Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program in Enhancing Students' Job Readiness: A Study at the Faculty of Education, State University of Jakarta

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ABSTRACT
This study aims to examine the effectiveness of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in enhancing the job readiness of graduates from the Faculty of Education, State University of Jakarta (FIP UNJ). Employing a quantitative research approach, the study utilized a survey method with data collected through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The instrument, developed using a Likert scale, was administered to a sample of 323 FIP UNJ students selected through proportional random sampling to ensure representativeness based on the population's structure. The findings indicate that students perceive the MBKM program positively. It is seen as instrumental in strengthening experiential learning, enhancing both hard and soft skills, and preparing them for the professional world. The program has significantly contributed to aligning higher education outcomes with labor market demands, thereby improving the overall quality of graduates. Furthermore, MBKM has played a vital role in nurturing students' intellectual and personal development. Despite its benefits, the program faces challenges in implementation, particularly in terms of limited socialization and insufficient collaboration with industry partners. These barriers can be addressed through enhanced outreach, stronger institutional partnerships, ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and improved resource allocation to support effective program delivery.

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of quality improvement and innovation in education has become a fundamental necessity in response to the dynamic demands of the modern world. In accordance with Indonesia's Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, education is defined as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process through which learners actively develop their potential, including spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills relevant to individual and societal needs (UURI, 2003). The ultimate objective is to produce generations equipped with competencies that contribute to national development and reflect strong integrity and commitment.

Graduate competence has become a critical benchmark for measuring the quality of higher education. Article 5(1) of the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Regulation No. 44 of 2015 emphasizes that graduate competency standards must encompass attitudes, knowledge, and skills as outlined in learning outcome formulations (Kemenristekdikti, 2015). These standards are further reinforced by Law No. 12 of 2012, which mandates systematic quality assurance mechanisms in higher education institutions aligned with the National Standards for Higher Education (UURI, 2012).

The advancement of a nation is, to a great extent, determined by its ability to produce graduates with deep domain knowledge, technological competence, and adaptability to change—particularly in a global context. This requires educational institutions to implement comprehensive and adaptive programs that are

meticulously planned, effectively executed, and rigorously evaluated (Andrews et al., 2017). Planning must be informed by situational analysis, including the assessment of needs, values, resources, and timing (Tuan Soh & Mohd Meerah, 2013). Execution is pivotal to bringing plans to fruition, while evaluation serves as the cornerstone of quality assurance and continuous improvement in education (Bhattacharyya, 2013).

The synergy of planning, implementation, and evaluation constitutes the backbone of educational quality enhancement (Arniati et al., 2019). Educational institutions bear the responsibility of preparing students not merely for academic success but for real-world engagement. Producing competent graduates involves addressing multifaceted challenges and requires collaboration among stakeholders (Tobin & Sprague, 2000; Borrego & Newswander, 2010).
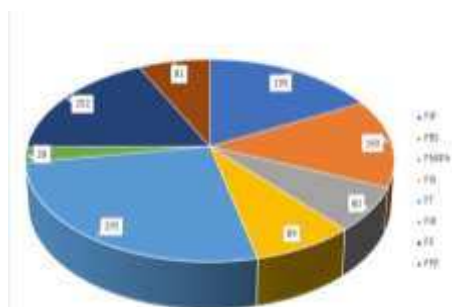
In response to these demands, Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture introduced the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy in 2020. This transformative initiative aims to promote flexible, interest-driven, and experiential learning that bridges academic preparation with workforce readiness. The State University of Jakarta (UNJ) has adopted various MBKM programs—including Summer School, Desa Binaan, Permata-Sakti, Bangkit, KKN Tematik, and others—to support student development and institutional goals.

According to the MBKM handbook issued by the Ministry, the program is designed to strengthen graduates' competencies in both hard and soft skills, ensuring their alignment with current industry needs and societal expectations. MBKM envisions future leaders who are intellectually capable, ethically grounded, and socially responsible. Through interdisciplinary, cross-institutional, and off-campus learning experiences, the program enables students to engage with diverse perspectives and real-world challenges (Fuadi & Aswita, 2021).

As stipulated in the Ministerial Regulation No. 3 of 2020 on National Higher Education Standards, students can complete their academic workloads either within their home study programs or through a combination of internal and external learning experiences. These include studying in different disciplines, institutions, or non-academic environments such as industries or communities (Permendikbud, 2020; Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021).

The MBKM policy is widely recognized as a forward-looking initiative (Rohiyatussakinah, 2021), offering a curriculum that is responsive to societal and technological changes (Kodrat, 2021b). Realizing the full potential of MBKM requires robust collaboration among internal and external stakeholders (Matthews et al., 2017), including universities, students, government agencies, and industry partners. At UNJ, the MBKM program is positioned as a strategic initiative to enhance the quality of graduates. Although participation in MBKM is not mandatory, it has attracted considerable interest due to its perceived benefits.

The implementation of MBKM is not without challenges. Successful execution demands coordinated efforts, adequate infrastructure, and a shared vision among all stakeholders. The figure below illustrates the participation trend in MBKM programs at UNJ during 2021–2022:

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(Insert Figure 1. Student Participation in MBKM UNJ 2021–2022)

Education is a lifelong process and a cornerstone of societal progress (Hughes, 2013). Thus, higher education institutions must align their learning outcomes with societal and industrial needs (Jorre de St Jorre & Oliver, 2018). In this regard, MBKM offers a promising pathway to produce competitive, competent, and adaptable graduates.

This research, therefore, seeks to assess the extent to which the MBKM program contributes to improving the quality of graduates at the Faculty of Education, State University of Jakarta. Specifically, it focuses on students' perceptions of MBKM's role in enhancing employability and readiness for the world of work. Hence, the study is titled "The Effectiveness of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program in Enhancing Students' Job Readiness: A Study at the Faculty of Education, State University of Jakarta."

Theoretical Framework

1. Perception

Perception refers to the process through which individuals organize and interpret sensory information to give meaning to their environment. It is a subjective experience, influenced by past experiences, expectations, and contextual factors, which may result in differing interpretations of the same phenomenon among individuals.

According to Robbins (2003), perception is "a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their environment." Fred Luthans (2011) expands on this, stating that perception is "a unique interpretation of the situation, not an exact recording of it," and characterizes it as a "complex cognitive process that produces a unique picture of the world, a picture that may be quite different from reality."

Griffin and Moorhead (2014) emphasize that perception involves "a set of processes by which an individual becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment," noting its importance in workplace behavior. Similarly, Mullins (2010) explains that perception is "the mental function of assigning meaning to stimuli such as shape, color, movement, taste, sound, touch, smell, pain, pressure, and feelings," and further notes that it is not necessarily reflective of reality. Instead, behavior is often shaped more by perceptions than by objective truth.

Harris and Hartman (2002) describe perception as "a sensory experience in which an individual observes a behavior, event, or condition; forms interpretations of the factors observed; develops attitudes; and allows these processed observations to influence behavior." Perception, therefore, encompasses both cognitive and affective dimensions and functions across various areas of life, including self-concept, interpersonal relationships, and organizational behavior.

Sinha (2008) posits that perception is "the process of becoming aware of objects, persons, or ideas and attaching meaning to them based on past experience." Schermerhorn (2002) similarly suggests that perception acts as a "filter or screen through which information is processed before it influences the individual." Miner (2005) elaborates on this by focusing on person perception, highlighting that it involves "forming impressions and drawing inferences about other people."

Slocum and Hellriegel (2009) define perception as "the process by which individuals select, organize, interpret, and respond to information from the world around them." Hence, perception shapes attitudes, decisions, and behaviors and plays a pivotal role in learning, communication, and motivation within both educational and organizational contexts.

2. Independent Learning – Independent Campus (MBKM)

The *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) policy is a transformative higher education reform introduced by Indonesia's Ministry of Education and Culture. The policy is designed to better prepare students to adapt to rapid changes in society, the labor market, and technology (Wardani, 2022). MBKM provides students with the freedom to pursue learning experiences beyond their core academic programs for up to three semesters (Risza et al., 2022). This includes one semester of coursework outside the major and two semesters of non-academic experiential learning, such as internships, community service, or entrepreneurship (MBKM, 2022).

The program's foundation draws inspiration from Ki Hajar Dewantara's philosophy, emphasizing autonomy and independence in learning (Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021). MBKM aligns well with the demands of the millennial generation by offering flexibility, autonomy, and diverse learning pathways (Hakim et al., 2022). Students can participate in eight flagship programs:

a. Internships in Industry
b. Community Service Projects (Thematic KKN)
c. Teaching Assistance in Schools
d. Student Exchange
e. Research Projects
f. Entrepreneurship Activities
g. Independent Studies
h. Humanitarian Projects

Each program is designed to foster soft and hard skills, prepare students for real-world challenges, and bridge the gap between academic knowledge and practical experience (Tohir, 2020). For example, internships enable students to develop professional competencies while allowing industries to engage with potential talent. The Thematic Community Service program encourages students to identify and solve social problems in rural communities, promoting civic engagement and local development. The Teaching Assistance program improves educational equity and quality, while the Research Internship pathway provides early exposure to academic inquiry for those interested in research careers. Entrepreneurship initiatives aim to promote job creation and reduce youth unemployment.

The MBKM program also redefines the structure of higher education governance. According to Makarim, it consists of two main pillars: *Merdeka Belajar* (Independent Learning) and *Kampus Merdeka* (Independent Campus). The former focuses on promoting innovative learning experiences, while the latter involves

institutional autonomy, accreditation reform, and regulatory changes. Key policies include:

a. Autonomy to establish new programs for universities with A or B accreditation;
b. Automatic reaccreditation every five years by the National Accreditation Board (BAN-PT);
c. Freedom for public universities to transition into State Legal Entities (PTN-BH);
d. Compulsory student participation in off-campus learning activities equivalent to 40 credits over two semesters.

Given the multi-stakeholder nature of MBKM—including government, universities, industries, and civil society—the program exemplifies a collaborative model of higher education reform aimed at producing competent, work-ready, and socially responsible graduates (Rohiyatussakinah, 2021).

3. Graduate Quality

Graduate quality refers to the extent to which graduates meet educational outcomes and are prepared for professional and societal roles. It is a dynamic concept shaped by stakeholder expectations, including students, employers, and society at large. Johnson et al. (2000) define quality as a continuous process of meeting or exceeding expectations within a given environment, highlighting the need for adaptability and responsiveness.

In the higher education context, students are the primary internal customers, and the end product is the graduate (Jamaludin, 2013). Graduate quality is reflected not only in academic achievement but also in competencies such as knowledge, attitudes, skills, critical thinking, aspirations, and motivation (Jorre de St Jorre & Oliver, 2018). These outcomes are strongly influenced by institutional planning, program implementation, and evaluation processes (Matthews & Mercer-Mapstone, 2018).

Quality assurance mechanisms require a robust framework aligned with the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI). Key indicators of graduate quality include:

a. Fulfillment of Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL), evaluated in terms of comprehensiveness, depth, and usefulness;
b. Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA);
c. Academic and non-academic achievements;
d. Study duration and on-time graduation rates;
e. Study success rates and graduate tracer studies;
f. Job placement waiting time and alignment with field of study;
g. Employer satisfaction with graduates.

Tracer studies must be conducted annually, target graduates from the past two to four years, and include core questions from the Ministry of Education. The findings should inform curriculum and instructional development.

In addition to academic outputs, research and innovation are key performance metrics. These include:

a. Student scientific publications, independently or in collaboration with faculty;
b. Articles cited in academic forums;
c. Products or services adopted by industries or communities.

These indicators help ensure that graduates are not only academically competent but also contribute meaningfully to research, innovation, and community engagement.

METHODS

This study employed a survey method with a quantitative research approach. Data collection was carried out using a structured questionnaire composed of statements measured on a Likert scale. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms to students of the Faculty of Education (FIP) at the State University of Jakarta (UNJ).

Additionally, questionnaires were distributed to lecturers at STAI Nurul Iman Parung Bogor, who were asked to complete and return them. The Likert scale utilized in the instrument comprised five response categories: (1) Strongly Agree, (2) Agree, (3) Somewhat Agree, (4) Disagree, and (5) Strongly Disagree. For positively worded statements, the scoring ranged from 5 (Strongly Agree) to 1 (Strongly Disagree).

The population of this study included 1,681 students from the 2021 and 2022 cohorts of FIP UNJ. The sample consisted of 323 students, selected using the Proportional Random Sampling technique. This sampling size was determined based on the Slovin formula, which resulted in a calculated minimum sample size of 323.1 respondents, rounded down to 323 participants.

Table 1. Proportional Random Sampling

No	Study Program	Population	Sample = 323	
			Presentation	Sample Amount
1	Educational Technology	170	32.66508	33
2	Special Education	177	34.01011	34
3	Education Management	196	37.66092	38
4	Out of School Education	170	32.66508	33
5	Early Childhood Education	279	53.60916	54
6	Guidance and Counseling	151	29.01428	29
7	Primary Teacher Education	538	103.3754	103
	Total	1681	323	323

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This research found that the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program has an impact on the improvement of graduate quality at the Faculty of Education (FIP) at State University of Jakarta (UNJ). This is evidenced by the observations made by the researcher throughout the study, as well as the responses to the questions posed to informants, supported by documents obtained from various data sources. The data presented in percentage form is explained in detail in the appendix, providing a systematic summary of the findings. More detailed data can be found in the available appendix. Below is a brief overview of the research findings:

### 1. Student Perceptions of the Impact of the MBKM Program on Learning

Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) is a policy launched by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture aimed at providing freedom and flexibility for students to develop their potential according to their interests and talents. The following is a summary of the findings regarding the MBKM program at FIP UNJ.

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Table 2. Summary of Finding Results of Independent Learning Independent Campus

| No.	Indicator	Answer Category (%)				
		SS	S	KS	TS	STS
1	Student Centered Learning	36	52	11	1	0
2	Hardand Soft Skills	29	51	13	3	4
3	Experiential Learning	28	48	13	7	9
4	Adaptation to the World of Work	20	41	28	8	3
5	Science and Technology Ability	28	46	14	8	12
Average		28	48	16	5	6

In the MBKM, five indicators explain the achievements obtained by the Faculty of Education (FIP) at Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) from this policy, indicating positive results.

Student Centered-Learning
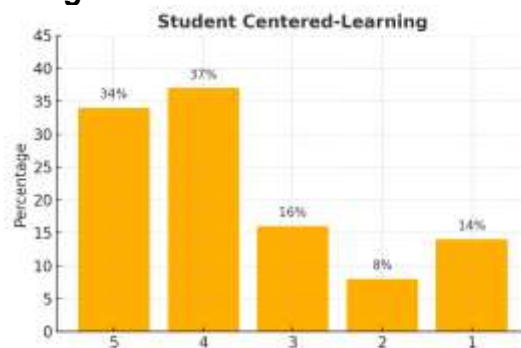
Figure 3. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards *Hard a*nd *Soft Skills*

Furthermore, 80% of FIP UNJ students reported a significant improvement in both hard and soft skills gained after participating in MBKM activities. The MBKM policy at FIP UNJ has had a substantial impact on the development of students' hard and soft skills. By facilitating more practical, interdisciplinary, and experiential learning, students not only deepen their technical skills but also hone essential soft skills necessary for success in the workforce and society. MBKM plays a vital role in shaping graduates who are more competent, creative, and ready to face future challenges.
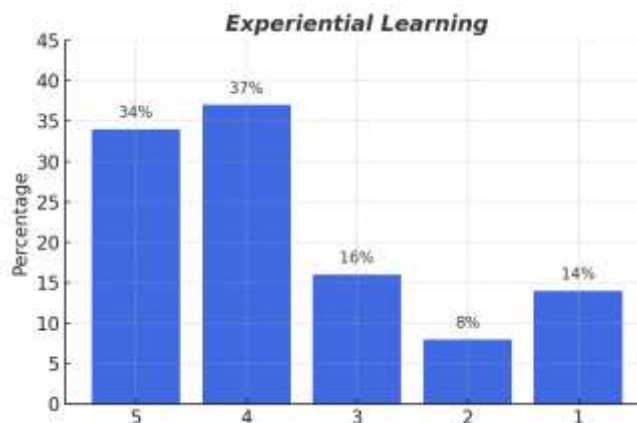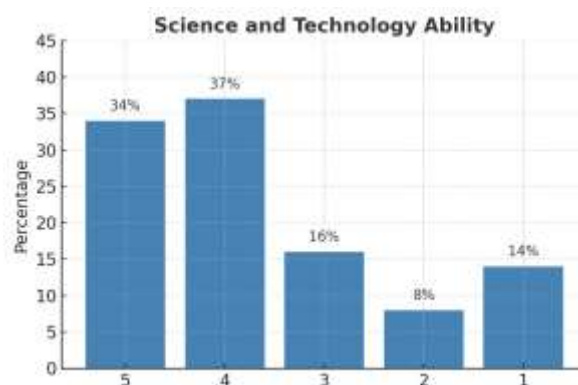

Figure 4. Perception Result Diagram of MBKM Impact towards Experiential Learning

Additionally, 76% of FIP UNJ students agree that experiential learning has a significant impact on their future employment. The MBKM policy strongly supports and enhances experiential learning by providing FIP UNJ students with various opportunities to learn through direct experiences. By engaging in real-life situations and reflecting on those experiences, students not only gain more profound knowledge and skills but also develop character, leadership, and a more holistic understanding of how theory is applied in practice. This prepares them to become competent, creative graduates who are ready to tackle real-world challenges.
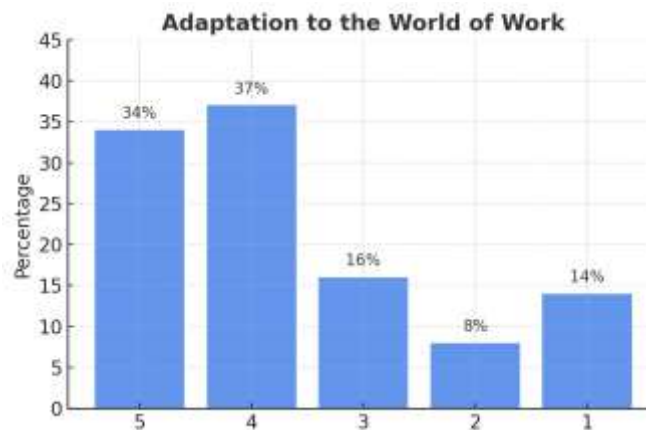
Figure 5. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Adaptation of The Workforce

In its implementation, students at FIP UNJ have shown significant adaptation to the work environment, with 61% of students reporting ease in this transition. The MBKM program has effectively prepared FIP UNJ students to adapt more easily to the ever-changing workforce. Through practical experiences, soft skills development, understanding various work environments, and building professional networks, students become more competent and ready to face future career challenges. The MBKM program helps shape graduates who possess not only academic knowledge but also the practical skills and adaptability necessary for success in the professional world.

Figure 6. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact on Science and Technology Competencies

Furthermore, regarding the development of science and technology competencies, a notable 74% of FIP UNJ students reported an increase in their technological knowledge. The MBKM program significantly supports the

enhancement of students' capabilities in the field of science and technology. By providing access to practical experiences, involvement in research, interdisciplinary learning, and collaboration with industry and research institutions, MBKM helps students develop and apply essential science and technology skills. This not only prepares them to enter a technology-based workforce but also encourages them to become innovators and leaders in the field of science and technology in the future.

Many informants have directly continued their work contracts at the places where they

interned through the Internship and Certified Independent Study Program (MSIB). Additionally, various experiences gained from participating in the Student Exchange Program (PMM) have broadened their perspectives. As a faculty offering education programs, several informants participate in the Teaching Assistance Program in Educational Units (AMSP), enhancing their skills through direct engagement in schools to help implement strategies for exploring school programs.

During the implementation, informants encountered several obstacles, such as unmet requirements, difficulty in prioritizing tasks, the need for adjustments in newly launched programs, and challenges related to fields of study that had not been previously explored. Institutions themselves cannot force the execution of all programs, as they require alignment with the practitioners, related faculty members, and assessment mechanisms. Despite these obstacles and the fact that not all aspects of MBKM have been fully realized, the positive impacts are evident in the data obtained from informants, observational results, and the documentation collected. It is undeniable that MBKM has had a beneficial effect on the students of FIP UNJ.

2. Student Perceptions of the Implementation of the MBKM Program in Enhancing Graduate Quality

Graduate quality is a key indicator of the success of a higher education institution in educating and preparing students to enter the workforce and society. Graduate quality reflects how well a higher education institution equips students to face the demands of the professional world and community. By focusing on the development of technical skills, soft skills, practical experience, and ethics, along with close collaboration with industry, institutions can produce graduates who are not only competent but also adaptive, innovative, and ready to contribute positively in their careers and to society at large. Below is a summary of the findings regarding the impact of the MBKM program on graduate quality at FIP UNJ.

**Table** 3. Finding Results of Graduate Quality

No	Indicator	SS	S	KS	TS	STS
1	Academic and Non-Academic Achievement	20	44	21	9	9
2	Study Period	28	34	22	9	15
3	Public Perception	21	31	24	17	11
4	Community Contribution	34	53	12	1	0
5	Suitability of Work Field	23	44	27	4	2
	Average	25	41	21	8	7

The data obtained from questions regarding graduate quality through five indicators indicates that the MBKM program has a positive impact on enhancing the quality of graduates from FIP UNJ.
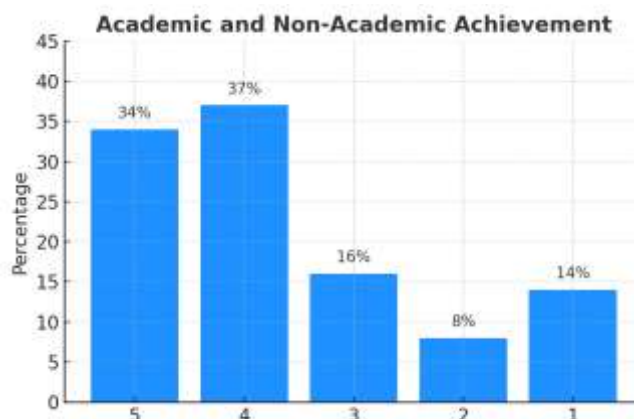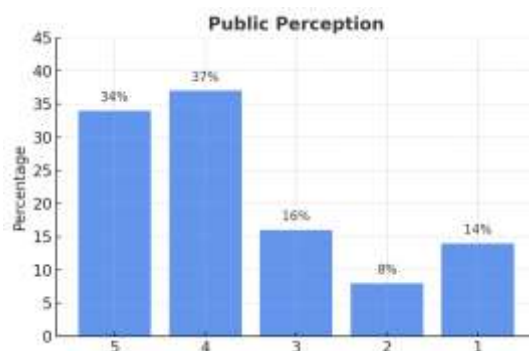
Figure 7. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards academic and non-academic achievements

This can be proven by the academic and non-academic achievements attained by the students. A total of 64% of students expressed strong agreement or agreement that the MBKM program has impacted the academic and non-academic performance of FIP UNJ students. The MBKM policy significantly influences the improvement of students' achievements in both academic and non-academic fields. By providing students with opportunities to learn through hands-on experiences, flexibility in choosing educational paths, and practical skills development, MBKM not only assists students in achieving higher academic performance but also enriches their non-academic achievements. This prepares students to become competent, competitive individuals ready to face various challenges in the future.
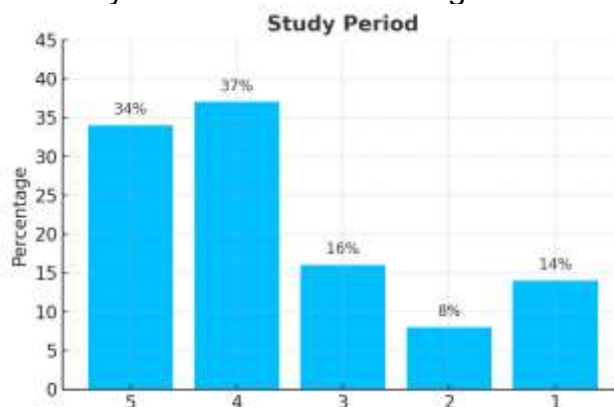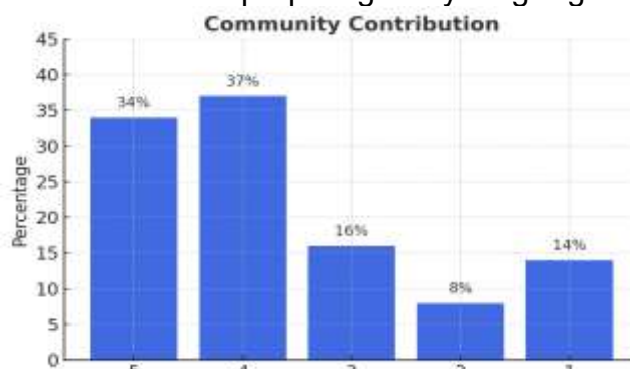

Figure 8. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Study Duration

According to the data, about 62% of FIP UNJ students completed their studies successfully. This encouragement is also driven by demands from the places where the informants are doing their internships, urging them to complete their higher education through the MSIB program. The MBKM policy can have diverse impacts on students' study duration, either accelerating or extending it. Success in using the MBKM program largely depends on careful planning, effective time management, and students' ability to integrate off-campus experiences with their academic requirements. With the right approach, MBKM can assist students in completing their studies more efficiently and achieving better outcomes, both in terms of academic performance and their readiness to face the job market.
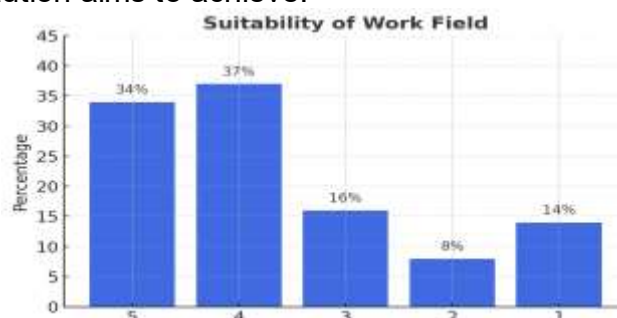
Figure 9. Perception Result Diagram of MBKM Impact towards Society Perception

In terms of societal perception, 52% of FIP UNJ students agree with the contribution made by students to the community. However, the remaining students either strongly agree or strongly disagree with the contributions provided. As the program is implemented, MB KM not only impacts students and higher education institutions but also influences public perception of higher education in Indonesia. This perception encompasses the community's views on the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of higher education in preparing the younger generation for the future.

Figure 10. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Society Contribution

Improving the quality of graduates through contributions made to the community is one of the MBKM programs in which several FIP UNJ students participate, specifically the Community Service Program (PKM). This builds a positive perception of graduates within the community. As many as 87% of informants are involved in one or more organizations within the community. In other words, the contributions made to the community align with the enhancement of graduate quality that the institution aims to achieve.

Figure 11. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Alignment of Job Fields

All efforts made to improve the quality of graduates through the alignment of job fields with their areas of expertise have shown positive results. Approximately 67% of graduates successfully find employment in fields related to their studies. Many informants believe that the knowledge gained during their studies should align with their job responsibilities.

The MBKM program significantly influences the alignment between the education received by students and their job fields after graduation. By providing relevant practical experiences, flexibility in choosing career paths, and curriculum adjustments based on industry needs, MBKM enhances the opportunities for graduates to work in areas that match their education. This not only helps graduates secure jobs that align with their competencies but also strengthens the role of higher education in preparing a workforce ready to face challenges in the modern job market.

Despite the many positive impacts on improving graduate quality, several aspects need attention, such as maintaining good relationships between the faculty and alums. The lack of information from informants makes it challenging to obtain data. A caring relationship between alums and the faculty, or vice versa, should be maintained. A good relationship is expected to produce continuous, beneficial information for both parties and uphold the reputation of the alma mater. Student Perceptions of the Implementation of the MBKM Program Contributing to Graduate Quality Improvement in Job Readiness

The MBKM program plays a crucial role in enhancing students' job readiness by providing relevant practical experiences, developing both soft and technical skills, and introducing students to the professional world and networking opportunities. By taking advantage of the various opportunities offered by MBKM, students can better prepare themselves to enter the job market and face the challenges and opportunities presented in the professional realm. This not only increases their chances of securing jobs that align with their educational background but also strengthens their position in the competitive job market. Below is a summary of the findings regarding the impact of the MBKM program on the job readiness of FIP UNJ students..

**Table** 4. Find Results of Job Readiness

No	Indicators	SS	S	KS	TS	STS
1	Intelligence	21	40	24	11	4
2	Interest in Work	29	40	20	7	4
3	Physical and Mental Health Conditions	51	26	12	13	8
4	Personality	34	37	16	8	14
	Average	34	36	18	10	7

From the four indicators based on the questions answered by the informants, the results indicate that the contribution of the MBKM program to the job readiness of FIP UNJ students received positive responses.
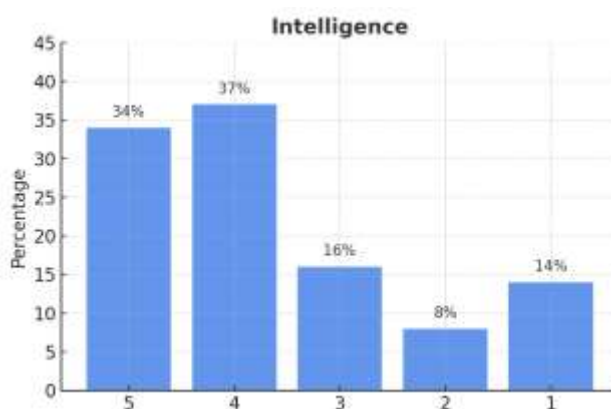
Figure 12 Perception Result Diagram of MBKM Impact towards Intelligence

In addition to impacting skills and job readiness, the MBKM program also influences the intellectual development of students. In this context, intelligence can encompass various aspects. Key aspects include critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, adaptability, and emotional intelligence. About 61% of FIP UNJ students feel they possess adequate intelligence in line with their abilities. By encouraging students to engage in project-based learning, interdisciplinary exploration, practical experiences, and independent studies, MBKM strengthens these various aspects of intelligence. This not only helps students become better prepared for the workforce but also fosters them to become more critical thinkers and innovators in their lives.
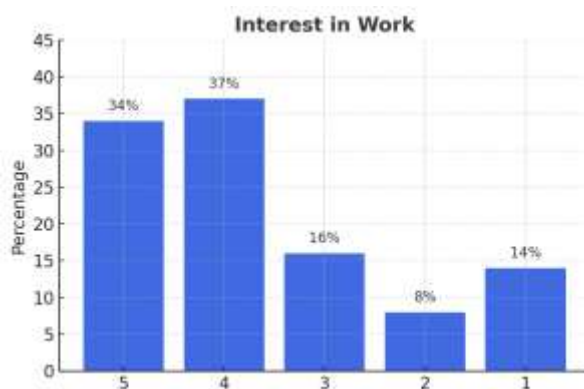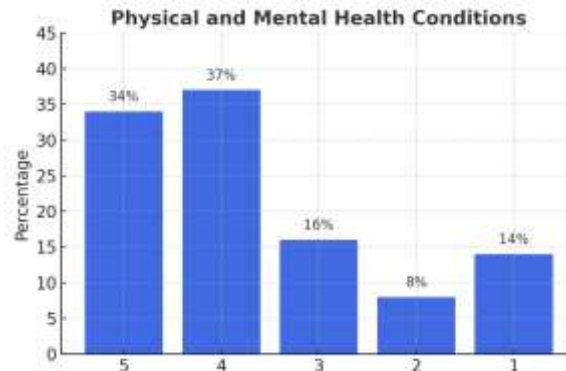

Figure 13. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards students' interests in their careers

There is also a high interest in career development, with 69% of FIP UNJ students agreeing. The MBKM program significantly contributes to the development of students' interests in their careers. By providing opportunities to explore various fields of study, practical work experiences, project-based learning, and career guidance, students can better understand their interests and preferences in the workplace. MBKM helps students identify career paths that align with their passions, enabling them to feel more satisfied and motivated in their jobs.

By maintaining physical health through exercise, good nutrition, and adequate rest, as well as nurturing mental health through stress management, social support, and balancing activities, students can ensure that they participate in the MBKM program optimally and derive maximum benefits from the experience. A total of 77% of FIP UNJ students agree with this statement.

The success of enhancing students' job readiness is also linked to maintaining physical and mental well-being. An impressive 97% believe that drawing closer to

God is a form of inner peace. This approach reflects how students are prepared for work. When students have experience, it becomes easier for them to face job challenges. The MBKM approach encourages students to take ownership of their learning and actively engage with their studies in line with their fields of expertise.

Figure 15. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Personality

With a meticulous personality in the workplace, approximately 71% of graduates respect the decisions made by others, which fosters high work motivation, thanks to the support provided by their families. The MBKM program not only enhances students' academic and professional skills but also plays a crucial role in shaping and developing their personalities. Through various practical experiences, social interactions, and new challenges, students learn to become more independent, responsible, confident, empathetic, and apt, and possess a strong work ethic. All of these aspects contribute to the formation of a more mature personality, which will benefit students in both their personal lives and professional careers in the future.

The MBKM program allows students to gain early experience through internships or practical work organized by the university or by working off-campus. This helps graduates acquire the skills and insights needed in the workforce and provides opportunities to build networks and connections that can be valuable in the future. As a result, by the time they graduate, students already have relevant experience and knowledge about the working world, enabling them to enter the workforce more independently and skillfully.

3. Student Perceptions of Barriers to the Implementation of the MBKM Program at FIP UNJ

Based on research findings, students from FIP UNJ have identified several barriers to the MBKM program, including the following:

a. Lack of Socialization

One of the main barriers to the implementation of the MBKM program is the inadequate effectiveness of socialization. Information about MBKM has not been disseminated across faculties or study programs, resulting in some students and lecturers being unaware of or misunderstanding the program. The socialization efforts may be one-sided and lack interactive discussions, preventing students and lecturers from asking questions or expressing their concerns.

b. Insufficient Collaboration with Industry Partners

Not all faculties or study programs have a strong partnership network with external industries or organizations. This lack of collaboration may limit students' opportunities to participate in internships, projects, or other activities outside the campus, which are crucial components of MBKM.

c. Limitations of Lecturers in Supporting MBKM

Not all lecturers are prepared or adapted to the flexible and open teaching methods encouraged in MBKM. They may require additional training to support more adaptive and project-based learning. The lack of training and workshops that directly involve lecturers and students can lead to a low understanding of how MBKM can be implemented and utilized.

d. Economic and Social Challenges

Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may face difficulties in participating in MBKM activities that require additional costs, such as travel, internships in other cities, or student exchange programs.

Addressing these barriers requires a comprehensive strategy, including enhanced socialization, infrastructure development, simplification of administrative processes, and increased cooperation with external partners. Thus, the implementation of MBKM can proceed more effectively and provide maximum benefits for FIP UNJ students.

4. Solutions for Enhancing the Effectiveness of the MBKM Program to Improve Graduates

Based on research results, students at FIP UNJ have proposed several solutions to enhance the effectiveness of the MBKM program, including the following:

a. Conducting MBKM Socialization Program

There is a need for continuous socialization regarding the importance of MBKM so that students can fully understand its significance. This socialization should not only impact students but also benefit the faculty and the university. Organizing socialization sessions with FIP UNJ students to participate in MBKM can help change their mindset to view MBKM as a means to enhance skills beneficial to society or schools, rather than solely for financial gain or personal desires. Moreover, students should be well-prepared to apply the theories learned during their studies. Increased socialization regarding the MBKM program, including information on benefits, procedures, and available opportunities, can be conducted through seminars, workshops, or more intensive online media.

b. Collaborating with Industries and Other Institutions

First, it is essential to establish stronger partnerships with industries and businesses to ensure the relevance of programs (such as internships) aligns with market needs and corresponds to the majors. This collaboration should be supplemented by intensive socialization about the benefits and mechanisms of MBKM to students and lecturers. Additionally, strengthening collaborations with industry partners and external organizations can provide relevant practical experiences for students.

c. Regular Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring and evaluation of the MBKM program's implementation is necessary. A transparent and ongoing evaluation system should be established to ensure program quality and student satisfaction. Furthermore, periodic evaluations of the MBKM program can capture feedback from students and other stakeholders, which can be instrumental in improving the MBKM program at FIP UNJ.

d. Providing Adequate Resources

Enhancing the provision of resources such as funding, facilities, or access to learning materials that support the implementation of MBKM is crucial. Adequate resource provision will assist students in navigating this program more smoothly and

effectively. Students often require financial support and facilities to participate in MBKM activities such as internships, independent projects, or student exchanges. Funding from the university or special scholarships for MBKM participants can alleviate students' financial burdens, allowing them to focus more on competency development without worrying about associated costs. Furthermore, adequate facilities, such as access to laboratories, libraries, and well-equipped working spaces with cutting-edge technology, are essential to support practical activities in the MBKM program. Access to relevant software or specialized equipment related to their fields of study would significantly enhance their MBKM activities.

5. CLOSING

Based on the findings and discussions presented, the researchers have arrived at answers to the research questions and concluded several points as follows:

a. Positive Perception of MBKM: Students tend to have a positive perception of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in learning. Within MBKM, five indicators explain the achievements obtained by FIP UNJ, with an average positive result. The MBKM program significantly supports and strengthens the student-centered learning approach by providing flexibility, independence, and diverse learning opportunities for students. The MBKM program at FIP UNJ significantly impacts the development of students' hard skills and soft skills. MBKM strongly supports and enhances experiential learning by providing FIP UNJ students with various opportunities to learn through direct experience. MBKM significantly prepares FIP UNJ students to adapt more easily to the ever-changing world of work. Additionally, MBKM significantly supports the improvement of students' capabilities in science and technology (IPTEK). By providing access to practical experiences, involvement in research, interdisciplinary learning, and collaboration with industries and research institutions, MBKM helps students develop and apply essential science and technology skills.

b. Contribution to Graduate Quality: The implementation of MBKM contributes to the Improvement of graduate quality at FIP UNJ. The MBKM program has a significant impact on enhancing students' achievements, both academically and non-academically. The MBKM program can have varied impacts on students' study durations, either accelerating or prolonging their studies. MBKM not only affects students and higher education institutions but also influences public perception of higher education in Indonesia. This perception encompasses the public's view of the relevance, quality, and effectiveness of higher education in preparing the younger generation for the future. The contributions made to society align with the improvement in graduate quality that institutions aim to achieve. The MBKM program significantly influences the alignment between the education received by students and their fields of work after graduation.

c. Enhancing Work Readiness: The MBKM program plays an essential role in enhancing students' work readiness by providing relevant practical experiences, developing soft and technical skills, and introducing students to the world of work and professional networks. In addition to impacting skills and work readiness, MBKM also influences the development of students' intelligence. Intelligence, in this context, can encompass various aspects such as critical thinking, problem-solving, creativity, adaptability, and emotional intelligence. MBKM significantly contributes to the development of students' interest in careers. Through

opportunities to explore various fields of study, practical work experiences, project-based learning, and career guidance, students can bett er understand their interests and preferences in their careers. By maintaining physical health through exercise, proper nutrition, and sufficient rest, as well as nurturing mental health through stress management, social support, and balanced activities, students can ensure they can optimally participate in the MBKM program and derive maximum benefits from the experience. The MBKM program not only enhances students' academic and professional skills but also plays a vital role in shaping and developing their personalities.

d. Barriers to Implementation: There are several barriers to the implementation of the MBKM program, including insufficient socialization, lack of collaboration with industrial partners, limited faculty support for the MBKM program, and economic and social challenges. Addressing these barriers requires comprehensive strategies, including improving socialization, developing infrastructure, simplifying administrative processes, and enhancing collaboration with external partners.

e. Proposed Solutions: Based on the existing barriers, students of FIP UNJ have proposed several solutions to enhance the effectiveness of MBKM implementation, including organizing MBKM program socialization, establishing partnerships with industries and other institutions, conducting regular monitoring and evaluation, and providing adequate resources. Thus, the implementation of MBKM can run more effectively and provide maximum benefits for FIP UNJ students.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings previously discussed, several recommendat ion s related to the impact of the MBKM program on improving graduate quality at FIP UNJ are as follows:

1. For Academics: Academics who have the opportunity to participate in MBKM are encouraged to take part in one of the available programs. This research has demonstrated the impact of MBKM on enhancing graduate quality. It is expected that this will contribute to the advancement of knowledge, character development, and improved living standards through MBKM.

2. For Higher Education Institutions: Higher education institutions are encouraged to actively implement MBKM. This not only provides financial support for graduates but also serves as a promotional opportunity for the academic excellence of the institution. It can assist institutions in producing graduates who have the opportunity to achieve academic and professional goals in their fields of study. For example, institutions could conduct regular outreach sessions for students and faculty, explaining the objectives, benefits, and implementat ion of MBKM. Involve alumni who have participated in the program to share their experiences.

3. For the Government: The government could simplify the requirements and conditions for participating in MBKM. In this research, it was found that some students were unable to pass the program selection due to a requirement that disqualified candidates receiving scholarships from sources other than MBKM. Additionally, improving website accessibilit y across the country is essential,

ensuring that information is updated and readily available. This information can serve as a reference for policymaking and future development of MBKM.

4. For Society/Corporate Partners: Non-governmental entities and companies should

support MBKM. This not only helps build a better educational standard but also benefits from the distribution of quality labor that has proven expertise. This research provides a broader reference for thought, especially in the field of education, so that in the future, society can contribute its voice towards better development of MBKM.

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