THE INFLUENCE OF THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM OR WORK PRACTICES OF THE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF SYIAH KUALA UNIVERSITY ON LEADERSHIP, CRITICAL THINKING, AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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ABSTRACT
This research investigates the phenomenon of internships, which is often criticized for being perceived as involving tasks of limited substance, often limited to activities such as photocopying and document printing. Internships are viewed as a form of experiential learning that complements theoretical knowledge gained from university education with practical application in a professional environment. The aim of this study is to examine this phenomenon, which is sometimes seen as ordinary. Quantitative research methods were employed, focusing on an associative approach with a sample of 47 individuals selected from a population of 53 using the Slovin formula. The results indicate that internships/work practices at BPBU significantly influence leadership and critical thinking skills but do not have a significant impact on communication skills. These findings provide insights into the effectiveness of internships in developing specific skills and offer perspectives for educational institutions and prospective interns in the future.

ARTICLE HISTORY
Received 03/08/2023
Revised 12/10/2023
Accepted 13/10/2023
Published 15/10/2023

KEYWORDS
Internship program; practical work; leadership; critical thinking; communication skills

CITATION (APA 6th Edition)

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.30743/mkd.v7i2.7618

INTRODUCTION

Jobs that are not by the number of job seekers, the lack of employment opportunities makes job seekers have to have special skills and skills to be accepted by companies that open job vacancies. The number of job seekers who are not supported by special expertise and skills makes companies more selective in choosing workers who are later expected to be able to participate in advancing the company in the business world and the industrial world (Maroli, 2019).

The phenomenon of apprenticeship is not new. In contrast, some scholars trace the old apprentice training methods (from the French word: ‘aprentiz,’ meaning ‘one who learns’) prevalent in ancient China and Greece some 2,500 years ago, through Medieval European unions to the present day (Maaravi et al., 2021). So far, the phenomenon of internships is considered not good because in general, the internship assignments given are not so heavy, such as only photocopying, and printing sheets of paper needed for internships.

In the world of work, that job performance and the ability to maintain a high level of job performance have made training and development programs an important part of business operations. On-the-job training differs from formal education and learning methodologies, in that adults share different characteristics for learners and young students (Chalupa & Chad, 2021). Researchers are interested in researching this study because the phenomenon of internships is still considered normal by some people, in fact, internships have many new things that can be learned seeing the phenomenon of internships in business entities unlike the views of the general public.
Where our internships only work on photocopying and printing but are given a great responsibility to be able to have soft skills in the real field of work.

Internship programs can influence students' leadership development through several mechanisms. During internships, students are presented with real-life situations in a work environment (Nugraheni & Wijaya, 2017). They have the opportunity to practice leadership skills such as decision-making, delegation, and time management. This hands-on experience allows students to develop and sharpen practical skills required to become effective leaders.

In some internship programs, students may have the chance to work closely with leaders or supervisors who have experience in leadership roles. Such mentorship can provide valuable insights and guidance on how to become effective leaders. Some internship programs may assign leadership responsibilities to students (Ismail et al., 2018). For instance, they may be tasked with leading a small team on a project. This provides students with an opportunity to test their leadership skills directly and understand how to lead effectively within an organizational context.

Internships can also have a positive impact on students' critical thinking abilities. When working in a real-world environment, students are often confronted with challenges and issues that require critical thinking to resolve. This can stimulate the development of critical thinking skills as students need to analyze problems, formulate solutions, and evaluate the consequences of their decisions (Effrisanti, 2015).

The practical experience gained through internships provides direct insights into how decisions and actions influence outcomes. Students can comprehend the impact of their actions, both positively and negatively, enriching their understanding of the critical thinking process. During internships, students often interact with professionals experienced in critical thinking. Discussions and learning from these professionals can assist students in developing a more analytical and critical mindset.

Students undergoing internships are required to communicate with colleagues, supervisors, and possibly external stakeholders. This involves clear verbal communication, report writing, and interactions with various individuals (Aswita, 2022). All of these aspects can contribute to improving communication skills. Throughout internships, students frequently receive feedback regarding their work. This process can help them understand how to convey messages more effectively and collaborate better with teams. Students can also learn about communication in a business and professional context, including the use of appropriate language, communicating with business stakeholders, and participating in business presentations or meetings (Ismailia & Muhtadi, 2015).

Several leadership theories, such as Transformational Leadership Theory and Social Learning Theory, can be utilized to evaluate how internship experiences shape and enhance students' leadership skills. Previous research on the impact of internships on leadership can also serve as a reference (Campbell, 1994).

Career Development and Learning Theories, as well as the concept of Critical Thinking, can be applied to understand how internships can improve students' abilities to analyze problems, formulate solutions, and make sound decisions. Organizational Communication Theory and communication components like interpersonal and workplace communication can be employed to examine the impact of internship programs on students' communication skills (Soyomukti, 2010).

This research aims to investigate the influence of the Internship Program/Work Practices at the Business Development Agency of Syiah Kuala University on three essential skills: Leadership, Critical Thinking, and Communication Skills.
The Business Development Agency of Syiah Kuala University is an entity focused on entrepreneurship and business development. Therefore, the internship program organized by BPB-Unsyiah has the potential to positively impact students’ skill development, particularly in the areas of leadership, critical thinking, and communication. This is due to the real-world work environment where students can experience and refine these skills.

The following are the research questions that can be addressed in this study: (1) Can the internship experience at BPB-Unsyiah help students develop leadership skills, such as taking initiative, leading teams, and managing projects; (2) Does the internship program contribute to students’ ability to think critically, evaluate situations, and make informed decisions; (3) What is the impact of internships on students’ communication skills, including speaking, writing, and effectively communicating with various stakeholders.

By addressing the above questions and delving further into the literature, this research will provide valuable insights into how the Internship Program at BPB-Unsyiah can influence the development of crucial skills in students, specifically in the context of leadership, critical thinking, and communication skills.

**METHODS**

The research methodology employed in this study utilizes a quantitative approach with the aim of examining the influence of the Internship Program or Work Practices at the Business Development Agency of Syiah Kuala University on students’ leadership abilities, critical thinking skills, and communication skills (Martono, 2015). A quantitative associative data analysis approach is used to explore the relationships among the variables under investigation.

There are two main variables in this study: (1) the independent variable, which encompasses the Internship Program or Work Practices at the Business Development Agency of Syiah Kuala University, and (2) the dependent variables, which include Leadership Ability, Critical Thinking Ability, and Communication Skills.

The research sample consists of 47 participants, a combination of two internship batches (batch one and batch two). Data collected include assessments of the participants’ leadership abilities, critical thinking skills, and communication skills. These data were gathered through a survey instrument adapted from the standards of The University of Florida - Engagement, Cogitative, Maturity, Innovativeness (UF-EMI), and The Leadership Skill Inventory (LSI).

Data Processing Techniques encompass various methods, including Correlation Analysis, which involves simple linear correlation (Product Moment correlation), multiple linear correlations, Rank Spearman correlation, and Kendall Tau correlation. These analyses measure the extent of the relationship between the Internship Program and students’ leadership abilities, critical thinking skills, and communication skills.

Regression Analysis, specifically simple linear regression and multiple linear regression is employed to identify the influence of the Internship Program on each dependent variable. This aids in understanding whether the Internship Program has a significant impact on these abilities. Factor Analysis is utilized to identify factors that may affect the dependent variables. This helps in pinpointing specific aspects of the Internship Program that contribute to the development of leadership abilities, critical thinking skills, and communication skills.

This quantitative survey employs instruments derived from the standards of The University of Florida - Engagement, Cogitative, Maturity, Innovativeness (UF-EMI), and The Leadership Skill Inventory (LSI). The posttest, originating from the two batches, comprises 28 items, each related to
one of three constructs: leadership, critical thinking, and communication skills. Participants are asked to indicate their level of agreement with each statement on a Likert-type scale (1=strongly disagree; 5=strongly agree) (Duncan et al., 2017).

Descriptive Analysis techniques, such as mean, median, and standard deviation, are employed to provide an overview of the data. Data analysis is conducted using software such as Excel and SPSS version 26. The analysis encompasses classical assumption testing, multiple regression testing, normality testing, heteroscedasticity testing, as well as hypothesis testing (F test and T test). The results of this analysis will yield a deeper understanding of the influence of the Internship Program or Work Practices on the development of students' leadership abilities, critical thinking skills, and communication skills within a university setting.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Understanding Internship Practices

Internships can be described as a form of experiential learning that supports theoretical knowledge acquired in university education with practical implementation in professional settings (Şekerci et al., 2021). These structured work experiences allow students to bridge the gap between academia and the real world by engaging in meaningful tasks, problem-solving, and skill development within their chosen field. Through internships, individuals gain insights into the inner workings of industries, develop a deeper understanding of their chosen careers, and cultivate essential professional skills, which are crucial for their future success. Therefore, investigating the impact of internship programs on specific skill development, such as leadership, critical thinking, and communication, becomes essential in comprehending their significance in the educational landscape.

In this context, the study presented here investigates the impact of internship programs specifically within the Business Development Agency of Syiah Kuala University (BPBU) on the development of leadership, critical thinking, and communication skills. With a quantitative research approach, this study assesses the perceived effectiveness of BPBU's internship program in enhancing these skills. By analyzing the relationship between internship experiences and skill development, this research aims to provide valuable insights for educational institutions seeking to optimize their internship offerings and for aspiring interns looking to make the most of their practical learning experiences. Understanding how internships contribute to the acquisition of these essential skills is vital in preparing students for their future careers and improving the overall quality of internship programs.

Understanding Internship Experience

Elaine B. Johnson states that experience brings out one's potential. The full potential will emerge gradually over time in response to various experiences (Johnson, 2020).

Nature of Internship

The first type of internship is an internship which aims to give students experience in the world of work or social reality through theoretical studies in lectures. Second, public service, namely the ability of students to contribute to the world of work or the social reality of various academic competencies that they have obtained in lectures. The implementation of internships in the field has the following characteristics: Interdisciplinary, 'cross-sectoral' comprehensive, broad in dimensions, pragmatic and practical.
**Internship Benefits**

The benefits of internships for students include training for students to see what and how the world of work is so that they can adapt according to their competencies. Adaptations made by each student must be different from one another.

**Leadership**

Etymologically the term leadership comes from the basic word 'lead' which means to guide or guide. From 'lead' was born the verb 'leader' which means to guide and demand. Leadership is about managing leadership and inspiring others to do something new, past, or ongoing work.

**Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking is the ability to think logically, reflectively, systematically, and productively which is applied in making judgments and making good decisions (Zubaidah, 2018). Critical thinking is critical thinking which requires a high understanding, logical and sharp analysis and is needed by students in the 21st century so that students can process information rationally, logically, and correctly. So critical thinking is needed in the world of work, especially for beginners during internships (Yustina et al., 2021).

**Communication Ability**

Communication or in English communication comes from the Latin word communicatio and comes from words that have the same meaning. Communication in general can be interpreted as a way to convey a message from the messenger to the recipient of the message to inform, opinion, or behavior, either verbally or through the media (Ubaidah, 2014). Therefore, when communicating, you must think about how to make the message conveyed to others easily understood.

**Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis**

The research hypothesis is also called the substance hypothesis (substantive hypothesis) is a hypothesis that contains a statement about the relation between two or more variables by the theory (Juliandi & Irfan, 2013).

Based on the above analysis, the following research hypotheses were developed:

- H1: Leadership has a significant effect on Internships at BPBU USK.
- H2: Internship at BPBU USK has a significant effect on critical thinking.
- H3: Communication skills have a significant effect on Internships at USK BPBUs.

The theoretical framework is the underlying foundation of the entire research project. From the theoretical framework, hypotheses can be formulated that can be tested to determine whether the formulated theory is valid or not. Then it will be measured by the appropriate statistical analysis (Novitasari et al., 2021).

As a basis for comparison between this research and previous studies, the following are some previous studies presented by the author: (1) Yusnita, et al., Yusnita, et al. This study aimed to conduct internship research, focusing on the variable of critical thinking. The research was conducted within the country and employed a contextual approach. The research centered on internships at a hospital (Yustina et al., 2021); (2) Research by the Hart Research Associates team. This study also aimed to conduct internship research. It primarily involved an online survey of entrepreneurs and students, carried out on behalf of the Association of American Colleges & Universities. The key distinctions lie...
in the subject of study and the research location (*Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success, 2015*); (3) De Ridder, et al. This study was directed towards conducting internship research. It made significant contributions to student organizations, such as the International Society for Computational Biology Student Council (ISCB-SC) (de Ridder et al., 2014).

The table below illustrates that a significant proportion of the students who participated in internships at USK BPBU came from the faculties of Economics and Business (38%), followed by Engineering, Mathematics, and Natural Sciences, FKIP, FP, FKP, and FH. The majority of participants were female (77%), with a smaller percentage being male (23%). Most participants fell within the 18-21 age bracket (74%), and a small portion (4%) had already completed their bachelor’s degrees.

**Validity Test**

All items about 28 statements, seven statements in the form of Internships/Work Practices, seven leadership statements, seven critical thinking statements, and seven communication statements are all valid above > 0.05 and may be continued for instrument reliability testing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Variable Dimension</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>N of Items</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Apprenticeship</td>
<td>0.949</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>0.956</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Communication Skill</td>
<td>0.945</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Reliable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows the results of Cronbach’s Alpha, namely (0.949>0.6), (0.945>0.6), (0.956>0.6), and (0.945>0.6). So, the conclusion of all the tested instruments is reliable.

**Validity Test**

All items about 28 statements, seven statements in the form of Internships/Work Practices, seven leadership statements, seven critical thinking statements, and seven communication statements are all valid above > 0.05 and may be continued for instrument reliability testing.

**Reporting Research Results**

**Multiple Regression Classical Assumption Test Normality**

Table 2 shows the results of Cronbach’s Alpha, namely (0.949>0.6), (0.945>0.6), (0.956>0.6), and (0.945>0.6). So, the conclusion of all the tested instruments is reliable.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig</th>
<th>Sig</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>0.109</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical thinking</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication skills</td>
<td>0.075</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>Normal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Multiple Regression Classical Assumption Test Normality

![Figure 1. Heteroscedasticity test using scatterplot (X-Y1)](image1)

![Figure 2. Heteroscedasticity test using scatterplot (X-Y2)](image2)

![Figure 3. Heteroscedasticity test using scatterplot (X-Y3)](image3)

The three figures 1, 2, and 3 show that each pattern from the points above has its own x and y axes, so that all tables are heteroscedastic. And there is no need for further tests, namely the Glejser test.
**F Test**

Table 3. Conclusion of Simultaneous Test Results (F Test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>57.368</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>57.368</td>
<td>25.039</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>103.101</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>2.291</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>160.468</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>163.143</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>163.143</td>
<td>33.145</td>
<td>.000b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>221.495</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>4.922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>384.638</td>
<td>46</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>18.370</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18.370</td>
<td>3.015</td>
<td>.089b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>274.183</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6.093</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the table above based on the results of SPSS version 26 output above, it can be seen that each F<sub>count</sub> value is greater than F<sub>table</sub> with the results (25,039>2.82), (33,145>2.82), and (3,015>2.82) with a significant level below 0.05. Thus, the Internship/Work Practice variable simultaneously has a significant effect on Leadership, Critical Thinking, and Communication Skills.

**T Test**

Table 4. Conclusion Partial Test Results (T Test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>13.889</td>
<td>3.605</td>
<td>3.853</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internshippractice</td>
<td>.563</td>
<td>.113</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>.468</td>
<td>5.284</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>.930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internship practice</td>
<td>.949</td>
<td>.165</td>
<td>.651</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>20.471</td>
<td>5.879</td>
<td>3.482</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>internshippractice</td>
<td>.319</td>
<td>.183</td>
<td>.251</td>
<td>1.736</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on the results of SPSS output using SPSS version 26 above, it can be seen that each F<sub>count</sub> value is greater than F<sub>table</sub> with the results (5.004>2.02), (5.757>2.02), and (1.736>2.02).

**T Test**

Table 5. Conclusion of the Coefficient of Determination Test Results (R<sup>2</sup> test)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>.358</td>
<td>.343</td>
<td>151.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.651</td>
<td>.424</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>221.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.063</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>246.839</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on Table 5, which presents the output from SPSS version 26, it is evident that the coefficient of determination, or R-Square, is 0.358, equivalent to 35.8%. Subsequently, the coefficient of determination, or R-Square, is 0.424, which is equal to 42.4%. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination, or R-Square, is 0.063, or 6.3%. The research results concerning the relationship between internship and leadership yielded a t-value of 5.004, exceeding the critical value of 2.02. Therefore, it can be concluded that internship has a significant impact on leadership. Similarly, the
relationship between internship and Critical Thinking resulted in a t-value of 5.757, surpassing the critical value of 2.02, indicating that internship significantly affects leadership. However, the research findings regarding internship and communication skills, with a t-value of 1.736, exceed the critical value of 2.02, suggesting that internship does not significantly influence communication skills.

CONCLUSION
In the validity test, all statements were deemed valid. Subsequently, reliability testing was conducted, and all statements were confirmed to be reliable, as indicated by the results of Cronbach’s Alpha (0.949>0.6), (0.945>0.6), (0.965>0.6), and (0.945>0.6). Therefore, it can be concluded that all tested instruments are reliable. In the normality test, the data revealed a Sig > 0.05, indicating that all three datasets follow a normal distribution. The heteroscedasticity test demonstrated that each pattern on the graphs in figures 1, 2 and 3 has its own set of x and y axes, confirming that all table results exhibit heteroscedasticity. Consequently, there is no need for further tests, such as the Glejser test.

Meanwhile, in the statistical testing phase, the F test was performed, revealing that each F_count value exceeded the F_table value, with results of (25.039>2.82), (33.145>2.82), and (3.015>2.82), all at a significance level below 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that the Internship/Work Practice variable has a significant simultaneous effect on Leadership, Critical Thinking, and Communication Skills. In the T test, each F_count value exceeded the F_table value, with results of (5.004>2.02), (5.757>2.02), and (1.736<2.02). Among the three T test values, one variable did not exhibit a significant effect, namely, the Internship/Work Practice variable on Communication Skills. In contrast, Internships/Work Practices had a significant impact on Leadership, as well as on Critical Thinking.

REFERENCES


