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**STUDENTS PERCEPTION OF THE IMPACT OF THE MERDEKA BELAJAR
KAMPUS MERDEKA (MBKM) PROGRAM ON IMPROVING GRADUATE
QUALITY AT THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION, STATE UNIVERSITY OF
JAKARTA**

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to find out that the impact of the MBKM program can contribute to improving the quality of student graduates at FIP UNJ. The research method used is a survey, using a quantitative approach. The data collection technique in this research was carried out using a questionnaire designed in the form of a statement with a Likert assessment, then

distributed via Google form involving a sample of 323 FIP UNJ students. The sampling technique of 323 respondents as samples in this study used the technique (Proportional random sampling), namely the sample by paying attention to the proportion of the population elements. The results of this study are that FIP UNJ students tend to have a positive perception of MBKM, which is considered to strengthen experiential learning, improve hard skills and soft skills, and prepare them for the world of work. MBKM contributes significantly to improving the quality of graduates and the suitability between education and work after graduation. This program also supports the development of students' intelligence and personality. However, there are several obstacles in its implementation, such as lack of socialization and cooperation with industry, which can be overcome through increased socialization, cooperation, monitoring, evaluation, and provision of adequate resources to increase the effectiveness of the program.

Keywords: MBKM, Perception, Quality of Graduates

INTRODUCTION

Meeting the demand for the improvement and development of the quality of education delivery is a necessity. As stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, Article 1, paragraph 1, education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process so that students actively develop their potential to possess spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state (UURI, 2003). The aim is to create a generation with competencies beneficial to industrial development in society, as well as being characterized by integrity and dedication. This highlights the importance of education for the younger generation to foster hope and create better opportunities for the future. Such efforts should be coordinated by leveraging all forms of support from various societal layers. Considering that education changes dynamically with the times, the efforts required are complex and have become a primary focus in life.

When discussing the quality of education, it aligns with graduate competency standards. As stated in Article 5, paragraph (1) of the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education Regulation No. 44 of 2015, the graduate competency standards at the higher education level are the minimum criteria regarding the qualifications of graduates, encompassing attitudes, knowledge, and skills, which are expressed in the formulation of graduate learning outcomes (Kemenristekdikti, 2014). In accordance with the mandate of Law No. 12 of 2012, higher education institutions must systematically implement a quality assurance process through the Higher Education Quality Assurance System, referring to the National Higher Education Standards (UURI, 2012).

The progress of a nation is determined, in part, by its institutions, such as universities, producing graduates who master various branches of knowledge, possess technological insight that leverages current conditions, and can adapt to unexpected changes. This is crucial for fulfilling national and international interests, as well as enhancing global competitiveness (Afifi, 2011). Achieving this requires the implementation of programs that are well-planned, executed, and evaluated with quality (Andrews et al., 2017). Planning a program requires the correct components as a response to the situation, including considering abilities, values,

information, circumstances, and timing (Tuan Soh & Mohd Meerah, 2013). Once the plan is established, the next step is to implement the program (Andrews et al., 2017), as execution is key to realizing a thoroughly developed plan. Evaluation is also a crucial aspect of educational management, serving as an assessment of the final achievements (Bhattacharyya, 2013).

Referring to planning, implementation, and evaluation, these processes are essential efforts in improving the quality of education (Arniati et al., 2019). As previously mentioned, education is the cornerstone of human development. Educational institutions bear great responsibility in this regard, as students will eventually engage directly with society. Preparing them for this is no easy task, considering the many factors that contribute to producing high-quality graduates (Tobin & Sprague, 2000). Collaboration between institutions and individuals also plays a vital role in ensuring that a program is planned, implemented, and evaluated according to the highest quality standards (Borrego & Newswander, 2010).

The Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) launched a new program in early 2020, known as Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM), which aims to foster innovative, flexible learning processes that align with students' interests. According to the Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) website, some flagship MBKM programs include Summer School, Desa Binaan, Permata-Sakti, Bangkit, KKN Tematik, and the Kampus Merdeka Program, among others.

The purpose of the MBKM program, as stated in the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Handbook by Kemendikbud, is to enhance the competencies of graduates, both in soft skills and hard skills, making them more prepared and relevant to the current needs. The program seeks to prepare graduates to become future leaders who are excellent and have strong character. Through flexible, experiential learning, it is expected that students can develop their potential and talents. MBKM offers a holistic and practical learning experience for students, providing them with the opportunity to choose courses that align with their interests without interrupting their Semester Credit Unit (SKS) activities at their home institution (Fuadi & Aswita, 2021).

As outlined in Minister of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) No. 3 of 2020 on National Higher Education Standards, Article 18 explains that students in undergraduate or applied undergraduate programs can fulfill their learning periods and workloads by: 1) participating in the entire learning process in the study program at the university according to their study period and workload, and 2) participating in the learning process within the study program for part of their study period and workload, and completing the rest outside the study program (Permendikbud, 2020). Students can choose to take courses not only within their study program but also in different study programs at their home university, or in the same study program at a different university, or even in a different study program at a different university, as well as learning outside the university environment (Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021).

The MBKM program is a significant hope for educational practitioners (Rohiyatussakinah, 2021) because it offers a dynamic, evolving curriculum that keeps up with the changing times (Kodrat, 2021b). To ensure that the quality of education continues to improve and to produce competent graduates, cooperation between various internal and external stakeholders is essential (Matthews et al., 2017). This program is an example of a plan implemented by universities in collaboration with relevant partners, and it is carried out by

students. After implementation, the results are evaluated to assess the quality of the graduates produced by the university. UNJ, as an educational institution, has adopted MBKM as a program that benefits its primary customers, the students. The ultimate product of MBKM is competent graduates. Although MBKM is not mandatory for students, it has garnered significant interest. As mentioned earlier, realizing a large-scale program like MBKM requires strong support and cooperation between universities, students, and related institutions. The following data illustrates this point:

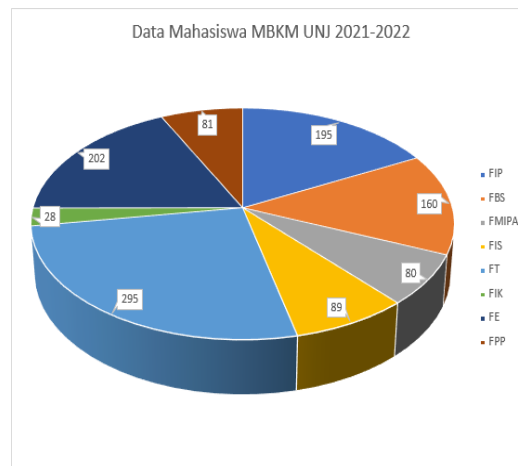


Figure 1. Student Data of MBKM UNJ 2021-2022

In every aspect of life, education is an essential element (Hughes, 2013) that must be strategically implemented. For this reason, graduate competency standards should be the goal of higher education institutions in order to create a connection between the academic world, society, and industry (Jorre de St Jorre & Oliver, 2018). To achieve this, the MBKM program can be a solution in the face of an increasingly competitive reality. The MBKM program aims to improve graduate quality, as proven by the evaluations conducted. Thus, this research examines the outcomes/impact of a policy-based program on the quality of university graduates. Therefore, the title chosen is "Students' Perceptions of the Impact of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka Program on Improving Graduate Quality at the Faculty of Education, State University of Jakarta."

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Perception

Perception is a process individuals use to manage and interpret what they capture through their senses to give meaning to their environment. However, what is perceived by one person may differ due to objective reality. It doesn't always have to be different, but often there are disagreements. For example, it is possible that all members of a particular organization view the organization as a conducive place to work, with pleasant working conditions, interesting job tasks, good pay, and wise and responsible management. Robbins Stephen (2003:3) provides an initial definition of perception, stating, "Perception is a process by which individuals organize and interpret their sensory impressions in order to give meaning to their

environment." Perception is a process where individuals organize and interpret sensory impressions to give meaning to their environment.

Similarly, Fred Luthans (2011:135) notes that "Perception is to recognize that it is a unique interpretation of the situation, not an exact recording of it." Perception is a unique interpretation of a situation experienced by an individual, not an exact recording of the event. In the same book, Luthans adds another definition that aligns with this: "Perception is a very complex cognitive process that produces a unique picture of the world, a picture that may be quite different from reality." Perception is a highly complex cognitive process that results in a unique image of the world, which may be very different from reality.

In a similar vein, Griffin and Moorhead (2014:75) state that "Perception is the set of processes by which an individual becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment, which is another important element of workplace behavior." Perception is a series of processes where an individual becomes aware of and interprets information about the environment, which is an important aspect of individual workplace behavior in the organization.

According to Laurie J. Mullins (2010:211), "The process of perception explains the manner in which information (stimuli) from the environment around us is selected and organized to provide meaning for the individual. Perception is the mental function of giving significance to stimuli such as shapes, colors, movement, taste, sounds, touch, smells, pain, pressures, and feelings. Perception gives rise to individual behavioral responses to particular situations." The process of perception explains how information (stimuli) from the surrounding environment is selected and organized to give meaning to an individual. Perception is the mental function that assigns significance to stimuli such as shapes, colors, movements, tastes, sounds, touch, smells, pain, pressure, and feelings. Perception generates individual behavioral responses to specific situations. Furthermore, Mullins (2010:175) adds that "Perception is not necessarily reality; that is, perceptions are not always accurate or correct. It is the worker's perception that influences personal behavior, however, and not so much the real phenomenon. Perceptions are real in their consequences."

Perception is a sensory experience where an individual observes behavior, events, or conditions. It involves interpreting observed factors, developing attitudes, and allowing these observations to influence behavior. Perception occurs across all aspects of an individual's environment (self, others, production components, customers, the general public, etc.). Harris and Hartman (2002:175) explain that "Perception is a sensory experience in which an individual observes a behavior, event, or condition; forms interpretations of the factors observed; develops attitudes; and allows the processed observation to become a factor influencing his or her behavior. Perceptions are achieved for all aspects of the individual's environment (self, others production components, customers, the general public, and so on)."

According to Sinha (2008:86), "Perception is the process of being aware of objects, persons, or ideas and attaching meaning or significance to them on the basis of one's past experience with them in order to relate to them." Perception is the process of understanding objects, people, or ideas and assigning meaning or significance to them based on one's past experience with those things to relate to them.

Perception can also shape impressions of oneself, others, and daily life experiences. It serves as a screen or filter through which information is passed before it affects an individual,

as Schermerhorn (2002:32) states: "Perception is a way of forming impressions about oneself, other people, and daily life experiences. It also serves as a screen or filter through which information passes before it has an effect on people."

Similar to Schermerhorn's view, Miner (2005:184) defines "Person perception includes the processes through which individuals form impressions and draw inferences regarding other people." Person perception encompasses all the processes through which individuals form impressions and make conclusions about others. According to Ivanevich, Konopaske, and Matteson (2008:86), "Perception is the process by which an individual gives meaning to their environment. It involves organizing and interpreting various stimuli into a psychological experience." Perception is the process by which an individual assigns meaning to their environment, involving the organization and interpretation of various stimuli into a psychological experience. Miner (2005:184) adds that "Person perception is that people tend to have rather fixed views of the way that things should be as they enter into interpersonal relationships." People's perceptions tend to have more accurate interpretations, particularly when forming interpersonal relationships.

The context in which we observe certain objects or events is also important. The time when certain objects or events are observed can affect attention, such as location, lighting, air temperature, or a number of other situational factors. Slocum and Hellriegel (2009:68) mention that "Perception is the process by which people select, organize, interpret, and respond to information from the world around them." Perception is the process by which individuals select, organize, interpret, and respond to information from the world around them.

Finally, Harris and Hartman (2002:197) conclude that "Perception is a sensory experience in which an individual observes a behavior, event, or condition; forms interpretations of the factors observed; develops attitudes; and allows the processed observation to become a factor influencing his or her behavior." Perception is a sensory experience where an individual observes behavior, events, or conditions, forms interpretations of the observed factors, develops attitudes, and allows these processed observations to influence behavior.

Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM)

Studying a theory is a series of research processes aimed at investigating to find answers to questions in the environment (Hughes, 2013). MBKM is a policy designed to prepare students for rapid social, cultural, workforce, and technological changes (Wardani, 2022). The main programs include: easing the establishment of new study programs, changing the accreditation system for higher education institutions, simplifying the process for public universities to become state legal entities, and providing students with the right to study outside their study program for three semesters (Risza et al., 2022). According to the MBKM website, one of the program's goals is the "right to study for three semesters outside the study program." This means that students are given the freedom to take credits outside their study program. The three semesters are referred to include one semester of taking courses outside their study program and two semesters of engaging in learning activities outside the university (MBKM, 2022).

According to Nadiem Makarim, the basic principle behind the "Merdeka Belajar" program is inspired by KH Dewantara's philosophy, which emphasizes education on independence and autonomy (Kamalia & Andriansyah, 2021). In the millennial era, MBKM is

well-suited for implementation, as "freedom" in this context refers to the educational process in higher education, where students can choose from eight independent learning programs offered by the ministry (Hakim et al., 2022). Students are given the freedom to attend courses outside their study program within the same university or participate in linear programs at different universities, with activities lasting for one semester or equivalent to 20 credits (Kodrat, 2021).

According to Nadiem Makarim, MBKM is divided into two components: "Merdeka Belajar" (Independent Learning) and "Kampus Merdeka" (Independent Campus). The first component, "Freedom to Learn," refers to freedom of thought, which ideally begins with educators being expected to appreciate changes in learning at every level of education. The second component, "Kampus Merdeka," refers to removing constraints that limit movement. Some aspects of this second component include:

1. Autonomy for higher education institutions to create new study programs with accreditation levels of A or B.
2. Automatic reaccreditation for institutions or study programs that wish to improve their ratings. The conditions are governed by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education (BAN-PT), which renews accreditation automatically every five years, with reapplication possible two years after the final accreditation is issued.
3. Freedom for Public Universities (PTN), Public Service Agencies (BLU), and Working Units (Satker) to become State Universities with Legal Entity Status (PTN-BH).
4. Universities are required to give students the freedom to participate in programs outside the university for two semesters or the equivalent of 40 credits.

Since MBKM involves many parties both inside and outside universities, the program represents a form of cooperation between universities and other relevant institutions (Rohiyatussakinah, 2021). Various forms of experiential learning are offered for students outside the university, aimed at helping them develop their potential in line with their talents. There are eight flagship programs that students can choose from, including (Tohir, 2020):

1. Internship/Work Practice in Industry or Other Workplaces

The internship program lasts 1–2 semesters, where students are expected to gain sufficient experience and learn directly in the workplace (experiential learning). During the internship, students will acquire hard skills such as technical skills, complex problem-solving, and analytical abilities, as well as soft skills such as professional/work ethics, communication, and collaboration. Students who are familiar with the workplace are expected to adapt to the workforce more easily. For industries, the benefit is the potential to recruit suitable talent directly, reducing recruitment and training costs. Through this program, industry issues can flow into universities, updating teaching materials and enhancing the relevance of university research topics.

2. Community Service Projects in Villages

The Thematic Community Service Program (KKNT) is a form of education that provides students with the opportunity to live within a community outside the university. They work directly with the community to identify potential and address problems, aiming to develop

the village's potential and solve existing issues. KKNT is conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Villages, Development of Disadvantaged Regions, and Transmigration, as well as other ministries/stakeholders, in accordance with Ministerial Regulation No. 17 of 2019, which outlines the general guidelines for village development and empowerment.

3. Teaching Assistance Program in Educational Institutions

This program aims to provide students with an opportunity to teach, enhance the quality and equity of education, and align primary and secondary education with higher education, considering current developments.

4. Student Exchange Program

The student exchange program aims to instill certain attitudes in students, as outlined in the Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation (Permendikbud) No. 3 of 2020. These include respect for cultural diversity, viewpoints, religions, and beliefs, as well as others' original opinions or findings, alongside the ability to collaborate and maintain social sensitivity and concern for society and the environment.

5. Research Internships

For students interested in a research career, the opportunity to intern in research labs is ideal. Research institutions often need research assistants for short-term projects (one semester to one year).

6. Entrepreneurship Program

Through entrepreneurship activities, students with entrepreneurial interests have a platform to channel their talents, which can also help address unemployment issues.

7. Independent Study/Project

Independent study projects complement the curriculum students have already taken. Universities can also use independent study to cover topics not included in the regular curriculum but still within the syllabus of a particular study program or faculty. Independent study projects can involve interdisciplinary group work.

8. Humanitarian Projects

Students with youth, skills, and interest can participate in humanitarian projects both in Indonesia and abroad. Since Indonesia is frequently affected by natural disasters, universities often help address these disasters through humanitarian programs. This can train students to develop social sensitivity, helping them understand and address various issues.

Quality of College Graduates

Quality of University Graduates

Quality is something dynamic that follows customer expectations of products and services, evolving in line with processes in the environment by meeting or exceeding

expectations (Scott D. Johnson et al., 2000). Therefore, quality is not momentary but occurs over a long period. During this period, quality needs to change, improve, and refine to meet the needs and expectations of customers while adapting to environmental developments (Kodrat, 2021b). Educational institutions, including universities, must understand the needs of both internal and external customers.

In the world of education, the customers are the students who study at the institution for a specified duration based on their educational level (Jamaludin, 2013). Once students complete their studies, the output is the graduates produced by the university. When discussing output, it is related to outcomes, which refer to learning aspects, such as the creation of quality graduates characterized by: 1) awareness, 2) knowledge, 3) attitude, 4) skills, 5) opinions, 6) aspirations, and 7) motivation (Jorre de St Jorre & Oliver, 2018).

The process of achieving improved graduate quality involves planning, implementation, and evaluation. These three stages are closely related to outcomes (Matthews & Mercer-Mapstone, 2018). Designing a program is a form of well-prepared, directed planning. The implementation aligns with how the program is carried out to enhance graduate quality. Meanwhile, evaluation is carried out in parallel with identifying the benefits, supporting factors, and obstacles in implementing quality improvement. However, both implementation and evaluation will always refer back to the initial planning for improving graduate quality.

This study focuses on the learning outcomes or competencies set by the program and the university, with the Indonesian National Qualifications Framework (KKNI) as the reference. The assessment elements and descriptions include the outputs from the education sector and the research sector, as well as the Student Creativity Program (PKM). The outputs from the education sector include:

1. Analysis of the fulfillment of Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL), measured using valid and relevant methods, covering: a) comprehensiveness, b) depth, and c) usefulness of the analysis, shown by the improvement of CPL over the last three years, 2. Cumulative Grade Point Average (GPA) of graduates. 3. Academic achievements of students, 4. Non-academic achievements of students, 5. Study duration, 6. On-time graduation, 7. Study success, 8. Implementation of tracer studies, covering five aspects:

a) Coordinated tracer studies at the university level, b) Conducted regularly every year, c) Questions include core questions from the Ministry of Education's tracer study, d) Targeted at the entire population (graduates from two to four years ago), and e) Results are disseminated and used for curriculum and learning development, 9. Waiting time for employment, 10. Job relevance to the field of study, 11. User satisfaction with graduates.

The outputs from the research sector and the PKM include student scientific publications produced independently or jointly with permanent lecturers, with titles relevant to the field of study. Additionally, there are student scientific articles produced independently or with permanent lecturers that are cited. Lastly, student products or services are produced independently or with permanent lecturers that are adopted by industries or communities. The research and PKM outputs are produced by students, either independently or in collaboration with permanent lecturers.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research method used is a survey, employing a quantitative approach. The data collection technique in this study was conducted through a questionnaire designed in the form of statements assessed using the Likert scale, which was then distributed via Google Forms to students of the Faculty of Education (FIP) at State University of Jakarta (UNJ).

The data collection technique involved distributing questionnaires to be filled out and answered by lecturers from STAI Nurul Iman Parung Bogor. The Likert scale used in the questionnaire has five categories of responses: (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) somewhat agree, (4) disagree, and (5) strongly disagree. The scoring for positive statements ranges from 5 (five) to 1 (one).

The population in this study consists of 1,681 students from FIP UNJ from the 2021 and 2022 cohorts. The sample used in this study amounts to 323 students from FIP UNJ. This aligns with the Proportional Random Sampling technique, accommodating the minimum sample size calculated using the Slovin formula. The calculation resulted in 323.1 respondents, which was rounded down to 323 students.

Table 1. Proportionale Random Sampling

No	Study program	Population	Sample = 323	
			Presentation	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 programs	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:

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.

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

No	Indicator	Answer Category (%)				
		SS	S	KS	TS	STS
1	<i>Student Centered Learning</i>	36	52	11	1	0
2	<i>Hardand Soft Skills</i>	29	51	13	3	4
3	<i>Experiential Learning</i>	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, there are five indicators that explain the achievements obtained by the Faculty of Education (FIP) at Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) from this policy, indicating positive results.

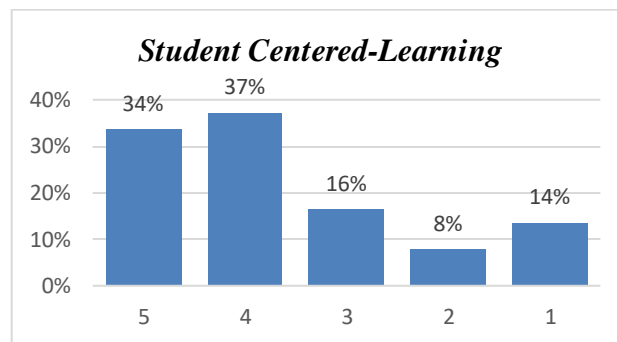


Figure 3. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards *HardAndSoft Skill*

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.

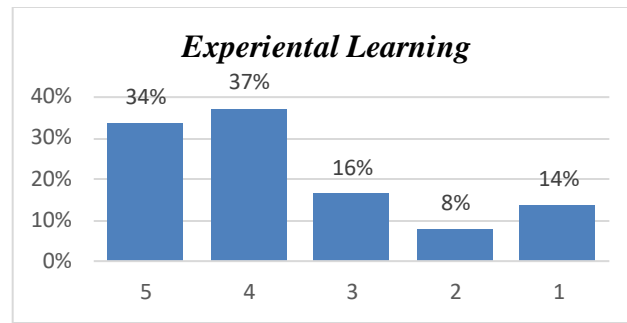


Figure 4. Perception Result Diagram of MBKM Impact towards Experiential Learning

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 deeper 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.

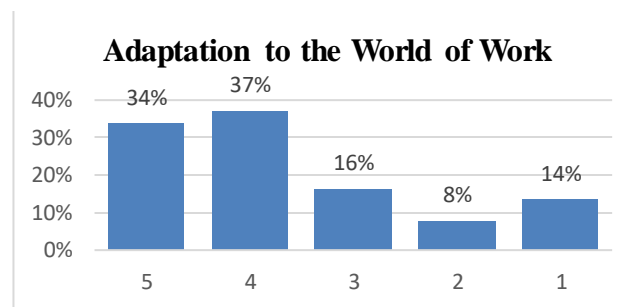


Figure 5. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Adaptation of The Workforce

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.

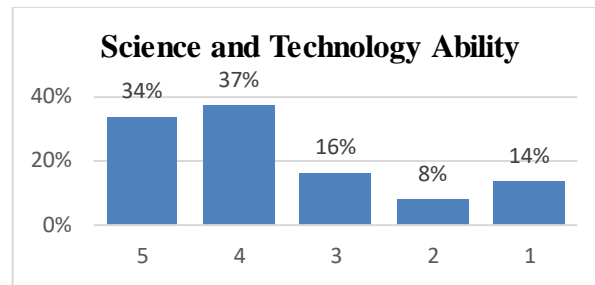


Figure 6. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Science and Technology Competencies

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 that offers education programs, several informants participate in the Teaching Assistance Program in Educational Units (AMSP), enhancing their skills by directly engaging in schools to help implement strategies in 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.

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	Answer Category (%)				
		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.

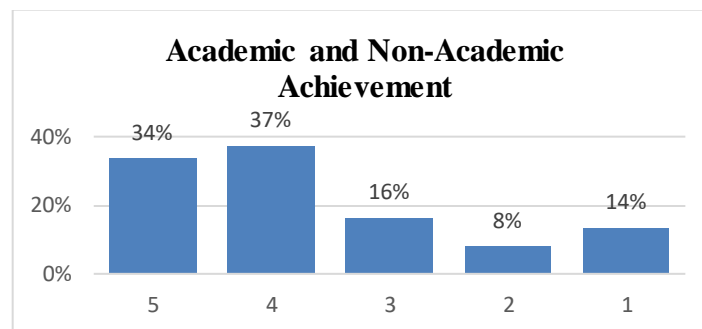


Figure 7. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards academic and non-academic achievements

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.

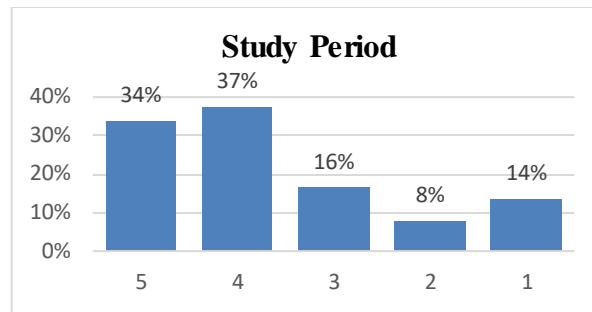


Figure 8. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Study Duration

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.

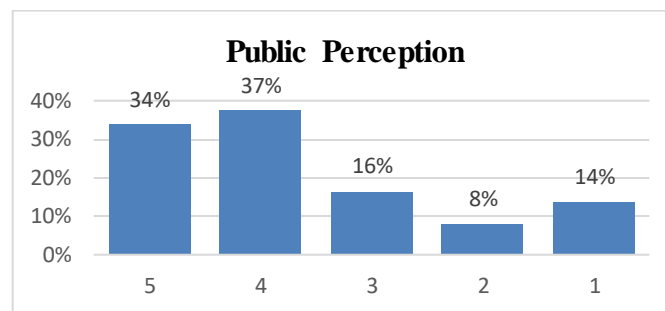


Figure 9. Perception Result Diagram of MBKM Impact towards Society Perception

In terms of societal perception, 52% of FIP UNJ students agree with the contribution made by students to the community. However, the remaining students feel less agreed or strongly disagree with the contributions provided. As the program is implemented, MBKM 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.

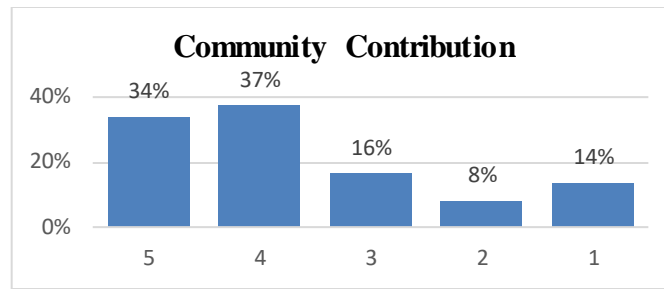


Figure 10. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Society Contribution

Improving the quality of graduates through contributions made to the community is one of the MBKM programs participated in by several FIP UNJ students, 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.

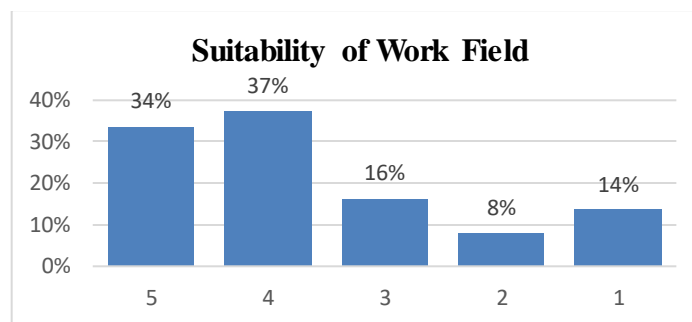


Figure 11. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Alignment of Job Fields

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 alumni. The lack of information from informants makes it challenging to obtain data. A caring relationship between alumni 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	Answer Category (%)				
		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.

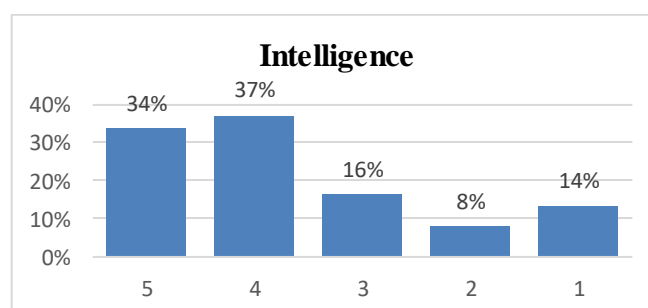


Figure 12 Perception Result Diagram of MBKM Impact towards Intelligence

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 such as 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.

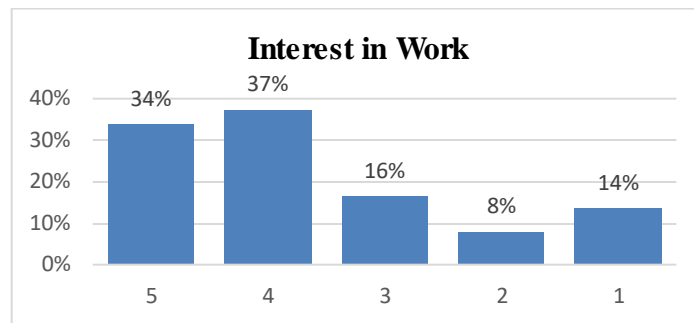


Figure 13. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards students' interests in their careers

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 the jobs they choose in the future.

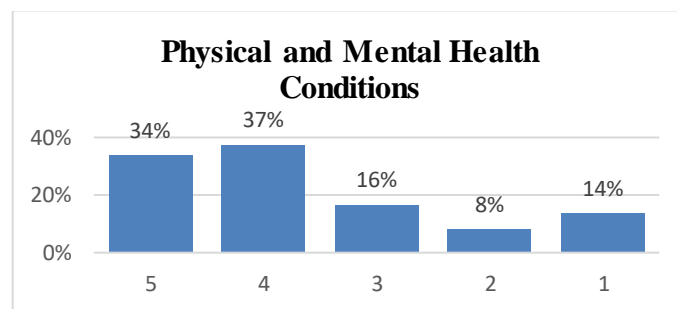


Figure 14. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards physical health

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.

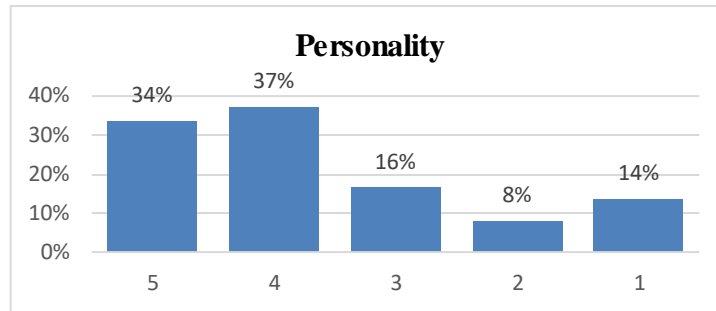


Figure 15. Diagram of Perception Result of MBKM Impact towards Personality

Having a meticulous personality in work, 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, adaptive, 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.

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:

1. 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 even across faculties or study programs, leading to 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

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:

1. 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 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.

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. 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.

CLOSING

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

1. **Positive Perception of MBKM:** Students tend to have a positive perception of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in learning. Within MBKM, there are five indicators that 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 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.
2. **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.

3. **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 better 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.
4. **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.
5. **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.

Recommendations Based on Research Findings

Based on the research findings previously discussed, several recommendations 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 implementation 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 accessibility 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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