Perceptions of Students in the Field of Education towards the Freedom of Learning Independent Campus Policy

Endra Ubaidillah[1], Dedi Prestiadi[2], Maulana Amirul Adha[3], Imam Gunawan[4], Sasi Maulina[5], Aulia Nur Firdausi[6]

[1]Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Science, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia
[2]Faculty of Education, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia
[3]Faculty of Economics, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia
[4]International Intercollegiate Ph.D. Program, National Tsing Hua University, Hsinchu, Taiwan
[5]Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia
[6]Faculty of Sport Science, Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia

Abstract

Higher education in Indonesia has experienced significant developments in recent years, one of the latest efforts is the MBKM policy. Although MBKM brings hope for improving the quality of education and student independence, there are varying perceptions and reactions among students, especially in the education sector. The aim of the research is to explain the perceptions and understanding of education students regarding MBKM policies. This research uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design, to achieve the research objectives. The respondents in this study were 164 students. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis using percentages to get an overview of student perceptions, with the help of the SPSS program. The research results show that the majority of students have a good understanding of the MBKM policy, the MBKM Teaching Assistance activity in the Education Unit is the most familiar and most popular activity, and students have several concerns when they take part in the MBKM program. This research contributes both theoretically and practically.

Keyword: freedom of learning independent campus policy; students perception; higher education; MBKM activities

1. Introduction

Higher education in Indonesia has experienced significant development in recent years. One of the latest efforts is the "Free Campus for Independent Learning" (MBKM) policy, which was launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) in 2019. MBKM is an initiative that aims to give students more freedom in determining their educational path, and increase the accessibility of higher education (Sihombing et al., 2021; Wibowo et al., 2022). Through MBKM, students are allowed to choose the courses, lecturers, educational institutions and even several other activities they want.

Even though MBKM brings hope for improving the quality of education and student independence, there are various perceptions and reactions among students, especially in the education sector (Hidayatullah, 2021; Maisyaroh et al., 2021). The acceptance and implementation of MBKM in higher education can influence students in various aspects, such as academic freedom, curriculum selection, and their career orientation. Therefore, it is important to explore education students' understanding and perceptions about MBKM and its impact on higher education in Indonesia.

This research focuses on education students because they have a key role in understanding, implementing and developing education in this country (Bhakti et al., 2022; Sopiansyah & Masruroh, 2022; Ubaidillah, Prestiadi, Adha, Maulina, et al., 2022). Their perceptions of MBKM can provide valuable insight into the extent to which this policy influences their views of higher education and future career opportunities (Yulianti et al., 2023; Syifa et al., 2023). The existence of significant changes in higher education, such as MBKM, raises a number of questions that need to be answered (Susilawati, 2021; Wahyuni et al., 2022). How do education students understand and respond to MBKM? Do they see MBKM as an opportunity or a challenge? What impact does MBKM have on their curriculum choices and career orientation? Is there a difference in perception between students who take a conventional approach to their education and those who utilize MBKM more extensively?

Previous studies on MBKM generally focused on policy analysis and lecturers' views (Arisandi et al., 2022; Kodrat, 2021). However, the perspective of students, especially those from the education sector, is an aspect that needs to be deepened. Students are important stakeholders in the higher education system, and their understanding of this policy will influence its implementation in higher education (Komarudin & Aziz, 2022; Zakiyyah et al., 2021). In addition, MBKM has the potential to change the education paradigm in Indonesia from a more traditional one to a more inclusive and results-based one. Education students are future teachers, future educators, and educational leaders (Arifin et al., 2022; Hartono et al., 2023; Maisyaroh, Juharyanto, Wiyono, et al., 2023). Therefore, their understanding of MBKM will also influence the way they educate the next generation and participate in the development of education in Indonesia.

This study seeks to fill the knowledge gap in the literature on MBKM with the research aim of explaining education students' perceptions and understanding of this policy. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide guidance for policy makers and universities to better understand student needs, as well as help improve the implementation of MBKM in the context of higher education in Indonesia. Apart from that, the results of this research can also be a basis

for further research on the impact of MBKM on students' education and career development in the future.

2. Literature review

This research focuses on the perceptions of students in the education sector regarding the MBKM Policy introduced by the government. MBKM aims to give students more freedom in determining their own curriculum and learning methods. Previous research has shown a number of issues relevant to MBKM, such as education quality, accessibility, and its impact on the quality of graduates (Cahya et al., 2023; Sumani et al., 2022; Ubaidillah, Prestiadi, Adha, Ariyanti, et al., 2022). Education within the Independent Campus framework offers challenges and opportunities for developing innovation, creativity, individual capacity, as well as meeting the unique needs of students (Juharyanto et al., 2023; Marpaung et al., 2023). Apart from that, it also encourages the development of independence in exploring knowledge through practical experience and interaction with the real world, such as ability demands, real situations, social interactions, cooperation, self-management, and achieving goals. With effective implementation of the independent learning program, students can strengthen both aspects of technical and social skills well. There are eight main activities in MBKM activities, namely (1) Student Exchange; (2) Internship/Work Practice; (3) Teaching Assistance in Education Units; (4) Research/Research; (5) Humanitarian Projects; (6) Entrepreneurial Activities; (7) Independent Study/Project; and (8) Building Villages/Thematic Real Work Lectures (Maisyaroh et al., 2022; Maisyaroh, Juharyanto, Bafadal, et al., 2023).

3. Method

This research uses a quantitative approach with a descriptive research design, to achieve the research objectives. The respondents in this research were students from the Faculty of Education, State University of Malang, with a sample of 164 students. The data collection process was carried out in May-August 2023. The research instrument used a closed questionnaire which had been tested for validity (Pearson's Product Moment) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha) using the help of the SPSS program. Data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis using percentages to get an overview of student perceptions, with the help of the SPSS program.

4. Results and Discussion

As the aim of this research, an instrument to measure student perceptions regarding the implementation of the Freedom of Learning Independent Campus Policy (MBKM) was distributed to students at the Faculty of Education, State University of Malang, filled in by 164 students, who were then analyzed. Based on Figure 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents stated that they already knew the MBKM policy as a whole, namely 57.3%, followed by respondents who knew most of the policy at 26.2%, 11.6% knew a little and only 4.9% did not know at all. Students' understanding of the MBKM policy is essential as it enables them to take full advantage of the program. With good understanding, students can take advantage of additional learning opportunities and improve their abilities and skills for a brighter future (Nasri et al., 2020; Owusu-Agyeman, 2021). Good understanding can also help students to choose the MBKM activities they choose.
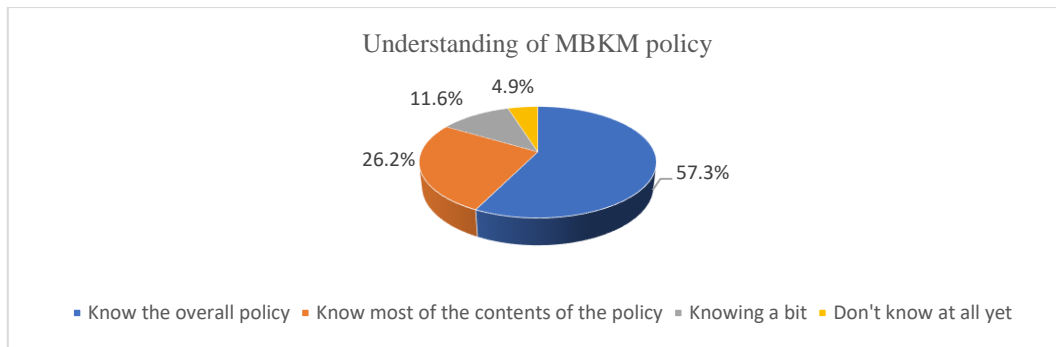
Figure 1. Understanding of MBKM Policy

Regarding sources of information regarding the implementation of MBKM policies, based on Figure 2 it can be seen that most respondents stated that they got information related to the implementation of MBKM from Faculty online channels (web/page, social media), namely 86.6%, followed by Offline/online organized socialization activities by universities/faculties/departments amounting to 81.7%, interestingly the third most common source of information is colleagues, namely 80.5%, more interestingly sources from the Ministry of Education and Culture online channels (web/page, social media) are the lowest source of information according to respondents (31.7%). Students can search for information about the implementation of the MBKM policy from various official government sources such as the website of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology, apart from that, news and related publications from educational institutions and mass media can also provide insight into the implementation of the policy MBKM in Indonesia (Sudapet et al., 2022; Zakiyyah et al., 2021). Colleagues are also known to be a source of information regarding the MBKM program for other students.
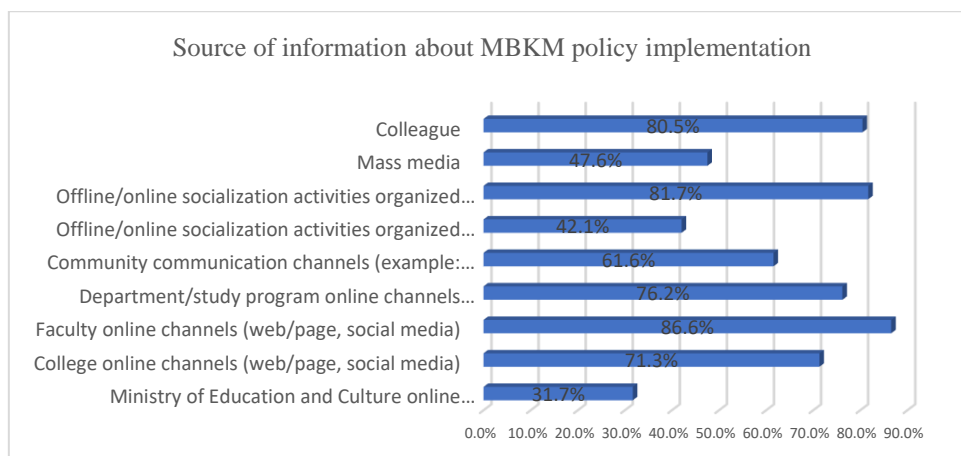

Figure 2. Source of Information about MBKM Policy Implementation

Furthermore, based on Figure 3, it can be seen that the majority of respondents have studied the technical manual for implementing MBKM issued by the university, namely 64.6%, while the rest have not studied it. Of course, there are students who have not yet studied technical manuals, which is homework for universities to socialize the MBKM guidelines that

have been prepared. Understanding MBKM technical instructions is important because it helps students plan and implement the chosen MBKM program effectively (Wahyuni et al., 2022; Williamson, 2016). These instructions explain the procedures, requirements, and objectives of the program, and provide implementation guidelines that can increase its benefits for students, communities, and educational institutions.
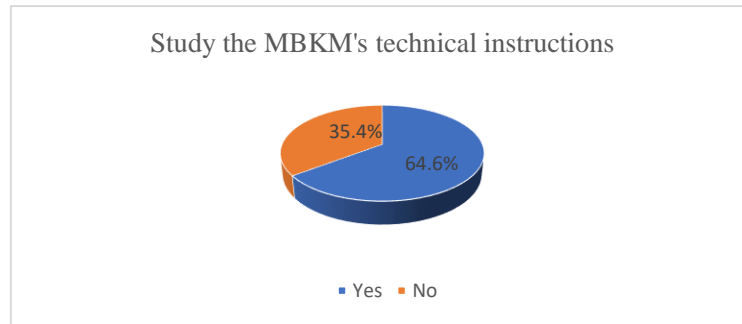

Study the MBKM's technical instructions

Figure 3. Study the MBKM's Technical Instructions

Based on Figure 4, it can be seen that as many as 84.1% of respondents stated that the department/study program provides direction and support for students to take part in MBKM activities, while 12.2% stated the opposite, and 3.7% said they did not know. Even though the majority of respondents stated that they received support from departments or study programs, it is hoped that all students will receive the same sense of support as other students. Faculty or study program support is very important for students because they need guidance and additional resources in pursuing their academic and career success, especially in relation to MBKM activities, as well as to ensure curriculum integrity and continuity of education that is oriented to individual needs (Adha et al., 2022; Lutz, 2021).
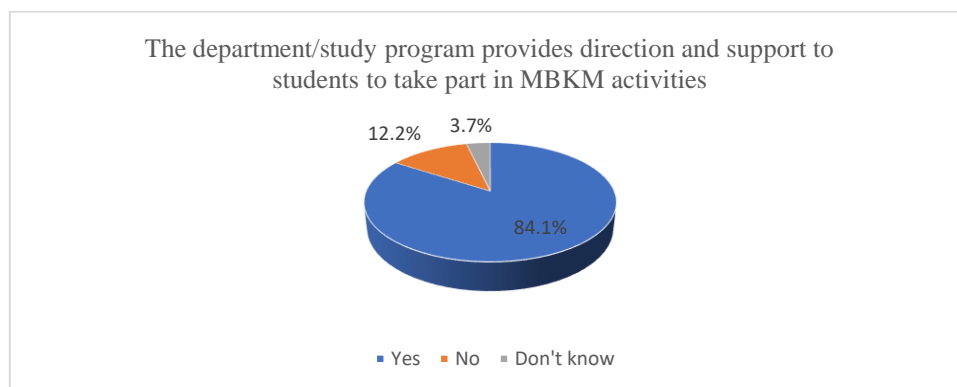

The department/study program provides direction and support to students to take part in MBKM activities

Figure 4. The department/study program provides direction and support to students to take part in MBKM activities

Regarding the eight MBKM activities that are most familiar among students, it can be seen in Figure 5. Based on Figure 5, it can be seen that most respondents understand and are familiar with Teaching Assistance in Schools activities, namely 91.5%, followed by Internship/Work Practice at 82.9%. , then the third most frequent is Building Villages/Thematic

Real Work Lectures, namely 75.6%, more interestingly, Independent Study/Project is the lowest MBKM activity according to respondents (29.9%). This can be understood because among students in the field of education, teaching at school, serving the community (Real Work College), and work practice are things that must be implemented, even before the MBKM policy was initiated. Meanwhile, it is a challenge for universities to introduce Independent Study/Project activities to students, so that students have sufficient understanding of these activities and other MBKM activities (Thohir et al., 2021; Wahyuni et al., 2022).
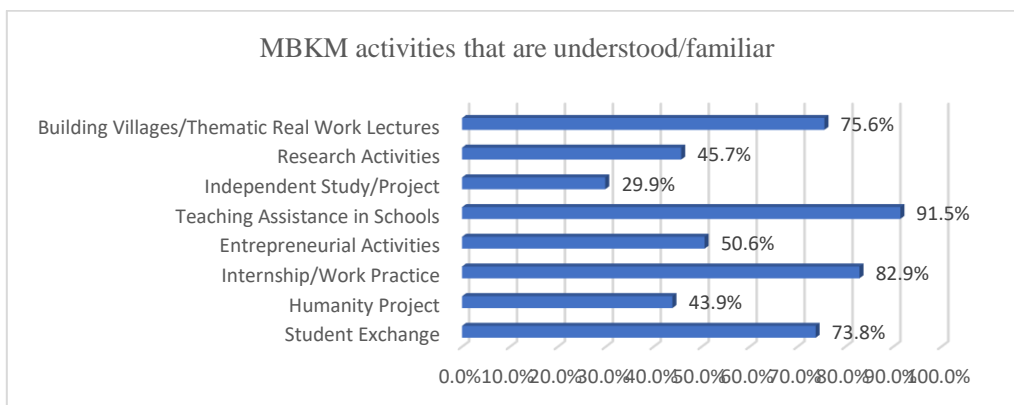

Figure 5. MBKM Activities that are Understood/Familiar

Based on Figure 6, it can be seen that the activity that is most popular with students among the eight MBKM activities, Teaching Assistance in Schools is the most popular activity (90.2%), followed by Internship/Work Practice at 74.4%, the third most popular activity is Independent Study/Project (68.3%), this is interesting because this activity is the least familiar to students. Teaching Assistance in Schools is the most popular activity because students think they can apply the knowledge learned in the program (Lee et al., 2019; Tehseen & Hadi, 2015), while students feel challenged to take part in Independent Study/Project activities, because they have not yet Many people know about the program.
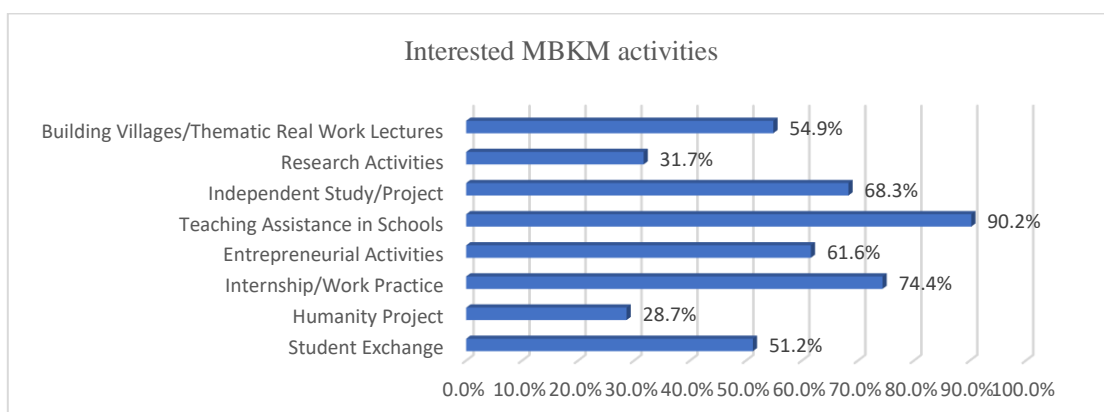

Figure 6. Interested MBKM Activities

Regarding the form of readiness in participating in MBKM activities, it can be seen in Figure 7. Based on Figure 7, as many as 90.9% of the forms of readiness are through being

proactive in seeking information about MBKM activities, then 78.0% follow the selection of activities and prepare the necessary conditions, and that Lastly, 61.6% studied the MBKM guide and curriculum that facilitates. Students' readiness to take part in MBKM involves openness to developments in knowledge, the ability to learn independently, collaboration with others, and motivation to achieve additional competencies (Cahya et al., 2023; Zakiyyah et al., 2021). Students need to be ready to face challenges and optimize the resources available in their education.
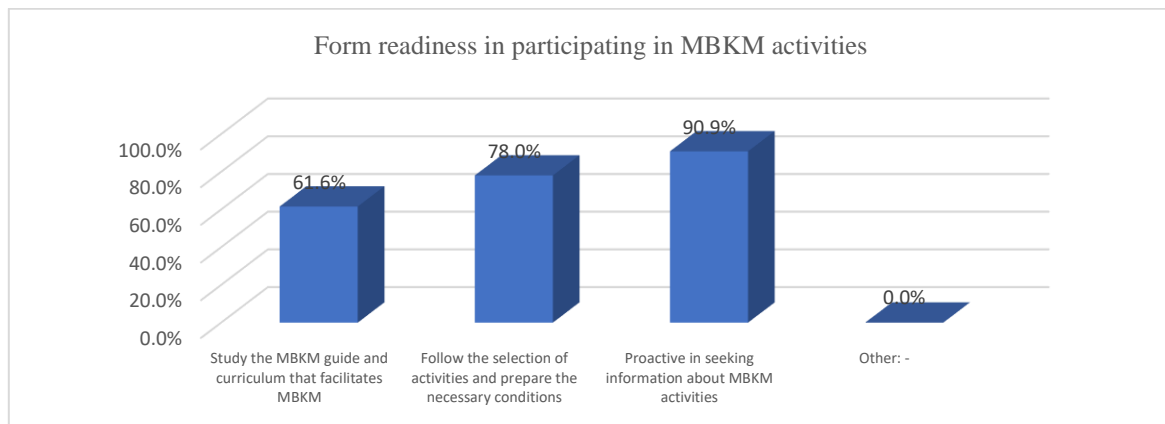

Figure 7. Form Readiness in Participating in MKBK Activities

Students' concerns when participating in MBKM activities also need to be explored, based on Figure 8, as many as 84.1% have concerns about lack of information, then 59.8% have concerns about spending money/costs, then lack of support from the campus and lack of parental approval, respectively. 48.2% and 26.8% respectively. It is interesting that students also experience concerns about the exploitation of their energy when carrying out MBKM and they worry about not being able to settle the external bills that are required for every MBKM activity. Students often worry about increasing academic workload, time balance, and fulfilling MBKM requirements (Baharuddin, 2021; Bhakti et al., 2022). They also worry about having difficulty finding projects or activities that match their interests. Moreover, concerns about the influence of MBKM on their academic performance and future careers are also a concern.
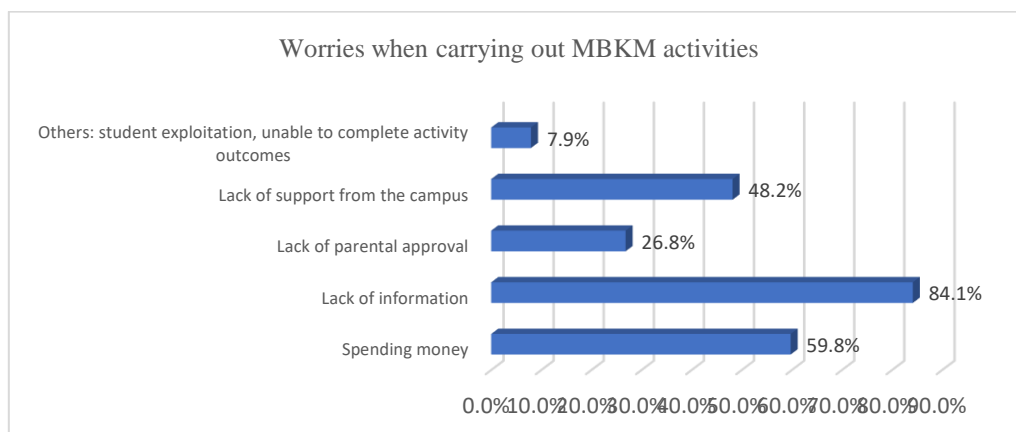

Figure 8. Worries when carrying out MBKM activities

5. Conclusion, Implication, and Recommendation

Their perceptions of MBKM can provide valuable insight into the extent to which this policy influences their views of higher education and future career opportunities. The research results show that the majority of students have a good understanding of the MBKM policy, the MBKM Teaching Assistance activity in the Education Unit is the most familiar and most popular activity, and students have several concerns when they take part in the MBKM program. Practically, this research has implications for higher education management at all levels, from chancellors to higher education leaders, by continuing to socialize MBKM policies, providing support, and preparing all the equipment students need to participate in MBKM activities. This research is also not free from several limitations, such as only being carried out in one field of science, and only being carried out at one state university. Future research can take a wider population, for example by exploring data on private universities.

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