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DEMOGRAPHIC, MENTORSHIP QUALITY, EMPLOYABILITY: INTERN SATISFACTION AS VARIABLE MEDIATION

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ABSTRACT

The development of the modern world of work requires students to have practical skills relevant to industry needs. This study aims to determine the relationship between demographics and mentorship quality in influencing student internship satisfaction and Employability. In addition, this study aims to examine the role of internship satisfaction as a mediator between demographics and mentor quality at Infinite Learning company. This study was conducted using quantitative methods in the form of an online questionnaire with 121 respondents from the student intern population. This study was analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the relationship between variables. The results of the analysis show that mentor quality has an effect on student internship satisfaction, and internship satisfaction has a significant impact on student employability. Mentor quality affects Employability through the mediation of internship satisfaction. However, demographic factors did not show a significant effect on internship satisfaction and Employability. Demographics had no effect on Employability through internship satisfaction as a mediating variable. This study emphasizes the importance of mentorship quality in improving internship experience and students' readiness to enter the job market. For further research, it is recommended to explore more deeply the factors that influence Employability outside the context of student internship by including information related to long-term career development. This more comprehensive approach is expected to provide more accurate information on the influence of various factors on interns' work readiness and improve the effectiveness of internship programs in the future.

Keywords: Demographics, Mentorship quality, Employability, Intern satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

The development of the modern world of work has undergone a significant transformation along with technological advances and globalization. Companies are now looking not only for laborers who master the theory but also those who have practical skills according to industry needs (Outlook, 2017). Based on data from the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (2024), the unemployment rate in February 2024 was recorded at 4.82%, down 0.63% compared to February 2023. However, the data shows that unemployment at the higher education level, especially D4, S1, and S3 graduates, has increased. In February 2023, the percentage of unemployed college graduates was recorded at 5.52%, increasing to 5.63% in February 2024. In contrast, unemployment for graduates from primary to senior high school decreased. Unemployment is often caused by a mismatch of skills with labor market needs (Suhandi et al., 2021). Furthermore, a report by World Economic Forum (World Economic Forum, 2022) revealed that 50% of the workforce worldwide will need to acquire new skills in the next five years to adapt to technological change. Students, as future workers, must continue to develop their abilities in order to compete in the global labor market (Zhang et al., 2022).

This is in contrast to decades ago when having an academic degree with high grades was enough to get a job. However, this is changing due to increasing economic uncertainty and the impact of automation, as expressed by (Alawamleh & Mahadin, 2022). Higher education alone no longer guarantees employment opportunities. As a solution, work experience through internship programs is an effective means to improve students' Employability (Kapareliotis et al., 2019);(Baert et al., 2021).

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek) of the Republic of Indonesia has introduced the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) policy as an effort to improve the connection between the world of education and the world of work. One of MBKM's flagship programs is a certified internship program that allows students to engage directly in industry activities for one to two semesters. The program is designed to ensure students gain relevant work experience, thereby enhancing their practical skills and work readiness. With this policy, it is expected that university graduates will be able to meet the demands of the labour market and contribute to the reduction of unemployment (Artika & Purmayanti, 2023).

However, the implementation of internship programs often faces challenges. The survey results showed that 40.56% of student interns felt discriminated against in the work hierarchy, while 32.22% of students reported overly high workloads and targets. In addition, 53% of students often worked outside of working hours, and 72.6% felt that they did not have the opportunity to choose their work interests during their internship. Learning facilities are also often considered inadequate, including a lack of space to express opinions and low responsiveness of mentors (Fatourou, 2022).

Poorly organized internships can have a negative impact on students, especially on their Employability (Chen et al., 2018). According to Hore et al. (2020), internships play an important role in students' psychological and professional development. Therefore, understanding students' perceptions of internships is key to creating more effective internship programs. The effectiveness of internship programs can be evaluated based on the level of student satisfaction with their internship experience.

Previous research suggests that demographic factors and mentoring quality play a significant role in influencing students' satisfaction and job readiness after internships. Rahman et al. (2020) found that age, gender, and previous experience affect students' satisfaction with the internship program, which directly impacts their Employability. Research from Adeyami et al. (2022) also shows that demographic variables, such as age and educational background, are important predictors of satisfaction with various aspects of life, including work and internships. In terms of mentorship quality, Gault et al. (2010) highlighted that effective mentoring is a key determinant of student intern satisfaction in business, where good mentor interaction can enhance the learning experience. Research by Roth & Whitehead (2019) supports these findings by stating that high-quality mentoring programs can increase student intern satisfaction and retention. Similarly, Williamson et al. (2020) found that student interns who received quality mentorship reported higher levels of satisfaction and retention during their internships. Internship satisfaction is closely related to students' employability and work readiness after completing the internship program. Chen et al. (2018) state that students who are satisfied with their internship experience have a higher level of Employability, as they have developed relevant skills and confidence to face challenges in the professional world. Research by Abdullah et al. (2014) shows that high levels of student satisfaction correlate with increased graduate employability, as satisfied students are more likely to perform well and gain employment.

However, at Infinite Learning company, there were issues with the quality of mentoring and the influence of demographic factors. Student interns felt that their mentors were less engaged in providing adequate guidance, with more attention given to other programs than to the interns. This made the interns feel less cared for, leaving them to complete projects on their own without sufficient support from their mentors. In addition, differences in the quality of human resources among the interns slowed down the completion of projects, as they had to adjust to varying abilities between individuals. Many mentors at Infinite Learning are new or work on short-term contracts, thus affecting their ability to provide adequate guidance.

Based on the background, this study aims to explore how demographics and mentor quality affect intern satisfaction and Employability. In addition, this study aims to examine the role of intern satisfaction as a mediator between demographics and mentor quality. This research is needed to make a significant contribution to improving student internship experiences and addressing existing mentorship issues.

Demography is the study of populations, including the structure, distribution and development of populations involving factors such as age, gender, race, ethnicity, and economic status (Ludyaningrum, 2016). Research by Rahman et al. (Rahman et al., 2020) states that demographic factors such as age, gender, educational background, and socioeconomic status can influence how interns rate their internship experience. Participants who have certain characteristics may have different expectations, needs, and preferences during their internship. For example, interns with higher levels of education may have greater expectations of the challenges and responsibilities of the work provided, which affects their level of satisfaction. In accordance with this, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis.:

H1: Demographics affect Intern satisfaction

Mentor quality is defined as the process by which mentors provide mentees with adequate support to prepare them for the challenges that exist in the workplace. Quality mentors provide guidance, support, and constructive feedback to interns, which ultimately increases their level of satisfaction with the internship experience (Adolph, 2016). According to research by Pop et al. (2013), effective mentorship creates an

environment that supports interns' professional growth and provides them with clear direction in completing tasks. In this study, the researcher wants to test whether quality mentorship has a significant effect on interns' satisfaction, as found in previous studies. In accordance with this, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:

H2: Mentorship Quality affects Intern satisfaction

Intern satisfaction is defined as interns' opinions about their internship experience and how much they enjoyed the work they did during their internship (D'Abate et al., 2009). According to research by Presti et al. (2022), demographics such as gender, education level, and training sector affect the essential abilities they need to get a job according to industry needs. Apprentices who are satisfied with their work experience tend to feel more prepared and competent to enter the workforce. This satisfaction includes factors such as challenging roles, learning opportunities, and strong mentor support, all of which increase their perception of Employability, or their ability to secure employment after their apprenticeship. This research wants to explore whether interns' satisfaction positively influences their Employability in the world of work. In accordance with this, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:

H3: Internal satisfaction affects Employability.

Employability is defined as a set of understanding skills and personal characteristics that can increase graduates' chances of success in their chosen career and benefit them in the world of work, the community, and the economy. Demographic factors such as age, gender, and educational background can also influence apprentices' perceptions of their Employability. Research by Saeed et al. (2023) found that people with higher education or access to better career resources tend to feel more prepared to enter the workforce. This study, therefore, wanted to test whether there is a significant relationship between education and apprentices' perceptions of their Employability. In accordance with this, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:

H4a: Demographic affect Employability.

Students with different demographic backgrounds, such as age, gender, or discipline, have varied experiences and perceptions during the internship program. These factors affect their level of satisfaction with the internship program, whether in terms of the work environment, mentors, or tasks assigned. Higher internship satisfaction tends to improve Employability, such as students' technical skills and adaptability. Therefore, demographics indirectly influence Employability through internship satisfaction as a mediating variable. In relation to this, the researcher formulated the following hypothesis. Based on this, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:

H4b. Demographics affect Employability through the mediation of Intern satisfaction.

Quality mentorship can improve apprentices' abilities and confidence in facing future career challenges. According to research by Nuis et al. (2024), mentors who provide good guidance not only help apprentices develop during their apprenticeship but also equip them with the skills necessary for success in the world of work. Research from Adeyami et al. (2022) also shows that demographic variables such as gender and age play an important role in determining the activities or opportunities that students utilize to develop their employability skills. This study aims to show the influence of these individual factors on the development of Employability among university students. Therefore, this study aims to see the extent to which the quality of mentors can impact on the Employability of apprentices. In accordance with this, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:

H5a: Quality mentorship affects Employability.

Quality mentorship provides support, direction, and relevant learning throughout the internship program. This increases the student's level of satisfaction with their internship experience, both in terms of learning, skill development, and self-confidence. This satisfaction then has a positive impact on students' Employability, such as their ability to face challenges in the world of work, adapt, and demonstrate competencies required by employers. Thus, quality mentorship not only directly improves Employability but also has an indirect positive impact through the mediation of internal satisfaction. Based on this, the researcher formulates the following hypothesis:

H5b: Quality mentorship affects Employability through the mediation of intern satisfaction.

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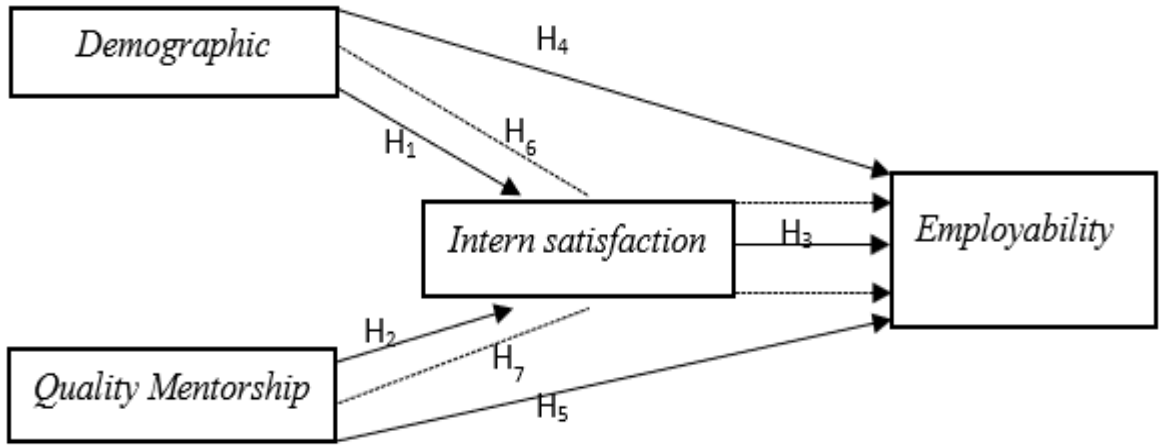
Figure 1 research model



RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses quantitative methods to find out how variables interact with each other. The author used primary data, which is information collected directly from respondents through distributing questionnaires online via WhatsApp in October 2024. To measure the indicators in the questionnaire, the author used a modified Likert scale with points from 1 to 5. From this population, the researcher took a sample of 121 Infinite Learning 6th batch certified internship students as respondents through the application of saturated sampling technique, where taking the entire population as a research sample. The collected data were analyzed using Smart PLS (Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling), a statistical method based on structural equation modeling (SEM). Smart PLS was chosen for its reliability in testing measurement models and structural models, especially in small samples and complex models. This method of analysis allows for effective evaluation and reliability of moderation, resulting in accurate analyses. The analysis process includes two main stages:

1. Measurement model testing: assessing construct validity and indicator reliability, including convergent validity and discriminant validity.
2. Testing the structural model identifies the relationship between variables based on the path coefficient value and P-value.

3.

Table 1. Operational definition of variables

Variable	Indicator	Reference
Demographic	Level of study	(Adeyemi et al., 2022)
	Disciplines	(Rahman et al., 2020)
	Gender	(Min & Khoon, 2014)
	Age	
Mentorship Quality	Emotional support	(Pop et al., 2013)
	Network support	(Roth & Whitehead, 2019)
	Empathy	
	Frequency of meetings	
Intern Satisfaction	Teamwork support	(Roth & Whitehead, 2019)
	Overtime work hours	(Febriani et al., 2024)
	Participation in decision-making	(Rahman et al., 2020)
	Opportunities to improve knowledge and capabilities	(Presti et al., 2022)
Employability	Work experience	
	Interpersonal and other skills	
	Self-confidence	(Barton et al., 2019)
	Job mentor support	

Source: Author's calculation (2024)

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The following outer model analysis is used to test construct validity and outer loadings. Figure 2 below presents the outer model generated in SEM PLS through the algorithm method, which is used to assess reliability and validity.

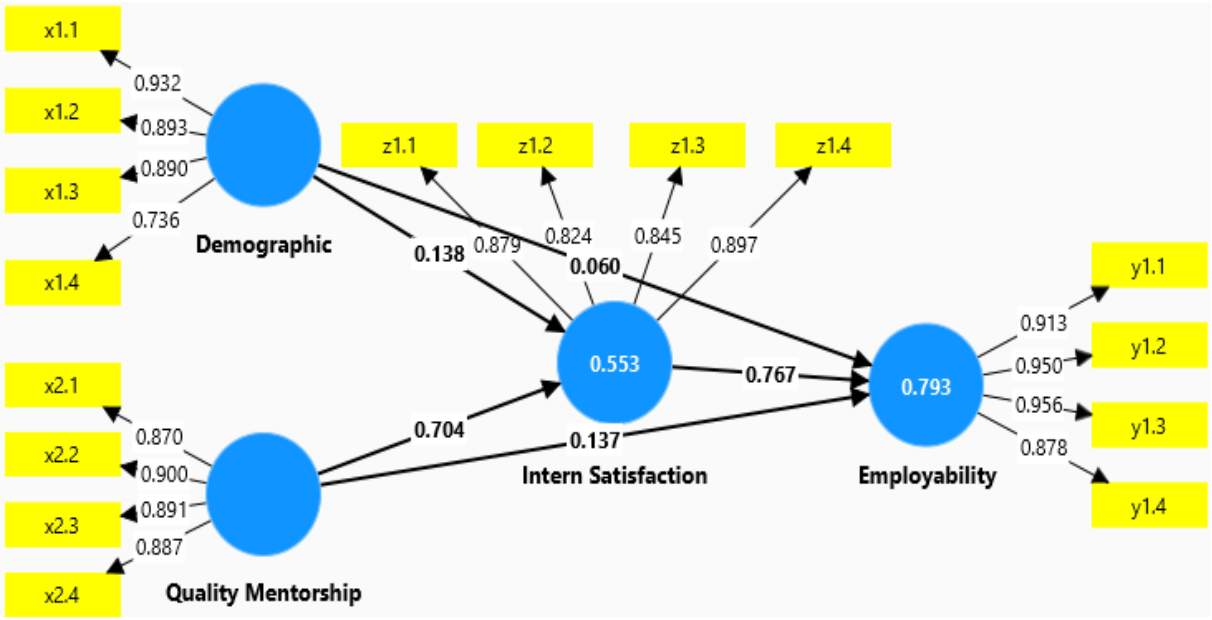

Figure 2. Results of the outer model
Source: Smart PLS processing results (2024)

In SEM (Structural Equation Modeling) analysis, the outer load test conducted with PLS (Patrial Least Squares) aims to evaluate the correlation between item or indicator scores and latent variables. Table 3 shows the Outer Loadings results.

Table 2. Characteristics of respondents

Characteristics	Category	% (percentage)
Gender	Male	40,9%
	Female	59,1%
Age	20 – 25 years old	100%

Source: Primary data processing (2024)

Table 3. Outer Loadings

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Description
Demographic	X1.1	0,932	Valid
	X1.2	0,893	Valid
	X1.3	0,890	Valid
	X1.4	0,734	Valid
Mentorship Quality	X2.1	0,870	Valid
	X2.2	0,900	Valid
	X2.3	0,891	Valid
	X2.4	0,887	Valid
Intern Satisfaction	Z1.1	0,879	Valid
	Z1.2	0,824	Valid
	Z1.3	0,845	Valid
	Z1.4	0,897	Valid
Employability	Y1.1	0,913	Valid
	Y1.2	0,950	Valid
	Y1.3	0,953	Valid
	Y1.4	0,878	Valid

Source: SmartPLS processing results (2024)

Table 3 shows that there are no indicators with external loading values below 0.5. These results indicate that all indicator variables are valid for research and can be used for further analysis. The following are the results of the discriminant validity test, variable reliability, coefficient of determination, and hypothesis testing. Table 4 presents the results of discriminant and variable reliability.

Table 4. Discriminant Validity and Reliability Test of Variables

variable	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Demographic	0,895	1,044	0,922	0,750
Employability	0,943	0,948	0,959	0,855
Intern Satisfaction	0,884	0,893	0,920	0,743
Mentorship Quality	0,910	0,913	0,937	0,787

Source: SmartPLS processing results (2024)

All variables in this study are considered valid because the AVE test results shown in table 4 show that all variables have a value above 0.50. The reliability test is used to assess how consistent a questionnaire is in measuring the intended variable. If the results are positive and significant, the hypothesis is considered accepted. The initial value of the sample can be used to measure the magnitude of the effect

Table 5 Coefficient of Determination Test Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Intern satisfaction	0,553	0,545
Employability	0,793	0,788

Source: SmartPLS processing results (2024)

The R-square adjusted value of the internal satisfaction variable is 0.545, indicating that the demographic and mentorship quality variables are able to explain the internal satisfaction variable by 54.5%. So, it can be concluded that the model is considered moderate. While the adjusted R-square value of the employability variable is 0.788, this indicates that the demographic variable, mentorship quality, and internal satisfaction are able to explain the employability variable by 78.3%. So, it can be concluded that the model is considered strong. On the other hand, if the P-value is less than 0.05 and the T-statistic is greater than 1.97, then significance can be calculated. The results of hypothesis testing are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Value	Description
Demographic -> Intern satisfaction	0,138	1,677	0,094	H1 rejected
Quality Mentorship -> Intern satisfaction	0,704	9,094	0,000	H2 accepted
Intern satisfaction -> Employability	0,767	10.737	0,000	H3 accepted
Demographic -> Employability	0,060	1,172	0,241	H4 rejected
Quality Mentorship -> Employability	0,137	1,684	0,092	H5 rejected
Demographic -> Intern satisfaction -> Employability	0,106	1,637	0,102	H6 rejected
Quality mentorship -> Intern satisfaction -> Employability	0,540	7,846	0,000	H7 accepted

Source: SmartPLS processing results (2024)

The results of the hypothesis test in Table 5 can be concluded as follows:

1. Demographic -> Internal satisfaction P-value 0.094 > 0.05, then H1 is rejected, namely demographics have no effect on internal satisfaction.
2. Quality Mentorship -> Intern satisfaction P-value 0.000> 0.05, then H2 is accepted. Namely, quality mentorship affects intern satisfaction.
3. Internal satisfaction -> Employability P-value 0.000> 0.05, then H3 is accepted, namely internal satisfaction affects Employability.
4. Demographic -> Employability P-value 0.241 > 0.05, then H4 is rejected, namely demographic has an effect on Employability.
5. Quality Mentorship -> Employability P-value 0.092 > 0.05, then H5 is rejected. Namely, quality mentorship has no effect on Employability.
6. Demographic -> Intern satisfaction -> Employability p-value 0.102 > 0.05, then H6 is rejected, namely demographic has no effect on Employability through internal satisfaction.
7. Quality mentorship -> Intern satisfaction -> Employability p-value 0.000 > 0.05, then H7 is accepted, namely, quality mentorship affects Employability through intern satisfaction

DISCUSSION

Based on the hypothesis testing results. H1 states that internship satisfaction is not influenced by demographics, with a P-value of 0.090 which is greater than the 0.05 significance limit. So, statistically, demographics do not have a significant influence on the level of satisfaction of student interns. This insignificance is due to the fact that demographic variations are not directly related to the determinants of satisfaction in the internship program. Demographic factors, such as age or gender, do not necessarily reflect the quality of the internship experience or the perception of the mentorship received. This suggests that internship satisfaction is more influenced by other aspects, such as the quality of mentorship or work environment factors, rather than demographic differences alone. In addition, the findings of this study are in line with previous research by Angela & Roujuniah (2022), which states that factors, age, gender, and education level have no significant moderating influence on the relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance.

Second, the results of testing H4 state that Employability is not influenced by demographics with a P-value of 0.386 which is greater than the 0.05 significance limit. So statistically, demographics do not have a significant influence on the Employability of internship students. This is consistent with research conducted by Bagares (2024), which concluded that although Employability is influenced by the contribution of course outcomes, demographic factors such as age, gender, and year of graduation do not have a significant effect on the level of Employability of graduates. This is because demographics such as age, gender, and discipline often show significant influence in the context of more advanced professional experiences. However, in the case of first-time students, limited direct experience in the world of work tends to reduce the significant role of demographic factors on Employability. In the absence of substantial work experience, their skills and knowledge are still in the early stages of development, so demographic variables have not shown significant influence in building their Employability. The results are in line with research from Kasler et al. (2017), which states that demographic factors do not show a significant effect on the perceived Employability of students. This study found that there is no unique relationship between demographic factors such as age, discipline, current employment status and suggested Employability.

Third, the results of testing H5, which states that mentorship quality does not affect Employability, can be explained by limitations in how mentorship is implemented during internships. The short duration of internships makes mentors prioritize technical tasks over comprehensive career guidance, resulting in minimal emotional support, which is crucial for boosting interns' confidence and helping them face challenges in the workplace. Mentors often do not have the opportunity to provide networking support by connecting interns with industry professionals, reducing their ability to utilize valuable relationships for career advancement. In addition, mentors may show limited empathy, focusing more on task-orientated guidance rather than understanding the unique challenges faced by interns, especially those new to the workforce, which reduces the effectiveness of guidance in aligning with career aspirations. In addition, the low frequency of meetings due to time constraints limits the opportunity for in-depth discussions on career development and skills enhancement, so mentorship emphasizes immediate outcomes rather than developing transferable skills. The combination of these factors weakens the potential for mentorship quality to significantly influence Employability.

Fourth, the results of testing hypothesis H6 show that demographic variables do not have a significant effect on Employability through internship satisfaction as a mediating variable, with a P-value of 0.097 which is greater than the 0.05 significance limit. This finding is consistent with research Isnarti Trisnawati (2022), which states that demographic characteristics such as age, education, and tenure have no significant impact on employee employability. In addition, internship satisfaction is also not influenced by demographic factors, so it cannot function as a mediator between the two. This insignificance can be explained because demographic factors tend not to directly influence work experience or outcomes. Instead, Employability is more influenced by other more relevant factors, such as training, skills development, hands-on work experience, and the quality of mentoring during the internship. These elements contribute more to shaping Employability than demographic characteristics.

This research resulted in several findings for Infinite Learning as an internship company. There are three findings that reflect that mentor quality affects internship satisfaction and internship satisfaction has a great influence on interns' Employability.

The results of testing H2, state that there is a significant positive effect of mentor quality on the Employability of student interns. With a P-value of 0.000 and a T-statistic of 9.996, this relationship is highly statistically significant. This result means that good mentorship provides clear direction, helps overcome difficulties, and creates a supportive work environment. This support makes students feel valued and supported, thereby increasing their satisfaction with the internship experience and assisting in the development of relevant skills and understanding. This is in line with research conducted by Sciences, (2014) which says that mentor quality plays an important role in influencing internship student satisfaction. The results showed that students involved in internship programs with quality mentors tend to feel more satisfied with their internship experience. Good mentors not only provide effective clinical guidance but also help students feel more confident and competent in the internship program

Second, the results of testing hypothesis H3 show that internship satisfaction has a significant effect on Employability through internship satisfaction. With a P-value of 0.000 and a T-statistic of 9.994. This finding indicates that satisfaction during internship reflects how well the internship experience prepares students for the world of work. Students who are satisfied with their internship assignments, mentorship, and environment are more likely to develop relevant skills, feel more prepared for the challenges of the working world, and have higher motivation to seek employment. High satisfaction also strengthens their confidence in competing in the job market after the internship is completed. This is in line with research showing internship satisfaction D'Abate et al., (2009); Bordean & Sonea, (2018) which suggests that internship satisfaction is identified as an important factor that not only affects the learning experience during the internship but can also have a positive impact on future employment outcomes and relationships. Internship satisfaction can increase self-efficacy and skills that are considered important for careers, internship satisfaction can contribute to positive perceptions of the skills required on the job, potentially improving student interns' Employability.

Third, the results of testing hypothesis H7 show that the mentorship quality variable has a significant effect on Employability through internship satisfaction as a mediating variable, with a P-value of 0.000 and a T-statistic of 7.449. This indicates that good mentorship quality is able to increase participants' internship satisfaction, which in turn has a positive impact on their Employability. This finding is in line with mentoring theory which states that guidance from mentors not only provides technical knowledge, but also facilitates the development of interpersonal and professional skills. Qualified mentors are able to create a meaningful internship experience by providing direction, constructive feedback, and emotional support. This increases participants' satisfaction during the internship, which in turn promotes the development of their work competencies, such as adaptability, communication, and decision-making. This successful mediation also confirms that internship satisfaction is a key factor in linking mentoring to Employability. When participants are satisfied with their internship experience, they are more confident and motivated to apply the skills they have acquired in the world of work. The implication of these results is that organizations and educational institutions need to pay special attention to the selection and training of mentors. Competent and supportive mentors can be an important asset in creating an effective internship experience and increasing future employment opportunities for participants. Thus, the quality of mentorship is not only an important element in internship programs, but also a strategic investment in creating a more competent workforce ready to compete in the job market.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that demographic factors, such as age, gender, and discipline, have no significant influence on internship satisfaction or Employability. This insignificance is due to the interns' limited work experience, which reduces the relevance of demographic differences to their work outcomes or satisfaction. In contrast, mentorship quality was shown to have a significant influence on intern satisfaction, which in turn contributed to improved Employability through the mediation of intern satisfaction. This confirms the importance of good mentorship in creating a positive internship experience, which supports the development of students' technical and professional skills. Therefore, organizations and educational institutions need to focus on improving mentor quality as a strategy to enhance the effectiveness of internship programs and the competitiveness of the future workforce.

This research provides important implications for companies and educational institutions, namely that the selection and training of quality mentors is a strategic investment to create effective internship experiences, which will ultimately contribute to the development of a more competent workforce ready to compete in the labor market.

For Infinite Learning, the results of this study can be used as evaluation material to focus more on improving the quality of mentorship during the internship program. Improving the quality of mentorship, including career skills development and more personalized support, can increase internship student satisfaction. This is expected to have an impact on improving students' readiness to enter the world of work. The authors hope that internship programs can pay more attention to the quality of mentors as a key factor in shaping a positive internship experience and impacting student employability. For future research, it is recommended to expand the research sample by involving permanent employees of the company. Thus, it will be easier to assess how mentorship quality and job satisfaction affect Employability in the context of more advanced professional experiences. Future researchers can also dig deeper into the factors that influence Employability outside the context of student internships, by including information related to long-term career development. This more comprehensive approach is expected to provide more accurate information about the influence of various factors on interns' work readiness and improve the effectiveness of internship programs in the future. readiness of student intern.

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