

Transforming MBKM Learning to Enhance Political Science Student Competencies at Soedirman University

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ABSTRACT

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy is a government initiative aimed at reforming higher education to better align with labor market demands and socio-political dynamics. In the context of political science education, MBKM has the potential to transform learning patterns while shaping students' political competencies. This study aims to analyze the implementation of MBKM as a form of learning transformation in political science education and its contribution to the development of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies among students of the Political Science Department at Jenderal Soedirman University. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted interactively by applying source and method triangulation. The analytical framework is based on the Competency-Based Education (CBE) approach and Bloom's Taxonomy to assess students' competency achievements. The findings indicate that the implementation of MBKM encourages a shift from classroom-based learning to more contextual experiential learning. The MBKM program in the Department of Political Science at Jenderal Soedirman University functions as a strategic mechanism for producing students' political competencies by integratively developing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains through the integration of practical experience and theoretical reflection within real political contexts. Nevertheless, the implementation of MBKM still faces several challenges, particularly related to limited partnerships and technical coordination. Overall, MBKM has proven to be an effective instrument for transforming political science learning; however, it requires stronger governance to avoid being confined to a purely technocratic orientation.

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Introduction

Higher education transformation manifests national education policy politics, where strategic government intervention determines the direction of academic capacity and youth competence in facing contemporary social, economic, and political dynamics. According to Hidayati et al. (2025), this transformation serves as government intervention to develop the national education system. Through curriculum updates aimed at refining education, students are equipped with adaptive and competitive abilities aligned with globalization and technological advancement (Hidayati, Subhi, & Sari, 2025).

One implementation of this transformation is the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy. Launched in early 2020 by Minister Nadiem Anwar Makarim, it is a strategic Ministry of Education and Culture policy designed to prepare graduates who are not only academically excellent but also competent, relevant, and adaptive to workplace dynamics. Based on Ministerial Regulation (Permendikbud) No. 3 of 2020 regarding National Standards for Higher Education, universities must facilitate student learning activities outside their study programs (Opti & Rachmawati, 2022). The "Kampus Merdeka" policy grants students the right to take up to 40 credits outside their major, including one semester in another program. It also redefines credits (SKS) from "study hours" to "activity hours," encompassing internships, student exchanges, research, and community service (Larasati, 2020).

The MBKM policy functions as an instrument for higher education governance reform by shifting authority from the central government to universities through increased institutional autonomy in curriculum design, learning management, and external partnerships with industry and local governments (Anggara, 2022). Furthermore, Anggarawan (2023) states that MBKM enables universities to produce graduates who are academically superior and aligned with labor market needs (Rodin, Warlizasusi, & Adisel, 2024).

Political science education currently faces a gap between theoretical mastery and practical political demands. Dominantly theoretical curricula have not fully addressed the needs of the real political world, which requires practical skills, decision-making, and contextual understanding. This condition emphasizes the need to align theory and practice so graduates can both analyze and contribute effectively to real political processes. This gap is part of the job-education mismatch phenomenon—a discrepancy between education levels or fields and the types of jobs available in the labor market. This mismatch results in low productivity and income because worker skills do not align with industry needs (Puspasari, 2019).

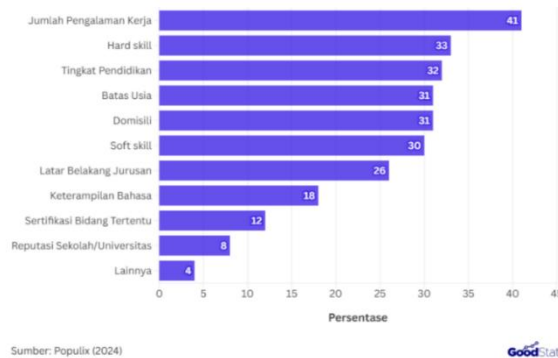


Image 1. Applicant Qualification that do not match the Employer (Dayinta, 2024)

Based on the data above, the discrepancy between applicant qualifications and employer needs is primarily caused by a lack of work experience (41%), followed by hard skill mismatches (33%), education levels (32%), and age or residency factors at 31% each. Additionally, soft skills (30%) and academic background (26%) are common factors in the mismatch between applicants and companies. This data indicates that the job–education mismatch phenomenon is driven not only by a misalignment of study fields but also by limited experience and a lack of technical and non-technical skills relevant to industry needs.

As an effort to bridge this gap, the government designed the MBKM program. One of the institutions implementing MBKM is the Department of Political Science at Jenderal Soedirman University as a commitment to developing student competence. Through internships in government institutions and international organizations, public policy research, and community service, students gain practical experience that supports professional readiness. This implementation aligns with the department's vision to produce graduates who possess both a strong theoretical foundation and the practical ability to respond to socio-political issues at local and national levels.

The implementation of MBKM provides students with opportunities to engage in off-campus learning through internships, rural projects, research, entrepreneurship, student exchanges, and humanitarian programs to enhance academic competence, practical skills, and soft skills. The MBKM programs at Jenderal Soedirman University include

Forum Human Capital Indonesia (FHCI), Thematic Community Service (KKN Tematik) Unsoed Mengajar (Teaching Program), International Student Exchange (via the International Relation Office/IRO), Research, Entrepreneurship, and Independent Study. These programs allow for a conversion of up to 20 credits (SKS). Generally, students from the fifth semester onwards can participate through a process of registration, selection, supervisor assignment, activity execution, and report writing to ensure that MBKM remains integrated with the students' academic progress (Unsoed, 2021).

Many studies have been conducted on the MBKM program, focusing on its impact on student competence and its implementation effectiveness. One such study by Puja Triana et al. demonstrates that the MBKM program significantly

enhances hard skills, soft skills, and career readiness among students entering the professional world. kerja (Triana et al., 2024). Furthermore, research by Abdul Kholik et al. indicates that the implementation of the MBKM curriculum is viewed positively by both faculty and students, particularly regarding the improvement of hard skills and soft skills. However, this study also identifies key challenges in MBKM execution, namely curriculum adjustment, funding, partner cooperation, and academic information systems. Consequently, its implementation requires collaborative planning and evaluation between the government and study programs. (Kholik et al., 2022). Furthermore, research by Uswatun Hasanah and Ahmad Syafak Khoirut Tobib emphasizes that MBKM is a student-centered educational design aimed at preparing superior human resources. MBKM is considered capable of stimulating the development of hard skills, soft skills, and power skills, thereby strengthening students' existence and readiness to face society and competition in the professional world. (Hasanah & Tobib, 2023).

This research shares similarities with previous studies discussing the MBKM program as an innovative Ministry of Education policy providing student learning flexibility. However, this study specifically focuses on Political Science students at Jenderal Soedirman University, emphasizing the transformation of MBKM learning to enhance core political science competencies, such as political analysis, political communication, negotiation skills, and multidisciplinary understanding.

According to data from Dayinta (2024), many university graduates still work in fields unrelated to their majors, and a lack of hard and soft skills continues to result in a job-education mismatch. This indicates that the link between higher education opportunities and labor market needs remains suboptimal, with limited direct application of academic knowledge in professional settings. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the relevance of the MBKM program in enhancing the competence of Political Science students. Political Science graduates are required to possess multidisciplinary competencies and practical skills aligned with the dynamics of politics and public policy. As a national flagship program, evaluating the impact of MBKM at Jenderal Soedirman University is essential to assess its contribution to preparing graduates who are competent and ready to compete in the job market. The results of the Tracer Study from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at Unsoed indicate that the job-field alignment of Political Science graduates is distributed relatively evenly across the low, medium, and high categories, which underscores the necessity of strengthening competencies through the MBKM program.

If the policy target is to increase the proportion of graduates in the "high" job-relevance category, the curriculum must be continuously adapted to labor market needs. The presence of graduates with low job relevance (BS1 = 32 graduates) serves as a basis for evaluating the relevance of provided competencies and the necessity of career counseling. Nevertheless, data shows that the majority of graduates (68.3%) work in fields that are moderately to highly relevant to the curriculum. This presents an opportunity to further examine the causes of job mismatch and strategies for increasing educational relevance, specifically through strengthening the MBKM program.

Since its launch in 2020, the Department of Political Science at Jenderal Soedirman University has consistently organized MBKM programs for students in their 5th and 6th semesters. Students participate in MBKM across various institutions, such as government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and political consulting firms, gaining firsthand experience in bureaucracy, public policy, advocacy, and research on political issues relevant to future needs.

The MBKM program contributes to strengthening the competencies of Political Science students, particularly in analytical, research, and scientific problem-solving skills through thematic projects and policy studies. Furthermore, direct involvement in public policy formulation and strategic planning provides practical experience relevant to careers as policy analysts or public planners.

In its execution, the Political Science Department's MBKM Team collaborates with various partners, including the DPR (House of Representatives), KPU (General Elections Commission), Bawaslu (Elections Supervisory Agency), local governments, and the national MSIB (Certified Internships and Independent Study) program. This cooperation allows students to learn outside their study program with recognized credit conversion, while strengthening the link between academic education and the demands of the professional world.

Based on available data, approximately 30% of Political Science students participate in the MBKM program each semester, indicating a high level of student enthusiasm. Internships in government agencies and election management bodies are the primary choices, as they provide direct experience in political practice, public policy, and field-level political dynamics. This aligns with MBKM's goal of preparing students for the workforce in the industry 4.0 era through off-campus learning and the utilization of partner learning platforms.

Based on this background, this research is directed toward answering how learning is transformed through the implementation of the MBKM program in the Department of Political Science at Jenderal Soedirman University, and to what extent the program contributes to the enhancement of students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies.

Correspondingly, the objectives of this research are:

- To analyze MBKM as a form of learning transformation from a political science perspective.
- To examine its relevance to student competency development.

To identify various implementation challenges within the framework of higher education governance.

Method

This research employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, aiming to understand and interpret the meanings of events, interactions, and subject behaviors within a specific context (Sahir, 2021). The study is conducted at the Department of Political Science, Jenderal Soedirman University, with research subjects including MBKM student participants, faculty supervisors, and MBKM implementation partners. The research type used is field research, involving direct data collection at the research site. In its execution, the study utilizes observation, interviews, and documentation techniques to obtain relevant, accurate, and in-

depth data aligned with the studied context (Ahmad & Laha, 2020). The field study approach is carried out through interactive analysis, a process of systematically identifying, organizing, and interpreting data obtained from interview results, field notes, and documentation (Rusandi & Rusli, 2021). To ensure data validity, this research applies triangulation of data sources and methods. According to Alfansyur & Andarusni (2020), source triangulation is performed by comparing data obtained from various informants to enhance credibility. Meanwhile, method triangulation is conducted by comparing data obtained through different collection methods, such as interviews, observations, and surveys (Susanto, Risnita, & Jailani, 2023).

Results and Discussion

MBKM as an Instrument for The Transformation of Political Science Learning

Educational developments are driving a paradigm shift from classroom-based learning toward experiential learning, which emphasizes active student engagement through direct experience. Unlike passive conventional learning, experiential learning views education as a process of transforming experience into knowledge, allowing for the contextual integration of theory and practice while supporting critical thinking, problem-solving, and real-world readiness (Wadu et al., 2024).

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy encourages a shift in Political Science education from a theoretical, classroom-oriented approach to experiential political learning by expanding learning spaces beyond the study program (Gerald, 2022). Research findings indicate that implementing MBKM in the Department of Political Science at Jenderal Soedirman University has successfully shifted the learning paradigm. Students no longer only interact with political theory in classrooms but are directly involved in political practice and policy through internships, research, election management, and community service. This change is reflected in the increasing integration of the MBKM curriculum with contemporary political praxis, such as electoral dynamics, public policy formulation, and governance. MBKM serves as a medium that bridges academic knowledge with political reality in the field, while simultaneously expanding student learning spaces into the arena of real politics. Through these experiences, students not only gain a more contextual conceptual understanding but also develop analytical skills, ethical sensitivity, and professional capacity relevant to today's challenges in politics and public policy.

Strengthening Political Science Student Competencies

One educational approach receiving significant attention is Competency-Based Education (CBE). According to Azmi (2022), CBE demands the mastery of knowledge and practical abilities that reflect both theoretical understanding and the skills required to perform specific tasks through directed learning and training (Azmi, 2022). Overall, CBE is a result-oriented approach aimed at preparing individuals for future labor market demands and enhancing competitiveness (Fattah, Oktapia, Hasibuan, & Khotima, 2024).

Competency-Based Education (CBE) emphasizes the achievement of both knowledge and skill competencies, necessitating analytical tools to assess learning outcomes. Bloom's Taxonomy (1956) serves as the primary framework, classifying learning objectives into the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains, and remains a cornerstone for instructional planning and evaluation (Nafiati, 2021). The cognitive domain emphasizes hierarchical thinking skills—ranging from understanding and application to analysis, evaluation, and creation. It reflects the processes of information handling, problem-solving, and the development of knowledge. Within Bloom's Taxonomy, this domain is hierarchical, consisting of six levels of thinking ability:

1. Knowledge
2. Comprehension
3. Application
4. Analysis
5. Synthesis
6. Evaluation

Higher levels in this hierarchy require increasingly complex mental processes (Hoque, 2016). The affective domain encompasses behaviors related to feelings and emotions, including interests, attitudes, appreciation, and adaptability (Suratmi, Kamil, Okta Safitri, & Sari, 2025). According to Gaol and Jimmy (2014), the affective domain is divided into five levels:

1. Receiving: The willingness to pay attention to a phenomenon.
2. Responding: Active participation and a satisfying response.
3. Valuing: Assigning worth to an object or behavior.
4. Organizing: Prioritizing values through alignment and synthesis.
5. Characterizing: Internalizing values reflected in consistent personal, social, and emotional behavior (Nafiati, 2021).

The psychomotor domain pertains to physical functions, reflexes, and skilled movements. This domain consists of seven levels: perception (using sensory information for movement), set (physical and mental readiness), guided response (imitating behavior through practice), mechanism (transforming responses into skilled actions), complex overt response (performing complex actions skillfully), adaptation (adjusting skills to new situations), and origination (designing new movement patterns as needed) (Hoque, 2016).

The results of MBKM implementation by Political Science students from Jenderal Soedirman University in Pandak Village demonstrate contributions across three primary areas: administration, digitalization, and public services. In administration, students compiled the 2025 Pandak Village Profile book to support the "Desa Cantik" program. Regarding digitalization, they managed the village website using SEO-optimized articles to ensure information remained current. In public services, they documented village activities and assisted in community programs, such as recording BUMDES (Village-Owned Enterprise) data, distributing Direct Cash Assistance (BLT), managing zakat distribution, and

supporting nutritional programs for pregnant women. These findings confirm that MBKM enhances student capacity while providing tangible benefits to village governance.

The implementation of the MBKM program at the Karangcegak Village Head Office demonstrated student involvement in population administration, data and archive management, and support for social programs, such as *Posyandu* and aid distribution. Students also prepared development reports, documented activities, and attended village meetings, thereby gaining firsthand experience in participatory policy formulation. These findings confirm that the MBKM program provides a tangible contribution to the village while enriching students' practical skills and their understanding of village governance and public services.

The implementation of MBKM by Unsoed Political Science students at the Banyumas Regency KPU (General Elections Commission) demonstrated contributions to media management, information publication, and institutional capacity building. Students assigned to the Community Participation and HR Sub-division managed social media, the website, and the DERAP magazine – producing digital content, editing the magazine, monitoring engagement, and serving as MCs for activities such as "KPU Banyumas Menyapa" and the "Ngodemas" podcast. Through "Election Classes," students gained theoretical insights into regulations, the history of election management, voter participation strategies, and local democratic dynamics. These findings indicate that MBKM provides practical experience alongside conceptual understanding relevant to political science and democracy.

Beyond the village level and election management bodies, MBKM also provided strategic experience for Unsoed Political Science students interning at the DPR RI (Indonesian House of Representatives), specifically within Commission X, which oversees education. Students were involved in supporting legislative administration, processing meeting materials, drafting minutes, and monitoring national education policy issues, including attending working meetings and public hearings. This experience allowed students to directly understand the legislative process, executive-legislative relations, and the dynamics of interest groups in public policy formulation. These findings affirm that MBKM effectively strengthens students' cognitive competence, policy analysis skills, and political communication within a national political context.

Through the MBKM program, students develop high-level thinking skills, professional attitudes, and practical skills relevant to the workforce. Consequently, MBKM is not merely an educational innovation but an outcome-based and competency-based public policy. However, while effective in developing political competence, MBKM must be critically examined; a narrow focus on measurability and market relevance carries the potential risk of the "technocratization" of political science education. The sustainability and quality of this program's impact depend on the ability of universities and policymakers to balance pragmatic demands with

the emancipatory function of political education as a space for fostering critical and democratic awareness.

Based on the questionnaire results, the primary motivation for students to participate in the MBKM program is to gain new experiences through direct involvement in the professional work environment and political practice, while simultaneously honing soft skills (communication, teamwork) and hard skills (analysis, technical skills). This program also enables students to expand their knowledge of political dynamics, elections, public policy, and bureaucratic practices, as well as build networks with partners and practitioners, providing essential preparation for the post-study job market.

MBKM contributes significantly to the deepening of students' cognitive competencies, particularly in understanding political theory, electoral democracy, and public policy. Student involvement with partner institutions allows them to grasp political concepts—which were previously abstract—in a way that is contextual and applicable. Based on the questionnaire data filled out by 32 Political Science students, the majority of respondents felt that the MBKM program met their expectations, with 93.75% stating it was appropriate and 6.25% rating it as average.

Furthermore, 87.5% of students felt that their understanding of the theories taught in class increased after participating in this program, while 12.5% rated the improvement as average. Remarkably, 100% of respondents stated that the MBKM program helped them improve their communication skills, teamwork, and mastery of specific technical skills that support a career in politics.

Additionally, 93.75% of students consider the MBKM program relevant in enhancing their competencies, and an equal percentage believe the program provides a deep understanding of practical political issues. A significant majority – 81.25% of respondents – stated that the MBKM program opened opportunities for direct involvement in public policy-making alongside partner institutions, while 18.75% responded otherwise. Regarding confidence in discussing political issues, 68.75% of students felt an improvement, while 31.25% rated the change as average. Finally, 81.25% of students felt that MBKM partner institutions met their expectations, with 18.75% viewing them as average.

Based on the description of student internship activities, the MBKM program provides a comprehensive learning experience that includes the reinforcement of technical skills and the development of soft skills. Students achieved an increase in technical capabilities, such as audio-visual production and documentation, graphic design, digital content management, administrative data entry and archiving, as well as report writing.

Furthermore, the MBKM internship contributes to the development of soft skills, including communication, public speaking, leadership, teamwork, discipline, adaptability, and professional work ethics. Direct involvement in the work environment of government institutions—at both the national and village levels—broadens students' understanding of governance, public services, participatory

decision-making mechanisms, and socio-community dynamics. Interaction with officials and the public also fosters empathy, social concern, and an understanding of the realities of the professional world. Thus, this internship experience serves as essential preparation for students in the academic realm, community life, and readiness to enter the professional world.

Field experience through MBKM strengthens the ability of Unsoed Political Science students to analyze local political dynamics, electoral mechanisms, and the processes of policy formulation and implementation. Consequently, it does not only add work experience but also significantly enhances policy literacy and analytical capacity.

The program also shapes the affective competence of students through the internalization of political ethics, professionalism, responsibility, integrity, and socio-political sensitivity gained through direct interaction with public institutions and the community. Involvement in social and institutional activities further strengthens civic engagement and instills democratic values that are often difficult to obtain through purely theoretical learning.

Additionally, MBKM improves students' psychomotor competencies, including political communication skills, leadership, teamwork, and policy analysis. As a result, students take on an active role as participants in the learning process within political and policy environments, rather than remaining mere observers.

Challenges in Implementing MBKM in the Political Science Department at Unsoed

The implementation of the MBKM (*Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka*) policy in higher education, specifically within the Political Science Study Program at Jenderal Soedirman University, is essentially a concrete application of Competency-Based Education (CBE) theory. This approach is oriented toward achieving tangible competencies through a learning process that is both flexible and results-based. Nevertheless, in its field implementation, several obstacles have emerged. From the students' perspective, the primary challenge is the limited number of partners and the lack of variety in MBKM activity programs. The number of agencies or institutions serving as MBKM partners remains relatively restricted; consequently, the choice of internship placements or activity types is not yet fully able to accommodate the diverse interests and academic concentrations of the students. This condition potentially hinders students who, ideally, should be able to choose a learning path that aligns with their potential and career goals. Furthermore, several students highlighted the weak coordination and mentoring during the program's execution. The minimal supervision from faculty advisors at the start of the program, the lack of routine evaluations, and the absence of a consistent monitoring system have caused some students to experience confusion when adapting to their host institutions. This situation has implications for the suboptimal achievement of

competencies, as a results-based learning process depends heavily on continuous guidance and feedback throughout the duration of the program.

Another challenge that arises is the mismatch between academic theory and field practice. Some students admit that while MBKM activities provide highly useful practical experience, they frequently face difficulties in linking those experiences with the theoretical concepts learned in the classroom. This condition can be categorized as a competency gap—an imbalance between the mastery of conceptual knowledge and applied skills. To address this, more integrative learning strategies are required, such as structured academic reflections, competency achievement portfolios, post-program seminars. These steps ensure students can interpret their practical experiences through a scientific and theoretical lens. Furthermore, challenges persist regarding adaptation to professional work environments and work disciplines that differ from conventional academic patterns. Based on field data, several students admitted to struggling with the work rhythm of partner institutions, Intergenerational communication (cross-generational workplace dynamics), Administrative responsibilities requiring high precision and consistency. This phenomenon indicates that the affective and psychomotor domains within Bloom's Taxonomy still require reinforcement—specifically regarding discipline, responsibility, and the ability to adapt to changing work contexts.

From the perspective of collaborating partners, the implementation of MBKM faces several challenges related to student readiness and systemic support. Some students are considered not yet fully prepared to adapt to a professional work culture, including aspects of discipline, bureaucratic work rhythms, and an understanding of administrative systems and activity management—all of which are consequences of the transition from academic learning to competency-based work practice. Overall, the implementation of MBKM within the Indonesian higher education environment presents a complementary combination of challenges and opportunities. The emerging challenges serve not as obstacles, but as stepping stones to strengthen educational governance that is more flexible and relevant to contemporary demands. This discussion reaffirms that MBKM contributes to the production of student political competence, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. Through the practical experiences facilitated by MBKM policies, students develop not only political skills and policy literacy but also form political ethics, professionalism, and democratic awareness. Thus, MBKM can be viewed as a strategic higher education policy instrument in strengthening the relevance of political science education. However, the sustainability and quality of its impact depend heavily on policy governance, curriculum design, and the ability of higher education institutions to maintain a balance between the emancipatory function of political education and the pragmatic demands of public policy.

MBKM from the Perspective of Public Policy and the Politics of Higher Education

From a political science perspective, MBKM can be understood as a higher education public policy that reflects a paradigm shift in governance toward New Public Management (NPM) and Outcome-Based Governance. In this framework, the state acts as a regulator, pushing higher education institutions to produce graduates with measurable competencies that are relevant to both the labor market and democratic needs. Research findings indicate that MBKM is relatively effective in producing student political competence. However, this policy also carries political implications—specifically the potential for the "technocratization" of political science education if competency orientation is reduced solely to the demands of the labor market. Research findings indicate that the implementation of MBKM in the Department of Political Science at Jenderal Soedirman University has made a positive contribution to the development of student competencies. Students gained direct experience through internships in government institutions, election management bodies, village governments, and civil society organizations, which strengthened their understanding of political processes, governance, and public policy. This experience not only enhanced cognitive knowledge but also shaped professional attitudes, work ethics, and practical skills relevant to the field of political science. These findings demonstrate that MBKM, as a public policy, is relatively effective in bridging the gap between theoretical learning on campus and political and policy practices in the field.

However, as a higher education policy, MBKM also carries implications that must be critically examined. The emphasis on measurable competencies, workforce relevance, and professional readiness has the potential to steer political science education toward an increasingly technocratic approach if it is not balanced by strengthening reflective and critical dimensions. In the context of political education, this balance is vital; the objective of political science education is not merely to produce job-ready graduates but also to cultivate citizens who possess critical awareness, social sensitivity, and the ability to deeply analyze power relations and democratic dynamics.

Within this framework, MBKM can be understood as a public policy with a dual function. On one hand, it supports the human resource development agenda by strengthening students' professional competencies. On the other hand, it opens a space for contextual learning that allows students to reflect directly on political practices and public policy. Through field experience, students have the opportunity not only to internalize values of professionalism and institutional governance but also to develop a critical understanding of the socio-political realities they encounter.

Consequently, MBKM as a public policy in the politics of higher education cannot be viewed merely as a technical learning instrument. Instead, it is a part of the state's strategy to rearrange the relationship between higher education, the

workforce, and the needs of democratic development. The sustainability and quality of this policy's impact depend heavily on the ability of universities to implement MBKM in a balanced manner – maintaining the role of political science education as a space for forming students' professional competence while preserving its critical and democratic essence.

MBKM and the Development of Student's Political Competence

The Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program in the Department of Political Science at Jenderal Soedirman University can be understood as a strategic instrument in the process of producing student political competence. In this context, MBKM functions not only as an alternative off-campus learning scheme but also as a space for praxis that enables students to internalize political knowledge, form political attitudes and ethics, and sharpen practical skills relevant to the political world. Accordingly, MBKM contributes directly to the integrated formation of student political competence, encompassing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

In the cognitive domain, MBKM expands students' understanding of political theories and concepts through direct involvement in institutional practices. Internship experiences in agencies such as the General Elections Commission, village governments, and other public institutions allow students to concretely understand electoral mechanisms, policy formulation processes, and local political dynamics. Knowledge previously acquired theoretically in the classroom becomes more contextual and applicable, enabling students not only to master concepts but also to interpret political realities empirically.

In the affective domain, MBKM plays a vital role in shaping students' political attitudes, values, and ethics. Direct interaction with state officials, the community, and political actors at the local level encourages students to develop social sensitivity, public responsibility, and professionalism. Such experiences reinforce students' awareness of the importance of integrity, accountability, and public service in daily political practice. In other words, MBKM serves as a medium for internalizing democratic values and political ethics that are difficult to achieve solely through conventional learning.

Meanwhile, in the psychomotor domain, MBKM provides ample space for students to hone practical skills that are part of political competence. Skills in political communication, public speaking, teamwork, leadership, as well as administrative and policy analysis abilities, develop through student involvement in field activities. Activities such as mentoring village programs, data management, institutional content production, and participation in policy and electoral forums serve as learning tools that strengthen students' practical capacity as future policy analysts, bureaucrats, or political actors.

Consequently, MBKM functions as a mechanism for producing student political competence that bridges the gap between theory and practice. This program enables Political Science students to be not just political observers, but also actors who

understand institutional logic, power dynamics, and socio-political realities firsthand. However, the effectiveness of MBKM in producing political competence depends heavily on the quality of program design, academic mentoring, and the integration of practical experience with theoretical reflection to ensure that the resulting learning is not merely technocratic, but remains critical and emancipatory.

Conclusion

Based on the results of research on students of the Political Science Department at Jenderal Soedirman University who participated in the MBKM program, it can be concluded that the implementation of MBKM has provided a tangible contribution to the enhancement of student competence. The MBKM program is proven to be a form of implementation of Competency-Based Education (CBE) theory because it is oriented toward achieving measurable learning outcomes through direct field experience. The transformation of learning through MBKM is also in line with the Bloom's Taxonomy concept, which encompasses the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. In the cognitive domain, students experienced an increase in analytical skills and understanding of political dynamics, governance, and public policy. In the affective domain, students developed professional attitudes, work ethics, responsibility, and the ability to adapt to the work environment. Meanwhile, in the psychomotor domain, students were able to implement technical skills such as data management, information publication, public service, and mentoring for social-community programs.

This research highlights several important findings. First, the MBKM program is proven to improve students' soft skills and hard skills. Second, internship activities in government institutions and election management bodies strengthen students' understanding of political practice and governance. Third, students also develop analytical and research capabilities through the process of compiling reports and policy studies. Fourth, although obstacles such as limited partners and program coordination still exist, MBKM provides significant opportunities to expand professional networks and increase learning relevance. Overall, the implementation of MBKM in the Unsoed Political Science Department has successfully enhanced student competence comprehensively and strengthened the links between higher education, the professional world, and socio-political dynamics.

However, it is necessary to expand cooperation with various government agencies, the private sector, and non-governmental organizations to enrich the variety of MBKM activities. Coordination and mentoring between faculty advisors and students also need to be strengthened so that competency achievements are more measurable. Students are expected to utilize the MBKM program optimally to develop academic and professional abilities through active participation and reflection on learning experiences. For cooperation partners, it is expected that they strengthen synergy with universities and provide space for students to make real contributions. Future researchers are suggested to expand the scope of research and explore the long-term impact of MBKM on job readiness and graduate

competitiveness.

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