

Retail Realities: Bridging Education and Industry through Internship Experiences

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Abstract: *In the fast-paced world of retail, bridging the gap between classroom learning and real-world application is essential for students aspiring to enter the industry. This study delves into the transformative role of retail internships in facilitating this bridge, enriching students' educational journeys while preparing them for the dynamic demands of the retail sector. Through a comprehensive analysis of internship experiences, including surveys and interviews with both students and industry professionals, this research uncovers the multifaceted benefits of internships in fostering career readiness and industry integration. Findings reveal that internships provide invaluable opportunities for students to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings, develop essential skills, and cultivate professional networks. Moreover, internships serve as a catalyst for students' career exploration and decision-making, enabling them to gain first-hand insights into various retail roles and sectors. However, challenges such as access to quality internships and equitable experiences underscore the need for ongoing efforts to enhance internship programs and ensure inclusivity. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the transformative potential of retail internships and highlights the significance of collaborative efforts between educational institutions and industry partners in shaping the next generation of retail professionals.*

Keywords: Retail internships, Education-industry integration, Career readiness, Experiential learning, Industry partnerships.

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