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The Impact of the Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) Internship Program on Students' Soft Skills, Hard Skills and Work Readiness: Impact Analysis on Mulawarman University Students

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Abstract: This study aims to examine the impact of the Independent Learning Campus Independent Internship Program (MBKM) on the development of Soft Skills, Hard Skills, and Work Readiness of Mulawarman University students. The main focus of the study is how students improve their work readiness by improving soft skills and hard skills after undergoing the MBKM program. The results of the study prove that Soft Skills (X1) and Hard Skills (X2) have a significant impact on Work Readiness (Y) simultaneously. Students who experience an increase in soft skills and hard skills after undergoing the MBKM program feel more ready to enter the workforce. This finding shows that work readiness can be achieved by developing effective soft skills and improving relevant hard skills. The study also revealed that soft skills such as communication skills, inter-member cooperation, and in handling problems have a crucial role in increasing the level of student readiness to work. Meanwhile, improving hard skills, including technical and intellectual abilities, also plays a significant role in supporting work readiness. Although there is an increase in work readiness with the MBKM program, there are challenges in optimal implementation, especially related to the application of soft skills and hard skills in real work situations. Therefore, a comprehensive and sustainable strategy is needed to continuously improve students' work readiness by developing soft skills and hard skills continuously. Overall, the MBKM program has proven effective in facilitating efforts to develop students' soft skills and hard skills, thereby increasing their readiness to work. This program makes a significant contribution in creating graduates who are ready to face challenges in the professional world and can adapt to their work scope which tends to change and compete with each other.

Keywords: MBKM Program, Soft Skills, Hard Skills, Work Readiness.

INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a crucial role in shaping the future of the nation. In a dynamic global context, universities must be able to produce graduates who have strong moral values

in addition to intellectual intelligence. The ultimate goal of education is to create the next generation who are able to overcome various national problems and lead Indonesia towards a better future. The Indonesian higher education system is being reformed with the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Program, which seeks to create graduates who are more competitive and relevant to the demands of the world of work. (Wulandari et al., 2023).

Through MBKM, students are given the opportunity to learn outside the traditional classroom, so that they can develop not only soft skills, but also hard skills needed in a dynamic world of work. MBKM emphasizes curriculum flexibility, collaboration between universities and industry, and holistic student competency development. By giving autonomy to universities, MBKM encourages innovation in learning and allows students to explore their interests and talents. It is the duty of education to improve the competence and skills of the next generation of prospective employees. (Setiarini et al., 2022).

Since June 2021, Mulawarman University has proactively implemented the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) regulation. With the support of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the university has partnered with various industry partners and other institutions to provide internship programs for students. The internship programs offered are very diverse, ranging from internships in companies, non-profit organizations, to community-based projects. Selected students will receive intensive mentoring from mentors and are required to complete the assigned tasks. (Mulawarman, 2021).

Hard skills and soft skills are both crucial in the workplace. These two aspects are often needed, where hard skills guide us on what to do and soft skills help us on how to do it and interact with the environment. Research shows that soft skills are actually more dominant in the world of work. Unfortunately, higher education often focuses too much on hard skills, even though soft skills are very important for career success. Soft skills such as adaptability, high work motivation, effective communication, and good integrity are very important for students to be able to integrate into the world of work (Scientific & Education, 2024).

Personal soft skills and intrapersonal soft skills are two categories in which soft skills fall. Personal soft skills include the ability to manage time, think optimistically, control emotions, and receive feedback from others. Conversely, the capacity to collaborate in groups and engage with people is an example of intrapersonal soft skills. (Scientific & Educational, 2024).

Based on the view of (Setiawati & Mayasari, 2021), Soft skills are academic skills and methods that emphasize skills such as conveying messages to the public and emotional regulation in the scope of individual work. So, students need to explore all the potential they have. In addition, they must also develop this potential to achieve personal and academic goals, both academic abilities and practical skills, during college. Personal soft skills and intra-personal soft skills are two categories in which soft skills fall. Personal soft skills include the ability to manage time, think optimistically, control emotions, and receive feedback from others. Conversely, intra-personal soft skills include things like the capacity to collaborate in groups and engage with people. (Scientific & Educational, 2024).

The following is the percentage of respondents' answers regarding improving soft skills:

Table 1. Percentage of Respondents' Answers Regarding Improving Soft Skills

Pertanyaan	Tidak Ada Peningkatan	Peningkatan Kurang Baik	Peningkatan Cukup Baik	Peningkatan Baik	Peningkatan Sangat Baik
Mendukung Perkuliahan	0%	2.6%	17.2%	54.3%	25.9%
Kemampuan Komunikasi	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	43.1%	50.0%
Kemampuan Berpikir Kreatif dan Inovatif	1%	0%	6%	46%	47%
Kemampuan Penyelesaian Masalah7	0.9%	0.0%	7.8%	48.3%	43.1%
Kerja Sama Tim	0.9%	0.0%	6.9%	39.7%	52.6%
Total	2.8%	2.6%	44.8%	231.4%	218.6%
Rata-rata	0,56%	0,52%	8,96%	46,28%	43,72%

Source: Scientific & Educational, 2024

From the table percentage above, most students (77.5%) who participated in the MBKM program considered this activity very useful in supporting their lecture process. Only a small portion (2.6%) felt dissatisfied. The next indicator is that the survey results prove that the MBKM program significantly increases students' communication skills and creativity. Most participants felt a good to very good improvement in both aspects. In problem solving Most students (91%) felt that the MBKM program had improved their problem-solving skills. 92.2% of students felt a significant increase in teamwork skills after participating in the MBKM program. Based on the survey results, the MBKM program made a significant contribution to improving students' soft skills. In addition to supporting lectures, MBKM also succeeded in improving students' communication skills, creativity, innovation, and problem solving. The direct experience gained during the program, such as interacting with others and facing real challenges, has helped students develop better teamwork skills. (Scientific & Educational, 2024).

Mastery of academic information and technical skills relevant to the field of expertise is known as hard skills. This has to do with the breadth of scientific topics that need to be studied, the skills that need to be learned, the application of work, and how these skills are used in the profession. (Chairunissa & Rahmayanti, 2023). Therefore, these skills are very important to carry out specific tasks in the job. Hard skills are usually obtained through formal education, training, or direct work experience. Examples of hard skills needed in the world of work are technical skills (IT, Engineering, Accounting and Finance, Marketing), and industry-specific skills (Health, Law, and Education). Based on research (Hatimah et al., 2023) shows an increase in hard skills in FIP UNM Educational Technology students who participated in the MBKM program. The results of this study are presented in the following table.

Table 2. The results of this study are presented

TIDAK.	Keterampilan Keras	Ukuran	Total
1	Keterampilan dalam Memanfaatkan Informasi dan Teknologi Komunikasi untuk kebutuhan suatu kegiatan	Frekuensi	22
		Persentase	79%
2	*Manusia sebagai Sumber Daya* (Menjadi staf atau individu yang banyak membantu dalam hal teknologi)	Frekuensi	16
		Persentase	57%
3	Mampu Mendesain, Mengembangkan, Implementasi dan Evaluasi Kegiatan	Frekuensi	16
		Persentase	57%
4	Mampu Mendesain, Mengembangkan, dan Memproduksi Program dan Media untuk digunakan dalam Kegiatan	Frekuensi	15
		Persentase	53%
5	Mengembangkan Model, Bahan, dan Media Pelaksanaan Kegiatan	Frekuensi	13
		Persentase	46%
6	Mampu Menggunakan dan Memanfaatkan WebQuest (Kegiatan yang berlangsung dengan efektif Berbasis Web dan Integratif)	Frekuensi	12
		Persentase	43%
7	Mampu Melaksanakan Program dan Media Komprehensif	Frekuensi	11
		Persentase	39%
8	Mampu Mengembangkan dan Mengelola Aplikasi untuk Kepentingan Agensi	Frekuensi	12
		Persentase	43%
9	Mampu Menciptakan dan Mengembangkan Situs Web Badan/Lembaga	Frekuensi	8
		Persentase	29%

Source: Hatimah et al., 2023

Based on the table data, the MBKM internship program has opened up opportunities for FIP UNM Educational Technology students to acquire and develop new hard skills that they did not previously have. As many as 80.5% of respondents stated that they could learn to utilize

ICT effectively in the context of an internship through this program. This shows that the MBKM Internship has succeeded in facilitating students to explore their potential in the ICT field.

Work activities are very important for humans in order to fulfill their life needs and achieve life goals, because they have basic needs and aspirations that they want to achieve, humans carry out work activities as a means to fulfill both. In addition to being considered as one of the potential graduates in terms of long-term performance and usefulness for career advancement, work readiness is also an important indicator in the recruitment and selection of workers given the rapidly developing work environment. (Wahyuni et al., 2023).

For the next workforce, it can help the next generation become more independent and foster an inventive and autonomous community for creative growth. By doing this, a student can improve his/her knowledge and skills, making him/her more prepared to enter the workforce and eager to do his/her job to the best of his/her ability. (Pambajeng et al., 2024). Work readiness also includes professional attitude, work ethic, and ability to collaborate in a team. With good readiness, students can compete more effectively in the job market and contribute positively in the workplace.

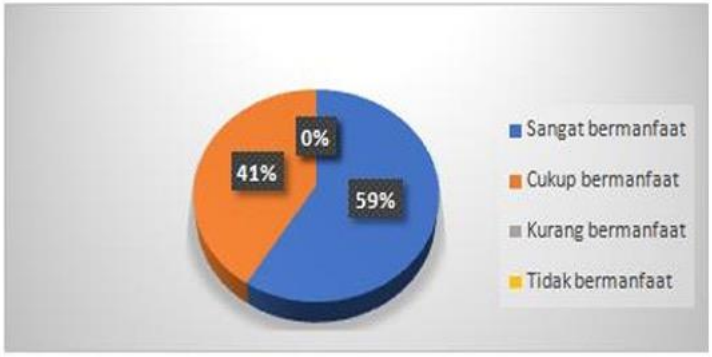


Figure 1.
Source. Ley 25,632,2022

According to the research percentage above, the MBKM program was considered very positive by all students. Most (58.75%) stated that this program was very useful in improving their competence, while the rest (41%) considered this program quite useful. Not a single student gave a negative assessment of the MBKM program. (Ley 25,632, 2022)

According to longitudinal research, students who participate in the MBKM program have a greater opportunity to gain work experience in the following months after graduation, with a figure reaching 85% compared to 65% for those who did not participate. In addition, students involved in this program tend to have faster career progress, with 30% reporting promotions in the first two years after graduation.

The MBKM program can be a useful experience for students after graduating facing the world of work. This analysis aims to understand the impact of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) internship program when increasing students' level of work readiness. It is estimated that the findings of this study will significantly benefit studentshence facilitating a better comprehension of the advantages offered by the MBKM internship program and the means by which one can make the most of the internship experience (Kurniasih et al., 2022).

The researcher's interest in conducting study on the impact of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Internship Program on students' work readiness, as well as their soft skills and hard talents, emerged as a result of the background information. An examination of the ways in which Mulawarman University students are affected. The objectives to be achieved in this study are to understand the impact of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka

(MBKM) internship program in increasing students' work readiness. The results of the study are expected to provide significant participation for students, provide a better understanding of the benefits of the internship program (MBKM) and how to maximize the internship experience. For universities, providing input for improving internship programs and developing curricula that are more relevant to industry needs. For the government, providing empirical data for evaluating the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) regulations. For the industrial world, knowing in depth about the potential of college graduates who have participated in the internship program.

Literature Review

Soft skills

Soft skills are basic skills needed in various jobs, such as communication. According to Sharma, soft skills include the ability to communicate, work together, honesty, adaptation, and emotional intelligence. Muhibbin added that internal factors such as talent, intelligence, interests, motivation, and student attitudes, as well as external factors such as family, lecturers, and social environment, also influence the development of soft skills (Deswarta et al., 2023). Referring to the views of Yulianti and Khafid (2015) in the study (Setiarini et al., 2022) There is a positive relationship between soft skills and work readiness. Individuals with strong soft skills tend to be more ready to enter the workforce compared to those who lack soft skills.
The MBKM program provides opportunities for students to increase their level of soft skills with practical experience in the field. With direct involvement in various projects and real work environments, students can hone their communication skills, work together in teams, and adapt to new situations. This initiative is expected to increase their readiness to face challenges in the world of work.

Hard skills

Hard skills are abilities that produce real and immediately visible results. This ability is based on strong theoretical knowledge (Ratuela et al., 2022). There are several indicators for hard skills, namely, technical skills, specific expertise that a person has in carrying out technical tasks in a particular field, broad and in-depth knowledge obtained through learning and experience, technological knowledge, the ability to understand, use, and develop technology. (Devita Putri, 2024). The MBKM program has been proven effective in improving students' technical abilities (hard skills), such as mastery of technology, writing, and research. This makes graduates more competitive in the world of work. (Kusumaningrum et al., 2022).

Work Readiness

Work readiness is a condition where a person has sufficient ability and knowledge to carry out work tasks effectively and efficiently (Khairudin & I'fa, 2023). According to Farihati et al., (2019) in a study (Wahyuni et al., 2023) stated that students who have good work readiness are valuable assets for the world of work. This level of readiness is greatly influenced by students' efforts in developing competencies and skills during their studies.

According to Pool Sewell (Violinda et al, 2023) in a study (Devita Putri, 2024) there are 4 indicators needed to measure work readiness, namely:

1. Personal Attributes: traits that make someone suitable for a job.
2. Skills: abilities needed to carry out certain tasks.
3. Knowledge: a strong foundation for understanding work-related concepts.
4. Understanding: the ability to apply knowledge in real situations.

METHOD

The researcher's interest in conducting study on the impact of the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Internship Program on students' work readiness, as well as their soft skills and hard talents, emerged as a result of the background information. An examination of the ways in which Mulawarman University students are affected.

The research population is Mulawarman University students who have completed or are currently carrying out the MBKM internship program. The target population is set at 200 students. The respondent criteria are determined based on students who have participated in the MBKM internship program. This ensures that all respondents have relevant experience for the study. The researcher will use purposive sampling to select a minimum of 150 students who meet these criteria.

The questionnaire will be distributed to respondents who have been selected through online methods (for example, Google Forms) or in person, depending on the situation and policies in force on campus. The data obtained from the questionnaire will be collected and compiled for further analysis. The researcher will ensure that all respondents have completed the questionnaire completely.

This study will use multiple linear regression techniques and correlation analysis to measure the relationship and influence involving the independent factors (hard skills and soft skills) and the dependent variable (work readiness) in the relationship between the two. In addition, before conducting the main analysis, validity and reliability tests will be carried out to determine that the tools used are accurate and consistent in measuring the research variables. Statistical analysis will be carried out using software such as SPSS, with the aim of providing a deeper understanding of the contribution of the MBKM program to student work readiness through the development of soft skills and hard skills. The results of the analysis will later be designed in the form of a research report that includes key findings, consultations, and suggestions based on the information obtained. This study has a number of limitations and must be reviewed for the interpretation of the results and generalization of the findings. The use of purposive sampling can cause bias, where the respondents selected may not represent the entire population of students participating in the MBKM internship program.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Description

Table 3. Description of Respondents

Category	Precentage (%)	Number of Respondents
Gender		
Female	60%	120
Male	40%	80
Class		
2021	37%	74
2022	30,5%	61
2020	18%	36
2023	11%	22
2024	3,5%	7
Faculty		
Faculty of Economics and Business	31%	62
Faculty of Social and Political Sciences	9%	18
Faculty of Agriculture	8%	16
Faculty of Forestry	6,5%	13
Faculty of Teacher Training and Education	7%	14

Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences	5%	10
Faculty of Law	6%1	12
Faculty of Engineering	9%	18
Faculty of Medicine	18%	36
Participation in MBKM internship program		
Participating	97%	194
Not Participating	3%	6

Source: Processed Data 2024

This study used 200 respondents with various characteristics which are shown in detail in the image above. Based on the figure, 60% or 120 respondents were female, while 40% or 80 respondents were male. In this study, there were 37% of respondents from the 2021 batch, 30.5% from the 2022 batch, 18% from the 2020 batch, 11% from the 2023 batch, and 3.5% from the 2024 batch. Based on the faculty, 31% of respondents came from the Faculty of Economics and Business, 9% from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, 8% from the Faculty of Agriculture, 6.5% from the Faculty of Forestry, 7% from the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, 5% from the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences, 6% from the Faculty of Law, 9% from the Faculty of Engineering, and 18% from the Faculty of Medicine. Based on participation in the MBKM internship program, 97% or 194 respondents had participated in the program, while 3% or 6 respondents had not participated in the MBKM internship program. Given the aforementioned characteristics, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the majority of the individuals who participated in this study were females (60%) who were members of the 2021 class (37%), and those who were members of the Faculty of Economics and Business (31%). There is a significant majority of responders who have taken part in the MBKM internship program (97%). This shows that the MBKM internship program has been followed by the majority of students from various faculties and classes at Mulawarman University.

Validity Test and Reliability Test

Table 4. Validity Test

Variables	Item	Pearson Cor	Significant Value	Information
X1 = *Soft Skill*	X1.1	0,744	0,000	**VALID**
	X1.2	0,763	0,000	**VALID**
	X1.3	0,734	0,000	**VALID**
X2 = *Hard Skill*	X2.1	0,768	0,000	**VALID**
	X2.2	0,775	0,000	**VALID**
	X2.3	0,787	0,000	**VALID**
Y = Kesiapan Bekerja	Y.1	0,792	0,000	**VALID**
	Y.2	0,733	0,000	**VALID**
	Y.3	0,753	0,000	**VALID**

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Following the completion of the validity test, it was determined that all of the variables that were investigated (including Work Readiness, Hard Skills, and Soft Skills) were valid. The relationship between each item and the total score of the variable is quite strong. The Pearson Correlation coefficient value which is generally above 0.7 indicates a strong relationship between the item and the measured variable.

Table 5. Reliability Test

Variables	Significant Calue	Information
X1 = Soft Skill	0,606	**RELIABLE**
X2 = Hard Skill	0,669	**RELIABLE**
Y = Readiness to Work	0,633	**RELIABLE**

Source: Processed Data, 2024

The instruments used to measure the three variables provide consistent or stable results so that it can be concluded that all variables in this study have a high level of reliability.

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test

Table 6. Normality Test

Sample	Nilai Kolmogrov - Smirnov	Sig.	Information
200	0,062	0,061	Normal

Source: Processed Data, 2024

The number of data tested in this analysis is 200, The Kolmogrov-Smirnov value is a test statistic that measures how far the sample data distribution deviates from the ideal normal distribution. This value usually ranges from 0 to 1. The smaller this value, the closer the data distribution is to the normal distribution. Sig (Significant) is a probability value that indicates the possibility of getting test results that are as large or more extreme if the data really comes from a normal distribution.

Based on the results of the Normality Test in accordance with the table above, it gives a significance value of 0.061 which is greater than 0.05 which states that the research results are considered to come from a normal distribution.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 7. Multicollinearity Test

Variables	Tolerance Value	VIF Value	Information.
Soft Skills X1	0,317	3.157	Multicollinearity Free
Hard Skills X2	0,317	3.157	Multicollinearity Free

Source: Data Diolah, 2024

The tolerance value for the Soft Skills (X1) and Hard Skills (X2) variables is 0.317, and the value for the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) is 3.157. These values are derived from the multicollinearity test table. Given that the value of the VIF is less than 10, it may be concluded that there is not a significant multicollinearity issue. Therefore, it is possible to draw the conclusion that the variables of Soft Skills and Hard Skills do not have a strong linear relationship with each other. As a result, the regression model that was utilized to measure the impact of the MBKM internship program on students' soft skills, hard skills, and work readiness can be considered valid and free from multicollinearity issues.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 8. Heteroscedasticity Test

			Standardized Coecfficients	t	Sig.
			Beta		
(Contant)	1.685	.317		5.239	<,001
Soft Skills	-058	.047	-153	-1.223	.223
Hard Skills	.001	.047	.002	.017	.968

Source: Processed Data, 2024

Based on the data from the table above, the constant value is 1.685 with a t value of 5.239 and a significance of less than 0.001. This shows that the constant is significant in the regression model. The beta coefficient for soft skills is -0.058 with a t value of -1.223 and a significance of 0.223. This shows that soft skills are not significant in this regression model because the significance value is greater than 0.05. The beta coefficient for hard skills is 0.001 with a t value of 0.017 and a significance of 0.968. This shows that hard skills are also not significant in this regression model because the significance value is greater than 0.05.

Overall, the results of this heteroscedasticity test indicate that there is no significant heteroscedasticity problem in the regression model used to measure the impact of the MBKM internship program on students' soft skills, hard skills, and work readiness. This means that the error variance remains constant, or homogeneous, so that the heteroscedasticity assumption is not violated and the results of the regression analysis are reliable.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Regression Equation

Table 9. Regression Equation

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Contant)	3.195	.543		5.890	<,001
Soft Skills	.338	.081	.355	4.191	<,001
Hard Skills	.397	.080	.421	4.971	<,001
a. Dependent Variable : Readiness to Work					

Source: Processed Data 2024

Based on the table above, the results of the research model are:

Y = 3.195 + 0.338 x Soft Skills + 0.397 x Hard Skills

The constant value of 3.195 indicates that if soft skills and hard skills are zero, then the student's work readiness is 3.195. The coefficient of the Soft Skills X1 variable is 0.338 and the coefficient of the Hard Skills X2 variable is 0.397 indicating that the increase in the independent variable can be concluded that both soft skills and hard skills have a significant influence on the work readiness of Mulawarman University students in the context of the Independent Learning Campus Merdeka Internship Program (MBKM). This program has succeeded in increasing students' work readiness by strengthening their soft and hard skills, which are very important in the world of work.

Correlation Coefficient Test (R)

Table 10. Correlation Coefficient Test

Model	R	R *Square*	*Adjusted R Square*	*Std. Error of the Estimate*
1	.743[a]	.551	.547	1.268
a. *Predictors : (Constant), X2, X1*				
b. *Dependent Variable : Y*				

Source: Processed Data 2024

Based on the table above, the correlation coefficient (R) value of 0.743 indicates a very strong the relationship that exists between the variable that is independent and the variable that is dependent. Changes in the independent variable are obviously tied to changes in the dependent variable, which shows that there is a significant relationship between the two variables. This implies that there is a relationship between the two variables.

Determination Coefficient Test (R^2)

Evaluating the amount to which the regression model is able to explain variations in the dependent variable is accomplished through the utilization of the Determination Coefficient, also known as R2. Indicating that the independent variable has limitations in explaining the variations that occur in the dependent variable, a low adjusted R2 value implies that the independent variable has constraints. Taking into consideration the data presented in table 7, the value of the determination coefficient (R2) is 0.551, which indicates that the independent variables included in this model are capable of explaining 55.1% of the variability in the dependent variable. The remaining 44.9%, on the other hand, is influenced by additional factors that were not included in this study.

Hypothesis Testing

T Test

In order to do the T test, we compare the statistical value that we generate (T count) with the critical value that is determined based on a significance threshold of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$). If the value of the T count is higher than the critical value, then we are able to reject the null hypothesis (H0), which asserts that there is no effect. It can be concluded from this that we are in agreement with the alternative hypothesis (H1), which asserts that there is a significant influence.

Table 11. T-Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients			T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Contant)	3.195	.543		5.890	<,001
Soft Skills	.338	.081	.355	4.191	<,001
Hard Skills	.397	.080	.421	4.971	<,001
a. Dependent Variable : Readiness to Work					

Source: Processed Data 2024

Based on table 8, the significance value in the Soft Skills variable is 0.000 <0.05 and t count 4.191> 1.97601, the Hard Skills variable is 0.000 <0.05 and t count 4.971> 1.97601. So it can be interpreted that Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected, so it can be concluded that the Soft Skills and Hard Skills variables have a significant partial effect on the Readiness to Work of Mulawarman University students in the context of the Independent Learning Campus Independent Internship Program (MBKM).

F Test

For the purpose of determining whether or not all of the independent factors together have a substantial impact on the dependent variable, the F test is utilized. We are able to determine whether the regression model that we construct offers a sufficient contribution to the explanation of fluctuations in the dependent variable by comparing the F value that we calculated with the F table value at a significance level of 5%.

Table 12. F Test

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	389.324	2	194.662	121.114	<,001[b]
Residual	316.631	197	1.607		
Total	705.955	199			
a. Dependent Variable : Readiness to Work					
b. Predictors : (Contants), Hard Skills (X2), Soft Skills (X1)					

Source: Processed Data 2024

To test the hypothesis, we use a 95% confidence level. If the F value we calculate is greater than the F value in the table or if the significance level is less than 5%, then we will accept the alternative hypothesis. Based on table 9, the significance value in the Y variable (Readiness to Work) is <0.001 <0.05 and the calculated F is 121.114> 3.04. So it can be interpreted that Ha is accepted and Ho is rejected, so it can be concluded that the Hard Skills X2 variable and the Soft Skills X1 variable have a significant effect simultaneously on the readiness to work of Mulawarman University students in the context of the Independent Learning Campus Independent Internship Program (MBKM).

Discussion

The Impact of Soft Skills on Students' Readiness to Work

The results of the study showed that there was a significant positive relationship between the Soft Skills variable (X1) and the readiness to work variable (Y). Abilities such as communication, teamwork, and problem solving, which are the main components of soft skills, have increased significantly after participating in the internship program.

This is in line with the findings that soft skills not only complement hard skills but also play a crucial role in work readiness. Students who have strong soft skills tend to be more prepared to enter a dynamic and competitive world of work. They are better able to adapt to new work environments, collaborate with colleagues from various backgrounds, and solve complex problems.

The MBKM program has proven effective in facilitating the development of students' soft skills. Internship experiences that directly enter the world of work provide opportunities for students to apply the theories they have learned and develop the interpersonal skills needed in a professional environment. Thus, the MBKM program not only improves students' hard skills but also enriches their soft skills, resulting in graduates who are better prepared to face the challenges of the world of work.

Soft skills are interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities that are continuously honed through time and experience. These skills not only complement technical skills (hard skills) but also increase the effectiveness in applying these hard skills in various situations (Ayaturrahman & Rahayu, 2023).

Impact of Hard Skills on Students' Work Readiness

The results of the study showed that there was a positive and significant relationship between the hard skills variable (X2) and work readiness (Y). Significantly contributing to the increase in the work readiness variable (Y) by 3,195, this finding indicates that the MBKM internship program has succeeded in equipping Mulawarman University students with technical skills that are in great demand by today's industry, thereby increasing students' opportunities to get jobs that match their qualifications. The results of this study support Robin's theory in the study (Maulidiyah & Ubaidillah, 2024) which states that hard skills, as intellectual abilities, are very important in preparing someone to work. The ability to think, reason, and solve problems which are part of hard skills, have been shown to contribute significantly to work readiness.

CONCLUSION

Students at Mulawarman University have been shown to benefit significantly from the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) Internship Program, which has been shown to have a considerable favourable impact on the development of both soft skills and hard skills, as well as work preparedness. The results of the study showed that students who participated in this program felt a real improvement in communication skills, teamwork, problem solving, and technical skills according to industry needs. The combination of strengthening these two

types of skills gives students greater confidence and readiness to face the challenges of a dynamic and competitive world of work.

In addition, the MBKM program provides direct experience in a professional environment that helps students apply the theories learned in college to real practice. Students not only develop technical skills, but also learn how to interact and adapt to real work situations. This makes the MBKM program one of the strategic steps in preparing graduates who not only have academic expertise, but also the practical skills needed in the field.

However, this study also identified challenges in applying soft skills and hard skills in the real work environment. Students need further assistance and support so that the skills they have developed can be applied effectively. By paying attention to these challenges and continuing to improve the quality of the MBKM program, universities can be more optimal in producing graduates who are not only competent, but also ready to compete in the era of globalization..

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