Building HR Character With an Insight to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Through The Role of 'Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka' (MBKM)

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Abstract. Currently, not only intelligent human resources are needed, but also human resources with character, so that improving the quality of education is the key to Indonesia's success and success in the future. Building the character of quality human resources with a sustainable development perspective will be able to face increasingly fierce world competition and disruption in various fields. That is why universities must have the courage to set targets, the graduates produced are guaranteed to be competitive at regional and global levels by implementing the Merdeka learning program at the Merdeka campus to face challenges in the future. The independent learning policy at the Deka campus which supports sustainable development goals will lead to the formation of superior human resource characters who are always ready to face any changes in the environment. The Independent Campus Learning Policy plays a role in shaping the character of human resources who are aware of environmental, social and economic issues advocated for by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By giving universities the freedom to customize the curriculum, students can engage in learning that is relevant to the challenges of sustainable development. The method used in this research is quantitative using PLS software. The results of this research are that the MBKM program can moderate the SDGs with human resources with character.

Keywords: Building character, MBKM, Sustainable development goals

1   Introduction

In an effort to improve the quality of human resources, one of the supporting aspects is building the character of human resources. With human resources with character, other

aspects that support and also support the formation of quality and adequate human resources, both technical and non-technical, will have more opportunities to be realized. On the other hand, human resources who are only skilled but do not have strong character will not be enough to contribute to efforts to advance the country. Of course, with strong character, Indonesian people will have a positive spirit and always work smartly, hard and a totality that is able to develop a spirit of mutual cooperation in mobilizing all its potential, to bring progress and glory to the country by prioritizing sustainable development. So, the aspect of building human resource character is important, especially since it can be started from an early age through education. Education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to have religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state (8).

The function of Higher Education is 1) to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to make the nation's life more intelligent; 2) develop an academic community that is innovative, responsive, creative, skilled, competitive and cooperative through the implementation of the Tridharma; and 3) develop Science and Technology by paying attention to and applying Humanities values. Several aspects can support the formation of valuable HR character, including aspects of sustainable development goals. Building sustainability is carried out in the process of optimizing existing resources to make them more valuable and provide positive outcomes in developing attitudes, mentality and insight into a strong character, including the character of human resources. Where HR not only has insightful knowledge and expertise but is balanced with emotional and spiritual intelligence so that they are caring, critical of every change and ready to adapt by always updating their competencies (2). Another aspect is the role of government policy through the Independent Campus Learning Program (MBKM).

Likewise, learning in the Semarang State University (Unnes) environment tries to provide a balance of strengthening competence and strengthening emotional and spiritual intelligence in accordance with the demands of the labor market where in the current era there are still many who are not yet literate in the use of information and technology, the ability to build work teams is still low, Competency certification for graduates is still limited so other skills that can support competence are felt to be lacking, social sensitivity in organizations or the world of work is still low so it seems more self-serving. Meanwhile, various efforts have been made in various study program units, such as the implemented curriculum which is based on workforce needs, adequate learning facilities have been provided, discipline in the academic process is maintained and quality controlled by academic quality assurance institutions, and the ease of using various literacy access is not yet complete. used in learning. Thus, these efforts have not been able to fully shape graduates into human resources with character (Fadillah 2023).

As a PTNBH tertiary institution where graduates must be absorbed by the world of work, UNNES needs to continue to improve competence and strengthen emotional and spiritual intelligence in accordance with labor market regulations, because there are still many who are not yet literate in the use of information and technology, and their ability

to build teams is still low. work, competency certification for graduates is still limited so it is felt that it is still lacking, social sensitivity in organizations or the world of work is still low.

2   Literature Review

2.1   Building Character

Building character is a fundamental aspect of education and personal development that involves nurturing virtues such as responsibility, empathy, integrity, and perseverance. It is essential for preparing individuals to face the challenges of life and contribute positively to society. Character education has gained significant attention in recent years as educators and policymakers recognize its role in fostering well-rounded individuals capable of critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and effective communication (12). According to a study by Lee and Taylor (10), character development in schools is linked to improved academic performance, reduced behavioral problems, and enhanced social skills. Schools and educational institutions can implement character education through various approaches, including integrating character-focused curricula, modeling positive behavior, and providing opportunities for students to engage in community service and collaborative projects (13). Moreover, character building is closely aligned with global educational goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and fostering peaceful, just, and inclusive societies (20). Overall, character education is a crucial element in shaping individuals who are not only knowledgeable but also ethical and socially responsible.

Recent research further emphasizes the importance of character education in higher education institutions. For instance, incorporating emotional intelligence into university curricula not only enhances students' competencies but also prepares them to meet the demands of the modern workforce (24). Similarly, Wahyuni and Sutrisno (2021) demonstrated the positive impact of integrating spiritual intelligence in higher education settings, contributing to students' holistic development. Additionally, Arifin and Kurniasih (1) discussed the role of curriculum design in strengthening soft skills, such as teamwork and communication, which are essential components of character education . Highlighted the challenges and solutions for developing teamwork skills among university students, addressing the gap between education and workforce needs (4).

Furthermore, enhancing social sensitivity in educational environments has been shown to promote a more collaborative and empathetic workforce (6) . The integration of character education into academic quality assurance processes also plays a vital role in maintaining educational standards and improving graduate outcomes (16).

2.2   MBKM

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) initiative is a transformative educational policy introduced by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture in 2020, aimed at reshaping higher education to better prepare students for the demands of the 21st century. MBKM seeks to provide students with greater autonomy and flexibility in their learning paths by allowing them to gain practical experience outside the traditional classroom setting (5). This program encourages universities to offer diverse learning opportunities, including internships, community service, student exchanges, research projects, and entrepreneurship programs. By participating in these activities, students can develop critical skills such as problem-solving, communication, and adaptability, which are essential for thriving in a rapidly changing world (23). Moreover, MBKM aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by promoting inclusive and equitable quality education and fostering lifelong learning opportunities for all (9). Despite the challenges in implementation, such as the need for curriculum adjustments and collaboration with external partners, the MBKM initiative represents a significant step toward enhancing the relevance and quality of Indonesian higher education (23).

One of the key aspects of MBKM is its focus on bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-world application. MBKM facilitates experiential learning, enabling students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, thus enhancing their readiness for the workforce (14) . This experiential approach not only boosts employability but also fosters innovation and creativity, as students engage in problem-solving activities that mirror actual workplace challenges (25) .

Furthermore, the MBKM program encourages cross-disciplinary learning and collaboration, the importance of interdisciplinary projects that allow students to work across different fields, thereby broadening their perspectives and enhancing collaborative skills (17) . Students involved in interdisciplinary projects exhibit improved communication skills and a greater ability to adapt to diverse working environments (22).

The initiative also promotes the development of entrepreneurial skills, entrepreneurship programs under MBKM have led to a significant increase in student-led startups and innovation-driven projects . This entrepreneurial focus not only supports individual career growth but also contributes to the broader economic development by fostering a new generation of entrepreneurs who can drive change and innovation in their communities (7).

Despite these positive outcomes, the implementation of MBKM faces several challenges. Universities must navigate curriculum adjustments and establish partnerships with industries and communities to fully realize the program's potential . This requires a collaborative effort from all stakeholders, including educators, policymakers, and industry leaders, to ensure that the MBKM initiative is effectively integrated into the educational landscape (18).

2.3   SDGs

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a collection of 17 global objectives set by the United Nations in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They aim to address critical global issues such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice, fostering sustainable economic growth while ensuring social equity and environmental protection. These goals are designed to be universal and interdependent, recognizing that progress in one area can influence outcomes in others, and emphasize the importance of collaboration among governments, businesses, civil society, and individuals. Recent research highlights the progress and challenges in implementing the SDGs. For instance, despite advancements in areas like poverty reduction and health improvements, challenges remain in achieving goals related to climate action and inequality (19). The SDGs provide a comprehensive framework for aligning global efforts to ensure a sustainable and equitable future for all, emphasizing the need for integrated and inclusive approaches to development (27).

A significant aspect of the SDGs is their emphasis on education as a catalyst for sustainable development. Education plays a pivotal role in empowering individuals and communities to contribute to achieving the SDGs by promoting awareness and understanding of sustainable practices . Educational institutions must integrate SDG-focused curricula to prepare students to address complex global challenges effectively (28). Furthermore, the SDGs stress the importance of gender equality and women's empowerment as crucial components of sustainable development. Achieving gender equality not only improves social and economic outcomes but also accelerates progress across other SDGs by enhancing women's participation in decision-making processes . This interlinkage underscores the SDGs' holistic approach, where advancements in one area can drive positive changes in others (15).

Climate action, a critical SDG, remains one of the most challenging areas, with many countries struggling to meet their emission reduction targets. The need for innovative strategies and international cooperation to combat climate change effectively, highlighting that technology and policy innovations are essential to achieving meaningful progress . They also note that collaboration between governments, private sectors, and communities is vital in developing and implementing sustainable solutions (26). The SDGs also focus on reducing inequalities within and among countries. Addressing disparities in income, education, and access to resources is fundamental to achieving sustainable development. They stress the importance of targeted policies and inclusive economic growth to ensure that no one is left behind (21) .

Despite these efforts, challenges persist in mobilizing the necessary resources and political will to achieve the SDGs. Financial constraints and competing priorities often hinder the implementation of SDG-related initiatives. They call for increased investment in sustainable development projects and enhanced partnerships among stakeholders to overcome these barriers (11).

3   Method

This research carries out empirical testing of influencing factors derived from institutional theory, so it is quantitative research. The data used in this research is primary data. The data collection technique uses a questionnaire prepared based on indicators of the variables studied. Distribution of questionnaires was carried out both directly and online (google form). The research respondents were all students who had taken the MBKM program. This is related to the focus point of this research on HR with character which is part of the graduates produced in accordance with the needs and desires of the HR market.

The population of this research is Unnes students who have participated in the MBKM program in the odd semester of 2023, a total of 6492 people. The reason why students were chosen was because they were involved and experienced the MBKM program directly. Due to limited time and costs, the sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a degree of 5 percent, namely 377 students who had participated in the MBKM program. Samples were taken proportionally from 9 faculties owned by Semarang State University.

This research uses the regression method, a statistical analysis technique used to understand the relationship between two or more variables. The main goal of regression is to build a model that can predict the value of a dependent variable (response) based on one or more independent variables (predictor). In simple linear regression, the model is built with a straight line that best fits the data, whereas in multiple linear regression, more than one predictor variable is used. Regression not only helps in prediction, but also in understanding the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables.

4   Result and Analysis

4.1   Reliability and Validity

To verify the validity in this study, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value was used, and a threshold of 0.50 was applied. According to Table 1, all variables have AVE values greater than 0.50, indicating that all indicators and variables are considered valid. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with all constructs showing good reliability as their values are above 0.70.

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE
Building character	0,826	0,712
MBKM	0,712	0,617

Sustainable Development Goals	0,819	0,601

4.2   Effect Size

F2 for Effect Size is used to know that endo-gene variables have an effect on exogenous latent variables. If the value of f2>0 then a latent variable can be said to have a sufficient effect size, but when f2<0 then a latent variable can be said to not have a sufficient effect size, the criteria are (3):

Tabel 2. Effect Size Criteria

Criteria	Explanation
0,00 – 0,20	Weak
0,21 – 0,50	Low
0,51 – 1,00	Medium
> 1,00	High

Tabel 3. Effect Size

Impact	Effect Size	Category
Building character → SDGs	0,524	Weak
MBKM → SDGs	0,418	Low

A hypothesis is accepted when the significance level is 0.05, or the t-value exceeds the critical value of 1.96. The results showed that the t-statistics for a 0.05 significance level was 1.96. Testing the relationships between constructs indicated that all hypotheses were accepted.

Tabel 4. Structural Model

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Value	Significant Level
Building character → SDGs	0,370	7,653	0,000	Significant
MBKM → SDGs	0,240	5,140	0,000	Significant

5   Conclusion

The Independent Learning-Free Campus (MBKM) policy has an important role in supporting sustainable development and achieving the goals of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By providing equality in synchronization, MBKM allows students

to be involved in various learning activities outside campus such as internships, research, and social projects. This engagement provides students with the opportunity to understand and address environmental, social, and economic issues directly, as well as apply academic knowledge in real-world contexts. This approach ensures that students not only gain practical understanding but also contribute to real solutions to global challenges, thereby helping to advance the SDGs.

In addition, collaboration facilitated by MBKM between universities, industry and society plays a key role in creating innovative and sustainable solutions. Through the MBKM program, various parties can work together to develop projects that focus on sustainability, improving the quality of life and protecting the environment. This collaboration not only enriches students' learning experiences but also strengthens the synergy between academics and practitioners in finding solutions to global issues. Therefore, MBKM encourages the creation of a future generation of leaders who have broad insight, practical skills and commitment to sustainable development.

Lastly, the MBKM policy also plays a role in ensuring that college graduates are better absorbed by the business world. Through involvement in internships and real projects, students gain hands-on experience and skills relevant to industry needs. This increases their work readiness, makes them more competitive in the labor market, and eases the transition from education to productive work. In this way, MBKM not only contributes to sustainable development and achieving the SDGs, but also ensures that college graduates are ready to contribute effectively to the business world, support economic growth, and improve societal welfare.

6   Reference

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