



Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) in Islamic higher education institutions: Ontological, epistemological and axiological reviews

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Abstract: This study examines the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) from ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives. The research aims to understand the unique characteristics of MBKM and its impact on Islamic higher education in Indonesia. Employing a qualitative literature review methodology, data were collected through observations and documentation related to MBKM policies and their implementation in PTKI. Data analysis involved data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Findings indicate that ontologically, MBKM differs from conventional curricula through its flexibility, direct student engagement with real-world contexts, and emphasis on contextual learning. These factors set MBKM apart from more static and rigidly structured curricula. Epistemologically, MBKM is grounded in an educational philosophy that emphasizes academic freedom, innovation, and student involvement in practical activities. This includes curriculum adjustments based on industrial and societal needs, ensuring high relevance and quality of education. Axiologically, MBKM significantly enhances students' practical skills and soft skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaboration. The program's relevance is evident in bridging the gap between theory and practice, and between education and industry. Benefits of MBKM include improved graduate employability, expanded professional networks, and tangible contributions to national development through humanitarian and entrepreneurial projects. These advantages highlight MBKM as an adaptive and responsive educational model to global changes. The study concludes that MBKM has significant potential to enhance the quality of higher education at PTKI and contribute substantially to societal development.

Keywords: Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka; PTKI; ontological; epistemological; axiological.

A. Introduction

Dynamic developments require society to always be ready and able to respond to local, national, and global changes (Yanuarsari et al., 2021). Continuous social, technological, economic, and political transformation demands adaptability and readiness to face new challenges (Fricticarani et al., 2023). In this context, education plays a crucial role because it is one of the main instruments for preparing individuals to face an ever-changing world (Sujana, 2019).

Education aims to equip individuals with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for success in real life (Gaol, 2024). The educational process aims to transfer information and develop critical thinking skills, creativity, and adaptability to face future challenges (Pare & Sihotang, 2023). Through education, individuals are empowered to become agents of change who can contribute positively to building a better society.

More than that, educational institutions, including Islamic universities, are not only required to face changing times but also must be non-resistant and adaptive-innovative to the needs and demands of the times (Fitri, 2013). Educational institutions must be able to predict changes in the future so that the educational process can prepare graduates who are ready in terms of knowledge, attitudes, and skills according to their future era (Wibawa et al., 2022).

In Indonesia's education context, the newest curriculum implemented to respond to and anticipate social change on a global scale without recognizing geographical boundaries is Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). MBKM was designed with the hope of creating an academic climate that is adaptive (Kodrat 2021), flexible, accessible to all individuals, full of innovation, encourages creativity, expands and strengthens student networks, improves students' social abilities, enriches knowledge, fulfills students' scientific thirst, and places students as the center of attention (Mathar et al., 2021).

Several exclusive special programs at MBKM include opportunities for students to expand their networks significantly nationally and internationally. MBKM supports and enables students to study at the location of their choice for one semester or more, with recognition and equalization of academic credits equivalent to learning at their home campus (Junaidi et al., 2020). Examples include one semester of study in the Philippines or one semester in Malaysia, which will be recognized and equivalent to one semester at the student's home campus.

The flexibility and adaptability of MBKM in the context of Islamic higher education align with the mandate of the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning autonomy in implementing Islamic higher education. Innovations in education at Islamic universities are a manifestation of this autonomy. Islamic universities have unique creativity and innovation, recognized through the MBKM accreditation system, which is adapted to the dynamics of change in the education provision in Islamic universities (Ananda et al., 2022). A concrete example of the implementation of this autonomy, which has a global impact, is the implementation of international KKN for students, which offers various benefits for students, such as experience, knowledge, social networks, and international recognition, as well as for Islamic universities in the context of national and international accreditation (Sibawaihi, 2022).

In implementing MBKM into the educational process at Islamic universities, curriculum adjustments are needed at the implementation level at the institution (Maghfiroh & Sholeh, 2022). This adjustment must be adjusted to the capital owned by each Islamic higher education institution, such as capital resources for lecturers and teaching staff, student resources, an overview of input and graduates, financing resources, bureaucratic resources, facilities and infrastructure resources, resources network power, and so on (Isnaniah & Kurniawan, 2022). Adjusting MBKM to the curriculum of each Islamic university will open up opportunities for each Islamic university to become an agent of change itself and avoid being swept away in the current of change, which is very fast and ready to "roll over" anyone who is not open and responsive to these changes (Albar et al., 2021).

The MBKM program in Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 3 of 2020 provides opportunities for students, lecturers, and teaching staff to develop significantly and reach an international level. Students are guaranteed to be able to study for three semesters outside their study program, both domestically and abroad (Irawan & Suharyati 2023). This innovation also allows lecturers and educational staff to take part in self-development activities and increase skills and knowledge at the international level. This concept is referred to as the learning universe in MBKM, with creativity and innovation as the main pillars that maintain the relevance of education in Indonesia in every era (Junaidi et al., 2020).

For Islamic universities, understanding and implementing MBKM in a systematic and organized manner is a must, considering that the curriculum is an educational

instrument that must be continuously evaluated, re-planned, tested, implemented, monitored, and adapted to needs (Maharani et al., 2023). Islamic universities must be able to understand MBKM from various dimensions, namely ontological, epistemological, and axiological. Ontologically, MBKM must be seen from the factors that differentiate it from other curricula: epistemologically, from its foundation, philosophy, background, origin, and procedural standards, and axiologically, from its value, relevance, benefits, and advantages.

There have been several previous studies discussing MBKM. Among these studies, include the following. In their research, Mudrikah et al. focus on implementing Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) as one of the government's efforts to develop the learning process with a focus on improving the quality of graduates, improving the quality of lecturers and improving the quality of the curriculum in higher education. This study highlights the holistic approach taken by the tertiary institution in introducing MBKM, including increasing learning accessibility, developing flexible curricula, and empowering students in designing learning paths that suit their interests and potential. Apart from that, this study also shows that the readiness of all educational elements on campus in implementing the MBKM program has reached 50%. Some of the obstacles related to this program are due to the lack of massive socialization in several study programs. The remaining students ready to be involved in MBKM are 57.75% (Mudrikah et al., 2022).

This research focuses on MBKM in Islamic Universities (*Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam/PTKI*) from ontology, epistemology, and axiology perspectives. This research aims to explore the nature of the existence of MBKM in the context of Islamic religious-based educational institutions, explore the sources and validity of the knowledge used in implementing MBKM, and examine the values and ultimate goals carried out by MBKM in Islamic education. With a focused focus on ontological, epistemological, and axiological aspects, this research is expected to provide in-depth insight into the relevance, challenges, and potential of MBKM in the context of Islamic education, as well as contribute to the conceptual and practical development of MBKM at PTKI.

B. Method

This research uses two methods: literature study and content analysis. Literature studies aim to search for, analyze, inventory, and present data in the form of material and information through written works such as books, journals, papers, magazines, newspapers, and other relevant documents with the theme of this study (Creswell, 2012). This literature study is presented qualitatively because the quantitative statistical analysis cannot represent the review but through the narrative description. In the literature study, documents relevant to the theme of the paper were content analyzed by the discussion of MBKM in the context of Islamic higher education; this method is known as content analysis (Fiantika et al., 2022). Content analysis in the context of an ontological, epistemological, and axiological review of MBKM in Islamic Higher Education Institutions involves systematic and methodological steps. Data was collected by identifying and selecting policy documents, curricula, and academic publications related to MBKM at the institution. The coding stage was carried out to categorize data according to the dimensions of ontology (the nature and reality of education in MBKM), epistemology (sources and validity of knowledge in the implementation of MBKM), and axiology (values and goals of MBKM). The analysis process continues with an in-depth interpretation of the findings of each dimension, using a relevant theoretical framework to assess the consistency, sustainability, and practical implications of MBKM in Islamic education. Finally, a synthesis of the results of the analysis is presented in a comprehensive report that includes strategic recommendations for developing educational policies and practices at the relevant institutions.

C. Result and Discussion

1. MBKM curriculum in educational institutions: An overview

MBKM, as explained in the introduction above, allows students at Islamic universities to carry out their study period in two ways: completing the study load at Islamic universities in their study program or taking part in learning outside their study program before completing the study load in the program (Susilawati, 2021). It is one of the main characteristics of MBKM, in addition to three other particular policies exclusively owned by MBKM, such as flexibility in opening new study programs,

different accreditation systems, and the status of legal entity universities. These four distinctive factors are the four main MBKM policies (Junaidi et al., 2020).

First, the MBKM Policy. Four MBKM policies are closely related to strategies for developing the quality of education in Indonesia. Therefore, this MBKM policy is known as the four MBKM strategic policies.

1. Opening of a New Study Program

This policy is a facilitation effort from the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture to simplify complicated bureaucracy, excessive procedures, and uncertain times. This convenience is provided to all state and private Islamic universities (Kardiyem et al., 2023). The ease of applying for new study programs at Islamic universities facilitates a more in-depth and comprehensive analysis of various crucial aspects. Islamic universities can evaluate local potential more carefully, identify specific industry needs, and align their academic and spiritual orientation with global developments. Thus, this analysis allows the development of a curriculum that is more relevant and responsive to the surrounding socio-economic dynamics, as well as ensuring that the graduates produced have competencies that are in line with the demands of the job market and the needs of society (Pohan & Kisman, 2022).

2. Islamic Higher Education Accreditation System

The new accreditation system implemented within the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) framework has undergone significant changes compared to the previous system. This new system immediately gives newly established study programs "Good" or C accreditation status. The granting of C accreditation eliminates the five-year evaluation process, previously a burden for new study programs that had to achieve C accreditation in the initial evaluation (Saptadi et al., 2024). With the adoption of the MBKM accreditation system, the first assessment is immediately carried out as a re-evaluation or re-accreditation. This policy step substantially reduces the administrative burden on Islamic universities, allowing the focus of managing new study programs to be oriented toward developing and consolidating study program excellence without being burdened by the accreditation process (Setiawan et al., 2023). This policy is based on Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 5 of 2020 concerning Accreditation of Islamic Study Programs and Higher Education. In the MBKM context, study programs that receive C accreditation and are still within two years must apply for

re-accreditation. It is considered sufficient time to meet quality standards through various quality improvement efforts and fulfillment of accreditation documents. In this period, the Islamic universities concerned had the opportunity to improve their quality qualifications to obtain a higher ranking.

One of the significant advances in MBKM is the recognition of international accreditation by the national accreditation agency (Baharuddin, 2021). Suppose Islamic universities obtain evaluation and validation from institutions such as CHEA, Washington Accor, EQAR, Sydney Accor, etc. In that case, they will automatically obtain A-level accreditation from national accreditation institutions. This accreditation system is supported by other programs that enable Islamic universities to collaborate in academic activities such as publication of scientific papers, writing guidebooks and lectures, compiling thought anthologies, community service programs, research, scientific competitions, etc. (Tuju et al., 2022).

3. State Islamic universities with legal entities

The legal entity status of Islamic universities plays a significant role in increasing the potential and quality of these institutions (Anggraini, 2019). With this status, Islamic universities have easier access and greater flexibility in directing the development of their institutions. Wider accessibility allows institutions to obtain various necessary resources, including funding, facilities, and academic collaboration with national and international institutions (Darlis et al., 2023). Flexibility in management also provides greater autonomy in designing and implementing a curriculum that aligns with current needs and global standards and in recruiting competent and experienced teaching staff (Saputra, 2023).

4. Student's right to study for three semesters outside the study program

The most essential thing for students in the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) is their ability to undergo a learning period with two main choices. First, students can allocate time to study at Islamic universities in their chosen study program. This choice allows them to focus and deepen scientific fields according to the interests and skills they want to develop. Second, students can take part in learning outside their study program, either in a different campus environment, outside campus or even abroad. This learning is still recognized as part of the learning load that must be completed in the study program they have previously chosen (Irawan & Suharyati, 2023).

Second is the forms of MBKM learning activities. Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) offers various learning activities that focus on contextual learning, where students face reality by changing the context of learning objects again according to learning objectives (Saptadi et al., 2024). Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 3 of 2020 identifies eight main activities that are the core of learning activities in MBKM. These eight activities include student exchange programs, internships or work practices, humanitarian projects, research, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies or projects, building villages or thematic actual work lectures, as well as teaching programs in schools (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020).

Third is Student Exchange. MBKM aims to facilitate the participation of Islamic higher education students in the global arena by adopting a local Indonesian identity. Through the student exchange program, this initiative is directed at forming an open attitude towards cultural, social, racial, religious, linguistic, and intellectual diversity, as well as social interactions, responsibilities, and roles in society, both on a national and international scale (Yunitasari & Rahmadanik, 2022). Recognition, join class, join program, double degree, sandwich program, research scholarship, and others are provided to support interaction and exchange between students from various parts of the world through MBKM (Tuju et al., 2022).

Fourth is internship/work practice. Internships or work practices are not only limited to collaboration between Islamic universities in Indonesia. Still, they can also be carried out abroad, such as internships at partner schools of Islamic universities that have established collaborations or MoAs with Islamic universities in Indonesia (Fuadi & Aswita, 2021). One form of international internship is Integrative KKN, which has an internship duration of one semester. Besides MBKM facilitating this, international cooperation is also open in institutional student work practice programs. Practically, Indonesian students can carry out joint work practices accompanied by students from the country where they practice, while accompanying lecturers can come from Indonesia, providing opportunities for international actualization.

Fifth is Teaching Assistance in Education Units. This teaching activity can be carried out in the domestic area, especially in locations where Islamic higher education institutions operate, both public and private, as well as formal and non-formal (Sudianto et al., 2023). This teaching model can also be applied in an internship format, which involves collaboration with Islamic higher education institutions at the

international level. On the other hand, students from abroad can also be involved in practical teaching activities at educational institutions collaborating with Islamic universities in Indonesia (Tuju et al., 2022).

Sixth is research. Student research activities can include completing final assignments, preparing a thesis, conducting research projects with students from other Islamic higher education institutions or lecturers from similar institutions, and collaborating with students and lecturers from Islamic higher education institutions abroad. This collaborative approach in research activities and scientific publications significantly contributes to the institution's development. It supports improving the quality of Islamic higher education. Collaborative practices also play a role in strengthening the academic abilities of the entire Islamic higher education community in carrying out the *Tri Dharma* Higher Education mission (Saptadi et al., 2024).

Seventh is the Humanitarian Project. Humanitarian projects for students may include participation in direct activities in disaster areas within a specified time, aimed at increasing students' social awareness as agents of change. Apart from that, humanitarian projects can also strengthen students' sense of social responsibility, so it is hoped that students will not feel confused about social roles when directly involved in community life after their education (Andriani et al., 2023).

Eighth, Entrepreneurship. In an era that continues to change rapidly and is full of uncertainty, Islamic universities are expected to be able to prepare their students with the skills to face future challenges. These skills include the ability to survive, high fighting spirit, mental toughness, and entrepreneurship as an integral part of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) (Irawan & Suharyati, 2023). Program kewirausahaan di MBKM dirancang untuk melatih mahasiswa agar dapat merespons perubahan dengan fleksibilitas dan keberanian yang diperlukan dalam menghadapi dinamika sosial, ekonomi, dan teknologi yang terus berkembang (Yanuarsari et al., 2022).

Ninth is an Independent Project. Student competitions are a form of self-realization and a tool to strengthen their mental readiness. They are strengthened and utilized effectively by MBKM, as regulated in Article 15 Paragraph 1, where independent projects are integrated as one of the eight main MBKM programs. This independent project implements a research and development-based educational approach (Nurhayati et al., 2022). Students are guided, encouraged, developed, and

included in competitions to increase their self-confidence at national and international levels (Junaidi, 2020).

The tenth is Thematic KKN. Thematic Community Service Program (Kuliah Kerja Nyata/KKN) activities within the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) can be combined with other activities such as work practice, teaching and learning, humanitarian projects, and independent initiatives. They can be synchronized with Islamic higher education institutions both nationally and internationally. Thus, student participation in real social life can significantly improve the quality of students and Islamic higher education institutions (Junaidi, 2020).

2. MBKM in an ontological perspective

From an ontological perspective, Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) at Islamic Universities (PTKI) has profound implications for the nature of the existence and reality of education. MBKM, as an educational policy, changes the traditional paradigm of higher education by giving students the freedom to design the course of learning (Saptadi et al., 2024). It reflects an ontological shift from a paradigm centered on institutions to one focused on individual students as the main agents in the learning process, which differentiates MBKM from other curricula. Borrowing Hans Georg Gadamer's theory (Darmaji, 2013), it can be seen that MBKM at PTKI indicates an ontological evolution in the educational paradigm, where the role of students is increasingly recognized as active subjects in knowledge creation.

Furthermore, MBKM introduces flexibility in the learning process, allowing students to take on various off-campus activities as part of their official curriculum (Saptadi et al., 2024). It includes internship programs, student exchanges, humanitarian projects, research, entrepreneurship, and community service. This flexibility allows students to gain practical experience and important interpersonal skills and integrate knowledge gained in the classroom with real-world applications (Fuadi & Aswita, 2021). In this way, MBKM breaks down the traditional boundaries between academic learning and practical experience, making the educational process more dynamic and relevant.

Another ontological factor differentiating MBKM is the emphasis on individualized learning and personalization of education. Within the MBKM framework, students are encouraged to explore their interests and talents through various activities (Nurhayati et al., 2022). It allows them to design an educational path that suits their aspirations and career goals, which can increase motivation and

engagement in the learning process (Salmiyanti & Desyandri, 2023). This approach is different from the conventional curriculum, which is more uniform and requires all students to follow the same path without paying attention to individual differences.

Ontologically, MBKM also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between universities, industry, and society in education (Saptadi et al., 2024). The synergy between these three components creates a rich and diverse learning ecosystem where students can learn from industry practitioners, get involved in real projects, and directly contribute to society. It not only enriches students' learning experiences but also ensures that the resulting graduates are ready to face the challenges and needs of the ever-evolving world of work. Thus, MBKM places higher education in a broader and integrated context, fundamentally different from traditional curriculum approaches focusing on classroom learning.

The ontological approach to MBKM at PTKI also highlights an understanding of the reality of education in the context of the diversity of knowledge and world views (Susilawati, 2021). For example, Fathurohim highlights that MBKM allows students to gain a broader understanding of social, cultural, and religious realities through direct experience in the real world (Fathurohim, 2023). In this case, MBKM creates space for an inclusive and diverse educational ontology, which allows various perspectives and understandings to develop.

However, borrowing Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory (Hasanah & Adawiyah, 2021) shows that MBKM, even though it promises freedom and pluralism, is still embedded in an ontological structure formed by power and hierarchy (Richardo & Cahdriyana 2021). From Derrida's deconstruction perspective, the researcher highlights that although MBKM provides opportunities for students to be "independent" in their learning, reality is still bound by narratives imposed by existing institutions and powers.

In exploring the ontological implications of MBKM in PTKI, it is important to note that educational reality is not static; instead, it continues to change and develop over time. Therefore, educational ontology must always be open to reflection, criticism, and innovation (Inayati et al., 2023). Borrowing Martin Heidegger's philosophy of existentialism, stakeholders need to continue to ask about the existential meaning of education in the MBKM context, as well as how education can be a means for students to achieve a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them (Wahid, 2022). Thus, the ontological discussion of MBKM at PTKI offers a deep understanding

of the essence and changes in the educational paradigm while still considering the complexity and dynamics of the ever-changing educational reality.

3. MBKM in an epistemological perspective

The origins of the MBKM concept can be traced to various educational reform initiatives in different developed countries that adopted experiential learning and project-based learning approaches (Saptadi et al., 2024). This concept was then adapted to the Indonesian context through Minister of Education and Culture policy Number 3 of 2020, which regulates implementing eight main activities in MBKM. This policy aims to integrate practical and contextual experiences into the curriculum so students can achieve more meaningful and applicable learning (Nurhayati et al., 2022).

In another narrative, the background to the implementation of MBKM is closely related to the global challenges faced by the higher education system, such as the separation between the academic world and the world of work, as well as the need for graduates who have 21st-century skills (Hastangka & Hidayah, 2023). In Indonesia, this problem is reinforced by university graduates' relatively high unemployment rate, indicating a gap between the competencies obtained in college and those required by industry (Ivan, 2022). Therefore, MBKM was initiated in response to the need to design a more flexible and adaptive curriculum to prepare graduates who are not only academically competent but also have the soft skills needed in the dynamics of the global job market.

Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) at Islamic Universities offers an interesting perspective in the realm of epistemology. MBKM places knowledge as the main focus of the learning process by introducing various methods and sources of knowledge that are inclusive and multidimensional (Saptadi et al., 2024). In this context, MBKM epistemology emphasizes the importance of expanding the scope of knowledge sources, not only limited to religious literature but also considering contributions from other relevant sciences. This approach reflects a progressive epistemological view and is open to various understandings and interpretations.

Applying an interdisciplinary approach to the learning process is a crucial aspect of the MBKM epistemological perspective. It allows students to integrate knowledge from various disciplines, science, humanities, social or religious, enriching their understanding of the complex reality. Borrowing from Amin Abdullah's integration-interconnection theory (Siswanto, 2013), an interdisciplinary approach in MBKM can

open insight and deepen understanding of various actual problems modern society faces.

Apart from that, MBKM epistemology also emphasizes the importance of developing critical and analytical thinking skills. In this context, Susilawati emphasized that MBKM provides sufficient space for students to question, criticize, and analyze various concepts and ideas originating from the Islamic scientific tradition and from outside that tradition (Susilawati, 2021). It creates an academic environment that strengthens students' intellectual capacity to understand and interpret various phenomena more deeply.

Apart from that, MBKM epistemology also offers an inclusive perspective on local and contextual knowledge (Saptadi et al., 2024). In the context of Islamic Universities, Ananda et al. stated that MBKM pays attention to and encourages the development of knowledge relevant to local social, cultural, and religious realities (Ananda et al., 2022). Thus, MBKM teaches universal knowledge and enriches understanding of the richness of local culture and traditions, which are integral to Islamic identity.

The epistemological approach applied in MBKM also pays special attention to the values of truth, justice, and ethics in knowledge. Buya Syafi'i Ma'arif, an Islamic scholar, highlighted the importance of strengthening the moral and ethical dimensions in the learning process so that students are not only able to acquire technical knowledge but also have high moral awareness in applying this knowledge in everyday life (Arifin, 2023; Mannuhung & Tenrigau, 2018).

In the context of epistemology, MBKM also emphasizes the importance of integrating theoretical and practical knowledge. Azyumardi Azra, an Islamic thinker, highlighted the need for students to understand theoretical concepts and apply this knowledge to solving real societal problems (Amirudin, 2016). It creates harmony between theory and practice, strengthening the relevance of knowledge in facing actual challenges society faces.

Procedural standards for implementing MBKM involve a series of systematic steps that include planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation (Saptadi et al., 2024). This procedure begins with identifying needs and potential activities relevant to the learning objectives and graduate profile. Furthermore, higher education institutions collaborate with various industrial partners, community organizations, and government institutions to provide the platforms and resources necessary for implementing MBKM activities. The monitoring and evaluation process is carried out

continuously to ensure that activities are running according to established standards and to identify and overcome possible obstacles (Baharuddin 2021). With these procedural standards, it is hoped that the implementation of MBKM can run effectively and sustainably, positively impacting students, educational institutions, and the wider community.

Thus, MBKM in PTKI offers a dynamic and inclusive epistemological paradigm. This approach expands the scope of knowledge through an interdisciplinary and inclusive approach and strengthens critical, contextual, ethical, and practical values in the learning process. Through this approach, it is hoped that MBKM can prepare students to become competent and responsible agents of change in facing the complex challenges faced by modern society.

4. MBKM in an axiological perspective

Axiologically, MBKM has significant value in Indonesia's higher education context. MBKM emphasizes the values of academic freedom, innovation, and social relevance, which aims to change the traditional learning paradigm to be more dynamic and responsive to the needs of the times (Saptadi et al., 2024). These values are reflected in eight main activities prepared based on Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 3 of 2020, which provide students with the opportunity to be directly involved in various practical and contextual activities so that they gain not only theoretical knowledge but also practical skills that are essential in the world of work (Junaidi, 2020).

The relevance of MBKM in education and national development is obvious. This program is designed to bridge the gap between the world of education and industry, as well as between theory and practice (Nurhayati et al., 2022). In the era of globalization and the Industrial Revolution 4.0, relevant and adaptive skills are very important (Budiyono, 2020). MBKM allows students to gain industry experience through internships, work practices, and involvement in humanitarian projects and research on current social and scientific issues. It makes graduates better prepared to face global challenges and can contribute significantly in various sectors, both at the national and international levels.

The benefits resulting from implementing MBKM include increasing students' practical and soft skills, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, and collaboration abilities. These skills are necessary in the complex and ever-changing modern world of work (Firdaus, 2017). Apart from that, MBKM also provides benefits

by increasing students' professional networks through interactions with various parties, including industry, research institutions, and social communities (Saptadi et al., 2024). This experience enriches students' insight and opens broader and more varied career opportunities.

In addition, an axiological analysis of the MBKM at Islamic Universities (PTKI) highlights the values, goals, and morality contained in implementing the program. In this context, MBKM is seen as an educational innovation and a process that prioritizes axiological principles relevant to Islamic education (Hayani et al., 2022). One of the values upheld in MBKM is the value of academic freedom, which provides opportunities for students to explore their interests and talents independently in the learning process. It aligns with the "Merdeka belajar" concept, which underlies this program, where students can organize the learning course according to their needs and interests (Ni'mah & Sari, 2022).

Apart from the value of academic freedom, the axiological aspect of MBKM also involves religious values and morality. Experts, such as Amin Abdullah, underline the importance of including Islamic values in every aspect of education (Waston 2016), including in MBKM. In the context of PTKI, religious values such as honesty, responsibility, and simplicity are an important foundation in forming student character (Ainiyah, 2013). Therefore, implementing MBKM at PTKI aims to improve academic competence, strengthen students' Islamic identity, and form responsible and moral individuals.

The axiological approach to MBKM also describes the ultimate goal of this program. Nufus et al., in their study, highlighted the importance of MBKM in producing graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent but also sensitive to human values and social justice. Thus, MBKM at PTKI aims to produce competent professionals in their fields and form change agents who can contribute positively to society (Nufus et al., 2022).

However, in appreciating the axiological values of MBKM, it must be acknowledged that its implementation also faces challenges. Rosani, in his view, highlights the risk of possible value distortion due to implementing MBKM, which is too oriented towards quantitative aspects, such as increasing graduate numbers and academic productivity, without paying attention to students' moral and spiritual qualities (Rosani, 2023). Therefore, there needs to be a balance between achieving

academic achievement and developing moral values when implementing MBKM at PTKI.

Apart from that, sustainability aspects are also a concern in the axiological perspective of MBKM. Nofia emphasized the need for continuity of axiological values in every stage of education, starting from the admission of new students to the learning process in the classroom. It shows that the formation of character and moral values must be the main concern in all aspects of academic activities at PTKI, including in the implementation of MBKM (Nofia, 2020).

In the PTKI context, the axiological values reflected in MBKM must always be integrated with Islamic teachings. Komaruddin Hidayat, in his view, emphasized that education at PTKI must be based on the principles of Islamic teachings, prioritizing the values of humanity, justice, and mercy (Nurdin, 2022). Therefore, implementing MBKM at PTKI must be carried out by paying attention to relevance and conformity with the values of Islamic teachings to contribute significantly to the formation of student character and personality.

Finally, an axiological perspective on MBKM at PTKI highlights the program's values, goals, and morality. The implementation of MBKM must be carried out by paying attention to Islamic values, morality, and social justice, which are an integral part of the education process at PTKI. In addition, there needs to be a balance between academic achievement, the development of moral values, and the continuity of axiological values in all stages of education. Thus, MBKM at PTKI can be an effective instrument in forming the next generation who is not only intellectually intelligent but also has morality and sensitivity to human values.

D. Conclusion

Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) in Islamic Higher Education Institutions is a comprehensive educational innovation that can be analyzed from three main perspectives: ontological, epistemological, and axiological. Ontologically, MBKM displays unique characteristics that differentiate it from traditional curricula. It includes a contextual learning approach that allows students to interact directly with social, cultural, and economic realities. This program offers freedom and flexibility in choosing an educational path that suits students' interests and talents, aiming to improve the quality and relevance of graduates in the job market.

Epistemologically, MBKM is built on the foundation of a progressive educational philosophy, which emphasizes the importance of practical experience and lifelong learning. This philosophy is supported by a strong background and various procedural standards that ensure consistent and effective program implementation. This foundation includes integrating theory and practice and collaboration between the academic world and industry to produce competent and adaptive graduates.

Axiologically, MBKM has high value in the context of Islamic higher education because it combines religious values with the practical needs of the modern world. This program is relevant in responding to globalization and industrial revolution 4.0 challenges and provides real student benefits by improving practical and soft skills. Other benefits of MBKM include increased professional networks and strengthening the role of universities as agents of social change. Thus, MBKM not only enriches the learning process but also makes a significant contribution to national development and community development.

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