

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Self-Development and Internship Experience on Job Readiness: A Quantitative Study in Indonesian Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the influence of self-development and internship experience on job readiness among students participating in the Certified Internship and Independent Study Program (MSIB) Batch 5. Employing a quantitative descriptive approach with a causal design, data were collected from 50 purposively selected students using a structured online questionnaire. The analysis, conducted using SPSS version 26, involved multiple linear regression, t-tests, and F-tests. Results indicate that both self-development and internship experience have a positive and statistically significant effect on job readiness, both individually and simultaneously. The two variables together account for 92% of the variance in job readiness, demonstrating a strong model fit. These findings support existing theories such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs and self-efficacy theory, affirming the role of personal growth and experiential learning. Practically, the study underscores the need for higher education institutions and internship providers to integrate structured personal development and industry-aligned internship programs to enhance students' career preparedness and smooth their transition into the workforce.

Keywords: Self-Development, Internship Experience, Job Readiness, MSIB Program, Higher Education.

JEL Code: J24, I23, I28, J21.

I. Introduction

In facing the increasingly competitive challenges of globalization, it is essential to possess strong competencies and well-developed skills, alongside high-quality human resources equipped with relevant knowledge and expertise that align with national development goals. These attributes are critical, both in quantity and quality, particularly in strengthening the nation's human resource capacity (McKenzie, 2025; Whalley et al., 2024). To meet these demands, the younger generation, particularly university students, must acquire adequate knowledge and practical experience to enhance their competencies. One strategic approach is through internship programs offered by higher education institutions. These internships play a crucial role in exposing students to real-world work environments. They are expected to foster technical skills,



professional ethics, and industry-relevant knowledge—key elements for entering the labor market. Furthermore, internships are an important part of the learning process, offering students the opportunity to gain recognition for hands-on experience (Anjum, 2020; Zegwaard & Campbell, 2023). Mustari (2018) also supports that internship programs offer training tailored to students' academic backgrounds, helping to prepare them for professional challenges.

The Certified Internship and Independent Study Program (MSIB), under the “Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka” (MBKM) policy, initiated by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, aims to strengthen students' career readiness through direct involvement in the workplace. In this program, participating companies are required to design internship curricula tailored to students' roles and aligned with future job expectations. Through this alignment, students are expected to make informed career choices based on their competencies, interests, and educational backgrounds (Safitri & Syofyan, 2023). Human resource development is not limited to technical training but must emphasize long-term growth. Personal development, in this context, is a structured effort to improve competence and performance for both present and future roles. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, personal development reflects an individual's pursuit of self-actualization. Hascan (2021) emphasizes that personal development involves skill enhancement, the pursuit of aspirations, confidence building, and resilience. It can be achieved through experience, feedback, self-awareness, and belief in one's potential (Assylzhan et al., 2023). Internship experience, as defined by Aini (2022), is the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and attitudes obtained from real work participation. It is often measured by indicators such as internship duration, professional development, consolidation of knowledge, practical skills acquisition, and the cultivation of a professional mindset. Research also supports that experiential learning models, including project-based internships and hackathons, significantly improve students' soft skills and readiness for future employment (Araújo et al., 2025).

Job readiness, according to Pratiwi (2022), is the integration of skills, knowledge, and attitudes enabling new graduates to contribute productively to organizational goals. However, in practice, the MSIB program has shown inconsistencies with its curriculum objectives. Several students report that the tasks provided during internships did not match expectations, leading to decreased motivation and limited skill development (Hora et al., 2020; Cheung & Arnold, 2019). Rahmawati (2019) highlights job interest as an internal factor influencing readiness. Hariyanto (2011) explains that interest reflects personal value towards specific roles or activities—where high interest often drives stronger motivation and preparation. Conversely, misalignment in program execution can reduce this interest. Muspawi (2020) argues that previous work experience contributes substantially to job readiness. With increasing access to both on-campus and off-campus internship opportunities, students have more chances to enhance their competencies. Among these opportunities, the MSIB program plays a central role. Riyanti (2017) also identifies self-efficacy as a crucial factor. Defined as a belief in one's capability to perform tasks (Tentama, 2019), self-efficacy shapes students' confidence and behavior in preparing for the job market. Despite generally high levels of self-efficacy among MSIB participants, some students still struggle with low self-confidence and career planning.

Astikasari (2018) conceptualizes job readiness as a form of maturity involving logical thinking, collaboration, emotional control, responsibility, adaptability to change, and personal ambition. These traits are cultivated through education and practical experience. The MSIB program is designed to support these developments by combining theoretical and experiential learning. Nonetheless, inconsistent implementation of the program continues to be an issue. Therefore, this study aims to examine the extent to which self-development and internship experience influence job readiness among students participating in the MSIB Batch 5 program.

II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development



2.1. Self-Development

Self-development is a critical aspect of human resource improvement aimed at enhancing individual competencies through continuous learning and training. According to Hascan (2021), self-development involves sharpening one's skills, achieving aspirations, increasing self-confidence, maintaining resilience in the face of failure, and fostering meaningful relationships with others. It is a holistic process that includes learning from experience, accepting feedback, building self-awareness, and believing in personal growth efforts. In the workplace context, personal development prepares individuals not only for current job responsibilities but also for future roles. Recent studies also emphasize that structured personal development, supported by coaching and mentoring, significantly improves career confidence and adaptability among university students (McKenzie, 2025; Assylzhan et al., 2023). Based on Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, self-development reflects an individual's pursuit of self-actualization, the highest level in the hierarchy. This process involves fulfilling personal potential and is considered essential for achieving job readiness, particularly for students transitioning into professional roles. Therefore, based on Maslow's theory and supported by empirical studies (Cheung & Arnold, 2019; Araújo et al., 2025), it is hypothesized that students who actively engage in self-development will exhibit higher levels of job readiness.

2.2. Internship Experience

Internship experience plays a pivotal role in preparing students for the professional world by bridging the gap between academic knowledge and workplace realities. Aini (2022) defines internship experience as the accumulation of knowledge, skills, and competencies gained during internship activities. Key indicators of internship experience include the duration of the internship, human resource training and development, reinforcement of learning outcomes, development of practical skills, and formation of professional attitudes. Internships expose students to real-world work environments and allow them to practice workplace behaviors, build confidence, and gain insights into organizational culture. According to Mustari (2018), internship programs provide hands-on experience aligned with students' fields of study, which helps develop both hard and soft skills essential for future employment. Research by Zegwaard & Campbell (2023) and Safitri & Syofyan (2023) also found that internships aligned with students' academic disciplines significantly increase work readiness, especially when structured mentorship and evaluation mechanisms are embedded in the program. Therefore, it is hypothesized that internship experience has a significant and positive effect on job readiness, as it allows students to translate theoretical knowledge into workplace practice (Anjum, 2020; Araújo et al., 2025).

2.3. Job Readiness

Job readiness refers to an individual's preparedness to enter and perform effectively in the workforce. Pratiwi (2022) defines it as a set of skills, knowledge, and attitudes that enable new graduates to contribute productively to organizational goals. Astikasari (2018) further elaborates that job readiness includes the ability to think logically and objectively, collaborate effectively, manage emotions, act critically and responsibly, adapt to new environments and technologies, and possess ambition for continuous personal growth. According to Rahmawati (2019), one of the key internal factors influencing job readiness is job interest. Students with a high level of interest in specific career paths are more motivated to develop their skills and prepare themselves for the demands of the job market. However, inconsistencies between internship implementation and planned curricula may negatively impact students' job interest and, consequently, their overall readiness. Self-efficacy also plays a vital role in job readiness. Riyanti (2017) and Tentama (2019) suggest that self-efficacy is a person's belief in their ability to achieve desired performance outcomes. Students with high self-efficacy are more confident in their capabilities and are likely to engage more actively in job preparation activities. Conversely, students with low self-efficacy may lack the motivation and confidence necessary to transition smoothly into the workforce. More recently, Assylzhan et al. (2023)

demonstrated that digital platforms supporting self-assessment and reflective learning can improve students' sense of readiness and self-efficacy, especially when integrated into structured internship programs.

2.4. The Role of MSIB Program

The Certified Internship and Independent Study Program (MSIB) is designed to provide students with opportunities to develop professional competencies by working in real organizational settings. The program is expected to enhance students' job readiness by equipping them with practical experience and exposure to industry standards. However, deviations in the implementation of the program from the intended curriculum may reduce its effectiveness, leading to mismatches between students' expectations and the skills they actually acquire. Zegwaard & Campbell (2023) emphasize that the success of internship models like MSIB depends not only on participation but also on the alignment between institutional planning and industry mentoring.

2.5. Hypothesis Development

Based on the theoretical framework, including Maslow's theory of self-actualization and Bandura's concept of self-efficacy, along with findings from recent empirical studies, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H₁: Self-development has a positive and significant effect on the job readiness of students in the MSIB Batch 5 program.

H₂: Internship experience has a positive and significant effect on the job readiness of students in the MSIB Batch 5 program.

H₃: Self-development and internship experience have a simultaneous positive and significant effect on the job readiness of students in the MSIB Batch 5 program.

III. Research Method

3.1. Research Design

This study adopts a quantitative descriptive approach with a causal design, aiming to investigate the influence of self-development and internship experience on the job readiness of students who participated in the MSIB (Certified Internship and Independent Study) Batch 5 program. The causal design allows researchers to explore not only the relationships among variables but also the extent to which one variable may cause changes in another. The main objective is to determine whether self-development and internship experience significantly affect students' readiness to enter the workforce.

3.2. Population and Sample

The population in this study comprises 50 students who have participated in the MSIB Batch 5 program. Given the specific characteristics required for the research, namely students with direct MSIB experience, the sampling method used is purposive sampling. This technique was chosen to ensure that respondents are relevant and have adequate exposure to both self-development initiatives and internship programs as designed within the MSIB framework. As the number of participants in the population is relatively small, the entire population was used as the sample, resulting in 50 respondents.

3.3. Instrument

Data collection was carried out using an online questionnaire distributed through Google Forms. The questionnaire was designed to measure three key constructs: self-development, internship experience, and job readiness. Each variable was represented by a set of indicators derived from theoretical frameworks and prior studies. Instrument validity was tested using Pearson correlation, and Cronbach's Alpha was applied for reliability testing to ensure internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The questionnaire items were carefully constructed to ensure clarity, validity, and relevance to the research objectives. Additional secondary data were obtained through document analysis and literature reviews to support the interpretation of findings.

3.4. Data Management and Procedure

Data were stored in encrypted format via Google Drive restricted to research team access to ensure confidentiality and data security. Responses were monitored to detect inconsistencies and cleaned prior to analysis. Respondents provided informed consent before filling out the questionnaire.

3.5. Data Analysis

The study employed SPSS version 26 for data analysis. Descriptive statistics were first used to summarize the responses, providing an overview of the distribution and central tendencies of each variable. This preliminary step helped assess the consistency of data and the general tendencies among the respondents. Subsequently, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the effect of the independent variables—self-development and internship experience—on the dependent variable, job readiness. The following statistical procedures were carried out:

1. T-test: to evaluate the individual contribution (partial effect) of self-development and internship experience on job readiness.
2. F-test (ANOVA): to assess the simultaneous or collective effect of both independent variables on the dependent variable.
3. Coefficient of determination (R^2): calculated to determine the extent to which variations in job readiness are explained by self-development and internship experience.

Each test was conducted at a 95% confidence level ($\alpha = 0.05$), and all statistical assumptions (normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity) were verified before model interpretation. A higher R^2 value indicates a stronger model fit and better predictive ability.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Analysis Result

In this study, after the data were declared valid and reliable through validity and reliability testing, a multiple linear regression analysis was conducted. The purpose of this analysis was to determine the extent to which the independent variables, self-development (X_1) and internship experience (X_2), influence the dependent variable, namely job readiness (Y), among students participating in the MSIB Batch 5 program. The analysis was performed using the SPSS Statistics 26 software for Windows.

Table 1. Regression Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	B	Std. Error
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1	Constant	33,857	4,252
	Self-Development (X_1)	0,752	0,172
	Internship Experience (X_2)	0,768	0,181
a. Dependent Variable: Job Readiness (Y)			

Table 1 shows that the regression coefficient for the self-development variable (X_1) is 0.752. This indicates that if other independent variables remain constant and self-development increases by 1%, the job readiness variable (Y) will increase by 0.752. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between self-development and job readiness among students participating in the MSIB Batch 5 program. Similarly, the regression coefficient for the internship experience variable (X_2) is 0.768. This means that if other independent variables are held constant and internship experience increases by 1%, the job readiness variable (Y) will increase by 0.768. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a positive relationship between internship experience and job readiness among MSIB Batch 5 participants. The t-test (partial test) is used to determine the individual effect of each independent variable, namely self-development and internship experience, on the dependent variable (Y), which is job readiness, to assess whether these effects are statistically significant.

Table 2. t-Test Results

	T	Sig
Constant	5,675	,000
Self-Development (X_1)	3,172	,000
Internship Experience (X_2)	3,185	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Job Readiness (Y)

Based on Table 2, the calculated t-value for the self-development variable (X_1) is 3.172, with a significance value (p-value) of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. This indicates that self-development has a positive and statistically significant partial effect on job readiness among students participating in the MSIB Batch 5 program. Thus, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. Similarly, the t-value for the internship experience variable (X_2) is 3.185, with a significance value of 0.000, which also falls below the 0.05 significance level. This confirms that internship experience has a positive and statistically significant partial effect on job readiness. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (H_2) is accepted. These findings suggest that both self-development and internship experience, when assessed individually, contribute significantly to improving students' readiness to enter the workforce.

Table 3. F-Test Results (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean of Square	F	Sig
1	Regression	306,300	15	20,236	3,460	,024 ^b
	Residual	880,605	135	6,432		
	Total	1186,905	150			

a. Dependent Variable: Job Readiness (Y)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Development (X_1), Internship Experience (X_2)

Based on Table 3, the calculated F-value is 3.460, which is greater than the F-table value of 2.51. In addition, the significance value is 0.024, which is less than the standard threshold of 0.05. These results indicate that the null hypothesis (H_0) is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_3) is accepted. This means that the independent variables, self-development (X_1) and internship experience (X_2), jointly have a positive and significant effect on job readiness. Therefore, it can be concluded that self-development and internship experience simultaneously influence the job readiness of students participating in the MSIB Batch 5 program.

Table 4. Coefficient of Determination Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Standard Error of the Estimate
1	0,960 ^a	.923	.920	2,640

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Development (X_1), Internship Experience (X_2)

b. Dependent Variable: Job Readiness (Y)

Based on Table 4, the Model Summary shows that the coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.923, while the adjusted R square is 0.920. This indicates that 92.0% of the variance in job readiness (Y) can be explained jointly by the two independent variables: self-development (X_1) and internship experience (X_2). The remaining 8.0% of the variance may be attributed to other factors not included in this study, such as personal motivation, organizational culture, soft skills, or external mentoring. The high R value of 0.960 also suggests a very strong positive correlation between the combined independent variables and job readiness. This strong correlation reinforces the robustness of the regression model used in this study. The standard error of the estimate, which is 2.640, indicates the average distance that the observed values fall from the regression line, and the relatively low value here implies good predictive accuracy. The findings suggest that self-development and internship experience are highly influential factors in shaping students' readiness for employment, and that the model used in this research is both statistically sound and practically meaningful.

4.2. Discussion

The findings of this study reveal that both self-development and internship experience have a positive and statistically significant effect on job readiness among students participating in the MSIB Batch 5 program. The results of the partial t-tests indicate that self-development ($t = 3.172$, $p < 0.001$) and internship experience ($t = 3.185$, $p < 0.001$) significantly influence job readiness. Furthermore, the F-test demonstrates that the combined effect of these two variables on job readiness is also significant ($F = 3.460$, $p = 0.024$), supporting the hypothesis that self-development and internship experience collectively impact students' preparedness to enter the workforce. The adjusted R^2 value of 0.920 confirms that 92% of the variation in job readiness can be explained by these two variables, indicating a strong and stable regression model. This result is not only statistically robust but also practically significant, considering the high explanatory power of the model.

These results are consistent with the theoretical foundation proposed by Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which emphasizes self-actualization as a key motivator in human development. According to Hascan (2021), self-development involves goal setting, resilience, confidence building, and learning from feedback—characteristics that align with employability competencies such as adaptability, responsibility, and continuous improvement. Assylzhan et al. (2023) further explain that personalized development supported by reflective learning and digital self-assessment contributes to greater workplace preparedness. Students who actively engage in personal development are likely to exhibit higher levels of preparedness, motivation, and mental readiness to transition from academic to professional environments.

In line with this, the results also echo findings from Riyanti and Rustiana (2017) and Tentama (2019), who argue that self-efficacy—a core component of self-development—is a strong predictor of job readiness. Students with greater belief in their capabilities tend to approach job-seeking and professional challenges with a proactive mindset, making them more desirable in the eyes of potential employers. The alignment of this study's findings with self-efficacy theory reinforces the necessity of including psychological empowerment elements in student development programs. The significant relationship found in this study further validates the importance of self-development programs and mentoring as strategic components in higher education curricula.

The role of internship experience also emerged as a critical factor in enhancing job readiness. As indicated in this study, students who participated in well-structured internships demonstrated higher levels of job preparedness. This aligns with the work of Mustari (2018) and Aini (2022), who emphasize that internships offer opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, foster technical and soft

skills, and promote a deeper understanding of workplace dynamics. Furthermore, Araújo et al. (2025) highlight that structured experiential learning, such as hackathons and project-based internships, substantially improves student problem-solving and teamwork competencies—skills highly demanded in the job market. The findings support the premise that internship programs like MSIB play a vital role in preparing students for real-world employment.

Moreover, the positive relationship between internship experience and job readiness is consistent with the study by Safitri and Syofyan (2023), who found that students' exposure to workplace environments improves their time perspective, decision-making, and goal orientation—elements central to job readiness. When students are immersed in professional settings, they tend to develop clearer expectations about job roles and build confidence in their ability to meet industry standards. This study extends those findings by quantifying the degree of influence and confirming the combined strength of both self-development and internship experience. It also highlights that career coaching embedded within internships could amplify job readiness outcomes.

In addition, the strong model fit (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.920$) implies that self-development and internship experience together form a robust predictive framework for assessing job readiness. This validates the strategic direction of the MSIB program as part of the broader Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) initiative, which aims to align academic learning with industry needs. However, as noted in Rahmawati (2019) and Pratiwi et al. (2022), job readiness is also influenced by intrinsic interest and motivation. The remaining 8% of unexplained variance might be due to factors such as individual career aspirations, the influence of peer networks, quality of academic advising, or socio-economic context. This study confirms that both self-development and internship experience are critical antecedents to job readiness. The findings reinforce the importance of experiential learning and structured personal development as tools for bridging the gap between higher education and employment. Future interventions should continue to integrate these components to cultivate competent, confident, and career-ready graduates.

V. Conclusion

The results of the analysis confirmed that self-development and internship experience positively and significantly influence job readiness, both individually and jointly. The model showed strong explanatory power, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.920, meaning that 92% of the variance in job readiness is accounted for by the two variables. This underscores their strategic importance in the development of employability skills within higher education. From a theoretical perspective, the findings reinforce the significance of Maslow's concept of self-actualization and the role of self-efficacy theory in shaping student behavior and preparedness. It also supports prior research that emphasizes the value of experiential learning—particularly structured internships—in bridging academic learning with workplace expectations. From a practical standpoint, the study highlights the need for higher education institutions to systematically embed self-development practices into their programs. Universities should integrate reflective training modules, self-assessment workshops, and mentorship schemes into the MSIB curriculum to strengthen students' self-awareness and confidence. Likewise, internship providers should ensure that placements involve real responsibilities, continuous supervision, and exposure to professional routines to optimize learning outcomes. This research affirms that self-development and internship experience are core determinants of job readiness, not merely supportive elements. Their deliberate integration into curriculum design, student services, and industry partnerships is essential to cultivate graduates who are not only academically competent but also emotionally resilient, professionally agile, and socially prepared to thrive in a competitive job market.

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