

EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MERDEKA BELAJAR–KAMPUS MERDEKA (MBKM) PROGRAM TO SUPPORT HIGHER EDUCATION KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS: A CIPP AND IPOO EVALUATION IN A JOURNALISM STUDY PROGRAM

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Abstract

This study evaluates the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program and its contribution to the achievement of Key Performance Indicators (IKU) in the S1 Journalism Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, University of Bengkulu. MBKM serves as Indonesia's national higher education reform, providing students with flexible learning opportunities outside the campus through experiential and industry-linked activities. Guided by principles of educational evaluation, this study employs the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) model and the Input–Process–Output–Outcome (IPOO) framework to systematically assess program relevance, resource readiness, implementation quality, outputs, and institutional outcomes. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews, questionnaires, observations, documentation, and literature review. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, including program managers, lecturers, students, and external partners. Data were analyzed through reduction, display, conclusion drawing, and triangulation. The findings indicate that MBKM implementation significantly contributes to the achievement of IKU particularly IKU-2 (student learning experience outside campus) and IKU-6 (partnership with external institutions). Two strategic mechanisms were identified as the most influential: (1) diversification and collaboration with industry and community partners, and (2) integration of MBKM activities with faculty research through research assistance schemes. MBKM also generated tangible outputs such as student publications, intellectual property, documentary works, and enhanced professional competencies. This study provides empirical evidence on how program evaluation frameworks can be effectively applied to assess MBKM performance and offers strategic recommendations for strengthening experiential learning in journalism education.

Keywords: CIPP, IPOO, Journalism Education, Key Performance Indicators, MBKM, Program Evaluation.



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INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are required to adapt to rapid changes in the global workforce, technological disruption, and increasing demands for graduate employability. In Indonesia, the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy was introduced as a transformative framework to strengthen student competencies through flexible learning pathways and authentic experiential learning. The policy, mandated through the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 3/2020 on the National Standards for Higher Education, enables students to undertake structured learning activities outside their home campus including internships, research, community engagement, entrepreneurship, and independent study aimed at enhancing both soft and hard skills relevant to future professional demands.

For communication and journalism programs, the implementation of MBKM holds strategic significance. Journalism education requires not only theoretical understanding but also practical exposure, collaboration with industry partners, and immersive field experiences. These competencies align closely with the broader objectives of MBKM, which facilitate students' direct involvement in professional settings, newsroom practices, media production, and community-based projects. Recent studies in the field highlight that MBKM contributes to improved professional readiness, increased industry relevance of curricula, and strengthened student portfolios (Hidayati & Priyanto, 2023; Lusiana et al., 2022). Despite these benefits, challenges persist, including curriculum alignment, stakeholder readiness, administrative integration, and variability in the quality of partnerships (Hasanah, 2022; Putra et al., 2022).

Parallel to MBKM, the Indonesian higher education system has adopted the Indikator Kinerja Utama (IKU) or Key Performance Indicators framework as a measure of institutional performance and accountability. IKU functions not only as an evaluative tool but also as a mechanism to encourage innovative, collaborative, and outcomes-based educational practices. Among the eight indicators, IKU-2 ("Students Gain Learning Experience Outside Campus") and IKU-6 ("Study Program Collaborates with World-Class Partners") are directly supported by MBKM implementation, while IKU-1 ("Graduates Obtain Decent Employment") is strengthened through improved student competencies and professional exposure (Kemendikbudristek, 2023). Therefore, examining the effectiveness of MBKM implementation provides meaningful insights into both program quality and institutional performance.

Evaluating educational programs requires a systematic and comprehensive approach. Theoretical foundations of educational evaluation emphasize the roles of measurement, assessment, and evaluation in informing decision-making, improving program quality, and determining program effectiveness (Nitko & Brookhart, 2014; Arifin, 2021). In this study, the evaluation of MBKM implementation is framed using two widely adopted models: the Context–Input–Process–Product (CIPP) model and the Input–Process–Output–Outcome (IPOO) framework. The CIPP model enables a holistic assessment of program relevance, resource readiness, implementation quality, and resultant products (Stufflebeam, 1971), and it has been used extensively in evaluating MBKM and other higher education programs (Puspitasari & Arifin, 2022; Setiawan & Dewi, 2024). Meanwhile, the IPOO model supports analysis of program mechanisms and their direct and indirect impacts, particularly in experiential learning and internship-based initiatives (Kurniawan & Fatimah, 2023; Siregar, 2022).

The Journalism Study Program at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), University of Bengkulu, began implementing MBKM programs in 2021 and expanded to independent MBKM initiatives in 2023 such as Talenta, Village Project, and Research Assistance. These programs have shown promising contributions to IKU achievement at both faculty and university levels. However, a systematic evaluation is still required to determine the effectiveness, challenges, and strategic opportunities for strengthening MBKM implementation in relation to the study program's performance indicators.

Therefore, this research aims to evaluate the implementation of MBKM within the S1 Journalism Study Program and its contribution to the achievement of key university performance indicators, using the CIPP and IPOO models. The findings are expected to provide empirical insights for improving MBKM strategies, strengthening program–industry partnerships, and supporting evidence-based policy development in journalism and communication education.

Literature Review

1. The Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Policy in the Global Context of Experiential and Work-Integrated Learning

The Merdeka Belajar–Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy represents Indonesia’s adaptation of global paradigms such as experiential learning and work-integrated learning (WIL). International research consistently shows that WIL enhances employability skills, professional readiness, and adaptive competencies among university students (Jackson, 2015; Freney & Shah, 2021). Learning models that incorporate off-campus and cross-institutional experiences are also known to strengthen students’ motivation, problem-solving ability, and resilience (Jones, 2020; Coll et al., 2021).

Similar to WIL frameworks, MBKM provides opportunities for student mobility across universities, industries, communities, and research environments. This approach aligns with the global demand for higher education curricula that remain responsive to technological change and evolving industry needs (Deuze, 2019; Mensing & Ryfe, 2019). In the Indonesian context, MBKM enables students to gain authentic professional exposure that directly contributes to their future employability (Hidayati & Priyanto, 2023; Ramadhani et al., 2022). Thus, MBKM can be positioned as a national policy aligned with global experiential and competency-based learning frameworks

2. Key Performance Indicators (IKU) in the Context of Higher Education Performance Evaluation

Globally, higher education institutions apply performance indicators to measure organizational effectiveness, learning quality, institutional accountability, and graduate outcomes (Shah & Richardson, 2016; Dougherty & Natow, 2019). In Indonesia, the Indikator Kinerja Utama (IKU) functions as a strategic instrument to strengthen institutional competitiveness and global compatibility (Kemendikbudristek, 2023).

MBKM directly supports several IKU components, particularly:

- IKU 2 (Student Experience Outside Campus): aligned with global WIL standards
- IKU 6 (Partnership Quality): comparable to international external engagement indicators
- IKU 1 (Graduate Employability): consistent with employability metrics used worldwide

Indonesian studies confirm that effective MBKM implementation contributes positively to IKU achievements (Lestari et al., 2023; Mulyani & Rohman, 2023). This demonstrates that MBKM and IKU function as mutually reinforcing instruments within higher education transformation.

3. Theoretical Foundations of Educational Measurement, Assessment, and Evaluation

Educational evaluation rests upon three interconnected components: measurement, assessment, and evaluation (Nitko & Brookhart, 2014). Measurement quantifies attributes and performance; assessment interprets collected data; and evaluation determines value, merit, or effectiveness of programs (Arifin, 2021).

Internationally, evidence-based evaluation has become a standard requirement in determining the effectiveness of higher education policies and programs (OECD, 2020). Within this context, IKU can be considered a performance measurement tool that helps institutions evaluate how far programs such as MBKM contribute to academic quality, relevance, and stakeholder outcomes.

4. The CIPP Model as a Global Framework for Program Evaluation

The CIPP model (Context, Input, Process, Product) is widely recognized as one of the most influential and comprehensive frameworks for program evaluation (Stufflebeam, 2003; Alkin & Christie, 2012). It is applied globally to evaluate educational innovations, curriculum reforms, partnerships, and professional training programs.

International research demonstrates the effectiveness of CIPP in evaluating experiential-learning-based curricula and industry–university collaborations (Zhang et al., 2011; Kaya & Öztürk, 2022). In Indonesia, CIPP has been frequently employed to assess MBKM implementation, curriculum readiness, and program processes (Hidayat et al., 2021; Puspitasari & Arifin, 2022; Setiawan & Dewi, 2024). Thus, CIPP provides a valuable and globally accepted lens for evaluating MBKM implementation.

5. The IPOO Model (Input–Process–Output–Outcome) in Global Educational Evaluation

The IPOO model offers a systematic framework for mapping program components from initial resources (input) to long-term impact (outcome) (Rossi, Lipsey & Henry, 2019). Internationally, the IPOO model has been applied to evaluate internship programs, student mobility initiatives, and employability outcomes (Tymon, 2013; Williams et al., 2019).

In the context of MBKM, IPOO is relevant to evaluating:

- Input: institutional policies, partnerships, curriculum structure, and resources
- Process: implementation of MBKM activities such as internships, research, and community programs
- Output: student projects, publications, intellectual property, portfolios, and field experience
- Outcome: improvements in IKU performance and graduate quality

Indonesian studies support IPOO’s suitability for evaluating MBKM internships, research assistant programs, and industry collaboration (Siregar, 2022; Kurniawan & Fatimah, 2023; Mahmud & Yuniarti, 2021).

6. Journalism and Communication Education in the International Landscape

Journalism education globally is undergoing rapid transformation due to digital disruption, media convergence, and shifts in industry expectations (Deuze, 2019). Modern journalism curricula emphasize practical experience, portfolio development, data journalism, multimedia storytelling, and collaboration with industry partners (Mensing & Ryfe, 2019; Raeymaeckers et al., 2020).

MBKM programs such as internships, community-based projects, and research assistantships align strongly with these international demands. They reinforce professional skills including critical thinking, digital literacy, media production, and research-driven reporting. Indonesian studies also show that MBKM strengthens journalism students’ competencies and fosters stronger linkages between communication programs and media industries (Lusiana et al., 2022; Rochana et al., 2021).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design with an embedded mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative elements to strengthen the evaluation of the MBKM implementation in the Journalism Study Program. The qualitative strand served as the primary approach, while quantitative data were used to support interpretation within the CIPP and IPOO frameworks.

Research Design

The study adopted a mixed-methods descriptive design, aligning with Creswell’s (2014) rationale for integrating multiple sources of evidence to obtain a comprehensive understanding of program implementation. Qualitative analysis was used to explore stakeholder experiences, institutional readiness, program processes, and outcome achievements. Quantitative data (e.g.,

student participation rates, IKU metrics, SWOT–QSPM scoring) were incorporated to enrich and validate qualitative findings.

Data Sources and Participants

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, considering their direct involvement in MBKM activities. The informants consisted of:

- the Head of the Journalism Study Program,
- MBKM coordinators at the faculty and program levels,
- academic advisors,
- lecturers supervising MBKM activities,
- partner institutions, and
- students participating in MBKM (internships, research assistantship, community projects).

This sampling technique ensured that information-rich cases contributed to a holistic interpretation of MBKM implementation.

Data Collection Techniques

Multiple data-gathering techniques were employed to ensure validity and depth of analysis, including:

- Semi-structured interviews with coordinators, lecturers, and student participants;
- Questionnaires assessing student experiences, program challenges, and partnership quality;
- Observation of program documentation, MBKM procedures, and academic information systems;
- Document analysis, including curriculum documents, MBKM guidelines, MoUs, IKU reports, and program portfolios.

Using multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation and enhanced credibility.

Analytical Framework

Data were analyzed using qualitative content analysis, following Miles and Huberman's (2014) stages of:

- Data condensation: identifying recurring patterns, themes, and program issues;
- Data display: organizing qualitative insights into matrices, thematic charts, and model-based categories;
- Conclusion drawing and verification.

The analysis was guided by:

a. CIPP Evaluation Model (Context–Input–Process–Product)

The CIPP model (Stufflebeam, 2003) was used to evaluate:

- Context: relevance of the MBKM policy to institutional goals and IKU demands;
- Input: curriculum readiness, partner networks, procedural guidelines, and resources;
- Process: implementation flow, supervision mechanisms, administrative systems, and challenges;

- Product: outputs and achievements such as student competencies, partnerships, publications, and IKU contributions.

b. IPOO Framework (Input–Process–Output–Outcome)

The IPOO model (Rossi et al., 2019) supported analysis of:

- Input: institutional policies, curriculum structure, academic support systems;
- Process: MBKM activities (internships, research, mentoring);
- Output: student products, performance achievements, publications, competencies;
- Outcome: improvements in IKU metrics and program quality.

c. SWOT and QSPM Analysis

To formulate strategic recommendations:

- SWOT analysis was used to map strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats,
- QSPM (Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix) was used to determine strategic priority alternatives based on Total Attractiveness Scores.

These models ensured analytical rigor and alignment with international standards for program evaluation.

1. Trustworthiness and Data Validation

Credibility was ensured through:

- *Methodological triangulation (interviews, documentation, questionnaires);*
- *Source triangulation (students, lecturers, partners, administrators);*
- *Member checking with key informants;*
- *Audit trail documenting the analytic process.*

Transferability was supported by thick description of context, while dependability and confirmability were ensured through systematic documentation and cross-review.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Implementation of the MBKM Program in the Journalism Study Program

The implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in the Journalism Study Program has shown a progressive pattern over the past four academic years. Since its initial adoption in 2021/2022, the program has shifted from reliance on ministerial schemes to stronger institutional–faculty initiatives through MBKM Mandiri.

The participation data show a clear increase in student engagement:

- 2021/2022: 6 students (ministerial program only; limited alignment with CPL)
- 2022/2023: 4 students (increased alignment after socialization)
- 2023/2024: 119 students (Program Mandiri: 25 Research Assistance, 64 Desa Project, 30 Talenta)
- 2024/2025: 18 students (mixed ministerial + independent)

This trend indicates that the internal MBKM Mandiri programs serve as the main driver of the program’s growth. Qualitative interviews with study program management highlighted that

students exhibited stronger motivation when the activities were contextualized with journalism competencies and supervised directly by program lecturers.

2. Contribution of MBKM to Key Performance Indicators (IKU)

The study found strong evidence that MBKM contributes significantly to three IKU categories: IKU-1, IKU-2, and IKU-6.

Table 4.1 Contribution of MBKM Activities to University Key Performance Indicators (IKU)

o.	MBKM Activity	IKU Contribution
	Pejuang Muda	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-2: Students gain off-campus learning experience • IKU-6: Study program collaborates with external partners
	Magang Merdeka (Internship)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-2: Students gain off-campus learning experience • IKU-6: External collaboration with industry partners • IKU-2: Off-campus instructional experience
	Kampus Mengajar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-6: Collaboration with government/community partners
	Studi Independen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-2: Independent off-campus learning • IKU-6: Collaboration with industry/startups
	MSIB (Magang & Studi Independen Bersertifikat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-2: Professional off-campus experience • IKU-6: Partnerships with national private and public institutions
	PMM-4 (Pertukaran Mahasiswa Merdeka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-2: Mobility and cross-campus learning • IKU-6: Collaboration with national partner universities
	MBKM Mandiri – Desa Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-2: Community-engaged off-campus learning • IKU-6: Community and regional partnerships
	TALENTA Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-2: Talent development outside campus • IKU-6: Collaboration with external creative/industry partners
	Research Assistance (SINTA-3 Publication)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IKU-1: Early employability indicators • IKU-2: Research-based experiential learning • IKU-6: Collaboration with research institutions & partners

a. IKU-2: Student Learning Experience Outside Campus

All nine MBKM activity types contributed to IKU-2, particularly through:

- Magang Merdeka / internship
- Kampus Mengajar

- Studi Independen
- Program Talenta
- MBKM Mandiri (Desa Project & Research Assistance)

Interview results confirmed that IKU-2 achievement improved consistently as MBKM Mandiri increased participation.

b. IKU-6: Partnerships with World-Class Partners

Collaboration with government agencies, NGOs, media institutions, and community organizations strengthened IKU-6 performance.

Results also show that MBKM Mandiri created new local and regional partnerships, enhancing the study program's external visibility.

c. IKU-1: Graduate Employability

Although IKU-1 is not directly linked to undergraduate MBKM activities, the Research Assistance Program produced early indicators of increased employability, such as:

- stronger student portfolios,
- increased research exposure,
- publication experience in SINTA-indexed journals.

3. Outputs of the MBKM Program

The implementation of MBKM resulted in various measurable outputs:

- Student Creative Works & HKI: Documentary films, village journals, and digital magazines from the Desa Project.
- Scientific Publications: Students produced SINTA-4 and SINTA-3 publications through Research Assistance.
- Professional Skills Development: Supervisors noted improvements in editorial, reporting, media production, collaboration, and project management skills.
- Strengthened Student Portfolios: Students involved in MBKM Mandiri were more competitive in internships and competitions.

These outputs contribute to both academic performance and graduate readiness.

4. Internal and External Factors Influencing MBKM Implementation

To deepen the evaluation of the MBKM implementation, this study conducted an analysis of internal and external strategic factors to identify the key strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that influence program performance. These factors were assessed using weighted scoring based on stakeholder responses, documentation reviews, and focus group discussions. The results of the internal factor evaluation (IFE) and external factor evaluation (EFE) provide a comprehensive picture of the program's institutional capacity and environmental conditions. The detailed weighted scores are presented in the following tables.

Table 2. Internal Strategic Factors (Strengths & Weaknesses)

A. Strengths

No	Internal Strength Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
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1	Collaboration between Study Program and partners	0.112618	3.12	0.351368
2	Opportunities for collaboration with industry partners	0.111439	3.02	0.336545
3	Equal student access to MBKM programs	0.107901	3.16	0.340967
4	Routine MBKM socialization activities	0.112028	3.08	0.345047
5	Complete MBKM documentation at program level	0.113208	3.02	0.341887
6	Well-structured MBKM procedures	0.114387	2.98	0.340873
7	Flexible curriculum aligned with CPL	0.109080	3.02	0.329422
8	Development of practical competencies	0.110259	3.10	0.341804
9	Improvement in educational quality	0.109080	3.06	0.333785
Total Strength Score		1.00		3.061.698

B. Weaknesses

No	Internal Weakness Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
1	Limited institutional resources	0.142857	2.58	0.368571
2	Suboptimal integration of academic system (SIKAD)	0.142857	2.74	0.391429
3	Limited funding for certain MBKM activities	0.142857	2.74	0.391429
4	Low understanding of MBKM among students, lecturers, and staff	0.142857	2.72	0.388571
5	Curriculum adaptation challenges	0.142857	2.86	0.408571
6	Inconsistent coordination between campus and industry partners	0.142857	2.78	0.397143
7	Differences in MBKM interpretation across stakeholders	0.142857	2.80	0.400000
Total Weakness Score		1.00		2.745.714

Table 3. External Strategic Factors (Opportunities & Threats)

A. Opportunities				
No	External Opportunity Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
1	Support from industry and external agencies	0.166667	3.14	0.523333
2	Alignment of courses among university, partners, and study program	0.166667	3.10	0.516667
3	Availability of national mobility programs (PMM-4, Permata, etc.)	0.166667	3.08	0.513333
4	Strong legal foundation for MBKM	0.166667	3.12	0.520000
5	High demand for job-ready graduates	0.166667	3.00	0.500000
6	Institutional recognition of MBKM outputs	0.166667	3.00	0.500000
Total Opportunity Score		1.00		3.073.333
B. Threats				
No	External Threat Factors	Weight	Rating	Weighted Score
1	High operational costs of MBKM	0.500000	2.64	1.320.000
2	Mismatch between industry needs and graduate competencies	0.500000	2.76	1.380.000
Total Threat Score		1.00		2.700.000

a. Internal Strengths

The FGD identified key internal strengths such as:

- well-structured MBKM procedures and documentation,
- strong faculty–industry partnerships,
- flexible curriculum alignment with CPL,
- routine MBKM socialization.

The total internal strength score reached 3.06, reflecting a strong institutional foundation.

b. Internal Weaknesses

Internal challenges scored 2.74, indicating moderate weaknesses:

- limited resources and operational funding,

- suboptimal SIAKAD integration,
- varied understanding of MBKM among students and lecturers,
- inconsistent coordination with industry partners.

c. External Opportunities

External opportunities (score 3.07) included:

- strong industry support,
- availability of national mobility programs,
- high labor market demand for journalism graduates.

d. External Threats

Threats (score 2.70) included:

- MBKM operational costs,
- mismatches between industry demands and student competencies.

5. CIPP Analysis Findings

a. Context

The MBKM initiative aligns well with national higher education policy and the Journalism Study Program's curriculum reform goals. Both institutional and national stakeholders recognize MBKM as essential for elevating IKU.

b. Input

Inputs were adequate but uneven. The program has clear guidelines and partnerships. However, human resources, technological support, and funding fluctuations remain notable limitations.

c. Process

Implementation of MBKM both ministerial and independent runs effectively but faces issues such as inconsistent coordination, workload of supervisors, and varying student readiness.

d. Product

Products include strong IKU achievements, student works, publications, and HKI. Stakeholders confirm that MBKM improved student competencies and program visibility.

In summary, the CIPP analysis confirms that while MBKM is contextually relevant and aligned with institutional goals, improvements in resource readiness and process coordination are essential for maximizing program outcomes.

6. IPOO Analysis Finding,

a. Input: Established policy, supporting documents, and partnerships.

b. Process: Internships, Desa Projects, Talenta Program, Riset Asistensi, regular monitoring.

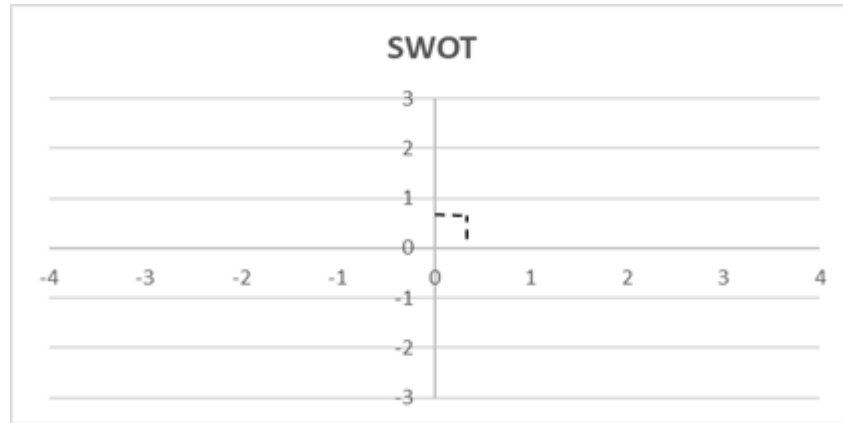
c. Output: Media works, publications, HKI, successful internships.

d. Outcome: IKU-2 and IKU-6 performance increased, faculty reputation strengthened, graduate competitiveness improved.

The IPOO results reinforce that MBKM generates strong short-term outputs and mid-term outcomes, demonstrating its strategic contribution to institutional performance indicators.

7. SWOT Positioning and Strategic Implications

a. SWOT Matrix Recap

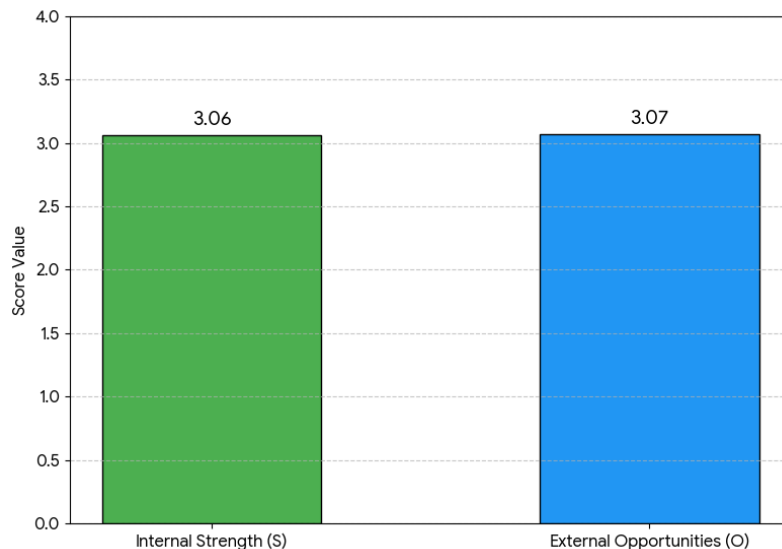


Picture 1. Matrix SWOT

Table X. SWOT Scores of the Journalism Study Program

Dimension	Total Score	Interpretation
Strengths (S)	3.06	Strong internal foundation
Weaknesses (W)	2.74	Moderate internal limitations
Opportunities (O)	3.07	High external opportunities
Threats (T)	2.70	Moderate external threats

b. Narrative

SWOT Positioning**Figure 1** SWOT Analysis Scores: Journalism Study Program

The combined internal and external evaluation places the Journalism Study Program firmly in Quadrant I (Growth Strategy) of the SWOT matrix. This indicates that the program possesses strong internal capacity ($S = 3.06$) and faces substantial external opportunities ($O = 3.07$). Such positioning reflects a favorable environment for expanding and strengthening MBKM implementation.

Strategic Implications

Given the quadrant position, the recommended strategy orientation is SO (Strength–Opportunity), emphasizing leveraging internal strengths to maximize external opportunities. The Quantitative Strategic Planning Matrix (QSPM) confirms this alignment.

Table Y. Summary of QSPM Total Attractiveness Scores

Strategic Alternative	Description	TAS
ST1	Partnership diversification and strengthening collaboration with industry and external stakeholders	17.24
ST2	Integration of MBKM with faculty research and academic innovation	17.13
ST3	Strengthening student socialization, readiness, and mentoring for MBKM participation	16.91

Priority Strategies Based on QSPM

The QSPM results indicate the following priority strategies:

- Strengthening and diversifying partnerships with external stakeholders, (Highest TAS score = 17.23). This includes expanding collaboration for internships, Desa Projects, Talenta Programs, and research-based MBKM activities.
- Integrating MBKM activities with faculty research and institutional innovation. This ensures better alignment between curriculum, experiential learning, and research outputs.
- Enhancing student outreach, socialization, and mentoring for MBKM participation. Improving student readiness and understanding is essential for sustaining participation and quality of MBKM outputs.

Strategic Meaning for Program Development

These strategies collectively indicate that the program is well-positioned to scale up MBKM implementation, enhance IKU performance, and strengthen graduate employability. The aggressive strategy orientation affirms that the program can move beyond compliance and leverage MBKM as a catalyst for long-term academic and institutional competitiveness.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that the MBKM implementation in the Journalism Study Program has significantly enhanced institutional performance, particularly in relation to experiential learning, employability, and key performance indicators. This section discusses the results by integrating relevant theoretical frameworks and international literature..

1. Alignment Between MBKM Implementation and Global Work-Integrated Learning (WIL)

The Journalism Study Program has effectively integrated experiential learning through both ministerial and independent MBKM schemes. The rapid increase in student participation especially in Desa Projects, internships, and research assistance reflects a strong institutional adaptation to work-integrated learning. This aligns with global studies indicating that WIL improves student motivation, problem-solving abilities, and professional readiness (Jackson, 2015; Jones, 2020; Coll et al., 2021).

The findings also confirm Deuze's (2019) argument that journalism education requires real-world immersion to build adaptive and cross-platform competencies. By embedding authentic learning experiences into the curriculum, the program is moving in parallel with international trends in journalism education, which emphasize flexibility, industry relevance, and community engagement (Mensing & Ryfe, 2019; Raeymaeckers et al., 2020).

Implication: MBKM provides an effective Indonesian adaptation of global WIL principles, positioning journalism students to meet contemporary media industry demands.

2. MBKM as a Strategic Driver of Key Performance Indicators (IKU)

The study provides empirical evidence that MBKM significantly contributes to IKU-2 and IKU-6, consistent with global literature linking institutional performance metrics to student mobility and external partnerships (Shah & Richardson, 2016; Dougherty & Natow, 2019).

Notably, MBKM Mandiri programs such as Desa Projects, Talenta Programs, and Research Assistance, serve as major contributors to IKU achievement, filling a gap in existing research that has predominantly focused on ministerial MBKM schemes. Early indications of IKU-1 improvement also emerged through publication experience and undergraduate research involvement, which aligns with studies showing that research engagement enhances graduate employability (Williams et al., 2019).

Implication: MBKM functions as an institutional performance accelerator, strengthening the competitiveness and accountability of higher education institutions.

3. Interpretation Through CIPP Model

Using the CIPP framework provides a comprehensive understanding of program success.

- a. Context: MBKM aligns with national higher education reforms and global expectations for journalism graduates.
- b. Input: Documentation, partnerships, and curriculum readiness were adequate, but resource limitations and uneven MBKM understanding persisted issues consistent with previous analyses of MBKM implementation (Hidayat et al., 2021).
- c. Process: Logistical challenges such as SIAKAD integration and partner coordination echo global barriers in WIL implementation (Freney & Shah, 2021).
- d. Product: Strong outputs including student portfolios, HKI, and publications reinforce the effectiveness of MBKM, reflecting similar findings in international CIPP-based evaluations (Kaya & Öztürk, 2022).

Implication: Strengthening inputs and refining process management are key to sustaining high-quality MBKM products.

4. Interpretation Through IPOO Framework

The IPOO analysis demonstrates coherent linkages between institutional inputs, MBKM processes, and program outputs. Clear documentation, structured activities, and direct lecturer involvement contributed to substantial outputs such as journalism products and scientific publications. These results mirror international evidence on experiential learning outcomes (Williams et al., 2019).

Crucially, this study connects MBKM outputs to institutional outcomes, particularly IKU improvements, an area that remains underexplored in Indonesian MBKM literature.

Implication: IPOO provides a robust analytical framework for mapping how program design and institutional support influence performance indicators.

5. Strategic Positioning Based on SWOT and QSPM Analysis

The positioning of the Journalism Study Program in Quadrant I (Growth Strategy) indicates strong internal capacity and substantial external opportunities. This aligns with global research showing that strong industry engagement enhances experiential learning quality (Raeymaeckers et al., 2020).

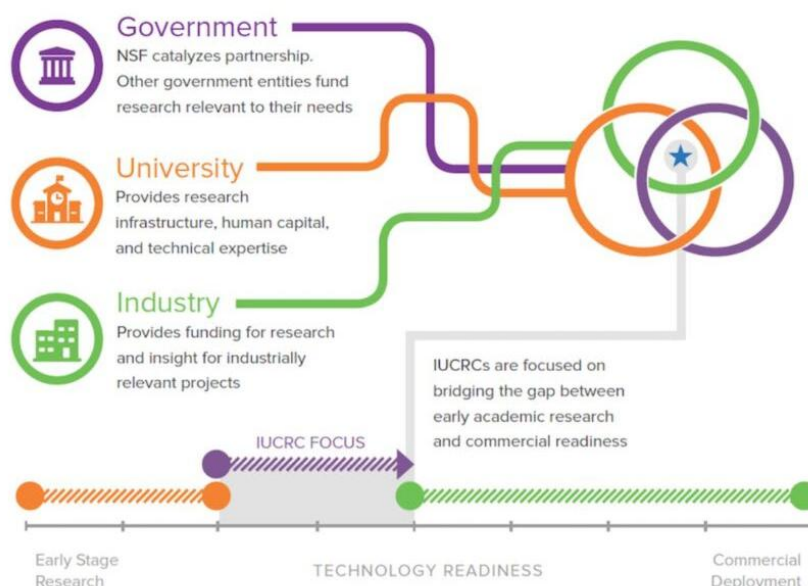


Figure 2 QSPM Validate Partnership Diversification

The QSPM results validate partnership diversification as the most attractive strategy, followed by integrating MBKM with faculty research and strengthening student readiness. These strategies parallel international trends that emphasize expanding learning ecosystems and promoting undergraduate research engagement.

Implication: The program is strategically positioned to scale MBKM, strengthen collaboration, and increase institutional visibility.

6. Implications for Journalism and Higher Education Policy

The study provides several broader implications:

- a. For journalism education, MBKM reinforces the relevance of practical, community-based, and research-driven learning in preparing students for changing media ecosystems.
- b. For higher education governance, MBKM proves to be an effective mechanism for improving institutional performance metrics, particularly IKU.
- c. For policy implementation, stronger integration between academic systems (SIKAD), partner engagement, and human resource preparedness is essential to maximize the benefits of MBKM.

Overall implication: MBKM serves as a transformative framework that strengthens competence, collaboration, and institutional performance within Indonesia's higher education reforms.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in the Journalism Study Program has made a significant contribution to improving institutional performance, particularly in relation to Key Performance Indicators

(IKU). By applying the CIPP evaluation model and the IPOO framework, the study demonstrates that MBKM is well-aligned with national higher education reforms and global trends in experiential and work-integrated learning.

The analysis shows that the program's contextual relevance and institutional inputs are generally adequate, although several persistent challenges remain such as resource limitations, uneven understanding of MBKM, and gaps in academic system integration. Despite these constraints, the MBKM implementation process has produced substantial academic and professional outputs, including scientific publications, intellectual property works, media projects, and increased student mobility. These outputs translate into measurable outcomes, especially the strengthening of IKU-2 (off-campus learning experiences), IKU-6 (external partnerships), and early indicators of IKU-1 (employability).

Strategic evaluation through SWOT and QSPM positions the study program in Quadrant I (growth strategy), indicating strong internal capacity and favorable external conditions. The highest-priority strategy expanding and diversifying collaborations with industry and external partners aligns with international best practices for enhancing the quality and sustainability of experiential learning. Integrating MBKM with faculty research emerges as a second key strategy that can reinforce student competence development while simultaneously elevating institutional research productivity.

Overall, this study contributes to global discussions on experiential learning, program evaluation, and journalism education by offering evidence from a developing higher education context. The findings emphasize the importance of structured experiential learning models, strategic partnerships, and integrated evaluation mechanisms in strengthening academic quality and institutional performance.

Future research should investigate the longitudinal impact of MBKM participation on graduates, conduct cross-program or cross-university comparative analyses, and develop improved evaluation tools to measure long-term academic and employability outcomes. Strengthening digital academic systems and institutional capacities will be essential to sustaining the transformative potential of MBKM within Indonesian higher education.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; Investigation.

Author 3: Data curation; Investigation.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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