

Implementation of the Merdeka Campus Internship Program to Develop Self-Directed Learning

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Abstract

The Merdeka Campus Internship Program at Yudharta Pasuruan University is part of an effort to enhance the quality of education by integrating academic theory and real-world practical experience in the workplace. Although the academic curriculum provides a foundation of knowledge, students often struggle to develop learning independence and professional skills when facing real challenges in the field. This issue encourages the need for a systematic and structured internship program to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The aim of this research is to analyze the design, implementation, and evaluation of the internship program in improving students' learning independence and their readiness to face the workforce. The research method used is descriptive-qualitative, with data collection through observations of internship activities, logbooks, weekly reports, and interviews with students, supervising lecturers, and industry supervisors. Data analysis is conducted by linking field findings to Kolb's Experiential Learning principles, which include concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation. The research results show that the internship program effectively reinforces the principles of Experiential Learning, where students are able to apply theory to practice, reflect on experiences, develop improvement strategies, and enhance self-directed learning. The evaluations conducted collaboratively between lecturers and industry partners also strengthen the development of technical competencies and soft skills, including creativity, initiative, teamwork, and professionalism..

Keyword: Internship Program, Independent Campus, Self-Directed Learning



INTRODUCTION

Higher education in the era of globalization is required to produce graduates who not only master theory but are also able to apply knowledge practically (Aktas et al., 2017; Bound et al., 2021; Larsen & Larsen, 2016). Students need to be guided to have strong learning independence in facing the challenges of changing times. The dynamics of industry, technology, and society demand graduates who are ready to adapt quickly. Higher education institutions have a significant responsibility to prepare students with balanced academic and non-academic skills (Rahayu et al., 2024). One approach that has become increasingly common is connecting students directly to the workforce. This approach is seen as effective in strengthening real and relevant learning experiences (Ita Aristia Saida, Naning Kurniawati, 2025; Molderez & Fonseca, 2018). Through practical experience, students are expected to enhance their problem-solving skills and critical thinking. This condition aligns with the direction of higher education in Indonesia, which now emphasizes Independent Learning - Independent Campus (MBKM).

The Independent Learning Campus Independent Program is a government policy that provides opportunities for students to learn outside the classroom (Nani Sintiawati, Saktika Rohmah Fajarwati, Agus Mulyanto, Kingking Muttaqien, 2022; Ramadhan, Syahrul; Megawati, 2023; Simatupang & Yuhertiana, 2021). One of its implementations is internships in various institutions, both private and public. Internships within the framework of MBKM are not just an academic supplement, but a medium for contextual learning (NURAINI, Umi; SULIKAH, 2025). Students are challenged to take an active role in developing their learning independence (Myktytn et al., 2024; Puspitasari et al., 2023; Sholeh, 2025). They are required to strategize their learning, adapt to work rhythms, and be responsible for their tasks. Thus, internships become an important means of honing self-management skills. In addition, students have the opportunity to build social and professional networks that are beneficial for the future. Therefore, internship programs are an important part of transforming higher education in Indonesia.

Student learning independence is an important aspect that determines the quality of higher education (Magnusson & Zackariasson, 2019; Mykolaivna, 2018). Independent students are typically able to manage their time, motivate themselves, and complete assignments effectively. This aligns with the demands of the job market that require graduates to be not only academically smart but also personally resilient. On the other hand, soft skills such as communication, leadership, and collaboration are also highly needed. These soft skills often become the distinguishing factor between successful graduates and those who are average. Internships provide opportunities for students to develop both aspects simultaneously (Ab et al.,





2024; Dewanti et al., 2024; WIJAYANTI, Atrianing Yessi; PRISTIWATI, Rahayu; SUBYANTORO, 2021). They not only learn to manage themselves but also interact with various parties in the workforce. Thus, internships become a strategic platform for building learning independence and soft skills concurrently.

Yudharta Pasuruan University, as one of the higher education institutions in East Java, has also implemented an internship program within the framework of the MBKM. Students from various faculties are given the opportunity to gain field experience relevant to their respective fields. This program is intended to provide practical work experience before students graduate. However, its implementation does not always go as expected. Some students still adopt a passive attitude and wait for directions without strong initiative. This hinders the goal of enhancing learning independence from being fully achieved. Similarly, with soft skills, some students still struggle to adapt to the work environment. This situation indicates the need for a thorough evaluation of the internship implementation at Yudharta Pasuruan University.

The research conducted by Aji Setyawan and Nurul Fatimah entitled Implementation of Self-Directed Learning Policy in the Internship Program (MSIB) at PT Mikro Bisnis Digital Sejahtera in 2024 shows that the Merdeka Belajar policy through the internship program has been well implemented. The findings explain that the internship program at PT Mikro Bisnis Digital Sejahtera successfully integrates the principles of experiential learning with active student involvement, thereby enhancing practical skills and work readiness. In addition, students are also required to produce a capstone project at the end of the program as a tangible form of applying theory into real work practices. Overall, the implementation of this program is considered effective in equipping students with direct experience, relevant competencies, and professional networks that are essential to face challenges in the industry(Setyawan & Fatimah, 2024).

The research conducted by Fahriany, Viviana Lisma Lestari, and Hasnan Yasin entitled Independent Learning-Independent Campus Curriculum: Students' Reflection on EFL Quality in English Education, published in 2023 in Al-Ishlah: Jurnal Pendidikan, shows that the majority of students in the English Education Department at UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta are already aware of the Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka program, although its implementation in the department remains very limited. Nevertheless, students still show great interest in the program as it is considered beneficial for developing knowledge, experiences, and skills relevant to their future careers. They believe that this program can enhance additional competencies, including soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and leadership, which are not fully acquired through regular coursework in the department(Lestari & Yasin, 2023).



The prominent research gap is the lack of studies linking internships to the enhancement of students' self-directed learning as well as their soft skills. Previous research often separates these two aspects, whereas they are closely related. Self-directed learning without soft skills results in students who are intelligent but less adaptive. Conversely, soft skills without self-directed learning only produce students who are communicative but unable to manage themselves. Therefore, there is a need for research that views both as a unity. This is important to see how internships can serve as a means of holistic learning. The context of Yudharta Pasuruan University is unique because it has not been extensively explored. This is what makes this research important to conduct.

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the role of the MBKM internship program in enhancing the self-directed learning and soft skills of students at Yudharta University Pasuruan. This study aims to add a new contribution to the literature by looking at both aspects in an integrated manner. Thus, this research does not only view internships from the perspective of work experience but also as a process of self-learning. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on the development of students in regional universities facing unique challenges. The research results are expected to provide practical insights for higher education managers. Furthermore, this study may enrich the academic discourse on MBKM in Indonesia. Finally, this research is also hoped to serve as a basis for the development of a more effective internship model in the future.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative research type with a case study approach, aimed at providing an in-depth description of the implementation of the Merdeka Campus internship program and its impact on students' learning independence (Atmowardoyo, 2018; Starman, 2013). The case study research design was chosen because it allows the researcher to explore the processes, interactions, and experiences of students in context at Yudharta Pasuruan University, including the relationships between students, supervising lecturers, and partner institutions during the internship program. The qualitative approach was selected because it enables the collection of rich narrative and descriptive data, allowing the researcher to understand the phenomenon in its entirety, including the dynamics, challenges, and management strategies of the internship program. With this design, the research not only emphasizes the final outcome but also the learning processes experienced by students in the real-world context.

The types of data collected in this study include primary and secondary data (Valdez et



al., 2022). Primary data is obtained directly from the student participants of the internship, field supervisors, program coordinators at Yudharta Pasuruan University, as well as from partner institutions where the students are interning. This data is collected through in-depth interviews to understand the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced during the internship, as well as observations of student activities in the field to see the actual implementation of the program. In addition, internal documents such as internship activity reports, evaluation notes, and students' daily journals also form part of the primary data. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from scientific literature related to self-directed learning, the Merdeka Learning–Independent Campus program guidelines, university policies, and results from previous research relevant to the development of students' competencies through internships.

Data collection techniques were conducted through semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and document studies (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021; Blee & Taylor, 2002). Interviews were conducted with student interns to understand their learning experiences, levels of independence, and challenges faced during the internship; with field supervisors to obtain academic perspectives on the effectiveness of the program; and with partner institutions to understand the supervision process and the integration of students into real work environments. Participatory observations were conducted on students at the internship sites, covering daily activities, interactions with staff and supervisors, as well as the application of skills acquired during lectures. Meanwhile, the documents analyzed included student internship activity reports, evaluation notes from supervising lecturers, students' daily journals, MBKM program guidelines, and university policy documents related to the internship implementation.

Data analysis is conducted through three main stages according to the Miles and Huberman model, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Ridder, 2014). In the data reduction stage, the researcher filters, selects, and focuses on relevant information from interviews, observations, and documents for easier analysis. The data presentation stage is carried out by organizing information in the form of narratives, tables, or matrices that facilitate the identification of patterns, relationships, and important findings related to the implementation of the internship program and students' learning independence. The final stage, conclusion drawing or verification, is done to systematically interpret the findings and ensure consistency between the data and the conclusions drawn. The theoretical framework used includes the theory of learning independence, the concept of experiential learning, and the principles of implementing the MBKM program as a conceptual foundation. The credibility of the data is maintained through





triangulation of sources, techniques, and time, as well as member checks and audit trails, so that the research results have high validity and can accurately depict the actual conditions in the field.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Design of the Independent Campus Internship Program in Enhancing Self-Learning Independence

The design of the Merdeka Campus internship program at Yudharta University Pasuruan is built on the philosophy that students' learning experiences are not solely obtained in the classroom. This program is designed to provide alternative learning spaces that allow students to interact directly with the working world, enabling them to develop self-directed learning through real practice (Adinda & Mohib, 2020; Van Woezik et al., 2019). The internship curriculum is arranged not just as a supplement to courses, but as an integral part of the academic system that connects theory with practice. Thus, students not only master conceptual knowledge but are also trained in problem-solving, decision-making, and independent task management. The primary orientation of this design is to shape students who are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning process and ready to adapt to the dynamics of the professional environment.

The implementation of campus-based internships is systematically regulated through the stages of socialization, selection, training, placement, monitoring, and evaluation. Socialization is conducted by the faculty and study programs to provide a comprehensive understanding to students about the objectives, procedures, and benefits of internships. In the selection stage, students are assessed not only based on academic achievements such as GPA and credit hours but also on mental readiness, communication skills, and learning motivation. Training is provided so that students understand work ethics, discipline, and how to learn in a new environment that requires independence. Student placement is carried out according to their field of study and interests, allowing them to directly connect academic knowledge with practical experiences in the field.

To support independent learning, Yudharta University Pasuruan collaborates with various strategic partners, including government agencies, Islamic boarding schools, Islamic financial institutions, village-owned enterprises, cooperatives, and private companies. This diversity of partners provides students with opportunities to choose internship locations that align with their interests and competencies. Placement relevant to their field of study encourages students to learn independently, as they are faced with real challenges that do not





always conform to classroom theory. For instance, students of Islamic economics placed in PT. REVOLUSI CITA EDUKASI are required to understand sharia-based financial practices, while engineering students interning at manufacturing companies must adapt to modern production systems.

Students' learning independence is increasingly honed through the guidance mechanisms applied in the internship program. Supervising lecturers act as mentors who accompany students, not just as monitors. They provide initial directions, monitor progress, and conduct evaluations, but still allow ample space for students to find their own solutions to problems in the field. Industrial partners also play an important role as practical mentors, equipping students with real experiences. The collaboration between lecturers and partners creates a learning ecosystem that encourages students to be independent, while also having a consultation pathway if they face challenges that cannot be solved on their own.

The design of this internship program emphasizes the creation of project-based learning experiences. Students are not only assigned administrative tasks but are also involved in work that requires initiative, creativity, and personal responsibility. For example, students placed in TV 9 are asked to develop marketing strategies for local products, while law students at the religious court must assist in the administrative process of cases according to work standards. Direct involvement in real projects trains students to plan, implement, and evaluate their own work results, thus creating a more active, critical, and achievement-oriented learning attitude.

The internship duration set for a full semester, around 4–6 months, provides an opportunity for students to truly adapt to the work culture. The internship schedule, which follows the working hours of the partners, requires students to manage their time with discipline, manage their energy, and balance work with personal needs. This situation indirectly fosters independence, as students must take full responsibility for their own work and study rhythms. The longer the internship duration, the stronger the students become in developing systematic, consistent, and integrated self-study habits within a professional environment.

In addition, the internship program design of the Merdeka Campus at Yudharta Pasuruan University also provides a very important space for reflective thinking to develop learning independence. Students are required to compile daily logbooks, weekly reports, and final internship reports that connect field experiences with academic theories. This reflective process encourages students to evaluate themselves, recognize their strengths and weaknesses, and design improvement strategies for the future. Reflection becomes a means of internalizing knowledge, where students not only record what they do but also critique how they learn and how those experiences contribute to their personal development.





The design of the Merdeka Campus internship program at Yudharta University Pasuruan has proven effective in fostering students' learning independence. With a combination of academic curriculum, guidance from lecturers, support from partners, and real experiences in the field, students transform into more independent, creative individuals who take responsibility for their learning process. This program not only prepares them to graduate with academic grades but also shapes graduates who are ready to compete in the workforce. Through careful design, structured implementation, and deep reflection, Yudharta University Pasuruan has turned the internship program into a strategic instrument to produce a competitive, adaptive young generation that is oriented towards lifelong learning.

The Implementation of the Independent Campus Internship Program in Enhancing Self-Learning Independence

The implementation of the Merdeka Campus internship program at Yudharta University Pasuruan begins with the registration stage of students through PMMB (Student Internship and Scholarship Acceptance). At this stage, students who wish to participate in the internship program are required to meet a number of academic requirements set by the university. These requirements include the selection of courses relevant to the internship field and the adjustment of the KRS (Student Academic Plan) to comply with the program provisions. In addition, students must also obtain approval from their academic advisors to ensure that the internship activities align with their learning objectives. This preparation process provides a solid foundation for students to be ready to face the internship activities academically, while also ensuring that each student has an adequate understanding of the responsibilities and learning targets they will achieve during the program.

In addition to academic requirements, students are also required to prepare administrative documents as part of the registration process, which include a curriculum vitae (CV), an internship cover letter, and a proposal for activities containing clear objectives and learning plans. These documents not only serve as formalities but also become initial evaluation tools for the university and partner institutions in assessing the students' readiness to enter the workforce. With well-prepared administrative documentation, students can demonstrate their commitment and seriousness in participating in the internship program, while also providing an initial overview of their abilities to plan and carry out learning activities independently. This systematic initial stage becomes an important foundation for ensuring that the entire internship process can run effectively, measurably, and provide optimal benefits for the development of students' academic and professional competencies.





The second stage in the implementation of the internship program is the administrative and academic selection, which is carried out in an integrated manner by the university and the partner institution. At this stage, each student is evaluated based on the suitability of their academic background with the chosen field of internship, the availability of positions at the partner institution, and their readiness to work in a professional environment. This selection not only assesses the completeness of administrative documents but also evaluates the students' ability to plan and prepare activity proposals systematically. This careful selection process ensures that each accepted student possesses adequate basic competencies, a mental readiness to face the challenges of the working world, and the ability to follow the procedures and regulations applicable at the partner institution.

In addition, the selection stage also becomes an important moment to align the learning objectives of students with the needs of partner institutions. The assessment is conducted comprehensively, starting from the review of administrative documents, suitability of the fields of study, to the readiness of students to adapt to a dynamic work environment. In this process, the university emphasizes the importance of clarity in goals and learning targets, so that students who pass the selection can carry out the internship program with a structured and measurable plan. This comprehensive selection not only serves as an administrative filter but also as an initial mentoring tool for students to understand professional responsibilities, increase motivation for independent learning, and prepare themselves to face real work situations in partner institutions. Thus, the selection stage becomes an important foundation that determines the quality and success of the implementation of the entire Kampus Merdeka internship program.

After passing the selection, students enter the internship stage, which is the core of the Merdeka Campus program, lasting 4 to 6 months or equivalent to 1 to 2 semesters and 20 credits. At this stage, students work directly with partner institutions that have established cooperation with the university, allowing them to gain real experience in facing the dynamics of the working world. The internship activities include the application of academic theory to practice, the development of technical skills, as well as the familiarization of soft skills such as communication, time management, initiative-taking, and the ability to work independently as well as collaboratively. This process gives students the opportunity to learn actively and independently, while honing their problem-solving skills in a professional context. In addition, students are also required to create a daily logbook as documentation of activities, achievement of targets, and reflections on the learning they undergo, so that each activity can be monitored systematically and the learning outcomes can be measured clearly.





The internship stage not only emphasizes technical skills but also shapes students' professional attitudes and work ethics. Students learn to adapt to the work culture of partner institutions, understand the applicable procedures and regulations, and build effective interactions with staff and supervisors. This activity provides a comprehensive learning experience, as students are confronted with real challenges that require the precise application of theory, independent decision-making, and productive collaboration in teams. With this extensive practical experience, students can optimally develop self-directed learning, enhance their sense of responsibility, and prepare themselves to meet professional demands in the future. This hands-on experience in the field becomes an important foundation for students to integrate academic knowledge with real work practices holistically.

The assessment stage is an important phase in the implementation of the Merdeka Campus internship program, where supervising lecturers from the university and supervisors from partner institutions jointly evaluate the students' competency achievements. This assessment covers various aspects, ranging from self-directed learning, the ability to complete tasks independently, to the quality of students' interactions with staff and supervisors at partner institutions. Moreover, students' compliance with rules and work procedures also serves as an important indicator in assessing their professionalism. Evaluation is conducted through direct observation, daily logbook reviews, as well as formal assessments through exams or specific assignments that have been predetermined. With this comprehensive assessment method, universities can ensure that students not only master theory but are also capable of effectively applying that knowledge in real work environments.

In addition to technical aspects, the assessment stage also emphasizes reflection on students' learning experiences during their internship. Supervisors and supervising lecturers provide constructive feedback to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for development that need improvement. This comprehensive assessment not only serves as a basis for determining graduation or grade conversion, but also as a development tool for students to continually enhance their professional competencies. With a transparent and objective evaluation process, students gain a clear understanding of their achievements, as well as encouragement to keep improving both technical and non-technical skills, so that the internship experience becomes not just an academic formality, but also a means of strengthening independence, professionalism, and readiness to face the challenges of the job market.

After the assessment stage is completed, students are required to compile a PDDikti report as official documentation of all internship activities. This report includes a summary of the activities undertaken, target achievements, learning experiences gained, and challenges







observations at the internship location but also includes academic assessments through reports and seminars conducted by students at the university. By involving various parties, the evaluation process can provide an objective picture of students' abilities to apply theory to practice, while also assessing their readiness to face professional challenges in the real working world.

The internship evaluation emphasizes the comprehensive development of students' competencies, including both hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills encompass relevant technical knowledge and skills related to the internship field, while soft skills include professional attitudes, adaptability, communication, and teamwork. With this comprehensive evaluation approach, students are assessed not only on their technical abilities but also on their capacity to work independently, interact with the professional environment, and manage their learning processes independently. This initial evaluation stage is an important foundation to ensure that the entire internship assessment can be conducted objectively, transparently, and provide maximum benefits for the development of students' competencies.

The assessment of internship or practicum performance of students is taken from three main sources, namely the industry side (supervising lecturer from the industry), the field supervisor from UYP, and the supervising lecturer from the course. The assessment composition is set at a minimum of 40% from the industry side and a maximum of 60% from the supervisors, thus reflecting a balance between the professional perspective in the workforce and the academic perspective of the university. This system ensures that students receive a comprehensive and fair evaluation, as their performance is assessed based on real experiences in the field as well as from academic achievements that align with learning objectives. This assessment becomes an important indicator to measure how effectively students apply academic theory in practice, manage tasks independently, and adapt to the professional environment in partner institutions.

The industry provides an assessment through the Internship or Work Practice Performance Assessment form, which must be submitted no later than two weeks after the internship activities are completed. This form is written with a pen, signed by the field supervisor, and stamped by the partner institution to ensure the validity of the assessment. The evaluation components from the industry include knowledge, skills, and work attitude of the students. The knowledge aspect covers mastery of the work field and problem-solving ability; the skills aspect emphasizes mastery of technical skills and quality of work results; while the work attitude aspect assesses discipline, responsibility, motivation, initiative, teamwork, and social adaptability. This comprehensive assessment provides a complete picture of the students'





readiness to meet professional demands and continuous self-development.

The assessment from the university supervising lecturer is conducted based on direct observation during the internship, reports prepared by students, as well as seminars or presentations held after the internship activities are completed. This component of academic assessment includes the quality of the internship or work practice report, mastery of material relevant to the field of work, attitude and presentation skills, as well as the overall achievements of the internship. With this approach, the university can assess students not only from the results observed in the field, but also from their ability to prepare documentation, analyze experiences, and systematically present learning outcomes. This academic assessment serves as a means to measure the effectiveness of students' independent learning processes and the extent to which they are able to apply theory to real practice.

In addition to assessing technical and academic aspects, the supervising lecturer also emphasizes the development of students' soft skills. Students are evaluated based on their ability to adapt, initiative, teamwork, as well as their ability to manage time and responsibilities independently. Seminars and presentations become opportunities for students to demonstrate their communication, argumentation, and problem-solving skills that they have developed during their internship. This assessment not only focuses on mastery of the material but also on the students' ability to present their learning experiences in a professional and reflective manner. Thus, the evaluation process from the university supervising lecturer provides a comprehensive view of the students' academic and professional competencies.

The evaluation of internships or work practices at Yudharta University Pasuruan is designed to assess students comprehensively from various perspectives, namely the academic perspective and the industrial perspective. The evaluation from the industry emphasizes technical competence, problem-solving abilities, quality of work, as well as the professional attitudes of students while in a real work environment. Meanwhile, the evaluation from university supervisors emphasizes mastery of academic material, report writing and presentation skills, as well as the development of soft skills such as initiative, discipline, teamwork, and adaptability. With the integration of these two sources of assessment, the university can provide an objective overview of students' success in achieving learning objectives and their readiness to face professional challenges after completing their internships.

This comprehensive evaluation process not only serves as a measurement tool for competence but also as a means of mentoring for students to continue developing themselves. The feedback provided by academic advisors and industry supervisors helps students recognize their strengths and weaknesses, as well as motivates them to continuously improve their



technical and non-technical skills. This systematic and transparent evaluation ensures that each student receives maximum learning experience, can reflect on their achievements, and prepares themselves well for entering the professional job market. Thus, the internship evaluation is not merely a formal assessment but also an integral part of the learning process that fosters independence, professionalism, and overall competence of students.

Table 1 Assessment Indicators

Assessment Source	Assessment Components	Indicator / Criterion
Industry / Field Supervisor	Knowledge	- Mastery/understanding of the field of work- Problem-solving skills
	Skills	- Technical skills- Quality of work results
	Soft Skills	- Discipline- Responsibility- Motivation- Initiative- Teamwork- Social interaction/adaptability
Field Supervisor UYP	Internship Report	- Completeness of reports- Relevance to internship activities- Reflective analysis
	Presentation / Seminar	- Mastery of material- Communication skills- Professional attitude during presentations
	Learning Outcomes / Soft Skills	- Learning independence - Collaboration and adaptation - Problem-solving skills
Course Supervisor	Mastery of Academic Material	- The alignment of theory with practice - Understanding of the concepts related to the course
	Academic Reports & Documentation	- Kualitas laporan PDDikti- Kepatuhan pada format dan prosedur
	Attitude & Academic Presentation	- The ability to present internship results - Kedisiplinan dan tanggung jawab akademik

DISCUSSION

The design of the Merdeka Campus internship program at Yudharta University Pasuruan emphasizes the philosophy that students' learning experiences are not only acquired through classroom theory but also through direct involvement in the workforce. According to David Kolb,



Concrete Experience is the initial stage in the learning cycle, where individuals learn from direct engagement and real interactions. This program provides various internship locations relevant to students' fields of study, ranging from government institutions, village-owned enterprises, Islamic financial cooperatives, to private companies, enabling students to face real situations that require the application of academic knowledge. This design allows students to experience various work contexts, making their learning process not merely theoretical but also based on concrete experiences that stimulate further reflection and analysis.

The program design is intended to facilitate the connection between Concrete Experience and Reflective Observation, where students are required to prepare a daily logbook, weekly reports, and activity proposals before the internship. These activities provide a foundation for reflecting on the experiences gained in the field and comparing them with the theories learned in college. By combining practical experience and reflection, students are trained to identify problems, evaluate the strategies they have used, and formulate more effective learning plans. This approach aligns with the principles of Experiential Learning, where learning occurs when students are able to reflect on real experiences, understand the implications, and plan corrective actions.

The program design also takes into account the aspects of fostering independence and developing soft skills. Kolb emphasizes the importance of Abstract Conceptualization, which is the ability to generalize concrete experiences into concepts or principles that can be applied in new situations. In the context of internships, students are faced with real projects that require decision-making, strategic planning, and creativity, such as developing marketing strategies for village-owned enterprises or administrative processes in religious courts. Through this experience, students not only learn technical procedures but also internalize the concepts of professionalism, responsibility, and collaboration, allowing them to systematically connect concrete experiences with academic theories.

The implementation of the internship program begins with registration, selection, and placement of students in partner institutions, which creates direct Concrete Experience for students. While in the field, students face real work situations, from managing projects, solving problems, to interacting with staff and supervisors. Kolb emphasizes that direct involvement in real contexts is the core of the learning process, as students can observe the consequences of their actions and gain authentic experiences. By facing real challenges, students learn to apply academic theories in practice, hone technical skills, and develop critical thinking abilities as well as adaptability to a dynamic work environment.

In addition to direct involvement, the internship implementation emphasizes Reflective





Observation, where students are required to compile daily logbooks and weekly reports. This activity allows students to reflect on each experience, assess the effectiveness of their actions, and recognize strengths and weaknesses in completing tasks. Kolb emphasizes the importance of reflection as a bridge between concrete experiences and conceptual learning. In the context of internships, students are not only performing tasks, but also reflecting on how the theories they learned in class can be applied, adapted, or even developed to solve problems encountered in the field.

The implementation stage also integrates Active Experimentation, which provides opportunities for students to try new strategies based on reflections from previous experiences. For example, students involved in developing TV 9 marketing strategies can experiment with digital promotion approaches after analyzing previous marketing results. In the context of religious courts, students can try drafting administrative documents with more efficient procedures after evaluating initial practices. This cycle of concrete experiences, reflection, and experimentation creates deep, repetitive learning, fostering student independence, creativity, and adaptability to different situations.

The internship program evaluation is conducted comprehensively by the course instructors, field supervisors, and industry partners, which includes the assessment of hard skills and soft skills. From Kolb's perspective, this evaluation utilizes Reflective Observation, where students are assessed based on how they reflect on experiences, identify problems, and apply solutions. The evaluation covers technical aspects such as work quality and mastery of materials, as well as non-technical aspects such as independence, initiative, motivation, teamwork, and adaptability. This evaluation provides constructive feedback to strengthen experiential learning, enabling students to recognize their strengths and weaknesses in real-life contexts. The evaluation also includes Abstract Conceptualization, where the PDDikti report or reflective documents serve as the basis for connecting practical experiences with academic theory. Students extract principles, patterns, and strategies from their experiences, which can then be used as guidelines in future work situations. In this way, evaluation not only becomes a measure of achievement but also a means of ongoing learning, where students are able to generalize their experiences to enhance their work effectiveness and problem-solving in the future.

Finally, the evaluation facilitates further Active Experimentation, as feedback from lecturers and partners encourages students to plan improvement actions and try new approaches in the field or in subsequent projects. For example, students who receive input on administrative or marketing strategies may try different approaches to enhance efficiency and work outcomes. This cycle of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and experimentation



makes the Merdeka Campus internship program not just a formal experience, but a continuous and dynamic learning process, in line with Kolb's Experiential Learning principles. This systematic and experience-based evaluation ensures that students develop into independent, creative individuals, ready to face the challenges of the professional workforce.

Tabel 2 Research Result

Program Phase	Siklus Kolb	Components / Indicators	Findings / Achievements of Students
Design Program	Concrete Experience	a. Determination of internship location according to field of study b. Preparation of activity proposal c. Preparation of logbook and administrative documents	Students understand the context of real work, can plan learning objectives, and prepare reflective documents.
	Reflective Observation	a. Analysis of the suitability of experience with academic theory b. Planning of independent learning strategies	Students are able to reflect on their internship plans and anticipate the challenges they will face.
	Abstract Conceptualization	a. Integration of theory and practice b. Development of a project-based learning framework	Students relate academic concepts to practice, forming an independent framework.
Implementation Program	Concrete Experience	- Kegiatan magang di institusi mitra- Terlibat dalam proyek nyata (TV 9, PT. Revolusi Cita Edukasi, pengadilan, perusahaan)	Students face real challenges, applying theory, and developing technical skills as well as soft skills.
	Reflective Observation	a. Daily logbook writing b. Weekly reports and supervisor evaluation	Students reflect on achievements, mistakes, and work strategies, enhancing self-awareness and independence.
	Active Experimentation	a. Trying a new approach based on reflection b. Implementing alternative solutions in the project	Students are able to adjust work strategies, develop creativity, and increase project efficiency.

Program Phase	Siklus Kolb	Components / Indicators	Findings / Achievements of Students
Evaluation Program	Reflective Observation	a. Assessment by lecturers and industry supervisors b. Review of the PDDikti report	Students receive feedback, recognize strengths and weaknesses, enhance professional understanding.
	Abstract Conceptualization	a. Summarizing the internship experience b. Connecting the work results with theory	Students are able to generalize experiences to be applied in similar situations in the future.
	Active Experimentation	a. Planning for the improvement or development of the next project b. Implementation of new strategies	Students apply repetitive learning, enhancing independence, creativity, and professional readiness.

The research results indicate that the implementation of the Merdeka Campus internship program at Yudharta University Pasuruan strengthens Kolb's Experiential Learning theory. Students who are directly involved in real projects gain concrete experiences that are relevant to their fields of study, enabling them to apply academic theories to practice. The reflection process through logbooks, weekly reports, and final reports encourages students to evaluate achievements, identify weaknesses, and plan improvement strategies. Furthermore, students' ability to generalize experiences into new concepts and test improvement strategies in the field shows that Kolb's learning cycle operates effectively, enhancing students' learning independence and creativity. The research findings also reaffirm that the integration of assessments from lecturers and industry partners provides continuous feedback, reinforcing the development of students' technical competencies and soft skills. Students are able to adapt to real challenges, manage tasks independently, and develop initiative and collaborative skills. Thus, the research results strengthen the notion that internships are not only formal experiences, but also effective experiential learning opportunities, shaping students to be more prepared to meet professional demands and focused on sustainable personal development.

CONCLUSION

The Merdeka Campus internship program at Yudharta University Pasuruan successfully provides a holistic and authentic learning experience for students by integrating academic

theory with real-world practice, thereby promoting the development of study independence, technical skills, and soft skills simultaneously. Through the implementation of Kolb's Experiential Learning cycle—concrete experience, reflection, conceptualization, and active experimentation—students are able to internalize experiences, evaluate achievements, identify strengths and weaknesses, and independently plan improvement strategies. Comprehensive evaluations by faculty and industry parties ensure that assessments encompass aspects of professionalism, creativity, responsibility, initiative, and teamwork, so students' achievements can be measured objectively and transparently. The research results strengthen that this program not only enhances academic competence but also shapes graduates who are adaptive, creative, ready to face professional challenges, and oriented towards lifelong learning, making internships a strategic instrument in shaping a competent, independent, and competitive young generation in the modern workplace.

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