Students' Experience in Joining Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program

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Abstract. The experiences of students engaged in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program under the English Education Study Program at FKIP Universitas Bandar Lampung are the main emphasis of this study. The main goal is to find out how these kids view and negotiate the program, which is meant to provide learning chances outside the conventional classroom setting, thereby improving both soft and hard abilities. Descriptive analysis was used in a qualitative research approach with which an in-depth knowledge of the experiences of the students could be obtained. Purposive sampling was used in the study to choose four students—one male and three female actively participating in the MBKM program. One month of observation and one-month of interviews comprised the data collecting process. Twice a week observations were undertaken, and students were free to carefully communicate their experiences thanks to WhatsApp interviews. According to the study, the MBKM program offers students useful chances for experiential learning, so promoting critical thinking, creativity, and useful skills development. Still highlighted, though, were difficulties with time management and adjusting to different learning contexts. The results imply that although the MBKM program has great potential to improve educational results, successful implementation of it depends on careful attention of students' requirements and limits.

Keywords: Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka, student experiences, experiential learning.

Introduction

Education is a purposeful and conscious effort to create a learning environment that allows students to actively develop their potential in various aspects, including spiritual strength, intellectual abilities, emotional maturity, and practical skills. The foundation of this approach is enshrined in Indonesia's Law No. 20 of 2003, which highlights the strategic role of education in shaping the future of the nation. The law emphasizes that education is not merely a tool for knowledge dissemination but an integral effort to prepare individuals to make meaningful contributions to society, the country, and the world. As such, education is a fundamental right and necessity for every child in Indonesia, and it is the government's responsibility to ensure that all children, regardless of their background, have access to mandatory education. This effort reflects the broader goal of producing a well-rounded, morally upright, and knowledgeable population capable of advancing the nation and addressing future challenges.

Over the years, the Indonesian education system has evolved to meet the changing needs of society and the demands of a globalized world. One of the most significant recent developments in the country's education system is the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program, introduced in 2019 by Nadeem Anwar Makarim, the Minister of Education. This program represents a paradigm shift towards greater autonomy, flexibility, and innovation

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in learning, allowing students to engage in diverse educational activities beyond the traditional classroom. These activities include internships, student exchanges, research, community service, and other experiential learning opportunities that aim to bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical skills. As Siregar, et al. (2020) point out, the MBKM policy seeks to enhance both hard and soft skills, with a focus on producing graduates who are creative, independent, and prepared to succeed in a rapidly changing global economy.

The MBKM program's core philosophy is the freedom to learn, as emphasized by Nadeem Anwar Makarim. He believes that students should have the liberty to pursue their interests and passions without external pressures, fostering a culture of creativity and critical thinking that is essential for success in today's dynamic global economy. As Amelia & Mustakin (2020) describe, the MBKM policy provides four main areas of reform: autonomy for higher education institutions to establish new study programs, the management of accreditation systems, the transformation of institutions into state universities with legal entity status, and the promotion of learning outside the traditional academic curriculum. According to the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Handbook (2020), the policy also offers eight types of learning activities, including internships, student exchanges, research, teaching assistance, and community service.

Research on the MBKM program has revealed its potential to significantly improve students' competencies. For example, Novita & Suranto (2023) found that the program has positively impacted students' hard and soft skills, particularly in terms of preparing them for the workforce. Furthermore, Sri Wahyuni, et al. (2023) highlight that universities have implemented various models of the MBKM curriculum, with some institutions adapting their existing curricula to align with the program's goals, while others have developed entirely new structures to support it. These findings suggest that MBKM is not only reshaping the educational landscape in Indonesia but also helping to prepare students to meet the demands of the 21st century.

Despite its potential, the MBKM program faces several challenges, particularly in terms of implementation. These include gaps in access to quality education, especially in remote areas, and the readiness of educational institutions and students to embrace more flexible and self-directed learning environments. Nonetheless, the MBKM initiative represents a bold step toward transforming the Indonesian education system, and its continued evolution promises to enhance the quality of education and produce graduates who are not only academically proficient but also capable of contributing to the nation's development in meaningful ways.

Theoretical Frameworks

Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (1984) provides a foundational framework for understanding how individuals learn through direct experience. According to Kolb, learning is a continuous process that is grounded in experience and shaped by reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation. Kolb's theory emphasizes that learning is not a passive process but an active one, in which individuals interact with their environment and reflect on their experiences to construct new knowledge. This theory is particularly relevant to the MBKM program, which is designed to provide students with hands-on learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom setting.

The core of Kolb's theory is the "Learning Cycle", which consists of four stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. In the first stage, Concrete Experience, learners are exposed to a new experience or situation. This is followed by Reflective Observation, where learners reflect on the experience and consider its implications. Next, in Abstract Conceptualization, learners develop theories or frameworks to explain their experiences. Finally, in Active Experimentation, learners apply their new knowledge to real-world situations, testing their ideas and refining their understanding (Kolb & Kolb, 2017, referenced in Morris & Pamela, 1978).

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The MBKM program aligns closely with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory by offering students the opportunity to engage in real-world experiences such as internships, community service, and research. These experiences allow students to apply their academic knowledge in practical contexts, reflect on their actions, develop new insights, and experiment with different approaches. For example, students participating in internships can gain hands-on experience in their field of study, reflect on their learning, and apply their newfound knowledge in future professional settings. This process not only enhances students' practical skills but also fosters critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity—key competencies that are essential for success in the modern workforce (Novita & Suranto, 2023).

The Learning Cycle, as proposed by Kolb (1984), played a critical role in supporting a holistic learning process in educational settings. It emphasized the importance of engaging students in active, reflective, and experiential learning activities that foster deep understanding and skill development. The Learning Cycle, as described by Kolb (1984), consists of four interconnected stages. The first stage is Concrete Experience, where students are fully immersed in new experiences that provide direct, hands-on learning opportunities. In the MBKM program, these experiences might include internships, community service, or research projects, where students engage with real-world situations. Following this, the second stage, Reflective Observation, encourages students to reflect on their experiences and consider what they have learned, allowing them to think critically about their actions and gain deeper insights. Next, in the Abstract Conceptualization stage, students use their reflections to develop theories or conceptual frameworks that explain their experiences.

This involves integrating both academic knowledge and practical experiences to form a more comprehensive understanding of the subject. Finally, in the Active Experimentation stage, students apply their newly acquired knowledge to new situations, testing and refining their ideas through experimentation and innovation. This cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation forms the foundation of experiential learning. Figure 1 below illustrates Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle, which demonstrates how these four stages are interconnected in the learning process.
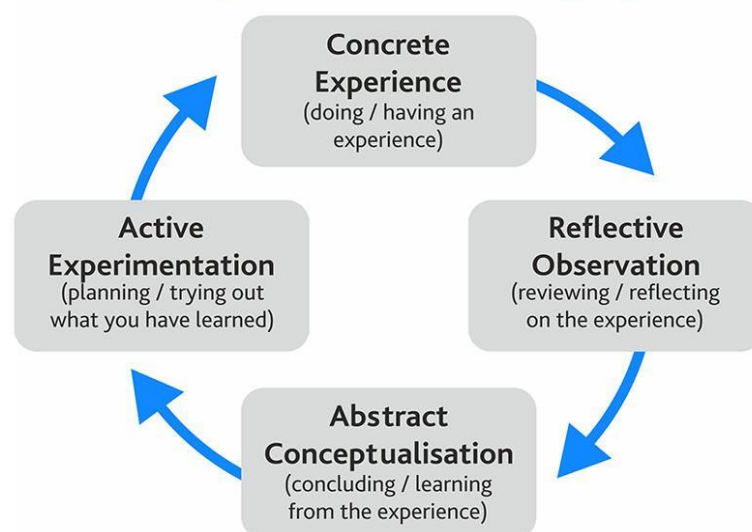
Figure 1.
The Experimental Learning Cycle

In addition to the Learning Cycle, Kolb's (1984) theory also identifies four distinct learning styles Assimilating, Converging, Accommodating, and Diverging which correspond to different ways that individuals engage with the learning process. These learning styles are

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important for understanding how students interact with the MBKM program and tailor their educational experiences to fit their personal preferences and strengths. Assimilating learners are those who favor abstract concepts and theoretical models. They excel at structured, reflective activities and are skilled at developing frameworks and theories. Converging learners are practical problem-solvers who thrive in environments where they can apply theoretical knowledge to real-world situations, often preferring hands-on activities. Accommodating learners are action-oriented and learn best by doing. They are comfortable with change and prefer to engage in hands-on experiences that allow for practical learning. Diverging learners are imaginative and creative, excelling at seeing things from multiple perspectives. They are highly skilled at brainstorming and generating new ideas, thriving in environments that encourage exploration and experimentation. Each of these learning styles highlights the different ways students interact with the learning process, allowing educators to tailor their approaches to meet individual needs.

Material and Method

This study employed a qualitative research approach to explore the experiences of university students participating in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. A qualitative method was chosen to provide an in-depth understanding of the students' learning processes and reflections throughout their engagement with the program (Latifa et al, 2023). Descriptive analysis was used to interpret the students' experiences during various MBKM activities. The research used purposive sampling to select participants based on specific criteria related to the study's focus. Participants were selected based on their active involvement in the MBKM program, and four students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, specifically from the English Language Education Program, were chosen. The sample consisted of one male and three females, offering a diverse representation of experiences within the program, namely AA, LN, VY, and YA. Each of them participated in a different type of activity. AA and LN participated in the Kuliah Kerja Nyata Tematik (KKNT) in Kresno Widodo Village, district. Pesawaran, Prov. Lampung. Meanwhile, VY and YA participated in the form of joint research activities with lecturers at the Center for Linguistics Studies, University of Bandar Lampung.

Data collection was conducted through observations and interviews, using indicators designed to capture both Learning Experience and Learning Styles. The Learning Experience indicators followed Kolb's Learning Cycle, covering four phases: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation. These indicators assessed the students' decision to join MBKM, their engagement in specific activities, the duration of their participation, and the development and progress of learning programs related to MBKM. Additionally, the Learning Styles indicators focused on how students processed information, applied ideas, engaged in new activities, and generated new perspectives. These learning styles were categorized into four types: Assimilating, Converging, Accommodating, and Diverging.

Observations were carried out twice a week for one month, focusing on how students interacted with MBKM activities and reflecting their involvement in real-world experiences. Interviews were conducted via WhatsApp to provide flexibility, allowing the students to respond at their convenience, thereby encouraging deeper reflection on their learning processes. These interviews provided insights into how students developed learning programs, progressed in their activities, and applied conclusions from their reflections to new experiences.

The data analysis process employed thematic analysis, focusing on indicators derived from two primary categories: Learning Experience and Learning Styles. These categories were structured around Kolb's experiential learning theory, which outlines a cycle consisting of Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active

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Experimentation. Additionally, the analysis incorporated students' learning preferences, as classified under learning styles: Assimilating, Converging, Accommodating, and Diverging.

The Learning Experience category encompassed several indicators related to students' decisions, involvement, progress, and reflections during their participation in the MBKM program. For instance, one key indicator was students' decision to join MBKM, which was crucial in understanding their initial motivations. This was captured through interviews, where students expressed their reasons for participating, such as a desire for leadership development or gaining new learning experiences.

The next set of indicators examined students' engagement with MBKM activities. This included measuring the progress of their work programs, their ability to create learning plans, and how they responded to challenges. The analysis paid special attention to how students adjusted their plans when facing difficulties such as the pandemic, showing their critical thinking in action.

Social interaction was another important indicator, as students' experiences were shaped by their communication and collaboration with peers, lecturers, and local communities. These interactions were pivotal in fostering social skills and group learning. Lastly, the improvement of critical thinking skills was an indicator used to assess students' development in problem-solving, particularly in real-world settings such as their research or community projects.

After identifying these indicators, the analysis proceeded in stages. First, all responses gathered from observations and interviews were grouped according to the Learning Cycle. For instance, students' reflections on their involvement with the program were categorized under Reflective Observation. Their ability to solve problems and adapt to real-world challenges was assessed within the Active Experimentation phase.

Responses were then coded to identify recurring themes, such as the relationship between participation in MBKM and learning outcomes. The thematic analysis highlighted patterns, like how students who were actively engaged in community projects demonstrated better critical thinking and problem-solving skills than those primarily involved in research activities. Additionally, these patterns were cross-referenced with students' preferred learning styles. For example, students who favored an Accommodating learning style showed a preference for hands-on projects and were more successful in adapting to unexpected challenges.

Results & Discussion
Results

The research findings of this study consist to sections. The first section is about the result of the research. The results of these findings were obtained from observations and interviews. The second section presents the discussion of research findings described in the first section.

Result of Interview

Table 1.
Result of Interview

No	Subject	Activity	Benefits	Challenges	Implemented Program
1	AA	Village Development Project (KKNT).	Improved communication skills with various social layers Understanding social issues and finding solutions	Funding difficulties, team cooperation not always smooth, impact of the	Batik Center, Rumah Pintar, Traditional Tourism Market.

			Expanding connections with diverse social backgrounds.	COVID-19 pandemic, and academic challenges as a final-year student.	
2	VY	Research at Linguistics Study Center.	Gained in-depth knowledge of linguistics, improved time management skills.	Difficulty in managing time, especially since the research activities were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.	Linguistic Research, Teaching, Seminar on Forensic Linguistics.
3	LN	Thematic KKN (economic and educational development in Kresnowidodo Village).	Developed social awareness Enhanced communication skills Problem-solving abilities Teamwork	Difficulty finding donors and team cooperation.	Batik Center, Rumah Pintar, Traditional Tourism Markets.
4	YA	Research at Linguistics Study Center.	Deepened knowledge in language analysis Improved teaching and research data analysis skills.	Lack of motivation from supervisors, new research topic requiring extensive effort to learn relevant research tools, and technical issues like internet connectivity while teaching online.	Research, Teaching, Seminar on Linguistics, creation of teaching materials, and classroom administration.

The Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program provided a valuable platform for students to explore new learning opportunities outside the traditional classroom environment. Each participant joined the program with distinct goals and motivations, but there was a common thread among them: the desire to gain new experiences that were not typically available through regular coursework. For some, this meant acquiring practical skills that would be useful in their future careers, while for others, the motivation stemmed from a wish to contribute meaningfully to society through community engagement. This program allowed them to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world situations, making their academic journey more dynamic and impactful.

The activities selected by participants were diverse, reflecting the flexible nature of the program. Some chose to participate in community service projects through Kuliah Kerja Nyata Tematik (KKNT), where they worked in rural villages to improve local infrastructure, economy, and education systems. Others were involved in specialized research projects, such as linguistics research, where they contributed to academic studies in a niche field. Additionally, many participants took on roles as educators, delivering teaching sessions or organizing seminars to share their knowledge with others. This diversity in activities allowed students to pursue their unique interests while still fulfilling the program's objectives of experiential learning.

The benefits of the program were evident across all interviews. Participants reported significant personal and professional growth, particularly in areas such as communication, problem-solving, and time management. These skills were honed through constant interaction with diverse social groups and the necessity to address real-life challenges. Participants also expanded their knowledge base, especially those involved in research, where they deepened their understanding of their chosen fields. Another key benefit was the sense of connection participants felt with the community, as many of them worked directly with local populations, helping to resolve social issues or contribute to economic development. The immersive nature of these projects provided students with a clearer picture of working environments outside of academia, which would be invaluable in their professional lives.

However, the program was not without its challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant obstacles, particularly for those whose activities required physical presence or interaction with communities. Participants had to adapt quickly, transitioning from offline to online formats for research, teaching, and community outreach. Time management also emerged as a major issue, especially for students who were balancing their program responsibilities with academic pressures like thesis work (Ladi & Soma, 2023). Funding was another common challenge, particularly for those involved in community projects, as securing sufficient resources to implement their initiatives was often difficult. Additionally, teamwork was sometimes problematic, with participants encountering difficulties in coordinating efforts with fellow students. Despite these challenges, participants displayed resilience, employing flexibility and positive thinking to ensure the success of their projects. Many found creative solutions, such as adjusting project scopes or finding alternative funding methods to keep their activities on track. Below is an explanation of the learning cycle and learning styles based on the observations and interviews conducted.

1. Learning Cycle: The process of grasping and transforming experience. There are 4 types of learning cycles:
   a. Learning Cycle: The process of grasping and transforming experience by VY
      In analyzing Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program in English Education Study Program of FKIP Universitas Bandar Lampung, with an emphasis on the Learning Cycle category the process of grasping and transforming experience we can assess four pertinent kinds of learning cycles: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation analysis of VY's experience in taking part in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program.
      Concrete Experience: First, VY is actively engaged in several tasks reflecting real-life events in the Concrete Experience phase, including teaching and linguistics study. Her outside of traditional learning activities, she decided to concentrate on investigating text-based case evidence a novel experience. Both online and in-person, this direct participation consists in observing text data, teaching, and going to linguistic forensic seminars. These exercises let VY address the difficulties in linguistics research and instruction as well as apply language theory in the real world.
      Reflective Observation: VY often muses on and notes the events she has encountered during the Reflective Observation stage. She points up several hurdles, including low desire, trouble learning new subjects, and technological

problems including network connections during online instruction. VY notes that some research techniques including documentation techniques are fresh to her. This introspection helps her to see her advantages and shortcomings as well as her means of adaptation to new circumstances.

Abstract Conceptualization: VY used her experiences to create abstract ideas in the phase of abstract conceptualization so she may improve her knowledge and abilities. Her experiences help her to see the need of knowing data collecting techniques and of having trustworthy sources. Using these techniques in her studies helps her to acquire language interpretation and analysis techniques applicable in other courses and next studies. VY has established a notion of the need of evaluation and efficient time management to successfully complete research even if she has not completely finished the publishing procedure.

Active Experimentation: At last, in the Active Experimentation period, VY uses her acquired knowledge and abilities from experience and introspection into useful application. She develops instructional materials, schedules research activities, and oversees classroom management chores. She also finds her own answers and seeks advice from mentors to adjust to changes and obstacles including the COVID-19 pandemic and personal problems. VY has also worked on finishing her thesis, PPL report, Merdeka Belajar report. This dynamic application showed how VY solves useful difficulties and enhances her activities by applying her thoughts and acquired ideas.

VY's experience in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program outlines a learning process including direct participation in new events, intense introspection, creation of abstract ideas, and active application of the knowledge acquired. Along with showing how these events helped her to improve her academic skills and knowledge, she showed how to overcome obstacles, seize chances to learn, and apply fresh ideas in useful settings. In higher education particularly in initiatives stressing the integration of theory with practical application, this method reflects an efficient learning cycle.

b. Learning Cycle: The process of grasping and transforming experience by AA

Here in Using the Learning Cycle category, we will examine AA's experience in attending the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program in English Education Study Program of FKIP Universitas Bandar Lampung under four relevant learning cycles: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Idealization, and Active Experimentation.

Concrete Experience: Through a variety of Merdeka Belajar program activities, AA directly participates in real-world events. Among his experiences include creating smart homes, traditional tourist markets, and community projects like batik centers. Working directly with the Kresnowidodo community, AA engaged with several social levels and put the knowledge acquired in practical use in this project. Making modules and lesson plans, showing batik, and creating a tourist market constitute part of this activity. This first-hand knowledge is a specific illustration of participation in social services and community-based events.

Reflective Observation: AA gave careful thought to the encounters he had participating in the program. He pointed out the several advantages of the exercise, including the capacity to interact and communicate with several social structures, grasp community issues, and identify remedies. He also understood his difficulties with financing, collaboration, and the COVID-19 epidemic. This introspection let him realize the need of applying academic knowledge in the field and how to coolly handle issues and come with workable answers.

Abstract Conceptualization: From his thoughts, AA created an awareness and perspective regarding the need of using academic theory in actual application. He understood that community service events may benefit from the knowledge acquired in classes including micro-teaching, ELM, and interpreting. This idea

emphasizes the need of using intellectual knowledge in the area to get practical and successful outcomes. He also developed his time management skills and discovered other ways to go past challenges faced during project execution.
Active Experimentation: AA uses the knowledge and ideas acquired in practical situations by putting solutions and methods created from contemplation into use. Developing batik centers, smart houses and tourist markets, he plans and carries out projects according on community requirements. Searching for creative and adaptable answers helped him to fit the COVID-19 circumstances and academic activities. By means of this active experimentation, AA accomplished 85% of the program target and acquired insightful knowledge in project management and team working.

AA's experience in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program showed an efficient learning cycle comprising direct involvement in community-based activities (Concrete Experience), in-depth reflection on the experience (Reflective Observation), development of new concepts and understanding (Abstract Idealization), and active application from the knowledge gained (Active Experimentation). AA overcome several obstacles in an organized and efficient manner and effectively turned intellectual ideas into reality. This encounter demonstrates how the Merdeka Belajar program offers a chance to blend field experience with academic knowledge and how important achievements are achieved depending on introspection and adaptation.

c. Learning Cycle: The process of grasping and transforming experience by LN
    Based LN's experience in joining the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program in English Education Study Program of FKIP Universitas Bandar Lampung using the Learning Cycle category is analyzed based on the outcomes of the interview with LN: the means of grasping and changing experience. Four kind of learning cycles concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation will be included in this study.
    Concrete Experience: LN participated directly in actual events in the community under Thematic KKN projects. LN participated in this program working on initiatives including the Kricaan Traditional Tourism Market, Rumah Pintar, and the Batik Center. By means of her participation, LN deals directly with rural communities, interacts and handles different field problems. These real-life events give her chances to use knowledge and abilities outside of the classroom.
    Reflective Observation: LN considered the lessons learned from the Merdeka Belajar Program. She came to see the advantages of these pursuits, including teamwork, problem-solving skills, and societal awareness raising capacity. LN pointed out that lessons in adaptability to new surroundings and direct community contact were priceless. The difficulties he encountered searching for donors, group cooperation, and COVID-19 pandemic challenges inspired her to grow optimistic and start looking for answers. Through field experiences, this introspection enabled her to appreciate the need of self-evaluation and growth.
    Abstract Conceptualization: From these thoughts, LN came to see how field experiences may enhance academic and professional competencies. She was aware that even if she has not found a fresh approach, the knowledge acquired in classes including Interpreting, Visual Literature, and PPL can be used in actual settings. LN saw the value of observing and modifying programs depending on field conditions as well as the possibility to blend theoretical knowledge with practical experience offered by Merdeka Belajar events. She was also knowing that conquering academic load and other difficulties mostly depends on priorities and effective time management.
    Active Experimentation: LN used the ready-made programs to apply ideas acquired from reflective experience. Along with helping to fund and create

traditional tourist markets, she used knowledge from the courses in actual tasks include creating batik product displays, developing modules and RPPs for Rumah Pintar. LN also developed activities depending on community comments, corrects mistakes, and evaluates program outcomes. LN keeps searching for answers and adjusting the program to raise activity results even if it attained about 85% of the aim.

LN's experience in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program showed an efficient learning cycle via direct involvement in community projects (Concrete Experience), reflection on that experience (Reflective Observation), development of new understandings and concepts (Abstract Conceptualization), and active application of these concepts in real practice (Active Experimentation). Overcoming several obstacles, LN was successful in bringing academic theory into use and honing her communication, teamwork, and problem-solving abilities. This event emphasizes the need of evaluation and adaptation to reach best results as well as how the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program may give chances for students to combine academic learning with useful field experience.

d. Learning Cycle: The process of grasping and transforming experience by YA.

Following an interview with YA about her experience in Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program in English Education Study Program of FKIP Universitas Bandar Lampung, the Learning Cycle is used to provide an analysis based on which YA's learning experience is understood and changed. Four kinds of learning cycles concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation are incorporated in this study.

Concrete Experience: YA directly participated in research at the linguistic study center, so attaining a kind of tangible experience. She did research on linguistics, teaches, assists with classroom management, and speaks in seminars among other things. Through face-to-face and online conversations, this experience includes direct connection with superiors and other students. Given the COVID-19 pandemic, her activities also included effective time management and changes in research techniques.

Reflective Observation: Reflective Thought: YA considers several facets of her experience. This exercise helped her to recognize that his original objective of attempting new activities and expanding knowledge outside the classroom was reached. She pointed out the advantages of the curriculum, including improved time management, problem-solving ability, and understanding in linguistics. YA also considered the difficulty in time management and integration of several activities as well as the pandemic restrictions on the method of study conducted. She noted and considered events that have been completed using a logbook, therefore assessing the outcomes.

Abstract Conceptualization: From her introspection, YA came to see how crucial time management and flexibility are to research projects. This experience, he realized, increased her understanding of linguistics and research and imparted lessons on the need of modifying strategies in line with current circumstances. YA also came to see that, in the framework of research and teaching, she could employ previously acquired skills including micro teaching, reading and writing abilities even though she had not found a new learning approach. This indicates that she was aware of how field experiences could combine and enhance intellectual knowledge.

Active Experimentation: YA used her knowledge acquired from introspection in actual application. In the framework of teaching and research, he was successful in controlling time, adjusting research techniques to pandemic conditions, and applying the acquired abilities. She also keeps assessing her work and applies adjustments depending on her comments. Notwithstanding various difficulties, YA prepared a research report and finished the project successfully using her

knowledge   of   languages   and   research.
YA's experience in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program showed a learning cycle including direct involvement in real experience (Concrete Experience), reflection on that experience (Reflective Observation), development of new understanding and concepts (Abstract Conceptualization), as well as active application of this understanding in real practice (Active Experimentation). Overcoming obstacles and honing critical abilities including time management and problem-solving, YA was successful in combining scholarly theory with field experience. Though there are various challenges that have to be faced, this experience showed how the Merdeka Belajar program may give students chances to enhance knowledge, acquire practical skills, and apply learning in real scenarios.

3.3 Learning Styles: Individual differences in learning based on the preferences of learners to apply different things learning cycle phase. There are 4 types of learning styles:

2. Learning Styles: Individual differences in learning based on the preferences of learners to apply different things learning cycle phase by VY
The following is a study of learning styles and experiences connected to the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in English Education Study Program of FKIP Universitas Bandar Lampung based on the findings of the interview with VY:
Assimilating (Concept Absorption): VY exhibits an absorbing learning style by means of her capacity to comprehend and articulate knowledge depending on personal experience. She researches new languages and research techniques while also working on linguistically based projects. This demonstrates VY's ability to absorb fresh language and research study techniques knowledge. She recognizes and clarifies how knowledge of language and linguistics evidence is advanced by research activities as well as how this might be applied to scholarly work and next employment.
Converging: When VY discovers useful applications of the ideas and theories she has learned, she exhibits a convergent learning approach. She used the linguistic theory she acquired, for instance, in teaching and text data analysis. VY teaches and does research using her expertise of languages, and she can make pragmatic decisions regarding how to solve issues such time management and epidemic-related delays. She also came to see how helpful this information was for publishing and finishing studies.
Accommodating: VY's capacity to organize, engage in novel activities, and communicate with different people reveals her adaptive learning approach. She participates in research, instruction, and class management projects requiring adaptation and contact with supervisors and other participants. Her brilliance in adjusting to changing circumstances and challenges is shown by her capacity to meet new needs including independent research and instruction of new courses.
Diverging (Deviation): VY's different learning style is evident in her capacity to create concepts and view events from several angles. For challenges like a pandemic, VY considers other options such doing research online and changing her calendar with her supervisor. Through the logbook, she was also able to assess and consider the activities she had completed as well as spot chances from the challenges he encountered, like ignorance of the newly acquired research techniques during the program.
Application in the VY Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program revealed that the MBKM program lets the use of several learning strategies to reach both personal and professional objectives. This curriculum offers the chance to absorb: language knowledge and research techniques. Convergent: Using knowledge in teaching and research. Changing to fit different new challenges and activities. Different: Creating several ideas and answers to the challenges encountered. In conclusion VY developed

study, teaching, and time management techniques using the MBKM program. Various learning approaches let VY see events from several angles, absorb fresh knowledge, apply it in useful settings, and change with the times. Through this program experience, VY showed notable improvement in abilities and knowledge despite some obstacles, such time management and adjusting to new research techniques.

3. Learning Styles: Individual differences in learning based on the preferences of learners to apply different things learning cycle phase by AA
    An examination of experiences in the Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program concerning learning styles based on an interview with AA follows:
    Assimilating (Concept Absorption): AA's capacity to grasp and use knowledge in natural settings reveals an absorbing learning style. Particularly in building smart houses and Batik centers, he decided to help out in village initiatives emphasizing community service. His awareness of community needs and his belief of how academia may be used to have a direct influence guided the choice to establish these initiatives. AA shows his capacity to absorb and apply knowledge by using academic ideas including modules and lesson plans to arrange and carry out initiatives.
    Converging: Convergent learning is another trait AA exhibits in his approach of tying theory with application. Developing batik centers and traditional tourist markets is one of his realistic answers to the issues society faces. His capacity to see the pragmatic application of these concepts in enhancing the village's education and economics led him to decide on starting these initiatives. Strong convergence abilities enable AA to make wise decisions on project development and modify programs to fit field conditions.
    Accommodating: AA exhibits an accommodating learning style by means of his capacity for planning, adaptation, and interaction with other stakeholders. Working directly with teams and communities, he customizes programs to fit local needs. AA also proved his capacity for situational adaptation—that is, for funding and the COVID-19 epidemic as well as for managing demanding academic responsibilities. His versatility and active participation in many spheres, including teaching, helping to establish batik facilities, and growth of tourist markets, demonstrates his excellence.
    Diverging (Deviation): AA's different learning approach is evident in his capacity to produce ideas and recognize several points of view. Based on field conditions and community demands, he participates in the ideation and design process of programs like smart houses, traditional tourist markets, and batik centers. AA regularly connects with the society to obtain opinions and grasp issues from several angles. He did not provide a fresh approach, but he supported program implementation using knowledge from courses such micro teaching and ELTM.
    Application in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program AA utilizes various learning styles in the MBKM program to achieve the goals of leadership development and community service: Using scholarly knowledge, one can create and carry out initiatives benefiting for society. Converging: Using theories and ideas to actually address neighborhood issues. Accommodating: Rising to challenges and working with several groups to meet program objectives. Generating ideas and solutions depending on several points of view and interactions with society requires divergent approach. According to AA conclusion, the MBKM program offers chances to utilize several learning approaches in the framework of community service. This curriculum lets AA apply academic information realistically, be flexible enough to fit circumstances, and come up with creative approaches to address issues. Notwithstanding obstacles including financing and the COVID-19 pandemic, AA managed to finish the activity satisfactorily and acquired useful experience using intellectual knowledge in the field. This initiative also enhances comprehension of how academic information can be directly used to assist society and problem-solving ability.

4. Individual differences in learning based on the preferences of learners to apply different things learning cycle phase by LN

LN's interview helped one to understand the experiences in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program concerning different learning styles: **Assimilating (Concept Absorption)**: LN exhibits an absorbing learning style since she may apply knowledge in the framework of field activities and grasp. LN selected topical KKNT projects and created initiatives including the Batik Center, Smart House, and Traditional Tourism Market. Before developing the program to guarantee its fit for village conditions, she carried field observations. LN's choice to include these initiatives sprang from her awareness of local needs and potential as well as from the application of theory gained from seminars to meet pragmatic problems. **Converging**: LN's convergent learning approach is seen in her capacity to link theory with application. She selects projects with immediate advantages for society and pragmatic used. The Batik Center to market batik goods, the Smart House for educational activities, and the Traditional Tourism Market to boost the local economy, for instance, LN can make judgments depending on observations and the fit of programs to community requirements and develop pragmatic answers to local issues. This demonstrates her capacity for practical application of concepts and theories. **Accommodating**: LN demonstrates an accommodating learning style through her ability to plan, adapt, and collaborate with others. She was involved in various aspects of the program, including creating batik product displays, preparing modules and RPPs, as well as funding and building tourist markets. LN also faces challenges such as looking for donors, teamwork, and the COVID-19 pandemic situation with a positive attitude and looking for alternative solutions. Her ability to adapt to new environments and manage her time well showed her excellence in adaptability and active engagement.

Diverging (Deviation): LN showed an adaptive learning style via her capacity for planning, adjusting, and group projects. She participated in several facets of the initiative, including designing batik product displays, organizing modules and RPPs, and financing and building of tourist markets. LN also deals with issues such searching for donors, working with others, and the COVID-19 pandemic with a cheerful attitude and search for other answers. Her perfection in adaptability and active participation is demonstrated by her capacity to fit new surroundings and well manage her time.

Application inside the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program LN used several learning strategies in the MBKM program to reach the objectives of increasing social awareness and professional competencies: Learning from lectures, one can create and carry out initiatives benefiting the society. Applying ideas and theories into reality to solve issues and directly benefit the community will help to converge. Adapting to difficulties, engaging with different people, and properly allocating time and money help one to be accommodating. Generating ideas and solutions by considering several perspective and getting comments from the team and community helps one to diverge. LN's conclusion reveals that, in the framework of community service, the MBKM program offers a chance to implement several learning approaches. This curriculum lets LN apply academic knowledge practically, adjust to circumstances, and create creative approaches to address challenges. LN overcame obstacles including financing and the COVID-19 epidemic to effectively finish the activities and acquire insightful experience in using intellectual knowledge in the field. This curriculum also provides insight on how academic information may be used to serve the society, thereby enhancing communication skills, problem-solving ability, and analytical capacity.

5. Learning Styles: Individual differences in learning based on the preferences of learners to apply different things learning cycle phase by YA

This study of the learning experience in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in the learning style category is based on an interview with YA:
Assimilating (Concept Absorption): In linguistics, YA exhibits an assimilating learning style driven by a goal to expand linguistic knowledge and grasp of fresh ideas. By means of research carried out under the direction of lecturers at the linguistic study center, YA expanded her grasp of linguistics and integrated the acquired knowledge in class into actual research environments. YA also demonstrate her capacity to absorb and evaluate material in great detail by showing her capacity to investigate and grasp many   linguistic   ideas.
Converging: YA's convergent learning approach is seen in her capacity to translate knowledge and theory into actual application. During her research, YA found and overcome challenges including the COVID-19 epidemic, which compelled a shift in experimental approach from offline to online. Her choices to modify approaches and techniques depending on circumstances and requirements showed her capacity to identify workable answers to challenges faced in the field of research. Furthermore, reflecting her capacity to link theory with experience is her participation in seminars and   training   programs.
Accommodating: Through her capacity to plan, adjust to change, and engage with different people, YA exhibits an accommodating learning style. By developing a disciplined schedule and establishing goals, she overcame obstacles including the pandemic and time management issues. In many facets of the program, including research, instruction and seminars, and activity adaptation, YA also actively participates. Her ability to adapt and cooperate with others shown by his capacity to engage in conversations and program changes involving friends and superiors.
Diverging: YA's capacity to recognize several points of view and create fresh ideas reveals her diverse learning approach. YA keep a notebook to document and assesses advancement and challenges encountered while she participates in conversations and contemplations on the research process and other activities. Her capacity to gather and evaluate comments from managers as well as from personal introspection techniques reveals her capacity to see problems from several perspective and enhance the strategy followed.

Use in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Using several learning approaches in the MBKM program, YA Program aims to improve knowledge and skills by means of Learning strengthening language skills and using ideas gained in lectures in research. Applying pragmatic answers to research problems and linking theory with practice by means of seminars and teaching will help to converge. Adapting to new circumstances and effectively scheduling and managing time will help one to run different initiatives. Diverging: Seeing events from several points of view and creating fresh ideas by means of contemplation and feedback YA's conclusion demonstrates how the MBKM program uses several learning strategies to enable efficient and useful application of academic knowledge. This curriculum supports YA in strengthening her time management abilities, expanding her language competency, and putting theory into use. YA overcame obstacles including time management and the epidemic to finish the activities satisfactorily and get important experience. Though some challenges may occur if the program is performed concurrently with a final project or internship, this program also offers insight on how academic information can be utilized realistically and enhance professional skills.

Discussion
Learning Cycle in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program
The Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program has proven to be a transformative educational platform for students, offering opportunities to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application for students, particularly those in the English Education Study Program at FKIP Universitas Bandar Lampung. Through the integration of real-world

experiences and academic theory, the program fosters the development of essential skills, personal growth, and practical application of knowledge. This direct involvement is described as the Concrete Experience phase of Kolb's Learning Cycle (1984).

The students reported a wide range of experiences, with most engaging in community projects, research activities, and teaching roles, directly addressing the program's goal of blending theory with practical application. A key theme that emerged across these experiences is how the program provided students with opportunities to actively engage with the world outside of the classroom, addressing real-life challenges and community needs.

The students in the program engaged in various real-world activities, each offering a unique set of challenges and opportunities. For instance, VY focused on linguistics research and teaching, gaining direct exposure to academic environments and applying her theoretical knowledge. Similarly, AA was involved in community projects such as developing smart homes, traditional markets, and batik centers, allowing him to engage with the community while utilizing his knowledge in a practical setting. Meanwhile, LN participated in community service projects like the Kricaan Traditional Tourism Market and Batik Center, providing her with the opportunity to apply her academic skills directly to real-world challenges. YA, on the other hand, worked in linguistic research, balancing teaching responsibilities with research activities. These diverse experiences represent the concrete experience phase of Kolb's learning cycle, where students interact with their environment and apply their knowledge in tangible ways.

Following their experiences, the students entered the reflective observation phase, where they took time to introspect and evaluate their activities. For VY, this phase highlighted the importance of self-reflection on new research techniques and the challenges posed by technological issues and online learning. Similarly, AA reflected on his difficulties with funding, team coordination, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced him to adapt to new methods of working. LN also noted challenges such as finding donors and the difficulties in working in a team under pandemic restrictions. However, this reflective phase allowed all participants to recognize the significance of self-evaluation, teamwork, and adaptability in overcoming challenges and making the most of their experiences.

The next step in the learning cycle is abstract conceptualization, where the students turned their reflections into broader concepts and ideas. For VY, this stage helped her realize the importance of data collection and the need for time management in academic and research contexts. She developed an understanding of how the skills gained through linguistic research could be applied to other areas of study. AA, similarly, recognized the connection between academic knowledge from courses like micro-teaching and interpreting and how they could be used effectively in community service projects. LN conceptualized how her field experiences could improve her academic competencies, specifically in applying classroom knowledge to real-life settings. YA also acknowledged the need for flexibility and effective time management to adjust research strategies in response to unforeseen challenges, such as the pandemic.

Finally, in the active experimentation phase, the students began to apply the concepts they had developed into practical solutions. VY used the knowledge gained in research and teaching to create lesson plans, manage classrooms, and adapt to the challenges of the pandemic. She found creative solutions to problems such as online teaching and research methods. AA applied his insights by executing community projects, including setting up batik centers and tourist markets, while also adapting to the constraints imposed by the pandemic. LN developed modules and lesson plans for community-based projects, constantly adjusting her strategies based on feedback from the community. YA applied her knowledge of linguistics and teaching techniques to complete her research projects and reports, adjusting her methods to suit the online environment and managing her time effectively.

The Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program exemplifies an effective learning model, one that integrates theoretical knowledge with practical experience. It highlights how the program serves as an effective bridge between academic theory and fieldwork, fostering growth and preparing students for future challenges. The participants' experiences align with

Kolb's Learning Cycle, demonstrating how direct participation in community-based activities leads to personal and academic growth. Through Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Conceptualization, and Active Experimentation, students like VY, AA, LN, and YA have not only applied their knowledge but have also developed critical skills like problem-solving, time management, and adaptability, which will serve them well in their professional lives.

Learning Styles in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Program

The findings from VY, AA, LN, and YA's experiences in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program illustrate how individuals with different learning styles can apply academic knowledge in practical, real-world settings. These findings align with Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, which categorizes learning into four styles: Assimilating, Converging, Accommodating, and Diverging. According to Kolb (1984), individuals process and apply information differently based on their learning preferences, and this theory offers a framework to understand how participants in the MBKM program approached challenges and developed their skills.

The Assimilating learning style was evident in all participants, who demonstrated an ability to absorb theoretical knowledge and apply it effectively in various contexts. VY, for instance, absorbed linguistic theories and applied them in research, while AA used academic knowledge to design community projects such as the Batik Center and Smart House. LN, too, used field observations to develop practical programs tailored to local needs, and YA applied linguistic research techniques to real-world research challenges. This mirrors Kolb's view that assimilators excel at organizing and synthesizing abstract ideas into comprehensive frameworks, showcasing their ability to deeply understand and apply knowledge in new contexts.

The Converging learning style, which emphasizes applying theory to solve real-world problems, was another prominent feature in the participants' experiences. VY used linguistic theories in her teaching and research, adapting to time constraints and unexpected challenges. AA, similarly, transformed academic knowledge into tangible community service initiatives, such as the Smart House, to address local issues. LN applied her knowledge to enhance the local economy through initiatives like the Traditional Tourism Market, while YA adapted her research techniques to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Kolb, convergent learners are solution-oriented and excel in applying theoretical knowledge to practical problems, and these examples align with that definition.

Accommodating learners, who excel in flexibility and collaboration, were also well-represented in the MBKM program. VY's ability to adapt to new research and teaching environments demonstrated her accommodating style, while AA's ability to work with different stakeholders and modify his projects to meet local needs highlighted his flexibility. LN faced several challenges, including funding issues and the pandemic, but adapted by seeking alternative solutions and collaborating with others. YA demonstrated her accommodating style by managing time constraints effectively and working closely with peers and mentors. Kolb suggests that accommodators thrive in experiential tasks that require flexibility and hands-on learning, a trait that all four participants displayed.

Finally, the Diverging learning style, characterized by reflection and the generation of creative solutions, was evident in all participants. VY, for example, creatively adapted to the online research environment during the pandemic. AA, when designing community projects, sought feedback from the community to ensure the projects met their needs. LN reflected on feedback from her team to improve her initiatives, and YA kept a detailed logbook to assess challenges and refine her approach. Divergent learners, as Kolb suggests, excel in situations that require creativity, reflection, and consideration of multiple perspectives, all of which were crucial in the MBKM program.

The MBKM program demonstrated the value of accommodating various learning styles, as it enabled students to integrate academic knowledge with practical, real-world experiences. The program's flexibility allowed participants to adapt their learning styles to overcome challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, time management issues, and

funding constraints. By combining Assimilating, Converging, Accommodating, and Diverging styles, participants were able to enhance their problem-solving, adaptability, and collaboration skills. These experiences underline the importance of experiential learning, as proposed by Kolb's theory, which emphasizes the continuous cycle of experience, reflection, thinking, and application. The MBKM program exemplifies how different learning styles can contribute to the personal and professional growth of students, preparing them for complex challenges in both academic and professional environments.

Conclusion

The results of this study emphasize, from a Learning Cycle and Learning Style perspective, the experiences of students engaged in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in the English Education Study Program at FKIP Universitas Bandar Lampung. Four students AA, LN, VY, and YA shared experiences that clearly revealed how they applied the learning cycle and learning styles during the program. Regarding the Learning Cycle, every four of the four pupils displayed consistent stages: Concrete Experience, Reflective Observation, Abstract Idealization, and Active Experimentation. They participated actively in real-world events, thought back on them, created fresh ideas based on their observations, and then put these ideas to use in useful contexts. These encounters improved their practical abilities including time management, problem-solving, and adaptation to obstacles including those presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore augmenting their knowledge of academic theories. Moreover, the pupils showed variations in their learning styles, which reflected personal preferences in using several phases of the learning process. VY, for example, demonstrated assimilation and convergent learning methods in which she assimilated and utilized fresh knowledge with great effectiveness. AA excelled in Diverging and Accommodating learning styles, giving hands-on experiences and introspection top priority in order to reach creative and adaptive answers. LN and YA also showed different ways of learning, mixing in-depth thought with the application of ideas in practical contexts. This study shows generally that the MBKM program effectively gave students the chance to combine theoretical knowledge with practical field experiences. By use of several learning cycles and approaches, students were able to acquire pertinent skills and equip themselves to meet demands of the actual world. This encounter emphasizes the need of assessment and modification in reaching best results and the possibility of the MBKM program to improve the quality of higher education in Indonesia.

Acknowledgement

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