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## Systematic Literature Review Analysis for Trends in The Study of Islamic Thought in Career Development

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### Abstract

This study was conducted to find the trends of studies for career development from Islamic perspective and popular sources of Islamic career argument by analyzing the past literature that discuss the career development in Islam. It was guided by 'The Academic Journal Guide 2018' issued by the Chartered Association of Business Schools. A total of 53 quantitative research papers and 29 qualitative papers were selected and reviewed from the Scopus and the WoS Indexed Journal from the year 2016 - 2021. The discussion of the study limited to the practical implications for individual career development in stages of exploration (15-24 years) and Establishment (25-44 years) base on Super Theory. The study uniquely synergized on systematic assessment that combine with Islamic perspective from various source. The study shows work ethics, spiritual and manners in workplace become the trends for the Islamic Career Development's studies. It also shows that Islamic thought embraces careers as part of world's human development and 33% of the paper used Islamic scholar, al-Ghazali as a main source of information for study of Islamic Career. Other popular sources like al-Qur'an, Hadith and Islamic scholar also included in the studies. The study suggested to focus more on the significant differences between subjective and objective career development according to Islamic law in the future

**Keywords:** Systematic Review, Career Development, Spiritual Needs, Al-Ghazali, Islamic Scholar

### Introduction

A career is an important thing for every individual to think about because a person's future life is closely related to the aspirations of a career he chose. It is a part of an individual's journey of his life. The career selection is an ongoing process that begins with children's perceptions towards a profession and then develops into adolescence and early adulthood (Natasha et al., 2019). Meanwhile, a career according to Super (1957; 1977; 1990) includes the preparations made by an individual before work and also other roles performed by him after retirement. Super argues that occupational preferences and competencies, along with an individual's life situations all change with time and experience. Therefore, it can be said

that a career is all the preparation for life that include five stages base on individual ages (Growth, Exploration, Establishment, Maintenance and Decline). The best career must concern the goals that covers the stages and the hereafter's achievement as ruled by Allah. He told us to make this world as preparation for the hereafter that needs a balance between these two worlds.

The previous literatures were found rarely discussed about the relationship between career and Islam. Most literatures only focus on career development from western perspective that does not involve spiritual elements in career development (Ahmad, 2016). The trend of literatures that focusing on the connection between Islam and career were only discussed randomly and almost not systematically mapped. To overcome the problem, the study conducted an SLR survey to explore issues related to career and Islam. The researcher outlines the following research questions to determine the direction of this research paper:

- What do we know about the sources that link career development and Islam?
- How has Islamic Career been conceptualized and studied?

The study contributes a comprehensive understanding of careers from a Islamic point of view by discussing about career stage development and its relation to the Islamic perspective. The most critical part in the stage are Exploration (15-24 years) and Establishment (25-44 years) because it can be a decisive stage for your life. This study emphasizes to review all studies about career for this stage from Islamic perspective. In addition, the study designates the reference sources about career in Islamic perspectives. The study will provides better understanding about the trends of career by categorizing them into ethics, gender, aspirations and decisions. Furthermore, the study suggested to focus more on the significant differences between subjective and objective career development according to Islamic law in the future. Finally, the study recommended the future study to emphasize the human capital development in an accurate and shariah manner that may be derived from specific career models. This research paper is arranged as follows: firstly, it defines the core concepts (career and Islam) of the research in more detail. Secondly, it discusses the methodology used to conduct the survey. Thirdly, it presents results that are appropriate to the research question. The study also summarizes and evaluate these important findings and thus guide future research. The study concludes by discussing management implications and research proposals for the future.

### **Career**

Experts in career development as mentioned by Super (1957; 1977; 1990) have long emphasized the importance of career development in the education of individuals according to their age level. A career adaptability leads to a readiness to face expected and unexpected career-related tasks, transitions and trauma (Savickas, 2011) Therefore, it is not unanticipated that the concept of career has become part of the foundation of curriculum development in the West and an important holdup in their teaching and learning process (Mohamad et al., 2015) The career happens continuously and there is no time limit for it. This is an important process resulted from an individual's choice after taking into account of cost and risk factors throughout his or her life. It was a process of personality development that leads to someone's preparation towards job. The preparation is driven by natural talents, interests and abilities as well as environmental influences such as formal and informal education and training as there are necessary guide to a brilliant future career. The guidance of career development can accelerate the process of maturity, abilities and interests (Sharf, 2013). For this reason, Super (1977) argues that the process of maturity of self-concept in career

development can be a curriculum that should be learned from the individual's birth until the final stage of career development (65 years and above). A productive, professional and highly skilled manpower can be driving force for economic progress and competition. All of this requires creative and innovative career planning to prepare individuals for the career challenges of this new millennium.

### **Islamic Perspective on Career**

Islamic careers have basic elements that are not possessed by Western theory on professional, which are mental stability, knowledge, skills and experience. Mental stability is formed through good intentions, strong determination, high patience, trust in Allah and *istiqamah* (consistency) in the workplace. On the other hand, the employee is required to seek relevant knowledge, because it has a connection to the status and quality of one's work. Islam obliges a person to prioritize management skills and knowledge in order to do a good and systematic job as mention in the Quran. After gaining knowledge, skills, and experience, individuals need to understand the ways and means of performing work. In addition to technical skills, the individual also needs to have a specific strategy to produce high quality work. As a Muslim, the worldly achievement needs to be balanced with success in the hereafter and thus requires a comprehensive and balanced guide between both of them. Islam as a comprehensive religion has its own solution for the any issues aroused. Many Islamic scholars have discussed and demonstrated the methods of career development according to Islamic views such as the concept of Career Ethics in the Theory of Human Development by Al-Ghazali. Islam does not exclude the factors that has been put forward by Western researchers such as genetic, educational, learning, and environmental.

However, Islam makes religion a very important factor to be included in this discussion. Therefore, the selection of career in Islam considers religious factors as the main determinants of personal career development. Religious factors determine whether a job is halal, holy or *syubhah*. Moreover, Islamic career theory balances success and satisfaction between worldly affairs and the hereafter. The theory of human development that has been founded by Al-Ghazali (2000) in his book called *Ihya 'Ulumuddin* discusses a lot about student self-development that suits to the objectives of this study. He stressed that the importance of self-development is become necessary to the human being by observing the inside element of the human body such as *al-ruh*, *al-qalb*, *al-'aql*, *al-nafs*, body and human being (Siti, 2019). Al-Ghazali (2000) discusses a lot about human development where each of the human elements are interrelated, but the spiritual element or spirituality (*al-ruh*) needs to be cleansed first before the heart (*al-qalb*) and the mind (*al-'aql*). The thought then directs the emotions into love, sadness, frustration and will eventually turn out to physical behavior (body) and connect socially among human beings. The discussion is in line with the study of Yusof et al (2016) that expressed the main concerns of university students regarding their future jobs and their worries were so high that it put a strain on them while at the public university.

### **Methodology**

Many experts see the integration of Islam and career as a very interesting combination as these two fields are seen to go hand in hand. This integration is able to change the perception of western thinking that ignores the spiritual and manners aspects in career development. The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) analysis approach has been found to be more effective than traditional literature reviews in synthesizing the fields of career development and Islam

(Pickering & Byrne, 2014) This approach can highlight the relevant literature review in a more structured and comprehensive manner so that critical and relevant research can be conducted, while identifying research gaps that require more study (Synder, 2019). This SLR approach can be implemented by:

- a) Determine the objectives of the review;
- b) Identify keywords, databases and selection criteria for literature materials,
- c) Search for literature material and make screening whether accepted or rejected based on criteria;
- d) Evaluate the quality of literature material and structure in summary tables,
- e) Synthesize and report findings (Pickering and Byrne, 14).

### Searching Method

Since research topics on career development and Islamic thought have been discussed and studied extensively across different disciplines and concepts, it is important to set research boundaries for relevant literature and maintain a systematic review process (Snyder, 2019). This by focusing on the Scopus Indexed Journal and the Web Journal of Sciences (WOS). The literature review was conducted using several key keywords, namely: "career development: or"development "or" career figure "or" career model "or" Islamic career "or" al-Ghazali "or" Islamic scholar "or" spirituality in career "or" job satisfaction "or" job engagement "or" job search ". This study uses Boolean theory in performing search and screening through Scopus and WOS databases. This feature allows the study to perform searches using individual journal names and also obtain information from specific journals. Scopus and WOS provide quality search results as they are both high-impact journals in academic publications. This study found that the combination of searches using all keywords related to career development and Islamic thinking resulted in a high number of searches. The study also limited the selection criteria of publication articles between 2016 to 2022 to reduce the number of literature searches and obtain more up-to-date material. The data was shown in Diagram 1 and it clearly tells us about drastic interest in career's study and Islam.

### Article Selection

This study only selects research papers that report empirical findings only. For non-empirical findings such as chapters in books, theory papers, literature reviews and book reviews removed from the beginning of the study. At the initial stage, the title, abstract, keywords 'and', in some cases, the full article is examined manually to determine the relationship between Career and Islam. This SLR study on Careers and Islam covers all online full text articles available in English and Malay. Preliminary searches yielded 173 papers selected from articles contained in the indexed Journals of Scopus and W.O.S. The journal list and references of each article are listed in full using the APA format along with its full file. A second screening was conducted by assessing several criteria. First, studies that only discuss 'Career or Islam' are considered. Second, each article should discuss at least one aspect of the career perspective: Career (including Ethics, Planning, Exploration, Information and Career Decisions) and/or Al Ghazali's career perspective (Ethics, manners and spiritual aspects). All selected articles will be saved using the Mendeley application to facilitate the management of this article information.

### Categorization

In structuring the reviews, worksheet files with related groups and subgroups in columns are used to populate and retrieve input derived from articles. The table contains information about the author, journal and year of publication, career concept, job seeker well-being concept, empirical findings, theoretical framework, research context, respondents, and data analysis methods. Selected articles are categorized into a list of articles that refer to career development or that touch on Islamic Concepts. Articles related to ethics, career aspirations and gender roles are listed for which a measurement analysis is then performed to facilitate the objective and subjective identification of well-being categories. Discussions of the supporting theories and their relation to different constructions are classified in different columns for the purpose of critical analysis. The classification process is iterative and adjusted based on the results of the study. The appropriateness of this study was ensured by following a systematic search protocol and examining the coding and categorization of several rounds.

### Findings

A total of 82 articles have been published from 2016 - 2021 regarding career and Islam, and 76 % of studies were published from 2019 - 2021. Diagram 1 shows that the trend have increase from 2016 to 2021. It was a good indicator in progressing studies of Islamic career and show that many researchers interested to make it as a main focus in their studies.

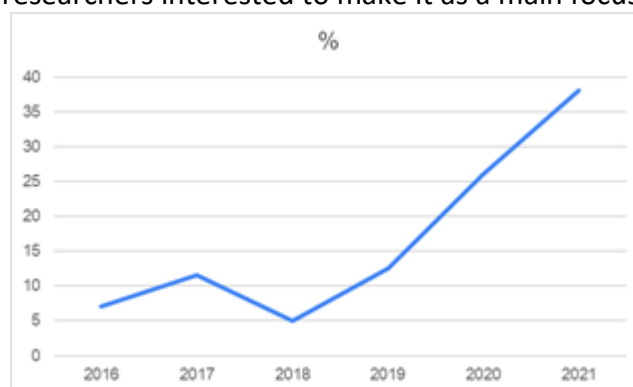


Diagram 1 Trend of studies in Islamic Career base on years

Of the review articles, about 80% studies focused on career development and employability, with 33% studies addressed the importance of career ethics, 31% studies addressed the role of woman in career through management and social support variables, 12% studies addressed utilization of competence through career decisions practices and others studies addressed the development entrepreneurship in Islam, relationship between employer and employee. Besides, the review reveals that 13% of studies embraced the objective well-being concept. The review demonstrates 61% of studies covering Asian context, 30% on European context, 7% on the USA context and 2% on Oceania context. Moreover, we find about 9% of the review studies addressing multiple countries. We find that 25% of review studies drawn sample from management, 15% from the primary worker and 10% studies from the students. While most review studies relied on cross-sectional research and primary survey, we find 15% of review studies employing time-lagged survey design and 20% studies using secondary data. The review shows 7% of studies collecting human capital data from senior managers and 5% from religious comparison between Islam and other religion.

**Findings of Review 1: The main source of reference in the study of Careers and Islam**

Based on a review of the articles that have been evaluated, 33% of the researchers refer their study to the opinion of Imam al-Ghazali. He produced many scholarly works in the fields of career and economics. In his book *Ihya Ulumiddin*, Al-Ghazali discusses in detail in a special chapter on how Islamic career ethics in the Book of *Adab al-Aqli*, also related to work manners and earning a living in the Book of *Adab Al-Kasbi Wa Al Ma'asyi*. Even in a study conducted by Suprihatin et al. (2018), found that Imam al-Ghazali's scholarly works talk a lot about the elements of careers in various fields. He was given the title of *Hujjah al-Islam* because of his expertise in various fields of knowledge using the Islamic *manhaj*.

Meanwhile, 21% of the survey list collected career-related articles based on the Quran and sunnah. References to the Quran and hadith are often made when referring to basic questions in Islamic careers such as the direction of Islamic careers, halal and haram in careers and others. Some quote verses from the Qur'an that revolve around careers, including "And We have sent down to you the Book (the Qur'an) to explain everything." (*An-Nahl*: 89) and the hadith narrated by 'Aisyah, that the Prophet Muhammad said: meaning "Surely Allah loves a person who when he teaches a work, he performs brilliantly". Narrated by al-Tabarani in *al-Mu'jam al-Awsath* (897) and al-Baihaqi in *Syu'ab al-Iman* (4929, 4930 and 4931) but with different sanad. Even in the field of career counseling itself many researchers have made the Quran and Hadith as their main source of reference when incorporating Islamic elements in the counseling process performed (Musa et al., 2018). Next, 3% of the study made other prominent Islamic figures as reference sources such as Yusuf Al-Qaradhawi and Assyafie. This paper focuses on the discussion related to the career of women, which gathers the opinions of scholars of the *Syafi'iyyah* school whether it is permissible or otherwise. This writing is carried out on the basis of Islamic law by quoting the views of scholars of the *Shafi'i* school. And the remaining 37% are Islamic career studies taken from several countries such as Indonesia, Syria, UAE, British, Canadian, American and Muslims living outside the country of origin. The study found various Islamic perspectives that have been practiced even in various different civilizations.

**Findings of Review 2: The concept of Career in Islam which is a trend of researchers**

Career is a discipline with a wide scope such as career development, career ethics, career planning and many more. A systematic review of articles in the trend of Islamic career studies found that the sub -topic of Islamic Career Ethics was a popular topic where 33% of studies on it were recorded. Career ethics are peeled not only on employee codes of conduct but also cover employee-employer relations, top-subordinate management and teamwork ethics according to Islam (Zaim et al., 2021). Work ethic is very important in being a working guideline in every human being and creating harmony in the work environment (Ahmad, 2011). Ethics according to this Islamic perspective refers to morality which means every behavior that is accepted as customary and not contrary to sharia. In fact, Imam al-Ghazali emphasized that the concept of morality is not merely a knowledge or ability to do a practice but it is the truth about the situation of the soul which is the cause of a behavior. If an individual behaves well then it is said that he has good morals and vice versa. While Miskawayh (1977) detailed morality as a state of a person's soul formed naturally and feelings formed through daily habits and also Exercise. Al-Maududi (1967) has outlined the Islamic Work Ethics that (1) Employers or employees must perform work responsibly, (2) Good or bad work is determined by Al-Qur'an and As-Sunnah, (3) Principles and values of work Islam is

universal (acceptable to anyone), (4) Islam is a religion of peace and prosperity, and (5) Work should be done according to admirable morals.

Diagram 2 show that the second theme that is the highest trend is gender in employment, namely the role of women in employment. In the early 20th century, topics related to women in careers according to Islam were less of an in-depth discussion or study (Muhamad, 2021). Based on this SLR study, it is clear that the latest gender issues, especially the position of women in their careers according to the Islamic perspective, are beginning to be the main topic of debate and discussion. The findings of the study clearly show that Islam does not prevent women from working even most scholars allow women to be part of the top management as evidenced in the study of (Abdullah et al., 2021). Most Muslim families in these modern times encourage women to work and have their own income. In fact, the researchers also linked the wives of the Prophet also have their own careers such as Syaidatina Khadijah r.a who is a successful businessman (Makrufi, 2016).

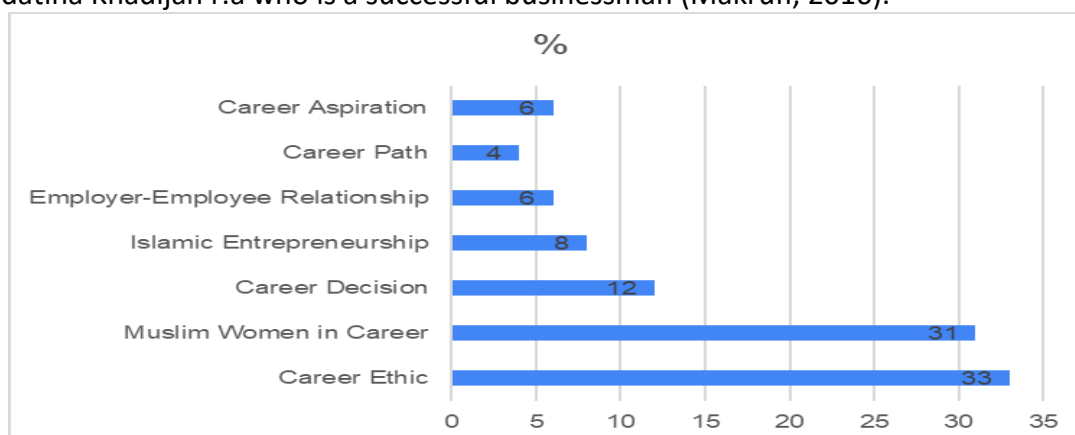


Diagram 2 Concept of Career in Islam which is a trend of researchers

Furthermore, the concept of career choice is also the topic of the researcher's choice study where they state that individual career choice should be examined to the elements that exist in the human self and those related to it include *al-ruh*, *al-qalb*, *al-'aql* and *al-nafs* (Hamjah, 2016; Hassan, 2019). According to Badaruddin (2016), the book *Ihya 'Ulumuddin* by al-Ghazali discusses a lot about human development in a career where each of the human elements is interrelated, but the spiritual or spiritual element (*al-ruh*) needs to be cleansed first before affecting the heart (*al-qalb*) as well as the mind (*al-'aql*). The thought then direct the emotions into love, sadness, frustration and will eventually turn out to physical behavior (body) and connect socially among human beings. This will make the decision to pursue a career to meet the balance of individual needs in the worldly and *ukhrawi*. The balance of these two elements is able to be a catalyst for individual career success and stimulate their productivity towards greater excellence.

While other topics that are chosen by the researcher are such as entrepreneurship, employee-employer relationship, career aspirations and work quality assessment. These topics are discussed together either as a comparison between conventional and Islamic careers or making Islam the main reference to discuss the topic. Discussions and studies like this can further enhance the spiritual value in career development either for individuals or the development of a society.



## Discussion

Islamic careers outcomes have been overlooked in existing career development literature partly because few studies have highlighted broader viewpoints of career development concept. A career is more than the result of a job; their behavioral perspectives and attitudes need to be aligned with their religious goals to achieve a quality career in this world and the hereafter (Ahmad, 2021). Careers and its development from Islamic perspective are intrinsically related, although empirical studies have focused more on the latter perspectives. Islam, as a conceptual consideration of spirituality, is hardly explored. A review of the literature offers a broader view of Islam and career development and explains the theoretical notions that underlie the relationship of human and spiritual capital. The review also emphasizes that more than one theory can explain the potential mechanisms of career development and the spiritual aspects in some cases. In the following sections, we summarize and critically evaluate the research findings and discuss the urgent research needs

### ***Need to consider a broader view of Career Development and Islamic concept***

The review highlights some significant differences in the conceptualization and measure of career development construct from conventional career theories and Islamic Perspective especially in terms of spirituality. Solely relying on traditional measures of career development (e.g. planning, exploration, career decision and career information) will undermine the comprehensiveness of the career construct. Those categorical elements chronicling one's achievements have represented a state of career readiness, which often lacks conformity with actual job requirements and lacks relevance with up-to-date working behaviour (Etherington, 2017). We also argue that solely dependant on job-skill without Manners might fail to capture an appropriate description of career development because of the circumstances of job-personality mismatch and work diversity across religious (Zaim, 2021). Likewise, the valuation of career performance by reporting personality-interest matching (Holland, 2011), which does not consider spirituality factor at work, might be distorted. Human capital is more dynamic and contingent on the career readiness, value and uniqueness level (Lepak, 1999). Human capital measures should include proximal *adab* indicators assessing one's level of functionality and readiness for work performance. We argue that appropriate appreciation of *adab* in human capital encapsulates the type of knowledge and skills employees acquire to perform their job and entails how and from whom they obtain.

However, Islam makes religion a very important factor to be included in this discussion. al-Qur'an is a guide and reference for humans in providing information on human biology and mentality, the need for humans to be religious and moral in nourishing the spiritual element in themselves (Manawi, 2022). Therefore, the selection of career in Islam considers religious factors as the main determinants of personal career development (Abdul Aziz, 2017). Religious factors determine whether a job is *halal*, holy or *syubhah*. Moreover, Islamic career theory balances success and satisfaction between worldly affairs and the hereafter. The theory of human development that has been founded by Al-Ghazali (2000) in his book called *Ihya 'Ulumuddin* discusses a lot about student self-development that suits to the objectives of this study. He stressed that the importance of self-development has become necessary to the human being by observing the inside element of the human body such as *al-ruh*, *al-qalb*, *al-'aql*, *al-nafs*, body and human being (Hamjah, 2016). There is also a discussion that emphasizes the term soul in psycho-spiritual relationships. The soul is one of the elements of psychology that is intimately tied to one's spirituality. According to al-Ghazali, the soul, or *al-*

*nafs*, has two connotations. The first is desire, which leads to the essence of man's rage and lust. This term is widely used to denote repulsive characteristics. Second, the term of "*Latifah Rabbani*" which is the actuality of human beings and their essences. It differentiates humans from animals (Noor, 2020).

The book of *Ihya 'Ulumuddin* by al-Ghazali discusses a lot about human development where each of the human elements are interrelated, but the spiritual element or spirituality (*al-ruh*) needs to be cleansed first before the heart (*al-qalb*) and the mind (*al-'aql*). The thought then direct the emotions into love, sadness, frustration and will eventually turn out to physical behavior (body) and connect socially among human beings. The discussion is in line with the study of Yusof (2016) that expressed the main concerns of university students regarding their future jobs and their worries were so high that it put a strain on them while at the public university.

### ***Expanding Muslim Women Role in Career Development***

Women's involvement in careers is one of the topics discussed by researchers. Some researchers argue that the career patterns of women and men are significantly different. Women define success in a career more holistically than men. Their career development model is unique and is part of a larger discussion about career and personal life (Didem, 2022). Studies show that the tendency of Muslim women to pursue careers in various fields has increased significantly. In fact, careers at the professional and top management levels also show an increase from year to year among Muslim women. Policies in some Muslim countries have also allocated a certain percentage to be given to women holding positions in decision-making and national policy-making (Tasnim, 2020). For example, the *National Women's Policy* which was introduced by the Malaysian government in 2009 through the *Women Development Action Plan* has detailed the actions to be taken by Government agencies, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and civil society covering 13 sectors namely the economy; poverty; law; violence against women; health; education and training; science and technology; decision maker; women's development mechanisms, machinery and institutions; media; environment; sports; and culture, arts and heritage. In the strategy the plan has also promoted career paths for women in all fields including to reach at least 30% women at the decision-making level. The implementation of this policy has shown encouraging progress where some high and important positions that have never been held before by women have been successfully held by women such as Vice Chancellor of Public University, judges, district officers and senior police and military officers. Following these results, key public sector positions (JUSA) held by women increased from 18.8 per cent in 2004 to 25.8 per cent in 2007; ambassadors from 10.0 per cent in 2006 to 15.6 per cent in 2007; and high commissioners from 4.3 per cent in 2006 to 40.0 per cent in 2007. Based on the above facts, it turns out that the preaching of Islam as an obstacle to women's advancement in career and national development is a complete mistake (Parizi, 2021).

### **Conclusion**

This study has successfully achieved its objective to study the latest trends in the study of work in Islam and reference sources that are the choice of researchers to refer to. The findings of the study as discussed clearly show an increase in interest among researchers towards careers according to the Islamic perspective. Further studies need to be done in the future to see the justification to the trends that are preferred and sources of reference to career

discussions in Islam. This allows a more detailed explanation of the current phenomenon in the study of careers in Islam.

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