

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The curriculum is an important element in implementing the learning process at all levels of education (Telaumbanua, 2024). The Merdeka Curriculum Program is an important topic in the development of education in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the benefits and challenges in implementing this program are still on the way. According to Aji,(2023).This approach is believed to foster a more engaging and adaptive learning environment, where students can develop the necessary competencies to thrive in the ever-changing modern world. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of fostering 4C skills (critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication) to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century. (Syofyan & Oknaryana, 2021).

MBKM is one of the programs launched by the Kementrian Pendidikan Kebudayaan Research and Technology to improve the quality and character of human resources. Good students will have different experiences, eventually enriching the network with insights and advantages of their characters and improving hard and soft skills. The development of MBKM is closely linked to the current era's development. The concept of "Merdeka Belajar" (or "Independent Learning") has been a topic of growing interest within the Indonesian educational landscape. Merdeka Belajar, or "Freedom to Learn," is a curriculum initiative introduced by the Indonesian government with the aim of empowering students and educators to take a more active role in the learning process (Novia et al., 2023) (Januarita et al., 2023). This research paper explores

the perceptions of students regarding the implementation of this innovative curriculum.

Implementation is an action from a plan that has been prepared carefully and in detail. Implementation is carried out when the planning is complete, which leads to activities, actions, actions or mechanisms in a planned system. Its implementation cannot stand alone but is related to other things, Usman (2002:70). Such as resources, facilities and infrastructure and funding. In relation to the implementation of MBKM in higher education, it is certainly influenced by the curriculum, classes, lecturers and funding institutions which are not cheap. The development of MBKM is closely linked to the current era's development. University graduates must be highly skilled to adapt to the social, culture.

Internship is one of the interesting activities in the MBKM policy. Internship provides students with structured professional work experience with the assistance of experts in their fields (Fatah, 2021). Internship is very good for students because during the internship process, students will be accompanied by field supervisors who will train and guide students so that they can learn work culture and interact with their new environment. Internship will also teach students new skills as well as teach them how to work (Liunir, 2012). Through internship activities, students will also realize that what they have learned so far on campus helps prepare for their future. The internship program not only provides benefits for students who do internships, but also provides benefits for partners who provide opportunities for students (Fatah, 2021)

It can be concluded that the Merdeka Curriculum and the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program are transformative efforts in Indonesian

education, with the curriculum as a crucial element that encourages the development of skills to face challenges in education, while MBKM aims to improve the quality of human resources through learning experiences that are diverse and relevant to the needs of the modern era, and includes the concept of Merdeka Belajar, requiring careful planning, capable resources, and collaboration from various parties, facing challenges, it is hoped that it can achieve adaptive and successful success For this reason, researchers are interested in research with the entitled **”STUDENTS PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IN MERDEKA BELAJAR KAMPUS MERDEKA (MBKM) AT ENGLISH EDUCATION STUDY PROGRAM AT ARTHA WACANA CRISTIAN UNIVERSITY 2024/2025”**. Therefore, it is hope that this research can contribute to the development of independence in the 5th semester English language education study program at Artha Wacana Christian University.

1.2 Research problem

To clarify the problems of fifth semester English Education Study Program students regarding student perceptions of the implementation internship program, as described above with the following problem formulation: "What are students' perceptions on the implementation of internship program of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) at fifth semester English Study Program at Artha Wacana Cristian University 2024/2025?"

1.3 Aims of study

To find out student's perceptions of the implementation of the fifth semester independent learning campus (MBKM) English study program at Artha Wacana Cristian University?

1.4 Significance of study

The significances of the study are as follows:

1.4.1 Implication

The result of this study is expected to support the theory about students' perceptions on the implementation of the MBKM program by proposed (Shofiyuddin et al., 2023)

1.4.2 Application

It is hope that the research results that have been described can contribute both theoretically and practically, as follows:

1. Theoretically, the researcher hopes that this research can be useful for the world of education, especially students' perception on the implementation of independent learning by participating in MBKM activities which is a source of learning and development activities or increasing one's competence.
2. Practically, researchers hope that this research can be useful for:
 - a. 5th semester student english education study program

This research to help students find out and understand the perceptions on the implementation of English Department students through the MBKM program.

- b. Other researchers

This research to be useful for researchers to conduct further research on this matter. Apart from that, researchers can also evaluate, revise, reconstruct, or modify this research and conduct similar research in different forms.