The Implementation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka to Early Literacy
A Program Evaluation

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ABSTRACT
MBKM or Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (Independent Learning, Independent Campus) offers a variety of programs to diversify students’ learning experiences outside traditional college learning. This study examines the implementation of the Kampus Mengajar Program in the year 2021 and reports on program evaluation from the university students’, teachers’, and university mentors’ perspectives regarding the process of the implementation, benefits, and challenges encountered, including the course conversion at the host university. Using the descriptive qualitative method, the data were gathered from an open-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and related documents. It was revealed that while all parties involved perceived the program to be generally valuable to enrich the university students’ learning outside the campus and improve the early literacy in the partner school, especially to facilitate learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, some of the features of the program need to be enhanced. On the course conversion front, due to the new implementation of the program, the conversion process encountered some discords regarding the most appropriate matches for the course convention. The implications drawn from this study are expected to contribute to policy and the improvement of the program and other similar programs under the MBKM scheme.

Keywords: Kampus mengajar program, MBKM, Program evaluation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is listed as one of the countries that has succeeded in reducing illiteracy rates. Data from the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2014 noted that the literacy rate of the Indonesian people reached 92.8% for the adult category and 98.8% for the youth category. This achievement shows that Indonesia has passed the stage of a literacy crisis. The still occurring challenges are the uneven availability of books in almost all parts of Indonesia and students’ low motivation and interest in reading. This is concerning because in the era of information technology, students are required to have the ability to read in the sense of understanding texts analytically, critically, and reflectively (Wiedarti, Laksono, & Retnaningsih, 2018). This is a challenge that must be faced by all levels of schools in Indonesia. Elementary school as the initial foundation of a student becomes a good place as an introduction and initial habituation of students in literacy.

When the COVID-19 pandemic started, the government established a distance learning policy through the Circular Letter of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 36962/MPK.A/HK/2020 which states that learning must be done online so that the spread of Corona Virus Disease (Covid-19) can be prevented (Karnawati & Mardiharto, 2020; Wardani & Ayriza, 2020). This policy is not only applied to primary and secondary schools but also to higher institutions. The Ministry of Education and Culture, through the Directorate General of Higher Education, organizes the Pioneer Campus Teaching Program to support the distance learning policy. This is related to the MBKM policy, particularly the Campus Teaching curriculum. According to the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makarim, the MBKM policy is defined as a form of giving autonomy to educational institutions, independence from complicated bureaucracy, and freedom for students to choose their desired program (Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia,
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Several elementary school activities were hampered during this pandemic. One of them is the GLS or Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (School Literacy Movement) program, which is not well implemented, decreasing students’ reading interest. Elementary school students also have difficulty getting used to reading despite the large amount of free time they have (Husna & Supriyanto, 2021; Subakti, Oktaviani, & Anggraini, 2021). Excessive levels of anxiety in dealing with the pandemic make it difficult for children to focus. As a result, children tend to choose to enjoy various forms of entertainment compared to spending time reading (Jawapos, 2020). According to the World Economic Forum (2016), students need 16 skills to have the ability to survive in the world. Some of these skills include how to apply literacy skills to everyday life, how to deal with complex problems or challenges, and how to respond to changes that occur in the surrounding environment.

In addition, the independent learning process of elementary school-aged children is vulnerable to losing effective learning opportunities. At that age, students are expected to be able to build environmental and structural thinking skills. This requires extra assistance because children at this age are easily distracted and prone to lose their concentration in learning. Therefore, teachers’ role remains very important and must complement the efforts of parents who inevitably have to adapt to increase their capacity of accompanying their children. However, during this pandemic, building a learning process often encounters obstacles due to various factors.

According to Markum, Maharbid, and Ramadhan (2022); Umar and Widodo (2022), there are at least three main obstacles found in elementary schools due to Covid-19, namely 1) the quality of learning decreases with less study time, 2) less mastery of prerequisite material that hampers the learning process, and 3) the difficulty of conditioning students at home to focus on online learning activities. In addition, the social background of students' parents is also one of the causes. Problems arise due to some of the students’ limited accessibility to the internet which ultimately results in a learning loss.

To support the realization of this goal, there are several materials presented by university students to elementary school students. The materials are divided into two parts, namely for early-grade students and high-grade students. More specifically, there are literacy and numeracy teaching materials for both grades. In the early classes, some of the materials that can be delivered include spelling, literacy, introduction, counting, and acquiring information with interview techniques. Meanwhile, literacy and numeracy teaching materials in high grades include reading data and graphs, mechanics, reporting, speech, setting goals, and instilling tolerance through games (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2021).

Vanbela, Fuad, and Marini (2018) evaluated GLS activities at the elementary school level in North Jakarta City. The achievement of the GLS program at the school was 90.01% which was in category A, which means that the students have successfully implemented the GLS program very well in accordance with the plans and expectations of the teachers. Magdalena, Rosnaningsih, Akbar, and Situmorang (2019) evaluated the implementation of the school literacy movement program in Tangerang. Most of the programs have been running as expected. The implementation of this research was carried out before the pandemic in several elementary schools in Tangerang. Teguh (2020) explained that the implementation of the Literacy Movement in schools can be classified into daily, weekly, and per semester or six-month activities. This study only describes some forms of GLS activities and their indicators of achievement but has not been applied to directly evaluate the GLS process in schools. These studies were carried out before the pandemic in big cities. In addition, the elementary school that was used as the place for this previous research already had complete facilities and infrastructure. Meanwhile, the implementation of school literacy programs during a pandemic and in elementary schools with accreditation other than A can also be monitored to determine the level of effectiveness and to find out the existing obstacles, to monitor the spread of the implementation of school literacy from an early age.

Based on the explanation above, the current program requires an evaluation process as a form of follow-up that needs to be considered. The results of the evaluation can be used by university students and other lecturers who do not take part in the activity as an illustration of the implementation of the current program. It can also be used to explain the reality of the program, whether it is in line with expectations or not. In addition, the evaluation results can also be used as consideration for policymakers.
to make follow-up programs. Therefore, how this program works from the student's point of view, the Campus Teaching participants will be explained in this article.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditionally, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write. The definition then develops into the ability to read, write, speak, and listen. Literacy learning activities are an effort to meet the needs of the challenges brought by the changing times. Literacy learning activities provide the means to face the challenges of today and the future. Therefore, literacy activities can have influence on one's mindset in reading situations and opportunities, so that one can be more careful in making decisions in the future (Robi & Abidin, 2020). In addition, the definition adopted by the Department of Education and Skills in the National Strategy for Increasing Literacy and Numeracy Between Children and Adolescents of 2011-2020 states that: literacy covers the ability to read, understand, and critically appreciate various forms of communication including verbal languages, printed texts, broadcast media, and digital media (DES, 2011) emphasis on vocabulary, syntax, world knowledge, phonology, alphabet knowledge, and basic word parsing (Dickinson & Neuman, 2007; Soffianingrum, 2021).

Another goal is to develop students' character through cultivating the school literacy ecosystem which is manifested in the School Literacy Movement so that they become lifelong learners. In addition, it aims to foster a culture of literacy in schools; increase the capacity of citizens and the school environment to be literate; make schools a fun and child-friendly learning environment so that school residents can manage knowledge; maintain the continuity of learning by presenting a variety of reading books and accommodating various reading strategies.

There are at least five factors that influence the level of students' reading literacy, namely the intensity of reading books, the availability of resources that support reading habits such as books and computers, parental education, student habits with parents at home, and student perceptions of reading (Harini, 2018). However, switching to online learning makes it difficult for students to understand the materials. Especially in literacy learning, where lower grades (1–3 Elementary School) must master reading and writing skills as a determinant of success in learning at the next level.

The low literacy level of our nation results in weak interest and the ability to read and write. This, in turn, causes our Human Resources to be uncompetitive due to a lack of mastery of science and technology. Reading and writing have not become a necessity of life and have not become a national culture. The number of libraries and books is far from sufficient for the demands of reading as the basis of education. The problems of reading culture have not been considered critical problems, while many other problems are considered more urgent. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture through Ministerial Regulation number 23 of 2013, launched the GLS or Gerakan Literasi Sekolah (School Literacy Movement) to foster higher values in children through language.

According to Beers, Beers, and Smith (2009), good practices in the school literacy movement emphasize the following principles.

1) The development of literacy proceeds according to a predictable stage of development. Stages of children's development in learning to read and write intersect between the stages of development. Understanding the stages of students' literacy development can help schools to choose the right literacy habits and learning strategies according to their developmental needs.

2) A good literacy program is balanced. Schools that implement a balanced literacy program realize that each student has different needs. Therefore, the reading strategies and types of texts need to be varied and adapted to the level of education. A meaningful literacy program can be carried out by utilizing varied reading materials, such as literary works for children and adolescents.

3) The literacy program is integrated with the curriculum. Literacy habitation and learning in schools is the responsibility of all teachers in all subjects because learning any subject requires language, especially reading and writing. Thus, teacher professional development in terms of literacy needs to be given to teachers of all subjects.

4) Reading and writing activities are carried out at any time. For example, 'writing a letter to the president' or 'reading to mom' are examples of meaningful literacy activities.

5) Literacy activities develop oral culture. A strong literacy-based class is expected to bring up various oral activities in the form of discussions about books during class learning. This discussion activity also needs to open up the possibility of differing opinions, which can hone critical thinking skills. Students need to learn to express their feelings and opinions, listen to each other, and respect different views.

6) Literacy activities need to develop an awareness of diversity. School residents need to respect differences through literacy activities at school. Reading materials for students need to reflect the richness of Indonesian culture so that they gain multicultural knowledge and experience.

Adapting from Teguh’s opinion (2020), the following are some activities of the school literacy movement that can be practiced for elementary school-age children, whether daily, weekly, monthly, or even yearly activities.
1) Reading books on mannerisms for 10-15 minutes before class starts in each class.
2) Creating a forum to discuss, review, and dissect reading material.
3) Providing a 'literacy corner' in the classroom, library, park, or any convenient location in the school environment.
4) Scheduling literacy activities for each class (reading, writing, storytelling, plays, drawing, crafts, etc.).
5) Creating a wall magazine in the school area as a medium of appreciation for children's work.
6) Publishing pictures/stories of literacy activities on various social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter, etc.).
7) Holding quizzes or competitions of fun literacy activities (reading competitions, storytelling, poetry, plays, dancing, etc.).
8) Visiting literacy centers (regional libraries, Gramedia, exhibitions, museums, traditional houses, famous figures, tourism offices, etc.).
9) Encouraging and assisting children to create works (stories, poetry, and pictures) to be published in the mass media.
10) Rewarding students who get the best marks in literacy (reading awards and writing awards).

3. METHOD

Broadly speaking, this research uses a qualitative descriptive method. The qualitative method utilizes the means of interpretation by presenting it in the form of a description. Specifically, the method used to analyze the data in this study is a goal-oriented evaluation model. The object of observation in this model is the goal of the program set before the program starts (Jaedun, 2010). This evaluation is expected to be carried out continuously to evaluate how far these objectives have been achieved in the program implementation process.

Meanwhile, the main objectives of the independent campus program include 1) providing opportunities for students to learn and develop themselves through activities outside of class lectures; 2) assisting schools in providing optimal educational services to all students at the elementary level in the limited and critical conditions during the pandemic; and 3) providing optimal learning opportunities to all elementary school students in the limited and critical conditions during the pandemic. Moreover, the objectives of literacy activities in schools include developing a literacy culture, improving the literacy of citizens and the school environment, and making schools a fun and child-friendly learning partner so that students can process knowledge and maintain learning sustainability by presenting a variety of reading books and accommodating various reading strategies (Ramadhani, 2018).

The data in this study are the results of questionnaires given to university students. The population of this study are students of the Faculty of Language and Literature Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia who come from various study programs that have participated in the Campus Teaching program in 2021. A total of 16 students represented other students who participated in the Campus Teaching program. The number of respondents is one of the limitations of the study, which may lead to a weak generalization of the results or research findings.

The instrument used in this study was adapted from the needs or main objectives of this study, namely, to determine literacy activities in elementary schools and their benefits. The instruments of this study are based on the needs of the researchers to obtain complete and structured information from the respondents. The questions were developed independently by the researchers to obtain maximum data. The instruments were distributed to students in the form of an open-ended questionnaire, semi-structured interview, and some related documents. The following is an outline of the questionnaire using the Google Form technology.

The data processing of the questionnaires, interviews, and document studies was carried out in a qualitative descriptive manner accompanied by necessary quantitative evidence. Miles and Huberman’s (1992) technique with three stages was used as a data analysis technique. First is the data reduction stage. The data reduction stage is the stage of reducing or simplifying the data so that it can fit the needs and be easy to obtain. The data from questionnaires, interviews, and document studies are grouped to obtain representative data. This data contains information that is precise, clear, and solves the problem. The second is the data presentation stage.

Table 1. Outline of questionnaire

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<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Main Component</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The implementation of literacy activities of the Campus Teaching programs in 2021 from university students’ point of view</td>
<td>Stage 1 of implementation: The habituation of fun reading activities in the school ecosystem.</td>
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<td>Stage 2 of implementation: The development of reading interest to improve literacy skills.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stage 3 of implementation: The implementation of literacy-based learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>The benefits of literacy activities of Campus Teaching programs in 2021 from university students’ point of view</td>
<td>Direct benefit</td>
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<td>Indirect benefit</td>
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The various forms of data are then presented in the form of graphs, charts, pictograms, and other forms for the sake of legibility and easy access. The data presenting process is needed in qualitative data analysis to present or display data neatly, systematically, patterned, and organized. The last or third stage is drawing conclusions. The data that has been compiled and grouped is then presented with a technique or pattern so that conclusions can be drawn. This conclusion becomes information that can be presented in the research report and placed in the closing section.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Literacy Program in Elementary Schools

The implementation of the Campus Teaching program is prioritized for elementary schools with accreditation C (Wahyuningsih, 2021). Suffice it to say that the university students are deployed to help schools that are experiencing quite complex obstacles. These schools are generally located in rural areas. In fact, teaching and learning activities during the pandemic are considered difficult by teachers and students. The government has the policy to conduct online learning during the pandemic. However, these schools choose to conduct learning using blended learning. They schedule students to keep coming to school and occasionally do online activities due to the students’ limited availability of resources. Not all students and their parents/guardians have smartphones that can be used for online learning.

The following is a description of the research data obtained through a semi-open questionnaire given to university students who have attended the Campus Teaching program of 2021. 16 participants filled out the questionnaire. Based on their experience, the following is the percentage of the implementation of literacy activities in the elementary schools they are deployed to.

The results of the implementation of literacy activities in elementary schools show that 75% of the university students carry out literacy activities in elementary schools, and 25% admit that their elementary schools do not have literacy activities. In this question, the literacy activity is reading and writing. This data shows that a small percentage of elementary schools still have not or do not carry out literacy activities. Some of the influencing factors or activities will be described in the following questions. Furthermore, the following is the percentage of early literacy activities in the form of reading habits for 10 to 15 minutes before class activities begin.

In addition, the implementation of 10-15 minutes reading habits shows that 56.3% of university students stated that their schools carry out a reading habit for 10 to 15 minutes before learning activities begin. Meanwhile, 43.8% admit that there are no reading activities before the start of learning activities. The reading materials used in this habituation activity are free. The following will describe the means of literacy activities provided by the schools.

Regarding the facilities and infrastructure for school literacy activities, all the elementary schools, or 100% of the respondents, have reported school facilities in the form of libraries. A total of 37.5% of participants have a reading corner or reading area at school, 12.5% of participants have a literacy tutor, and 6.3% have a wall magazine, reading cards, and literacy modules for lower grades. Lastly, 6.3% have the provision of printed visual, digital, and multimodal texts that can be accessed by all school residents. This means that all of these elementary schools do not have adequate infrastructure in the field of technology. Facilities and infrastructure support the school literacy movement. These facilities make it easier for students and teachers to carry out fun literacy activities. In addition, they can also increase students' interest in carrying out literacy activities if the materials are provided in full by the school.

4.2. Literacy Stages in Elementary Schools

Based on the research results, literacy is more than just reading and writing. Literacy also includes thinking skills using knowledge sources in the form of print, visual, digital, and audio. In addition, based on the Directorate General of Primary and Higher Education of the Ministry of Education and Culture (2016), the School Literacy Movement has several stages. The following will describe these stages, along with a description of the implementation of school literacy that has been carried out in several elementary schools during the Campus Teaching program.

Stage 1: Habituation of fun reading activities in the school ecosystem. This habituation aims to foster interest in reading and reading activities within the school community. The growth of reading interest is fundamental for the development of students' literacy skills.

Based on the results, there are literacy activities carried out in this stage in the form of reading activities for 10 to 15 minutes before class activities begin. The reading material used is free. Students can choose independently according to their respective interests. However, some elementary schools have yet to implement this kind of literacy habituation due to various factors. One of them is the online school system. When the entire learning process is carried out online, the teacher automatically finds it difficult to monitor student activities in reading before class begins.

Stage 2: The development of reading interest to improve literacy skills. Literacy activities at this stage aim to develop the ability to understand reading and relate it to personal experience, think critically, and
cultivate creative communication skills such as responding to enrichment readings.

The results of the school literacy activity development show that 50% of the university students have carried out reading-aloud activities. Books are read aloud so that students can listen to the reading better. Then, 75% of the university students provide guidance or assistance in literacy activities in the form of reading fiction and non-fiction materials. A total of 31.3% play short films to develop students' literacy interests. A total of 6.3% carried out book and film reviews. The most carried-out literacy activity, or as many as 75%, is drawing or discussion activities after reading activities, both independently and in groups. In addition, there are also literacy activities that are carried out independently by students, for example, reading books in the school library.

Stage 3: The implementation of literacy-based learning. Literacy activities at this stage aim to develop the ability to understand texts and relate them to personal experiences, think critically, and process communication skills creatively, such as responding to texts of enrichment reading books and textbooks. In this stage, there is a requirement that is academic (related to subjects). The reading activity at this stage is to support the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum (and the Independent Curriculum launched by the government), which requires students to read non-textual textbooks such as books on general knowledge, hobbies, or special interests.

The activities in this stage show that literacy activities have been implemented or integrated into the learning process. Some of the activities are as follows. First, 62.5% of respondents stated that they had carried out book reading activities, either before or during the learning process. Reading activities can be done aloud or silently. This activity can also be done independently or guided. They also carried out discussions of the reading materials. Second, 50% of respondents stated that they had carried out literacy activities in learning that was adjusted to academic requirements. This is adjusted to the curriculum run in the schools. Third, 31.3% of respondents stated that they had implemented various strategies for understanding texts in all subjects, such as using graphic organizers. This percentage is still relatively low compared to other activities. Fourth, 62.5% of respondents stated that they had used the physical, social, affective, and academic environment accompanied by a variety of readings (print, visual, auditory, digital) that were rich in literacy outside of textbooks to enrich knowledge in subjects. This is also done to broaden the students' insight and not make them fixated on textbooks.

4.3. The Benefits of School Literacy Activities

The following are the benefits of literacy activities from the opinions of the university students who served as teachers during the Independent Campus program. There are short-term benefits and long-term benefits. Some of the short-term benefits include 1) students will be more fluent in reading; 2) Students will gain insight, knowledge, and develop their imagination; 3) Students are able to understand a text or speech well and are not easily eaten by hoaxes; 4) Training students' reasoning and thinking power; 5) Training students' focus; 6) Teachers become more creative and innovative in preparing learning activities; 7) Students and teachers can receive various information from varied sources; 8) Creating a fun learning environment; 9) Influencing students' interest in learning to make it easier for teachers to teach; 10) Cultivating good habits and higher literacy; 11) Students will be more interested in reading books and have a greater curiosity.

The long-term benefits include 1) better communication; 2) Increasing students’ vocabulary; 3) Understand the context of conversations more quickly; 4) Students can express opinions easily; 4) If it has become a hobby, then this literacy activity will be a source of knowledge to be applied in everyday life; 5) Improving the literacy value of the nation; 6) Students can take lessons from books and apply them to their daily lives.

5. CONCLUSION

The results showed that the Campus Teaching program as part of the MBKM organized by the government was in accordance with the program's objectives, namely to assist the process of implementing learning at the elementary school level in Indonesia. In terms of school literacy activities, several literacy programs were hampered because the learning process was carried out online. However, some literacy activities are also carried out face-to-face in schools. University students as teachers maximize literacy and numeracy activities when students come to school. Meanwhile, when students study from home or online, they are guided to do digital literacy or trained to be more proficient in mastering digital literacy. Based on this activity, it can also be seen that literacy activities in elementary schools have various benefits, both short-term and long-term benefits.

As the next step, in-depth research is still needed on literacy activities in post-pandemic elementary schools. Future research is expected to describe the ability of students in literacy. This is in terms of teaching and learning activities that have begun to be carried out in full face-to-face. This is intended to determine the level of student literacy after a long time of studying online, as well as its impact on students, especially in literacy activities. In addition, the Campus Teaching program that
is still running can also be continuously evaluated to monitor the progress of programs that have been, are currently, and will be running.

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