



# Between Aspirations and Reality: Sports Education Students' Perceptions of Merdeka Belajar Policy and Implementation

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## Abstract

In sports coaching education, students benefit from independent learning policies to explore their interests, talents, and learning methods, promoting holistic and independent development in sports. This study aims to analyze sports coaching education students' perceptions of these policies and their implementation. It is a quantitative descriptive study utilizing a five-category Likert scale questionnaire. The population includes all students from the Sports Coaching Education Study Programme, Faculty of Sports and Health, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, from the 2021, 2022, and 2023 cohorts, totaling 200 active students. The sample consists of 108 students selected through purposive sampling, meeting the criteria of being active students willing to complete the questionnaire. Data are presented in tables with numbers, percentages, and a norm reference assessment (NRA). Results show that 40.52% of responses strongly agree with the statements, while the overall NRA indicates a fair classification. The study concludes that most sports coaching education students require additional understanding of independent learning policies and their implementation.

**Keywords:** Perception; Student; Sports Coaching Education; Freedom To Learn

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The curriculum is an educational plan that is systematically designed to provide knowledge, skills and attitudes to students at various levels of education [1], [2]. The curriculum includes learning objectives, materials, teaching methods, and evaluations which are prepared to achieve the expected learning outcomes [3], [4]. In the context of formal education, the curriculum becomes a guide for educators in developing effective and efficient learning activities, in accordance with standards set by educational authorities [5], [6]. The curriculum also plays a role in ensuring that the educational process runs consistently and evenly, helping students develop their potential optimally and preparing them to face future challenges

The Indonesian government launched Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) as an educational initiative to give students more freedom in designing the curriculum, choosing courses, and determining their own career paths. This concept aims to provide students with greater opportunities to develop their interests, talents, and skills in accordance with the needs of the job market and industrial developments [7], [8]. MBKM expects students to actively and creatively manage their learning process, enabling them to reach their full potential and significantly contribute to the nation's and state's progress [9], [10]. This programme also accommodates various forms of learning, including project-based learning, internships, and entrepreneurship, so that students can gain practical experience relevant to the world of work.

The Sports Coaching Education Study Programme at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo is an integral part of the higher education system, aiming to educate prospective sports coaches as well as qualified and professional physical education and sports teachers. The programme aims to offer a thorough education in the field of sports coaching education, encompassing topics like sports theory, training methodology, team management, and sports psychology. In addition, this programme also emphasises developing the practical skills needed to become an effective physical education and sports coach and teacher, including communication, leadership, and problem-solving skills. Thus, the Sports Coaching Education Study Programme at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo aims to produce graduates who are ready to become leaders in the world of sports, both at the local and national level, and contribute positively to the development of sports achievements and public health.

The Sports Coaching Education Study Programme is a field that has a crucial role in producing superior human resources in the sports sector, both in the context of competition and the development of society as a whole [11], [12]. In the era of education that continues to transform, the concept of independent learning has become the main focus for expanding and enriching student learning experiences [13]. However, implementation and understanding of the independent learning policy in sports coaching education are still major concerns. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct this research, "Perceptions of Sports Coaching Education Students Regarding the Policy and Implementation of Merdeka Belajar at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo," to gain a comprehensive understanding of how students comprehend and react to this concept in their academic pursuits. With a better understanding of student perceptions, strategic steps can be taken to improve and optimise the implementation of the independent learning policy in the sports coaching education environment so that it can have a greater positive impact on sports education in the future.

However, several problems arise regarding the understanding and implementation of this MBKM policy. Many students still do not understand the concept and objectives of MBKM, as well as how to integrate it into their learning process. Lack of information and outreach regarding this policy is also a major obstacle. Additionally, there are concerns that the freedom provided by MBKM may not be accompanied by sufficient guidance to ensure that students remain on track in achieving their academic and professional goals. This research will identify and analyze student perceptions of MBKM policies and implementation, so that solutions can be found to increase understanding and implementation of this policy among Sports Coaching Education students.

The aim of this research is to explore and analyze the perceptions of students in the Gorontalo State University Sports Coaching Education Study Program regarding the policy and implementation of Merdeka Belajar. This research is expected to provide a clear picture of the level of students' understanding and acceptance of the MBKM concept as well as the obstacles faced in its implementation.

Relevant previous research includes studies that examine the impact of MBKM on student skills development [8], as well as research that highlights the challenges of implementing MBKM in various universities in Indonesia [7]. Also research on the role of MBKM in increasing students' creativity and independence [9], [10], all of which provide the theoretical and empirical basis for this research.

## 2. METHODS

This research was a descriptive quantitative study. The population consisted of all students from the Sports Coaching Education Study Programme, Faculty of Sports and Health, Universitas Negeri Gorontalo, from the classes of 2021, 2022, and 2023, totaling 200 active students. The sample included 108 students selected using a purposive sampling technique, meeting the criteria of being active students and willing to fill out a series of questionnaires.

The instrument used a 5-category Likert scale questionnaire adapted from research by Arjanto [14]. The questionnaire included eight MBKM programme items for students in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 3 of 2020: student exchange, professional work practice, teaching assistance in educational units, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent studies and projects, and projects/building villages. The validity and reliability of the instrument were tested by the author using student respondents from the class of 2020, totaling 36 students. The validity test used an  $r$  table value of 0.329 at a 5% significance level, and items were declared valid if the  $r$  count was greater than the  $r$  table. The results of the validity and reliability tests are as follows: (provide the specific results here).

**Table 1.** Validity Test

| No | r<br>count | r table | Information | No | r count | r table | Information |
|----|------------|---------|-------------|----|---------|---------|-------------|
| 1  | 0,308      | 0,329   | Not Valid   | 21 | 0,439   | 0,329   | Valid       |
| 2  | 0,26       | 0,329   | Not Valid   | 22 | 0,796   | 0,329   | Valid       |
| 3  | 0,575      | 0,329   | Valid       | 23 | 0,716   | 0,329   | Valid       |
| 4  | 0,559      | 0,329   | Valid       | 24 | 0,666   | 0,329   | Valid       |
| 5  | 0,683      | 0,329   | Valid       | 25 | 0,794   | 0,329   | Valid       |
| 6  | 0,345      | 0,329   | Valid       | 26 | 0,829   | 0,329   | Valid       |

|    |       |       |       |    |       |       |       |
|----|-------|-------|-------|----|-------|-------|-------|
| 7  | 0,758 | 0,329 | Valid | 27 | 0,756 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 8  | 0,59  | 0,329 | Valid | 28 | 0,788 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 9  | 0,635 | 0,329 | Valid | 29 | 0,737 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 10 | 0,66  | 0,329 | Valid | 30 | 0,729 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 11 | 0,401 | 0,329 | Valid | 31 | 0,868 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 12 | 0,512 | 0,329 | Valid | 32 | 0,562 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 13 | 0,426 | 0,329 | Valid | 33 | 0,651 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 14 | 0,694 | 0,329 | Valid | 34 | 0,54  | 0,329 | Valid |
| 15 | 0,655 | 0,329 | Valid | 35 | 0,694 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 16 | 0,62  | 0,329 | Valid | 36 | 0,352 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 17 | 0,611 | 0,329 | Valid | 37 | 0,513 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 18 | 0,55  | 0,329 | Valid | 38 | 0,552 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 19 | 0,386 | 0,329 | Valid | 39 | 0,745 | 0,329 | Valid |
| 20 | 0,785 | 0,329 | Valid | 40 | 0,766 | 0,329 | Valid |

**Table 2.** Reliability Test

| Reference Value | Cronbach's Alpha value | Conclusion |
|-----------------|------------------------|------------|
| 0,70            | 0,96                   | Reliable   |

It can be seen from the table that questions 1 (one) and 2 (two) are invalid, so the author only used questions that were considered valid, so of the 40 questions, 38 were determined to be instruments. Meanwhile, in testing the level of reliability, it shows that the Cronbach's alpha value > the reference value, so it is declared reliable. The grid of validated instruments is as follows:

**Table 3.** Instrument Grid

| Variable                                                                   | Indicator                                | Questionnaire Item Number | Amount |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------|
| Perceptions of Sports Coaching Education Students Regarding the Policy and | Student exchange                         | 1,2,3                     | 3      |
|                                                                            | Professional work practices              | 4,5,6,7,8                 | 5      |
|                                                                            | Teaching assistance in educational units | 9,10,11,12,13             | 5      |

|                                   |                           |                |    |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------|----|
| Implementation of Merdeka Belajar | Research research         | 14,15,16,17,18 | 5  |
|                                   | Humanitarian project      | 19,20,21,22,23 | 5  |
|                                   | Entrepreneurial activity  | 24,25,26,27,28 | 5  |
|                                   | Independent study/project | 29,30,31,32,33 | 5  |
|                                   | Village projects/building | 34,35,36,37,38 | 5  |
| Total                             |                           |                | 38 |

**Table 4.** Alternative Answers and Score Weights

| Alternative Answers    | Statement score weight |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA)    | 5                      |
| Agree (A)              | 4                      |
| Undecided (U)          | 3                      |
| Disagree (D)           | 2                      |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 1                      |

To facilitate immediate processing, the author distributes questionnaires via Google Form. Data processing is described by presenting data in the form of tables of numbers and percentages and by using normative reference assessment (NRA) with the following formula:

**Table 5.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA)

| No | KSL Formula                | Criteria   |
|----|----------------------------|------------|
| 1. | Mean + (1,5 SD) to the top | Very good  |
| 2. | Mean + (0,5 SD) to the top | Good       |
| 3. | Mean – (0,5 SD) to the top | Enough     |
| 4. | Mean – (1,5 SD) to the top | Not enough |
| 5. | Mean – (1,5 SD) down       | Very less  |

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The overall research findings, which focus on how sports coaching education students perceive the policy and implementation of independent learning, are as follows:

**Table 6.** Overall Data

| Alternative Answers    | Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA)    | 1663   | 40,52      |
| Agree (A)              | 1545   | 37,65      |
| Undecided (U)          | 445    | 10,84      |
| Disagree (D)           | 340    | 8,29       |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 111    | 2,7        |
| Total                  | 4104   | 100        |

The criteria for using norm reference assessment (NRA) for overall data are as follows:

**Table 7.** Overall Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) Data

| No    | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|-------|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1     | > 202          | Very good  | 0      |
| 2     | 170 - 201      | Good       | 35     |
| 3     | 138 - 169      | Enough     | 55     |
| 4     | 106 - 137      | Not enough | 7      |
| 5     | < 106          | Very less  | 11     |
| Total |                |            | 108    |

The research findings for student exchange indicators, which pertain to the perceptions of sports coaching education students regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning, are as follows:

**Table 8.** Student Exchange Indicators

| Alternative Answers | Amount | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA) | 165    | 50,9       |
| Agree (A)           | 106    | 32,7       |
| Undecided (U)       | 21     | 6,5        |
| Disagree (D)        | 25     | 7,7        |

|                        |     |     |
|------------------------|-----|-----|
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 7   | 2,2 |
| Total                  | 324 | 100 |

The criteria for using the Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) for student exchange indicators are as follows:

**Table 9.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) of Student Exchange Indicators

| No    | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|-------|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1     | > 17           | Very good  | 0      |
| 2     | 14 - 17        | Good       | 54     |
| 3     | 11 - 13        | Enough     | 37     |
| 4     | 9 - 10         | Not enough | 5      |
| 5     | < 9            | Very less  | 12     |
| Total |                |            | 108    |

The research findings for professional work practice indicators, which pertain to the perceptions of sports coaching education students regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning, are presented below:

**Table 10.** Professional Work Practice Indicators

| Alternative Answers    | Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA)    | 233    | 43,15      |
| Agree (A)              | 198    | 36,67      |
| Undecided (U)          | 51     | 9,44       |
| Disagree (D)           | 45     | 8,33       |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 13     | 2,41       |
| Total                  | 540    | 100        |

The criteria for using the Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) for professional work practice indicators are as follows:

**Table 11.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) of Professional Work Practice Indicators

| No    | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|-------|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1     | > 26           | Very good  | 0      |
| 2     | 22 - 26        | Good       | 51     |
| 3     | 18 - 21        | Enough     | 38     |
| 4     | 14 - 17        | Not enough | 10     |
| 5     | < 14           | Very less  | 9      |
| Total |                |            | 108    |

The research findings for indicators of teaching assistance in educational units, which relate to the perceptions of sports coaching education students about the policy and implementation of independent learning, are as follows:

**Table 12.** Indicators of Teaching Assistance in Education Units

| Alternative Answers    | Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA)    | 207    | 38,33      |
| Agree (A)              | 210    | 38,89      |
| Undecided (U)          | 61     | 11,3       |
| Disagree (D)           | 48     | 8,89       |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 14     | 2,59       |
| Total                  | 540    | 100        |

The criteria for using the Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) for teaching assistance indicators in educational units are as follows:

**Table 13.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) of Teaching Assistance Indicators in Education Units

| No    | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|-------|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1     | > 26           | Very good  | 0      |
| 2     | 22 - 26        | Good       | 43     |
| 3     | 18 - 21        | Enough     | 43     |
| 4     | 14 - 17        | Not enough | 11     |
| 5     | < 14           | Very less  | 11     |
| Total |                |            | 108    |



The results of the research findings for research indicators regarding the perceptions of sports coaching education students regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning are as follows:

**Table 14.** Research Research Indicators

| Alternative Answers    | Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA)    | 217    | 40,2       |
| Agree (A)              | 213    | 39,4       |
| Undecided (U)          | 56     | 10,4       |
| Disagree (D)           | 40     | 7,4        |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 14     | 2,6        |
| Total                  | 540    | 100        |

The criteria for using norm reference assessment (NRA) for research indicators are as follows:

**Table 15.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) of Research Research Indicators

| No    | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|-------|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1     | > 25           | Very good  | 0      |
| 2     | 22 -25         | Good       | 47     |
| 3     | 19 - 21        | Enough     | 40     |
| 4     | 16 - 18        | Not enough | 7      |
| 5     | < 16           | Very less  | 14     |
| Total |                |            | 108    |

The results of the research findings for the humanitarian project indicators regarding the perceptions of sports coaching education students regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning are as follows:

**Table 16.** Humanitarian Project Indicators

| Alternative Answers | Amount | Percentage |
|---------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA) | 222    | 41,11      |
| Agree (A)           | 204    | 37,78      |

|                        |     |
|------------------------|-----|
| Undecided (U)          | 54  |
| Disagree (D)           | 46  |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 14  |
| Total                  | 540 |

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The criteria for using Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) for humanitarian project indicators are as follows:

**Table 17.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) of Humanitarian Project Indicators

| No    | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|-------|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1     | > 28           | Very good  |        |
| 2     | 23 - 28        | Good       |        |
| 3     | 18 - 22        | Enough     | 0      |
| 4     | 13 - 17        | Not enough | 39     |
| 5     | < 13           | Very less  | 52     |
| Total |                |            | 7      |
|       |                |            | 10     |

The research findings for entrepreneurial activity indicators, which pertain to the perceptions of sports coaching education students regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning, are presented below:

**Table 18.** Entrepreneurial Activity Indicators

| Alternative Answers    | Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA)    | 196    | 36,3       |
| Agree (A)              | 212    | 39,3       |
| Undecided (U)          | 68     | 12,6       |
| Disagree (D)           | 46     | 8,5        |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 18     | 3,3        |
| Total                  | 540    | 100        |

The criteria for using the Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) for entrepreneurial activity indicators are as follows:

**Table 19.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) of Entrepreneurial Activity Indicators

| No    | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|-------|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1     | > 28           | Very good  | 0      |
| 2     | 23 - 28        | Good       | 32     |
| 3     | 18 - 22        | Enough     | 52     |
| 4     | 13 - 17        | Not enough | 11     |
| 5     | < 13           | Very less  | 13     |
| Total |                |            | 108    |

The results of the research findings for independent study or project indicators regarding the perceptions of sports coaching education students regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning are as follows:

**Table 20.** Independent study/project indicators

| Alternative Answers    | Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA)    | 195    | 36,11      |
| Agree (A)              | 209    | 38,7       |
| Undecided (U)          | 73     | 13,52      |
| Disagree (D)           | 46     | 8,52       |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 17     | 3,15       |
| Total                  | 540    | 100        |

The criteria for using norm reference assessment (NRA) for independent study or project indicators are as follows:

**Table 21.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) of independent study/project indicators

| No | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|----|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1  | > 28           | Very good  | 0      |
| 2  | 23 - 28        | Good       | 35     |
| 3  | 18 - 22        | Enough     | 51     |
| 4  | 13 - 17        | Not enough | 11     |
| 5  | < 13           | Very less  | 11     |

Total

108

The research findings for project/village development indicators, which pertain to the perceptions of sports coaching education students regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning, are presented as follows:

**Table 22.** Project/village development indicators

| Alternative Answers    | Amount | Percentage |
|------------------------|--------|------------|
| Strongly Agree (SA)    | 228    | 42         |
| Agree (A)              | 193    | 36         |
| Undecided (U)          | 61     | 11         |
| Disagree (D)           | 44     | 8          |
| Strongly Disagree (SD) | 14     | 3          |
| Total                  | 540    | 100        |

The criteria for using the Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) for project or village development indicators are as follows:

**Table 23.** Norm Reference Assessment (NRA) of Project/Village Development Indicators

| No    | Interval Score | Category   | Amount |
|-------|----------------|------------|--------|
| 1     | > 28           | Very good  | 0      |
| 2     | 23 - 28        | Good       | 39     |
| 3     | 18 - 22        | Enough     | 49     |
| 4     | 13 - 17        | Not enough | 10     |
| 5     | < 13           | Very less  | 10     |
| Total |                |            | 108    |

Research on the perceptions of sports coaching education students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning shows results that describe the adequate category for the majority of students. Previous research stated that the majority of students agreed with the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar curriculum [16]. These findings indicate that although there is an understanding of the concept of independent learning, its implementation still requires improvement so that it can be more effective and meet student expectations. Factors such as support and access to learning resources, as well as the mentoring role

of lecturers and related parties, may need to be strengthened to increase the effectiveness of the independent learning policy in the sports education environment. Thus, this research provides valuable insights for further development in realising the optimal concept of independent learning for sports coaching education students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo.

Indicators of policy and implementation of independent learning show findings that indicate a good category for the majority of students, especially in indicators of exchange of ideas and experiences between fellow students. Student exchange is one of the most popular programmes [17]. These results show that students tend to appreciate the space to share knowledge and experiences with their colleagues, which shows that the concept of independent learning allows for positive interaction and collaboration between them. Thus, this research provides a positive view of the implementation of the independent learning policy in the sports education environment; however, further research still needs to be carried out to explore other aspects of the policy and how it influences the overall learning experience for Sports Coaching Education students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo.

The policy and implementation of independent learning show that the majority of students assess the professional work practice category as good. These findings indicate that students feel there are adequate opportunities to hone practical skills relevant to the sports profession as well as gain useful field experience. Previous research findings also state that this activity can provide direct work opportunities [18]. This indicates that the policy and implementation of independent learning have provided significant encouragement for students to prepare themselves for the world of work in the field of sports coaching. However, further research may be needed to evaluate in more depth the effectiveness of professional work practices in achieving the learning goals and work readiness of sports coaching education students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo.

Most students believe that teaching assistance in educational units is good. Previous research also revealed that this programme can improve the quality of learning [19]. This indicates that students feel there is adequate support in getting guidance from lecturers or academic staff during the learning process in the field. These findings show that the independent learning policy has been well implemented in providing assistance and guidance to students in facing practical challenges that arise during the learning process in educational units. However, it is important to continue to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of this teaching assistance to ensure that Sports Coaching Education students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo can gain maximum benefit from their practical learning experience.

According to the research findings, the majority of students rated the research category as good. Previous research conducted on management students at the University of Flores showed that their perception was that they felt more flexible in lectures and that it was not impossible to do research while doing it [20]. This shows that students feel that there are adequate opportunities to engage in research activities that are relevant to their field of study. These findings reflect that the policy and implementation of independent learning have succeeded in encouraging student interest and involvement in research activities that can increase their understanding of sports science and develop their overall academic skills. However, further attention is needed to ensure that research infrastructure and academic support are available to

support students in carrying out research activities effectively and efficiently so that they can make meaningful contributions to the development of sports science in the future.

Most students rated the humanitarian project category as sufficient. Previous research also revealed that this programme is less popular [21]. This indicates that while students recognise the existence of humanitarian projects as part of their learning experience, there is room for improvement in implementation and more significant contributions to humanitarian activities. These findings highlight the importance of increasing students' awareness and involvement in humanitarian projects relevant to their field of study, as well as expanding the scope and positive impact of such humanitarian activities. Therefore, further steps need to be taken to strengthen the role of humanitarian projects in the context of policy and the implementation of independent learning at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo so that they can make a more meaningful contribution to the welfare of society.

Most students rated the entrepreneurial activity category as sufficient. In fact, previous research revealed that with entrepreneurial education, students will become more motivated to carry out entrepreneurship [22]–[24]. These findings indicate that although there is awareness of the importance of entrepreneurship in sports education, there are still challenges in implementing entrepreneurial activities effectively. This may indicate the need for more support and resources to help students develop the skills and knowledge necessary to undertake entrepreneurial activities successfully. Thus, additional steps are needed to support sports coaching education students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo so that they can obtain maximum benefits from the entrepreneurial opportunities available in the context of independent learning.

Most students rated the independent study/project category as sufficient. This is in accordance with the opinion of previous research that this programme is the one that is least popular with students at the Faculty of Creative Industries, Universitas Telkom, at 0.4% [25]. These findings indicate that while students recognise the importance of being independent when undertaking independent studies or projects, there is still room for improvement in supporting and facilitating these activities. This highlights the need for more resources, guidance, and support for students to effectively plan, implement, and evaluate their independent studies or projects. Thus, additional steps in strengthening academic infrastructure and support need to be considered so that sports coaching education students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo can feel more supported and motivated to carry out quality independent studies or projects that are beneficial for their academic and professional development.

Most students rated the project/village development category as sufficient. In fact, the aim of this project is to improve human resources in the village [26]. These findings illustrate their understanding that projects or activities focused on village development are an integral part of their learning experience. However, there is still potential to increase the contribution and positive impact of this activity in advancing local communities and integrating sports knowledge in the context of community development. Therefore, pinpointing areas for improvement is crucial, including enhancing local community involvement, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and formulating more focused strategies to accomplish sustainable village development objectives. Thus, this research provides valuable insight into optimising the implementation of the independent learning policy in the sports coaching

education environment while ensuring that village projects and building can be an effective means of expanding students' understanding of the role of sport in holistic community development.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the research findings regarding the perceptions of Sports Coaching Education students at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo regarding the policy and implementation of independent learning is that the majority of students show sufficient understanding of various indicators, such as the exchange of ideas between fellow students, teaching assistance in educational units, and projects/building villages. Nevertheless, there is still potential to increase the effectiveness of implementing independent learning, especially in terms of strengthening student involvement in entrepreneurial activities, humanitarian projects, independent studies, and research studies.

Based on these findings, we can propose several recommendations. First, universities can strengthen infrastructure and academic support to increase student participation in entrepreneurial activities, either through startup funding or entrepreneurship training. Secondly, universities must enhance their provision of resources and guidance to encourage students to participate in humanitarian projects that directly benefit society. Third, universities must expand access and support students in carrying out independent studies, projects, and research studies by providing appropriate facilities and mentors. Finally, collaboration between universities, the government, and local communities must be increased to strengthen student contributions to projects and the building of sustainable villages, taking into account the needs and aspirations of local communities. With these steps, the implementation of independent learning in sports coaching education at Universitas Negeri Gorontalo can be improved while ensuring that students can develop skills and knowledge that are relevant and useful in their preparation for the future.

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