

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka policy changes the paradigm of a rigid content-based curriculum approach to an adaptive and flexible learning outcome-based curriculum to prepare students to become adults who can be independent. The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy, collaboration, and cooperation with partners or other parties related to the scientific field of the study program and participation in supporting the desired learning outcomes. According to Ampera (2022). In facing the challenges of the ever-evolving era, curriculum improvement is a necessity that cannot be ignored. Therefore, the implementation of an independent curriculum in the English language education study program is an important step to ensure the relevance and quality of education held.

The independent curriculum is a flexible curriculum based on character and competence as well as creativity-based set by the government starting in 2022/2023, Curriculum changes at the university level which are implemented as Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) are a policy of the Minister of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud). This MBKM curriculum change policy is an effort to encourage students to master various sciences that are useful for entering the world of work or industry in the 21st century and Society 5.0 Marisa (2021). According to Nafiah et.,al (2023) The independent learning curriculum is one of the steps chosen by the government as a recovery of education in Indonesia after the COVID-19 pandemic a few years ago. As a learning development and innovation, the Merdeka Belajar curriculum offers learning

concepts, namely freedom of thinking, freedom of innovation, and freedom of independent and creative learning.

The main characteristics of the independent learning curriculum that support learning recovery are: a) Project-based learning for the development of soft skills and character according to the profile of Pancasila students. b) Focus on essential materials so that there is sufficient time for in-depth learning of basic competencies such as literacy and numeracy. c) Flexibility for teachers to conduct differentiated learning according to the ability of students and adapt to local contexts and content Nafiah at., al (2023).

Implementation of the Merdeka curriculum at Artha Wacana Christian University in 2020, especially in the English education study program which implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in the same year. The learning curriculum model is used in the English education study program, where students are allowed to choose courses according to their interests and talents to take internship opportunities according to their talents and interests for 1 semester off campus.

Based on my personal experience from the implementation of the independent curriculum at the Artha Wacana Christian University of Kupang, the Teaching Faculty of Education, English Language Education Study Program. There are several obstacles such as among others, no experience with independent learning students have no experience with independent learning so students have difficulty interacting with this which has been applied, for example, such as field practice without theory without theory first. Students are asked to choose courses that suit their interests or talents, but these students have abilities in the fields they are interested in, but they may not have abilities in other fields each field must have a dependency, so students cannot master

one field. But must have a small ability in other fields. As for other obstacles or problems that researchers encountered, namely after implementing the independent curriculum, learning several subjects in the upper semester had to be converted to the lower semester.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher intends to conduct a research title:
**THE IMPACTS OF IMPLEMENTING AN INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM
(MERDEKA BELAJAR) FOR STUDENTS ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY
PROGRAM.**

1.2 Research Problem

Based on the background of the study, the researcher identified some problems as follows:

“What are the impact of an Independent curriculum (Merdeka Belajar) towards Student Learning Strategies at the English Education Study Program Artha Wacana Christian University Kupang?”

1.3 Aim(s) of Study

The study was to determine the impacts of the Independent curriculum (Merdeka Belajar) towards Student Learning Strategies at the English Education Study Program at Artha Wacana Christian University Kupang.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research is expected to provide significant contributions in both impact and implementation.

1.4.1 Implication

This research is expected to support and enrich the theory of the impact of the implementation of the independent learning curriculum for higher education by

Usanto S (2022), that the implementation of the independent curriculum has an impact on lecturers and students. Lecturers are responsible for modernizing traditional learning through innovative technology-based learning methods. This aims to help students understand that education and technology must be able to create synergies with technology and flexible learning.

1.4.2 Application

1. For students

- a. Increase the active role of students in learning activities.
- b. Increase student enthusiasm for learning in learning.
- c. Improve the quality of student learning outcomes.
- d. Improve the scientific work process of students.

2. For Lecturers

- a. As information material for lecturers in implementing the right learning curriculum and can improve learning outcomes.
- b. Help overcome problems faced by students in learning, especially in English subjects.
- c. Assist lecturers in creating interesting learning activities

3. For Universities

The results of this research can make a good contribution to the University to improve and improve learning activities that can further improve the quality of the University.

4. For Researchers

Helping researchers to add insight, and knowledge, and develop their abilities to become professional teachers.