Perception of D4 Polytechnic Students Regarding Eight Learning Programs of MBKM Program

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Abstract. This research employed a quantitative descriptive research design, utilizing a survey method. The study's target population comprised students enrolled in the D4 program at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic. To obtain a representative sample, random sampling techniques were utilized, resulting in a group of 230 students. Data collection was carried out through a closed-ended questionnaire distributed via Google Form, employing a Likert scale with five response options: strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, and strongly agree. The primary focus of the study was to assess students' perceptions of the MBKM program, which was analyzed descriptively. The perception index served as a representation of how students viewed eight different MBKM learning activities, including student exchange, internships/work placements, teaching assistance in educational units, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent project studies, and village development/community engagement projects. The research findings revealed that among D4 students at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic currently in their 4th semester, there was a high level of agreement and strong agreement with the MBKM curriculum. Specifically, the percentages were as follows: student exchange program (92%), internships/work placements (98%), teaching assistance in educational units (77%), research (88%), humanitarian projects (76%), entrepreneurial activities (81%), independent project studies (69%), and village development/community engagement projects (84%).

Keywords: Curriculum Implementation, MBKM, Student Perception.

1 Introduction

To cope with social, cultural, workplace, and disruptive technological changes, students must have competence, religious values, integrity, discipline, credibility, and honesty as part of the educated community. Meanwhile, higher education institutions must also offer innovative and creative educational designs and models to achieve optimal learning outcomes covering attitudes, knowledge, and skills[1][2][3].

The impact of the fourth industrial revolution on higher education is to prepare quality graduates for the times and community needs [4][5]. The concept of linking and matching with the world of industry and the world of work is highlighted in designing

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and implementing the learning process [6]. This concept is encapsulated in the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM). Through the well-designed and implemented MBKM implementation at a university, adaptive and flexible learning outcomes, both hard skills and soft skills of students, will be strongly formed by the demands of the global community. Thus, the MBKM concept allows students to participate in various experiential learning programs with flexible pathways[7][8][9].

The implementation design of the MBKM curriculum consists of 8 forms of learning activities through campus programs, namely: 1) participating in student exchange programs, 2) participating in internships or apprenticeships in business and industry, 3) conducting community service activities in villages or thematic community service programs, 4) assisting in teaching at educational institutions, 5) conducting research, 6) engaging in entrepreneurial activities, 7) creating independent study or project, and 8) participating in humanitarian programs [10]. Implementing these eight activities under the guidance of lecturers ensures that students have real field experiences and effectively enhance their competencies.

Higher education institutions such as Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya Palembang are the only state polytechnic under the largest Indonesian Ministry of Education in South Sumatra that responded positively to the MBKM policy. Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya Palembang has several D4 study programs in which, in the 5th semester, students are given the freedom to choose program activities available in MBKM. Based on observations, among students of Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya, several problems still need to be solved, including low literacy and numeracy skills, low interest in learning, easily bored, rarely attending classes, passive in class discussions, lazy in doing assignments, and lack of The implementation of MBKM can address some of these issues. In applying the MBKM policy, of course, it raises many diverse perceptions among its students. Some agree with the policy being implemented, but some do not fully agree, and various other expressions arise from this policy.

A research entitled "Students' Perception of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Policy" explained that students only had a little understanding of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy. Students received information about this policy through various media and socialization, but most students (28%) received it through mass media. Internship and apprenticeship programs were the most dominant programs chosen by students (44.08%), and 66.6% of students stated their readiness to participate in this policy. The research also showed that students believed this policy could develop students' skills for the future. Students also showed interest in programs conducted by MBKM and intended to recommend them to family or acquaintances[11].

In the study entitled "Perceptions of Students in the Building Engineering Education Program Regarding the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Initiative," it was established that students had a good understanding of the MBKM policy, particularly the inclusion of the opportunity for three semesters of learning outside their specific study program. According to the students' viewpoint, the execution of this policy was considered satisfactory, with a 78.2% agreement rate, indicating that students believed this policy was appropriate for those enrolled in the Building Engineering Education Program. Furthermore, concerning the students' attitudes, they exhibited an 80.2% endorsement rate, signifying that students not only embraced but also actively supported the MBKM policy, especially the provision of three-semester learning

opportunities beyond their program of study[12].

The researchers has compared several previous studies. There are differences in location, time, the number, and characteristics of respondents between previous studies and the current study. In previous research, various sampling techniques were used, such as total, proportional, and proportionate stratified random sampling. In this study, the researchers used the Simple Random Sampling technique. To add expected data and information, previous studies used quantitative methods with data collection techniques such as questionnaire filling, interviews, and documentation. In this study, the researchesr used quantitative research methods with a survey method, and data collection was limited to filling out questionnaires.

Given the information provided, the researchers' central aim is to explore the perceptions of D4 Polytechnic students toward the implementation of the Independent Learning Independent Campus Program (MBKM) program. As a result, the researchers conducted a research entitled "Perception of D4 Polytechnic Students Regarding Eight Learning Programs of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program."

2 Methodology

2.1 The Method of the Research

The research methodology employed in this study is quantitative research, which predominantly follows a deductive-inductive approach [13][14]. Quantitative research relies more on hypothesis verification logic, starting with deductive thinking to derive hypotheses and then conducting field testing and drawing conclusions or hypotheses based on empirical data.

Based on the preceding descriptions, quantitative research is employed to examine a particular group or subset of individuals. Researchers gather data through the use of specific research tools, and the subsequent analysis is primarily focused on quantitative and statistical methods. The data collected in this process comprises numerical values with a quantitative nature.

2.2 Research Type

Survey research is a type of research that establishes clear boundaries regarding data[15]. This is because the influence referred to here is a force that exists or arises from something (people, objects) that contributes to shaping an individual's character, beliefs, or actions. Survey research was chosen as it aligns with the research objectives.

2.3 Population, Sampling, and Research Sample

2.3.1 Population

The population refers to all interest data within a defined scope and time frame. The population is the subject of research aimed at obtaining and collecting data[16]. This research's population consists of students in the D4 program at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic, Palembang.

2.3.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling is a technique researchers use when they have specific considerations in selecting their samples. This technique is chosen with the intention that the selected samples can represent the desired characteristics of the population.

2.3.3 Sample

A sample is a portion or a representative segment of the population being investigated [18]. In this research, the sample comprises 230 students in the D4 program at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic who are currently in their fourth semester. In the upcoming fifth semester, they will be offered the various activities included in the MBKM.

2.4 Data Sources and Measurement Scale

2.4.1. Data Sources

Data sources in research refer to the subjects from whom data can be obtained. The data source for this research is primary data. Primary data refers to data sources directly providing data to the collector [17]. This study's primary data source is students in the D4 program at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic.

2.4.2 Measurement Scale

Likert scale was used as the measurement scale. Individual behavior is measured using the Likert scale in this study by responding to 5-point options for each questionnaire item: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The researcher employs this scale to assess students' perceptions of the eight (eight) types of MBKM learning activities.

2.5 Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

To collect research data, the researchers employed a survey method that consists of a series of questions regarding a specific issue or area of study [18]. The survey employs a closed-ended format, offering respondents five options: strongly disagree, disagree, unsure, agree, and strongly agree[19].

The data collection technique used in this research involved distributing questionnaires through electronic media, specifically Google Forms. Google Forms is a tool that facilitates sending surveys, planning events, and efficiently gathering information[20].

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

3.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This descriptive assessment relies on research data obtained through 230 respondents' questionnaire responses. The research data collected has been converted into numerical tables to enhance comprehension and interpretation. The researcher employs descriptive analysis to present details regarding the demographic attributes of the participants. Below are the findings from the descriptive analysis:

3.1.2 Characteristics of Respondents Based on Gender

Before delving into the analysis of the collected data, an overview of the demographic characteristics of the research participants is presented. The study involved 230 respondents, with 103 being male students (accounting for 45%) and 127 being female students (making up 55%), spread across seven distinct study programs. The distribution of respondents is visually represented in the accompanying chart:

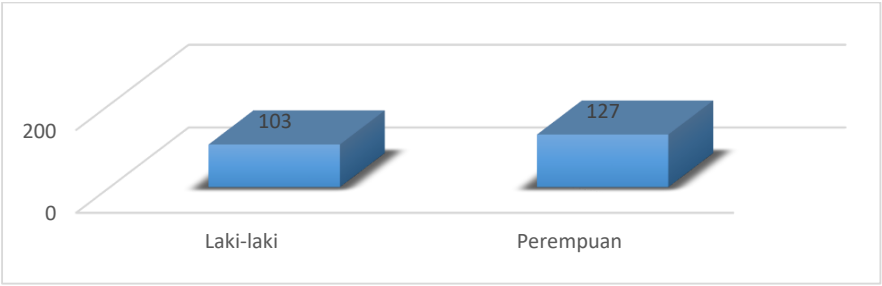

Figure 1. Characteristics of respondents based on gender

3.1.3 Characteristics of Respondents Based on Study Program Origin

As indicated by Figure 2, it is evident that among the 230 respondents, the sample comprised individuals enrolled in seven different study programs. The number of students from the D4 Information Management program is 30 students or 13%, the number of students from the D4 Industrial Chemical Technology program is 42 students or 18%, the number of students from the D4 Digital Multimedia Information Technology program is 28 students or 12%, the number of students from the D4 Public Sector Accounting program is 47 students or 20%, the number of students from the D4 Electrical Engineering program is 25 students or 11%. The number of D4 Travel Tourism Business program students is 28 or 12%. From this total, it can be observed that the D4 Public Sector Accounting program represents the majority of respondents, while the D4 Electrical Engineering program represents the minority in this research.

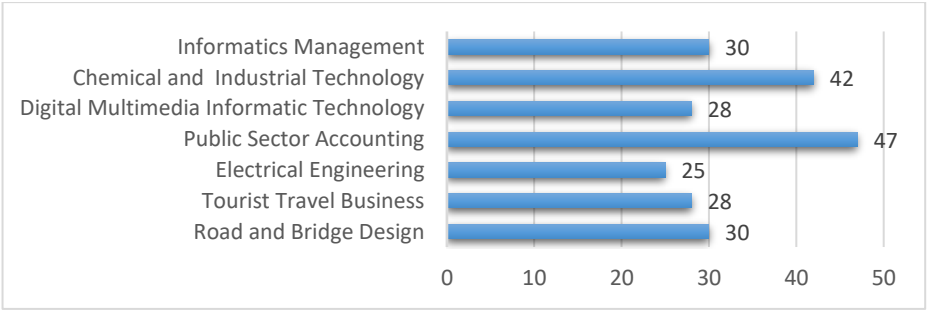

Figure 2. Characteristics of respondents based on study program origin

3.1.4 Students' Perceptions of the Implementation of Student Exchange

Based on the survey results, students' perceptions of implementing student exchange activities at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya indicate a high level of agreement. Specifically, 28% (65 students) strongly agree, 64% (147 students) agree, and 8% (18 students) remain neutral, as shown in Figure 3. This is because students at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya are interested in learning at different campuses to enhance their experiences.

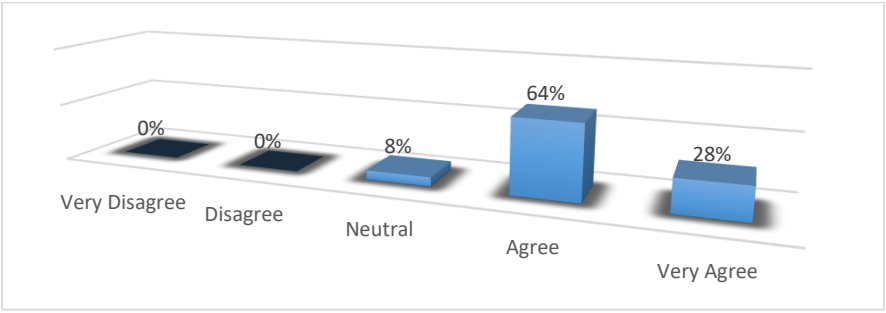

Figure 3. Students' perceptions of the implementation of student exchange

3.1.5 Results of Student Perceptions Regarding the Implementation of Internship/Work Practice Activities

According to the survey findings, students overwhelmingly concur with the effectiveness of internship and work practice activities' execution at 61% (141 students), agreement at 37% (84 students), and neutrality at 2% (5 students). At the same time, the remainder disagreed and strongly disagreed, totaling 0%, as shown in Figure 4. This is because students at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya are prepared not only to become workers but also to pursue careers in other institutions/organizations.

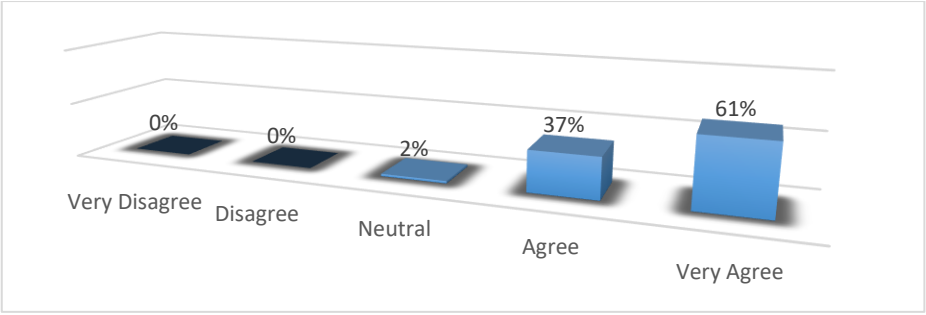

Figure 4. Student perceptions regarding the implementation of internship/work practice activities

3.1.6 Results of Students' Perception of Teaching Assistance Activities

According to the survey findings, the viewpoint of students of Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya, the implementation of teaching assistance activities shows that 38% (87 students)

strongly agree, and 39% (90 students) agree. In comparison, 17% (38 students) are neutral, 2% (4 students) disagree, and 5% (11 students) strongly disagree, as depicted in Figure 5. This is because the core goal of Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya is to prepare graduates not only for employment in the workforce but also to share their knowledge at other educational levels.

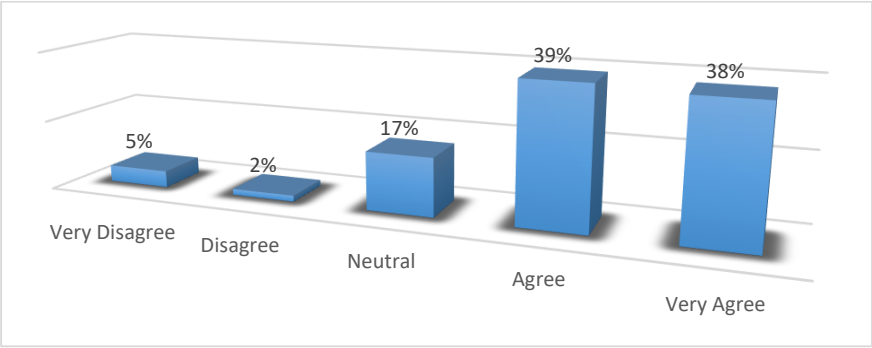

Figure 5. Students' perception of teaching assistance activities

3.1.7 Results of Student Perceptions on Research and Research Activities

According to the survey results, 38% (88 students) strongly agree and 50% (114 students agree with the implementation of research and research activities. Figure 6 shows that 9% (21 students) are unsure, 2% (5 students) disagree, and 1% (2 students) strongly disagree. This positive perception can be attributed to Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya students' active participation in collaborative research projects with lecturers as part of their final assignments/theses.

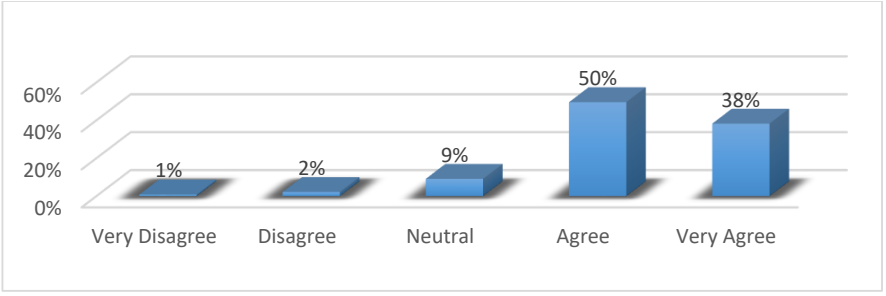

Figure 6. Student perceptions on research and research activities

3.1.8 Results of Student Perceptions on Humanitarian Project Activities

Based on the survey results, students' perceptions of implementing humanitarian project activities indicate that 37% (86 students) strongly agree, and 39% (90 students) agree. In comparison, 19% (43 students) are unsure, 3% (7 students) disagree, and 2% (4 stu-

dents) strongly disagree, as depicted in Figure 7. This positive perception may be attributed to the fact that students at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya come from South Sumatra Province, an area that has experienced natural disasters and social conflicts, which has instilled a high sense of humanitarianism in them.

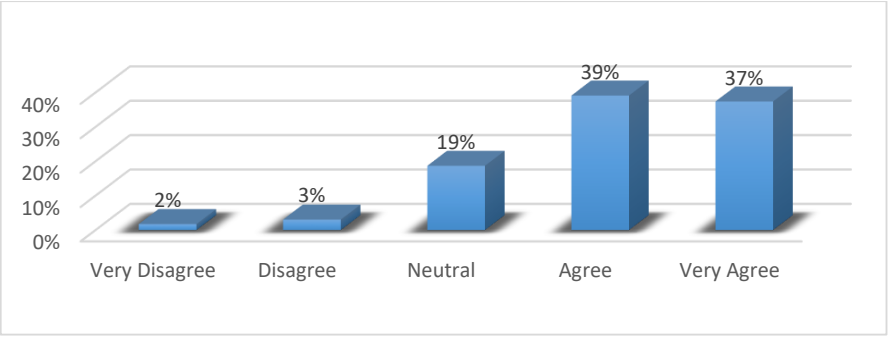

Figure 7. Results of student perceptions on humanitarian project activities

3.1.9 Results of Student Perceptions on Entrepreneurship Activities

According to the survey results, students' perceptions of implementing entrepreneurship activities indicate that 37% (85 students) strongly agree, and 44% (101 students) agree. In comparison, 11% (25 students) are neutral, 5% (12 students) disagree, and 3% (7 students) strongly disagree, as depicted in Figure 8. This is because students at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya Palembang are prepared not only as educators but also as entrepreneurs in the field of education.

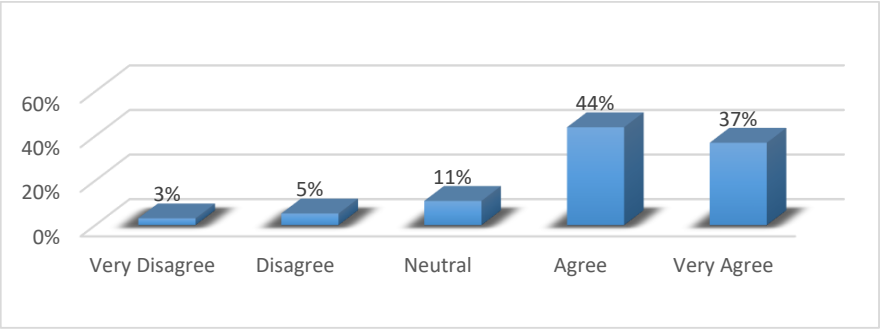

Figure 8. Student perceptions on entrepreneurship activities

3.1.10 Results of Student Perceptions on Independent Study/Project Activities

According to the survey results, students' perceptions of implementing independent study/project activities show that 26% (60 students) strongly agree, and 43% (98 students) agree. In comparison, 22% (51 students) are neutral, 5% (12 students) disagree, and 4% (9 students) strongly disagree, as illustrated in Figure 9. This is because students at Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya Palembang are motivated to actualize

their ideas and thoughts through study/project activities in the field of education in South Sumatra Province.

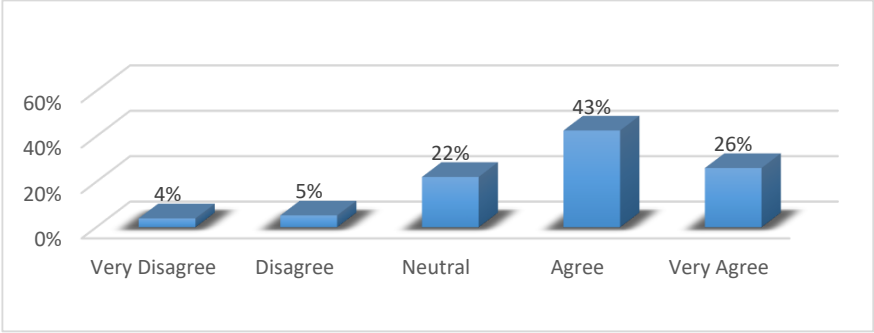

Figure 9. Student perceptions on independent study/project activities

3.1.11 Results of Student Perceptions on Village Development/Thematic Community Service Activities

According to the survey findings, students' views on the execution of village development or thematic community service activities indicate that 40% (92 students) strongly support it, and 44% (101 students) agree. Meanwhile, 8% (18 students) remain neutral, 5% (12 students) disagree, and 3% (7 students) strongly disagree, as depicted in Figure 10. This can be attributed to the fact that the community service activities undertaken by Politeknik Negeri Sriwijaya students are consistent with the intended educational outcomes and the attributes expected of graduates.

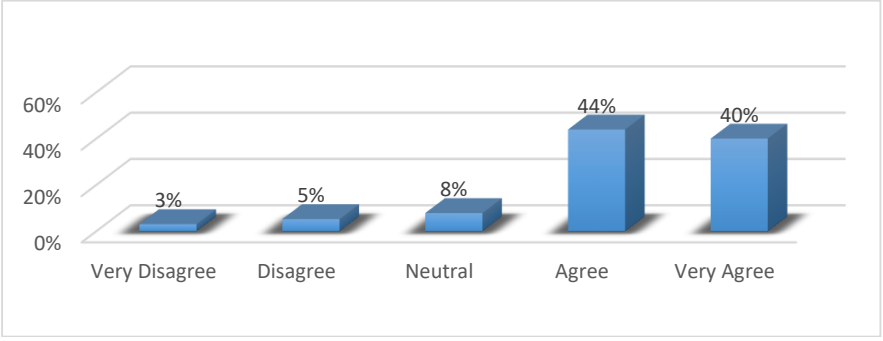

Figure 10. Student perceptions on village development/thematic community service activities

3.2 Discussion

Within the framework of the Merdeka Belajar- Kampus Merdeka (Independent Learning - Independent Campus) program, student exchange programs are categorized into three variations: exchanges between study programs within the same campus, exchanges within the same study program at different campuses, and exchanges between study programs at different campuses. Students at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic express

a preference for these student exchange activities. According to students, the implementation of these initiatives can contribute to enhancing the national consciousness, integrity, and competencies of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic students, fostering their love for Indonesia. Additionally, it aids in developing the character of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic students by enhancing their soft skills, collaborative abilities, and adaptability in a diverse Indonesian society. Furthermore, these programs enrich the learning experience of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic students in other higher education institutions with distinct academic environments and boost the capabilities of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic students through more in-depth coursework or subjects that might not be available in their respective study programs.

Sriwijaya State Polytechnic has already put in place student exchange programs that encompass different study programs within Sriwijaya State Polytechnic and also involve the same study program at different campuses, particularly across the various Sriwijaya State Polytechnic campuses situated across Indonesia. The instructional formats utilized by students enhance the teaching and educational environments and optimize the educational outcomes. Student exchange learning occurs through online methods and encompasses courses that are either two credit hours (SKS) or three credit hours (SKS). However, it is important to understand that student exchanges are not restricted solely to domestic institutions; students also have the opportunity to complete one or two semesters at international partner universities as part of the requirements for their degree attainment.

The knowledge acquired during internships or work placements is distinct from what is gained through classroom lectures. Nevertheless, the knowledge obtained during academic years serves as a valuable foundation during internships, and university-acquired knowledge can aid in the internship process. This is one way to enhance the quality of higher education graduates is through internship activities.

Internship activities serve as a method of education and training that methodically combines campus-based education with the practical work environment. Internships yield positive outcomes for both students and universities. These experiences contribute to the development of skill sets and competencies, subsequently increasing career prospects after graduation and facilitating entry into the industrial or business sectors.

The positive influence of internships on acclimating to the industrial and business world significantly shapes one's future career interests. Internships provide students with a practical learning experience to apply the theoretical knowledge they've acquired to the professional environment, allowing them to integrate their knowledge and actions. During internships, students are guided to gain insights into business and industry management at their placement locations. Additionally, students can cultivate personal competencies, particularly soft skills honed through supplementary courses.

Student perspectives on the implementation of internships conducted by Sriwijaya State Polytechnic confirm that students hold a favorable view of these activities. With internships in place, students believe they will acquire skills that can be further developed. These skills include effective communication, critical thinking for problem-solving, time management, teamwork, and self-confidence.

Teaching assistance activities within educational institutions are carried out collaboratively by students from Sriwijaya State Polytechnic across various educational units encompassing both formal and informal education systems. Teaching assistance pro-

vides a platform to apply the cumulative learning experiences gained during higher education. These internships involve lecturers functioning as mentors, guiding the learning process, and offering support during the internship activities. Additionally, student interns have shown notable development in soft skills, particularly in the domain of effective communication, as evidenced by feedback from schools, the local community, and residential areas. Student perceptions of the implementation of teaching assistance at educational units conducted by Sriwijaya State Polytechnic demonstrate a harmonization between graduate learning outcomes and these teaching assistance activities.

Research-based learning has emerged as an appropriate educational approach for higher education. Students with a strong interest in research can pursue self-directed learning through research initiatives conducted at study centers within Sriwijaya State Polytechnic. This approach enables students to enhance their critical thinking capabilities, leading to more profound critical thinking skills and a heightened capacity for research comprehension and execution. Research-based learning operates as an instructional model that places students at the center of the learning process, with instructors serving as facilitators, affording students the chance to engage in research projects.

The integration of research-based learning into higher education can enhance students' proficiency in scientific writing. This encompasses various aspects such as problem formulation, data collection through observations and methodologies, research design, data organization and description, data analysis to address formulated questions, and the subsequent interpretation of results. Students can effectively summarize and communicate their research findings, whether in academic settings or through the publication of scientific works in journals or conference proceedings. This approach allows students to seek information, formulate hypotheses, gather and analyze data, and draw conclusions from well-organized data, promoting a learning-by-doing methodology.

Students endorse research activities because they perceive research as an educational endeavor that cultivates critical thinking skills among those aspiring to pursue careers as researchers. It provides an avenue for deeper exploration, comprehension, and the refinement of research methods, which are of significant value across various academic fields in higher education. This is achieved through research internship programs based in research centers or laboratories, both within and outside of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic. The duration of these internships varies from 6 to 12 months, depending on each student's academic discipline.

By actively involving and engaging students from Sriwijaya State Polytechnic in research conducted by the institution or its respective departments, students can elevate the quality of their research work and gain invaluable experience as research assistants in large-scale research projects. In doing so, they contribute to the reinforcement of their subject-specific expertise, cultivate their research skills through direct guidance from faculty members, researchers, and study centers, and make a substantial contribution to the research ecosystem and its overall quality in Indonesian laboratories and research institutions. This is accomplished by offering research resources and nurturing the development of early-stage researchers.

The goal of Humanitarian Project Activities is to refine and augment social consciousness through well-organized and standardized initiatives. These endeavors aim to provide assistance and support to communities that have been affected by natural disasters or other determining factors. Essentially, the selection of locations for these humanitarian project activities is made by Sriwijaya State Polytechnic and is based on

regions designated as areas affected by national disasters. These activities are a manifestation of the higher education sector's commitment to aiding victims in the aftermath of disasters. This form of educational activity, in the shape of humanitarian projects, spans a duration of 6-12 months and can be credited for a maximum of 20-40 credit hours.

A significant proportion of Sriwijaya State Polytechnic students are in favor of these activities. In addition to fostering their social consciousness, humanitarian project activities allow students to apply their academic knowledge within the community. Furthermore, students can gain practical experience in managerial skills and teamwork through the execution of these projects. In short, humanitarian activities can have a positive impact on both the recipients and the individuals implementing the programs.

Entrepreneurship pertains to individuals who possess the capability to establish their own businesses, shoulder a significant share of the associated risks, and reap the benefits derived from their initiated ventures. The MBKM program within Sriwijaya State Polytechnic provides a platform for students interested in entrepreneurship to harness their creativity and innovation, enabling them to transform their business ideas into reality. Students have the opportunity to implement the business plans they acquire through entrepreneurship courses, even while they are still pursuing their college education. Sriwijaya State Polytechnic students can put their entrepreneurial skills into practice by supporting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in developing their products and business innovations. Furthermore, students can create entrepreneurship initiatives aimed at empowering the community through collaborative efforts with pertinent institutions. An academic environment that encourages entrepreneurship practice undoubtedly boosts students' enthusiasm for entrepreneurship.

Independent Study/Project Activities refer to initiatives where students generate substantial and inventive projects that can be submitted for national or international competitions. The majority of students express approval for the integration of these activities within the MBKM program. Through these endeavors, students can unleash their creative concepts and provide solutions to community challenges. Additionally, these activities serve as a link between the progress in science and technology and the societal requirements, enabling Sriwijaya State Polytechnic students to bring their innovative product ideas to fruition, engage in research and development (R&D)-based education, extend support, bolster and contribute to the implementation of priority programs in research and development (R&D) partnership collaborations. These activities aim to enhance student achievements on both national and international scales, expedite the dissemination of technological advancements and management practices from the higher education sphere to the public, and nurture the development of self-reliant communities in economic and social dimensions. Furthermore, they contribute to fostering a sense of peace and comfort within the community.

Village Development/Thematic Real Work Lecture represents an educational approach where students are dispatched to communities to identify existing potential within villages and proffer solutions to local issues. Students are encouraged to perceive various phenomena within the community and contribute based on their academic knowledge. The Village Development/Thematic Real Work Lecture (KKN-T) program concurrently fosters cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects, as students gain direct experiential learning by residing in villages alongside the local population. The ultimate goal of this initiative is for students to acquire the ability to analyze potential

challenges, formulate development program plans, and evaluate the outcomes. Students are generally supportive of these activities, which not only facilitate their interactions and collaboration with the community but also enable them to collectively apply their knowledge in collaboration with entities like village governments and other institutions.

As indicated by the aforementioned data, most students favour the implementation of the MBKM program. However, there is still evidence of some students adhering to traditional paradigms, focusing solely on their specific fields related to their majors. Due to the diversity of attitudes, MBKM can be tailored to meet individual student needs. Significantly, the D4 study programs at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic Palembang ensure that access to MBKM is available to all students.

4. Conclusion

The research indicates that students at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic in Palembang overwhelmingly agree and strongly agree with eight learning activities in the Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) Program. Specifically, 92% of students support student exchange programs, 98% endorse internships/work placements, 77% favor teaching assistance in educational units, 88% support research activities, 76% are in favor of humanitarian projects, 81% endorse entrepreneurial activities, 69% are interested in independent project studies, and 84% support village development/community engagement projects. Students at Sriwijaya State Polytechnic respond positively to the MBKM program. Most students believe the MBKM program can broaden their perspectives and enhance their competencies. Furthermore, they consider the program relevant to graduates' future needs. Among the MBKM program components, the most popular include student exchanges, teaching assistance activities, and industrial internships.

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