

## STUDENTS SELECTION OFF-CAMPUS LEARNING ACTIVITIES: MERDEKA BELAJAR - KAMPUS MERDEKA

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### ABSTRACT

*The demands of change and the needs of the world of work are increasingly complex. Undergraduate students are expected to have various competencies to be able to compete in the world of work globally. Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka policy provides freedom for undergraduate students to carry out learning activities outside the campus to improve their competences. The survey research was conducted with 66 undergraduate students from various regions in Indonesia as respondents. Undergraduate students were asked to fill out a questionnaire about study options outside of campus. Undergraduate students who fill out the questionnaire can choose from eight off-campus learning activities, namely: teaching in school, industrial apprenticeships, village projects, student exchanges, research, entrepreneurship, self-study, and humanitarian projects. The results of the questionnaire showed that the tendency of undergraduate students to choose teaching activities at school was 37.9% while 25.8% of the undergraduate students chose student exchange activities. The results of the survey of undergraduate students' choices in activities outside the campus have many differences, this was influenced by the characteristics of the undergraduate students' environment and the ability of undergraduate students to carry out lecture activities. This article describes the undergraduate students' choices in determining learning activities outside of campus in government policies regarding Kampus Merdeka to develop their competencies in order to compete in the global world and make a better life in the future.*

Keywords: Student Selection, Off-Campus Learning Activities, Merdeka Belajar, Kampus Merdeka.

### INTRODUCTION

The increase of unemployment, the difficulty of getting a job, the lack of competence of Indonesian human resources in competing in the world of work globally calls for the government to think about finding effective solutions to change all of this. Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture Number 3 of 2020 concerning National Higher Education Standards mandates the policy of *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* which must be implemented by all universities in Indonesia. This policy emphasizes higher education institutions that are more autonomous and flexible so that a learning culture that is innovative, non-restrictive, and in accordance with the needs of undergraduate students will be created. *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* is implemented in order to meet the demands, current changes and needs to prepare the undergraduate students for the world of work. Higher education institutions are required to be able to design and implement creative and innovative learning processes so that undergraduate students can achieve optimal learning outcomes including aspects of attitude, knowledge, and skills.

The concept of *Merdeka Belajar* requires education to contribute strongly to economic improvement, thus requiring the students to study freely. The simple explanation of "*Merdeka Belajar*" is the freedom of thinking (Houtman, 2020). The learning process through the concept of *Merdeka Belajar* focuses on the concept of deeper learning in a more real community environment (Elihami, 2019). Learning methods in the development of *Merdeka Belajar* education must meet the education tendency in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, namely the mastery of new literacy which consists of data literacy, technological literacy, and human literacy (Yamin & Syahrir, 2020).

The policy of *Kampus Merdeka* is a continuation of the concept of *Merdeka Belajar*. The implementation is simply changes ministerial regulations, not the government regulations or laws. There are four main points: 1. The opening of a new study program, 2. Accreditation system for higher education, 3. Facilitates the university in becoming PTN-BH, 4. Study rights for 3 semesters outside the study program (Abidah et al., 2020). *Kampus Merdeka* is believed to be an attempt to allow an education system that is more pro-students and lecturers, in achieving meaningful quality learning to face the current era disruption (Prahani et al., 2020). Learning at *Kampus Merdeka* provides challenges and opportunities for the development of creativity, capacity, personality, and needs of students, as well as developing independence in seeking and finding knowledge through realities and dynamics in the field such as capability needs, real problems, social interactions, collaboration, self-management, performance demands, targets, and achievements (Rizka Zulfika, 2019).

The *Kampus Merdeka* Policy is expected to be able to erase the gap between the world of education (higher education) and the real world. The implementation of this policy is to be able to support the efforts of the teacher study program to prepare undergraduate students with various skills and experiences outside the study program to answer the demands and needs of the 21st century education world (Priatmoko et al., 2020). The concept of *Kampus Merdeka Belajar* provides breadth in various fields of knowledge and learning experiences for the students so that later they will be able to find where their passion is, therefore they will be ready to face the real world, and being able to face the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, which is not inferior to machines, but still in control, because humans have heart, reason, and passion that should be maintained properly (Siregar et al., 2020). One of the challenges of implementing *Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka*, namely universities with limited human resources, infrastructure, and remote geographical locations certainly have big obstacles to collaborate with large agencies and leading universities to create productive and meaningful collaborations for scientific development and student experience (Arifin & Muslim, 2020).

It is hoped that the *Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka* Policy can be an answer to the demands of the world of work. Undergraduate students are given ample opportunities to choose learning activities outside of campus according to their interests and talents. They are given the freedom to take credits outside the study program, three semesters can be taken for learning outside the study program in Higher Education and or learning outside the College. Learning activities outside of tertiary education include internships/work practices, projects in villages, teaching at schools, student exchanges, research, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies/projects, and humanitarian projects, all of which must be guided by lecturers. *Kampus Merdeka* is expected to provide contextual field experiences that will improve students' competences as a whole and are ready to work.

This study aims to determine undergraduate students' interest in choosing off-campus learning activities that suit the needs of civic education graduates. Looking for information on off-campus activities which are expected to support the professional skills of graduate education in the working world citizenship. Furthermore, the information and data analysis carried out in this study will help universities, lecturers, and undergraduate students to prepare appropriate off-campus learning activities to achieve the expected learning objectives and graduate competencies. The survey was conducted on 66 undergraduate students from various regions of Indonesia. Undergraduate students come from 13 State and Private Universities which represent the regions of western, central and eastern Indonesia. They were asked to fill out a questionnaire via google form with 30 questions that must be answered properly.

### STUDENTS SELECTION SURVEY FOR OFF-CAMPUS LEARNING ACTIVITIES

This research was carried out through a virtual face-to-face Webinar with the theme "Survey of Student Choices to Study Outside of Campus, *Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka*" to provide undergraduate students with initial knowledge and understanding of learning activities outside the campus. The webinar was held online on Friday, August 28, 2020. The speakers in this activity were Dr. Susan Fitriyani, M.Pd and Prof. Dr. Dasim Budimasnyah, M.Si. After the undergraduate students understood the concept of *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka*, an off-campus study option program, 66 undergraduate students from various universities in Indonesia were asked to fill out a google form regarding their responses to the program. The Google form contained selected questions that have been available as well as questions with open answers so that they can more freely convey criticism, suggestions, and input on the sustainability of this program.

The results of the questionnaire explained that undergraduate students had various opinions on the choice of studying outside the *Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka*. They were given the opportunity to choose activities that prioritized to be carried out in supporting their competence as a professional scholar. The first choice of civic education students tended to choose teaching activities in schools with a percentage of 37.9%. They think that the main reason they chose this activity was because it was in accordance with the background of the study program, namely producing bachelor degrees in civic education teachers. In addition, at school, they will be able to gain experience like how to teach properly, understanding the learning and teaching process, practicing their speaking skills in front of students, understanding the learning styles and curriculum that applied, and familiarize themselves with the school environment and atmosphere.

1. Jika kalian diberikan kesempatan untuk belajar diluar kampus, pilihan kegiatan mana yang akan kalian pilih untuk pilihan pertama ? (pilih salah satu yang paling diminati)  
66 responses

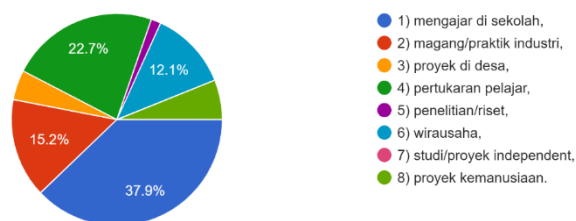
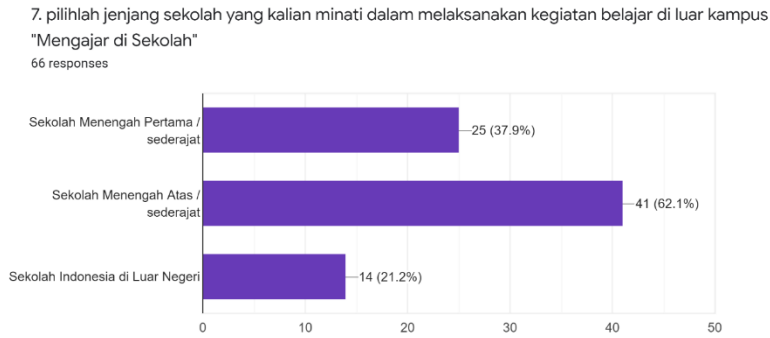


Figure 1 Percentage Diagram of Student's First Choice of Off-Campus Learning Activities

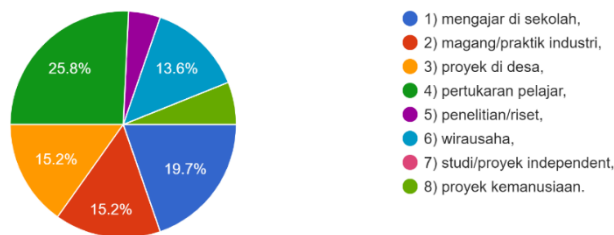
*Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka* activity is a choice of learning off-campus: teaching at schools, providing opportunities for undergraduate students to be able to collaborate with schools of all levels of education in Indonesia or abroad. When undergraduate students were given the opportunity to choose, only 21.2% have an interest in teaching at Indonesian Schools Abroad. Most of them chose high school level/equivalent because it is considered the right time to instill a spirit of nationalism and love for the country.



**Figure 2 Percentage Diagram of School Choices in Teaching Activities in Schools**

In the second largest choice, 25.8% of undergraduate students chose student exchange activities. They believe that student exchanges can add broad insight, can increase their capacity and capability, experiencing the quality of education and infrastructure in other areas. In addition, student exchanges are also considered to be able to help them get to know Indonesian culture, try to experience the culture and traditions of other communities, learn something from the point of view of people who are in different areas, and expand their connection.

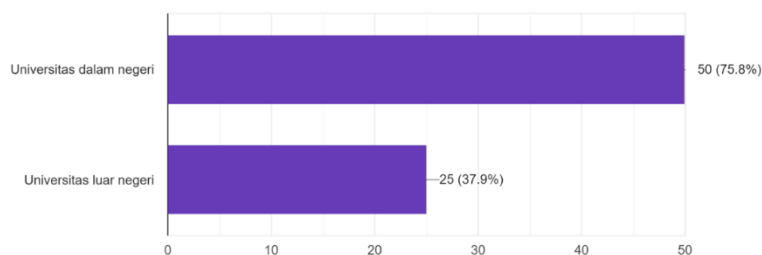
3. Jika kalian diberikan kesempatan untuk belajar diluar kampus, pilihan kegiatan mana yang akan kalian pilih untuk pilihan kedua ? (pilih salah satu yang paling diminati)  
66 responses



**Figure 3 Percentage Chart of Second Choice in Off-Campus Study Options**

75.8% of choices chose domestic universities as preferred student exchange places, and there was less interest in undergraduate students in choosing universities abroad. This happens because the challenges to be able to study abroad are greater. International language skills, namely English, are the main needs of the students to study abroad, without good language skills, they will have difficulty gaining knowledge and understanding the course material. Furthermore, the adaptation process will also be more difficult because each country has very different characteristics of curricula, traditions and cultures. Moreover, the absence of assistance to carry out student exchanges abroad is also a drawback. The university must also develop cooperation with other universities abroad to be able to exchange students in this student exchange program. Global challenges require undergraduate students to be globally competitive. Facing these challenges, this student exchange provides opportunities for them to be able to develop their competencies and skills through learning experiences both at home and abroad. Intention and motivation are needed from the students who will then be supported by the government, universities, and study programs.

13. Pilihlah tempat yang kalian minati dalam melaksanakan kegiatan belajar di luar kampus  
"Pertukaran Pelajar"  
66 responses



**Figure 4 Percentage Chart of University Choices in Student Exchange Activities**

Undergraduate students stated that the implementation of this program must be accompanied by thorough individual readiness, mechanisms, and infrastructure. Cooperation, communication, and a common spirit to build a more advanced country are also needed. In implementing this program, of course, there are advantages and disadvantages and of course there will be those who reject and those who accept. However, this program, as a whole, will give a very good influence on the students personally and provide benefits to the community. The implementation of this activity must also pay attention to the facilities that can be used by the undergraduate students as an assistance in carrying out any existing activities.

Suggestions and input from undergraduate students related to this program, namely the campus/college must prepare two important things such as the undergraduate students who will study outside the campus and the destination campus which will become a learning destination. The campus must provide full support to the students who will be going to study outside the campus, both in the students' ability and moral readiness. The campus must also prepare itself to become a place of learning that can facilitate and become the best place of learning for the newcomer students. With the aim that this program will really have a big influence or impact on the personal development of the students. In addition, universities and study programs involve students in making any policy, and support each students' potential, and most importantly, the University supports learning activities off campus.

The implications of the *Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka* policy provides opportunities for universities to be more independent in achieving their vision, mission and goals according to the conditions and challenges of the times. Off-campus learning activities contributes in improving the quality of the students themselves so that they will be able to compete in the global environment. The eight off-campus study options suggested in the *Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka* policy will encourage students to gain new experiences and perseverance to make life better.

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