

Impact of Internship Programs and Senior Mentoring on Hospitality Students Work Readiness at Novotel Manado

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the effects of internship programs and senior mentoring on the work readiness of hospitality students participating in internship programs at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center. The analysis focused on the individual effect of each variable as well as their combined effect on students' work readiness.

Research Methodology: Using a mixed-methods design and saturated sampling, data were collected from 25 student interns through Likert-scale questionnaires, interviews, observations, and documentation. Quantitative data were evaluated using IBM SPSS for validity, reliability, normality, multiple linear regression, t-test, F-test, and coefficient of determination (R^2).

Results: The findings indicate that internship programs significantly improve students' work readiness, while senior mentoring alone is not significant. However, both variables jointly had a significant effect on students' workplace readiness.

Conclusions: Internship programs significantly impact students' work readiness by providing opportunities for practical experience and fostering the development of competencies necessary for working in the hospitality industry.

Limitations: This study was limited to 25 student interns at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center; therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to other hospitality organizations.

Contributions: The findings of this research provide useful insights for hotel management and educational institutions to develop better internship and mentoring programs. This study also serves as a reference for future research in hospitality, vocational education, and human resource management.

Keywords: *Hospitality Industry, Internship, Senior Mentoring, Student Interns, Work Readiness*

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1. Introduction

As a major contributor to tourism development, the hospitality industry places a strong emphasis on human resource competence and service quality. The growing competitive pressure within the sector has led hotels to recruit employees who possess not only technical proficiency but also critical interpersonal competencies, including effective communication, collaboration, adaptability, and professionalism. These competencies are recognized as fundamental aspects of work readiness, as they influence an individual's capacity to respond to workplace requirements and uphold service

quality standards in the hospitality industry ([Airlangga, Irianto, and Suryanto \(2024\)](#); [Muspawi and Lestari \(2020\)](#)).

Accordingly, vocational higher education institutions play a strategic role in developing graduates who demonstrate professional competence, adaptability, and preparedness to respond to the hospitality sector's dynamic demands. Internship programs are regarded as an effective means of enhancing students' readiness for employment. Through these programs, students are provided with opportunities to engage in authentic workplace settings, enabling them to implement academic knowledge and acquire practical competencies essential for professional practices. These experiences help students understand various aspects of the workplace, including organizational culture, work procedures, communication patterns, and professional responsibilities, which may not be fully developed through theoretical classroom learning. According to [Grosemans, Coertjens, and Kyndt \(2020\)](#), work-based learning experiences obtained during internships significantly support students' self-confidence, skill development, and ability to adapt to professional environments. In addition to internships, senior mentoring plays an important role in shaping new employees. Senior mentoring provides guidance, knowledge transfer, and role modeling that can accelerate junior employees' adaptation to the workplace environment.

Although the effectiveness of internship programs and senior mentoring has been widely proven in previous studies, most research has examined these two variables separately. [Grosemans et al. \(2020\)](#) focused on internships in building self-confidence and skills, while mentoring studies emphasized employee retention and job satisfaction in general industries. However, in the context of the Indonesian hospitality industry, particularly in the Manado area, there is limited empirical research examining the combined effect of structured internship programs and senior mentoring on students' work readiness. At Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center, interns not only carry out operational tasks but also receive direct guidance from senior employees. This gap indicates the need for a study that examines how the interaction of these two factors influences the work readiness of hospitality students.

Grounded in the preceding background, this study investigates the effects of internship programs and senior mentoring on the work readiness of hospitality students at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center. Specifically, this study is guided by three research questions:

- RQ1.* First, to what extent does the internship program affect hospitality students' work readiness?
- RQ2.* Second, to what extent does senior mentoring affect the work readiness of hospitality student?
- RQ3.* Third, to what extent do internship programs and senior mentoring simultaneously influence the work readiness of hospitality students?

The purpose of this study was threefold. First, to investigate the influence of internship programs on work readiness. Second, it investigates the influence of senior mentoring on work readiness. Third, to investigate the joint influence of internship programs and senior mentoring on the work readiness of hospitality students at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center. The significance of this study lies in its theoretical and practical aspects. From a theoretical perspective, this study enriches the body of hospitality human resource management literature by examining the combined effect of internship programs and senior mentoring. It is anticipated that the findings will provide new perspectives on the interaction of these variables within the Indonesian context, where seniority is highly valued. From a practical perspective, the results are expected to assist Novotel Manado management in formulating and evaluating more effective internship and mentoring programs. Furthermore, for vocational tourism higher-education institutions, the findings can contribute to curriculum enhancement aimed at bridging academic and industry requirements. Consequently, it is expected to

minimize graduates' lack of work preparedness and reduce new employee turnover in the hospitality industry.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Internship Program

The internship program provides students with opportunities to integrate academic knowledge with practical workplace experience by actively participating in professional activities. Through internship programs, students can apply competencies acquired during their academic studies, gain a deeper understanding of organizational culture, and develop technical as well as transferable skills required in professional environments. [Saputra and Jalinus \(2020\)](#) emphasized that one of the main objectives Internship programs are designed to facilitate the transition of students from academic environments to professional workplaces. Internship experiences enable students to evaluate and improve their abilities, confidence, and professional attitudes related to specific job responsibilities and future career development.

Practical experience obtained through internship programs plays an important role in strengthening students' self-efficacy and preparing them to meet workplace demands. This finding is consistent with [Grosemans, Coertjens, and Kyndt \(2020\)](#), who stated that direct workplace experiences contribute positively to students' work preparedness by helping them develop competencies required in professional settings. Similarly, [Nada and Ubaidillah \(2024\)](#) explained that internship programs improve students' work readiness through increased knowledge, practical experience, and the development of soft skills, including teamwork, communication, and adaptability.

Furthermore, [Alharethi, Awan, and Saleem \(2025\)](#) found that internship experiences significantly contribute to students' work readiness by improving their capabilities and providing a clearer understanding of professional roles and workplace expectations. In line with this finding, [Tusaqdhiah, Tasya, Mayori, Rasikha, and Nabila \(2026\)](#) highlighted that internship experiences play an essential role in shaping students' work readiness by allowing them to understand the organizational culture, enhance workplace skills, and develop the ability to adapt to professional challenges. These findings indicate that a well-structured internship program not only provides students with technical experience but also supports the development of personal and professional competencies required to enter the workforce.

In this study, the internship program is measured using five indicators: pre-internship preparation, alignment of assigned tasks with the field of study, clarity of the work system, supervision and evaluation, and authentic work experience. These indicators represent essential aspects of internship program quality in supporting the development of students' work-readiness.

2.2 Senior Mentoring

Senior mentoring refers to a developmental relationship between individuals with greater experience and knowledge (mentors) and those with limited experience (mentees) aimed at supporting the professional and personal growth of mentees within the workplace ([Kram, 1988](#)). In internship programs, senior mentoring is an important mechanism for transferring practical knowledge, workplace skills, and professional values through guidance, constructive feedback, and continuous support. Through mentoring relationships, students can gain a deeper understanding of work procedures, operational standards, and professional workplace culture, which contribute to their adaptation and readiness to enter the workforce. This process is closely related to the role of training and education in developing individual capabilities, as learning activities involving knowledge transfer, skill development, and work preparation can enhance an individual's ability to perform professional tasks effectively ([Resna & Haninun, 2026](#)).

[Kram \(1988\)](#) further explained that mentoring relationships serve two main functions: career development and psychosocial support. Career development functions involve coaching, knowledge sharing, and opportunities for skill improvement, whereas psychosocial functions include encouragement, confidence building, and professional identity development. These functions are

particularly relevant in hospitality internships, where students require direct guidance to adapt to dynamic service environments and industry expectations of them.

Supporting this perspective, [Zheng, Zheng, Wu, Yao, and Wang \(2021\)](#) highlighted that mentoring effectiveness is influenced by the quality of the mentor–mentee relationship, which is developed through effective communication, information exchange, and consistent guidance. A strong mentoring relationship enables students to improve workplace adaptation and develop greater confidence in performing professional tasks. Furthermore, [Nuis, Segers, and Beausaert \(2023\)](#) stated that mentoring contributes to competency development, self-reflection, and the formation of professional identity through structured developmental relationship. Similarly, [Azky and Mulyana \(2024\)](#) emphasized that mentoring serves as a form of social support that strengthens students' work readiness, while [\(Sitorus & Cahayani, 2024\)](#) found that mentoring positively contributes to students' skills, competencies, and psychological preparedness for entering the workforce.

Therefore, senior mentoring is not only limited to transferring technical knowledge but also plays a broader role in developing professional attitudes, self-confidence, adaptability, and workplace competence among junior staff. These aspects are essential for students' successful integration into the hospitality industry, where employees are required to demonstrate technical abilities and interpersonal competencies.

2.3 Work Readiness

Work readiness is defined as the state in which an individual possesses the requisite knowledge, competencies, attitudes, and adaptability to perform job functions effectively, in accordance with organizational requirements. [Muspawi and Lestari \(2020\)](#); [Sagita, Hami, and Hinduan \(2020\)](#); [Airlangga, Irianto, and Suryanto \(2024\)](#) describe work readiness as the capacity to apply learned skills, adapt to workplace conditions, and execute job tasks professionally. Within the hospitality context, work readiness encompasses both technical proficiency and non-technical attributes, such as effective communication, collaboration, flexibility in responding to operational dynamics, self-assurance, and professionalism in delivering superior guest services.

Empirical studies emphasize that work readiness is influenced by both learning experiences and exposure to professional environments. [Labiرو and Widjaja \(2024\)](#) demonstrated that students' experiences within educational settings are significantly associated with their workforce preparedness, as these experiences contribute to the development of competency and professional consciousness. Furthermore, [Wispanono and Purnomo \(2024\)](#) argue that enhancing human resource quality through competency-based approaches is critical for equipping individuals to meet labor market requirements. This is reinforced by [Takrim, Shalahuddin, and Yusup \(2024\)](#), who asserted that individual workplace readiness is strongly determined by competency aspects, namely, knowledge, skills, and interpersonal effectiveness within organizational environments.

Furthermore, [Jackson \(2016\)](#) stated that work readiness involves more than technical knowledge acquisition; it also includes the development of professional identity, communication competence, and adaptability gained through learning experiences and direct involvement in the workplace environment. Therefore, internship programs and senior mentoring are important mechanisms for supporting students' transition from academic settings to professional workplaces, particularly in the hospitality sector, where practical skills and professional behaviors are highly required.

In this study, work readiness was assessed using six indicators: technical skills, professional attitude, communication skills, teamwork, work adaptability, and self-confidence ([Prianto, Winardi, & Qomariyah, 2021](#)). These indicators were selected because they represent the essential competencies hospitality students need to successfully transition into the professional workforce.

2.4 Relationship Among Variables

Previous studies have shown that internship programs and senior mentoring are important factors in developing students' work readiness in the hospitality industry. Internship programs offer students first-hand experience in real workplace settings. Such experiences enable students to implement

theoretical knowledge and acquire the practical competencies required by the industry. [Grosemans, Coertjens, and Kyndt \(2020\)](#) empirically found that work-based learning through internships significantly increases students' self-efficacy, adaptability, and job preparedness. Furthermore, Internship participation helps students understand the organizational culture, operational procedures, and professional demands.

Senior mentoring contributes to the development of students' professional attitudes and skills. Through mentoring, students receive guidance, feedback, and role modeling from senior employees, which facilitates learning workplace communication, collaboration, and problem-solving. [Airlangga, Irianto, and Suryanto \(2024\)](#) emphasized that soft skills, including communication, teamwork, and professionalism, are critical for work readiness in the hospitality sector. [Muspawi and Lestari \(2020\)](#) also reported that guidance from senior personnel accelerates student adaptation and enhances confidence in task performance.

Based on these empirical results, internships and senior mentoring are mutually reinforcing processes. Internships provide concrete experience, whereas mentoring provides direction and reflection to align students with the expectations of the workplace. The combination of practical experience and mentoring support is expected to significantly improve students' adaptability and performance. Consequently, both variables are proposed to have a significant effect on students' work readiness. The stronger the implementation of internships and senior mentoring, the greater the hospitality students' work readiness.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Grounded in the preceding theoretical and empirical review, this study presents a conceptual framework (Figure 1) in which internship programs and senior mentoring are positioned as independent variables affecting work readiness as the dependent variable. The framework indicates that these variables have both partial and simultaneous effects on students' work-readiness

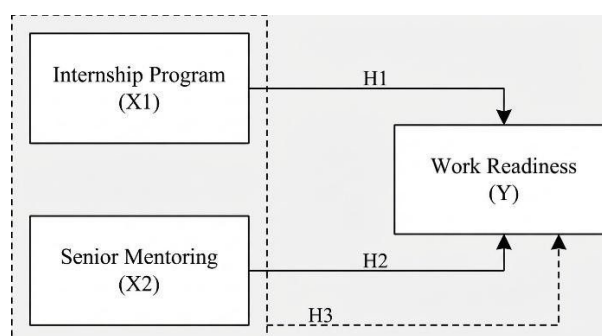


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2.6 Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and empirical studies above, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

Internship programs provide students with firsthand workplace experience, allowing them to implement theoretical knowledge and enhance their practical competencies. Such experiences facilitate students' understanding of job roles, organizational culture, and professional norms. [Grosemans, Coertjens, and Kyndt \(2020\)](#) found empirical evidence that internship participation is associated with increased work readiness, self-efficacy, and adaptability in students. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that internship programs exert a positive and significant influence on work readiness.

H₁: Internship program has a positive and significant effect on work readiness

Senior mentoring contributes to student development by providing guidance, constructive feedback, and professional role models among experienced personnel. Through mentor interactions, students acquire key competencies, such as workplace communication, collaboration, and professional conduct, which are crucial in the hospitality sector. [Airlangga, Irianto, and Suryanto](#)

(2024) and asserted that the soft skills acquired through mentoring play an important role in enhancing students' work readiness. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that senior mentoring positively and significantly influences work readiness.

H₂: Senior mentoring has a positive and significant effect on work readiness

The synergy between internship participation and senior mentoring contributes to a more comprehensive learning experience. Internships serve as a source of practical experience, while mentoring provides support and reflective feedback that enables students to make sense of their experiences. The presence of both factors is expected to enhance students' ability to adjust to the workplace and fulfill the industry's requirements. Previous studies by [Grosemans et al. \(2020\)](#); [Airlangga et al. \(2024\)](#); [Muspawi and Lestari \(2020\)](#) indicate that practical experience reinforced by guidance leads to better work readiness. Accordingly, it is hypothesized that the Internship Program and Senior Mentoring have a simultaneous, positive, and significant effect on work readiness.

H₃: Internship program and senior mentoring simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on work readiness

2.7 Research Gap

Previous studies serve as an essential foundation for understanding research development, identifying research gaps, and strengthening the theoretical and empirical basis of a study [Hadi and Afandi \(2021\)](#); [Nuis, Segers, and Beausaert \(2023\)](#). A review of previous studies enables researchers to evaluate existing findings, recognize limitations in earlier research, and determine the contribution of the current study to a specific research context.

Although previous studies have shown that internship programs contribute significantly to improving students' work readiness by offering real workplace experiences and helping them develop relevant competencies [Grosemans, Coertjens, and Kyndt \(2020\)](#); [Nada and Ubaidillah \(2024\)](#), and that senior mentoring contributes to work readiness and workplace adaptation through guidance, effective communication, and psychological support [\(Zheng, Zheng, Wu, Yao, & Wang, 2021\)](#), most existing studies have examined these two variables separately. Furthermore, mentoring is often considered only a supporting factor in the development of work readiness.

From a conceptual perspective, mentoring can be understood as a developmental approach that enables individuals to enhance their professional abilities while facilitating their adaptation to the workplace [\(Nuis et al., 2023\)](#). Work readiness, on the other hand, describes an individual's capability to respond effectively to workplace expectations by possessing technical skills, psychological readiness, and flexibility to adapt to changing work conditions and responsibilities [Airlangga, Irianto, and Suryanto \(2024\)](#); [Muspawi and Lestari \(2020\)](#). However, limited research has examined the combined role of internship programs and senior mentoring in shaping the work readiness of hospitality students, particularly within the Indonesian hospitality industry.

This study aims to address the existing research gap by investigating the combined effects of internship programmes and senior mentoring on the work readiness of student interns at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center. It is anticipated that the findings will provide a clearer understanding of the factors influencing hospitality students' work readiness and assist them in preparing more effectively for a career in the hospitality sector.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Desain

This study employed a mixed methods strategy that integrated quantitative and qualitative research methods. [Hair, Hult, Ringle, Sarstedt, Danks, and Ray \(2021\)](#) describe mixed methods as a process of collecting, assessing, and combining quantitative and qualitative data to obtain a more

comprehensive understanding than a single-method approach. Quantitatively, this study adopted a causal associative research design to analyze the effects of internship programs and senior mentoring on hospitality students' work readiness. [Sugiyono \(2011\)](#) explains that causal associative research is used to identify cause-and-effect relationships between variables. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with senior employees at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center. [Sugiyono \(2015\)](#) noted that qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena in depth within their natural context.

3.2 Research Site and Period

The research was carried out at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center as the location of the study. The research site was selected because it implements an internship program involving hospitality students and applies a senior mentoring system as an integral part of workplace learning in the hospitality industry. The study was conducted from August 2024 to June 2025, encompassing data collection through observations, questionnaire distribution, and interviews with research respondents and key informants.

3.3 Data Sources

This study employed both primary and secondary data sources. [Sugiyono \(2015\)](#) explains that primary data are collected directly by the researcher from the original source based on the research objectives. For this study, primary data were collected using questionnaires administered to student interns and through semi-structured interviews with the supervisors and senior staff members. Secondary data refer to information that has been previously collected by other individuals or organizations. According to [Gothe, Ihle, and Swart \(2021\)](#), secondary data were obtained from reference books, academic articles, scientific journals, company documents, and other literature related to internship programs, senior mentoring and work readiness.

3.4 Research Participants

The research participants consisted of 25 hospitality students undertaking an internship program who served as the quantitative respondents, as well as five staff members and supervisors who participated as qualitative informants at the Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center.

The sampling technique used in this study was total sampling, in which all members of the population were selected as respondents. The reason for using This technique was used because of the limited size of the population. [Andaristo, Tatihoran, and Firdaus \(2025\)](#) defined the population as the entire set of individuals or elements that constitute the object of research.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data were gathered through four methods: observation, questionnaires, interviews, and documentation

1. Observation: Conducted to directly examine the implementation of the internship program. According to Kraus (2024), observation is a systematic data collection method that involves directly examining phenomena to obtain empirical evidence.
2. Questionnaire: The main instrument used for quantitative data collection was a questionnaire. According to Kishore et al. (2021), a questionnaire is a systematically developed research instrument designed to collect information related to the variables under study.
3. Interview: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior mentors to obtain more in-depth insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and perspectives. As explained by Demirci (2023), interviews serve as a qualitative data collection approach that allows researchers to examine participants' experiences comprehensively
4. Documentation: Used to support research activities. According to Fadli (2021), documentation is a data collection method that involves using various types of documents as information sources.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study was performed using IBM SPSS to process quantitative data from student intern questionnaires. The procedure involved descriptive statistical analysis, instrument testing for validity and reliability, and multiple linear regression for hypothesis testing to assess the impact of the internship programme and senior mentoring on hospitality students' work readiness.

A descriptive analysis was first conducted to identify the data characteristics based on the respondents' answers. [Cooksey \(2020\)](#) and [Lee \(2020\)](#) describe descriptive statistics as methods for summarizing and presenting data through mean, frequency, percentage, and distribution. This step aimed to provide an overview of respondents' perceptions of the Internship Program, Senior Mentoring, and Work Readiness before further testing.

Instrument testing included validity and reliability assessment. Validity was examined using Pearson's product-moment correlation to ensure that each item measured its intended construct. [Subhaktiyasa \(2024\)](#) argue that validity reflects how well an instrument represents a variable. Reliability was tested using Cronbach's alpha. [Ellis \(2021\)](#) emphasized that reliability indicates consistency, while [Sijtsma and Pfadt \(2021\)](#) stated that a Cronbach's alpha value > 0.70 is acceptable.

Multiple linear regression was employed to analyze the relationships between the variables. [Kim \(2019\)](#) defined it as a method for examining the effect of multiple independent variables on a dependent variable. This study used it to test both the partial and simultaneous effects of the Internship Program (X_1) and Senior Mentoring (X_2) on Work Readiness (Y).

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the t-test, F-test, and R^2 . As [Miller and Ulrich \(2021\)](#) explained, these tests evaluate whether the data support the research hypothesis. The t-test assessed individual influence, the F-test assessed joint influence, and R^2 indicated the proportion of variance in work readiness explained by the independent variables.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Result

Quantitative analysis was conducted to determine the impact of the Internship Program (X_1) and Senior Mentoring (X_2) on Work Readiness (Y) among student interns at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center. Prior to the main statistical procedure, the instruments used in this study were subjected to tests of their validity, reliability, and normality. These tests were conducted to verify that the instruments met the criteria of accuracy, consistency, and relevance.

Based on the validity analysis, all items related to the Internship Program, Senior Mentoring, and Work Readiness variables obtained correlation values above the r-table threshold of 0.396. This suggests that all indicators were valid and appropriate for assessing the variables of interest. Moreover, the reliability analysis yielded Cronbach's alpha values of 0.875, 0.899, and 0.881 for the internship program, senior mentoring, and work readiness, respectively. These values indicate that the instruments possessed a high level of internal reliability and were suitable for data collection.

The findings of the normality test revealed an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value of 0.117, which exceeded the 0.05 threshold. Therefore, it can be concluded that the data had a normal distribution and satisfied the prerequisites for multiple linear regression. The regression analysis produced the following regression Formula 1:

$$Y = 18.288 + 0.498X_1 + 0.237X_2 \quad (1)$$

The regression analysis yielded coefficients of 0.498 and 0.237 for the Internship Program and Senior Mentoring, respectively. These results demonstrate that both independent variables positively impact the work readiness of internship students. Consequently, better quality internship

programs and senior mentoring will contribute to higher levels of student readiness to enter the job market.

The partial t-test analysis showed a significance value of 0.010 for the Internship Program, below the 0.05 threshold. This confirms that the Internship Program significantly and positively influences students' Work Readiness, thereby supporting *H₁*. Conversely, Senior Mentoring obtained a significance value of 0.107, above 0.05, indicating no significant individual effect on Work Readiness. Therefore, *H₂* was not accepted. The results of the F-test indicate a significance value of 0.000 and an F-statistic of 15.813. Therefore, when tested simultaneously, the Internship Program and Senior Mentoring had a significant effect on interns' Work Readiness. The *R*² value of 0.590 further demonstrates that these two variables contribute 59% to explaining the variance in students' Work Readiness. The remaining 41% can be attributed to factors not examined in this model.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 The Effect of Internship Program on Work Readiness

This study found that the internship program significantly enhanced students' work readiness. This finding is consistent with earlier research indicating that workplace experience contributes positively to student preparedness by fostering professional competencies. The coefficient of 0.498 implies that an increase of one unit in the quality of the internship program results in a 0.498 unit increase in work readiness. The interview results further validate this conclusion. Students reported that the internship at Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center enabled them to gain practical knowledge of hotel operations, develop technical capabilities, and become accustomed to a professional work environment. Therefore, experiential learning through internships is the primary driver of students' workforce readiness.

4.2.2 The Effect of Senior Mentoring on Work Readiness

Conversely, the partial analysis showed that senior mentoring had no significant effect on students' work readiness ($p = 0.107 > 0.05$). This finding contradicts the established mentoring theory. [Kram \(1988\)](#) argued that mentoring fulfills career and psychosocial roles that are crucial for professional development. [Similarly, Zheng et al. \(2021\)](#) stated that mentoring outcomes depend on the quality of the interactions between mentors and mentees.

Several factors may explain these results. First, mentoring may function as a supportive mechanism rather than a direct determinant of work readiness. Interview findings revealed that mentors contributed through technical direction, feedback, encouragement, and professional examples. However, because mentoring was conducted within the internship framework, students may have perceived it as inseparable from the internship itself.

Second, the effectiveness of mentoring is strongly influenced by consistency, communication, and the quality of relationships. Variations in mentor dedication and availability during the internship may have lessened the distinct effect of mentoring on students' work readiness.

4.2.3 Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Although senior mentoring was not statistically significant individually, the simultaneous test showed that the internship program and senior mentoring together significantly influenced work readiness, contributing 59%. This suggests that mentoring plays a complementary role. Qualitative data support this interpretation: students emphasized that guidance from senior staff helped them adapt to the workplace and increased their confidence, even though this support did not directly translate into a separate statistical effect. Overall, the findings indicate that students' work readiness is primarily shaped by experiential learning acquired through the internship program, while senior mentoring functions as a complementary mechanism that supports competency development throughout the internship period.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study concludes that internship programs positively and significantly affect hospitality students' work readiness ($\beta = 0.498$; $p = 0.010$) by strengthening their technical competencies, communication, teamwork, adaptability, and professionalism. Senior mentoring has no significant partial effect ($p = 0.107$), but remains valuable in providing guidance, feedback, motivation, and workplace role modeling. Simultaneously, internships and mentoring significantly explain 59% of the variation in work readiness ($p < 0.001$), while the remaining 41% is influenced by other factors. Key challenges include limited adaptation time, heavy workloads, inconsistent mentoring approaches, and difficulties balancing academic and workplace demands.

Theoretically, this study extends hospitality work-readiness literature by showing that mentoring functions as a complementary mechanism within internship programs rather than as an independent predictor. It also provides practical insights for improving the structure and implementation of hospitality internships and mentoring.

5.2 Research Limitations

Despite its contributions, this study is limited by its focus on a single hospitality organization, Novotel Manado Golf Resort & Convention Center, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. The small and homogeneous sample of 25 student interns from the 2024–2025 period further limits external validity. Moreover, the study examined only internship programs and senior mentoring, excluding other potential determinants of work readiness, such as self-efficacy, motivation, academic performance, organizational participation, and workplace characteristics. Finally, its cross-sectional design does not capture changes in students' work readiness throughout the internship period.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Educational institutions should strengthen internship programs by aligning them with industry needs, improving pre-internship training on workplace culture, professional ethics, and time management, and developing stronger partnerships with hospitality organizations. Hotels should standardize mentoring through mentor training, clear guidelines, consistent feedback, balanced task distribution, and structured workplace orientation.

Future studies should involve multiple hospitality organizations across different regions, examine additional variables such as self-efficacy, work motivation, job satisfaction, and organizational culture, and apply longitudinal or qualitative methods to explore changes in work readiness and mentor–mentee relationships more comprehensively.

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Author Contributions

The first author, JP contributed to the conceptualization, methodology, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, writing – original draft, and visualization. Second DR & JS Contributed to supervision, validation, and writing – review & editing.

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