

CHAPTER I

PREFACE

1.1. Background

The hospitality industry—which encompasses hotels, restaurants, tourism, and customer service sectors—has demonstrated significant recovery in 2022 following the setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the World Tourism Organization, international tourism revenue reached US\$1 billion in 2022, reflecting a 50% increase compared to the previous year (EHL, 2022; Harman, 2025). In Indonesia, this positive trend is supported by national data; the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) reported an increase in five-star hotel occupancy rates across various regions (Danang, 2022; Wahyu et al., 2022). In West Java specifically, occupancy rates were higher than in the previous year, indicating a rise in domestic tourism (Dudung, 2022). Moreover, the health tourism segment contributed approximately 23% to the sector's total revenue in 2022, reflecting growing interest in wellness and relaxation-focused travel experiences (Harman, 2025).

As people's mobility and demand for quality service increase, hospitality remains a rapidly developing sector. However, this growth is accompanied by the challenges of globalization and intense competition. Thus, it requires a workforce equipped not only with theoretical knowledge but also with practical competence (Agus, 2024). Hospitality education aims to prepare students to meet these demands by combining academic learning with direct field experience. One effective method to achieve this is through internship programs, which have become a vital component of the educational curriculum (Sixtyn, 2025; Peng et al., 2024). Through internships, students are exposed to real operational activities in the workplace, enabling them to understand job dynamics, sharpen their professional capabilities, and cultivate responsible and adaptable work attitudes aligned with industry expectations (Xu et al., 2023).

The primary purpose of conducting an internship in the hospitality field is to apply academic knowledge in a practical setting. Furthermore, internships help students enhance essential professional skills such as communication, customer service, time management, and a professional demeanor—skills that are crucial in a dynamic work environment (Sixtyn, 2025; Lutfi, 2024). These experiences also significantly improve students' competitiveness in the job market by demonstrating motivation and a solid understanding of the industry (Nurul & Evi, 2022). Additionally, internships offer students the opportunity to build professional networks that may benefit their future careers. Ultimately, internship experiences not only foster students' self-confidence but also deepen their insight into the industry's dynamics, potentially increasing their interest in pursuing a career in hospitality (Peng et al., 2024; Xu et al., 2023).

The writer chose to undertake the internship at Mercure BSD City Hotel because it offers an ideal environment to gain firsthand experience in the real hotel industry. As part of the Accor Group—one of the world's largest hospitality networks—Mercure provides the opportunity to learn international standards of operation and a professional work system that aligns with global hospitality practices (Harman, 2025).

1.2. Internship Aims and Objectives

The writer is expected to be capable of applying the knowledge and competencies acquired throughout the four semesters of study. Through internship activities, participants are given the opportunity to enhance essential skills required in professional environments, thereby improving the writer's overall competence and readiness to enter the workforce. With this Internship Program, the writer was able to:

a. Gain Practical Experience

Through participation in the internship program, the writer was afforded the opportunity to acquire practical experience within their selected field. This experiential learning process enables the application of theoretical concepts obtained in academic settings to real-world professional scenarios.

b. Build Connections

Internships facilitate opportunities for the writer to establish professional networks within their respective industry. Cultivating these connections may lead to mentorship, future employment opportunities, and strong references for career advancement.

c. Develop Skills

The internship program allows the writer to cultivate a diverse set of skills pertinent to their field, including but not limited to technical expertise, effective communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative teamwork. These competencies are fundamental to achieving success in any professional domain.

d. Work Under Pressure

Through the Internship Program, the writer developed the ability to perform effectively under pressure, managing external constraints beyond their control. This includes maintaining composure and focus in stressful situations while simultaneously devising swift and effective solutions. Such adaptability and resilience are invaluable assets in high-pressure work environments.

1.3. Time and Procedure of Internship

Before engaging in the Internship Program, the writer must be an actively enrolled student, having completed a minimum of 75 credit hours and maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.75. The writer is required to participate in an internship briefing organized by the university. The internship briefing is needed for students to ensure the students can understand the role and how to prepare the attitude during the internship (Prawira et al., 2023). During the internship briefing, the writer also learned the necessary procedures before and after the Internship Program. Here are the procedures of internship program:

1. Seek Opportunity for Internship

It is essential to actively search for and compile a list of hospitality establishments that provide internship opportunities. This process facilitates

more strategic planning and comparison based on key factors such as location, departmental offerings, and prospects for future career development, thereby ensuring that the selected internship aligns with both academic requirements and personal professional aspirations.

2. Submit Application for Internship

The writer must prepare a complete set of application documents, including a formal cover letter, résumé, and any supporting paperwork, then submit them to the Human Resources Department via email.

3. Await Response

After submitting the application, the writer must allow time for a response. During this period, it is advisable to prepare for the possibility of an interview by practicing appropriate responses and familiarize about background information about the hotel.

4. Attend the Interview

Attending the scheduled interview punctually is needed to present students profile with confidence, make a positive impression, and clearly articulate why candidate would be a valuable addition to their organization.

5. Second Stage Interview

To approach this stage with a professional mindset, the writer must ensure to be prepared and well-informed about the position and department for which you are applying. This includes understanding the key responsibilities, acquiring knowledge about the internship structure, training procedures, work expectations, and anticipating possible challenges.

6. Await Selection Announcement

The writer must wait for the official notification regarding internship trainee selection status.

7. Receive the Acceptance Letter

The writer received an official acceptance letter outlining the details of the internship. Acceptance need to be confirmed for begin preparations to the upcoming internship experience.