
Student Perceptions toward Eight Forms of Independent Learning Activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM)

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Abstract: Exploring educational opportunities beyond the official curriculum and campus environment is a means for students to enhance the competencies of future graduates who can thrive in both national and international industrial settings. This study's objective is to assess students' awareness and engagement with the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) policy and its consequences. The research methodology employed in this study involves a survey using descriptive analysis techniques. The study involved 350 undergraduate students as participants, and data collection was conducted through a questionnaire comprising two sections: one for capturing respondent demographics and the other for inquiring about their perspectives on the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) policy. The study's findings suggest that students exhibit a considerable level of awareness regarding the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) policy, and their participation is also notably high. Moreover, the feedback regarding the impact of the MBKM policy on students is positively inclined. This positive response is rooted in the advantages offered by the MBKM program, such as enhanced learning experiences, the allocation of 20 credits, and the development of soft skills. Consequently, the MBKM policy holds the potential to encourage greater student involvement in extracurricular learning activities outside the official curriculum and campus. Hence, the outcomes of this study carry several important implications. First, because students are so aware of the MBKM policy, they will continue to attend the program with great enthusiasm. Second, because there is a lot of student interest in the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) program, the quality of learning that takes place off campus will improve. Third, the study program will successfully maintain the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) program. This is based on the advantages of the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) program, which can offer a variety of skills, knowledge of different cultures, and adaptability, including leadership skills.

Keywords: curriculum implementation, MBKM, student perceptions, learning, independent

1. Introduction

It is imperative to update the curriculum structure within the higher education setting. The curriculum utilized in the teaching and learning process should be revised to align with

the demands of the job market and adapt to the current era. Higher education institutions, being formal educational establishments, are anticipated to produce skilled

professionals who can readily adapt to the constantly evolving industry and technological advancements. Consequently, education during the era of Industry 4.0 places a strong emphasis on cognitive skills, including critical thinking, systemic thinking, lateral thinking, and advanced-level thinking, ensuring that students not only excel in traditional literacy but also acquire proficiency in emerging literacies, such as data literacy, technology literacy, and human literacy.

Based on this, the Ministry of Education and Culture has implemented a new policy in higher education through the "Independent Learning Independent Campus Program abbreviated as MBKM", which is currently being adopted by universities. The Ministry of Education and Culture's policy relates to granting students the freedom to participate in learning activities for a maximum of three semesters outside their study program and campus[1][2].

The Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) policy provides an opportunity for students to gain broader learning experiences and new competencies through various learning activities, including student exchange programs, internships/work placements, research, independent projects, entrepreneurial activities, humanitarian projects, teaching in schools, and thematic community service projects. Furthermore, students are also given the freedom to engage in learning activities outside their designated program of study within the same university, with a specific credit value[3][4]. All of these activities can be undertaken by students under the guidance of faculty members, and cooperation agreements may be necessary when conducted in collaboration with external parties outside the program of study.

It was revealed that the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program offers students the chance to nurture their critical thinking abilities and forward-looking perspectives[5]. This program can deliver a comprehensive, real-world contextual learning experience, equipping students for the job market or entrepreneurship. It introduces challenges and opportunities for fostering innovation, creativity, capacity building, personal development, and addressing students' needs while promoting independence in

seeking and acquiring knowledge through hands-on experiences and field dynamics[6]. These encompass skill requirements, real-world issues, social interactions, collaboration, and performance expectations. Ultimately, this program will strongly influence the development of both the technical and interpersonal skills of students[7]. The Independent Learning Independent Campus Program has the capability to respond to the challenges faced by universities in producing graduates who are in line with the demands of the times, considering the advancements in Science and Technology, and the requirements of both the business and industrial sectors[8]. Through a well-conceived and effectively executed independent learning program, students' hard and soft skills will be strongly nurtured [9]. In short, the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program abbreviated as MBKM is one of the Indonesian government's flagship initiatives for eliminating unemployment and ensuring graduates' relevance in the industrial sector.

The need for support from universities will ensure the success of activities and collaborations with partners, both within and outside the university[10][11]. It is undeniable that in practice, the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program is not as straightforward as anticipated, and various challenges and obstacles need to be confronted by all involved parties during its implementation [12]. These challenges can arise from both within and outside the university. Therefore, a high level of commitment is required to collectively seek regulatory facilitation for the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program[13].

The State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya in Palembang, which operates under the Indonesian Ministry of Education and is the largest in South Sumatra, has shown a favorable response to the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program. The introduction of this policy has naturally given rise to a diverse set of viewpoints among the students at the State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya. Some students support the implementation of the policy, while others may have concerns, leading to a range of different reactions stemming from this policy. That is why the researchers are interested in learning about how students at the State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya perceive eight learning activities included in the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program based

on the description provided above. In order to find out, the researcher carried out a study titled "Students' Perceptions toward Eight Forms of Independent Learning Activities in the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM)."

The purpose of this research is to provide a comprehensive picture of students' perceptions of eight forms of independent learning activities in independent learning independent campus program (MBKM)" at State Polytechnic of Srwijaya, Indonesia. The anticipated benefit of this research is that it may be used as a reference for future policy making on the implementation of the MBKM program, as well as a means of improving the implementation of the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) program at State Polytechnic of Srwijaya.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Method

This research was conducted at the Sriwijaya State Polytechnic. The research was carried out from March 2023 to August 2023. This research is a quantitative study. In quantitative research, the process includes data collection, analysis, interpretation, and the presentation of research results. The character of quantitative research involves a deductive approach with the goal of proving, disproving, or supporting a theory further [14]. Quantitative research is more suitable when the primary goal of the research is description and evaluation [15][16]. The research design used was a non-experimental survey research design. Surveys provide quantitative descriptions or numbers related to trends, behaviors, or opinions within a sample population being studied [17]. Data is collected using questionnaires or structured interviews with the aim of generalizing the sample to the entire population.

2.2. Population, Research Sample, and Sampling

2.2.1. Population

Population is the generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that possess specific qualities and characteristics defined by the researcher for study and drawing conclusions. The population encompasses not only humans but also other objects and natural entities. It is not just the number of objects or subjects being studied, but it includes all the characteristics or traits possessed by those subjects or objects. In other words, a population is a group of people, events, or objects that share specific characteristics and serve as the subject of study.

2.2.2. Sample

A sample is a subset of the population that mirrors the traits and features of the larger population. In this study, the sample comprises 450 first-semester bachelor's degree students at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic, who will be provided with the opportunity to engage in the activities and programs offered by the independent learning independent campus program in the future.

2.2.3. Sampling

The research question the researchers are trying to answer is of the utmost importance when selecting a sampling technique for informant selection. The question will determine the goals that the methodology will be built around. The first question to ask yourself is whether you should study the entire population, and if not, how to efficiently sample the population. How many participants are expected? Which level of organization-individuals or communities-would be sampled? What kind of sampling methodology ought to be applied to ensure that the sample is representative and the data gathered is reliable, solid, and pertinent? The next step is for the researcher to decide whether purposive sampling is the best method for their research.

The research employs purposive sampling as its sampling method. Purposive sampling falls under the category of non-probability sampling, where the researcher selects participants based on specific characteristics aligned with the research objectives aimed at addressing the research questions.

2.3 Data Sources and Measurement Scale

2.3.1. Data Sources

To obtain complete, clear, accurate, and valid information and data regarding the research subject, it is essential to use the appropriate types and sources of data in the study. In terms of data sources, data collection in this research is based on primary data sources, which are data and information obtained directly from the primary sources (core informants) or information gathered on-site from the research location or research object/subject. The primary data source in this research is the first-semester bachelor's degree students from seven programs of study at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya.

2.3.2 Measurement Scale

The measurement scale is an agreement used as a reference to determine the length of the intervals in the measuring instrument, so that when the measuring instrument is used, it will produce quantitative data. In this

research, a Likert scale is used to measure perceptions of students regarding eight learning programs included in the Independent Learning Activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM). With the Likert scale, the variable to be measured is broken down into variable indicators. These indicators are then used as a starting point to create instrument items, which can be statements or questions. Each item in the instrument that uses a Likert scale has a graduation from very positive to very negative.

2.4 Technique and Instrument for Collecting Data

Survey research designs in quantitative research involve the administration of surveys to a sample or the entire population to assess and describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of that population. Survey research is a form of social scientific research that centers on understanding people, including their core characteristics, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations, and behavior. Given this perspective, the researchers concluded that the survey method was appropriate for this study because it aligned with the research's objectives. This research is focused on determining the thoughts of first-semester bachelor's degree students regarding the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) program. In this case, the respondents responded to written questions that the writers had created. The survey has five alternative answers and a closed format. The Likert scale has five alternative answers; strongly disagree, disagree, disagree, uncertain, agree, and strongly agree. Questionnaires are distributed electronically using Google Forms as part of the research's data collection method. In order to ensure that respondents' responses meet the researcher's needs, this study uses a closed questionnaire with predetermined answers. Google Forms are more efficient financially, humanly, and time-wise.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Research Results

3.1.1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This descriptive analysis is based on the 450 respondents' questionnaire responses, which make up the research data. To make the research data easier to understand and interpret, it has been transformed into numerical tables. The

researcher uses the descriptive analysis to provide details about the respondents' demographic characteristics. The results of the descriptive analysis are as follows, including:

3.1.2. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Gender

A descriptive analysis of the research participants is presented before the data analysis. 450 students of first semester from seven different academic programs make up the sample of respondents for this study, including 211 male students (47%) and 239 female students (53%) from those programs. The following figure show how the respondents were distributed:

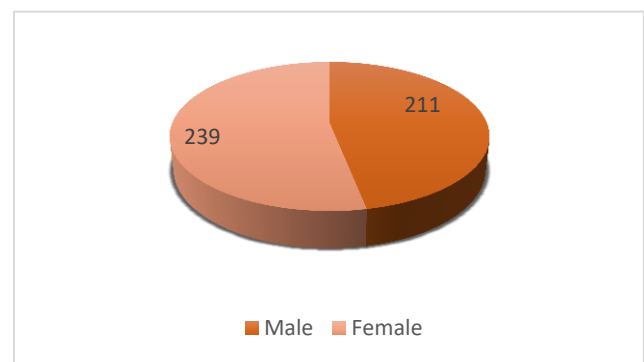


Figure 1. Distribution of respondents based on gender

3.1.3. Characteristics of Respondents Based on Program of Study

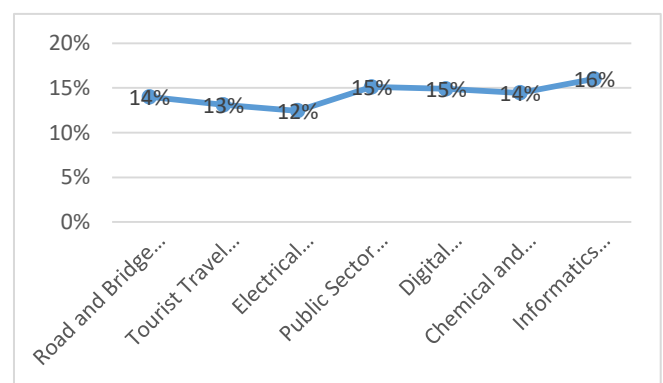


Figure 2. Distribution of respondents

Figure 2 shows that students from a variety of seven different academic programs make up the 450 respondents who make up the sample. Particularly, 16% of the students are enrolled in the program for information management, 14% in the program for industrial chemical technology, 15% in the program for multimedia digital information

technology, 15% in the program for public sector accounting, 12% in the program for electrical engineering, and 13% in the program for tourism business.

3.1.4. Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of Student Exchange

Student Exchange, as one of the forms of Independent Learning Campus Independent Learning (MBKM), has become one of the strategies to foster a diverse atmosphere during the academic journey. In the context of MBKM Student Exchange as a form of learning activity, students are given the opportunity to enhance knowledge and skills that they have not acquired during their program of study. This program helps students become accustomed to new environments, thereby sharpening their adaptability skills, which will serve as an asset in their future careers. The Student Exchange program is expected to be the answer to these demands. Students and graduates in the field of urban and regional planning must work with multidisciplinary teams. This student exchange activity provides students with the opportunity to gain cross-campus learning experiences, build friendships among students from different cultural backgrounds, and exchange knowledge and opinions about various fields of study.

Based on the survey results, students' perceptions of the implementation of student exchange activities at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya indicate that 42% strongly agree, 52% agree, 4% are neutral, while 1% each disagree or strongly disagree, as depicted in Figure 3.

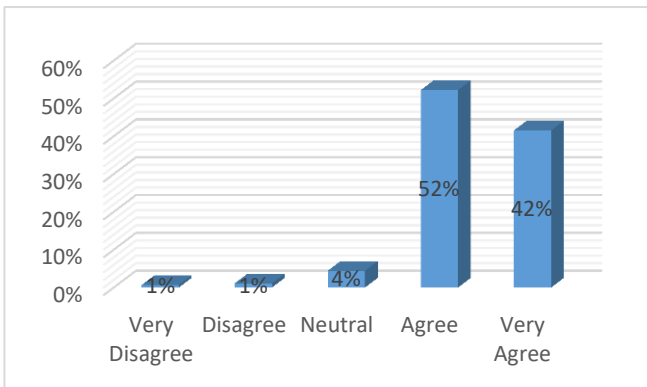


Figure 3. Students' perception of the implementation of student exchange activities

3.1.5. Students' perceptions of the implementation of Internship/work practice activities

The one- to two-semester Internship program provides students with worthwhile experiential learning opportunities in a real work setting. Students will acquire technical skills (hard skills) as well as soft skills (professional behavior, effective communication, teamwork, etc.) during the internship. The industry simultaneously gains access to potential talent that, if a good fit can be found, can be hired directly, cutting down on recruitment costs and the need for initial training. Students who have experience working in an office setting will have a deeper understanding of how to enter the workforce and advance in their careers. This initiative acts as a channel for communicating business challenges to institutions of higher learning, offering a chance to improve instructional materials and faculty development and ensuring that university research topics remain relevant. In conclusion, the Internship program, a part of MBKM, gives students the opportunity to apply and acquire both general and specialized job-related knowledge and skills, internalize a professional demeanor, and adapt to the work culture necessary and relevant to the business world.

Based on the survey results, students' perceptions of the implementation of internship/work practice activities indicate that 41% strongly agree, 59% agree, with no respondents expressing neutrality, disagreement, or strong disagreement, as shown in Figure 4.

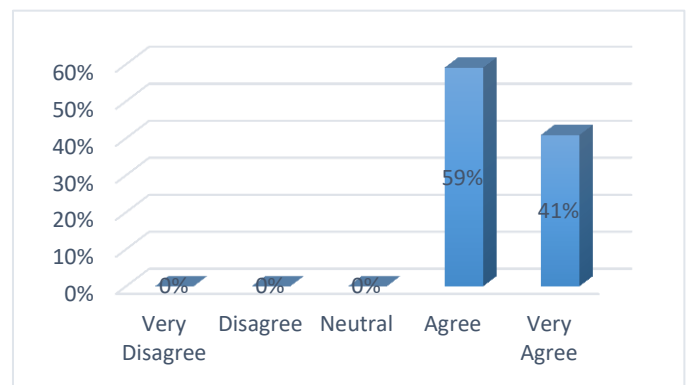


Figure 4. Students' perception of the implementation of internship/work practice Activities

3.1.6. Students' perceptions of teaching assistance activities

As part of the teaching assistance program, students can volunteer to teach at the primary/madrasah or secondary levels for a predetermined period of time in educational institutions. Both urban and rural areas have schools. Students participate in the educational institution's teaching activities through practical teaching experiences. Students can improve their teaching skills and contribute to resolving educational issues in their respective schools with the aid of this program. Students have the chance to broaden their horizons by directly engaging with school communities and tackling real-world issues in the educational field by participating in teaching assistance activities at educational institutions. Students are given the opportunity to observe, confront, and overcome educational challenges while applying the knowledge they have learned in the classroom. Learning outside of the classroom while providing teaching assistance in educational institutions helps students develop their perspectives and skills, which will be useful when they enter the real professional world.

Based on the survey results, the perceptions of students at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya regarding the implementation of teaching assistance activities show that 34% strongly agree, 49% agree, 8% are neutral, 5% disagree, and 4% strongly disagree, as depicted in Figure 5.

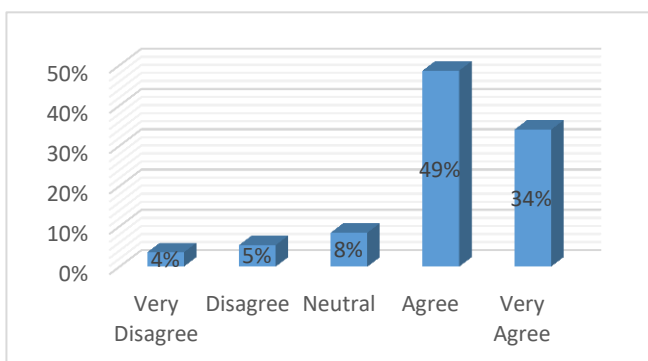


Figure 5. Students' perception of the implementation of teaching assistance activities

3.1.7. Students' perceptions of research and research activities

Research can foster critical thinking skills among students. With the ability to think critically, students can delve deeper,

understand, and execute research methods more effectively. For students interested in pursuing a career in research, there is an opportunity to conduct research at research institutions, which can serve as a starting point in launching a career as a researcher.

Research offers students the chance to enhance their capacity, roles, and participation in research activities, especially for the purpose of building a robust and competence-aligned track record. Moreover, research laboratories or research institutions often face a shortage of researchers when undertaking short-term research projects (ranging from one semester to one year). The presence of students in these laboratories or research institutions can help address the issue of a shortage of research personnel. Improving research output in the form of national and international publications, including articles in national journals, accredited national journals, international journals, or renowned international journals, as well as outstanding innovation prototype products with eligible patented intellectual property rights that can be localized and have a significant societal impact, is one of the top priorities in research activities.

Figure 6 illustrates how students feel about the application of research and research activities based on the survey results. 44% strongly agree, 45% agree, 7% are neutral, 3% disagree, and 1% strongly disagree.

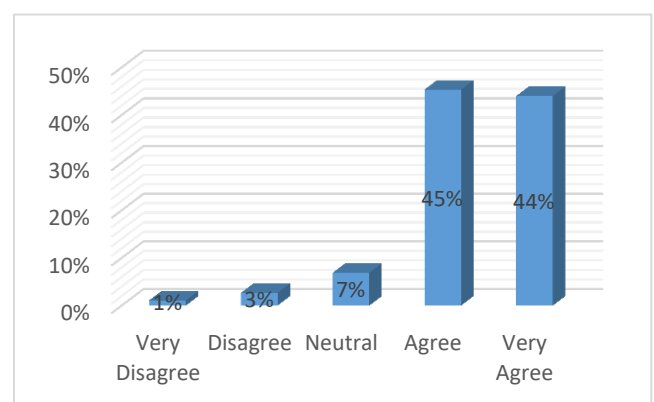


Figure 6. Students' perception of the implementation of research activities

3.1.8. Students' perceptions of humanitarian project activities

Humanitarian project initiatives place a strong emphasis on fostering and enriching students' potential as intellectual leaders and agents of change who possess a profound ethical

and intellectual awareness of their environment, particularly in the context of humanitarian concerns. Within these humanitarian projects, students are anticipated to demonstrate a mindset that is characterized by creativity, innovation, productivity, swift responsiveness, and a strong proclivity for taking the initiative when participating in humanitarian programs and undertakings. Furthermore, the aspiration is that the knowledge and expertise students acquire during their academic studies on campus can be effectively translated into tangible and measurable contributions.

Furthermore, humanitarian projects are integrated into the curriculum with the goal of constructing or reinforcing the educational outcomes of the courses. This implies that students should possess the capability to scrutinize, assess, and generate products or programmatic initiatives that contribute to humanitarian causes, both directly and indirectly.

Figure 7 illustrates how students feel about the implementation of humanitarian project activities based on the survey results. 39% strongly agree, 44% agree, 12% are neutral, 3% disagree, and 2% strongly disagree.

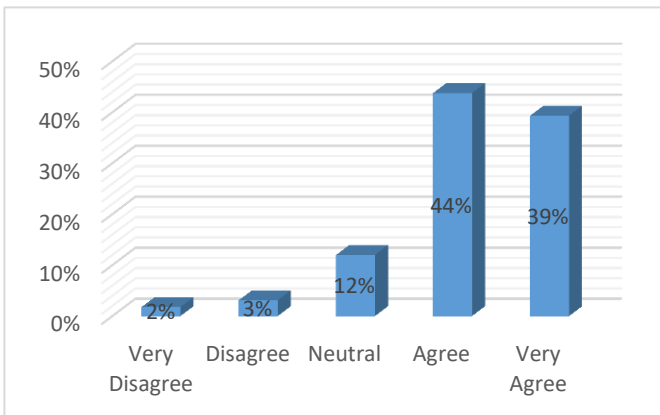


Figure 7. Students' perception of the implementation of humanitarian project activities

3.1.9 Students' perceptions of entrepreneurship activities

Independent Entrepreneur program is the response to creating flexible and high-quality learning in higher education institutions. This aims to establish a new culture of learning that is engaging, innovative, and tailored to students' needs, thereby enhancing the competencies of

university graduates. Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) pertains to learning activities in higher education institutions, granting students the right and freedom to learn beyond their program of study for three semesters, which can be used for learning either within or outside the institution. Independent Entrepreneur program with the objective of providing students with the opportunity to learn and develop themselves as potential entrepreneurs through activities outside the traditional classroom setting. Independent Entrepreneur program encourages students to collaborate, take action, and contribute to the economic development of Indonesian society. Students are expected to become agents of change who help improve the economic quality of communities, serve as drivers of innovation to create job opportunities through student business development, and act as pioneers in cultivating new entrepreneurial potential in Indonesia.

Based on the survey results, students' perceptions of the implementation of entrepreneurship activities indicate that 46% strongly agree, 41% agree, 10% are neutral, 2% disagree, and 1% strongly disagree, as shown in Figure 8.

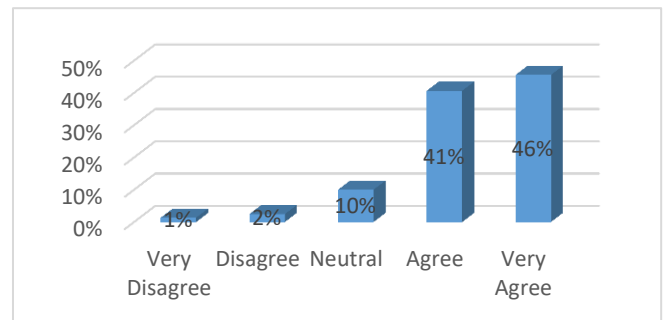


Figure 8. Students' perception of the implementation of entrepreneurial activities

3.1.10 Students' perceptions of independent study/project activities

Many students are passionate about creating noteworthy projects that can be submitted to international competitions or original projects that are based on their ideas. The goal of independent work is to supplement the curriculum that students are already pursuing. Educational institutions where students study at can also offer independent studies to supplement subjects that are present in the curriculum of the academic program or faculty but are not covered in the

regular course schedule. Interdisciplinary group work can be used for independent project activities. The goals of independent studies or projects include enhancing students' accomplishments in both national and international contexts, conducting research and development (R&D)-based education, and bringing students' ideas to life by creating innovative products they have conceptualized.

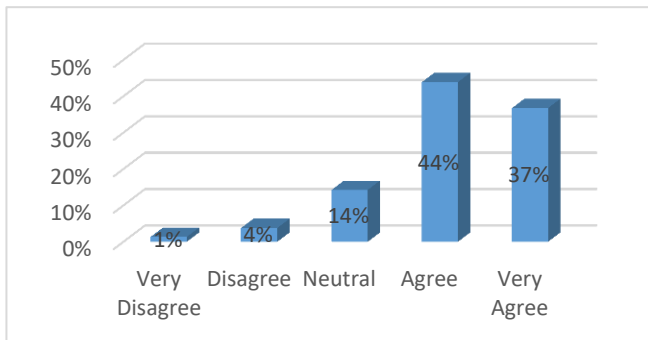


Figure 9. Students' perception of the implementation of independent study/project activities

According to the survey results, 37% strongly agree, 44% agree, 14% are neutral, 4% disagree, and 1% strongly disagrees with the implementation of independent study/project activities, as shown in Figure 9.

3.1.11 Students' perceptions of community development activities/thematic community engagement

Thematic Community Engagement (Kuliah Kerja Nyata Tematik - KKNT) is a form of education that provides students with a learning experience by immersing them in the community outside the campus. In this program, students live among the local community and, together with the community, identify potential and address issues. The goal is to empower students to develop the potential of rural or regional areas and craft solutions for the problems present in these communities. Thematic Community Engagement is designed to enhance students' soft skills, foster partnerships, promote interdisciplinary teamwork, and develop student leadership in managing rural development programs.

The survey findings show that 37% of students strongly agree, 51% agree, 8% are unsure, 2% disagree, and 3% strongly disagree with the implementation of community development activities/thematic community engagement. This is because the thematic community engagement projects

carried out by Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya students are consistent with the graduate profiles and anticipated learning outcomes.

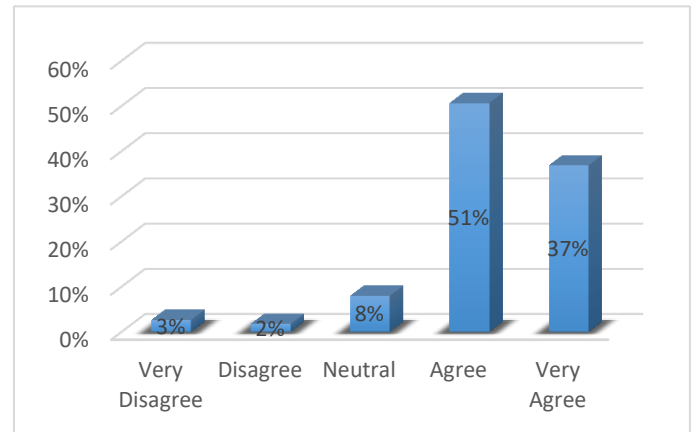


Figure 10. Students' perceptions of thematic community engagement

3.2 Discussion

The Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) initiative represents one of Kemendikbudristek's endeavors to cultivate aspiring bachelor's degree candidates who are not only creative and innovative but also well-equipped with their inherent talents[18][19]. In order to foster such creative, innovative, and talented bachelor's degree candidates, a curriculum that is adaptable, non-restrictive, and globally aligned is essential, as indicated by several sources [20][21][22]. The successful execution of the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) undoubtedly hinges on the support of various stakeholders, particularly the higher education institutions responsible for overseeing the primary beneficiaries of the program, namely, the students[23].

The questionnaire results indicate that the majority of respondents have given positive assessments of the eight independent learning programs (1) student exchange, 2) internships/work placements, 3) teaching in educational institutions, 4) village projects, 5) research, 6) entrepreneurial activities, 7) independent study/projects, and 8) humanitarian projects), and they believe they will benefit from the implementation of Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM).

Regarding the implementation of student exchange activities, students highly approve of the upcoming student exchange program that will be conducted by the Sriwijaya

State Polytechnic in the future. The student exchange activities within Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) allow them to experience studying in other higher education institutions and to immerse themselves in cultural diversity, different perspectives, religions, and beliefs. At the end of this activity, students will develop social sensitivity and concern for both society and the environment.

Regarding the implementation of internships/work placements, students have given a highly positive assessment. Internship/work placement activities provide a genuine learning experience for students to apply the theories they have taught to the real working world, while also giving students the opportunity to integrate action and thought.

Regarding the implementation of teaching assistance in educational institutions, students have welcomed it warmly. Students feel that they are provided with a platform to apply all their learning experiences from higher education, and indirectly, they can develop soft skills, particularly communication skills.

Regarding the implementation of research activities, students are confident that they can develop critical thinking skills, which will deepen their ability to think critically and enable them to understand and conduct research more effectively. Furthermore, research activities provide students with the opportunity to seek information, formulate hypotheses, gather data, analyze data, and draw conclusions from the organized data. In other words, students experience learning through a "learning by doing" approach.

Regarding the implementation of humanitarian projects, students believe that this activity can sharpen and enhance their social sensitivity toward communities affected by disasters through providing support and assistance.

Concerning the implementation of entrepreneurial activities, many students are interested in engaging in entrepreneurial activities. This is further clarified by their belief that entrepreneurship activities can generate income, add to their experience, build relationships, and fulfill their creativity.

Regarding the implementation of independent study/projects, students are confident that in the future, they will be able to bring forth their creative ideas and ultimately provide solutions to the issues that arise in the midst of

society.

Regarding the implementation of village development/collaborative real-work thematic courses, students are in favor of this activity. In the students' perspective, this activity not only provides them with the opportunity to interact and engage with the community, but it also allows them to collaboratively apply their knowledge with other parties, such as village authorities or other organizations.

The expected impact of the implementation of the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) based on this research is to open up opportunities for students to learn real-world aspects in the workplace more quickly and to be able to implement what they have gained in their academic studies earlier in their professional careers. Additionally, there is a change in student behavior, making them more flexible, adaptable, and better at communicating with external parties. As a result, university graduates will find it easier to integrate into society.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that bachelor degree students at State Polytechnic of Sriwijaya welcome the implementation of independent learning activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) and view it as a suitable solution to enhance the quality of education in Indonesia. Through this research, it is hoped that universities can continue to implement the independent learning activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM).

Recommendations for all study programs include continuing to carry out the independent learning activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM), establishing and expanding collaborations with relevant companies for internship and work practice activities, fostering partnerships with other national and international universities for student exchange programs, consistently promoting awareness about independent learning activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) among all students to keep them motivated and interested in participating in the independent learning activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM), and selecting competent mentors to guide students enrolled in the independent learning activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM).

The advice for students is that they should continue to broaden their knowledge beyond their field, which can be obtained by participating in the independent learning activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM). Through this research, it is hoped that all students need not be afraid to join the independent learning activities in

Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) because the independent learning activities in Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) offers many benefits, provides numerous experiences, expands connections and relationships with companies, other universities, and various other parties.

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