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# Analysis of the Internship Program "Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka" Perspectives of Primary School Teachers' Teaching Readiness

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to analyze the "Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM)" program from the perspective of teachers' teaching readiness. The study used a qualitative approach carried out at one elementary school in Wonosobo Regency, Central Java during the early days of learning activities from August to December 2021. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires distributed to participants, which included teachers, students, and pre-service elementary school teachers of Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang. Besides, the secondary data were obtained from books, journal articles, and other sources. The findings revealed that relating to teachers' teaching readiness, there were 40% of educators mastered the concept of the MBKM program, while another 60% of them understood the term MBKM program from the existing information provided by media. In mastering Information and Communication Technology (ICT), 63% of educators stated that they had mastered ICT and were accustomed to using some social media for learning activities, while 37% of educators had not mastered ICT well but they only used ICT for certain purposes such as teaching the MBKM program although with a relatively low understanding.

Keywords: *merdeka belajar, internship program, teachers' readiness, primary school.*

**Abstrak**

Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menganalisis program merdeka belajar kampus merdeka (MBKM) dari perspektif kesiapan mengajar guru. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif yang dilaksanakan di salah satu sekolah dasar di Kabupaten Wonosobo, Jawa Tengah pada masa-masa awal kegiatan pembelajaran, yaitu Agustus-Desember 2021. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan angket kepada partisipan yang meliputi guru, siswa, dan mahasiswa Universitas Islam Sultan Agung Semarang sebagai calon guru SD. Selain itu, data sekunder diperoleh dari buku, jurnal, dan sumber lainnya. Hasil temuan mengungkapkan bahwa terkait kesiapan guru dalam mengajar, terdapat 40% pendidik yang menguasai konsep program MBKM, sedangkan 60% lainnya hanya memahami istilah program MBKM dari media informasi yang ada. Dalam penguasaan Teknologi Informasi dan Komunikasi (TIK), 63% pendidik menyatakan telah menguasai TIK dan terbiasa menggunakan beberapa media sosial untuk kegiatan pembelajaran, sedangkan 37% pendidik belum menguasai TIK dengan baik, hanya menggunakan TIK untuk tujuan tertentu seperti mengajar dan berkomunikasi. Sehingga dapat disimpulkan bahwa para pendidik sudah siap mengajar dalam program MBKM meskipun dengan pemahaman yang relatif rendah.

Kata kunci: *merdeka belajar, program magang, kesiapan guru, sekolah dasar.*

## INTRODUCTION

Life in the 21st century poses many challenges to the world of education. Therefore, the education system is expected to be able to adapt to changing circumstances while maintaining religious values and national character. In addition, currently, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a global issue in the world (World Health Organization, 2020). Following it, many countries in the world have taken a policy of closing schools and choosing to facilitate education through distance learning (Permadi, 2020; Syamsi et al., 2021). To respond to it, the utilization of technology cannot be neglected in teaching and learning activities especially in facing the industrial revolution 4.0.

The industrial revolution 4.0 era has fundamentally changed people's lives and jobs (Ossiannilsson, 2021). At this time, changes are happening widely, including in the economic field, in this case, the internet is not only used as a means of communication, but also it is used as a business platform, such as online stores, online transportation, etc. which will certainly facilitate some people but it will also have an impact on others, namely those who have not been able to adapt to digital, so it may cause unemployment (Li, Zhuge, & Wang, 2020). The adaptation of digital technology is also happening in the world of education, especially in the transition from a class-based learning model to online learning that requires everyone to adopt digital technology as a learning model (Garvis et al., 2018; Gorgati & Savid-Buteler, 2016; Wikander & Bouchoucha, 2018). The current life and work model are based on technology, so there is no need to worry because from technology many works can

be created and produced, so that the current generation must be educated quickly and precisely about the right technology to support their future (Davanzo & Avanzini, 2020; Suliyanthini & Nahuda, 2018).

In addition, based on the 21st Century Partnership Framework for learning formulated by the National Education Association (NEA), it is stated that teachers are expected to prepare learning that leads to 4C, namely: critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration (Afandi et al., 2021). Furthermore, schools must also promote interdisciplinary learning such as the 21st century, including Global Awareness, Financial Literacy, Economics, Business and Entrepreneurship, Civic Literacy, Healthy Literacy, and Environmental society. Students need to be equipped with 21st-century skills, including knowledge building, real-world problem solving, communication and collaboration skills, and the use of technology and media for learning and self-regulation (Munir, 2020).

In responding to the industrial revolution 4.0 era, the concept of "Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka" (MBKM) gives freedom and autonomy to educational institutions and is free from complicated bureaucracy, teachers are freed from complex bureaucracy and students have the freedom to choose their field of interest (Billah, 2021; Direktorat Pembelajaran dan Kemahasiswaan, 2021). The idea of free learning compiled by the Ministry of Education and Culture during Nadiem Makarim's ministry aims to create superior Human Resources by prioritizing the application of personality values so that reflective power and creativity are developing (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020). The freedom gained in MBKM promotes the immunity of each campus to continue to be a better campus by producing graduates who have character and develop critical and creative thinking.

The form of MBKM activities following the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture No. 3 of 2020 Article 15 paragraph 1 includes learning that can take place inside and outside the curriculum with eight activities, namely student exchanges, work/practice placements, teaching support in teaching units, research, humanitarian projects, business activities, independent research/projects, village development/real work symposia as shown in the figure 1.


Figure 1. Form of Learning Activities Outside the MBKM Program
(Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020)

The rapid development of technology makes it difficult for students to adapt, because this event changes the entire order of life, both personal and social in all fields (Lloyd et al., 2021; Ossiannilsson et al., 2017; Santyasa et al., 2017). The existence of lofty ideals on the campus must be able to prepare students to be ready to become graduates who are competent in academics, knowledge, attitudes, and skills. MBKM program is expected to be able to answer the challenges of the technological age, providing broad opportunities for students to continue to advance and develop both on-campus and off-campus school staff (Direktorat Pembelajaran dan Kemahasiswaan, 2021). From this policy, Universitas Islam Sultan Agung (UNISSULA) Semarang tries to answer the challenges by implementing MBKM, with the hope of producing graduates who are following the needs of the 4.0 revolution era.

Some studies related to the curriculum of MBKM have been conducted by some previous scholars. Purwanti (2021) explores the practice of Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka in the context of higher education in which universities had different responses to implementing MBKM. Some of them have positive responses while others have been debating practicing the new policy of it. Muid et al. (2022) specifically highlight the implementation of MBKM in Arabic education programs and the challenges. Their study demonstrates that the Arabic education department needs to adopt the new policy in MBKM regarding curriculum and its practices. Meanwhile, the challenge in practicing it is the need of

establishing networking with various institutions. Rohiyatussakinah (2021) explores the practice of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) education based on the MBKM curriculum in Japan. The result indicates that the practice of EFL teaching in the context of higher education in Japan is still related to adopting Japan's Education policy in responding to the curriculum of MBKM especially the need of using communicative language teaching. Andari et al. (2021) explicitly explore the steps in arranging the program of student exchange in MBKM including planning, socialization, recruitment, student orientation, student placement, student development, recording, and reporting.

Different from the previous studies exploring the implementation of the MBKM curriculum including some needs tips in its practices in the context of higher education; surprisingly, the study measuring the readiness of elementary school teachers in implementing MBKM has been explored yet. Therefore, this present study focuses on exploring the internship program of MBKM viewed from the teaching readiness of elementary school teachers.

## METHODS

The present study employed qualitative research. It was carried out at Sekolah Dasar Negeri (SDN) 2 Ngalian, Wonosobo, Central Java in the early stages of learning activities, from August until December 2021, where learning this semester was carried out with distance learning model due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The data sources for this study are divided into two categories, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data were collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires to participants including teachers, students, and pre-service elementary school teachers of UNISSULA Semarang.

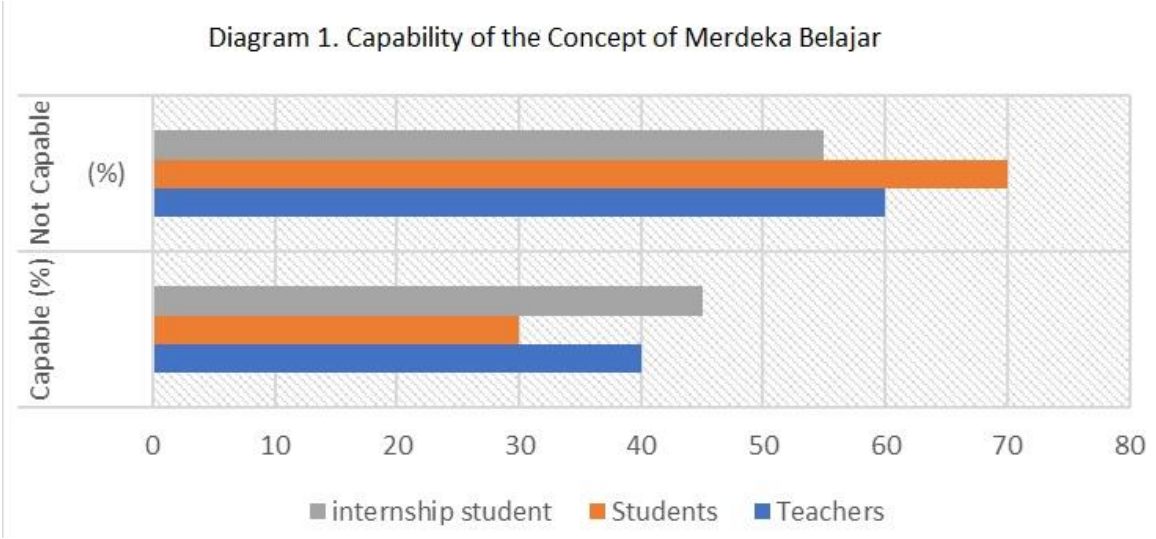
In terms of observation, we observed the activities of teaching and learning, school facilities, and so on. The semi-structured interviews were done. There were 20 participants with the classification of teachers of SDN 2 Ngalian Wonosobo as many as 6 people, 9 students with grades 1-6 elementary schools, and 5 interns from UNISSULA Semarang. Also, we distributed a questionnaire related to the readiness of implementing the MBKM curriculum viewed from the teaching readiness. Besides, secondary data were obtained from books, journals, and other sources relevant to the search. The instruments we used include an observation guide, an interview guide, and a questionnaire sheet such as the acceleration of the use of ICT in Distance Learning.

Data analysis was carried out inductively, starting with empirical data, where researchers conduct field trips, study, analyze, interpret, and draw conclusions from field phenomena. Data analysis was performed in the manner adopted by Miles and Huberman

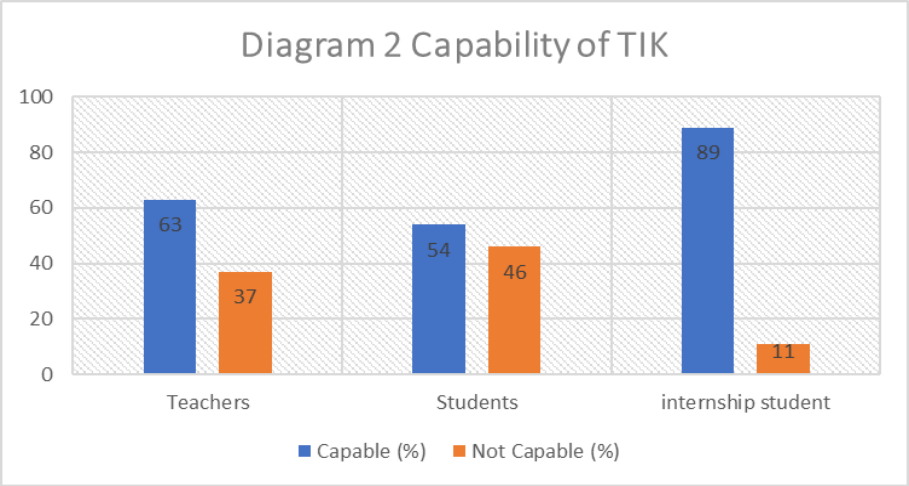
(Miles et al., 2014) including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification. Researchers collect data from the field and then analyze it to understand the results of the study. The process of data analysis takes place in stages; reducing data, presenting data, and drawing conclusions or verifying data. Data validity testing includes data reliability testing, data reliability testing, and general/external validation testing. Data reliability is checked by: expanding observations, improving resilience, triangulation analysis, and discussions with colleagues (Bungin, 2016)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on data on teacher preparation in the field of implementing "Merdeka Belajar" at the beginning of the industrial era 4.0, the following data table provides an overview:

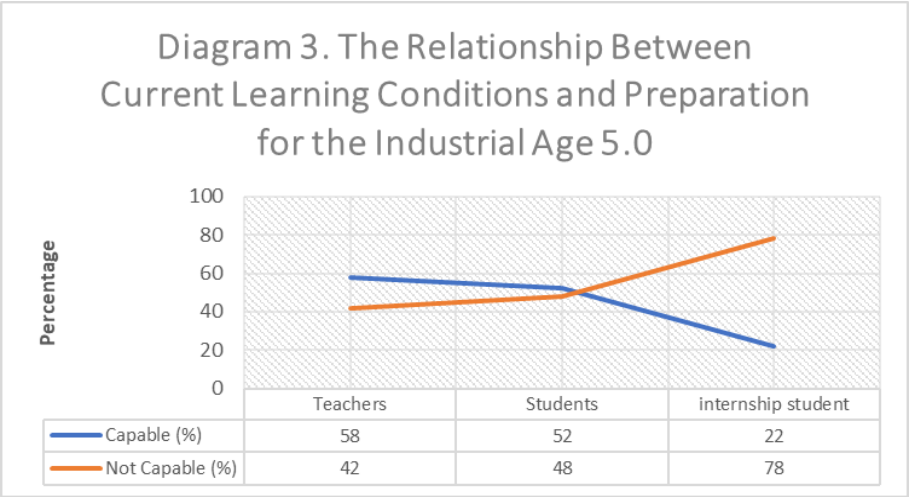



From the results of the summary of diagram 1 above, we can see that many participants still do not master the concept of Merdeka Belajar. The data above is summarized from the results of questionnaires and closed interviews in the field. there were 20 participants with the classification of teachers of SDN 2 Ngalian, Wonosobo as many as 6 people, 9 students with grades 1-6 elementary schools, and 5 interns from UNISSULA Semarang. Based on the presentation of the table above, it can be seen that only 40% of educators master the concept, while the remaining 60% understand the term-limited to the existing information media but do not understand the concept. Participants who came from students with various levels of 9 people stated that they mastered the concept as much as 30% and the other 70% were not familiar with the term. Participants among the students as interns as many as 5 people, 55% stated that they did not know about the concept, while another 45% admitted that they had known the term for quite a long time.




Based on the diagram 2 above, it can be seen that 63% of teachers seem to have mastered ICT, as evidenced by being accustomed to using several media in teaching and having social media accounts for learning activities while the remaining 37% of teachers have not mastered ICT optimally but only use IT for other purposes, such as communicating. This teacher seems not optimal in making his learning materials with the application, and it is more convenient to use the materials provided by partners or download them from the internet.

Meanwhile, the number of students who master ICT by 54%, and 46% of others still find it difficult to use ICT either because of technical problems such as networks or because they still use the same device as their parents. In comparison for prospective teachers, namely interns as participants are more proficient in IT and many use social media to interact/communicate with their colleagues so only 11% have not mastered ICT.




The fact the acceleration of the use of ICT in Distance Learning (PJJ) must be recognized is due to the Covid Pandemic (Johnson et al., 2021; Leech et al., 2022; F. Li et al., 2021). Even so, complaints that arise because PJJ is carried out without a clear concept, confusing educators and students, and making the burden on parents increase. This situation is widely used by some educators, it is proven that 58% of teachers practice providing services

to students with a 21st-century learning model which is more dominant in the use of the internet as a medium and a means to carry out the learning process, but it is undeniable that there are still many as 42% of teachers who have not mastered and are not ready to face this new adaptation, so most of them hope that learning will return to normal in the classroom as before it can soon be resumed.

The difficulties experienced by students as much as 48% are mainly due to technical obstacles such as network affordability in the home environment and the lack of funds to pay for internet access in the form of quotas. Not infrequently complaint after complaint is often obtained while accompanying and supervising children while carrying out the PJJ process, among the complaints; children who feel objections in doing the tasks of each subject followed. They generally do not understand the nature of learning that their children must introduce and live in the face of the industrial era 5.0. While the other 52% can run PJJ well, the active role of parents in supervising and guiding their children is very important, even becoming the main factor for the success of the PJJ process when they study at home. Meanwhile, as many as 78% of interns expect schools to reopen soon because they have the assumption that learning activities at this time are not effective.

On the other hand, a teacher who is considered ready to teach can also be seen from the indication of the responsibility to prepare integrated learning between subject content and life skills in the 21st century, including critical, communicative, collaborative, and creative thinking (Susanto et al., 2020; Syamsi et al., 2021). Integrating the four skills of the 21st century is one way to go. Combining the content of knowledge and scientific phenomena also needs to be balanced with *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (TPCK)* by the teacher, who furthermore the teacher can give clear and challenging instructions to the students, on how to learn with the help of digital tools (Rachmadtullah et al., 2018).

Currently, technological advances need to be balanced with the ability of teachers to carry out learning effectively and efficiently. Thus, teachers must have TPCK (Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge). Mishra and Koehler (2006) states that the development of technology is a very important thing for a teacher to have, so that teachers can integrate technological knowledge effectively in the teaching process (Zainuddin, 2021). TPCK is a structure formed by combining three different components of knowledge, namely technological knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and content knowledge in learning (Heck & Strohfeldt, 2011). It is intended that teachers can help with problems experienced by students during learning and with the technology used to build new and meaningful knowledge (Voogt et al., 2013).

In a meaningful context, Merdeka Belajar should be a new policy program launched by the government that can create a meaningful, fun, and comfortable learning atmosphere for educators and students in learning to carry out learning activities (Syamsi et al., 2020). However, it should not be forgotten that the comfort provided is not purposeless. The government hopes that Merdeka Learning can improve the value of PISA, which is currently sixth from the bottom in mathematics and literacy (Syamsi & Saleh, 2021). Based on research data, it turns out that more and more teachers, students, and parents do not understand the concept of free learning, some even do not know the term. This shows that digital literacy in education is still very lacking because the information is widespread in existing social networks. In order to realize independent learning, educators need to improve literacy as a prerequisite for 21st century life skills (Syamsi, 2016).

The industrial era 5.0 or often called Society 5.0 is a new era that is human-centered and technology-based. The rapid development of technology and the ease of accessing the internet use caused some new problems, especially the preparation of human resource skills, especially teachers keep up with the times (Susanto et al., 2020). The world of education is in a society that has entered the Industrial 4.0 era, so 21st-century skills must be mastered by educators, namely educators and students. The skills in question are critical thinking skills, problem-solving skills, creativity and innovation skills, and communication and collaboration skills. While technology is important in learning, it is meaningless if today's technology cannot drive transformation in learning practice (Rachmadtullah, 2015).

In addition, skills are also needed in finding, managing, and transmitting information as well as skills in the use of information and technology (Marshall & Taylor, 2016). Motivation and enthusiasm for learning are closely related to learning achievement, which shows that educators and students need to show high spirits in every learning activity achieved (Marzuki & Ghufron, n.d.) as in the school curriculum that researchers presented below:

Table 1. List of MBKM Program Implementation

| No. | MBKM Program | Implemented | Not Implemented |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Student exchange | | Not yet |
| 2. | Internships/Work Practices | Already | |
| 3. | Teaching Assistance in Education Units | Already | |
| 4. | Research | Already | |
| 5. | Humanitarian Projects | | Not yet |
| 6. | Entrepreneurial Activities | Already | |
| 7. | Independent Studies/Projects | | Not yet |
| 8. | Building Thematic Villages/ KKN | | Not yet |

From the table 1, it is known that 4 of the 8 programs have been carried out, namely internships/work practices, teaching assistance in education units, research, and entrepreneurial activities, besides that other programs have not been implemented, namely student exchanges, humanitarian projects, independent projects and also thematic KKN which are constrained by Covid.

The results of the observation of the implementation concept of Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka Belajar (MBKM) proposed by the Minister of Education and Culture, have carried out many things related to the implementation of the internship program at SD Negeri 2 Ngalian Wonosobo including assisting student learning (literacy and numeracy), implementing healthy gymnastics with strict procedures, developing a reading corner, carrying out the administration of the library master book, socializing the AKSI application, carrying out clean class activities, assisting the implementation of limited NCDs, implementing Home visit, Creating learning media for high-end students, assisting school administration (correction of pts results), developing Interest Talents, reviving the Library (utilization of reading corners, distributing library book loan cards for students, utilization of reading parks), adapting ICT (AKM Simulation Grade 5) and Joining Sports Activities.

The Teaching Campus Program is part of the Kampus Merdeka program which aims to provide roars and opportunities for students to learn and develop through activities outside the classroom of lectures (Direktorat Pembelajaran dan Kemahasiswaan, 2021). In the teaching campus program, students will be trained and placed in elementary schools throughout Indonesia and help the teaching and learning process in the school. This Teaching Campus aims to help students achieve an increase in integrated literacy and numeracy skills which have decreased a lot due to the impact of this pandemic. With the existence of students, the teaching campus program can have a positive impact on improving student learning outcomes and the program is expected to have a good correlation between universities and the world of work. The teaching campus program hopes that students become agents of change who can inspire the community and provide assistance to schools so that they can continue to carry out teaching and learning activities through the transfer of knowledge possessed by students which can be very useful in this pandemic era.

In terms of implementation of the MBKM curriculum, we still found that some students have difficulty in reading and numeracy. They also take a long time to do assignments. Meanwhile, other friends have finished and they have to wait, this is due to the pandemic which requires students to study independently at home. Because the school is located in a rural area, not all parents can teach their children, teachers are also active in limited

circumstances. Furthermore, the problem of order related to Health Protocol students in which some students do not use masks. It is also our responsibility to provide for the student's needs related to health including masks. This has been experienced by students in some schools in Indonesia that teachers should be responsible for adapting the health protocols at schools (Wahyuningsih, 2021).

Efforts in overcoming these obstacles are providing learning assistance through home visits, especially to students who still have problems in their learning. We divided into small groups with different learning methods such as usually not only counting or writing but using learning media as a tool. This was done to maximize the achievement of learning objectives. Regarding the lack of sensitivity of parents and children to the health program, we tried to advise parents of children about the importance of complying with this health protocol, not only that, but we also provided masks at schools and distribute them to children who do not bring masks and make adjustments. classrooms according to health protocols. Finally, we created the reading garden outside the room, precisely in the schoolyard and reading corner in every classroom and the library. The importance of developing literacy has been emphasized by Wahyuningsih (2018), (2017); Wahyuningsih & Susanti (2020) highlighting that in this digital era, students were expected to have better literacy.

Importantly, the teaching campus program is expected to be able to contribute to the mutual benefit between elementary schools and students. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture, by actively participating in this program, students have the opportunity to hone their skills in the field of interpersonal communication and gain experience in teaching. In addition, in terms of elementary school students, the advantage obtained is the opportunity to interact and get inspiration from teaching students who participate in the teaching campus program, experiences from new people can certainly provide more value for students. The MBKM program makes universities ready to compete with the times that continue to develop as technology develops that requires all civitas to move to carry out the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 in learning that is very close to technology (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the description of the research results, it can be concluded that in general educators are ready to implement the MBKM program, although with a relatively low understanding. The MBKM Program with 8 work programs is a challenge for the campus world to develop in the context of the industrial revolution 4.0 where this era is closely related to rapid technology so all elements of the campus must be able to answer this challenge well

by taking part in implementing this MBKM program utilizing socialization, workshops, and implementation of the program gradually. MBKM program is expected to provide contextual field experiences that will improve student competence, both in academic and non-academic fields, and can compete in the future.

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