

Examining Educational Equity in Indonesia through Student Performance in the Certified Emancipated Learning Internship Program

Mengkaji Kesetaraan Pendidikan di Indonesia Melalui Kinerja Mahasiswa dalam Program Magang Bersertifikat Kampus Merdeka

Lukman Nul Hakim,¹ Destina Winarti,² Hazrat Shah
Kayen,³ Muhammad Numan,⁴ Indra Cakra Buana,⁵ &
Dewi Barliana⁶

¹lukman.hakim@uiii.ac.id

Universitas Islam International Indonesia
Jl. Raya Bogor Km 33 No.5, Kota Depok, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

²destina.winarti@uiii.ac.id

Universitas Islam International Indonesia
Jl. Raya Bogor Km 33 No.5, Kota Depok, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

³hazrat.kayen@uiii.ac.id

Universitas Islam International Indonesia
Jl. Raya Bogor Km 33 No.5, Kota Depok, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

⁴muhammad.numan@uiii.ac.id

Universitas Islam International Indonesia
Jl. Raya Bogor Km 33 No.5, Kota Depok, Jawa Barat, Indonesia

⁵indra.buana@dpr.go.id

Pusat Pengembangan Kompetensi, Sekretariat Jenderal DPR RI
Jl. Gatot Subroto, Jakarta Pusat, Jakarta, Indonesia

⁶dewi.barliana@dpr.go.id

Pusat Pengembangan Kompetensi, Sekretariat Jenderal DPR RI
Jl. Gatot Subroto, Jakarta Pusat, Daerah Khusus Ibukota Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstrak: Kesenjangan akses terhadap pendidikan berkualitas antara masyarakat Jawa dan luar Jawa merupakan persoalan serius yang melanggengkan ketidakadilan sistemis. Di Pulau Jawa, daerah perkotaan mendapatkan manfaat dari pendidikan tinggi yang lengkap, dosen yang berkualitas, dan sumber daya pendidikan lainnya yang melimpah, sedangkan di daerah pedesaan dan terpencil sering kali mengalami hal yang sebaliknya. Para peneliti telah menyoroti isu ketidakadilan dalam pendidikan dari konteks, di antaranya, kurikulum, fasilitas dan kualitas dosen. Namun, tidak banyak yang melihat isu ketidakadilan ini dalam konteks program magang. Itulah yang menjadi



kebaruan dari penelitian ini. Fokus kajiannya adalah pada perbedaan kinerja mahasiswa Program Magang Bersertifikat Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) dari perguruan tinggi dalam dan luar Pulau Jawa, dengan pendekatan kuantitatif. Rubrik penilaian kinerja mahasiswa disusun oleh Tim MBKM instansi tempat magang yang meliputi student log book, tes akademik, formulir observasi, artikel, dan presentasi. Penilaian dilakukan oleh para mentor yang telah dilatih. Data penelitian berasal dari 144 mahasiswa baik perguruan tinggi negeri maupun swasta di dalam dan luar Pulau Jawa. 120 mahasiswa dari Jawa dan 24 dari luar Jawa. Uji independent T-test dilakukan untuk melihat perbedaan signifikan kinerja magang mahasiswa di DPR RI. Ditemukan bahwa terdapat perbedaan nilai akhir yang signifikan antara kinerja magang mahasiswa yang berasal dari universitas di dalam dan di luar Pulau Jawa, dibandingkan dengan mahasiswa yang mengikuti program magang dari universitas di dalam Pulau Jawa. Penelitian ini menyoroti disparitas kualitas pendidikan dilihat dari program magang. Kajian ini merekomendasikan Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi, Sains, dan Teknologi RI untuk menghasilkan kebijakan afirmatif bagi mahasiswa luar pulau Jawa termasuk kebijakan program magang.

Kata kunci: kesetaraan pendidikan; Kampus Merdeka; kota–desa; magang

Abstract: The disparity in access to quality education between regions within Java and those outside it perpetuates systemic inequality. While urban areas in Java benefit from comprehensive higher education, skilled faculty, and ample resources, students in non-Java regions often face significant limitations. This study uniquely examines this educational inequality through the lens of student performance in the Merdeka Campus’s Certified Internship Program (MBKM), comparing students from universities within Java to those outside. Using a quantitative approach, the research analyzed the internship performance of 144 students—120 from Java and 24 from outside Java—based on a performance rubric developed by the MBKM Team at their respective internship institutions. This rubric includes assessments from student logbooks, academic tests, observation forms, article papers, and presentations. Evaluations were conducted by trained mentors, and an independent t-test was applied to identify performance differences. Results indicated a significant disparity in final scores, with students from Java-based universities outperforming those from outside Java. This study highlights the need to address educational disparities in internship performance and recommends affirmative policies from the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology to support students from outside Java, particularly in internship programs.

Keywords: educational equity; emancipated learning; internship; urban–rural

Introduction

Equitable access to higher education is very important for promoting social and economic growth in Indonesia, where disparities in access have limited opportunities for many. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (2008), equity in education refers to “the extent to which access and opportunities for children and adults are just and fair.” However, the landscape of Indonesia’s higher education shows the opposite. There is a significant disparity, with students from urban areas extensively outnumbering those from rural regions—a trend linked to higher tuition costs and limited access to educational resources in rural communities (Logli, 2016). Java Island holds dominant advantages in resources

and infrastructure, and it has a concentration of reputable educational institutions, contrasting sharply with the limited facilities outside Java. This imbalance not only remains a persistent challenge (Ananda et al., 2023), but also perpetuates systemic inequality and hinders social progress and economic advancement across the nation.

Among the islands in the Indonesian archipelago, Java Island is one of the most developed. The majority of sectors use Java as one of their main marketing strategies. Additionally, Java's location aids in the expansion of its economy. For the same reason, Java is considered more developed regarding access, quality, equity, and education equality than in regions outside Java. The discrepancy in educational standards between Java and other areas heightens concerns regarding educational equity in Indonesia. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013), most Indonesians are compelled to relocate to urban and developed regions in pursuit of education due to the restricted accessibility and availability of higher learning institutions. According to Moeliodihardjo (2014), almost half of the population of higher education institutions (HEIs) in Indonesia are located in Java with 43,7 percent, while in Maluku and Papua combined, there are only approximately 3,4 percent. These and similar other reports and studies uncover an imbalance of fairness and justice in urban/rural equity in education (OECD, 2020; Logli, 2016).

To address various education issues in Indonesia, the government has launched various policies. One of the policies is the Emancipated Learning Program, in Bahasa Indonesia also known as Kampus Merdeka. The policy is a comprehensive career preparation program to help the future Indonesian generation prepare for the world of work. The policy tries to fill the gap between student competencies and the competencies required by the industries. This is one of the most notable programs by Kementerian Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, Riset, dan Teknologi (Kemendikbudristek) during the period of 2019–2024. Following the cabinet reorganization in October 2024, the agency was restructured and rebranded as Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi, Riset, dan Teknologi (Ministry of Higher Education, Research, and Technology [Kemendikti saintek]), with the previous ministry split into three separate entities.

This research limits its scope to the Emancipated Learning Program since the program has attracted many scholars to evaluate the program from many perspectives, such as the curriculum (Baharuddin, 2021), the number of participants (Sintiawati et al., 2022), and the policy (Mailin, 2021). The program is widely discussed because it is believed that it anticipates the requirements of the present age world by offering university students a wide array of challenges and opportunities, fostering the development of their creativity, capabilities, individuality, and requirements. Moreover, engaging with real-world situations and field dynamics promotes independence in the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. As mentioned by Siregar et al. (2020), the current condition requires students with the ability to face real-world problems, interact socially, collaborate, self-manage, and comply with targets, demands, and accomplishments. As stipulated in Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation Number 3 of 2020 on the National Standards for Higher Education, universities are free to organize the Emancipated Learning Program activities that suit the needs and interests of their students. The policy, for instance, gives students the right to take courses in external study programs for one semester and carry out activities outside of higher education for two semesters.

The Emancipated Learning Program has nine sub-programs: student exchange, internship, teaching assistance, research assistance, community empowerment, micro-credential independent projects, entrepreneurship, humanitarian activiti-

es, and military service. This research will focus on one of the programs, namely the Certified Emancipated Learning Internship Program. The policy idea is to get students ready with hands-on skills outside the classroom. According to Kemendikbudristek, the internship program gives students a chance to get real-world experience by working in the industry or their professional sector (Kemendikbudristek, n.d.).

The Certified Emancipated Learning Internship Program is available for all private and public universities across Indonesia, as well as students from various academic disciplines. As a result, the program has attracted students from various academic disciplines and universities inside and outside Java. Therefore, this research will explore the performance of students from inside and outside Java who have participated in the program at one particular state institution. The research tries to answer the question, “Is there any significant difference in students’ internship performance within the scope of both Java and outside Java?”. This study aims to shed light on the disparity of quality education in Indonesia from the perspective of internship programs. The study’s results can serve as a foundation for the Indonesian House of Representatives Commission X to exercise its oversight function over its counterpart, the ministry responsible for higher education, Kemendikti Saintek.

To answer the research question, a quantitative research method was utilized to see statistical differences between the dependent variables, namely students’ performance. Student performance was rated based on the assessment rubric created by the MBKM Team at the students’ internship institution, which includes a logbook, academic test, observation form, article paper, and presentation. These evaluations are integral to offering students constructive feedback and ensuring a meaningful learning experience.

Trained mentors evaluated the student’s performance by the end of the internship program. In the organization where we conduct the research, every student will intern in several departments, allowing them to gain a comprehensive understanding of different areas within the organization. Each department is equipped with a dedicated mentor who is responsible not only for educating and guiding the interns through their tasks but also for monitoring their progress and providing detailed evaluations.

These evaluations are crucial as they form the basis for assessing the interns’ overall performance and development, ensuring that each student receives constructive feedback and an enriching learning experience.

Students from 56 universities participated in a state institution’s Certified Emancipated Learning Internship Program. These universities were categorized by their accreditation status, region, and type. The participants represented a range of academic disciplines and came from both Java and outside Java. Specifically, 120 students from 36 universities in Java and 24 students from 20 universities outside Java took part, as detailed in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Number of Participant’s Universities for Each Grouping Criteria

Number of participants universities						
Prime	Accreditation		Location		Type	
	A	B	Java	Outside Java	Public	Private
1	40	15	36	20	46	10

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Participants

Category	University location	Number of students	Mean	SD
Final score	Outside Java Island	24	86.99	3.28
	Java Island	120	88.95	2.2

This study utilized secondary data from the institution where students conducted their internship program. The student's internship performance data was gathered from several sources, namely the student log book, academic test, observation form, and paper presentation. Each aspect was weighed and summed up as a student's internship performance score. The data was categorized as continuous data with an interval measurement scale, as each score ranged from 0 to 100. The details of each aspect of students' internship performance are described in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Criteria for Students' Internship Scores

Aspect (weight)	Components									
Log book (20%)	Public lecture attendance	Simulation score	Learning Journal							
Academic test (20%)	Academic score									
Observation (20%)	Administration skills	Resource management	Customer service orientation	Information gathering	Critical thinking	Data analysis	Data reporting & presentation	Collaboration skills	Leadership	
Paper presentation (20%)	Material mastery	Presentation technique	Communication technique							

Note: The final score (100%) is the sum of the scores from the log book, academic test, observation, and presentation

Following data collection, the data was organized and analyzed using MS Excel and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Statistical analysis was conducted on two levels: descriptive statistics for summarizing and visualizing the data and inferential statistics for making data-driven conclusions.

The Certified Emancipated Learning Internship Program

The Emancipated Learning Program is an initiative designed to modernize Indonesia's higher education system by aligning it with labor market needs, and equipping students with practical skills and real-world experience (Sopacua & Fadli, 2022). By integrating academic learning with hands-on projects, the program aims to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring students are better prepared for their careers (Apoko et al., 2023).

At its core, the Emancipated Learning Program promotes an independent and adaptable approach to learning within universities, fostering a student-centered educational environment. This program encourages creativity, personal capacity building, and character development (Yudhawasthi & Christiani, 2022). Key elements of the program include facilitating the establishment of new study programs, reforming higher education certifications, streamlining legal recognition processes for state universities, and allowing students to engage in three semesters outside their primary

program. During this period, students may earn credits by taking classes outside their major for one semester, while the remaining two are dedicated to practical learning activities.

This program exemplifies student-centered education, fostering innovation and self-reliance. Immersing students in field dynamics such as skill requirements, problem-solving, collaboration, and self-management aims to cultivate cognitive and interpersonal skills essential for professional success.

Enrollment and Program Structure

A core component of the Emancipated Campus Program, known in Indonesia as Magang Bersertifikat Kampus Merdeka (MBKM), is its certified internship program, introduced in November 2020 by the Kemendikbudristek (Tim Microcredential, 2021). The program spans one to three semesters, during which students may earn up to 20 credits in one semester. Available to public and private university students at the S-1 level (equivalent to a bachelor's degree), the internship program is accessible to students registered in Indonesia's Higher Education Database (PDDikti).

The MBKM program was developed after consultations between 200 academics and 200 industry professionals, aiming to address shared obstacles in traditional internship schemes. Some of these obstacles included difficulties securing internships, inadequate oversight during internships, mismatches in internship timing and duration between universities and industries, lack of supportive policies, and limited industry recognition of internship outcomes. Additional issues identified included a need for integration of projects within internships, supportive policies for high-quality internships, adjustment challenges for students entering the industry, competency gaps, and inadequate supervision for interns.

Benefits and Principles of the Emancipated Learning Program

The Emancipated Learning Program provides various benefits by offering students relevant, real-world challenges that foster the development of practical skills. The program encourages students to pursue a self-driven education, develop professional skills, and meet the complex demands of the labor market. Its emphasis on flexible, innovative education seeks to shape students who are resourceful, independent, and ready to tackle real-world problems.

Research and Perspectives on Program Implementation

Since its inception, the Emancipated Learning Program has sparked diverse opinions regarding its implementation and effectiveness across universities in Indonesia. Research by Cakranegara and Santoso (2022) highlights mixed student perspectives; some students view the program as beneficial for achieving their career goals, while others see it as mainly a self-development opportunity or a temporary solution. Similarly, Vega & Nur (2022) report that although 50 percent of students expressed satisfaction with the program, others cited technical and credit-hour issues as challenges.

Further studies reveal varied experiences and challenges across institutions. For example, Anggarwati (2022) found positive support for program implementation at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo, particularly from administrative and practical perspectives. Conversely, Krishnapatria (2021) identified policy challenges in implementing the program within the English Studies department at Universitas Padjajaran. Research by Yusuf (2021) noted that government support, faculty involvement, and

campus readiness facilitated successful implementation in private universities in West Java, while Restu et al. (2022) found promising conditions at Universitas Negeri Medan due to faculty and campus support.

However, Qorib and Harfiani (2021) discovered that the program poses challenges for students in institutions outside urban areas, where unique university circumstances complicate implementation (Budiharso & Tarman, 2020; Subedi et al., 2020; Wahyuni et al., 2021).

Continuous Evaluation and Future Directions

Given the varied research findings on implementation, support, and outcomes, further evaluation is essential to ensure the program meets its goals. Tayibnapi (2011) emphasizes that assessing the Emancipated Learning Program's success is critical for determining its sustainability (Sukardi, 2011).

Kemendikbudristek envisions the Emancipated Learning Program as a transformative educational model that prepares Indonesian students for the demands of the workforce. As more research and evaluations are conducted, identifying best practices and addressing areas for improvement will be vital for the program's alignment with student needs and labor market expectations. By fostering a flexible, skills-based educational framework, the Emancipated Learning Program aims to contribute to a progressive Indonesian education system and equip a new generation of students for success in the 21st century.

Educational Performance in Rural and Urban Settings

The disparity in educational performance between rural and urban areas has been a persistent issue in many countries. Various factors contribute to this gap, including differences in resource availability, teacher quality, infrastructure, and access to technology. Urban schools often benefit from better funding, more experienced teachers, and more advanced facilities, which can significantly enhance students' learning experience and academic outcomes. In contrast, rural schools frequently struggle with limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a shortage of qualified teachers, which can impede student achievement and limit educational opportunities. This section explores the key differences in educational performance between rural and urban settings, examining the underlying causes and potential strategies to bridge this gap.

Domestic graduates often fill fewer positions in rural areas compared to metropolitan regions, highlighting a significant workforce disparity (McGrail et al., 2020). This issue is further compounded by the quality of rural internships, which plays a crucial role in shaping post-graduate employment decisions. An article examining post-interns' perspectives reveals that many graduates perceive rural internships as lacking in quality and support compared to those offered in urban settings (Ralph & Walker, 2012). This perception influences their reluctance to accept permanent positions in rural areas, exacerbating the shortage of skilled professionals in these communities. Improving the quality of rural internships could be a key strategy in addressing this imbalance and encouraging more domestic graduates to consider rural employment opportunities.

Facilities management is crucial in shaping students' academic achievement in educational institutions. Research has shown that the quality and availability of physical facilities significantly influence academic performance at the university level (Zuri-

anan et al., 2021, p. 27). Specifically, a positive relationship has been identified between consistent power supply, adequate health facilities, and improved academic outcomes (Fagbohunka, 2017). Furthermore, the use of collegiate recreation facilities has been explored, revealing a correlation between regular usage and higher academic achievement. These findings underscore the importance of well-managed, comprehensive facilities in fostering an environment conducive to academic success (Das et al., 2021).

The Certified Emancipated Learning Internship Program and Equity in Education

The issue of equity in education is of great importance. According to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 26, “Everyone has the right to education, and higher education shall be equally accessible to all based on merit” (Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948). This declaration of the United Nations signifies that education as a basic human right shall be available to everyone without considering their race, social class, community level, gender, poverty, and the like. On the other hand, Rusman (2012) defines equity in education as increased fairness and opportunities for students to get ultimate results. Rusman (2012) brings equity closely connected to justice in providing quality education for all. Amadeo (2021, par 1) puts equity in education as giving every student the necessary resources to perform at an acceptable level. For the sake of economic mobilizations, equitable education comes first. Otherwise, societies would come under the darkness of economic suffering and imbalance. In return, it would lead to inequality in income as a result of students receiving inequitable treatment in terms of education. On the other hand, inequity in education leads to structural inequality. It signifies that low-income or underdeveloped areas receive inferior education compared to students in higher-income or developed areas.

Realizing the same declaration, according to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System article 11 paragraph (2), “Every citizen has the same right to get a quality education”. It has turned into the basis of the national educational development agenda, and to put this into effect as equity and equality in education, the Indonesian government has come forward with issuing autonomy and decentralization of the education system (Ginting, 2019). A book by Radius Prawiro, *The Indonesian Struggle to Build the Economy: Pragmatism in Action*, talks about growth, equity, and stability development is centered on (Mujahidun, 2016). It brings again the issue of economic development to which education is undoubtedly connected.

Another issue of concern, together with equity, is equal access and equal quality of education between rural and urban Indonesia. Education can enhance a student’s capacity for critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making (Nazneen, 2024). Nevertheless, for education to yield such outcomes, it must meet rigorous standards. Consequently, governments often strive to enhance both the accessibility and the caliber of education for all members of society. The Indonesian government is no different (Muttaqin, 2018). While its endeavors yielded observable results, several objectives aimed at enhancing accessibility to and the quality of education remain unfulfilled (Lundine et al., 2013, as cited in Muttaqin, 2018, p. 2).

According to a study by Kristiansen and Pratikno (2006), participation in education is discrepant across various district levels of Indonesia. However, after Indonesia’s independence, social and educational disparities have been significantly reduced. Still, geographical differences are also significant, with rural areas having lower levels of enrollment and literacy. Enrollment in senior high schools differs by 31 percentage points between urban and rural areas (Kristiansen & Pratikno, 2006).

Fadhil and Sabic-El-Rayess (2021) argued that poverty and lack of educational infrastructure are forcing many Indonesians to lag in advancing their knowledge and skills in the residence setting. On the other hand, with only 3.6 percent of the GDP currently, the level of public education spending in Indonesia is lower than recommended for developing economies (Dilas et al., 2019). According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2013), access to HEIs in Indonesia's less developed regions is constrained, compelling numerous individuals to migrate to urban areas to pursue educational opportunities.

There is a significant gap between rural and urban Indonesia regarding education provision, and few provinces have 80 percent of Indonesia's top universities, according to Logli (2015). Among them, the top ten are on the island of Java (Topuniversities.com., 2019). In 2012, Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, boasted a gross enrollment rate of 122 percent for higher education, starkly contrasting to the meager 22 percent recorded in West Papua (OECD, 2013). The majority of educational institutions are presently concentrated in the Java (43.7 percent) and Sumatra (29.1 percent) archipelagos, with the islands of Maluku and Papua hosting a mere 3.4 percent of all HEIs (Moeliodihardjo, 2014, p. 1).

Implementing The Emancipated Learning Program in Indonesia, particularly inside and outside Java, brings the focus to educational equity. To make education equitable, policymakers had long debates and discussions (McLaughlin, 2010). Similarly, scholarly discussions over equality and equity in education make up a recurrent theme in their debates (Green, 1983; Neill, 1976). Equity in education means that poor treatment or racial discrimination might hinder quality education and access to the same educational opportunities in urban-rural areas. According to Fadhil and Sabic-El-Rayess (2021), the gap in higher education accessibility between urban and rural regions endures. Only some provinces of Indonesia have 80 percent of the best HEIs (Logli, 2015). Java Island is the center of the ten greatest universities (Topuniversities.com, 2019). According to OECD (2013), West Papua (under 22 percent) and Jakarta (122 percent) had far greater differences in terms of enrollment in 2012. Gardiner (2008) states that a policy approach that means one-size-fits-all neglects the necessities and lives of particular communities regarding education. A policy that under-realizes ground realities and develops elsewhere for a society often overlooks the needs and problems of people in that society.

Furthermore, social context and community preparedness are also essential considerations for the success of the Emancipated Learning Program. Most of the studies on the Emancipated Learning Program focus either on the program implementation (Ahid & Sufirmansyah, 2022; Anggarwati, 2022; Krishnapatria, 2021; Restu et al., 2022) or the student and teachers' perceptions (Cakranegara & Santoso, 2022; Vega & Nur, 2022). There is a lack of research on how the program resulted in various parts of the country, particularly inside or outside Java, to see the Emancipated Learning Program's effect on the student's achievement across academic disciplines. This issue determines the success and failure of the Emancipated Learning program. This study compares students' achievement across academic disciplines in public and private universities located inside and outside Java to compare students' internship performance.

Analyzing Student Internship Performance

After data collection, two programs, MS Excel and Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS), were used to help arrange and analyze the data. The statistical anal-

ysis was carried out on two levels, namely, descriptive statistics and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics provide data on the student population in this study. On the other hand, inferential statistics were applied to examine the difference between students' internship performance inside and outside Java when taking the Certified Emancipated Learning Internship Program in one state institution.

From the initial collected data of 149 participants, due to the data cleaning, only the data from 144 participants were used for further analysis. These participants included 24 students from universities outside of Java Island and 120 students from universities on Java Island. Participants from Java outnumbered those from outside Java; however, the data used was the central tendency data from each group; therefore, the imbalance in the number of participants from each group should not be a problem.

An independent T-test was undertaken to examine the difference between student participants from the universities in Java Island and outside Java regarding their performance during the internship program. Their final score measured their performance. Table 4 presents the completed independent T-test results. There was a significant difference between students from the university in Java Island and outside Java in their performance during the internship program, favoring students from the universities in Java Island.

Table 4. T-test Result of Final Score Observed

Variables	Levene's Test		T-test			
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Final score	Equal variances assumed	8.374	0.004	-3.618	142	<.001
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.793	27.312	0.009

Findings indicate that students from universities within Java performed better by the end of the internship program than those from institutions outside the island. These findings align with the research results of Rahayu and Sudaryono (2022), which highlight the superiority of higher education institutions from Java compared to those outside Java regarding intellectual capital disclosure. Intellectual capital disclosure reflects the university's attention to its human resources, such as lecturers and faculty staff, in terms of competence and compensation, which are often demonstrated through employee training programs. The intellectual capital disclosure advantage affects the student's performance, as research shows that teacher competence significantly influences student performance (Superi & Naqshbandi, 2022). These findings also align with the study by Rahayuningtyas & Triana (2017), which concluded that universities in Java possess better intellectual capital than those outside Java.

This research finding highlights the challenges faced by the Emancipated Learning program. In the university context, it causes administration problems and pushes the university to redesign the university academic information systems, which hinders the program's effective implementation (Apriliani et al., 2022). These real-world obstacles often contrast with policy expectations that guide program design. Similarly, Purwanti (2021) highlighted challenges with university preparedness and skepticism about this newly introduced policy. One factor behind this disparity may be the limited infrastructure and resources in regions outside Java, as many areas beyond the island are less developed. Addressing these gaps in student funding and institutional readiness, especially in more remote parts of Indonesia, could empower students and enhance their performance in the program.

In summary, the results favor students from universities within Java, pointing to the need for targeted support for students from other regions. Policy recommendations should focus on two key areas to strengthen the program's impact nationwide. First, the Emancipated Learning policy should be refined to consider universities' unique challenges outside of Java. Second, consistent and timely monitoring and evaluation ensure that implementation remains effective and responsive to students' needs. Additionally, integrating a recognition mechanism for students' achievements would provide valuable intrinsic motivation to drive engagement and success.

Conclusion

The present study tries to find the difference in the internship performance of students from inside and outside Java universities. It was essential to shed light on how the Emancipated Learning Program prepares graduates for the fast-paced work market since the program is part of the Kemendikbudristek's Emancipated Learning Program policy, which allows all students to hone skills based on their talents and interests before entering the workforce as Career preparation steps.

After analyzing the data of students from inside and outside Java universities and statistically analyzing their final scores, it was found that there is a significant difference in internship performance between students from inside and outside Java. The analysis also revealed that students from universities inside Java perform better than those outside Java. Since the internship was held in one institution, all students had access to similar opportunities, facilities, and learning perspectives.

The study results indicate that the Indonesian government still needs to go through a lot of homework to bring forth quality education for Indonesians outside Java. The government needs to pay more attention to education outside of Java in its policy. One of the ways is to make an affirmative action for education policy in Indonesia, giving more chances and voice to students from outside Java to balance the developmental issues in education in and outside Java. Although the Indonesian government has been attentive to territories through the 3Ts (Terluar, Terdepan, Tertinggal), this means outermost, furthest, and most lagging in English. It does not signify that equity in education has been fulfilled, as the study results find that the gap in internship achievement disparity needs consideration on policy grounds. In summary, the findings of this study need to be considered an alarming bell for the newly restructured Indonesian Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Technology or Kementerian Pendidikan Tinggi, Sains, dan Teknologi (Kemendikti Saintek) to produce affirmative policies for students from outside Java, including the policy in the internship program. Also, Commission X of the Indonesian House of Representatives, which is responsible for overseeing the performance of Kemendikti Saintek in implementing their policies in education, must give more attention to this particular issue.

Finally, the study suggested policy recommendations for better management and implementation of the Emancipated Learning Program inside and outside Java. (1) The policy should further improve to encompass and consider realities from the ground, particularly in universities outside Java. (2) Another important policy takeaway could be clear and on-time monitoring and evaluation of this policy implementation and the internship program, which would also help students get better involved in this program and lead to better performance. (3) Finally, students' achievement should have an appreciation mechanism in the policy to help provide intrinsic motivation to students.

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