

## The Role of Bahana Mahasiswa Press in the Field of Education and Malay Culture in Riau (1983-1998)

Meila Dita Sukmana<sup>1\*</sup>, Ahmal<sup>2</sup>, Yuliantoro<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>History Education, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Universitas Riau, Indonesia  
\*correspondence email: meiladitasukmana@gmail.com

*Received 8 June 2023; Received in revised form 11 October 2023; Accepted 13 October 2023*

### Abstrak

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah: (1) Untuk mengetahui awal pembentukan pers mahasiswa Bahana Mahasiswa, (2) Untuk mengetahui peran pers mahasiswa Bahana Mahasiswa dalam bidang pendidikan di Riau pada 1983-1998, (3) Untuk mengetahui peran pers mahasiswa Bahana Mahasiswa dalam bidang kebudayaan Melayu di Riau pada 1983-1998. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan historis, metode pengumpulan data dengan studi pustaka, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Penelitian ini dilaksanakan di Sekretariat Bahana Mahasiswa. Setelah data di kumpulkan, pengujian data dilakukan dengan kritik sumber yaitu dengan menguji keaslian sumber yang didapat dengan membandingkan antara data yang satu dengan yang lainnya, seperti membandingkan hasil wawancara dengan bukti tertulis. Berdasarkan hasil penelitian dapat disimpulkan yaitu: (1) Bahana Mahasiswa dibentuk sejak tahun 1982 dan perkembangannya ditandai dengan terbitan perdana pada Juli 1983, (2) Peranan Bahana Mahasiswa dalam bidang pendidikan tidak terlepas dari identitasnya sebagai pers kampus, berita yang diterbitkan selalu mengenai isu pendidikan yang ada di Riau khususnya di Universitas Riau, (3) Peranan Bahana Mahasiswa dalam bidang kebudayaan Melayu hadir dalam bentuk rubrik Gumam dan Kilas Balik yang berisi topik seputar kebudayaan Melayu.

**Kata kunci:** sejarah, peranan, pers mahasiswa, pendidikan, kebudayaan melayu.

### Abstract

*The objectives of this research are: (1) To determine the early formation of Bahana Mahasiswa student press, (2) To understand the role of Bahana Mahasiswa student press in the field of education in Riau from 1983 to 1998, (3) To comprehend the role of Bahana Mahasiswa student press in the field of Malay culture in Riau from 1983 to 1998. This research utilized a historical approach, with data collection methods including literature review, interviews, and documentation. The study was conducted at the Bahana Mahasiswa Secretariat. After gathering the data, data validation was performed through source criticism by assessing the authenticity of the obtained sources through comparing data from different sources, such as comparing interview results with written evidence. Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that: (1) Bahana Mahasiswa was established in 1982 and its development was marked by its inaugural publication in July 1983, (2) The role of Bahana Mahasiswa in the field of education is inseparable from its identity as a campus press, with published news always addressing educational issues in Riau, particularly at the University of Riau, (3) The role of Bahana Mahasiswa in the field of Malay culture is manifested through the Gumam and Kilas Balik rubrics, which contain topics related to Malay culture.*

**Keywords:** history, role, student press, education, Malay culture.

### INTRODUCTION

The term press is taken from the English word "press" which means mold. Operationally, the press has two meanings, namely the printing business and the effort to convey news through

print and electronic media (Efendi, 2010).

In a broad sense, the press is a medium for conveying reports in the form of opinions, suggestions, images and facts to the general public. The press is a very influential tool for human life. The press

consciously develops values and norms based on the vision and mission it carries. There are at least four functions of the press that we can simplify, namely conveying information (to inform), educating (to educate), entertaining (to entertain) and influencing (to influence) (Tahrin, et.al, 2019).

The press plays an important role in developing human insight and knowledge. Information disseminated through the press has the aim of educating, increasing knowledge, and encouraging individuals to take positive action (Bunari, et.al, 2023). The press carries out education by conveying relevant information regarding various aspects of a situation, including criticism and suggestions in the public interest. Through this information, people can expand their thinking, knowledge and empathy in dealing with various situations (Boty, et.al, 2023). Apart from that, the public is also invited to respect the diversity of opinions and attitudes that exist (Bunari, et.al, 2024).

Student press is a press managed by students. Student press is divided into two types. First, student press published by students at the faculty or department level. This publication usually presents special matters related to the field of study (Endaryati & Setiawan, 2020). Second, student press published at university level. This publication presents matters of a general nature (Supriyanto, 1998). In 1983, Riau University students

formed a mass media called Bahana Mahasiswa. Initially, Bahana Mahasiswa's coverage only discussed student body issues, but gradually the content of the coverage began to cover issues within the University of Riau and issues in Riau. Bahana Mahasiswa's journalistic products were not only read and circulated around the University of Riau, but were also consumed by the general public because the press presence in Riau at that time was still small.

Malay education and culture in Riau is an interesting and important topic to publish. One of the media that publishes this field in Riau is Bahana Mahasiswa. Media driven and run by Riau University students. Therefore, research on the role of Bahana Mahasiswa in the field of Malay education and culture in Riau can provide a valuable contribution in increasing the number of sources of information on this topic. This research focuses on the role of Bahana Mahasiswa in developing Malay education and culture in Riau in the period between 1983 and 1998. At that time, Bahana Mahasiswa became an active and influential mass media in promoting and developing education and culture in the area. Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide a broader picture of the role of mass media in the social and cultural development of a society (Wibowo, et.al, 2020).

This research also explains how students have an important role in

developing education and culture. They can become agents of change and driving forces in advancing education and culture in an area. This research aims to understand the role of Bahana Mahasiswa in developing Malay education and culture in Riau in the time period between 1983 to 1998. Apart from that, this research will also provide an overview of the conditions of education and culture in Riau at that time, as well as provide broader insight regarding the role of mass media in the social and cultural development of a society. Thus, the results of this research can be a reference and inspiration for academics, practitioners and other related parties in developing education and culture in Riau and in other regions in Indonesia.

## **METHOD**

The research method that will be used in this research is the historical method. The historical method is a systematic set of rules and principles for collecting historical sources effectively, evaluating them critically, and presenting a synthesis and the results achieved in written form (Abdurahmad, 2007). According to Sjamsuddin in Een Herdiani (2016) the historical method is a procedure, or has something to do with a systematic procedure, process or technique in the investigation of certain scientific disciplines to obtain the objects or materials studied (Basri, et.al, 2022).

Based on the definition above, it can be concluded that the historical research method is a way to study an event, figure or problem that is considered appropriate and important that occurred in the past descriptively, critically and analytically. There are four steps used in historical research methods, first heuristics, second verification, third interpretation, and finally historiography (Laksono, 2018). Data collection in this research used literature study, interviews and documentation techniques (Anggito & Setiawan, 2018). This research was conducted at the Bahana Student Secretariat, University of Riau, Pekanbaru City, Riau Province. The data obtained in the research will be analyzed using a qualitative approach based on historical or historical data (Hidayat & Setiawan, 2023).

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Early History of the Establishment of Bahana Student**

The student press will not be separated from the history of the struggle of young people or students in the spirit of unity that pushed for the independence of the Republic of Indonesia (Handayani, et. al, 2024). The Indonesian magazine published by the Indonesian association in the Netherlands in 1924, seems to be the beginning of the student press in Indonesia (Siddiq, 2015). During the Japanese colonial period, only organizations

founded by the Japanese fascist regime were allowed to operate. As a result, the press in Indonesia experienced a decline. At the time of independence from 1945 to 1948, not many student presses emerged openly because students and youth were physically involved in building the form of the Republic of Indonesia. However, the student press plays an important role in spreading information about independence and supporting the government and people's struggle (Achmad, 2014).

After 1950, the Indonesian student press experienced rapid development during the era of liberal democracy. There are two student press organizations, namely the Indonesian Student Journalists Association (IWMI) led by T. Yacob and the Indonesian Student Press Union (SPMI) led by Nugroho Notosusanto. In 1958, IWMI and SPMI were merged into the Indonesian Student Press Association (IPMI). However, during the period of guided democracy between 1959 and 1966, the press experienced a lot of oppression. The press is no longer used as a link between the people and the government, but rather as a tool to support the goals of the revolution or the interests of the authorities at that time. Along with this, several Student Press Institutions experienced setbacks (Achmad, 2014).

Not to forget, Sumatra Island, especially Riau Province, has taken part in the development of special student press publications. The chain of student press

travel in Indonesia is also well recorded in Riau Province. The University of Riau and the Islamic University of Riau in the 1960s to 1970s, launched various student publications in the form of bulletins and magazines printed simply. But generally, these mimeographed publications only had limited circulation among the respective faculties (Famajra, et al, 1996). It can be seen that the state of the campus press in Riau is directly related to the heyday and revival of the student press in Indonesia from 1965 to the 1970s. Nationally, many people say this revival was marked by the publication of campus newspapers and magazines which were managed by students through the Student Council at their respective universities.

The presence of Bahana students from the University created its own color in campus press trips in Riau in the 80s. Riau University itself has information media, even though it is only at faculty level. The media are Estuaria from the Faculty of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs, Politea from the Faculty of Social Sciences and Political Sciences, Echo from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Economics from the Faculty of Economics, and Beta from the Faculty of Teaching and Education. These media are simply printed and some are even just stuck on the wall. Then in 1982 there was an offer to establish campus media from Jakarta, there was a pilot project which funded the establishment and printing

costs of campus media for one year. Anwar Syair, Assistant Chancellor III at that time gathered 30 student representatives from each faculty with the criteria of being able to write. The representatives consist of faculty level media administrators, students who are active in the Student Coordinating Board, representatives of the Student Senate, and the Student Representative Body (Ali, 2008).

The first campus media formation meeting was chaired by Vice Chancellor III Anwar Syair. During the meeting, the name of the campus media to be created was determined, the name approved was the Bahana Unri Student Campus Newspaper. The name was given directly by the Chancellor of the University of Riau, Muchtar Lufti. Bahana means echo, echo, or sipongi. On September 9 1982, Bahana Mahasiswa was approved in the form of Unri Chancellor's Decree No.368/PT.22/0.1982 concerning the publication of the Unri student campus newspaper and the structure and personnel of its caretakers.

Based on the decision letter, there are 30 administrators who occupy 11 positions in the Bahana Mahasiswa management as protector/adviser, general leader/officer, editor-in-chief, deputy editor-in-chief, editorial board, editorial secretary, editor, illustrator, photojournalist, circulation and finance. Fachrunnas MA Jabbar was elected as

editor-in-chief through a meeting and won by acclamation. Fachrunnas previously served as an administrator at Estuaria from the Faculty of Fisheries and Maritime Affairs. The simple consideration for this selection was because he had experience as a general journalist and he was the person who first published Estuaria Spirit, which at that time was regularly published.

After receiving a decision letter from the chancellor, further formal requirements must be taken care of immediately. Efforts were made to process recommendations from the Head of the Regional Office of the Riau Province Department of Information as one of the conditions for obtaining permission from the Department of Information of the Republic of Indonesia.

After receiving this recommendation, the Vice Chancellor III of the University of Riau and WE Tinambunan left for Jakarta to arrange permits with the Minister of Information of the Republic of Indonesia. Finally, on May 30 1983, STT No. 1013/SK/Ditjen PPG/STT/1983 was issued by the Minister of Information of the Republic of Indonesia. After the legalities were fulfilled, on July 17 1983, the first edition of Bahana Maharesi was published with sixteen pages and 5000 copies. Almost half of the page contains announcements of new student admissions.

### **Development of Student Materials (1983-1998)**

The editorship of Bahana Mahasiswa was first led by Fakhrunnas MA Jabbar from 1983 to 1987. Before entering the world of campus press, Fakhrunnas had been a general journalist at LKBN Antara, his experience in the press world made him chosen to be the first editor-in-chief of Bahana Mahasiswa. This period plays an important role in building the legal foundations for Bahana Student. Through publishing meetings, rubric content, recruitment systems, and crew coaching, they form a strong foundation for Bahana Student.

At first, Bahana Mahasiswa's coverage only discussed problems in the student environment. However, over time, Bahana Students began to dare to criticize all the policies implemented by Riau University. Because Bahana Mahasiswa criticized the chancellor, Muchtar Lutfi, Bahana Mahasiswa was summoned by the chancellor and told to discuss his criticism first before publishing it. Since then, before Bahana Mahasiswa is published, it has to be edited by the chancellor. Apart from publishing newspapers, in 1985 Bahana Mahasiswa was also trusted to host journalistic training for student presses throughout Sumatra, Fakhrunnas became the chief organizer. This activity succeeded in getting attention at the national level. This activity was covered by Television Republik Indonesia

(Interview with Fakhrunnas MA Jabbar, April 2023).

Entering the fifth year, the position of chief editor of Bahana Mahasiswa was handed over to Bahtiar. He served from June 1987 to August 1989, Bahtiar was accompanied by Izarman as deputy chief editor. This era was the beginning of the emergence of off-campus issues as the main issue for Bahana Student. During this period, Bahana Student began inviting well-known press figures and writers such as Mahbub Junaidi and Arswendo Atmowiloto to speak in front of campus journalist cadres. Apart from that, they also carry out social activities and even feature artists from Jakarta. Bahana Students also held a one-day seminar with the theme "Dreaming a Regional Daily" on September 17 1987, as proof of their concern about the lack of daily newspapers in Riau. Four years later, the daily newspaper Riau Pos was born as the first large-scale daily publication in Riau. Since Bahtiar's leadership, coverage of issues outside campus has increased. Bahana Mahasiswa also became a newspaper that was widely read by outsiders because at that time there were no daily newspapers. The critical tradition has always been a characteristic of Bahana Mahasiswa (Famajra, et al, 1996).

After Bahtiar's leadership period was over, the editorial leadership of Bahana Mahasiswa was entrusted to Abu Bakar Siddik. He served as editor-in-chief of

Bahana Mahasiswa for only four months, namely from September 1989 to February 1990. During his tenure, Abu Bakar Siddik still continued the previous work program, such as holding annual journalism training which this time invited speakers such as Parni Hadi who was Antara journalist. Apart from that, at this time Bahana Student tends to be vocal because the articles published directly discuss socio-political issues that are currently developing in wider society (Interview with Abu Bakar Siddik, April 2023).

In February 1990, Bahana Mahasiswa published an edition that angered the Riau Provincial government and the Chancellor of Riau University. This was caused by Bahana Mahasiswa's article entitled "Malay Culture at the Crossroads? Cultural Fever, Dengue Fever and Cultural Week Ha... Ha..." which contained criticism of the Riau Malay Cultural Week event which will be held in March. After the Bahana Student newspaper was published, Riau became excited. At that time the Bahana Student newspaper was read by the general public. Thanks to this article, Abu Bakar Siddik, the editor-in-chief, and T Zulmizan Assegaf, the editorial secretary, were finally summoned to the rectorate of the University of Riau.

The Chancellor of the University of Riau, Prof. Bosman Saleh, ordered that edition of the Bahana Mahasiswa newspaper not to be circulated again and the rest to be taken as evidence. Apart

from that, Abu Bakar Siddiq was fired from the Bahana Mahasiswa management and T Zulmizan Assegaf was demoted to reporter (Famajra, 1996).

Riva Muzamri became editor-in-chief of Bahana Mahasiswa replacing Abu Bakar Siddik. He served as editor-in-chief of Bahana Mahasiswa until the end of 1991. . When led by Riva Muzamri, Bahana Student gave the impression of obeying the chancellor's orders because at this time the Bahana Student newspaper had to go through a censorship process from the campus before being put into printing and distributed to its readers (Famajra, 1996). After Riva Muzamri stepped down, the leadership of Bahana Student was given to T Zulmizan Assegaf until 1996. This generation of Zulmizan, Bahana Student, was completely free from the chancellor's intervention. This generation can be said to be a generation of change. Bahana's Motto for Students, which was originally to Guard the Nusantara Alma Mater, was changed to Developing a critical academic tradition (Ali, 2008).

Then in November 1996, Ahmad Jamaan was the general leader and editor-in-chief of Bahana Mahasiswa, who led it until 1998. The economic crisis that hit Indonesia in 1998 had an impact on the world of journalism. Bahana Student also feels the bitterness of this situation, especially after the Riau Pos Group decided to stop printing the Bahana Student newspaper. Even so, the Bahana

Mahasiswa crew didn't just give up. They fought tooth and nail so that Bahana Mahasiswa could continue to be published and provide news and information to its readers. Apart from accounting problems, this year Bahana Students also had several problems ranging from damaged computers to stolen material inventory, such as computers, cameras and printers (Interview with Ahmad Fitri, March 2023).

### **The Role of Student Materials in the Education Sector**

The third role of the press is as an educational medium. This means that information or news disseminated through mass media also functions to provide education, truth, broaden horizons, and encourage positive action. In its development, the press has contributed to advancing education in Indonesia. As a means of education, the press plays an important role in increasing human knowledge and understanding. The information presented through this media aims to form and enrich insight, increase intelligence, and motivate individuals to act well (Anggraeni, et.al, 2022).

The Bahana Student newspaper is published every month of the year, as a student press Bahana Student always carries out press functions in the educational sector. To realize this function Bahana Mahasiswa presents various types of rubrics that discuss educational matters both on the Riau

University campus and outside the Riau University campus. Rubrics that discuss education such as: (1) Main Report Rubric, contains long articles about current cases or issues at the University of Riau or Riau itself, (2) Perca Rubric, contains news about events or activities that have been carried out, (3) Campus Tour Rubric, contains information about universities in Riau, (4) Faculty Miscellaneous or Faculty Variety Rubric, contains information about the faculties of the University of Riau, (5) Prospective Student Rubric, contains articles about high schools in Riau, (6) Research Journal Rubric, contains research carried out by the academic community in Riau.

### **The Role of Bahana Students in the Field of Malay Culture**

Apart from playing a role in informing about the field of education in Riau Province, Bahana Mahasiswa also participates in efforts to provide information in the field of culture, especially regarding Riau Malay culture. This is in line with development goals in the cultural sector, namely the process of improving or maintaining existing habits in society. Bahana Mahasiswa acts as mass media which broadcasts programs about culture, especially those related to Riau Malay culture in Riau Province.

In the Bahana Student newspaper there are two special pages about literature and culture, these pages are the

Punca column. This rubric contains (1) a Malay Dictionary containing words in Malay and their meanings in Indonesian, (2) Telatah Melayu containing sketches in the form of short stories about daily events in Riau society with a character named Wak Atan who chatters in Malay. (3) Poetry contains literary works that are arranged using grammar and sentences that have rhythm. (4) Murmur contains opinions about culture and literature written by the Bahana Student crew, (5) Opinion contains written opinions about culture and literature, (6) Short Stories. Apart from the Punca rubric, there is also a Flashback rubric whose contents review places, buildings, past events or culture in the Province. Bahana Mahasiswa also contains writings about Malay culture outside of these two sections, these articles are usually included in news sections, research journals, or columns.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results obtained from various sources regarding the role of the Bahana Student press in the field of Malay education and culture in Riau, the author puts forward the following conclusions: (1) The emergence of the campus press in Riau starting from 1965 to 1970 was influenced by the rise and heyday of the student press in Indonesia, this can be seen from the emergence of campus newspapers and magazines published by faculties and student councils at

universities in Riau, (2) Bahana Mahasiswa was formed in 1982 and its development was marked by its first publication in July 1983. Bahana Mahasiswa's coverage contains information about the situation at the University of Riau but not infrequently also raises issues in Riau Province. (3) The role of Bahana Student in the field of education cannot be separated from Bahana Student's identity as the campus press itself, the news published in the Bahana Student newspaper is definitely related to educational issues in Riau, especially at Riau University. (4) Meanwhile Bahana Mahasiswa's role in the field of Malay culture can be seen from the creation of a special column called Gumam which contains topics related to culture. This rubric is always in every issue of the Bahana Student newspaper.

## REFERENCES

- Abdurahman, D. (2007). *Metodologi Penelitian Sejarah*. Ar-Ruzz Media.
- Achmad, Z. A. (2014). *Perbandingan Sistem Pers dan Sistem Pers Indonesia*. Lutfansah Mediatama.
- Ali, M. (2008, July 17). *Secuil Kisah Bahana Mahasiswa*. <https://Bahanamahasiswa.wordpress.com/Catatan-Kru/Secuil-Kisah-Bahana-Mahasiswa/>.
- Anggito, A., & Setiawan, J. (2018). *Metodologi penelitian kualitatif*. CV Jejak (Jejak Publisher).
- Anggraeni, W. D., Aman, A., & Setiawan, J. (2022). Character Education Values of Radin Inten II's Against The Dutch Colonization For Learning Local History. *Al-Ishlah: Jurnal*

- Pendidikan*, 14(3), 4267-4278.
- Ash Shiddiq, A. F. (2015). Pers Mahasiswa dalam Benturan Neoliberalisme. *Gema Keadilan Edisi Jurnal*, 2.
- Basri, M., Setiawan, J., Insani, M., Fadli, M. R., Amboro, K., & Kuswono, K. (2022). The Correlation of the Understanding of Indonesian History, Multiculturalism, and Historical Awareness to Students' Nationalistic Attitudes. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 11(1), 369-376.
- Boty, M., Setiawan, J., & Fadli, M. R. (2023). The values of struggle character education KH Ahmad Hanafiah and its implementation in local history learning. *Pegem Journal of Education and Instruction*, 13(2), 62-71.
- Bunari, M. R. F., Fikri, A., Setiawan, J., Fahri, A., & Izzati, I. M. (2023). Understanding history, historical thinking, and historical consciousness, in learning history: An ex post-facto correlation. *Int J Eval & Res Educ ISSN*, 2252(8822), 8822.
- Bunari, B., Setiawan, J., Ma'arif, M. A., Purnamasari, R., Hadisaputra, H., & Sudirman, S. (2024). The influence of flipbook learning media, learning interest, and learning motivation on learning outcomes. *Journal of Education and Learning (EduLearn)*, 18(2), 313-321.
- Efendi, A. (2010). *Perkembangan Pers di Indonesia*. Alprin.
- Endaryati, T., & Setiawan, J. (2020). The Implementation of National Values Insights in the Learning Process of Indonesian History to Form Student's Solidarity Attitudes. *learning*, 10(2).
- Famajra, A., Jabbar, F. M. A., & Sumana, I. (1996). *Kata Pena: Sejarah dan Bunga Rampai Pers Riau*. PWI Cabang Riau.
- Handayani, N., Aw, S., Zamroni, M. I., Setiawan, J., & Fadli, M. R. (2024). Development of higher order thinking skill assessment instruments in social studies learning. *Int J Eval & Res Educ*, 13(2), 923-933.
- Herdiani, E. (2016). Metode Sejarah Dalam Penelitian Tari. *Jurnal Ilmiah Seni Mangkalang*.
- Hidayat, B., & Setiawan, J. (2023). The Talangsari Incident in Lampung in 1989: A Review of Social History. *HISTORIA*, 11, 2.
- Laksono, A. D. (2018). *Apa Itu Sejarah; Pengertian, Ruang Lingkup, Metode dan Penelitian*. Derwati Press.
- Supriyanto, D. (1998). *Perlawanan Pers Mahasiswa: Protes Sepanjang NKK/BKK*. Penerbit Pustaka Sinar Harapan dan Yayasan Sinyal.
- Tahrn., H., & Nasir, M. (2019). *Keterampilan Pers dan Jurnalistik Berwawasan Jender*. Deepublish.
- Wibowo, B. P., Wulandari, T., & Setiawan, J. (2020). Character education values as reflected in KH Gholib struggles of defending Indonesian independence in Lampung. *International Journal of Learning and Development*, 10(4), 22-41.