
CAREER PREPARATION AND GRADUATE EARNINGS: EVIDENCE FROM INTERNSHIPS, COUNSELING, AND WORKSHOPS IN ISLAMIC ECONOMICS AND BUSINESS EDUCATION



Rizky Fatmawati¹

Institut Sheikh Abdul Halim Hasan, Binjai, Indonesia
rizkyfatmawati@insan.ac.id

Nurul Hasanah Syah²

Institut Sheikh Abdul Halim Hasan, Binjai, Indonesia
nurulhasanahsyah@insan.ac.id

Juliana Nasution³

Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara, Medan, Indonesia
juliananasution@uinsu.ac.id

Fahmi Zulfandy⁴

Institut Sheikh Abdul Halim Hasan, Binjai, Indonesia
fahmizulfandy.mhs@insan.ac.id

Abstract

In today's competitive labor market, many graduates, particularly those from Islamic business faculties, struggle to secure jobs that match their qualifications and ensure sustainable income. There is growing concern about the gap between educational preparation and post-graduation earnings, especially regarding the effectiveness of structured career preparation programs. This study aims to examine the influence of three key career preparation strategies: industrial internships, career counseling training, and career workshops on the earnings of graduates from Islamic business education programs. Using a quantitative approach, the study employs Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to analyze data collected from a sample of 347 students out of a total population of 2,617 from the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business at Sheikh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai Institute. The findings show that the three variables industrial internships, career counseling training, and career workshops, have a significant and positive impact on graduate income. Internships provide real-world experience that enhances employability, counseling supports informed career decision-making, and workshops strengthen soft skills relevant to the labor market. Career preparation programs play an essential role in improving the economic outcomes of Islamic business graduates. Higher education institutions should integrate practical activities, consultation, and skill enhancement to bridge the gap between academic learning and labor market demands. This study uniquely contributes to the literature by focusing on career preparation in the context of Islamic higher education, an area that remains largely under-researched. It offers empirical evidence of how structured interventions can increase graduate income and provides strategic insights for curriculum developers, policymakers, and educational institutions seeking to improve graduate employability through holistic preparation mechanisms.

Keywords: Responsiveness, Empathy, Interpersonal Communication, Customer Satisfaction, Telecommunication

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with Law No. 12 of 2012, the fundamental mission of higher education in Indonesia is to serve as the main driver in advancing the nation's intellectual development through the creation and dissemination of science and technology (Muttaqin, 2023), guided by the principles of the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. One of the core responsibilities of universities is to prepare students for employment. In this context, experiential learning has been widely recognized as an effective approach to reinforcing academic concepts and facilitating the transfer and application of knowledge (Machuca & Martinez, 2023).

To achieve this mission, universities must implement targeted programs to optimize students' potential and enhance graduates' competitiveness in the labor market, ultimately improving their income and quality of life. These initiatives, often referred to as career development programs, may include training, certification, and internships. Mandatory and voluntary internships provide valuable opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience and exposure to the professional world during their academic journey (Holden et al., 2025). However, questions remain as to whether such programs consistently lead to better outcomes, particularly in terms of income, job alignment, and overall job satisfaction.

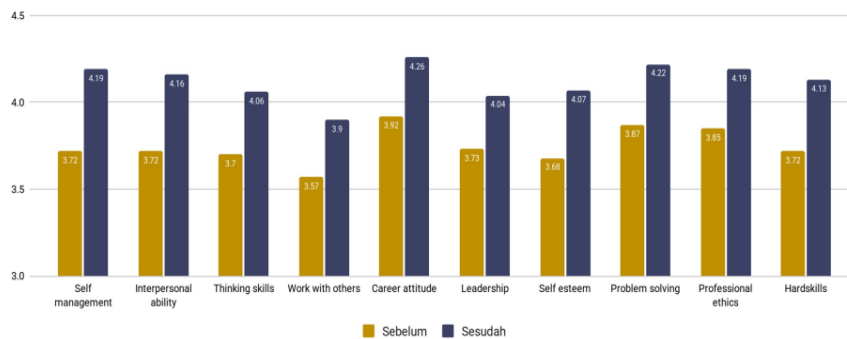


Figure 1.
Final Survey Report of the MSIB 5 Program

Well-structured and curated project-based programs have been shown to significantly enhance students' competencies and abilities, positively influencing their employability post-graduation. This is evident from the outcomes of the MSIB (Certified Internship and Independent Study) program within Kampus Merdeka, where internships have proven effective in improving both hard and soft skills.

Liu & Ip. identified several theoretical frameworks explaining employment outcomes, including Trait and Factor Theory (Liu & Ip, 2026). This theory suggests that career choices depend on individuals' accurate self-assessment, deep understanding of job requirements, and the ability to align the two (Marvi et al., 2025). The closer the match between a person's traits and job demands, the higher the likelihood of job satisfaction and career success (Liao, 2021). These insights underscore the importance of structured career guidance programs in preparing university graduates for financially sustainable careers (Semeijn et al., 2020).

However, national employment data paints a more concerning picture. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), only 62% of the workforce is optimally absorbed. This shortfall is not only due to limited job availability but also due to a mismatch between

labor supply and demand; many job seekers lack the skills required by employers (Hasan et al., 2024).

Many studies have explored the role of career guidance in shaping graduates' income. Internships are widely regarded as a high-impact practice that can open doors to career opportunities for students (Musa et al., 2025). Yet limited attention has been given to the barriers that impede student participation. Educators and employers often assume that accessing internships is not an issue, leading many higher education institutions to require them for graduation (Bridgstock et al., 2019).

Business schools, in particular, have incorporated experiential learning strategies such as internships into their academic programs to equip students with competitive, real-world-ready skills. These initiatives aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice by immersing students in practical environments that simulate workplace conditions.

In the evolving global higher education and labor market landscape, emphasis on graduate employability and income generation has become increasingly urgent. With rising economic competition, technological advancements, and the growing commodification of academic degrees, students face immense pressure not only to complete their studies but also to secure meaningful employment that ensures financial stability (Pianda et al., 2024). Among the array of challenges faced by university graduates, income inequality and unemployment remain critical issues, particularly for recent graduates of specialized and values-based programs such as Islamic Economics and Business (Nwakanma, 2024).

In many developing and Muslim-majority countries, Islamic higher education institutions bear a dual responsibility: to prepare graduates who are professionally competent and morally grounded (Rahman & Azzahra, 2024). This is especially evident in Islamic Economics and Business faculties, whose curricula emphasize not only technical knowledge in finance and economics but also Sharia-based ethical principles. While this dual focus is theoretically enriching, it also presents practical challenges. Various studies and graduate outcome reports indicate that graduates of Islamic business faculties often struggle to translate their academic credentials into competitive income in the job market. Despite their specialized knowledge, many graduates remain unemployed or underemployed, raising concerns about the effectiveness of current career preparation strategies (Oviana & Rijal, 2021).

Amid these concerns, career preparation programs such as industrial internships, career counseling, and professional development workshops have been widely adopted in universities to bridge the gap between academic training and workforce demands. These programs are increasingly positioned as mechanisms for enhancing graduate employability, job readiness, and long-term earning potential. Internships are often hailed as powerful tools for providing practical skills, networking opportunities, and exposure to real-world work environments. Meanwhile, career counseling aims to help students align their strengths and aspirations with realistic career pathways, and workshops typically focus on developing soft skills such as communication, leadership, and problem-solving.

Although these interventions are widely implemented, their actual impact on graduate income remains the subject of scholarly debate. Some scholars argue that internships significantly improve labor market outcomes by enhancing human capital and social capital. According to this perspective, internships allow students to demonstrate their job readiness to potential employers, which may lead to higher starting salaries and faster career

advancement. However, other studies caution that not all internships offer meaningful benefits, particularly when they are unstructured, unpaid, or unrelated to students' academic fields. In some cases, internships may even exploit student labor without providing substantial skill development or employment opportunities.

Career counseling services have also received mixed evaluations. On the one hand, effective counseling is associated with higher self-efficacy, informed career decision-making, and greater job satisfaction. On the other hand, critics argue that counseling services are often generic, under-resourced, and misaligned with industry needs, particularly in institutions serving students from low socioeconomic backgrounds or non-mainstream disciplines such as Islamic business studies. Furthermore, career workshops—despite being praised for their flexibility and responsiveness to labor market trends—are often informal, inconsistently delivered, and lacking systematic assessment of their outcomes. These inconsistencies raise questions about their scalability and contribution to genuine economic empowerment.

The academic literature thus reveals a fragmented understanding of how career preparation programs influence graduate income, particularly within Islamic higher education environments. While several studies have examined the impact of individual interventions, few have investigated the combined or comparative effects of internships, counseling, and workshops on graduate income. Moreover, most existing studies are situated in Western contexts or focus on conventional business education, leaving a research gap in understanding how these programs operate within Islamic academic institutions that function under distinct pedagogical, cultural, and religious frameworks.

This empirical gap is significant. In many Islamic universities, career development efforts remain in a formative stage, and institutional capacity to systematically evaluate program effectiveness is often limited. In addition, unique socio-cultural expectations placed on Islamic business graduates—such as the need to balance spiritual values with professional ambitions—may influence how they engage with career services and translate them into income-generating opportunities. Consequently, the role of career preparation programs in shaping financial outcomes for Islamic business graduates remains under-theorized and under-researched.

There is also a theoretical gap in conceptualizing career preparation itself. Much of the literature treats career preparation as a monolithic concept, failing to account for its multidimensional nature. Internships, counseling, and workshops serve different functions, target different competencies, and may influence income through distinct mechanisms. For example, internships can directly enhance technical and professional experience, counseling can shape psychological readiness and goal-setting, and workshops can strengthen transferable soft skills. Without a nuanced framework to differentiate these mechanisms, it becomes challenging to develop targeted strategies for improving graduates' income outcomes.

Given this context, this study seeks to investigate the specific and relative impacts of three major career preparation interventions—industrial internships, career counseling, and professional workshops—on the income levels of graduates from the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business. By focusing on a population often overlooked in global employability research, this study offers both theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, it aims to uncover the multidimensional nature of career preparation and

examine how its components contribute to economic outcomes. Empirically, it provides new evidence from the context of Islamic higher education, using graduate data from a leading Islamic higher education institution in Indonesia.

Thus, this study responds to calls in the literature for more context-sensitive and data-driven analyses of graduate employability, particularly within non-Western and values-based educational environments. It also carries significant policy implications, especially for university administrators, curriculum designers, and policymakers concerned with improving graduate outcomes in Islamic institutions. By identifying career preparation components most closely associated with income, this study can help stakeholders allocate resources more efficiently and design programs that are both effective and aligned with institutional missions.

Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of how higher education can support graduates not only in securing employment but also in achieving sustainable and meaningful economic well-being. As labor markets become increasingly competitive and diverse, and as Islamic business programs strive to remain relevant in the global economy, deeper understanding of the mechanisms linking education to income becomes timely and essential.

The urgency of this study arises from the pressing need to address persistent income disparities and underemployment among graduates of Islamic business programs, particularly in developing countries with uneven economic opportunities. Despite growing investment in career development initiatives such as internships, counseling, and professional workshops, empirical clarity regarding their effectiveness in improving graduates' financial outcomes remains lacking. This gap is especially acute in the context of Islamic higher education, where the integration of moral values and market demands presents unique challenges for educational institutions.

As graduate unemployment and income instability continue to undermine the return on investment in higher education, universities face increasing pressure to demonstrate the tangible impact of their career services.

Islamic business faculties, in particular, must justify the value of their specialized curricula by demonstrating concrete outcomes related to employability and income. Without robust evidence of which career interventions are effective and why, these institutions risk perpetuating cycles of academically qualified yet economically disadvantaged graduates.

Furthermore, with labor markets rapidly evolving due to technological disruption, globalization, and shifting employer expectations, the role of structured career preparation has become increasingly crucial. It is essential to identify the elements of career preparation—whether practical experience, psychological support, or skills-based training—that are most effective in equipping Islamic business graduates not only to secure jobs but also to thrive financially in their chosen fields.

Therefore, this study is both timely and significant. It not only fills a substantial empirical gap in the literature but also offers strategic insights for enhancing graduate outcomes, shaping evidence-based career development policy, and strengthening the socio-economic impact of Islamic higher education. This study addresses a critical gap in the existing literature, which has yet to specifically examine the impact of career guidance on the income levels of graduates from private universities, particularly those located in smaller urban areas. While many studies have explored various forms of career counseling and its

influence on career success, few have focused on how such interventions translate into actual income outcomes for graduates of private universities outside major metropolitan regions. This omission presents an opportunity for smaller private universities to leverage evidence-based strategies to enhance their competitiveness within the broader higher education landscape. Moreover, through a quantitative approach, this study aims to provide a deeper analysis of income-related outcomes, an area still under-explored in previous research.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies consistently highlight the importance of sustained and synergistic collaboration among key stakeholders in the higher education ecosystem—universities, students, and industry partners. Such collaboration fosters mutual understanding and responsiveness to the needs of each party, ultimately facilitating the development of work-ready graduates. According to Oliinyk et al. (2021), an adequate supply of highly qualified labor is critical to national economic and social welfare. Consequently, governments worldwide increasingly prioritize graduate employability. Yet significant misalignments persist between the knowledge gained in universities and the competencies required in the labor market, hindering the availability of high-quality talent. In response, Goulart et al. (2022) argue that higher education institutions (HEIs) must identify and provide essential career services to address human resource challenges more effectively.

The complexity of these issues underscores the importance of lifelong learning in professional life, which has heightened interest in Continuing Professional Development (CPD). HEIs play a crucial role in developing students' cognitive and emotional skills through CPD, a process that necessitates effective dialogue between academia and industry. In the rapidly evolving economic and technological landscape, students face an unprecedented range of career options, with income emerging as a key factor shaping career decision-making.

A growing body of research has examined the root causes of graduate unemployment, particularly the mismatch between graduates' skills and labor market demands. In Indonesia, this structural misalignment is especially evident among recent graduates who face limited employment opportunities. Job preference has been shown to influence graduates' perceptions of their employability, with expectations related to salary, work–life balance, and career development significantly shaping their ability to secure desirable employment. These findings suggest that personal job preferences not only reflect individual aspirations but are also closely linked to perceived employability and labor market outcomes.

Graduate tracer studies have been identified as vital tools for ensuring curriculum relevance and enhancing the marketability of academic programs. Angeloni (2021) emphasizes that adequate knowledge of graduate outcomes can serve as a basis for educational policy reforms aimed at reducing youth unemployment and mitigating broader social challenges. Accordingly, career guidance programs must be delivered equitably and comprehensively so that all students—regardless of background—can benefit from career-related support services.

Nevertheless, persistent barriers remain. Many students continue to experience limited access to practical training opportunities, particularly internships. Bolli et al. (2021a) found that although college internships provide academic, economic, and professional

benefits, access remains unequal across socioeconomic and demographic groups—undermining their potential as a universal tool for enhancing graduate employability. Despite the growing popularity of internships in higher education systems, empirical evidence on their effectiveness in improving labor market outcomes remains limited. Baert et al. (2021) note that although institutional and governmental emphasis on internships in the European Higher Education Area is increasing, research on the link between internship participation and labor market outcomes—particularly in countries such as Spain—remains underdeveloped.

Graduate employability and post-graduation earnings are growing concerns in higher education, especially in developing countries where labor market demand is rapidly evolving. HEIs are increasingly expected to equip students with both theoretical knowledge and practical competencies that translate into meaningful employment outcomes. Among the most frequently discussed interventions are industrial internships, career counseling, and career development workshops.

Internships are widely recognized as a critical bridge between higher education and the labor market, enabling students to translate theoretical knowledge into practice. Hora et al. (2021a) highlight several key benefits of internships, including strengthened academic knowledge, the development of soft skills such as communication and teamwork, and clearer understanding of career pathways and marketable skills. These experiences not only prepare students for professional life but also enhance employability through practical exposure and self-development. Studies by Awdziej et al. (2023) and Pizzutilo & Venezia (2021) show that employers often perceive student workers as having stronger work attitudes, broader social networks, and higher levels of responsibility, motivation, and maturity. Thus, internships contribute to employability by combining soft-skill acquisition with hands-on experience, facilitating the transition from academia to the workplace.

Although higher education is widely assumed to enhance employment prospects and earnings, much of the literature focuses on academic performance rather than labor market outcomes. Arora et al. (2024) highlight this gap through a comparative analysis of Latin American universities, emphasizing the need to evaluate institutions' effectiveness in facilitating graduate employment as part of broader Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to decent work and economic growth. Despite the integration of both mandatory and voluntary internships into higher education curricula, questions remain about their actual effectiveness. Inayat & Jahanzeb Khan (2021) caution that it is still unclear whether internship experiences consistently lead to improved employment outcomes such as higher earnings, better job matching, or greater job satisfaction.

Higher education has traditionally been associated with upward mobility, improved career prospects, and enhanced life aspirations. However, these advantages appear to be diminishing amid rising participation rates and growing student debt burdens. Consequently, students increasingly pursue internships as a strategy to gain a competitive advantage in saturated labor markets. Universities widely promote internships as a strategic mechanism to support graduates' successful entry into the workforce and secure adequate earnings. Students seek internships for various reasons, from gaining general work experience to acquiring specialized skills relevant to specific jobs, industries, or organizations. Many also aspire to secure internships in prestigious companies to signal their capabilities and improve their chances of succeeding in internal recruitment processes. For employers, internships

serve as a low-risk method of screening potential employees before making long-term hiring commitments.

Internships are now widely considered a high-impact practice that enhances students' career readiness. Chang and Hwang (2023) argue that experiential learning—such as internships—supports the application of classroom knowledge to real-world contexts. Avleeva et al. (2025) similarly found that internships bridge theory–practice gaps, particularly in business education, by equipping students with practical skills that are immediately applicable in professional settings. In addition, Bolli et al. (2021a) show that internship experience correlates positively with job satisfaction and higher earnings, although the degree of benefit may depend on the quality and relevance of the placement. Complementing internships, career counseling is designed to assist students in making informed career choices based on self-awareness, labor market trends, and available opportunities. Grounded in Trait and Factor Theory, effective career guidance aligns personal characteristics with job demands, potentially resulting in better career fit and higher earnings.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative descriptive research design to explore the relationship between career preparation activities, specifically internships, career counseling, and career workshops, and students' expected income (Ghanad, 2023). The primary goal of this design is to describe and interpret the statistical associations among variables without manipulating them (Disman et al., 2017). A quantitative descriptive approach is appropriate for identifying trends, measuring perceptions, and establishing associative patterns, particularly when working with large student populations in higher education settings (Lahbar et al., 2023).

The study population consists of graduates registered in the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business at the Sheikh Abdul Halim Hasan Binjai Institute. For the 2024–2025 academic year, the total population includes 614 graduates. Considering the impracticality of surveying the entire population (Disman et al., 2017), the Slovin formula was applied to determine an adequate sample size at a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (Kotronoulas et al., 2023). The formula is as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Note :
 n = Required sample size
 N = population size (614)
 e = margin of error (0.05)

The calculation resulted in a sample size of 242 respondents. Simple random sampling was used to ensure that each graduate had an equal chance of being selected, thereby increasing the generalizability of the findings.

The research subjects comprise students and graduates from various study programs within the Faculty of Islamic Economics and Business, including Sharia Law and Islamic Economics. Focusing on this faculty enables the study to examine how Islamic values intersect with professional preparation practices in the modern labor market context.

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 4.0. This method was selected for its robustness in handling complex relationships among latent variables and its ability to accommodate relatively small sample sizes with non-normal data distributions. PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for predictive modeling and theory development in educational research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1.
Outer Loadings (Standardized Factor Loadings)

Variable	Indicator	Loading	Remark
Career Counseling Training	PBK1	0.802	Valid
	PBK2	0.844	Valid
	PBK3	0.781	Valid
	PBK4	0.819	Valid
Career Guidance Workshops	WBK1	0.812	Valid
	WBK2	0.838	Valid
	WBK3	0.861	Valid
Graduate Income	PL1	0.830	Valid
	PL2	0.797	Valid
	PL3	0.872	Valid

This table presents the outer loadings for the three latent variables—Career Counseling Training, Career Guidance Workshops, and Graduate Income—along with their respective indicators. Each indicator displays a loading value greater than 0.70, which is widely recognized as the cutoff for establishing acceptable convergent validity in structural equation modeling.

For the Career Counseling Training variable, indicators PBK1 (0.802), PBK2 (0.844), PBK3 (0.781), and PBK4 (0.819) all show strong loadings, indicating that these indicators reliably reflect the construct. PBK2 shows the highest loading, suggesting that it plays a particularly significant role in capturing the essence of training effectiveness, while PBK3, although slightly lower, still falls within the valid range and contributes meaningful information.

Similarly, the Career Guidance Workshop variable is supported by indicators WBK1 (0.812), WBK2 (0.838), and WBK3 (0.861). These values consistently reflect high indicator reliability. Notably, WBK3 shows the highest loading, implying that it may be the most influential item in representing workshop effectiveness or quality. The consistency among these indicators also supports the internal validity and coherence of the workshop construct.

For the Graduate Income variable, indicators PL1 (0.830), PL2 (0.797), and PL3 (0.872) all demonstrate strong factor loadings. PL3 stands out with the highest loading, showing a very strong alignment with the construct. Although PL2 has the lowest loading among the three, it still exceeds the acceptable threshold, confirming its validity.

Collectively, these results demonstrate that all constructs are represented by indicators with high convergent validity, strengthening the overall quality of the measurement model. In summary, the strong and consistent loading values across constructs reflect a reliable instrument that effectively captures the intended theoretical concepts and supports further structural modeling and hypothesis testing.

Table 2.
Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE	Remark
Career Counseling Training	0.765	Valid (> 0.50)
Career Guidance Workshops	0.793	Valid (> 0.50)
Graduate Income	0.798	Valid (> 0.50)

The results of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis in Table 2 indicate that all three constructs, Career Counseling Training, Career Guidance Workshops, and Graduate Income, show AVE values above the commonly accepted threshold of 0.50. This threshold indicates the minimum proportion of variance that should be captured by the indicators relative to error variance.

The AVE value for Career Counseling Training is 0.765, indicating that more than 76% of the variance in its indicators is explained by the latent construct, reflecting strong convergent validity. This means the indicators used to measure this construct are highly consistent and representative of the underlying concept. Similarly, the Career Guidance Workshops construct shows an AVE value of 0.793, indicating that approximately 79.3% of the variance in its indicators is captured by the latent variable. This supports the notion that the indicators are closely aligned with the construct and that the construct itself is well-defined.

The Graduate Income variable achieves the highest AVE value, 0.798, indicating that around 79.8% of the variance is captured by the construct, reflecting excellent convergent validity. This confirms that the selected indicators strongly represent the intended concept related to post-graduation income. Overall, all three variables not only meet but substantially exceed the minimum threshold, reinforcing the robustness, validity, and reliability of the measurement model used in this study.

Table 3.
Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach’s Alpha

Variable	Composite Reliability (CR)	Cronbach’s Alpha	Remark
Career Counseling Training	0.873	0.803	Reliable (CR > 0.70)
Career Guidance Workshops	0.885	0.812	Reliable (CR > 0.70)
Graduate Income	0.892	0.823	Reliable (CR > 0.70)

The results shown in Table 3 indicate that all measured constructs—Career Counseling Training, Career Guidance Workshops, and Graduate Income—have Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach’s Alpha values exceeding the widely accepted threshold of

0.70. This indicates that each construct possesses a high level of internal consistency and reliability. For Career Counseling Training, the CR value is 0.873 and Cronbach’s Alpha is 0.803. These values reflect that the indicators consistently measure the same underlying dimension. While Cronbach’s Alpha assumes equal indicator loadings, the higher CR value reflects the advantage of PLS in considering individual item contributions, making CR a more accurate estimate of reliability.

Similarly, Career Guidance Workshops show strong reliability with a CR of 0.885 and Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.812. These values confirm that the indicators correlate well and effectively measure the same construct. The slightly higher CR value again reflects the strength of each indicator’s unique loading. The Graduate Income variable shows the highest reliability among the three, with a CR of 0.892 and Cronbach’s Alpha of 0.823. This demonstrates a very high degree of consistency among the indicators measuring graduate income outcomes. Overall, the data clearly demonstrate that all constructs are reliable and internally consistent, providing a strong foundation for the structural model and ensuring confidence in subsequent analyses such as hypothesis testing and path modeling.

Table 4.
Hypothesis Testing Results (Bootstrapping Path Coefficients)

Hypothesis Relationship		Original Sample (β)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Remark
H1	Industrial Internship → Graduate Income	0.312	4.21	0.000	Significant (***)
H2	Career Counseling Training → Graduate Income	0.298	3.781	0.000	Significant (***)
H3	Career Guidance Workshops → Graduate Income	0.267	3.142	0.002	Significant (**)

The results presented in Table 4 highlight the hypothesis testing outcomes using path coefficients obtained through bootstrapping in Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). All three hypotheses (H1, H2, and H3) show statistically significant effects on Graduate Income, indicating that the examined variables—Industrial Internship, Career Counseling Training, and Career Guidance Workshops—each make a significant and positive contribution to graduates’ income levels.

H1 shows that Industrial Internship has the strongest influence on Graduate Income, with a path coefficient (β) of 0.312, a t-statistic of 4.21, and a p-value of 0.000. These values exceed the critical thresholds for significance and confirm a highly significant relationship (***). This indicates that participating in industrial internships plays a crucial role in enhancing graduates’ earning potential, likely because of their exposure to real-world skills, professional networks, and improved employability.

H2 shows that Career Counseling Training also has a substantial and statistically significant influence on Graduate Income, with a path coefficient of 0.298, a t-statistic of 3.781, and a p-value of 0.000. This (***) significance suggests that structured career guidance programs positively affect graduate outcomes, possibly by improving job search strategies, self-presentation, and awareness of labor market demands.

H3 shows that Career Guidance Workshops contribute positively to Graduate Income, though with a slightly lower effect size ($\beta = 0.267$), a t-statistic of 3.142, and a p-value of 0.002. The relationship remains statistically significant (**), indicating that workshop-based interventions—such as résumé clinics, interview simulations, and career discussions effectively support graduates' transition into the labor market, although their impact is smaller than that of internships and formal training.

Overall, the path analysis provides strong empirical support for the positive effect of career preparation programs and internships on income outcomes. The order of effect sizes—industrial internships ($\beta = 0.312$), career counseling training ($\beta = 0.298$), and career guidance workshops ($\beta = 0.267$)—offers valuable insights for educational institutions and policymakers in designing the most effective programs to enhance graduate employability and income potential.

CONCLUSION

These results highlight the crucial role of experiential learning through internships, which act as a bridge between classroom theory and real-world application. By participating in internships, students gain valuable technical and interpersonal skills, professional exposure, and access to potential employers—factors that directly enhance post-graduation earnings. This supports previous research showing that internships not only improve employability but also provide long-term financial benefits.

Similarly, career guidance training—covering résumé development, job search strategies, and interview simulations—was found to significantly influence graduate income. These services equip students with essential tools to navigate an increasingly competitive job market. They also contribute to higher career self-efficacy and confidence in decision-making, which is particularly important in Islamic education contexts where students often seek careers aligned with both market needs and religious values.

Career workshops, despite showing the smallest effect among the three, still demonstrate a significant contribution to graduate income. These typically short, skills-focused sessions offer accessible and flexible platforms for career learning. Their positive impact indicates that even minimal interventions, if well-designed, can support graduate success.

From a policy perspective, these findings carry important implications. Career preparation initiatives should be institutionalized, adequately funded, and widely accessible. Collaboration between universities and industry should be strengthened to ensure relevant and inclusive internship opportunities. Additionally, career services must be tailored to the socio-religious identity of Islamic business students, enabling them to thrive in both Islamic and conventional labor markets.

While this study provides valuable contributions, it also opens avenues for future research. Longitudinal studies are needed to capture the long-term effects of career interventions on income trajectories. Furthermore, qualitative approaches can explore how students experience and interpret these programs, particularly with respect to their faith-based career aspirations.

In conclusion, career preparation is a key determinant of economic success for Islamic business graduates. By strengthening the design and delivery of these programs,

Islamic higher education institutions can enhance graduate outcomes, close skill gaps, and meaningfully contribute to national human-capital development.

REFERENCES

- Bridgstock, R., Grant-Iramu, M., & McAlpine, A. (2019). Integrating career development learning into the curriculum: Collaboration with the careers service for employability. *Journal of Teaching and Learning for Graduate Employability*, 10(1), 56–72. <https://doi.org/10.21153/jtlge2019vol10no1art785>
- Disman, D., Ali, M., & Syaom Barliana, M. (2017). The Use of Quantitative Research Method and Statistical Data Analysis in Dissertation: an Evaluation Study. *International Journal of Education*, 10(1), 46. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ije.v10i1.5566>
- Ghanad, A. (2023). An Overview of Quantitative Research Methods. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 06(08), 3794–3803. <https://doi.org/10.47191/ijmra/v6-i8-52>
- Hasan, M. M., Haque, M. E., Ali Reza, S. M., Chowdhury, M. S., & Moral, I. H. (2024). Impact of Personality on Job and Career Satisfaction Among University Faculty Members. *Indonesian Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(2), 399–426. <https://doi.org/10.17509/ijomr.v4i2.78459>
- Holden, J., Wagstaff, C. R. D., Wadey, R., & Brown, P. (2025). Navigating athlete development in elite sport: Understanding the barriers to the provision of performance lifestyle service in England. *Psychology of Sport and Exercise*, 77(April 2024), 102779. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychsport.2024.102779>
- Isbahi, M. B., Zuana, M. M. M., & Toha, M. (2024). The Multi-Social Relation of the Cattle Industry in the Plaosan Subdistrict Animal Market of Magetan Regency. *Malacca: Journal of Management and Business Development*, 1(1), 31–46. <https://doi.org/10.69965/malacca.v1i1.51>
- Kotronoulas, G., Miguel, S., Dowling, M., Fernández-Ortega, P., Colomer-Lahiguera, S., Bağçivan, G., Pape, E., Drury, A., Semple, C., Dieperink, K. B., & Papadopoulou, C. (2023). An Overview of the Fundamentals of Data Management, Analysis, and Interpretation in Quantitative Research. *Seminars in Oncology Nursing*, 39(2), 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.soncn.2023.151398>
- Lahbar, G. M., Junejo, D., & Bhatti, A. A. (2023). Mediating Effect of Green Human Resource Management (GHRM) and Organizational Agility (OA) On Firm Environmental Performance (FEP): By Applying Quantitative Research Approach. *Global Economics Review*, VIII(II), 67–83. [https://doi.org/10.31703/ger.2023\(viii-ii\).06](https://doi.org/10.31703/ger.2023(viii-ii).06)
- Liao, P. Y. (2021). Linking Proactive Personality to Well-Being: The Mediating Role of Person-Environment Fit. *SAGE Open*, 11(3). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440211040118>
- Liu, H. C., & Ip, C. Y. (2026). From competition to contribution: How trait competitiveness drives social entrepreneurial intentions among university students. *Acta Psychologica*, 262(510), 106057. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.actpsy.2025.106057>

- Machuca, R., & Martinez, E. (2023). Service-Learning in Multicultural Counselor Education after Disaster Situations: A Case Study. *International Journal for Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, 10(1). <https://doi.org/10.37333/001c.66272>
- Marvi, R., Foroudi, P., & AmirDadbar, N. (2025). Dynamics of user engagement: AI mastery goal and the paradox mindset in AI–employee collaboration. *International Journal of Information Management*, 83(April), 102908. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijinfomgt.2025.102908>
- Musa, S., Nurhayati, S., & Boriboon, G. (2025). The Effect of Internships on Graduates' Employability, Soft Skills, and Digital Competence. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 17. <https://doi.org/10.22521/edupij.2025.17.306>
- Muttaqin, I. (2023). Challenges of Islamic Education Management in the Digital Era. *Ta'allum: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(2), 343–364. <https://doi.org/10.21274/taalum.2022.10.2.343-364>
- Nwakanma, C. H. (2024). The Impact of Career Education on Students' Labour Market Perceptions. *Didaktika: Jurnal Kependidikan*, 13(1), 155–166. <https://doi.org/10.58230/27454312.490>
- Oviana, W., & Rijal, F. (2021). The Role of Islamic Higher Education Institution in Developing Students' Character Value. *AL-ISHLAH: Jurnal Pendidikan*, 13(1), 570–580. <https://doi.org/10.35445/alishlah.v13i1.418>
- Pianda, D., Hilmiana, H., Widiyanto, S., & Sartika, D. (2024). The impact of internship experience on the employability of vocational students: a bibliometric and systematic review. *Cogent Business and Management*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311975.2024.2386465>
- Rahman, N. A., & Azzahra, A. (2024). The Role of Islamic Education in Preserving Cultural Identity Amidst Global Modernity. *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 2(4), 24–37. <https://journal.sinergi.or.id/>
- Semeijn, J. H., van der Heijden, B. I. J. M., & De Beuckelaer, A. (2020). Personality Traits and Types in Relation to Career Success: An Empirical Comparison Using the Big Five. *Applied Psychology*, 69(2), 538–556. <https://doi.org/10.1111/apps.12174>
- Toha, M., Zuana, M. M. M., & Isbahi, M. B. (2024). Acculturation of Mataraman Local Wisdom with Islamic Values: Implications for Social and Economic Development. *Danadyaksa: Post Modern Economy Journal*, 2(1), 33–47. <https://doi.org/10.69965/danadyaksa.v2i1.143>