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## Exploring Challenges in Implementing a *Merdeka Belajar KAMPUS MERDEKA Curriculum*: A Qualitative Analysis of Students' Perceptions

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### Abstract

The objective of this study is to determine how students perceptions the Merdeka Learning Campus Merdeka curriculum (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka- MBKM). This research is conducted using a survey. The survey was administered to fifty research participants from the STKIP AL MAKSUM LANGKAT English Education study program. These respondents are students on fifth semester with 47 respondents. Collecting data use questionnaire. The objective is to determine the extent to which students approve of MBKM. Students must respond to six MBKM-related items on the questionnaire using the following four scales: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree use the Google Form application. The results of this study indicate that the majority of students agree with the implementation of the MBKM curriculum with four recognitions, namely lectures at differences study program in same College with agree 85.4%, lectures at same study program different college with agree 64.6%, lectures at different study program at different college with agree 70.8%, and practice in Non-University/college Institutions with agree 70.8%.

**Keywords:** Curriculum, MBKM, Student Perception

### Introduction

A lot of experts have talked about the independent learning Merdeka Belajar curriculum (MBKM in Indonesia). Starting with the idea of implementing the MBKM curriculum by making the structure of the old curriculum better (Suwandi, 2020), the urgency of implementing the MBKM curriculum (Suryaman, 2020), and the different problems that come up when the curriculum is put into practice are discussed (Siswanto, 2009; Haryanto, 2020; Susetyo, 2020). This shows that different actors in the field of education, especially in higher education, always welcome changes to the curriculum. In line with this, the government has also put out Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2020 to make this curriculum easier. This regulation shows how the government helps with this curriculum, especially when it comes to the standard part of the process (Hidayatullah, 2020).

This study on MBKM also shows that the curriculum is an important tool for providing quality education (Richards, 2001; McNeil, 2006). The quality of education depends a lot on how well the things that come out of education can help the world as a whole. So, the issues that come up when making a curriculum are often related to the time. Suryaman (2020) told us this, and he said that MBKM is trying to answer the question of artificial intelligence, which is becoming more and more important during the pandemic. This can be seen in how cyberspace is used in many areas of life, including education. Suryaman (2020) also talked about the problems with Indonesia's 2030 vision, the industrial revolution, and public literacy that the world of education must solve through MBKM.

In accordance with the last factor, which is actually a crucial factor in other areas, the Indonesian population's literacy rate remains low. This is evidenced by the fact that Indonesians are only interested in reading 0.001 books. This suggests that only one individual out of one thousand Indonesians has an

interest in reading. This is supported by data from the 2015 Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), which ranks Indonesian students' reading skills 62nd out of 72 nations. In the following year, 2016, UNESCO revealed the ranking of countries based on their literacy levels for the 2016 World's Most Literate Nations program. Indonesia was ranked 60th out of 61 countries, placing it near the bottom of the list (Suryaman, 2020).

On the basis of these issues, MBKM is seen as a significant solution for enhancing Indonesia's human resources. MBKM is a component of the government's autonomous learning policy phase. The first phase concentrates on primary and secondary education with four policy focuses on the adoption of national standard school examinations (USBN in Indonesia), national exams (UN in Indonesia), learning implementation plans (RPP in Indonesia), and new student entrance regulations (PPDB in Indonesia) The first phase is zoning, the second phase is MBKM for the world of higher education, the third phase is the reorganization of the school operational assistance fund (BOS in Indonesia) distribution scheme, the fourth phase is the formation of a driving organization, and the fifth phase is about driving teachers (Rosyidi, 2020). This study attempts to assess student perceptions of MBKM implementation in relation to the new MBKM policy, the question are: Are students already familiar with MBKM? Are they prepared to enrol in MBKM? With the following perceptions:

- Lectures at differences study program in same College
- Lectures at same study program different college
- Lectures at different study program at different college
- Practice in Non-University/college Institutions

## Methods

This study aimed to determine how students perceive MBKM. Consequently, this study employs a survey method. The survey was administered to forty seven research participants from the STKIP AL MAKSUM LANGKAT English Education study program. These respondents are students in fifth semester. The fifth semester was chosen because MBKM will be applied to them in accordance with the study program's revised curriculum. Collecting data use questionnaire. The objective is to determine the extent to which students approve of MBKM. Students must respond to six MBKM-related items on the questionnaire using the following four scales: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Using the Google Form application, the questionnaire was administered.

## Results and Discussion

Changes to the curriculum must be matched with an attitude of change that not only emanates from the macro, but also from the micro (students). For this reason, it is essential to assess the pupils' mastery of this MBKM. Following is a concise summary of the data gathered about student perceptions of the implementation of MBKM.

**Table 1. Results of Student Perceptions About the MBKM Curriculum**

No.	Recognicy of MBKM	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Point 1	10.4%	85.4%	4.2%	0%
2	Point 2	14.6%	64.6%	20.8%	0%
3	Point 3	6.3%	70.8%	20.8%	2.1%
4	Point 4	27.1%	70.8%	2.1%	0%

### MBKM Recognition

Point 1 = Lectures at differences study program in same College

Point 2 = Lectures at same study program different college

Point 3 = Lectures at different study program at different college

Point 4 = Practice in Non-University/college Institutions

The table shows how the MBKM curriculum made the students feel. In general, MBKM gives students options to improve their skills in certain areas, especially those that involve cross-disciplinary learning and getting ready for the world of work. So, MBKM is the right of a student to get course credit (Structure Form) or CPL (Free Form) (Suryaman, 2020).

Lectures at differences study program in same College

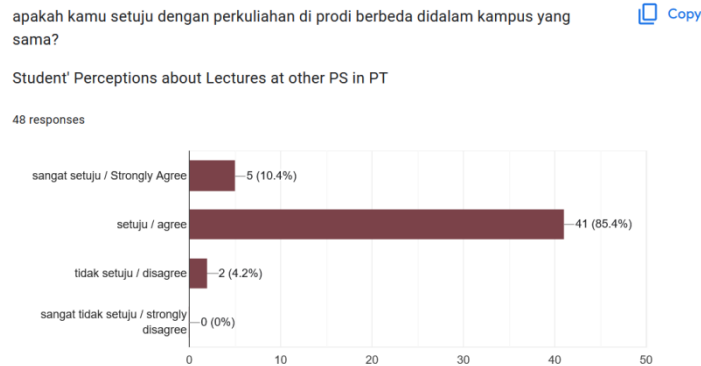


Figure 1. Lectures at differences study program in same College

Almost student in STKIP Al Maksum for English department agree with this point. They want to try another department in their college. For college policy, the college decide to switch English program with Computer Program. So the student will get the other ability after graduating especially for technology in Computer ability. Nowadays, the competence of technology must be mastering for all components in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Lectures at same study program different college

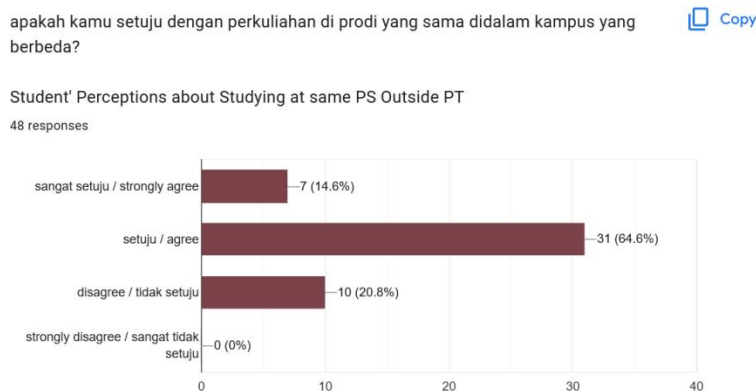
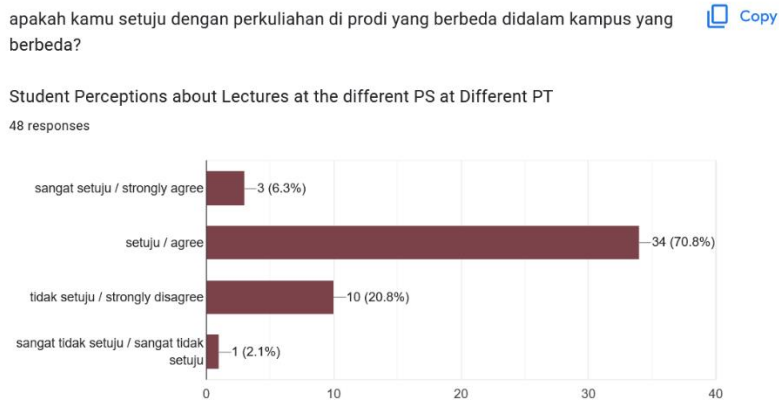


Figure 2. Lectures at same study program different college

Many students agree with 64.6% to lecture at same study program different college. They want to know about how the environments in another college that outside of their college. Another reason they want to get new knowledge and experience. They also want to know about culture and rule from different college.

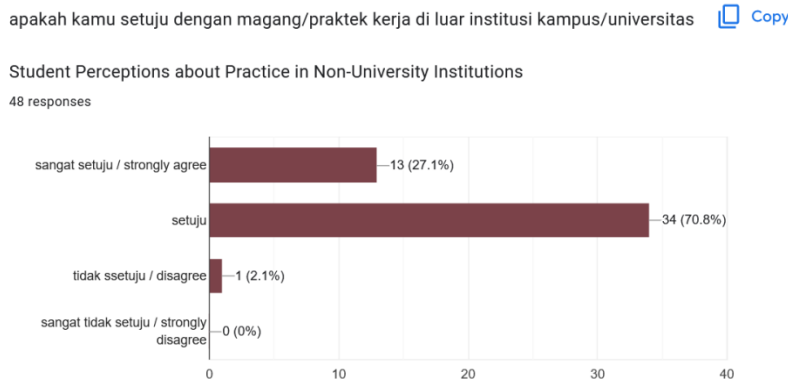
Lectures at different study program at different college



**Figure 3. Lectures at different study program at different college**

Lectures at different study program at different college with agree 70.8%. This has same reason as the second point. They want to know about how the environments in another college that outside of their college but with different study program. Another reason they want to get new knowledge and experience. They also want to know about culture and rule from different college. This will be new challenge for students' experience.

Practice in Non-University/college Institutions



**Figure 4. Practice in Non-University/college Institutions**

Practicing in Non-University/college Institutions get agree 70.8%. This is slightly different from the previous point. The point is show about Practicing in Non-University/college Institutions for student. STKIP AL Maksum is the college where the student will become a teacher after graduating, but for this point they will try practicing in outside of their department. Almost student thought they will get another competence besides teaching. This challenge will be used for global competition, and students are expected to be able to prepare themselves in the competition in today's modern era.

## Conclusion

Almost every English major at STKIP Al Maksu agrees with all point. They want to try something different in another part of their college. Due to college rules, the English program was switched with the Computer Program. So, when the student graduates, he or she will have other skills, especially when it comes to technology and computer skills. In the 21st century, all parts must be able to use technology well. They want to know how the environment is at a different college with a different study program than their own. Another reason they want to get new knowledge and experience. They also want to know about the college's culture and rules. This will give students a new challenge to face. Almost every student thought they would learn something else besides how to teach. This challenge will be used in a global competition, and students in the modern day should be able to prepare themselves for the competition.

The government implemented MBKM as a response to the issues posed by the changing times. With this MBKM program, one of the efforts made is to allow as much room as possible for the development of students' potential in accordance with the requirements of their time. This indicates that pupils are willing to make personal adjustments. Thus, MBKM can be the solution to the issues that frequently occur among graduates who feel disconnected from the professional world.

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