

ENHANCING PROGRAM QUALITY: AN IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS OF ITS EFFECT ON STUDENT SATISFACTION VIA STUDENTS' PERCEIVED EXPERIENCE VALUE IN THE MBKM PROGRAM

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to evaluate the influence of educational program quality on student satisfaction, specifically on the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (emancipated learning - MBKM) initiative. Although the MBKM program prioritizes the enhancement of learning flexibility and the improvement of student outcomes, more research needs to be done to examine how the perceived quality of these programs affects students' overall satisfaction and experiential value. This study examines the role of student-perceived experience value as a mediating variable between program quality and student satisfaction. A survey, which included 200 MBKM participants from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, was conducted utilizing primary sources (questionnaires) and secondary sources (literature review) for data collection. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was utilized to examine the interrelationships among the key variables. The results indicate that program quality significantly impacts student satisfaction and the perceived value of the experience. Additionally, learners' satisfaction serves as a mediator in the relationship between program quality and perceived experiential value. These results highlight the necessity of prioritizing program quality to improve student satisfaction and perceived value, enhancing educational experiences' overall effectiveness. The study suggests that enhancing program quality and student satisfaction is essential for attaining the desired goals of the MBKM program.

Keywords: Program Quality, Student Perceived Experience, Student Satisfaction, MBKM

INTRODUCTION

Student satisfaction is crucial for education and learners, as it influences the quality of education and students' success in finishing their studies. Prior studies indicate that student satisfaction influences educational institutions' reputation and appeal to potential students. The issue of student satisfaction continues to be investigated, emphasizing the service and quality of the learning process (Bernal, 2023). Assessing student satisfaction is crucial as it correlates with increased engagement and motivation, hence enhancing the learning process (Muzammil, 2021). Student satisfaction is receiving increased focus in the current competitive educational landscape (Minarti & Segoro, 2014; Winstone, 2022). Student satisfaction is a multifaceted construct influenced by various factors. Satisfaction can be interpreted as a feeling of happiness or unhappiness, satisfaction or dissatisfaction, relief or not relief towards something or someone (Abdelmaaboud, 2021; Park, 2023). Therefore, student satisfaction can be defined as the fulfillment or lack thereof of students' desires, aspirations, or needs. (Walker, 2021).

The objective is to improve students' comprehension and enthusiasm for scientific topics and methodologies while offering practical experience with scientific instruments and abilities. While student satisfaction with perception is essential in e-learning, active participation leads to learning and performance. Consequently, engagement is a fundamental idea. (Moon, 2021). Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (emancipated learning - MBKM) fosters a constructive learning environment, aids students in attaining expected learning outcomes, and enables independent task completion by incorporating contextual information on experiments, along with photographs and videos, so facilitating the development of visual images. Student satisfaction is determined by an individual's assessment of how well their needs, aspirations, and desires have been fulfilled within the learning environment (Ziegler, 2023).

The level of participant satisfaction in the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program can be assessed through the survey responses obtained. 62.8% of respondents participated in the Independent MBKM program organized by the Study Program, whereas 35.5% engaged in the flagship MBKM program conducted by DIKTI. 7.1% of respondents were MBKM participants from institutions other than DIKTI and UGM (Insani et al., 2021). Concerning credit acquisition, 60% of participants in the MBKM program obtained acknowledgment of 20 credit points from the Study Program, and the remaining 40% earned credit recognition ranging from 0 to 19. Within the framework of the MBKM Learning Activity Form (BKP), the majority of respondents selected the Internship BKP (57.6%), followed by the Independent Study BKP (15.8%) and the Research BKP (15.1%). The majority of individuals engaged in the MBKM Program throughout semesters 5, 6, and 7. Regarding the utility of knowledge, 61.1% of students deemed the exchange in the MBKM program highly beneficial, while 37.7% regarded it as beneficial. A small fraction (0.9%) indicated it was less beneficial, while 0.3% were uncertain or did not respond (Syamsuadi et al., 2022).

Low student satisfaction can adversely affect the quality of education and educational institutions. The initial consequence is a deterioration in the quality of educational services, which may adversely influence students' learning experiences (Iruka, 2023). Moreover, low student satisfaction might adversely affect lecturer performance, diminish motivation, and impair the quality of teaching (Sommanus, 2022). The reputation of educational institutions can be diminished by student dissatisfaction, which

influences public and prospective students' impressions of the institution. Moreover, a decline in attractiveness to potential students could occur, reducing applicant numbers and heightened competitiveness (Logachev, 2021).

This research investigated the determinants of low student satisfaction levels and their broader implications for educational institutions. By identifying critical determinants of dissatisfaction, the paper seeks to provide actionable recommendations to improve the quality of educational services, enhance lecturer performance, and restore institutional reputation. Furthermore, it emphasizes tactics to entice potential students and sustain competitiveness in a swiftly changing educational environment.

METHODS

The research was conducted over 8 months, from February to September 2024. The research site was the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Indonesia University of Education). This study utilized both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was acquired by literature review, observation, and interviews, whereas primary data was gathered by utilizing research instruments on samples chosen according to the defined population. The subjects of this study are MBKM participants at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (Indonesia University of Education). Utilizing the Slovin formula (Husein Umar, 2003, p. 141) with a sample error tolerance of 10%, a minimum sample size of 100 responders was determined. To ensure the sample was representative, the size was increased to 200 respondents. This study employs Quality of Program and Student Perceived Experience as independent factors, with Student Satisfaction as the dependent variable. Data plays a crucial function in research as it represents the variables under investigation and is a foundation for hypothesis formulation (Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2023). Consequently, it is essential to perform data evaluation to ascertain its quality. The validity and dependability of data are significantly influenced by the employed data collection method. An effective instrument must satisfy validity and reliability criteria (Rahmadhan et al., 2023). This study employed SPSS software for validity and reliability testing (Whitehead, 2007). This study employed verification data analysis to examine the impact of Program Quality (X1) on Student Satisfaction (Y) via Student Perceived Experience Value (X2). The analytical method utilized to ascertain the correlational relationship was Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION FINDINGS

The following data was derived from a survey conducted with 200 respondents who are students at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (The Indonesia University of Education). This study seeks to ascertain students' demographic attributes and participation in the Emancipated Learning (MBKM) Program. The collected information encompasses several characteristics, including age, gender, study program, semester undertaken, and type of MBKM program participated in.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristics	Information	Amount
Age	Man	94
	Woman	106
University	Indonesian education university	200
	Guidance and counseling	2
	Educational Administration	3
	Special education	13
	Educational Technology	14
	Bumi Siliwangi's Primary School Teacher Education Program	5
	Bumi Siliwangi's The Early Childhood Education Teacher Education Program	6
	Psychology	3
	Library and Information	5
	Civic education	7
	History Education	8
	Geography Education	2
	Islamic Religious Education Science	3
	Study program	Resort & Leisure Management
Tourism Marketing Management		9
Catering Industry Management		3
Social Science Education		3
Communication Studies		3
Sociology Education		2
Indonesian Language and Literature Education		4
English language education		9
English Language and Literature		6
Korean Language Education		6
Fine Arts and Crafts Education		4
Dance Arts Education		3
Music Arts Education	2	

Characteristics	Information	Amount
	Mathematics Education	3
	Physics Education	4
	Biology Education	2
	Chemistry Education	5
	Computer Science Education	3
	Mathematics	2
	Physics	3
	Biology	4
	Chemistry	3
	Computer Science	4
	Natural Sciences (IPSE)	3
	Electrical Engineering Education	2
	Mechanical Engineering Education	2
	Civil Engineering Education	2
	Architectural Engineering Education	1
	Agro-Industrial Technology Education	1
	Family Welfare Education	1
	Fashion Design Education	1
	Electrical Engineering	1
	Sports Coaching Education	1
	Health Education and Recreation	1
	Physical Education, Health and Recreation	2
	Management	4
	Accounting	3
	Accounting Education	5
	Business Education	8
Semester	3	41
	4	40
	5	40
	6	40
	7	39
MBKM Program Types	Certified Internship	63
	Independent Study	27
	Teaching Campus	23
	Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA)	23
	Independent Student Exchange	21
	Building Villages (Thematic KKN)	18
	Humanitarian Project	13
Research or Studies	12	

The data indicates that the responder pool comprised 94 males and 106 females, totaling 200 students from diverse academic disciplines. The majority of students originated from the disciplines of Special Education, Educational Technology, and Business Education. The distribution of students over semesters 3 to 7 was relatively even, with the highest number of respondents in semester 3, totaling 41 students.

Within student participation in the MBKM Program, the Certified Internship is the most favored initiative, succeeded by Independent Study and Kampus Mengajar. The Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) and Merdeka Student Exchange programs are notably popular. This data illustrates a range of MBKM program options selected by students, indicating their interests and preferences for programs that facilitate competency enhancement and experiential learning beyond the classroom.

Table 2. Measurement Model Estimation Test Results

			Estimate
QP4	←	Quality of Program	0.751
QP3	←		0.831
QP2	←		0.754
QP1	←		0.861
SE1	←	Student Satisfaction	0.748
SE2	←		0.758
SE3	←		0.758
SE4	←		0.778
Satis1	←	Student Perceived Experience Value	0.742
Satis2	←		0.899
Satis3	←		0.839
Satis4	←		0.772
Satis5	←		0.839
Satis6	←		0.888

The Measurement Model Estimation Test findings indicate that all indicators and constructs within this research model are valid, necessitating loading factor values exceeding 0.5. The Measurement Model Estimation Test results indicate that all indicators and constructs within this research model are valid, requiring loading factor values exceeding 0.5.

Table 3. Full Model Hypothesis Test Analysis

	Estimate	SE	CR	P
QP4	12,512	0.114	109.67	***
QP3	12.37	0.125	98,615	***
QP2	18,616	0.182	102.28	***
QP1	18,839	0.141	133.64	***
SE1	18,886	0.138	136,903	***
SE2	18,768	0.141	133,052	***
SE3	18,768	0.143	131,423	***
SE4	19,218	0.108	178,093	***
satisfied1	5,972	0.081	73,582	***
satisfied2	6,199	0.074	83,599	***
satisfied3	6,109	0.071	85,446	***
satis4	6,043	0.076	80,029	***
Satis5	6.1	0.077	79,185	***
satisfied6	6,147	0.075	81,438	***

Source: Data Processing Results, 2023
(Using IBM SPSS AMOS for Windows Software)

The criteria for acceptance and rejection of the main hypothesis in this research are as follows:

H0 $cr \leq 1.96$, meaning that there is no statistical influence between the two variables

H1 $cr \geq 1.96$, meaning that there is a statistical influence between the two variables

The overall model fit test aims to evaluate the degree of fit or goodness of fit (GOF) model.

Table 4. Goodness of Fit

Category	Model	Mark
CMIN	Default Model	CMIN: 120.559, DF: 74, P: 0.001, CMIN/DF: 1.629
	Saturated Model	CMIN: 0 (Perfect Fit)
	Independence Model	CMIN: 1910.214, DF: 91, P: 0.000, CMIN/DF: 20.991
Baseline Comparisons	Default Model	NFI: 0.937, RFI: 0.922, IFI: 0.975, TLI: 0.969, CFI: 0.974
	Saturated Model	NFI: 1, IFI: 1, CFI: 1
	Independence Model	NFI: 0, RFI: 0, IFI: 0, TLI: 0, CFI: 0
Parsimony-Adjusted Measures	Default Model	PRATIO: 0.813, PNFI: 0.762, PCFI: 0.792
	Saturated Model	PRATIO: 0, PNFI: 0, PCFI: 0
	Independence Model	PRATIO: 1, PNFI: 0, PCFI: 0
	NCP (Non-Centrality Parameter)	
NCP (Non-Centrality Parameter)	Default Model	NCP: 46,559 (LO 90: 20,373; HI 90: 80,651)
	Saturated Model	NCP: 0
	Independence Model	NCP: 1819,214 (LO 90: 1680,796; HI 90: 1965,005)
	Default Model	FMIN: 0.574, F0: 0.222 (LO 90: 0.097; HI 90: 0.384)

Category	Model	Mark
FMIN (Minimum Fit Function)	Saturated Model	FMIN: 0
	Independence Model	FMIN: 9.096 (LO 90: 8.004; HI 90: 9.357)
RMSEA (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation)	Default Model	RMSEA: 0.055 (LO 90: 0.036; HI 90: 0.072), PCLOSE: 0.315
	Independence Model	RMSEA: 0.309 (LO 90: 0.297; HI 90: 0.321), PCLOSE: 0
AIC (Akaike Information Criterion)	Default Model	AIC: 210,559
	Saturated Model	AIC: 238
	Independence Model	AIC: 1966,214
ECVI (Expected Cross-Validation Index)	Default Model	ECVI: 1.003 (LO 90: 0.878; HI 90: 1.165), MECVI: 1.036
	Saturated Model	ECVI: 1,133
	Independence Model	ECVI: 9.363 (LO 90: 8.704; HI 90: 10.057)
HOELTER (Critical N)	Default Model	HOELTER (0.05): 166, HOELTER (0.01): 184
	Independence Model	HOELTER (0.05): 13, HOELTER (0.01): 14

The model analysis results show that the default model has a CMIN/DF value of 1.629, indicating that the model has a good fit because this value is below the general threshold of 2.0. The CMIN value for the default model is 120.559 with 74 degrees of freedom (DF) and a significance level (P) of 0.001, indicating that this model is statistically significant. Regarding Baseline Comparisons, the default model has a CFI of 0.974 and a TLI of 0.969, both above 0.95, indicating that this model has a perfect fit. The NFI and RFI are also close to 0.94, indicating a solid fit for the data. The Parsimony-Adjusted measure values for PNFI and PCFI are 0.762 and 0.792, respectively, indicating that this model balances parsimony and fit. The RMSEA value for the default model is 0.055 (LO 90: 0.036; HI 90: 0.072), indicating that the model has a low approximation error, with a PCLOSE value of 0.315 supporting a good fit. In addition, the default model has an AIC value of 210.559, lower than the independent model, meaning this model is preferred because it is more economical. Regarding ECVI, the default model has a value of 1.003, lower than the saturation model (1.133) and the independent model (9.363), indicating that this model is more appropriate for prediction in the population. Finally, the HOELTER value (0.05) of 166 indicates that the sample used is sufficient to support a good model fit.

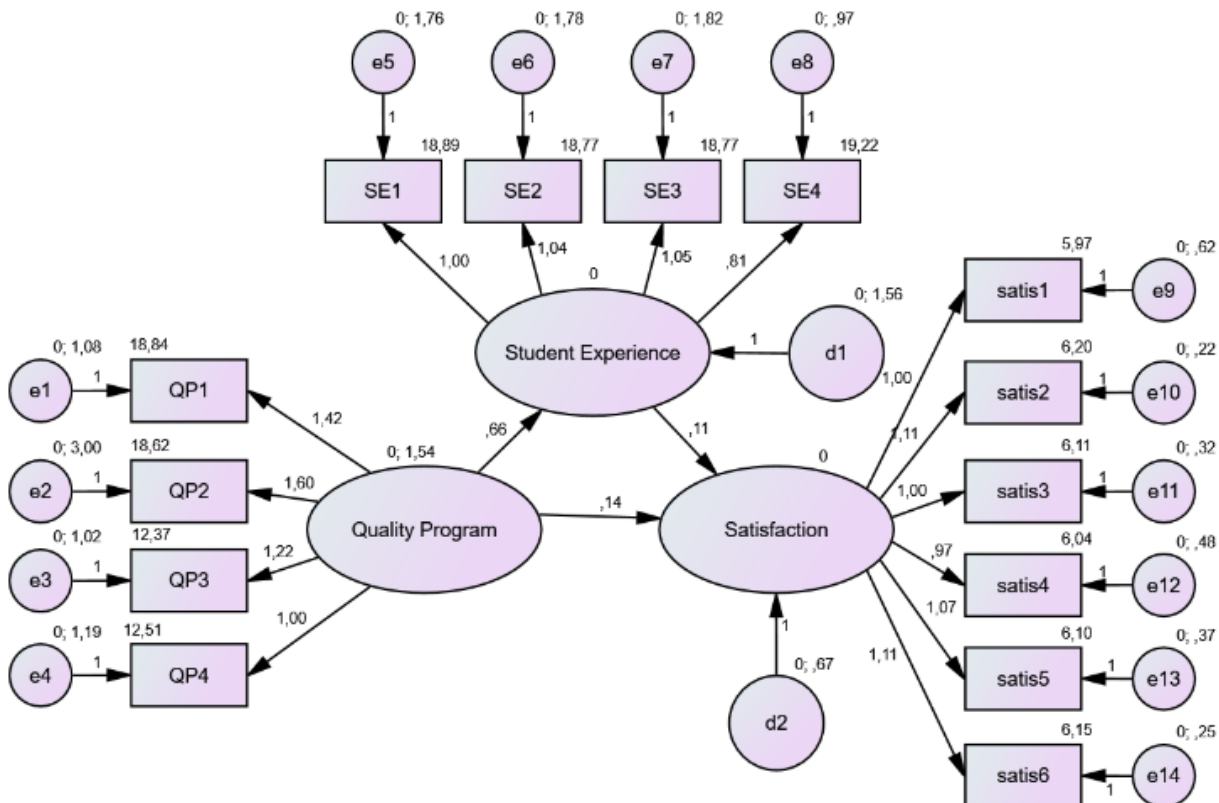


Figure 1. Research Results

The model illustrates the correlation among three primary latent constructs: Quality Program (QP), Student Experience (SE), and Satisfaction (Satis), employing the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) methodology. The Quality Program is assessed using four indicators (QP1 to QP4), each with a loading factor that quantifies its contribution to the latent construct. The influence of Quality Programs on Student Experience is substantial, evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.91, signifying that high-quality programs directly impact the student experience. Moreover, Student Experience significantly influences satisfaction, as evidenced by the path coefficient of 1.56, signifying that an improved student experience correlates with elevated satisfaction levels. Moreover, a clear correlation exists between Quality Program and Satisfaction; however, this influence is relatively moderate, with a value of 0.14, suggesting that while program quality impacts satisfaction, its effect is less significant than that of student experience.

ANALYSIS

1. The Influence of Program Quality on Student Satisfaction

The initial hypothesis asserts that program quality significantly affects student satisfaction. The data analysis confirms this association, demonstrating a positive correlation between the two variables. This discovery corresponds with prior studies by Pandita (2023), Park (2023), and Wen (2023), which emphasize that high-quality programs boost student happiness by fulfilling educational objectives and offering exciting learning experiences. The research utilized structural equation modeling (SEM) to demonstrate that students who view the program as well-organized and resource-abundant generally express greater satisfaction. Moreover, in alignment with the findings of Borishade (2021) and Roque-Hernández (2023), it was noted that factors including curriculum relevance, instructional quality, and support services substantially influence student happiness. The findings indicate that educational institutions should focus on quality enhancement activities to increase student satisfaction (Bawa'aneh, 2021). The results demonstrate that curricular relevance, instructional quality, and support services are essential determinants of student happiness. This indicates that educational institutions should strategically focus on quality enhancement measures in these domains to improve student experience (Oubibi, 2023). By aligning curricula with industrial requirements and societal demands, institutions can ensure that students perceive their education as practical and significant. Moreover, enhancing teaching quality via professional development initiatives for educators and implementing novel pedagogical strategies can profoundly influence student involvement and academic performance. Furthermore, comprehensive support services—such as academic advising, mental health resources, and career counseling—are essential in meeting students' varied needs, thereby establishing a nurturing educational atmosphere (Nedeljković, 2023).

2. The Influence of Student Satisfaction on Student Perceived Experience Value

The second hypothesis investigates how student satisfaction influences their perceived experience value. The findings reveal a strong positive correlation, suggesting increased student satisfaction notably improves perceived experience value. This outcome aligns with the findings of Wong (2023), which suggest that when students express satisfaction with their educational experience, they tend to recognize a higher value in their overall experience. The study utilized a quantitative methodology, implementing surveys to collect data from various student demographics. It indicates that satisfaction enhances students' perceived advantages from their education, encompassing personal and professional development (Sany, 2023). The importance of this relationship is substantial, highlighting that institutions that focus on improving student satisfaction are likely to increase the perceived value of their academic programs (Amado, 2023). This enhances the institution's competitiveness in education and promotes improved student attraction and retention (Baldwin, 2021; Dasoo, 2023). By focusing on essential aspects like curriculum relevance, teaching quality, and the availability of extensive support services, institutions can create an environment that meets students' ambitious and practical needs. This alignment enhances the perceived quality of the educational experience and strengthens institutional credibility and stakeholder trust.

3. The Influence of Program Quality on Student Perceived Experience Value

The third hypothesis examines the direct impact of program quality on the experience value students perceive. The findings reveal a significant and positive relationship, implying that high-quality programs enhance students' perceived value of their educational experiences. This finding supports the work of Sáiz-Manzanas (2023), while Khan (2024) emphasizes the crucial importance of program quality as a critical factor influencing students' assessment of their overall educational experiences. The study, characterized by a large sample size and robust statistical methods, demonstrates that students view high-quality programs as inherently more advantageous, thus enhancing their academic engagement and learning outcomes (Adegbolagun, 2022; Findley, 2022; Soo CHA & Han LEE, 2021). This finding indicates that educational programs' perceived utility and effectiveness are fundamentally linked to the institution's dedication to quality assurance and improvement. In this context, program quality includes several interconnected aspects, such as the alignment of curricula with current industry and societal demands, the qualifications and teaching skills of instructors, and the sufficiency of institutional resources that facilitate the learning experience. The effective coalescence of these elements enhances students' academic satisfaction and fosters a sense of confidence and value in their educational journey (Moradi, 2021). The implications of these findings extend significantly. Organizations that intentionally focus on enhancing program quality are positioned to cultivate a culture of excellence, positively impacting all involved parties. Improving program quality can result in higher student retention rates, better graduate employability outcomes, and an enhanced institutional reputation in national and global rankings (MacKler, 2023). Moreover, in an era where educational environments are becoming more competitive, upholding exceptional quality standards can act as a crucial differentiator, establishing institutions as frontrunners in innovation and scholarly excellence.

4. The Influence of Program Quality on Student Perceived Experience Value through Student Satisfaction

The fourth hypothesis suggests that program quality indirectly influences student perceived experience value through student satisfaction. The results reveal a mediating effect, confirming that satisfaction acts as a significant mediator between program quality and perceived experience value. This finding is consistent with the framework proposed by (Zhu, 2024), who argues that the positive effects of program quality on perceived experience value are facilitated through enhanced satisfaction. Their research highlights that when students are satisfied with their program, they are more likely to recognize the value derived from their educational experiences, leading to a more profound appreciation of the program's quality (Musa, 2022). This satisfaction amplifies the recognition of the program's worth and fosters a deeper acknowledgment of its overall quality. Consequently, the relationship between program quality and perceived experience value is not merely direct but significantly enhanced through the satisfaction students derive from their academic engagements (Batista-Toledo, 2023). This mediation effect emphasizes the importance of not only focusing on program quality but also on enhancing student satisfaction as a means to increase perceived experience value (Ahmed, 2022).

CONCLUSION

This investigation examined the connection among program quality, student satisfaction, and perceived experience value. The findings validate the anticipated outcomes, particularly highlighting the substantial impact of program quality on student satisfaction. Furthermore, it demonstrates that student satisfaction positively affects the perceived experience value. At the same time, program quality directly improves the perceived experience value and affects it through student satisfaction. The alignment between the expectations outlined in the introduction and the results achieved underscores the robustness of the theoretical framework utilized in this study. The results support the current body of work and offer essential perspectives for educational institutions aiming to enhance student performance. By emphasizing program quality and enhancing student satisfaction, institutions can significantly enhance the perceived value of their educational offerings. The future holds significant potential for advancing studies. Future studies might explore variables affecting these relationships, including institutional support, student engagement, and external factors like employment opportunities. Furthermore, longitudinal studies have the potential to offer a more profound understanding of how these dynamics develop over time and influence student retention and success. Ultimately, using these findings can assist educational policymakers and administrators in formulating strategies that improve program quality and student satisfaction, thus enhancing the overall educational experience for students.

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