

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The hospitality industry is always growing and changing, especially with the arrival of the digital era. Technology has pushed hotels and other hospitality businesses to improve the way they work, communicate with guests, and manage their operations. In the book *Transformasi Industri Perhotelan di Era Digital* by Daniel Adolf Ohyver and others, it is explained that digital transformation helps hotels work more efficiently, improve customer experience, and reach more people. Today, going digital is not a choice, but a must if a hotel wants to stay successful and competitive.

This digital change can be seen in almost every department in a hotel, including areas like the pastry kitchen. Technology is now used in managing inventory, planning production, controlling quality, and keeping records. In addition, digital tools help pastry chefs create new products, update menus, and keep their work consistent. This shows that digital transformation is not only for front-office services but also important in the kitchen and behind the scenes.

A journal written by Jovinka et al. (2023) called *Transformasi Digital Berkelanjutan Industri Perhotelan* supports this idea. The journal says that three things help make digital transformation successful: digital technology, digital market understanding, and strong digital leadership. The study found that these three areas help hotels improve their customer engagement, which means they can connect better with their guests and build stronger relationships.

I will soon do my internship in the pastry department of a hotel. This is a great opportunity to learn how digital tools are used in the daily kitchen operations. In the pastry kitchen, technology helps not only with making products but also with planning, teamwork, and maintaining quality. I hope to learn from experienced staff who already use digital systems and understand how to work efficiently in the modern hospitality industry.

Because of this, this report is written as a preparation before starting the internship. It will reflect on how digital transformation is happening in the hospitality industry, especially in the pastry department. I also hope that after the internship, I can combine real work experience with what I have read in books and journals to better understand the world of hospitality today.

1.2 Purpose

The main aim of this internship was to give the writer the instant professional experience in an operating hotel kitchen environment, specifically within the Pastry Department of a five-star hospitality hotel. Through this experience, the writer aimed to bridge the gap between being academically educated and practically practicing and build up the technical, social, and professional competences necessary for successful life in the pastry and broader culinary industry. The specific objectives of the internship were as follows:

1. Applying Academic Knowledge in Real Pastry Production and Kitchen Operations

One of the main objectives of this internship was to apply theoretical knowledge acquired from academic course work in practice within the day-to-day operations of a commercial pastry kitchen. This includes applying an understanding of baking science—such as the formation and functionality of gluten in dough structure, the Maillard reaction and its impact upon flavor and color development, and the influence of temperature and humidity upon ingredient functionality and final product quality. By direct observation of kitchen operations, the author learned to make informed choices based on scientific principles. For example, understanding how sugar crystallization affects ganache consistency, or how varying proof times can affect laminated dough, enabled more precise and repeatable product outcomes. This objective emphasized the importance of educational knowledge in not just producing quality pastries, but also in isolating unexpected issues, maintaining food safety guidelines, and continually improving production processes.

2. Acquisition of Technical Pastry Skills

The technical pastry skills are the most critical ones for any prospective pastry professional to acquire. While on internship, the author was exposed to a range of hands-on work including tempering chocolate, preparing pâte à choux, creating laminated doughs like croissants and Danish pastries, baking sponge cakes, preparing custards, and creating decorative pieces like chocolate garnishes and piped designs. One of the most important lessons learned was the importance of precision and attention to detail when working with pastry. Unlike the remainder of cooking, pastry is precise measurement, controlled temperature, and refined technique. The author also learned how to function within the real-world limitations of a kitchen by creating substitute equipment—like creating piping bags out of plastic bags or parchment paper when professional equipment is not an option—utilizing creativity and resourcefulness during stressful situations.

3. Developing Soft Skills in a Team Environment

Soft skills are just as important as technical skills in a busy hotel kitchen. Throughout this internship, there was the opportunity to develop important interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, flexibility, and time management. The author realized how crucial communication was in making teamwork possible, particularly during service hours or when dealing with multiple team members across stations. Flexibility was also a must, as the kitchen would typically face last-minute menu changes, unexpected ingredient deficiencies, or production time changes. Time management then became essential in completing prep work efficiently, meeting deadlines, and multi-tasking without compromising quality. Through daily interaction with chefs, managers, and fellow interns, the writer became confident in handling professional kitchen culture and in remaining optimistic even under pressure.

4. Familiarization with the Organization and Operation of a Five-Star Pastry Kitchen

Another primary objective was to understand the organizational structure and operation of a five-star pastry kitchen. Working in accordance with a brigade system—originally devised by Auguste Escoffier—every member of staff has a clear function, from the Chef Pâtissier to Commis Pâtissier, so that operation is efficient and smooth. By watching and participating in the brigade system, the author gained a sense of how responsibilities are delegated, how different stages of production are organized, and how quality is monitored from prep to plating. This information not only helped the author to be more efficient daily duties, but it also created a greater respect for the discipline, teamwork, and coordination that goes into high-level pastry-making.

5. Building Connections with Hospitality Professionals

Networking is a critical element of career development in the hospitality industry. Through the internship, the writer was able to network with seasoned pastry chefs, managers, and culinary professionals. Such interactions provided insightful counseling, practical advice, and education regarding several career avenues in pastry arts and more. The author also participated in team briefings, casual conversation, and professional kitchen duties that enhanced the author's appreciation of the culinary culture. They are possible references or future co-workers and an increasing working circle that will develop to assist the author in the future. Also, exposure to changing habits of work and culinary ideologies helped the author to expand their own perspective towards the art.

6. Developing Mental Resilience and Professionalism

To working in a stressed kitchen environment, too, then came developing good mental resilience and professionalism at all times. The author learned to manage stress during peak-production times, to remain calm under pressure, and to focus despite conflicting demands. Professionalism was also demonstrated through punctuality, reliability, attention to detail, and the ability to carry out instructions to the letter. Acceptance of constructive

criticism and use of same as a tool for improvement was also learned. A good attitude, even in adversity, came a long way towards promoting a good working environment and set the stage for long-term professional achievement in the culinary field.

Overall, this internship was a complete and well-rounded experience in the pastry department of a high-end hospitality setting. Through means of hands-on practice, observation, and consideration, the author did not just develop a deeper understanding of the pastry arts but also honed fundamental professional and interpersonal abilities that will serve as the building blocks for future success within the culinary field.

1.3 Period and Procedures

The Internship Program is a mandatory requirement for all Hotel Operations students at the writer's university once they reach the fifth semester. It is also a prerequisite for graduation. The internship must be completed six months. Before beginning the internship, students must fulfill several academic and administrative criteria. These include being an active student, having completed at least 75 SKS, and maintaining a minimum GPA of 2.75. Once eligible, students are required to attend a mandatory internship briefing provided by the university. This briefing outlines all necessary procedures before, during, and after the internship. It also equips students with important skills such as CV writing, interview preparation, and other related topics, all of which proved beneficial to the writer in securing the internship.

The process began with the writer filling out KM 1, a form that specifies the preferred hotel and department for the internship. KM 1 was submitted to the Hotel Operations Department, and within 1–2 working days, the writer received KM 2, which was signed by the Head of the Hotel Operations Program. The writer then submitted KM 2 to the hotel along with a cover letter, curriculum vitae (CV), academic transcript (GPA), and supporting certificates via email.

This structured approach to the Internship Program not only ensured that all requirements were met but also allowed the writer to gain a clear understanding of the professional recruitment process in the hospitality industry. It also marked the beginning of a meaningful learning journey in a five-star hotel environment.

The writer is currently undertaking a six-month Internship Program at The St. Regis Jakarta, specifically in the Pastry Department, starting from 7 July 2025 until 7 January 2026, with a total of 180 working days and 1,200 working hours. The process began when the writer submitted the internship application on 15 May 2025. The hotel responded on 22 May 2025, inviting the writer for an onsite interview with the Human Resources Department and the Sous Chef scheduled on 26 May 2025. Following the interview, on 3 June 2025, the writer received an official acceptance letter from the hotel. As part of the pre-internship requirements, the writer was asked to prepare and submit several documents, including a medical check-up report, a valid identification card, a bank account, a current pas photo, a police certificate (SKCK), and the signed Letter of Acceptance. All of these documents were submitted on 27 June 2025, completing the administrative process before the internship officially began.