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Student's Preferences and Perceptions on Kampus Merdeka Experiential Learning Programs: A Survey in a Private University in Yogyakarta

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ABSTRACT
Kampus Merdeka concept of providing work experiences to students is basically an experiential learning approach to support the achievement of learning outcomes. The effectiveness of experiential learning requires some factors. One of those is student readiness, which is affected by student preference and perception. This study conducted a survey to students in a private university in Yogyakarta, Indonesia, about students' preferences and perceptions on *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs. The results show that students' preferences and perceptions vary. Three most interesting programs according to students are internship, student exchange, and humanitarian program. Three most avoided programs depend on the discipline. Students from STEM discipline tend to avoid independent project, teaching, and entrepreneur program, while students from HS discipline tend to not taking independent project, research, and teaching. The two most reasons of not choosing a program are students' interest to the programs and students' perception on the program. The insights coming from the survey is that the students still do not really understand and aware to the *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs. Thus, some actions related to knowledge sharing and awareness are required to be taken.

Keywords: *Kampus Merdeka, Experiential learning, Survey, Students' preferences, Students' perceptions.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The emerging Industry 4.0 is characterized by the integration of cyber-physical system and the use of internet of things in all aspects of human life. Individualization and volatility of market demand force industry to focus on data and connectivity, analytics and intelligence, and human-machine interaction. The economic potentials in that market environment are flexibility, optimization, opportunities creation, and human-life-balance [1, 2]. The skills required are also shifted from technical and management skills to cognitive abilities, systems skills, and complex problem solving skills [2, 3]. Some researches review the required skills for the future [4, 5, 6] and the most-mentioned skills related to 21st century and Industry 4.0 are communication skills, decision making and problem solving skills, teamwork skills, fundamental skills, self- management skills, and digital competences.

Higher education takes a main role in generating the required skills. The development of learning outcomes in the curriculum and the effectiveness of the curriculum execution are the main concerns of higher education. In terms of learning outcome development in Indonesia's higher education, the Indonesia Ministry of Education (IME) Decree No. 3/2020 states the dimensions should be included in defining the learning outcomes, i.e. attitude, knowledge, and skills. These dimensions should be manifested in learning process, student's work experience, research, and community service. These activities have been implemented in Indonesia's higher education institutions for long time. However, evaluation by the government found that the student's work experience dimension, in most higher education, is still not effective. Thus, recently, IME publishes a guidance for Indonesia's higher education to elaborate the student's work experience under a concept named *Kampus*

Merdeka.

The *Kampus Merdeka* Guidance from IME classifies the experiential learning activities into eight program categories, i.e. student exchange, internship, teaching practice, research, humanitarian program, entrepreneur program, independent project, and community service [7]. These programs actually are experiential learning approach [8, 9, 10, 11]. They are also named as professional learning [12]. The definition of experiential learning is changed by time since 1971 until now [13, 14], however, there is still one similar aspect among all the definitions, i.e. the need of involvement of external parties to give close-to-actual experience to students. The eight categories of *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs require higher education institution to collaborate with other educational institutions, industries, research institutions, government institutions, and social institutions.

Beside collaboration with external parties, the implementation of *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs needs higher education institution to prepare adequate resources to facilitate students' choices like supervisor and funding support. Under outcomes based education (OBE) philosophy, the institution should not constrain and force the students to choose only limited alternate activities. Students, especially today, the Z generations, need personalized micro-experience and tend to perform skill-focused activities they want to. The creative and independent characters of Z generation make them demanding to seek their own passions and avoid directed activities. They will be excited in doing learning on their own [15, 16]. Thus, higher education institution should prepare many programs to be chosen.

The problem may occur when higher education institutions in Indonesia implement *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs is determination of the size of resources allocated to every program, regarding that the students are free to choose the programs they want to take. Another problem is the readiness of the student itself and the readiness of the teacher as the supervisor, related to the variation and the complexity of the programs. Effort to paradigm change is required from students and teachers regarding to the old habit in conventional learning process, in which the learning activities are standard and all the learning instructions are clear.

2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The concern of this research is about students' readiness to involve in the *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs in a private university in Yogyakarta. The followings are research questions to be answered through this research:

Q1: What kinds of experiential learning programs do students likely take?

Q2: What are the reasons the students choosing or not choosing a kind of experiential learning program?

Q3: What are the most popular experiential learning programs prioritized by the students?

A structured survey and descriptive analysis are conducted to portray students' preferences and perceptions about *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs, in order to answer the research questions and to propose a recommendation for the university and for higher education institution in general.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Because of the actual work experienced by students, the experiential learning is proven to be a useful method to drive effective achievement of learning outcomes [8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14]. A comprehensive capabilities of attitude, knowledge, and skills are all together shaped during the experiential learning process. Figure 1 illustrates the framework of the relationship among some factors related to this research, explained as follows.

To make experiential learning process effective, the readiness of the learner (student) and the readiness of the supervisor (teacher) are important. The readiness of the teacher depends on teacher's expertise and experience. The readiness of the student depends on the student's preference and perception. Student's preference and perception can be affected by student knowledge about the experiential learning programs.

Furthermore, teachers' readiness and students' readiness will encourage higher education institution to plan experiential learning programs, as well as the relevant supporting programs for students and teachers to advance their readiness before performing experiential learning programs. The support from institution resources then will promote the excellence of the institutional programs in stimulating the effectiveness of experiential learning process.

The focus of this research is related to the circled parts in Figure 1, i.e. portraying the students' preferences, perceptions, and the readiness to propose recommendation of some supporting programs.

4. METHOD

This research conducted by a survey to the students of a private university in Yogyakarta. The survey carried out during September–November, 2020.

Instrument of the survey is a structured questionnaire created using Microsoft Form and is distributed through around 10,000 students' e-mail accounts. The respondents are the students from batch 2014 until batch 2020, from 12 undergraduate study programs consisting of 6 Sciences, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM)

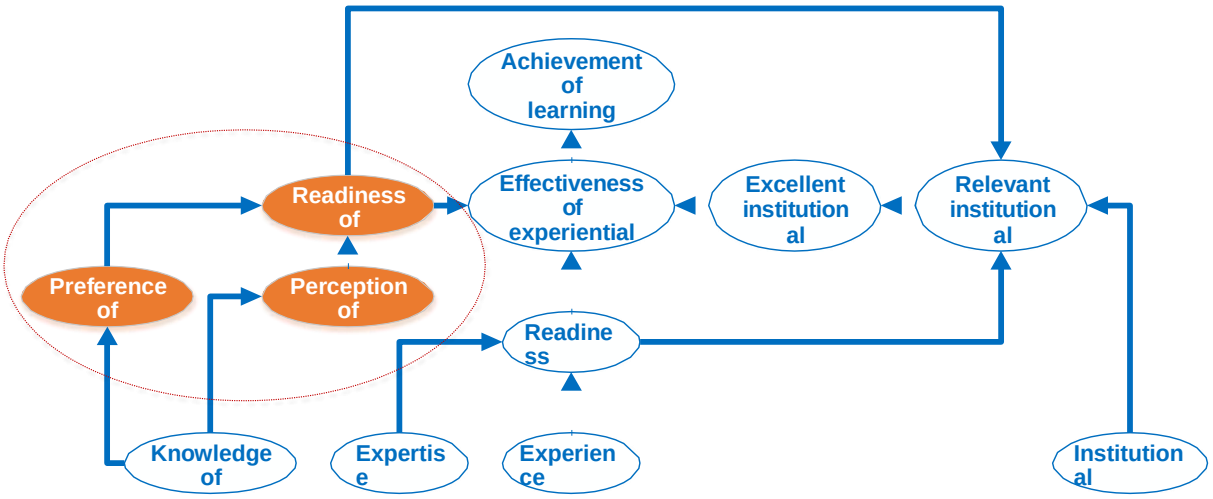

Figure 1 Students' preferences, perceptions, and readiness among experiential learning related factors

disciplines and 6 Humanities and Social Sciences (HS) disciplines.

The questionnaires used in the survey consist of 42 questions. The first 7 questions are about personal and general data, 8 questions are about willingness to take experiential learning program categories, 17 questions are about describing the kind of activities of every program category, 8 questions are about the reasons of not choosing the program categories, 1 question is about the priority rank to take the experiential learning program categories, and the last question asks the possibility of the number of activities will be taken.

After the data collection, a descriptive analysis explained in the following section is conducted and some recommendations are proposed.

5. COLLECTED DATA

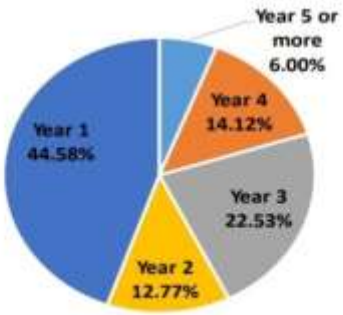

Figure 2 Batches distribution of respondents (students)

Data collected are coming from 1035 respondents, covering all batches (Figure 2), includes all 12 study programs with similar portion of STEM and HS disciplines (Figure 3) and similar portion of female and male (Figure 4). One of the data is incomplete and excluded from the analysis, so that the data used in the analysis is 1034. The respondents come from 31 of 34 provinces in Indonesia (Figure 5).

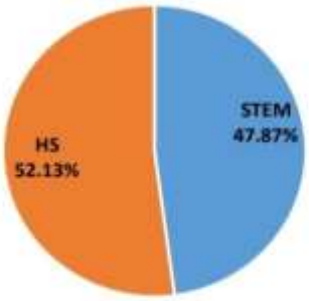

Figure 3 Portion of STEM and HS disciplines of respondents

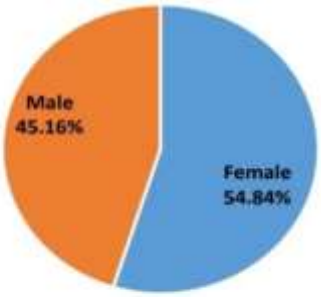

Figure 4 Portion of female and male respondents

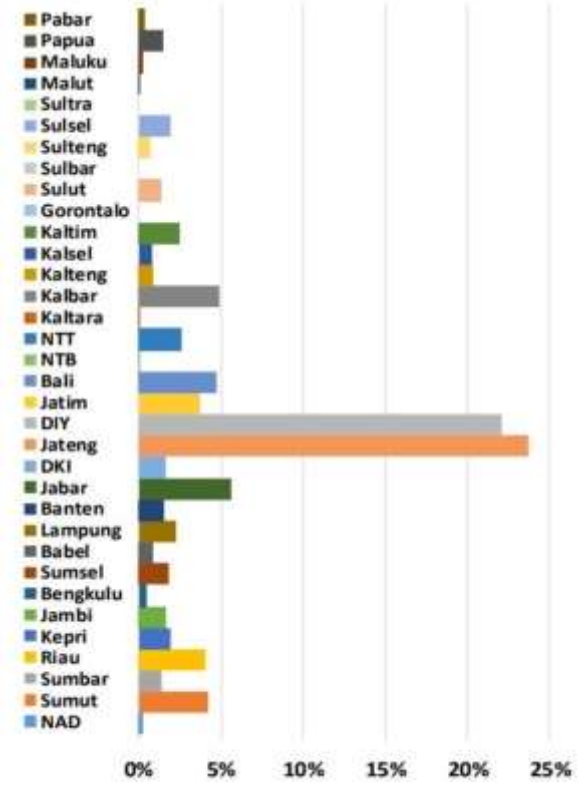

Figure 5 Respondents' residences (provinces)

6. DISCUSSION

From the survey, the willingness of the students to take experiential learning program can be illustrated in Figure 6. The three most interesting programs are internship, student exchange, and humanitarian program, both for STEM and HS students. The most avoided programs for STEM students are independent project, teaching, and entrepreneur program, while students from HS discipline tend to not taking independent project, research, and teaching. This phenomena bring out an apprehension that the students of the university tend to join a structured programs facilitated by others and are still shrinking back from innovation-based activities like entrepreneur, research, and independent project. It seems contradictory to the skills demanded in Industry 4.0 environment [2, 3, 4, 5, 6].

When respondents are asking to rank the priority of their choices on experiential learning programs, the result is as presented in Figure 7. Three programs mostly chosen as first priority by STEM students are student exchange, internship, and entrepreneur, while the most three prioritized programs for HS students are internship, student exchange, and entrepreneur. Three lowest prioritized programs for STEM students are community service, independent project, and teaching, while for HS students, the three lowest priority are for community service, independent project, and research programs.

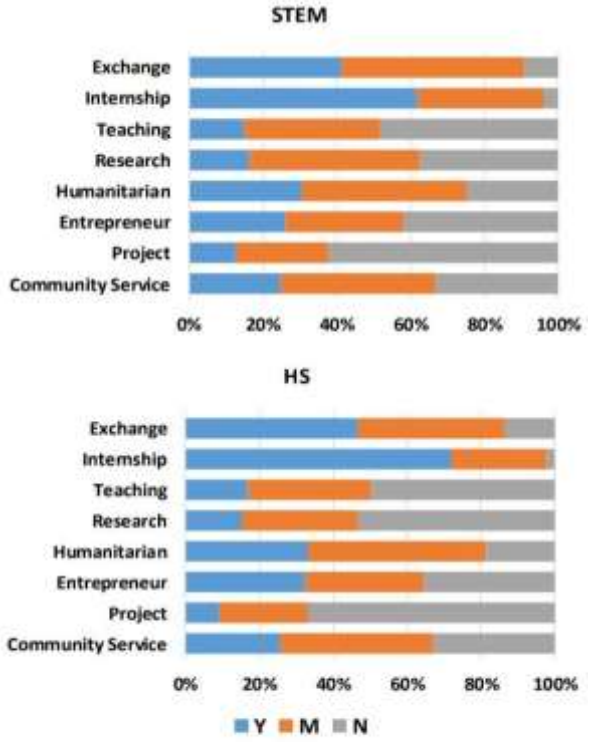

Figure 6 The STEM and HS students' willingness to take experiential learning program (Y = Yes, M = Maybe, N = No)

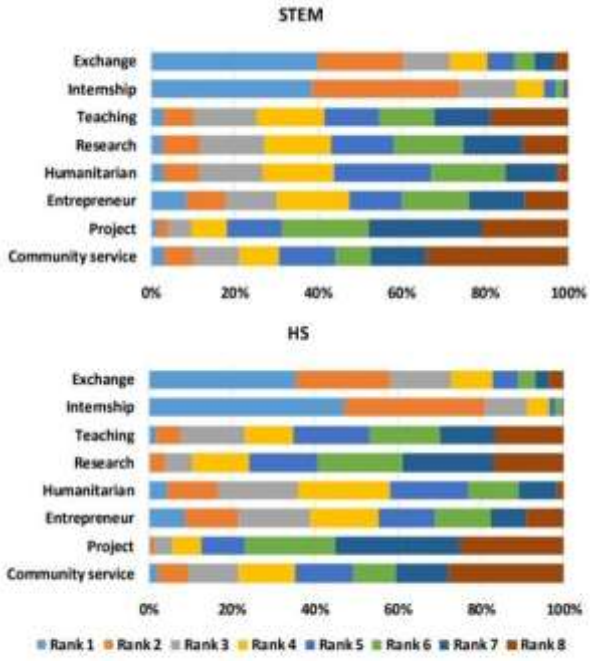

Figure 7 The priority rank of experiential learning programs to be chosen by STEM and HS students

There are four programs with the opportunity to conduct overseas, i.e. student exchange, internship, teaching, and humanitarian. There are 38.06% of respondents, in average, choosing to conduct those

activities overseas. It indicates the willingness of the student to get more experience and wider horizon. STEM students have tendency to go overseas more (40.99%) than HS students (35.37%). Figure 8 illustrate the distribution of respondents' interest to do the activities overseas.

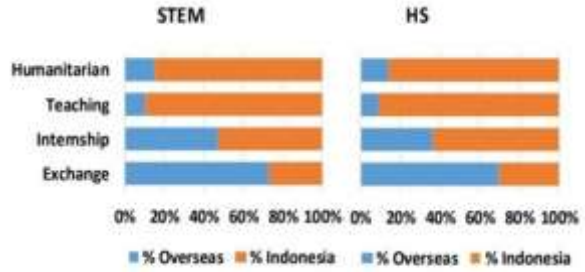

Figure 8 STEM and HS students' interest to overseas activities

Related to research programs, most respondents choosing research program tend to do field research than laboratory research or virtual research (Figure 9). However, STEM students interest on laboratory research is greater (16.83%) than HS students (3.98%).

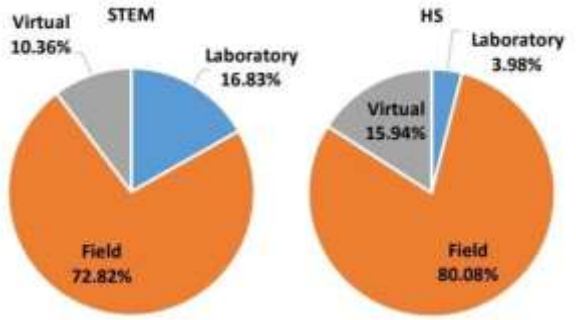

Figure 9 STEM and HS students' choices on research activities

Respondents interested in entrepreneur programs are asked to choose the type of entrepreneur program they would carry out, i.e. goods production, services, or start- up. Most respondents tend to choose creating goods production business compared to services and start-up (Figure 10). Surprisingly, STEM students, which are doing many physical activities in their learning process, on the contrary tend to do virtual and service business than HS students. It indicates a shift of disciplines role in the future. STEM and HS are going to blend one to another.

The independent project that is chosen or maybe chosen by 35.30% of respondents are dominated by public facilities design, product design, and virtual source design for STEM students, and are dominated by event organizing, product design, and social institution development for HS students. Figure 11 presents the detail of independent project activities mentioned by respondents.

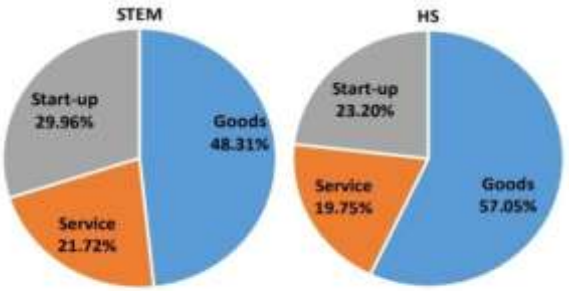

Figure 10 STEM and HS students' choices on entrepreneur programs

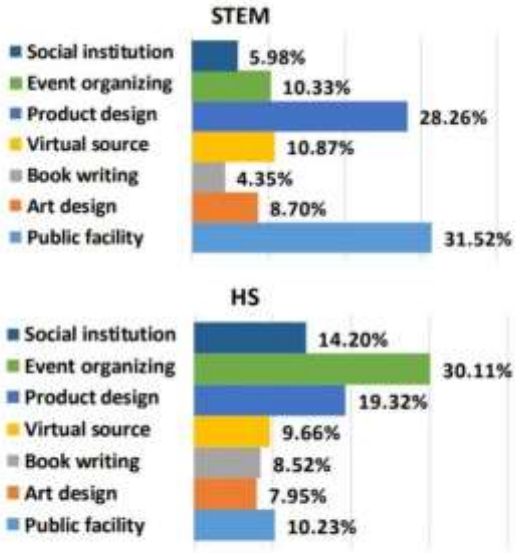

Figure 11 STEM and HS students' choices on independent project activities

In community service program, the most interested activities for STEM students are small scale industry development, farming, and tourism development, respectively. HS students are interested mostly in small scale industry development, tourism development, and farming. The biggest difference between STEM students and HS students is on woman issues. HS students interest on woman issues are nearly four times as STEM students interest. The detail of other activities is presented in Figure 12.

Besides the plan and willingness of the respondents to take *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs, the survey conducted also asks the respondents about the reasons they are not choosing a program. The most and common reasons of not choosing a program are that the respondents are not interested to the program and that the program seem hard to be conducted (Figure 13). This finding shows that there are possible actions can be performed by the institution to attract students to know further and being interested to the programs. Knowledge sharing through announcement, sharing session, group discussion, and clear and complete guidance documents are good to be programmed.

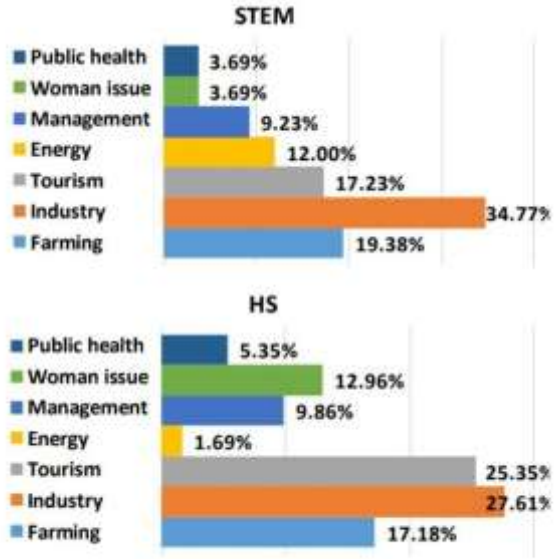

Figure 12 STEM and HS students' choices on community services activities

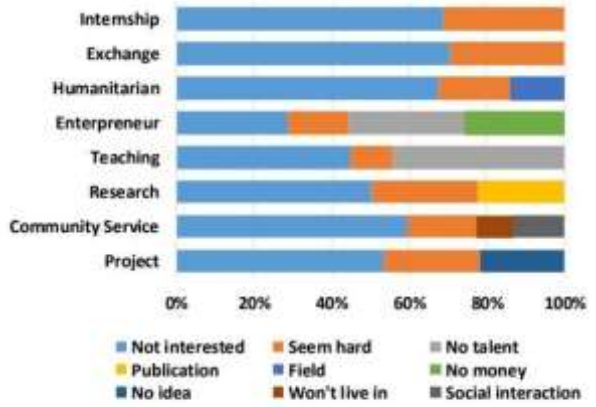

Figure 13 The reasons of respondents not to choose a program

Other reasons highlighted in Figure 13 from the highest are assumption of having no talent in entrepreneur and teaching programs, economic consideration in entrepreneur program, publication requirement in research, and the absence of idea in independent project. There are some actions can be performed by the higher education institution to aware students about their talent, for example providing counselling or coaching in the semesters before they take the programs. For economic reason, fund support like sponsorship and scholarship are important to be increased. From the detail questions in the survey, the avoidance of students to involve in overseas activities, besides money reason, is the English capability. Thus, to open wider opportunity for students to do overseas learning program, arranging language advancement programs is necessary.

7. CONCLUSION

The implementation of *Kampus Merdeka*'s experiential learning cannot just be supported by good facilities, infrastructure, networking, and collaboration with external parties. To make the experiential learning effectively runs, the readiness of the learner and supervisor are important to be considered and followed up.

Based on a survey in a private university in Yogyakarta, it can be concluded that the students' preferences and perceptions on *Kampus Merdeka*'s experiential learning vary. The most favorite programs are internship, student exchange, and humanitarian program, and the most unwanted programs are independent project, teaching, and entrepreneur for STEM students, and independent project, research, and teaching for HS students. The favorite programs are still structured programs, not the innovation-based programs. It is contradictory with the demands in Industry 4.0 era. Hence, the university has to take actions to advance students' knowledge and awareness about *Kampus Merdeka* experiential learning programs.

The other conclusion is that the most and common reasons of not choosing a program are respondents' interest and perception on the programs. Thus, knowledge sharing is required. Other reasons like talent, money, and language should also be followed up.

In brief, some of supports can be prepared are: knowledge sharing (announcement, sharing session, group discussion, clear and complete guidance documents); awareness of students' talent (counselling, coaching); fund support (sponsorship, scholarship); and training (language).

8. FURTHER WORK

There are three parties involved in the framework presented in Figure 1, i.e. student, teacher, and institution. This paper discusses student. The further works will discuss teacher, institution, and the relations among the three parties.

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