

# Transformation of Student Work Readiness Post Internship

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to deeply understand the transformation of post-internship student readiness that focuses on changes in self-perception, development of interpersonal skills and instilling a work ethic. The basis of this study is the doubt in the implementation of the internship program which is an integral component of the higher education curriculum regarding the extent to which this experience can effectively form holistic readiness in students for the real world of work and the gap between expectations and reality in the work environment which often makes students less prepared for the world of work. The research method used is qualitative with a phenomenological approach. The sampling technique used a purposive sampling technique of five students who had completed a three-month internship program. Data were collected through interviews, documents in the form of internship reports and other references related to this study. The results of the study revealed that the internship program can significantly increase students' confidence in applying theoretical knowledge to work practices; there is an increase in communication and teamwork skills, fostering a professional work ethic and the ability to adapt to a dynamic work environment. The conclusion is that the internship program activities are a valuable experience for students and function as a crucial catalyst in the transformation of students' work readiness. A significant impact for higher education institutions to design more effective internship programs to maximize their experience. For companies, it is expected to be able to develop internship programs that are more structured and oriented towards human resource development. This can contribute to the creation of a more adaptive workforce that is ready to face global challenges.

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## 1. Introduction

Facing very high and tight job competition, college graduates not only have academic knowledge but also work readiness to contribute directly in the professional world. However, the transition from college to the work environment often presents extraordinary and significant challenges because the theories obtained during college are not necessarily fully aligned with the practical reality and demands of the work world. In this context, Internships play an important role as a bridge between formal education and the needs of the job market. This program is designed to equip

final year students with real work experience, train practical skills and build professional networks before they enter the world of work.

Although internships are widely recognized as an important component of the curriculum, many questions have been raised about the extent to which these programs can transform the work readiness of final year students. Internships are a mandatory extracurricular activity implemented in various universities. With this program, it is hoped that it can close the gap between the competencies taught during lectures and employer expectations and provide students with the opportunity to gain direct work experience in the world of work so that challenges such as lack of work experience, lack of adaptation skills to work culture, or inability to collaborate effectively are still often faced by new graduates. These challenges can be overcome through this program and foster work readiness for final year students. Work readiness is a person's ability or capability to increase their work capacity, which includes knowledge, skills and attitudes (Juniyanto et al., 2024). Therefore, this study focuses on the analysis of the transformation of work readiness of final year students after they complete their internship. The purpose of this study is to determine the work readiness of final year students after their internship.

## 2. Literature Review

Work readiness is a condition that shows that there is a work harmony between physical maturity, mental maturity and learning experience, so that individuals have the ability to carry out an activity in relation to work (Muspawi & Lestari, 2020). According to Setiarini et al, work readiness is the ability of a student to be able to enter a company after graduating without requiring a long adaptation period in the work environment which is supported by physical and mental maturity, as well as learning experience according to the needs of the world of work (Fadillah et al., 2025).

Work readiness is a multidimensional construct based on the work readiness scale, there are four main dominant factors, namely technical ability, ability to interact socially, personal character such as self-confidence and responsibility, and understanding of organizational norms and culture (Azhar et al., 2025). Pool and Sewell said that overall work readiness consists of four main aspects, namely skills, knowledge, understanding and personal personality attributes (Muspawi & Lestari, 2020). The same thing was expressed by Farenanda Kusuma Wardani et al. (2021) There are four aspects, namely resilience, maturity, motivation and interpersonal skills.

According to Kardimin, there are two factors that influence work readiness, namely internal factors (physical maturity, mental maturity, pressure, creativity, interests, talents, independence and mastery of knowledge) and external factors (role of society, family, school facilities and infrastructure, information about the world of work and work experience) (Wahyuni et al., 2021).

The conceptual framework in this research focuses on the personal experiences and perceptions of students who have participated in an internship program. Important elements in the research consist of the student's initial condition before the internship, the internship experience which is a transformation process and the student's work readiness after completing the internship program.

**Figure 1.** Conceptual Framework



## 3. Method, Data, and Analysis

This study uses a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This approach was chosen because its main focus is to understand and interpret individual life experiences and the meaning they give to those experiences. The sampling technique used purposive sampling. This means

that participants were selected intentionally based on criteria that are relevant to the research objectives. The main data sources in this study were five students of the Office Administration Study Program at ITSNU Pekalongan who had completed a three-month internship program. The types of data used were primary data in the form of interviews and observations, while secondary data were in the form of research journals and final internship reports for triangulation and to enrich understanding (Misno et al., 2021).

#### 4. Result and Discussion

At this stage, it will provide in-depth analysis results of the findings conducted by researchers through interviews and observations. A total of five respondents were final year students from the D-3 Office Administration study program who had participated in field work practice activities. To obtain the results of the analysis in this study, the researcher used four aspects, namely technical skills, social interaction skills, personal character and understanding of organizational norms and culture (Azhar et al., 2025).

**The first aspect: technical skills.** There are several technical skills that I need to pay attention to when carrying out my internship, one of which is the use of computer devices because all work activities use computer devices with Microsoft Word and Google Spreadsheet applications, said subject A. While subject P stated that the ability to operate and understand the workflow can help me in carrying out correspondence activities both manually and digitally. In line with what was expressed by C, in addition to mastering information technology, we are required to master basic skills to support smooth work. The main skill factor possessed to carry out work activities according to subject M in the interview is computer and communication skills. During my internship, I was given the task of managing and inputting documents into the system, said subject L.

Based on the interview results, it was concluded that students need to master technical skills to carry out office operational activities such as the ability to operate computers and process data. This is reinforced by the results of Yunia et.al's research showing that hard skills and self-efficacy partially have a significant positive effect on students' work readiness (Ratuela et al., 2022). In line with what Cici and Syafrudin said, soft skills and hard skills have a positive and significant effect on readiness, meaning that the better the soft skills and hard skills, the better a person's work readiness and can compete in the world of work (C. N. I. Sari & Manunggal, 2023). Research conducted by Nurbaiti and Almira stated that hard skills, soft skills and self-efficacy together have a positive influence on the work readiness of final year students of FEB Higher Education in Bandar Lampung City (Nurbaiti & Putri, 2024).

**Second aspect: ability to interact socially.** During the internship, I tried to establish good social relationships with the employees there. I always maintained a polite, friendly attitude and appreciated every direction given to me. In addition, I also tried to be cooperative and help each other when needed, said subject A. Through daily interactions, I learned to socialize and practice communicating with coworkers who are older than me and learned to adapt to a professional work environment, said subject P.

Valuable experience when I was doing internship because at the beginning of the activity I felt nervous to interact with new people but over time I started to adjust and learn to interact with coworkers at the internship place said subject C. During the field work practice, I had coworkers who were not very close so I felt awkward but over time I learned to adapt said subject M. At the field work practice place, I interacted well with coworkers sometimes I offered help to coworkers who were having difficulties said subject L.

Based on the results of research conducted by Widia and Dahyatul, they said that the basic interaction skills aspect has a very important role in a person's work readiness (Ardias & Qolbi, 2022). In line with what Yaula and Wisudani said, in the current era of job competition, not only technical skills are needed for job readiness, but mental, social and digital readiness need to be considered by graduates

so that they can compete competitively (Octhaviana & Rahmaningtyas, 2025). Research from Jihan et. al (2021) revealed that the emotional intelligence possessed by the millennial generation has a positive influence on their readiness to work.

**The third aspect: personal character.** The current global demands for character education and professional readiness of students are two important aspects in forming quality individuals who are ready to face challenges in the world of work. (Khodijah et al., 2024).

Accuracy and precision are the main factors in carrying out work, if negligent and not careful then it will impact performance said subject P. In the world of work, a professional attitude, discipline and responsibility in carrying out work are demands that must be possessed by every employee said subject A. In addition, personal characters that need to be possessed by employees are establishing good communication, responsive and friendly said subject M. The same thing was conveyed by subject C that doing and completing work on time, discipline, responsibility, tenacity and politeness are important points that must be possessed by students who are undergoing field work practice. The same thing was expressed by subject L where discipline, responsibility, politeness and being able to work together and adapt quickly support the smoothness of internships and work so that professionals are created in the world of work.

Based on the interview, it can be strengthened from the results of previous research that the character education possessed by a person has a big influence on the work readiness of graduates. This is supported by the research results of Husnita and Suparno (2020). In line with what Polinggapo et.al expressed (2024) that work readiness is related to psychological aspects of a person, it was found that the personality dimensions of the big five personality have a strong relationship. The higher the tendency of students to have openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion and agreeableness personalities, the higher their work readiness. However, the lower the tendency of students to have neuroticism personalities, the higher the student's work readiness.

**Fourth aspect: understanding organizational norms and culture.** Organizational culture according to Jones is a set of general values and norms that regulate interactions between members of the organization with vendors, consumers, and other individuals outside the organization (A. P. Sari et al., 2021). Organizational culture is an opportunity to build human resources through aspects of changes in attitudes and behavior, which are expected and adapting to current and future challenges (Azbari et al., 2019). Based on the study, there is a positive correlation with the findings of researchers in the field, where respondents conveyed their adjustment to the new environment. This is evidenced by the results of the interviews that have been conducted.

To understand the organizational culture where I am doing my internship, I first observe the work patterns that have been formed, said M. Similar to what was expressed by C, namely at the beginning of carrying out my internship activities, I pay attention to the applicable rules and customs, if I do not understand the rules, I ask politely to the leader or co-workers at the field work practice location. When I experience obstacles in carrying out my work, I do not hesitate to ask politely to my co-workers, said A. Responsiveness and adaptability are always my priorities during my internship activities, this is part of the organizational culture where I work, said L. I adjust myself and observe the organizational culture at the internship location so that I do not make mistakes due to carelessness, said P.

The results of the interview obtained an analysis that organizational culture as a reference in behavior so that it can prepare students to enter the world of work. The existence of an internship program is expected to describe the problems and tasks that exist in the world of work so that they can be better prepared in the future. So the research conducted by Ana et.al (2024) conveyed that there is a significant positive influence of organizational culture on the readiness of prospective workers.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestion

The high job competition and unemployment rate among college graduates that occur today, then the readiness of students to work needs to be prepared since they are in college. To overcome

this condition, there needs to be a work preparation program that is needed by final year students, one of which is an internship program. The internship program influences the transformation of students' readiness to work, besides that this program also plays a crucial role in bridging the gap between academic theory and real world work practices. Post-internship transformation is seen in the increase in hard skills, significant development of soft skills, a better understanding of work culture and a shift in mindset from academic to professional. Therefore, the internship program has a positive impact on students in readiness to work. To obtain the impact of this program, higher education institutions must be able to design more effective internship programs so that they can maximize their experience and for companies it is expected to be able to develop internship programs that are more structured and oriented towards human resource development. This can contribute to the creation of a more adaptive workforce and ready to face global challenges..

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