

Collaboration Education Challenges and Optimizing MBKM Law Faculty Surabaya State University

Christian Felix Lumbanraja¹, Rafif Athaullah Gazali², Rafi Satrya Arvitto³, Fadly Ady
Nugroho⁴

¹ Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Email: christian.22098@mhs.unesa.ac.id

² Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Email: rafif.22097@mhs.unesa.ac.id

³ Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Email: rafi.22085@mhs.unesa.ac.id

⁴ Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Email: fadly.22105@mhs.unesa.ac.id

Info Artikel

Article history:

Received Feb 17, 2025

Revised Mar 26, 2025

Accepted Mar 26, 2025

Kata Kunci:

Pendidikan Kolaboratif, MBKM,
Optimalisasi Program, Kesiapan
Mahasiswa

Keywords:

Collaboration Education, MBKM,
Program Optimization, Student
Readiness

ABSTRAK

Implementasi program Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) dalam pendidikan hukum menghadirkan peluang sekaligus tantangan dalam mendorong kolaborasi yang efektif antara mahasiswa, dosen, dan institusi eksternal. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi tantangan dalam penerapan MBKM di Fakultas Hukum, Universitas Negeri Surabaya, serta mengidentifikasi pendekatan strategis untuk mengoptimalkan efektivitasnya. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan dosen, mahasiswa, dan koordinator program, serta analisis dokumen terkait kebijakan MBKM. Sampel ditentukan dengan teknik purposive sampling guna memastikan keterlibatan pemangku kepentingan utama yang secara langsung terlibat dalam kegiatan MBKM. Analisis data dilakukan dengan metode analisis tematik untuk mengidentifikasi pola dan tema utama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tantangan dalam implementasi MBKM meliputi ketidakefisienan administratif, kurangnya koordinasi antar pemangku kepentingan, serta variasi kesiapan mahasiswa. Namun, intervensi strategis seperti pendampingan yang terstruktur, integrasi digital, dan penyelarasan kebijakan dengan kebutuhan akademik dapat meningkatkan kolaborasi dan hasil program. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur yang ada dengan memberikan analisis mendalam mengenai implementasi MBKM dalam pendidikan hukum, serta menyoroti perlunya pendekatan yang lebih adaptif dan terstruktur. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya bagi perguruan tinggi untuk menyempurnakan kerangka MBKM guna mendukung pembelajaran interdisipliner dan pengembangan profesional secara lebih efektif.

ABSTRACT

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in legal education presents both opportunities and challenges in fostering effective collaboration among students, faculty, and external institutions. This study aims to explore the challenges faced in the implementation of MBKM at the Faculty of Law, Surabaya State University, and to identify strategic approaches to optimize its effectiveness. The research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with faculty members, students, and program coordinators, as well as document analysis related to MBKM policies. The sample was determined using purposive sampling to ensure the inclusion of key stakeholders directly involved in MBKM activities. Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis to identify patterns and key themes. The findings reveal that challenges include

administrative inefficiencies, lack of coordination among stakeholders, and variations in student readiness. However, strategic interventions such as structured mentorship, digital integration, and policy alignment with academic requirements can enhance collaboration and program outcomes. This study contributes to the existing literature by providing a focused examination of MBKM's implementation in legal education, highlighting the need for a more adaptive and structured approach. The implications of this research emphasize the necessity for universities to refine their MBKM frameworks to better support interdisciplinary learning and professional development.

Corresponding Author:

Name: Christian Felix Lumbanraja

Institution: Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Fakultas Hukum, Prodi Ilmu Hukum, Indonesia.

Email: christian.22098@mhs.unesa.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

Collaboration in education plays a crucial role in preparing students for the dynamic demands of the professional world. The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program (Kuncoro et al., 2022), initiated by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture, aims to provide students with experiential learning opportunities by allowing them to engage in internships, research projects, community service, and entrepreneurial activities outside their home universities. At the Faculty of Law, Surabaya State University, MBKM serves as a platform for bridging academic knowledge with practical experience. However, its implementation presents several challenges, including administrative inefficiencies, lack of coordination among stakeholders, and disparities in student readiness.

While existing solutions focus on policy frameworks and guidelines, there remain limitations in practical execution, particularly in ensuring effective collaboration between students, faculty, and external partners. Current studies have explored MBKM's impact on student learning outcomes but have not sufficiently addressed the structural and institutional barriers that hinder its success. This research seeks to fill this gap by analyzing the key challenges and identifying strategic approaches to optimize collaboration in MBKM implementation.

The concept of collaborative learning in higher education has been widely studied, with early research emphasizing its role in enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Amanda et al., 2024). Subsequent studies have explored the integration of experiential learning in academic curricula, highlighting the benefits of internships and community engagement in higher education (Zilvinskis et al., 2023). More recent works focus on the policy implications of MBKM, examining its impact on student competencies and employability (Kulal et al., 2023).

Despite these advancements, gaps remain in understanding how universities can systematically facilitate MBKM collaborations. Current research often overlooks the institutional challenges faced by faculty and administrators in managing MBKM programs, as well as the specific difficulties encountered in legal education. This study aims to address these gaps by providing an in-depth analysis of collaboration strategies tailored to the unique context of law faculties.

This research contributes to the literature by offering a comprehensive examination of collaboration mechanisms within MBKM at the Faculty of Law, Surabaya State University. The key objectives are:

1. To identify the primary challenges in MBKM implementation from the perspectives of students, faculty, and program coordinators.

2. To analyze existing collaboration models and assess their effectiveness in legal education.
3. To propose strategic interventions for enhancing coordination, mentorship, and digital integration in MBKM.

It is hypothesized that structured mentorship, streamlined administrative processes, and digital collaboration tools can significantly improve the effectiveness of MBKM implementation. The findings are expected to provide actionable insights for universities in optimizing their MBKM frameworks, ultimately enhancing interdisciplinary learning and professional development. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 outlines the research methodology, including data collection and analysis techniques. Section 3 presents the findings and discussion on MBKM implementation challenges and potential solutions. Section 4 provides conclusions and policy recommendations for improving MBKM collaboration in higher education.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a case study methodology to investigate the challenges and strategies for optimizing MBKM implementation at the Faculty of Law, Surabaya State University. The research was conducted at Surabaya State University, chosen due to its active participation in MBKM programs and its role in legal education. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with students, faculty members, and program coordinators involved in MBKM. Secondary data were gathered from institutional reports, MBKM policy documents, and academic literature on higher education collaboration. The study population includes all faculty members and students participating in MBKM at the Faculty of Law. A purposive sampling technique was used to select key stakeholders, ensuring representation of various perspectives and experiences. Thematic analysis was employed to identify patterns and themes in the collected data. Coding techniques were used to categorize responses and uncover key insights into the effectiveness and challenges of MBKM collaboration. While primarily qualitative, the study integrates descriptive statistical analysis to quantify student participation rates, faculty engagement, and administrative efficiency in MBKM programs. Challenges encountered included limited access to some administrative data and variations in student experiences across different MBKM programs. However, the case study method allows for an in-depth exploration of specific issues and practical recommendations tailored to the university's context. By utilizing qualitative methods and thematic analysis, this research provides a nuanced understanding of MBKM implementation, offering valuable insights for improving collaboration in legal education and higher education in general.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section combines the detailed findings from the study with an in-depth theoretical analysis and interpretation of those findings. The results and discussion will be presented in a way that answers the key research questions and reflects on the implications for future practices in the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program at the Faculty of Law, Surabaya State University. The primary findings of this research were centered around three key themes: the challenges in MBKM implementation, the existing models of collaboration, and the strategies for improving these collaborations.

- a) **Challenges in Coordination:** A significant finding was that the coordination between students, faculty, and external partners was often limited, resulting in communication gaps and delays in the program's implementation. Many students reported not receiving timely information about available MBKM opportunities, while faculty members felt that the lack of structured communication with external partners made it difficult to manage these collaborations effectively.
- b) **Administrative Barriers:** Another key discovery was the inefficiency of administrative processes. Students faced difficulties in navigating the bureaucratic hurdles of registering for and participating in MBKM activities. This created frustration and, in some cases, led to students dropping out of the program altogether. Faculty members noted that they were

often overwhelmed by paperwork and the administrative demands of tracking student progress.

- c) **Student Readiness Variability:** The study also found that there was significant variability in student readiness to participate in MBKM programs. Some students were well-prepared for practical work, while others struggled due to a lack of relevant skills and experience. This gap in readiness points to the need for more preparatory work before students engage in MBKM activities.
- d) **Unanticipated Finding:** An unanticipated result was the degree to which faculty members themselves expressed a lack of preparedness in managing MBKM programs. Although many faculty members were committed to supporting students, the overwhelming administrative demands and the absence of formal training on managing experiential learning made it difficult for them to effectively guide students through the program.

In this section, we analyze the implications of the findings and how they contribute to the existing literature on MBKM and collaborative learning in higher education. The analysis is framed by key theoretical concepts, including collaboration, experiential learning, and institutional barriers.

Addressing Coordination Gaps

The findings highlight significant gaps in coordination between students, faculty, and external partners, which directly impact the success of MBKM. This is consistent with previous research, which has emphasized that effective coordination is crucial for the success of experiential learning programs (Bradberry & De Maio, 2019). The lack of communication channels between stakeholders leads to confusion, delays, and dissatisfaction among participants. By implementing clear guidelines for communication and fostering stronger partnerships, universities can ensure that all parties involved in MBKM are aligned with program goals and expectations. This can be achieved by setting up regular meetings or using digital platforms to facilitate collaboration.

The lack of communication channels between stakeholders in the MBKM program often leads to confusion, delays, and dissatisfaction among participants, undermining the effectiveness of the initiative. This issue arises from the absence of a unified communication system that integrates the needs and concerns of students, faculty members, and external partners. Without a clear and consistent means of communication, information about available opportunities, program requirements, and progress tracking is often scattered across multiple platforms or, worse, delivered through informal channels. This fragmentation not only makes it difficult for stakeholders to stay informed, but it also fosters an environment of miscommunication and uncertainty, which can significantly hinder the success of the MBKM program.

One of the critical challenges highlighted in this study is the need for effective communication between all involved parties, particularly between faculty members and external partners. Faculty members, in their roles as mentors and coordinators, often find themselves in the position of trying to bridge the gap between students and external organizations, which can lead to conflicting expectations and a lack of alignment. Students, on the other hand, may be unaware of their roles or the specific objectives they are meant to achieve in their internships or community projects. This confusion can result in delays in student progress, missed opportunities for feedback, and overall dissatisfaction with the MBKM experience. The lack of clarity surrounding roles and expectations not only detracts from the quality of the program but also diminishes the potential for students to fully benefit from the collaborative learning opportunities that MBKM aims to provide.

To address these issues, it is essential for universities to implement clear and structured communication channels that ensure all stakeholders are on the same page. One of the most effective ways to achieve this is by setting up regular meetings or check-ins between faculty members, students, and external partners. These meetings should be used as a platform for discussing the progress of the program, addressing any concerns, and realigning expectations. By bringing together all parties on a regular basis, universities can ensure that any issues are identified early and can be

addressed in a timely manner, preventing misunderstandings from escalating into larger problems. Regular meetings also provide an opportunity for stakeholders to share feedback, which can be invaluable in refining the MBKM program and ensuring that it continues to meet the needs of students, faculty, and external partners.

However, simply implementing a digital platform is not enough to resolve communication issues. It is equally important to establish clear guidelines for how the platform should be used. These guidelines would outline the expectations for communication, including the frequency of updates, the types of information to be shared, and the response times expected from both students and external partners. For example, faculty members could be required to provide regular feedback on students' progress, while external partners could be encouraged to update the platform with any changes to the opportunities available for students. Students, in turn, would be expected to check the platform regularly for updates and respond promptly to any requests for information or feedback. Clear guidelines would ensure that the digital platform is used effectively and that communication remains consistent and timely.

In addition to improving communication within the MBKM program, fostering stronger partnerships with external organizations is crucial for the success of the initiative. Many of the challenges faced by students in MBKM are directly related to the quality of the partnerships between universities and external partners. When these partnerships are not well-structured, students may be placed in internships or community service projects that do not align with their academic goals or career aspirations. This misalignment can lead to a lack of engagement, poor learning outcomes, and frustration among students. To address this, universities should work closely with external partners to ensure that the opportunities they offer are relevant to the students' field of study and are designed to help students develop the skills and competencies they need for future employment.

Strong partnerships are built on mutual understanding and shared goals. Universities should engage with external partners early in the program design process to discuss the specific needs of the MBKM program and identify areas where collaboration can be most effective. These discussions should focus on aligning the objectives of the university with the goals of external organizations, ensuring that both parties are committed to providing a high-quality learning experience for students. Clear agreements and formalized contracts should be established to outline the expectations of both the university and the external partners, including the scope of student involvement, the level of mentorship provided, and the criteria for evaluating student performance. By setting these expectations upfront, universities can reduce the potential for misunderstandings and ensure that all partners are aligned in their efforts.

Another key element of fostering stronger partnerships is providing ongoing support to external partners throughout the MBKM program. Many external organizations may not be familiar with the specific needs of students or the academic requirements of the program. Universities can offer training or orientation sessions for external partners to ensure that they understand the goals of MBKM and the role they play in supporting students' learning. This support could include providing external partners with resources and guidance on how to mentor students effectively, assess their performance, and offer constructive feedback. By building the capacity of external partners, universities can enhance the quality of the internships and community service projects offered to students, ensuring that these experiences are valuable and meaningful.

Overcoming Administrative Barriers.

The administrative inefficiencies identified in this study are not unique to MBKM at Surabaya State University; they are a common challenge in higher education when implementing new, complex programs. Studies have shown that cumbersome administrative processes often hinder the success of collaborative programs (Subramanian, 2012). Streamlining these processes will be essential to improving student satisfaction and faculty engagement in MBKM. The suggestion to create a centralized digital platform aligns with contemporary trends in higher education

administration, where digital tools can reduce paperwork and improve overall efficiency. By simplifying administrative tasks, universities can focus more on fostering meaningful collaboration between students, faculty, and external partners.

The suggestion to create a centralized digital platform aligns with contemporary trends in higher education administration, where digital tools can reduce the burden of manual paperwork and improve overall efficiency. A digital platform would serve as a one-stop portal for all MBKM-related activities, from registration to tracking progress and accessing resources. By consolidating all relevant information into a single, accessible platform, universities could eliminate the confusion that often arises from fragmented systems and unclear communication.

Such a platform would streamline many of the time-consuming tasks that currently plague both students and faculty. For students, it would provide a clear overview of available MBKM opportunities, making it easier for them to find and apply for internships, community service projects, and other experiential learning activities. Moreover, students would be able to track their progress throughout the program, ensuring that they meet all the necessary requirements and deadlines. For faculty, the platform could offer tools for monitoring student participation, providing feedback, and managing the logistics of their involvement in MBKM activities. This would free up valuable time for faculty to focus on mentorship and academic support rather than administrative duties. By simplifying these administrative tasks, universities can shift their focus from day-to-day operational concerns to more meaningful aspects of the MBKM program, such as fostering collaboration and enhancing the quality of the learning experience.

In addition to improving administrative efficiency, a centralized digital platform can enhance communication and coordination between students, faculty, and external partners. Currently, the lack of a centralized communication system often leads to miscommunication and delays, as students and faculty members must navigate a patchwork of emails, phone calls, and in-person meetings to stay updated on program developments. With a unified platform, all stakeholders would have real-time access to the same information, reducing the risk of misunderstandings and ensuring that everyone is on the same page. For external partners, the platform could provide a space to post available opportunities, set expectations for student involvement, and communicate directly with faculty and students. This would help establish a more collaborative environment where all parties are actively engaged in the MBKM process.

Furthermore, a digital platform could facilitate the collection and analysis of data related to the MBKM program, offering valuable insights into its effectiveness and areas for improvement. By tracking student participation rates, faculty engagement, and the outcomes of internships and other activities, universities can identify patterns and trends that can inform future decision-making. For instance, the platform could collect data on the types of internships or projects that most benefit students in terms of skill development and employability. This information could help guide future program design and ensure that MBKM offerings are aligned with the evolving needs of the job market. In addition, universities could use the data collected to measure the overall success of the MBKM program and identify specific areas where improvements are needed, such as in student preparation or the alignment of academic content with real-world practices.

However, while the introduction of a centralized digital platform offers significant benefits, it is not without its challenges. One of the potential obstacles is the digital divide, where some students or faculty members may not have the necessary access to technology or may lack the digital literacy required to fully engage with the platform. To address this, universities should ensure that adequate support systems are in place, including training sessions for students and faculty, as well as accessible hardware and internet connectivity options for those who need it. Additionally, the platform must be user-friendly and intuitive to ensure that it is accessible to all participants, regardless of their technological background. A user-centered design approach, with input from all stakeholders, can help ensure that the platform meets the diverse needs of the university community.

The success of the platform will also depend on the willingness of faculty members and external partners to fully engage with it. Faculty members, who may be accustomed to traditional

methods of communication and administration, might be hesitant to adopt new technology. To overcome this resistance, universities should offer training and support, emphasizing the ways in which the platform can enhance their teaching and mentoring roles rather than replace them. External partners, too, may need to be encouraged to embrace the platform as a means of improving their collaboration with the university. This could involve providing orientation sessions or resources to help them understand how the platform can facilitate smoother communication and ensure that students receive high-quality learning experiences.

The introduction of a digital platform also raises important questions about data privacy and security. With personal and academic information being shared through the platform, it is crucial that universities implement robust security measures to protect student data and ensure compliance with privacy regulations. This will require investment in cybersecurity infrastructure and ongoing monitoring to prevent data breaches or unauthorized access. Additionally, universities must establish clear policies regarding the use and storage of student data, ensuring transparency and accountability in how the information is handled.

Addressing Student Readiness

The variability in student readiness for MBKM programs is another significant finding. Some students are well-prepared to take on practical legal work, while others struggle due to a lack of relevant skills. This gap highlights the need for universities to assess and address the skill gaps before students enter MBKM programs. Pre-departure training and orientation sessions can be implemented to ensure that all students are adequately prepared for the challenges they may face in the field. Furthermore, mentorship programs can play a critical role in helping students navigate the challenges they encounter during their MBKM activities. By pairing students with experienced mentors, universities can ensure that students receive the guidance and support they need to succeed.

This inconsistency in readiness underscores the need for universities to take a more proactive approach to assess and address these gaps before students embark on MBKM programs. It is clear that the current framework does not sufficiently prepare all students to engage with the real-world tasks they will encounter in the field, and this can lead to frustration and underperformance, not only for the students but also for the external organizations and faculty members involved. The disparity in readiness among students also highlights the importance of building a robust preparatory phase before students participate in MBKM, where targeted training and orientation can equip them with the necessary tools to succeed.

One of the first steps toward addressing these gaps is to implement pre-departure training and orientation sessions that will ensure all students are adequately prepared for the challenges they may face in the field. These preparatory programs should be comprehensive, covering not just the technical skills required for specific legal tasks, but also the soft skills necessary for success in the workplace. Training in communication, teamwork, time management, and professional conduct is crucial, as these are competencies that students may not have fully developed within the academic setting. These orientation sessions could also introduce students to the expectations of external partners, ensuring that they understand the roles and responsibilities they will assume during their internships or community service activities. In addition to practical training, these sessions can provide students with a deeper understanding of the broader goals of MBKM and how their contributions fit into the larger context of societal development and legal reform.

By equipping students with the right skills before they embark on MBKM programs, universities can reduce the likelihood of students feeling overwhelmed or ill-prepared when faced with real-world tasks. A structured pre-departure training program can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ensuring that students are ready to contribute meaningfully to their internships, community projects, or entrepreneurial endeavors. Furthermore, it is essential that these training programs are designed to be adaptive, taking into account the

diverse backgrounds and previous experiences of students. While some may require intensive training in specific legal areas, others may benefit more from sessions focused on improving general professional skills or enhancing their ability to work in interdisciplinary teams. Tailoring the preparatory training to meet the varied needs of students will ensure that all participants are on equal footing when they enter the field, leading to a more equitable and effective MBKM experience.

Another crucial component that can support students in bridging their skill gaps is the implementation of mentorship programs. Mentorship has long been recognized as a powerful tool for professional development, offering students an opportunity to learn from experienced professionals who can guide them through the challenges they encounter in their practical legal work. By pairing students with mentors, universities can ensure that students receive personalized support, advice, and encouragement, helping them to build their confidence and competence in the field. The mentorship relationship provides a space where students can ask questions, receive constructive feedback, and develop a deeper understanding of the nuances of legal practice, which is often not fully conveyed in the classroom.

Mentorship can also play a critical role in addressing the emotional and psychological challenges that students may encounter during their MBKM activities. The transition from academic study to practical legal work can be daunting, and some students may struggle with feelings of inadequacy or self-doubt, particularly if they feel that they lack the necessary skills to succeed. A mentor can offer reassurance, helping students to navigate these feelings and encouraging them to continue working toward their professional goals. In addition, mentors can serve as role models, demonstrating the values, ethics, and professionalism required in legal practice. Through regular one-on-one meetings and feedback sessions, mentors can help students reflect on their experiences, identify areas for improvement, and build a roadmap for their continued development.

The benefits of mentorship are not limited to students; faculty members and external partners can also gain valuable insights through their involvement in these relationships. Faculty members, for example, can use mentorship as a means of strengthening their ties with the professional legal community, while external partners can contribute to the development of future legal professionals by offering guidance and expertise. Mentorship also serves as a mechanism for fostering stronger collaboration between the university and external organizations, as it encourages continuous communication and feedback between the academic and professional sectors. Through these partnerships, universities can ensure that their MBKM programs are closely aligned with the needs of the legal industry, making the program more relevant and impactful for students.

To optimize the mentorship process, universities should establish clear guidelines for mentors, ensuring that they understand their roles and responsibilities in supporting students' development. This could include providing mentors with training on how to give constructive feedback, how to facilitate reflective practice, and how to navigate potential challenges in the mentor-mentee relationship. Universities should also encourage mentors to provide regular progress updates and communicate any concerns they may have about the student's development, ensuring that faculty members and program coordinators are kept informed. By fostering an environment where mentorship is prioritized and supported, universities can create a culture of continuous learning, where students, faculty, and external partners work together to cultivate the next generation of legal professionals.

Despite the importance of preparatory training and mentorship, it is equally important for universities to foster a culture of continuous professional development throughout the MBKM program. While the initial preparation phase is critical, it is not a one-time event; students must have ongoing opportunities to refine their skills and gain feedback throughout their MBKM experience. Regular check-ins, performance evaluations, and feedback loops are essential in ensuring that students continue to grow and develop during their internships or community service projects. These evaluations should not be limited to a final assessment but should be part of an ongoing dialogue between students, mentors, and faculty members. Regular performance reviews will allow students to identify areas for improvement and make adjustments to their approach before issues

escalate. In addition, these evaluations can help students build a professional portfolio that showcases their growth, which can be valuable when seeking future employment opportunities.

Improving Faculty and External Partner Collaboration

The study also points to the need for stronger internal collaboration among faculty members and more structured partnerships with external organizations. This suggests a need for clearer guidelines and agreements regarding roles and expectations. Collaborative frameworks, such as co-designed curriculum or shared responsibilities, can help mitigate the current issues of miscommunication and mismatched expectations. Building stronger relationships with external partners can also enhance the learning experiences for students, providing them with high-quality internships and fieldwork opportunities that align with their academic and professional goals. The study also points to the need for stronger internal collaboration among faculty members and more structured partnerships with external organizations. In many cases, faculty members reported difficulties in aligning their efforts due to a lack of communication and coordination. Some faculty members felt disconnected from the broader goals of the MBKM program, which often led to inefficiencies in managing the program. This disjointedness creates an environment where students are not receiving the full benefits of collaboration between the university and external partners. One way to address these challenges is by establishing clearer internal frameworks that define the roles and responsibilities of faculty members in managing MBKM activities. Such frameworks could provide a systematic approach to collaboration that ensures everyone involved is working towards common goals.

Moreover, the study suggests that the partnerships between the university and external organizations need to be more clearly structured. Many students and faculty members expressed concerns about the lack of formal agreements with external organizations, which led to ambiguity in expectations. In some cases, students reported that their internships or community service experiences did not align with their academic goals, leaving them with a sense of dissatisfaction. To remedy this, universities could implement clearer guidelines that outline the roles of both external partners and students. Collaborative frameworks, such as co-designed curricula or shared responsibilities, can be instrumental in creating a more structured partnership where both academic and professional objectives are aligned. By doing so, the university can ensure that the MBKM program is more directly connected to real-world legal practice and other relevant sectors.

Building stronger relationships with external partners is critical for the success of MBKM programs. By working closely with legal firms, government agencies, and NGOs, for instance, the university can offer students internships and fieldwork opportunities that are more meaningful and directly aligned with their academic pursuits. These opportunities will not only help students gain practical knowledge but will also expose them to professional environments that are vital for their future careers. When external partners are more deeply involved in the program design, they can offer insights into the evolving needs of the legal profession and other sectors, helping students prepare for the demands of the workforce. Additionally, these collaborations can benefit the external organizations as well, as they gain access to a pool of motivated and talented students who could contribute to their work in various capacities.

To strengthen these partnerships, it is also important for the university to create formal agreements that outline the expectations and responsibilities of each party. These agreements can clarify issues such as the scope of internships, the tasks students will be expected to perform, and the level of mentorship they will receive. Clear agreements also help in managing any potential conflicts that may arise, ensuring that all parties involved are aware of their obligations. Moreover, these partnerships can evolve over time, adapting to the changing needs of the labor market and the skills required in the legal field. The university and its external partners must remain flexible and responsive to these changes, fostering a dynamic and mutually beneficial relationship.

In addition to improving internal collaboration and partnerships with external organizations, the study highlights the importance of faculty development programs that focus on managing experiential learning initiatives. Faculty members are often the bridge between students, the university, and external partners, and they need to be adequately trained to handle these complex relationships. Faculty development should not only focus on pedagogical strategies but also on how to effectively communicate and collaborate with external partners, navigate administrative challenges, and assess student performance in real-world settings. Training faculty in these areas can help mitigate some of the difficulties experienced in coordinating MBKM activities and ensure that they are better equipped to support students throughout their learning journey.

Furthermore, addressing the challenges of miscommunication and mismatched expectations requires a shift in the overall culture of collaboration within the university. Encouraging a more collaborative culture involves creating a shared understanding of the objectives and outcomes of the MBKM program among all stakeholders. This includes not only faculty and students but also administrative staff and external partners. Regular meetings, workshops, and feedback loops can help to ensure that all parties are aligned and that any issues are addressed in a timely manner. When there is a strong, shared vision for the program, the potential for conflict is reduced, and the program's overall success is enhanced.

A more collaborative environment also has the potential to benefit students by offering them a broader range of learning opportunities. In a system where faculty, external partners, and students work together as a cohesive unit, students can gain deeper insights into the practical application of their studies. Instead of being passive recipients of knowledge, students become active participants in the learning process, engaged in projects, internships, and fieldwork that offer real-world context to their academic experiences. This type of engagement fosters critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and professional competencies that are essential for success in the workforce.

The importance of clearly defined expectations in both internal and external collaboration cannot be overstated. In the absence of such clarity, misunderstandings and frustration are likely to arise, which can ultimately undermine the effectiveness of the MBKM program. Clear expectations and guidelines allow for more efficient planning, smoother execution of activities, and a better overall experience for all parties involved. These structures ensure that students, faculty, and external partners are on the same page regarding their roles, responsibilities, and objectives. The result is a more productive and successful collaborative effort that benefits everyone involved, particularly the students who stand to gain the most from a well-organized and coherent program.

4. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the success of the MBKM program hinges on addressing key challenges related to communication, student readiness, and collaboration between stakeholders. By implementing clear communication channels, providing pre-departure training, and fostering strong mentorship programs, universities can enhance the preparedness of students for practical legal work and ensure more meaningful and impactful learning experiences. Strengthening partnerships with external organizations and streamlining administrative processes will also contribute to a more efficient and cohesive program. Ultimately, these efforts will better equip students with the necessary skills, competencies, and professional networks to thrive in their careers, while improving the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the MBKM program in higher education.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Amanda, F. F., Sumitro, S. B., Lestari, S. R., & Ibrohim. (2024). Enhancing Critical Thinking And Problem Solving Skills By Complexity Science-Problem Based Learning Model. *Multidisciplinary Journal of Educational Research*, 14(1). <https://doi.org/10.17583/remie.9409>
- Bradberry, L. A., & De Maio, J. (2019). Learning By Doing: The Long-Term Impact of Experiential Learning Programs on Student Success. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2018.1485571>

- Kulal, A., Dinesh, S., Abhishek, N., & Ur Rahiman, H. (2023). Transversal competences and employability: comparing in-person learning and distance education. *Cogent Education*, 10(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2204716>
- Kuncoro, J., Handayani, A., & Suprihatin, T. (2022). Peningkatan Soft Skill Melalui Kegiatan Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM). *Proyeksi*, 17(1).
- Subramanian, M. (2012). Rural e-governance through the “Panchayati Raj” institutions in India: Prospects and challenges. In *Active Citizen Participation in E-Government: A Global Perspective*.
<https://doi.org/10.4018/978-1-4666-0116-1.ch016>
- Zilvinskis, J., Kinzie, J., Daday, J., O'Donnell, K., & Zande, C. Vande. (2023). DELIVERING ON THE PROMISE OF HIGH-IMPACT PRACTICES: Research and Models for Achieving Equity, Fidelity, Impact, and Scale. In *Delivering on the Promise of High-Impact Practices: Research and Models for Achieving Equity, Fidelity, Impact, and Scale*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003444022>