

## **BENEFITS OF THE INDEPENDENT STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR OUTBOND STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION AT HKBP NOMMENSEN UNIVERSITY**

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRAK
<p>Diterima: 05 Februari 2026 Direvisi: 25 Februari 2026 Disetujui: 12 Maret 2026 Tersedia Daring: 30 April 2026</p> <hr/> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Manfaat Program Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka, Mahasiswa FKIP, Universitas HKBP Nommensen Medan</p>	<p>Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui manfaat Program Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka pada mahasiswa Outbond di Fakultas Keguruan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas HKBP Nommensen Medan dan mengukur tingkat kepuasan para peserta Program Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka. Desain penelitian ini. Desain penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian kuantitatif dengan kuantitatif deskriptif dan teknik pengambilan data melalui angket, yang melibatkan sampel penelitian 54 mahasiswa FKIP UHN Medan yang sudah mengikuti program pertukaran mahasiswa merdeka. Deskripsi hasil penelitian menunjukkan rata-rata nilai angket adalah 4,00% dengan kategori nilai angket setuju dengan manfaat PMM dalam pengembangan akademik, karier, pemahaman budaya, dan soft skills mahasiswa, Manfaat Program Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka (PMM) terhadap, fasilitas, dan dukungan institusional selama PMM di PT tujuan, Manfaat Pelaksanaan Program Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka (PMM) terhadap pengalaman belajar di PT tujuan dan Manfaat Program Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka (PMM) terhadap pengembangan sosial, dan profesional mahasiswa. Dengan demikian terdapat manfaat program pertukaran mahasiswa merdeka pada Mahasiswa Outbond Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan di Universitas HKBP Nommensen.</p>
ABSTRACT	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program, FKIP Students, HKBP Nommensen University Medan</p>	<p><i>This study aims to determine the benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program for Outbound students at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, HKBP Nommensen University, Medan, and to measure the level of satisfaction of the Independent Student Exchange Program participants. This study design uses a quantitative research approach with descriptive quantitative data collection techniques through questionnaires, involving a sample of 54 students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, UHN Medan, who have participated in the Independent Student Exchange Program. The description of the research results shows an average questionnaire score of 4.00%, with the questionnaire score categorized as agreeing with the benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) in developing students' academics, careers, cultural understanding, and soft skills. The benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) in terms of facilities and institutional support during the PMM at the target university. The benefits of implementing the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) in terms of the learning experience at the target university. The</i></p>

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*benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) in terms of students' social and professional development. Thus, the Independent Student Exchange Program benefits students from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education's Outbound Program at HKBP Nommensen University*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the Republic of Indonesia Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning higher education, it is stated that higher education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the nation's life (Mufidah & Fadilah, 2022). This is conveyed in Article 4 point a regarding the function of higher education. Then in Article 5, it is followed by the objectives of higher education which state that higher education aims: to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty and have noble morals, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, skilled, competent and cultured for the benefit of the nation (Insani et al., 2021).

Developing student potential is crucial in higher education. Students are valuable assets for a nation's future as they are future leaders, innovators, and drivers of change in various areas of life. By developing their potential through quality education and diverse experiences beyond the curriculum, students can hone the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary for career success and positive contributions to society. Furthermore, by encouraging students to explore their interests and talents, educational institutions can help them discover their passions and direct their energies toward appropriate fields. Thus, developing student potential is not only an investment in their studies but also an investment in the nation's sustainable future (Laksita, 2023).

To achieve this, the government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, launched the Independent Learning and Independent Campus (MBKM) program, which was then implemented through Regulation No. 3 of 2020 concerning Higher Education Standards. The MBKM program is student-centered, providing students with the opportunity to develop their own potential (Anwar, 2022a).

The implementation of the MBKM program is carried out with several considerations, one of which is that MBKM must prioritize the balance of developing specific work skills (hard skills) accompanied by soft skills, especially those obtained outside the university environment/in the world of work. The Student Exchange Program (PMM) is one of the programs in MBKM where students are transferred to another university to attend lectures for one semester oriented to developing cultural experiences and diversity in students. Efforts to develop student potential involve

various approaches and programs designed to broaden their horizons, improve skills, and facilitate their personal growth (Batau et al., 2022).

The Merdeka Student Exchange Program is designed to broaden students' national perspectives, enrich their academic experiences, and enhance their social skills through cross-cultural and academic interactions across Indonesia. The program aims to produce students who are not only more adaptable and open to diversity but also able to implement innovative learning in their home environments (Anwar, 2022b).

However, in practice, many face obstacles such as complicated administrative processes, inadequate facilities, and minimal support from program organizers and host universities. Furthermore, there are challenges in adapting to the new environment, where the lack of effective support and mentoring hinders students' learning and integration. The impact of the program is also perceived as not always commensurate with its initial objectives, particularly in developing long-term competencies relevant to the workplace or further study. This phenomenon highlights the need for a comprehensive evaluation to ensure that the program truly delivers the benefits it aims to achieve and provides a meaningful experience for students. (Sitorus et al., 2023).

In addition, researchers have also observed several students who did not participate in the program, stating that they were not interested, some also stated that they lacked information and had no interest at all. As an effort to support this educational program, we should be involved in achieving the previously established goal of enriching students with learning experiences outside the region through cross-cultural learning. This Student Exchange Program must be considered by stakeholders, including the government and universities themselves, students, and the community (Gulo et al., 2023).

This study aims to measure and assess the program's usefulness for students. This will also reveal new breakthroughs that align with the opportunities and challenges experienced by alumni through their experiences during the program (Abna et al., 2022).

Measuring the benefits of the Merdeka Student Exchange Program is important because the results can provide a deeper understanding of its effectiveness (Wulan et al., 2023). Although the program has noble goals of improving students' national insight, social skills, and academic experience, the reality on the ground shows that not all participants experience the same benefits. By examining this gap, we can identify specific issues that hinder the achievement of program goals, such as student adaptation, support from host institutions, and the integration of learning outcomes (Mulya & Taka, 2022).

This research is important because it will provide valid and objective data to determine whether the program is truly beneficial and fulfilling its objectives. Furthermore, the research results can be used to provide concrete recommendations for improvement, so that in the future, the program can run more effectively and provide more equitable benefits to all participants. This research also contributes to the development of education policies that are more responsive and adaptive to the needs of students throughout Indonesia. The results of this study can also be used as input to encourage and motivate students who have never participated in the program to

contribute and participate so that all students have equal opportunities to develop themselves.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research approach with survey and descriptive quantitative methods. The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction levels of student exchange program participants, as well as to understand the program's strengths and weaknesses. The results can then be used for decision-making purposes, including identifying appropriate strategies and providing appropriate recommendations regarding the program (Anggraini et al., 2022).

This research will be conducted at HKBP Nommensen University Medan, located at Jl. Sutomo No. 4A Medan, North Sumatra. This research will be conducted in the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The population in the study refers to the entire group of individuals, who are the focus of the study and from which the sample is drawn. The main function of the population is to ensure that each member of the group being studied is well-defined. By defining the population, researchers can determine a representative sample, so that the results obtained from the study can be generalized more accurately to the wider population. The population also allows researchers to make valid inferences and conclusions regarding relevant trends, patterns, or relationships within the group being studied (Harunasari & Halim, 2021).

In this study, the population was all students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education who had participated in the independent student exchange program at HKBP Nommensen University.

A sample is a subset of a population, i.e., individuals or objects used as a source of data. In this study, the sample consisted of all students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education participating in the Independent Student Exchange Program, batches 3 and 4. A total of 55 students were selected using purposive sampling. This sampling technique was based on the assumption that students participating in PMM batches 3 and 4 were mostly students from the 2021 and 2022 academic years, making data collection easier. Furthermore, participants in batches 3 and 4 were relatively new, allowing researchers to identify more relevant program effectiveness and efficiency through the data obtained from these samples (Vardhani & Tyas, 2018).

A questionnaire is a tool used to collect data from respondents through a series of questions or statements. In this study, the questionnaire was designed in the form of a Likert scale. The Likert scale questionnaire is designed to measure the extent to which respondents agree or disagree with certain statements, and its purpose is to obtain in-depth data regarding their attitudes, opinions, or perceptions towards the independent student exchange program. The Likert scale is also useful for assessing the effectiveness of a program or intervention by providing structured insights into specific aspects valued by respondents (Aldi et al., 2024).

Descriptive analysis in evaluation research using a Likert-scale questionnaire aims to provide a general overview of respondents' perceptions or opinions regarding various aspects measured in the study. Diah Prihatiningsih (2020:71) states that the

presentation of descriptive analysis includes measurements of central phenomena such as the mean, mode, median, standard deviation, standard error, lowest and highest values, and their confidence intervals

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Research Description**

This research was conducted from August 1 to August 31, 2025. This research was conducted to determine the benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program for Outbound Students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at HKBP Nommensen University, Medan. This research type or design uses quantitative research with a survey method. (Wulandari et al., 2021). The purpose of this study is to determine the level of effectiveness, efficiency, and satisfaction of student participants in the exchange program, as well as to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the program. In this study, the researcher used a questionnaire distributed to students who had participated in the Merdeka Student Exchange program and filled out by the students to obtain the questionnaire results, then the questionnaire results will be processed with SPSS Questionnaire benefits of the Merdeka Student Exchange Program and carried out with descriptive statistics to determine the summary of the research variable data, along with basic statistical analysis, namely descriptive statistics benefits

#### **Research result**

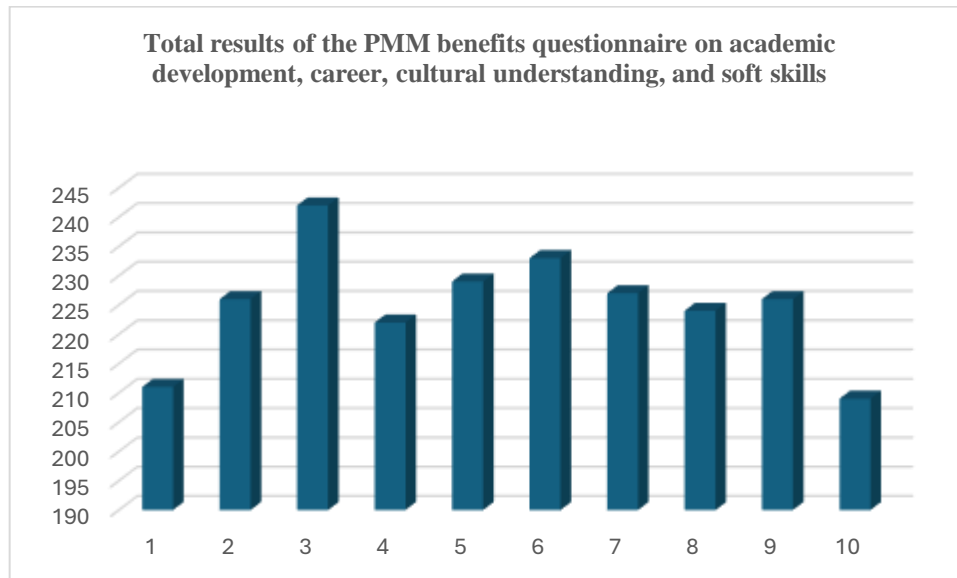
#### **Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) for Students' Academic Development, Career, Cultural Understanding, and Soft Skills**

In general, the results of the questionnaire filled out by students regarding the Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) on the development of academics, careers, cultural understanding, and soft skills of students showed high benefits, as seen in (table 4.2). The average score is quite high on various statements indicating that there is an output of the Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) on academic development, careers, cultural understanding, and soft skills felt by students while participating in the Independent Student Exchange Program with the results of the descriptive analysis as follows (Marjan Fuadi, 2022).

Based on the descriptive statistics of 10 statements (P1 to P10), it is known that the number of respondents (N) for each item is 55 people. The score range for each item ranges from 1.00 to 5.00, which indicates that all respondents used the entire available rating scale. The highest average (mean) score is found in item P3 (4.4000), which indicates that the statement is most agreed upon or assessed positively by respondents. Meanwhile, the lowest average is found in items P1 (3.8364) and P10 (3.8000), although it remains in the high category on the Likert scale. The highest standard deviation (Std. Deviation) value is found in P8 (1.18407), indicating that there is quite a large diversity of answers from respondents to this item. Conversely, the lowest standard deviation is found in P1 (0.93815), which indicates a relatively higher level of consistency of answers among respondents. In general, the results of the questionnaire showed that the

Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) directly benefited students in terms of academic development, career development, cultural understanding, and soft skills.

The descriptive statistics table above shows the results of processing total data from 55 respondents (N = 55). The minimum total score obtained was 209.00, while the maximum score reached 242.00, with an average (mean) of 224.90. This indicates that in general, respondents gave a fairly high total score. The standard deviation of 9.64 indicates that there is a fairly moderate spread or variation in the data among the respondents' total scores.



**Figure 1. Histogram of the results of the PMM benefits questionnaire on academic development, career, cultural understanding, and soft skills.**

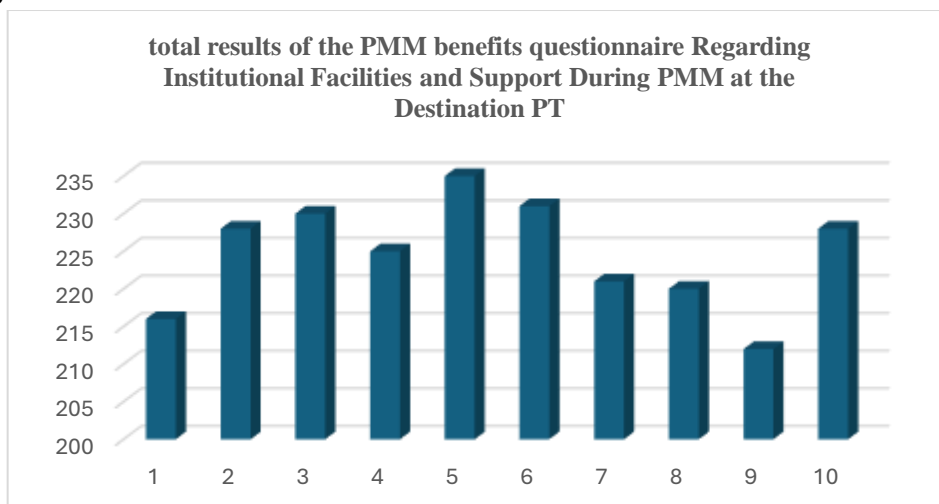
Item number 3 is the item that students feel is most beneficial in terms of academic, career, cultural, and soft skills development. Items 1 and 10 have the lowest total scores, indicating that the aspects measured in these items have less significant influence according to student perceptions. In general, the majority of items show scores above 225, indicating that the PMM Program as a whole is considered to provide real benefits by respondents in various aspects of self-development. This data shows a stable and even distribution of scores and is high or quite good with a mean of 224.90. of 55 respondents with the very useful category around the average. (Suastika et al., 2022) . There are no extreme values (outliers) that deviate significantly, so the overall data can be considered representative and reliable for further analysis, for example in evaluating performance, perceptions, or respondents' assessments of a program. With the results of the questionnaire that have been processed using SPSS, the researcher concluded that the mean of 224.90/55 is 4.18 with the percentage of students answering agree and PMM has benefits for academic development, careers, cultural understanding, and soft skills of students.

## Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) for Institutional Facilities and Support During PMM at the Destination University

In general, the results of the questionnaire filled out by students regarding the Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) towards, facilities, and institutional support during PMM at the Destination University showed high benefits, as seen in (table 4.4). The average score is quite high on various statements indicating that there is an output of benefits from the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) towards, facilities, and institutional support during PMM at the Destination University that was felt by students while participating in the program.

Based on the descriptive statistics of the 10 statement items (Questions 11 to 20) completed by 55 respondents, it can be concluded that the average score for all items is above 3.8, with the highest score at Q15 (mean = 4.2727) and the lowest score at Q19 (mean = 3.8545). This indicates that in general, respondents have a positive perception of all statements asked. However, the standard deviation values ranged from 1.02 to 1.16, indicating a diversity of answers among respondents. This means that although the average assessment tends to be high, there are variations in understanding or acceptance of some items. Overall, these data reflect that respondents show a high commitment and involvement in the aspects measured in items P11 to P20. However, there are still differences in the level of individual assessments that need further examination, especially in items with high standard deviations such as P19 and P11, which may require clarification or a different approach in program implementation.

Based on the results of descriptive analysis of the total data from 10 respondents, the minimum total score was 212 and the maximum was 235, with an average (mean) of 224.60. This value indicates that in general, the total score of respondents is in the high category. The standard deviation of 7.21 indicates that the data distribution is relatively low, meaning that the answers between respondents are quite consistent and do not show too much variation. This strengthens the indication that respondents' perceptions or assessments of the measured aspects have a good level of uniformity. (Sudaryanto et al., 2020).



**Figure 2. Histogram of Questionnaire Results on the Benefits of PMM for, Facilities, and Institutional Support During PMM at the Destination PT**

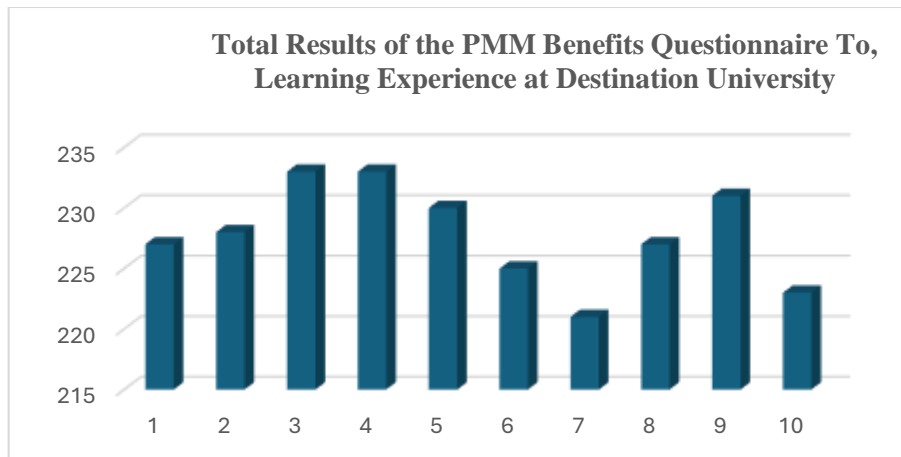
The average score was 224.60, indicating that the values tended to be in the high range. The highest score was 235, and the lowest was 212, resulting in a range of 23, indicating moderate data variation. The standard deviation of 7.21 indicates that the data are fairly evenly distributed around the mean, with no extreme deviations (outliers). The mode (the most frequently occurring value) was 228, which appeared twice, indicating this value was fairly representative among the respondents. The median (226.5) was close to the mean, indicating that the data distribution was symmetrical. With the questionnaire results processed using SPSS, the researcher concluded that the mean of 224.60/55 was 4.09 with the percentage of students answering agree and the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) had benefits, facilities, and institutional support during PMM at the Destination University. (Muhammad Afriansyah Novianto & Munirul Abidin, 2023)

### **Benefits of Implementing the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) on the Learning Experience at the Destination University**

In general, the results of the questionnaire filled out by students regarding the Benefits of Implementing the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) on the Learning Experience at the Destination University, showed high benefits, as seen in (table 4.6). The average score is quite high on various statements indicating that there are output benefits of the Benefits of Implementing the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) on the Learning Experience at the Destination University, which were felt by students while participating in the Independent Student Exchange Program with the results of the descriptive analysis as follows:

The data consists of 10 statement items (Statement 21–Statement 30) with a total of 55 respondents. The minimum and maximum scores for all items are 1.00 and 5.00, indicating that respondents have a full range of answers on a 5-point Likert scale. The average (mean) of all items ranges from 4.02 to 4.24, indicating that in general, respondents agree to strongly agree with these items. The highest average value is on P23 and P 24 (4.2364). The lowest average value is on P 27 (4.0182). The standard deviation ranges from 1.037 to 1.155, which means there is moderate variability in respondents' answers, but not too high. This means that although the majority of respondents tend to give high scores, there are still differences in views in assessing each item.

The data consists of the total results of the questionnaire from 10 statements. The minimum value is 221.00, while the maximum is 233.00. The average (mean) TOTAL value is 227.80, indicating a general high value tendency. The standard deviation is 4.05, which indicates that the spread of values among respondents is relatively high. The TOTAL value of 10 statements shows a high level of consistency, with an average value close to the upper limit and low data spread. This indicates that respondents gave a fairly uniform and positive assessment, with little variation between individuals.



**Figure 3. Histogram of the Results of the PMM Benefits Questionnaire on Learning Experience at the Destination University**

The average value (227.8) indicates that the data is generally in the high range, which is relatively large, indicating low data variation between respondents. The standard deviation (4.05) indicates that the distribution of values from the average is quite narrow, the data is homogeneous/uniform. Multiple modes (227 and 233) indicate that these two values appear most frequently. With the results of the questionnaire that have been processed using SPSS, the researcher concluded that the mean of 227.8/55 is 4.15 with the percentage number of students answering agree and the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) has benefits for the learning experience at the destination university.

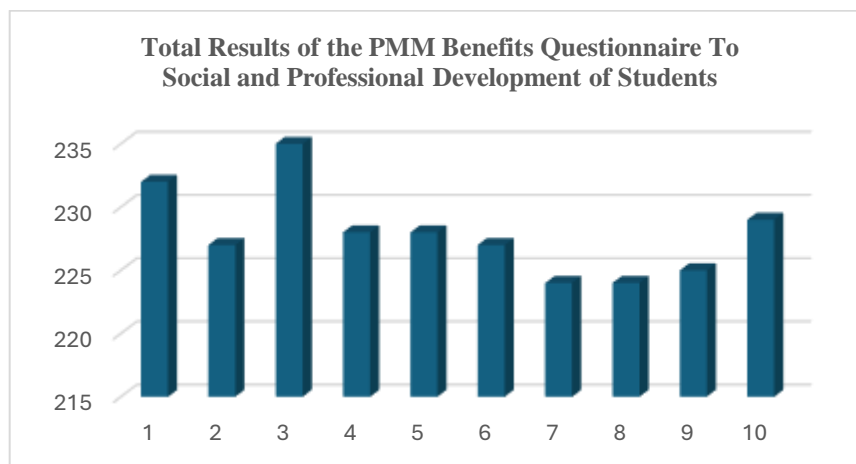
### **Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) for Students' Social and Professional Development**

In general, the results of the questionnaire filled out by students regarding the Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) on the Social and Professional Development of Students, showed high benefits, as seen in (table 4.8). The average score is quite high on various statements indicating that there is an output of the Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) on the Social and Professional Development of Students, which is felt by students while participating in the Independent Student Exchange Program with the results of the descriptive analysis as follows:

Based on the results of descriptive analysis of 10 questionnaire items (Questions 31 to 40) filled out by 55 respondents, the following conclusions can be drawn: High Level of Respondent Agreement All items have a mean above 4.00, indicating that respondents generally agree to strongly agree with the statements raised. This indicates a positive assessment from respondents towards the aspects measured by these items. Items with the Highest and Lowest Means The item with the highest mean is P33 (Mean = 4.27), indicating that the statements in this item are most agreed by respondents. The items with the lowest means are P37 and P38 (Mean = 4.07), but are still in the agree category. Overall, the data shows that respondents gave a positive assessment to all statements in items P31–P40. A high mean indicates a strong level of agreement, while a

moderate standard deviation value indicates that although most agree (Arifin et al., 2023).

Number of Respondents (N) There are 10 total questions that are complete  
Minimum and Maximum Scores The lowest score (minimum) is 224 The highest score (maximum) is 235. This shows that the total score of the questionnaire is in a relatively narrow range (224–235), only differing by 11 points between respondents. Average (Mean) The average total questionnaire result is 227.90, this indicates that in general, respondents gave a high score to the questionnaire, which reflects a positive assessment or perception of the aspects measured in the questionnaire. The standard deviation value is 3.48, which is relatively low. This means that the variation or spread of answers between respondents is small, so it can be concluded that most respondents gave consistent and similar answers.



**Figure 4. Histogram of the Results of the PMM Benefits Questionnaire for Students' Social and Professional Development**

The average score was 227.90, indicating that respondents generally gave a high rating to the questionnaire or instrument used. The minimum and maximum scores ranged from 224 to 235, differing by only 11 points, indicating low variability and a high level of consistency among respondents. A standard deviation of 3.48 indicates that most scores were close to the mean, reinforcing the finding that respondents' responses were relatively uniform. Three scores constituted the mode (224, 227, and 228), each appearing twice. This demonstrates the absence of dominance of one score, but remains within a narrow and positive range. With the questionnaire results processed using SPSS, the researcher concluded that the mean of 227.90/55 was 4.16, with a percentage of students responding in agreement with the benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) for Social and Professional Development.

## Discussion

From the results of research that has been conducted and processed through SPSS regarding the Benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program for Outbound

Students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at HKBP Nommensen University, Medan, there are several research discussions, namely as follows:

The benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) for the development of academics, careers, cultural understanding, and soft skills of students obtained an average questionnaire score of 4.18 students agreed that there were benefits of PMM in academic development, careers, cultural understanding, and soft skills. This is in line with research conducted (Novela, et al. 2025) by the results of the study showed that most students were satisfied with the academic, social, and cultural development during PMM, especially in terms of introduction to cultural diversity, improvement of soft skills, and benefits for career development. (Putri et al., 2024).

The benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) towards, facilities, and institutional support during PMM at the destination university, the conclusion of the questionnaire results with an average of 4.09 students agreeing and there are benefits of PMM felt by students towards, facilities, and institutional support during PMM at the destination university. This is in line with the results of research conducted by (Muhammad Rafly & Ivan Achmad Nurcholis, 2024) students during the PMM program, and shows the importance of this program in building cooperation between universities and enriching the learning experience of students in Indonesia as well as the support of facilities and institutional support of the target university is very satisfying.

The benefits of the implementation of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) on the learning experience at the destination university with the results of the questionnaire or the average respondent's answer is 4.15 with the percentage of students answering agree and the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) has benefits on the learning experience at the destination university. From the conclusion of the study, this is in line with the results of research conducted by (Launde et al., 2024) the independent student exchange program has a positive impact on the learning outcomes of students from other majors providing cross-departmental learning experiences in various study programs at the destination university. (Jamilatussholikhah et al., 2022).

The benefits of the PMM Program for the social and professional development of students with the results of the questionnaire or the average respondent's answers are with a percentage of 4.16 students answering in agreement that there are benefits of the PMM program for the social and professional development of students during their participation in the Independent Student Exchange (PMM) program. This is in line with the results of research conducted by (Aulia et al., 2023) Students who participate in the Independent Student Exchange (PMM) program have a lot of experience related to diversity and social activities. (Sonjaya & Iskandar, 2022) . The material on diversity is closely related to the goals of national education, namely to form a generation that is intelligent, noble, healthy, capable, creative, innovative, and independent, which shapes the nation's civilization and the development of social and professional values in responding to social problems in society.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

From the results of the research and discussion of the research, there are several conclusions regarding the benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program for Outbound Students of the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at HKBP Nommensen University, Medan, namely as follows: Students agree that there are benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) in academic development, career, cultural understanding, and soft skills. The average questionnaire score is 4.18% with the agree questionnaire score category. Students agree that there are benefits from the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) regarding facilities and institutional support during PMM at the destination university, with an average questionnaire score of 4.09% with the agree questionnaire score category. Students agree that there are benefits from implementing the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) for the learning experience at the target university, with an average questionnaire score of 4.15% in the agree questionnaire score category. Students agree that there are benefits of the Independent Student Exchange Program (PMM) for social and professional development, and students get an average questionnaire score of 4.16% with the questionnaire score category agreeing.

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