

The influence of professional internships and learning processes on soft skills development in PAP FKIP UNS students

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk (1) mengetahui pengaruh magang profesi terhadap pengembangan soft skill, (2) mengetahui pengaruh proses pembelajaran terhadap pengembangan soft skill, (3) mengetahui pengaruh magang profesi dan proses pembelajaran terhadap pengembangan soft skill pada mahasiswa PAP FKIP UNS Angkatan 2021. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kuantitatif korelasional. Populasi dan sampel dalam penelitian ini ditentukan dengan menggunakan teknik sampling jenuh dengan jumlah 81 mahasiswa. Pengumpulan data penelitian dilakukan dengan penyebaran kuisioner dan analisis data menggunakan regresi linear berganda yang dilakukan menggunakan IBM SPSS. Hasil Penelitian menunjukkan bahwa (1) terdapat pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan magang profesi terhadap pengembangan soft skill dengan nilai signifikansi $0,001 < 0,05$ dan nilai t -hitung $3,609 > t$ -tabel $1,665$; (2) terdapat pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan proses pembelajaran terhadap pengembangan soft skill dengan nilai signifikansi $0,046 < 0,05$ dan nilai t -hitung $2,025 > t$ -tabel $1,665$; (3) terdapat pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan magang profesi dan proses pembelajaran secara simultan terhadap pengembangan soft skill pada mahasiswa PAP FKIP UNS angkatan 2021 dengan nilai signifikansi $0,000 < 0,05$ dan nilai F -hitung $16,131 > F$ -tabel $3,11$. Demikian pengembangan soft skill dapat dilakukan dengan memaksimalkan kegiatan magang profesi dan proses pembelajaran.

Kata kunci : kuantitatif; keterampilan profesional; pembelajaran; kemampuan non teknis

Abstract

This study aims to (1) determine the influence of professional internship on the development of soft skill, (2) determine the influence of the learning process on development of soft skill, (3) determine the influence of professional internship and the learning process on development of soft skill in students of PAP FKIP

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UNS class of 2021. This study is a correlational quantitative research. The population and sample in this study was determined using a saturated sampling technique with a total of 81 students. The data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires and data analysis using multiple linear regression conducted using IBM SPSS. The results show that (1) there is a positive and significant influence of the professional internship on the development of soft skill as evidenced by the significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$ and the t-count value of $3.609 > t\text{-table of } 1.665$; (2) there is a positive and significant influence of the learning process on the development of soft skill as evidenced by the significance value of $0.046 < 0.05$ and the t-count value of $2.025 > t\text{-table of } 1.665$; (3) there is a positive and significant influence of the professional internship and the learning process simultaneously the development of soft skill in students of PAP FKIP UNS class of 2021 as evidenced by the significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and the F-count value of $16.131 > F\text{-table } 3.11$. Thus, soft skill development can be done by maximizing professional internship activities and the learning process..

Keywords : quantitative; professional skills; learning; skill

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Introduction

The development of soft skills is an essential endeavor in the professional world, as it plays a critical role in shaping individuals' careers and future aspirations. According to Lahope et al. (2020), soft skills are crucial for organizational performance success; the absence of these skills among employees can lead to numerous operational and interpersonal challenges. Similarly, Bhati (2022) emphasizes that soft skills are universally valued across industries and are considered key criteria in recruitment processes. This is further supported by Kumar et al. (2022), who argue that the development of soft skills significantly influences work quality, which is essential for achieving organizational objectives.

According to Qizi (2020), soft skills encompass personal, social, and methodological competencies such as self-awareness, commitment, learning skills, creativity, cultural adaptability, communication, teamwork, leadership, analytical thinking, change adaptability, management abilities, and more. As stated by Kumar et al. (2022), soft skills enable individuals to communicate effectively, collaborate within teams, and solve problems efficiently. While some soft skills may be naturally inherent traits, Mattajang (2023) concludes that they can also be learned and developed through practical actions and interpersonal interactions. Ngang et al. (2015) highlight that for students, soft skills serve as vital tools to prepare them for competitive work environments and elevate their overall competence. These findings underscore the importance and benefits of soft skill development, particularly for students preparing to enter the workforce.

However, field observations indicate that many students do not yet fully recognize or prioritize the development of soft skills. Ngo (2024) notes that many students remain unaware of the significance of soft skills in both academic and career success, which hinders their ability to cultivate these competencies. Faizah (2018) found that only 8% of students demonstrated high-level soft skill profiles, while the majority fell into medium, low, or very low categories. Similar findings were observed among the 2021 cohort of PAP FKIP UNS students during preliminary studies, which revealed deficiencies in soft skills necessary for daily tasks involving collaboration with others or independent work. Notably, areas requiring improvement include communication, leadership, teamwork, and time management.

Soft skill development refers to efforts aimed at enhancing individual capabilities used to complete specific tasks and interact effectively within social environments (Kumar et al., 2022;

Nitonde & Nandapurkar, 2014; Rosi, 2023; Tegeh in Saputra et al., 2022). Fundamentally, this development focuses on improving the functionality, utility, and application of non-technical skills possessed by individuals. The process is influenced by both internal and external factors. Internally, Syah (as cited in Metan & Handayani, 2023) identifies intelligence, talent, interest, motivation, and attitude as key influencers of soft skill acquisition. Externally, elements such as formal education, social motivation, environmental context, and opportunities such as internships and training programs also play significant roles. Yoke and Ngang (2017) add that soft skill development can occur through structured campus life experiences, teaching activities, and learning processes. Audrys et al. (2024) further note that internship experiences aligned with students' fields of study provide real-world contexts for developing these skills. Therefore, effective soft skill development must align these influencing factors with the targeted skill outcomes. Nitonde and Nandapurkar (2014) emphasize that the ultimate goal of soft skill development is the holistic growth of personality and enhanced social competence. Chavan and Carter (as cited in Mattajang, 2023) suggest that developing these skills also enhances leadership performance and contributes significantly to various aspects of professional life.

One of the primary factors influencing soft skill development is professional internship experience. A professional internship represents the practical implementation of theoretical knowledge gained in academic settings, applied directly in real-world work environments aligned with students' expertise and field of study (Bender, 2021; Nurhadi, 2017; Ramadhana et al., 2024; Syafira & Umam, 2024). Successful internship programs are shaped by student perceptions, institutional support, contextual program design, and the guidance provided by mentors or supervisors (Maertz Jr. et al., 2014; Siregar et al., 2024). Characteristics of professional internships include: (1) focusing on skill development to gain professional experience; (2) connecting students with industry professionals under expert supervision; (3) implementing rigorous monitoring and periodic evaluations by field supervisors or mentors; (4) maintaining extended durations, typically ranging from three to six months depending on program requirements; and (5) expanding professional networks and employment opportunities through experiential learning and relationship-building (Chan et al., 2020; Gomez et al., 2023; Odio & Kerwin, 2016; Thompson et al., 2021). Lalangyame and Daik (2024) emphasize that the purpose of internships is to enhance students' knowledge and experience in real working environments by applying classroom theories, ultimately producing skilled, professional graduates with strong work ethics. Saleh et al. (2023) and Praja et al. (2023) confirm that internship experiences significantly contribute to soft skill development. However, Papp et al. (2023) report that, in practice, internship programs do not always consistently fulfill their intended purpose of providing direct exposure to company operations or effectively testing and developing students' hard and soft skills acquired during their academic journey.

Another factor that influences soft skill development is the learning process. The learning process is an activity or action carried out between teacher and student to learn or master something in line with the intended learning objectives (Junaedi, 2019; Suharyanti et al., 2014). The learning process has several components: learning objectives, learning resources, strategies, media, evaluation, methods, approaches, techniques, and tactics of learning (Adisel et al., 2022; Sajadi, 2022). In addition, the learning process is influenced by environment, students/learners, teaching, academic counseling, higher education institutions, ICT, educators, classroom and its interactions, as well as facilities and infrastructure (Mohammed, 2020; Junaedi, 2019). The purpose of the learning process according to Yamin and Syahrir (2020) is to facilitate the growth and development of students' reasoning ability, character, independence, innovation, comfort, and expertise by building an ecosystem that supports these aspects. Meanwhile, the benefit of the learning process according to Setiani and Rasto (2016) is that it serves as an effective medium for improving students' soft skills. Research conducted by Sugraini and Cerya (2023), as well as Suharyanti et al. (2014), states that the learning process significantly affects the development of students' soft skills. Kocsis & Pusztai (2024) show that higher education that overly focuses on theoretical aspects has limited influence on soft skill development, hence the need for more applicable and contextual learning approaches to maximize the development of students' non-technical abilities.

Thus, soft skill development is very necessary for the younger generation in carrying out daily life activities and preparing themselves for future careers. All activities carried out in life certainly require soft skills. At this time, many individuals still do not pay enough attention to the

fact that the quality of soft skills will greatly affect the activities individuals carry out in achieving desired success. Based on previous research, there are discrepancies in findings differences between researchers' results, or in other words, fluctuating inconsistencies regarding the influence of professional internships and learning processes on soft skill development. In addition, the population and sample of this study have different characteristics compared to previous studies. These conditions represent a research gap that underlies the need for further research focusing on the context and characteristics of the 2021 cohort of PAP FKIP UNS students regarding: 1) Is there an influence of professional internships on the development of soft skills among the 2021 cohort of PAP FKIP UNS students? 2) Is there an influence of the learning process on the development of soft skills among the 2021 cohort of PAP FKIP UNS students? 3) Is there an influence of both professional internships and the learning process together on the development of soft skills among the 2021 cohort of PAP FKIP UNS students?

Research Methodology

This research employs a correlational quantitative approach, chosen to obtain data that can test and verify the existing hypotheses regarding the presence or absence of influence. The study involves two independent variables professional internship and learning process—and one dependent variable—soft skill development.

The research was conducted in four stages: preparation, data collection, data processing, and report writing. The implementation period spanned from September 2024 to April 2025. The population consisted of all students from the 2021 cohort of the Teacher Profession Education Program (PAP) at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), Sebelas Maret University (UNS). The sample was selected using saturated sampling technique, comprising a total of 81 respondents.

Data collection was carried out through the distribution of closed-ended questionnaires modified with a 1–4 Likert scale. The research instruments were developed by the researcher based on indicators derived from each variable. These instruments underwent validity and reliability testing using pilot data collected from respondents with similar characteristics to the research sample.

The indicators for the soft skill development variable include leadership, time management, teamwork, adaptability, and interpersonal communication. For the professional internship variable, the indicators are professional knowledge, professional skills, and building networks with professionals. Meanwhile, the indicators for the learning process variable are learning materials, teaching methods, learning media, interaction, and assignments.

Data analysis was performed using multiple linear regression with the help of IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The process began with the tabulation of research data, followed by prerequisite tests including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. Subsequently, hypothesis testing was conducted through t-tests (partial effect), F-tests (simultaneous effect), and determination coefficient analysis (R^2). Additionally, the relative and effective contribution of X_1 (professional internship) and X_2 (learning process) toward Y (soft skill development) was calculated. These statistical tests were carried out to examine and validate the existing hypotheses and to produce measurable, statistically significant results.

Results and Discussion

Research Results

The instruments used in this study have been tested for validity and reliability, consisting of 37 instrument items. These were distributed through a closed-ended questionnaire to 81 respondents who served as the research sample. Data were collected and subsequently processed and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics version 26. The results include descriptive data analysis of the independent variables—professional internship (X_1) and learning process (X_2)—and the dependent variable—soft skill development (Y). The findings are presented in Table 1 below:

Table 1
Data Description

	Internship Profession	Learning Process	Soft Skill Development
N	81	81	81
Mean	28,493	41,296	41,604
Std. Error of Mean	0,389	0,480	0,534
Median	28	42	41
Mode	27	4,328	41
Std. Deviation	3,507	18,736	4,808
Variance	12,303	22	23,117
Range	19	33	25
Minimum	17	55	31
Maximum	36	3345	56
Sum	2308		3370

The data description results obtained for the soft skill development variable have a minimum score of 31, maximum score of 56, an average of 41.604, and a standard deviation of 4.808. The total score in the soft skill development variable is 3,370. The soft skill development variable consists of 14 statement items with measurement scores using a modified 1–4 Likert scale.

Meanwhile, the data description results obtained for the professional internship variable have a minimum score of 17, maximum score of 36, an average of 28.493, and a standard deviation of 3.507. The total score in the professional internship variable is 2,308. The professional internship variable consists of 9 statement items with measurement scores using a modified 1–4 Likert scale.

As for the data description results obtained for the learning process variable, it has a minimum score of 33, maximum score of 55, an average of 41.296, and a standard deviation of 4.328. The total score in the learning process variable is 3,345. The learning process variable consists of 14 statement items with measurement scores using a modified 1–4 Likert scale.

The prerequisite tests in this study include normality test, linearity test, multicollinearity test, and heteroscedasticity test. Based on the normality test results, the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is 0.200, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the data in this study are normally distributed. Regarding the linearity test, the significance value in the deviation from linearity row is 0.402, which is also greater than 0.05, meaning that the professional internship variable and soft skill development variable have a linear relationship. Meanwhile, for the learning process variable, the significance value in the deviation from linearity row is 0.597, which is greater than 0.05, indicating that the learning process variable and soft skill development variable also have a linear relationship.

The multicollinearity test in this study shows that the professional internship variable has a Tolerance value of 0.755 and a VIF value of 1.324. Meanwhile, the learning process variable has a Tolerance value of 0.755 and a VIF value of 1.324. Both independent variables have Tolerance values greater than 0.1 and VIF values less than 10, so it can be concluded that both independent variables do not show symptoms of multicollinearity. In addition, the heteroscedasticity test in this study using Glejser's test resulted in a significance value for the professional internship variable (X_1) of 0.781 and a significance value for the learning process variable (X_2) of 0.085. Furthermore, based on the scatterplot test, the distribution of points appears random and does not form any particular pattern. The spread of points also lies above or below the value of 0. Thus, it means that both independent variables have significance values greater than 0.05, so it can be stated that the regression model in this study does not experience heteroscedasticity.

Furthermore, the hypothesis testing results in this study using t-tests, F-tests, determination coefficient test (R^2), and effective and relative contribution of X_1 and X_2 to Y are presented in the following table 2.

Table 2
Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	15,975	4,744	
Professional Internship	0,542	0,150	0,395
Learning Process	0,247	0,122	0,222

Based on Table 2, the regression equation obtained in this study is as follows:

$$Y = 15.975 + 0.542X_1 + 0.247X_2$$

Where: Y: Soft Skill Development, X_1 : Professional Internship, X_2 : Learning Process

Based on the above regression equation, the interpretation is as follows: 1) The constant value of 15.975 mathematically indicates that if the values of the professional internship variable (X_1) and learning process variable (X_2) are zero, then the value of the soft skill development variable (Y) would be 15.975; 2) The regression coefficient of the professional internship variable (X_1) is 0.542, which mathematically indicates that if X_1 is increased by one unit and the learning process variable (X_2) is assumed to be zero, it will result in an increase in the soft skill development variable (Y) by 0.542; 3) The regression coefficient of the learning process variable (X_2) is 0.247, which mathematically indicates that if X_2 is increased by one unit and the professional internship variable (X_1) is assumed to be zero, it will result in an increase in the soft skill development variable (Y) by 0.247.

Table 3
t Test Results

	T _{value}	Sig.
(Constant)	3,368	0,001
Professional Internship	3,609	0,001
Learning Process	2,025	0,046

Based on Table 3 above, it can be concluded that the test results show the significance value of professional internship (X_1) is 0.001, which is < 0.05 . The t_{value} is greater than t_{table} , specifically $3.609 > 1.665$. The t_{table} value was determined at $\alpha = 0.05$ with $df = 78$ ($n - k - 1$, which is $81 - 2 - 1$). Based on the result of a significance value < 0.05 and $t_{\text{value}} > t_{\text{table}}$, there is a significant partial influence between the professional internship variable (X_1) and the soft skill development variable (Y). Meanwhile, the test results also show that the significance value of the learning process (X_2) is 0.046, which is also < 0.05 . The t_{value} is greater than t_{table} , specifically $2.025 > 1.665$. The t_{table} value was determined at $\alpha = 0.05$ with $df = 78$ ($n - k - 1$, which is $81 - 2 - 1$). Based on the result of a significance value < 0.05 and $t_{\text{value}} > t_{\text{table}}$, there is a significant partial influence between the learning process variable (X_2) and the soft skill development variable (Y).

Table 4
F Test Result

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	541,104	2	270,552	16,131	0,000
Residual	1308,254	78	16,772		
Total	1849,358	80			

Based on Table 4, the probability value in the Sig. column is 0.000, which is < 0.05 . Furthermore, the F_{value} is greater than F_{table} , specifically $16.131 > 3.11$. The F_{table} value was determined at $\alpha = 0.05$ with $df_1 = 2$ and $df_2 = 78$. Based on these results, it can be concluded that there is a significant simultaneous influence of the professional internship variable (X_1) and the learning process variable (X_2) together on the soft skill development variable (Y).

Tabel 5*Results of the Determination Coefficient (R²) Test*

Variabel	Koefisien Regresi (Beta)	Koefisien Korelasi	R Square
Professional Internship	0,395	0,505	0,293
Learning Process	0,222	0,418	0,293

Based on Table 5 above, it is known that the obtained determination coefficient (R Square) value is 0.293, which means that the professional internship variable (X₁) and learning process variable (X₂) together influence soft skill development (Y) by 29.3%. The remaining 70.7% is influenced by other factors or variables not examined in this study. Furthermore, the effective contribution (Beta x Correlation Coefficient x 100%) of professional internship (X₁) to soft skill development (Y) is 20%, and the effective contribution of learning process (X₂) to soft skill development (Y) is 9.3%, which is equal to the previously calculated R Square value. Meanwhile, the relative contribution (SE(X)% / R²) of professional internship (X₁) to soft skill development (Y) is 70%, and the relative contribution of learning process (X₂) to soft skill development (Y) is 30%. The total relative contribution from both independent variables amounts to 100%, or equal to 1.

Discussion

The data analysis conducted for the professional internship variable shows that professional internship experience has a positive and significant effect on the development of students' soft skills, with a significance value of $0.001 < 0.05$ and a t_{value} of $3.609 > t_{\text{table}}$ value of 1.665. These results are also in line with the research conducted by Saleh et al. (2023) and Praja et al. (2023), which state that the better and more intensive the professional internship activities are, the higher the level of soft skill development. A professional internship becomes both a medium and an influencing factor in soft skill development because during the internship, students use their soft skills to complete assigned tasks, and through this usage, these skills develop and improve over time.

Data collected in this study through questionnaires completed by respondents showed that the statement item with the highest score was item number 5, with a total score of 280, indicating that respondents agree that professional internships help improve relevant technical skills aligned with the student's field of study. Thus, the findings of this study are supported by the research of Saleh et al. (2023) and Praja et al. (2023), which state that professional internships significantly influence the development of students' soft skills.

The data analysis for the learning process variable also shows that it has a positive and significant impact on soft skill development, with a significance value of $0.046 < 0.05$ and a t_{value} of $2.025 > t_{\text{table}}$ value of 1.665. This result is consistent with the findings of Sugrains and Cerya (2023) and Suharyanti et al. (2014), which indicate that the better the learning process, the better the development of students' soft skills. An effective and well-conducted learning process not only imparts theoretical knowledge but also involves teamwork or group work, leadership, and other interactive elements that support the development of students' soft skills.

In this study, questionnaire responses indicated that the statement item with the highest score was item number 7, with a total score of 278, showing that respondents agreed that the use of technology in learning media helps them follow the learning process more easily. This outcome aligns with the findings of Sugrains and Cerya (2023) and Suharyanti et al. (2014), which show that good aspects of the learning process support effective and optimal learning, thereby promoting the development of students' soft skills.

Both variables professional internship (X₁) and learning process (X₂) also have a jointly significant effect on soft skill development, with a significance value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and an F_{value} of $16.131 > F_{\text{table}}$ value of 3.11. Through professional internships, students gain valuable experience and opportunities to apply and develop their existing soft skills. Meanwhile, the learning process does not only provide theoretical knowledge; during the process, students must use their soft skills to participate in and benefit from learning, further developing those skills.

This finding is supported by Sugraini and Cerya (2023) and Suharyanti et al. (2014), who prove that professional internships and the learning process together influence the development of students' soft skills. Therefore, soft skill development does not occur only during theoretical instruction but also during practical application. Both independent variables in this study cover the same aspects theory and practice hence they can be said to jointly influence the dependent variable, explaining 29.3% of the variation in soft skill development.

Furthermore, the results of effective and relative contribution analysis show that the professional internship (X_1) has a greater influence than the learning process (X_2) on soft skill development. This indicates that professional internships contribute more significantly and effectively than classroom-based learning in fostering soft skills among PAP FKIP UNS students.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that professional internships and the learning process have a positive and significant influence on soft skill development among students. It can be observed that the better and more intensive the professional internship and learning process experiences are, the higher the level of soft skill development. When students participate in professional internships or engage in the learning process, they are required to use soft skills to carry out tasks and activities, and as these skills are applied, they continue to develop and improve in quality. These soft skills include communication, teamwork, time management, and adaptability skills that develop through participation in internships and classroom-based learning. Additionally, there may be other influencing factors that contribute even more significantly to soft skill development. Therefore, future research should consider examining these additional factors in greater depth to provide a more comprehensive understanding of soft skill development among students.

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