STUDENT MOBILITY IN MERDEKA BELAJAR-KAMPUS MERDEKA PROGRAM: THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE OF ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM STUDENTS IN INDONESIAN UNIVERSITIES

A THESIS

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FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION SRIWIJAYA UNIVERSITY

2024

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Certified that thesis entitled "Student Mobility in Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program: The Learning Experience of English Education Study Program Studetns in Indonesian Universities" is my own work and I did not do any plagiarism or inappropriate quotation against the ethic and rules commended by the Ministry of Education of Republic Indonesia Number 17, 2010 regarding plagiarism in higher education.

Therefore, I deserve to face the court if I am found to have plagiarized this work.

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DEDICATION AND MOTTOS

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved family. My parents, brother, and sister who always give me support and encourage me to do my best.

MOTTOS

You don't have to be great to start, but you have to start to be great." - Zig Ziglar

(Just be brave to take a chance, and give it your best shot)

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Palembang, March 2024

The writer

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Student Mobility in Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka Program: The Learning Experience of English Education Study Program Students in Indonesian Universities

ABSTRACT

This study investigated students' learning experience in joining student mobility in Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program. A case study with qualitative methods was applied in this study. In-depth interviews with one-on-one interviews were conducted to collect data. Nine students from various universities voluntarily participated. The data from the interview were analyzed using three-phase codes: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding, which were proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). The findings of this study showed that students experienced various activities in both online and offline classes from learning models that used project-based learning, problem-based learning, and inquiry learning. During the learning process, students also faced some difficulties, such as network problems, schedules, distance, pressure, and communication in class. In addition, students also experienced difficulties with lecturers' approaches, techniques, and tactics during the learning process. Along the process, students also found solutions to cope with difficulties such as using personal cellular data, finding a place with a strong network, attending both classes with earphones, taking the bus, making friends, and self-motivation. The results of this study are expected to provide insight that student mobility program helps students to deepen their academic knowledge and national insight.

Keywords: Learning Experience, Student Mobility, Student Exchange, Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka. MBKM

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In this era, social, cultural, world of work, and technology are advancing rapidly. Ensuring students' competencies align with the demands of the current era is of greatest importance. Link and match extend beyond industries and work to an evolving future. Higher education is essential for developing the ability to create and execute an effective educational approach, ensuring that students can consistently achieve optimal learning outcomes that involve attitude, knowledge, and skills. Freedom of learning independent campus program is poised to address these demands.

Freedom of learning independent campus program called the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) in Indonesian. This program is designed to provide a self-directed and adaptable learning experience in higher education. It aims to foster an innovative learning culture responsive to students' needs. Based on the Directorate General of Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture, the freedom of learning independent campus program includes student mobility, teaching, internship, entrepreneurship, and independent study. These programs support students in improving their potential based on their passions and talents.

Student mobility is becoming increasingly popular across universities within the freedom of learning independent campus program. Student mobility refers to students pursuing their education in a different country from their own, either partially or entirely (Branch & Mehmet, 2023). The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) defines "an internationally mobile student as an individual who has physically crossed an international border between two countries to participate in educational activities in a destination country, where the destination country is different from his or her country of origin". Furthermore, the freedom of learning independent campus program provides student mobility domestically and internationally. These student mobility programs provide opportunities for Indonesian students to study for a semester. Domestically, the Independent Student Exchange is known as

Pertukaran Pelajar Merdeka (PMM) in Indonesian, where students will study at universities on different islands of Indonesia. Internationally, the Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) is a student mobility program where students will study at top universities overseas. Hence, student mobility is students who can experience education at universities in different cities or countries.

Independent students exchange or student mobility conducted domestically aims to enhance students' national insight and deepen academic knowledge (Kampus Merdeka, n.d.). It allows students to develop flexible and comprehensive thinking methods in subjects that have never been studied before (Insani et al., 2021). According to the European Education Area (EEA), student mobility allows students to develop valuable skills and enhance their knowledge (European Commission, n.d.). Furthermore, Wit & Hunter (2015) state that student mobility plays a crucial role in the internationalization of higher education, enhancing academic, intercultural, and international dimensions. Based on the research of Granel et al. (2021), student mobility provides benefits, satisfaction, and learning outcomes that are significantly enhanced. Therefore, students gain benefits when participating in the student mobility program. However, despite the numerous benefits students gain, students encounter challenges while participating in the student mobility program.

The challenges encountered by student mobility students may not be the same. Previous studies from overseas have discovered a range of challenges that students encounter during the program, such as language barriers, academic challenges, feelings of isolation, experiences of discrimination, and practical issues related to adapting to new environments (Smith & Khawaja, 2011). Bista et al. (2018) highlight the essential role of adjustment and adaptation for student mobility in addressing language challenges, academic performance, and cultural competence. Moreover, finance, racism, language, and writing skills are barriers students face in student mobility (Howe et al., 2023). For international students, overcoming academic challenges is the most difficult. According to Liu et al. (2022), students face many academic challenges, such as pedagogical and cultural differences and inferior educational quality. Moreover, students who study in

foreign nations are likely to deal with learning conflicts such as differences in academic contexts (Wu, 2015). Among these difficulties, academic challenges are almost always found in research. However, some previous studies in Indonesia investigated student mobility in freedom of learning independent campus program only focused on perceptions, motivations, challenges, and opportunities in the program. Insani et al. (2021) researched the perception of freedom of learning independent campus program student exchange. Wijayanto et al. (2023) have discovered student motivation in participation in independent student exchange. Last, Abna et al. (2022) investigated the challenges and opportunities for student exchange of the freedom of learning independent campus program for students at universitas muslim Indonesia. The research studied in Indonesia shows that no research examines the academic context. Based on this gap, this study explores academic contexts focusing on learning experiences.

This study was expected to show that this program helps students deepen their academic knowledge and national insight. The results of the study will provide pieces of information to support the four activities offered by independent student exchange program, such as the diversity shown in learning activities, inspiration and reflection shown in difficulties and how to students cope with their learning activities, then for social contribution shown from all activities in diversity, inspiration, and reflection. Nine students from various universities are involved in qualitative research and the interview method will be used in this study to gain in-depth knowledge. Thus, this research is entitled "Student Mobility in the Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka Program: Learning Experience of English Education Study Program Students in Indonesian Universities".

1.2 The Problem of the Study

The following questions are represent the problem of this study:

- 1. What were the student's learning activities in joining student mobility in freedom of learning independent campus program?
- 2. What were the student's learning difficulties in joining the student mobility in the freedom of learning independent campus program?

3. How did students cope with the learning difficulties in joining student mobility in the freedom of learning independent campus program?

1.3 The Objectives of the Study

In relation to the problems above, the objectives of this study are to:

- 1. Find out the student's learning activities in joining student mobility in freedom of learning independent campus program.
- 2. Find out the student's learning difficulties in joining the student mobility in the freedom of learning independent campus program.
- 3. Find out how the students cope with the learning difficulties in joining student mobility in the freedom of learning independent campus program.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

This study will present beneficial contributions as follows:

- 1. Practically, this study is expected to be helpful and valuable for teachers and students to use various activities in the learning process
- 2. Theoretically, this study is expected to be useful for developing the implementation of the teaching and learning process in the classroom.

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