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## The Implementation of MBKM Policy and Its Impact on the Curriculum and Learning Model

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**Abstract:** This article is a report of a research on the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) at Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU), Semarang supported by the Directorate General of Research and Technology, Directorate General of Higher Education, Republic Indonesia). This study involved 5275 respondents as the sample taken from a total of 7775 population which consisted of lecturers, administrative staff, and students. It aimed to see the implementation of MBKM at SCU and how the stakeholders perceived the impacts of MBKM implementation on the curriculum, syllabus, and learning model. This study applied sequential method by which the results of qualitative and

quantitative data analysis were elaborated. The instruments used were Focus Group Discussion and SPADA survey. The results of this study showed that respondents had positive perceptions on the implementation of MBKM but not all respondents fully understood the system, process, and procedure of the MBKM implementation. The implementation of MBKM also affected the curriculum and learning model. Therefore, a model of curriculum and learning model based on contextual learning was suggested to support the implementation of MBKM at SCU.

**Key words:** MBKM policy, curriculum, learning model

***Abstrak:** Artikel ini merupakan laporan penelitian pelaksanaan Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) di Universitas Katolik Soegijapranata (SCU), Semarang yang danai oleh Direktorat Jenderal Riset dan Teknologi, Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, Republik Indonesia. Penelitian ini melibatkan 5275 responden sebagai sampel yang diambil dari total 7775 populasi yang terdiri dari Lecturer, tenaga administrasi, dan Student. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk melihat implementasi MBKM di SCU dan bagaimana persepsi Lecturer, tendik, dan Student akan dampak penerapan MBKM terhadap kurikulum, silabus, dan model pembelajaran. Penelitian ini menggunakan sequential method yang menggabungkan hasil analisis data kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah Focus Group Discussion dan survei SPADA. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa responden memiliki persepsi positif terhadap pelaksanaan MBKM namun tidak semua responden memahami sepenuhnya sistem, proses, dan prosedur pelaksanaan MBKM. Penerapan MBKM juga mempengaruhi kurikulum dan model pembelajaran. Oleh karena itu, model kurikulum dan model pembelajaran berbasis pembelajaran kontekstual disarankan untuk mendukung pelaksanaan MBKM di SCU.*

***Kata kunci:** Kebijakan MBKM, kurikulum, model pembelajaran*

## INTRODUCTION

As an educational institution, university has strategic roles to both transfer knowledge and to cultivate the life values. Those strategic roles make a

university a powerful instrument to prepare the youth for the future global leadership. One of the ways to create future global leaders is through a whole person education which does not only focus on the knowledge transfer but also on the development of values and life skills. The whole person education process should be well designed in a form of learning model which accommodates the ultimate goals. One among other Indonesian government educational programs which supports the efforts to equip students with broader knowledge, values and life skills is *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM).

*Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) is a program launched by the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture. This program offers students opportunity to enrich themselves with more knowledge and experiences through various learning activities such as studying in other study programs, internship, community service, independent study, research, social project, teaching internship, and social project. As a leading faith-based university in Central Java, Soegijapranata Catholic University (SCU) supports the government's program, MBKM. The implementation of MBKM is in line with Soegijapranata Catholic University's educational strategic plans which put emphasis on the whole person education to prepare competent graduates. The university's educational strategic plans are based on Drijarkara's thoughts which highlight the importance of education as hominization and humanization, that is to create cultured intellectual humans who are ready to dedicate themselves to the society (Sudiarja et al, 2006).

The implementation of MBKM also supports Contextual Learning by which SCU views that contextual learning is relevant to the needs of the community. Contextual learning is an educational process that aims to help students see and understand the lessons being studied by connecting it to the context of their daily lives such as the context of their personal, social and cultural environment (Hasibuan, 2014). The contextual learning model provides opportunities for students to absorb and apply knowledge in their field. The contextual learning model is considered relevant for students who are in the developmental period of young adults (Hurlock, 2011)

The Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture No. 3 of 2021 Decree about the Main Performance Indicators (IKU) of Higher Education, especially in point seven regarding collaborative learning activities confirms the importance of contextual learning to provide real experiences to students. The MBKM programs and activities provide real experiences for students. SCU

itself has implemented the MBKM Program, both the Independent MBKM Program and the Government Program since 2020, although not all of the programs offered in the MBKM scheme have been implemented.

In almost two years of implementing the MBKM programs at SCU, there were various challenges and issues in curriculum adaptation and policies, teaching methods, MBKM internal information management system, administrative matters and the socialization of the MBKM program to all members of the academic community at SCU, Semarang Indonesia. Therefore, a study on the implementation of MBKM at SCU was worth to be conducted. The results of the study would provide valuable information for the institution to better all supporting aspects of the MBKM implementation and to take the most appropriate policies for further implementation of MBKM. Since the launching of MBKM Program, some universities have made studies related to the implementation of the MBKM Policies. Some of those studies were conducted in various faculties and cities such as the application of the policies in English Studies Program (Krisnhapatria, 2021), MBKM activities in Japanese Literature Program (Rahmawati & Mugiyanti, 2021), and in the Education Faculty (Fuardi & Irdalisa, 2021). This study covered the implementation of MBKM Policies at various study programs at SCU. Data were gained from the main stakeholders including active students, heads of study programs, PIC of MBKM programs at SCU, and alumni. This article presented the results of the study and the implication for the university.

## PROBLEM FORMULATION

This research, which was carried out with the financial support of the Indonesian Higher Education, the Ministry of Education and Culture, aimed to

- (1) portrait how lecturers and students perceive MBKM implementation at SCU and
- (2) take an inventory of input related to curriculum development, teaching methods, and internal information management system related to the implementation of MBKM.

To achieve the aims above, this research was conducted based on the following research questions:

- (1) How do lecturers and students perceive the implementation of MBKM at SCU?
- (2) How do lecturers and students perceive the curriculum and learning model that accommodate MBKM?

## METHOD

The research method employed in this research was the Sequential Mixed Method which elaborated the results of qualitative and quantitative data (Cresswel, 2009, p.234).

### A. Population and Sample

The population of this research were the main stakeholders of SCU consisting of 7311 active undergraduate students, 216 full time lecturers (including 15 Heads of Study Programs), 28 part time lecturers, and 212 education staff, with a total of 7775 people. From the total population, this study used 5586 respondents (72%) of the population. Cohen, Manion, and Morisson (2007) mentions at 99% confidence level, 1480 samples can be used for a number of 7000 population. Thus, the sample used in the quantitative stage of this research is eligible.

### B. Research Instruments

This study used two main instruments for data collection, namely a survey through the SPADA system provided by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture and Higher Education, and Focus Group Discussions (FGD)s which were conducted online with the gmeet platform. The SPADA system consisted of a set of questions related to the implementation of MBKM. The survey was designed for students, lecturers, and administrative staff. Each respondent category received different set of questions. The FGDs were conducted several times with 4 to 5 participants for each FGD.

### C. Research Procedure

The research was conducted with the following steps:

- (1) Scheduling and conducting FGDs with heads of study programs and students
- (2) Conducting surveys through the SPADA Dikti system

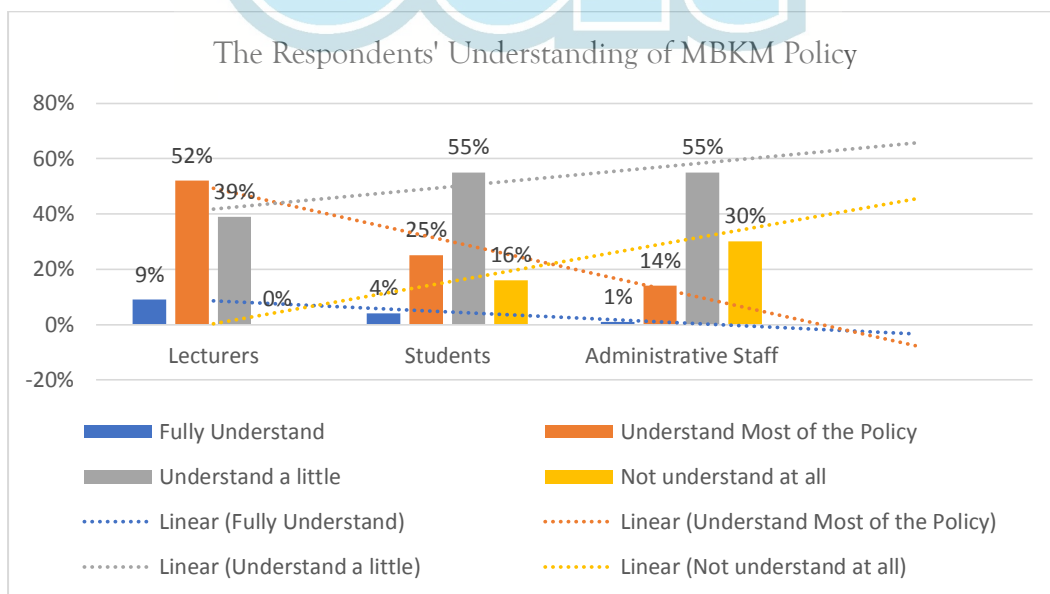
- (3) Analyzing the results of the FGD qualitatively
- (4) Analyzing the quantitative survey results with descriptive data processing
- (5) Elaborating and interpreting the results of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study are presented in the following discussion. The discussion includes the respondents' perceptions toward the implementation of MBKM at SCU and how the respondents perceived the curriculum, learning model, and teaching methods which accommodated MBKM.

### A. The Perceptions of Lecturers, Administrative Staffs, and Students on the Implementation of MBKM at SCU

From the results of the FGDs, it was found that the lecturers and students who participated in the FGD generally had a positive perception of the MBKM policy. However, what should be noted is that the detailed information on each program in the MBKM policy has not been fully understood.

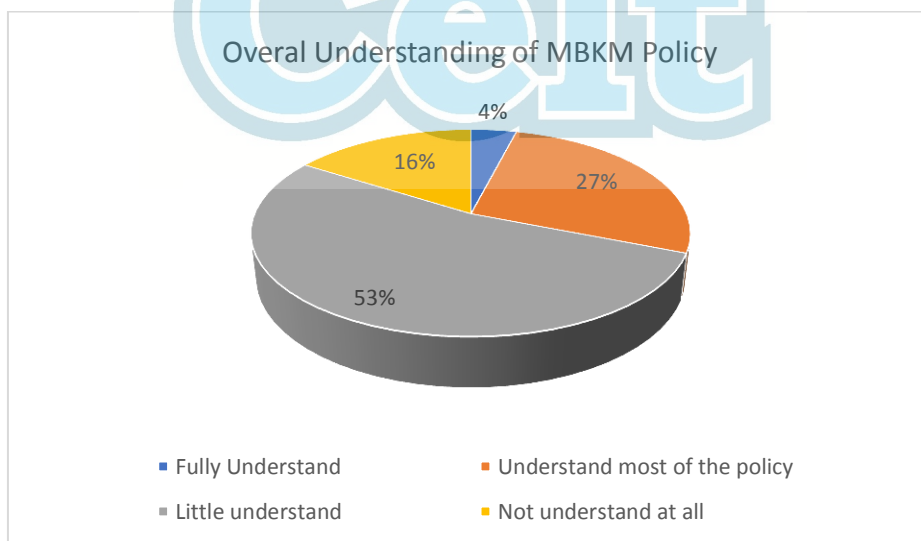


**Figure 1:**  
**The respondents' understanding of MBKM policy**

The process of socializing MBKM policies at the study program level is quite diverse, some have been carried out very intensively and comprehensively but some have not been socialized properly. The findings related to the lack of socialization of information are due to too much overlapping information and unclear application in the field.

The SPADA survey gave a description of the respondents' level of MBKM Policy Understanding. From the results of the quantitative data analysis, it was found that in average, each group of respondents had little understanding of MBKM policy. The following graph shows how the respondents in each category understand the policy of MBKM.

Based on the data presented in graph 1 above, it was found that the MBKM policy had not been fully understood by the respondents in each category. In fact, there were only 9% of the lecturer respondents fully understood the MBM policy. Both students and administrative staff groups show similar trend that most of them just had little understanding of the MBKM policy. Meanwhile, in lecturer group, the trend shows that most of them understand the policy.



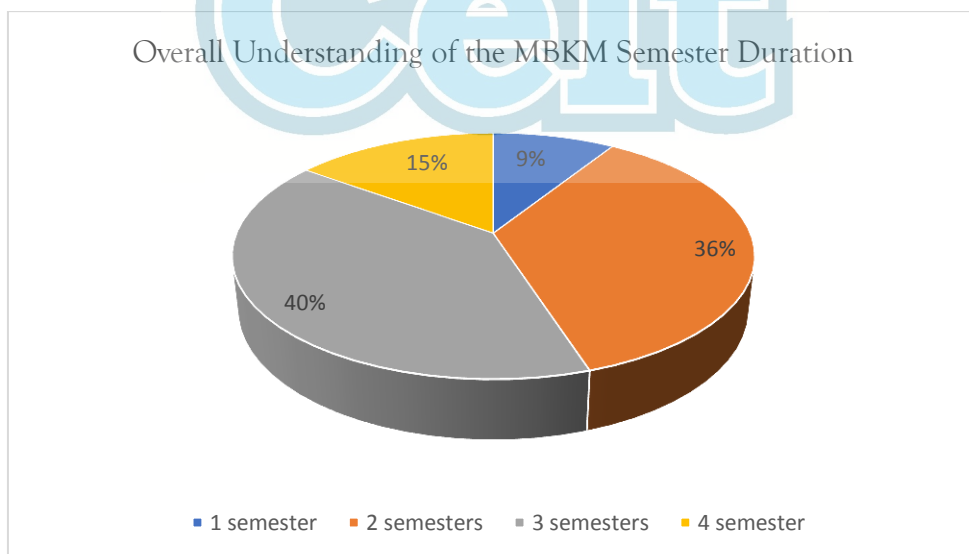
**Figure 2:**  
**Overall understanding of MBKM policy**

Overall, the respondents' understanding of the MBKM policy is described in chart 1 where there were only 4% of respondents understood the policy as a whole, 27% knew most of the contents of the MBKM policy, 53%

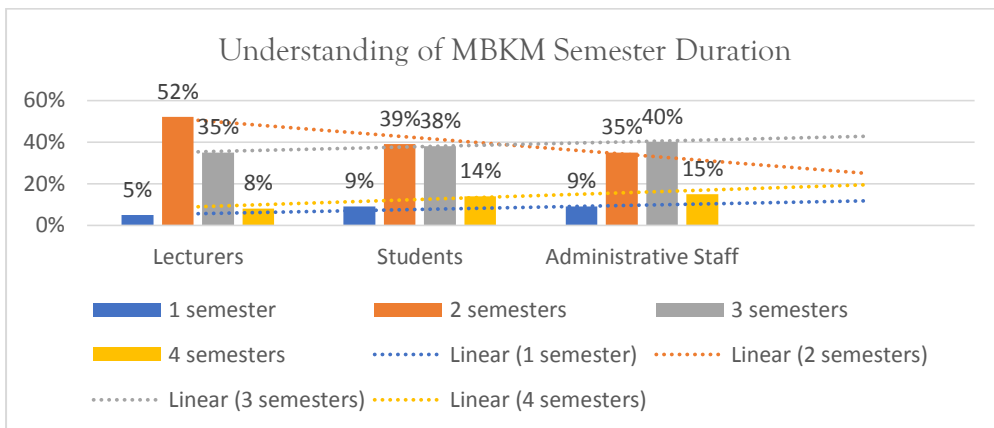


only slightly understood the MBKM policy, and 16% did not understand it at all. From the input submitted by the respondents, detailed information regarding MBKM policies has not been optimally conveyed to all components of the university. Some of the reasons for this issue is due to the limited access to offline socialization of MBKM Programs. Besides, at the time this research was carried out, two batches of new students had never been to campus because of restricted access to campus due to covid-19 pandemic. Normally, students absorb information more quickly from communication with their peers and seniors who have previous experience related to MBKM. Unfortunately, during the covid-19 pandemic students were not allowed to come to campus as the teaching and learning process was conducted online.

Following the respondents' understanding of MBKM policy, the respondents also show different understanding of the length of number of semesters which they can follow for the MBKM programs. In general, respondents understand that the MBKM program can be followed for a maximum of 3 semesters with a maximum credit conversion of 20 credits. This is supported by the results of data analysis which shows that 40% of respondents have this answer (see chart 2) although each respondent category also shows different result (graph 2).

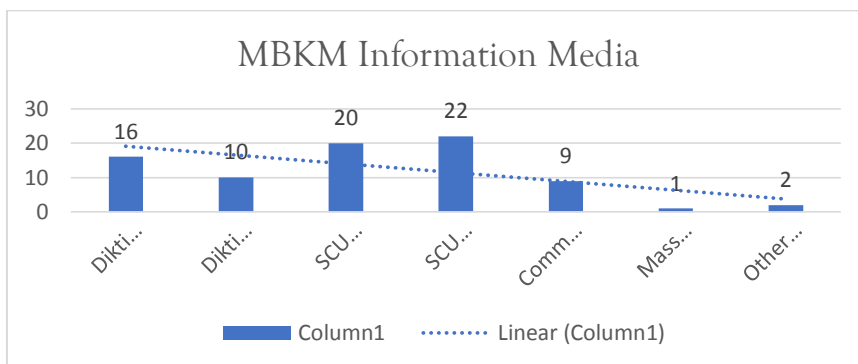


**Figure 3:**  
**Overall understanding of MBKM semester duration**



**Figure 4:**  
**Understanding of MBKM semester duration**

The low level of respondents' understanding on the MBKM policy is also related to the informative media used to share the results. It seems that the use of the media was not maximum as none of the informative media chosen by the students did not show high tendency to be used. Graph 3 below shows the information media chosen by respondents to get the information about MBKM. From graph 3 below, it was found that information related to the implementation of MBKM was obtained through several media, including: 16% through the Ministry of Education and Culture channels, 10% through the Ministry of Education and Culture socialization activities, 20% from SCU's channel, 22% from SCU's socialization programs, 9% through community channels, 1% through mass media, and only 2% through other media.



**Figure 5:**  
**Media for MBKM information**

The respondents perceive that there is not much differences of MBKM programs as university programs they have been familiar before. From the FGDs it was noted that before the MBKM program was launched by the Higher Education Ministry of Education and Culture, there were several programs that had been running at SCU and were implemented by universities and study programs. Some of the programs are:

1. Student exchange

This program has been carried out by SCU for a long time. Student exchange programs are generally carried out under the credit transfer scheme. The student exchange programs are commonly conducted with partner universities abroad and in country. Some of those programs are international student exchange programs within the framework of collaboration in several consortiums by which SCU participate such as ACUCA (the Association of Christian Universities and Colleges in Asia) and ASEACU (the Association of Southeast and East Asian Catholic Colleges and Universities). Since 2019, SCU has also participated in the International Credit Transfer (ICT) program organized by the Directorate General of Belmawa Dikti. SCU has also accepted foreign students in the Darmasiswa program scheme from the Ministry of Education and Culture since 2017. In addition, SCU also conducted exchange student program in collaboration with other universities in Indonesia particularly those which are under the consortium of NUNI (Nationwide University Network in Indonesia) and APTIK (Catholic University Association).

2. Apprenticeship

Some study programs have partnerships with companies or industry that can provide a place for students to do internships. Several study programs that have intensively implemented this program before MBKM include Information Systems, Informatics Engineering, English Department, Psychology, Food Technology, and Civil Engineering.

3. Entrepreneurship

SCU already has a student entrepreneurship unit which is managed by a unit called CSE (Center of Student Entrepreneurship). This unit collaborates a lot with MSMEs that are fostered partners of SCU as well as a unit that facilitates students to practice entrepreneurship. This unit was established on October 1 2017 with the Rector's Decree No. 039/G.5/SK-Rek/X/2017 concerning the Establishment of a Center for Student Entrepreneurship.

4. Thematic community service

SCU in collaboration with the Central Java Provincial Government and APTIK has held thematic student community service several times before the MBKM Program. Some of the programs were held in Central Java and Mentawai.

5. Research with lecturers

Research activities involving students as research teams have been carried out by study programs in both umbrella research schemes and joint research with researchers from partner universities both at home university and abroad.

6. Humanity project

The humanitarian project is coordinated by the lecturers of the Study Program, especially Psychology and Medical Education. Humanitarian projects that have been carried out so far are in the form of humanitarian activities related to handling natural disasters such as trauma healing as well as assistance with medical equipment and personnel.

Some of the above programs have been implemented at SCU prior to the MBKM Program. However, the implementation of these programs is still independent and conversion for activities can be in the form of a Diploma Supplement Certificate (SKPI) or credit conversion according to the policies of each study program.

**B. How the Lecturers and Students Perceive the Curriculum and Learning Model that Accommodate MBKM**

One of the things that becomes a concern in the application of this MBKM policy is its impact on the curriculum structure in the Study Program. The Study Programs urge the need of a curriculum model that is flexible enough to implement MBKM but still strongly demonstrate the uniqueness of SCU. From this point, the respondents perceive that the implementation of MBKM at SCU campus in Semarang requires a curriculum model which reflects special features of Soegijapranata values but quiet flexible to accommodate MBKM. Such a curriculum design is packaged with a curriculum model called the "Soegijapranata Learning Model (SLM)". The curriculum will accommodate several programs that support contextual learning where students are given the opportunity to take part in credit transfer programs in the form of student exchanges both at home university

and abroad, getting to know the Industrial World Business World (DUDI) through internship programs and KCU (Business Work College), joint research, and other activities that directly involve the community in both urban and rural areas.

The syllabus and lesson plan in each study program will also be adapted to the SLM curriculum model where in the lesson plan there will be student learning sessions with alumni and field work to bring students closer to the professional world and contextual situations in society. The lesson plan or in the local term called as RPS (*Rencana Pembelajaran Semester*) is developed to facilitate student learning. It is supposed not to only focuses on theory but also provides contextual experiences for students.

The Soegijapranata Learning Model (SLM) aims to prepare the young generation who are excellent in their fields and mature in their moral and personality. After they graduate, these young generation will be playing the role as leaders wherever they work. The strategy to achieve this goal is to strengthen the values so called Critical, Creative, Visionary – Caring, Resilient. These values are honed (strengthened) in the learning process, so that students and alumni are expected to be able to act as leaders in any context.

Efforts to strengthen these values are carried out through contextual learning. Lecturers in this case function more as facilitators and students do more active learning activities. From the Focus Group Discussion on SLM with 16 heads of study programs, it was found that most of the undergraduate study programs had started to carry out contextual learning with their respective versions of the program aimed at equipping students with real knowledge in the field and strengthening their Critical, Creative, Visionary – Caring, Resilient values. If it is associated with Merdeka Learning Campus Merdeka (MBKM), then the programs carried out by the Study Program as the forerunner of SLM are substantially related to several forms of MBKM learning (Permendikbud no 3 of 2020 article 15 paragraph 1), although it has not been directly linked with MBKM.

During the FGD, several interesting things were found regarding the learning model that accommodates MBKM at SCU. In the discussion, respondents said that several appropriate teaching methods would help prepare students to take part in various programs that are enriching and providing students with experiences. Several teaching and learning methods that can be applied include Problem-Based Learning, Cooperative Learning, and Project Based Learning. Students also show positive perspectives that

active learning challenge students to think critically. Both students and lecturers are positive towards the application of contextual learning. In fact, contextual learning is in line with the MBKM principle which provides opportunities for students to gain real experience in their learning process.

## CONCLUSION

From the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that the several programs have been implemented previously by SCU prior to the MBKM policy and it is recognized that the programs that are further covered by the MBKM policy are quite useful for increasing the knowledge and soft skills of the students. However, not all of the main stakeholders, which include lecturers, students, and staff, fully understand the MBKM policies and their implementation. Ignorance of the policy causes respondents, especially students, to be less interested in recommending the MBKM Program.

The implementation of MBKM at SCU campus has impact on the adaptation of the curriculum model, lesson plan, and the learning model. In general, the lecturers, staff, and students at SCU show positive perception of the curriculum model, lesson plan, and teaching and learning methods that accommodate MBKM. Therefore, universities need to make policies regarding curriculum models, lesson plan, and teaching methods that are flexible enough to accommodate MBKM at the study program level. In addition, the university needs to prepare an internal information management system for the implementation of MBKM. The system or platform is supposed to be easily accessed by students and the public.

From the conclusions presented above, the researcher has several suggestions for future research and implementation of MBKM:

- 1) Given the importance of similar research related to MBKM policies, further research needs to be carried out with a more structured scheme, design, and schedule
- 2) The research results can be used by the government to review the implementation of MBKM in the field as well as input for universities to prepare all stakeholders to support the MBKM program.

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