

# **Strengthening Higher Education Connectivity Patterns with MBKM-Based Industries: A Case Study of the Implementation of the Schooling Field Introduction Program (PLP) for Students Majoring in Non Formal Education at Think Indonesia**

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## **Abstract**

Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) as one of the State Universities (PTN) which this year won the National 1st Place in the Public Service Agency (BLU) National PTN League with the implementation of MBKM as one of the main assessment contributors trying to strengthen the partnership that has been established with industry, including through the Schooling Field Introduction Program (PLP). Non Formal Education (PLS) as one of the study programs or majors at UNESA has sent its students in the program, through several industry partners, including Think Indonesia. This study aims to determine the model of strengthening the connectivity of tertiary institutions and industry through the PLP Program as one of the leading forms of Lecture Activities (BKP) from MBKM at UNESA. A qualitative research method with a case study design is used to achieve this goal with stages or activity plans including; formulate problems, create designs and instruments, collect data, make data analysis, and prepare research reports. The subjects and objects of this research are all parties directly involved in the PLP Program which includes the Deputy Chancellor for Academic Affairs, Chair of the MBKM Unit, PLP Program Advisors, Students majoring in Non Formal Education (PLS) and the Director of Think Indonesia as an industrial partner whose address is at Jambangan Kebon Agung Street No. 15, Jambangan, Jambangan District, Surabaya City, East Java. The parties who then acted as informants were selected using a purposive sampling method, taking into account their role and contribution in strengthening the implementation of cooperation with industry in the form of BKP MBKM Internships or work practices packaged through the PLP Program. The results of this study are to describe the implementation of the Schooling Field Introduction Program (PLP) for students majoring in Non Formal Education at Think Indonesia and its relation to the pattern of strengthening connectivity.

**Keywords:** Connectivity model, university, industry, MBKM, PLP Program.

## Background

Higher education in the era of disruption is faced with a variety of challenges and the main problem is related to the competence and character of the graduates produced who are unable to satisfy the needs of the business and industrial world (DUDI). This condition later became the background for the emergence of the policy of the Merdeka Learning Campus Merdeka (MBKM) program. One of the programs from the Freedom to Learn – Merdeka Campus policy is the Right to Study Three Semesters Outside the Study Program (Antoni et al., 2022).

The impact of the program after a year has passed has shown no significant results in strengthening cooperation and connectivity between universities and the industrial world. Ministry of Education Culture Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) through the Director of Vocational and Professional Higher Education Dr. Beny Bandanadajaya, ST., MT. revealed "...a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or memorandum of understanding on cooperation between vocational tertiary institutions and industry has been signed a lot. But until now, the implementation is still lacking" (Putra, 2022).

The case of the discrepancy in the implementation of MBKM in the field with the expectations of these stakeholders is a real impact of the MoU phenomenon which has been intensively implemented by universities with industrial and business partners, which were only a formality. The content contained in the MoU must be poured into the agreement so that later it can be more binding (Mabhan, 2019). The existence of the MoU is ideally a reinforcing medium between universities and the main industry related to the relevance of the quality of graduates to the needs in the field.

Collaboration between universities and industry is one of the keys to the success of implementing the MBKM program. Departing from this, the government through the Directorate of Learning and Student Affairs under the Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture provided support in the form of Circular Letter Number: 0809/E2/KR/2021 regarding the announcement of the MBKM collaboration grant. Universities that have received funding support are expected to be able to improve the quality of the tri dharma and the quality of collaboration with link and match partners, as well as strengthen the connectivity of tertiary institutions with their main partners in the industrial world.

Various reasons or causes for the failure of the MoU as a form of strengthening the connectivity of tertiary institutions with industry surfaced, including those conveyed by the Director of Vocational and Professional Higher Education on the same occasion, ranging from a lack of funds to the lack of readiness of technical guides for MBKM implementation after the MoU. This phenomenon is not without reason, various reports related to problems with the implementation of MBKM still often arise due to the inability of higher education institutions to follow up on the connectivity that has been formally established in the form of MoUs with industrial partners, as an important locus of the right to study outside the campus which is the core of MBKM.

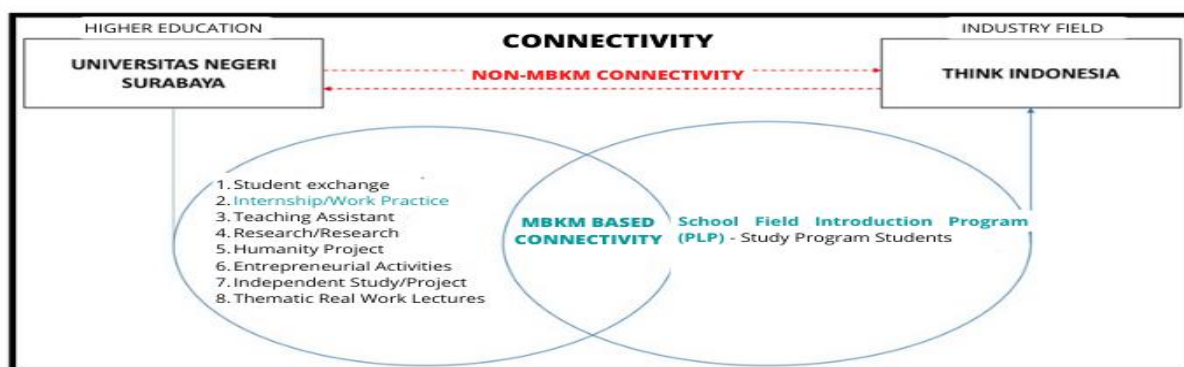
Universities should build proper connectivity in industries related to graduate competencies. This connectivity is an effort to develop students' abilities to adapt themselves to current industrial needs. MBKM is an independent and versatile higher education learning program (Meke et al., 2022). MBKM is designed to create a creative learning community that can meet the needs of students as a whole. In practice, students from the Department of Non-Formal Education carry out internships in the non-formal education industry. This activity is included in the Schooling Field Introduction Program (PLP) because students learn learning activities and managerial matters in an educational institution.

The MBKM-based industry involves a wide range of capabilities implemented in the education world. The Non-Formal Education Department has graduate competencies by industry criteria based on MBKM, where the focus is on learning that liberates students. The link between the MBKM-based education industry and the Department of Non-Formal Education needs to be continuously developed. Universities such as the Department of Non-Formal Education provide graduates who are competent in the MBKM field. At the same time, the MBKM-based education industry requires human resources who have qualified skills in independent education. If the tertiary institutions establish good connectivity with related industries, an outcome that benefits both parties will be produced.

The resulting impacts if connectivity between tertiary institutions and institutions are well established include: (1) opening of job opportunities for tertiary graduates, (2) increasing community demand for the competencies of tertiary graduates, (3) creating qualified human resources in MBKM-based industry, (4) achieving the objectives of the MBKM-based industry.

## Conceptual Framework and Research Method

The conceptual framework of research is the link or relationship between one concept and another concept of the problem to be studied. The conceptual framework is obtained from the concept of science/theory used as the basis for research (Setiadi, 2013). The conceptual framework of this research is as follows:



**Picture 1.1** Model of Strengthening Higher Education Connectivity with MBKM-Based Industries: A Case Study of the Implementation of the Schooling Field Introduction Program (PLP) for Non-Formal Education Students at Think Indonesia

The purpose of conducting this research is to discover the pattern of connectivity between higher education institutions and the current MBKM-based industry, especially in the PLP program implemented by students of the Department of Non-Formal Education. In order to achieve effectiveness in achieving research goals and objectives, the method used in this study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. Case study is a method that seeks to reveal the uniqueness or unique characteristics of a subject under study (Hamzah, 2020). The subjects and objects in this research with a case study approach are the PLP program and all parties who directly contribute to the implementation of PLP as a reinforcing medium for collaboration with industrial partners which include the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, the Head of the MBKM Center, PLP Supervisors, PLP Students and industrial partners. In this case Think Indonesia. In a deeper context, such as determining informants, researchers take a purposive sampling approach, namely by selecting those who know best about the problem to be studied by researchers (Chan et al., 2019).

The case study research method is the right strategy to use in research that uses how or why research questions, little time the researcher has to control the events studied, and the

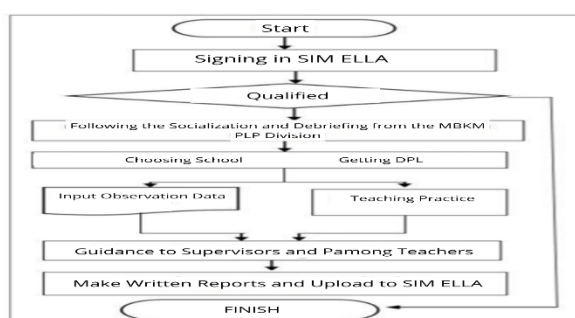
research focus is contemporary phenomena, to track contemporary events. In the case study method, researchers focus on research design and implementation (Nur'aini, 2020).

Researchers will ask lots of questions, listen, adapt and be flexible, adhere to the issues to be studied, and reduce bias in this regard to PLP implementation which has an impact on strengthening UNESA cooperation as a university with Think Indonesia as an industrial partner. At the time of data collection, the function of the protocol is very important. Protocols are more than just instruments, contain procedures and general rules that need to be followed, are common tactics in increasing the reliability of research, guiding researchers. The protocol contains a project overview, field procedures, questions, and report instructions. According to Sugiyono (2017: 194), methods or techniques for collecting data can be done by interviews, questionnaires, observation, and a combination of the three. Data collection techniques in this study include observation, interviews and documentation. As for strengthening the results of the three, it was also used in a preliminary study of literature studies. One of the characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher acts as an instrument as well as a data collector. Instruments other than humans (such as questionnaires, interview guides, observation guides and so on) can also be used, but their function is limited to supporting the task of the researcher as a key instrument. The entire data that has been obtained will then be tested for the validity of the data

The initial stage that the researcher did was the data collection process, the stage where the researcher collected data in the form of both primary and secondary data, then went through a data reduction process. The data reduction that researchers take is the process of summarizing, selecting the main points, focusing on important things, searching for themes and patterns. In this process the researcher began to group data from the data that had been obtained, namely in the form of primary data transcripts from interviews, PLP implementation documentation, meeting activities held by UNESA with Think Indonesia, PLP planning instruments/Guidelines and assessment results obtained by students from Think Indonesia as partners. In the context of secondary data are indirect data that are not accommodated in a primary manner and are corroborating from the primary data obtained. The process of drawing conclusions is intended to analyze, find meaning from the existing data so that it can be found in the research that has been done, of course, based on the data that has been obtained both primary and secondary.

## Result and Discussions

Universitas Negeri Surabaya (UNESA) as one of the tertiary institutions which in 2022 won 1st place in the National PTN BLU (Public Service Agency) League and excelled through its MBKM policy, trying to strengthen its cooperative relations with industrial partners which have been intertwined and delayed in its implementation as examples of university cases another height. This strengthening is carried out through the implementation of the Schooling Field Introduction Program (PLP), which is a form of Internship Lecture Activities (BKP) or work practices from MBKM at UNESA. Industrial partners in the field of education and UNESA who have established connectivity in terms of cooperation can actually benefit from the MoU.



**Picture 1.2** UNESA PLP Implementation Guidelines

PLP is a program for prospective teachers to observe and analyze problems that exist in schools and then try to provide solutions to these problems (Hidayat et al., 2021). The implementation of the PLP Program at UNESA involves industrial partners who are relevant to the profiles of graduates in each major. This effort was again pursued in order to increase link and match as optimally as possible, bearing in mind that in the education industry based on Law no. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System consists of various channels which include formal, non-formal and informal. PLP is implemented not necessarily in the context of the teaching profession and in formal schools, but also in the education industry profession and partners outside formal schools such as Course and Training Institutes, Home Schooling and Centers for Community Learning Activities (PKBM).

This reality was actually experienced this year by students majoring in Non-Formal Education (PLS) of the Faculty of Education (FIP) Surabaya State University. PLS as a study program at several tertiary institutions is also referred to as non-formal education and community education. The difference in nomenclature does not change the essence of PLS scholarship, namely the art of serving the community so that it can grow and develop as early as possible and throughout life for a better life (Rosyanafi, 2012). PLS or non-formal education is also defined as "...non-formal education is flexible, acts as a complement, substitute, and enhancer of knowledge and skills that are not obtained through formal education" (Bartin, 2020). Departing from this terminology, of course, industrial partners are different from other majors in the educational scientific family which are generally in the formal education pathway such as elementary, junior high, high school and the equivalent.

Think Indonesia is one of the industrial partners from the perspective of the PLS FIP UNESA department which has lost and in terms of connectivity or follow-up cooperation. The presence of PLP revived the value of a collaboration by sending students majoring in PLS to assist all institutional activities.



**Picture 1.3** Welcoming of Batch 2 PLP Program Students at Think Indonesia.

Think Indonesia is a Center for Community Learning Activities (PKBM) which is an industrial partner of the UNESA PLS major. PKBM is an educational institution that was born from the idea of awareness of the importance of the position of the community in the development process of non-formal education. PKBM or also known as Community Learning Center (CLC) "...The Community Learning Center is a non-formal education program that aims to expand the reach of education in the community by involving community participation (Akbar, 2021). Therefore, by referring to the previous context of PLS as a science it is very appropriate to establish collaborative connectivity with Think Indonesia as PKBM. PLS graduates are expected after participating in PLP to have knowledge and skills in organizing similar institutions in their respective regions and that is part of the effort to fulfill the graduates' achievements of a tertiary institution that link and match with the industry they are supposed to be in. The phenomenon before the existence of cooperation, it was often found that graduates got jobs that were not in accordance with the scientific fields studied during lectures.

The MBKM implementation policy should ideally be captured by all tertiary institutions to improve and strengthen the connectivity of tertiary institutions and industry which so far has only been formal without any follow-up. The inability to create a formula or model for implementation of BKP, especially those that are effective and optimal off-campus activities such as work practices or apprenticeships, weakens connectivity between a university and the business world or industry as its partners. The presence of this research is expected to find a comprehensive description regarding "Strengthening Higher Education Connectivity Patterns with MBKM-Based Industries: A Case Study of the Implementation of the Schooling Field Introduction Program (PLP) for Students Majoring in Non-Formal Education at Think Indonesia". The presence of this research certainly cannot be separated from previous research. Previous research serves to analyze and enrich the research discussion, as well as distinguish it from research that is currently being conducted. This research includes three reputable national journals, the results of previous research related to models and strategies for strengthening universities and the industrial world in Indonesia for at least the last 10 years.

Contribution, originality, and novelty are the basis for researchers in compiling a state of the art in this study with the topic of Strengthening connectivity between higher education and industry in developing talents and future leaders. The research carried out by Diana and Lukman Hakim with the title "Strategy for Collaboration Between Universities, Industry and Government: A Conceptual Review in Efforts to Increase Educational Innovation and Learning Creativity in Higher Education" shows results;

**Tabel 3.1** *State of Art*

Researchers	Titles	Goals	Methods	Results
Diana, Lukman Hakim (2021)	Strategy for Collaboration Between Universities, Industry and Government: A Conceptual Review in Efforts to Increase Educational Innovation and Learning Creativity in Higher Education	Seeing the potential for collaboration between Higher Education, Industry and Government Partnerships, including; Government Cooperation Program, BUMN and private companies; Collaboration initiatives are aligned with the Independent Campus Program.	Descriptive qualitative	University, government and industry collaboration provides benefits to each party, namely to invest in developing research capabilities carried out by universities and industry in the focus of research areas on each party and find the best solutions to problems faced by the industrial world through research collaboration to improve company performance and in the end for the government will have an impact on national economic growth.
Sueivanti, Didik Nurhadi, Dina (2013)	Implementation of Cooperation Programs between Universities and the Industrial World	Knowing how to model collaborative learning between universities and the industrial world and know the implementation of cooperation programs between universities and the industrial world	Descriptive qualitative	Forms of cooperation between universities and the industrial world in general include three main forms, namely field trips (visiting and sightseeing), field trips (travels outside (areas, campuses, industry) in the context of study visits) in order to increase knowledge, and practicum (theoretical activities are carried out on campus while practicum activities are carried out in industry. The most frequent implementation of cooperation programs between universities and the industrial world is using a mixing model (cooperative-dual) between universities and industry. In this activity, learning activities are carried out in addition to in the campus environment as well as in the industrial environment so that students can directly see/practice the theory they acquire.
Surya Dharma, Husaini Usman (2007)	Conception and Synergy Action of Higher Education, Local Government, and Business/Industry	Contributing thoughts on the conception and action of synergy partnerships of higher education, local government, and business and business in order to prepare high-quality human resources in the coming 2020.	Descriptive qualitative	The concept for preparing high-quality human resources to face the global competition in APEC 2020 is a mutually beneficial partnership between universities, local governments, and business and foreign countries by applying the TOGETHER principle. Actions carried out by universities, regional governments and business and business organizations must be in accordance with their respective authorities. There are at least 25 actions that can be carried out by universities, 11 actions that can be carried out by local governments, and 10 actions that can be carried out by DU/I.

**Source:** *Harzing Publish or Perish Version 7*

"University, government and industry collaboration provides benefits to each party, namely to invest in the development of research capabilities carried out by universities and industry on the focus of research areas on each party and find the best solutions to problems faced by the industrial world through collaborative research. to improve company performance and ultimately for the government will have an impact on national economic growth" (Diana & Hakim, 2020).

These results are certainly different from the objectives in this study which are more focused on collaborative models and strengthening cooperation through MBKM-based learning activities. In addition, this research does not mention the quality of graduates that are relevant to the needs of the industrial world as partners of higher education institutions. Research on a similar topic has also been carried out previously by Sugiyanti, Didik Nurhadi, Dina with the title "Implementation of Cooperation Programs Between Universities and the Industrial World". The results of this study show;

"Forms of cooperation between universities and the industrial world in general include three main forms, namely field trips (visiting and sightseeing), field trips (travels outside the region, campus, industry) in the context of study visits in order to increase knowledge, and practicum (theoretical activities are carried out on campus while practicum activities are carried out in industry)" (Sugiyanti et al., 2013).

These results show more relevant findings which have touched on the implementation of collaboration with learning content in the form of practicums inside and outside the campus where or the location of industrial partners. However, at that time they were not familiar with the concept of independent learning so that the practicum concept that was held could not be said to be relevant to the needs of today's students who were more practical and critical. The practicum activities carried out in this study were not as long as the BKP of Work Practices or Internships which were the main focus of off-campus activities in this study. The latest research that is relevant to the topic of this research, carried out by Surya Dharma and Husaini Usman entitled "Conception and Action of Synergy of Higher Education, Local Government, and the Business/Industry World" resulted;

"The concept for preparing high-quality human resources to face the global competition in APEC 2020 is a mutually beneficial partnership between PTs, regional governments and business entities by implementing the TOGETHER principle. Actions carried out by PT, regional government, and DU/I must be in accordance with their respective authorities. There are at least 25 actions that PTs can take, 11 actions that local governments can take, and 10 actions that DU/I can take (Dharma & Usman, 2007).

The results of the research were carried out in preparation for the APEC event which of course was oriented only for a moment to produce several actions that had to be shown by the universities, regional governments and the world of business and industry. This research is short term for the succession of an event which is certainly different from this research which focuses on sustainability to produce graduates who are talented and relevant to future leadership needs.

The entire review and review of the previous research, as well as bringing it closer to the conclusion of novelty. Novelty is basically an element of originality that is new in the sense of discovering what others have not found (Noor, 2021). The novelty that researchers are trying to offer departs from previous research as shown above focusing on a model of strengthening cooperation or connectivity that exists in tertiary institutions. The connectivity between universities and industry so far is still in the dimension of formality which has a real impact on failure in implementing MBKM as an actual issue. In research related to the strengthening or synergy of a tertiary institution with industry, it is less focused on implementing learning models that are relevant to the challenges and needs of the industrial world. The PLS Department in the context of this research is a representation of UNESA as a tertiary institution which has re-established a collaborative implementation relationship with Think Indonesia as a partner. The presence of the PLP Program besides the connectivity bridge is also expected to form a kind of model for strengthening the connectivity of higher education institutions and industry.

This research is expected to impact educational activists, especially at the tertiary level, to continue improving connectivity with industrial institutions related to graduate competencies. This connectivity can provide beneficial outcomes for the world of education because there is a circulation of resources and better output. The existence of the industry cannot be separated from human resources. Therefore universities produce competent graduates to provide maximum performance as needed.

Researchers tried to improve connectivity patterns qualified in the MBKM-based education industry through collaborative programs, one of which is an apprenticeship program. In the future, university graduates will have no difficulty developing their abilities and fostering good performance. Likewise, MBKM-based industries can have competent human resources according to their fields through collaboration programs with universities.

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