

Internship Values: Islamic Higher Educations (IHEs) Students' Motives

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the motivational factors underlying students' participation in internship programs within Islamic Higher Education Institutions (IHEs) in Indonesia. As internships become increasingly central to graduate employability, the Ministry of Religious Affairs has implemented the *Prima Magang* initiative to enhance student readiness for the workforce through practical experience, digital literacy, and professional mentorship. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected from 249 IHEs students across eight regencies in Banten Province. The study examined four core variables influencing internship engagement: economic values, work readiness, Islamic values (morality and spirituality), and networking and connection motives. Data were analysed using path analysis with LISREL 8.8 to explore the relationships among these variables. Findings reveal that Islamic values exert the most significant and positive influence on students' networking and connection development, serving as a key mediating factor between economic and professional motives. Economic values showed a negative yet significant correlation, while work readiness demonstrated an insignificant effect on networking outcomes. These results highlight the centrality of spiritual and moral dimensions in shaping students' professional identity and social engagement during internships. The study underscores the importance of aligning academic curricula with labor market needs while integrating Islamic ethical principles to foster holistic employability. Ultimately, internship programs in IHEs not only enhance students' economic and professional competencies but also cultivate ethical awareness and social responsibility within the broader context of Islamic education.

Keywords: *Internship; Islamic Higher Education (IHEs); Student Motivation*

INTRODUCTION

Seeking higher education constitutes primary reason and a key to employability (Jerez Gomez et al., 2023). Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) at any reason created and produce acceptable, employable graduates. Subsequently, many Islamic Higher Educations (IHEs) currently embed massive internship programs to further industrial networking and preserving graduates acceptable in employment and any vacancies. IHEs set up the bridging closed connection to entrepreneurs in growing expectation of fresh graduates employability (Binder et al., 2015). Today's and current program of internship of such the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia, on the flat-form of <https://prima-ptki.kemenag.go.id/>. The strategic program intensively promoted participants of IHEs Students joined the program.

The latest data on the *Prima Magang* of IHEs platform website, <https://prima-ptki.kemenag.go.id>, shows a very high increase in the number of prospective internship participants. This data demonstrates the significance of IHEs students' participation throughout Indonesia. The Head of Sub-Directorate for Infrastructure and Student Affairs at the ministry exposed at least 6,713 registrants for program,

with a total of 5,872 students recommended by IHEs’ career centre development (Kemenag RI, 2024). The total applicants at the partners on the *Prima Magang* platform amount to 2,746 students. This number proves that the response from Islamic higher students is very high to participate in internships, which are highly contributes to the academic and student world. In line with this, in this era of digitalization, the importance of digital literacy education within partner networks and digital spaces is essential to enhance employability in the job market, where internships serve as a starting point for candidates. This may involve undertaking ‘short-term practical work experience’, eligible for credit as students receive ‘training and gain experience in a specific field or career area of their interest’ (Washor, 2015).

Internship program proposing higher students’ talents and work readiness (Martínez-Argüelles et al., 2023). Students own and undergo concrete experiences on self-development on business and career pathways. College flexibility accepts any experienced student projects, converted soft-skill competence into credits available. Internship program needs the need of focused learning outcome which can be converted into profile outcome learning description. Internship is regarded as an influential type of work-based learning which is benefit to students, educator, and employers alike even to those entrepreneurs (Downs et al., 2024). A comprehensive models of project-based and work-based learning combined into explicit models of knowing and theory and practices. Islamic Higher Education under the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Indonesia launched the priority program of internship (Kemenag RI, 2024). This program is designed to present Islamic Higher Education students’ talents and work readiness (Hora et al., 2021). The running program applied an online personal assessment process, competency development, and professional mentoring. IHE’s *Prima Magang Program* by the Ministry of Religious Affairs, represents direct internship experience in national and multinational industries, develop hard and soft skills, share opportunities to be directly recruited by industry partners. It provided soft skills and Artificial Intelligent (AI) booth training for digital work readiness. The program run flexibility according to interests and living areas, and surely the recognition or conversion of Semester Credit Units (SKS) tailored (Abaya Vocal, 2023) and flexible according to students’ achievement evidence, not merely administrative (Hoyt & Jones, 2023).

One of the most significant challenges is ensuring alignment between academic curricula and the evolving needs of the labour market. Studies reveal that in many cases, there is a mismatch between what is taught in classrooms and the skills required by employers (Viona & Afrianti, 2024). This disconnect can result in underprepared graduates and frustration among industry partners. One of the biggest challenges in Indonesia is the mismatch between the curriculum taught in educational institutions and the real needs in the workplace (Frenette, 2015). Many vocational education programs do not fully reflect technological changes and rapidly

evolving industry demands, especially in sectors such as information technology, modern manufacturing, and renewable energy. As a result, graduates often struggle to adapt to the demands of more specific, technically skilled jobs. Research highlights the growing demand for soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and adaptability, in internship programs (Wang et al., 2024). Employers expect intern graduates not only to possess technical expertise but also to demonstrate strong interpersonal skills (Dogara et al., 2020). In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the demand for soft skills in the workplace, and this is increasingly becoming a key focus in internship programs. Soft skills include communication, teamwork, adaptability, leadership, time management, and problem-solving skills, which are considered very important by employers. Research shows that a person's success in the workplace depends not only on technical skills, but also on their ability to interact with colleagues, adapt to change, and contribute effectively in a team environment (Committee, 2022).

Internship, in any context, bring down the three principles of higher education (three dharma) deals with edupreneur and work employability (Pianda et al., 2024). Academic study, research, and innovation do not intent to only seminar, journal and teaching practices rather than to real world touch on industrial networking and entrepreneurial improvement at which college students get in touch with contextually (Gault et al., 2010). Internship constitutes professional readiness through internship and mentorship for academics as a concrete and real efforts to encourage synergic reciprocal between academician and industrial components (Binder et al., 2015). Such program becomes outstanding in strengthening learning outcome, be prominent portfolio of colleges' hard-skill and soft-skill. University set up readiness alum to variant vacancies competitively. Internship must be designed to present students' talent through personal assessing, supported competences, and professional mentorship (Benati & Fischer, 2021). University presents on developing pre-alum to serve readiness challenges and opportunity at any possibilities and probability competitors. Through Internship, higher students often feel more motivated because they can immediately see the results of what they are learning. Involvement in real work provides a higher sense of achievement and relevance than learning that is purely theoretical. Research shows that such program not only improves students' employability but also enhances their understanding of industry practices and workplace dynamics (Moo, 2024; Thapa, 2024). It is gaining recognition from both educators and employers for its ability to create a skilled workforce that meets the demands of an evolving labour market (Lester & Crawford Lee, 2023).

The pre-assessment, carried out by the CDC (Career development Center) of The State Islamic University Sultan Maulana Hasanuddin Banten, on higher students' motives in involvement the program run within latest three months. IHes students' perception, summarized by the validator of the program, simply had been

drawn into four self-motives, namely; economic values, work readiness, Islamic values, and networking and connecting improvement. Previous research revealed the role of internship of college students as the start point of employability to entrepreneurs (Shaheen et al., 2022). College’s program increased the bridging of academics with entrepreneurial vacancies. The perceived commitment of both organ leads to reciprocal engagement to receivable product and employers. Previous and running program arises much problem intentionally on certain and specific agenda even students did not ever mostly undergo projected-internship. Islamic Higher Education (IHE) internship proposes different perspective of implementing; economics, work readiness, network connections, and Islamic values; morality and spirituality as important as those professional and entrepreneurial interests (Kolb, 1984).

METHOD

This research purposes on finding economics, work readiness, Islamic value; morality and spirituality to network connections, and on internships on any values engagement of intending on reciprocal agreement with entrepreneurs. The research was designed in quantitative approach. The data was derived from participants involved in such program at any entrepreneurs. The data gained from which the phenomenon of the Islamic higher education students’ engagement and got in touch to internship program to be developed Islamic human resources (Miles, 2014). Sample of the research was 202 Islamic higher education students involved in running internship program around 8 regencies of Banten. The data gathered from the variables (Ghina, 2013) is a set of assumptions and perceptual orientations shared by members of a research community (Donmoyer, 2013). This research includes a type of descriptive quantitative research.

This research used four questionnaires for each variable: economic values, work readiness, Islamic value; morality and spirituality network connections questionnaire. The questionnaire is in the form of a five-point Likert scale. The explanation of each questionnaire is presented in table 1 below.

Table 1. Research instrument

Questionnaire	Indicators	n-item	Validity	Reliability
Economic values	1. employment outcome 2. valuable investment for work 3. practical skills, 4. professional networks	20	0.677	0.941
Work readiness	1. responsibility 2. flexibility 3. skill 4. communication 5. self-view	20	0.637	0.919

Islamic value; morality and spirituality	1. Seeking Allah's Pleasure 2. Integrity and Honesty 3. Ethical Conduct 4. Patience and Remembrance	20	0.682	0.947
Networking and Connection	1. having the conversation 2. networking goals 3. proactive and professional 4. share the values	20	0.656	0.901

Path analysis was conducted in this study to analyse the influential the economic values, work readiness, Islamic value; morality and spirituality are in improving networking and connection. This analysis can measure one variable's direct effects on another. Similar to multiple regression, path analysis is conducted on interval data from the total score of the variable, which is the sum of the scores of the dimensions or items of the research instrument, and both, therefore, path analysis and multiple regression are only conducted at the latent variable level. In this study, path analysis was conducted using LISREL 8.8. Analysis with LISREL involves two main stages: building a measurement model to ensure the validity and reliability of the latent variables; and building a structural model to test hypotheses regarding the causal relationship between latent variables. The study conducted an analysis based on the Path Diagram processed by LISREL to visualize the relationship between variables and facilitate interpretation of the analysis results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study is to identify of the variables involved in; economic values, work readiness, Islamic values (moral and spiritual) to connection and networking of the IHEs internship program. These variables are selected based on the assumption that strong motives of undergoing internship environment. In fact, the most valuable motives are reflecting and implementing Islamic values to find and widen networking and connection to entrepreneurs. The research results began with identifying the portrait of the economic values on running program. The researcher conducted a survey regarding the IHEs student engagement of in the context of sustainable and word readiness after, which was obtained through a questionnaire filled out participants. In general, the economic values are measured based on four aspect/indicator: employment outcome, valuable investment for work, practical skills, and professional networks. An overview of IHEs' students' economic values based on the assessment of participants' responses.

The average score, in general, the research sample assesses that economic values is very reasonable in involving the internship of any entrepreneurial environment and in the context of any activities during the program. The high assessment indicates that the sample believes that economic reasoning has been high interest on such employment outcome, valuable investment for work, practical skills, professional networks the dimensions of motives, capable in identifying new

opportunities in work environment well, such as developing innovative network as the investment or establishing collaborations with intern entrepreneurs (Baert et al., 2021). Islamic values during internship occurred in integrating spiritual, moral and intellectual aspects in seeking Allah's pleasure, integrity and honesty, ethical conduct, patient and remembrance.

The participants assess that the program served high experiences in work readiness. The results of this survey indicate the participants perception has successfully created a learning environment that is strongly infused with Islamic values. It showed the value of IHEs students assess environmental condition created them in such competence of high work readiness. Meanwhile, connection and networking as the reflection of any Islamic values and the purposed outcome of the practicing and work readiness since entrepreneurs highly respected to moral and spiritual support in connecting people and networking any intern. Meanwhile, the average score from internship participants regarding the connecting and networking motives is 137.08. Based on this score, it indicated that the participants observed that the connecting and networking motives have a good understanding of the teachings of Islam in any aspects (Grotta & McGrath, 2013). They are able to apply religious values in their daily lives, both in social interactions and in worship. In the social aspect, participants are also assessed to have social skills that enable them to interact with others. In addition to religious and social aspects, IHEs students' internship also observed an improvement in academic improvement and achievements. This shows that such motives not only have a strong been affected by the Islamic values but also possess sufficient higher level economic vales and work readiness (Ryder & Downs, 2022).

The regression model built has a reasonably good ability to explain the variation in the networking and connection. This can be seen from the R-Square value of 0.844, which means that 84.4% of the variance in the networking and connection can be explained by the independent variables, namely the economic values, work readiness and Islamic Values. In other words, the three independent variables together significantly contribute to improving networking and connection. Table 2 below shows the partial influence of each variable on the networking and connection.

Table 2. Multiple Linear Regression Test

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	31.069	2.461		12.625	.000
X1	-.128	.048	-.162	-2.649	.008
X2	.112	.068	.134	1.642	.102
X3	.803	.051	.933	15.856	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Seeing the t value, variable of Islamic values has the highest and statistically significant t value, indicating a powerful and positive influence on the dependent

variable. This means that the higher the value of Islamic values, the higher the value of the dependent variable. Conversely, economic values also have a statistically significant *t* value but with a negative direction of influence, indicating an inverse relationship between the two variables. Meanwhile, variable work readiness has an insignificant *t* value, meaning there is no firm evidence of its influence on the dependent variable. Thus, it can be concluded that Islamic values is a key variable of the three independent variables in improving the IHEs student internship. A path analysis was carried out on the three latent variables to ensure this conclusion. The results of the analysis are presented in figure 1 below.

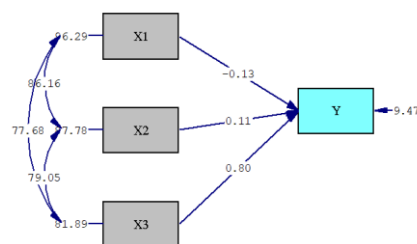


Figure 1. Path analysis

The model of pathway shows the relationship between variables each variable. It appears economic values and work readiness directly affect to Islamic values with path coefficients of 0.01 (positive) and 0.89 (very positive), respectively. Furthermore, the economic values had an adverse direct effect on networking and connections of -0.13, and work readiness has an adverse direct effect on networking and connection of -0.11. Meanwhile, Islamic values had a powerful and positive direct effect on students' networking of 0.80. Although the *Chi-Square*, *df*, *P-value*, and RMSEA values indicate a perfect model fit. Based on the path analysis, it can be concluded that the Islamic values were the most influential mediator factor in improving the students networking and connection improvement.

In an era of rapid disruption and digital transformation, Islamic Higher Education Institutions (PTKI) can no longer merely serve as ivory towers of knowledge. Islamic Higher Education Institutions presents as A centre for developing individuals who are adaptive, productive, and capable of meeting the challenges of the times. Islamic Higher Education Institutions Internship Program comes in—not just an ordinary internship program, but one designed in collaboration with industry partners in a structured manner with measurable competency achievements and as a catalyst for changing the way of working between the educational world and the industrial sector.

This flagship program of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' is a bridge to a collaborative forum between Islamic Higer Education and industry partners, which not only introduces the concept of the program but also serves as a moment to build a shared commitment to its implementation. As many as 160 (one hundred sixty) Islamic Higher Education Institution have joined the platform. This number is quite

representative, over the past 3 months, for the Ministry of Religious Affairs in building a partnership network of student internships with 103 (one hundred three) industry partners across Indonesia. The total industry partners, in the past three months, as many as 60 (sixty) partners have opened 2,778 vacancies across 27 (twenty-seven) provinces.

This program provides space for Islamic Higher Education to implement the “three education principles” of higher education in a more contextual manner. Academic studies, research, and innovation no longer stop at seminars and journals but directly engage with the real world through students deployed in the field (O’Higgins & Caro, 2021). The digitalization of student recruitment in PTKI’s Internship certainly serves as a bridge for broader Islamic Higher students branding in various industry forums. The program strategically supports the achievement of the Key Performance Indicators (IKU) set by the government, including; graduates obtain decent employment, students gain experience outside the campus, study programs establish cooperation with partners.

The outstanding and beneficiary program gave reciprocal opportunity of between Islamic higher education, entrepreneurs, and the students. Entrepreneurs involved in the PRIMA Internship at Islamic Higher Education have the opportunity to gain young talent that has been mapped according to their needs. *First*, university sent are not only academically competent but also equipped with an understanding of soft skills and integrity values. *Second*, partners gain strategic opportunities: a) building employer branding among young talent, b) utilizing a long-term recruitment channel with minimal risk, c) being part of the effort to educate the nation. Equally important, partner involvement opens opportunities for long-term collaboration with Islamic Higher Education, in terms of applied research, curriculum development, or joint innovation. Third, Students participating in the PRIMA Internship at PTKI not only gain a temporary workplace but also enter the real ecosystem of the professional world. For one semester, they are directly guided by professional mentors from various strategic sectors. They learn to face workplace challenges, build work ethics, and adapt to organizational dynamics. This is not merely administrative recognition but an acknowledgment of the quality of experience and the depth of the learning process in the field. Many students are even directly recruited by partners because of their performance during the internship. This is a tangible example of the link-and-match between education and employment. Through this internship program, students gain valuable opportunities to learn directly in the workplace, broaden their horizons, and hone practical skills required by today’s industry.

Considering that Islamic higher students should have the opportunity to grow and learn through these Indonesian education programs (Laeheem et al., 2025). However, young people are also endowed with imagination, enthusiasm, and courage, qualities that can contribute to the change that is clearly needed; they stand

at the intersection of continuity and change, tradition and progress. IHEs students must have the opportunity to participate fully in all aspects of economic, political, educational, cultural, and scientific life in the societies in which they live, and to freely exercise the qualities their own (Field & Barraclough, 2025). Searching for identity among Islamic students often becomes a process of character formation at a vulnerable age. Many ways of searching for this identity may lead them, uncontrolled, to fall into boundaryless communities. College, university and entrepreneur must be present and actively participate in the process of students search for employability (Chandupatla, 2022). The involvement of colleges is crucial in guiding and educating, attitudes, and the entrepreneurial relationships they formed. Indonesia is blessed with a demographic driven by advancements in science and technology (Field & Barraclough, 2025).

Economic Values Impact

The economic impact of internships is multifaceted and significant, influencing individuals, organizations, and the broader economy. Economic values enrich IHE's talent pipeline and economic growth. By offering a pathway for young talent to enter the labour market, internships support the development of future employees (As'ari, Syarifuddin & Apud, 2024). This can lead to increased productivity and innovation, driving economic growth. It helps cost savings for employers. Interns often perform tasks that can reduce labour costs. Many internships are unpaid or low-paid, which benefits organizations financially while providing valuable experience to interns. It also increased consumer spending. Interns earning stipends or wages tend to spend more, stimulating local economies through increased consumption (Binder et al., 2015).

Economic values and impact on internship driven entrepreneurship (von Graevenitz et al., 2010) and innovation, since internships can inspire entrepreneurship by exposing young individuals to new ideas and networks, potentially leading to new business ventures and startups (Fadhillah et al., 2025). In another context, economic values make long-term economic benefits. Successful internships can lead to higher employment rates among interns, reducing unemployment costs and increasing tax revenues over time. It is also aligned to regional economic development. Internships often promote regional development by attracting students and professionals to specific areas, which can boost local economies through increased demand for housing, services, and infrastructure.

Work Readiness

Priority internship program of the ministry of Religious Affairs is designed to skill development and workforce readiness. Internships provide practical experience, helping students and early-career professionals develop skills aligned with industry needs. This enhances employability and reduces skills gaps, contributing to a more competent workforce (Gault et al., 2010). Internships play a crucial role in preparing individuals for the workforce by providing practical, real-world experience. The

program served practical application of skills, allowed participants to apply theoretical knowledge gained in classrooms to real workplace scenarios, enhancing their understanding and competence. Interns learned specialized skills relevant to their chosen field, such as technical abilities, software proficiency, or operational procedures, making them more competitive in the job market. IHEs students promoted soft skills enhancement (Capacio, 2025).

Beyond technical skills, internships help develop soft skills like communication, teamwork, problem-solving, adaptability, and time management—essential for workplace success. Interns gain insights into organizational culture, workplace norms, and professional etiquette, facilitating smoother transitions into full-time employment (Gamboa et al., 2021). They found networking opportunities. Internships provide opportunities to build professional relationships and mentorships, which can be valuable for career development and job placement (Rutman, 2022). During interns, experience gained during internships helps individuals clarify their career interests and goals, guiding their future educational and professional pathways. Finally, the program must increase employability. Candidates with internship experience are often preferred by employers, as they demonstrate initiative, real-world experience, and readiness to contribute from day one.

Islamic Values

The running program of internship, at a certain context of Islamic Higher Education, significantly Islamic values can influence the experience and conduct of an internship in various ways. Islamic teachings emphasize honesty, trustworthiness, and fairness. Interns guided by these values are likely to demonstrate integrity in their work, fostering trust with colleagues and supervisors (Rahmawati, 2019). Islam encourages respect for others, including colleagues and clients, regardless of their background. This promotes a harmonious work environment and enhances teamwork.

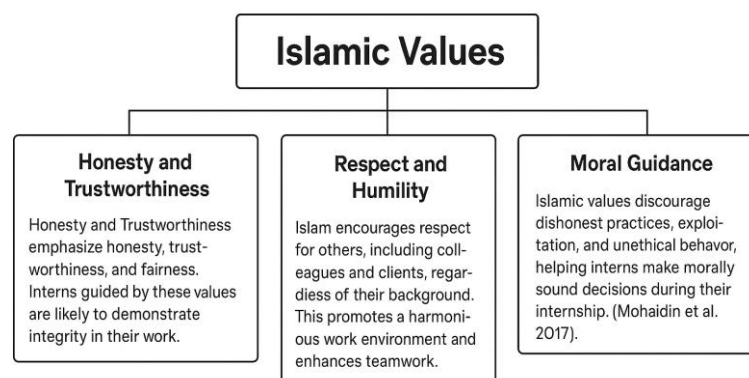


Figure 2. Visualization Islamic Values

The value placed on punctuality and discipline in Islam encourages interns to be diligent, punctual, and committed to their responsibilities. Emphasizing humility and the importance of serving others can lead interns to approach their tasks with

sincerity and a desire to genuinely contribute, rather than solely seeking personal gain. Islamic values discourage dishonest practices, exploitation, and unethical behaviour, helping interns make morally sound decisions during their internship (Mohaidin et al., 2017). Internship schedules may be managed to accommodate religious practices such as prayer times and fasting, fostering a balanced approach to professional and spiritual obligations. Interns influenced by Islamic principles may advocate for fairness in dealings and oppose injustice, contributing positively to workplace culture.

Networking and Connections

Networking and building professional connections during internships have a profound impact on an individual’s career development and long-term success. Access to job opportunities is the main goal of the internship. Connecting and networking open more possibilities of employability. Internships often serve as a gateway to future employment. The connections made with supervisors, colleagues, and industry professionals can lead to job offers, recommendations, or referrals when new positions become available. Networking and connecting created mentorship and guidance at which building relationships with experienced professionals provides interns with mentorship, advice, and insights into industry trends, enhancing their understanding and career trajectory. Networking allows interns to learn about industry challenges, innovations, and best practices directly from experts, keeping them informed and adaptable (Mohaidin et al., 2017).

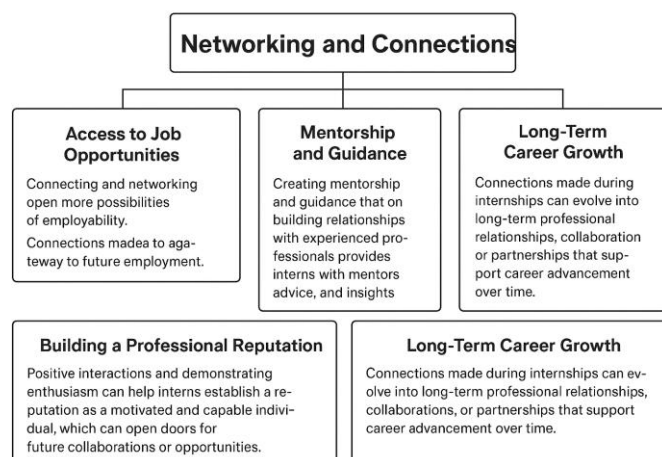


Figure 3. Networking and Connection Motives

It can be adopted into building a professional reputation. Positive interactions and demonstrating enthusiasm can help interns establish a reputation as a motivated and capable individual, which can open doors for future collaborations or opportunities. Participants of internship got long-term career growth. Connections made during internships can evolve into long-term professional relationships, collaborations, or partnerships that support career advancement over time. It created increased confidence and communication skills. Engaging with professionals in a networking setting helps interns improve their communication

skills and build confidence in professional interactions (Narayanan et al., 2006). Finally, good networking enhanced visibility in the industry. Active networking increases an intern’s visibility within their industry, helping them stay informed about upcoming opportunities, industry events, and trends.

CONCLUSION

Internships are a valuable investment that enhances human capital, supports economic development, and benefits both individuals and societies. Internships serve as a bridge between education and employment, equipping individuals with the skills and confidence needed to succeed in their careers, thereby enhancing overall workforce readiness. Programs significantly enhance work readiness by equipping individuals with the essential skills, attitudes, and experiences needed to thrive in their careers. They serve as a practical training ground, bridging the gap between education and professional employment. Overall, Islamic values can cultivate a respectful, ethical, and disciplined attitude in interns, which benefits their personal development and contributes to a positive and ethical workplace environment. Effective networking during internships not only provides immediate benefits such as job prospects and mentorship but also establishes a foundation for ongoing career growth and success through meaningful professional relationships. Finally, they foster a life-skill atmosphere, provide youth with access to high-quality education, and give them the opportunity to engage in work environment and mental readiness at any work context and develop valuable life skills and networking.

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