

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The hotel industry in Indonesia has shown positive growth in recent years, driven by increasing domestic and international tourism, improved infrastructure, and government support. According to Ardiansyah and Iskandar (2021), sustainability efforts and service quality improvements in five-star hotels have contributed to the rising competitiveness of the Indonesian hospitality sector. Additionally, digital transformation has played a significant role in modernizing hotel operations and guest experiences (Anwar et al., 2024). Despite setbacks caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry has demonstrated resilience and continues to recover steadily, with a renewed focus on hygiene, personalization, and digital innovation (Margatan, 2025).

For students pursuing hospitality studies, internships serve as a critical bridge between academic learning and real-world application. Internship programs allow students to gain hands-on experience, develop professional competencies, and adapt to the fast-paced service environment of hotels. Anjum (2020) emphasizes that internships significantly contribute to students' personal and professional development by enhancing their problem-solving and communication skills. Furthermore, internships promote industry readiness and help students understand actual workplace expectations (Chen & Shen, 2020). This practical exposure is vital to prepare future hospitality professionals who can meet global service standards and respond effectively to guest needs (Kusluvan et al., 2021).

Jakarta, as Indonesia's capital and largest metropolitan city, offers one of the most dynamic and competitive hospitality landscapes in the country. With its high concentration of international hotel chains and luxury properties, the city has become a central hub for business travelers, diplomats, and tourists. The level of service in Jakarta's hotel industry reflects global standards and constantly evolves to meet changing market demands. According to Ferdiansyah et al. (2025), hospitality

organizations in Jakarta are more likely to implement certified internship programs that ensure students are trained under standardized procedures. These practices align with the expectations of international guests and the operational complexity of urban hotels (Pusiran et al., 2020).

Taking an internship at a hotel in Jakarta brings multiple benefits to hospitality students. It not only improves technical abilities, such as guest handling and F&B service, but also cultivates soft skills like teamwork, adaptability, and cultural awareness. Lestari and Rosman (2024) found that exposure to a diverse work environment during internships strongly influences students' long-term career goals in hospitality. Moreover, working in Jakarta allows students to interact with experienced professionals, join cross-functional teams, and gain access to larger networks and future employment opportunities (Chen, Ramkissoon, & Mavondo, 2021). Internships in Jakarta-based hotels thus represent a strategic opportunity for students to grow professionally in a real-world hospitality setting.

Choosing Le Méridien Jakarta as the internship placement was a strategic decision based on the hotel's strong reputation as a five-star international hotel operating under the Marriott International group. Le Méridien Jakarta is known for its commitment to service excellence, cultural sophistication, and global hospitality standards, particularly within the Food and Beverage Service division. The hotel offers diverse dining outlets and operates in Jakarta's central business district, making it an ideal environment for learning professional service practices in a high-demand setting. Through its structured training system and adherence to international Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Le Méridien Jakarta provides interns with valuable exposure to real operational challenges, professional discipline, and cross-cultural guest interactions, which are essential for career development in the hospitality industry.

In conclusion, the background of the hotel industry, combined with the importance of internship programs, highlights the relevance of practical training for hospitality students. Indonesia's hospitality sector, particularly in Jakarta, continues to grow and adapt through innovation,

service quality enhancement, and professional workforce development. Internship experiences in reputable hotels such as Le Méridien Jakarta allow students to bridge theoretical knowledge with practical application, develop essential technical and soft skills, and gain a realistic understanding of hotel operations. Therefore, undertaking an internship in Jakarta's hotel industry not only strengthens students' professional competencies but also prepares them to contribute effectively to the future development of the hospitality sector.

1.2 Purpose

The primary purpose of undertaking the hotel internship at Le Méridien Jakarta was to provide the writer with meaningful exposure to real-world hospitality operations, with a particular focus on the Food and Beverage Service Department at La Brasserie Restaurant. This internship experience enabled the writer to bridge the gap between academic knowledge acquired during coursework and practical service application in a five-star hotel environment.

Through direct involvement in daily restaurant operations, including guest greeting and seating, order taking, food and beverage service, table setup, and coordination with the kitchen and stewarding teams, the writer gained a comprehensive understanding of service standards, operational flow, and the level of professionalism required in an international hospitality setting. The internship also contributed significantly to the development of essential professional skills such as communication, time management, adaptability, teamwork, and attention to detail, all of which are crucial for success in the hospitality industry.

In addition to technical and service-related learning, the writer benefited from close interaction with experienced service staff, supervisors, and managers, gaining valuable guidance, feedback, and insight into best practices in food and beverage service. This exposure enhanced the writer's understanding of workplace discipline, service etiquette, and guest-oriented service culture, while also helping to build

professional confidence and interpersonal skills.

Overall, the internship at Le Méridien Jakarta played an important role in shaping the writer's professional competence and readiness for a future career in the hospitality industry. The experience also provided a strong foundation for academic reflection by allowing the writer to apply theoretical concepts in a real operational context within a reputable five-star hotel.

1.3 Period and Procedures

The Internship Program is a mandatory requirement for all Hotel Operations students in their fifth semester and serves as a vital component for graduation. This program spans six months, and for this cycle, it is scheduled from July 14, 2025, to January 2026, with a minimum requirement of 800 working hours or 100 working days. Students were given the opportunity to choose a department based on their interests and professional aspirations. The writer chose the Food & Beverage Services Department at Hotel Le Méridien Jakarta, considering her enthusiasm for guest interaction, service operations, and gaining practical experience in a real hospitality setting.

Eligibility for the Internship Program requires students to be active, to have completed a minimum of 75 SKS (credit units), and to maintain a GPA of at least 2.75. Upon meeting these academic criteria, students are required to attend an Internship Briefing conducted by the university. This session aims to equip students with the knowledge of procedures and expectations for the entire internship cycle.

Following the briefing, students are responsible for independently seeking internship placements. The writer utilized training in CV writing, interview techniques, and professional communication, all of which were provided by the university. These preparations enabled the writer to confidently navigate the application process. The writer received an offline interview schedule with the Human Resources Department and the F&B Manager of Hotel Le Méridien Jakarta, which took place on April

25, 2025. After successfully passing the interview, the writer was officially accepted into the F&B Services Department for a six-month internship.

Below is a summary of the writer's internship preparation process:

1. The writer must create a recommendation letter containing information regarding the desired internship site and department. The recommendation letter must be submitted to the Fnb Services lecturer and the Head of Hotel Operations Program for signature which can take 1-2 working days.
2. After receiving the signature, the writer sends it to the hotel of choice along with a Cover Letter, CV, and Recommendation Letter. The writer sent an application to the hotel on April, 22 2025 and received feedback from the hotel on April 24, 2023 for the interview process.
3. The writer was scheduled for an offline interview on April, 25 2025 with the Human Resources Department (HRD) and the Food & Beverage (F&B) Manager.
4. On April 28, the writer received an acceptance letter from the hotel. As part of the acceptance letter, the author must do a medical check-up, fill out an investigation form, make a SKCK, and prepare several other documents that must be submitted on June 23, 2025.
5. After submitting the required documents, the author only had to wait for the first day of the internship on July 14.

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