



The Effect of Internship Program Activities and Certified Independent Studies on Students' Accounting Skills

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the influence of certified independent internship and stufghjkdi program activities on students' accounting skills. Using a quantitative approach with accounting student respondents who have participated in internship programs and certified independent studies through random sampling techniques. The results of the study revealed that certified internship and independent study programs have a positive impact on students' accounting skills. Through practical experience in the world of work or independent study projects, students have the opportunity to apply the theories they have learned in class to real-life situations. This shows how important participation in certified internship and independent study programs is, it makes a positive contribution to improving students' accounting skills.

INTRODUCTION

Today's globalization has made great changes that affect the development of news, economy, and culture. From an economic point of view, globalization has had an impact on changes in economic structure. To face the structural changes that will arise in the competition of globalization, it can be known that the basic thing that every nation must have is human resources that can be seen in terms of quantity and quality of human beings (Rizkiwati, 2024) In the era of globalization and rapid technological developments, relevant accounting skills are becoming increasingly important for accounting students.

Today, the world of work increasingly demands accounting graduates who not only master theory but are also able to apply technical skills in the field (Ayunda P. et al., 2023). Technological developments and changes in the business world require accounting graduates to not only master theory, but also have practical skills that are relevant to the needs of the industry (Jones & Miller, 2018). Higher education no longer only focuses on theoretical aspects, but must also be able to equip students with practical skills to be better prepared for the world of work (Abelha et al., 2020). To improve the quality of learning and prepare students to enter the world of work, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) has organized the Independent Learning Independent Campus (MBKM) program in 2020 (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan Republik Indonesia, 2022). According to Syafira and Hatta (2022), The Merdeka Campus Internship Program has many positive impacts for students to improve their skills. There are several types of activities in the MBKM program, one of which is the Certified Internship and Independent Study Program (MSIB)

The Certified Internship and Independent Study Program (MSIB) is a comprehensive career preparation program and provides opportunities for students to study outside the study program with a guaranteed credit conversion that is recognized by the university. Internship and independent study programs can improve students' competencies in technical and non-technical aspects, such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and professional communication skills (Abelha et al., 2020; Fantinelli et al., 2024). This program aims to provide students with the opportunity to study outside the campus to gain hands-on work experience and practical skills in accordance with their field of study (Martin & Anderson, 2022). In the context of accounting education, MSIB offers opportunities for students to develop accounting skills through internship experiences in companies as well as through certified independent study projects. Utami & Prasetyo (2020) Said the internship experience can improve students' understanding of the application of accounting theory in real-world situations, helping them become better prepared for the world of work.

Sari, (2022) In his research, it was revealed that independent study programs provide students with the opportunity to develop practical skills that are in accordance with the needs of the industry. Through the MSIB program, students are expected to be able to hone accounting skills which include the ability to analyze financial statements, use accounting software, and understand financial and tax regulations (Ahmad. R., 2021). However, the extent to which

these skills are really mastered by students through this program is still an important question to be researched.

Several previous studies have examined the influence of internships on students, but not many have specifically examined the impact of Certified Internships and Independent Studies programs on students' accounting skills. This research is expected to fill this gap by providing a special focus on accounting skills. This research is important to evaluate the effectiveness of the MSIB program in preparing accounting students to face challenges in the industry.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Capital Theori

Human Capital Theory is a concept that emphasizes the importance of investing in human resources (HR) to increase productivity and economic growth. This theory was first introduced by economists such as Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker in the 1960s, and has evolved into one of the pillars in development economics. Human Capital can be defined as the accumulation of knowledge, skills, experience, and other attributes that individuals possess, which contribute to the productivity and performance of an organization. This concept considers that human beings are not just resources, but also as capital that can generate returns from every investment made in their development.

The Influence of Internship Programs on Students' Accounting Skills

Becker's (1964) Human Capital Theory states that investment in education and training will improve individual skills and impact work productivity. Training in education is such as a certified internship program that allows students to gain real work experience at the company, so that they can apply the knowledge they have learned. In the internship program, students can participate in the company's day-to-day activities, work closely with professionals, and learn how to make decisions in a real business context.

According to Johnson, (2020), Students who take part in internship programs tend to have better job readiness compared to those who rely solely on classroom learning. They not only acquire technical skills, but also learn how to work in a team, communicate with colleagues, and manage work pressure. This is reinforced by Brown, (2021), which states that internships how accounting processes work in complex organizations, as well as provide opportunities for them to develop skills relevant to the needs of the industry. So that the hypothesis of this study can be explained:

H1: Internship programs have a positive effect on students' accounting skills

The Effect of Certified Independent Study on Students' Accounting Skills

The Human Capital Theory states that individuals who have better skills will have a greater chance of getting a better job and making greater contributions to the organization and the economy as a whole. Independent study is part of the MSIB program which gives students the opportunity to work independently in completing projects relevant to their field of study. In independent study, students are not only required to master the technical aspects of accounting, but

also to be able to manage time, plan projects, and make complex decisions independently. It is considered essential in improving analytical and *problem-solving skills*, which are indispensable in the modern world of accounting (Ismail et al., 2020).

According to Taylor & Harrison, (2019), Independent study provides space for students to develop critical and analytical thinking skills, as they must complete projects with little guidance. Students who engage in independent study tend to be more independent and ready to face challenges in the world of work because they are used to dealing with problems directly and making strategic decisions (Smith. R., 2019). Furthermore, they learn how to deal with uncertainty, which is one of the essential skills in an ever-changing industry like accounting. So that the hypothesis of this study can be explained:

H2: Certified Independent Studies have an effect on students' accounting skills

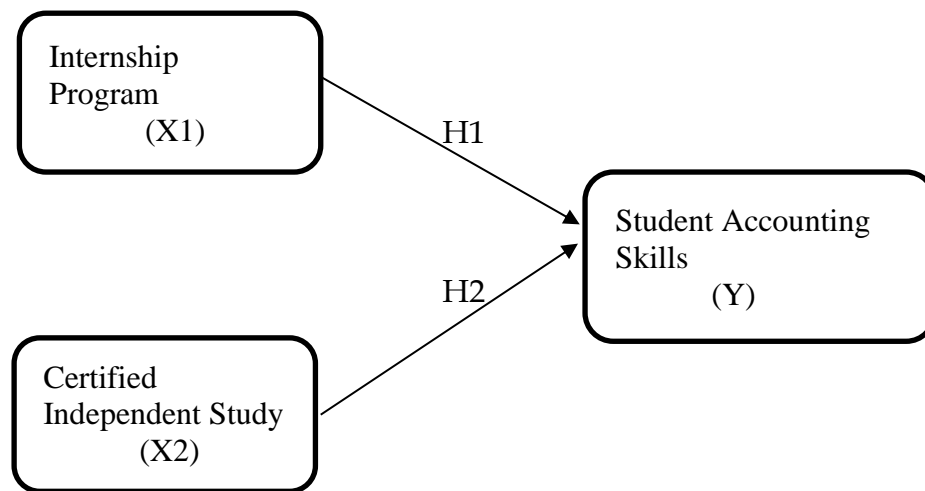


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative approach involving a descriptive method, aimed at explaining the Influence of Certified Internship and Independent Study Programs on Students' Accounting Skills. This type of data uses primary data collected directly from respondents through filling out questionnaires. The population of this study is Accounting students who have participated in the MSIB program at the University of Mataram from Batches 1-6. The sampling technique utilizes the random sampling technique. The respondents involved in this study amounted to 100 students. The data was obtained through a questionnaire distributed online in the form of a Google Form containing statements related to this research. The data that has been obtained is then processed using the SmartPLS application version 4.0.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The respondents in this study are accounting students from the University of Mataram who have participated in the MSIB program from Batches 1-6. An overview and the number of respondent data processed in this study of 100 students can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Respondent Overview

Information	Total	Percentage
Gender		
- Man	43	43%
- Woman	57	57%
Age		
- 20	5	5%
- 21	40	40%
- 22	33	33%
- 23	13	13%
- 24	2	2%
- 25	4	4%
- 26	3	3%
Force		
- 2018	1	1%
- 2019	5	5%
- 2020	22	22%
- 2021	60	60%
- 2022	12	12%
Semester while attending MSIB		
- 5	14	14%
- 6	69	68%
- 7	17	16%
- 8	2	2%

Source: Research Data, 2025

Based on table 1, it can be seen that female respondents have a higher percentage with a total of 57% compared to the percentage of male respondents which amounted to 43%. This shows that many students who are interested in participating in the MSIB program are women, but it is also influenced by the number of female students in the accounting program at the University of Mataram more than the students. In terms of age, it can be seen that the dominant respondents are in the age range of 21-23 years. This is because Accounting students at the University of Mataram are predominantly in this age range. Then 60% of respondents came from students of the Class of 2021. This is because there are more students who participated in the MSIB program in the Class of 2021 compared to other Batches. In addition, respondents who program MSIB activities were dominated in the 6th semester by 68%, followed by the 7th semester by 16%, the 5th semester by 14% and the 8th semester by 2%.

Validity Test

Convergent Validity

The convergent validity test in PLS was carried out using a reflection indicator and assessed using a *loading factor*, which shows the correlation between the component score and the construct score. The convergent validity can be evaluated using the rule of thumb with an outer loading >0.7 .

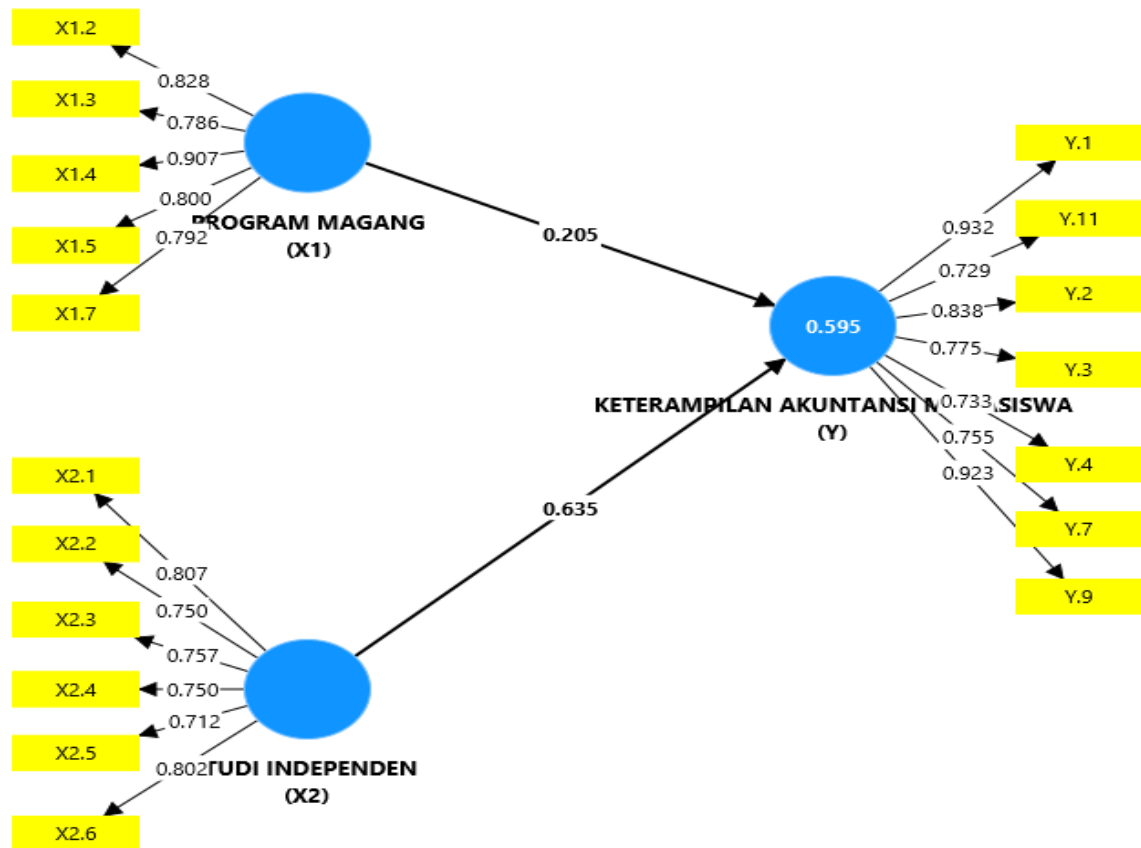


Figure 2. Model Structural
 Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The results of the convergent validity test in Figure 2 show that all of the above indicators reached a loading factor value of >0.7 . So that all of these indicators are declared to meet the validity criteria and can be used for subsequent testing.

Discriminant Validity

The discriminant validity test on SmartPLS can be assessed using the value of *cross loading*. An indicator can be said to be valid if the correlation value between the indicator and its construct must be greater than the correlation with the other block constructs.

Table 2. Cross Loading Value

	STUDENT ACCOUNTING SKILLS (Y)	INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (X1)	CERTIFIED INDEPENDENT STUDY (X2)
X1.2	0.514	0.828	0.481
X1.3	0.425	0.788	0.465
X1.4	0.546	0.908	0.546

X1.5	0.409	0.799	0.394
X1.7	0.399	0.788	0.473
X2.1	0.589	0.397	0.805
X2.2	0.534	0.501	0.749
X2.3	0.524	0.433	0.759
X2.4	0.556	0.486	0.747
X2.5	0.559	0.423	0.712
X2.6	0.646	0.412	0.806
Y.1	0.937	0.507	0.675
Y.2	0.825	0.468	0.678
Y.3	0.773	0.418	0.576
Y.4	0.723	0.471	0.567
Y.11	0.722	0.499	0.571
Y.12	0.798	0.425	0.576
Y.5	0.931	0.492	0.658
Y.7	0.757	0.424	0.538
Y.9	0.926	0.473	0.676

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The results of the discriminant validity test in table 2 show that the correlation value of these indicators is higher or greater with their construct compared to the correlation value with other blocks. The X1.2, X1.3, X1.4, X1.5, X1.7 indicators have the highest loading value in their construct, which is variable X compared to other blocks. This can also be seen in the X2 and Y indicators.

Reliability Test

The reliability test is carried out to test the statements from the questionnaire which are a reflection of the indicators of each construct. The reliability test is reflected in the composite and *Cronbach alpha* reliability values. For the construct to be considered trustworthy, the *Composite Reability* value must be >0.7 , the *Cronbach alpha* value must be >0.6 and the *AVE* value must be >0.5 .

Tabel 3. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability dan AVE

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted (AVE)
STUDENT ACCOUNTING SKILLS (Y)	0.940	0.950	0.681
INTERNSHIP PROGRAM (X1)	0.881	0.913	0.678
CERTIFIED INDEPENDENT STUDY (X2)	0.857	0.893	0.583

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Based on the reliability test in table 3, the *Composite Reliability* value is greater than 0.7, the *Cronbach alpha* value is greater than 0.6 and the *AVE* value is greater than 0.5. So it can be concluded that the statements contained in the questionnaire regarding internship programs and certified independent studies can be said to be reliable.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Result For Inner Weight

	Original sample (O)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values	T Table	Hypothesis	Statement of
PROGRAM MAGANG (X1) -> KETERAMPILAN AKUNTANSI MAHASISWA (Y)	0.200	2.242	0.000	1,98	H1	Diterima
STUDI INDEPENDEN BERSERTIFIKAT (X2) -> KETERAMPILAN AKUNTANSI MAHASISWA (Y)	0.631	6.498	0.000	1,98	H2	Diterima

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The results of hypothesis testing in table 4, explaining that the p value of the influence of the internship program on students' accounting skills is less than 0.05 which is 0.00 and the statistical t-value is greater than 1.98 which is 2.24 with a positive path coefficient, it can be concluded that the internship program has a positive effect on students' accounting skills. Then table 4 also shows that the p value of the influence of certified independent studies on students' accounting

skills is smaller than 0.05 which is 0.00 with a statistical t-value greater than 1.98 which is 6.49, and a positive path coefficient shows that certified independent studies have a positive influence on students' accounting skills.

DISCUSSION

The influence of internship programs on students' accounting skills

Based on the results of the research, it can be seen that the internship program has a significant positive effect on students' accounting skills. In the hypothesis test, the statistical t-value of 2.24 is greater than 1.98 and the p-value of 0.00 is less than 0.05. This means that internship programs have an effect on improving students' accounting skills. Internship programs also have many other positive impacts such as being able to improve hard and soft skills.

This is in line with the research conducted Wardiningsih & Ferdaus, (2023) that the internship program has a positive impact on students, including the ability to apply theory in work situations, master accounting *software*, and understand financial reporting procedures, tax reports and audits. Internships have a significant positive impact on the development of student competencies, including the improvement of practical skills, analytical abilities, industry understanding, and the development of positive work ethics (Santoso & Sari, 2024). Therefore, the internship program needs to be improved again among students to provide experience and improve skills to prepare students for the world of work.

The effect of certified independent study on students' accounting skills

In the hypothesis test, the statistical t-value of 6.49 is greater than 1.98 and the p value of 0.00 is less than 0.05. This shows that certified independent studies have an effect on students' accounting skills. In independent study, students are not only required to master the technical aspects of accounting, but also to be able to manage time, strategy, plan projects, and make complex decisions independently. This is important in improving analytical and problem-solving skills, which are indispensable in the modern world of accounting.

This opinion is supported by the statements made by Rizkiwati, (2024) that certified independent studies have a positive effect on students' skills and work readiness. This reinforces that certified independent study provides significant positive benefits to students, including practicing independence, good time management, decision-making, and other skills.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that certified internship and independent study programs have a positive effect on students' accounting skills. This shows how important participation in certified internship and independent study programs is, it makes a positive contribution to improving students' accounting skills. Through practical experience in the world of work or independent study projects, students have the opportunity to apply the theories they have learned in class to real-life situations. This not only deepens the understanding of accounting concepts, but can also develop practical skills such as financial statement analysis, budgeting, and the use of accounting software. The program also allows students to interact with professionals in the field of

accounting, acquire mentors, and expand networks, all of which support their skills development and preparation for their future careers. Thus, certified internship and independent study programs can be considered an effective means to improve the quality of accounting graduates and meet the increasingly complex needs of the industry.

ADVANCE RESEARCH

This research has various limitations that can be used as a reference for future researchers, including that this research is only carried out on accounting students so it is expected for the next research to be researched with a wider scope. In addition, the data in this study was obtained through questionnaires, so the data produced was limited and not in-depth. Therefore, it is expected in the next study to use other methods such as observation or interviews in order to dig deeper into information.

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