

Development Of Competence And Soft Skills Of Tourism Students Through An F&B Service Internship At Lorin Syariah Hotel Solo

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the development of technical competence, the improvement of soft skills, and work professionalism among Tourism students during an internship in the Food and Beverage Service Division at Al Kautsar Restaurant (Bebek Anom), Lorin Syariah Hotel Solo. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using participant observation through direct involvement in operational activities. The results show that the author initially experienced a competence gap due to limited technical knowledge of F&B service, which gradually improved through work experience. The competencies developed included the use of tableware, buffet station arrangement, talking order procedures, food and beverage service, room service, and operational activities in the breakfast and banquet sections. In addition, soft skills improved through the application of the 5S principles, work discipline, sharia values, and grooming standards. The internship served as experiential learning that bridged academic competence and industry requirements while enhancing students work readiness.

Keywords: technical competence; soft skills; internship program; Food and Beverage Service; sharia hotel.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism and hospitality are two closely related service industry sectors and are important contributors to economic growth, particularly in cities with high tourism potential such as Surakarta (Solo). Although they are interrelated, the two fields differ in their competence focus

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in practice. Tourism study programs generally equip students with knowledge of destination management, travel planning, and tourist services in the broader context of tourism. The hospitality industry, particularly the Food and Beverage (F&B) Service division, in contrast, demands more specific technical competence and work attitudes, such as procedures for serving food and beverages, techniques for arranging the buffet table at breakfast (buffet breakfast set up), the procedure for clearing used plates (clear up), and the application of guest service standards enforced internally within the hotel. F&B Service is the section that deals directly with guests and plays a role in the smooth operation of food and beverage service (Nurfadilah & Haditya, 2024).

This difference in competence focus between the academic world of the Tourism study program and the demands of the hospitality industry often creates a gap for students entering the workforce, particularly in the F&B service division. (Hanadya & Febrianti, 2025) explain that a gap still exists between the competencies students acquire in academic settings and the needs of the hospitality industry. The industry demands accuracy, speed, adaptability, experience in dealing with guests, and an understanding of standard operating procedures that are not always acquired through classroom learning. Students generally become aware of this gap only when they enter the field through an internship program.

Internship programs are a strategic means of bridging the gap between the theoretical knowledge gained in lectures and the practical competence required in the real working world. An internship gives students the opportunity to develop both technical abilities (hard skills) and non-technical abilities (soft skills), such as communication, teamwork, discipline, and time management, while improving work readiness through direct experience in a professional environment (Al-Qhadry et al., 2026). Through an internship, students not only gain operational technical knowledge directly but are also trained to develop soft skills and professional work attitudes, such as discipline, communication, and friendliness in serving guests, which are the main demands of the service industry.

The author experienced this competence gap during an internship in the Food and Beverage Service Division at Al Kautsar Restaurant, Lorin Syariah Hotel Solo, a hotel that applies a sharia concept in all aspects of its operations, including its guest service standards. This is in line with the findings of (Kurniawan et al., 2024), who show that Lorin International Syariah Hotel Solo has applied the Islamic values of *tauhid*, *khilafah*, *ibadah*, and *ihsan* in carrying out all of its business activities. As a student from a Tourism study program who had previously studied mostly



service in the tourist destination sector and had received little practical technical training in hospitality, the author went through a considerable process of learning and adaptation. This process included understanding technical terms in F&B service that were previously unfamiliar, applying standard operating procedures (SOP) such as serving food from the guest's right side (serving from the right) and clearing used plates from the guest's left side (clear up from the left), developing the skill of arranging the buffet table when preparing guests' breakfast, and applying hospitality values based on the 5S principles (*Senyum, Salam, Sapa, Sopan, Santun*, i.e., Smile, Greeting, Address, Politeness, Courtesy) in serving guests in line with the sharia values upheld by the hotel.

This experience gave the author new understanding and skills in F&B service that had not been widely acquired during the years of study, and it also became an important provision for developing technical competence and soft skills relevant to the demands of the hospitality industry, particularly sharia-based hotels. This condition shows that an internship program has a strategic role not only as a means of fulfilling academic requirements but also as a real-world learning medium capable of shaping the work readiness of Tourism students in hospitality, particularly in the Food and Beverage Service division.

Based on this background, the present study focuses on the development of technical competence and the improvement of soft skills and work professionalism of a Tourism student during an internship in the Food and Beverage Service Division at Lorin Syariah Hotel Solo. The study aims to describe the process of developing the technical competence of a Tourism student in carrying out F&B service standard operating procedures, and to describe the process of improving soft skills and work professionalism in applying service values based on the 5S principles during the internship. Through this study, a comprehensive picture is expected to emerge of the contribution of internship programs to the competence and soft skill readiness of Tourism students in facing the world of work in hospitality, particularly in the Food and Beverage Service division of a sharia-based hotel.





Figure1. Al-Kautsar Restaurant

Source: Author

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative approach with participant observation, in which the author was directly involved in the activities under study while at the same time observing the phenomena that occurred during the internship. The study was conducted at Al Kautsar Restaurant, Food and Beverage Service Division, Lorin Syariah Hotel Solo, Gonilan, Kartasura District, Sukoharjo Regency, Central Java, during the internship period of July - August 2026. The subject of the study was the author as an intern student, while the objects of the study comprised the processes of developing technical competence, soft skills, and work professionalism.

Data were collected through participant observation, documentation, and a literature study. The observations covered food and beverage service activities, buffet breakfast set up, the application of SOPs such as serving from the right and clear up from the left, and the application of the 5S principles (*Senyum, Salam, Sapa, Sapan, Santun*). Documentation consisted of an activity journal, photographs, and supporting documents. The literature study was carried out through relevant books and journals. The data were analyzed descriptively and qualitatively by organizing and interpreting them into the categories of technical competence, soft skills, and work professionalism, and then presenting them in narrative form.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development of Technical Competence of Tourism Students in the Food and Beverage Service Division

At the beginning of the internship, the author faced a rather challenging situation because of limited technical knowledge of Food and Beverage Service gained during university study. As a student in a Tourism study program who had mostly studied destination management and tourist services in general, the author felt anxious when first confronted with the technical operational terms of F&B Service. This condition confirms the existence of a gap between the competencies provided by the academic curriculum and the technical competencies actually required by the hospitality industry.

The first basic competence the author had to master was knowing the terms and functions of tableware in English, ranging from the dinner plate, dessert plate, and saucer to various types of glasses such as the water goblet, Irish coffee glass, Collins glass, and juice glass, as summarized in Table 1. Mastery of this vocabulary was a prerequisite before the author could carry out service tasks independently.



Table 1. Scope of Technical Competencies in the Food and Beverage Service Division

Competence Area	Main Scope
Tableware	Dinner plate/dessert plate, saucer, cutlery, water goblet, and other types of glasses
Buffet stations	Main course, pastry, beverage, and <i>tegalan</i> (mixed vegetables)/ <i>bubur</i> (porridge)/salad/ <i>siomay</i> /soup stalls, along with serving utensils and food tags
Talking order	Knowledge of the signature menu (<i>Bebek Goreng</i> /fried duck, <i>Bebek Bakar</i> /grilled duck, <i>Es Campur Anom</i> /mixed iced dessert) and the triplicate Captain Order procedure
Serving procedure and service priority	Order of priority: children first, then women, then men; wrapped cutlery set
Room service	Wrapping food, checking the bill against the order, greeting "Assalamualaikum, room service," payment via EDC (card payment terminal)
Supporting operations	Check floor, print summary, reprinting food tags, in-charge breakfast (clear up, refill), send to room
Banquet	In-charge coffee break/lunch/dinner, buffet set up, table manner, water pouring

In addition to mastering tableware, the author was required to understand the division of stations in buffet service and the different serving utensils each station needs, including the placement of food tags, which had to be matched correctly to avoid mix-ups between stations. Another competence developed was knowledge of the Al Kautsar Restaurant menu, with the *Bebek Anom* outlet as the signature brand of Lorin Syariah Hotel Solo, along with the talking order procedure using a triplicate Captain Order (CO) book. The author also learned the procedure for serving according to guest priority, the complete room service procedure (from wrapping the food to payment via EDC), the duties of check floor and print summary, the role of the in-charge during breakfast, and duties in the banquet area such as buffet set up and water pouring during table manner service.



Based on all of these experiences, the author experienced significant development of technical competence, from an initial condition of being unfamiliar with F&B Service terms and procedures to being able to carry out various operational tasks with greater confidence. The application of SOPs in restaurant service covers stages from preparation before service, welcoming guests, taking orders, and serving food and beverages to handling the table after guests have finished eating (Ransun et al., 2025). This is in line with (Gede et al., 2026), who show that practical learning in the field of Food and Beverage Service strengthens mastery of service theory, product knowledge, serving techniques, and the formation of professional work attitudes. (Anggraini & Utami, 2022) also explain that waiters and waitresses are the main workforce in F&B Service operations, so their performance needs attention in order to support guest comfort. Similarly, (Wirawan & Wijaya, 2024) found that the application of the sequence of service SOP for buffet breakfast at a star-rated hotel in Bali was generally carried out well, although obstacles remained at the stage of interacting with guests, such as asking about guests' satisfaction with their breakfast.

(Mularsari & Farika, 2022) emphasize that human resources are an important asset that drives the operations of a service company, so periodic training is needed to evaluate and improve the quality of service procedures. (Putra et al., 2024) add that SOP training and socialization for hotel restaurant staff can increase knowledge and skills in providing excellent service, which in turn improves the hotel's image. These findings indicate that internship programs serve as an effective experiential learning medium for developing the technical competence of Tourism students, particularly competencies that are not taught in depth in the university curriculum.

Improvement of Soft Skills and Work Professionalism of Tourism Students

In addition to technical competence, the internship contributed significantly to the improvement of the author's soft skills and work professionalism, particularly in guest service. The most memorable experience was the duty of greeter, in which the author applied a service standard based on sharia values by greeting guests with "*Assalamualaikum*" combined with a greeting appropriate to the time of the visit. The application of grooming, communication, ethics, and a friendly attitude is an important part of hotel service, and service needs to be adapted to guests' requests and needs (Timo, 2021). This deserves attention, given that (Simamora & Sebayang, 2024) found that waitstaff who are unfriendly, not punctual, and inattentive to the



cleanliness of their appearance can lower guest satisfaction. The use of this greeting reflects the integration of the 5S principles (Smile, Greeting, Address, Politeness, Courtesy) with sharia values, which is the identity that distinguishes Lorin Syariah Hotel from conventional hotels.

Sharia values are also reflected in staff grooming standards, including the blue vest uniform, long-sleeved white shirt, hijab, and long black skirt, which are an important part of work professionalism. The author's professionalism was also trained through the discipline of the shift system (morning shift 07:00–15:00 and afternoon shift 15:00–23:00) and the habit of arriving early. (A. B. R. Ramadhan & Haryadi, 2021) found that the higher employees' work motivation, the higher their work productivity, as shown in research conducted at Lorin Syariah Hotel Solo.

The author's communication skills were also sharpened through direct interaction with guests during talking order, room service, and table manner service at banquets. Communication is equally important for coordination between sections, particularly between F&B Service and the Kitchen, so that a synergistic workflow is created and errors that could affect service quality are minimized (Aznam et al., 2025). This finding is in line with (Muh. A. Ramadhan et al., 2026), who show that internship activities improve students' communication, teamwork, creativity, discipline, and professionalism in hospitality work environments, provisions that cannot be fully obtained through classroom theory learning.

The Relationship between Technical Competence and Soft Skills in Shaping Work Readiness

Based on the description above, the technical competence and soft skills acquired by the author complement each other and together form complete work readiness. Technical competence provides the foundation of mandatory operational skills, while soft skills the 5S principles, sharia values, discipline, and grooming add value by shaping the quality of interaction and professionalism toward guests. This finding is reinforced by (Witayasa & Sudiarta, 2020), who showed that service quality, covering the reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy of staff, has a significant effect on customer satisfaction in the F&B Service department of a star-rated hotel. The diversity of work areas the author went through, from the restaurant and room service to banquets, strengthens the understanding that work competence in the F&B Service division is multidimensional and interrelated. The combination of both aspects confirms that an internship in the Food and Beverage Service Division has a strategic role in preparing Tourism students for the demands of the hospitality industry, particularly in sharia-based hotels.



CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion presented above, it can be concluded that the internship in the Food and Beverage Service Division, Al Kautsar Restaurant (Bebek Anom), Lorin Syariah Hotel Solo, made a significant contribution to the development of technical competence and the improvement of soft skills of a student of the Tourism Study Program. The author progressed from an initial condition of being unfamiliar with F&B service terms and procedures to being able to carry out various operational tasks independently in different work areas, from the restaurant and room service to banquets, while also improving soft skills through the application of the 5S principles integrated with sharia values, work discipline, and professionalism in serving guests. These findings confirm the existence of a gap between the academic competence of the Tourism Study Program and the competence required by the hospitality industry, and show that internship programs play an important role as a medium of experiential learning in bridging this gap.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that hotels provide more structured initial briefing for interns from educational backgrounds outside hospitality, that the Tourism Study Program consider adding basic Food and Beverage Service operational material to its curriculum, and that students who will undertake internships in similar divisions prepare themselves mentally and be proactive in learning so that they can maximize the internship experience as a means of developing competence and soft skills.

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