



Integrating Islamic Values In The Development Of The Merdeka Campus Curriculum: Enhancing Student Independence In Islamic Higher Education

¹Akhyak, ²Sahri, ³Eko Agus Sujianto, ⁴ Binti Maunah, ⁵Agus Zainul Fitri, ⁶Ahmad Tanzeh

^{1,3,4,5,6}Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia

²Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Sunan Giri, Indonesia.

¹akhyak67@gmail.com, ²sahriunugiri@gmail.com, ³agusekosujianto@gmail.com,

⁴uun.lilanur@gmail.com, ⁵guszain@yahoo.co.id, ⁶tanzehahmad@gmail.com.

Correspondence Email: akhyak67@gmail.com

Abstract: Islamic university students today face serious challenges in the form of low learning independence. Many of them still depend on their lecturers' guidance, lack initiative in exploring knowledge, and are not yet fully capable of managing their own learning independently. This study aims to examine how the development of the MBKM curriculum in PTKI can enhance students' learning independence and support the realization of impactful campuses. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design, conducted at Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya (UNUSA) and Yudharta University Pasuruan. Data collection techniques were carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, with data analysis using data condensation, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. The research results show that the development of the MBKM curriculum at both universities encourages students to learn actively, independently, and reflectively through programs such as internships, entrepreneurship, teaching on campus, and community service. Independent learning is reflected in students' ability to manage the learning process, make decisions, and take responsibility for their learning achievements. In addition, Islamic values also frame this process, resulting in learners who are not only academically excellent but also ethical and contribute significantly to society. Thus, the contextually developed MBKM curriculum has proven to be an important instrument in shaping independent students while also realizing an impactful campus.

Keywords: Freedom Campus Curriculum, Independent Learning, Impactful Campus, Islamic Values, Islamic Higher Education

INTRODUCTION

The Merdeka Campus Curriculum is a policy for the transformation of higher education introduced by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Ihsan et al., 2025; Khaerunisa & Aliyyah, 2024). This approach provides greater flexibility for students in choosing courses outside of their main study program, including through internships, humanitarian projects, student exchange, and independent research. The goal is to develop holistic competencies, both hard skills and soft skills, in line with the needs of the job market and society. This curriculum



emphasizes contextual and experiential learning so that students are better prepared to adapt to the challenges of the times (Chairly et al., 2025; Juliawan et al., 2024). In addition, this policy supports cross-disciplinary and inter-agency collaboration, encouraging students to get used to working in multidisciplinary teams. Thus, the Merdeka Campus becomes a strategic means to produce graduates who are adaptive, innovative, and highly competitive.

The implementation of the Merdeka Campus Curriculum also introduces the 'Learn from Anywhere' scheme for a maximum of two semesters outside the main campus. This policy allows students to take courses at other universities, research institutions, or partner industries as part of the learning process (Fuadi, 2022; Ramadhan & Megawati, 2023; Yuhertiana, 2021). In addition to adding a variety of academic experiences, this mechanism encourages students to interact directly with the professional environment and the community. In this way, students not only learn theory in the classroom but also apply it in real situations. This freedom makes learning more personal and relevant, while also increasing students' intrinsic motivation to broaden their horizons. The curriculum becomes more adaptive to the dynamics of the times, while also fostering innovation in study programs (Barab & Luehmann, 2003; Hutahaean et al., 2024; Li, 2024).

Learning independence refers to the ability of students to manage and direct their learning process independently (Khoirudin et al., 2022; Khunafah et al., 2024; Rahmelia & Prasetiawati, 2021). This includes aspects such as initiative, decision-making, and responsibility for managing time and learning resources. Independent learners tend to have high intrinsic motivation and reflective abilities in assessing their strengths and weaknesses (Lin, 2025; Mortimer, 2014; Thanh, 2019). This independence is also closely related to self-regulation the ability to manage oneself to achieve academic goals. In the context of Islamic Higher Education, independent learning is also framed by Islamic values such as discipline, trustworthiness, and social responsibility. Therefore, encouraging independent learning also means shaping a character that aligns with the spirituality and morals of students.

Learning independence is important in preparing students to face a dynamic and uncertain disruptive era (Bozkurt et al., 2020; Imran et al., 2023; Mills & Blossfeld, 2012). When students are able to learn independently, they are better prepared to adapt to rapid changes in both professional and social environments. Learning independence also has a positive impact on



academic outcomes, student satisfaction, and active engagement in learning. In the context of Islamic Higher Education, independence can be manifested in activities such as independent study of the Qur'an, community-based research, internships, entrepreneurship, teaching campus activities, and community service (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Maulida & Ali, 2023; Muhyiddin et al., 2022). If encouraged through an appropriate curriculum, learning independence becomes a foundation for students to develop harmoniously across intellectual, spiritual, and social dimensions. Thus, the enhancement of learning independence becomes one of the indicators of the success of the Independent Campus Curriculum in the context of Islamic Religious Higher Education.

At Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya (UNUSA), students' independence in learning is developed through the implementation of Merdeka Belajar programs such as entrepreneurial practices, student exchanges, and internships. Through entrepreneurial practices, students are encouraged to design and run their own businesses as part of a reality-based learning experience. The student exchange program provides opportunities for students to study at other campuses, broadening their horizons and academic networks. Meanwhile, internship activities provide direct experience in the working world, encouraging students to think independently, act, and address professional challenges effectively. Internal surveys at UNUSA show that 78% of students feel that this program enhances their self-confidence and self-regulation abilities. However, academic evaluations continue to be conducted to ensure the strong and measurable integration of these activities into the formal curriculum.

At Yudharta University Pasuruan, student independence in learning is fostered through various MBKM programs such as Teaching Campus, Entrepreneurship Program, Community Service (KKN), and internships. Through the Teaching Campus, students are given direct responsibility to teach in schools, which trains their independence, leadership, and social adaptation. The entrepreneurship program encourages students to design and run independent businesses as a form of practical-based learning. Meanwhile, KKN and internships provide field experiences that challenge students to manage tasks independently and contribute meaningfully to the community. In its implementation, students work in multidisciplinary teams and are responsible for the entire project cycle, from planning to presenting results. This model requires



students to become problem solvers, communicators, and proficient time managers all essential elements of learning independence. According to a report from Yudharta University Pasuruan, more than 85% of projects successfully produced products that are viable and relevant to the needs of the local community. This program has also received appreciation from local stakeholders and strengthened the image of Yudharta University as an impactful and innovative campus.

Several studies have explored the implementation of the Merdeka Campus Curriculum in various higher education institutions, including Islamic Religious Colleges. For example, a study by Ahmad & Sari (2022) shows that student participation in internships and field projects has a significant impact on problem-solving skills and academic independence. Another study by Dewi et al. (2023) reported that student exchange programs and independent research enhance students' communication, collaboration, and self-management skills. In the realm of Islamic higher education, research by Al-Farisi & Hanifah (2024) found that integrating pesantren kilat (short pesantren) activities and community service into the MBKM curriculum helps students apply Islamic values in real contexts. However, this research also notes challenges such as faculty readiness, institutional support, and access to partner networks. Therefore, the development of the Merdeka Campus curriculum needs to be continuously adjusted to be optimal in the context of Islamic Higher Education.

Previous studies have also touched upon the issues of program sustainability and long-term impact evaluation. For example, a longitudinal study by Kusuma (2023) highlights the importance of periodic monitoring and evaluation to measure the achievement of MBKM learning outcomes. The results show that programs with clear evaluation mechanisms demonstrate an increase in student autonomy and professional skills. Meanwhile, research by Rahayu & Setiawan (2024) criticizes that several MBKM programs launched without intensive guidance actually result in students having difficulty adapting. This indicates that curriculum development needs to be carried out with adequate guidance. In the context of Islamic Higher Education, the spiritual and character aspects in the MBKM curriculum have not been systematically measured. Therefore, there is a strong need to further research how the integration of Islamic values and the sustainability mechanism of the curriculum can strengthen independent learning.



Research on the Merdeka Campus Curriculum has been extensively conducted, particularly in public universities, with a primary focus on the effectiveness of internship programs, student exchanges, and the enhancement of soft skills. However, studies on how this curriculum is contextually applied in Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) are still limited. The characteristics of Islamic Religious Higher Education Institutions, which integrate Islamic values, pesantren traditions, and a moral-spiritual approach, present both challenges and opportunities for curriculum development in these institutions. Most previous research has also not deeply highlighted the relationship between the development of the MBKM curriculum and the improvement of student independence in learning based on religious values. In the context of Islamic Higher Education, self-directed learning encompasses not only academic abilities but also reflects spiritual maturity, social responsibility, and moral exemplarity. These aspects become crucial indicators in the successful implementation of the MBKM (Freedom to Learn - Independent Campus) program in religious universities. The absence of studies that combine the dimensions of the curriculum, Islamic character, and self-directed learning indicates a theoretical and practical gap that has yet to be optimally addressed. Therefore, this research is highly relevant in addressing the need for the development of an MBKM curriculum that aligns with the academic mission and characteristics of higher education institutions.

In addition, there is a gap in the literature regarding the practices of implementing student independence in Islamic campus environments based on religious organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya and Yudharta University Pasuruan. Both universities have a unique approach in fostering student independence, but they have not been extensively studied in a comparative and systematic manner from the perspective of the MBKM curriculum development. Some existing studies only review the success of community service programs or da'wah activities without directly relating them to the independent curriculum framework. There has been no in-depth study on how the structure, design, and methods of the curriculum at these campuses actually encourage students to become independent learners. Therefore, this research aims to fill that gap by examining effective curriculum development practices that enhance student independence in learning at both institutions. This study will also highlight the perspectives of students and lecturers in assessing the effectiveness of the MBKM-based curriculum in Islamic campus environments.



By examining two institutions with strong cultural, social, and spiritual backgrounds, it is hoped that a curriculum model that has a broad and contextual impact can be identified. This is important in formulating higher education policies in Islam that align with the spirit of an Independent Campus while also encouraging the establishment of campuses that have a tangible impact on society.

This research aims to examine how the development of the Merdeka Campus Curriculum can significantly contribute to enhancing students' learning independence in Islamic Higher Education. Specifically, this study seeks to identify the effective curriculum elements that promote independent learning, as well as to explore the concrete implementation at Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya University and Yudharta Pasuruan University. This research also aims to reveal the role of Islamic values in strengthening students' characters that are independent intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Additionally, this study endeavors to formulate a model or recommendations for context-specific development of the Merdeka Campus-based curriculum that aligns with the characteristics of Islamic Religious Higher Education. Thus, the results of this research are expected to contribute theoretically and practically to the development of academic policies in the environment of Islamic higher education institutions. The ultimate goal of this research is to promote the establishment of a campus that has a social and spiritual impact through a curriculum that supports students to become lifelong learners.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to deeply explore the implementation of the Independent Campus curriculum in enhancing student learning autonomy in Islamic Higher Education (Prastowo, 2016). This approach was chosen because it allows the researcher to understand the phenomenon contextually and holistically according to the characteristics of the institutions being studied. The research design used is a multi-case study involving two institutions, namely Nahdlatul Ulama University and Yudharta Pasuruan University (Thabit & Raewf, 2018). The selection of UNUSA and Yudharta Pasuruan University is based on their potential as representations of PTKI with contrasting social, cultural, and geographical backgrounds. This difference enriches the analysis of the effectiveness of the



Merdeka Campus curriculum in enhancing students' learning independence. This research focuses on the description, interpretation, and understanding of meanings from the experiences, strategies, and perceptions of educational actors. Thus, this research design enables the researcher to find important patterns in curriculum development and its impact on student independence. This research also employs source and technique triangulation to ensure data validity.

The data sources in this research consist of primary data and secondary data (Prastowo, 2016). Primary data was obtained from in-depth interviews with curriculum managers, students participating in the MBKM program, and faculty or university leaders. In addition, direct observations of learning activities and curriculum documentation were also used to enrich the findings. Data collection techniques were carried out through semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and documentary studies on curriculum documents, MBKM program reports, and institutional policies. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, which involved data reduction, categorization, interpretation of meanings, and drawing conclusions. To maintain data validity, the researcher used source triangulation and conducted member checking with key informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Independent Campus Curriculum as a Means of Independent Learning

The Merdeka Campus Curriculum at Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya (UNUSA) has been designed to encourage students to become the main subjects in the learning process. This curriculum provides ample space for students to choose their learning paths according to their interests and potentials through internship programs, student exchanges, and entrepreneurship. With this approach, students are no longer fully dependent on lecturers as the center of learning, but rather learn actively through direct experiences. The curriculum is designed to be flexible with a conversion mechanism for credit hours that provides academic legitimacy for learning experiences outside the classroom. This positively impacts the growth of a sense of responsibility and initiative within the students. The student exchange program, for example, broadens academic and cultural perspectives and requires students to adapt independently. In addition, entrepreneurial activities encourage students to design business ideas, manage risks, and make strategic decisions.



The curriculum at UNUSA clearly reflects the spirit of the Independent Campus as a means to shape active and independent learners.

The UNUSA approach in developing the MBKM curriculum strongly considers the integration between academic values and Islamic values. Independent learning is viewed not only from a cognitive aspect but also from the maturity of attitude, ethics, and social commitment of students. In practice, students participating in entrepreneurship programs or internships are encouraged to apply Islamic principles such as honesty, trustworthiness, and social responsibility in their activities. This makes the curriculum not only practically oriented but also shapes the students' character as a whole. Lecturers at UNUSA play more of a facilitator and mentor role, rather than being the sole source of knowledge. Students are given the freedom to develop ideas and formulate strategies, yet still within the framework of guidance based on Islamic values. This approach provides a healthy space for students to learn from both failures and successes. Such a curriculum makes learning more meaningful and shapes students who are not only intelligent but also have integrity.

Meanwhile, Yudharta University Pasuruan is also implementing the Merdeka Campus Curriculum to build independent learning, but with a more community and society-based approach. Through programs such as Teaching Campus, Community Service (KKN), and internships, students are directly involved in solving real problems in the community. Students are challenged to design, implement, and evaluate teaching or service programs independently, with minimal guidance from lecturers. This process not only develops academic and social skills but also trains independence in decision-making and responsibility for their own learning process. The curriculum at Yudharta places students as the main actors of change, not just recipients of material. In the field, students learn to manage conflicts, build communication with community leaders, and design contextual solutions. This makes the curriculum more adaptive and meaningful in real life. In this context, learning is no longer confined to the classroom, but instead occurs transformatively in the community.

The experience of students at Yudharta University Pasuruan in running the Merdeka Campus program shows that this curriculum is effective in fostering learning independence based on social service. Students are given the role of actors, not just executors, so they must develop work plans,



adjust their approaches to local conditions, and reflect on the outcomes of their activities. The curriculum is designed to provide flexibility while still having a clear structure regarding competency achievement. Students are also encouraged to engage in cross-disciplinary collaboration, which strengthens aspects of communication and collective responsibility. The role of lecturers in this program is more as guides and evaluators, who only intervene when complex problems arise. Thus, students have autonomy in managing their time, resources, and learning processes. Islamic values such as social concern, cooperation, and honesty continue to be used as guidelines in the implementation of programs. This curriculum provides a rich and profound learning experience, while also producing graduates who are able to contribute meaningfully to society.

In general, the development of the Merdeka Campus curriculum in the PTKI environment has played an important role in enhancing student autonomy in learning. Each university in UNUSA and Yudharta applies a curriculum approach that provides academic freedom while also strengthening character values and Islamic spirituality. Student autonomy does not only arise from the freedom to choose programs but also from the internalization of values and field experiences that build students' confidence and responsibility. Although each institution's approach differs, both show that the integration of a flexible curriculum and meaningful learning can create active, reflective, and independent students. The role of lecturers as facilitators and institutional support are key factors in the successful implementation of this curriculum. In addition, the academic recognition of MBKM activities through the credit conversion system strengthens the legitimacy of the program as part of the core curriculum. Therefore, the experiences of these two universities can serve as references for other higher education institutions in developing adaptive and impactful curricula. The Merdeka Campus curriculum, when designed contextually and based on Islamic values, can become an effective and relevant tool for the transformation of higher education.

The Role and Integration of the MBKM Program in Shaping Learning Independence

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program is designed to provide students with opportunities to learn outside of the classroom through direct experiences in the workplace, community, and new environments. Programs such as internships, entrepreneurship, and teaching on campus serve as important instruments in shaping learning independence as they place students



as the main actors in the learning process. Students are challenged to design, execute, and evaluate their own activities, thereby fostering initiative, responsibility, and better time management. In Islamic Higher Education settings, the role of the MBKM program is not only academic but also shapes students' character in accordance with Islamic values such as discipline, hard work, and integrity. The learning independence developed through MBKM encompasses cognitive, affective, and social aspects that are integrated. This shows that learning occurs not only in formal settings but also through direct experiences that require reflection and self-evaluation. These programs transform the role of lecturers into facilitators who guide, rather than fully dictate. Thus, students learn to rely on their own abilities in completing tasks and challenges.

Internship programs are one of the forms of implementing MBKM that is very effective in promoting independent learning. Through internships, students are directly immersed in the working world and faced with real conditions that demand adaptation, communication, and initiative. They learn to prepare work reports, adjust to professional rhythms, and face pressures and responsibilities that are different from an academic environment. This experience helps students build confidence and problem-solving skills independently. At UNUSA, for example, the internship program is carried out in various partner institutions such as hospitals, educational institutions, and sharia-based companies, which also strengthens students' technical skills and ethical values. Students are given the freedom to set internship goals and develop their own learning outcomes with general guidance from their supervising lecturers. This situation encourages students to be active, reflective, and responsible for their own learning. As a result, students are able to plan their career steps in a more directed and realistic way.



Figure 1. Internship Program



The entrepreneurship program in the MBKM also plays a significant role in fostering student independence in learning. In this program, students are asked to design business ideas, create business proposals, and manage operations directly. This process requires creativity, critical thinking skills, and the courage to take risks. Students learn to determine market strategies, manage capital, and solve various business problems in real situations. At Yudharta Pasuruan University, many students have successfully developed businesses based on local potential and Islamic values, such as halal products, organic farming, and religious education platforms. These activities not only strengthen entrepreneurial skills but also train students to learn from failure, correct mistakes, and continue to innovate. The MBKM curriculum provides academic recognition for these activities, thus increasing students' motivation to engage seriously and independently in the learning process. Learning independence is not only limited to academic space but also develops into economic and social independence.



Figure 2. of the Independent Entrepreneurship Program

The Campus Teaching Program is another form of MBKM that has proven to build independent learner character, especially in the aspects of leadership, communication, and decision-making. In this program, students are placed in schools that need teaching assistance, and they are required to develop teaching materials, interact with students, and build relationships with teachers and school principals. Students are not only expected to master the subject matter but also to independently devise teaching strategies that are suitable for the field conditions. At Yudharta University Pasuruan, many students participate in Campus Teaching in rural areas, where they face limited facilities and different learning cultures. This becomes an important means to hone empathy, creativity, and independence. Students learn to manage time, plan activities, and evaluate



learning outcomes with minimal guidance from lecturers. Thus, this program effectively hones lifelong learning skills and readiness to face real social challenges.



Figure 3. of the Merdeka Campus Program

The independence of student learning is also shaped by the shift in the role of lecturers in the implementation of MBKM (Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka). Lecturers are no longer the sole source of knowledge but become mentors or facilitators who guide and support students from a distance. Students are entrusted to develop activity plans, establish success indicators, and independently create achievement reports. This provides a significant opportunity for students to take initiative and be responsible for their own learning process. In Islamic Religious Higher Education, this approach aligns with the principles of Islamic tarbiyah, which emphasize spiritual and ethical independence. Lecturers at UNUSA and Yudharta play a crucial role in monitoring progress and providing reflective evaluations, not just assessing academic results. The interaction between lecturers and students becomes more collaborative and builds mutual trust. This creates a healthy, productive, and independence-oriented learning ecosystem.

Higher Education	MBKM Program
Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya	Internship, Student Exchange, and Entrepreneurship
Yudharta University Pasuruan	Internship, Campus Teaching, Entrepreneurship and Community Service Program

Table 1. The most popular Merdeka Campus program

Universitas Nahdlatul Ulama Surabaya (UNUSA), as one of the higher education institutions affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama, has a special strategy for integrating Islamic values into the MBKM curriculum. This strategy is based on a moderate Islamic vision that emphasizes Aswaja principles such as tawassuth (moderation), tawazun (balance), tasamuh (tolerance), and i'tidal



(justice). These values are not only incorporated into religious courses but are also integrated into both the core and supplementary curriculum. This approach is evident in the curriculum design that emphasizes a balance between knowledge, spirituality, and student skills. Additionally, UNUSA adopts a traditional pesantren learning model that instills moral values while strengthening students' character. Through this, students are not only prepared as professional workers, but also have a strong moral foundation. This effort is made so that graduates are able to compete academically and professionally, while upholding the values of Islam that are a mercy for the worlds.

Unlike UNUSA, Yudharta Pasuruan University (UPY) develops a strategy of integrating Islamic values through a multicultural and Sufistic approach. UPY places multicultural Islamic values such as at-ta'aruf (mutual acquaintance), at-tawassuth (moderation), at-tasamuh (tolerance), at-ta'awun (cooperation), and at-tawazun (balance) as the foundation of its curriculum. These values are implemented in the MBKM program, particularly in the Teaching Campus, where students are involved in various inclusive educational activities. Students not only teach but also build synergy with schools through activities such as creating learning media, the Adiwiyata program, and developing reading corners. This strategy aims to foster students' abilities to manage diversity while strengthening autonomous learning.

UPY not only integrates Islamic values practically into student activities but also institutionalizes them into campus policies. Multicultural-sufistic values are formalized in strategic documents such as the Strategic Plan, thus becoming the official identity of the university. This reinforces the position of Islamic values as part of the education system, not merely additional activities. Consequently, every MBKM program implemented by UPY is aimed at shaping students' characters to be independent, tolerant, and adaptive to differences. Challenges such as resistance to curriculum changes are addressed by the campus's consistency in realizing a multicultural Islamic vision. Future prospects indicate that this strategy will further strengthen the competitiveness of UPY graduates in the job market and society at large. The integration done not only equips students with academic competencies but also with strong spiritual and social abilities. This is the main differentiator of UPY in nurturing a superior, Islamic, and multicultural generation.



Higher Education	Integration Strategy Form	Characteristic Features
Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya	Core curriculum complemented by Islamic values; pesantren NU-style learning model.	The Values of Aswaja An Nahdliyah Islamic Teachings
Yudharta University Pasuruan	MBKM with the instillation of multicultural values; sufi curriculum and campus cultural policies	Multiculturalism and Religious Pluralism

Table 2. Integration Strategy Form

The MBKM program at UNUSA and Yudharta Pasuruan University has made a significant contribution to shaping students who are academically, emotionally, and socially independent. Students not only gain field experience but also learn to manage their learning actively and reflectively. Internships, entrepreneurship, and teaching on campus are not merely additional activities, but part of a curriculum development strategy that has a direct impact on character formation and independent learning skills. Furthermore, the recognition of MBKM activities into the formal curriculum through credit conversion strengthens the legitimacy of the program and encourages student seriousness. The real experiences that students undergo create a contextual, meaningful, and sustainable learning process. With the integration of Islamic values in every program, the independence that is formed is not only academic but also spiritual and moral.

Learning Independence as an Indicator of Impactful Campus Success

Learning independence is one of the important indicators of the success of higher education transformation that is oriented towards real impact, or what is now known as an impactful campus. Students who are able to learn independently demonstrate the capacity to manage knowledge, build initiative, and take responsibility for their learning process and outcomes. In this context, learning independence not only reflects individual success but also the readiness of students to contribute directly to society. The concept of an impactful campus emphasizes the role of higher education institutions in addressing social, economic, and cultural needs in their environment. Therefore, the more independent a student is, the greater their potential contribution to creating solutions to real problems. In Islamic Higher Education, learner independence is closely related to ethics, social sensitivity, and Islamic values. Therefore, the formation of independent students is essentially the main foundation for achieving the campus mission that has a wide and sustainable impact.



At Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya (UNUSA), the indicators of student learning independence are reflected in their ability to carry out internships, entrepreneurship, and student exchanges with minimal direct supervision from lecturers. Students are given full trust to set objectives, design strategies, and manage time and resources independently. The results are not only reflected in academic achievements but also in the changes in attitudes and mindsets of students who are more open, resilient, and solution-oriented. The impact of this learning model is also felt outside the campus, such as when internship students generate service innovations at partner organizations or entrepreneurial students develop products based on local and Islamic values. The campus becomes an agent of change by successfully producing students who have an impact on their surrounding communities. This is a concrete manifestation of the relationship between learning independence and the concept of an impactful campus. This success is evidence that the development of a curriculum that allows for independent learning indeed contributes significantly to the achievement of the campus vision.

Yudharta University Pasuruan shows that the students' independence in learning, formed through the Teaching Campus program, Community Service, and internships, has a direct impact on rural communities, remote schools, and local SMEs. Students are not only present as program implementers but also as catalysts who can read social conditions and offer innovative solutions. This ability arises because students are accustomed to thinking independently, making decisions in the field, and evaluating their own work results. This reflects a true picture of autonomous learners who are also socially responsible. Yudharta Campus is known in its environment as an institution that not only produces graduates but also generates positive changes in the surrounding community.

Learning independence as an indicator of the success of universities is also reflected in students' ability to become agents of change in their respective environments. Students who are accustomed to learning independently tend to have high self-confidence, good communication skills, and the ability to make value- and data-based decisions. They become individuals who are adaptive to change, capable of collaborating across disciplines, and solution-oriented in addressing social issues. These are the characteristics of impactful graduates, in line with the vision of contemporary higher education. In Islamic Higher Education Institutions, this independence is



strengthened by Islamic ethics that guide students to be not only intellectually smart but also spiritually wise. Therefore, every student initiative that arises from the process of independent learning becomes a part of the campus's real contribution to the moral and social development of society. A campus with an impact is not just a slogan, but can be realized through a curriculum that encourages students to become key agents of change.

From the results of the research at UNUSA and Yudharta Pasuruan University, it can be concluded that strengthening independent learning through MBKM programs is an effective strategy in realizing an impactful campus. The success of students in independently carrying out these programs shows that the curriculum has provided space and structure that supports the achievement of independence as a learning objective. In addition, active student involvement in addressing real issues in society strengthens the position of the campus as a center for empowerment, not just an academic institution. With this approach, Islamic Higher Education not only produces graduates with diplomas but also nurtures individuals capable of contributing to social change in a concrete way. An impactful campus is born from an educational process that builds independent, reflective, and transformative character in its students. Therefore, the integration between the MBKM curriculum and Islamic values becomes an important foundation in creating graduates who are not only excellent but also beneficial to the community and the nation. This indicates that independent learning is not just an outcome, but also a tool towards meaningfulness and the usefulness of the campus in social life.

CONCLUSION

The integration of Islamic values into the Merdeka Campus curriculum at Islamic higher education institutions, particularly at Nahdlatul Ulama University Surabaya and Yudharta University Pasuruan, has been a major driving force in shaping the students' independence in learning comprehensively, covering academic, social, and spiritual aspects. Through internships, entrepreneurship, teaching campus programs, and community service, students are guided to become active learners who can manage their own learning processes. A flexible, contextual curriculum based on Islamic values not only makes students intellectually competent but also character-driven and beneficial to society. The implication for other higher education institutions



is that the integration of Islamic values into the MBKM curriculum can serve as an adaptive model to develop graduates who are independent, ethical, and competitive, while simultaneously creating a holistic, inclusive, and transformative educational ecosystem.

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Vol 3 No 2 July 2025



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