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# Evaluation of Merdeka Belajar program of the Kampus Merdeka

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka, hereinafter referred to as MBKM. Provide opportunities for students and lecturers to strengthen student-based learning programs. This program also supports students' soft skills in their learning process, to improve graduates' competencies, both soft skills and hard skills, so that they are more prepared and relevant to the needs of the times, preparing graduates to become superior future leaders of the nation. This paper aims to evaluate the implementation of this program in teaching and learning activities to improve the quality of education. This research was conducted using a quantitative approach. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires through online surveys. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to analyze the data. The results of the study show that students who have participated in the MBKM program provide benefits such as each student can re-explore themselves to find what they like, what they want to develop even more, and what they want to make or create according to their interests and their talents. also provides additional competencies in solving problems, improving soft skills, job search competencies, and post-college preparation competencies. As for the lecturer himself, the lecturer must be able to interfere with himself (self-disruption), continue to improve their competence from time to time (long-life learner) to be able to become a "companion" for students towards the gateway to the real world of work success and Lecturers are required to have competencies that will be "inherited" to students and have experience in coaching the MKBM program for students, as well as having expertise in designing Postgraduate Learning Outcomes and converting the Semester Credit System.



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# Introduction

Indonesia, as a country that is moving towards progressive progress, is influenced by the education system it implements. Action as a system is organized by setting an example, building willingness, and de creativity of students. The development and progress of a country are highly dependent on the ability of human resources as its subject. Indonesia, as a country that is moving towards progressive progress, is influenced by the education system it implements (Mardhiyah et al., 2021). It means, needed a new paradigm in education. John E. Beck argues that we need a new paradigm of management education and a new paradigm might become established within the management education community (John E. Beck, 2015).

In higher education, graduates are to be prepared to become human beings with proper behavior and values and to meet the demands of a life that is constantly changing (Suwandi, 2010). The educational process must provide excellent opportunities for students to develop and actualize their abilities (Susilawati, 2020). With higher-quality education, we will be able to achieve a brighter future for Indonesia. Universities (universities, institutes, academies, and high schools) have a great responsibility to realize these ideals (Mariati, 2021).

The quality of education in higher education is always strived to be improved. This increase aims to provide the best service to students as one of the higher education stakeholders (Ramdhan & Siregar, 2019). Improving the learning process needs to be done starting from the level of Study Programs. Faculties, and Higher Education (Asmawi, 2010). The quality of education in higher education is supported by several policies and programs included in the Tri Dharma activities. The quality of this education includes several elements, including the quality of governance, leadership, human resources, lecturers and education staff, finance, information systems, and output-based performance indicators set by universities (Aziz, 2018).

A quality curriculum is necessary for the execution of a quality education system (Bunga, 2019). The curriculum has a crucial and strategic role in the implementation and achievement of education (Aziz, 2018). Consequently, curriculum development in higher education is required. Curriculum development must be conducted in response to the evolution of science and technology (scientific vision), community demands (societal needs), and graduate users' needs (stakeholder needs) (Awwaliyah, 2019). Nonetheless, the lecturers' and education stakeholders' understanding of the curriculum and its growth remains extremely different. There are still misconceptions about the curriculum, particularly about one of the new policies from the Minister of Education and Culture that the Ministry of Education and Culture has begun to implement (Boiliu et al., 2022). Higher education institutions, namely the Merdeka Learning Campus (MBKM) program, are governed by Permendikbud No.3 of 2020 about the National Higher Education Standards, including the right to study for three semesters outside the study program (Tohir, 2010). This establishes that curriculum changes in higher education necessitate acceleration, not velocity (Yamin & Syahrir., 2020). Universities face the task of accelerating curriculum development quickly following the National Higher Education Standards (Suryaman, 2020).

The MBKM program grants educational institutions flexibility and autonomy, is devoid of bureaucratization, liberates lecturers from cumbersome bureaucracy, and allows students to pick their courses of study (Wilhelmus, 2020). Independent campuses are a style of university education that is autonomous and adaptable (Purwanti, 2020). Fostering an inventive, unrestricted learning culture that caters to the needs of students (Sopiansyah et al., 2022). Universities are obligated to provide and facilitate the MBKM Program, as required by Permendikbud RI No. 3 of 2020, as well as those outlined in the free learning Guidebook Free Campus released by the Ministry of Education and Culture, Consequently, there are nine MBKM Program: (1) Student Exchange. (2) Professional Work Practices. (3) Teaching Assistance in Education Units. (4) Research (5) Humanitarian Projects, (6) Entrepreneurial Activities, (7) Independent Study Project (8) Village Development Project, and (9) National Defense Training (Vhalery et al., 2021). The objective of the MBKM program is to strengthen graduates' soft and hard skills so that they are more equipped and more relevant to the demands of the times, as well as to prepare graduates as future national leaders with exceptional personalities (Kuncoro et al., 2022; Nofri, 2020). Student exchange activities, teaching in education units, independent studies/projects, certified internships or work practices, research assistants, entrepreneurial activities, humanitarian projects, and village development projects are all components of the MBKM program (Baharuddin, 2021). The MBKM curriculum can focus education toward global living and is based on global conditions (Rodiyah, 2021; Lathif et al., 2022). Therefore, MBKM is quite important for increasing knowledge and skills as a post-graduation offering (Sulistiyani et al., 2020).

The independent campus is a new concept that was preceded by the previous concept, namely "Freedom to Learn". In other words, Bolhuis and Voeten in Lau, the independent campus is independent learning, or similar terms such as autonomous learning and self-directed learning, has been advocated and promoted as a major contemporary educational goal (Lau, 2017). This new concept is expected to enable students to gain learning independence in higher education. The design and planning of the Merdeka Campus concept is a learning innovation that can produce quality learning and create individuals with character (Sopiansyah et al., 2022; Nofia, 2020). Learning innovation included using meaningful methods. It means universities are challenged to find meaningful methods of evaluating program influences on independent learning traits of students (Barnes, 2013). Learning independently produces quality learning and quality outcomes, as Hockings et al argue, Independent learning is a key feature of university education. 'Personal and intellectual autonomy' or being an independent learner is widely accepted in the sector as a 'graduate attribute' that appears in mission statements, learning, and teaching strategies, and in the course and module outcomes (Hockings et al., 2018; M. McLinden & Edwards, 2011). In addition, to measure university performance, especially study programs, this research also aims to obtain results that can be used by universities and study programs as well

as the Directorate General of Research, Technology and Higher Education team to evaluate and carry out curriculum development and learning designs to realize optimal learning outcomes (Muslikh, 2020). Therefore researchers feel the need to conduct research that can describe the results of implementing MBKM learning, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology to see the impact and perceptions of applying MBKM to all study program students, lecturers, and education staff (Vania & Yusuf, 2020). Furthermore, this research aims to see the extent of understanding of the entire University academic community and how the impact of implementing the MBKM program (Fatah, 2021).

Universities have introduced numerous MBKM initiatives, including student exchanges, recognized internships, instructional support, and independent studies/projects. The success of the MBKM program must be reviewed to make judgments regarding program modifications, enhancements, and follow-up (Wijihastuti, R et al., 2020). To examine the autonomous campus it is required to evaluate the responses of students who have or have not participated in the Evaluation of the Independent Program (Rochana et al., 2021).

# Method

The data used are primary and secondary. Primary data comes from filling out questionnaires interviews, and field observations. Secondary data is obtained from reports, books, and guidelines related to MBKM. Primary data collection using questionnaires was carried out by sampling students and a census of all private university lecturers in the city of Bandung in the education management study program. Sampling method to capture student respondents using stratified sampling. As stratification is a grouping based on the semester of study. The data collection method in this study was carried out by using a questionnaire. The instruments used in this research are the MBKM implementation Survey instrument for students, lecturers, and educational staff at universities who are accessed through SPADA DIKTI. The research data were processed using tabulation and graph methods. The tabulation presents the accurate data of each component, while the graph depicts the percentage distribution of each component studied in this study. Data analysis used a descriptive analysis approach. Data from each table and the graph are discussed to describe the condition of each research component. Literature review as an addition to descriptive analysis to discuss more deeply the perspectives and attitudes of lecturers obtained in this study.

# **Results and Discussions**

## **MBKM Program Implementation**

The MBKM program will change the undergraduate program system to support students facing uncertain future challenges. In general, students positively responded to the **Merdeka** Learning Campus Merdeka (MBKM) program (Meke et al., 2021). With the SKS policy outside the classroom, it is a means for each student to deal with the natural work environment, which is likened to lectures as a pool, and the work environment is a big ocean to anchor with all the challenges that students have never encountered in lectures. The MBKM program is intended to boost quality improvement and student readiness so as not to be surprised when facing challenges in the natural work environment. Through this MBKM policy, students can take credits outside the University for two semesters or the equivalent of 40 credits. Plus, students are allowed to accredits outside the study programs at the University for one semester or the equivalent of 20 credits. In other words, the number of credits that must be taken at the Timis forever deters. Thus, there is a redefinition of SKS from what is defined as "Learung I fibers to cry Hours. This activity makes it easier for students of the Education Manager St., Program to carry out the program.

Internships Field Work Practises or research/research programs are valued at 20 credits for activities for one semester. These activities can be noted that the relevant lecturers and the Head of the Education Management Study Program have been consulted. In implementing this MBKM program, the Education Management Study Program must prepare student competencies to obtain the desired credits. In addition, to implement the MBKM program in the coming semester, the Education Management Study Program has also prepared an MBKM-based curriculum by aligning Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL) with MBKM activities and assessments, preparing mentoring, preparing courses that can be taken by other Study Programs/Universities and designing activities with partners. It is the core driver of learning programs. Their existence requires dynamic design, implementation, and evaluation following the times, science and technology: needs, and the community's competencies, including graduate users (Junaidi et al., 2012).

Activities involving MBKM will impact student learning. The influence emerges from the process of action and might be beneficial or bad (Nehe, 2021). The concept of the MBKM program is designed to have a positive impact on both the learning process and the hard and soft skills of students. It will be able to meet the MBKM objective of encouraging students to study many sciences in preparation for entering the workforce

(Susilawati, 2020). MBKM influences students to be more adaptable in the lecture process, and community experience. and employment opportunities following college graduation (Laga et al., 2021). The success of the MBKM learning process is also supported by lecturers who can reduce their competence to students. Internship activities can make students in the education management study program develop their interests and talents outside the program they are currently undergoing. Internship programs can also give education management study students other experiences that will be useful when they graduate from college.

# **MBKM Program Evaluation for Students**

Students must make the best use of the Independent Learning Campus (MBKM) program offered by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud, 2020). This program allows students to acquire knowledge through means other than lectures. However, many programs can be completed off-campus. This evaluation was undertaken to determine the perceptions and comprehension of the MBKM program within the Education Management Study Program on the part of the students. Perception can be defined as the process of gathering, identifying, and interpreting sensory information to provide an overview and comprehension of the surrounding environment (Alizamar & Couto, 2016). The Big Indonesian Language Dictionary (KBBI) defines comprehension as having a great deal of knowledge or comprehending things accurately (Badan Pengembangan Bahasa dan Perbukuan, 2016).

Humanitarian initiatives (41.85 %), student exchanges (29.67%), internships/work practices (13.55%), and entrepreneurial activities (14,83%) comprise the majority of extracurricular learning activities chosen by education management students in Bandung. Students with a youthful spirit, scientific aptitude, and a strong social motivation might serve as "foot soldiers in humanitarian and other development projects in Indonesia and abroad. Student exchanges between study programs at the same university are among the several learning activities that can be conducted within the context of a learning exchange.

In addition, universities offering the same academic curriculum provide student exchange programs. There are also student exchanges between different university study programs. Through the internship program, students can gain practical experience in the working world. In general, there are two ways to equalize the weights of internships or work practices: free form and fixed weights. This activity is equivalent to 20 credits regardless of course equivalence. Institutions are required by Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 about National Standards for Higher Education to enable the right for students (may be taken or not) to take courses outside of universities for a maximum of two semesters or the equivalent of forty credits (Directorate General of Higher Education 2020). In addition, a structured form exists (structured form). This activity is equivalent to 20 credits, as well as courses whose subject matter is comparable to internship activities. In the meanwhile, students interested in entrepreneurship might leverage entrepreneurial activities.

The majority of students (70.42%) studied MBKM rules and the curriculum that facilitates MBKM to ensure that the implementation of MBKM runs efficiently. However, Education Management students continue to be concerned about the lack of information (70.42%) and the expense (56.17%) when participating in off-campus learning activities.

According to Education Management students, some of the benefits of off-campus learning activities include: 1) Provide additional skills such as problem-solving abilities (85.67%); 2) Studying in various academic programs broadens perspectives and imparts extra skills (87.65%); 3) After participating in MBKM activities for building competence skills, there is a substantial (56.17%) improvement in soft skills; 4) In terms of improving competence/skills in preparation for post-graduation employment, the program is very useful (57.14%); 5) Something crucial for preparing for life after college (42.86%)

The challenge for Education Management students and the study programs concern is the limited information obtained by students regarding the Independent Learning-Independent Campus (MBKM) policy. This is known from the opinion of Education Management students who argue that there is still little information about MBKM policies (71439). It can be concluded that the student version of MBKM activities for Education Management, among others, is for higher education, following the needs of future graduates (85.71%)).

# **Evaluation of the MBKM Program on Lecturers**

One of the primary pillars of the learning process in a higher education institution is the faculty. Following the Tridharma of Higher Education, lecturers are responsible for the learning process (education), research, and community service. One of a program's accomplishments is contingent on the knowledge of the program being executed. Figure 1 presents data indicating that the majority of lecturers in the Education Management study program (50%) claimed to be familiar with the majority of the MBKM policies implemented at private universities in the city of Bandung, while 30% claimed to be familiar with the entire policy and 20% claimed to

be familiar with a portion of it. This means that the vast majority of professors in the Education Management study program are familiar with the MBKM program policy.

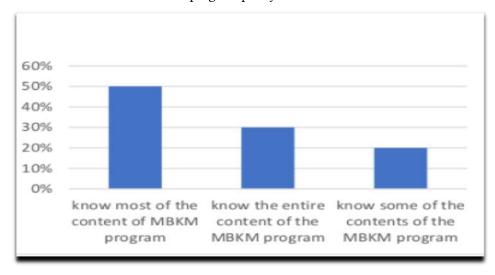


Figure 1. Lecturer's Knowledge of the MBKM Program

The MBKM program is designed based on eight (8) categories including Internships/work practices, village building/ thematic community services activities, entrepreneurship, student exchanges, humanitarian projects, teaching assistance, and independent studies/ projects. The lecturers of the Management study program are at least aware of the existence of three previous programs that have been carried out that resemble MBKM, including internships/ work practices, research, and student exchanges. Figure 2 below presents data that the average lecturer (35% each) has run previous programs that resemble MBKM, namely internships/work practices and student exchanges. In comparison, another 30% stated that they had conducted joint research that resembled MBKM. This means that the MBKM program policy is in line with what has been done previously, although, at present, it is programmed and planned more systematically, structured, and comprehensively.

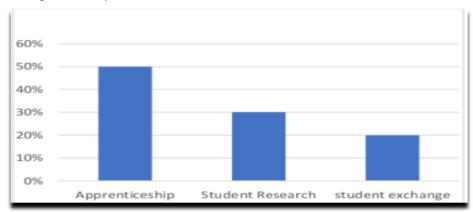
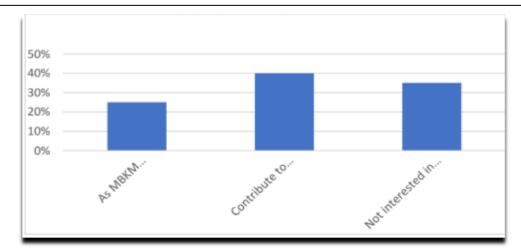


Figure 2. Lecturer's knowledge of previous programs that resemble MBKM

Planning is one of the keys to the success of a policy and program being implemented. The MBKM program should be well prepared so that its implementation can run according to the expected goals. This preparation requires the active role and participation of program organizers, including those within the Education Management study program. The role and active participation of Education Management lecturers in the MBKM preparation process at private universities in Bandung can be demonstrated by the presence of lecturers who actively serve as MBKM preparation teams (25%) and contribute to discussions/meetings/workshop preparations (40%). Although 35% of lecturers are less interested in joining the MBKM program, at least all lecturers are aware of the MBKM program run by universities, especially in the Education Management study program (Figure 3)



**Figure 3.** The Role and Contribution of Lecturers in Preparation for the Implementation of the MBKM Program

Experience is one of the forces that can encourage the successful implementation of a program. The MBKM program, in its implementation, requires the touch of a supervisor to ensure that the program is carried out following the graduate learning achievement targets (CPL). Figure 4 shows that most (70%) lecturers in the Education Management study program have experience guiding programs similar to MBKM. namely KKN / KKL, apprenticeship work practice guidance. This means that with the capacity and experience possessed by lecturers in programs similar to MBKM. the success of the mentoring and guidance process for the MBKM program will be achieved.

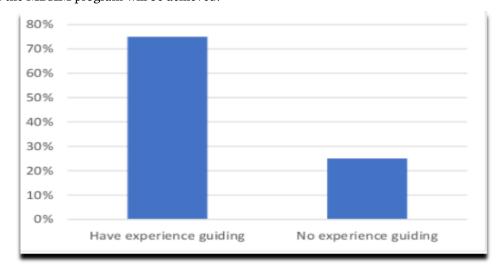


Figure 4. Readiness and Experience of Lecturers in Implementing the MBKM Program

CPL is one of the benchmarks for the success of the education process following the characteristics of the concentration of the field of study provided in the higher education environment. CPL is an iterative result and an agreement by education providers to be adapted to a curriculum structure based on capacity and competency development that is prepared for students. This CPL is prepared jointly by education providers by involving elements of universities and user representations. Lecturers are an essential pillar in the preparation of this CPL. The MBKM program must at least be synergized and adapted based on the CPL so that sufficient capacities and competencies follow the collaborative MBKM educational goals internalized in the curriculum following the planned CPL. Figure 5 shows that most (85%) lecturers in the Education Management study program have experience in assisting study programs in preparing CPL and SKS conversion. This means that the Education Management study program can internalize the MBKM program into the CPL study program to maintain efforts to develop the capacity and competence of students following the goals and expected graduate profiles.

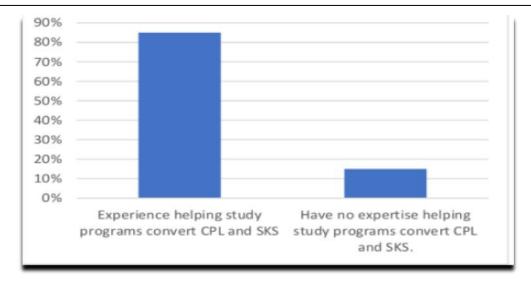


Figure 5. Lecturer's Experience in Compiling CPL and SKS Conversion

## **Conclusions**

The MBKM program will improve all levels of higher education by creating opportunities for both students and faculty members to obtain experience outside of the traditional classroom setting. Collaboration with partners is necessary because it enables faculties to access the facilities necessary to participate in Tri Dharma activities related to higher education. According to the professors who teach in the Education Management study program and the students who are enrolled in the program, the findings of the evaluation of the impact of the MBKM program reveal that those who engage in the program receive a sizeable amount of profit from it. For students, the MBKM program may have a positive influence on their ability to increase their knowledge and abilities, while for lecturers, the MBKM program may have a positive influence on their capacity to increase their teaching ability. To achieve the program's goals and advantages in the most effective and long-lasting manner possible, it is vital to take measures to mitigate any potential hurdles that may develop during the implementation of the MBKM program.

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