



# The Effect of internship Experience and skills on student work readiness at STIE AMKOP Makassar

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Abstract	
<p><b>Keywords:</b> <i>Internship, skills, work readiness, students.</i></p> <p><b>Conflict of Interest Statement:</b> The authors confirm that this study was carried out independently and free from any commercial, financial, or external influences that could be construed as affecting the study's objectivity, integrity, or results.</p> <p>Copyright © 2023 POVREMA. All rights reserved.</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> This study aims to examine the individual and combined effects of internships and skills on students' readiness to enter the workforce.</p> <p><b>Research Design and Methodology:</b> A quantitative research design was employed, involving 83 student respondents. Data were collected through structured questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression with the assistance of SPSS version 25.</p> <p><b>Findings and Discussion:</b> The results indicate that internships and skills each have a positive and statistically significant effect on students' work readiness. When analyzed simultaneously, both variables demonstrate a strong combined influence on readiness for employment. Among the two predictors, skills emerged as the most dominant factor, emphasizing the critical role of technical competence, communication abilities, and individual responsibility in preparing students for professional work environments.</p> <p><b>Implications:</b> The findings suggest that active participation in internship programs and the development of relevant skills are essential strategies for enhancing students' readiness to face the demands and challenges of the workforce. Educational institutions are therefore encouraged to strengthen internship opportunities and integrate skill-based learning into their curricula to better prepare graduates for professional careers.</p>

## Introduction

Higher education institutions are tasked with producing graduates who are not only academically competent but also capable of navigating the increasingly complex demands of the modern labor market. Despite this, a considerable proportion of university graduates continue to face difficulties in securing employment, a situation reflected in persistently high unemployment rates among degree holders. This trend suggests a mismatch between the competencies developed through higher education and the needs of industry (Musa et al., 2025), highlighting a fundamental gap between academic preparation and workplace expectations.

Work readiness extends beyond theoretical knowledge to encompass practical experience and employability skills that enable graduates to function effectively in professional settings. Research shows that engagement in structured real-world work, such as internships, significantly enhances students' readiness for employment by providing opportunities to apply academic knowledge in

practical contexts, develop professional competencies, and internalize workplace norms (Wilopo et al., 2025). This aligns with the broader literature on *work-integrated learning*, which emphasizes the integration of academic theory and experiential practice as a critical pathway to workforce readiness in higher education globally.

Internship programs are widely recognized as one of the most effective forms of experiential learning, facilitating skill development in areas such as communication, problem-solving, adaptability, and teamwork—skills that are consistently identified as essential for 21st-century employability (Hasanuzzaman & Sooraksa, 2023). These employability skills are increasingly valued by employers, yet a skill gap persists whereby many graduates lack the competencies required to meet professional demands upon graduation, contributing to prolonged job search periods and underemployment.

Beyond practical exposure, mastery of employability skills such as critical thinking, communication, teamwork, and responsibility is a significant determinant of career success. Literature on employability underscores that graduates who develop these transferable skills are more adaptable, confident, and capable of navigating diverse work environments, thereby increasing their competitiveness in the labor market. Moreover, systematic reviews highlight the crucial role these competencies play in bridging the gap between academic learning and industry requirements, recommending enhanced curriculum integration of practical and soft skills.

STIE AMKOP Makassar, as a higher education institution focused on economics and management, holds the responsibility to strengthen both academic knowledge and practical competencies in its students. However, variations in graduates' work readiness persist, likely due to differences in internship exposure and skill development among students. This observed disparity underscores the need for empirical investigation to assess the influence of internships and employability skills on student work readiness. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the extent to which internship experience and skill mastery affect the readiness of STIE AMKOP Makassar students to transition into the professional workforce.

## **Literature Review**

Internships represent a structured form of experiential learning that provides students with opportunities to gain real-world work experience prior to entering professional employment. This learning activity is intended to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge acquired in academic settings and the practical demands of the workplace. According to Saputra and Jalinus (2020), internships function as a contextual learning mechanism that enables students to understand work patterns, organizational systems, and professional ethics. Through internship engagement, students can improve their adaptability, sharpen professional competencies, and develop a sense of responsibility toward work tasks.

In addition, Azizah et al. (2019) explain that internships serve as a platform for shaping professional character through exposure to organizational culture and professional communication practices. Internship experiences that are aligned with students' fields of study have been shown to strengthen their readiness for employment and enhance their confidence in performing tasks independently. This aligns with findings from international research, which demonstrate that internship participation significantly enhances graduates' employability and readiness by enabling them to apply academic concepts to practical tasks and by fostering professional awareness (Galon, 2025).

Skills comprise an individual's ability to perform work effectively and efficiently within their field of expertise. Mangkunegara (2017) posits that skills encompass not only technical abilities but also non-technical competencies such as communication, critical thinking, and teamwork. These competencies reflect an individual's capacity to adapt to workplace environments and to complete tasks professionally. Wajdi et al. (2019) further categorize skills into basic literacy, technical skills, interpersonal skills, and problem-solving skills. Students who possess strong competencies across these

dimensions demonstrate higher levels of work readiness, as they can integrate technical proficiency with social and cognitive abilities required in professional settings.

Recent international studies also emphasize the role of skills development in workforce preparedness. A bibliometric analysis identifies communication, adaptability, and critical thinking as core employability competencies cultivated through internship experiences, which in turn enhance graduates' preparedness for workplace transitions (Zakaria et al., 2024). Work readiness refers to the extent to which an individual is prepared to face the demands of the labor market, covering knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Fitriyanto (2006) defines work readiness as a condition in which an individual possesses maturity and preparedness to adapt to the work environment. Adelina (2018) adds that work readiness encompasses dimensions of knowledge, skills, understanding, and personal attributes necessary for professional productivity. These conceptualizations align with international research demonstrating that internship experiences not only contribute directly to job readiness but also indirectly through the development of professional competencies, including 21st-century skills that employers increasingly demand (Pianda et al., 2025).

Moreover, pre-professional internship studies in international contexts show that structured internship programs significantly influence students' perceptions of employability and professional competence. For example, a recent evaluation of pre-professional internships among accounting students found that internship participation enhances professional competencies and perceived employability across diverse institutional settings, highlighting the importance of integrating practical training into academic curricula (Frontiers in Education, 2025).

Work readiness is also influenced by a range of factors beyond internships and skill mastery, such as communication ability, discipline, and time management. Students with high levels of work readiness tend to adjust more quickly to workplace conditions, understand job expectations more effectively, and demonstrate high performance in professional environments. International research supports this multi-factor model, indicating that internship participation and competence in key employability skills significantly increase graduates' competitiveness and readiness for labor market entry (Valdez et al., 2025).

In summary, both national and international literature consistently demonstrate that internship experience and skill development play pivotal roles in preparing students to meet professional challenges. Internships provide structured opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge, develop essential competencies, and integrate into professional cultures, while skills such as communication, critical thinking, and teamwork serve as critical determinants of work readiness in the contemporary workforce.

## **Research Design and Methodology**

### *Research Design and Approach*

This study employed a **descriptive quantitative approach** with a causal research design to analyze the effect of internships and skills on students' work readiness at STIE AMKOP Makassar. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows for objective measurement of variables and statistical testing of relationships among them. This design is suitable for examining cause-and-effect relationships between independent variables and a dependent variable using numerical data (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The population of this study consisted of 502 undergraduate students from the 2019–2021 cohorts at STIE AMKOP Makassar who had participated in internship programs. A sample of 83 respondents was determined using the Slovin formula to ensure representativeness while maintaining an acceptable margin of error (Yamane, 1967). The sampling technique applied was simple random sampling, which provided equal selection opportunities for all population members and reduced sampling bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016).

### *Research Variables*

This study involved three main variables:

1. Internship ( $X_1$ ) as the first independent variable, representing students' practical work experience in professional settings.
2. Skills ( $X_2$ ) as the second independent variable, encompassing both technical and non-technical competencies possessed by students.
3. Work Readiness ( $Y$ ) as the dependent variable, reflecting students' preparedness to enter and adapt to the workforce.

#### **Data Collection Instrument**

The collected data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with the support of SPSS version 25. This technique was employed to examine both the partial and simultaneous effects of internships and skills on work readiness. The analysis included t-tests to assess individual variable effects, F-tests to evaluate joint effects, and the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) to determine the explanatory power of the independent variables (Gujarati & Porter, 2009; Field, 2018).

#### **Research Procedure**

The research procedure began with the identification of research variables and population, followed by sample determination and questionnaire development. After data collection, the responses were coded and processed using SPSS. Instrument testing was conducted prior to hypothesis testing, and the final results were interpreted to draw conclusions regarding the influence of internships and skills on students' work readiness.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Findings**

#### *Overview of Regression Analysis*

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of internship experience ( $X_1$ ) and skills ( $X_2$ ) on students' work readiness ( $Y$ ) at STIE AMKOP Makassar. Data processing using SPSS version 25 indicates that both independent variables contribute positively to the prediction of students' work readiness. The regression model meets the criteria for statistical significance, demonstrating that internships and skills are relevant predictors within the research context.

#### *Effect of Internship Experience on Work Readiness*

The regression results show that internship experience ( $X_1$ ) has a  $t$ -value of 1.761 with a significance level of 0.022 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This result indicates that internship experience exerts a statistically significant positive effect on students' work readiness. The positive regression coefficient suggests that higher levels of internship engagement are associated with increased readiness to enter the workforce. In practical terms, students who have undergone internship programs tend to demonstrate better preparedness in facing work-related responsibilities and expectations.

#### *Effect of Skills on Work Readiness*

The analysis further reveals that the skills variable ( $X_2$ ) has a  $t$ -value of 4.150 with a significance level of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This finding confirms that skills have a statistically significant and stronger effect on work readiness compared to internship experience. The magnitude of the  $t$ -value indicates that skills contribute more substantially to variations in students' readiness levels. This result reflects that improvements in students' skills are closely associated with higher levels of preparedness for professional work environments.

#### *Simultaneous Contribution of Internship Experience and Skills*

The overall explanatory power of the regression model is reflected in the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.469. This value indicates that 46.9% of the variance in students' work readiness can be explained jointly by internship experience and skills. The remaining 53.1% of the variance is attributed to other variables outside the scope of this study, suggesting that work readiness is a multifaceted construct influenced by a combination of academic, personal, and environmental factors.

Summary of Statistical Findings

Overall, the regression analysis demonstrates that both internship experience and skills significantly contribute to students' work readiness, both individually and collectively. Among the two independent variables, skills show a more dominant statistical influence, while internship experience also provides a meaningful contribution. The detailed results of the multiple linear regression analysis are presented in **Table 1**, which summarizes the regression coefficients, *t*-values, significance levels, and the coefficient of determination for the model.

Table 1. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4,098	1,452		2,823	,006
	Magang	,146	,138	,144	1,761	,022
	Keterampilan	,598	,144	,564	4,150	,000

a. Dependent Variable: Kesiapan Kerja  
 Sumber : Data SPSS diolah, 2025.

Discussion

Effect of Internship Experience on Work Readiness

The findings of this study indicate that internship experience has a positive and significant effect on students' work readiness. This result suggests that internships play an important role in preparing students to enter the professional workforce. Through internship activities, students gain opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge acquired during their academic studies to real workplace situations, enabling them to better understand job tasks, organizational structures, and professional expectations. Direct interaction with supervisors and colleagues also helps students develop adaptability and enhances their confidence in professional settings.

This finding supports previous national studies by Gohae (2020) and Halawa et al. (2025), which concluded that internship experience significantly contributes to improving students' work readiness. Their research emphasizes that internships help students develop work discipline, professional attitudes, and practical insight into the demands of the labor market. In the context of STIE AMKOP Makassar, students who actively participated in internship programs demonstrated higher readiness levels compared to those with limited internship exposure.

At the international level, this result aligns with studies by Maertz et al. (2014) and Jackson (2016), who highlighted internships as an essential component of work-based learning that enhances employability and professional identity. These studies suggest that internship programs enable students to internalize workplace norms and expectations, thereby facilitating a smoother transition from education to employment.

Effect of skills on Students' Work Readiness

The results further reveal that skills have a stronger and more dominant influence on work readiness compared to internship experience. Students who possess well-developed technical skills (hard skills), such as technology utilization and data analysis, as well as non-technical skills (soft skills), including communication, leadership, teamwork, and responsibility, tend to be better prepared to face workplace challenges.

This finding is consistent with national research indicating that skill mastery is a key determinant of work readiness (Gohae, 2020; Halawa et al., 2025). Students with strong skills demonstrate higher confidence, adaptability, and task performance readiness. From an international perspective, Finch et al. (2013) emphasize that employability skills are among the most influential factors affecting graduates' readiness for employment, often surpassing academic achievement alone. Similarly, Yorke (2006)

argues that skills such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork are critical indicators of graduate employability in modern labor markets

#### *Comparative Role of Internships and Skills*

The comparative findings of this study indicate that while both internships and skills significantly influence work readiness, skills emerge as the more dominant predictor. This suggests that internship experiences are most effective when supported by strong skill mastery, enabling students to fully benefit from practical exposure. Students with adequate skills are better able to translate internship experiences into meaningful professional competencies.

This finding aligns with international research by Silva et al. (2018), who found that internships enhance employability outcomes most effectively when students possess sufficient skills to capitalize on experiential learning opportunities. Their study emphasizes that work readiness is a multidimensional construct shaped by the interaction of experience, skills, and personal attributes.

#### *Implications for Higher Education Institutions*

The results of this study highlight the importance of integrating structured internship programs with systematic skill development in higher education curricula. Institutions such as STIE AMKOP Makassar are encouraged to strengthen partnerships with industry while simultaneously embedding skill-based learning strategies within academic programs. By doing so, universities can better ensure that graduates are equipped not only with academic knowledge but also with the competencies required to succeed in professional environments.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that internship experience has a positive and statistically significant effect on the work readiness of students at STIE AMKOP Makassar, as it provides direct exposure to real work environments that help students adapt to professional settings. In addition, skills demonstrate a more dominant influence on work readiness, indicating that mastery of both technical and non-technical skills enhances students' confidence, competence, and ability to meet workplace demands. Furthermore, internships and skills simultaneously contribute significantly to improving students' work readiness, suggesting that effective preparation for the workforce requires the integration of practical experience and systematic skill development. Therefore, higher education institutions are encouraged to strengthen internship programs and expand skill-based training to improve graduates' competitiveness in the labor market.

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