Journal of Advanced Multidisciplinary Studies
JAMS
+62 895-3300-77970
admin@jurnal-jams.or.id
https://jurnal-jams.or.id
Vol. 2, No. 3, July 2026 | Page. 168 - 178

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MERDEKA BELAJAR KAMPUS MERDEKA PROGRAM AT INDRAPRASTA PGRI UNIVERSITY

**Nadya Fitri Utami[1], Jenny Aulia Defira[2], Annasya Syiffa Syahida[3], Anggi Makdalena[4], Faizah Jahro Rusyna [5]**
Mathematics Education, Indraprasta PGRI University, East Jakarta, Indonesia
E-mail: nadynadya44@gmail.com, jennyauliadefira83@gmail.com, annasyasyiffa@gmail.com, anggi.tampz710@gmail.com, faizahjahrorusyna@gmail.com

***Keywords:***

*MBKM Program, Higher Education Policy, Student Perception, Indraprasta PGRI University, Experiential Learning*

**Abstrak**

*The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy was introduced to enhance graduates' competencies through experiential learning beyond the classroom. While several studies have examined MBKM implementation in large public universities, limited research has focused on private universities with distinct student demographics, such as Universitas Indraprasta PGRI (Unindra), where many students are in-service teachers or part-time workers. This study aims to analyze the implementation, benefits, and challenges of the MBKM program at Unindra from the students' perspective. A quantitative descriptive survey was conducted among 30 Unindra students who had participated in MBKM activities. Data were collected via an online questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results revealed that the primary motivation for joining MBKM was to gain new experiences (70%), and 76.7% agreed that the program enabled them to apply theoretical knowledge in real work settings. Key benefits included direct teaching experience (53.3%), new skills (30%), and tuition fee reduction (16.7%). Students also reported enhanced responsibility (60%) and discipline (36.7%). However, 43.3% struggled to balance academic and MBKM tasks, and the same percentage perceived inadequate program planning. These findings suggest that MBKM at Unindra fosters valuable experiential learning yet requires stronger scheduling support and better program design. This study contributes to the literature on MBKM in private teacher-training universities and offers practical recommendations for optimization.*

*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

## INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions worldwide are currently facing significant challenges driven by rapid technological advancement, digital transformation, and evolving labor market demands. In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, graduates are expected not only to master disciplinary knowledge but also to demonstrate critical


*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and adaptability in increasingly dynamic work environments (World Economic Forum, 2020). In Indonesia, however, the transition from higher education to employment remains a challenge, as reflected in the continuing mismatch between graduates' competencies and industry expectations (Arsyad & Widuhung, 2022). This condition highlights the need for higher education institutions to redesign learning systems that are more flexible, experiential, and responsive to real-world challenges. Consequently, universities are encouraged to strengthen the connection between academic learning and practical experience through innovative educational policies.

One of the major policy reforms introduced to address this challenge is the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) program, established through the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education. The policy allows undergraduate students to spend up to three semesters participating in learning activities outside their study program through various experiential learning opportunities, including student exchanges, internships, humanitarian projects, research, entrepreneurship, independent studies, village development programs, and teaching assistance (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020). According to the MBKM Guidebook issued by the Directorate General of Higher Education, the program is intended to strengthen both academic competence and transferable skills by providing students with authentic learning experiences beyond the classroom (Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi, 2020). Since its implementation, MBKM has attracted substantial participation from universities across Indonesia. Kemendikbudristek (2023) reported that more than 800,000 students had participated in various MBKM activities, indicating the growing acceptance of experiential learning as an important component of higher education reform.

Previous studies have consistently shown that successful MBKM implementation depends on institutional readiness, curriculum flexibility, and effective collaboration with external stakeholders. Meke et al. (2021) emphasized that curriculum flexibility plays a central role in supporting MBKM implementation, although many universities continue to encounter challenges related to quality assurance and curriculum alignment. Likewise, Rosmiati et al. (2021) demonstrated that institutional support, lecturer readiness, and collaboration with external partners significantly influence the effectiveness of MBKM programs. Wayan Juliawan et al. (2022) further argued that sustainable partnerships between universities and industry are essential for ensuring meaningful learning experiences and effective program implementation. Focusing on private universities, Arsyad and Widuhung (2022) identified several implementation challenges, including limited student understanding of the program, difficulties in credit conversion, and administrative constraints. Collectively, these studies suggest that although MBKM has been widely adopted, its implementation remains highly dependent on the characteristics and readiness of individual institutions.

Despite the increasing number of studies on MBKM, empirical evidence concerning its implementation at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI (Unindra) remains very limited. As one of Indonesia's private universities with a diverse student population, including many students who balance academic responsibilities with employment, Unindra may experience implementation challenges that differ from those reported in previous studies. These conditions may affect students' participation in off-campus



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

learning activities, the effectiveness of credit conversion mechanisms, and institutional collaboration with external partners. To the best of the authors' knowledge, no published study has specifically examined how MBKM has been implemented at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI from the perspective of students who have directly participated in the program. This lack of empirical evidence represents an important research gap, particularly considering the need to evaluate whether MBKM has achieved its intended objectives within the institutional context of private higher education.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* program at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI. Specifically, the study explores the forms of MBKM activities undertaken by students, examines the factors that support and hinder program implementation, evaluates students' perceptions of their learning experiences, and identifies areas for institutional improvement. The findings are expected to enrich the growing body of literature on MBKM implementation in private higher education institutions while providing practical recommendations for improving the quality and sustainability of MBKM programs at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Education Policy and the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) Program

Educational policy plays a fundamental role in shaping the direction of higher education by providing a framework for curriculum development, learning systems, and graduate competency standards. According to Nugroho (2021), educational policies are designed to respond to societal needs while supporting national development objectives. Within this context, the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) policy represents one of the most significant higher education reforms introduced by the Indonesian government. Established through the Regulation of the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 2020, MBKM promotes student-centered learning by allowing undergraduate students to undertake learning activities outside their home study program for up to three semesters (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2020). Through this policy, universities are encouraged to provide more flexible learning opportunities that enable students to integrate academic knowledge with practical experience, thereby enhancing both disciplinary competence and workplace readiness.

### Experiential Learning as the Theoretical Foundation of MBKM

The educational philosophy underlying MBKM is closely aligned with Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory, which views learning as a continuous process in which knowledge is constructed through the transformation of experience. According to this theory, effective learning occurs through four interconnected stages: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. The design of MBKM reflects these principles by engaging students in authentic learning environments through internships, teaching assistance, research, entrepreneurial activities, humanitarian projects, and other off-campus learning experiences. Such activities encourage students to apply theoretical knowledge in real-world situations while simultaneously reflecting on and refining their understanding through direct practice. Previous international studies have similarly demonstrated that work-integrated learning contributes significantly to the development of employability skills, professional identity, and career readiness among university graduates (Deissinger & Hellwig, 2011; Jackson, 2015). Therefore, experiential learning provides an



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

appropriate theoretical perspective for understanding how participation in MBKM may influence students' academic and personal development.

**Empirical Studies on MBKM Implementation**

A growing body of empirical research suggests that the effectiveness of MBKM implementation is influenced by a combination of institutional readiness, curriculum flexibility, and collaboration with external stakeholders. Meke et al. (2021) emphasized that curriculum flexibility is a key prerequisite for successful implementation, although many universities continue to face challenges related to quality assurance systems and curriculum alignment. Likewise, Rosmiati et al. (2021) found that lecturer preparedness, institutional support, and cooperation with industry partners significantly contribute to the successful delivery of MBKM activities. Sustainable partnerships between universities and external organizations are also considered essential for ensuring meaningful learning experiences and maintaining program quality (Wayan Juliawan et al., 2022).

Despite these positive developments, previous studies have consistently identified several implementation challenges, particularly within private higher education institutions. Administrative issues, including credit conversion procedures and curriculum adjustments, remain common barriers to effective implementation (Arsyad & Widuhung, 2022; Meke et al., 2021). In addition, students who combine academic study with employment often encounter greater difficulty balancing coursework, professional responsibilities, and participation in MBKM activities (Baharuddin, 2021). These findings indicate that successful implementation depends not only on national policy but also on institutional capacity and the characteristics of the student population.

**Student Development through MBKM Participation**

Numerous studies have reported positive educational outcomes associated with students' participation in MBKM. Beyond improving academic competence, the program has been shown to strengthen communication, collaboration, leadership, problem-solving abilities, and professional confidence. Arjanto et al. (2022) found that students who participated in MBKM demonstrated stronger interpersonal and collaborative skills, while Suwanti et al. (2022) reported improvements in learning motivation, self-confidence, and career preparedness. These findings support the primary objective of MBKM, which is to produce graduates who are academically competent, professionally adaptable, and capable of responding to the demands of an increasingly dynamic labor market. Nevertheless, most existing studies have focused on large public universities or well-established private institutions, leaving limited empirical evidence regarding MBKM implementation in teacher education universities with diverse student characteristics.

**Conceptual Framework**

Drawing upon the educational policy perspective and Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory, this study conceptualizes MBKM as an experiential learning policy that facilitates competency development through authentic learning experiences beyond the classroom. The implementation of MBKM is expected to influence students' perceptions of learning, including perceived benefits, learning motivation, personality development, and challenges encountered during program participation. At the same time, institutional



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

factors such as administrative support, curriculum flexibility, partnership quality, and academic guidance are considered important contextual elements that may strengthen or constrain the effectiveness of program implementation. This conceptual framework provides the basis for examining how MBKM is implemented at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI and how students perceive its contribution to their academic and professional development.

## METHOD

### Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive survey design to capture the perceptions and experiences of Unindra students participating in the MBKM program.

### Population and Sample

The population comprised all Unindra students registered in any MBKM scheme. A purposive sample of 30 students who had completed at least one MBKM activity was selected. The small sample size reflects the still-limited participation at the university but was deemed sufficient for descriptive analysis.

### Instrument and Data Collection

Data were collected via an online structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions on motivation, perceived benefits, impact on personality, challenges, and satisfaction. Items were developed based on MBKM evaluation instruments from previous studies (Rosmiati et al., 2021; Arsyad & Widuhung, 2022). The questionnaire used a combination of multiple-choice and Likert-scale items. Data collection took place in October 2024.

### Data Analysis

Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including frequency counts and percentages. Results are presented in tables and charts to illustrate distribution patterns. No inferential statistics were applied due to the exploratory nature of the study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Sample Characteristics

A total of 30 students from Universitas Indraprasta PGRI participated in this study. All respondents had previously participated in at least one MBKM activity, making them eligible to provide reflections on their learning experiences and perceptions of the program. Since the study focused on students who had completed MBKM activities, the analysis emphasizes participants' experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges encountered during program implementation.

### Motivation for Joining MBKM

Figure 1 shows that the predominant motivation was “to gain new experience” (70%), while 30% aimed at credit conversion, and none were primarily motivated by financial incentives. This pattern reflects a strong intrinsic desire among Unindra students to expand their practical knowledge, consistent with experiential learning principles.



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

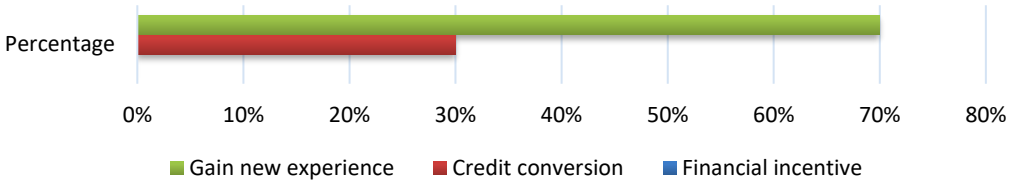



**Figure 1. Students' Motivation for Participating in MBKM**

**Perceived Benefits**

Most respondents perceived MBKM as providing valuable opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in authentic workplace settings. As shown in Figure 2, 76.7% of respondents answered "Yes", indicating that the program enabled them to implement classroom learning in real educational contexts. Meanwhile, 20% selected "Maybe", while only 3.3% responded "No".

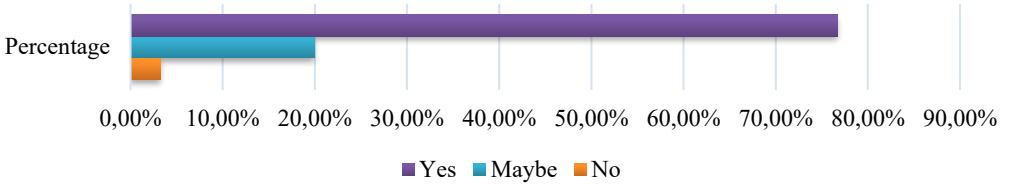



**Figure 2. The results of the survey on MBKM provide an opportunity to utilize one's skills**

Beyond opportunities for applying theory, respondents also identified several major benefits obtained from MBKM participation. As illustrated in Figure 3, direct teaching experience was the most frequently reported benefit (53.3%), followed by acquiring new professional skills (30%), whereas 16.7% highlighted tuition fee support (UKT).

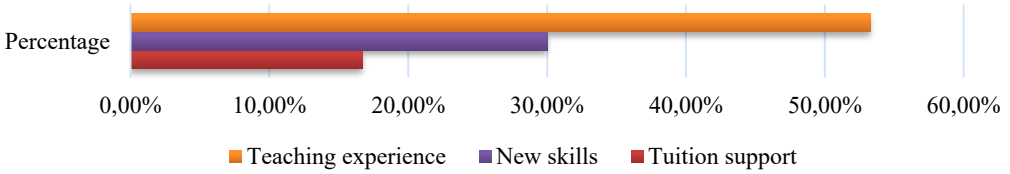



**Figure 3. Benefits for UNINDRA Students Participating in MBKM**

These findings align with Suwanti et al. (2022), who noted that Kampus Mengajar significantly enhances pedagogical skills.

**Impact on Personality Development**

Participation in MBKM was also perceived to influence students' personal development. As presented in Figure 4, responsibility was the most frequently reported attribute developed after participating in MBKM (60%), followed by discipline (36.7%) and honesty (3.3%).



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

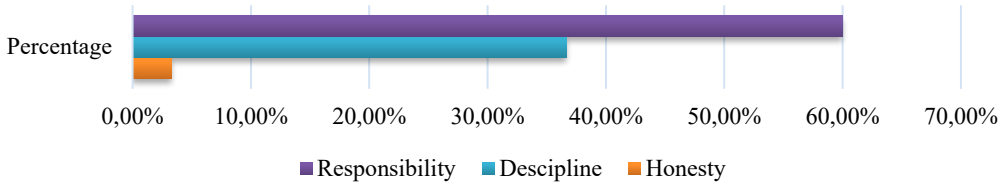



**Figure 4. Participating in MBKM Influences Personal Development**

In addition to changes in personal attributes, all respondents reported acquiring new skills after participating in MBKM. This finding suggests that experiential learning not only supports personality development but also facilitates the acquisition of competencies relevant to future professional practice.

**Learning Outcomes**

Students also reported several broader learning outcomes following their participation in MBKM. Figure 5 indicates that 93.3% of respondents believed the program had expanded their professional networks, while only 6.7% remained uncertain.

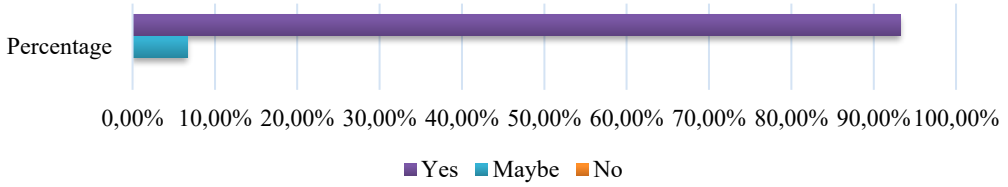



**Figure 5. Participating in MBKM Influences the Expansion of One's Professional Network**

Similarly, Figure 6 shows that 90% of respondents perceived that MBKM provided them with greater freedom to pursue learning experiences aligned with their interests and career aspirations.

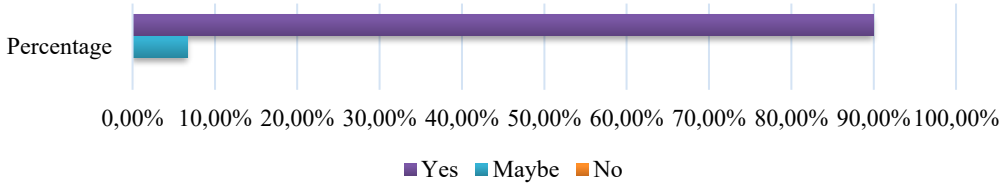



**Figure 6. Participating in MBKM provides students with the freedom to choose learning experiences that align with their interests and passions**

Regarding knowledge acquisition, Figure 7 demonstrates that most respondents reported gaining educational knowledge (80%), followed by science and technology (16.7%) and cultural knowledge (3.3%).



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

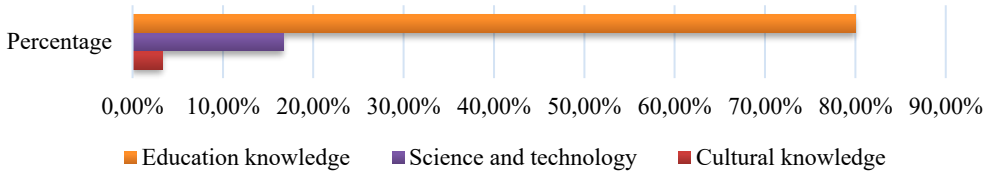



**Figure 7. Results Chart**

**Challenges Faced**

Despite positive impacts, students encountered notable obstacles. As shown in Table 1, 43.3% found it difficult to balance academic lectures and MBKM activities, 30% could not balance them at all, and 26.7% were uncertain. Program design was also criticized: 43.3% reported poorly planned learning activities, 30% cited inadequate facilities, and 26.7% noted insufficient human resources. These findings resonate with Meke et al. (2021) and Arsyad and Widuhung (2022), who identified administrative and structural barriers in private universities. The time management issue is particularly acute for Unindra's working students, who must juggle multiple roles simultaneously.

| Challenge | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|
| Difficulty balancing academic & MBKM | 13 | 43.3% |
| Cannot balance | 9 | 30.0% |
| Possibly can balance | 8 | 26.7% |
| Main program shortcomings | | |
| Poorly planned learning | 13 | 43.3% |
| Lack of facilities | 9 | 30.0% |
| Insufficient human resources | 8 | 26.7% |

**Table 1. Challenges in MBKM Implementation**

**Discussion**

The findings suggest that the implementation of the *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM) program at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI is generally perceived positively by participating students, particularly as a means of gaining authentic learning experiences and supporting personal development. The predominance of students who joined the program to gain practical experience rather than financial benefits reflects the central premise of Experiential Learning Theory, which argues that meaningful learning is constructed through concrete experiences followed by reflection and active application (Kolb, 1984). Furthermore, most respondents perceived that MBKM enabled them to apply theoretical knowledge acquired in university to real educational settings, suggesting that the program has successfully bridged classroom learning with professional practice in accordance with the objectives of the MBKM policy.

Beyond academic learning, respondents also perceived positive changes in their personal and professional attributes. Increased responsibility, discipline, and confidence reported by participants indicate that involvement in authentic educational environments encourages the development of transferable competencies required in professional settings. Similar findings have been reported in studies on work-integrated learning, which demonstrate that participation in workplace-based learning contributes to the development of responsibility, accountability, time-management skills, and graduate



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

employability (Ng et al., 2022; Shahanga & Kasambala, 2024). These findings reinforce the view that experiential learning extends beyond cognitive achievement by promoting behavioural and professional competencies that are difficult to cultivate through classroom instruction alone.

Despite these positive perceptions, several institutional challenges remain evident. A considerable proportion of respondents reported difficulties in balancing academic responsibilities with MBKM activities, reflecting the complexity of participating in off-campus learning while simultaneously fulfilling university obligations. This issue may be particularly relevant in the context of Universitas Indraprasta PGRI, where many students combine higher education with employment. Unlike many public universities whose student populations are predominantly full-time learners, the demographic profile of Unindra requires greater flexibility in academic scheduling and administrative support. Consequently, the findings suggest that institutional characteristics should be considered when implementing MBKM to ensure equitable learning opportunities for diverse student populations. Similar implementation challenges related to institutional readiness, curriculum flexibility, and administrative procedures have also been identified in previous studies on MBKM implementation in Indonesian higher education (Meke et al., 2021; Arsyad & Widuhung, 2022).

Another important finding concerns respondents' perceptions of program planning and institutional support. Students highlighted limitations in learning organization, facilities, and human resources, suggesting that the effectiveness of MBKM depends not only on national policy but also on the quality of implementation at the institutional level. These findings are consistent with Rosmiati et al. (2021), who emphasized that lecturer readiness, institutional support, and collaboration with external partners are essential determinants of successful MBKM implementation. Therefore, strengthening coordination between the university and partner institutions, improving curriculum alignment, and establishing transparent credit conversion mechanisms are likely to enhance both student satisfaction and program effectiveness.

Overall, this study demonstrates that MBKM has considerable potential to foster experiential learning, professional competence, and personal growth among students at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that maximizing these benefits requires institutional adaptations that accommodate the characteristics of working students. Based on these findings, several practical recommendations can be proposed. First, the university should strengthen its MBKM management through a dedicated coordination unit responsible for academic administration, partnership development, and student assistance. Second, greater academic flexibility, including alternative class schedules or additional learning support for MBKM participants, may help students balance academic responsibilities with off-campus activities. Finally, clearer and more standardized credit conversion guidelines would reduce administrative uncertainty and encourage broader student participation. Implementing these strategies may improve the sustainability and effectiveness of MBKM while ensuring that its objectives are achieved across diverse higher education contexts.

**Implications of Findings**

Overall, the findings demonstrate that MBKM has been implemented positively at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI. Students generally perceive the program as beneficial for developing professional competence, practical experience, and personal growth.



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

Nevertheless, institutional constraints related to scheduling flexibility and program management remain important issues that require further attention. These results reinforce the argument that successful MBKM implementation depends not only on national policy but also on institutional readiness and student characteristics.

## CONCLUSION

This study reveals that the MBKM program at Universitas Indraprasta PGRI provides valuable experiential learning opportunities, enhancing students' professional skills, personal qualities, and career readiness. However, significant barriers remain, particularly regarding time management for working students and inadequate program planning. The findings imply that Unindra must adopt a more flexible academic system and strengthen institutional support to maximize MBKM benefits. Limitations of this study include the small sample size and reliance on self-reported data from a single institution, which may limit generalizability. Future research should employ mixed-method approaches with larger samples across multiple private teacher-training universities, and include perspectives from lecturers and industry partners to gain a more comprehensive understanding of MBKM implementation dynamics.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY


Arjanto, P., Antariksa, W. F., Mustiningsih, M., & Timan, A. (2022). Persepsi mahasiswa terhadap implementasi Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). JAMP: Jurnal Administrasi dan Manajemen Pendidikan, 5(3), 247–257. https://doi.org/10.17977/um027v5i32022p247

Arsyad, A. T., & Widuhung, S. D. (2022). Dampak Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka terhadap kualitas mahasiswa. Jurnal Al Azhar Indonesia Seri Ilmu Sosial, 3(2), 88–97. https://doi.org/10.36722/jaiss.v3i2.1027

Baharuddin, M. R. (2021). Adaptasi kurikulum Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (fokus: model MBKM program studi). Jurnal Studi Guru Dan Pembelajaran, 4(1), 195–205. https://doi.org/10.30605/jsgp.4.1.2021.591

Deissinger, T., & Hellwig, S. (2011). Structures and functions of dual vocational education and training systems in international comparison. International Journal of Training Research, 9(1–2), 76–95. https://doi.org/10.5172/ijtr.9.1-2.76

Direktorat Jenderal Pendidikan Tinggi. (2020). Buku panduan Merdeka Belajar - Kampus Merdeka. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan.

Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan. (2020). Peraturan Menteri Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Nomor 3 Tahun 2020 tentang Standar Nasional Pendidikan Tinggi.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Prentice-Hall.

Meke, K. D. P., Astro, R. B., & Daud, M. H. (2021). Dampak kebijakan Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) pada perguruan tinggi swasta di Indonesia. EDUKATIF: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, 4(1), 675–685. https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v4i1.1940

Ng, P. M. L., Wut, T. M., & Chan, J. K. Y. (2022). *Enhancing perceived employability through work-integrated learning*. Education + Training, 64(4), 559–576.





*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*

https://doi.org/10.1108/ET-12-2021-0476

Nugroho, R. (2021). Public policy 7: Dinamika kebijakan publik, analisis kebijakan publik. PT Elex Media Komputindo.

Pratama, R. A., & Kusumawardhani, A. (2023). Exploring the implementation of Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka policy in Indonesian universities: Challenges and opportunities. International Journal of Educational Development, 102, 102852. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102852

Rosmiati, R., Putra, I., & Nasori, A. (2021). Pengukuran mutu pembelajaran di FKIP UNJA dalam upaya membangun generasi economic citizen yang mengelaborasi program MBKM Kemendikbud. EDUKATIF: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan, 3(6), 5256–5264. https://doi.org/10.31004/edukatif.v3i6.1356

Susanti, R., & Hadi, S. (2023). Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka: A new policy direction for Indonesian higher education. Asian Education and Development Studies, 12(2), 155–168. https://doi.org/10.1108/AEDS-02-2023-0021

Suwanti, V., Suastika, I. K., Ferdiani, R. D., & Harianto, W. (2022). Analisis dampak implementasi program MBKM Kampus Mengajar pada persepsi mahasiswa. Jurnal PAJAR (Pendidikan dan Pengajaran), 6(3), 814–822. https://doi.org/10.33578/pjr.v6i3.8773

Wayan Juliawan, I., Qondias, D., Suastini, N. W., Sucipto, I. M. D., Badriyah, R. D. U., & Pucangan, K. R. V. (2022). Pemahaman mahasiswa terhadap aktivitas Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka. Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Citra Bakti, 10(2), 350–361. https://doi.org/10.38048/jipcb.v10i2.951

World Economic Forum. (2020). The future of jobs report 2020. World Economic Form



*This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 license*