INTERN SPECIFIC ATTRIBUTES INFLUENCING THE CONVERSION OF INTERNS TO PERMANENT EMPLOYEE IN SRI LANKAN IT SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS

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Abstract

Internships have become a critical pathway into the Sri Lankan IT industry amid skills shortages and recruitment risks, yet empirical evidence on how organisations evaluate intern-specific attributes when making permanent hiring decisions remains limited. This study addresses this gap by examining which intern attributes, as perceived by employers, significantly influence managers' intentions to convert interns to permanent employees. Adopting a positivist philosophy and deductive approach, the research employed a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design. A structured questionnaire was distributed via professional networks and LinkedIn to 354 team leaders, HR professionals, and IT managers across small, medium, and large Sri Lankan IT firms. Data were analysed using SPSS, with descriptive statistics summarising respondent profiles and multiple regression analysis testing relationships between four independent variables (core competencies, soft skills, organisational alignment, and internship performance) and the dependent variable (managers' hiring intentions). Results indicate that all four attributes are statistically significant predictors, with internship performance and soft skills emerging as the strongest determinants. The findings highlight that observable behaviours and applied competencies outweigh academic credentials in hiring decisions. This study contributes to Sri Lankan literature on intern-to-employee conversion by providing empirical evidence on employer perceptions, offering practical insights for IT organisations seeking to strengthen talent pipelines through structured internship programmes.

Keywords: Intern-to-Employee Conversion, Core Competencies, Soft Skills, Talent Acquisition, Information Technology