



At-Tarbawi: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial dan Kebudayaan
e-ISSN: 2086-9754/p-ISSN: 2086-9754
Volume 11 Number 22024
doi: 10.32505/tarbawi.v11i2.9462

Producing Work-Ready Graduates Through Islamic Education Management Strategies

Received: Sept 14, 2024

Accepted: Oct 1, 2024

Published: Nov 30, 2024

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Abstract

The policy of producing highly job ready graduates encourages the Islamic Education Management program to apply the right strategies carefully job-ready. Therefore, this article aims to identify concrete strategies that can be used by the Islamic Education Management program to produce job-ready graduates, why these strategies should be implemented correctly, and the implications of these strategies. This study uses a qualitative method with a case study design in several Islamic Education Management programs at Indonesian higher education institutions. The data consists of primary and secondary data, and content analysis was applied as the data analysis technique. The results show that the strategies implemented by the Islamic Education Management program include effective curriculum development, provision of supportive learning facilities, faculty qualification improvement, talent and potential development, soft skills training, and well-structured internship programs. These strategies are crucial for preparing graduates with practical skills and work ethics, ensuring high competitiveness in the job market. The implementation of these strategies has proven successful with many graduates securing employment shortly after graduation. This research is expected to provide new insights into strategies that can enhance graduate readiness for the workforce.

Keywords: *Islamic Education, Job Ready Graduates, Management strategy*

Abstrak

Adanya kebijakan mencetak lulusan yang memiliki kesiapan kerja tinggi mendorong program studi manajemen pendidikan Islam harus berhati-hati dalam menerapkan strategi yang benar. Oleh karena itu, pada artikel ini peneliti bertujuan menemukan secara konkrit strategi yang dapat digunakan oleh prodi manajemen pendidikan Islam untuk mencetak lulusan siap kerja, mengapa menggunakan strategi tersebut secara benar, dan implikasi dari strategi yang digunakan manajemen pendidikan Islam. Peneliti menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus di beberapa program manajemen pendidikan Islam di Perguruan Tinggi Indonesia. Data dalam penelitian ini terdiri dari data primer dan data sekunder. Peneliti menerapkan metode analisis isi sebagai teknik menganalisa data. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi yang diterapkan oleh program studi Manajemen Pendidikan Islam meliputi pengembangan kurikulum yang efektif, penyediaan fasilitas pendukung pembelajaran, peningkatan kualifikasi dosen, pembinaan potensi dan bakat mahasiswa, pelatihan softskill, serta penyelenggaraan program magang yang terstruktur dengan baik. Strategi ini penting karena mempersiapkan lulusan dengan keterampilan praktis dan etika kerja, sehingga mereka

memiliki daya saing yang tinggi di pasar kerja. Implementasi dari strategi ini terbukti berhasil dengan banyak lulusan yang mendapatkan pekerjaan dalam waktu singkat. Penelitian ini diharapkan memberikan wawasan baru mengenai strategi yang dapat diterapkan untuk meningkatkan kesiapan lulusan dalam menghadapi dunia kerja.

Kata Kunci: Lulusan Siap Kerja, Pendidikan Islam, Strategi Manajemen

Introduction

Producing work-ready graduates through Islamic Education management strategies is a demand from Indonesian society in the 4.0 era. This is because Indonesia is facing challenges with a relatively high unemployment rate, especially among new graduates (Ginting, 2021). The Director General of Higher Education (Dirjen Dikti) of (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology) stated that the unemployment rate among university graduates, including those with D4, S1, S2, and S3 degrees, has increased. This statement is based on data from the Central Statistic Agency (BPS), obtained from the National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) in August 2023. According to BPS data from 2023, 11.8% or 945,413 unemployed individuals are university graduates (Mashabi et al., 2024). This reflects a gap between the education provided and the evolving needs of the job market. Furthermore, a survey conducted by Manpower Group indicates that nearly 4 out of 5 companies report difficulties in finding candidates with the skills that match their requirements (Hafidz, 2023). This indicates that graduates are expected to possess not only academic knowledge but also relevant practical skills and soft skills.

As one of the valuable components of the educational system in Indonesia, Islamic education adopts innovative strategic approaches to ensure its graduates are capable of competing in the 4.0 era (Purnomo, 2023). Effective management of Islamic education is key to producing graduates who not only possess theoretical knowledge but also have practical skills that are useful in the modern workplace (Syafaruddin et al., 2015). Islamic education management is a program that involves managing Islamic learning institutions, encompassing Muslim human resources, and preparing them to

succeed and be productive in achieving the goals of Islamic education (Listiowaty, 2020).

Every higher education institution especially academic programs needs to ensure that graduates possess competencies and knowledge that are relevant to the needs of the job market (Handayani, 2019). This is where the role of the Islamic education management program becomes crucial in producing graduates who are ready to meet the demands of the job market in the 4.0 era (Mohza et al., 2023). Toni and Nurul argue that in this modern era, the management strategy of Islamic education is very important because it encompasses various methods and tactics to achieve the goals of Islamic education (Putri, 2018; T. Wijaya et al., 2023). Mohammad Adnan believes that Islamic education to produce graduates with strong competitive energy requires effective management (Adnan, 2019). Meanwhile, Ibnu Sholeh argues that in the context of an educational institution, the Islamic education management program must have effective strategies to face the challenges that arise in the modern era (Sholeh, 2023). Some previous studies on Islamic education management have been limited to data collection on the employment competencies of graduates, therefore this research aims to complement those earlier studies.

Research on producing job ready graduates through strategies in Islamic education management has become a very important and relevant topic in this 4.0 era. Based on this context, this article aims to identify the strategies that can be implemented by Islamic education management programs to create job-ready graduates. With the right strategies, these programs can meet the demands of Indonesian society in the 4.0 era and contribute to economic and social progress.

Certainly, each year the demands on graduates to be job-ready will continue to rise. This means that there needs to be strategies in place to assist graduates of Islamic education management programs in achieving this readiness. Therefore, in this article, the researcher aims to concretely identify

the strategies used by Islamic education management programs to produce job-ready graduates, understand why employing these strategies correctly is important, and explore the implications of the strategies used in Islamic education management.

A strategy is a framework or a series of steps organized by an institution to achieve desired outcomes. According to Solihin, a strategy is a process of establishing long-term main objectives and goals for the institution as well as selecting actions and allocating the necessary resources to achieve them (Kurniati, 2018; Nahak et al., 2023). Strategi can be understood through two aspects: formulating the strategy and implementing it. The goal is to translate the strategy into action and control the strategy as needed to achieve the established objectives (Faujiah et al., 2023). Strategy involves the processes of formulating, implementing, and evaluating actions (Qori, 2019). Essentially, a strategy consists of the formulation and implementation components (Mulyadi Soepardi, 2009).

- a. The formulation of a strategy is the process of designing a long-term plan that takes into account the strengths and weaknesses of the institution to manage environmental challenges and opportunities (Machali et al., 2017). The formulation of a strategy includes identifying the institution's mission, setting desired objectives, designing the strategy, and establishing the institution's policy principles.
- b. The implementation of management strategy is the step where management manifest its strategies and policies in practice through program development, budget allocation, and the establishment of procedures (Rahim et al., 2017). There are several management strategies that can be applied in Islamic education. These strategies include ensuring the stability of Islamic norms, implementing a participatory educational management system, optimizing technology in the learning process, and developing a system for enhancing the quality of educators and educational staff (Muhammad et al., 2023). The application of management strategies

can produce graduates with high moral standards, the ability to adapt to changing times, strong work motivation, and the capacity to make positive contributions to society.

The 4.0 era brings high levels of globalization and rapid technological advancement. Islamic education offers a framework that helps graduates understand and address these challenges guided by Islamic values. Islamic education is an effort aimed at enhancing the quality of faith, intelligence, character, and individual skills based on the principles of Islamic teachings as preparation for the future (Mappasiara, 2018). The concept of effective Islamic education integrates religious knowledge with general knowledge so that graduates receive a strong religious education while also studying relevant general subjects in the 4.0 era (Choli, 2020).

The outcomes of Islamic education prioritize not only spiritual interests but also the ability to adapt and compete in modern society particularly in the job market. Efforts to face future challenges include enhancing professionalism and entrepreneurship. Islamic education provides a significant boost to work productivity. Thus, an individual who possesses faith and understanding of Islam can be expected to have a strong work ethic (Jandra et al., 2018).

Work readiness is a condition that indicates the alignment between physical, mental, and experiential development, allowing an individual to complete specific activities related to work. Social reality reveals that many job seekers lack adequate work readiness (E. Y. Wijaya et al., 2021). Essentially, a student can be considered ready to face the workforce if they possess the necessary skills to complete the tasks at hand, relevant knowledge in their field, an understanding of the knowledge they have learned, and character traits that encourage them to unlock their potential (Diah Baiti et al., 2017).

Physical maturity, experience that teaches about a particular job, and a balanced mental and emotional state play a crucial role in shaping an individual's readiness for work (Setyaningrum et al., 2018). The elements that

influence work readiness include insights, skills, interests, behaviours, job types, and opportunities for rapid career advancement (Muspawi et al., 2020). An individual's readiness for work will improve when influenced by positive elements. A person with high work readiness will reap greater benefits because they have prepared everything necessary to enter the workforce.

Methods

In this study, the researcher focuses on understanding the strategies of Islamic education management in producing job-ready graduates, the existence of these strategies, and the implications of Islamic education management strategies. To address these issues, the researcher employs a qualitative method with a case study design applied to several Islamic Education Management Programs at Islamic higher education institutions in Indonesia. Qualitative research aims to describe and analyze specific phenomena, such as conditions, emerging opinions, resulting impacts, and similar aspects (Rusandi et al., 2021). The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to describe the phenomena occurring within the Islamic Education Management departments and to provide an analysis of the strategies used, along with their implications for the graduate's job readiness. The location of this study is Indonesian Islamic higher education institutions that offer established Islamic Education Management programs. The research subjects consist of: program study leaders, lecturers, students, and graduates.

Researchers utilized data obtained through interviews using a google form questionnaire which was distributed to heads of study programs, lecturers, students, and graduates from Islamic Education Management majors in university. The researcher also collects information through literature study by searching for sources such as books, journals, and previous research findings. Subsequently, the literature obtained from various sources was analyzed to support the researcher's assumptions and ideas. A literature study is a data collection technique used to gather information by understanding and

studying the theories present in various literature sources related to the research (Adlini et al., 2022). After collecting the data, the researcher analyzed it using content analysis methods. The content analysis process involves selecting, sorting, comparing, and combining various meanings until relevant ones are identified (Riya Utari et al., 2018).

Result

The findings related to the strategies of Islamic education management in producing job-ready graduates are presented in the following tables:

Table 1 Data on Islamic Education Management Strategies

Source	Data
Head of the Islamic Education Management Program Study at IAIN Gorontalo	The strategies implemented by stakeholders include developing a good curriculum and preparing facilities that support classroom activities, increasing the academic qualifications of lecturers, nurturing, and exploring students' potential and talents, providing soft skills development training, and organizing internship activities
Student Development Program Book of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta Link: Program Sarjana Manajemen Pendidikan Islam UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta (uin-suka.ac.id)	Various efforts have been made to produce job ready graduates particularly through development programs that include creating various flagship programs. These programs encompass activities related to academic reasoning, the development of soft skills and hard skills, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit, and enhancing the competitiveness of graduates
Article Achrul dkk (2020) UIN Alauddin Makassar Link: Kepuasan Stakeholders terhadap Lulusan Prodi Ki/ Mpi Fakultas Tarbiyah dan Keguruan Uin Alauddin Makassar - Neliti	The Islamic Education Management Program Study continually implements improvement strategies to produce job-ready graduates
Article Nauriatul Muharramah (2020) UIN Antasari Banjarmasin Link: Lihat artikel (google.com)	The strategy implemented to cultivate a strong work ethic among MPI graduates involves organizing seminars and training sessions on how to enhance work ethic

Islamic education management in preparing job-ready graduates can implement various strategies in the form of coaching, development, improvement, and training. Islamic education management aligns the curriculum with industry needs. Graduates not only possess theoretical knowledge but also practical competencies that are valuable in the workforce.

In terms of coaching, it involves organizing programs that engage the direct participation of practitioners in relevant industries allowing graduates of Islamic education management to gain a deep understanding of the dynamics and opportunities in the workplace while also guiding them in preparing to face challenges in that environment. In terms of development, it focuses on designing programs that can cultivate the practical skills and knowledge of Islamic education management graduates to master relevant job competencies. In terms of improvement, it involves refining the curriculum and enhancing effective teaching methods to identify areas where graduates may not fully meet the demands of the workforce. In terms of training, it includes organizing training sessions that align with labor market needs, delivered by experienced instructors in Islamic education management, and focusing on direct implementation in the workplace through activities such as internships (field experience), seminars and training on works ethics that are beneficial for graduates to gain practical experience in the job market.

Stakeholders in Islamic education management enhance the quality of graduates by implementing strategies for coaching, development, improvement, and training. This includes student guidance, skill development, curriculum review, and practical training. The context of these strategies is to respond to the increasingly complex and dynamic demands of the job market.

Table 2 Data on The Existence of Islamic Education Management Strategies

Source	Data
Article Maxi dan Ranga (2020) Link: Lihat artikel (google.co.id)	The study program needs to develop a strategy to implement continuous improvement
News	The strategy can enhance capabilities

Source	Data
Article Maxsi dan Rangga (2020) Link: Lihat artikel (google.co.id)	The study program needs to develop a strategy to implement continuous improvement
Link: gmlperformance.com	
Internet Link: Manajemen Pendidikan Islam Fakultas Agama Islam (uisu.ac.id)	Implementing strategies for the development of the MPI study program to produce highly competitive graduates
Link: Renstra & Renop MPI – STIT ALHIKMAH WAYKANAN (stit-alhikmahwk.ac.id)	Strategy is a guideline that can be used by MPI to advance, improve quality, and cultivate character

Elements such as improvement strategies, successful capability enhancement, competitiveness, quality, and character hold a fundamental position in the existence of Islamic education management in producing job-ready graduates. Through the integration of all these elements, Islamic education management can create graduates with strong character and a work ethic aligned with Islamic teachings. This condition ensures that graduates of Islamic education management are not only prepared for work but also possess the necessary competencies and strong moral values.

Improvement strategies will enhance capabilities which in turn produce graduates who are more competitive in the job market. Competitive graduates also need to possess high quality. However, to become graduates with integrity and a strong work ethic, the role of Islamic education is essential to ensure that character development remains a priority.

Improvement strategies in the context of Islamic education management focus on efforts to continuously enhance the quality of education which includes curriculum, development, teaching methods, and learning facilities. Successful capability enhancement encompasses both technical and non-technical skills required in the workforce such as implementing specialized skills training programs. Islamic education management supports the competitiveness of graduates by providing internship opportunities, training, and entrepreneurial activities. In Islamic education, the essence of learning is not merely about academic quality but also about character

development. Islamic education management integrates Islamic teachings with the educational process ensuring that graduates have a solid foundation to fulfill their roles as diligent individuals in the workplace.

Table 3 Data on The Implications of Islamic Education
Management Strategy

Source	Data
Lecturer of MPI at IAIN Gorontalo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The strategies implemented by MPI are very beneficial as evidenced by the many graduates who secure jobs immediately • The Soft skill development strategies are useful in enhancing graduates' potential in the workforce
Students and graduates of MPI at UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduates can apply the knowledge of MPI in their chosen profession • MPI graduates possess potential and skills, particularly in leadership and management which are beneficial in the workforce
Report of Tracer Study Results (2022) UIN Alauddin Makassar Link: https://mpi.ftk.uin-alauddin.ac.id/download/detail/4284	Various strategies implemented have established MPI as a reputable and promising program in the job market. Out of 110 MPI graduates who completed the questionnaire, 83 have secured jobs while the remaining 23 are still unemployed
Article Muhammad Iwan Abdi STAIN Samarinda Link: uinsi.ac.id	Graduates of the MPI study program have made their mark in the workforce across various professions

Islamic education management aims to ensure that its graduates are ready to succeed in their careers. MPI provides high-quality education that meets industry needs and prepares graduates well to face the challenges of the workforce. The various strategies implemented by MPI effectively produce job-ready graduates. This is evident from the graduates of MPI who achieve the skills, knowledge, and competencies including (managerial, communication, and analytical abilities) desired by the industry.

Graduate absorption refers to the extent to which graduates successfully enter the workforce. This is demonstrated by the number of MPI graduates who secure jobs in related fields or relevant institutions within a

relatively short period. MPI graduates can face challenges and compete in the job market contributing positively to the industries in which they work.

Effective strategies in Islamic education management ensure that graduates possess a high level of job readiness. Graduates of Islamic education management have managerial competencies that are relevant to the 4.0 era. This opens opportunities for them to have successful careers that meet the demands of society in this 4.0 era.

Discussion

This article discusses various issues related to producing job-ready graduates through Islamic education management strategies. First, it reviews how Islamic education management strategies can be implemented to prepare graduates to compete in the job market. Furthermore, the article explores the existence of these strategies within Islamic education management. The researcher aims to understand how these strategies manifest in Islamic education management. Finally, the article analyzes the implications of Islamic education management strategies for graduates' readiness in the job market.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded first that the strategy implemented by the Islamic Education Management Department in Indonesian higher education institutions to produce work-ready graduates involves several key steps. These steps include the development of an effective curriculum, the provision of facilities that support the learning process, the enhancement of the lecturer's academic qualifications through improvements in teaching methods, the development of student's potential and talents, soft skills training, and the organization of well-structured internship programs. This is in line with previous research that highlights the importance of an educational approach aligned with industry needs. Curriculums designed with consideration for labor market demands, through hands-on experience tend to produce graduates who are better prepared to enter the professional world (Ubihatun et al., 2024). An approach that encompasses training, development,

coaching, and monitoring is a comprehensive strategy for enhancing human resource performance (Tampubolon, 2016).

There is also research that suggests Islamic educational institutions should implement several strategies including: first, a substantive strategy that involves offering comprehensive and holistic programs. Second, a bottom-up strategy means that the design and structure of the curriculum along with policies for developing human resources and other physical facilities should be aligned with the needs, potential, and aspirations of the community. Third, a deregulation strategy allows freedom to innovate and improvise in program development without being overly restricted by the general rules set by the government. Fourth, a cooperative strategy emphasizing the importance of collaboration and empowering all available resources and potential, both from within the institution and the surrounding environment (Riyuzen, 2017).

The head of the Islamic Education Management program stated that every effort to improve the study program is aimed solely at developing student skills enabling them to acquire various competencies that can be applied in the workforce. All aspects of educational activity management must be carried out with careful and thorough planning both in the guidance and development of available resources as well as in addressing any weaknesses in the management of educational components. This is in line with the theory states that the key to achieving ideal education quality lies in a strategic education plan. In this context, planning should be carried out by stakeholders while adhering to the principles of educational institution improvement (Santoso, 2022). Improvement strategies are essential for consistently identifying and implementing changes in processes, systems, and human resources to achieve excellence and competitiveness in educational institutions (Redaksi, 2023). Champates states that mentoring plays a significant role in enhancing productivity to evaluate individual confidence in their work and identify factors that may hinder performance. Wexley and Yulk explain that training and development refer to planned activities conducted to

enhance the skills, insight, and attitudes of individuals within an organization (Levy Kambey et al., 2013).

It can be concluded that the strategy implemented by the Islamic Education Management Department in Indonesian higher education institutions is effective in preparing students for the workforce. The development of relevant curricula, supporting facilities, and the enhancement of teaching quality help students develop practical skills. Well-structured internship programs provide hands-on experience while the cultivation of student's potential ensures their readiness to face challenges in the professional world. Overall, this strategy helps students become competent graduates who are ready to contribute to the labor market with skills that are relevant and applicable across various industry sectors.

Furthermore, the strategic importance of the Islamic Education Management Study Program in Indonesian Higher Education is that it functions to encourage continuous improvement. The research findings indicate that the Islamic Education Management department in Indonesian higher education institutions applies a competency-based approach to teaching. Most of the learning is focused on practical fieldwork, as well as managerial skills training. The main goal of this strategy is to enhance the quality of the study program and ensure that the graduates produced are highly competitive. By implementing the right development strategies, the MPI Study Program can advance the quality of education and shape better graduate character. This strategy serves as the main guideline in achieving these objectives.

This is in line with previous research which reveals that many graduates of education programs face difficulties in adapting to the workforce due to a lack of practical skills. Therefore, improving the relevance of higher education graduates to the labor market requires concrete and continuous efforts from various parties, such as universities, the government, industry, and society. Universities need to periodically update the curriculum, enhance

fieldwork practices, and establish strong collaborations with industry. The government can provide incentives to universities that partner with industry, facilitate internship and training programs for students, and create regulations that foster an adaptive higher education ecosystem aligned with the needs of the workforce (Pramesti et al., 2024). Then, Resta and Lilia's research also emphasized that education plays an important role in developing the skills and competencies needed by students to enter the world of work including hard skills and soft skills (Susianita et al., 2024).

It can be concluded that the Islamic Education Management (MPI) Study Program at Indonesian Universities implements a competency-based approach to enhance the quality of education, ensuring that graduates possess high competitiveness in the job market through practical skills and work ethics required by the industry, as well as developing better graduate character. Therefore, this strategy serves as an important guideline in achieving the goal of producing competent and competitive graduates. In this regard, the educational strategy not only includes curriculum improvement but also involves enhancing teaching methods, character development, and the development of skills that are relevant to industry needs.

Finally, the implication of the strategy implemented in the Islamic Education Management department is the increased competitiveness of graduates in the labor market. This study shows that alumni who participated in programs emphasizing practical experience and managerial skills tend to secure jobs more quickly after graduation compared to those who focused solely on theory. Additionally, this strategy helps educational institutions adapt to the evolving demands of the labor market. Another implication is the strengthening of relationships between higher education institutions and various educational organizations that provide job opportunities for graduates, thereby broadening their access to employment.

This is by several previous research results which reveal that The strategies implemented in Islamic education management have proven

effective in producing quality graduates who are ready for work with broad career opportunities. Islamic education management ensures that its graduates possess the skills, knowledge, and competencies that meet industry needs. Islamic education management emphasizes developing communication skills, leadership, and the ability to analyze educational situations among graduates (Al-Falah, 2024). Then, the various strategies implemented by MPI can produce graduates with high work readiness. This is evidenced by numerous MPI graduates who are prepared to work and have successfully secured jobs in relevant fields or institutions within a relatively short period. Achieving high-quality graduates requires effective approaches or strategies. Implementing educational institution strategies is useful for improving the quality of graduates so that they can compete in the job market, entrepreneurship, and industry (Santoso, 2022).

It was also explained that career competency is closely related to the knowledge and skills a person has. This condition shows that the education experienced by graduates can advance their knowledge and maximize their skills. Graduates become more professional and experienced in carrying out tasks in their field of study (Safi'i et al., 2022). Improving the quality of Islamic education through implementing appropriate management strategies can increase the competitiveness of Islamic education institutions, strengthen community participation, and increase human resource competency. However, this Islamic education management strategy needs to be implemented continuously and sustainably to maintain consistent improvement in graduate skills in various fields. In this context, Islamic education can continue to develop and provide solutions to the various challenges faced by Muslims in an increasingly complex global era (Muhammad et al., 2023).

It can be concluded that the implementation of a competency-based strategy such as the development of skills (both hard and soft skills) as well as increasing leadership and managerial abilities for students implemented by

the MPI Study Program has a positive impact on the quality of graduates who are not only proficient in Islamic education theory but also capable of performing managerial tasks in educational institutions. Overall, these strategies have made the MPI Study Program a recognized program with good prospects for graduates in various professional fields. Although some graduates still face unemployment, this is likely related to external factors.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings it can be concluded that the strategies implemented by the Islamic Education Management Study Program (MPI) have proven effective in preparing graduates to enter the workforce. Several steps taken include the development of a relevant curriculum, the provision of facilities that support the learning process, improvement of teaching methods to enhance the quality of faculty, coaching student's potential and talents, soft skills training, and the organization of well-structured internship programs. The implementation of these strategies is crucial as it helps prepare graduates with competencies required in the workforce, such as practical skills, leadership, and professional ethics. The implication of these strategies is that MPI graduates have high competitiveness in the job market as evidenced by the large number of graduates who secure employment immediately after graduation indicating a positive correlation between the strategies applied and the success of the graduates. However, there are still some graduates who have not yet found employment, which suggests that these strategies need further evaluation. Therefore, the researcher recommends that future studies investigate the factors influencing the implementation of strategies in educational institutions.

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