



Link and Match Education in Indonesia: Implementation of New Policies? Effectiveness of Education Policy Implementation in Indonesia

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Abstract. Undergraduate unemployment in Indonesia is increasing in number every year. Seeing this phenomenon, the Indonesian Ministry of Education immediately updated the education policy and implemented it. The current new policy seeks to find links and matches for educational curricula with the needs of the world of work. There are several factors that can affect the degree of effectiveness of policy implementation. This study aims to look at several factors that arise from previous studies in their influence on the effectiveness of policy implementation. This research is exploratory quantitative research with the population being the academic community of the Faculty of Economics, Semarang State University who participated in the new policy program. The sample numbered 410 lecturers and students who were counted with Slovin. The sampling technique is random sampling and is taken with a questionnaire. The questionnaire was analyzed with the Structural Equation Model using Warp PLS. The competence of graduates has a weak effect on the effectiveness of policy implementation. When viewed based on the year of its implementation, this policy has only produced one graduating batch. So, it does not seem to be effective when viewed from the competence of university graduates. This study resulted in a linkage between free variables. Institutional support has a weak effect on the competence of graduates. This indicates that there is still weak support from universities and the weak mentality of today's students.

Keywords: Effectiveness · Education Policy · Curriculum · Graduate Competencies · Institutional Support

1 Introduction

Indonesia has a serious problem that continues to grow until now, namely unemployment. This condition is exacerbated by the youth unemployment rate in Indonesia which reached 54% in 2020 according to the Indonesian Central Statistics Agency. One of the causes of the high rate of young unemployment is due to the absence of conformity between the skills that job seekers have and the skills needed by job makers [1]. Education in Indonesia, especially universities, is considered not all to be able to produce job-ready graduates. More graduate students with abilities and skills do not meet the

demands in the world of work. The rapid development of science and technology today has brought changes in various aspects of life. Jobs and the way we work have changed, many jobs are gone, but many new types of jobs are emerging. Economic, social, and cultural changes are occurring at a very high rate. Due to the many changes, universities must quickly respond appropriately.

In response to this, the Ministry of Education responded with changes and adjustments to the curriculum to universities to be in line with the rapid progress of the times. The policy issued by the Ministry of Education is currently the “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” program. This program is the main issue currently in changing education in Indonesia. The change occurred because in the past the campus was a place of learning for students and lecturers face-to-face with the concept of learning as the main source is lecturers, as well as the application of a learning system with credits and there is an obligation for students to study in the classroom. Thus, students become less independent in solving problem solving.

Curriculum is an important part of educational success. The curriculum is also considered an indicator of quality management in universities [2]. For universities, the quality management system essentially has a core in continuous improvement to strengthen and develop the quality of graduates so that they can be absorbed by agencies and the labor market. Students need more learning to improve the science, degrees, skills, experience, beliefs, and noble behaviors that can compete in the global market. Overall, it is needed to prepare to enter the world of work and or prepare to create jobs.

Nowadays, the quality of college graduates is not always acceptable and can work as expected by the world of work [3]. According to Akhmetshin [4], the competencies of graduates produced by universities have close relevance to the curriculum used. The curriculum plays an important role in shaping the quality of graduates. In developed countries, the curriculum is changed within a year to improve the quality of graduates and keep up with the demand in the market [4]. Curriculum changes in universities are routine activities that must be carried out in response to technological developments, community needs, and the needs of stakeholders. The competence of graduates in universities can be changed and pursued properly through the educational curriculum [5]–[7].

Indonesia has problems with university graduates due to an undeveloped curriculum [8]. The curriculum used only hones students’ hard skills and forgets soft skills. So that university graduates in Indonesia only rely on the academic scores they have without additional competence. Lecturers still use old learning methods so that students have difficulty in developing themselves [9, 10]. Celarta & Esponilla [11] stated that Filipina had made a massive curriculum change in 2017 by implementing a business-based curriculum. Based on the phenomena listed and previous research, this study suspects the influence of curriculum changes on the competence of university graduates in Indonesia.

Higher education is an institution that determines the success of learning in it, including curriculum creation. Therefore, universities are required to actively participate in the new policies implemented [12]. According to Krishnapatria [13], the policy program will be an opportunity if the institution provides full support for the academic community to be actively involved in the program. Institutions that are ready to make curriculum adjustments, have succeeded in producing graduates with the expertise of today’s business world [14]. The curriculum is a reference and integrity for universities, so its changes

require full support from the bureaucracy. Therefore, this study suspects the influence of institutional support on curriculum adjustments and graduate competencies.

The estuary of a policy is the implementation of the policy itself [15]. The policy implementation process is the most important final determinant of overall policymaking, including in the field of education. Although the resulting policy formulation and formulation are very good, it becomes meaningless if the formulation is not continued with the implementation process. The value of the benefits of a new policy can be felt when it has been implemented and can be evaluated for its sustainability. Even so, the implementation of this policy is inseparable from several problems faced by the academic community of universities in Indonesia. In the initial observation, there were several obstacles in the implementation of this new policy such as curriculum design and adjustment problems, there were still few universities that made curriculum adjustments and credit replacements in accordance with the policy direction.

The implementation of a policy requires the encouragement of the indicators needed in the success of a policy [16]. If drawn to the “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” policy, the main purpose of this policy is to produce graduates with the skills and competencies needed by the business world and industry. Curriculum reform has a major impact on the implementation of education policy [17]. The curriculum reforms carried out even increased the competence of college graduates. Curriculum reform for policy effectiveness requires full institutional support. Agencies are a major milestone in the effectiveness of policy implementation. This study suspects the influence of curriculum adjustments, graduate competencies, and institutional support on the effectiveness of policy implementation.

The “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” policy is still ongoing today with all programs held. This study aims to see how curriculum adjustments, graduate competencies, and institutional support are interconnected and how they affect the effectiveness of the implementation of education policies in Indonesia.

2 Research Method

This study used an exploratory quantitative approach. The goal is to deepen the existing indicators and analyze the variables that are likely to occur. The population in this study is the entire academic community of the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Negeri Semarang which amounts to 1350 including lecturers and students. Meanwhile, the sample in this study was the academic community of the Faculty of Economics, Universitas Negeri Semarang who participated in the “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” program, namely as many as 410 academic communities including lecturers and students.

The data collection technique in this study used a questionnaire to retrieve primary data. The analysis of the collected primary data will be analyzed using SEM (*Structural Equation Model*) because SEM can identify the dimensions of the construct and at the same time is able to measure the influence or degree of relationship between factors that have been identified dimensions. This research analysis tool uses WarpPLS as a development of the PLS analysis tool.

3 Result and Discussion

The results of the data calculation see that the curriculum adjustment has a p-value of < 0.001 with a coefficient value of 0.64. Based on these figures, curriculum adjustments have a positive and significant influence on the competence of graduates. The curriculum in universities is required to be flexible to be able to keep up with the needs of the times. [18] stated that the quality of college learning will be seen from the quality of the graduates produced. Many previous studies have stated that curriculum changes have a significant influence on the competence of college graduates. The significance of this change is in a better direction. The suitability of college graduates to the needs of companies is getting higher so that unemployment can be resolved properly [19]–[21].

Curriculum changes are difficult to make because they are related to bureaucracy and the ability of lecturers to keep up with changes. Indonesia experienced this difficulty due to the limited ability of lecturers. The learning process still follows the old learning process because the ratio of senior lecturers is more than that of young lecturers. Curriculum adjustments made by universities in Indonesia are the willingness to add policy programs to learning and reposition them from several courses approved by the institution. With the adjustment of the curriculum, it can help students take part in expertise programs outside of higher education and can improve the competence of graduates.

3.1 Institutional Support to Curriculum Adjustment

The results of the data calculation see that the institution's support for curriculum adjustment has a p-value of < 0.001 with a coefficient value of 0.44. Based on these figures, institutional support has a positive and significant influence on curriculum adjustments. The institutions in this study are universities in Indonesia. The existence of curriculum adjustments requires support from various parties in the learning component, especially institutional support. So that all decisions will be embraced by the unit, including the curriculum applied. Therefore, institutional support related to government policies is needed to make curriculum adjustments. Curriculum adjustments in South Africa were massively made due to the Covid-19 pandemic that had hit [22]. Curriculum adjustments are made because learning has switched to online, so it requires the right curriculum so that learning takes place on target. Institutional Support to Graduate Competencies.

The results of the data calculation see that the institution's support for graduate competencies has a p-value of 0.032 with a coefficient value of 0.18. Based on these figures, institutional support has a positive influence on curriculum adjustments. The competence of college graduates fully occurs due to institutional support by providing various facilities to improve student competence [23]. However, it is not only institutional support that is a factor in the high competence of graduates. In fact, according to Alvarado [23], the campus climate has more significance in the influence on the competence of graduates.

Even so, this research contradicts Borah et al. [24] who state that institutional support has a significant effect on the competence of graduates. This is because the establishment of cooperation between universities and the business world and industry can only take place officially between institutions. In studies conducted in Japan and Australia, it shows that institutions have a great influence on the competence of college graduates

[25]. The support is in the form of a strategy to increase the quantity of graduates received in companies, especially large companies. This study looked at the weak relationship between institutional support and graduate competence. Data figures in the study may indicate that institutional support is not the main indicator for influencing the competence of graduates. The first thing that must be changed to students in Indonesia is to improve the mindset of students and the way of teaching in all universities in Indonesia. These two components are important, because if the two problems have not been overcome, then the full support from universities will not be optimal in their use.

3.2 Curriculum Adjustment to the Effectiveness of Policy Implementation

The results of the data calculation see that the curriculum adjustment to the effectiveness of policy implementation has a p-value of < 0.001 with a coefficient value of 0.63. Based on these figures, curriculum adjustments have a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of policy implementation. Education policy in Indonesia currently focuses on increasing the competence of graduates based on the needs of the business world and industry to reduce the increasing unemployment of undergraduates. The implementation of a similar policy turned out to be long-standing in other countries such as in Colombia. The era of digitalization is making massive changes to the industrial world. Changes in the industrial world began to stimulate changes in education in Colombia [26]. The main important thing that must be done for the effectiveness of policy implementation is to make curriculum adjustments so that there is no overlap with the programs provided by the government for students.

3.3 Graduate Competencies to the Effectiveness of Policy Implementation

The results of the data calculation see that the competence of graduates on the effectiveness of policy implementation has a p-value of 0.031 with a coefficient value of 0.18. Based on this figure, the competence of graduates has a positive influence on the effectiveness of policy implementation. The influence of graduate competence in this study is weak so that it is possible that graduate competence has no influence on the effectiveness of policy implementation.

Increasing the competence of graduates and decreasing the undergraduate unemployment rate are the main indicators of the effectiveness of the implementation of the “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” policy. Graduates with high competence hold a strong influence on the effectiveness of the implementation of competency-based education policies in Malaysia and Zambia [20, 27]. Even in Indonesia, the 2013 curriculum, which was implemented first, produced graduates with better quality than previous curriculum graduates with various weaknesses that must be developed again [28]. If you look deeper, this new policy of the Indonesian Ministry of Education is a further work of implementing the existing 2013 curriculum.

Indications of the weak influence of graduate competence on the effectiveness of policy implementation because this policy has only been running for two years. So, this policy has only produced one batch of graduates. Seeing this phenomenon, the effectiveness of the implementation of this new policy has not been really seen. In addition, at the beginning of the implementation of this policy, not many private agencies

were actively involved. So that the improvement of the quality of student competencies is only given by the Ministry of Education. Another problem is that the implementation of this new policy is accompanied by the arrival of the pandemic in Indonesia. So that the initial implementation does not run optimally.

3.4 Institutional Support to the Policy Implementation Effectiveness

The results of the data calculation see that institutional support for the effectiveness of policy implementation has a p-value of <0.001 with a coefficient value of 0.26. Based on these figures, institutional support has a positive and significant influence on the effectiveness of policy implementation. Thus, H6 in this study, accepted. Institutional support has a strong influence on the effectiveness of policy implementation. It is like the Hoa et al. [29] with the implementation of student-based curriculum policies in Vietnam. The implementation of policies in Vietnamese universities runs effectively and produces students with critical thinking because of the very high support of the college.

The active participation of the academic community in Indonesia towards the policies and programs of the Ministry of Education requires full support from the institution. This is related to the permit that must be issued by the university to the academic community who follow the program from the policy. Institutional support is a major factor in the effectiveness of policy implementation [30]. Although the academic community of universities has the freedom to develop themselves, administratively, they are individuals who are activities in one institution. To carry out other activities outside the university, the academic community must have supported administration so that it does not violate the rules administratively.

4 Conclusion

All factors in the effectiveness of the implementation of new education policies in Indonesia have an influence, but the competence of graduates has a weak influence. This is because the implementation of the “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” policy has only been carried out for two years. And the initial implementation of this policy was accompanied by the arrival of a pandemic that changed the paradigm of education and limited all human activities. So that the graduates produced are only one batch and the implementation of policies is not optimal. The competence of graduates cannot currently be an indicator of policy effectiveness so that it can be ignored first. In addition, there are relationships between independent variables. Curriculum adjustments have a strong influence on the competence of graduates. In the success of this policy, curriculum adjustments must be prioritized because it affects how learning takes place which can affect the improvement of graduate competencies. Institutional support has a weak influence on the competence of graduates, there are other indicators besides curriculum adjustments, namely the campus climate, growth mindset for students, and changing teaching patterns from lecturers.

The suggestion from the results of this study for the effectiveness of the implementation of education policies in Indonesia to produce graduates with high competence and in accordance with the business world and industry is to make a growth mindset

towards students and slowly change the teaching patterns of lecturers before making curriculum adjustments. A curriculum that is constantly being changed will not have maximum results if the two root causes of the problem have not been resolved.

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