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# Improving Educational Quality Through the Implementation of Learning Planning in the MBKM Context

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of writing this article is to investigate the planning and implementation process of the MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) program in the Sociology Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach. The theories utilized to analyze learning management are Total Quality Management (TQM), and constructivism theory is employed to examine the implementation of learning in the context of MBKM. The results of this study indicate that the learning planning process in the MBKM Program at the Sociology Study Prcogram has not been optimally implemented by all parties involved in MBKM implementation. To enhance the quality of education within the MBKM program framework, clear preparation, synergy, regulations, and socialization are needed among the university leadership, faculty, study program, and lecturers as field implementers. Student satisfaction and quality, demonstrated through collaboration, communication, and problem-solving skills, represent the manifestation of quality education. Therefore, periodic evaluations are necessary to improve the quality of education through the implementation of TQM.

Keywords: Implementation, Quality, Planning, MBKM Program.

## Abstrak

Tujuan penulisan artikel ini untuk mengetahui bagaiman proses perencanaan dan pelaksanaan program MBKM di Program Studi Sosiologi, Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Politik UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Teori yang digunakan untuk menganalisa manajmen pembelajaran yaitu Total Quality management (TQM) dan teori kontruktivisme untuk mengkaji pelaksanaan pembelajaran dalam konteks MBKM. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa proses perencanaan pembelajaran dalam Program MBKM di Prodi Sosiologi belum diimplementasikan secara optimal oleh seluruh pihak yang terlibat dalam penyelenggaraan MBKM. Untuk meningkatkan mutu pendidikan dalam bingkai program MBKM diperlukan persiapan, sinergi, regulasi dan sosialisai yang jelas antara puncuk pimpinan universitas, Fakultas, Prodi dan para Dosen sebagai pelaksana lapangan. Kepuasaan dan kualitas mahasiswa yang memiliki keterampilan kolaborasi, komunikasi, dan pemecahan masalah merupakan wujud dari pendidikan yang bermutu. Oleh karena itu, perlu dilakukan evaluasi berkala untuk meningkatkan mutu pendidikan melalui penerapan TQM.

Kata Kunci : Implementasi, Kualitas, , Mutu, Perencanaan. Program MBKM.

## **BACKGROUND**

In preparing students to face rapid social, cultural, workplace, and technological advancements, their competencies need to be aligned with the current needs of the time. Linking and matching should not only pertain to the industrial and work sectors but also to the rapidly changing future. Higher education institutions are required to design and implement innovative learning processes to ensure students achieve optimal and always relevant learning outcomes encompassing attitudes, knowledge, and skills

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(Jima'ain, 2023). However, the current education system in Indonesia faces difficulties in producing high-quality and character-rich students who can compete nationally and internationally (Rojak, 2017). To address this issue, schools can employ various strategies to enhance educational quality, one of which is implementing strategic planning (Turmidzi, 2022). Strategic planning in preparing graduates for the workforce includes the implementation of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) curriculum.

While the campus merdeka policy is seen as a way out of educational challenges in Indonesia, it must address issues such as: 1) how private tertiary institutions (PTS) can collaborate with large service and industrial companies, 2) whether major private and state universities are willing to collaborate with smaller PTS, or institutions with accreditation A collaborating with those with only accreditation B or even C. These issues need to be considered by the government to find solutions and regulatory mechanisms to facilitate collaboration between smaller PTS and larger institutions. Without clear mechanisms and a shared vision between the Ministry of Education and other ministries, this policy, although sound in theory, poses challenges in practical implementation (Deak et al., 2022). The misalignment between planning outcomes (documents) and the institutional environment (madrasah) or issues arising from partners executing strategic plans (management teams or school principals as policy stakeholders) can hinder the implementation of the MBKM program (Turmidzi, 2022).

Another field-found fact is that many universities are not ready for or capable of implementing the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka program. There is confusion and uncertainty among schools and universities about the ultimate goal of this program. The lack of government or relevant institution technical planning awareness has led to this confusion. The socialization process is a crucial part of initial planning in policy implementation (Wahyu & Fadly, 2023). According to Turmidzi (2022), quality management in madrasah or universities is inseparable from the implementation of strategic planning. Strategic management is a large-scale plan to achieve long-term organizational goals (Turmidzi, 2022). Deak et al. (2022) assert that there is a very close correlation between policy implementation using good management and the improvement of university quality.

Since the implementation of the MBKM curriculum by Minister of Education Nadiem Makariem, the Sociology Department of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has been implementing the MBKM program since 2021 and engaging in collaboration between universities. This study is limited to the planning and implementation aspects of learning in the context of the MBKM program, focusing on student exchange activities in the Sociology Department. The goal of this program is to expand networks for students and introduce the academic culture of each campus, facilitating the transfer of knowledge regardless of the students' origins. However, in its implementation, various challenges arise, including obstacles faced by higher education institutions, study programs, supervising lecturers, and students as MBKM program implementers. Additionally, challenges come from other higher education institutions, government agencies, research institutions, and the business world (Bhakti et al., 2022).

To overcome these challenges, a thorough planning process is needed from the beginning to ensure that the implementation process aligns with the established objectives and achieves optimal success. One key aspect of MBKM success is the implementation of careful and effective learning planning. Planning includes formulating what will be taught, how it will be taught, and how well students can absorb the material after the learning process concludes. Without planning, the teaching and learning process becomes unguided. Suwito et al. (2017) state that teachers often face obstacles in planning, implementing, and evaluating learning, such as difficulty formulating competency achievement indicators, students frequently asking for permission to leave, and difficulty analyzing test question items. Addressing these

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obstacles requires careful planning to ensure that the implementation process aligns with the set goals and achieves optimal success.

This study aims to examine how effective planning can enhance the quality of education in the MBKM context and how the learning implementation process is conducted by teachers in the MBKM context. The contribution of this research is to develop educational quality through the advancement of educational management theory, specifically in the aspects of planning and learning implementation.

This qualitative descriptive research employs a case study approach to focus on the planning and implementation processes of learning within the Sociology Department at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. Utilizing the Total Quality Management and Constructivism theories, the study aims to analyze the applied management aspects and the execution of the MBKM learning program. Data were gathered through observation, interviews, and document analysis involving the department head, secretary, faculty members, and participating students. The purposive sampling technique was employed to select key individuals engaged in the MBKM program. The analysis process encompasses data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing.

## Student Exchange Program Planning in the MBKM Context

Based on Minister of National Education Regulation No. 41 of 2007, to implement learning programs in the MBKM context, it is carried out through planning, implementation and evaluation stages, learning process planning includes a syllabus and learning implementation plan which contains at least learning objectives, learning materials, learning methods, resources. learning, and assessment of learning outcomes.

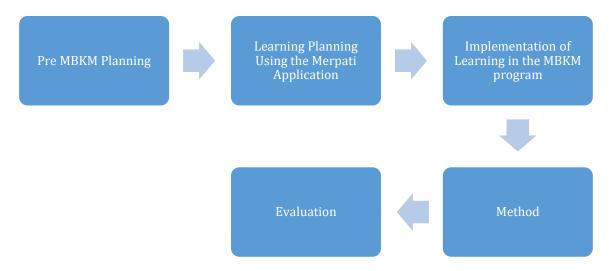


Figure 1. MBKM Program Learning Planning Scheme

The following fugure 1 is a form of partnership that has been carried out by the Sociology Study Program with various universities in Indonesia in the MBKM program for the 2021-2023 period.

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Table. 1 Form of Partnership Student exchange program

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Year	Partner	Form of collaboration	Technical implementation
2021 (even semester)	Universitas Maritim Raja Ali (UMRAH)	Student Exchange Agreement (MoA).	The system is that 2 lecturers from Sociology at UIN Bandung teach Umrah online and are joined by 10 students from UIN Bandung to attend lectures there online.
2022 (odd semester)	Sosiologi Agama IAIN Kediri	Student Exchange through Agreement (MoA)	
2023 (odd semester)	UIN Samarinda, UIN Lampung, UIN Ponorogo	Student Exchange uses Merpati Application System by the Ministry of Religion	The organizational sociology course was accessed by 3 students from outside and the sociology of disaster was accessed by 1 student from outside UIN Bandung

Source: Results of Interview with Secretary of Sociology Study Program (2023)

Table 1 show the learning planning process begins by setting objectives consisting of MBKM program objectives, Graduate Learning Achievements (CPL), Course learning outcomes (CPMK) and further broken down into Sub-CPMK. Can be seen in the following table 2:

Table 2. CPL and CMK in MBKM

MBKM program objectives	CPL	CMK
1. Producing quality graduates with holistic competency mastery between non-technical (soft skills) and technical (hard skills) competencies, so that they are able to work professionally according to the discipline they master	<ul> <li>Have devotion to God Almighty and be able to show a religious attitude as a Muslim, believer and muhsin;</li> <li>Tolerant, moderate and upholding human values in carrying out duties based on Islamic religion, morals and ethics;</li> <li>Contribute to improving the quality of life in the community, nation, state and progress of civilization based on Pancasila;</li> </ul>	Master basic and theoretical concepts in the field of sociology in general and theoretical concepts in the fields of sociological study in depth and be able to formulate problem solving systematically and procedurally based on an Islamic values approach. (P1)

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2. Producing graduates who have competencies that are relevant and actual to the demands of society, especially the world of business and industry (DUDI	• Master the basic and theoretical concepts in the field of sociology in general and theoretical concepts in the fields of sociological study in depth and be able to formulate problem solving systematically and procedurally based on an Islamic values approach.	Able to understand the importance of Sociology studies in managing KU family life
3. Shaping character and thought patterns in responding to developments and demands of society and the world of work, so that	<ul> <li>Apply logical, critical, systematic and innovative thinking in the context of the development or implementation of science and technology as well as Islamic teaching values by paying attention to and applying human values in accordance with their field of expertise.</li> <li>Able to carry out studies and transfer knowledge based on scientific procedures and the context of revelation, guiding knowledge according to their expertise based on scientific rules, procedures and ethics in order to produce solutions and ideas.</li> </ul>	Able to formulate problems in society based on P3 Sociology concepts
4. Producing graduates who are able to work together in work (collaboration work), work in groups and have adequate leadership skills, through the habit of interacting with various parties outside the university and study program.	<ul> <li>Able to implement and apply quantitative or qualitative research as an implication of the sociological paradigm used (social researcher)</li> <li>Able to analyze and present data in the form of infographics, graphs, etc.</li> <li>Able to identify and formulate social problems (social consultant)</li> <li>Able to identify problems and potential for community empowerment. (community empowerer/social innovator).</li> </ul>	Able to understand the importance of Sociology studies in managing family life KU1

Source: Sociology Study Program Profile Document (2023)

# Discussion

Learning planning is the process of determining teaching materials, use of media, teaching approaches and methods, and assessing how well certain competencies that have been determined will be achieved within a certain time period (Andriana 2015).. Learning process planning must include a syllabus and learning implementation plan which contains at least; 1) learning objectives, 2) learning materials, 3) teaching methods, 40 learning resources, and 5) assessment of learning outcomes.

The development of the educational curriculum requires policy makers including universities, faculties, study programs, lecturers and staff to work together to make the MBKM program a success.

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Based on a circular from the Minister of Education, Nadiem Makariem, since 2021, the Sociology Department of UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung has begun implementing the MBKM program. One of the MBKM programs implemented is the student exchange program. This program is implemented with partners from universities at home and abroad with online and offline learning. Student exchange is carried out through mechanisms within the same university or different universities.

"Preparations carried out by the Sociology department in implementing MBKM have started in 2021 by adapting the curriculum to MBKM needs, all courses that form graduate profiles have been prepared and can be accessed by students from semester 1-4 so that semester 5 class of 2021 can start implementing the MBKM program outside campus". For the graduate profile, the CPMK and Sub CPMK department curriculum teams formulate it as the direction of learning in the sociology department. In order not to stray from the graduate profile that has been determined in the curriculum, lecturers need to understand the curriculum which contains graduate profiles and courses that form graduate profiles. So that learning objectives can be achieved." (Results of interview with Mrs. Rini, 26 September 2023)

The MBKM program suddenly had to be implemented by the study program without a prior socialization process from the university and minimal knowledge about MBKM caused the study program to feel overwhelmed by the questions asked by students. With all the limited knowledge regarding MBKM, the Sociology Study Program began to design learning plans that referred to objectives that were appropriate to the MBKM context. However, due to lack of optimal communication between the University, Faculties, Study Programs, Lecturers and even at the student level, this has resulted in overlapping regulations regarding the implementation of planning and implementation of MBKM learning.

In 2021, the initial implementation of the MBKM learning program is still running wildly without clear mechanisms and regulations, only limited to forms of collaboration with partners. The Sociology Study Program at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung and Raja Ali Maritime University entered into an MoU for student exchange. Then one of the lecturers involved in the MBKM program carried out learning using an online system which was attended by both students from the Sociology Study Program and students from Raja Ali Maritime University.

To facilitate the mechanism for implementing the MBKM learning program, in 2023 the Ministry of Religion created the Freedom to Learn Islamic Religious Higher Education (MERPATI) application. This application aims to facilitate the exchange of courses between campuses. Apart from that, this application aims to make it easier for campuses to establish cooperation/MoU between universities, especially those familiar with MBKM. However, once again the lack of a socialization process regarding this application makes the regulations for planning and implementing the MBKM program increasingly unclear.

Mrs. Farah as a Sociology Lecturer said, "This application was launched on Wednesday, while on Monday the new semester of lectures will start. How the study program is prepared to present courses that suit student needs. "And the students themselves feel confused about how to convert the grades of the new courses taken to the courses presented in the Sociology Study Program curriculum" (Interview Results, 21 September 2023)

The chaotic implementation of the MBKM program learning, of course, meant that the learning objectives were not achieved optimally. Therefore, careful learning planning is needed to improve the quality of learning in the MBKM program. The steps that need to be taken to improve the quality of MBKM education in the Sociology Study Program at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung are as follows:

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## **Determining Clear Learning Goals**

Ismail (2019) explains that the learning objectives essentially imply statements or descriptions of changes in knowledge, understanding, attitudes, behavior, performance, or other psychological conditions in students, whether observable or not but measurable and/or assessable. Learning objectives are considered as behaviors to be achieved or tasks that can be performed by students under those competency conditions (Zaini and Agustina, 2016). According to Percival and Ellington, learning objectives are clear statements indicating specific student performances or skills expected to be achieved as learning outcomes (Zaini and Agustina, 2016).

Mager, as cited by Zaini and Agustina (2016), presents three main reasons why learning objectives are crucial in instructional planning: 1) the basis for subject/course planning, 2) providing opportunities to evaluate outcomes, and 3) providing a clear direction for learners. Learning plans are designed to change student behavior in line with the intended objectives. The primary focus in instructional planning is the achievement of these objectives (Ananda & Amiruddin, 2019).

In designing learning objectives for the MBKM (Credit Transfer Program), instructors should consider objectives oriented towards practical skills needed in the 21st century, such as critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills (Zahratul Jannah et al., 2023). This aligns with the constructivist view, assuming that knowledge is constructed in the human brain, and individuals have no alternative but to build their thoughts based on past experiences. In constructivism, students are allowed to engage in authentic activities, encouraging them to make explicit ideas and promoting the generation of various conceptual schemes (Madrah, 2020). Thus, the learning process is more student-oriented and focuses on competencies expected after completing the learning process.

Effective planning must be based on facts and information rather than emotions and desires. Kaufman, as explained by Ananda & Amiruddin (2019), describes planning as a projection of what is needed to achieve valid and valuable goals, including elements such as identifying and documenting needs, prioritizing needs, specifying detailed outcomes for each prioritized need, identifying requirements for each option, sequencing necessary outcomes, and identifying alternative strategies and tools.

Learning planning should start by understanding the needs, expectations, and hopes of students in the MBKM program. What do students expect during the MBKM program? How can this experience enhance their preparation for the workforce? Understanding students' needs and expectations is crucial for effective planning, as the goal of the MBKM program is student satisfaction.

Learning objectives for the MBKM program are typically established at the beginning of the semester by the program coordinators, aligning the courses with the graduate profile from the 1st to the 4th semester. By setting clear learning objectives, students can understand the direction they are heading, fostering interest and motivation to learn (Widiyanto and Wahyuni, 2020). However, in reality, the set objectives may not align with student needs. An interview with Mr. Dede Syarif revealed that some courses, such as "Sociology of Sundanese Society," offered in the MBKM program, have low interest (Interview Results, September 26, 2023). Thus, analyzing student needs before formulating courses is essential to align with MBKM program expectations (Baharuddin, 2021).

According to Bukhari, achieving effective and efficient national educational goals requires the participation and cooperation of all educational components. To produce quality human resources, integrated quality management (TQM) is needed, focusing on overall educational system management and quality orientation (Fauzi and Nikmatullah, 2016). The principles of TQM, according to Rouf (2018), emphasize that product quality depends on process quality, which in turn relies on appropriate organization and competent leadership. Effective regulation from top to bottom is crucial for good quality

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throughout the planning and implementation of the learning process. If regulations from above are unclear, the quality below will suffer.

## Relevant Curriculum Design

The process of planning and developing learning plans for the MBKM program needs to combine various components to suit student needs (Jerald 2009), society and current developments. Therefore, in formulating objectives it is necessary to pay attention to various factors including educational objectives, student characteristics, technological developments and social developments.

The MBKM curriculum design must have clear and specific learning objectives. This objective must reflect what is expected, what students understand and master after participating in the MBKM program.

Apart from that, the characteristics of students participating in the MBKM program must also be taken into consideration when designing the curriculum. Because every student comes from a different background, different level of intelligence and of course different learning styles.

In addition, curriculum design must be relevant to the real world and job market needs. Relevant curriculum design must always strive to create meaningful and useful learning experiences for students, as well as prepare them to face future challenges. This also needs to be in line with the vision, mission and values of the school or educational institution concerned.

Based on the results of an interview with Mr. Dede Syarif, he stated that, "In 2022, in the even semester, several courses will be offered in the MBKM program, namely family sociology, empowerment and community empowerment strategies. Meanwhile, in 2023 in the odd semester, the courses offered through the Merpati application consist of Sociology of Sundanese Society and Sociolinguistics. However, there are few people interested in the Sociology of Sundanese Society course, not a single student took the subject (Interview results, 23 September 2023).

This indicates that the courses offered by study programs in the MBKM program are not in accordance with market needs and student interests. Apart from that, the lack of clarity in the goals, targets and objectives to be achieved in the MBKM program results in both the quality of learning and the results being unsatisfactory. When setting learning objectives, it should start from an analysis of student needs and a survey of educators' readiness and the availability of facilities and infrastructure. In other words, the curriculum design in planning the MBKM program in the Sociology Study Program is not yet relevant to the objectives of implementing MBKM.

## Use of Innovative Learning Methods

The term "method" originates from two syllables, namely "meta" and "hodos." "Meta" means through, and "hodos" means road or way. Therefore, method, in terms of terminology, is a way or approach used to achieve something (Siregar, 2021). Learning methods refer to techniques considered effective in delivering instructional material (Juliana, 2018). In line with this, Djalal (2017) explains that learning methods are approaches used to implement plans formulated in real activities to achieve set goals optimally.

The selection of learning methods is based on several considerations according to Afandi et al. (2013): 1) Guided by objectives, 2) Individual differences among students, 3) Teacher's capabilities, 4) Situation, and 5) Facilities. Choosing the appropriate learning method helps educators achieve maximum learning goals. Each learning method has its advantages, making it crucial for educators to decide which method to use by considering the intended learning objectives.

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The use of an unsuitable learning method can pose a hindrance in achieving the set goals (Asmara and Nindianti, 2019). The choice of learning materials and teaching methods needs to align with students' abilities and interests, stimulating critical thinking. An effective learning process can significantly impact students' abilities, including enhancing their critical, analytical, and creative thinking skills. The learning process can also improve students' understanding of clinical problems, communication skills, and their ability to construct new knowledge (Zakaria and Awaisu, 2011).

One way to successfully implement the MBKM curriculum is through more autonomous and flexible learning (Purwanto and Risdianto, 2022), fostering innovation in the learning process, student-centered learning to support the achievement of competent graduates and prepare them for the workforce (Baharuddin, 2021). Greater autonomy provides excellent opportunities to develop a more innovative learning environment (Sourander et al., 2016).

To achieve learning objectives in the 21st century, innovative learning methods need to be employed, including project-based learning, collaborative learning, game-based learning, flipped classrooms, problem-based learning, skill-based learning, technology-based learning, and discovery-based learning.

Hence, many Sociology lecturers teaching MBKM program courses have been utilizing collaborative and problem-based learning methods, although traditional methods like lectures and discussions are occasionally used. This is done to enhance students' competency in mastering 21st-century skills. The successful implementation of the curriculum is not solely the responsibility of leadership but also the entire educational implementers, including students, lecturers, partners, and facilitators (Aho, Pitkanen, and Sahlberg, 2006).

## Adequate support for students

Adequate support for students will help them to succeed academically, emotionally and socially. Institutional support provided to students can be in the form of 1) academic support provided by their supervisors in selecting courses, and helping them with difficulties in understanding the material. 2) emotional support, lecturers in this case help students to overcome stress and mental pressure during the lecture process, 3) development of career guidance skills, by developing. The use of creative learning methods has indirectly helped students develop their soft skills, namely learning to communicate, learning to collaborate and learning about leadership, which in the end will equip them to become graduates who are ready to work. This support can be used as a means to increase student retention, promote the quality of education and produce graduates who are ready to face the world of work.

According to the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 41 of 2007, the implementation of learning is the implementation of the RPP. Implementation of learning includes: 1) preliminary activities, in the lecturer's preliminary activities: a) preparing students psychologically and physically to take part in the learning process, b) asking questions that link previous knowledge with the material to be studied, c) explaining the learning objectives or basic competencies to be achieved, d) conveying material coverage and explanations of activity descriptions according to the syllabus. 2) Core Activities, the implementation of core activities is a learning process to achieve KD which is carried out in an interactive, inspiring, fun, challenging manner, motivating students to participate actively, and providing sufficient space for initiative, creativity and independence in accordance with their talents, interests and physical and psychological development of students.

## **Periodic Evaluation**

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Based on the results of an interview with Mrs. Farah as a Sociology Lecturer, "Evaluation of learning in the MBKM program is carried out continuously and involves various forms of assessment, including written exams, presentations and projects" (Interview Results, 20 September, 2023). Formative assessment can help lecturers and students track learning progress and adjust learning strategies. Mr. Desyar, one of the Sociology study program lecturers, added, "if there are students who don't understand the material presented, they can ask directly or write about it in the WhatsApp group" (Interview results, 20 September 2023). This is done as feedback, and provides additional resources to help students achieve their learning goals

Total quality management drives continuous improvement in processes. In the context of learning, this means designing a relevant curriculum, effective teaching methods, and a fair evaluation system. The learning process must be able to be measured, analyzed and improved continuously. Furthermore, according to Ma'rifataini (2018) the functions of learning planning prepared by teachers include: (1) determining the direction of learning activities, (2) providing the content and meaning of objectives, (3) determining how to achieve the expected objectives, and (4) measuring how far the goal has been achieved and what action must be taken if the goal has not been achieved.

The results of this research can be used as material for future evaluation for the planning and implementation process of the MBKM program in the Sociology Study Program. Things that need to be carefully prepared are the selection of courses that suit the needs of students and the needs of the world of work. As well as preparation of all components involved in the MBKM program so that quality education can be achieved.

Organizational success is greatly influenced by flexibility, sensitivity and ability to respond to existing changes (Schunk and Zimmerman 2012). The management function is universal, meaning it can be applied anywhere because it is flexible and can be applied in organizations both small and large. The application of appropriate management in educational practice will have a good impact (Widodo, Atiqoh, and Wiyarno 2023) and quality in educational output and outcomes both in quantity and quality (Basri 2011).

## **CONCLUSION**

Implementation of planning and implementation of the MBKM program is not easy. Collaboration is needed between all parties, namely students, lecturers and partner universities to achieve MBKM's goals, namely creating graduates who are independent, innovative and ready to compete in the global world. With clear learning objectives, relevant curriculum design and adequate support for students, MBKM can be an effective vehicle for preparing a generation that is competent and ready to compete in the global job market. Planning and implementing effective learning is the first foundation for the success of MBKM and achieving the vision of a better and more inclusive higher education in the future. Implementing learning using Total Quality Management can help improve the quality of education and student learning experiences. TQM is a management approach that focuses on achieving the best quality in all aspects of an organization. MBKM has the potential to change the paradigm of higher education in Indonesia and provide great benefits for students and society.

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