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# Creative Economy as a Career Path for Gen Z: Learning from the MBKM Internship Program for UNPAB Students with PT. Konsultan Media Digital

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## Abstrak

Internship Program MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) has become one of the important initiatives in bridging the world of education with the world of industry, especially for students who want to deepen practical skills in certain fields. This article discusses the empowerment of Gen Z's potential in the creative economy through the MBKM internship program involving students of Panca Budi Development University (UNPAB) and PT. Konsultan Media Digital. The creative economy, as a rapidly growing sector, provides many opportunities for the younger generation, especially Gen Z, to develop innovative skills, entrepreneurship, and digital skills that are urgently needed in this digital era. Through a collaboration between UNPAB and PT. Konsultan Media Digital, students have the opportunity to be directly involved in creative projects, such as social media management, graphic design, digital content creation, and digital marketing. The learnings gained during this internship include not only technical knowledge, but also an understanding of the industry dynamics and the challenges of running a digital-based business. Empowering Gen Z in the creative economy through MBKM internships is expected to open up wider career opportunities, both in the creative industry and in creating independent businesses. The results of this program show that students not only gain relevant work experience, but also improve their skills in creative thinking, innovation, and teamwork. This program has a positive impact in shaping the profile of graduates who are ready to compete in the growing creative industry. Therefore, the MBKM internship with PT. Konsultan Media Digital is a strategic step in preparing Gen Z to play an active role in the creative economy.

Kata Kunci: Creative Economy, Gen Z, MBKM Internship, Empowerment, PT. Konsultan Media Digital, UNPAB.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The creative economy has become one of the fastest-growing sectors in recent decades, particularly as advances in digital technology are transforming the way we create and conduct business. Indonesia, with its large young population, has enormous potential in the development of the creative economy, especially among Generation Z (Gen Z). Gen Z, born between 1997 and 2012, is known for being highly familiar with digital technology and can adapt quickly to change. Therefore, they are a very valuable resource in driving the growth of this sector (Mankirat, 2023). One way to develop this potential is through internship programs that can provide hands-on experience in the creative industry. The MBKM (Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka) internship program is an initiative by the Indonesian government to connect the world of education with the industrial world, enabling students to acquire practical skills relevant to the job market's needs. At Panca Budi Development University (UNPAB), the MBKM internship program has provided students with opportunities to be directly involved in creative projects relevant to the development of the digital economy (Amalia, 2024), through collaboration with PT. Konsultan Media Digital, UNPAB students can gain practical experience in the field of creative economy, which includes digital marketing, creative content creation, and social media management.

In this context, PT. Konsultan Media Digital plays the role of an industry partner that helps students understand the dynamics of the creative business world, as well as provide learning based on real practice. As a company engaged in digital services, PT. Media Consultant Digital offers various programs that support the growth of digital skills that are urgently needed in the industrial era 4.0 (Pratama & Dewi, 2023). The program not only focuses on developing

technical skills, but also teaches students how to manage creative projects and innovate in a dynamic and challenging environment. Furthermore, the success of the MBKM internship program at UNPAB can be a model for other universities in creating synergistic cooperation between the academic world and the creative industry. This will accelerate the process of empowering Gen Z to become more career-ready and contribute to the growing creative economy. This study aims to explore how the MBKM internship program, in collaboration with PT. Konsultan Media Digital has succeeded in empowering UNPAB students to explore career opportunities in the creative economy sector, as well as its impact on developing their skills in facing the challenges of the world of work in the future (Yuliana, 2024).

## **2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD**

To achieve the goal of service that has been proclaimed, namely empowering the potential of Gen Z in the creative economy through the MBKM internship program, several methods are applied in this activity. The main method used is a participatory and collaborative approach, involving students, industry PT. Konsultan Media Digital, as well as the community in the process of learning and skill development. Here is a breakdown of the methods used:

### **1. MBKM Internship Program as Practical Learning**

The MBKM internship program was carried out by involving UNPAB students at PT. Konsultan Media Digital. Students gain hands-on experience in projects related to the creative economy, such as social media management, digital content creation, and digital marketing. This approach provides practical learning that introduces students to the challenges and dynamics that exist in the creative economy industry.

### **2. Training and Workshops**

As part of the internship program, training and workshops are held to strengthen students' understanding of technical and managerial aspects in the creative economy. This training covers digital skills, creative entrepreneurship, and innovation in creating content and marketing creative products effectively.

### **3. Mentoring and Mentoring**

The mentoring process was carried out by experts from PT. Konsultan Media Digital to provide direct guidance to students as they engage in creative projects. This mentoring aims to build students' confidence, introduce them to best practices in the creative industry, and provide direction to create new innovations in the digital economy.

## **2.1 Measuring Instruments Used**

To measure the success of this service activity, two types of measurement tools were applied, namely descriptive and qualitative. Here's the explanation:

### **1. Descriptive Measuring Tool**

Descriptive measurements were carried out using surveys and questionnaires distributed to students, PT. PT. Konsultan Media Digital, and other related parties. This questionnaire measures the extent to which the MBKM internship program has a positive impact on improving students' skills in the field of creative economy, including their abilities in digital content creation, online marketing, and social media management. The data obtained from this questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively to see the level of change in students' knowledge and skills before and after participating in the internship program.

### **2. Qualitative Measuring Instruments**

To measure a more profound impact on changes in attitudes and perceptions, in-depth interviews with students and mentors from PT. Konsultan Media Digital. This interview provides insight into changes in attitudes, understanding of the creative economy, and changes in students' mindset regarding career opportunities in the creative sector. In addition, focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted to gather the opinions and experiences of interns about the impact of the program on their socio-cultural changes.

## 2.2 How to Measure the Success Rate of Activities

The level of achievement of the success of this service activity can be measured from several aspects, namely:

### 1. Attitude Change

To measure changes in students' attitudes towards the creative economy and careers in this field, the instruments used were pre-tests and post-tests related to their perceptions before and after participating in the internship program. The results of these two tests provide an idea of whether there is an increase in understanding and interest in the creative economy sector. Changes in attitudes can also be seen from interviews and FGDs that identify changes in students' perspectives on career opportunities in the creative industry.

### 2. Socio-Cultural Change

Socio-cultural change is measured by paying attention to the social interaction and network development that occurs between students and industry. Students involved in internships not only develop technical skills but also broaden their horizons about work culture and collaboration within the creative industry. Socio-cultural change indicators also involve an analysis of the sustainability of the relationship between students and companies after the internship is completed, for example whether there are permanent job opportunities or further collaboration.

### 3. Economic Changes

In terms of economics, change is measured by looking at the financial impact that results from student involvement in creative economy projects, whether it is through the creation of business opportunities or contributions to the increase in the income of partner companies. In addition, it is also measured whether students who take part in this internship program get job opportunities or even open their own business after completing the internship. For this economic measurement, interviews with interns and analysis of employment or business data built by students after the internship were used.

Overall, the level of success of this service activity can be seen from how much changes have occurred in students both in terms of skills, attitudes, socio-culture, and economics, which shows that the MBKM internship program has succeeded in empowering them in the creative economy sector.

## 3. DISCUSSION RESULTS

### 3.1 Community Service: Impact and Resulting Change

Community service through the MBKM internship program involving students of Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi (UNPAB) with PT. Konsultan Media Digital not only provides benefits in the form of practical skills for students, but also has a positive impact on social, economic, and policy changes in the target community. This program, which focuses on the development of the creative economy, has succeeded in providing added value in both the short and long term. This activity opens up opportunities for students to expand skills and knowledge that are highly relevant to the demands of the ever-evolving digital industry. In the short term, this internship program has helped students develop practical skills that are directly applied in real projects, while in the long term, these activities are expected to create career opportunities for them in the creative industry.

## 1. Implementation of Activities to Achieve Goals

The service activities were carried out by following a participatory method that directly involved students as interns and PT. Konsultan Media Digital as an industry partner. Students are involved in a variety of projects that include digital content creation, digital marketing, and social media management, all of which are closely linked to the creative economy. This internship program is designed to integrate theory gained in college with hands-on practice in the industrial world. Through intensive training, mentor mentoring, and direct cooperation with the team at PT. Konsultan Media Digital, students are given space to hone their skills and gain the first-hand experience that is needed in the world of work. Indicators of the success of these service activities include improving students' digital skills, changing attitudes towards the creative economy, and developing their professional networks. The measuring tools used to assess success are pre-test and post-test questionnaires, which measure changes in students' skills and knowledge before and after the internship program, as well as in-depth interviews with students and mentors to assess changes in attitudes and perceptions of career opportunities in the creative sector. In addition, focus group discussions (FGD) were also conducted to get an overview of the experiences and impacts felt by students during the internship.

## 2. Indicators and Benchmarks of Success

Indicators of achieving this goal of service can be seen from several aspects, namely:

- a. Practical Skills Enhancement. Dilihat dari hasil kuesioner yang menunjukkan adanya peningkatan kemampuan dalam pembuatan konten digital, pengelolaan media sosial, dan pemasaran digital. Keberhasilan juga dapat diukur dari banyaknya mahasiswa yang mampu mengaplikasikan keterampilan ini dalam proyek nyata dan menghasilkan produk kreatif.
- b. Changes in Attitudes and Perceptions. Measure how much students' attitudes towards the world of the creative economy have changed. This is measured by a comparison of pre-test and post-test results which show that students are more interested and confident in a career in the creative industry after participating in an internship program.
- c. Professional Network Development. It can be measured from the number of students who get job opportunities or further collaboration with PT. Konsultan Media Digital or other companies after completing the internship.

## 3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Activities

The main advantage of this activity is the integration of theory and practice that allows students to learn directly in the industrial world. This internship program also provides a great opportunity for students to build professional networks, which is very useful in developing their careers in the future. In addition, the existence of experienced mentors from PT. PT. Konsultan Media Digital also strengthen the quality of student learning. However, there are some drawbacks to be aware of. One of them is the limited number of interns that can be accommodated, due to the limited capacity and resources available at partner companies. Additionally, it is difficult to measure the long-term impact in terms of student career success, as most students are still in the early stages of their careers after attending an internship program.

## 3.3 Difficulty Level of Implementation and Production of Goods

The level of difficulty in implementing this activity can be seen from the complexity of the projects being carried out, which involve digital skills and high creativity in content creation and social media management. In addition, students are also faced with challenges in adapting to the world of work that is full of pressure and tight deadlines. Nevertheless, through intensive mentoring and support from PT. PT. Konsultan Media Digital, students can overcome these challenges well. In terms of the production of goods, the main products produced in these activities are creative content (such as graphic design, videos, and articles) that can be used to promote the company's products or services.

This product has the potential to be further developed by improving quality and adding value to the community, for example by developing creative products that can be sold or used in student business development.

### 3.4 Future Development Opportunities

In the future, this MBKM internship program has great potential to be expanded by involving more students and partner companies. One of the development opportunities that can be done is to expand the types of projects that students can work on, such as the development of digital applications, animation, or more complex digital marketing. In addition, wider cooperation with other industrial sectors can also open up opportunities for students to be involved in various types of creative economy projects.

### 3.5 Relevant Documentation

Documentation related to the implementation of this activity can include images from the digital content creation process, photos of training activities, and graphs showing changes in students' skills before and after the internship. This documentation can be used to reinforce visual evidence of the program's success and to motivate others to participate in similar activities in the future.



**Figure 1.** Transfer of MBKM Internship Students



**Figure 2.** MBKM Internship Supervision



**Figure 3.** Invitation of MBKM Internship Students

The figure above illustrates the enhancement of students' skills before and after participating in the MBKM internship program. It highlights a significant improvement in various areas related to the creative economy, including content creation, digital marketing, social media management, creativity, and teamwork. Before the internship, students demonstrated relatively lower skill levels across these domains, with content creation and social media management being the weakest areas. However, after completing the program, there was a notable increase in their capabilities, with all skills showing a considerable rise. This transformation reflects the program's success in equipping students with practical, industry-relevant skills, thereby bridging the gap between academic knowledge and real-world application in the creative economy sector.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis described in Figure 1, the MBKM internship program has succeeded in having a significant impact on improving students' skills, especially in fields related to the creative economy. Prior to the internship program, students demonstrated a still low level of skills in several key areas such as content creation, digital marketing, social media management, creativity, and team collaboration. However, after the internship, there is a very clear improvement in all these aspects, which indicates that the program is effective in preparing students to face the challenges of the industrial world. This significant skill increase shows that the MBKM internship program not only provides students with the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge in the real world, but also develops practical skills that are much needed in the creative economy sector, which is rapidly growing in today's digital age. This success also shows that the collaboration between universities (UNPAB) and industry (PT. Konsultan Media Digital) provides great benefits, both for students who acquire direct skills, and for industries that get skilled human resources who are ready to work. Furthermore, the outcomes of this internship program are not only limited to improving technical skills, but also have a positive impact on building students' confidence and expanding their professional network. Thus, the MBKM internship program plays an important role in preparing students for careers in the creative industry and opening up opportunities for them to succeed in the digital world.

#### 5. THANKS

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to all parties who have contributed to the successful implementation of this MBKM internship program. Especially to PT. Konsultan Media Digital has become an extraordinary partner in providing opportunities and support for students of Universitas Pembangunan Panca Budi (UNPAB) to develop skills in the field of creative economy. This collaboration has provided a very valuable experience for students in preparing them to face an increasingly competitive world of work. We also express our high appreciation to UNPAB, lecturers, and all staff who have supported and ensured the smooth running of this program. Thank you to the students who have shown great enthusiasm, dedication, and enthusiasm in participating in each stage of the internship. Without the commitment and hard work of all parties, the goals of this program will not be achieved.

Hopefully, this collaboration will continue to grow and provide long-term benefits for students, educational institutions, and the creative industry in Indonesia. We hope that this program does not only end here, but can become a model that can be followed and expanded for the development of Indonesia's young generation in the future.

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