

The Correlation between Understanding the Independent Learning – *Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) Curriculum with the Fulfillment of PAI Student Learning Rights

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – The lack of information on the *Merdeka Belajar* and *Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) curriculum has made students not take the MBKM programs. The study aims to determine to what extent the relation between PAI students' understanding of the *Merdeka Belajar* – *Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) curriculum policy implemented at Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI) and the fulfillment of PAI students' learning rights.

Design/methods/approach – The type of research used is quantitative research with a correlational survey design. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire containing 49 questions, where all questions were validated and the results were reliable. From a population of 650 students from 15 PTKI, 152 Islamic religious education students were taken as respondents. The collected data was analyzed using simple linear regression analysis.

Findings – The analysis results obtained a value of $r = 0.932$ and a significance value of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$). The R Square (R^2) result was 0.869, showing that 86.9% of PAI students can understand the concept of the MBKM curriculum at PTKI well so that there is a decision-making relation to take the learning rights of PAI students.

Research implications/limitations – This research is limited to understanding the concept of the MBKM curriculum. Therefore, further research is expected to reach the implementation stage of the MBKM curriculum. In addition, policymakers should consider expanding the implementation of *Merdeka* Curriculum programs to a broader scale.

Originality/value – The study results have proved the PAI students' ability to understand the concept of the MBKM curriculum related to the fulfillment of their learning rights. Most PAI students can understand the basic concepts of the MBKM curriculum. However, there are still some PAI students who do not understand holistically, requiring treatment to improve their understanding of the MBKM curriculum concept.

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Introduction

Higher education institutions must be able to answer the dynamics of industry needs (Nasution, 2023). One of the steps they can take is designing and implementing an innovative learning process to ultimately produce students who are capable in aspects of attitudes, knowledge, and skills optimally and, of course, relevant to the needs of the times (Kusumaningrum et al., 2022). The *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) aims to prepare Indonesia's future generation by encouraging a learning process that facilitates the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed for the world of work (Ahid & Chamid, 2021; Muslihati et al., 2023; Rizki et al., 2022). This policy emphasizes the opportunities given to students to hone their abilities according to their talents and interests by going directly into the world of work as a provision for a future career (Hatmanto et al., 2023). In addition, it requires soft skills and hard skills to face these challenges (Kuncoro et al., 2022; Sudaryanto et al., 2020).

In response to the pandemic and Industry 4.0's disruptive technologies, university-industry partnerships and the development of more flexible, student-focused curricula based on real-world experience can help bridge the growing skills gap and better equip students for a growing labor market (Bakir & Dahlan, 2023; Carayannis & Morawska-Jancelewicz, 2022; Siregar et al., 2020). It is in tune with research from (Aryanti et al., 2023), showing a significant influence on their careers. MBKM also deals with knowledge frameworks, the use of digital skills, and aspects of information and communication technology (Rachmat et al., 2021). The curriculum is one of the dynamic education systems that must always be revised and developed regularly to keep up with existing developments and difficulties (Wulandari et al., 2022). The curriculum is reformed to organize students, especially at the university level, to face rapid changes in technology, the world of work, and socio-cultural life, requiring the improvement of students' abilities to adapt and meet these developments (Sota, 2018).

The *Kampus Merdeka* learning poses challenges and opportunities to develop innovation, creativity, capacity, personality, and student needs, as well as encourage independence in exploring knowledge through field realities. The MBKM curriculum provides freedom to students in the implementation process (Astuti & Muslim, 2022). Study programs are faced with the task of what is often considered a challenge to creating an adaptive curriculum (Latipah et al., 2023) that can adjust to rapid developments in society. When students have developed both soft and hard skills, they are considered capable of facing global competition in the future. MBKM is also able to internalize the values of the Indonesian character in life. Also, the MBKM policy is considered to be one of the concrete solutions to overcoming increasingly complicated education problems. Universally, the following are some of the objectives of the MBKM policy. First, to build interaction between universities and the world of work (Kusumo et al., 2022). Second, to broaden horizons and offer a range of experiences to expected students. Third, it is an added value and, at the same time, prepares students to face challenges in an increasingly complex future (Puspitasari & Nugroho, 2021).

The main points of MBKM's external policy that are the fundamental reference for curriculum development in its study program include Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education; Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 8 of 2012 concerning the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI); Regulation of the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education Number 5 of 2019 concerning Study Program Accreditation Instruments; Permendikbud Number 3 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka); Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 5 of 2020 concerning Accreditation of Study Programs and Higher Education; and Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 22 of 2020 concerning the Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Education and Culture. This regulation is not only the responsibility of one party to implement. However, they are also supported and implemented by several parties, such as universities, faculties, study programs, students, and partners (Baharuddin, 2021).

In more detail, the following is an overview of how universities and faculties manage to manifest MBKM policies. Higher education institutions are required to facilitate students' rights to make decisions from several elective programs, namely, students can take credits outside of college for a maximum of two semesters or worth 40 credits, and students can take credits in different study programs in the same university as much as one semester or worth 20 credits. Meanwhile, the faculty must prepare facilities for a list of faculty-level courses that can be taken by students across study programs. In addition, the faculty must also prepare cooperation documents (MoU / SPK) with relevant partners.

Numerous existing research efforts have shown that government support, the dedication of teachers and students, and the readiness of universities all can have an impact on how well MBKM is implemented (Yusuf, 2021). The dedication of lecturers can also be seen from research (Nona et al., 2022), stating lecturers support their students to join the MBKM program. Furthermore, previous research focused on the application of one of the students' learning rights (Tuasikal et al., 2021), the influence on social skills (Sumani et al., 2022), and student perceptions of MBKM (Gunawan et al., 2022; Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021; Komarudin & Aziz, 2022). Moreover, within PTKI, there is a positive response by students in implementing MBKM (Zubair et al., 2023). MBKM can also improve students' skills (Christanti & Sukoco, 2022). The difficulty of PTKI in formulating profiles and fields of study in developing MBKM (Suwadi, 2016).

This research is important, considering that student participation is crucial to the success of MBKM (Kusumo et al., 2022). In more detail, most students do not know the MBKM program (Yulinar et al., 2023). Besides, some students are not interested in fulfilling the right to study MBKM (Hanapi et al., 2023). Moreover, a study by Laga et al., (2022) has indicated that most students need to study MBKM guidelines related to the fulfillment of their learning rights. Students also feel the urgency of socialization to understand the right to learn MBKM at the university level, both online and offline (Meke et al., 2022). It is also in tune with research by Rohaenah et al., (2022), stating that students know only part of MBKM programs.

The problem of lack of knowledge about the MBKM curriculum calls for a solution. This study tried to answer this problem by measuring the students' understanding level of MBKM and its connection with the fulfillment of their MBKM learning rights. In fact, there has been no research that explored students' understanding of MBKM and the fulfillment of learning rights, especially within the Ministry of Religious Affairs or PTKI. Therefore, this research fills the gap with new things in curriculum development in Indonesia, both in the general context and especially in PTKI. From the explanation above, researchers formulate two problem formulations/research questions (RQ) as follows:

- (1) RQ1. Is there a relation between Understanding the Concept of the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) and the Fulfillment of PAI Student Learning Rights??
- (2) RQ2. To what extent does the relation between Understanding the Concept of Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) contribute to the Fulfillment of PAI Student Learning Rights?

Methods

This study is a quantitative research that aims to analyze the correlation between understanding the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka curriculum and the fulfillment of student learning rights in universities. Quantitative research methods are methods to test specific theories by examining the relationship between variables in research (Creswell, 2014). The research design used is a correlational survey that aims to determine the presence or absence of correlation between variables. The research design can be seen in Figure 1

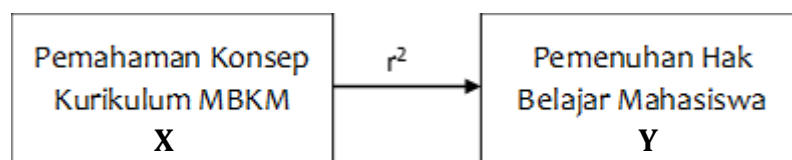


Figure 1. Research design

The population of this study was 650 PAI students from 15 Islamic Religious Universities of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. From here, a sample of 152 students was selected using a cluster random sampling technique, 10 students were taken from each sample university, each member in the population having the same probability of being selected (Apuke, 2017). The sample consisted of 89 female students and 63 students, all aged 19-21 years, at least attending the fifth semester at Islamic religious universities and undergoing the implementation of the MBKM curriculum.

Primary data for this study were obtained through the results of disseminated questionnaires made by referring to previous research and relevant theories. This questionnaire was implemented through the Google Forms platform and then forwarded

to respondents through student WhatsApp groups. The establishment of operational definitions, instrument structures, and indicators was performed carefully to ensure clarity in research design. The research instrument was made with 21 items on understanding the concept of the MBKM curriculum and 28 items on fulfilling student learning rights. Responses were given to respondents referring to the four-point Likert scale, with categories strongly agree (4), agree (3), disagree (2), and strongly disagree (1). In this context, the researcher removed the neutral option, given that doubtful attitudes are considered ambiguous expressions and do not reflect positive or negative tendencies (Creswell, 2015). Table 1 describes the indicators of the created instruments.

Table 1. Instrument Dimensions

Variable	Dimensi
Pemahaman Konsep Kurikulum MBKM	Persepsi
	Pengetahuan
	Pelaksanaan
	Kesiapan
Pemenuhan Hak Belajar Mahasiswa	Pertukaran Pelajar
	Magang/Praktik Kerja
	Asistensi Mengajar di Satuan Pendidikan
	Penelitian/Riset
	Proyek Kemanusiaan
	Kegiatan Wirausaha
	Studi/Proyek Independen
	Membangun Desa/Kuliah Kerja Nyata Tematik

The instrument created then was tested first with 30 respondents, validated with the validity test of the Pearson Product Moment forecast, and tested with Cronbach's Alpha to measure reliability. The validity test results stated all statement items had $r_{xy} > r_{table}$ (0.05), in which the results explain the instrument had a Cronbach's Alpha value of > 0.60 , making the instrument valid and reliable to use for the research

Table 2. Validity and Reliability

Variable	N of Items	Validity		Reliability	
		r_{xy}	r_{table}	r_{table}	
Pemahaman Konsep Kurikulum MBKM	21	0,361 - 0,872	0,349	0,924	
Pemenuhan Hak Belajar	28	0,423 - 0,848	0,349	0,963	

Data analysis used simple linear regression assisted by IBM SPSS 26 software. Simple linear regression analysis is a statistical technique that studies the relationship between two variables: the independent variable (X) and the dependent variable (Y). Its purpose is to model the linear relationship between them, providing information about the

strength and direction of the relationship, as well as a basis for making predictions of the value of the dependent variable based on the value of the independent variable (Creswell, 2015).

Likewise, two hypotheses became the basis for decision-making as follows:

- (1) If the significance value (Sig.) is less than the probability of 0.05, it states that there is a relationship between Understanding the MBKM Concept (X) and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights (Y).
- (2) If the significance value (Sig.) is more than the probability of 0.05, it states that there is a relationship between Understanding the MBKM Concept (X) and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights (Y).

Result and Discussion

1. Test Prerequisites

Before running a simple linear regression test, researchers first conducted prerequisite tests on the data collected to ensure that the data met the assumptions required for simple linear regression analysis. These assumptions included the data was normally distributed, had a linear relationship, and had no symptoms of heteroscedasticity

Table 3. Normality Test Output

		Unstandardized Residual
N		152
Normal Paramaters	Mean	0,000
	Std. Deviation	0,230
Most Extreme Diff.	Absolute	0,064
	Positive	0,064
	Negative	-0,041
Test Statistic		0,064
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		0,200

The normality test results using Kolmogorov - Smirnov showed that the collected data were normally distributed. It can be seen based on the SPSS output (Table 3) of the Asymp value. Sig. (2-tailed) indicated 0.200 greater than 0.05

Table 4. Linearity Test Results

	df	F	Sig.
Deviation from Linearity	32	0,782	0,787
Within Groups	7		

Based on the output above (Table 4), the Deviation from Linearity Sig. value of 0.787 was higher than 0.05. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the collected data had a

significant linear relationship between the variables of Understanding the Concept of MBKM Curriculum (X) and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights (Y)

Table 5. Glacier Heteroscedasticity Test

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Pemahaman Konsep Kurikulum MBKM	0,000	0,002	-0,010	-0,122	-0,903

Based on the above result (Table 5), the significance value (Sig.) was 0.903. The value of 0.903 is higher than 0.05. Therefore, according to the decision-making in the Glejser test, the collected research data had no symptoms of heteroscedasticity

2. Simple Linear Regression Results

Simple linear regression analysis in this study is designed to answer the problem formulation (RQ1) related to the relationship between Understanding the Concept of MBKM Curriculum (X) and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights (Y). If the significance value (Sig.) of the regression analysis results is less than the probability of 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Understanding the MBKM Concept and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights. Conversely, if the significance value is more than 0.05, the hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the Understanding of the MBKM Concept and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights. Furthermore, the formulation of the second problem (RQ2) considers to what extent the relation between Understanding the MBKM Curriculum Concept (X) and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights (Y) by looking at the amount of r^2 value. This analysis provided a basis for concluding the relation between the variables of Understanding the Concept of MBKM and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights in the context of this study. The output of simple linear regression results can be seen in Table 6. Meanwhile, the output results of the magnitude r^2 can be seen in Table 7.

Table 6. Coefficients

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	85,231	0,174		490,948	0,000
Pemahaman Konsep Kurikulum MBKM	0,084	0,003	0,932	31,556	0,000

Table 6 reveals the significance value (Sig.) of the regression analysis results of a Sig. 0.00, which is less than the probability of 0.05. Accordingly, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Understanding the MBKM Concept and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights. The simple linear regression equation obtained in this study was $Y = 85.231 + 0.084X$.

Table 7. Model Summary

		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of The Estimate
Pemahaman Konsep Kurikulum MBKM		0,932	0,869	0,868	0,230

In Table 7, there was an R Square value of 0.869. This value means there is an 86.9% relationship between the Understanding of MBKM Curriculum Concepts and the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights. In addition, there was 13.1% of other variables were not studied, which also affected the fulfillment of student learning rights

Based on Permendikbud Number 3 of 2020 and guidelines for the *Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka* in 2020. Thus, the program overview of the government's key policies related to Kampus Merdeka - The opening of new study programs following market needs, Automated college accreditation system, State universities as legal entities, and the right to study 3 semesters in another study program for students. Meanwhile, parties implementing independent campus programs include universities, Faculty, Courses, Students, and Partners (Zubair et al., 2023).

This study aims to determine how much students understand the MBKM curriculum policy implemented at Islamic Religious Universities (PTKI) on the fulfillment of student learning rights. This study found a significant relationship between understanding the concept of the MBKM curriculum and fulfilling learning rights. This relationship had a percentage of 86.9% on the fulfillment of student learning rights. There were 13.1% of other unknown variables related to student learning rights.

Understanding of curriculum concepts can be seen from several aspects, such as the availability of information about MBKM. This research is also in tune with previous research, namely students knowing about MBKM policies (Wahyuni & Anshori, 2021). Furthermore, students' understanding related to the availability of information and documents regarding MBKM has been known by students (Zubair et al., 2023). Students gain this understanding of the MBKM policy from lecturers and stakeholders on their respective campuses (Gunawan et al., 2022). This research is in line with the opinion (Yusuf, 2021), stating that government support dominates by 7.7%, followed by student readiness by 4.7%, lecturer readiness by 4.7%, and campus readiness by 3.6% of the percentage of MBKM influence. Aspects of student readiness include student understanding, preparation for off-campus studies, and community service. However, the study has not discussed comprehensively the 8 Student Learning Rights.

Student learning rights in the context of MBKM are the fulfillment of 8 MBKM programs. According to the MBKM guidebook, the eight programs are Student Exchange, Internship or Work Practice, Teaching Assistance in Education Units, Research or Research, Humanitarian Projects, Entrepreneurial Activities, Independent Studies or Projects, and Building Villages or Thematic Real Work Lectures (Kemendikbud, 2020). However, the results of different studies (Puspitasari & Nugroho, 2021) have shown that students do not fully support MBKM. In addition, there are student perceptions of the technical and

administrative challenges in implementing this program. The implementation of this program has not gone as well as expected since students faced various technical problems, such as running the program online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and administrative problems, such as building partnerships between campuses and external institutions (Qorin & Shofiya, 2022). Furthermore, there are challenges with regulations and the readiness of human resources to implement MBKM (Yudhawasthi & Christiani, 2022). The fulfillment of MBKM learning rights correlates with students' understanding of the policy because student's level of awareness and comprehension of the MBKM will shape a solid foundation to involve themselves in the learning process, optimize the benefits offered by the MBKM, and ultimately ensure the fulfillment of effective learning rights.

The study results showed that in the PTKI environment, students have knowledge in understanding MBKM. It indicates the need for enrichment and mentoring activities for students who are still weak in mastering curriculum concepts, especially in the PTKI environment, so that students can gradually improve their understanding. This activity provides opportunities for students to gain additional guidance and overcome obstacles they face in understanding complex curriculum concepts. Moreover, this enrichment and mentoring can also help students gain the skills needed to take part in MBKM.

Students can seek information from various sources to improve their understanding of the MBKM curriculum. It is in line with one of the problems posed by (Sintiawati et al., 2022), stating that the participation of the academic community has not been optimized due to lack of information. Students can also prepare themselves for the MBKM program like taking the right to study outside their main study program. By doing so, students gain the freedom to develop their abilities and interests, making them prepared for the working world when they graduate (Krishnapatria, 2021). Students also have good perception after undergoing the MBKM program (Komarudin & Aziz, 2022). Flexibility in learning MBKM is also a significant point in the MBKM curriculum (Nasik, 2019). This flexibility can be seen from the selection of courses that suit their interests. The MBKM curriculum also provides credit conversion within their study period (Baharuddin, 2021).

In this study, it is crucial to acknowledge the existence of some limitations. First, this study is the first step in deepening the understanding of the Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) concept. This study's limited scope at the stage of understanding the concept has indicated that there is still a need for deeper exploration related to the substance, objectives, and methods of implementing the MBKM curriculum in higher education institutions. In this case, further research is expected to be able to surpass the limitations of this research by framing concept understanding into concrete implementation of the MBKM curriculum in the context of field practice. Second, our sample mainly comprised students from one study program, thus posing a challenge in extrapolating the results of our research to include all students in PTKI and universities in general. Moreover, there was another unknown variable of 13.1%. Further research is required to identify unidentified variables that can contribute to a more holistic

understanding of the fulfillment of MBKM learning rights. Therefore, further research is needed to explore additional aspects that have not been revealed in the context of MBKM learning rights.

Conclusion

The regression analysis results showed a significance value (Sig.) of 0.00, which is much lower than the probability of 0.05, indicating that the Understanding of MBKM Concepts has a relationship with the Fulfillment of Student Learning Rights. R Square of 0.869 showed that as much as 86.9% variation in the fulfillment of student learning rights can be explained by understanding the MBKM concept. However, it should be noted that there were unidentified 13.1% of other variables that also contributed to the fulfillment of student learning rights. This conclusion illustrates the importance of understanding the concept of MBKM in the context of PTKI and the need to consider other possible factors in thoroughly understanding the fulfillment of student learning rights.

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