

Determinants of Internship Satisfaction: Study of the Management Undergraduates of a Leading State University in Sri Lanka

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L. P. J. R. Samendra¹ and T. D. Weerasinghe²

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.¹

Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka².

Abstract:

Internship training has become an integral part of management degree programs offered in state and private universities in Sri Lanka. Even though the academic world focuses on internship training, a little attention has been given to examine the internship satisfaction. However, the internship satisfaction considered a critical factor in creating the desired graduate. Therefore, the current study attempts to examine, the determinants of internship satisfaction of commerce and management undergraduates providing the evidence from a leading state university in Sri Lanka. In addition to that, this study intends to contribute to filling the literature gap by investigating the associations between the determinants: university support; job characteristics; working environment; and the contextual factors with the internship satisfaction. Hence, this was a quantitative, cross-sectional study in which primary data were collected through a standard questionnaire distributed as an online google form to a sample of 237 final year undergraduates of the University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka selected via the simple random sampling technique. Correlation and simple regression analysis were used to test the advanced hypotheses with the aid of SPSS and Excel. Findings reveal a significant positive impact of university support, job characteristics, working environment, and contextual factors on internship satisfaction of management undergraduates in the context. Accordingly, it is concluded that, if there is satisfaction in any of these four factors (university support, job characteristics, working environment, and contextual factors) the interns will be retained in that organization. The study results underlined that, if the right and preferred methodologies are being adopted in internships, interns will be able to obtain a greater level of exposure from their internships. Furthermore, this study raises the need for stakeholders to look at the determinants of internship satisfaction in a more serious and holistic approach.

Keywords: *Contextual factors, Internship satisfaction, Job characteristics, University support, Working environment*

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Introduction

One of the goals of the Ministry of Higher Education, Sri Lanka is to improve the employability of graduates. However, currently the job market faces difficulty in absorbing the rising number of graduates who are seeking employment. One of the main reasons behind this issue includes the lack of working experience among university graduates and the misconception that these graduates have no enough capability to suit the market demand (Jean, Kawai, Rong, Chi & Yin, 2012). As a result of that, internship programs have been included in the curriculum of higher education providers and have been made a compulsory requirement for graduation in universities and many other higher education institutions in Sri Lanka.

Though the undergraduates possess a significant level of knowledge sometimes they are unable to apply that knowledge into practical problems and situations. Some graduates perceive that their education is not enough for them to enter into the corporate world (Maskooki, Rama & Raghunandan, 1998 as cited in Gupta, Burns & Schiferl, 2010). Hence, in most of the degree programs it is compulsory for the undergraduates to attend an internship before the completion of their course module as it adapts the undergraduates to the corporate world. The theory knowledge itself is not enough, so that, the experiential education becomes mandatory for undergraduates. One form of experiential education facilitated by the universities to fill this gap is the internship programs. Internships provide an adequate amount of practical knowledge on businesses for management undergraduates (Gupta, Burns & Schiferl, 2010).

On one hand, companies expect from the graduates, the ability to apply subject knowledge in the business world practically before they come into the corporate world (Arts, *et al*, 2006 as cited in Dabke, 2015). On the other hand, educational institutes face the challenge of developing the skills needed to prepare university students for employment. Undergraduate students are enriched with the knowledge gained from their degree programs. Nevertheless, students must have the soft skills to solve practical problems to meet the challenges of the modern business environment. An internship with academic knowledge facilitates the creation of the perfect graduate who can cope with the problems of the practical business world. An internship is defined as: "an opportunity to integrate the work-related experience into graduate education by participating in scheduled and supervised work" (Gault, *et al*, 2010 as cited in Dabke, 2015). Having an internship training is an advantage for undergraduates and it enriches their experience with the real business world.

However, the essence of a successful internship relies on the level of internship satisfaction. Internship satisfaction is defined as a set of psychological attitudes towards the work done by the intern. Satisfaction with the internship depends on the correspondence of the outcome of the work with the intern's internal needs (Staribratov, 2019).

Students who have had a satisfactory internship experience have a positive attitude towards the university in which they have studied and the future job search process

(Paulins, 2008). Increasing satisfaction among interns will improve the university student and benefit the host companies as well; working with a greater commitment to companies that give internship training, Decrease in absenteeism rate (Dabke, 2015).

The leading factors that the researcher-led to study this issue were: there are very few studies have been done on internship satisfaction until recently, as an undergraduate and intern it is very interesting to study about this area and, this is a timely issue and should study about this soon because the internship effectiveness and internship future career progress depends on the level of internship satisfaction (as cited in Dissanayaka, 2016). This is a problem that occurs frequently. So, the situation of this issue is not like a one-time occurring and disappearing problem. That is why this should be studied. For this research problem, there is no comprehensive solution, and the evidence available in existing literature is not consistent. This inconsistency in extant literature led to conduct this research and investigate further about this scenario.

There is a paucity of research on internship satisfaction; especially in developing countries (D'Abate, Youndt & Wenzel, 2009; Jean, *et al*, 2012). Since Sri Lanka is in the category of developing countries, it is expected that this study will fill the mentioned gap to a certain extent. To date, no studies have been conducted to elucidate individual satisfaction with their internship experiences in the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya. So, there is a contextual gap as well. Further, policy decisions and guidelines in state universities become a timely necessity for effective and satisfactory implementation of internships to achieve the desired results through internships (Dissanayaka, 2016).

Problem of the Study

The number of unemployed graduates in Sri Lanka is increasing day by day. The unemployment rate is high, especially among skilled young people. Lack of proper practical training or shortcomings in practical training is one of the main reasons of Sri Lankan unemployed graduates which hinders the access to the job market. Eradicating graduate unemployment has become a timely necessity by encouraging institutional participation in effective internship trainings. Successful solutions to this graduate unemployment problem cannot be achieved through unsatisfactory internship trainings. Considering all these factors it seems, it has become a timely necessity to find out what causes the internship satisfaction in internship training (Jean, *et al*, 2012). However, only a very few studies have been conducted in the domain of internship satisfaction (Jean, *et al*, 2012). Having considered the above reported background information the below research question is raised in the current study.

What are the significant determinants of internship satisfaction of the undergraduates of the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka?

Objectives of the Study

General Objective

The general objective of this study is to identify the significant determinants of internship satisfaction among the undergraduates in the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies, University of Kelaniya. Further, the following specific objectives were established to be achieved in the current study.

Specific Objectives

- i. To assess the effect of university support on internship satisfaction of undergraduates.
- ii. To assess the effect of job characteristics on internship satisfaction of undergraduates.
- iii. To assess the effect of the working environment on internship satisfaction of undergraduates.
- iv. To assess the effect of contextual factors on internship satisfaction of undergraduates.

Significance of the Study

Internship satisfaction of commerce and management undergraduates of the University of Kelaniya has not been studied before in a scientific research study. So, on one hand, that is why this is a unique study. Content and the Context are also new. From that angle, this study is new. Bridging that gap in the content and the context of this study will provide valuable insights at the end. And upon which future researchers, consultants, trainers, business analysts, and policymakers can take respective decisions in the context.

Since the University of Kelaniya is one of the premier institutes of management education in Sri Lanka, this research is expected to be useful in enhancing the quality and satisfaction of future internships at the University of Kelaniya. Further, this study will be useful for other universities that have internships to effectively develop and maintain their internship programs. This will guide for universities to direct students to get the training from companies that have high internship satisfaction. The university will be able to establish relationships with top companies and further strengthen existing relationships by sending undergraduates to internship programs and providing an effective service to those companies. Moreover, this research will be useful for future researchers as a reference if they wish to do related research.

Furthermore, the results of this research will enable organizations to attract, recruit, and retain highly skilled interns. Companies can take steps to provide a satisfying learning experience for the interns and increase their productivity. Knowing how students' satisfaction with the internship they offer will be useful for the HRM professionals to

get an idea of how to redesign and improve their internship program structure to retain outstanding interns as permanent employees in the future. The study is expected to serve as a preliminary step towards a broader discourse on internship satisfaction.

Literature Review

Internship Satisfaction

According to Staribratov (2019), satisfaction with internship training is a set of psychological attitudes that the intern has in his/her mind about his or her activities. Labour activity motivation and labour satisfaction play a significant role in the profession's adaptation and self-identification process. The job satisfaction of the interns depends on the extent to which the results of the work correspond to the needs of the interns. There are various ideas in the scientific literature that describe the level of satisfaction with internship training among young and under-experienced newcomers. However, most of them have incorporated their ideas into the following trends:

As mentioned by Gupta, Burns, and Schiferl (2010) it is evident that students who have gained more work experience through internship training will benefit more when finding a job and building a career. They are more likely to stay in the same company where they interned. The opportunity to find employment within the internship training company itself plays a huge role in increasing student internship satisfaction (Staribratov, 2019). Citing evidence from Staribratov (2019) Freeston *et al.*, (2007) mentioned that students who were treated by their host companies as part-time workers showed lower internship satisfaction.

Seyitoglu and Yirik (2015) assessed internship satisfaction among a sample of medical / hospitality students. They used five dimensions to see which of them contributed to the success of their internship. Those five dimensions were; payment during internship training, payments for overtime work, lack of overtime, fair management behaviour, and provide internship training throughout the internship period. Stansbie (2012) mentioned that there are nine factors which affect internship satisfaction. Those nine dimensions are, skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback from job, feedback from agents, dealing with others, pay and benefits receive from the internship. Citing evidence from Sovilla and Varty's (2004), Stansbie (2012) mentioned that, in terms of literature much attention has been paid to the studies related to the internship process and its connection to HR practice. There is little attention paid in the literature on internship satisfaction (D'Abate, Youndt & Wenzel, 2009). Having demonstrated a significant gap in published research in this research area, the purpose of this study is to identify and assess factors that contribute to internship satisfaction; especially in Sri Lankan context.

Moreover, this study examines internship satisfaction focusing on four main factors: university support, job characteristics, organizational environment, and the contextual factors.

University Support

Gryski, Johnson, and O'Toole (1987) found that strong administration of internship training programs and clear identification will increase the likelihood of success. The key to a satisfying internship program is to maintain regular contact with site supervisors and university supervisors, have regular visits, and interns to regularly consult their internship consultants. Citing evidence from Fagan and Wise (2007), Hussien and Lopa (2018) stated that in the event of unexpected problems in the course of the internship the university supervisors need the assistance of the University for Consultation.

Job Characteristics

Citing evidence from Steers and Porter (1991), D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel (2009) stated that job characteristics are a set of variables about the duties and tasks the employee does while he or she is employed. In this research job characteristics covers areas such as skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback.

As stated by Wubuli (2009) skill variety is defined as the number of skills and different activities included in the job. Task identity is the degree to which an employee completes a task from beginning to end. The degree to which the job has an impact on people concerned is defined as task significance. Autonomy refers to how much freedom, independence a worker has, and how much space the employee is allowed to work at his or her discretion when planning and executing tasks. Feedback is defined as the extent to which direct information is provided to the employee in evaluating their performance.

Working Environment

In this study organizational environment includes areas such as main supervisor support, co-worker support, task clarity, learning opportunities, professional growth, and organization satisfaction (D'Abate, Youndt & Wenzel, 2009). Main supervisor support means the degree to which the site supervisor is supportive of interns and motivates them to be supportive of one another. Co-worker support is the extent to which interns and co-workers are friendly and supportive to each other. Task clarity is the extent to which clear instruction is given to the intern on how to do various jobs. Practical and theoretical knowledge he/she acquire after completing the internship programme successfully is defined as learning opportunities. The degree to which internship programme prepare university students to enter the world of work after graduation is defined as professional growth. The extent to which site management is satisfied with the internship learning, communication and attitude during internship is defined as the organization satisfaction (Hussien & Lopa, 2018).

Contextual Factors

According to the National Science Foundation, context is defined as “*the specific setting a program occurs in. This includes social, political, cultural, historical, and*

personal factors" (Jean, *et al*, 2012). D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel (2009) have introduced a number of contextual factors that have a significant impact on internship satisfaction. Those are pay, work hours, commute, and location. Citing evidence from Jean *et al.* (2012), Nelson (1994) introduced measuring factors of satisfaction from an individuals' work which are job security, co-workers and peers, supervisory support, and pay.

Development of Hypotheses

Smits (2006) studied how satisfied the students were with the quality of university supervisors' supervision by using students who had completed their internship training. Smits (2006) revealed that interns who received adequate university support had higher commitment and higher levels of satisfaction and those who did not receive adequate university support relatively had the lower commitment and lower satisfaction.

Citing evidence from Moghaddam (2011), Jean *et al.* (2012) stated how the effectiveness of the internship office of the educational institute helps the students who receive internship training. As revealed by the author majority of the interns have responded that the internship office has shown an observable effect on students' job searching and other support processes. The support given from the internship office of the school in an organized and timely manner was the main reason which is caused the interns to be satisfied. Jean *et al.* (2012) have assessed the impact of university support on undergraduate internship satisfaction using two key components including, faculty site visits and good communication with the faculty supervisor.

Based on the above evidence the following hypotheses can be advanced:

Hypothesis 1a: There is a significant relationship between university support and internship satisfaction of undergraduates

Hypothesis 1b: There is a significant impact of university support on internship satisfaction of undergraduates.

The better the match between the competencies and the job characteristics of the students, the higher the probability that internship training will be satisfactory (Lord, Sumrall & Sambandam, 2011). Citing evidence from Hackman and Oldham (1980), Jean *et al.* (2012) further discussed the Job Characteristics Model (JCM). This model describes the relationship between job characteristics and employee satisfaction, motivation, and performance. That is not only job outcomes, job satisfaction as well can be reduced or increased by changes in job characteristics. Skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback are the five job dimensions that come under this model.

Reiner and Zhao (1999) mentioned that job characteristics is one of the main determinants of internship satisfaction. Citing evidence from Brown and Peterson (1993), Lord, Sumrall, and Sambandam (2011) found and revealed that job characteristics is one of the key factors in measuring internship satisfaction.

Paulins (2008) studied students' perceptions of task characteristics included in the internship and the relationship between task characteristics and job satisfaction. The results of his research revealed that employers will get the benefit of increasing the satisfaction of internship because employee productivity and loyalty are linked to job satisfaction. This study shares similar views on internship satisfaction and job satisfaction. D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel (2009) stated that according to further investigations the job characteristics model applies to permanent employment and internship training.

Accordingly, the following hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 2a: There is a significant relationship between job characteristics and internship satisfaction of undergraduates.

Hypothesis 2b: There is a significant impact of job characteristics on internship satisfaction of undergraduates.

One of the features of the work environment, the opportunity to learn is an important determinant of internship satisfaction (D'Abate, Youndt & Wenzel, 2009). Citing evidence from Rothman (2003), D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel (2009) have studied about most and least favoured aspects among a sample of business school interns, and according to his study, he reported that students' open responses indicated that they preferred an internship that would provide significant learning opportunities. Moreover, Glisson and Durik (1998) found that supervision is significantly associated with internship satisfaction.

Further, D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel (2009) revealed that all the following factors namely internal satisfaction, having learning opportunities in the work environment, receiving good support from the supervisor, giving professional development opportunities, receiving co-workers support were found to be correlated with internship satisfaction.

Moreover, Nelson (1994) studied the impact of job dimensions, organizational environment, and its supportive relationships on internship satisfaction. Tarquin and Truscott (2006), found that the supervisory relationship and the internship satisfaction are intertwined. Furthermore, Hurst (2007) mentioned that the extent to which the guidance, encouragement, and mentoring of employees is done by the supervisor is defined as supervisory support. Citing evidence from Jean *et al.* (2012), Klee (2011) mentioned that employees who receive high levels of support from site supervisors report high levels of satisfaction with their internship training experience. As mentioned by Phoebe (2010) according to research conducted by using 113 interns, the effectiveness of supervision and task role clarity are considered as two organizational environment factors that increase the success of an internship.

Further, Moghaddam (2011) mentioned that students who have undergone an internship or are currently receiving an internship were motivated by the availability of site supervisors and staff to answer the internship issues, helping their work and treating them as same as members of their group. Investigations have shown that the satisfaction

that university students receive from working as interns collaboratively with colleagues in companies is greater than the satisfaction they gain from academic work (Jean *et al*, 2012).

Based on the above-mentioned evidence the following hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 3a: There is a significant relationship between the working environment and the internship satisfaction of undergraduates.

Hypothesis 3b: There is a significant impact of working environment on internship satisfaction of undergraduates.

It was revealed that flexible work hours lead to internship satisfaction and the need to travel a far distance to reach the workplace leads to internship dissatisfaction (Rothman, 2003 as cited in D'Abate, Youndt & Wenzel, 2009). The location of the internship training is also another contextual factor that may contribute to the internship satisfaction. As mentioned by Fisher and Show (1994) research on relocation and job attitudes has raised questions about location. Getting to work in a workplace with friends and family, get the opportunity to join a community, receiving a familiar place as the location are some of the examples for that (Fisher & Shaw, 1994).

Pay is another key factor that affects internship satisfaction. Elickson (2002) studied what happens to an internship satisfaction with the amount of pay if the payment is made during the internship. According to Gerhart (1987), there is a significant relationship between pay and satisfaction among young workers.

Beebe, Blaylock, and Sweetser (2009) were done an online survey using the Job Descriptive Index (JDI) and Job in General Scale (JIG) to analyse job satisfaction of internship students' experiences. The results showed that paid internships have higher internship satisfaction rates and unpaid internships have lower internship satisfaction rates than that. According to the above examples from the literature, it can be concluded that pay affects internship satisfaction. There is evidence from the literature that internship satisfaction was high among the interns who worked in the financially paid institutions (Beebe, Blaylock & Sweetser, 2009; Phoebe, 2010; Jean, *et al*, 2012). Klee (2011) stated that the financial allowance given to interns by their host companies plays a significant role in internship satisfaction (as cited in Jean *et al.*, 2012).

According to the above factors following hypotheses are advanced:

Hypothesis 4a: There is a significant relationship between contextual factors and internship satisfaction of undergraduates.

Hypothesis 4b: There is a significant impact of contextual factors on the internship satisfaction of undergraduates.

The above hypothesized relationships are depicted in figure 01; conceptual framework of the study.

Methodology

Research Design

In the current study hypothetico-deductive approach was adopted as it was a model-testing study. This study falls into the category of quantitative research. This type of research would be descriptive research because it examines the 'what' question. This is a field study and the level of researcher's interference is minimal in this research. A cross-sectional time frame is used in this study. There is no repetition of primary data collection. This study is conducted using the survey method. The unit of analysis in the current study is at the individual level.

Population and the Sample

The target population of the study is final year commerce and management undergraduates in the University of Kelaniya. Currently, there are five departments under the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies. They are Accountancy, Commerce and Financial Management, Finance, Human Resource Management, and Marketing Management. The total population of Commerce and Management Undergraduates from the University of Kelaniya who had undergone an internship is 595 students. The sampling frame of this study is the list of final year undergraduates in the faculty of commerce and management studies in the University of Kelaniya who have undergone an internship up to date. According to the Morgan table, the sample size is determined as 234 observations.

Sampling Technique

As the total number of elements in the population is known to the researchers probability sampling is used in this study. As the population is known, the used sampling technique in this study was the simple random sampling.

Measurement Scales of Variables

Factors Affecting Internship Satisfaction

Adopting the measurement scale developed by Hussein & Lopa (2018) university support was assessed through three dimensions; university supervisor, internship coordinator, and the fair credit requirements. Job characteristics were assessed through five dimensions; skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback. The working environment was assessed through six dimensions; main supervisor, co-workers, task clarity, learning opportunities, professional growth, and organization satisfaction. Contextual factors were assessed through four dimensions; pay, work hours, commute, and location. The data collection instrument for this study was a web-based survey which was adapted and revised from previous internship studies (Gupta, Burns & Schiferl, 2010; Hussein & Lopa, 2018; Jean *et al*, 2012). Interns were asked to rate their level of agreement for the 49 items in response to the question: to what extent interns agree or disagree with each statement? On a five-point Likert scale anchored at 1 = Strongly

Disagree and 5 = Strongly Agree. Items 1-11 assessed the university support, items 12-26 assessed the job characteristics, items 27-38 assessed the working environment, and items 39-45 assessed the contextual factors.

Internship Satisfaction (DV)

Internship satisfaction is a unidimensional variable and it was assessed using the adopted scales taken from Hussein and Lopa (2018). Four items were used to measure the construct asking participants about the extent to which they were satisfied with their internship as a whole. Five Point Likert scale format is used to measure the items ranging from 1= Strongly Disagree to 5= Strongly Agree as in the original scale. Sample items include: 'Generally speaking, I was very satisfied with my internship' (Internship Satisfaction).

Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a self-administered questionnaire through an online questionnaire survey designed as a google form. The questionnaire comprised of two sections. Section one includes four close-ended questions to capture the demographics of the respondents included: gender, age, monthly compensation, and internship duration. Section two of the questionnaire comprises the items taken from standard measurement scales to assess the independent variable and the dependent variable of the study and one open-ended question was given at the end to capture other opinions and suggestions of the respondents other than the things given in the standard measurement scale.

Data Analysis Techniques

To ensure the reliability of the study, reliability statistics were used. With the aim of ensuring the construct validity, validity statistics were applied to analyse the data.

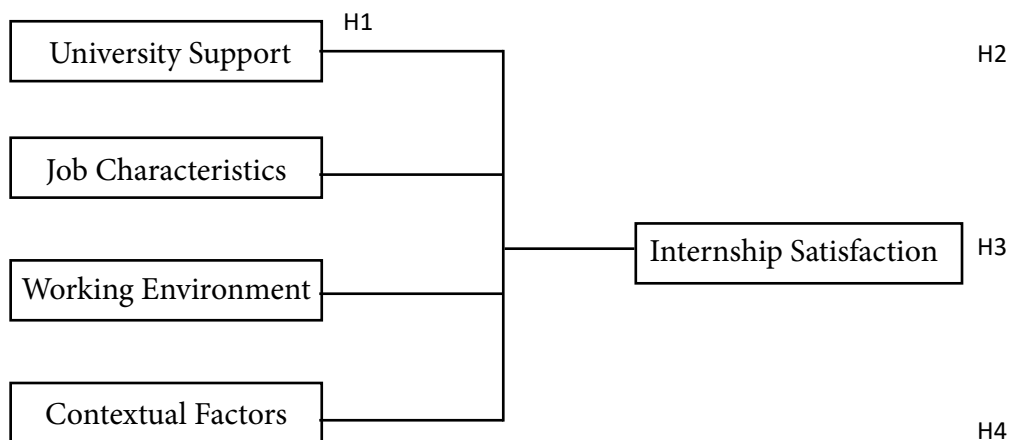


Figure 01: Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Authors, 2021

Descriptive statistics were used in the study to explain the sample composition. Normality and linearity statistics were generated as well to analyse the primary data set of the study. With the aim of testing the hypotheses of the study correlation statistics and regression statistics were adopted. Correlation statistics were used to measure the strength of association between variables of the study and regression statistics were used to measure the impact or the coefficient of partial determination.

Data Analysis and Results

Response Rate

Out of 280 questionnaires distributed in online mode, 240 respondents were responded. But, out of those 240 respondents responded 3 responses were discarded because those 3 respondents had put the same rating for all the Likert scale items. Hence, the researcher considered and entered only those 237 fully completed responses into SPSS. The response rate was 85.7%. But, the effective rate of response after discarding ineligible respondents from the sample (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) was 84.6% which is also beyond the accepted margin of 33% in social research.

Sample Composition

The composition of the study sample is depicted in table 1.

Table 1: Sample Composition (N=237)

Gender	Male	81	34.2%
	Female	156	65.8%
Age	22 Years	3	1.3%
	23 Years	103	43.5%
	24 Years	81	34.2%
	25 Years	42	17.7%
	Above 25 Years	8	3.4%
Department of Study	Department of Human Resource Management	54	22.8%
	Department of Accountancy	54	22.8%
	Department of Commerce and Financial Management	73	30.8%
	Department of Finance	28	11.8%
	Department of Marketing Management	28	11.8%
Monthly Compensation	No Compensation	7	3.0%
	Less than Rs.5000	5	2.1%
	Rs.5000 - Rs.10000	84	35.4%
	Rs.10000 - Rs.15000	106	44.7%
	More than Rs.15000	35	14.8%

Duration of the Internship	Less than 3 months	5	2.1%
	3 – 6 months	46	19.4%
	6 – 9 months	101	42.6%
	9 – 12 months	54	22.8%
	More than 1 year	31	13.1%

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Reliability Statistics

Internal consistency statistics were used to ensure the reliability of measurement scales. As recommended by Nunnally (1978) construct reliability and dimension reliability were assessed using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. Cronbach's Alpha values of all the variables are greater than 0.7 indicating that the multi-item scale is reliable. Cronbach's Alpha values of all the dimensions are greater than 0.5 as shown in table 2. TS3 (*Task Significance*) item is removed since it has a weak reliability coefficient. Except TS3 item, all the other items have played a significant role in conceptualizing the respective constructs.

Table 2: Reliability Statistics

Constructs	Dimension/s	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
University Support (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.950)	University Supervisor	06	0.940
	Internship Coordinator	03	0.889
	Credit Requirements	02	0.910
Job Characteristics (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.927)	Skills Variety	03	0.637
	Task Identity	03	0.798
	Task Significance	02	0.916
	Autonomy	03	0.714
	Feedback	03	0.944
Working Environment (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.933)	Main Supervisor	02	0.883
	Co- workers	02	0.505
	Task Clarity	02	0.945
	Learning Opportunities	02	0.858
	Professional Growth	02	0.830
	Organization Satisfaction	02	0.954
Contextual Factors (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.912)	Pay	02	0.964
	Work Hours	02	0.898
	Location	02	0.918
	Commute	01	-
Internship Satisfaction	Internship Satisfaction	04	0.839

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Validity Statistics

Sampling adequacy was ensured through the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) Measure and the sphericity was ensured through Bartlett's test respectively. As the KMO coefficient is greater than 0.7 for all the variables, and the Sig. value is less than 0.05, statistically it is claimed that the study sample of 237 observations is adequate enough to proceed with Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). Sampling adequacy is significant in this study as results indicate that sufficient correlations exist among the variables to proceed. Results of the KMO and Bartlett's test are given in table 3.

Table 3: Results of the KMO and Bartlett's test

		University Support	Job Characteristics	Working Environment	Contextual Factors	Internship Satisfaction
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		0.932	0.908	0.910	0.802	0.789
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2442.652	3315.981	2597.379	1462.097	611.062
	df	55	91	66	21	6
	Sig.	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

As recommended by Hair *et al.*, (2010) Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings (ESSL Cum %) of all the dimensions are greater than 50% and the item Factor Loading (FL) values are above the threshold limit of 0.5. Therefore, statistically the construct validity is ensured. Validity statistics of Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings and the item Factor Loading values are given in table 4.

Table 4: Validity Statistics [Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)]

Construct/s	Dimension/s	No. of Items	Lowest FL	Highest FL	ESSL Cum %
University Support	University Supervisor	06	0.855	0.913	77.183
	Internship Coordinator	03	0.892	0.917	81.795
	Credit Requirements	02	0.959	0.959	92.038
Job Characteristics	Skills Variety	03	0.639	0.883	64.567
	Task Identity	03	0.668	0.931	71.328
	Task Significance	02	0.961	0.961	92.351
	Autonomy	03	0.587	0.944	70.053
	Feedback	03	0.935	0.957	89.936

Working Environment	Main Supervisor	02	0.946	0.946	89.490
	Co-workers	02	0.836	0.836	69.961
	Task Clarity	02	0.974	0.974	94.811
	Learning Opportunities	02	0.937	0.937	87.729
	Professional Growth	02	0.925	0.925	85.551
	Organization Satisfaction	02	0.978	0.978	95.604
Contextual Factors	Pay	02	0.983	0.983	96.549
	Work Hours	02	0.953	0.953	90.814
	Location	02	0.962	0.962	92.536
	Commute	01	-	-	-
Internship Satisfaction	Internship Satisfaction	04	0.581	0.932	71.689

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Descriptive Statistics

Mean and Standard deviation (SD) are the two basic measures of descriptive statistics widely used in social science research. Statistically, Skewness and Kurtosis measure the relative size of the two tails of the distribution and the extent of probability in the tails respectively. The values are often compared to the Kurtosis of the normal distribution which is equal to 3. Mean, Standard deviation, Skewness and Kurtosis values of the constructs in the current research model are depicted in table 5.

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics

Construct/s	N	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
University Support	237	4.0564	0.59859	-0.336	0.617
Job Characteristics	237	3.9759	0.63594	-0.467	0.459
Working Environment	237	3.9944	0.62354	-0.463	0.325
Contextual Factors	237	3.4461	0.83493	-0.002	-0.497
Internship Satisfaction	237	3.9357	0.76699	-0.710	0.253

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Testing for Multivariate Assumptions

The primary data set was tested for multivariate assumptions including the test for normality, test for linearity, and the test for outliers before continuing with hypotheses testing.

Testing for Outliers

The dependent variable of the study; internship satisfaction was checked for

outliers using box plots. According to figure 02 - box plot, there are no outliers found in the dependent variable.

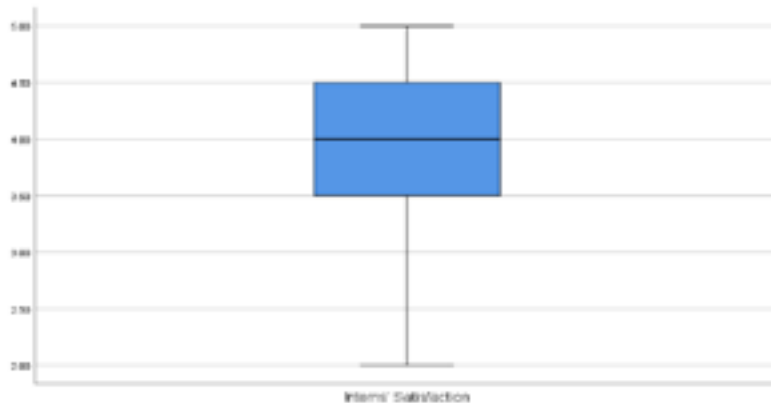


Figure 02: Box-plot
Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Testing for Normality

If the value of the Skewness and Kurtosis in the variables falls between -3 and +3, the distribution is said to be normally distributed. According to Skewness and Kurtosis values given in table 5 the dependent variable; internship satisfaction is said to be approximately normally distributed.

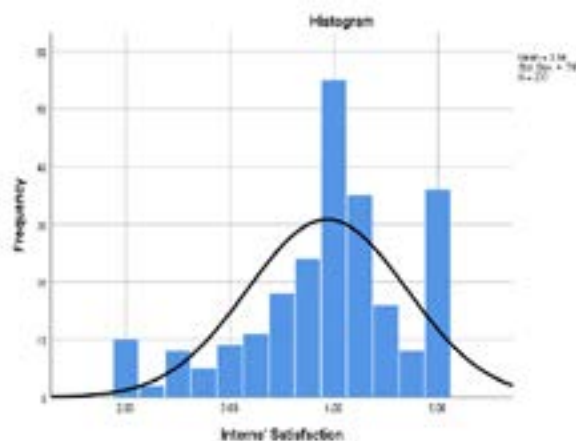


Figure 03: Histogram
Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Moreover, according to figure 3 - histogram with the normal curve, the dependent variable; Internship Satisfaction is said to be approximately normally distributed.

Testing for Linearity

According to the ANOVA output given in table 6, the value sig. of deviation from linearity in the constructs of university support and internship satisfaction is 0.671 which is greater than 0.05. Thus, it could be concluded that there is a linear relationship between the constructs of university support and internship satisfaction.

Table 6: Linearity Statistics - University support and internship satisfaction

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Internship Satisfaction * University Support	Between Groups	(Combined)	59.172	27	2.192	5.750	.000
		Linearity	50.695	1	50.695	133.007	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	8.477	26	.326	.855	.671
	Within Groups		79.659	209	.381		
	Total		138.831	236			

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

As shown in table 7 the value sig. of deviation from linearity in the ANOVA output in the constructs of job characteristics and internship satisfaction is 0.138 which is greater than 0.05. Thus, it appears there is a linear relationship between the constructs of job characteristics and internship satisfaction.

Table 7: Linearity Statistics - Job characteristics and internship satisfaction

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Internship Satisfaction * Job Characteristics	Between Groups	(Combined)	99.872	34	2.937	15.230	.000
		Linearity	91.575	1	91.575	474.814	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	8.297	33	.251	1.304	.138
	Within Groups		38.959	202	.193		
	Total		138.831	236			

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

The value sig. of deviation from linearity between the constructs of the working environment and internship satisfaction in the ANOVA output given in table 8 is 0.078 which is greater than 0.05. Thus, it could be stated that there is a linear relationship between the constructs of the working environment and internship satisfaction.

Table 8: Linearity Statistics - Working environment and internship satisfaction

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Internship Satisfaction * Working Environment	Between Groups	(Combined)	94.510	32	2.953	13.594	.000
		Linearity	84.913	1	84.913	390.835	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	9.597	31	.310	1.425	.078
	Within Groups		44.321	204	.217		
	Total		138.831	236			

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

According to table 9, the value sig. of deviation from linearity in the ANOVA output between the constructs of contextual factors and internship satisfaction is 0.137, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, it could be concluded that there is a linear relationship between aforesaid constructs.

Table 9: Linearity Statistics - Contextual factors and internship satisfaction

			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Internship Satisfaction * Contextual Factors	Between Groups	(Combined)	63.991	21	3.047	8.754	.000
		Linearity	54.423	1	54.423	156.345	.000
		Deviation from Linearity	9.567	20	.478	1.374	.137
	Within Groups		74.841	215	.348		
	Total		138.831	236			

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Correlation Analysis

Building on the linear relationship found among the independent variables; university support, job characteristics, working environment, contextual factors, and the dependent variable; internship satisfaction, Pearson Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the strength of association among the constructs. Since the advanced hypotheses are non-directional, Sig. (2-tailed) the test was applied to test the significance of the correlation coefficient. Results of the correlation analysis are given in tables 10, 11, 12, and 13.

Table 10: Correlation Statistics - University support and internship satisfaction

		Internship Satisfaction	University Support
Internship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.604**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	237	237

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

As shown in table 10, the Pearson correlation coefficient value between the above variables was calculated as 0.604. Since this value is positive and more than 0.5, it interprets that there is a strong positive correlation between university support and internship satisfaction. The correlation coefficient is significant at 0.01 level as Sig (2-tailed) is less than 0.01; which is 0.000. Hence, H1a is accepted.

Table 11: Correlation Statistics - Job characteristics and internship satisfaction

		Internship Satisfaction	Job Characteristics
Internship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.812**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	237	237

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

As shown in table 11, a strong positive correlation is found between job characteristics and internship satisfaction ($r = 0.812$) which is statistically significant as Sig (2-tailed) (0.000) is less than the level of significance (0.01). Therefore, H_{2a} is accepted.

Table 12: Correlation Statistics - Working environment and internship satisfaction

		Internship Satisfaction	Working Environment
Internship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.782**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	237	237

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

According to table 12, Pearson Correlation of 0.782 depicts a strong positive relationship between working environment and internship satisfaction. As the Sig

(2-tailed) value (0.000) is less than the significant value (0.01), the found correlation coefficient (0.782) is statistically significant. Therefore, H_{3a} is accepted.

Table 13: Correlation Statistics - Contextual factors and internship satisfaction

		Internship Satisfaction	Contextual Factors
Internship Satisfaction	Pearson Correlation	1	.626**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	237	237

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

According to the results of the Pearson correlation shown in table 13, there is a positive significant relationship between contextual factors and internship satisfaction of respondents. The Pearson correlation coefficient between the two variables is 0.626, which is positive. It shows that there is a strong positive correlation between contextual factors and internship satisfaction. Further, found relationship is statistically significant since Sig (2-tailed) value (0.000) is less than the significant value 0.01. Thus, there is statistical evidence to claim that contextual factors and internship satisfaction are significantly related. Hence, H_{4a} is accepted.

Regression Analysis

Linear regression analysis was done to test the hypotheses H_{1b} , H_{2b} , H_{3b} , and H_{4b} advanced to identify the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. Results of the tests are given in table 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, and 21.

Table 14: Regression Statistics - Effect of university support on internship satisfaction

R	0.604 ^a
R Square	0.365(36.5%)
Adjusted R Square	0.362
Standard Error	0.61241
Observations(N)	237
F	135.169
Sig.	0.000 ^b
Regression	Linear
Method	Enter

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

According to the results depicted in table 14, 36.5% (R Square = 0.365) of the variation of internship satisfaction could be significantly (Sig. = 0.000 which is less than 0.05) explained by the independent construct in the research model; university support. Further, as given in table 15, the marginal contribution of US (University Support) (0.774) in determining the effect on internship satisfaction is to be considered statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000) in the regression equation.

Table 15: Coefficients [Effect of university support on internship satisfaction]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.795	.273		2.911	.004
	University Support	.774	.067	.604	11.626	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Internship Satisfaction

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Thus, according to the regression results, H1b is accepted statistically claiming that there is a significant impact of university support on internship satisfaction.

Table 16: Regression Statistics - Effect of job characteristics on internship satisfaction

R	0.812 ^a
R Square	0.660(66%)
Adjusted R Square	0.658
Standard Error	0.44843
Observations(N)	237
F	455.393
Sig.	0.000 ^b
Regression	Linear
Method	Enter

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

According to table 16, R² equals 0.660 which means, when other factors remain constant; job characteristics have a 66% impact on internship satisfaction and the significant value of job characteristics is significant since the significant value of JC (Job Characteristics) is lower than the expected significant value of 0.05. When considering table 17, the marginal contribution of JC (0.980) in determining the effect on internship satisfaction is to be considered statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000) in the regression model.

Table 17: Coefficients [Effect of job characteristics on internship satisfaction]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.041	.185		3	.22.824
	Job Characteristics	.980	.046	.812	21.340	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Internship Satisfaction

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Thus, according to the regression results, H₂b is accepted statistically claiming that there is a significant impact of job characteristics on internship satisfaction.

Table 18: Regression Statistics - Effect of working environment on internship satisfaction

R	0.782 ^a
R Square	0.612(61.2%)
Adjusted R Square	0.610
Standard Error	0.47900
Observations(N)	237
F	370.089
Sig.	0.000 ^b
Regression	Linear
Method	Enter

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

According to the results depicted in table 18, 61.2% (R Square = 0.612) of the variation of internship satisfaction could be significantly (Sig. = 0.000 which is less than 0.05) explained by the independent construct in the research model, working environment. Further, as given in table 19, the marginal contribution of WE (Working Environment) (0.962) in determining the effect on internship satisfaction is to be considered statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000) in the regression equation.

Table 19: Coefficients [Effect of working environment on internship satisfaction]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.093	.202		.461	.645
	Working Environment	.962	.050	.782	19.238	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Internship Satisfaction

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Thus, according to the regression results, H₃b is accepted statistically claiming that there is a significant impact of working environment on internship satisfaction.

Table 20: Regression Statistics - Effect of contextual factors on internship satisfaction

R	0.626 ^a
R Square	0.392(39.2%)
Adjusted R Square	0.389
Standard Error	0.59932
Observations(N)	237
F	151.519
Sig.	0.000 ^b
Regression Method	Linear
	Enter

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

According to table 20, R^2 equals 0.392 which means, when other factors remain constant; contextual factors has a 39% impact on internship satisfaction and the significant value of contextual factors is significant since the significant value of CF (Contextual Factors) is lower than the expected significant value of 0.05. Further, when considering table 21, the marginal contribution of CF (0.575) in determining the effect on internship satisfaction is to be considered statistically significant (Sig. = 0.000) in the regression equation.

Table 21: Coefficients [Effect of contextual factors on internship satisfaction]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.954	.166		11.793	.000
	Contextual Factors	.575	.047	.626	12.309	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Internship Satisfaction

Source: Analysed Data, 2021

Thus, according to the regression results, H4b is accepted statistically claiming that there is a significant impact of contextual factors on IS (Internship Satisfaction).

Discussion of Findings

According to the results of primary data analysis, all the hypotheses were accepted. There are some evidence from previous literature to prove that there is a significant impact of independent variables (US, JC, WE, CF) on the dependent variable (IS). The results of the study were intended to be used to acquire a better understanding of what are the determinants of internship satisfaction among Commerce and Management undergraduates. Through data analysis, it is found that there is a significant relationship

between independent variables; university support, job characteristics, working environment, contextual factors, and the dependent variable; internship satisfaction respectively. Further, it is found that there is a significant impact of independent variables; university support, job characteristics, working environment, contextual factors on dependent variable; internship satisfaction respectively. Analysis results showed that the biggest impact on internship satisfaction comes from job characteristics ($R^2 = 0.660$) and working environment factors ($R^2 = 0.612$). The results of the current study align with the previous studies which have done by various scholars.

Citing evidence from Jean *et al.* (2012), Klee (2011) found that, internship satisfaction is greatly influenced by the supportive relationship between the intern and the university supervisor. Further, Smits (2006) found that interns who did not receive adequate university support relatively had a lower commitment and lower satisfaction, and interns who received adequate university support had a higher commitment and higher levels of satisfaction. According to Jean *et al.* (2012), the support given from the university has a major impact on internship satisfaction.

According to the findings of, Lord, Sumrall and Sambandam (2011), the impact of job characteristics on internship satisfaction is high and a significant relationship is found between job characteristics and internship satisfaction. It is found that job characteristics is a main determinant of internship satisfaction (Reiner & Zhao, 1999 as cited by Jean *et al.*, 2012).

According to the study conducted by D'Abate, Youndt, and Wenzel (2009), working environment has identified as a key determinant which impacts on internship satisfaction. They have found a significant relationship between work environment characteristics and internship satisfaction as well. According to Gupta, Burns and Schiferl (2010), there are six factors that have an impact on internship satisfaction. They are a positive work environment, positive internship experience, new skills, communication skills, improved job prospects, and comfort of the work environment.

Citing evidence from D'Abate, Youndt and Wenzel (2009) Rothman (2003) found that there is a significant relationship between contextual factors and internship satisfaction. As mentioned by Gerhart (1987) there is a significant relationship between pay and satisfaction among young workers. According to a study done by Beebe, Blaylock, and Sweetser (2009), it is found that paid internships have higher internship satisfaction rates than unpaid internships.

Conclusion

Internship satisfaction is highly affected by job characteristics and working environment factors. Based on this finding it could be concluded that internship effectiveness is high in companies which have proper job characteristics (skill variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, feedback) and more favourable working environment factors (main supervisor, co-workers, task clarity, learning opportunities,

professional growth, organization satisfaction) since internship satisfaction is high in those companies. If superiors share their personal experiences with interns, act as role models, and work collaboratively with their trainees, internship satisfaction will be high in such organizations. Having considered the findings reported in chapter four, the current study concludes by declaring that there is a tendency among interns to consider contextual factors. In companies with paid internships, interns work most preferentially than unpaid internship companies. Companies which are not providing compensation to their interns are unable to remain competitive in the market. Based on the findings reported in chapter four it could be concluded that, undergraduates are more likely to enter universities and institutes which offer high university support during their internship. If there is satisfaction in any of these four factors (university support, job characteristics, working environment, contextual factors) interns will be retained in that organization. If the right and preferred methodologies are being adopted in internships, interns will be able to obtain a greater level of satisfaction from their internship.

Recommendations

The university internship training coordinator and the university faculty office should make the information easily available and accessible to students. Moreover, they must ensure that they communicate this information clearly and systematically. So, it is recommended to hold internship orientation as a compulsory requirement in the internship process and hold it as frequently as needed to ensure standardization of information. It is recommended to assign more officers to handle students' grievances, inquiries, and paperwork processes. It is also important to have the support of university supervisors easily available for counselling as well as for resolving any issues that may arise while students are undergoing internships. There must be certain significance in the tasks assigned to them since the work they do has a direct impact on their internship satisfaction. Some employers do not give interns autonomy and freedom in doing their work. So, if possible, employers should give their trainees a certain degree of autonomy and freedom while doing their work. If superiors are willing to share their personal experiences with interns and if they act as role models to their interns, internship satisfaction and organizational commitment will be high in such organizations. So, it is recommended for employers to share their success stories with interns. They should share with interns an adequate explanation about the organization's core processes. Employers should reconsider the compensation and benefits they offer for their interns if they want to remain competitive in the market and it will avoid any forms of labour exploitation as well. It is recommended for employers to make their internship a structured one to make their trainees' internship experience a satisfactory one.

Limitations of the Study

The sample of the study is limited only to the Faculty of Commerce and Management Studies in the University of Kelaniya. Basically, in the research model researcher assumed that other factors remain constant. So, under assumptions researcher

checked the primary data set. So, that assumption itself is a limitation. It wasn't an easy task to collect the data during the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country. The researcher used a Google Form to collect data from undergraduates since the university is closed during this period of time. Further, the researcher used approximation for normality and linearity as this is a quantitative study.

Directions for Future Research

If future researchers do research on the same theme, to overcome the limitations mentioned under 5.5 it is recommended to consider bigger samples including other national universities and private campuses without limiting to a particular university or institute. Future researchers better consider mediated and moderated effects and more longitudinal and qualitative inquiries to validate the findings of the current study. There are many more variables in extant literature which affect internship satisfaction. It is suggested to consider those factors as well in future research studies. Hopefully, this study would raise the levels of interest among scholars to conduct more studies regarding internship satisfaction. It is recommended for future researchers to focus their studies on how demographic factors affect internship satisfaction. Future researchers can focus their studies on whether an intern who has obtained satisfactory internship training at a company will become a satisfied permanent employee once he or she enters the real business world.

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