

# Proposing a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Security Management (BSISM) at SKSU Palimbang: Addressing Enrollment and Employment Challenges in Sultan Kudarat

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## ABSTRACT

This study explores the feasibility of introducing a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Security Management (BSISM) program at Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU) Palimbang Campus. Currently, the campus offers limited programs—Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) and Bachelor of Science in Agribusiness (BSAB)—leading to stagnation in enrollment and significant educational and employment challenges for the local community. A thorough feasibility study revealed strong support for the proposed program based on a survey among 1,033 senior high school students from the four high schools in the municipality of Palimbang, and focus group discussions (FGDs) with nine BEED students, five parents, five teachers, and eight community leaders, ensuring that participant selection criteria included diversity in roles, representativeness, and availability to enhance methodological rigor. BSISM addresses gender inequality, out-of-school youth, and job market saturation while supporting local youth's career goals, especially in law enforcement and security. The results demonstrate that BSISM is a workable way to increase accessibility to higher education, diversify academic offerings, and promote community development.

The market, technical, management, and financial studies for the BSISM program at SKSU Palimbang suggest a promising outlook for the program's success, contingent on addressing key challenges. The demand for the program is evident, with a high level of student interest and strong support from local stakeholders. The program's focus on gender balance, particularly by appealing to male students in traditionally male-dominated fields like security management, aligns with current trends in higher education. Furthermore, the program's curriculum, infrastructure, and commitment to hands-on training position it as a valuable asset to the local community and job market.

This study further emphasizes the program's potential to enhance local employment opportunities by addressing the mismatch between graduates' qualifications and available jobs. With the growing demand for industrial security and law enforcement professionals, BSISM graduates would be equipped with specialized skills to meet these needs in both public and private sectors. Additionally, the program could alleviate the oversaturation of BEED graduates in the local job market, reducing underemployment and fostering a more balanced workforce. However, risks such as financial constraints, faculty recruitment challenges, and reliance on external partnerships must be carefully managed to ensure the program's sustainability. By offering a career pathway aligned with regional demands, the BSISM program represents a strategic response to the socioeconomic challenges faced by the community.

## INTRODUCTION

The Sultan Kudarat State University (SKSU) Palimbang Campus faces persistent challenges, including limited academic offerings and declining enrollment rates. Currently, the campus offers only two programs: BEED and BS Agribusiness. This narrow range fails to address the diverse aspirations of local youth, many of whom seek education in broader fields, such as criminology and security management. Consequently, the community experiences a saturation of teaching graduates, underemployment, and an increasing number of out-of-school youth.

This study proposes the introduction of a BSISM program as a strategic initiative to address these issues. By aligning academic programs with community needs and market demands, BSISM aims to attract more students, particularly males, reduce the gender imbalance in enrollment, and provide a pathway for careers in law enforcement and industrial security.

Moreover, the absence of diverse course offerings has prompted many students to leave Palimbang in pursuit of higher education opportunities elsewhere, exacerbating financial strains on families and contributing to the local brain drain. This outflow undermines community development and limits access to affordable education for those who cannot afford to study in distant cities. Introducing a BSISM program at SKSU Palimbang could reverse this trend by retaining students within the municipality, fostering local talent, and strengthening the university's role as a key driver of regional progress.

Additionally, the proposed program addresses the significant gender disparity in enrollment by offering a course aligned with male students' career interests, as revealed by community surveys. Many young men in the area aspire to law enforcement careers but cannot pursue their ambitions due to financial or geographic barriers. The BSISM program provides an accessible and relevant option that supports these aspirations and contributes to creating a more inclusive and equitable educational environment.

## METHODOLOGY

### Study Design

A mixed-methods approach was employed, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative Focus Group Discussions. Data were gathered to assess the demand, relevance, and potential impact of the proposed BSISM program.

The mixed-methods approach comprehensively analyzed the community's needs and perceptions regarding the proposed BSISM program. Quantitative surveys provided statistical data on students' course preferences, career aspirations, and the level of interest in pursuing a degree in Industrial Security Management (Creswell, 2019).

In contrast, the qualitative Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) offered deeper insights into the motivations, concerns, and expectations of students, parents, teachers, and local government officials (Merriam & Tisdell, 2020).

By combining these two approaches, the study ensured that numerical trends and personal perspectives were considered, offering a more nuanced understanding of the program's potential impact and alignment with local educational and employment needs (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2021).

### Data Collection

Data collection for the study involved multiple methodologies to ensure comprehensive and reliable insights into the feasibility of introducing the BSISM program at SKSU Palimbang Campus. A structured questionnaire was administered to 1,033 senior high school students from five feeder schools within Palimbang namely Palimbang National High School (PNHS), Milbuk National High School (MNHS), Mamansual Abdul National High School (MANHS), and Notre Dame of Milbuk, Inc. (NDMI). **This survey** aimed to capture quantitative data regarding students' course preferences, career aspirations, and interest in the proposed BSISM program, providing a broad overview of local educational needs and priorities.

**In addition to the surveys**, focus group discussions (FGDs) were organized to delve deeper into the findings. These discussions engaged nine BEED and BSAB students, five parents of identified out-of-school male students, five senior high school teachers, and eight local government officials, ensuring a diverse representation of stakeholders. **Through this process**, qualitative insights were gathered to validate the survey results and to uncover nuanced perspectives on the potential benefits and challenges of implementing the BSISM program. **These** approaches offered a well-rounded understanding of the community's educational aspirations and the program's alignment with local needs.

## Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed for trends and preferences, while qualitative insights were coded and thematically analyzed to identify key issues and opportunities.

The integration of quantitative and qualitative analyses provided a holistic understanding of the feasibility of the proposed BSISM program. **Specifically**, the quantitative data revealed clear trends, such as the high demand for security-related programs and the significant gender imbalance in current enrollment.

**Meanwhile**, the qualitative analysis enriched these findings by uncovering underlying factors, such as financial constraints, limited local career opportunities, and the aspirations of male youth for law enforcement careers.

**By triangulating these data**, the study identified the immediate preferences and challenges and broader opportunities for SKSU Palimbang to enhance its academic offerings and address community needs comprehensively.

## RESULTS

### Market Study

The results of the survey at SKSU Palimbang revealed several key insights regarding enrollment challenges, the demand for the BSISM program, gender balance issues, and feedback from stakeholders. A significant number of respondents, 45.9%, indicated that they would not enroll in SKSU Palimbang Campus due to the lack of preferred courses. This highlights a critical issue for the campus, where a limited course offering has contributed to stagnating enrollment. This aligns with Delavande and Zafar's (2019) observation that monetary returns (labor market prospects) are not the primary driver of university choice; instead, nonpecuniary outcomes (such as school ideology or course offerings) play a significant role. Financial constraints were also a notable barrier, affecting 12.4% of the respondents. Similar findings have been reported in various studies, where financial constraints have been linked to reduced academic participation, particularly in higher education (Yusoff & Ahmad, 2022; Hasan et al., 2020).

Regarding the demand for the BSISM program, it emerged as the top choice for students, with 35.11% of respondents expressing interest. This is consistent with broader trends where students are increasingly seeking programs aligned with career prospects in sectors such as law enforcement and industrial security, particularly as local job markets require such skills (Kavuma, Nyombi, & Okot, 2020). Furthermore, the potential of BSISM to attract more students, especially male students, was strongly supported, with 70.7% of respondents indicating their likelihood of enrolling. This aligns with the findings of other studies, which suggest that offering gender-specific programs can help address enrollment disparities and contribute to a more balanced student population (Ullah & Aziz, 2021).

The issue of gender imbalance, as evidenced by SKSU's enrollment data showing a significant difference between female and male students, is not unique to this institution. Similar trends have been observed in other universities, where male students are underrepresented in fields such as education and agribusiness. The introduction of BSISM could serve as a solution by catering to the aspirations of male students seeking careers in security management and law enforcement, areas traditionally dominated by males (Akpan & Umar, 2020). This could potentially improve the gender balance in higher education institutions.

Feedback from key stakeholders, including out-of-school youth parents and local government officials, was overwhelmingly positive, with many recognizing the program's potential to address local employment challenges and reduce the number of out-of-school youth. The support for local education as a way to minimize financial burdens related to studying away from home has been similarly documented in other studies focusing on educational retention and community development (Yang, He, and Zhang, 2021). These insights emphasize the relevance and importance of aligning higher education offerings with local labor market needs and the aspirations of the community.

## Technical Study

The technical study for the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Security Management (BSISM) program at SKSU Palimbang focuses on strategic planning and sustainability to ensure the program's success. The curriculum is aligned with CHED guidelines and the Philippine Qualifications Framework, offering a blend of general education, professional courses, and practical training in areas such as security operations, crime prevention, and law enforcement. With a total of 165 units, including 112 units of professional courses, the program provides students with a solid foundation in security management and technical skills based on the CHED Memorandum Order No. 6, Series of 2018 – Policies, Standards, and Guidelines for the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Security Management (BSISM) Program.

Infrastructure and resource development are key components of the program's implementation. SKSU Palimbang has invested in the construction of a modern two-story library and classrooms equipped with essential facilities. The campus is also committed to providing specialized labs, including crime scene rooms, demo-security equipment, and partnerships with local law enforcement for hands-on training. Additionally, human resources are prioritized, with a focus on recruiting qualified faculty with expertise in industrial security and law enforcement. Collaboration with local government units and security organizations will further enhance the program's relevance. Effective marketing efforts, including school visits and career orientations, will help attract students and raise awareness of the program's potential. The assertion that investments in modern educational facilities, such as libraries, classrooms, and specialized labs, improve educational access and align with strategies to bridge rural-urban education gaps can be corroborated with insights from Wood, R.M. (2023) which emphasizes that disparities in educational quality and access between urban and rural areas stem from unequal distribution of resources. These disparities affect rural students' ability to compete in a global economy, emphasizing the need for targeted investments in infrastructure and teaching resources to close the gap.

## Management Study

The management study for the Bachelor of Science in Industrial Security Management (BSISM) program identifies key risks that could affect its implementation and long-term success. These include the lack of qualified faculty, insufficient specialized facilities such as demo-electronic security tools and firearms training ranges, budgetary constraints, and the uncertainty of student enrollment. Additionally, reliance on external partnerships, like those with the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and local government units (LGUs), poses a risk if agreements are not formalized or sustained.

To mitigate these risks, the university plans to recruit specialized faculty, including full-time and part-time instructors with practical experience. It will also incentivize faculty development through scholarships for graduate studies. Infrastructure improvements will be prioritized, with the construction of new facilities on donated land and agreements with external partners. Funding will be sought through increased university budgets, grants, and private-sector sponsorships. Moreover, the university aims to strengthen its partnerships through formal MOAs and regular meetings to ensure mutual commitment. Promotional campaigns and career orientation sessions will be held to address enrollment challenges to attract prospective students. These proactive strategies aim to mitigate risks and ensure the program's success, contributing to the socio-economic development of the local community.

## Financial Study

The financial study for the BSISM program outlines a detailed plan for establishing and sustaining the program through strategic investments and revenue generation. The initial budget of ₱10,716,540 is allocated across critical areas, including faculty recruitment, facilities, equipment, and operational costs, ensuring a robust infrastructure to support quality education. Revenue projections, based on a tuition rate of ₱150 per unit for a 24-unit semester load and an initial enrollment of 150 students, estimate Year 1 earnings at ₱7,500,000, with a 10% annual growth expected in subsequent years (₱9,000,000 in Year 2 and ₱10,800,000 in Year 3).

This growth is designed to accommodate inflation and operational demands while maintaining affordability for students. Investments in specialized facilities and resources will enhance hands-on learning, while continuous

faculty development ensures program relevance and quality. Challenges, including enrollment stability and tuition affordability, must be addressed through effective recruitment, partnerships, and resource allocation. The plan highlights a commitment to balancing financial sustainability with program excellence, accessibility, and industry alignment.

The financial study for the BSISM program aligns with strategic practices observed in comparable academic settings. The emphasis on a detailed budget, including initial costs such as faculty recruitment and facilities, mirrors recommendations for establishing robust academic programs, which often require careful resource planning and alignment with institutional objectives to ensure sustainability and quality education (Goldman and Salem, 2015). Projection of revenue growth based on tuition rates and expected enrollment aligns with best practices in university planning. Strategic frameworks suggest using data-driven projections to balance affordability and operational demands, which enhances institutional financial resilience while accommodating future growth (Goldman and Salem, 2015).

## DISCUSSION

The market study conducted at SKSU Palimbang reveals several critical insights into enrollment challenges, demand for the BSISM program, gender imbalance, and stakeholder feedback. A significant proportion of respondents (45.9%) indicated they did not enroll due to the lack of preferred courses, highlighting a need for a broader course offering. Financial constraints were another major barrier, affecting 12.4% of respondents, which aligns with broader studies that link financial issues to decreased participation in higher education (Yusoff & Ahmad, 2022; Hasan et al., 2020). The BSISM program emerged as the top choice for 35.11% of respondents, indicating strong demand. The program also holds promise for improving gender balance, as 70.7% of respondents indicated they would likely enroll, especially male students, who are underrepresented in other fields such as education and agribusiness (Akpan & Umar, 2020). The positive feedback from local stakeholders, including parents and government officials, underscores the program's potential to address local employment challenges and minimize the financial burden of students studying away from home.

Additionally, the technical and management studies for the BSISM program emphasize the importance of aligning academic offerings with local labor market needs and community aspirations. The curriculum adheres to CHED guidelines, integrating general education and professional courses, as well as hands-on training in areas like security operations and crime prevention. The campus has invested in modern infrastructure, including a new library, specialized labs, and facilities for practical training, all aimed at ensuring the program's success. However, the management study identifies potential risks, such as the lack of qualified faculty and specialized facilities, as well as reliance on external partnerships with institutions like the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. To mitigate these risks, the university plans to recruit experienced faculty, develop infrastructure, and secure funding through partnerships and grants. The financial study indicates that the program is financially viable, with projected revenue growth over the first three years, and highlights the importance of balancing financial sustainability with program excellence and accessibility. Through strategic investments and careful planning, the BSISM program has the potential to become a valuable addition to the local higher education landscape.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the market, technical, management, and financial studies for the BSISM program at SKSU Palimbang suggest a promising outlook for the program's success, contingent on addressing key challenges. The demand for the program is evident, with a high level of student interest and strong support from local stakeholders. The program's focus on gender balance, particularly by appealing to male students in traditionally male-dominated fields like security management, aligns with current trends in higher education. Furthermore, the program's curriculum, infrastructure, and commitment to hands-on training position it as a valuable asset to the local community and job market. However, risks such as financial constraints, faculty recruitment challenges, and reliance on external partnerships must be carefully managed to ensure the program's sustainability.

To address these challenges, it is recommended that SKSU Palimbang invest in robust marketing strategies to boost enrollment, including career orientations and school visits to strengthen its recruitment efforts.

Partnerships with local industries, law enforcement agencies, and government bodies should be formalized to ensure long-term support and ensure the program remains aligned with labor market demands. Additionally, increasing the availability of financial aid or scholarships for students, particularly those from financially constrained backgrounds, could help alleviate barriers to enrollment. Finally, continuous faculty development through graduate scholarships and industry-specific training will ensure that the program remains relevant and that students are equipped with the skills necessary to succeed in the evolving security management field. By focusing on these areas, SKSU can enhance the program's quality, increase its appeal, and ensure its long-term success.

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