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Supporting Factors of Student Exchange Programs: An Analysis of Students' Perceptions

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ABSTRACT

This study describes the perceptions of outbound and inbound students about various supporting factors of the student exchange program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. This study used an evaluation research design with a descriptive quantitative approach. Data were collected through a questionnaire, and analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results show that most respondents said pre-departure communication and support from the university were good or very good. Students also felt ready to join the program, helped by their own motivation and support from their families. They thought it was good that they could take different courses and get cross-credit. However, there were still some problems with adjusting the curriculum. The collaborative learning process and active participation in seminars and workshops strengthen the student learning experience. In addition, the level of tolerance and social acceptance between exchange program students and regular students is very high. This study provides a comprehensive empirical picture of the implementation of the student exchange program and can be a reference for developing more inclusive and adaptive policies in higher education.

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization has changed higher education systems into a more connected and complex system. Universities need to help students build global skills like being able to adapt, work with people from different cultures, and understand international issues (Xu, 2023). One popular activity is through student exchange programs. These programs not only support academic learning, but also help students build a global identity. The student exchange program plays a strategic role by providing opportunities for social interaction among students from diverse backgrounds. According to Randle, (2024) such social interactions and students' satisfaction with the learning process are key factors that influence their engagement and acceptance in academic learning.

The two types of student exchange are inbound and outbound. The inbound type means students from other universities come to study at the university. The outbound type means students from the university go to study at partner universities, either in the same country or in other countries. Both types can help create an inclusive, multicultural, and globally competitive

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academic environment (Yang & Tian, 2023). Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) is one of the universities in Indonesia that actively joins student exchange programs. UNESA acts as both a home university and a host university through partnerships with many universities in Indonesia and other countries. The student exchange program at UNESA has also adopted a cutting-edge instructional approach known as Strategic Content Learning. According to Onyishi (2023), this approach is an effective strategy for enhancing students' task persistence, including those participating in student exchange programs across various fields of study. Additionally, UNESA has established policies aimed at improving the competencies of lecturers teaching in student exchange classes. This aligns with the findings of Supriyanto (2024), who concluded that one of the key factors influencing the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is the competency of the course instructors.

Although this program has been running for several years, there are still not many studies that fully look at students' perceptions, both for inbound and outbound students. Most past studies only focus on one side of the experience or talk about administrative details, like the number of participants, program length, and credits earned (Xu, 2023). But this doesn't fully illustrate what students perceive, like how they adjust, deal with other cultures, or obtain help from the university. This makes a difference between what people think will happen and what really happens. Numbers can't be used to judge how well a program is doing; students' personal experiences should also be taken into account because they are the ones who are most affected.

To fill this gap, this study uses a user experience (UX) approach to evaluate the student exchange program. The UX approach helps to explore students' feelings, social experiences, and thoughts. This matches the student-centered learning model in universities today (Huang, 2022). It also lets students share their feelings, problems, and satisfaction during the program. Because of this, the results can give more useful and long-term input for improving academic policies.

Therefore, this study aims to find out and compare the experiences of inbound and outbound students in the UNESA student exchange program. It focuses on their views about academic and social support and the challenges they face. The findings are expected to give practical ideas to make the program more inclusive and sustainable. Besides that, they can also add new knowledge to studies on international higher education based on students' experiences.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used an evaluative research design with a descriptive quantitative approach (Creswell et al., 2004), to determine the supporting factors for the student exchange program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), including students' perception on inbound and outbound schemes. The systematic and measurable perceptions of various aspects of the program were explored to know how ready the sending and receiving universities are, how effective the academic and nonacademic services are, how students adapt to new cultures, and what academic and social benefits they get during the program. A descriptive quantitative approach is seen as suitable to get general and representative data. In line with Diem (2023) Student perceptions of international mobility programs and cross-cultural challenges. The respondents were 129 students who participated in the Student Exchange Program, with details of 61 inbound students and 68 outbound students. The selection of respondents was carried out purposively with the criteria that students had participated in the program for at least one full semester. This research was conducted in four main stages, namely: (1) preparation of instruments based on the official guidelines of the Directorate General of Higher Education, (2) distribution of online questionnaires through the Google Form platform equipped with informed consent, (3) collection of quantitative and qualitative data from respondents, and (4) data analysis using descriptive statistical techniques and thematic analysis. The main instrument used was a closed questionnaire using a Likert scale of 1-4. Before being used, the questionnaire was validated by experts to ensure the relevance and clarity of the content, and its reliability was tested to ensure consistency of measurement.

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Data were collected through questionnaires via Google Form to reach respondents efficiently, considering that students are spread across various regions in Indonesia. In addition to quantitative data from the questionnaire, respondents were also given space to provide open comments regarding their experiences during the program. This qualitative data was used as a complement to strengthen the interpretation of the questionnaire data.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques, including frequency distribution, percentage, and calculation of the average value of each perception indicator. Meanwhile, narrative data from open comments were analyzed thematically to identify typical patterns of experience, both from inbound and outbound groups. The results of this analysis are expected to provide a comprehensive and empirically based picture of the success of the program, the obstacles faced by students, and the effectiveness of institutional support provided during the program. These findings will form the basis for strategic policy recommendations for the development of student exchange programs that are more responsive to student needs and the demands of globalization of higher education. The following figure describes the research method:

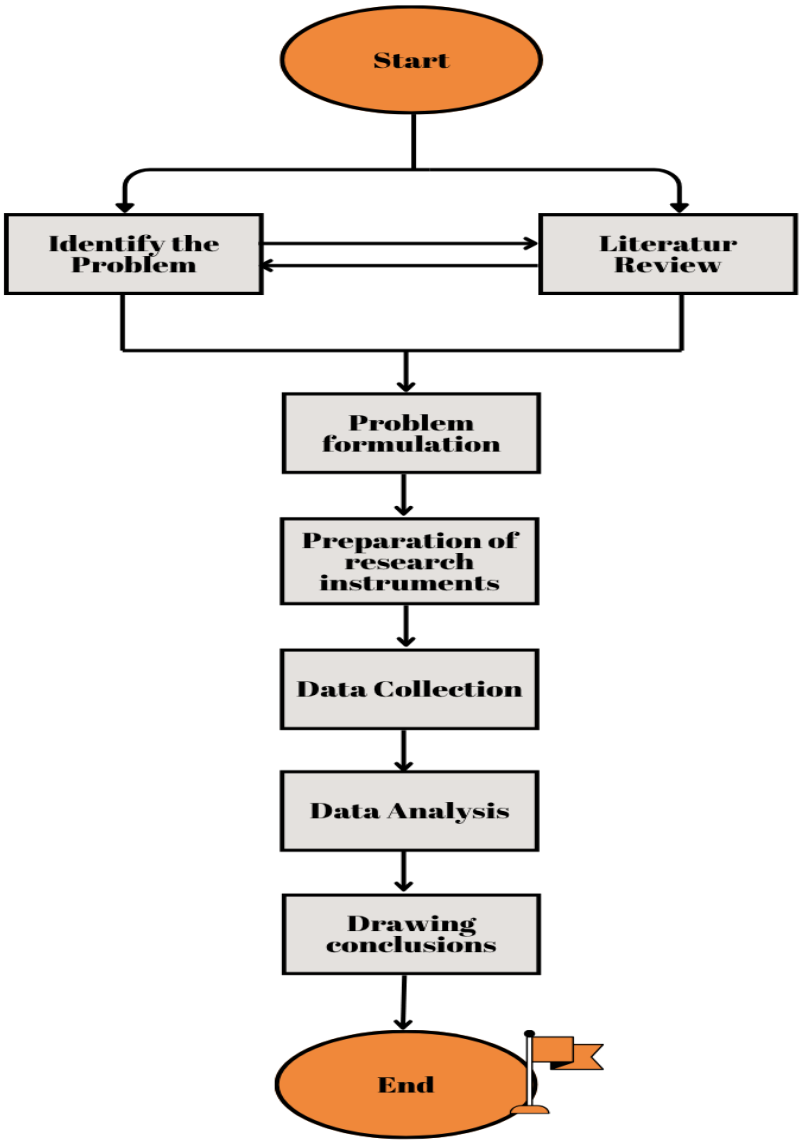


Figure 1. Flowchart of the research method in the evaluation of the student exchange program at UNESA

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Supporting Factors for Outbound Student Exchange Programs Based on Student Perceptions

The results of data analysis from 68 respondents of UNESA outbound students show that several main factors support the success of the student exchange program, as directly felt by the program participants. These findings are grouped into several main aspects, namely: UNESA Internal Preparation for Pre-Departure of Student Exchange Program students (pre-departure briefing).

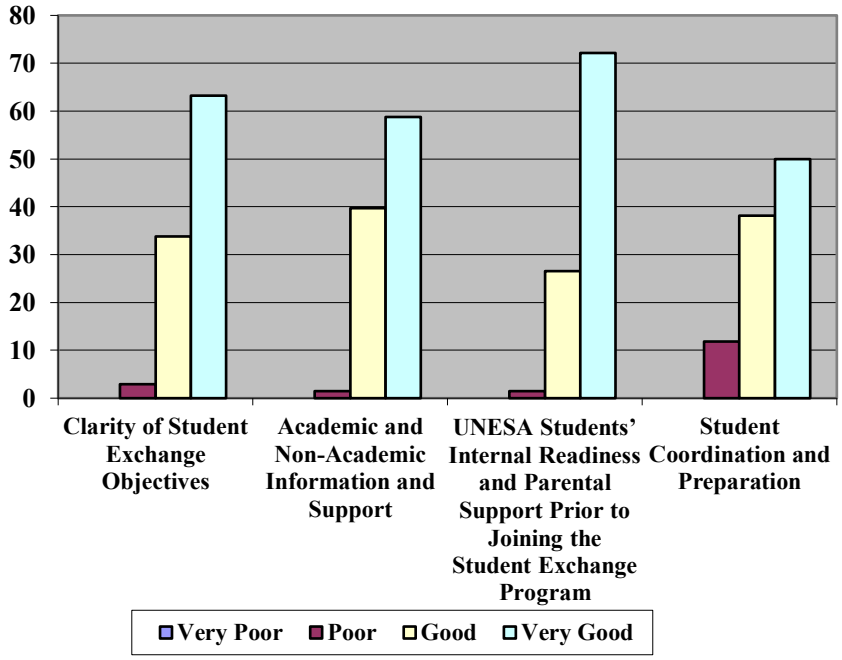


Figure 2. UNESA's internal preparation for student exchange program participants: Pre-departure briefing

Figure 2 shows that the pre-departure stage in the Student Exchange Program plays a crucial role in shaping students' mental, administrative, and academic readiness. Key findings highlight the importance of communication, institutional support, and internal coordination at the university, based on a survey of outbound students from Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA).

First, most students felt clarity of the program goals was very good. About 63.2% of respondents said it was "Very Good," and 33.8% said "Good." No respondents chose "Very Poor," and only a few chose "Poor." This shows that the program goals and directions were explained well and understood by the students. The clear objective of the program is to increase motivation and readiness to join the exchange. One student said:

"The program objectives were explained clearly, and I could easily find all the information I needed."

Students also appreciated the educational and diversity aspects, as seen in this comment:

"The objectives of the exchange program are informative. We not only study outside campus but also learn about other cultures to strengthen our love for the country and tolerance."

Second, about academic and non-academic support from UNESA's Sub-directorate, 58.8% of respondents said it was "Very Good," and 39.7% said "Good." The support included technical information, guidance, and help with administrative processes. A student said:

"UNESA fully supports students to join off-campus activities."

This shows that the guidance was effective. However, there is still a need for better internal coordination to make sure all students get equal and quick support.

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Third, about students' internal readiness and family support, 72.1% felt "Very Ready," and 26.5% felt "Ready." Support from family, including moral, financial, and emotional, has become a big factor. One student said:

"My parents fully support me."

This shows that social support is important for smooth preparation before departure.

Fourth, about coordination and preparation by UNESA's Sub-directorate, 50% of students said: "Very Good," and 38.2% said "Good". This included program introduction, registration, and document preparation. However, 11.8% said it was "Poor," mainly because of a lack of information about some technical parts, such as the KRS system. One student shared:

"There was no briefing about how to fill in the credits programming in Melisa, so we were confused at first."

This shows that, even though coordination was generally good, the timing of information and cross-unit coordination still needs improvement.

Therefore, these results show that UNESA has good internal readiness for the pre-departure process in the student exchange program. The clear objectives, strong institutional support, and personal readiness are key to program success. However, it is still recommended that UNESA strengthen cross-unit coordination, improve technical communication, and keep evaluating program socialization.

Preparation for Learning Activities in the Student Exchange Program at the Host University

Figure 3 shows the survey results on students' perceptions of available courses at host universities. A majority of respondents rated this aspect as "Good" (55.9%), while 30.9% considered it "Very Good." This indicates that most participants were able to find courses aligned with their academic needs and study backgrounds. However, 11.8% rated the course availability as "Poor," and a small number described it as "Very Poor." These responses point to ongoing challenges, including curriculum mismatches between home and host institutions, limited course offerings, and administrative difficulties in course selection or credit conversion. One student noted:

"The courses at the host university were good, but some subjects were not available at my home university, and there were differences in credit numbers."

This shows the importance of curriculum and good communication between previous and host universities to improve course relevance and access.

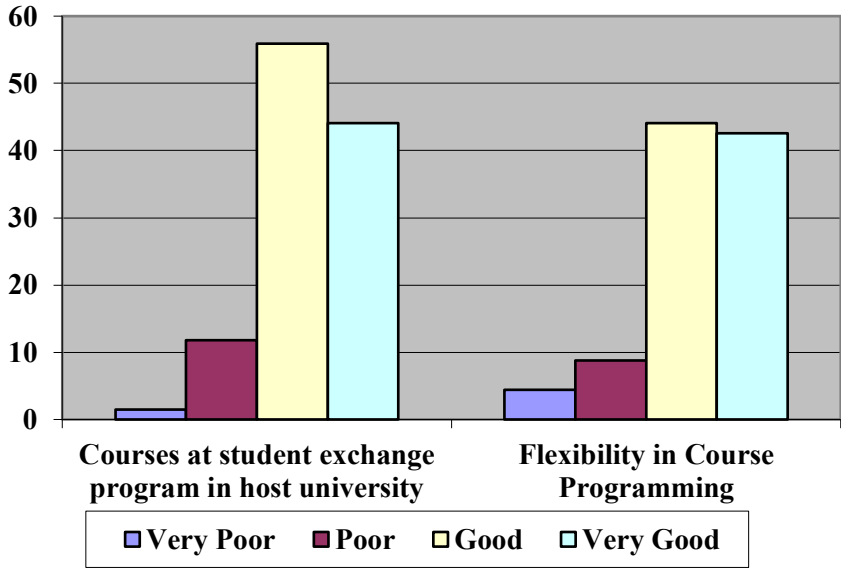


Figure 3. Learning preparation in the student exchange program at the host university

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When it comes to flexibility in taking courses from other programs, most responses were positive. Around 42.6% said "Very Good," and 44.1% said "Good." This shows that host universities are quite open for students to take courses outside their obligated program. One student said;

"The flexibility to take courses from other programs at the host university was good. I took some subjects outside my department."

However, 8.8% said the flexibility was "Poor," and a few said "Very Poor." These problems were usually related to administrative difficulties or internal policies. One student said:

"It was hard to convert credits when I took courses from other programs."

This shows that host universities need to improve their policies and systems so all students can enjoy the same flexibility in different study programs equally.

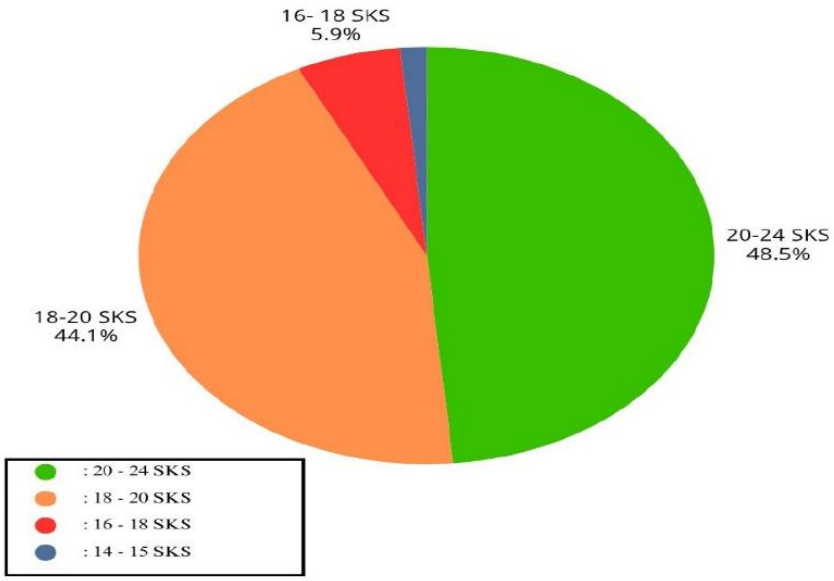


Figure 4. Course credits offered by the host universities

Figure 4 shows the variation in study loads undertaken by inbound exchange students at host universities. Among the 68 respondents, the majority (48.5%) took between 20–24 credits, while 44.1% enrolled in 18–20 credits. Only a small number of students reported taking lower loads of 16–18 or 14–15 credits. These findings suggest that host universities generally permitted exchange students to undertake a relatively high study load, approaching the maximum typically allowed for a single semester.

However, some universities set a credit limit to help students adjust. One student explained:

"The maximum credit load was set at 22 credits. The host university did this so we wouldn't feel overwhelmed and could adapt better."

This shows that host universities think carefully about balancing academic achievement and social adjustment for exchange students.

Therefore, these findings show that host universities were well prepared to support student learning activities, especially in course availability, cross-program flexibility, and study load arrangements. But improvements are still needed in curriculum adjustment, institutional coordination, and academic policy to make the program even more effective.

Learning Process at Host Universities

Figure 5 shows that most inbound students had positive perceptions of in-class learning experiences at the host universities. About 41.2% said "Very Good," and 39.7% said "Good.", meaning that many students were happy with the quality of teaching. A key factor contributing to this satisfaction was the equal treatment received by exchange students compared to local students. One student said;

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"Very good, in my classes, exchange students were treated the same as local students."

This shows success in creating social and academic integration.

However, 14.7% said "Poor," and a few said "Very Poor." One problem mentioned was irregular class schedules with many empty hours. A student said;

"Good, but there were too many free hours at the host university."

This suggests that better schedule management is needed to keep learning stable and effective.

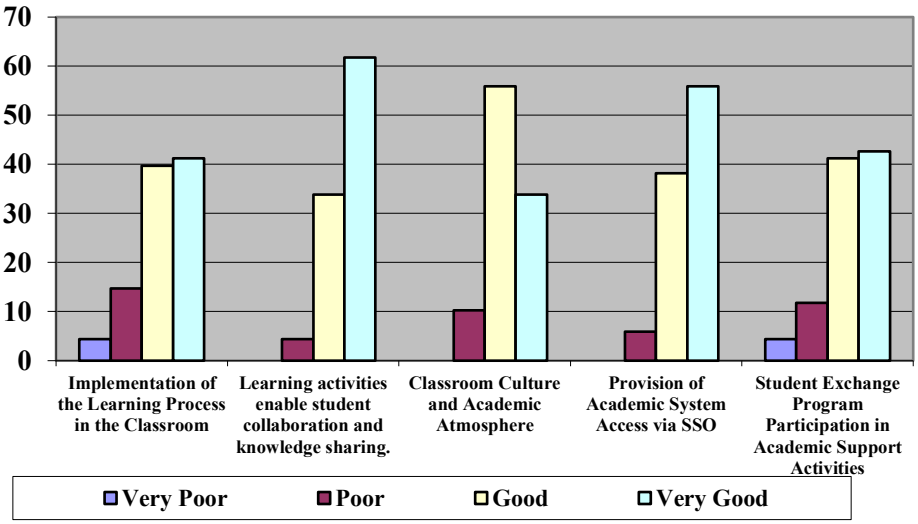


Figure 5. Classroom learning process at host universities

Therefore, students were happy with classroom integration and equal treatment. But improvements are needed in class scheduling and class grouping to encourage more interaction.

Then, UNESA Students' Perceptions of Learning in the Outbound program had good experiences. About 61.8% said the program was "Very Good" for giving chances to collaborate and share knowledge, and 33.8% said "Good." Meaning that most of the students benefited from this good academic partnership and collaboration. One student said:

"The learning activities gave us chances to collaborate and share knowledge and experiences."

A few students gave a "Poor" response because they had limited interaction with students from the same program. One student shared:

"Poor, because I didn't have friends from my home program or take the same courses. But sometimes I joined mixed classes and got a bit of that collaboration."

This shows that while the program aims for collaboration, better class grouping is needed to support interaction across different academic backgrounds.

The survey results on the perceptions of UNESA exchange program students (inbound) towards the culture and academic atmosphere in the classroom showed that most of the participants perceived the academic atmosphere positively. As many as 55.9% of respondents said that the academic atmosphere was "Good" and 33.8% said Very Good". Only 10.3% of respondents said "Poor", but no one chose "Very Poor". These findings show that most students feel comfortable and can adapt well to the academic environment of their destination university. One student said;

"The academic atmosphere was good, even though I needed some time to adjust at first."

This shows that, although overall inclusive, the early adaptation period is still a key challenge for students from different backgrounds.

In terms of access to the academic system (Single Sign-On/SSO) at the host university, most students gave a very positive response. Out of 68 respondents, 55.9% said the access service was "Very Good," and 38.2% said it was "Good." No respondents said it was "Very Poor," and only a few said "Poor." This shows that the academic system at the host university is generally easy for exchange students to access and use. One student shared:

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"Access to the academic system (SSO) was good, and we were guided well on how to use it."
This shows that guidance and technical support are important for smooth academic and administrative processes.

Finally, student participation in supporting academic activities such as seminars, workshops, and other educational events also received mostly positive responses. About 42.6% of respondents said their participation was "Very Good," and 41.2% said it was "Good." This means that more than 83% of respondents were satisfied with this aspect.

However, some students still had problems with participation. About 11.8% of respondents said it was "Poor" because of limited geographic access to the activity locations. One student said, "Poor, because there were very few activities like that. If there were, they were at Universitas Negeri Makasar, which is far from the main campus where we live." This shows that the location of activities affects student involvement. Therefore, activities need to be spread more evenly across all campus areas to make sure all students have equal access and can join more easily.

Based on those explanations, the learning process in the student exchange program at the host university was successful in creating an inclusive and collaborative academic environment. Access to the academic system and supporting activities was also well provided. However, improvements are still needed in class schedule management, better class grouping, and spreading academic activities more evenly across locations to improve the quality and fairness of learning experiences for all students.

Tolerance and Diversity Among Student Exchange Participants at the Host University

Figure 6 shows that social interaction between UNESA outbound exchange students and regular students at the host universities was positive and helped create cross-cultural integration. Based on the survey results, most respondents (89.7%) said the interaction was "Very Good" (45.6%) or "Good" (44.1%). This shows that regular students had a high level of social acceptance toward exchange students. One student said:

"Local students often helped me adapt and offered support outside class."
However, 10.3% had problems in making friends at first, but later succeeded. One student said:

"At first, we had few friends, but later I got many."

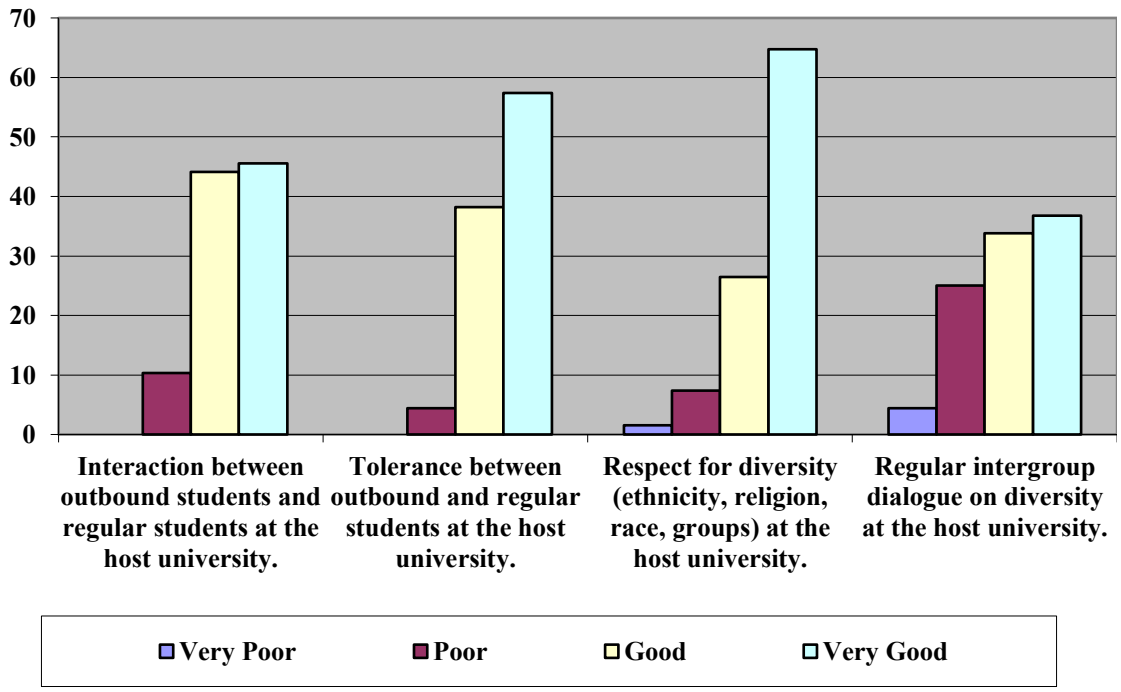


Figure 6. Tolerance and diversity at host universities

The level of tolerance among students was also high. Based on data from 68 respondents, 57.4% said the tolerance relationship was "Very Good," and 38.2% said it was "Good." This shows that more than 95% of students felt that the social environment at the host university was very welcoming and respected diversity. Only 4.4% of respondents said it was "Poor," and no one said it was "Very Poor." One student said:

> *"Tolerance between UNESA students and local students was good. They really respected our differences."*

This shows that regular students were not only open-minded but also respected the cultural differences, habits, and social backgrounds of the exchange students. Meanwhile, appreciation for ethnic, religious, racial, and inter-group diversity at the host universities also received high ratings. About 64.7% of respondents said this aspect was "Very Good," and 26.5% said it was "Good," so more than 91% of students felt that the campus culture respected diversity. However, 7.4% of respondents said the appreciation for diversity was still "Poor." One respondent said:

> *"Poor, in my opinion, there were not enough regular meetings or activities about inter-group diversity at my host university."*

This shows that although diversity was appreciated, activities to support these values still need to be improved, especially in the form of regular forums or meetings across different backgrounds.

For the aspect of dialogue and regular meetings about Ethnic, religious, racial, and inter-group diversity, survey results showed that 36.8% of respondents said "Very Good," 33.8% said "Good," 25% said "Poor," and 4.4% said "Very Poor." This shows that although most students felt that diversity was supported quite well, some students did not fully experience this dialogue space. Some respondents said there were no dialogue activities at all, while others felt the activities were good enough. These findings indicate the need for evaluation and improvement of diversity programs so they are not only symbolic, but can truly create inclusive and continuous spaces for meeting and interaction. As Munasi (2025) emphasizes that effective educational support systems must be designed to promote sustained engagement and meaningful participation in diverse learning environments.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the social environment at the host universities was seen as inclusive and supportive of diversity. Harmonious social interaction, a high level of tolerance, and respect for diversity values are the main strengths in supporting the success of student exchange programs, both academically and socially. However, improvements in cross-cultural dialogue activities and stronger forums for interaction across Ethnic, religious, racial, and inter-group differences are still needed to strengthen social integration and cohesion among students from different regions on campus.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Student Exchange Program by UNESA as Home University

Figure 7 shows that the monitoring and evaluation of the Student Exchange Program (Outbound) by UNESA as the home university gave positive results based on a survey of 68 respondents. About 48.5% of respondents said the monitoring and evaluation was "Very Good," and 45.6% said it was "Good." This shows that most students felt they got good attention and quick responses to any problems during the program. One respondent said:

> *"Very good because it helped students as best as possible so problems were solved quickly,"*

This shows that the monitoring service was truly helpful for the participants.

The impact of participating in this program can also be seen in changes to the students' academic and non-academic orientation. About 45.6% of respondents said the impact was "Very Good," and 50% said it was "Good." Students reported an increase in their academic insight through the chance to take courses at two universities, as well as a broader national perspective. One student said,

> *"My academic orientation improved, even if only a little, because I could take courses at two universities at the same time. For non-academic aspects, my national insight increased a lot and opened my mind about all the richness our country has."*

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This shows that the program not only provided academic benefits but also contributed to students' character development and national knowledge in a holistic way.

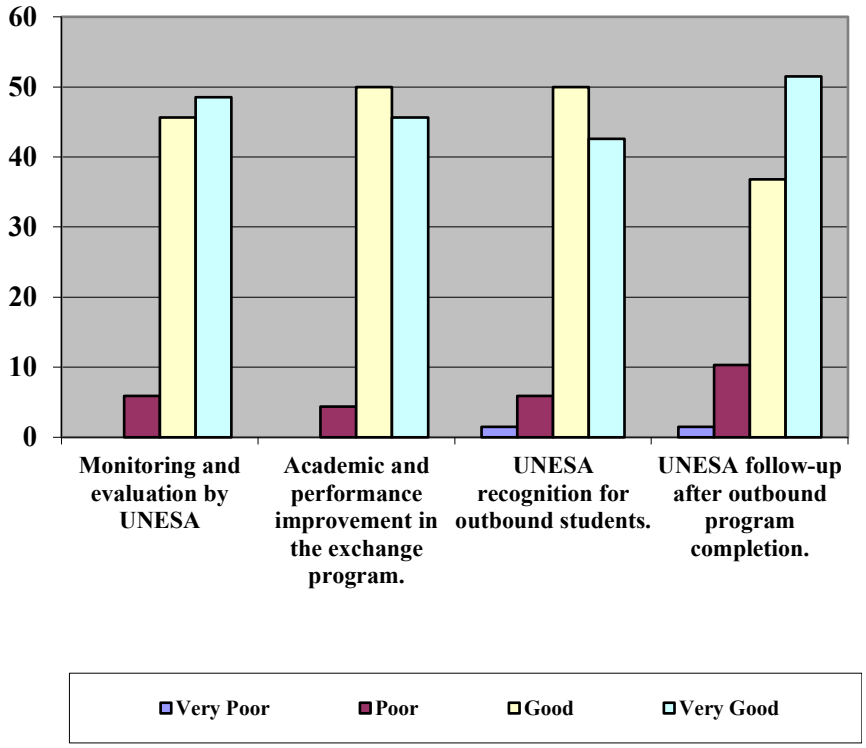


Figure 7. UNESA's monitoring and evaluation of the exchange program.

In terms of post-program academic recognition, the majority of students also gave positive assessments. As many as 42.6% of respondents said it very good and 50% good, indicating that the process of recognizing learning outcomes from the host university by UNESA has been carried out effectively and makes it easier for students to complete academic administration. One participant said that,

> "*The recognition from UNESA for outbound students who have completed the student exchange program was carried out very well, making it easier for us as participants in the student exchange program.*"

This strengthens the finding that the recognition process is not merely administrative, but also pays attention to the comfort and convenience of students.

The follow-up after students return from the exchange program also received high appreciation. As many as 51.5% of respondents said this follow-up as very good, and another 36.9% said it good. The process of converting courses and taking grades was reported to have run smoothly, with relatively good coordination from UNESA.

The follow-up after students return from the exchange program also received high appreciation. As many as 51.5% of respondents said this follow-up as "Very Good," and another 36.9% said it "Good." The process of converting courses and transferring grades was reported to have run smoothly, with relatively good coordination from UNESA. One student said,

> "*The follow-up from UNESA after outbound students completed the student exchange program (inboard) was carried out very well, starting from converting courses and taking grades.*"

This shows the institution's commitment to ensuring the academic sustainability of students after participating in the program.

However, findings from the open questionnaire revealed a number of challenges that still need attention. Respondents noted a delay in response from the UNESA Sub Directorate and weak coordination with the Head of Study Program, which resulted in delays in course

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verification and credits retrieval. Inconsistent information and slow delivery encouraged students to seek information from outside official channels. In addition, technical constraints on the Melisa platform, minimal monitoring activities, and no reception after the program were noted. These issues reflect broader concerns about institutional responsiveness and digital infrastructure in academic programs, as highlighted by Fasanmi (2025), who emphasizes the critical role of effective student support systems in maintaining educational stability.

However, students also acknowledged a number of positive achievements such as the orderly administration process, routine communication that helped understanding, and mentoring from managers that began to show improvement. Collaboration between managers, the Head of Study Program, and university partners also supported the smooth implementation of the program. The existing digital platform, although not yet perfect, also helped in managing administration and student self-development.

In facing obstacles, students showed high initiative by building communication independently, consulting with lecturers and PICs, and establishing relationships with program alumni. As a reflection, students expressed their hopes for increased synergy between management and faculty, more structured and timely delivery of information, the addition of PICs, and a more tangible form of appreciation for participants. Emotional and administrative support are also the main hopes in order to create a more meaningful and long-term cross-cultural experience.

Analysis of Supporting Factors for the Inbound Student Exchange Program based on Student Perceptions

Based on the results of data analysis from 61 UNESA inbound student respondents, a number of key factors were found that contributed to the success of the implementation of the student exchange program (Inbound), as experienced directly by the participants. These findings are classified into several main aspects.

Internal Preparation of home university, Pre-Departure of Student Exchange Program students (pre-departure briefing) to UNESA

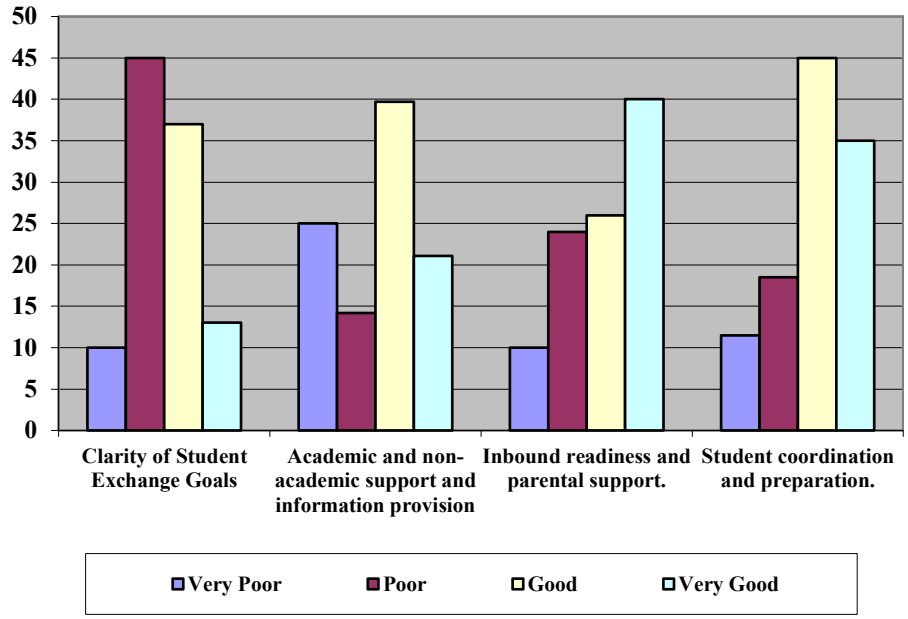


Figure 8. Inbound program support factors

Figure 8 shows that most of the 61 respondents viewed the inbound program's goals positively: 45% rated them "Fair," 37% "Good," while only 13% said "Very Poor" and 10% "Very Good." These findings indicate that although the program goals were generally seen as clear, there is still significant room for improvement in communicating these goals from the beginning. Qualitative feedback from respondents also highlighted this issue, as some students said that information about the program goals was not explained clearly at the start, and that activities continued without enough technical preparation from the home university. This shows the importance of improving how the program goals are socialized and strengthening institutional readiness to support the effective implementation of the inbound student exchange program.

In terms of delivering information and providing academic and non-academic support before the program started, the data showed that respondents had mixed perceptions. Out of 68 answers analyzed, 25% said this service was "Very Poor," 14.2% said "Poor," 39.7% said "Good," and 21.1% said "Very Good." Even though most gave positive ratings, an important note appeared regarding the speed of information delivery. One respondent said, "The information was not given quickly enough, so sometimes it made us confused," showing that although the information quality was good, the timing and speed still need improvement. This is important to make sure students are mentally and logistically ready to join the program.

Next, the internal readiness of students and support from their families before the program also received positive feedback. Out of 68 respondents, 40% said their readiness was "Good," 26% said "Very Good," while 24% said "Poor" and 10% said "Very Poor." This data shows that most students felt they received strong internal support. Some respondents said they were fully ready, as one student stated, "I was very ready." However, there were still some who felt there were weaknesses in pre-departure preparation, especially from the institutional side. One respondent said, "There was not enough pre-departure support before going to the destination," showing a gap in coordination and technical guidance from the home university before departure.

In terms of coordination and preparation by the home university, data from 68 respondents showed that 45% said the coordination was "Good," and 35% said it was "Very Good." However, 18.5% said it was "Poor," and 11.5% said "Very Poor." Even though most students felt satisfied with the coordination efforts, some respondents highlighted the lack of an official briefing before going to the host university. One respondent clearly said, "Before we left for the host university, we did not receive a briefing." This shows the importance of having a systematic pre-departure orientation so that students are fully prepared in terms of information, culture, and academics before joining activities at the host university. As noted, Pramudia (2025) culturally responsive preparation is essential in helping students adapt and engage meaningfully in diverse educational settings.

Therefore, even though students showed good readiness and received enough support, the aspects of information delivery, technical coordination, and pre-departure preparation still need improvement from the home university. Improving communication quality, arranging systematic briefings, and providing complete orientation materials are important steps to increase the effectiveness and success of the Student Exchange Program.

Preparation for Student Exchange Program Learning Activities at UNESA

Figure 9 shows the survey conducted with 61 respondents provides an overview of academic readiness in implementing the student exchange program (inbound) at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). One of the indicators highlighted is the availability of courses that exchange program students can take. The data show that the majority of respondents gave positive ratings for this aspect, with 52.5% saying it was "Very Good" and 42.6% saying "Good." These findings indicate that UNESA has successfully provided a diverse and relevant range of courses to support students' learning processes.

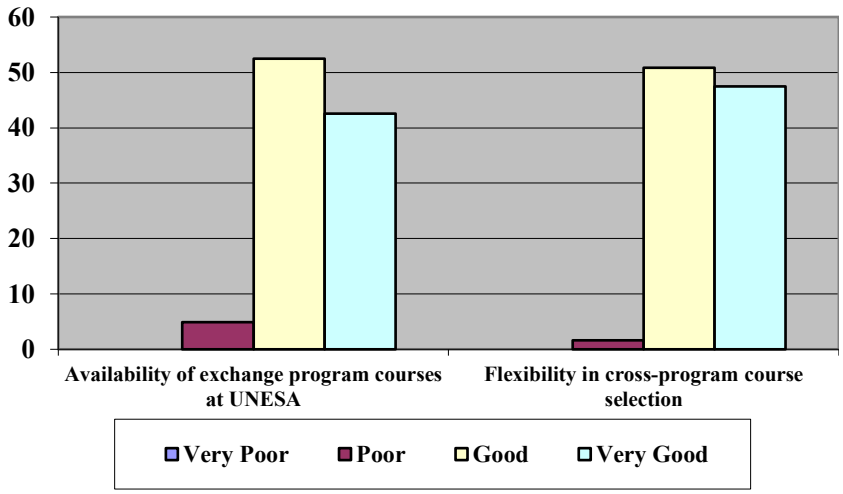


Figure 9. Preparation for exchange learning at UNESA

However, there was feedback from respondents regarding the quality of learning, especially for practice-based courses. One respondent said,

> *"The courses at UNESA are complete, but some practical courses require more credits to understand better."*

This shows that although the quantity of courses is sufficient, strengthening the practical aspect by increasing the credit weight of certain courses is an area that needs further consideration. This is important so that students' mastery of application skills can be more optimal.

In addition to the availability of courses, flexibility in taking courses across study programs is also one of the indicators evaluated. Based on the results of the same survey, 47.5% of respondents said this flexibility was "Very Good" and 50.8% said it was "Good". Thus, more than 98% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the flexibility of the academic system at UNESA. One of the respondents said:

> *"The process of taking cross-study program courses went well; the head of the study program was also very supportive and provided solutions and guidance for us to take the courses."*

This shows that the success of implementing flexibility is not only determined by an adaptive academic system, but also by the active role of the study program in providing guidance and solutions to students.

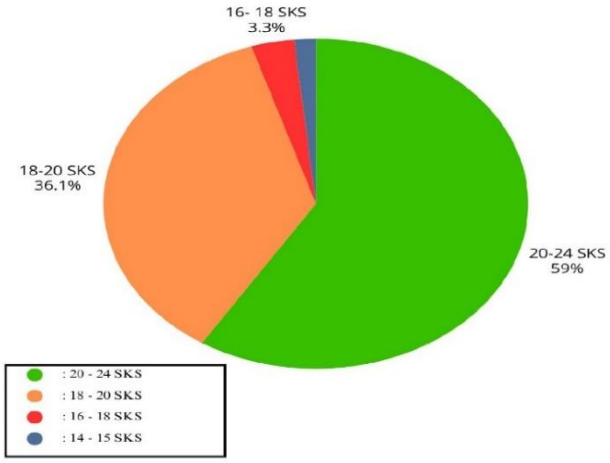


Figure 10. Number of credit load taken by students

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Figure 10 shows a further analysis of the study load undertaken by students during the exchange program. The majority (59%) enrolled in 20–24 credits, including the Nusantara Module, demonstrating their strong commitment to maximizing learning opportunities at the host university. Meanwhile, 36.1% of students chose a slightly lower load of 18–20 credits, reflecting a conscious effort to align academic responsibilities with personal capacity. Only a small number of students programed for 14–18 credits, due to specific academic or personal considerations.

The survey data shows that UNESA has successfully provided comprehensive academic support through a variety of available courses, flexibility in cross-program course enrollment, and a learning system that supports the maximum credit load. However, further strengthening of practical-based learning and the deepening of applicative skills remains an important point to optimize in order to enhance the quality of future student exchange program implementation at UNESA.

Learning process in the Student Exchange Program at UNESA.

Figure 11 shows the survey results from 61 respondents participating in the Inbound Student Exchange Program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). The data indicate that the majority of students perceived the learning process as high in quality. Specifically, 27.9% rated it as "Very Good" and 55.7% as "Good," meaning that over 83% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the learning experience at UNESA. In contrast, 14.8% rated it as "Poor," suggesting that a small portion of students encountered notable shortcomings in the learning process. One respondent said:

> "*In several meetings that I attended while studying at UNESA, the learning process was carried out well.*"

This shows that the learning process at UNESA has generally been well-structured and provides a positive learning experience for inbound students. However, there is room for improvement, particularly in enhancing the continuity and effectiveness of the learning process.

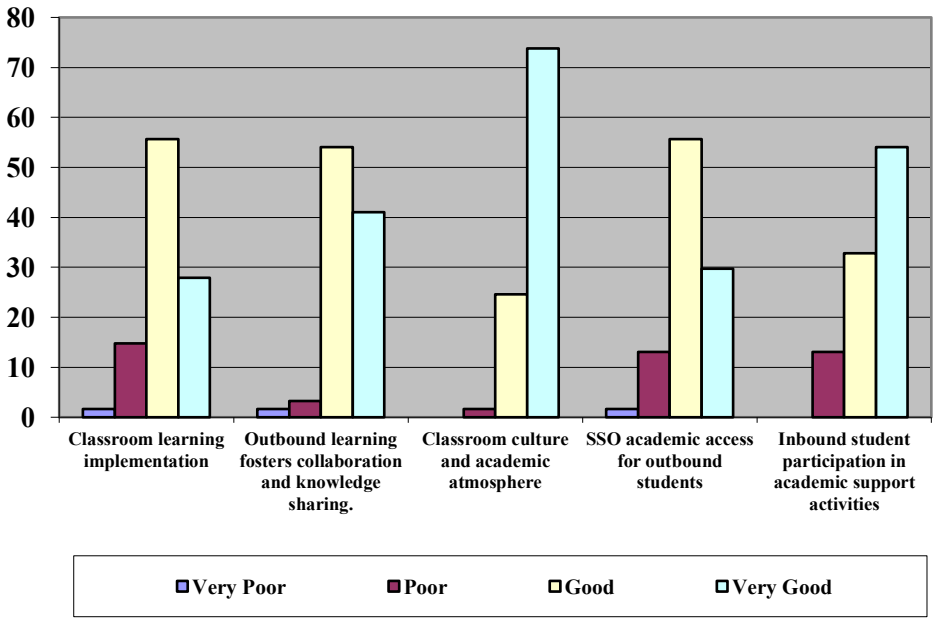


Figure 11. Student Exchange Learning at UNESA

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Survey results related to the culture and academic climate in the study programs where the Student Exchange Program (Inbound) classes are held show that the majority of respondents provided positive feedback. A total of 73.8% of respondents said the academic atmosphere as "Good," and 24.6% said as "Very Good." The remaining respondents said it as "Poor," with none rating it as "Very Poor," indicating a high level of satisfaction with the academic environment at UNESA. One respondent said:

> *"A positive academic culture helps shape students' character, encouraging them to become disciplined, responsible individuals with a strong work ethic."*

This shows that the influence of the academic culture at UNESA is not limited to cognitive aspects but also supports the holistic development of students' character.

The survey results regarding the ease of access to the academic system (SSO) show that 29.5% of respondents said the access as "Very Good," and 55.7% said as "Good." A total of 13.1% of respondents said as "Poor," indicating that over 85% of students are fairly satisfied with the academic access facilities provided by UNESA. One respondent said

> *"Exchange students are given email to access SSO and the Melisa website for study planning, attendance, and student grades."*

The findings show that access to the academic technology system has been adequately facilitated. However, the system used for inbound students is different from that of regular students, so in the future, there needs to be standardization or clarification of the access mechanisms to ensure inclusivity and avoid disparities.

The survey on student participation in supporting academic activities such as seminars, workshops, and similar events shows positive results. A total of 54.1% of respondents said their participation was "Good," and 32.8% said it was "Very Good." Only 13.1% said it was "Poor," and none said it was "Very Poor."

This high level of participation indicates that UNESA has successfully created an academic environment that encourages active student involvement in self-development activities. One respondent said:

> *"Of course, this is great, I can experience learning with international lecturers."*

This emphasizes that the involvement of guest lecturers, particularly from abroad, is an important element that enhances the quality of the academic experience for inbound students.

Therefore, it can be said that the learning process, academic culture, access systems, and supporting activities at UNESA have been deemed to meet the expectations of inbound students. While there is room for improvement, this data indicates UNESA's success in organizing an inclusive and high-quality student exchange program.

Tolerance and Diversity of Student Exchange Program Students at UNESA.

Figure 11 shows that interaction between inbound and regular students at UNESA was generally positive, based on a survey of 61 inbound student respondents. As many as 36.1% of respondents said the interaction as "Very Good", and 47.5% said it as "Good", so that more than 83% of respondents felt that the interaction was positive. However, 14.8% of respondents still said the interaction as "Poor", although none said it as "Very Poor".

One respondent said:

> *"Inbound and regular students at UNESA have harmonious and mutually supportive interactions, both in academic and non-academic aspects, which enrich the learning experience and create a state of mutual respect and understanding."*

This shows that interactions between students are not only limited to the classroom, but also include social and non-formal activities, which strengthen the sense of community and appreciation for diversity.

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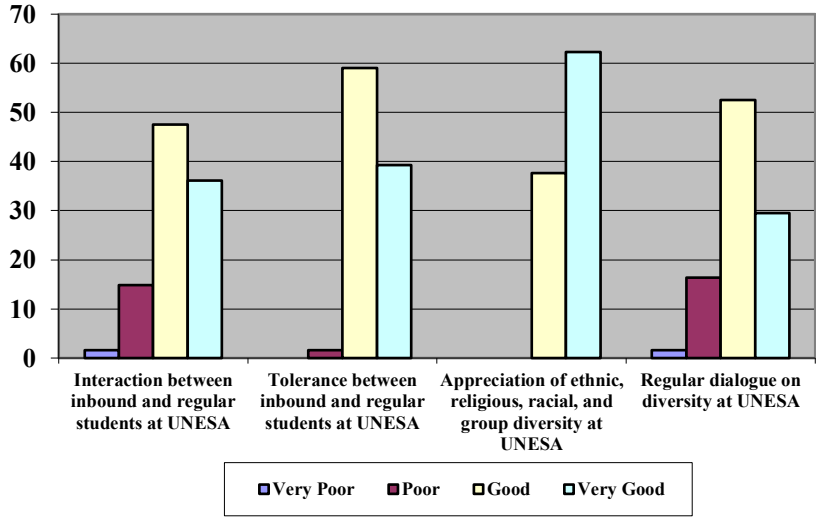


Figure 11. Tolerance and diversity at UNESA

The survey also showed a high level of tolerance between inbound and regular students. Of the total respondents, 39.3% said tolerance as "Excellent" and 59% said it as "Good", meaning that almost all respondents felt a strong sense of mutual respect. Only a small percentage said it as "Poor", and no respondents said it as "Very Poor". One respondent said:

"*Very respectful of differences. One example is when in class the lecturer explains in Javanese, I can't speak Javanese so there is a friend who translates what the lecturer is talking about.*"

This illustrates the real practice of tolerance in an academic environment, where language and cultural differences do not become a barrier in the learning process, but rather an opportunity to help and understand each other.

A total of 62.3% of respondents said respect for ethnic, religious, racial and intergroup (SARA) diversity as "Very Good", and 37.7% said it "Good". There were no respondents who said it as "Poor" or "Very Poor". One respondent said briefly but emphatically:

"*Our diversity is highly valued.*"

This emphasizes that UNESA has succeeded in creating an academic environment that upholds the values of pluralism and guarantees respect for differences.

Regarding the existence of dialog forums and regular encounters that discuss issues of diversity, 29.5% of respondents said these activities as "Very Good", 52.5% said them as "Good", and 16.4% felt they were "Less". No respondents gave a rating of "Very Poor". One respondent said

"*This dialog helps in developing diversity encounters and mutual understanding so as to create a harmonious and inclusive atmosphere on campus.*"

However, there was also constructive criticism:

"*Only occasionally, which usually does not reach consensus.*"

This reflects the need to increase the intensity and quality of diversity dialog implementation in order to build consensus and strengthen cross-cultural understanding more deeply.

In general, the survey results show that UNESA has succeeded in building an inclusive and supportive environment for inbound students, both in terms of social interaction, tolerance, respect for diversity, and the implementation of diversity dialog. However, an increase in the frequency and effectiveness of diversity dialog activities is an important point that needs further attention in an effort to create a truly inclusive and harmonious campus.

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Monitoring and Evaluation of Student Exchange Program by UNESA as Host University

Figure 12 shows that UNESA's monitoring and evaluation of inbound Student Exchange Program participants yielded positive results. Based on data from 61 respondents, the majority of students, 62.3%, said the implementation of monitoring and evaluation in the "Good" category. In addition, 27.9% of respondents gave a rating of "Very Good," reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the attention and supervision provided. Only 9.8% of respondents said this implementation as "Poor," and no respondents said it as "Very Poor."

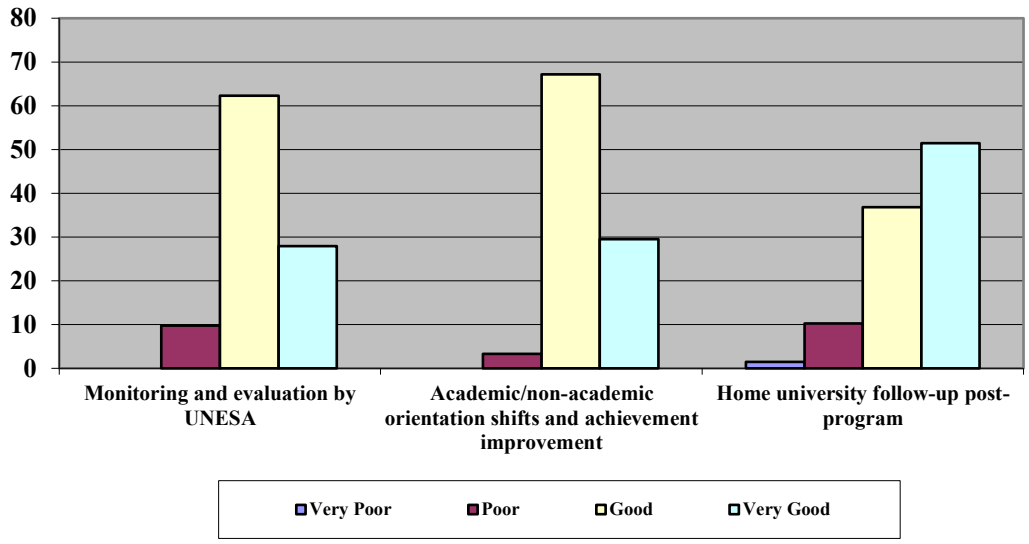


Figure 12. UNESA program monitoring and evaluation

The data indicates that UNESA has consistently carried out monitoring and evaluation functions, both in academic and non-academic aspects. This has a positive impact on the feelings of students who feel cared for and guided during the program. One respondent said:

> "*I feel that the inbound students of the student exchange program are very well cared for in learning activities and residence, and are always given advice or evaluation in both academic/non-academic activities.*"

This reinforces the finding that UNESA's attention to inbound students includes academic aspects and holistic well-being, which contributes to the success of the program.

Furthermore, changes in students' academic and non-academic orientation after participating in the exchange program at UNESA also showed very positive results. Of the 61 respondents, 67.2% stated that the change was "Good," and 29.5% said it "Very Good." Only a small percentage of respondents said it "Poor," with no one rating it "Very Poor."

This finding indicates that participation in the program had a significant impact on the development of students' mindset, academic orientation, and non-academic skills. As one respondent said:

> "*Students get a new view of teaching methods and curricula that are different from their home universities.*"

This statement confirms that cross-institutional learning experiences enrich students' academic horizons and provide new perspectives on various educational methods.

In terms of follow-up and recognition from the home university, the evaluation results also showed excellent achievements. A total of 60.7% of respondents said the follow-up and recognition process as "Good," while 32.8% said it "Very Good." Only a few respondents said it "Poor," and none said it "Very Poor."

These results reflect the home university's appreciation of the student experience and competencies gained during the program. One respondent said:

https://doi.org/10.46627/silet.v6i2.671

> *"The follow-up and recognition from the home university after the inbound students completed the exchange program at UNESA was very good and went smoothly because UNESA has a strong reputation in providing quality education and valuable learning experiences."*

This statement underlines that the student exchange program not only enhances the experience during the program, but also contributes to the students' future academic and professional development.

Although the overall results show good performance, the open-ended questionnaire results revealed some shortcomings in the management of the program by the UNESA Sub-Directorate. Frequently highlighted shortcomings include delays in the delivery of information, less than optimal coordination between the directorate, lecturers, and students, as well as delays in administrative completion and handling of housing issues. In addition, direct interaction between lecturers and students is considered to still need to be improved, and some activities are not carried out according to schedule.

On the other hand, a number of strengths were also identified. Students appreciated the responsiveness and openness of the directorate to criticism, suggestions, and complaints. Supporting facilities, academic guidance, and information provision are considered adequate, and there are active efforts to help students solve academic and non-academic problems. Coordination with various parties in the campus environment runs quite effectively, and innovation in the implementation of activities is also an added value.

Through the open-ended questionnaire format, students were able to express their opinions and experiences in depth, providing a comprehensive picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the management of the Inbound Student Exchange Program at UNESA.

Discussion

Analysis of Supporting Factors for the Outbound Student Exchange Program based on Student Perceptions

Internal Preparation of UNESA Student Exchange Program Students Pre-Departure Briefing

This study aims to examine Surabaya State University (UNESA) outbound students' perceptions of the effectiveness of institutional communication and coordination in supporting the success of the student exchange program. Based on a survey of 68 respondents, the majority of students appreciated the *pre-departure briefing* communication which was considered very helpful in understanding the program objectives and procedures. The results showed that 63.2% of respondents said the clarity of the exchange program objectives in the "Very Good" category, and another 33.8% said it "Good".

This finding is in line with the study Heinzmann (2025) which states that clarity of program objectives has a significant impact on the level of adaptation, motivation, and academic engagement of students. Clarity of communication is a key factor that prevents unrealistic expectations and increases participants' satisfaction with the program.

In addition, the academic and non-academic support provided by the UNESA Sub-directorate was highly appreciated, with 58.8% of respondents rating it "Very Good" and 39.7% rating it "Good". The support included administrative assistance and provision of technical information. Previous research Ariyanti and Ilman (2022) confirms that open communication and institutional support play an important role in building trust and facilitating student adaptation.

Aspects of students' internal readiness and family support also contribute greatly to the success of the program. A total of 72.1% of students stated that they were "Very Ready" to join the program, while 26.5% stated that they were "Ready". Factors such as personal motivation, emotional readiness, and moral and financial support from family are the main determinants of student (Ratna Yunitasari & Dida Rahmadanik, 2022).

Finally, the effectiveness of internal university coordination, especially in the socialization, registration, and administration stages, proved crucial in supporting the smooth running of the student exchange program. Good coordination can reduce student confusion and improve their

overall experience. Conversely, lack of technical information such as KRS filling can be a serious obstacle in the implementation of the program.

Thus, the success of a student exchange program depends not only on the readiness of individual participants, but also on the effectiveness of communication, institutional support, and coordination among stakeholders within the university.

Preparation of Student Exchange Program Learning Activities at the Host University

The survey results on students' perceptions regarding the availability of courses at the host university show that the majority of respondents said this aspect positively. A total of 55.9% of respondents categorized it as "Good", and 30.9% said it as "Very Good". This finding indicates that more than half of the program participants were able to access courses that suited their academic needs and study background. However, 11.8% of respondents stated that the availability of courses was still "Deficient", and a small number called it "Very Deficient".

The mismatch of courses with students' study plans is often a major obstacle in the implementation of exchange programs, causing dissatisfaction and disrupting the smooth running of studies. Students often have to readjust their academic plans and even take irrelevant courses. In the long run, this contributes to a negative perception of the institution's readiness to accommodate the needs of international students. Research by Streitwieser (2012) shows that 77% of outbound students feel there is a match between the courses offered and their academic needs, although there are still challenges in curriculum adjustment.

In the aspect of flexibility in taking courses across study programs, the majority of respondents also gave positive responses. 42.6% said this flexibility as "Very Good", and 44.1% said it as "Good". Only 8.8% considered it "Deficient", with a small proportion stating "Very Deficient". Curriculum flexibility is considered to play an important role in supporting the inclusiveness of exchange programs. The rigidity of the curriculum structure can be a barrier, especially for students from less accommodated disciplines (Suryanto et al., 2022). Therefore, the development of interdisciplinary courses, cross-credit recognition, and open curriculum systems are important strategies to expand access, increase academic diversity, and support more personalized and relevant learning experiences for students.

Regarding study load, the number of Semester Credit Units (SKS) taken by inbound program students varies. Of the 68 respondents, 48.5% took 20-24 credits, and 44.1% took 18-20 credits. A small proportion took a lower load, namely 16-18 credits and 14-15 credits. This variation reflects the complexity of the higher education system at each institution, as well as differences in fields of study. Programs such as engineering and medicine tend to have higher credit loads compared to social sciences and humanities. In addition, the structure of the curriculum, internal policies, and the readiness of the institution to adjust the curriculum for international students also affect the number of credits that can be taken. Marciniak (2019) emphasizes the importance of curriculum flexibility in responding to the dynamic needs of students and humanitarian projects.

Overall, these findings emphasize the importance of curriculum alignment and academic flexibility in improving the quality of student experience in exchange programs. Institutional efforts to adapt educational structures to the needs of international students are crucial to support the academic success and global reputation of universities.

The learning process in the Student Exchange Program at the Host University

UNESA (outbound) students' perceptions of learning activities in the exchange program showed encouraging results. A total of 61.8% of respondents said the program as "Excellent" in providing opportunities for collaboration and exchange of knowledge and experience between students, while 33.8% expressed a "Good" assessment. Studies by Opti and Rachmawati (2022) reveal that student exchange programs are able to increase students' active participation, self-confidence, and interpersonal skills because they are encouraged by a more open and diverse learning environment.

However, a minority of respondents gave a "Poor" rating to the learning activities. They highlighted the lack of meaningful interaction between students and lecturers on the destination campus as well as the limited use of collaborative learning methods. An evaluation conducted student exchanges between UNESA and Brawijaya University also noted that communication challenges and adaptation to learning methods hindered optimal learning experiences for some participants. This emphasizes the importance of increasing the capacity of partner institutions in organizing learning that supports cross-cultural collaboration more intensively.

Survey results on inbound students' perceptions of the culture and academic climate in the classroom at Surabaya State University (UNESA) showed that the majority of participants said this aspect positively. A total of 55.9% of respondents stated that the academic climate was in the "Good" category, and another 33.8% said it "Very Good". Only 10.3% of respondents said it as "Poor", and no one chose "Very Poor".

Research done by Fajri (2024) in their study emphasized that the Student Exchange program is effective in encouraging academic and cultural exchanges, which contribute to increased cultural understanding and social integration of students in the campus environment. Thus, positive perceptions of culture and academic climate in the classroom reflect the institution's success in creating a learning environment that is inclusive and supportive of cultural diversity.

In the aspect of access to the academic system (Single Sign-On/SSO) at the destination university, the majority of students gave a very positive assessment. Of the 68 respondents, 55.9% said the academic system access service as "Very Good", and 38.2% said it as "Good". There were no respondents who said this aspect as "Very Poor", and only a few who stated "Poor". This finding is in line with research by the results of the acceptance test showed that 80% of students and lecturers stated that this system is very easy and innovative, so it can be the basis for improving academic services in higher education.

In addition, a study by Salmuasih and Setiawan (2023) evaluated the implementation of SSO with SAML and OAuth 2.0 protocols at universities in Yogyakarta found that although most universities have implemented SSO, there are still discrepancies in its implementation that can add to the complexity of previous problems. Thus, the implementation of an effective SSO system that suits the needs of the institution can improve user experience and efficiency in accessing academic services.

Finally, student participation in academic support activities such as seminars, workshops, and other educational activities showed a predominantly positive response. A total of 42.6% of respondents said their participation in such activities as "Very Good", and 41.2% said it as "Good". Thus, more than 83% of respondents showed satisfaction with this aspect. This finding is in line with (AI-Youbi et al., 2020) emphasizing that student involvement in communities and student activity units plays an important role in non-academic achievement, which supports the holistic development of students. Thus, active participation in academic support activities not only increases student satisfaction but also contributes to the development of competencies that support their academic and professional success.

Overall, the implementation of UNESA's student exchange program was perceived positively. The success of this program is determined by the effectiveness of learning, responsive academic system support, and active participation of students in supporting activities. Recommendations include strengthening the collaborative pedagogical approach and increasing the integration of information technology to support program sustainability and quality.

Tolerance and Diversity of Student Exchange Program Students at the Host University.

Based on the survey results, social interactions between exchange program students (outbound) of Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) and regular students at the destination universities show positive and constructive dynamics. The majority of respondents (89.7%) said the interaction as being in the "very good" (45.6%) and "good" (44.1%) categories. This finding indicates a high level of social acceptance from regular students towards exchange program

students, which in turn supports the creation of cross-cultural integration in the destination university environment.

This finding is in line with a study by Leithwood (2024) and Heinzmann (2015) which, through a phenomenological approach, revealed that students use various adaptation strategies to overcome culture shock and build effective communication with local students. The study confirmed that intensive interaction between international students and local students contributed significantly to strengthening cross-cultural integration on campus.

The level of tolerance among students was also identified to be at a high level. Of the 68 respondents, 57.4% said the tolerance relationship as "very good" and 38.2% said it as "good". Thus, more than 95% of students feel that the social environment on campus aims to support and respect diversity. Only 4.4% of respondents said this tolerance relationship as "less", and there were no respondents who said it "very less". These results are reinforced by (Wulan et al., 2023) which shows that students participating in the exchange program experienced an increase in terms of respect for other cultures, as well as growing awareness that all ethnic groups are brothers.

On the other hand, respect for ethnic, religious, racial, and intergroup (SARA) diversity in destination universities also received high appreciation. A total of 64.7% of respondents said respect for diversity as "very good", and 26.5% said it as "good", so that more than 91% of students consider the culture of the destination campus to be very respectful of diversity. However, 7.4% of respondents said this aspect as "poor", indicating room for improvement in campus inclusivity practices.

In the aspect of regular dialogues and encounters related to racial diversity, the data shows that 36.8% of respondents said it "very good", 33.8% "good", 25% "less", and 4.4% "very less". Although the majority of students feel that diversity is well facilitated, there are still some students who think that the space for diversity dialogue has not been fully optimized.

In general, these findings support the conclusion that student exchange programs contribute significantly to the formation of students' attitudes of tolerance and nationalism, through strengthening respect for other cultures and awareness of national unity based on the values of Pancasila, as affirmed by Pinandhita and Gultom (2024).

Thus, UNESA's student exchange program (Outbound) shows effectiveness in encouraging cross-cultural integration in destination universities. Harmonious social interactions, high levels of tolerance, and respect for SARA diversity reflect the positive achievements of this program. However, the facilitation of diversity dialogue space still requires further attention.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Student Exchange Program by UNESA as the Sending University (Home University).

A survey involving 68 students participating in the exchange program (outbound) at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) showed that the implementation of program monitoring and evaluation received a very positive response. A total of 48.5% of respondents said the evaluation mechanism as "Very Good", while 45.6% said it as "Good". So that there needs to be further coordination with faculties who still do not understand the form of service received by inbound students and provide further direction to inbound students regarding the obstacles experienced during lectures (Ray, 2023; Al-Lawati et al., 2022).

In addition, participation in the program significantly contributed to changes in participants' academic and non-academic orientation. A total of 45.6% of respondents stated that the impact was "Very Good", and 50% said the impact as "Good". Regarding post-program academic recognition, most students gave a positive assessment. A total of 42.6% of respondents said this academic recognition as "Very Good", while the other 50% said it as "Good".

Finally, the follow-up provided after students return from the exchange program received a very good assessment. A total of 51.5% of respondents said this follow-up as "Very Good", and 36.9% said it as "Good". So, in the implementation of the student exchange program will encounter obstacles that are still found need to be improved so that the student exchange

program can be implemented more smoothly and evaluated with more measurable outcomes in the future (Pae et al., 2022).

Analysis of Supporting Factors for Outbound Student Exchange Programs based on Student Perceptions

Internal Preparation of Sending PTN / PTS (home university) Pre-departure of Student Exchange Program students (pre-departure briefing) to UNESA

The results of the survey data analysis regarding perceptions of the clarity of the objectives of the Student Exchange Program (inbound) involving 61 respondents showed that most participants had a fairly positive view. A total of 45% of respondents categorized the clarity of program objectives as "Less", while 37% gave an assessment of "Good". A small number of respondents stated that the clarity of program objectives was "Very Poor" (13%) and only 10% said it as "Very Good".

In the aspect of providing information and providing academic and non-academic support prior to program implementation, respondents' perceptions were mixed. Of the 68 responses analysed, 25% said this aspect as "Very Poor", 14.2% "Poor", 39.7% "Good", and 21.1% "Very Good". This finding shows that the socialization mechanism, registration procedures, and academic and non-academic preparation are still not optimal in some institutions.

The aspect of structured information delivery by universities, which includes program socialization, exposure to registration procedures, and pre-departure guidance, is a crucial element in ensuring program clarity. Academic support provided, such as guidance on course selection and pre-academic debriefing, has been shown to contribute significantly to improving student readiness (Marciniak, 2019).

Students' internal readiness and family support before departure also received a relatively positive response. Of the 68 respondents, 40% stated that their readiness was in the "Good" category and 26% were "Very Good". 24% stated "Poor" and 10% "Very Poor". This finding indicates that internal factors and external support from the family also influence students' overall readiness.

From the perspective of coordination and conditioning carried out by sending universities, 45% of respondents said the coordination as "Good", and 35% as "Very Good". However, there were also 18.5% of respondents who said this coordination as "Poor" and 11.5% said it as "Very Poor", indicating a disparity in the implementation of coordination between institutions.

This finding is in line with a study conducted by Aulia (2025) which emphasizes that cultural experiences, social interactions, and family support have a significant influence on students' internal readiness to participate in exchange programs. Students who receive family support and thorough debriefing from the sending institution generally show higher levels of tolerance, good social skills, and superior adaptability during the program.

Preparation of Student Exchange Program Learning Activities at UNESA

The results of the survey of 61 respondents provide a comprehensive picture of the level of academic readiness in the implementation of the Student Exchange Program (inbound) at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA). One of the main indicators analysed is the availability of courses that can be accessed by students participating in the program. The data shows that the majority of respondents gave positive responses to this aspect, with 52.5% stating "Very Good" and 42.6% stating "Good". This finding indicates that UNESA has successfully provided courses that are appropriate and relevant to the needs of inbound students.

In addition, the flexibility in taking courses across study programs also received high appreciation. Based on the same survey data, 47.5% of respondents said this flexibility in the "Very Good" category, while 50.8% stated "Good". Overall, more than 98% of respondents expressed satisfaction with the flexible academic system at UNESA. This shows that the academic system has been designed in such a way as to accommodate the diversity of academic backgrounds of participating students.

Academic readiness in this context includes the understanding of the lecture system, the availability of relevant learning materials, and the support provided by lecturers and institutions in the teaching-learning process. Program flexibility is needed to facilitate students' adjustment to the new academic environment and to face challenges during the program period. For this reason, universities are advised to conduct continuous evaluation and development of the program implementation. This includes improving the provision of information, adjusting the curriculum, and strengthening academic services and facilities to ensure an optimal learning experience (Monalisa Martha Siahaan et al., 2023).

Furthermore, the results of the analysis of the number of study loads (SKS) taken by students during the program showed that the majority of participants (59%) took a load of 20-24 SKS, including the Nusantara Module Course. This reflects the commitment and maximum effort of students in utilizing learning opportunities at the receiving institution. A total of 36.1% of students took a load of 18-20 credits, which can be interpreted as a form of adaptation to the learning capacity of each individual. Meanwhile, only a small proportion (around 4.9%) chose a study load of 14-18 credits, which may be influenced by personal, academic, or mental health considerations.

In its implementation, the taking of credits in the student exchange program is strictly regulated through a selection process, curriculum adjustments, and conversion of credits based on agreements between universities. Students are given the opportunity to take courses outside the study program or even across universities, with the guarantee that the credits obtained will be converted to the home institution. This conversion process is carried out by taking into account the learning outcomes of graduates and applicable academic regulations, as stipulated.

The learning process in the Student Exchange Program at UNESA.

Based on the survey results of 61 respondents who participated in the Student Exchange Program (Inbound) at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA), a positive picture was obtained regarding the quality of the learning process that took place. A total of 27.9% of respondents gave an assessment of "Very Good" and 55.7% stated "Good". Thus, more than 83% of respondents were satisfied with the implementation of the learning process at UNESA. Only 14.8% gave an assessment of "Less", and very few respondents assessed that there were significant shortcomings in the implementation of learning.

The learning process in this program is implemented collaboratively with an approach that integrates students from various cultural and academic backgrounds. Lecture activities are supported by competent lecturers and adequate learning facilities. Students gain cross-cultural learning experiences through group discussions, project work, and field practice. This approach contributes significantly to the development of students' soft skills and non-academic competencies. This inclusive and adaptive learning process is considered to be able to encourage the achievement of optimal learning outcomes optimal (Naiborhu & Panjaitan, 2023).

A follow-up survey that evaluates the academic culture and climate in the study program that is the location of the Student Exchange Program implementation shows that the majority of respondents assess this aspect positively. A total of 73.8% stated that the academic climate was classified as "Good", and 24.6% said it "Very Good". There were no respondents who said it "Very Poor", while only a small number said it "Poor". This finding indicates that the academic environment at UNESA supports students' adaptation and learning process. Previous research also confirms that adaptation to academic climate and culture is an important factor in the success of student exchange programs, so that a thorough preparation strategy is needed in this aspect (Mulyanto et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the ease of access to the digital academic system (SSO) was also evaluated in the survey. A total of 29.5% of respondents said access as "Very Good", and 55.7% said it as "Good". Only 13.1% said it as "Poor". This result shows that more than 85% of students are satisfied with the academic information system facilities available at UNESA. Easy access to the

academic system is considered important to support the effectiveness of student study management, especially in the context of academic mobility.

Student participation in supporting academic activities, such as seminars, workshops, and scientific discussions, also showed a high level of involvement. A total of 54.1% of respondents said their participation in the "Good" category and 32.8% stated "Very Good". Only 13.1% said it as "Poor", and there were no respondents who said it as "Very Poor". This finding confirms that inbound program students at UNESA show enthusiasm in participating in academic activities that support competency improvement. Active participation in these activities is proven to enrich learning experiences, improve communication skills, and broaden cross-cultural insights (Naiborhu & Panjaitan, 2023).

Therefore, the evaluation results show that UNESA has succeeded in creating an academic environment that supports the learning process of inbound students holistically. This success needs to be maintained through institutional strengthening, development of digital-based academic systems, and increasing the capacity of human resources involved in the student exchange program.

Tolerance and Diversity of Student Exchange Program Students at UNESA.

The survey results of 61 inbound students who participated in the Student Exchange Program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) showed that the interaction between inbound students and regular students took place positively. A total of 36.1% of respondents said the interaction in the "Very Good" category and 47.5% said it "Good", so that overall, more than 83% of respondents were satisfied with the dynamics of the interaction that occurred. However, 14.8% of respondents said the interaction as "Poor", although none said it as "Very Poor".

Interactions between inbound and regular students play a strategic role in supporting the social and cultural adaptation process. Joint activities in the classroom, student organizations, and informal interactions in the campus environment help inbound students to understand local social and cultural norms, while building self-confidence and expanding intercultural insights. This is in line with the findings of Rahmat et al., (2024) which emphasizes that the intensity of social interaction is a key factor in reducing feelings of *homesickness* and increasing students' readiness to face the challenges of a new environment.

Furthermore, the survey also showed a high level of tolerance among students. A total of 39.3% of respondents gave a "Very Good" rating to the tolerance attitude of regular students, while 59% stated "Good". Only a small number of respondents said it "Poor", and no respondents said it "Very Poor". This indicates that the majority of inbound students feel socially and culturally accepted by the academic community at UNESA.

This high tolerance is also reflected in respect for diversity, including aspects of ethnicity, religion, race and intergroup (SARA). A total of 62.3% of respondents said respect for diversity as "Very Good" and 37.7% said it "Good", with no respondents rating it "Less" or "Very Less". This academic environment that upholds diversity is an important foundation in creating an inclusive and harmonious campus atmosphere. Aulia (2025) states that the success of student exchange programs is highly dependent on an academic environment that respects plurality and encourages collaboration across identities.

In the institutional aspect, the existence of dialog forums and regular meetings that discuss diversity issues also received positive appreciation from students. A total of 29.5% of respondents said this forum as "Very Good", 52.5% said it as "Good", and only 16.4% said it as "Poor". There were no "Very Poor" ratings from respondents. The forum is considered an effective tool to strengthen cross-cultural understanding, build empathy, and improve intercultural communication skills. According to Marlia & Said, (2024) the dialog forum acts as a reflective and interactive space that allows students from various backgrounds to share experiences, form collaborative networks, and strengthen the values of tolerance and inclusiveness in the context of higher education.

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Overall, the findings show that UNESA has successfully built a social and academic environment conducive to the implementation of student exchange programs. Healthy interaction, high tolerance, and appreciation of diversity are key elements in supporting the success of inbound students in undergoing the learning process and adapting holistically.

Monitoring and evaluation of Student Exchange Program by UNESA as Host University.
The implementation of monitoring and evaluation of inbound students of the Student Exchange Program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) showed positive results. Based on data obtained from 61 respondents, the majority of students (62.3%) said the implementation of monitoring and evaluation in the "Good" category, while 27.9% of respondents said it "Very Good," reflecting a high level of satisfaction with the attention and supervision provided during the program. Only 9.8% of respondents said this implementation as "Poor," and no respondents said it as "Very Poor," indicating minimal dissatisfaction with this aspect.

Furthermore, changes in students' academic and non-academic orientation after participating in the exchange program at UNESA also showed a very positive trend. A total of 67.2% of respondents stated that the change was in the category of "Good," while 29.5% said it "Very Good." Only a small percentage of respondents said it "Poor," and none said it "Very Poor," suggesting that the program effectively encouraged transformation in students' academic and personal character development.

On the aspect of follow-up and recognition from the home university, the evaluation results also showed very good achievements. A total of 60.7% of respondents said the follow-up and recognition process as "Good," and another 32.8% said it as "Very Good." This finding indicates that coordination between UNESA and students' home universities is effective, especially in the recognition of students' academic achievements after joining the program.

The three aspects of monitoring and evaluation, changes in academic and non-academic orientation, and follow-up and recognition from home universities are closely related. Effective implementation of monitoring and evaluation directly contributes to positive changes in academic orientation (competency improvement, SKS recognition, curriculum adjustment) and non-academic (character development, soft skills improvement, cross-cultural adaptation, and internalization of diversity values). Thus, the evaluation results not only serve as a measuring tool for the success of the program, but also become an important foundation in the preparation of strategies for improving and developing student exchange programs on an ongoing basis (Priyanto & Andrianto, 2022).

The results of the evaluation of the implementation of the student exchange program at UNESA show that structured monitoring and evaluation, as well as effective follow-up, play a key role in supporting positive changes in students, both in academic and non-academic domains. Therefore, to ensure the sustainability and quality improvement of the program, continuous efforts are needed in refining the evaluation mechanism as well as stronger synergy between the receiving and home universities.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the student exchange program at Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) shows significant effectiveness in shaping participants' academic, social, and psychological readiness, both in the inbound and outbound schemes. The fundamental findings of this study indicate that structured pre-departure communication, strong institutional support, and good internal coordination are the main factors that support the success of the program. In addition, individual readiness strengthened by personal motivation and family support contributed greatly to the success of student participation in the program.

The implications of these findings are both practical and theoretical. Practically, the research results can be the basis for policy making to strengthen the implementation mechanism of the exchange program, both in terms of academic and non-academic. Theoretically, the user experience-based approach used in this study enriches the discourse on the internationalization

of higher education by placing students at the centre of the analysis. This approach allows for a deeper understanding of the emotional, cognitive, and social dimensions of the cross-cultural student mobility experience.

However, this study has several limitations. First, the data were collected within a limited time framework and involved a specific cohort of participants from a single university, which may not fully represent the diversity of student experiences across different institutions or cultural contexts. Second, the study relied primarily on self-reported data, which may be influenced by personal bias or selective recall. Lastly, the focus on participants' perspectives did not include institutional or administrative viewpoints that might offer additional insights into program effectiveness and operational challenges.

For future research, a longitudinal study is recommended to explore the long-term impact of participation in exchange programs on students' personal development, careers, and international networks. In addition, cross-institutional and cross-country comparative studies can enrich the understanding of the dynamics of internationalization of higher education in diverse cultural and policy contexts, thus encouraging the development of more inclusive, adaptive, and globally sustainable exchange program models.

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