

**The Impact of Indonesia's Higher Education Program on Improving Students'  
Competence in Achieving Global Employability**

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*Teachers are asked to adopt innovative teaching approaches and use cutting-edge technology in their classrooms. This method is deemed necessary as technological advancement is fast and educational institutions must be agile and adaptive. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has implemented the MBKM program focusing on building the students' competencies through collaborative and participatory learning to increase global employability. The study was conducted at one of the reputable universities in Indonesia and gathered survey data from 5653 students, 523 faculty members, and 245 education personnel. The findings show that from implementing MBKM activities in student learning, 97% of student respondents stated that it is valuable enough to develop their competencies and skills as a provision to work after graduation. Therefore, this program is considered successful. However, this program's socialization and dissemination of news need to be improved to increase program comprehension, especially among students, faculty members, and education personnel. Hence, the MBKM program is needed to prepare students socially, technologically and lead to better student competencies.*

*Keyword: higher education, students' competence, global employability*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Today's rapid development of science and technology has brought rapid changes in various aspects of life (Caputo, Scuotto, Carayannis, & Cillo, 2018; Fuchs, 2008; Luo, Tong, Fang, & Qu, 2019). Jobs and the way we work are changing; many jobs are lost while new jobs pop up. Economic, social, and cultural changes are also happening at a high rate (Benson-Armer, Noble, & Thiel, 2015; Grossmann, 2017; Westerman, Soule, & Eswaran, 2019). In this very dynamic time, colleges must respond quickly and appropriately. It takes a transformation of learning to equip and prepare higher education graduates to become a superior generation (Tohir, 2020).

Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) or can be translated into Independent Study – Independent Campus, is the policy of the Minister of Education and Culture, which aims to encourage students to master various valuable skills to achieve global employability. MBKM Program provides an opportunity for students to choose the courses they prefer. MBKM Policy is aligned with Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2020 concerning the National Standards of Higher Education. Article 18 mentioned that the fulfillment of the period and learning credit for undergraduate students could be implemented in two ways. First, by following the entire learning process in the university study program according to the chosen study program, or by the learning process within the study program to meet some of the time and credit of learning and the rest taken outside the study program.

Through MBKM Program, students have the opportunity for 1 (one) semester or equivalent to 20 (twenty) credits to study outside the study program at the same College. A maximum of 2 (two) semesters or equivalent to 40 (forty) credits to study in the same study program at different Universities, learn on different study programs at different Universities, and study outside of College. Learning in MBKM Program provides challenges and opportunities for the development of creativity, capacity, personality, and student needs, as well as developing independence in seeking and finding knowledge through reality and field dynamics such as ability requirements, real problems, social interaction, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets and achievements (Tohir, 2020).

During the implementation, universities are obliged to facilitate collaborative and participatory learning to provide good debriefing to students to have competitiveness after completing their studies. Fulfilling the period and learning burden for undergraduate students can be implemented by following the entire learning process in the Study Program at the university and the rest following the learning process outside the Study Program. (*Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Nomor 03 Tahun 2020 Tentang Standar Nasional Perguruan Tinggi*, 2020).

At the same time, the internet has permitted global social networking, which has shown to be an excellent enabler of changed professional practices and artistic collaborations for young people (Draper & Hitchcock, 2008). Due to a lack of equipment, experience, and case studies, hybrid learning for students

learning performance arts is lacking encouraging data, according to Ruthmann and Hebert (2012), Draper and Hitchcock (2008), Crawford (2017). The new ‘hybrid learning’ pedagogy integrates synchronous online learning (facilitated by Zoom, Cisco Webex, Google Class, Panopto, and others) with traditional lectures and regular webinars, innovative performance projects for student self-regulated learning, and traditional e-learning. In order to stay updated with the ever-changing teaching and learning environment, there has been a transition in teaching and learning approaches, from traditional teacher-centered approaches to ones that allow students to participate actively in the learning process. This latter teaching method necessitates students to be active learners capable of critical thinking. Critical thinking is a crucial talent required to adapt to real-life circumstances that are rife with issues. According to Zabit (2010), this skill is just as vital as knowledge since it aids a person’s ability to adapt and cope with new environmental demands that necessitate a quick response.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Modern teaching/learning methodologies such as problem-based learning, collaborative learning, and e-learning have received more attention (Dolničar, Boh Podgornik, Bartol, & Šorgo, 2020). New teaching/learning styles or frameworks have evolved as a result of advances in ICT and the internet and the progress of modern pedagogy toward a participatory principle, reformulating and expanding standard themes, sometimes in a less structured and thus more open to interpretation way. For example, the American Association of School Librarians’ (AASL) recent efforts (2009, 2017) emphasize knowledge generation and sharing, collaboration, conversation, and inquiry. Therefore, this research focuses on how collaborative and participatory learning, engagement and interaction, and the webinar methods implement the MBKM program.

Furthermore, there are two approaches in learning that are known to promote collaborative and participatory learning and engagement and interactions. The first is the Problem-Based Learning method. Looi and Seyal (2014) found that PBL was a successful learning strategy since it emphasized collaborative learning in which students could learn from one another. Aside from that, the study discovered that PBL boosted students’ learning interest and drove while also developing social skills. Peng (2010) also discovered that PBL improved students’ analytical capabilities, problem-solving abilities, and self-learning abilities in a group of students taking a computer programming course. Other studies have also proven the effectiveness of PBL (Bayat & Tarmizi, 2012; Johnstone & Biggs, 1998; Peerapolchaikul, Suealek, & Rojpiulstit, 2019; Stanley & Marsden, 2012; Zabit, 2010).

Second, the Playful Learning Environment (PLE) integrates curriculum-based education with digital technology, creativity, collaboration, and physical activities and opens up new learning opportunities outside the classroom and other enclosed areas. Students are active participants, players, and game content developers in the PLE, and they engage in outdoor and indoor fun learning. The PLE is likely to test teachers’ knowledge, but it also can give new ways for teachers to grow and accomplish their professional tasks. The playful learning environment (PLE) is a new learning environment that serves as the focus of this research. The term “playful learning environment” (PLE) is used in this study to refer to applying a fun learning technique in a playful setting. We define it as a physical, pedagogical, intellectual, socio-emotional, cultural, and media-rich learning environment in which students create, play, and learn by doing (Kangas & Ruokamo, 2012; Kangas, Siklander, Randolph, & Ruokamo, 2017). The PLE has recently been linked to technologically enhanced and play-based learning environments in pre-and primary-school education.

### **Collaborative and Participatory Learning**

According to Web 2.0 literature, in the modern workplace, hierarchies are being flattened, and value is now created through horizontal collaboration rather than vertical silos (Friedman, 2005). This was also the experience of students who reported that the online environment was the primary source of cross-year interactions and that while they recognized their year group as the strongest unit, they now felt part of a larger community

It has been demonstrated that combining online and face-to-face activities effectively create a 'hidden curriculum' in which students interact, reflect, and collaborate to create and maintain an authentic participatory learning culture (Draper & Hitchcock, 2008). Networking, collaboratively-formed knowledge structures, and the concept of 'the wisdom of crowd's are becoming increasingly valued (Surowiecki, 2004). The act of sharing presupposes a sense of ownership of knowledge and some degree of pride that accompanies the desire to share, speak up, and participate.

### **Engagement and Interaction**

Students participate in various online activities, which promote active learning (Li, Li, & Han, 2021). Teachers and students can communicate during online classes by highlighting significant points on notes and sharing personal perspectives on the same subject. This study encourages teachers to prioritize learning above technology. In other words, understanding how students are driven to learn, using tried-and-true frameworks to shape creative learning processes, and implementing the best variety of pedagogical approaches should guide our approach to both 'live' and online teaching equally. The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is a hidden opportunity for educators to change their practices supported by research and for institutions to review their curricula in terms of teaching. Participants contributed diverse ideas and practical examples throughout the webinar series.

### **Webinar**

The COVID-19 epidemic has altered the teaching and learning of students. It has given Academies new chances to rethink how lessons should be run and what information could be taught more efficiently and entertainingly. Universities have been forced to innovate in the production, display, and promotion of their artworks due to the pandemic. Inevitably, the pandemic has prompted students to consider their options beyond graduation and well before they begin their professional lives. For all instructors and students, these developments present problems and opportunities (Li et al., 2021). Speakers share their perspectives and experiences on doing education work online in webinars. The webinar series allows speakers to reflect on their experiences as practitioners forced to teach outside of studios, labs, and classrooms and keep sessions operating on desktops, laptops, and mobile devices due to the epidemic. This series gives a platform for colleagues from various skill sets and creative disciplines to share views of the future of education — how and what the universities have done so far and future plans.

Webinars also inspire educators to try new things, develop, and reflect on what works and does not, all while gaining experience. Delivering a course online is as learning-rich for the teacher as it is for the students. Creativity is the only method to ameliorate the crisis, and teaching is viewed as creative. Looking ahead, this method should include students in the co-creation process in the future. Students today are digital natives, and the internet is their natural environment. They know what they want, where they can get it, and how to get it quickly. By incorporating students, professors can move away from the podium and become facilitators in online classes. In a learning community like this, they play many roles. Instead of simply sharing knowledge, they construct, develop, guide, and facilitate the learning process.

### **MBKM Program**

Based on the Guidance Book of MBKM Program by Tohir (2020), there are several learning methods that are used inside and outside the study program and have been implemented in the universities. The methods are explained below.

#### *Student Exchange*

Currently student exchange with full credit transfer has been widely done with higher education partners abroad, but the credit transfer system conducted between universities in the country itself is still very small in number. Student exchange is organized to form several student attitudes contained in the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture (Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2020), namely respecting cultural diversity, views, religions, and

beliefs, as well as the original opinions or findings of others; and cooperate and have social sensitivity and concern for the community and the environment.

#### *Internships / Enrichment Program*

Previously, students had less work experience in the industry / real profession world, so they are less ready to work. While short-term internships (less than 6 months) are not enough to provide industry experience and competencies for students. Companies that accept internships also state that internships in a very short time are not beneficial, even interfere with activities in the industry. The objectives of the internship program include Internship program 1-2 semesters, providing enough experience to students, direct learning in the workplace (experiential learning). During the internship students will get hard skills (skills, complex problem solving, analytical skills, etc.), and soft skills (professional / work ethics, communication, cooperation, etc.). While the industry gets talent that if suitable can be directly recruited, thus reducing the cost of recruitment and initial training / induction. Students who know the workplace will be more successful in entering the world of work and career. Through this activity, industrial problems will flow to universities so that updating teaching materials and lecturer learning and research topics in universities will be more relevant.

#### *Teaching Assistants in the Education Unit*

The quality of primary and secondary education in Indonesia is still very low (PISA 2018 ranked Indonesia no. 7 from below). The number of educational units in Indonesia is very large and various problems both formal, non-formal and informal education units. Learning activities in the form of teaching assistance are carried out by students in educational units such as elementary, secondary, and upper schools. Schools where teaching practices can be located in city locations as well as in remote areas.

The purpose of the teaching assistance program in the education unit include: 1) Providing opportunities for students who have an interest in the field of education to participate in teaching and deepening their knowledge by becoming teachers in the education unit. 2) Help improve the equalization of the quality of education, as well as the relevance of primary and secondary education to higher education and the development of the times.

#### *Research*

For students who have a passion to become researchers, free learning can be realized in the form of research activities in research institutions / study centers. Through research students can build a way of thinking critically, which is needed for various scientific groups at the level of higher education. With the ability to think critically students will be more deeply steeped, understand, and able to do research methods better. For students who have an interest and desire to work in the field of research, the opportunity to intern in the research center laboratory is their desire. In addition, laboratories / research institutions sometimes lack research assistants when working on short-term research projects (1 semester - 1 year).

The objectives of the research / research program include: 1) Student research is expected to be improved in quality. In addition, the student experience in a large research project will strengthen the pool of talent of researchers topically. 2) Students gain research competence through direct guidance by researchers at research institutions / study centers. 3) Improve the ecosystem and quality of research in Indonesian laboratories and research institutions by providing researcher resources and regeneration of researchers early on.

#### *Indonesian Humanitarian Project*

Many experienced natural disasters, both in the form of earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, hydrological disasters, etc. The college has helped to cope with disasters through humanitarian programs. Student involvement has been voluntary and only short-term. In addition, many international institutions (UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, etc.) have conducted in-depth studies and pilot development projects in Indonesia and other developing countries. Students with a young soul, scientific competence, and interests can become “foot soldiers” in other humanitarian and development projects both in Indonesia and abroad.

The objectives of the humanitarian project program include: 1) Preparing superior students who uphold human values in carrying out tasks based on religion, morals, and ethics. 2) Train students to have a social sensitivity to explore and explore existing problems and also provide solutions in accordance with their respective interests and expertise.

#### *Entrepreneurial Activities*

Based on the Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) in 2018, Indonesia only has a score of 21% of entrepreneurs from various fields of work or ranked 94 out of 137 countries surveyed. Meanwhile, according to research from IDN Research Institute in 2019, 69.1% of millennials in Indonesia have an interest in entrepreneurship. Unfortunately, the entrepreneurial potential for the millennial generation has not been managed properly so far. Merdeka Campus Policy encourages the development of student entrepreneurial interests with appropriate learning activity programs. The objectives of the entrepreneurial activity program include: 1) Giving students who have an entrepreneurial interest to develop their business early and guided. 2) Addressing the problem of unemployment that results in intellectual unemployment among scholars.

#### *Independent Studies/Projects*

Many students have a passion for realizing great work contested at the international level or the work of innovative ideas. Ideally, independent studies / projects are run to be a complement to the curriculum that has been taken by students. Colleges or faculties may also make independent studies to cover topics that are not included in the lecture schedule but are still available in the syllabus of the study program or faculty. Independent project activities can be carried out in the form of cross-disciplinary group work.

#### *Building a Village/Real Work Lecture Thematic*

Thematic Real Work Lecture (KKNT) is a form of education by providing learning experiences to students to live in the community off campus, which directly together with the community identifies potential and handles problems so that it is expected to be able to develop the potential of the village / area and concoct solutions to problems in the village. KKNT activities are expected to hone soft skills partnerships, cross-disciplinary teamwork / science (across competencies), and student leadership in managing development programs in rural areas. So far, the college has run the KKNT program, it's just that the Semester Credit Unit (SKS) has not been able or can be recognized in accordance with the independent campus program whose credit recognition is equivalent to 6 - 12 months or 20 - 40 credits, with its implementation based on several models. It is also expected that after the implementation of KKNT, students can write down the things they do along with the results in the form of final assignments.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study uses primary data by conducting surveys to students, faculty members, and education personnel in a college environment. Student respondents are active students for all semesters of undergraduate education level registered in the higher education database of the Directorate General of Higher Education (PDDikti) of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology in Indonesia. Faculty members of all study programs registered as lecturers at the university officially at PDDIKTI. At the same time, the education personnel is the college staff in charge of serving faculty members and students in the teaching and learning process and implementing the college tri dharma.

The survey was conducted to measure the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar – Merdeka Campus program, one of the Indonesian government's programs encouraging students to master various practical science to enter the world of work. Merdeka Belajar - Merdeka Campus provides students with other learning experiences outside of their study programs. Faculty members and education personnel are also surveyed to see how their understanding of this program can contribute to the successful implementation of the Merdeka Belajar – Merdeka Campus (MBKM) program.

The sample of respondents in this study consisted of 5653 students, 523 faculty members, and 245 education personnel. The questionnaire is prepared by paying attention to the leading performance indicators in the MBKM program, especially the seventh indicator, namely collaborative and participatory learning classes. The questionnaire consists of 22 questions for students, 25 questions for faculty members, and 26 questions for education personnel. The questionnaire comes from the Directorate General of DIKTIRISTEK, distributed to all private universities in Indonesia.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

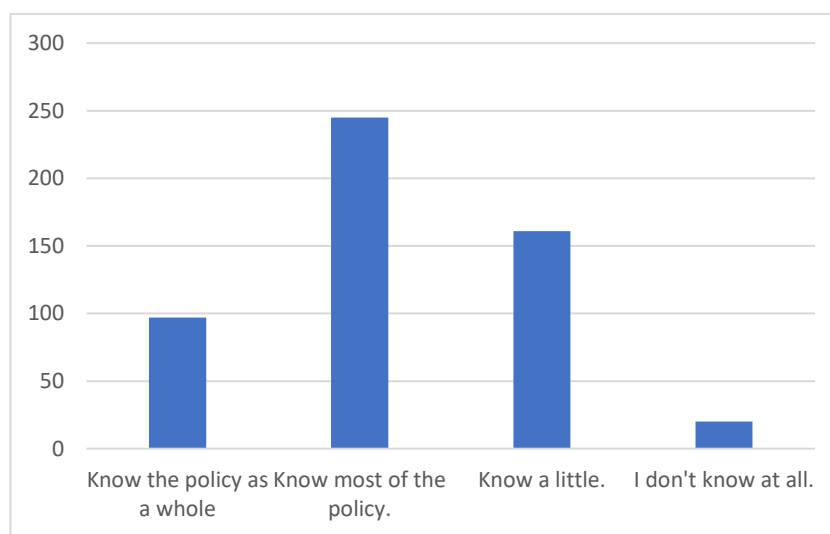
### Knowledge of Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Policy

Based on the results of surveys conducted with samples from students, faculty members, and education personnel, the results can be explained as follows. From the aspect of knowledge about the MBKM policy, most faculty members know well the policies implemented. 47% of faculty members know most of the contents of the independent learning-campus policy, and only 3% do not know about this program. As a driver of change, especially to control students to get the best debriefing and gain experience preparing for their future, faculty members need to understand this program well to drive national change.

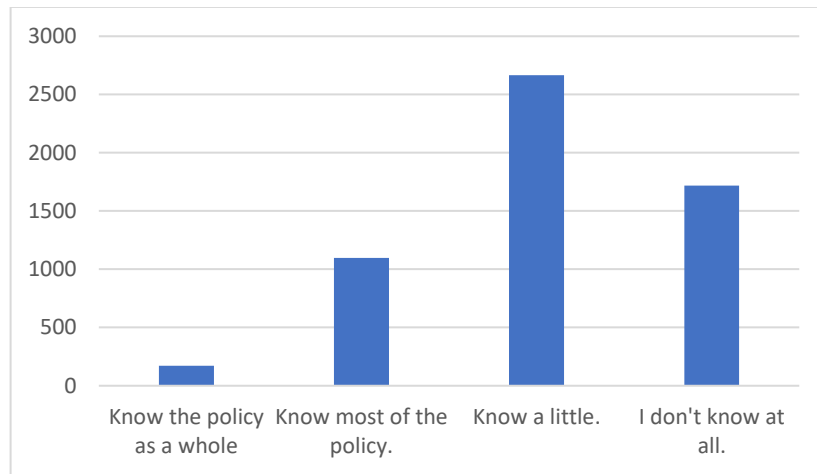
Of the student respondents (Figure 1), out of 5653 students mostly, 47% know little about the MBKM program. Only 3% of the total students know the overall program, and 19% know most of the content of the policy. The result proves that there needs to be a better and intensive socialization program to introduce this government policy to students. Students' awareness of the benefits of this program will be more felt and will eventually encourage the formation of young people ready to compete.

In addition to faculty members and students, education personnel also play an essential role in encouraging and controlling the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program in Indonesia. Education personnel is tasked with carrying out administration, management, development, supervision, and technical services to support the education process in universities. (Undang-Undang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional No. 20 Tahun 2003, n.d.). The composition of education personnel who understands the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program is quite balanced from those who know as a whole to those who do not know at all. 33% of education personnel know most of the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy contents, and 19% do not know about this program.

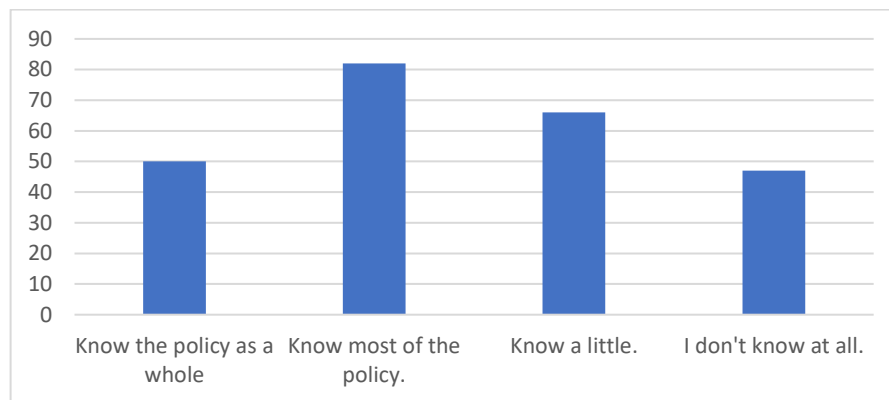
**FIGURE 1**  
**KNOWLEDGE OF MERDEKA BELAJAR-KAMPUS MERDEKA (MBKM) POLICY–**  
**FACULTY MEMBER**



**FIGURE 2**  
**KNOWLEDGE OF MERDEKA BELAJAR-KAMPUS MERDEKA (MBKM) POLICY – STUDENTS**



**FIGURE 3**  
**KNOWLEDGE OF MERDEKA BELAJAR-KAMPUS MERDEKA (MBKM) POLICY – EDUCATION PERSONNEL**

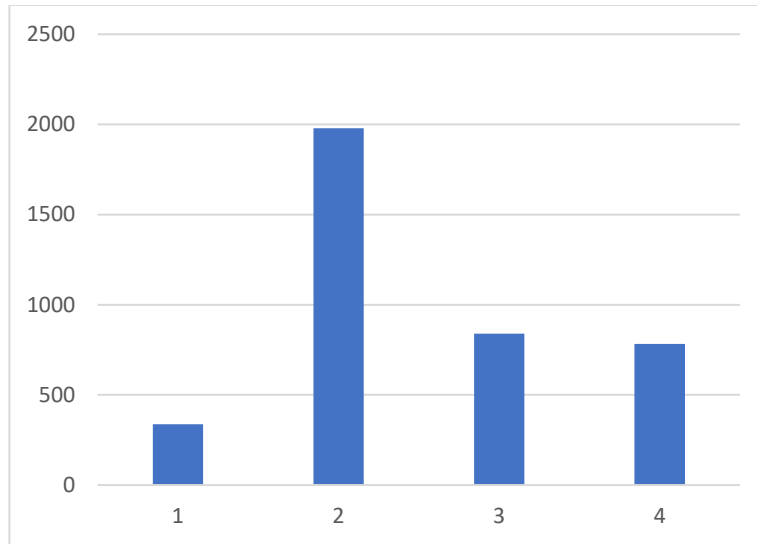


According to the National Standard of Higher Education, there are at least 4 (four) semesters and a maximum of 11 semesters in learning in the Study Program. And there is one semester or equivalent to 20 credits is Learning outside the Study Program at the same College, and a maximum of 2 semesters or equivalent to 40 credits is (a) learning on the same Study Program at different Universities, (b) Learning on different Study Programs at different Universities, (c) Learning outside the College (*Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Nomor 03 Tahun 2020 Tentang Standard Nasional Perguruan Tinggi*, 2020)

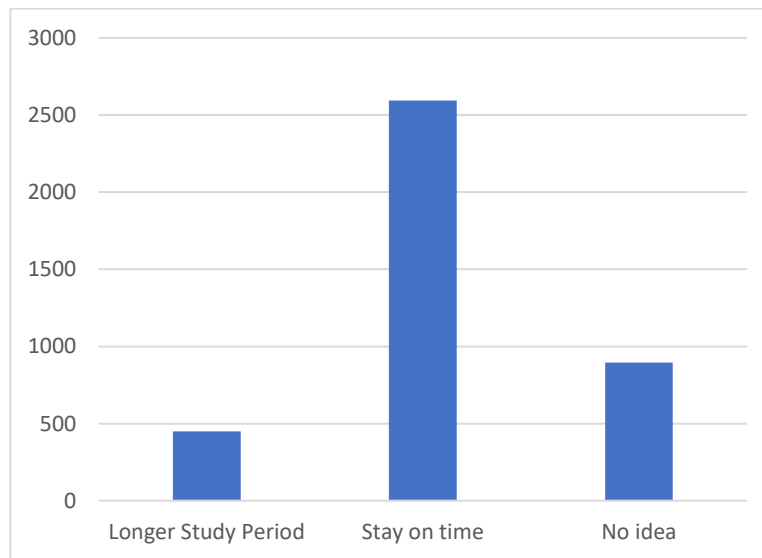
From the regulations and the survey results, it is seen that there are only 50% of students understand the provisions of MBKM activities outside of universities. This needs to be the attention of the government and universities because MBKM implementation's success depends on the understanding of students, faculty members, and education personnel. So it is necessary to conduct continuous socialization and workshops to provide understanding and knowledge that can support the success of this program.



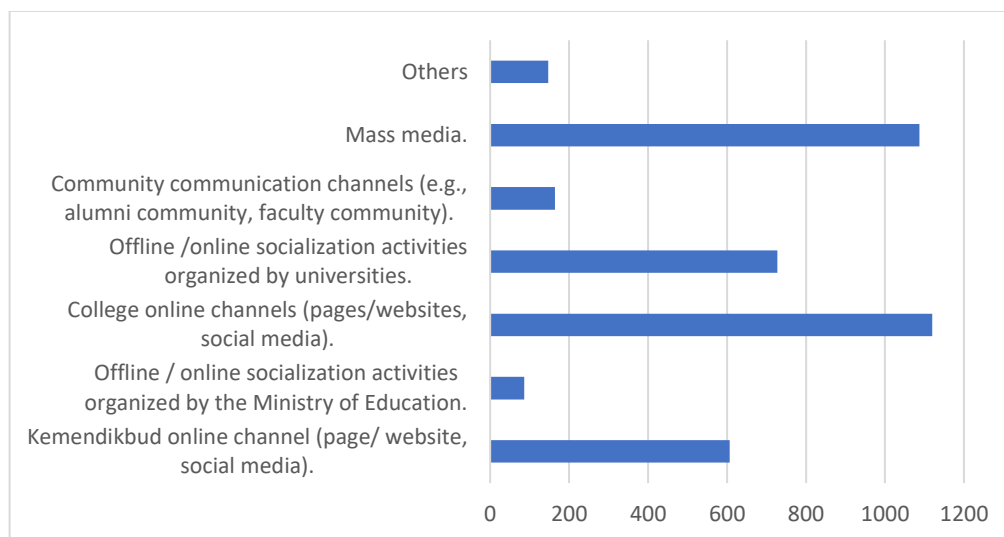
**FIGURE 4**  
**STUDENT KNOWLEDGE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MBKM CURRICULUM:**  
**NUMBER OF SEMESTERS OF MBKM ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE UNIVERSITY**



**FIGURE 5**  
**KNOWLEDGE OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY PERIOD ON LEARNING**  
**OUTSIDE THE STUDY PROGRAM – STUDENTS**



**FIGURE 6**  
**SOURCES OF INFORMATION ON MERDEKA BELAJAR POLICY – MERDEKA CAMPUS**  
**(STUDENTS)**

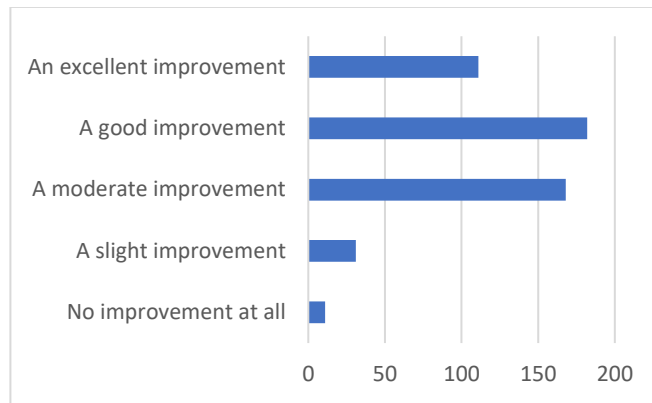


Based on the source of information obtained by students related to the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka policy, most of it is sourced from the College's online channels such as websites and social media. In addition, students also get much information from the mass media. 56% of students' knowledge comes from both sources. The utilization of offline or online socialization activities organized by the Ministry of Education needs to be improved because students are still minimally utilized. Increasing the effectiveness of various offline and online channels is necessary to answer the limitations of student knowledge to this MBKM program. Student knowledge related to the implications of learning activities outside the study program to the study period is still uneven. There are 35% of students who still do not know the implications of this study period, where there is still an assumption that learning outside the study program will increase the study period to a long time. There is still ignorance about the implications.

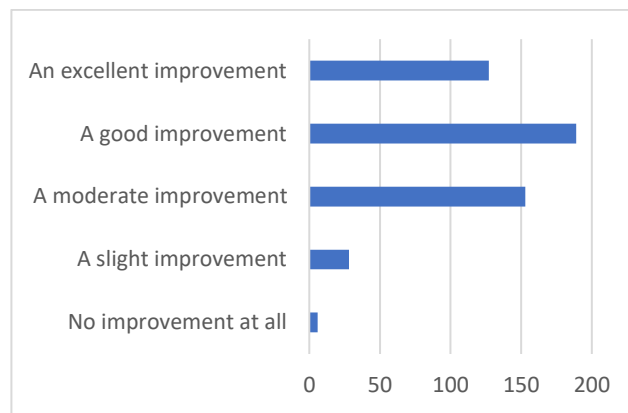
#### **Impact of MBKM on the Student Learning Process / Soft Skills/Capacity of Education Personnel**

The learning process is an essential part of preparing students to compete by getting adequate knowledge and abilities, which becomes an important part that needs to be the attention of the College. The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program becomes essential in supporting the above goals so that the measurement of the impact of this program becomes essential both on the student learning process, the improvement of students' soft skills, and the impact on increasing the capacity of education personnel in universities. The survey results with respondents from faculty members stated that there was an increase in the student learning process well by 35%. However, there are also faculty members who state that there is no increase from the impact of this program (2%).

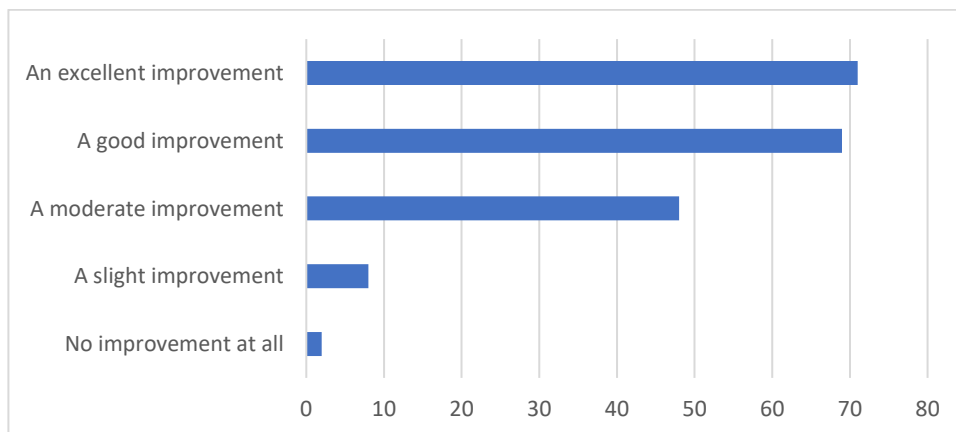
**FIGURE 7**  
**THE IMPACT OF MBKM ON THE LEARNING PROCESS OF STUDENTS –**  
**FACULTY MEMBERS**



**FIGURE 8**  
**IMPACT OF MBKM IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' SOFT SKILLS**



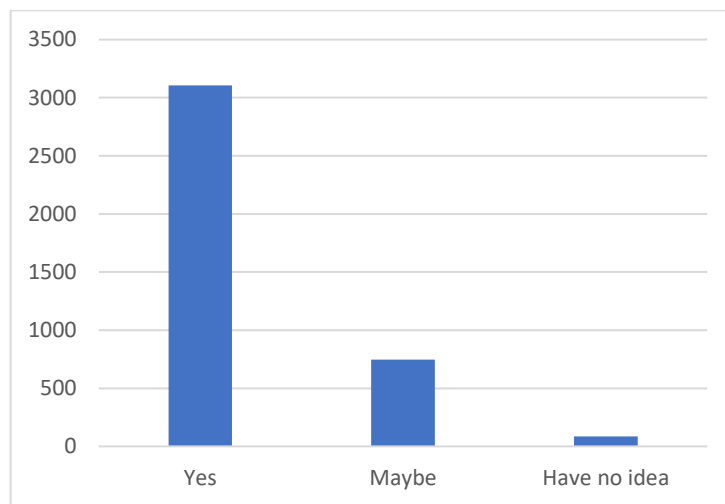
**FIGURE 9**  
**THE IMPACT OF MBKM IN INCREASING THE CAPACITY OF EDUCATION PERSONNEL**



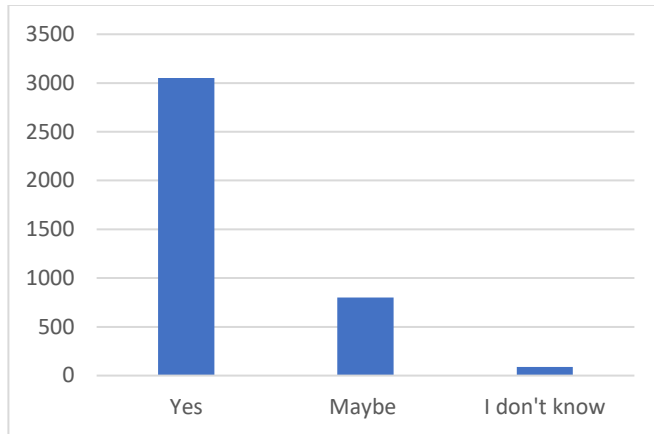
Collaborative learning is a process in which students from different educational backgrounds work together in groups. In conventional learning, collaboration is usually done between students in one College or the same study program. However, with the MBKM program, with the support of information technology, collaboration is possible between universities both with domestic and foreign universities. Collaborative learning also increasingly needs to be done as one of the impacts of the covid-19 pandemic in education where the use of ICT for learning becomes inevitable. At the same time, participatory learning is a form of learning by including students in every stage of learning, such as participating in program planning activities in universities and during the implementation and evaluation of activities. With the implementation of collaborative and participatory learning in the learning process, students can further improve their competence in both hard and soft skills. The impact of this collaborative and participatory learning can be seen in Figure 7 and Figure 8.

In terms of students, the impact of MBKM on the student learning process, especially related to the improvement of soft skills, is considered to be a good increase of 30%. This is in line with the survey results with faculty member respondents. Most students stated an increase in soft skills from very good to less, and only under 1% said no to the increase in students' soft skills felt. Education personnel dealing directly with students in the teaching and learning process in College feel the remarkable impact of this program on increasing their capacity to carry out work. Most education personnel agree that there is a tremendous increase in their capacity (57%). This proves that the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program impacts students, lecturers, and education personnel feel an excellent impact on all aspects of universities' implementation.

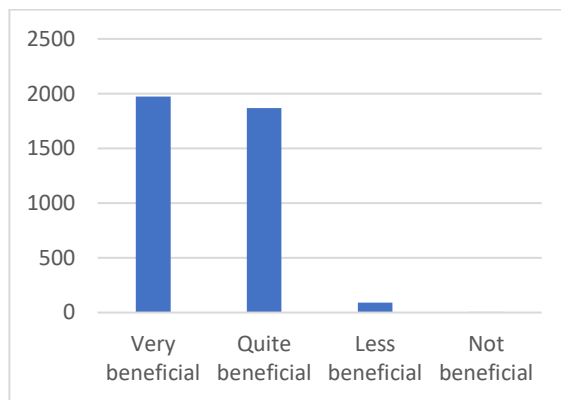
**FIGURE 10**  
**IMPACT OF INCREASING STUDENT COMPETENCE FROM OFF-CAMPUS LEARNING ACTIVITIES**



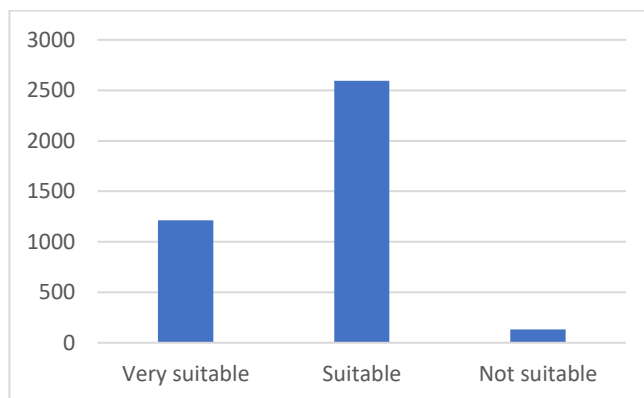
**FIGURE 11**  
**THE IMPACT OF LEARNING IN OTHER STUDY PROGRAMS ON STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES AND COMPETENCIES**



**FIGURE 12**  
**BENEFITS OF MBKM ACTIVITIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT COMPETENCE IN THE CAREER WORLD**



**FIGURE 13**  
**SUITABILITY OF MBKM PROGRAM TO THE NEEDS OF GRADUATES IN THE FUTURE**



Learning activities outside the College will provide additional competencies such as solving real problems in complex fields, conducting data analysis and problem analysis, improving professional ethics, working together in teams, and other benefits expected to obtain. Of the current implementations in College, 79% of students agree that off-campus learning will positively impact their competence. The result proves that the MBKM program is needed to equip students after completing their college studies.

The benefits obtained by the following learning in other study programs outside the student study program in question are also felt by students will expand perspective and provide additional competencies needed. This statement can be seen from 78% of student respondents who admitted that attending lectures in other study programs will benefit their competence. In addition to hard skills, learning in other study programs as part of student exchanges is organized to develop attitudes such as respecting cultural diversity, views, religions and beliefs, differences of opinion or original findings of others and cooperating and having social sensitivity and concern for the community and the surrounding environment.

Overall, from implementing MBKM activities in student learning, 97% of student respondents stated that it is valuable enough to develop their competencies and skills as a provision to work after graduation. Thus, it can be concluded that the MBKM program, which is the policy of the Minister of Education and Culture, has been successfully implemented in Indonesia. In terms of the needs of graduates in the future, most students agree that MBKM activities are following future needs. It is also in line with the purpose of this program, namely, to prepare students for social, cultural, world work changes and rapid technological progress; student competencies must be prepared better to answer the challenges of the needs of the times. Link and match not only with the industrial world and the world of work but also with a rapidly changing future. (Tohir, 2020).

## **CONCLUSION**

Knowledge of the existence of the Merdeka Belajar Program – Merdeka Campus and the goals to be achieved are still uneven among the academic community. There is still considerable student incomprehension of the program, although faculty members and education personnel are relatively evenly understanding and knowledgeable of this program. Socialization and dissemination of news on this program need to be improved in various media to provide knowledge and understanding to all relevant parties, especially students, faculty members, and education personnel, as an essential part of the successful implementation of this program. Although with limited knowledge and understanding, the benefits felt by implementing this program are recognized by all parties to bring a positive impact that supports the improvement of students' competencies and skills in facing the needs of graduates in the future. From the survey conducted, almost all students stated that this program positively impacts soft skills and hard skills as their provision after graduation and facing the world of work.

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