

The Fusion of the Bologna Process, Liberal Arts Education, and Indonesian Educational Transformation Ideas in the MBKM Policy

Rahmad Hidayat¹

¹Universitas Mbojo Bima, Jl. Piere Tendean No. 28 Mande II, Kota Bima, 84119

Corresponding Author: rahmad.hidayat@universitasmbojobima.ac.id

Keyword:

Bologna Process;
Education Policy;
Liberal Arts
Education;
MBKM.

Abstract: Higher education in Indonesia is undergoing a vital transformation through the presence of the MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) policy, which combines the principles of the Bologna Process (BP) and Liberal Arts Education (LAE) to create an inclusive and dynamic learning environment. Under that context, this article aims to investigate the urgency and implications of combining the BP paradigm, LAE, and the ideas of Indonesian educational transformation embedded in the MBKM policy and present the findings through a narrative overview approach that involves an in-depth analysis of the literature related to BP, LAE, and MBKM implementation in Indonesia. The author highlights the importance of academic freedom, a holistic approach, and the role of students as active agents in the learning process. The research findings confirm that MBKM is a step forward in providing relevant and responsive higher education. The fusion of Indonesian educational transformation ideas with the BP and LAE paradigms in the MBKM policy holds a strong foundation for inclusive learning that prepares students with critical skills, adaptability, and social responsibility. Thus, this article presents a complete understanding of the urgency and implications of combining the BP and LAE paradigms in MBKM and accentuates the importance of innovative interventions preparing students to become skilled and knowledgeable leaders in an era that continues to change rapidly.

Kata Kunci:

Bologna Process;
Kebijakan Pendidikan;
Liberal Arts
Education;
MBKM.

Abstrak: Pendidikan tinggi di Indonesia sedang mengalami transformasi penting melalui kehadiran kebijakan MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka), yang menggabungkan prinsip-prinsip Bologna Process (BP) dan Liberal Arts Education (LAE) untuk menciptakan lingkungan pembelajaran yang inklusif dan dinamis. Sesuai konteks tersebut, artikel ini bertujuan menyelidiki urgensi dan implikasi dari penggabungan paradigma BP, LAE, dan gagasan transformasi pendidikan Indonesia yang bersemayam dalam kebijakan MBKM serta menyajikan temuan melalui pendekatan tinjauan naratif yang melibatkan analisis mendalam terhadap literatur terkait BP, LAE, dan implementasi MBKM di Indonesia. Penulis menyoroti pentingnya kebebasan akademik, pendekatan holistik, dan peran mahasiswa sebagai agen aktif dalam proses pembelajaran. Temuan penelitian menegaskan bahwa MBKM merupakan langkah maju dalam menyediakan pendidikan tinggi yang relevan dan responsif. Integrasi gagasan transformasi pendidikan Indonesia dengan paradigma BP dan LAE dalam kebijakan MBKM menyediakan fondasi kuat untuk pembelajaran inklusif berorientasi mempersiapkan mahasiswa dengan keterampilan kritis, adaptabilitas, dan tanggung jawab sosial. Dengan demikian, artikel ini menyajikan pemahaman utuh tentang urgensi dan implikasi dari penggabungan paradigma BP dan LAE dalam MBKM dan menekankan pentingnya intervensi inovatif mempersiapkan mahasiswa untuk menjadi pemimpin terampil dan berpengetahuan luas di era yang terus berubah dengan cepat.

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation for the progress of a nation. The higher education sector in Indonesia has experienced significant advancement in the last few decades. However, complex challenges await, including high demands for curriculum relevance, progressive accessibility of higher education, and increasingly fierce global competition. A new paradigm for higher education in Indonesia is being formed, predominantly influenced by the presence of the MBKM policy. National Higher Education Standards Regulation No. 3 of 2020 from the Ministry of Education and Culture allows students to adjust their educational path based on personal needs and interests (Mujiwati et al., 2023; Purwanti, 2021; Sa'diyah et al., 2022).

MBKM is a revolutionary policy in Indonesia's higher education sector that aims to give students greater control over their educational path. Students can design learning experiences according to their interests, talents and needs. This policy recognizes that each student has unique potential by providing opportunities to explore various subjects and relevant career paths (Afriansyah et al., 2022; Sartika, 2021). Through MBKM, students are encouraged to become active subjects in the learning process, take responsibility for their education, and develop the skills and understanding needed to succeed in an ever-changing society (Anggara, 2023). MBKM offers a more flexible learning approach and creates an environment that stimulates innovation, creativity and independent learning.

That is in keeping with the spirit of liberal arts education and the Bologna Process, widely used in the United States and Europe. MBKM's symbiosis with these two paradigms is an important milestone in transforming higher education in Indonesia. Liberal arts education emphasizes the holistic development of students through fostering cross-disciplinary skills, critical thinking, and creativity (Zhang et al., 2023). This approach aligns with the MBKM ethos, which empowers students to design their educational journey according to their interests and talents (Yoto et al., 2024). By integrating the principles of liberal arts education into MBKM, universities in Indonesia can provide opportunities for students to explore a variety of subjects and their interests.

Meanwhile, the Bologna Process has become a paramount model in the standardization of higher education in Europe (Torotcoi, 2017). Its main goals are to increase student mobility and international recognition of educational degrees (Teichler, 2019). By adopting the principles of the Bologna Process, Indonesian universities can improve the quality of their education and strengthen international relations with universities in Europe. That will help create a more inclusive and global learning environment for Indonesian students.

The fusion of the Indonesian Government's transformative ideas with the Bologna Process paradigm and liberal arts education in the MBKM policy will impact the ability of graduates to compete in the global job market. A liberal arts education prepares students with the skills necessary for the 21st century, such as critical thinking, effective communication, and adaptability. Meanwhile, the Bologna Process ensures that educational degrees obtained in Indonesia are recognized internationally, opening the door to employment opportunities in various countries. Such a combination will also create a more inclusive learning environment and stimulate the exchange of students' cultures and ideas. This mechanism enhances the learning experience and helps prepare students to become open-minded and tolerant global citizens. While the potential benefits are clear, proficient deployment of such fusion requires careful planning and stakeholders' harmony. That includes the development of curricula that integrate liberal arts principles, mechanisms for international credit transfer and degree recognition, and initiatives to promote cultural exchange and diversity in educational settings.

That fusion profoundly impacts Indonesia's educational landscape and broader socio-economic development. The demand for a highly skilled and adaptable workforce grows as the world continues to undergo rapid technological advancements and globalization. MBKM enhances individual learning outcomes and contributes to the nation's overall human capital development by empowering students to tailor their education to their interests and needs (Voak et al., 2024). Moreover, the alignment with international standards through the Bologna Process enhances the mobility of Indonesian graduates and strengthens the country's position in the

global knowledge economy. Additionally, liberal arts principles foster a more well-rounded and socially conscious generation of capable leaders in addressing complex societal challenges with empathy and creativity. Ultimately, the successful implementation of MBKM has the potential to catalyze a virtuous cycle of innovation, economic growth, and social progress, positioning Indonesia as a primary player in the global arena.

This article is the first academic exploration effort to fill the gap in understanding how MBKM policy in Indonesia has strong relevance to the two dominant educational paradigms in Europe and the United States, the Bologna Process and liberal arts education. More attention should be paid to studies that comprehensively map the links between these three elements. Our research aims to bridge this gap by offering new insights and valuable contributions to education policy development in Indonesia and presenting a basis for further research. The problem formulation is "To what extent does the MBKM policy reflect its fusion with the Bologna Process and Liberal Arts Education to transform the Indonesian educational sector?"

In other words, a gap remains in understanding how MBKM, the Bologna Process, and liberal arts education can relate critically and analytically. Existing research has yet to fully explore the interrelationships and implications of unifying the three paradigms. Therefore, this article aims to fill this gap and provide valuable new insights into how integrating MBKM with the Bologna Process and liberal arts education can shape the future of higher education in Indonesia. Awareness of the importance of filling gaps in existing research is crucial. A deeper understanding of how MBKM, the Bologna Process, and liberal arts education interact with each other will not only enrich the academic literature. However, it will also provide a more solid foundation for developing education policy in Indonesia. This research is not just an ordinary academic exploration but also a concrete effort to understand and overcome the challenges faced by Indonesian higher education. By considering the intersection between MBKM, the Bologna Process, and liberal arts education, the author hopes to significantly contribute to education policy development in Indonesia and pave the way for further research.

RESEARCH METHOD

The exploration of the link between the MBKM policy with the Bologna Process and Liberal Arts Education in this article is through a narrative overview approach that investigates the suitability, implications and potential harmony between these three concepts in the context of the transformation of the Indonesian education sector. This approach is used to present and analyze related literature comprehensively and narratively, which allows researchers to compile comprehensive summaries of various relevant studies, theories and findings in the form of a coherent narrative (Bruce et al., 2016; Gavidia & Adu, 2022; Pare et al., 2015).

The first step in a narrative overview is identifying the research topic or issue. The author searched for relevant literature from various sources such as academic databases, scientific journals, books, and other documents. This literature search was carried out systematically using keywords appropriate to the research topic. After collecting the relevant literature, the next step is to read and critically analyze each selected source. The author then noted significant findings, relevant theories, and approaches used in the literature, as well as differences of opinion, knowledge gaps, and future research opportunities that may exist in the literature. After all the literature had been analyzed, the author prepared a narrative summary that included all the findings and analyzed those. This summary was arranged in a coherent and comprehensive narrative, allowing readers to understand the research topic discussed clearly. In compiling a narrative, the author applied relevant conceptual frameworks to help organize and interpret the findings from the literature that has been analyzed and add additional thoughts or analyses based on their understanding of the research topic.

The author used visualization to analyze the findings of the narrative review. Data visualization reflects common patterns and relationships between concepts that emerged from the literature reviewed. The author drew a diagram to present clearly and easily understand the relationship between MBKM, the Bologna Process, and Liberal Arts Education in the context of

higher education in Indonesia. Then, the author conducted a thematic analysis to identify key themes from the literature examined and grouped the findings into categories or themes representing the identified patterns. That enables us to understand the essence of the discussion about the relationship between MBKM, the Bologna Process, and Liberal Arts Education. The thematic analysis also helps to construct a coherent narrative and present a more comprehensive understanding of the research topics.

One of the advantages of the narrative overview approach is its flexibility in combining various types of literature and research approaches. This approach allows researchers to present a complete and more in-depth picture of a topic without being limited to a particular research method. However, as with other research approaches, the narrative overview has several limitations. One is the risk of selection bias in selecting literature, where researchers choose literature that supports their arguments or views. Narrative reviews do not provide evidence-based summaries for specific inquiries or offer definitive guideline statements (Sukhera, 2022). Because this approach does not involve collecting primary data, there is a possibility of inconsistencies or inaccuracies in interpreting findings from existing literature. However, by carefully analyzing existing literature and compiling a comprehensive narrative summary, the narrative overview approach remains valuable for presenting a broad and in-depth picture of a research topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The MBKM policy represents a visionary approach, converging the BP, the essence of the LAE, and Indonesia's transformative strides in education. This intricate blend paves the way for an innovative paradigm, recognizing students as active participants in shaping their educational journey. These paradigms serve as a comprehensive paradigmatic foundation for educational policies implemented by the Indonesian Government through the MBKM policy. The MBKM policy is a fusion of the BP, LAE, and Indonesian educational transformation agenda. The discussion will then shift its focus to a detailed exploration of the MBKM policy. This segment will unravel the intricate fusion of the BP, LAE principles, and the transformative dynamics within the Indonesian educational landscape.

Through a nuanced analysis of the policy's components and impact, the discussion aims to elucidate how the MBKM initiative has integrated elements from the BP, embraced liberal arts philosophies, and played a pivotal role in the broader transformation of the Indonesian education system. By delving into these diverse influences, the discussion seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the intricate interplay shaping the MBKM policy. Through these thematic explorations, the discussion section offers a comprehensive and insightful analysis, addressing the overarching questions and providing a holistic view of the multifaceted MBKM research and policy landscape.

The BP, a comprehensive and transformative initiative in European higher education that began in June 1999, has elicited extensive scholarly attention, with researchers investigating diverse dimensions. These dimensions include internationalization and global mobility (Borsetto & Saccon, 2022; Knight, 2015; Mngo, 2023; Ulriksen, 2023), harmonization and expansion of degree structures (Brøgger, 2019), quality assurance infrastructure in Europe (Hazelkorn, 2018; Mula-Falcón & Caballero, 2023; Stensaker, 2018; Tomicic, 2019), Europeanization and European policy on higher education (Grek & Russell, 2023), professional training of highly qualified personnel (Sapargaliyeva et al., 2023), innovative educational technologies in higher education (Zakharova et al., 2022), curriculum reform and employability competencies (Salas-Velasco, 2023), Post-Bachelor's choice narratives in different disciplines (Madsen & Holmegaard, 2023), social inequality at transition from Bachelor's to Master's (Reimer & Schwabe, 2023), and remote teaching during COVID-19 and Bologna alignment (Vale et al., 2023).

The extensive scholarly attention devoted to the BP in European higher education demonstrates that researchers have thoroughly explored the initiative across various dimensions. The multifaceted examination of these dimensions underscores the comprehensive

and transformative nature of the BP within the academic discourse. This paradigm has driven the growth of the virtual learning and e-learning market, intensified competition in the global higher education market, and significantly impacted developing countries (Mngo, 2023). The application of the BP in certain countries raises concerns among researchers. For instance, doctoral trends development in Spain (Castelló et al., 2023) and the BP's impact on Spanish graduates' employability (Domínguez & Gutiérrez, 2023), the influence of the BP in Kosovo's higher education (Kačaniku, 2020), the propensity of entrepreneurial universities in Tunisia (Khelifi, 2023), trilingual education policy for internalization in Kazakhstan (Lodhi & Ilyassova-Schoenfeld, 2023; Tajik et al., 2023), the impact of the BP on Serbian education system (Zajić & Maksimović, 2023), the primary educational reforms in the Czech Republic (Raudenská & Mysíková, 2023), students' spatial mobility in German (Gareis & Broekel, 2022), strategic significance of the Post-Brexit's UK Memberships (Kushnir & Brooks, 2023), and so on, delve into the specific challenges and implications on diverse educational systems and geopolitical contexts. These researchers expressed concerns about applying the BP in certain countries, scrutinizing its impact and effectiveness within specific national contexts.

Moreover, the international nature of academe characterized by cooperation and exchanges has made it impossible for United States tertiary education systems to avoid the effects of the European BP reform entirely. The adoption and adaptation of the BP in the United States resulted in the occurrence of the LAE paradigm (Mngo, 2023). The National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) (2007) defines liberal arts education as a coherent framework fostering broad knowledge, high-level intellectual and practical skills, a commitment to social responsibility, and the ability to apply learning to complex problems across multiple fields of study. Aligning with this, the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) (2020) emphasizes that liberal education empowers individuals for complexity, diversity, and change. It provides a comprehensive understanding of the world and opportunities for in-depth study in specific areas while developing social responsibility, intellectual and practical skills, and applying knowledge in real-world settings.

Delving into liberal arts education, Zha (2017) emphasizes AAC&U-recommended principles that foster intellectual and personal development, essential for global success and knowledgeable citizenship. This universally applicable approach is further explored by Becker (2022) in the context of the international liberal arts and sciences (LAS) education reform movement, emphasizing its intrinsic connection to democracy. Becker advocates for protecting liberal arts institutions against authoritarian pressures. Zha's (2022) global perspective on liberal arts education highlights its role in preparing students for societal challenges, cultivating critical thinking, and emphasizing ethical responsibilities. Van Vechten (2022) aligns liberal arts with student-centred campuses, focusing on teaching excellence as a transformative experience.

In the strategic context of higher education, Han & Yang (2023) discuss the deliberate response of new liberal arts construction to technological challenges and international competition, merging traditional and innovative elements. O'Keefe et al. (2015) contribute by outlining long-term objectives, emphasizing faculty recognition and proactive responsiveness to market needs. Yang (2020) explores the evolving landscape of liberal arts in China, emphasizing interdisciplinary talent development. Meanwhile, Magro et al. (2022) examine George Mason University's School of Business, showcasing the intersection of liberal education principles with business education through high-impact practices. Moreover, Pulino (2022) explores the growth of the Institute for Entrepreneurship (IFE) at John Cabot University, illustrating how liberal arts principles foster entrepreneurship. The case study exemplifies the institution's success based on values aligned with liberal arts, leadership support, a visionary approach, and meticulous execution. Together, these perspectives form a cohesive narrative, underlining the transformative nature of liberal education, its global relevance, and its role in fostering democratic values, critical thinking, and entrepreneurship.

The above intertwining narratives create a vibrant tapestry, revealing the diverse applications of liberal arts education across different settings. Whether integrated with science and engineering in China, woven into business education at George Mason University, or

catalyzing entrepreneurial education at John Cabot University's Institute for Entrepreneurship, liberal arts education emerges as a versatile and dynamic force. These perspectives collectively emphasize the global impact and strategic significance of liberal arts education in addressing contemporary challenges. The narratives illustrate how liberal arts principles seamlessly weave into various academic disciplines, fostering interdisciplinary talents, promoting collaboration, and nurturing a comprehensive skill set in students. This holistic view of liberal arts education extends beyond national borders, highlighting its continuous evolution to meet the changing needs of students and the broader educational landscape (Power, 2017). The showcased applications exemplify the adaptability and relevance of liberal arts education in navigating the complexities of the modern world. In essence, liberal arts education is a dynamic and transformative paradigm that transcends disciplinary boundaries, substantially contributing to the global educational landscape.

LAE, as a paradigm entrenched in the American educational landscape, offers a holistic approach to learning. It encourages students to engage with various disciplines, fostering analytical skills, critical thinking, and effective communication. This educational model, defined by the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise, provides a coherent framework for broad knowledge, high-level intellectual and practical skills, a commitment to social responsibility, and applying learning to complex problems. LAE, thus, stands as a transformative force, preparing students not only as specialists in their fields but also as individuals with a broad worldview, adaptability, and a commitment to social responsibility (Godwin, 2020).

In Indonesia, the MBKM policy represents a significant stride towards educational transformation. MBKM draws inspiration from the BP and LAE paradigms, aligning with the spirit of academic freedom, broad knowledge acquisition, and holistic skill development. The policy acknowledges students as active learners, allowing them to choose and design their educational journey. This departure from traditional study programs is rooted in the belief that rigid curriculum structures should not confine students. Instead, they are invited to explore diverse fields of knowledge in alignment with their interests and talents (Dwijayanti et al., 2023). The interplay between the BP and LAE paradigms and the guiding principles of "Freedom to Learn on Campus" (FLC) form the cornerstone of MBKM's philosophy. While the BP contributes insights into harmonization, internationalization, and quality assurance, LAE principles underscore the importance of a broad, interdisciplinary approach to learning. In the Indonesian context, this amalgamation manifests in MBKM's commitment to providing students with the freedom to learn beyond the boundaries of traditional study programs (Tjaija, 2022).

In essence, the MBKM policy represents a dynamic response to the evolving landscape of global education. It reflects a commitment to creating graduates with technical expertise, critical thinking skills, adaptability, and interdisciplinary competencies. By intertwining the BP and LAE elements, the MBKM emerges as a transformative policy, fostering inclusivity, diversity, and flexibility within higher education in Indonesia. The policy envisions a generation of students who, empowered by academic freedom, can navigate the complexities of the natural world with confidence, creativity, and resilience. In other words, by granting students the freedom to choose courses outside their main programs, the MBKM resonates with the foundational principles of the BP and LAE, emphasizing academic freedom, broad knowledge, and holistic intellectual skill development. However, it is essential to note the contextual differences in social, cultural, and educational systems between Indonesia, the United States, and Europe. The influence of the LAE and BP paradigms on the MBKM is more inspirational, offering perspectives on the possibility of creating a more inclusive and dynamic higher education system in Indonesia.

The MBKM policy reflects these aspects in the spirit of giving students the freedom to choose courses outside their main programs. Students are not directed solely to become specialists in one field but are also provided opportunities to gain holistic knowledge. Thus, the MBKM creates graduates who are experts in a particular area and individuals capable of critical thinking, synthesizing knowledge from various sources, and possessing interdisciplinary skills highly valued in the global community (Utami & Suswanto, 2022). FLC is a philosophical value

derived from the BP and LAE, reflecting a revolutionary approach to higher education. This concept admits that students are learning subjects with the right and freedom to manage and shape their educational experiences. Rooted in academic freedom and student autonomy, FLC offers a comprehensive paradigmatic foundation for education policies implemented by the Indonesian authority through the MBKM. FLC asserts that students can choose and design their academic journey, including the freedom to select courses, professors, and even educational institutions. FLC, or learning independence, involves selecting lessons and the freedom to manage study time, determine academic career paths, and engage in extracurricular activities that support personal and professional development. FLC believes this freedom enriches students' experiences, motivates creativity, and prepares academically skilled graduates to face real-world challenges. The concept also underlines the crucial role of students as active learning agents, not merely passive recipients of knowledge. Students are encouraged to be initiators, researchers, and pioneers in their educational journeys (Hinchliffe, 2017).

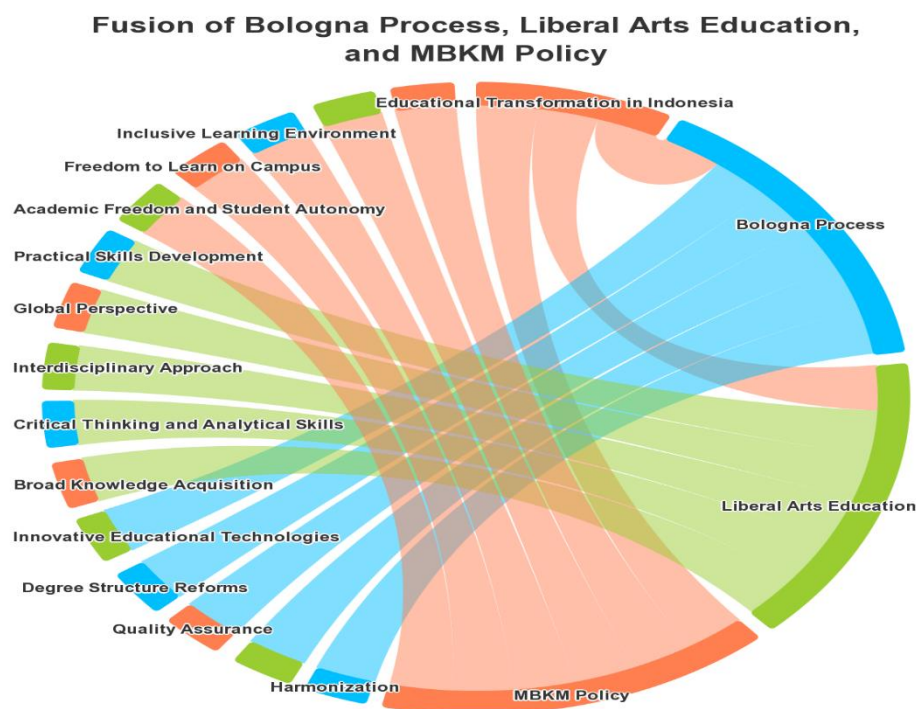
Furthermore, the concept involves a close engagement between higher education institutions and the workforce. Students learn theoretically and participate in practical experiences relevant to the job market demands. That creates a mutually beneficial flow where higher education is about acquiring knowledge and developing practical skills and deep contextual understanding. Acknowledging each student's unique potential and interests, FLC shifts away from the traditional one-size-fits-all paradigm, providing a theoretical foundation for inclusive education that appreciates diversity and allows students the freedom to pursue their interests and talents (Watanabe & McGaw, 2004). As the core of the MBKM policy, FLC is a philosophical foundation shaping higher education practices. It encourages a profound transformation in how we understand, manage, and experience higher education, offering hope for creating a generation not only educated academically but also prepared to face the world's complexity with courage, creativity, and resilience. The MBKM policy introduces FLC as a fundamental concept that transforms the paradigm of higher education in Indonesia. This concept is central and vital in understanding the essence of MBKM as an educational policy innovation. FLC reflects that students are free to choose and design their education journey, including course selection, choice of professors, selection of institutions, and even managing study time and extracurricular activities. It places students as active subjects in their learning process, not merely passive recipients of information (Naidu, 2017).

The FLC adoption by the MBKM policy responds to the challenges and dynamics of the evolving education and job landscape. With the advancement of science and technology, work and skill requirements paradigms are rapidly changing. The need for graduates with theoretical knowledge, practical skills, creativity, and adaptability is becoming increasingly crucial. Learning freedom is recognized as a step forward in creating graduates who are not only skilled academically but also trained to face the complexity of the real world. That means that students learn both within and outside the classroom, engaging in various contexts that reflect the needs and demands of a complex job market. The MBKM policy believes each student has unique potential and interests. This concept lays the groundwork for developing a responsive curriculum, allowing students to explore various fields of knowledge according to their interests. Moreover, FLC encourages students to become more independent, actively seeking, discovering, and applying knowledge daily (Almumen, 2020).

The concept acknowledges that learning is not confined within the campus walls. Students are invited to be actual learning agents who can sharpen their skills through experiences in various contexts, including village environments, industries, workplaces, and research centres. That creates a new paradigm where higher education is not only measured by how much knowledge is absorbed by students but also by the extent to which students can apply and develop that knowledge in real life. Furthermore, FLC collaborates closely between higher education institutions and the workforce. This intensive interaction creates a mutually beneficial flow, where students gain theoretical knowledge and engage in practical experiences relevant to the demands of a competitive job market (Suleman & Videira, 2023). In the context of MBKM, FLC illustrates a profound transformation in the approach to higher education. It marks a shift from

traditional paradigms to an empowering process, enabling students to become authentic, creative, and adaptive learners amidst the complexity of global changes. As an evolving concept, FLC within MBKM opens the door to a more dynamic, inclusive, and relevant higher education, aligning with future demands.

In tracing the connections of the MBKM policy with the LAE and BP paradigms, it is evident that MBKM brings these concepts into the context of Indonesian higher education. By providing learning freedom to students, MBKM has the potential to create graduates who possess not only technical expertise but also critical thinking skills, sensitivity to differences, and adaptability required in a rapidly changing era. In this regard, the MBKM embodies the spirit of inclusivity and mobility aligned with the principles of international higher education, as shown in the following Picture 1.



Picture 1
Fusion of the BP, LAE, and MBKM Policy to Transform the Indonesian Education Sector
Source: Author's Work

The relationship between the BP and LAE paradigms and the MBKM's FLC principles forms a close foundation because they promote freedom in learning and teaching within the campus environment. Both paradigms prepare students with broad knowledge and practical skills in this context, allowing them to explore and develop their ideas freely. The FLC principles foster an inclusive learning environment where diverse ideas are valued and respected. By embracing academic freedom, the applied paradigms and directions aim to create an ecosystem where students are encouraged to question, think critically, and develop their understanding of the world. That creates an atmosphere supporting intellectual growth and creativity across the campus. Combining Indonesia's transformative educational ideas with the Bologna Process and liberal arts education through the MBKM policy could potentially revolutionize the Indonesian education sector by fostering a more flexible, interdisciplinary, and globally competitive learning environment.

The fusion of MBKM with the Bologna Process offers significant opportunities for Indonesia's higher education landscape. With its focus on standardizing higher education across Europe, the Bologna Process emphasizes principles like mobility, compatibility, and quality assurance. By aligning MBKM with this framework, Indonesian universities can enhance the international recognition of their degrees, facilitate student and faculty exchange programs with

European counterparts, and foster academic collaborations that elevate the global competitiveness of Indonesian higher education institutions. Furthermore, incorporating liberal arts education principles into MBKM can yield graduates with versatile skill sets and broader perspectives. Liberal arts education emphasizes critical thinking, problem-solving, communication skills, and interdisciplinary learning—all crucial attributes for success in diverse career paths and navigating the modern world's complexities. By infusing liberal arts principles into MBKM, Indonesian universities can nurture creativity, innovation, and adaptability among their students, preparing them for the dynamic demands of the contemporary job market.

Flexibility in curriculum design is another key aspect of the MBKM policy. By offering customizable learning pathways through credit transfer, dual degree programs, and experiential learning opportunities, MBKM already empowers students to tailor their education to their interests and goals. Integrating liberal arts education further enhances this flexibility by offering various courses across disciplines. This approach encourages intellectual curiosity and fosters a deeper understanding of various fields, enriching students' learning experiences and broadening their horizons. Moreover, MBKM, in alignment with the Bologna, emphasizes lifelong learning and continuous skills development. Combining these frameworks with liberal arts education, Indonesian universities can equip students with distinctive knowledge and transferable skills such as critical thinking, communication, and adaptability. This holistic approach ensures graduates are well-prepared to thrive in an ever-evolving professional landscape.

Culturally and socially, integrating liberal arts education into MBKM promotes cross-cultural understanding and societal engagement. Liberal arts education encourages students to explore diverse cultures, histories, and perspectives, fostering empathy, tolerance, and global citizenship. Indonesian universities play a vital role in nurturing a more harmonious and interconnected world by embracing diversity and promoting inclusivity through educational initiatives. Furthermore, aligning MBKM with the Bologna Process ensures adherence to international quality standards and accreditation criteria, bolstering the credibility and reputation of Indonesian higher education institutions. That, in turn, attracts domestic and international students and faculty members, contributing to the overall enhancement of the country's academic environment and research capabilities.

The fusion of Indonesia's transformative educational ideas with the Bologna Process and liberal arts education represents a paradigm shift towards student-centred, inclusive, and dynamic higher education. MBKM aims to cultivate academically proficient graduates equipped to thrive in an increasingly interconnected and rapidly changing world by embracing academic freedom, interdisciplinary learning, and practical skill development.

The transformation of higher education in Indonesia due to the integration of MBKM with the BP and LAE is reflected in several concrete evidence observed in various higher education institutions throughout the country. One concrete example of this transformation is the change in curriculum design at many universities in Indonesia. In response to the integration with the BP, many higher education institutions have adopted a modular and structured curriculum model, allowing students to choose courses according to their passions and interests. That marks a shift from a traditional, rigid curriculum to one more flexible and responsive to student needs and the demands of the evolving job market.

Additionally, integration with LAE principles has encouraged higher education institutions to introduce cross-disciplinary approaches to teaching and learning. For example, at many universities, study programs have begun to offer courses that integrate elements from various disciplines, allowing students to gain a more holistic understanding of the complex problems faced by modern society. This approach helps develop students' analytical and critical skills and opens the door to interdisciplinary collaboration in research and innovation.

Furthermore, implementing MBKM has encouraged the growth of student exchange programs and international mobility activities at various universities in Indonesia. Many students now have the opportunity to study abroad and experience a different culture and education system, which opens up new horizons for them and increases cross-cultural understanding. It

also helps improve the quality of education students receive because they can access a wider range of resources and learning experiences in different countries.

Not only that, the integration of MBKM with the BP and LAE has also driven innovation in teaching and learning methods in various universities. Many higher education institutions now use a student-centred learning approach, which encourages active participation and self-empowerment in the learning process. Problem-oriented and project-based learning methods are also growing in popularity, as they help develop the practical and problem-solving skills required in the complex world of work.

Overall, the transformation of higher education in Indonesia triggered by integrating MBKM with the BP and LAE can be observed through concrete evidence, including changes in curriculum design, teaching and learning approaches, and the growth of student exchange programs. That marks a shift towards education that is more inclusive, responsive and relevant to the needs of Indonesia's rapidly developing society and economy. However, challenges remain, and continued efforts are needed to strengthen and continue this transformation process towards a better educational future.

CONCLUSION

The MBKM policy reflects an innovative educational paradigm, combining the principles of the BP, the essence of LAE, and transformative ideas in Indonesian education. MBKM becomes a comprehensive foundation for education policies implemented by the authority of Indonesia, demonstrating the essential and integrative role of the BP and LAE paradigms in the context of Indonesian higher education. Elaboration on BP shows that this initiative has attracted widespread academic attention. Scholars have reviewed it from various dimensions regarding the internationalization and harmonization of degree structures. On the other hand, the discussion regarding LAE highlights a holistic approach to learning, preparing students not only as specialists in their field but also as individuals with broad insight, adaptability, and commitment to social responsibility.

By giving students the freedom to learn, MBKM has the potential to create graduates' various technical expertise and critical thinking skills, sensitivity to differences, and adaptability needed in an era that continues to change rapidly. "Freedom to Learn on Campus" emphasizes the profound role of students as active learning agents, not just passive recipients of knowledge. The fusion of the BP paradigm, LAE, and the idea of educational transformation in Indonesia in the MBKM policy creates a strong foundation for inclusive, dynamic, and relevant higher education. That reflects a spirit of learning and innovation that continues to develop, preparing students to face the world's complexities with confidence, creativity and resilience. Even though there are contextual differences between Indonesia, the United States and Europe, the influence of the LAE and BP paradigms on MBKM is more inspirational, providing a perspective on the possibility of creating a more inclusive and dynamic higher education system in Indonesia. Thus, MBKM is a crucial evolution in Indonesian higher education that combines primary elements of the BP and LAE paradigms to create an inclusive, dynamic and relevant learning environment for students in Indonesia.

REFERENCES

- AAC&U. (2020). *What liberal education looks like*. Retrieved from <http://www.aacu.org/leap/what-is-a-liberal-education>.
- Afriansyah, A., Voak, A., Fairman, B., Suryono, I. L., & Muslim, F. (2022). Implementing kampus merdeka: The journey of a thousand miles begins with one tentative step. *Journal of Resilient Economies*, 2(2), 48–54. <https://doi.org/10.25120/jre.2.2.2022.3938>
- Almumen, H. A. (2020). Universal design for learning (UDL) across cultures: The application of UDL in Kuwaiti inclusive classrooms. *SAGE Open*, 10(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244020969674>

- Anggara, S. (2023). Exploring the effectiveness of merdeka belajar kampus merdeka policy in Indonesian higher education institutions: An in-depth case study analysis. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 15(2), 1563–1570. <http://dx.doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v15i2.3885>
- Becker, J. (2022). The global liberal arts challenge. *Ethics & International Affairs*, 36(3), 283–301. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0892679422000314>
- Borsetto, E., & Saccon, C. (2022). *A European perspective on the internationalization strategies and accreditation of business schools*. Paper presented at the 8th International Conference on Higher Education Advances (HEAd'22) Universitat Politècnica de Valencia, Valencia. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4995/HEAd22.2022.14687>
- Brøgger, K. (2019). *Governing through standards: The faceless masters of higher education: The Bologna Process, the EU and the open method of coordination*. Springer Nature.
- Bruce, A., Beuthin, R., Sheilds, L., Molzahn, A., & Schick-Makaroff, K. (2016). Narrative research evolving: Evolving through narrative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/1609406916659292>
- Castelló, M., García-Morante, M., Díaz, L., Sala-Bubaré, A., & Weise, C. (2023). Doctoral trends development in Spain: From academic to professional paths. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 60(5), 736–747. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2023.2237958>
- Domínguez, J. F. C., & Gutiérrez, C. R. (2023). Bologna Process and its impact on Spanish graduates employability: Good news yet to come. *Higher Education Policy*, 36(3), 556–577. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-022-00274-0>
- Dwijayanti, I., Suciati, S., Ardini, S. N., Ulfa, M., & Saputro, B. A. (2023). The implementation of MBKM policy towards university's IKU in Indonesia. *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)*, 12(3), 57–66. <https://doi.org/10.9790/7388-1203055766>
- Gareis, P., & Broekel, T. (2022). The spatial patterns of student mobility before, during and after the Bologna Process in Germany. *Tijdschrift voor economische en sociale geografie*, 113(3), 290–309. <https://doi.org/10.1111/tesg.12507>
- Gavidia, L. A. P., & Adu, J. (2022). Critical narrative inquiry: An examination of a methodological approach. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 21. <https://doi.org/10.1177/16094069221081594>
- Godwin, K. A. (2020). Liberal arts education, going global. In P. N. Teixeira & J. C. Shin (Eds.). *The international encyclopedia of higher education systems and institutions*. Springer, pp. 2001–2004. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-8905-9_219
- Grek, S., & Russell, I. (2023). Beyond Bologna? Infrastructuring quality in European higher education. *European Educational Research Journal*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041231170518>
- Han, Y., & Yang, J. (2023). *New liberal arts construction dynamics and development path based on citespace*. Paper presented at the 2023 4th International Conference on Artificial Intelligence and Education (ICAIE, 2023) (pp. 526–536). https://doi.org/10.2991/978-94-6463-242-2_65
- Hazelkorn, E. (2018). The accountability and transparency agenda: Emerging issues in the global era. In A. Curaj et al. (Eds.). *European higher education area: The impact of past and future policies*. Springer Nature, pp. 423–440.
- Hinchliffe, G. (2017). Education, learning and freedom. *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 51(2), 430–442. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-9752.12234>
- Kaçaniku, F. (2020). Towards quality assurance and enhancement: The influence of the Bologna Process in Kosovo's higher education. *Quality in Higher Education*, 26(1), 32–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13538322.2020.1737400>
- Khelifi, S. (2023). Informal university entrepreneurship: The missing link in transition higher education systems. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 97, 102725. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2023.102725>

- Kushnir, I., & Brooks, R. (2023). UK membership (s) in the European higher education area post-2020: A 'Europeanisation' agenda. *European Educational Research Journal*, 22(5), 718–740. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041221083073>
- Knight, J. (2015). International universities: Misunderstandings and emerging models? *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 19(2), 107–121. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1028315315572899>
- Lodhi, I., & Ilyassova-Schoenfeld, A. (2023). The Bologna Process and its impact on the higher education reforms in Kazakhstan: A case of policy transfer and translations. *Studies in Higher Education*, 48(1), 204–219. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2022.2124244>
- Madsen, L. M., & Holmegaard, H. T. (2023). Science students' post-bachelor's choice narratives in different disciplinary settings. *European Educational Research Journal*, 22(2), 216–235. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041221095151>
- Magro, A., Gring-Pemble, L. M., & Bishop, C. R. (2022). Integrating liberal education, business, and high-impact practices—The case of George Mason University's School of Business. *Journal of International Education in Business*, 15(1), 32–51. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JIEB-03-2021-0041>
- Mngo, Z. (2023). A case for caution: Twenty-one years of Bologna and ramifications for the US higher education. *Journal of Education*, 203(3), 520–530. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00220574211032583>
- Mujiwati, Y., Hamzah, M. R., Daryono, D., & Laili, I. (2023). Implementation of the Ministry of Education and Culture's independent campus learning program (MBKM) policy at Universitas PGRI Wiranegara. *International Journal of Humanities Education and Social Sciences*, 3(2), 1004–1014. <https://doi.org/10.55227/ijhess.v3i2.698>
- Mula-Falcón, J., & Caballero, K. (2023). Academics' perceptions regarding performance evaluations and the consequences for their professional and personal activity. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-05-2023-0183>
- Naidu, S. (2017). How flexible is flexible learning, who is to decide, and what are its implications? *Distance Education*, 38(3), 269–272. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2017.1371831>
- National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) (2007). *College learning for the new global century: A report from the National Leadership Council for liberal education and America's promise*. Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- O'Keefe, R. D., Hamer, L. O., & Kemp, P. R. (2015). Characteristics of a "teaching institution": Administrative objectives, actions, activities and assessment. *Journal of Academic Administration in Higher Education*, 11(2), 69–78.
- Pare, G., Trudel, M. C., Jaana, M., & Kitsiou, S. (2015). Synthesizing information systems knowledge: A typology of literature reviews. *Information & Management*, 52, 183–199. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.im.2014.08.008>
- Power, J. B. (2017). Not leaving the conversation behind: Approaching a decade of teaching reflective journal writing at a liberal arts college. *Reflective Practice*, 18(5), 713–724. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623943.2017.1324417>
- Pulino, S. C. (2022). Embedding the entrepreneurial mindset at a liberal arts university. *Journal of the International Council for Small Business*, 3(1), 62–67. <https://doi.org/10.1080/26437015.2021.1958661>
- Purwanti, E. (2021). *Preparing the implementation of merdeka belajar–kampus merdeka policy in higher education institutions*. Paper presented at the 4th International Conference on Sustainable Innovation 2020–Social, Humanity, and Education (ICoSIHESS, 2020) (pp. 384–391). Atlantis Press. <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210120.149>
- Raudenská, P., & Mysíková, M. (2023). Returns to bachelor's and master's degree in tertiary education: The case of the Czech Republic after the Bologna Process. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 36(3), 498–514.
- Reimer, D., & Schwabe, U. (2023). Stability or change? Social inequality at the transition from bachelor's to master's degree programmes in Germany. Empirical evidence from four

- graduate cohorts. *European Educational Research Journal*, 22(2), 170–197. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041221101293>
- Sa'diyah, M., Nurhayati, I., Endri, E., Supriadi, D., & Afrianto, Y. (2022). The implementation of independent learning independent campus: The new paradigm of education in Indonesia. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 12(4), 289–299. <https://doi.org/10.36941/jesr-2022-0114>
- Salas-Velasco, M. (2023). Propensity for self-employment in a model of occupational choice: Evidence from a cohort of recent university graduates in Spain. *Sustainability*, 15(4), 3400. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15043400>
- Sapargaliyeva, A. Z., Shynybekova, A. S., Molbassynova, Z. M., Tasbolatova, R., & Nurzhanova, T. T. (2023). Innovative educational technologies and competencies in higher education. *Higher Education for the Future*, 10(1), 110–122. <https://doi.org/10.1177/23476311231155523>
- Sartika, D. (2020). Essay: Liberating learning in Indonesian higher education. *Inside Indonesia*. Retrieved from <https://www.insideindonesia.org/archive/articles/essay-liberating-learning-in-indonesian-higher-education>
- Stensaker, B. (2018). External quality assurance in higher education. In P. N. Teixeira & J. C. Shin. (Eds.) *Encyclopedia of international higher education systems and institutions*. Springer, pp. 1–6. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-017-9553-1_523-1.
- Sukhera, J. (2022). Narrative reviews: Flexible, rigorous, and practical. *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, 14(4), 414–417. <https://doi.org/10.4300%2FJGME-D-22-00480.1>
- Suleman, F., & Videira, P. (2023). From academic autonomy to close collaboration: The employability strategies of local higher education institutions in Portugal. *Higher Education Policy*, 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41307-023-00329-w>
- Tajik, M. A., Namysova, G., Shamatov, D., Manan, S. A., Zhunussova, G., & Antwi, S. K. (2023). Navigating the potentials and barriers to EMI in the Post-Soviet region: Insights from Kazakhstani university students and instructors. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790718.2023.2265428>
- Teichler, U. (2019). Bologna and student mobility: A fuzzy relationship. *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Science Research*, 32(4), 429–449. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13511610.2019.1597685>
- Tjaija, A. (2022). Implementation of 'freedom to learn, independent campus' (MBKM) policy. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 14(1), 319–328. <http://dx.doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v14i1.2115>
- Tomicic, A. (2019). American dream, Humboldtian nightmare: Reflections on the remodelled values of a neoliberalized academia. *Policy Futures in Education*, 17(8), 1057–1077. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210319834825>
- Torotcoi, S. (2017). Politics and policies of higher education: Policy transfer and the Bologna Process. *Journal of Research in Higher Education*, 1(2), 6–30.
- Ulriksen, L. (2023). Students' choices and paths in the Bologna degree structure: An introduction to the special issue. *European Educational Research Journal*, 22(2), 135–145. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14749041211022201>
- Utami, Y. P., & Suswanto, B. (2022). The educational curriculum reform in Indonesia: Supporting "independent learning independent campus (MBKM)". *SHS Web of Conferences*, 149. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202214901041>
- Vale, A., Martins, A., & Coimbra, N. (2023). Experience of remote teaching in higher education: A scenario of challenges and opportunities. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 23(2), 8–17.
- Van Vechten, R. B. (2022). Ten tips for landing a teaching job at a liberal arts institution. *Journal of Political Science Education*, 18(3), 390–397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15512169.2022.2044343>
- Voak, A., Helmy, A., Fairman, B., & Afriansyah, A. (2024). Kampus merdeka: Indonesia's once-in-a-generation response to educational reform. *TVET @sia*, 22, 1–21.

- Watanabe, R., & Mcgaw, B. (2004). Student learning: Attitudes, engagement and strategies. In OECD. (Ed.). *Learning for tomorrow's world: First results from PISA 2003*. OECD Publishing, pp. 109–158. <https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264006416-en>
- Yang, Y. (2020). The construction of new liberal arts should return to the university spirit. *Learning & Education, 9*(3), 36–39.
- Yoto, Marsono, Suyetno, A., Mawangi, P. A. N., Romadin, A., & Paryono. (2024). The role of industry to unlock the potential of the Merdeka curriculum for vocational school. *Cogent Education, 11*(1), 2335820. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2024.2335820>
- Zajić, J. O., & Maksimović, J. (2023). The Bologna in the field of social sciences and humanities: A precondition for successful university education. *Athens Journal of Education, 10*(4), 701–716. <https://doi.org/10.30958/aje.10-4-8>
- Zakharova, A., Soboleva, E., & Biserova, G. (2022). Organizing students' independent work: An approach for graduate and undergraduate students. *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research, 21*(1), 51–66. <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.21.1.4>
- Zha, Q. (2017). What is liberal arts education in the 21st century? An exploration starts with Chinese universities and goes beyond China. In K. A. Godwin & N. Pickus (Eds.). *Liberal arts & sciences innovation in China: Six recommendations to shape the future* (CIHE Perspectives, No. 8). The Boston College Center for International Higher Education, pp. 40–48.
- Zha, Q. (2022). How should liberal arts education evolve in the twenty first century? An exploration of universities in China and beyond. *Educational Philosophy and Theory, 54*(12), 2082–2096. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00131857.2021>
- Zhang, W., Zhong, X., Fan, F., & Jiang, X. (2023). Unlocking the creative potential of Chinese new liberal arts: The role of interdisciplinary education, knowledge integration, and metacognitive awareness. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 1*–12. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40299-023-00788-0>