

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the introduction, research question, research objective, research significance, scope and limitations, and definition of key terms. Each section is given in the following order:

#### 1.1 Research Background

Indonesia is developing a new curriculum called the "Merdeka curriculum." It has a program named *Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka* (MBKM). This program allows students to learn through internships (Vhalery et al., 2022). After launching its internship program, University of Muhammadiyah Malang started some initiatives. One of these is the Center of Excellence (CoE) program. Its goal is to enhance the skill sets of internship sites.

CoE is a new program at the University of Muhammadiyah Malang that focuses on hard skill and soft skill training for students developed by each study program with the hope of becoming a competitive advantage as additional capital to compete in the world of global competition (Dele et al., 2024). Study programs that have CoE with specific benefits become a magnet that will provide interest to prospective new students. This program also supports the launch of the University's On-Time Graduation program to shorten students' study period. The CoE program also collaborates with other institutions, including DUDI, which is mutually beneficial. The Study Program provides new knowledge for DUDI, DUDI offers additional skills and competencies for students, and students gain networks to be able to work after graduation.

The CoE and School of Excellence programs are crucial because they provide specific competencies developed by each Study Program so that students can develop their passion outside the field they are currently pursuing. The CoE program is also an additional capital for students to fight in the world of global competition while at the same time supporting the interests and talents of students for one semester with a guarantee of being ready to work. The CoE program has been carefully designed, especially for English education majors, with a focus on the hospitality industry, where English language skills are important. The program also collaborates with professional companies in the field. The lecturers involved in this program are professionals who have direct experience in the hospitality industry and have an extensive network.

The program is carried out so that students technically gain broader and more flexible insights, and it is hoped that CoE students can develop and improve the abilities of CoE students. Especially with the aim of making students a qualified prospective workforce and can compete fairly in the industrial world. This training is carried out to help connect the world of education with the industrial world to support each other's progress.

Based on this explanation, this research tries to describe the experiences experienced by CoE students while undergoing an internship program at the Aston Denpasar Hotel & Convention Center for approximately 6 months. This research will explore the experiences experienced by CoE students. Through the description of this experience, it is hoped that the research can provide a more comprehensive picture of the processes and dynamics experienced by CoE students while

undergoing the internship program at the Aston Denpasar Hotel & Convention Center. This can be used as material for evaluation and improvement for future internship programs.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

What are the students' experiences Internship Program at Aston Denpasar Hotel Convention Center.

### **1.3 Research Objective**

The objective of this research is to describe students' experiences Internship Program at Aston Denpasar Hotel Convention Center.

### **1.4 Research Significance**

The researchers hope that the findings of this study can provide further information for further information for:

#### **1. Student**

Students can be more prepared and motivated to join the internship program after knowing the benefits and positive impacts obtained by previous CoE students. The findings of this study will strengthen students' understanding of the importance of internship programs in preparing them to enter the workforce in the hospitality industry.

## 2. Lectures

Lecturers have a better understanding of the benefits, challenges, and experiences that will be experienced by students during the internship program in the hospitality industry. This information can assist lecturers in providing appropriate preparation and guidance for students before and during the program and lecturers can also build closer partnerships or collaborations with the hospitality industry based on a deeper understanding of the industry's needs and expectations of CoE program graduates.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation**

The scope of this study is the students' experiences in the Internship Program at Aston Denpasar Hotel & Convention Center, with a limitation focusing solely on the experiences in the Front Office department.

### **1.6 Definition of key terms**

#### 1. Student's experiences

Student experience is the overall experience experienced by a student or student while studying at an educational institution, including academic, social, life on campus, relationships with institutions, and overall self-development (Flynn et al., 2017)

## 2. Front Office

Front Office is a department in a hotel that serves as the front line in providing services to guests, especially in terms of room booking administration, check-in, check-out, and all matters related to guest registration and accommodation while staying at the hotel (Ekhsan et al., 2020).

