

Strategies for Interorganizational Relationships in the Implementation of the “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” Initiative at Private Universities in Gorontalo

Rizal^{1*}, Ansar², Sastro Mustapa Wantu³, Yanti Aneta⁴

¹⁻⁴ Universitas Negeri Gorontalo

Corresponding author: rizal@ubmg.ac.id

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the Interorganizational Relationship (IOR) strategy in the implementation of the Independent Learning (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka MBKM) policy at private universities (PTS) in Gorontalo Province, emphasizing the dimensions of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between organizations. In the context of MBKM, interorganizational relationships are key to expanding resource access, strengthening curriculum relevance, and improving the quality of experiential learning. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method in several private universities that have implemented the MBKM program in Gorontalo. Informants were purposively selected from the leadership of private universities, LLDIKTI Region XVI, and APTISI Gorontalo Region, with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. The results show that coordination between private universities is facilitated by APTISI and LLDIKTI through meeting forums that regularly discuss MBKM implementation, so that communication flows and information exchange are relatively well established. However, substantive cooperation and collaboration between private universities in the form of student exchanges and lecturer teaching outside their home base have hardly materialized, although these two indicators have great potential for development based on the MBKM Key Performance Indicators. Field findings reveal that weak cooperation and collaboration are influenced by institutional egos, competitive tendencies in student recruitment, similar capacities and resources across private universities, and complex internal bureaucracy. This study confirms that the success of MBKM implementation in Gorontalo's private universities is largely determined by the institution's ability to build inter-organizational networks that are not only coordinative but also collaborative and mutually beneficial in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Interorganizational Relationship, Coordination, Cooperation, Collaboration, Independent Learning Independent Campus, Private Universities, Gorontalo

1. INTRODUCTION

The Independent Learning and Independent Campus (MBKM) policy, launched in 2020, is intended to address the challenge of low university graduate readiness in entering the dynamic, digital-based workforce [1]. MBKM grants universities greater autonomy and the right to study three semesters outside of their study program through various activities such as internships, research, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurship, student exchanges, and village development. This policy requires transformation not only at the curriculum level but also in governance and inter-organizational collaboration networks, particularly between universities and the business and industrial world, local governments, and community organizations [2][3].

Intensive collaboration with stakeholders is crucial for improving the quality of learning and preparing graduates to face the dynamics of global change. Through the active involvement of business and industry, local governments, professional institutions, and community groups, universities can enrich their curricula with real-world experiences, current competency needs, and the latest technological developments. Sustainable partnerships enable the development of internship programs, problem-based projects, guest lectures by practitioners, and applied research

that directly hone students' critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration skills. Thus, graduates not only master theoretical knowledge but also possess hard and soft skills relevant to job market demands and global challenges such as digital disruption, economic transformation, and rapid socio-cultural change. Well-designed collaborations also help universities build adaptive, innovative, and responsive learning ecosystems, thus preparing graduates to become lifelong learners capable of adapting, innovating, and contributing in various local, national, and international contexts [4]

In practice, the implementation of MBKM at various universities faces several obstacles, including institutional unpreparedness, limited resources, collaboration that is still administrative in nature, and capacity disparities between public and private universities, especially those outside Java. This phenomenon is also evident in Gorontalo Province, which has four public universities and ten private universities. Most private universities have only begun adopting MBKM gradually since 2021 and still face various institutional, curriculum, human resource, funding, and partnership network issues. An internal report from Gorontalo's private universities indicates that the main challenges to MBKM implementation lie in weak cross-organizational collaboration networks, a lack of MoUs/MoAs with strategic partners, and limited infrastructure to support off-campus learning.

Within the framework of public administration and governance networks, MBKM policies can be understood as policies that rely heavily on the ability of the actors involved to build sustainable cross-organizational relationships. The Interorganizational Relationship (IOR) theory emphasizes the importance of long-term coordination, cooperation, and collaboration as strategies for managing resource dependencies and achieving shared goals more effectively [5]. In Gorontalo Province, private universities are expected to be active collaborative nodes in the higher education policy network, but at the same time face capacity limitations and inter-institutional competition.

Based on this context, this article focuses on the analysis of the IOR strategy in the implementation of MBKM in PTS in Gorontalo by highlighting how coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between organizations are formed, managed, and contribute to program implementation. Specifically, this article highlights field findings related to: 1. strengthening coordination through the role of APTISI and LLDIKTI, 2. weak concrete cooperation between PTS in utilizing student and lecturer exchange schemes, and 3. the lack of growth of local strategic collaboration due to institutional egos, capacity homogeneity, and bureaucratic complexity. These findings are expected to provide practical contributions to the formulation of strategies for strengthening networks between PTS in order to optimize the implementation of MBKM in the region.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Interorganizational Relationships*

Interorganizational Relationship (IOR) refers to the long-term transactions, flows, and interrelationships between two or more organizations that influence each other in their environment. These relationships can take the form of collaborations, partnerships, alliances, networks, consortia, or coalitions involving public, business, and non-profit organizations. IOR studies focus on the patterns, origins, rationality, and consequences of these relationships on the performance of public policies and services [6].

In the context of public policy implementation, O'Toole and Montjoy emphasize that the more actors involved in a program's implementation, the greater the need for coordinated action across organizations. The complexity of inter-agency relationships reduces the dominance of a single actor and demands clear mechanisms for coordination, negotiation, and role allocation. Castaner and Oliveira then construct IOR into three main forms: coordination, cooperation, and collaboration, which are seen as the core of inter-organizational relationships [7].

In this study, the IOR framework is used to interpret the dynamics of the relationship between PTS, LLDIKTI, APTISI, local governments, and external partners in the implementation of MBKM in Gorontalo. Thus, IOR is understood not only as a formal relationship based on MoUs/MoAs, but also as a long-term process in managing the interdependence of resources and public objectives [8].

2.2 *Network Governance and Resource Dependencies*

Castaner and Oliveira [7] distinguishes three main dimensions in IOR: coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. Coordination focuses on the alignment of actions, the division of tasks, and integration mechanisms to prevent overlapping activities between organizations. Procedural coordination emphasizes the exchange of information, behavioral adjustments, and horizontal communication to produce a unified action strategy within the policy network.

Cooperation is understood as the willingness of actors to maximize mutual interests through fulfilling contractual obligations and contributing beyond the contract to support the effectiveness of the alliance. In cooperation, trust, interdependence, and a long-term orientation are essential to prevent opportunistic relationships. Strong cooperation allows organizations to share resources, information, and risks more equitably [6].

Collaboration is positioned as the most intense form of relationship because it involves the sharing of resources, risks, responsibilities, and the co-creation of innovation. Collaboration is understood as a process in which two or more organizations work together, not just side by side, to enhance public value and generate solutions to complex problems. Determinants of effective collaboration include shared vision, trust, clear governance mechanisms, and mutual benefits for all parties. In the context of private higher education institutions in Gorontalo, these three dimensions serve as a lens for assessing the extent to which inter-organizational relationships have moved from mere administrative coordination to strategic collaboration [9].

2.3 *Independent Learning Independent Campus MBKM*

The MBKM policy can be placed within the framework of network governance, a modern form of governance that emphasizes collaboration between state and non-state actors in formulating and implementing public policy. From this perspective, the policy process is no longer understood as the sole authority of the government, but rather as the result of networked interactions between ministries, universities, local governments, the business and industrial worlds, professional organizations, and community groups that share the resources, interests, and capacity to contribute. The government, in this case the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology,

acts as a facilitator coordinating various interests and resources across organizations, rather than as the sole controller of policy.

This facilitator role is reflected in the development of regulations, implementation guidelines, funding and incentive schemes, and the creation of various dialogue platforms and collaborative networks that enable universities and external partners to develop MBKM programs that are adaptive to local needs and global demands. Furthermore, universities and non-governmental partners are encouraged to become policy co-creators by initiating innovative learning models, internships, collaborative research, and community service projects that strengthen the relevance and quality of learning outcomes. Thus, the governance network in MBKM policies demands a more equal, trusting, and interdependent relationship between actors, so that policy implementation is not merely about compliance with regulations, but rather a truly collaborative process to improve the quality of higher education and the competitiveness of graduates.[10]The successful implementation of network policies such as MBKM depends on the quality of interaction, coordination, and trust between actors within the policy network [11].

At the same time, Resource Dependency theory emphasizes that organizations rely on their external environment for financial, information, technological, and human resources, necessitating the development of relationships with other actors to reduce uncertainty and dependency. In the context of private universities (PTS), which have relatively limited resources compared to state universities (PTN), the strategy of building collaborative networks and collaborations is an important instrument for strengthening the capacity for implementing MBKM. Thus, governance networks and resource dependency provide a theoretical basis for analyzing how PTS in Gorontalo utilize inter-organizational relationships to overcome internal limitations in implementing MBKM [8][12].

3. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type.[13]To understand in-depth the Interorganizational Relationship strategy in the implementation of MBKM at Private Universities in Gorontalo Province. A qualitative approach was chosen because the research focus lies on the process, meaning, and experiences of actors involved in the policy implementation network, rather than on quantitative measurement of variables. Qualitative descriptive research aims to describe phenomena as they are through data mining from natural contexts so that researchers can interpret the dynamics of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration between organizations in the implementation of MBKM [14].

Data were collected through three main techniques: in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation study. The in-depth interviews were conducted semi-structured to provide a guide for the researchers' questions while still allowing the informants to broadly explain their experiences and perspectives. Observations were conducted by directly observing MBKM implementation practices, coordination patterns between units within the university, and interactions between private universities and external partners in official forums and informal meetings. Documentation studies were conducted on various MBKM policy documents, cooperation agreements (MoUs and MoAs), internal university guidelines, and program implementation reports. Data validity was checked through triangulation of sources and methods to ensure the consistency and reliability of the research findings [15]

In addition, to enrich insight, interviews also involved teaching lecturers and student representatives participating in the MBKM program to evaluate the implementation of the course and formulate suggestions for future development [16]. Next, data analysis was conducted using descriptive qualitative methods, identifying patterns, themes, and categories from the collected data to build a comprehensive understanding of interorganizational strategies.[4]This research involved various stakeholders, including the rector, vice rectors, deans, the MBKM task force team, the head of the academic bureau, lecturers, and students, to gain a comprehensive perspective on the MBKM implementation strategy. Informant samples were determined using purposive sampling techniques for university leaders, lecturers, and study program partners, while random sampling was used for students [17]. The main focus of this research is to analyze the inter-organizational strategies implemented by PTS in Gorontalo in implementing the Independent Learning and Independent Campus policy, taking into account curriculum adaptation and resources [18], [19]. The data is then presented in the form of a thematic narrative and matrix that maps the relationships between actors, forms of inter-organizational relationships, and factors that strengthen or weaken IOR in the implementation of MBKM.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents field findings regarding the Interorganizational Relationship strategy in the implementation of MBKM in PTS in Gorontalo Province, with a focus on the dimensions of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors as revealed from interviews, observations, and documentation in several PTS and related institutions.

4.1 Coordination in the Implementation of MBKM

Coordination of MBKM implementation in PTS Gorontalo This coordination has generally been established through the role of LLDIKTI Region XVI and APTISI as hubs connecting various higher education institutions. This coordination is evident through the implementation of policy socialization, MBKM curriculum development workshops, and regular discussion forums that bring together PTS leaders to discuss program developments and obstacles. These forums facilitate the flow of information regarding the latest regulations, reporting mechanisms, and program support from the ministry, thereby reducing misunderstandings at the higher education level.

At the internal level of private universities (PTS), coordination is generally carried out through the formation of a dedicated unit or team to handle MBKM, such as the vice rector for academic affairs and MBKM, the head of the LPPPM (Lembaga Pendidikan Pendidikan/LPPPM), or the MBKM task force at the faculty and study program levels. This team's role is to integrate MBKM policies into the curriculum, develop standard operating procedures, and connect study programs with external partners. However, internal coordination still faces obstacles in the form of an organizational structure that is not yet fully adaptive, overlapping tasks with other units, and a lack of uniform understanding of MBKM principles among lecturers and education staff. This situation sometimes causes slow decision-making and information distribution, especially when it comes to approval of off-campus student activities and the recognition of their credits.

From the perspective of IOR and governance network theory, this coordination pattern demonstrates that relationships between actors have shifted from a mere hierarchical relationship to a network that emphasizes horizontal communication and mutual adjustment. However, the resulting coordination remains primarily focused on policy alignment and administrative adjustments, and has not yet fully addressed the design of a joint strategy across PTS to optimize the implementation of MBKM as a collective regional agenda.

4.2 Inter-organizational Cooperation

Inter-organizational collaboration in the implementation of MBKM in Gorontalo private universities is reflected in various formal documents, such as Memorandums of Understanding

(MoUs) and Memorandums of Agreement (MoA) between private universities and local governments, businesses and industry, educational institutions, and community organizations. Various collaboration agreements have been utilized for internship programs, thematic KKN (Community Service Program), teaching assistance, and humanitarian projects, particularly those involving local government agencies and elementary and secondary education institutions. This demonstrates that private universities have leveraged their existing networks to open up off-campus learning spaces for students.

However, substantive collaboration between private universities remains limited. Student exchanges between private universities in Gorontalo have not been optimal, nor has the MBKM (Mechanical Learning) scheme for lecturers teaching outside their home bases. A key finding is that private universities are more active in building vertical collaborations with government institutions and external partners outside the university environment, while horizontal collaboration between private universities often ceases at the level of document formalities and routine meetings. Institutional egos, concerns about potential student transfers, and the perception that private universities are in a competitive position are factors that hinder more open collaboration.

Internally, not all private universities have a clear mechanism for integrating collaborative outcomes into their curricula and academic information systems. Some existing collaborative programs lack a uniform quality assurance and credit recognition system, leaving their implementation at the discretion of individual study programs. This situation demonstrates that existing collaborations are still dominated by administrative dimensions and have not yet fully led to strategic synergies that could strengthen institutional capacity collectively.

4.3 Collaboration and Dynamics of the MBKM Network

Collaboration, the highest form of relationship within the IOR, which demands the sharing of resources, risks, and responsibilities, has not yet been fully realized among private universities in Gorontalo. Field findings indicate that cross-private collaboration in the form of joint programs, such as shared curricula, regional MBKM consortia, or integrated research and community service programs, remains very limited. Private universities tend to work independently to develop their MBKM models, despite facing relatively similar resource constraints.

However, the implementation of the MBKM program, which includes industrial internships, student exchanges, and research, relies heavily on collaboration with relevant partners to improve students' competencies and prepare them for the workforce [2].

Several factors inhibiting collaboration have been consistently identified. First, strong institutional egos, evident in private universities' preference for maintaining their own identities and brands and concerns about losing their competitive advantage if they open themselves too much to other universities. Second, the similarity in capacity and resources between private universities makes it difficult for each institution to position itself as a locomotive or anchor in collaboration; no single party is truly dominant in leading strategic alliances. Third, complex internal bureaucracy, particularly related to cross-unit decision-making and academic system adjustments, often hinders collaboration initiatives at the planning stage. Fourth, limited funding specifically for inter-campus MBKM collaboration reduces the incentive for private universities to design long-term joint programs. Fifth, a lack of comprehensive information regarding the concept and benefits of the MBKM program, as well as awareness of the urgency of integrating education with the needs of the workplace, also hinders MBKM implementation [16].

Other issues include curriculum adjustments, funding, partner exploration, and adjustments to academic information systems, which collectively make it difficult for universities, especially small institutions, to collaborate with large companies or other universities [20][21].

Castañer and Oliveira (Castañer, 2020) distinguish three main dimensions of IOR: coordination, cooperation, and collaboration. Coordination focuses on the alignment of actions, the division of tasks, and integration mechanisms to prevent overlapping activities between organizations. Procedural coordination emphasizes the exchange of information, behavioral

adjustments, and horizontal communication to generate a unified action strategy within the policy network. Meanwhile, cooperation goes further, involving a shared commitment to achieving collective goals through resource allocation and responsibility sharing, often focused on improving the quality of graduates and their relevance to industry needs [22].

Collaboration, as the highest form of IOR, is characterized by reciprocal interdependence, the formation of shared goals that transcend individual interests, and the restructuring of organizational activities and capabilities to achieve greater synergy.[23]. Nevertheless, there are several potential collaborations, such as thematic forums between APTISI and LLDIKTI, which have begun discussing the possibility of an MBKM consortium, as well as informal initiatives among private university leaders to mutually open up internship and research opportunities for students. If properly facilitated, these initiatives could develop into more structured collaborations, for example through a shared platform for student and lecturer exchanges at the regional level, or the development of shared learning modules that can be adopted across campuses.

4.4 Driving and Inhibiting Factors of IOR Strategy

The research findings confirm the importance of four key factors influencing successful coordination, cooperation, and collaboration: commitment, regulatory clarity, human resource capacity, and shared vision among partners. The commitment of PTS (Private Universities) and related institution leaders is evident in their willingness to attend coordination forums, allocate time and resources to develop the MBKM curriculum, and open up collaboration with external partners. Where this commitment is strong, MBKM implementation tends to be more progressive and inter-organizational relationships more stable. Conversely, in environments with weak commitment, MBKM programs operate merely as a formality to meet policy demands, without the support of innovation and strong relationships.

Clear regulations, both from the central government and from internal PTS policies, play a crucial role in reducing uncertainty among field actors in decision-making. Unclear technical guidelines regarding credit recognition, quality assurance of off-campus activities, and financing often lead to hesitation among study programs and lecturers about sending students off-campus or accepting students from other campuses. Human resource capacity, particularly among lecturers and program managers, is also a key determinant: campuses with management teams that understand the MBKM philosophy and possess strong managerial skills are better able to manage partner networks and transform formal partnerships into productive collaborations.

A shared vision between partners serves as a foundation for trust and long-term orientation. When private universities and external partners share a relatively aligned vision regarding the importance of improving student competency and creating public value, the negotiation process and role allocation become easier. On the other hand, differences in vision and priorities, for example between the university's academic orientation and the business orientation of industry partners, can hinder deepening collaboration. In Gorontalo's private universities, competition for new students and limited resources have led to a lack of shared vision among private universities regarding MBKM collaboration, resulting in relationships that have been established largely limited to coordination and cooperation.

4.5 Implications for Strengthening MBKM in PTS Gorontalo

Overall, the research results indicate that the implementation of MBKM in Gorontalo's private universities has triggered the formation of an increasingly intense network of inter-organizational relationships, particularly in the form of structured coordination and collaboration in various official forums and joint program initiatives. This dynamic is evident in the increasing frequency of communication between private universities and LLDIKTI, APTISI, local governments, the business and industrial sectors, and other partner institutions in the context of developing guidelines, synchronizing curriculums, and implementing off-campus learning activities. However, the intensity of these relationships is still dominated by administrative coordination patterns and

short-term project-based cooperation, so they do not fully reflect long-term, mutually reinforcing strategic collaboration.

To achieve MBKM's goals more optimally, a shift is needed from administrative relationships to strategic collaboration that truly shares resources, risks, and innovations between organizations. This shift requires a stronger commitment from PTS leaders to position MBKM as a strategic agenda for the institution, not simply to fulfill regulatory obligations or performance indicators. Furthermore, the development of clearer, more flexible internal regulations that favor the development of long-term partnerships is crucial to ensure that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of collaborative programs are not hampered by rigid bureaucratic procedures. Strengthening the human resources capacity of MBKM managers, both at the university and study program levels, is also a crucial prerequisite for them to be able to map potential partners, design mutually beneficial collaboration schemes, and manage interorganizational relationships professionally and sustainably.

The practical implication is that private universities in Gorontalo need to develop a more structured collaborative platform, for example, in the form of a regional MBKM consortium facilitated by LLDIKTI and APTISI as a space for coordination, negotiation, and joint innovation. Through this consortium, private universities can design and implement student and lecturer exchange programs, collaborative research, entrepreneurship incubation, and cross-campus community service projects designed based on the real needs of the community and the world of work in the Gorontalo region. At this point, the Interorganizational Relationship strategy is positioned not only as a response to resource limitations, but also as an instrument for transforming higher education governance to be more innovative, participatory, and oriented towards creating public value at the local level. Thus, MBKM has the potential to become a driving force for the formation of a higher education ecosystem that is collaborative and adaptive to change.

Discussion

The findings of this study confirm and enrich previous research on MBKM implementation in Indonesia. Consistent with Endang's 2020 findings, which showed that cross-organizational coordination in MBKM implementation is still suboptimal, the results from private universities in Gorontalo also show that the established coordination is only strong in terms of socialization and standardizing policy understanding, but has not yet fully addressed joint strategic planning across private universities. Coordination facilitated by LLDIKTI and APTISI has helped reduce regulatory uncertainty, but has not yet developed into a collective decision-making mechanism regarding MBKM program design at the regional level. In addition, the high resource dependency between PTS requires a more formal exchange of best practices so that managerial barriers in curriculum development can be overcome collectively [24], [25].

This research is also in line with studies that highlight that technical obstacles such as credit point conversion and student activity recognition are often rooted in a lack of collective commitment and alignment of vision among stakeholders at the university level [26]. Therefore, identifying the characteristics of strategic partners is a crucial step to ensure that the collaboration is not merely an administrative formality, but is able to provide substantial mutual benefits for improving the competency profile of graduates [15].

Furthermore, research emphasizing the need for increased university autonomy and strengthened inter-institutional coordination mechanisms to strengthen the MBKM implementation network is also reflected in the Gorontalo context. On the one hand, private universities (PTS) have been granted autonomy to develop their own MBKM models, but on the other hand, a sufficiently robust networking mechanism is not yet in place to integrate these initiatives into a collective movement at the regional level. As a result, PTS operate independently in developing curricula and establishing partnerships, thus the potential for synergy and efficiency through regional collaboration has not been optimally realized. This gap indicates the urgency of establishing a

structured coordination forum capable of facilitating a clear division of roles, particularly in optimizing the utilization of industry partners and government agencies spread across the region [27].

[28] highlighted weak collaboration mechanisms and low involvement of external partners as key obstacles to the effectiveness of MBKM. This finding is reinforced by research at Gorontalo private universities, which showed that in addition to limited substantive partnerships with business and industry, horizontal collaboration between private universities themselves remains weak. Institutional egos, concerns about competition in student recruitment, and shared capacity and limited resources make private universities cautious about opening up collaboration. This situation indicates that the challenges of MBKM lie not only in the technical aspects of implementation but also in the organizational culture and power relations within the higher education policy network. Therefore, strengthening inter-institutional trust through joint initiatives in collaborative curriculum development is an absolute prerequisite for transforming competition into productive synergy [28].

Compared to previous research, this study's significant contribution is its emphasis on four key factors: commitment, regulatory clarity, human resource capacity, and shared vision among partners, as determinants that bridge the shift from coordination and cooperation to sustainable collaboration. While previous research has focused more on weaknesses in coordination and cooperation, this study demonstrates that these factors operate across IOR dimensions and explain why many MBKM collaborations remain formal and do not develop into strategic collaborations. Thus, this study broadens the discourse on MBKM implementation beyond the issue of internal university readiness to address network governance and the quality of inter-organizational relationships at the regional level.

From the perspective of network governance and resource dependency theory, these findings reinforce the view that universities cannot rely solely on internal capabilities to address the complexity of MBKM policies. However, contrary to the common assumption that resource limitations automatically encourage collaboration, the case of Gorontalo's private universities demonstrates that limitations can actually lead to defensiveness and competitiveness if not balanced with collective commitment and adequate network facilitation. This means that the need for shared resources is not enough to foster collaboration; it must be combined with an institutional design that fosters equality, trust, and a shared vision among stakeholders.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Interorganizational Relationship strategy in the implementation of MBKM in private universities in Gorontalo Province has formed an increasingly intense network of interorganizational relationships, but the quality of these relationships still relies on administrative coordination and cooperation. Coordination facilitated by LLDIKTI and APTISI is important for aligning policy understanding, but has not been able to orchestrate a collective MBKM strategy at the regional level.

While private universities (PTS) have leveraged collaboration with external partners to support various forms of MBKM activities, horizontal relationships between them, such as student exchanges, cross-campus teaching, and joint MBKM programs, remain very limited. Strategic collaboration has yet to emerge due to institutional egos, capacity gaps, internal bureaucracy, and a lack of funding incentives for long-term collaboration.

Compared to previous research, this study broadens our understanding of MBKM implementation by demonstrating that the success of interorganizational relationships is determined not only by the presence or absence of coordination and cooperation, but also by the quality of commitment, regulatory clarity, human resource capacity, and shared vision among partners. These four factors act as levers that can transform formal cooperation into productive and sustainable collaboration if consciously managed by stakeholders.

- 1) Practically, the results of this study indicate the need for: Development of a more institutionalized inter-campus MBKM collaboration platform at the regional level, facilitated by LLDIKTI and APTISI
- 2) Developing internal PTS regulations that are more adaptive to the cross-campus MBKM scheme, including credit recognition mechanisms and joint quality assurance.
- 3) Strengthening the capacity of MBKM human resources through network management training, partnership negotiations, and collaborative program design.
- 4) Systematic efforts to foster a collaborative culture among private universities so that they view other campuses as strategic partners in improving quality and competitiveness, not merely as competitors.

With these steps, the Interorganizational Relationship strategy has the potential to become an important instrument for transforming the implementation of MBKM in Gorontalo PTS from individual and partial practices to collaborative, integrated practices, and oriented towards creating broader public value.

The research findings confirm the importance of four key factors influencing successful coordination, cooperation, and collaboration: commitment, regulatory clarity, human resource capacity, and shared vision among partners. The commitment of PTS (Private Universities) and related institution leaders is evident in their willingness to attend coordination forums, allocate time and resources to develop the MBKM curriculum, and open up collaboration with external partners. Where this commitment is strong, MBKM implementation tends to be more progressive and inter-organizational relationships more stable. Conversely, in environments with weak commitment, MBKM programs operate merely as a formality to meet policy demands, without the support of innovation and strong relationships. Furthermore, regulatory clarity and a shared understanding of learning outcomes and inter-institutional collaboration schemes are essential prerequisites for minimizing ambiguity and increasing partner participation.[29]

Increasing understanding of the MBKM concept among university leaders, faculties, study programs, and lecturers is crucial to ensure alignment in program implementation and prevent the perception that MBKM hinders the achievement of the established graduate profile.[26] Overall, the research results indicate that the implementation of MBKM in Gorontalo's private universities has triggered the formation of an increasingly intense network of inter-organizational relationships, particularly in the form of coordination and cooperation. However, to achieve MBKM goals more optimally, a shift from administrative relationships to strategic collaboration that truly shares resources, risks, and innovation is needed. This requires strengthening leadership commitment, developing clearer and more flexible internal regulations, increasing the capacity of MBKM human resources, and building a shared long-term vision between private universities and external partners.

For this reason, it is necessary to adapt the curriculum that is responsive to the dynamics of industrial needs as well as increase the active participation of partners in designing and evaluating learning programs [30]. Optimizing the implementation of the MBKM program also requires comprehensive outreach at the university, faculty, and study program levels to achieve a common perception among all policymakers [31].

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author expresses his gratitude to God Almighty for His abundant grace and blessings, enabling the successful completion of this scientific article on interorganizational relationship strategies in the implementation of Independent Learning and Independent Campus (MBKM) at private universities in Gorontalo Province. This article would not have been possible without the support, assistance, and cooperation of various parties involved, both directly and indirectly.

The author would like to express his sincere gratitude to the leaders of private universities in Gorontalo Province who have provided the opportunity, support, and access for the author to collect data through interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Special appreciation is also extended to key informants, starting from the vice-chancellors, deans, heads of study programs, managers of MBKM centers, to lecturers and education staff who have taken the time, shared experiences, and provided critical views on the dynamics of coordination, cooperation, and collaboration in the implementation of MBKM.

The author also thanks LLDIKTI Region XVI and APTISI Gorontalo for providing various information, guidance, and facilitation during the research process, allowing the author to gain a more comprehensive understanding of MBKM policies and implementation at the regional level. Furthermore, the author extends his deepest appreciation to his colleagues at Bina Mandiri University Gorontalo (or your institution) who consistently provided input, scientific discussions, and moral support throughout the preparation of this article.

Finally, the author would like to express his gratitude to his family for their constant prayers, encouragement, and understanding throughout the research and writing of this article. He acknowledges that this article still has various limitations; therefore, constructive suggestions and criticism are highly appreciated for the improvement of the writing and the development of further research.

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