



Optimizing Website Ranking Using Long-Tail Keywords and Internal Linking: A Case Study

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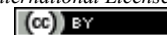
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Abstract

This study proposes a structured and cost-effective Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy through the application of long-tail keyword targeting and internal linking. Conducted across three websites within the same corporate group, this research investigates how internal links and keyword mapping can collectively improve organic rankings. Each high-volume keyword was developed into long-tail variations and implemented into topic-specific articles, supported by contextual internal and cross-site linking. Website A, as the parent site, was used strategically to distribute link authority to other sites. In a two-month observation, keyword rankings showed significant improvements, particularly for underperforming domains. The results confirm that collaborative SEO using content relevance and internal link equity distribution can enhance visibility without relying on paid backlinks.

Keywords: *SEO, Long-Tail Keyword, Internal Linking, Link Equity, Website Ecosystem.*

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1. Introduction

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is essential to improve the position of sites in search engine lists [1] as well as a critical technique to deliver information with significant advantage [2]. Out of all the SEO techniques, internal linking and long-tail keywords are favorites due to their effectiveness and low cost. Long-tail keywords, which comprise the majority of web search traffic, offer higher intent match and conversion potential compared to general, high-volume keywords[3]. On the other hand, internal linking supports SEO performance by improving crawlability, guiding search engine bots, and distributing authority between pages [4]. Several studies, such as [5], have proven that long-tail keyword targeting can produce more traffic from niche audiences. Others, such as [6], point to the role of internal linking for improving crawlability and authority. This strategy is critical in the age of content overload [7]. However, little literature addresses how these efforts interact in a multi-site SEO context[8].

This study plugged that gap by studying an SEO strategy implemented on three related websites. One of the websites ranked consistently higher and provided the internal links to the other two sites, to transfer link equity. This site-to-site strategy was intended to boost the rankings of all participating long-tail keywords. This study aims to examine how long-tail keyword planning and internal linking, cross-site linking affect search engine keyword rankings. The research foretells that employing these methods in combination will create measurable ranking improvement within a period of time.

2. Research Methods

This study adopts a descriptive case study approach, tracing the implementation of SEO strategies on three sites of companies from the same corporate group. One belongs to the mother company (Company A) and two are subsidiaries (Company B and Company C), each under a different business line, but the same industry niche, Japanese internship programs. The study was conducted from May to June 2025 (latest rank position) to establish how long-tail keyword utilization and internal linking contribute to improving search engine ranking.

The SEO strategy followed several key steps. The first step was to perform keyword research, using Ahrefs to identify search intents and create long-tail keyword variations based on the main terms from each website. This reflects suggestion from [9] and [10] who emphasized aligning keyword strategy with user search relevance to improve SERP position and click behavior to make use of data analytics in SEO on a search intent and

contextual basis to tailor the keyword strategy and shape the content in a manner that optimizes search effectiveness.

Once we identified the keywords, we wrote and published over 100 SEO articles across the three websites followed by content optimization on on-page SEO practice [11], including heading structure, internal link placement and meta tag optimization [12],[13]. Any SEO content was created by grouping around topic clusters and providing context through rational internal linking. From Website A, a higher domain authority site than Website B and C, we created strategic cross-site linking with intended link equity distribution to Websites B and C [9]. This approach demonstrates the "SEO Mix" model by [4] which demonstrates that content, keyword strategy, and technical architecture can operate as one cohesive system.

The final step was technical optimization through Yoast SEO, ensuring consistency with the keyword strategy and proper placement, readability of content, linking structure, and call-to-actions (CTAs) as structure data for comprehensive audit framework of creating the content[14]. Secure SEO techniques such as these are also highlighted by [15] as critical for sustained ranking and website security performance.

2.1. Keyword Research and Mapping

The keyword research process began with proposing and looking for strategic search terms for each of the three websites in the same business group.

Table 1. Main keyword, position and search volume for each company

Company A	Position	Volume	Company B	Position	Volume	Company C	Position	Volume
Japan Internship	2	1000	Japan Internship Caregiver	2	0–10	Japan Internship	>100	1000
Japan Internship Training Institute	1	50	Japan Internship Elderly Care	2	0–10	Internship Training Institute	>100	50
SO Japan Internship	3	10	Internship Caregiver Institute	1	0–10	SO Japan Internship	91	10
Work in Japan	19	450	Japan Internship Elderly Care Institute	2	0–10	Work in Japan	>100	450
SSW Japan	n/a	30	SO Japan Internship Caregiver	1	0–10			
P3MI Japan	n/a	10	Work in Japan Caregiver	8	0–10			
Tokutei Ginou Japan	n/a	150	Work in Japan Elderly Care	9	0–10			
P3MI Tokutei Ginou Japan	n/a	0–10						
Free Internship to Japan	14	200						

Website A being the parent company targeted general and high frequency terms like *magang Jepang* (1000, rank 2), *lpk magang Jepang* (50, rank 1), and *kerja Jepang* (450, rank 19), which reflected general people's interest. Website B, which is an industry subsidiary in the caregiver sector, focused on niche keywords such as *magang Jepang caregiver* and *kerja Jepang caregiver*, with low volumes (0–10) but good positions (mostly top 3), addressing more specific audiences. Website C, which likely handled agriculture or manufacturing internships, shared the same keywords as Website A but performed poorly (*magang Jepang* >100), an indication of poor visibility.

Table 2. example of long-tail keyword mapping based on search volume

Main Keyword	Derived/Long-Tail Keywords	Volume	Companies
LPK Japan Internship >200	lpk japan internship	200	Company A, Company B, Company C
	cost of interning in Japan via lpk	200	Company A, Company B, Company C
	list of trusted lpk japan internship	100	Company A, Company B, Company C
	lpk japan internship with funding	100	Company A, Company B, Company C
	lpk japan internship in Bandung	40	Company A, Company B, Company C
	nearest lpk japan internship	20	Company A, Company B, Company C
	lpk japan internship in Bekasi	20	Company A, Company B, Company C
	lpk japan internship to Japan	10	Company A, Company B, Company C
	lpk japan internship caregiver	0–10	Company B
	lpk japan internship elderly care	0–10	Company B

Each main keyword was expanded into long-tail keywords using Ahrefs based on user intent and volume. For example, main keyword: “*lpk magang jepang*”, long tail keyword: “*lpk magang ke jepang dana talang*”. This keyword mapping later helped in the internal and cross-site linking strategy, where the same articles on different domains were semantically interlinked to build authority and improve keyword rankings on search engines.

2.2. Internal and Cross-site Linking

The keyword research process began with looking for strategic search terms for each of the three websites. To help support content performance, the articles were internally linked together in topic clusters. In addition, Company A, the main company with stronger domain authority, added strategic contextual links to pertinent articles placed on the subsidiary websites (Companies B and C). This helped to distribute link equity within the same business group to help boost the search visibility of lower-performing sites without relying on paid backlinks. According to [16] internal linking strategies that balance contextual flow and keyword clustering are crucial for transferring link authority efficiently between pages.

Table 3. example table of relations between the three websites

Keyword	Linked (From to)	First rank	Note
Japan Internship	A to C	A (2), C (>100)	Boost website C position
lpk japan internship	A to C	A (1), C (>100)	Boost website C visibilities
SO Japan Internship	A to B & C	A (3), B(1), C (91)	Ratified the visibilities between the website companies
((Japan Internship (A)) caregiver (B))	A to B	B (2)	Strengthen relevance and authority

As a high-level step for increasing overall group-wide SEO performance, the process of cross-linking was used. Website A had the main domain site with solid rankings, so the cross-link content was similar on Websites B and C, which were competing for similar, related keywords. For example, the keyword *magang Jepang* (rank 2 on Website A) was cross-linked with Website C, which had its keyword (*magang Jepang*) ranked very low (rank >100). The same strategy was implemented for *LPK Magang Jepang* to raise the relevance and ranking of Website C.

All three websites have the “*magang Jepang*” keywords that were cross-linked from A to both B and C to help level the exposure. This will help balance out the exposure, particularly since B has already taken & retained the number 1 spot and C just needed some help in moving from their current rank, respectively above 100. In some of the niche content, for example, on the “*Magang Jepang caregiver*” side of Website A, the linking aided its domain authority by linking the caregiver pages on Website B. These links were placed contextually within the content so that they fostered a good reading path while also distributing link equity with respect. This goal to both assists the user navigation experience and increase the authority and SERP rankings of lower domains within the same ecosystem.

2.3. Technical Optimization

All of the articles are optimizing using Yoast SEO to meet on-page SEO standards. Optimization involved having keywords in headings and body content, correct link structure, readability enhanced through short and active sentences [17], and implementing clear Call to Actions (CTAs) at the end of every article.

2.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Performance was monitored two months by using manual search and tools like Serprobot, Semrush and other relevant tools. The most significant performance metrics were keyword ranking change. The values were measured using a before-and-after analysis to determine the impact of strategies. Long-tail keyword focus and linking tactics were the independent variables, while main keyword position within Google SERPs was the dependent variable.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Data Description

Table 4. Keyword Ranking Overview (May 5 – June 19, 2025)

Keywords - Website A	Weekly Position							
	Initial	05/08	05/15	05/20	05/28	06/05	06/12	06/19
Japan Internship	2	1	2	2	2	2	3	3
Japan Internship Training Institute (LPK)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sending Organization Japan Internship	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Work in Japan	19	4	3	4	3	3	4	4
Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) Japan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Indonesian Migrant Worker Placement Agency (P3MI)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Tokutei Ginou (Specified Skills) Japan	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P3MI for Tokutei Ginou Japan	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
Free Internship to Japan	14	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
How to Work in Japan for University Graduates	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SO Agency for Japan Internship	-	2	3	3	2	2	2	2
How to Work in Japan for High School Graduates	-	7	5	4	4	2	2	2
Internship to Japan	-	2	3	2	3	3	3	3
Japan Internship Institute with Funding Assistance	-	-	-	2	2	2	2	2

Keywords - Website B	Weekly Position							
	Initial	05/08	05/15	05/20	05/28	06/05	06/12	06/19
Japan Internship Caregiver	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Japan Internship Elderly Care	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Japan Internship Training Institute – Caregiver	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Japan Internship Training Institute – Elderly Care	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Sending Organization Japan Internship – Caregiver	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Work in Japan as Caregiver	8	1	1	1	3	1	2	1
Work in Japan as Elderly Caregiver	9	4	1	3	3	2	3	4
How to Work as a Nurse in Japan	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Net Salary of Internship in Japan	-	1	4	3	3	3	3	3
Working Hours in Japan	-	7	4	4	4	4	6	5
Kaigo Internship Salary in Japan	-	1	1	1	1	-	-	-
Internship to Japan with Funding Support	-	-	-	-	-	7	7	7

Keywords - Website C	Weekly Position							
	Initial	05/08	05/15	05/20	05/28	06/05	06/12	06/19
Japan Internship	100+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Japan Internship Training Institute (LPK)	100+	10	-	-	-	-	-	-
Sending Organization for Japan Internship	91	-	-	10	10	7	10	-
Work in Japan	100+	5	6	6	7	7	7	8
Internship Salary in Japan	-	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
How to Work in Japan	-	2	5	4	1	2	1	5
Salary for Internship Work in Japan	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Internship Salary in Japan	-	2	2	1	1	1	1	1

Work in Japanese Agriculture	-	3	2	3	3	3	3	3
How to Work in Japanese Agriculture	-	3	3	3	4	4	4	4
Net Internship Salary in Japan	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
How Vocational School Graduates Can Work in Japan	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Difference Between Internship and TG Salary in Japan	-	3	3	3	3	1	1	1
How to Be Able to Work in Japan	-	3	3	3	3	3	4	4
Agricultural Internship Salary in Japan	-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
How High School Graduates Can Work in Japan	-	5	5	6	6	4	3	3

Keyword ranking data indicated that there were some trends for each site's ranking for the company. Website A was the top in general institutional keywords, where "*magang Jepang*" was still in the top three. Website A, "*Magang ke Jepang Gratis*," did a lot better, from position 14 to position 1, which it then held later. Website B, which is very caregiver-focused in its topic, was the top with 1 per target keyword, e.g., "*magang Jepang caregiver*" and "*kerja Jepang caregiver*," which are of high topical authority. Website C experienced the greatest rate of increase, with the most words, which were not ranked, e.g., "*magang Jepang*" and "*perbedaan magang dan TG di Jepang*," ranking 1 mid-June. Website C contains a few keywords, such as "*cara kerja di Jepang*," that have experienced significant result in rankings, though it will take more time to be able to determine whether or not indexing has caused stability. The positions otherwise tend to show how effective the following SEO techniques are within the time frame since the first matches.

3.2. Discussion

The search engine optimization (SEO) strategy implemented in this analysis indicates that a combination of long-tail keyword mapping, contextual linking, and internal cross-domain structures not only significantly boost keyword rankings but improves the semantic relationship between content clusters[4], [14], especially on domains that have seen little to no impact to date. The findings of the research is align with previous research by [9], which asserts that online analytics-based approaches like that used in this strategy increases SEO performance using data-driven insights to make decisions about content and where to place keywords.

Additionally, the internal linking strategy used in this research is similar to the hub-and-spoke approach; where core content (on the parent site) is leveraged to provide authority and contextual relevancy of articles linked to other sites. Much of this practice follows from the SEO Mix framework introduced by [4], which states that internal site structure and cross-linking aligned with user intent and keyword clusters can add value to user experience and be indexed more closely by search engines.

The overall success of Website B, which had a dominant presence in caregiver-related keywords, as well as the growth amongst its keywords relating to Website C that reflect the findings by [18], points to the effectiveness of a structured cross-website SEO strategy across same ecosystem site. Similarly, [12] found that targeting long-tail keywords using optimized page structure improves indexing efficiency and user engagement. This study would therefore reaffirm that allocation of internal link equity and content clustering are pivotal components of organic search success [19], [20], [21], especially when other money efforts towards backlinks are unattainable.

In practical terms, these ranking upgrades can generate greater targeted traffic and increased brand awareness. It is an affordable method of creating awareness, spreading page authority and developing long-term business growth without resorting to paid advertising [12]. Additionally, [22]point to the rising importance of UX-driven SEO approaches, where internal linking and semantic alignment directly influence user retention and indexing quality

4. Conclusion

This research investigated the use and effects of implementing long-tail keyword mapping, internal and cross-site linking, as well as technical optimization on three websites owned by a single company. Results show that contextual linking and focused keyword clustering not only boosted the visibility of underperforming sites, but also helped preserve strong rankings for the high-authority pages.

While Company A maintained top positions for more general keywords, Company B was winning its niche as a top caregiver company. Although starting at very low visibility, Company C realized substantial ranking growth by leveraging targeted inbound links from its parent company and utilizing long-tail keywords. The collective SEO approach leveraging content relevance and internal link equity improved organic search rankings without paid backlinks. This optimization technique shown by the three websites can be adapted and replicated across other SEO needs [23].

In addition, changes in keyword rankings along with indexing patterns confirmed that factors like timing of publication, semantic congruency between content and its description, and overall link structure are some of the critically important technical determinants determining how fast content shows up on search engines. From the research, the following suggestions can be put forward:

1. Continuous Evaluation: SEO is always changing. Routine monitoring for keywords and performing technical audits need to be done for better ranking maintenance.
2. Scheduled Content Revisions: Articles that have been written previously need to be updated with new information as well as internal links to maintain rank retention.
3. Evaluation of Engagement Results: Evaluating rank position results should also include engagement results like click through rate (CTR), bounce rate, and session duration in order to enhance user engagement analysis.
4. Wider Scope: Other domains could apply repeat attempts with these proposed plans on other websites or industries which are unrelated and study how far these outcomes reach.
5. Other Focus Boosting Factors: Improving the mobile responsiveness, speed of the page and structured data (schema markup) might assist in faster indexing and retention of rank further.

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