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# Analysis of students' perceptions on the Freedom of Learning - Independent Campus (MBKM) program at Chemistry study program of Ma Chung University

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#### ARTICLE INFO

#### **ABSTRACT**

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#### Keywords

student perception; freedom of learning; independent campus



Considering that Indonesian education has gone through such a long journey from 1922 to 2022 now, it is necessary to have an educational program that is able to meet the demands of workers' needs in this era of globalization. In the end, the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology designed an education policy system in the realm of higher education, namely "Freedom of Learning - Independent Campus", as an accurate strategy for optimizing academics in today's Indonesia. In this study, a survey was aimed at 40 undergraduate students of the Chemistry Study Program at Ma Chung University. Data analysis were made by quantitative approach of the nine questions successfully answered by students who filled out questionnaires in the online multiple choice questionnaire with a dependency test by nonparametric statistical methods. As a result, the majority of students of the Chemistry Study Program were quite enthusiastic about this new educational policy, although it was necessary to optimize all internal strategies of the study program curriculum, so that it could be in accordance with the activities designed in the "Freedom of Learning - Independent Campus" Program.

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#### INTRODUCTION

The education system in Indonesia has undergone a long process of development, even when Indonesia had not yet proclaimed its independence (Alhamuddin, 2014). As stated by Sundayana et al. (2019), curriculum is a program that can be planned and implemented to achieve several specific educational goals. History has recorded this trace since the three educational mottos were first put forward by the Father of Indonesian National Education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, in 1922 (ing ngarsa sung tuladha (in front, setting an example); ing madya mangun karsa (in the middle, building a will); tut wuri handayani (behind, giving encouragement)) (Warsito & Widodo, 2018). The initial foundation of Indonesian education was then further implemented into a system of "Curriculum 47" or "Plan of 1947 Learning" at the time of the early independence of Indonesia, which focused on character building in society (Husni, 2020). Starting from 1952 to 2022, the Indonesian curriculum has continuously undergone nine evolutionary processes, especially to optimize each student competency, skill, and moral standards (Fahrudin et al., 2016). Besides, the curriculum change has been based on the needs and demands of the society (Mardiana & Suyata, 2017). The dynamics of education which takes a lot of time is what makes the Indonesian people deserve to be compared with citizens of other countries in the world in economic, social, political, scientific, and technological contexts (Sulisworo, 2016).

However, the life of today's world is clearly rife with the complexity and ambiguity of the paradigm of life, which always suppresses the movement of 'change' and 'progress' quickly and unexpectedly (Suharno et al., 2020). The existence of globalization, technological developments, and the Industrial Revolution 4.0 indirectly pressure educational institutions in every country to evaluate and redesign existing curricula, so that learning outcomes can match the expectations of modern-era workforce needs (Sulisworo, 2016; Rusijono et al., 2020; Aini et al., 2021). In Indonesia itself, the education curriculum at the elementary school to tertiary level must develop learning programs whose ultimate goal is to produce innovative, creative, and solution-based graduates with high scientific mastery (Purwanti, 2021). In the end, in 2020 the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology with the approval of the Minister of Education and Culture of Indonesia for the period of 2021 until now designed an education policy in the realm of higher education, which is expected to boost academic improvement in Indonesia today a policy called "Freedom of Learning - Independent Campus" (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020).

The policy of "Freedom of Learning - Independent Campus" (widely known as *Merdeka Belajar – Kampus Merdeka* and later on abbreviated as MBKM throughout this article) is a form of affirmation of the implementation of the motto of learning by doing which has previously been a room of discussion for the last one and a half decades by academics throughout Indonesia (Kodrat, 2021). A student has the right to participate more in real pre-employment experiences, whose achievement of competence is equivalent to the system of accumulation of class learning credits for a course (Directorate General of Higher Education, 2020). Without realizing it, the majority of higher education institutions actually already have the basic foundations that support this new education policy, but its actualization needs to be evaluated and matured again (Amalia, 2021). Ma Chung University (Malang, Indonesia) is one of Indonesia's private universities which from the beginning has prepared itself to take part in the program of the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research and Technology in Indonesia.

Ma Chung University is worthy of implementing the MBKM policy because it has superior learning activities that seek to improve the quality of graduates qualified in academic knowledge, soft skills, and life skills (Universitas Ma Chung, 2018). Adhering to the vision, mission, and 12 main values that have been built, Ma Chung University already has a general program in the form of compulsory mastery of three languages (Indonesian, English and Mandarin), citizenship, entrepreneurship, and field work practices as well as special programs in the form of character development activities (OBOR - Orientation Based on Reflections), student institutions, and community service programs (Broto, 2017). The Chemistry Study Program as one of Ma Chung University's majors is committed to following the MBKM Policy. Various efforts to introduce this policy have been made by the university leadership together with the study program to students, the results of which are stated in this written survey research report. It is expected that Chemistry Study Program students can support and encourage sustainability, and play an active role in implementing the MBKM program, so that it becomes a provision for links and matches with the industrial world, the world of work, and the future of students after obtaining a bachelor's degree (Andriana & Evans, 2020). Therefore, this research aims to explain in detail the interest and readiness of Ma Chung University Chemistry Study Program students to carry out this MBKM program.

#### RESEARCH METHOD

This research was carried out by conducting a survey that aims to determine students' perceptions of the existence of the MBKM policy. The survey was conducted on all 40 students of the Chemistry Study Program of Ma Chung University from 2018 to 2020, of which all of the students had taken Compulsory English, Mandatory Mandarin, Mandatory Citizenship, and Mandatory Entrepreneurship courses; also Field Work Practices for 2015 – 2018 students.

There was no specific sample selection in this study, or the total sample was taken as a whole. The questionnaire was filled out for two days, from 16 to 18 December 2021. The questionnaire is in the form of an online questionnaire consisting of nine questions (multiple choice) as summarized in Table 1. The design of the questions was determined by the Indonesian Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology through Spada Dikti, a learning management system application.

Table 1. Survey Questions Pertaining to the Perceptions of Chemistry Study Program's Students on MBKM Policy

No.	List of Nine Selected Questions	Answer Choice Options
1.	How much do you know about the policy of	- Fully knowing
	MBKM?	<ul> <li>Knowing most of the contents of the policy</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Knowing a little</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Don't know at all</li> </ul>
2.	Where did you get the information about the policy of MBKM?	<ul> <li>Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture's online channel</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>College online channel</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Offline/online socialization activities by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Offline/online socialization activities by universities</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Community communication channel</li> </ul>
		<ul> <li>Mass media</li> </ul>
		- Others
3.	Percentage of students' knowledge level of	<ul> <li>Correct Answer</li> </ul>
	MBKM policy	<ul> <li>Wrong Answer</li> </ul>
4.	Does your study program have a previous	- Yes
	program that is in accordance with the form of the MBKM activity?	- No
5.	Do you already have curriculum documents,	- Already
	guidelines and operational procedures for	- Not yet
	participating in the MBKM program in your study program?	- Don't know
6.	Have you prepared yourself to be a part of the	- Already
	MBKM activity?	<ul><li>Not yet</li></ul>
		<ul> <li>Not interested</li> </ul>
7.	In your opinion, will learning activities outside	<ul> <li>Study period becomes long</li> </ul>
	the study program have implications on the	<ul> <li>Stay on time</li> </ul>
	study period?	- Don't know
8.	In your opinion, will off-campus learning	- Yes
	activities provide additional competencies	- Maybe
	such as skills in solving complex real problems, skills in analyzing, professional ethics, etc.?	- Don't know
9.	How are you interested in the MBKM	<ul> <li>Very interested</li> </ul>
	Program held by the Directorate General of	<ul><li>Ordinary</li></ul>
	Higher Education, Research, and Technology?	<ul><li>Not interested</li></ul>

Initially, data were collected quantitatively, with the aim of knowing the understanding of undergraduate students of the Chemistry Study Program towards this new educational policy. Then from the recapitulated data, a dependency test was carried out using nonparametric statistical methods: Chi Square Test in the IBM® SPSS® Statistics application, as convenient data

analysis method (Maris & Oostenveld, 2007; Gerald, 2018). There are two hypothesis formulations given, namely H0 (no dependency) and H1 (there is dependency). The formulation of the hypothesis is done by setting a statistical significance value (sig) of 95% or 0.05. Therefore, if sig < 0.05 is obtained, then the hypothesis H0 is rejected and H1 is accepted, or there is a significant effect between the two variables being compared. Meanwhile, if sig > 0.05 is obtained, then the hypothesis H0 is accepted and H1 is rejected, or there is no significant effect between the two variables being compared. The existence of the Chi Square test aims to help observe the relationship between the results of the answers to one question and to strengthen the assumptions of answers given by respondents in this survey research (Hakim et al., 2022).

#### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

## Recapitulation of Answers for Filling Out the Questionnaire

The list of questions used in this research survey (Table 1) basically wants to know the following three important aspects: (1) students' basic knowledge of new education policies; (2) students' knowledge of the study program's internal learning system; (3) students' opinions and willingness to follow the new education policy. The first aspect is carried out by tracing the responses to questions 1, 2, and 3. Then the second assessment aspect can be figured out through the answers given to questions 4 and 5. The third aspect is assessed from the opinions given by respondents to questions 6, 7, 8, and 9. From the analysis of the data based on these three aspects of the assessment, the overall perception of the undergraduate students of the Chemistry Study Program of Ma Chung University on the policy of MBKM can be clearly seen.

Survey question number 1 has succeeded in obtaining a response, the results of which are summarized through a bar graph in Figure 1. Through the questions given, basically all students of the Chemistry Study Program of Ma Chung University (100% of respondents) are aware of the MBKM educational policy. However, 76% of respondents have little understanding of this policy system. The results of this recapitulation inform that students seem to need access to more complete information regarding the presentation of this new education policy.

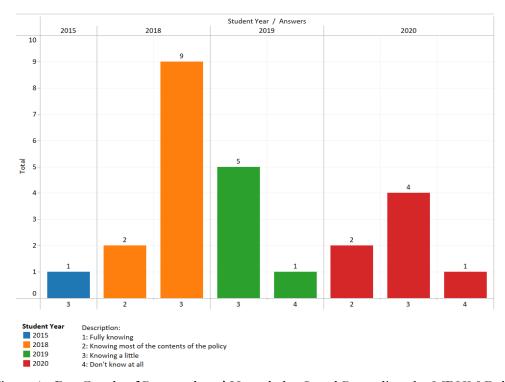


Figure 1. Bar Graph of Respondents' Knowledge Level Regarding the MBKM Policy

Information related to this new education policy can actually be accessed by undergraduate students of the Chemistry Study Program of Ma Chung University through various information sources. If traced further from the recapitulation of the results in Figure 2, of the seven options offered to answer survey question number 2, as many as 60.88% of the total respondents admitted that universities are a reliable source of information in providing information about the policy of MBKM. The rest of the students obtained independently through socialization from the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia (17.36%) and mass media (21.64%).

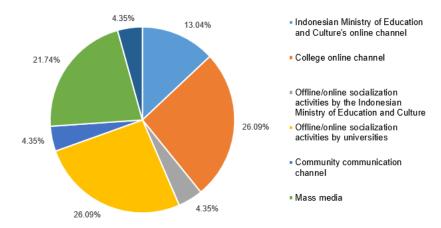


Figure 2. Pie Chart Related to Sources of Information Obtained by Respondents on the MBKM Policy

Answering the 3rd question, shown in Figure 3, related to the level of understanding of students' knowledge about MBKM activities, and in this case they are grouped into two parts. A total of 69.57% of respondents answered correctly and 30.43% answered incorrectly. The understanding that is requested pertains to "what is the minimum credit requirement that can be recognized as an MBKM program."

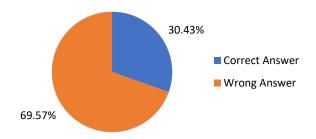


Figure 3. Pie Chart Related to Respondents' Knowledge of the MBKM Policy

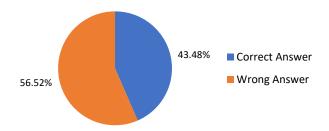


Figure 4. Pie Chart in Response to Respondents' Knowledge Regarding the Similarity of the Study Program's Education System with the Essence of the MBKM Policy

Figure 4 summarizes information related to students' knowledge regarding the internal education system utilized by the study program, whether it is considered equivalent to the policy of MBKM. As a result, as many as 56.52% of respondents admitted that the curriculum for the undergraduate education program of the Ma Chung University Chemistry Study Program was in accordance with the program promoted in the new education policy. The rest 43.48% of the other respondents considered that the study program did not have or lacked learning activities in accordance with the policy of MBKM.

Still related to the aspect of students' knowledge of the study program's internal learning system, in the fifth question of the survey, observations were made about curriculum documents, guidelines, and internal operational procedures of the study program. Through the data recap shown in Figure 5, as many as 56.52% of respondents are less aware of document information and operational standards of the study program that lead to the implementation of the MBKM Program, even 8.7% stated that they did not know this at all. The rest 34.78% of respondents are aware of the availability of curriculum documents, guidelines, and operational procedures that support this new education policy.

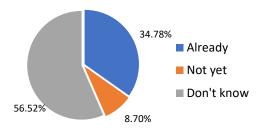


Figure 5. Pie Chart as Respondents' Responses in Observing the Availability of Curriculum Documents, Guidelines and Operational Procedures for the Chemistry Study Program to Support the MBKM Program

Furthermore, the results of the survey on the third aspect have been observed, namely regarding the willingness of students to take part in the MBKM education policy. Through question 6, it can be seen that the majority of respondents are not ready to immediately follow any education policy program that has been designed. Figure 6 shows as many as 60.87% plus 13.04% of respondents are considered necessary to be more prepared to fully support the new education policy.

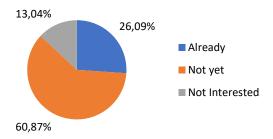


Figure 6. Pie Chart as a Form of Observation of Respondents' Readiness to Adapt in the MBKM Program

Regarding the impact of learning activities outside the study program, Figure 7 has shown that as many as 56.52% of respondents think that the study of things non-existent in the curriculum of the study program will affect the addition or reduction of the study period at the university. The rest of the respondents felt they did not know much (34.78%). In fact, 8.7% of respondents considered that learning activities outside the study program would have implications during the study period.

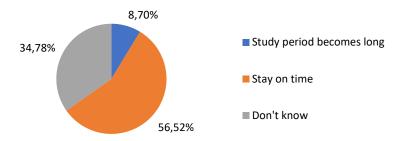


Figure 7. Pie Charts as Respondents' Responses Regarding the Implications of Study Time with Learning Activities Outside the Study Program

The MBKM program encourages students to be more active in pre-work activities outside the university. In question 8, a survey was conducted regarding the implications of off-campus learning activities in addition to soft skills. Figure 8 shows as many as 73.91% of respondents think that the ability to analyze and solve problems can realistically be achieved if students do a lot of learning activities off campus. Another response obtained stated that respondents doubted that there would be an increase in competence if they were active outside the campus.

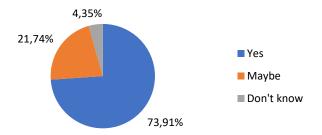


Figure 8. Pie Chart as Respondents' Responses to the Benefits of Existing Learning Activities outside Campus in Improving Problem-Solving Competence

In the end, respondents were asked to verify their interest in participating in the MBKM Program held by the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology. Through the recapitulation of the results in Figure 9, there are at least 60.87% of respondents who chose to enthusiastically accept the program approved by the Indonesian Minister of Education and Culture. However, 39.13% of respondents did not really like this designed policy.

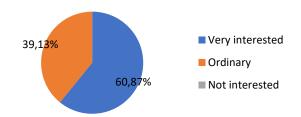


Figure 9. Pie Chart as Respondents' Responses Regarding Interest in the MBKM Program

#### **Dependency Test Results**

In this statistical analysis, the results of the recapitulation of question 9 in Figure 9 are used as independent variables to be associated with the dependent variable on the response results in questions 1, 3 to 8. Here, there are three aspects that are tested, namely: (1) dependency test of students' interest in related knowledge of MBKM Program; (2) dependency test of stu-

dents' interests on their perceptions regarding the impact of the MBKM Program on students, based on the length of study and additional competency enhancement; (3) dependency test of students' interest on the readiness of the internal academic community of Chemistry Study Program of Ma Chung University in terms of document availability, previous study program experience, and individual student's readiness. As explained in the research method section, a significant value (more or less than 0.05) obtained is the key of relation from the answer to two different questions. When the value is <0.05, then the hypothesis H1 (there is correlation between two aspects studied) is accepted.

The results of the dependency test between students' knowledge level and their interest in the MBKM Program in Table 2 show insignificant results (sig > 0.05). This means that there is no dependency between the level of students' knowledge and interest. The majority of respondents stated that they knew very little about the MBKM program. This should be addressed by the study program by increasing socialization to students related to the MBKM Program.

Table 2. Dependency Test Results of Chemistry Students' Knowledge Levels with Interests in the MBKM Program

			_		
			Knowledg	Total	
		_	Well Informed	Ill Informed	1 otai
Interest	Neutral		13.0 %	39.1 %	52.2 %
	Strong		21.7 %	26.1 %	47.8 %
Total			34.8 %	65.2 %	100.0 %
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significan (2-sided)	ce Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	$1.059^{a}$	1	.304		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	.349	1	.555		
Likelihood Ratio	1.066	1	.302		
Fisher's Exact Test				.400	.278

Table 3. Results of the Dependency Test of Chemistry Students' Interests with their Perceptions of the Impact of the MBKM Program in General

N of Valid Cases

23

Study Droman				Total		
Study Program	•		Good Poor		Excellent	Total
S1-Chemistry	Interest	Neutral	30.4 %		8.7 %	39.1 %
•		Strong	34.8 %		26.1 %	60.9 %
	Total		65.2 %		34.8 %	100.0 %

Study Program		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
S1-Chemistry	Pearson Chi-Square	1.028e	1	.311
·	Continuity Correction <sup>f</sup>	.320	1	.572
	Likelihood Ratio	1.064	1	.302
	Fisher's Exact Test			
	N of Valid Cases	23		

The results of the dependency test between students' interests and their perceptions of the impact of the MBKM program in general in Table 3 show insignificant results (sig > 0.05). This means that there is no dependency between students' interests and their general perceptions regarding the impact of the MBKM Program. The majority of students believe that the program in general will have a good or even very good impact on them.

The results of the dependency test between students' interests and their perceptions of the impact of the MBKM Program in the aspect of additional competencies in Table 4 show insignificant results (significance value > 0.05). This means that there is no dependency between students' interests and their perceptions regarding the impact of the MBKM Program in the aspect of additional competence. In general, students stated that they believed that the MBKM program would provide additional competencies beyond the competencies already acquired on campus. This shows a positive response from students regarding the benefits of the program.

Table 4. Results of Dependency Test of Chemistry Students' Interest with Perceptions of Additional Competencies

S			Addi	- Total		
Study Program		_	Maybe	Unknown	YES	Total
S1-Chemistry	Interest	Neutral	8.7 %	4.3 %	26.1 %	39.1 %
·		Strong	13.0 %		47.8 %	60.9 %
,	Total	Q	21.7 %	4.3 %	73.9 %	100.0 %

Study Program		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
S1-Chemistry	Pearson Chi-Square	1.662e	<u>-</u>	.436
	Likelihood Ratio	1.985	2	.371
	N of Valid Cases	23		

The results of the dependency test between students' interests and their perceptions of readiness in general is shown in Table 5. Readiness is seen in two aspects, namely the readiness of the study program and the readiness of the students themselves. Table 5 shows significant results (significance value < 0.05). This means that there is a dependency between students' interests and their general perception of readiness. The majority of the students stated that their readiness was low, but there was an interesting pattern seen from students of Chemistry Study Program. Those who expressed less/ordinary interest in fact expressed high readiness, and conversely, those who expressed high interest stated low readiness. This needs attention from the study program so that it can make efforts to prepare students to be better prepared to take part in the MBKM Program.

Table 5. Results of Dependency Test of Chemistry Students' Interest with Their Perception of General Readiness

Study			Preparation			Total
Program			Low	Average	High	Total
S1-Chemistry	Interest	Neutral	26.1 %		13.0 %	39.1 %
•		Strong	34.8 %	26.1 %		60.9 %
	Total		60.9 %	26.1 %	13.0 %	100.0 %

Study Program		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
S1-Chemistry	Pearson Chi-Square	$8.605^{e}$	2	.014
	Likelihood Ratio	11.668	2	.003
	N of Valid Cases	23		

The results of the dependency test between students' interests and the availability of the MBKM documents in their respective study program in Table 6 show insignificant results (significance value > 0.05). This means that there is no dependency between students' interest and the availability of the MBKM documents. The majority of the students stated that they did not know about the existence of the MBKM supporting documents owned by the study program. Therefore, the study program should better socialize the documents related to the MBKM program that it has made so that all students can easily access them, or, if the document is not yet available, it should be started gradually.

Table 6. Results of Dependency Test of Chemistry Students' Interest with the Availability of MBKM Documents owned by Chemistry Study Program

Study Program			Document MBKM			Total
			Not Yet Already Un		Unknown	- Totai
S1-Chemistry	Interest	Neutral	8.7 %	4.3 %	26.1 %	39.1 %
·		Strong		30.4 %	30.4 %	60.9 %
Total		8.7 %	34.8 %	56.5 %	100.0 %	

Study Program		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
S1-Chemistry	Pearson Chi-Square	5.762e	2	.056
•	Likelihood Ratio	6.816	2	.033
	N of Valid Cases	23		

The results of the dependency test between students' interests and the previous MBKM program activities in the Chemistry Study Program in Table 7 show insignificant results (significance value > 0.05). This means that there is no dependency between students' interests and activities similar to the previously existing MBKM Program. Both students with high interest and those with low interest, stated that they saw that there had not been any activities like the MBKM program before. This needs to be a concern for the study program because apparently students do not realize that internship activities frequently conducted outside campus are one form of the MBKM activities. This could be due to the low level of knowledge of students regarding the MBKM program. Therefore, efforts are needed from the study program related to the intensive socialization of the various kinds of MBKM programs as suggested by the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Table 7. Results of the Dependency Test of Chemistry Students' Interests with the Previous MBKM Activities

Study			Past Ac	T-4-1	
Program			NO	YES	- Total
S1-Chemistry	Interest	Neutral	21.7 %	17.4 %	39.1 %
·		Strong	34.8 %	26.1 %	60.9 %
	Total		56.5 %	43.5 %	100.0 %

Study Program		Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
S1-Chemistry	Pearson Chi-Square	.006e	1	.940		
	Continuity Correction <sup>f</sup>	.000	1	1.000		
	Likelihood Ratio	.006	1	.940		
	Fisher's Exact Test				1.000	.637

Table 8. Results of the Dependency Test of Chemistry Students' Interests with Their Readiness to Participate in the MBKM Program

Ct. J. Due and a			Ready			- Total
Study Program		•	Not Yet	Ready	Not B	- 1 otai
S1-Chemistry	Interest	Neutral	26.1 %	-	13.0 %	39.1 %
•		Strong	34.8 %	26.1 %		60.9 %
Total		60.9 %	26.1 %	13.0 %	100.0 %	

Study Program		Value	Value df Asymptotic Signit (2-sided)	
S1-Chemistry	Pearson Chi-Square	8.605e	2	.014
	Likelihood Ratio	11.668	2	.003
	N of Valid Cases	23		

The results of the dependency test between students' interests and their readiness to participate in the MBKM Program in Table 8 show significant results (significance value < 0.05). This means that there is a dependency between students' interests and their readiness to participate in the MBKM Program. Students with high interest (very interested) stated that they were ready to join this program compared to students with ordinary interests. This means that the higher the interest of students to take part in the MBKM, the greater the effort to prepare themselves to follow the new policy. As stated by Firmansyah et al. (2020) the students will be interested if the training process runs satisfactorily for participants who will eventually bring up reactions from participants who a lot of fun. However, overall the majority of the students still stated that they were not ready; therefore, the role of the study program was very much needed related to the facilitation of such readiness.

Overall, the MBKM policy received a good response from students at Ma Chung University Chemistry Study Program. Several related studies have reported the results of observational studies whose results were like what was done in this study, using consimilar approach in researching. Positive expectations and suggestions were expressed as a form of support from the university's academic community for this MBKM policy (Rochmiyati et al., 2022; Nur et al., 2022; Santri & Atmaja, 2022). All these studies are true research in containing the aspirations of the community within the scope of educational institutions towards the MBKM policy.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Through the results of the research, it can be seen that the majority of undergraduate students of the Chemistry Study Program of Ma Chung University are aware of the MBKM program designed by the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research, and Technology, in which most information was obtained from Ma Chung University itself. So far, students of Chemistry Study Program are willing to follow this new educational policy, although they are not yet fully technically ready. Statistically, there is a significant dependency especially on the relationship between students' interest and their readiness in general. The majority of the students stated that their readiness was low to participate in the MBKM program. Besides, there is a unique fact that precisely the students expressing their mediocre interest feel more prepared to participate in MBKM than those with high interest. In order to finalize the readiness of the Chemistry Study Program of Ma Chung University for the MBKM program, more outreach is needed between lecturers and students. In addition, it is necessary to evaluate the adjustment of the MBKM program in the curriculum of the Chemistry Study Program. Therefore, the academic community can more easily adapt and run this program effectively.

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