

# Optimization of Soft Skill Competencies and Student Work Readiness through the MBKM Internship Program at the KIPM Makassar Center

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## Abstract

This research aims to analyze the opportunities and challenges of work practice in preparing Makassar State University students for the world of work, as well as improve their soft skills in communication, discipline, teamwork, and domain-specific knowledge at the Center for Fish Quarantine, Quality Control, and Fishery Product Safety (BB KIPM) as the implementation of the MBKM Curriculum. The four-month research used a descriptive quantitative approach combined with experimental methods, surveys, and in-depth observations to analyze opportunities, challenges, and the impact of work practices on students' soft skills, such as communication, discipline, teamwork, and field-specific knowledge. The findings show that the internship program significantly improves students' practical skills, soft skills, and readiness for the workforce, providing valuable experience in modern laboratory techniques, occupational safety, and industry-specific management practices.

## Keywords

Competency; Curriculum; Soft Skills

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The development of student soft skills competencies in the Independent Curriculum is based on Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020 concerning SN-DIKTI article 5, paragraph (1), which states that the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) are the minimum criteria for the qualification of graduate abilities which include; attitudes, knowledge, and skills stated in the formulation of Graduate Learning Outcomes (CPL) (PERPRES/37/2023, 2023). The description of learning outcomes in KKNi contains four elements, namely elements of attitude and values, elements of workability, elements of scientific mastery, and elements of authority and responsibility (Frisnoiry et al., 2019; Nurkholiq, 2022; Rahmafritri, 2024). Meanwhile, in SN-Dikti, the CPL formulation is covered in one of the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL) standards. In SN-Dikti, CPL consists of attitude, general skills, special skills, and knowledge. Elements of general attitudes and skills have been formulated in detail and listed in the attachment to SN-Dikti. In contrast, elements of special skills and knowledge must be formulated by the forum of similar study programs that are the characteristics of study program graduates. Based on the CPL, the preparation of the curriculum of a study program can be developed (Junaidi et al., 2020)

The development of soft skill competencies of Makassar State University students is carried out



through a fieldwork practice program at the Center for Fish Quarantine, Quality Control, and Fishery Product Safety (BB KIPM). This program is a form of implementation of the Independent Learning Independent Campus Curriculum (MBKM), which aims to provide direct learning experiences to students in a real work environment (Baharuddin, 2021; Chelsya & H., n.d.; Kholik et al., 2022; Waliudin et al., 2023). In this activity, students are actively involved in various activities related to the fish quarantine process, quality control, and safety of fishery products. They are allowed to deeply understand the applicable work procedures, regulations, and quality standards at the national and international levels. In addition, students are also trained to develop communication skills, critical thinking, and teamwork through interaction with professionals in their fields. The program is designed to improve students' technical skills and form the professional attitudes necessary in work, such as responsibility, discipline, and adaptability. Thus, the fieldwork practice at BB KIPM is not only a means to apply the theories that have been learned in college but also a strategic step in preparing Makassar State University students to be more competitive in the world of work, especially in the fisheries sector and quality control of fishery products.

The implementation of the independent curriculum with the theme of work practice or internship activities at the KIPM Makassar Center is the right location to achieve the goals of SKNI as well as achieve CPL. As a center for fish quarantine and quality control and safety of fishery products, partners are seen as having various advantages when viewed from their role and function in managing fishery products in the country and to support the export of non-oil and gas commodities to foreign countries, potential sources of foreign exchange for the State, as well as for domestic consumption. However, absorbing and practicing all the knowledge from the results of practical work at the IPKM Makassar Center is not as simple as some people imagine because adequate facilities and equipment also support it and has high determination, motivation, and work ethic.

Along with efforts to respond to the Industrial Revolution 4.0, as well as the desire of stakeholders to participate in coloring and capturing job opportunities in various industrial fields, especially the food industry (food producing), soft skills are a prerequisite for seizing job and business opportunities (Pramesti et al., 2024; Qonita Muslikhatun Amalia & Wahyu Eko Pujiyanto, 2023; Setiarini et al., 2022; Wijiharta, 2022). It must be avoided that university alums contribute to the unemployment rate, which has been proven to cause losses in human resources. The hard skills developed first were felt insufficient to face the domestic and global job market (Nirmala et al., 2024). The independent curriculum allows students to learn according to their talents and interests. Through internship programs or work practices in various institutions, companies, or industries, such a wide interactive classroom is open (Hamzah et al., 2022; Mailin, 2021; Mudrikah et al., 2022; Qoyyim, M. A. & Santoso, 2020). Through the independent curriculum, students can independently determine the place of work practice or internship according to the field of science they are interested in and prepare themselves according to available job opportunities.

The challenges of the world of work in the global era and the 21st century require every educational institution to produce a workforce that is ready to work (Pramesti et al., 2024; Rosani, 2023). The quality of highly competitive graduates is largely determined by the quality of education and training applied in college. One of the factors supporting graduates' readiness to compete at DUDI is the insight and skills they have, which are the result of hands-on experience interacting and practicing at DUDI (Dessler, 2018; Kristanti et al., 2023a; Mangkunegara, 2020). Based on this background, this study aims to 1) analyze opportunities and challenges in carrying out work practices so that they can improve students' knowledge, insights, and skills in facing the world of work; 2) analyze the improvement of students' soft skills, especially in communication, discipline, teamwork, and knowledge with their respective fields.

## 2. METHODS

The research is quantitative and descriptive, with an experimental approach, surveys, and in-depth observations of the process carried out during work practice or internship at the Makassar Fish Quarantine, Quality Control, and Fishery Product Safety Center (KIPM). KIPM Makassar is an institution under the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries that controls the quality and safety of fishery products, both for domestic consumption and export purposes to foreign countries. Population and sample: The research population consists of all employees and employees/laboratories working at BBKIPM, while the research sample consists of laboratory personnel, students participating in work practice and internship, four people, and three supervisors.

The activity lasted for 4 (four) months. Data is obtained with the following instruments: a) Surveys are conducted in-depth and continuously during the implementation of work practice programs or internships. Observations were made on the programs that had been prepared, activities during the practicum to the final seminar, the preparation of reports, and the withdrawal of students participating in the work practice. b) Documentation studies are carried out by reading and analyzing various reports and test results that the KIPM Center has carried out; c) Interviews, while limited interviews are conducted during the implementation of work practices and internships to leaders, employees, and laboratories; d) Questionnaires/questionnaires, given to sources of information, in this case, practicum supervisors who routinely interact with students, operate various laboratory tools and materials at BBKIPM and participating students work practices and internships.

The research procedure is carried out in the following stages: registration of prospective participants in work practice and internships, submission of letters to MBKM partners, issuance of supervisor decrees, submission of work practice participants, preparation of activity programs, program implementation, practicum activities, data analysis, seminars, preparation of reports, withdrawal of students of work practice participants, giving final grades by supervisors 40%, partners 40% and final seminars 20%, and giving final grades by supervisors and partners.

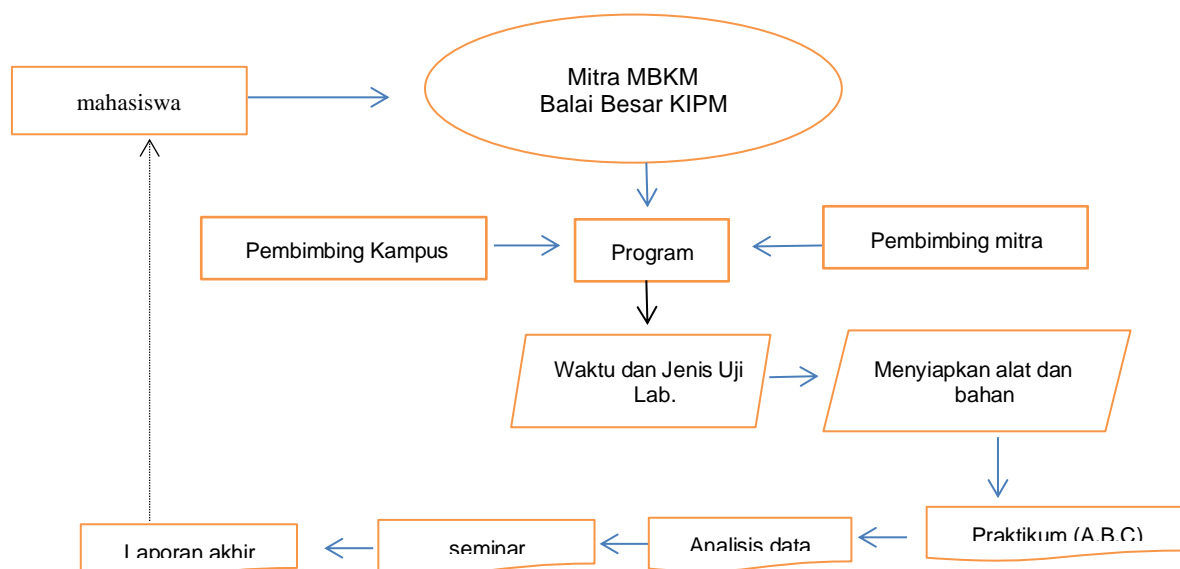


Figure 1. Research Outline

## 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

In general, work practice activities received a positive response from institutional students and partners.

- a. Students who take part in the practical program are allowed to (a) apply the knowledge or skills

gained during the college period directly to the world of work, (b) practice the way of thinking and decision-making skills that will be useful when entering the world of work, (c) increase insight, knowledge and experience to be ready to jump directly into the world of work, and get to know the dynamics of work in real conditions.

- b. Meanwhile, the benefits are also felt by the institution, including (a) providing space to establish collaboration between institutions - universities and partners or related companies in the implementation of work practices or internships in the future, (b) educational institutions such as campuses can make work practice programs as a very important mainstay program, meaning that it is a means to train and educate students to have a competitive advantage in the era of global competition entering the world, (c) as an effort to check and balance in improving the MBKM curriculum in the next program.
- c. Furthermore, the work practice program as an elaboration of the independent curriculum is very beneficial to partners; in this case, BBKIPM includes: (a) Partners receive assistance both in terms of energy, time, and mind so that various jobs that are the main tasks of partners are completed faster, (b) Collaboration and mutually beneficial cooperation between institutions and partners are realized, (c) in addition, companies can see prospective workers who are felt to be by the company's field of work.

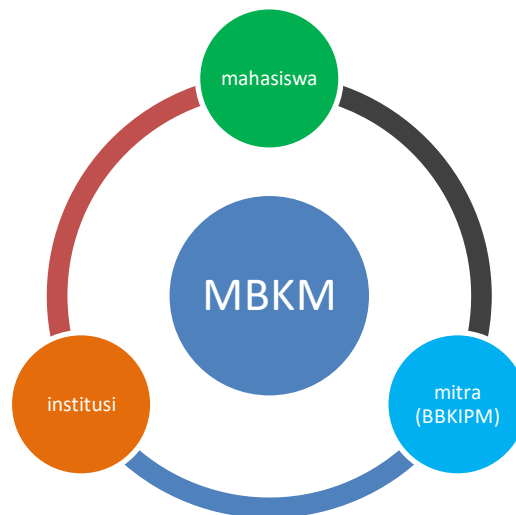


Figure 2. MBKM Scheme

The scheme shows that the independent curriculum provides new opportunities for students to be more creative, innovative, and adaptive to absorb various basic principles of the world of work that breathe in soft, smart, and hard skills. The realization of a highly ideal collaboration between students, institutions, and partners to answer the challenges of the world (work) that changes very quickly following global developments. The independent curriculum is designed to respond to the 4.0 revolution of the world's needs for modern digitalization. The practicum activities that have been carried out are as follows;

#### **Partner Activities**

During the implementation of work practices in the laboratory of the Makassar KIPM Center, students are involved in various quality and residue testing activities, as well as other supporting activities. Microbiological testing includes examination of *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella sp.*, Total Plate Number (ALT), *Staphylococcus aureus*, and water and ice quality. In the residue test, tests were carried out on the histamine levels and heavy metals such as Pb, Hg, and Cd. In addition, students also took organoleptic (sensory) tests and destructive fishing methods using forensic techniques and UV-VIS

double-beam spectrophotometry. Student activities in this program include making media, sterilizing tools, preparing samples, testing bacteria such as Salmonella sp., E. coli, Staphylococcus aureus, ALT, water and ice quality, and RNA and DNA extraction. Students actively participate in all laboratory activities carried out by partners, providing hands-on experience in the testing and analysis process in the laboratory.

The samples tested came from various places or regions covering the entire South Sulawesi region, namely cultivation locations, traditional and modern markets, and export-import companies of fishery products, as well as places to buy and sell fish (fish auctions (TPI) and so on. The testing carried out in the laboratory of the Makassar KIPM Center refers to the Indonesian National Standard (SNI) that the authorized agency has set. The standards and testing procedures are:

Testing of Salmonella sp bacteria,

a. Pre-enrichment

At this stage, 25gr/25ml sample homogenization in 225ml of Lactose Broth or 50gr/50ml sample in 450ml of Lactose Broth is carried out. Incubation for 24 hours at 35°C

b. Enrichment

There are two stages based on the type of product. For fishery products with high contamination (raw samples), use the median Rappaport Vassiliadis (RV) and Tetrathionate Broth (TTB) by adding 0.1 ml of sample to 10ml of RV and 1ml of sample to 10ml of TTB and then incubated for 24 hours in a water bath with a temperature of 42°C - 43°C.

As for other fishery products (cooked samples), use TTB and Selenite Cystine Broth (SCB) media by adding 1ml of sample to 10ml of TTB and 1ml of sample to 10ml of SCB and then incubating for 24 hours at a temperature of 35°C.

c. Isolation

At this stage, scratching is carried out from the enrichment medium to the selective media in the form of Hectoen Enteric (HE), Xylose Lysine Desoxycholate (XLD), and Bismuth Sulfite Agar (BSA) and then incubated for 24 hours at a temperature of 35°C.

If, after 24 hours, there are bacterial colonies that test positive, a follow-up test is carried out by taking two or more colonies on the selective agar medium and then scratching and piercing into the oblique agar medium in the form of Triple Sugar Iron Agar (TSIA) and Lysine Iron Agar (LIA) and then incubating for 24 hours at a temperature of 35°C.

d. Further tests

If, after isolation, a positive result is obtained, further testing will be carried out. For an explanation of further tests as well as Salmonella sp testing media and principles, attached (attachment 3 Salmonella sp microbiological tests, SNI 01-2332.2-2006)

### ***Coliform and Escherchia Coli Testing***

a. Homogenization

At this stage, 25gr/25ml sample in 225ml BFP or 50gr/50ml sample in 450ml Butterfield's phosphate buffered (BFP) for 2-3 minutes.

b. Dilution

Samples were pipetted 1ml each into a test tube containing 9ml of BFP 10<sup>2</sup> and into 3 test tubes containing 9ml of Lauryl Tryptose Broth (LTB) and then labeled 10<sup>1</sup>, then pipetted 1ml each from a test tube containing BFP 10<sup>2</sup> into a test tube containing 9ml BFP 10<sup>3</sup> and 3 test tubes containing 9ml LTB 10<sup>2</sup>. Finally, pipette 1ml each from a test tube containing BFP 10<sup>3</sup> to a test tube containing 9ml BFP 10<sup>4</sup> and 3

test tubes containing 9ml LTB  $10^3$ . Incubation of test tubes containing LTB for 48 hours at 35°C

c. Advanced tests

Positive LTB tubes are characterized by the presence of bubbles in Durham tubes. The positive sample is transferred into a test tube containing EC using an ose needle—incubated for 48 hours in a water bath at 45°C.

d. Isolation

The positive LTB tubes are scratched into Levine's Eosin Methylene Blue (LEMB) media and then incubated for 24 hours at a temperature of 35°C.

The advanced stages of e.coli testing include the principles and attached testing media (attachment four microbiological tests for determining coliform and E.Coli in fishery products SNI 01-2332.1-2006).

a. Determination of total plate number (ALT) in fishery products.

Test with the pour plate method by pipetting 1ml of each  $10^1$ ,  $10^2$ , and so on dilution and then putting it into a sterile petri dish. Do it in a duplicate for each dilution. Add the cooled Plate Count Agar (PCA) and then wait for it to solidify—incubation for 72 hours at 30°C.

Principles and media for testing total plate numbers are attached (attachment five determination of total plate numbers (ALT) in fishery products SNI 01-2332.3-2006).

b. Staphylococci Testing

This test was carried out by pipetting 1ml of sample and then pouring it over three Petri dishes filled with solid Baird Parquet Agar (BPA) media and then flattening it with a laboratory spreader, and then incubating for 24 hours at a temperature of 35°C.

Staphylococcus aureus colonies in Baird Parker Agar (BPA) have the following characteristics: round, smooth/smooth, convex colonies, 2 mm – 3 mm in diameter, gray to blackish color, around the edges of the colonies are clear (halo formed). The colonies have a fatty and sticky consistency when taken with an inoculation needle.

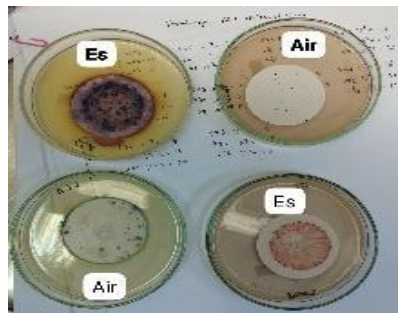
c. Water and ice quality testing

Water and ice testing is carried out by filtering 100ml of water or ice using a membrane placed in a filter device. Then, the membrane is placed on Chromocult Coliform Agar (CCA) media and planet in a petri dish, and then the mixture is incubated at 35°C for 2 days.

A complete description of the principles and procedures for testing water and ice is attached (Appendix 6 water quality filtration method with SNI membrane ISO 7899-2:2010).



**Figure 3.** Total Plate Number (ALT) testing activities.



**Figure 4.** Observation of water and ice quality test results



**Figure 5.** Salmonella sp. bacteria testing activities, using RV and TTB testing media

**Student Perception of Partner Activities (MBKM)**

**Table 1.** Frequency of Student Perception of Partner Activities (BKIMP)

No.	Student Perception of Partners	Indicator					Frequency
		SS	S	R	TS	STS	
1.	In the practicum activities, partners gave speeches and received participants in a friendly manner	0	4	0	0	0	100% Agree
2.	Practicum materials provided by partners	0	4	0	0	0	100% Agree
3.	Laboratory equipment in good condition and ready for use	0	4	0	0	0	100% Agree
4.	All equipment is well laid out and neat	0	2	2	0	0	50% agree 50 Neutral (hesitant)
5.	All employees and employees in the workplace are very open in providing the information needed	0	3	1	0	0	75% Agree 25 % Neutral
6.	The use of equipment is given flexibility but still asks for permission from the head of the laboratory	0	2	2	0	0	50 % Agree 50 Neutral
7.	The partner provides administrative services and does not complicate	0	3	1	0	0	75 % Agree 25 % Neutral
8.	For consultation and discussion activities, sufficient time is available	0	4	0	0	0	100 % Agree
9.	Communication between employees, laboratories, and participants in work practices is harmoniously established	0	4	0	0	0	100 % Agree

Source: Primary Data processed

From the table, it is known that partners welcome and receive participants kindly in practicum activities, practicum materials are provided by partners, and laboratory equipment is in good condition and ready to use (not damaged). Questionnaire questions 1, 2, and 3 received responses from respondents, and 100% answered yes. Meanwhile, for the arrangement of laboratory equipment (question number 4), two respondents answered in agreement (50%), and for those who answered neutral (hesitant), there were two people (50%).

Furthermore, it was found that all employees and employees in the workplace were very open in providing information (questionnaire number 5); 3 respondents (75%) answered yes, and one person (25%) answered neutrally.

It is a commitment of partners to provide services to the community. The participants were given the flexibility to use the equipment but still asked for permission from the head of the laboratory (question number 6) received a response from 2 practice participants who answered yes (50%) and two people (50%) metral. Furthermore, in administrative services, the partner provides administrative services quickly and does not make it difficult for interns to get responses from 3 respondents who answered yes (75%) and one person answered neutral (25%).

For consultation and discussion activities, the partners prepared enough time to receive a response from respondents who answered 100% yes, and the communication system between employees, laboratories, and work practice participants was harmoniously established, receiving a response from respondents who answered 100% yes.

For clarity, the respondents' perception of the welcome and service at the workplace can be

observed in the following table:

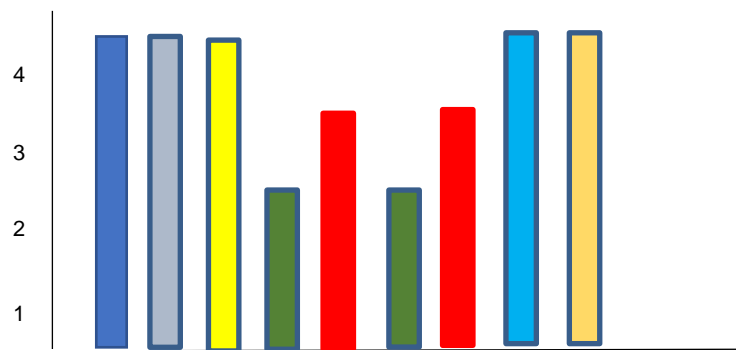


Figure 6. Respondent Perception Graph

### Discussion

The internship program at the KIPM Makassar Center shows significant results in improving students' soft skills, practical skills, and readiness to face the world of work. Based on national standards, students can apply theoretical skills in a real-world work environment, such as microbiology and residue testing. In addition, they also develop soft skills through professional interaction, decision-making, and collaboration in the laboratory. This experience helps students understand industry dynamics, including fisheries quality testing and product analysis to suit the global market's needs.

The student survey results confirmed that this internship program increased confidence, communication skills, and team collaboration skills. Friendly partner service, availability of tools, and openness of employees also support optimal learning. The MBKM internship program at BB KIPM Makassar shows effective synergy between students, universities, and industry partners in creating an educational ecosystem relevant to global challenges. In addition to equipping students with relevant technical skills, the program also forms graduates who are confident, adaptive, and ready to compete in the world of work. Nevertheless, the program still has room for improvement, such as increased availability of laboratory equipment and the provision of more structured consultation time.

These findings show that the internship experience significantly improves the job readiness of graduates. Student involvement in real-world practice, such as the one conducted at BB KIPM Makassar, equips them with an understanding of modern laboratory techniques, time management, and work ethics, all relevant to the fishing industry's needs. Soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability, which are key to success in the world of work, are also developing rapidly through this program. Students actively communicate with experts, face technical challenges and work in teams to complete laboratory tasks, strengthening their interpersonal skills.

Furthermore, collaboration between universities and industry, as happens in this program, helps students understand the needs of the world of work (Brown & Und, 2020.; Kupfer et al., n.d.; Strauser, 2021; Syifa et al., 2017). At BB KIPM, students learn the testing process according to international standards and gain important insights to improve their global competencies. This experience confirms that a well-designed internship can enhance students' technical competence, as seen from their involvement in microbiology, residues, and organoleptic analysis (Amrin & Darwis, 2022; Hasibuan, 2018; Henry, 2004; Kristanti et al., 2023b). This activity adds to their professional experience while honing their technical skills.

The MBKM program is also designed to answer the needs of the modern workforce with digitalization-based skills and global collaboration (Brown & Bimrose, 2012; Middleton et al., 2020). At BB KIPM, students are equipped with skills relevant to the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era, such as modern forensic techniques and digitization of testing. This technology integration not only increases students' competitiveness but also prepares them to face challenges in an increasingly complex and technology-



based world of work.

This study shows that the internship program, soft skills, and work motivation partially and significantly affect the work readiness of Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business (FEBI) UIN Raden Mas Said Surakarta students. Simultaneously, these three factors contributed 71.6% to student work readiness, while the rest were influenced by other variables that were not studied (Wulan, 2023). Other research confirms that internship programs improve students' hard and soft skills. Through internships, students can develop useful technical and non-technical skills as a form of readiness to enter the world of work (Lasinta, 2024). The study *The Influence of Hard Skills, Soft Skills, and Internship Experience on the Job Readiness of Final Year Students of Generation Z* found that hard skills, soft skills, and internship experience significantly affect the job readiness of final-year students. Combining these three factors equips students with the competencies needed to enter the world of work (Ufia et al., 2024); (Ufia et al., 2024). The *Effect of Soft Skill Training and Internship Experience in Increasing Readiness to Enter the World of Work in Students* This study shows that soft skills training and internship experience positively affect students' readiness to enter the world of work (Kusumaningrum, 2023). *Kombinasi antara pelatihan soft skill dan pengalaman magang memberikan mahasiswa pondasi yang kuat untuk memasuki dunia kerja dengan keterampilan interpersonal yang baik dan pemahaman tentang lingkungan kerja* (Athanasou & Esbroeck, 2008; D. J. Kupfer et al., 2016; Niles & Karajic, 2008; Suadnyana et al., 2016). *The Effect of Soft Skills and Organizational Activity on Student Work Readiness: This study reveals that soft skills and organizational activity positively and significantly affect student work readiness. The higher the soft skills and activeness in the organization, the higher the student's work readiness* (Kholifatun Sholikhah, 2022).

The internship experience at BB KIPM Makassar supports previous findings that a well-designed internship program improves students' technical competence, soft skills, and job readiness. In the context of MBKM, this program has succeeded in answering the needs of practice-based education and the needs of modern industry. Mutually beneficial collaboration between educational institutions and industry partners adds significant value for all parties.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The contribution of the Work Practice and/or Internship program as the implementation of the MBKM Curriculum at the KIPM Makassar Center has a very significant influence when viewed from the weight of the semester credit unit of 20 credits or 12.98 percent or 12.50 percent, assuming the number of credits that S1 students must take between 154-160 credits. Dense daily activities include practicum activities, data analysis, making reports, and seminars. There are many opportunities to explore knowledge and technical applications in testing various types and material properties of fishery commodities for domestic consumption and export purposes. Students' abilities will increase by seeing how to use various types of laboratory equipment that are increasingly modern and various materials and chemicals that are commonly used in food quality and food safety laboratories. The accumulation of knowledge and skills acquired shortly can help students enter the real world of work in various factories, fisheries, and post-harvest industries. From the work practice and internship program, of course, students will be trained to use PPE as part of the implementation of Occupational Health and Safety (K3) procedures, fisheries industry management, and personnel management, which are commonly encountered in various food industry areas (food producing)/ Through work practice programs and internships, students make the score of soft skill learners increase.

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