

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **A. Background**

Education is currently implementing the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)* curriculum. The purpose of this curriculum is to improve the quality of human resources and the quality of education in Indonesia. In addition, this curriculum is applied at various levels of education, from elementary to tertiary levels. Therefore, the role of each level of education is very important for the successful implementation of these programs (Journal et al., 2022).

The MBKM is an initiative that offers students the opportunity to learn in a way that is more flexible and suited to future needs. Although there are some challenges, this program has the potential to be an effective solution in improving the quality of higher education in Indonesia. The Minister of Education and Culture, Nadiem Makariem, has launched a number of policies, including *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)*. This program provides opportunities for students to study outside their discipline as part of the MBKM initiative. This program serves to improve the quality of learning at universities both domestically and abroad. MBKM is a curriculum implementation that supports independent learning in higher education, with a focus on relevance and innovation in each program offered. Established by the Indonesian government, MBKM aims to provide students with flexibility and access to a variety of learning activities, both on campus and off campus. As such, the program is expected

to broaden students' knowledge and skills through competency development, experience, and entrepreneurship (Arlista Dewi Januariska, 2022).

*Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* includes a student exchange program that provides students with the opportunity to explore knowledge outside of their discipline. Merdeka's Student Exchange Program is a semester-long student mobility initiative, which allows students to gain learning experience at public and private universities in Indonesia. The program also aims to foster a sense of unity in diversity (Naibaho et al., 2023). Merdeka's student exchange program aims to produce graduates who not only excel in academics, but also have the necessary skills and adaptability to face a rapidly changing world (Sartika, 2024). Student exchanges provide benefits to participants, especially in terms of adjusting to new environments and experiencing interdisciplinary collaboration.

Universitas Kristen Indonesia Toraja is one of the universities that has implemented the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)* program through various policies, programs, and activities that provide flexibility for students to explore learning outside the study program. One of the programs that students participate in is the Merdeka Student Exchange, especially in the academic scope of the English Education Study Program. In the implementation of the program, there are two students involved in the fourth batch of Student Exchange. This study aims to determine the experience of students who take part in the Student Exchange Program. The researcher will examine student exchange program, by interviewing students, how their

experiences and the best things to do so that this Student Exchange program is successful and can be carried out well. Reviewing this, the researcher is interested in researching “Best practice of student exchange in MBKM program at English Department”.

Some studies that discuss the Student Exchange Program, among others, were conducted by: Rara (2023) conducted research on the title “Communication Challenges in Participating in the Student Exchange Program” the results of this study indicate that the challenges experienced by students when participating in PMM activities are difficulties in communicating. The results shown by students when communicating with lecturers, destination campus students, PMM students, and the community at the PMM activity location (Rara, 2023).

The second is from (Arlista Dewi Januariska, 2022) conducted research with the title “Batch 2 Inbound Merdeka Student Exchange at Jambi University by Students of the University of 17 August 1945 Surabaya”, the results of this study indicate that the activities of the Merdeka Student Exchange (PMM) program are very beneficial for students in improving soft skills and hard skills, expanding academic knowledge, adding friendship relationships from various ethnicities, religions, races that stretch from Sabang to Merauke.

From some of the above research results that discuss the Merdeka Student Exchange and this research will also discuss the Merdeka Student Exchange, especially the experience of students when participating in the program.

## **B. Research Question**

Based on the above background, the research questions : How is the student best practice during the Student Exchange Program?

## **C. Objective of the Research**

The aim of this research is to determine the experiences of students who take part in the Student Exchange Program at English Department.

## **D. Significant of the Research**

The data will be useful for:

### 1. Student

The aim of this research is to determine the experiences of students who take part in the Student Exchange Program at English Department.

### 2. Lecturers

It is hoped that this research will provide benefits for lecturers in providing understanding to students, both those taking part in student exchange programs and those taking part in order MBKM programs.

### 3. The Next Researcher

The next researcher is expected that this research can be a reference for the same topic in their research.

### **E. Research Methodology**

In collecting this data the researcher used qualitative research methods. The purpose of using qualitative methods is to find out how students experience when participating in Student Exchange Program.

### **F. Key Terms Definition**

#### **1. Best Practice**

A set of principles or strategies that have been proven to be effective in achieving a particular goal and serve as the best model for Student Exchange implementation. Experience is the process of acquiring knowledge that is done, seen and felt.

#### **2. Student Exchange**

A program where students in an educational institution participate in a learning experience at another institution to broaden their horizons, academic skills, and culture.

#### **3. MBKM Program**

An initiative of the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology that allows students to take their courses or learning activities to develop cross-disciplinary competencies and experiences.