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18

Multicultural encounters within kampus merdeka: A study on educational policy impact to bolster diversity

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25

ABSTRACT

16

The future of Indonesian diversity is influenced partly by educational design and policy. In that sense, this study aims to analyze the actual and potential impacts of Kampus Merdeka's educational policy in strengthening multicultural encounters. Based on a specific context of Yogyakarta State University or Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta (UNY), Indonesia, this study used the qualitative method to reveal the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)/Freedom of Learning Kampus Merdeka program in providing both actual and potential multicultural encounters, particularly in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The determination of research subjects was combining purposive and snowball sampling. The data analysis technique utilized an inductive approach for qualitative data analysis. The stages of data analysis consisted of data reduction, data display, conclusion, and verification, while validity checking employed triangulation. The study concludes that the MBKM program provides an experience and a cross-ethnic encountering spaces for students to share each other's diversity of identities. The encounters are through the three-semester learning rights program outside the study program. Cross-identity encounter in the MBKM program also allows students to combine aspects of concern for structural and cultural issues through a derivative program of three-semester learning rights outside the study program. The actual impacts of the MBKM program include providing spaces of strengthening multiculturalism, through students-exchanges, Center of Excellence (CoE) facilitation, and equal education for all. In addition, the needed regulations have been issued to provide the potential impacts to optimize for multicultural encounters through student exchanges, especially intercultural understanding or multicultural collaboration programs.

Keywords: Kampus Merdeka, multicultural encounters, diversity

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INTRODUCTION

Multiculturalism is one of the basic values forming the Indonesian nation-state. It is not only manifested in a philosophical-conceptual belief but also a formal political consensus for the nation-state through the inclusion of "Bhinneka Tunggal Ika" as a formal message written on the national symbol of Garuda Pancasila.

The ideals of the nation's founders about the ability to live peacefully side by side in diversity (peaceful coexistence—the standard term used in this research) are a basic requirement for realizing and maintaining multiculturalism. In the context of describing just and civilized humanity, Soekarno (Soekarno, 1963) stated: "...Well, never mind if it has already become blocks, one block here, one block there. However, these two blocks can coexist with each other. In English: coexistence; in fact, it is said to be peaceful coexistence. Live side by side with each other in an atmosphere of peace. Peaceful coexistence. And it turned out to be possible, maybe, not only possible, but it can."

Nevertheless, in preliminary research observations, the phenomenon was found that these days, cyberspace has been widely used by intolerant groups to create ideological tensions between different cultural identities, especially those based on religion and other socio-cultural identities, in the form of discourse, propaganda, hate speech, and others.

This phenomenon must receive adequate attention and handling, considering that Indonesia has so many traumatic experiences regarding multicultural conflicts, inter-ethnic conflicts, and the like. Between 1952 and 2000, for example, conflicts in West Kalimantan occurred between various ethnic groups at least 12 times. These conflicts include clashes between ethnic Madurese and ethnic Dayaks in 1952, the expulsion of people with ethnic Chinese backgrounds by the Dayaks in 1967, riots between ethnic Madurese and ethnic Dayaks in 1979 that occurred in Kalimantan, the clash between the ethnic Madurese and the ethnic Dayak that occurred in 1983, the riots between the ethnic Dayak and ethnic Madurese that occurred in Sanggau Ledo in 1997, the conflict between the ethnic Madurese and the ethnic Dayak that occurred in Kalimantan in 1998, the conflict between the ethnic Malay and ethnic Madurese that occurred in Sambas, and the riots between the ethnic Malays of Pontianak and the ethnic Madurese that occurred on October 25, 2000.

Multicultural conflict incidents also occurred in Sampit Kotawaringin Timur (Kotim), Central Kalimantan, which involved ethnic Madurese and ethnic Dayaks. In this conflict, hundreds or even thousands of residents were declared dead, most of whom were Madurese. The conflict also resulted in a refugee flow of around 55,323 people, causing neglect, as evidenced by the death of 357 refugees, widespread disease outbreaks, poor quality of life, and inadequate sanitation. The widespread impact occurred in the form of an atmosphere of fear, psychological trauma, and thousands of residents who lost their property (Suhamo, 2010). Therefore, it is urgent for multicultural encounters to be intensified, especially for the younger generation through educational institutions, including at UNY.

From a policy perspective, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemdikbudristek) issued Kampus Merdeka, a policy that basically provides students opportunities to gain the freedom to study in higher education. This policy implements the vision and mission of President Joko Widodo's Government to build superior human resources.

In implementing this policy, students will be given the freedom for two semesters in their study program to carry out activities outside the classroom, outside the study program, and even outside their home university (Thohir et al., 2021). Thus, in addition to increasing competence through learning that is more socially aware and in accordance with professional needs, students will also have wider opportunities to interact with cross-cultural identities. The assumption is that the Kampus Merdeka educational policy will strengthen multicultural encounters.

As one of the leading public campuses in Yogyakarta, also known as miniature of Indonesia, Yogyakarta State University (UNY) gathers students from various backgrounds and reflects socio-natural diversity of Indonesia. Therefore, this research reveals more about the impact of the Kampus Merdeka educational policy on strengthening multicultural encounters at UNY, especially how the educational policy is responded through the Campus regulation and educational practices.

METHOD

This article is based on research with a qualitative-descriptive method. The research was conducted using in-depth data collection techniques and inductive data analysis to find important information, prepositions, and materials according to the research objectives.

The data sources of this research, following the classification of Lambert & Lambert (Lambert & Lambert, 2012), were paper and person. The paper in question was the literature under the research objectives. Meanwhile, the source of data in the form of a person can also be referred to as a research subject. The subjects of this research were lecturers and students of the MBKM program at UNY, particularly at the Faculty of Social Sciences. The determination of research subjects was done by a combination of purposive and snowball sampling.

52

In general, this study's data collection and analysis techniques were divided into two groups: desk study and field study. The field study included 1) in-depth interviews to obtain information on all aspects emphasized and relevant to the research problem. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide that contained points emphasized to reveal information relevant to the research problem. 2) Observation was to obtain information by reviewing the research object to see the reality that occurred in the field.

On the other hand, the desk study covered 1) literature study, a technique for utilizing secondary data and other written data regarding the object under study. 2) Peer discussion in this study was a discussion with colleagues to strengthen the analytical and theoretical construction of the temporary results of data analysis. Then, 3) Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was to enrich and a kind of "public test" of analysis and provisional results or progress of research results.

All stages of data collection are cyclical. Desk-study and field-study are not a series of activities that are completed procedurally at once. In fact, they were carried out as in a circle, where researchers are allowed to repeat or return to any previous stages.

Furthermore, the data analysis technique used qualitative inductive. The stages of analysis used were 1) data reduction, 2) data display, and 3) conclusion and verification.

Testing the data validity employed triangulation, a technique of checking the data validity that utilizes something other than the data to check or compare the data (Natow, 2020). The triangulation technique used was source triangulation by comparing and checking the degree of trustworthiness of information through different times and tools. Triangulation of sources in this study was carried out by comparing the data obtained from person and paper (results of in-depth interviews and documentation) or paper with paper or person with other persons.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Finding

Encounters in Multiculturalism

Multicultural encounters are not a new concept. As an episteme, multicultural encounters can be traced from the conception of multiculturalism itself.

With its diversity and tendency to develop concepts and practices, multiculturalism by Parekh (Parekh, 2001) is divided into five kinds. First, isolationism refers to a society with various cultural groups, living life autonomously and engaging in minimal interactions between one another.

Second, accommodative is a plural society with a dominant culture, which makes certain adjustments and accommodations for the cultural needs of minorities. Third, autonomy is a plural society where the main cultural groups seek to achieve equality with the dominant culture and want an autonomous life within a collectively acceptable political framework.

Fourth, critical or interactive is a plural society in which cultural groups are not too concerned with autonomous cultural life but rather demand the creation of a collective culture that reflects and affirms their distinctive perspectives. Fifth is cosmopolitan, in which this society seeks to eliminate cultural boundaries altogether to create a society where each individual is no longer bound and committed to a particular culture; on the contrary, they freely engage in intercultural experimentation and at the same time develop their own cultural life.

In its use, the term multiculturalism is often interchanged with pluralism. To examine multiculturalism more clearly, it is necessary to scrutinize the mapping proposed of multicultural society (Hoon, 2017; Modood, 2013; Parekh, 2001). The first is a group of people who have a culture like society in general, but in some cases, they have different beliefs and practices according to different areas of life and ways of life. They do not want to create an alternative culture but diversify it with their different presence. This group subculture diversity.

The second is the community group, in which some groups are critical of the various values and main principles that exist in the dominant culture of the community and then try to reconstruct it. This phenomenon perspective diversity.

The third is a group of people who have different self-awareness, are well organized, and live with different belief systems and belief practices. This phenomenon is described as communal diversity.

Therefore, a multicultural society is a society whose components describe one, two, or all three of these classifications. In contrast to pluralism, whose scope is in large sub-components, such as religion, ethnicity, and race, multiculturalism includes more “micro” components, even such as thoughts and lifestyles.

As a common thread from this explanation, multiculturalism is a concept of managing a culturally plural society, no matter how small the level and scope of cultural pluralism is, by giving recognition of the existence of the plurality component (Lan, 2011; Zarbaliyev, 2017). This recognition in contemporary phenomena is a demand. Therefore, the absence of recognition, which means no fulfillment of demands, is very potential for the emergence of various conflicts.

Multiculturalism management is clearly a complexity in itself that cannot be handled by one party alone, for example, the government of a country (Nye, 2007). This complexity increases in the era of the development of information and communication technology (ICT), especially the internet, which presents a virtual world, namely a world that has essence but not in form. In this virtual space, everyone is free to fill in identity without any binding legal rules by claiming to be anyone and anywhere (Hoter et al., 2009). They can fake their identity if they want (Murdock, 2016). This situation makes it easy for mono-culturalist or anti-pluralist groups to provoke tension and trigger conflict by contrasting differences between cultural identities that can actually coexist peacefully.

In that context, online multicultural encounters can be a breakthrough alternative to solve problems, with the main program being the provision of online discussion boards (Leurs et al., 2012). These online features can be expanded by emphasizing the recognition and appreciation of differences, not just culture, in the perspective of multiculturalism (Modood, 2013).

Discussion

Kampus Merdeka Educational Policy

The transformation of education policy in higher education has entered a new phase with the Freedom of Learning policy, including the Kampus Merdeka program. After a long time, universities were limited by a rigid bureaucracy and tended to hinder scientific groups from meeting and collaborating with each other, and this barrier now is trying to be relaxed, even to be eliminated through the Kampus Merdeka program. The Directorate General of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2020) defines Kampus Merdeka as a form of autonomously granting freedom to educational institutions and independence from complicated bureaucracy and freedom for students to choose the desired program. The establishment of the Kampus Merdeka educational policy aims to create a culture of autonomous and not bureaucratic educational institutions and create an innovative learning system based on the interests and demands of the modern world.

The existence of the Kampus Merdeka policy, on the one hand, provides a wide space for institutions to develop more responsively and quickly and pursue the quality of the institution so that it is in line with the latest scientific developments. The Kampus Merdeka educational policy also provides opportunities for cross-disciplinary students to meet and collaborate with each other so that it is expected to stimulate student creativity and innovation.

Referring to the MBKM guidebook published by the Directorate General of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (2020), there are four main programs launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) to realize and optimize the Kampus Merdeka policy: Opening of New Study Program

Referring to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 7 of 2020 concerning the Establishment, Amendment, Dissolution of State Universities, and the Establishment, Amendment, Revocation of Private Higher Education Permits, if the tertiary institution that will open a new study program meets the requirements in article 24 paragraph 2, it will automatically get a “Good” accreditation status from the National Accreditation Board.

With this provision, the opening of new study programs is expected to accommodate the demands of the region, industry, and the world of work on a wider scale. Thus, later, the existing new study program will reduce the number of graduates who are not absorbed in employment and further impact on reducing unemployment in Indonesia in general.

College Accreditation System: The Kampus Merdeka educational policy regulation also cuts down on the administration of higher education accreditation, which was previously considered complicated and inefficient because it took much energy to process it. Now, through the Kampus Merdeka policy, newly established study programs automatically obtain “C” accreditation from BAN-PT without having to wait for approval from the relevant ministry. The accreditation will continue to apply until the study program applies for re-accreditation to BAN-PT. Meanwhile, if it turns out that the application for accreditation has failed in the process, the study program must wait two years to re-apply. In addition, through the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 5 of 2020 concerning Accreditation of Study Programs and Higher Education, new study programs can obtain “A” accreditation status, on condition that they receive quality recognition from an international accreditation agency recognized by the relevant ministry.

State Universities with Legal Entity: Kemendikbudristek makes simpler administrative regulations for state universities to change their status to legal entities. Thus, it is hoped that it will be easier for state universities to manage their households so that the need to innovate and transform is more flexible, thereby increasing competitiveness not only domestically but also globally. It is possible because, with the status of a legal entity, government intervention decreases so that state higher education institutions can be more independent and have wider autonomy. The existence of autonomy for state universities also allows internal universities to be free to decide entry routes, determine entrance and tuition fees, open non-subsidized programs, enter into cooperation with industry, lease land and campus assets, and other mechanisms to optimize funding from the community. Meanwhile, to ensure that there are checks and balances in the administration of good academic governance and organization of higher education with legal entities, the diminishing function of the state is replaced by Majelis Wali Amanat/WMA (the Board of Trustees) (Angraini, 2019).

Student Learning Rights for Three Semesters Outside the Study Program: The Kampus Merdeka program that students can directly feel is the obligation for universities to provide three semesters of rights outside the study program for them to develop their knowledge and experience, which is then translated into several derivative programs, such as credit transfer systems, internships/work practices, teaching assistance in education units, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies/projects, and village building or thematic student community service (Buku Panduan Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka, 2020). In addition, the existence of a three-semester student learning rights program outside the study program to take credits (semester credit units) outside their study program provides an opportunity for students further to develop their knowledge and experience in the desired subject. The credit transfer system policy is not limited to only one university but can also cross universities. For students who take credits outside the study program within the same campus, one semester is equivalent to 20 credits, and for students who take credits outside the study program with different universities, the weight of the credits is equivalent to 40 credits. Based on the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 3 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education, in general, the purposes of the three-semester study rights policy outside the study program are to respect the diversity of cultures, views, religions, beliefs, and opinions or original findings of others, cooperate, and have social sensitivity and concern for society and the environment.

Multiculturalism Dimensions in Kampus Merdeka Educational Policy

Multiculturalism is defined as creating and maintaining a common awareness to share values and identities (Houston, 2014). Multiculturalism concerns pluralism in the smallest spectrum of the level and scope of cultural pluralism by recognizing these components' existence. Thus, the absence of recognition, which means negating the fulfillment of demands, is often an

entry point for conflict formation (Harris, 2013). As a prerequisite for establishing a nation-state, multiculturalism must be placed as part of the basic values of philosophical and conceptual beliefs of a pluralistic nation like Indonesia.

Efforts to realize and care for multiculturalism, in this case, with the context of Indonesia, must begin by providing supporting facilities and infrastructure to create the ability to coexist peacefully amid existing pluralism. As a multicultural nation-state, the diversity governance in Indonesia has experienced ups and downs. In the history of this nation, there are recorded traumatic experiences due to multicultural conflicts that occurred several times, one of which was the Sampit riots. In that conflict, hundreds or even thousands of residents were declared dead. In addition, it was recorded that no less than 55,323 people became refugees and caused neglect. As a result, 357 refugees died a few days later due to various factors, such as poor quality of life and inadequate sanitation, causing disease outbreaks. Apart from causing casualties, the Sampit riots also caused psychological trauma, and thousands of people lost their property (Suharno, 2015).

Parekh (Parekh, 2001) gives a classification of five models of multiculturalism. First, isolationist multiculturalism is a multicultural society that accepts diversity but at the same time tries to keep their culture separate from other societies in general. Second, accommodative multiculturalism is a society with a dominant culture providing certain accommodations for the cultural needs of minorities. Third, autonomous multiculturalism is a cultural community group with an advocacy focus on fulfilling the same rights as the dominant community to create a society where all groups can exist as equal partners. Fourth, in critical multiculturalism, it is a pluralistic society model that focuses on the demand for creating a shared culture, which represents and affirms their distinctive identity. Fifth, cosmopolitan multiculturalism is a typical society that seeks to eliminate cultural boundaries so that people are no longer bound to certain cultures or are called intercultural societies.

The birth of the Kampus Merdeka program through the Freedom of Learning policy has opened up a space for inclusion for the higher education ecosystem, both public and private. The inclusiveness of the academic ecosystem in higher education should be encouraged, considering that in recent years, issues of exclusivity and its derivatives such as radicalism and intolerance often adorn the face of university-themed discourse and have the potential to become a source of multicultural conflict. The Freedom of Learning policy model through the Kampus Merdeka program must also be encouraged to fulfill the requirements for creating a multicultural educational space, according to Banks (Banks, 2015).

According to Banks, four components can be used as a reference in reinforcing the Kampus Merdeka program, namely that teaching must be oriented towards the contribution of different cultural groups and individuals (content integration); an additive approach in which students and educational institutions are complementary to the existing curriculum (the knowledge construction process); a transformational approach in which the nature of curriculum and teaching is changed to reflect the experiences of diverse cultures, ethnicities, races, and social groups (an equity pedagogy); a social action approach that teaches students how to clarify their ethnic and cultural values for greater equality, freedom, and justice (prejudice reduction) (Bakir, 2020).

Actual and Potential Impacts for Strengthening Multicultural Encounters at UNY

Through the Freedom of Learning policy, the Kampus Merdeka program is actually a formal step for the state to accommodate a multiculturalism-oriented education style. The reason is that, so far, multiculturalism-style education in Indonesia is still a criticism because of the absence of formal programs that are curricular and non-curricular in nature regarding multicultural education in the scope of education. Observations made by researchers revealed that UNY, is one of the state universities organizing the MBKM program.

Wider autonomy in the MBKM program allows both institutions and students to gain more space to explore potential to strengthen the competitiveness and competence of graduates. The MBKM program also allows students to have the flexibility to take learning, both outside of the study program at the same university or the same study program at different universities. The implementation of the Kampus Merdeka program at UNY has been recorded to have been running

since 2020, preceded by the socialization of the curriculum of Freedom of Learning Kampus Merdeka, UNY.

Based on the researcher's observations, the Rector's Regulation of the UNY Number 07 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of the MBKM Curriculum and the Rector's Regulation of the UNY Number 5 of 2020 concerning the Freedom of Learning Kampus Merdeka Curriculum for Applied Undergraduate and Undergraduate Programs of UNY became a reference for the implementation of the Freedom of Learning Kampus Merdeka or MBKM curriculum at UNY. The MBKM implementation at UNY has been carried out with various curriculum schemes, including 6-1-1, 5-1-1, and 6-0-2, starting in the 2021/2022 school year. The MBKM program implementation at UNY is currently being carried out in stages, including the preparation of learning instruments in the form of RPS based on Team-Based Projects and/or case methods and an equivalence scheme for off-campus learning activities carried out by students. The equivalence scheme in question includes a credit transfer system, internships/work practices, teaching assistance in education units, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies/projects, and building villages or thematic student community service.

Moreover, the Kampus Merdeka Center of Excellence (CoE) program is an assistance program from the government for study programs that serve as a model for implementing Freedom of Learning Kampus Merdeka. Based on the observations made by the researcher, UNY has utilized the MBKM CoE assistance program through the Sociology Education Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences, UNY. In its implementation, the MBKM CoE assistance program was divided into two schemes, namely, Scheme I, which is the design and planning stage of the MBKM program at the university, faculty, and study program levels. It consists of the formulation of policies at the higher education level related to the MBKM program implementation in the form of regulations, decrees, and others; the preparation of guidelines that serve as a reference for the MBKM program implementation at the study program level; curriculum changes that include planning, learning processes, learning evaluations, and quality assurance; preparation of operational procedures for students to take credits outside the study program for three semesters, both outside study programs within universities and/or outside universities.

Based on interviews conducted by the researcher, the Scheme I implementation has been carried out through various discussions, designs, and evaluations of MBKM program regulatory products. As part of an effort to absorb input and accommodate criticism and suggestions for various regulatory products related to MBKM, UNY Sociology Education Study Program held a Forum Group Discussion (FGD), which involved various parties ranging from lecturers, students to alumni. The FGD focus was divided into two main themes: discussing four models of learning outside campus, including teaching assistance, student exchange, research, and entrepreneurial activities and models of village building activities, internships, independent studies, and humanitarian projects. The FGD results were then used to refine the guidebook to become clearer, more measurable, and easily understood by students.

Other activities included in Scheme I are the Sociology Education Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences UNY, conducting socialization and signing of cooperation (MoU) with universities domestically and abroad and non-universities. Several universities that have been explored by the Sociology Education Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences UNY, in the context of socialization and collaboration (MoU) for the MBKM program based on the researcher's observations are the Sociology Education Study Program, Padang State University, Sociology-Anthropology Education Study Program, Semarang State University (UNNES), Sultan Idris Educational University (UPSI) Malaysia, the Faculty of Social Sciences, Manado State University, and non-college institutions, such as the SP Kinasih Foundation Yogyakarta, Mulyodadi Village, Bambanglipuro Sub-district, Bantul Regency and Guwosari Village, Pajangan Sub-district, Bantul Regency.

Meanwhile, for the Scheme II implementation, the Sociology Education Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences UNY, has made various realizations of cooperation agreements (MoUs) with higher education and non-higher education institutions. One of the realizations of the MBKM program is student exchange. In 2021, between the Sociology Education study program and Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI) Malaysia, there was a student exchange

program in the context of the Freedom of Learning Kampus Merdeka. The class of 2020 student, on behalf of Mirda Yanti, became the first student to carry out the MBKM study exchange program. The researcher's search results also found that the student exchange program as part of the MBKM has implications for multiculturalism following the program's real purpose. Other activities related to the MBKM implementation are off-campus internships. Off-campus internship learning activities were carried out using FGD schemes and training or workshops on "Gender Integration Training and Climate Change in Environmental Action and Policy." The participants included students until regional work units. The author's interview results uncovered that the supervisor's role in disseminating the Freedom of Learning Kampus Merdeka program is the key to this program, which students widely use. Besides that, the readiness of the study program in preparing various supporting instruments is also a key in the MBKM program implementation.

Encouraging MBKM towards modeling multicultural education should be directed at four dimensions. First, the Kampus Merdeka program must be pushed towards opening up spaces that integrate across cultures and groups to describe basic concepts, generalizations, and theories in courses/disciplines or what James Banks calls content integration. It presupposes a wider space for students to adjust their knowledge and experience to certain scientific clusters. Second, the Kampus Merdeka program must lead to wide opportunities for students to understand the cultural implications of a course (the knowledge construction process).

The opening of opportunities for students to adjust their knowledge and experience to certain scientific groups should be a point that should not be lost, considering that students are given the freedom to choose courses based on their knowledge and experience. Third, with flexibility in terms of bureaucratization as a consequence of the adoption of the Kampus Merdeka for higher education units, it is better if teachers (lecturers) and students (university students) can develop models and ways of learning in accordance with their respective backgrounds, both in terms of ethnicity (culture), religion, race, and class (an equity pedagogy). Fourth, the existence of cross-ethnic (cultural), religious, racial, and group background encounters is expected to encourage the elimination of prejudice against other identities that are different from each other (prejudice reduction) (Banks, 1990).

If the emphasis is given on aspects of multiculturalism education, the Kampus Merdeka program has the following potentials: Integrating the cultural identity of each existing community and cultural area; Equity of pedagogy or education equity and justice without discrimination; Developing a knowledge system in factual, conceptual, and metacognitive knowledge about culture

CONCLUSION

It is relatively new to scrutinize the Kampus Merdeka educational policy which results the MBKM program in the more technical layer through the optic combining multiculturalism as conceptual view and UNY as the locus of implementation. From the view point of multiculturalism, The MBKM program provides students with cross-ethnic experiences and meeting spaces to confirm their diversity of identities through the three-semester learning rights program outside the study program. The encounter in this context is vital, considering that plural societies are often trapped in the exclusivity of one particular identity so that even though they have the same identity, they can conflict with each other. It happens because the multicultural education taught in the study room so far only focuses on introducing culture from the point of view of the material that exists, such as types of traditional food, traditional houses, and others. As a result, such a multicultural education model cannot eliminate prejudices that contain ethnicity, religion, race, and inter-groups.

Based on the previous description, the MBKM program allows students to combine aspects of concern for structural and cultural issues (gender, social status, ethnic, or racial uniqueness), linking culture and power, and multiculturalism with anti-racism through a derivative program of three semesters of learning rights at outside the study program. The end result is that students can take stock in the form of knowledge, attitudes, and guidelines for interacting, respecting others,

and involve themselves through dialogue, debate, or argumentation to find similarities while still respecting existing differences.

In addition, the MBKM program, according to its purpose, is to provide multicultural experiences to students to optimize their potential. The MBKM program implementation refers to the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 03 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education, which allows an experiential learning atmosphere, thereby further strengthening ethnic and cultural literacy. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 03 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education also gives students the right to study three semesters outside the study program. The existence of the right to study for three semesters outside the student's home study program provides space for students to be richer and increase their insight and competence when responding to developments and changing times.

Viewed from the multiculturalism aspect, the MBKM program provides a fresh and implementable new perspective. It aligns with the style of developing student learning curriculum, which is directed to experiential learning so that students are not only required to have academic skills but also cultural, social, personal, pedagogic, and other competencies, which supports skills in living life as an integral part of the social system. The accommodation of the right of three semesters for students to take learning outside their study program also allows an integrative learning style, providing space for students to not only learn how a social system can play a role in efforts to increase prosperity and welfare but also understand how to analyze and solve various social problems that arise due to changes and developments.

Explicitly, the MBKM program provides space for efforts to strengthen multiculturalism in higher education. In this case, UNY, as an educational institution for education personnel, has strategic potential to become an agent and pilot for the implementation of the multicultural-based MBKM program. The MBKM program implementation at UNY can be photographed in various landscapes, both conceptually and in application in the field. Conceptually, the MBKM program implementation at UNY only started in 2020, so it has not been fully implemented by existing study programs, both from planning and realization. However, the Rector's Regulation of the UNY Number 07 of 2020 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of the MBKM Curriculum and the Rector's Regulation of the UNY Number 5 of 2020 concerning the Freedom of Learning Kampus Merdeka Curriculum for Applied Undergraduate and Undergraduate Programs of UNY became the legal basis for the MBKM curriculum implementation at UNY, from which various derivative programs were rolled out. Meanwhile, for its realization in the field, the study program that organizes MBKM is provided by the government with assistance facilities through the Kampus Merdeka CoE (Center of Excellence).

Some notes that should be explored and improved on the existing potential to maximize the MBKM program in line with the goals are to provide students with an ethnic and cultural literacy experience. First, experiential learning as the breath of MBKM must be enriched with various types of learning models that are open and serious in nature by involving various identities. Second, strengthening the mastery of information technology is absolutely necessary. Third, it is necessary to have cross-culture courses before students exercise their right to study for three semesters outside the study program. Fourth, the existing learning is oriented towards equity pedagogy without any discrimination in the above matters to emphasize the quality of education based on multiculturalism to create a learning space that integrates the cultural identity of each community and existing cultural area.

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