

# EVALUATION OF INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS AND KI HADJAR DEWANTARA PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN INDONESIA

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## Abstract

This article aims to examine the implementation of internships programs in through the philosophy of education Ki Hadjar Dewantara's (KHD). The background of this research is that the internship program is considered a breakthrough in the education system in higher education in Indonesia. However, how complex is its implementation? What is KHD's view on education? The method used is qualitative with a case study in Indonesia on the internship program. The data is collected using student's interview who participate in the internship program and policy of Indonesia's Higher Education on Kampus Merdeka programs. The primary data used is KHD's classic book *"Towards an Independent Man"*. The results of the research show that KHD's philosophy of education can be relevant to students when conducting internships. This teaching can be integrated into the internship orientation activities carried out by stakeholders.

**Keywords:** *Ki Hadjar Dewantara, Internship in Campus Merdeka, Philosophy of education*

*"The purpose of teaching and education that is useful for living together is to liberate humans as members of the unity (people)" - Ki Hajar Dewantara*

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been growing concern over the ability of Indonesia's Higher Education Curriculum to keep up with the rapid pace of technological disruption and the resulting demands of the job market. In response to this, the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture introduced the Merdeka Campus program in 2019, which aimed to revamp the higher education system. According to the High Education Standardization regulations outlined in Permendikbud No. 3 of 2020, students are now given the opportunity to study beyond their respective departments, providing them with practical exposure to the industrial world in addition to traditional classroom learning. This new approach to higher education seeks to bridge the gap between academia and industry, enabling students to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to thrive in today's rapidly evolving workforce.

The implementation of this regulation provides students with a certain degree of flexibility in terms of their academic pursuits. There are options that available for students to choose including: the ability to study in other programs on the same campus, the option to study in the same program on different campuses, the opportunity to study in other programs on different campuses, and the popular non-campus learning option. The latter option is favored by many due to its inherent flexibility and can be achieved through a range of activities such as internships, student exchanges, teaching assistance in education units, humanitarian projects, entrepreneurial activities, independent projects, and community service programs. The overarching goal of this program is to allow students to enhance their skills and abilities according to their interests and talents by providing them with direct exposure to fields that align with their individual passions.

The using of words “Merdeka” in this programs is comes from Ki Hadjar Dewantara, an education philosopher from Indonesia. This concept is claimed by Merdeka Campus Programs which using element of authority and the existential role of human beings in social life. KHD prioritizes humanist education, where reason is a distinguishing characteristic of humans and animals where this mind includes creativity, taste, intention (Dewantara, 2009). This synergy of creativity, taste, intention is the initial conception for the formation of human being character. The character of the younger generation is a challenge for the Indonesian people, especially when students are directly involved in practicing their knowledge in the working both in industry and government.

The concept of KHD education is closely aligned with one of the programs offered under the Merdeka Campus initiative - the Internship and Certified Independent Study program (hereafter referred to as "internship"). This program is designed to provide students with opportunities to enhance their competencies, both in terms of hard and soft skills, through experiential learning outside of traditional classroom settings. The objective is to better equip students for their future careers. Previous research has identified numerous benefits associated with internships, which can be broadly categorized as job-related benefits, career-related benefits, and networking/job market benefits (Maertz, 2014).

This research article will discuss the implementation of the internship program and the concept of an independent human being by Ki Hadjar Dewantara. Some experts see that the Merdeka Campus program is considered as a response to specialization of knowledge where the approach needs multidisciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary solutions (Murtiningsih, 2022). The narrow-minded scientific approach that has been prevalent in higher education in Indonesia has resulted in students with majors in social-humanities being unable to engage in meaningful dialogue with their peers in natural sciences, and vice versa. As stated by Nadiem Makarim, Indonesia's Minister of Education, the problem must be solved since the higher education level before students enter the workforce.

Some experts in Indonesia's education criticize this program because many courses taken by students can actually interfere with the direction of their study path (Dasrimin, 2021). Meanwhile, the mechanisms created in the Merdeka Campus Program are not in accordance with the quality of human resources, geographical conditions, and the economic conditions of individuals (Muslim, 2020). Apprentice programs have also been criticized because it can be leads to the liberalization of higher education. Internships are considered a means of learning to create cheap, industry-oriented workforce, and even expand opportunities for corruption (Shivshenker, 2018). This article will try to answer the question: how are the internship program activities and their relevance to KHD thinking? What is the problems that face by the students who take part in this program? Is it in line with the spirit of the Merdeka Campus program?

## METHOD

The unit of analysis in this study is the internship program at the Merdeka Campus which is implemented by the Indonesian Ministry of Education which is launched in 2020. The Merdeka Campus Internship Program has a goal so that students get hands-on work experience as a preparation for them to face the working industry, but the implementations are not match this objective. This research tries to see the gap between the ideal and the facts on the ground.

Identification of the problem is done by separating between what is real (*Das Sein*) and what should be (*Das Solen*). *Das Sein* consists of facts, data and information while *Das Solen* consists of theory, regulations and norms (Kaufmann, 1987). Identification of problems with this method can sharpen the emergence of problems. The approach taken is through a descriptive method which is characterized by providing data and an accurate description of a phenomenon, documenting the process of causality and mechanism of a case (Neuman, 1996). In addition, the descriptive approach also provides a report on the context of the existing situation.

The present study employs a qualitative research design to investigate the impact of the KHD concept on students enrolled in internship programs at two universities in Indonesia. The primary source of information on the KHD concept is drawn from the book "*Towards Independent Man*". Data collection is conducted through a desk review of relevant documents from the Indonesia's Ministry of Education and in-depth interviews with students participating in internship programs. The collected data is analyzed using qualitative descriptive techniques, including data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions.

## DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

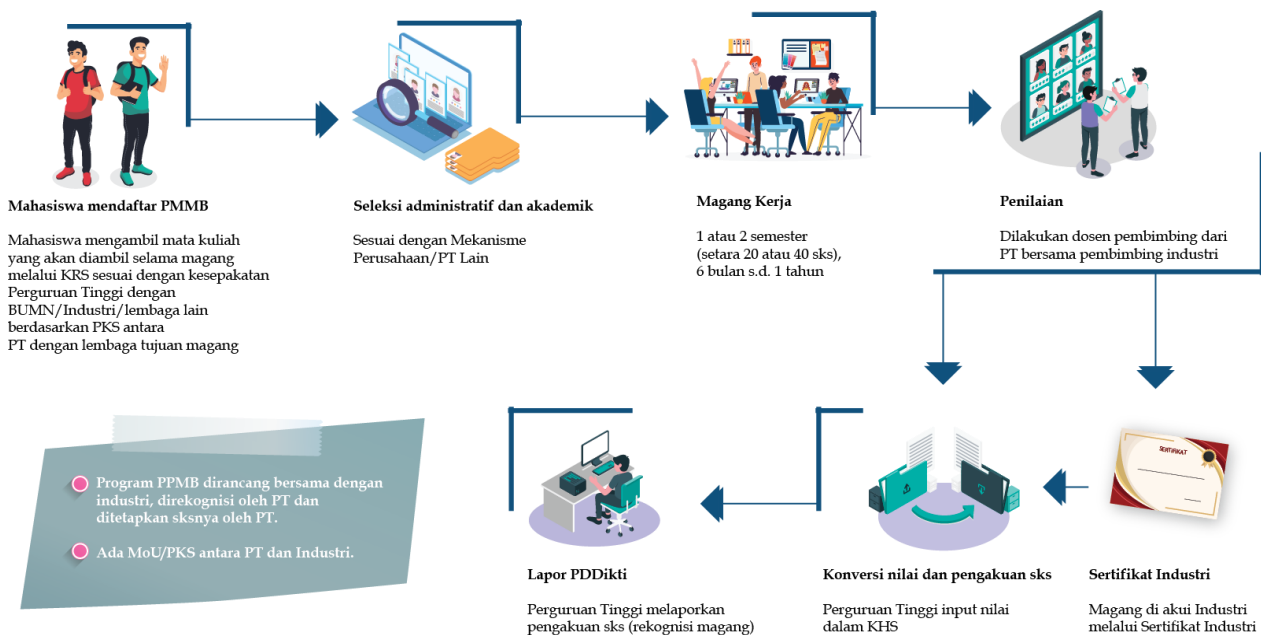
Internship programs generally promote the development of professional maturity among interns by providing them with opportunities to enhance their teamwork abilities, communication and interpersonal skills, as well as gain awareness of workplace culture (Wilton, 2012). Internships have been noted to offer students a multifaceted and autonomous learning environment that surpasses traditional classrooms (Valo, 2000: 152). Through internships, students can enhance their problem-solving skills (Teichler, 2009) and develop organizational, participative, and socio-emotional competencies (Alpert et al., 2009; García-Aracil and Velden, 2007) by taking on the role of young professionals, and making decisions in real-life scenarios. This experiential learning approach may accelerate their professional growth (Weible, 2009).

There has been a noticeable shift in students' perspective towards college internship programs, as they have become more focused on practical outcomes. Rather than viewing internships as a means of enhancing their education, students are increasingly using them as a tool to gain a competitive advantage in the job market (Ruhanen, 2013). Besides that, the internship programs is most effective models of experiential learning when there is cooperation among students, employers, and educators (Yiu, 2012).

The basis of the internship activity in Campus Merdeka programs is the fact that students were seen as not getting work experience so that they were considered not ready to professional sphere. The internships programs in Indonesia usually only short term (6 months) and even less, this seen as not providing experience and competence for students. Companies that employ student apprentices also state that short-term internships even disrupts activities in the industry.

Meanwhile, through the Merdeka Campus, the internship program is carried out for 1-2 semesters (1 year) so that it is expected to provide students with sufficient experience. In addition, students are expected to improve their hard skills and soft skills. Meanwhile, companies also benefit: if they get the right workforce and can later be directly employed. This certainly can reduce training costs in the early days of employees working.

Through this activity, responsibilities in the industrial sector will be "shared" with universities. This is done by updating teaching and learning materials for lecturers as well as research topics that will become more relevant (Directorate General of Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). This internship activity is carried out in collaboration with various partners, such as: non-profit foundations, companies, multilateral organizations, government institutions, and what the millennial generation likes most is startup companies. The mechanism of internship implementation is described as follows:



**Figure 1. Mechanism of internship programs at Campus Merdeka in Indonesia**  
**Source: Indonesia's Ministry of Education, 2020**

The initial mechanism is carried out by making an agreement through Letter of Cooperation Agreement between the Higher Education and partners. This collaboration includes: the learning process, semester credit recognition and assessment. Then, both parties develop an apprenticeship program with partners, both the contents of the competency apprenticeship program to be acquired by students, as well as the rights and obligations of both parties during the apprenticeship process. Then Universities can assign supervisors who will guide students during the internship for monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring of the apprenticeship process can be done through the Higher Education Database.

Meanwhile, the company where the student interns can guarantee the apprenticeship process is in accordance with the cooperation documents. The company also provides mentors who accompany students during their internships and together with supervisors provide assessments. In addition, the company provides rights and guarantees in accordance with statutory regulations, such as: apprentice fees, health insurance, work safety, and apprentice rights.

Students who take part in the internship selection get supervisors in campus and supervisors at their workplace. Students are also obliged to fill out a logbook and compile activity reports according to the activities carried out.

### **The Implementations of Campus Merdeka Internship; between value conversion and self-exploitation**

The campus merdeka internship program aims at learning outcomes that are aligned with the courses set by the study program in Higher Education in Indonesia. The rationale for this comes from the curriculum in Higher Education which is seen as not just a set of courses, but a design for a series of learning processes (Kelly, 2009). In general, equalizing the weight of internships at the Merdeka Campus can be grouped into two forms, namely free form and structured form. In this free form, internship activities carried out for 6 months are equivalent to 20 credits without equating to courses. The twenty credits are expressed in the form of competencies acquired by students while participating in the program, both in hard skills and soft skills competencies in accordance with the desired learning outcomes. Meanwhile, in a structured form, apprenticeship activities can also be adjusted to the curriculum pursued by students as many as 20 credits which are equivalent to the courses offered whose competencies are in line with internship activities.

However, therein lies the complexity of the problem. Converting assessments of apprenticeships and courses according to students participating in this internship program, is very difficult to convert. For example, one of the respondents, FS, an English Education student at Padang State University took an internship and wanted to convert it into a Pancasila Education course. The student did an internship at the education startup company with a position as a story writer-designer for the Free Learning Teacher program. However, the lecturers in the study program do not know the type of work that is directly related to learning outcomes. So that the student cannot ask for a conversion just because he has attended an internship program.

Another problem that arises based on some in-depth reports about this internship program is: it turns out that many students deliberately create an unsafe situation for themselves during their internship. Students who enjoy working see the work that is given to them as the most concrete means of learning so that it contributes the most to creating experiences, such as a preference for taking on jobs with significant responsibility giving them satisfaction with a sense of accomplishment. Some admit that they are not happy when there is free time in the middle of their work.

This self-exploitation becomes evident when interns work extra hard without any guaranteed incentives, both financial and non-financial, justified by understanding that their actions are an effort to make they can accept by the company. Self-exploitation is fueled by the great job ambiguity in the work they do. Intern students also don't like "trivial" jobs that are irrelevant to the division of apprentices placed. This ambiguity is also triggered by the student's difficulty in measuring how much his internship experience contributes to their learning process. On the one hand, they rationalize that what they get during their apprenticeship is a substitute for the financial compensation they get. One of the first batch of apprentice students from Padang State University said that they were paid 4.5 million rupiah/month for 6 months doing the internship. They get this salary from the Ministry of Education and Culture which is channeled through the educational fund management institution and has no relationship with the company that employs them. This is a very large number for regional students who go to other cities (Bandung) to carry out their internship program.

Meanwhile, there are no references that can ensure intern students will receive learning on a certain scale, such as competency standards or skills improvement. This ambiguity forces interns to perceive that taking initiative is the main key to getting as much

learning as possible. This scenario full of uncertainty can also amplify the feeling of work fatigue.

This efforts is to maximize the learning potential gained during the apprenticeship lead to excessive self-exploitation. This vulnerable working condition does not provide any guarantee for apprentices to obtain the expectations, either in terms of learning or the opportunity to secure a position in the labor market. One of the cases; YW has the expectation of working directly on the visual content production process in a film production house. However, during a pandemic in 2021 only employees with certain positions could enter the studio, and there was nothing YW could do to control the situation. During the pandemic, most of the time workers were work from home, expectations of being involved in practical activities were increasingly unrealizable. Apprentices continuously practice an entrepreneurial mentality through self-development that ends in exploitation practices (Wirman, 2021).

The problem of self-exploitation unconsciously carried out by apprentice students is also related to other work they do besides internships. Based on the report from the Multatuli Project (2022), 95 respondents were completing their thesis or final assignment during their internship, 46 respondents were still active in campus activities, 34 respondents had side jobs, 12 respondents were teaching assistants, and others took care of the household. This resulted in psychological fatigue experienced by these intern students.

### **The Educational Philosophy of Ki Hadjar Dewantara**

Ki Hadjar Dewantara has the name Soewardi Soerjaningrat born in Yogyakarta on 2 May 1889. He is the fourth son of the couple RM Soerjaningrat and son of Empress Sri Paku Alam III. His mother was a royal princess, heir to Kadilangu, who was descendants of Sunan Kalijaga (Soewito, 1985). Ki Hadjar Dewantara during his childhood had the name Raden Mas Suwardi Suryaningrat, but after his period exile in the Netherlands his national title was not used. It marks unite with the people who are fighting for. He was a politician and the peak of his career as a journalist when he wrote "*Als ik eens Nederlander was*" is a well-known treatise containing satire for the Dutch East Indies government (Widodo, 2017).

Ki Hadjar Dewantara was a fervent advocate of education for the younger generation, which he believed was crucial for liberating them from the clutches of foreign oppressors. He argued that education founded on national culture was essential to prevent foolishness and ignorance. The education system during the colonial period, on the other hand, did not truly educate students, but instead fostered a sense of fatalism and passivity. In order to achieve independence, Dewantara believed that the young generation needed to be prepared to become self-sufficient and hardworking. This way, they would be equipped to take charge of their own destiny and contribute to the building of an independent nation, one that values education and possesses a strong sense of independence (Marihandono, 2017).

According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, education plays a crucial role in encouraging the development of students, by teaching them to effect positive change and become valuable members of society. In addition to acquiring knowledge, students are expected to use their education to benefit their families and communities. Dewantara believed that education should also foster self-confidence and allow students to explore their potential, rather than simply develop their cognitive abilities without balancing it with behavioral and practical skills. As the central figures in education, teachers are expected to prioritize the needs of their students over their own interests. To achieve this, Dewantara emphasized the importance of teachers developing a teaching and education methodology based on compassion, sharpening, and fostering. Teachers are expected to possess strong pedagogical skills, be adept at building relationships with students and the wider school community, and have effective communication with parents while maintaining a professional attitude toward their duties.

An educator is also expected to be able to educate students by holding the motto "*ing ngarsa sung tuladha*" (give an example in advance), "*ing madya mangun karsa*" (in the middle of building ideals), "*tut wuri handayani*" (following and support it). The most important thing in educating, namely existence the same understanding between teachers and educators, so that educating is a process of humanizing humans, with the existence of an education system expected to be able to raise the degree of life towards better changes (Sugiarta, 2019). Apart from this, Ki Hadjar Dewantara has tri education center, which says that the education received by the participants learning occurs in three scopes, namely: the family, the college, and community environment. The environment has a deep educative influence the formation of the personality of students. Education system have a family spirit rooted in the nature and independence it is enforced by "*Tut Wuri Handayani*" system (Widodo, 2017).

Ki Hadjar Dewantara has a concept of education that is based on principles independence which means that humans are given freedom from God Almighty to regulate their lives by remaining in line with the rules that exist in society.

The purpose of education is the perfection of human life so that it can fulfill everything physical and spiritual needs obtained from nature (Dewantara, 2009). Educational intent according to KHD, namely getting physical and spiritual progress. The purpose of education is mentioned about satisfaction or peace of mind and body, or it can also be translated as happy, or *rahayu*, that is, the condition of a person in a happy state in the inner life, so that it can be understood if education is a way to get independence of the soul (Dewantara, 2009). According to Ki Hadjar Dewantara, education is one of the main efforts to provide the values of *kebatinan* that exist in people's lives cultured to each new generation, not only in the form "maintenance" but also with the intention of "advancing" and "developing" culture, towards the whole of human life (Dewantara, 2011).

KHD also revealed about the notion of education is efforts to advance the growth of inner strength and character, mind (intellect), and child's body. Taman Siswa, a school that KHD's build, should not be separated into parts so that we can promote perfection life, namely the life and livelihood of the children we educate in harmony with their world" (Mudana, 2019). Education must considering the balance of creativity, taste, and intention not only as a process transfer of knowledge but at the same time the process of value transformation. So in other words, Education is expected to be able to shape human character to become a complete human being. Ki Hadjar Dewantara has thought far and wide in terms of character education, sharpening intelligence is really good because it can build good character and strong, so as to realize the personality (*persoonlijkheid*) and character (soul based on mystic law). If that happens, people will always able to overcome bad characters, such as: cruel, wrathful, grumpy, miserly, loud, and others (Mudana, 2019).

Ki Hadjar Dewantara has an educational development strategy, he see that the independent spirit that must be instilled in the next generation because only those who are free-spirited can continue to fight and defend the independence of the Indonesian people. National education are needed in children to fight for national independence, in a way physically and mentally (Tauchid, 2011). It can be understood that independence means being able and strong enough to stand alone. Education in KHD's view is an attempt to provide all *kebatinan* (mind), which is in the life of the people who are cultured to every enlightenment culture, not only maintenance but also promote and develop culture towards the nobility of human life (Dewantara, 2009). Education is also a means of achieving renewal; all the interests of students regarding personal and societal should not be leaving interests related to the nature of natural conditions and times. In carrying out noble teachings, there is a nature in it, in order to know the nature of that one needs to have a positive attitude found in thinking, subtlety of feeling, and will power or balance between creativity taste, and intention (Dewantara, 2009).

Education according to Ki Hadjar Dewantara is an effort to understand and protect the needs of students as subjects of education. The educator's task is to develop the potentials of students, to offer knowledge to students in a dialogue. All of this is intended to ignite and express students' ideas about a particular topic. Knowledge is not forced but found, processed and selected by students. This is what KHD implements, that educating is "*taking care of*" (Samho, 2009). He applied this concept to the Taman Siswa school that is based on Indonesia's culture. The global goal is for the Indonesian people to work together with other nations.

In internships carried out by students, they can work with others and learn from those who have experience. The involvement of students in internship activities provides learning experience as a provision to face the world of work. In addition, universities can also establish cooperation with various agencies, the business world and the government.

KHD puts three *fatwas* on education, namely: (1) *tetep, antep and mantep*; (2) *ngandel, kandel, kendel and bandel*; (3) *neng, ning, nung and nang*. First; *tetep, antep, and mantep* means that education forms mental and inner determination, guarantees self-confidence and forms stability in life principles. *Tetep* is a determination to commit in line with social values. Education forms a person to be able to think critically and have determination in the realm of values. That is, his mind is not easily swayed by life offers that are not in harmony with values. The term *antep* shows that education leads a person to have self-confidence and self-toughness to move forward in overcoming all life's challenges in a modest manner.

In the praxis of life, people who are *antep* are those who have determination towards self-quality as a personal human being and a member of a social community. While the term *mantep* shows that education leads a person to persist in self-development, has a clear orientation towards a definite goal, namely self-independence as a person, a member of society and a citizen of the world.

Second; *ngandel, kandel, kendel and bandel*. *Ngandel* is a term in Javanese which means "standing upright". Education must bring people to a state of firm stance. An upright person is one who is principled in life. *Kandel* is a term that denotes courage. Education shapes a person to be a brave, dignified and knight person. An educated person is a person who dares to uphold truth and justice and mature. Meanwhile, the term *bandel* indicates that an educated person is one who "holds the test". All trials of life and in all situations of life he faced with trust, not easily afraid and lose courage.

Third; *neng, ning, nung and nang*. This means that education at the deepest level is religious in nature. Education creates feelings of pleasure (*neng*), silence (*ning*), serenity (*nang*), and contemplation (*nung*). Through education, one can experience purity of mind and inner peace.

The three KHD education *fatwas* above have relevance for the current context of Indonesian education, especially in the implementation of the internship program at the Merdeka Campus. For example, an *antep* attitude that shows the quality of student self-confidence can make him have the initiative in working at his internship. Ideally internship activities are intended to build a spirit of leadership in Indonesian students. Become a leader who has mental and spiritual determination, has self-confidence and a firm stance, has a pure mind, a calm mind and a happy heart. Such conditions are a guarantee towards the creation of leadership that liberates the humanity of every person in Indonesia.

## **CONCLUSION**



The objective of the Merdeka Campus Internship Program is to establish a connection between the professional sphere and the academic. Despite the fact that some perceive the role of educational institutions in Indonesia to be limited to producing a workforce, others view education as becoming more liberal. However, the Merdeka Campus Internship Program has been observed to lead to self-exploitation among students, as they feel compelled to take on additional responsibilities in order to feel that they are truly learning. Thus, the challenge for Indonesia's education system is to bridge the gap between theoretical concepts and practical realities on the ground.

The relevance of KHD education is underlined by its three educational fatwas, namely *tetep, antep, and mantep; ngandel, kandel, kendel, and bandel; and neng, ning, nung, and nang*. These concepts are designed to shape the mentality of students and prepare them for the professional world. By applying these principles, students can avoid the issue of excessive self-exploitation often encountered during internships. The article is giving the new concept that this approach will enable students to enter the workforce with a well-rounded perspective and mindset, which will ultimately benefit their personal and professional growth.

This study has certain limitations in that it relies solely on qualitative methods. To obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the topic, future research is recommended to involve a larger and more diverse sample of respondents from various educational institutions and at different levels. This approach would enable researchers to gather more robust data and provide a more nuanced analysis of the issue at hand.

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