

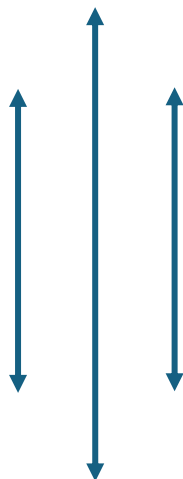
**Exploring the Impact of Internship Programs on BBA Student's Career Aspirations
in the Banking Sector of Nepal**

Submitted to:

Faculty of Management, Pokhara University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)



Submitted by:

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July, 2024

LETTER OF RECOMMENDATION

This is to certify that this project report entitled **Exploring the Impact of Internship Programs on BBA Students' Career Aspirations in the Banking Sector of Nepal** is prepared by Sristi Kumari Ter under my guidance. I hereby recommend this project report for the final evaluation by the Approval Committee of Amity College, Pokhara University in the partial fulfillment of BBA course under Pokhara University.

Supervisor

Date: July, 2024

APPROVAL LETTER

The project report entitled **Exploring the Impact of Internship Programs on BBA Students' Career Aspirations in the Banking Sector of Nepal** is submitted by Sristi Kumari Ter for final evaluation by Amity College, in the partial fulfillment of degree of Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA). We hereby certify that this project report is satisfactory in scope and quality and has therefore been accepted for the degree.

Internal Evaluator

Principal of Amity College

Mr. Rabindra Awasthi

DECLARATION

This is to certify that I have completed the project report entitled **Exploring the Impact of Internship Programs on BBA Students' Career Aspirations in the Banking Sector of Nepal** under the guidance of Mr. Chakra Patali in the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of **Bachelor of Business Administration** at Amity College, Faculty of Management, Pokhara University. This is my original work and I have not submitted it earlier elsewhere.

Signature:

Sristi Kumari Ter

Date: July, 2024

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I am thankful to all those people who helped me with the completion of this report. Without their help, it would have been impossible to complete this report. It was a great pleasure and experience for me to conduct this study.

First and foremost, I am thankful to my academicians at Pokhara University for including this project work in the BBA course which provides an opportunity to explore business environment in the real world. I would also like to thank Amity College and the principal, Mr. Rabindra Awasthi for providing this practical study. I am most grateful to my research supervisor Mr. Chakra Patali for his intellectual guidelines, continuous support and encouragement. My special thankfulness also my respected teacher Mr. Mahesh Mahara, an RMC member and faculty member at Amity College, Mahendranagar.

I heartily acknowledge those students who provided me with the information which is the building blocks of this report. I also thankfully acknowledge the assistance provided by my friends and seniors who provided necessary information and their extremely valuable suggestions and a contribution. I am solely responsible for the errors in this report and any constructive suggestions are warmly welcome for the further improvement of this research report.

Thanking all,

Sristi Ter

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study explored the impact of internship experiences on career aspirations and professional development of BBA students in Nepal's banking sector. The researcher used descriptive statistics to analyze data collected from 100 BBA students who had already completed internships in banks. The research revealed that internships had a significant influence on students' career choices, with 53.3% expressing interest in banking careers after the completion of internships. Most respondents (58.9%) reported positive experiences and 76% found internships productive. Internships proved valuable for job hunt (72%) meaning that internships are valuable for professional development. Internships also prepare the students for future jobs by honing their technical skills (90.07%), soft skills (80.65%), and digital skills (69.57%). They also provided a clear understanding of bank operations (72.73%) and developed an insight into the business environment. Internship experience influences career decisions moderately (35.56%) to significantly (55.56%). However, only 43% found their theoretical knowledge helpful during internships, indicating a potential gap in academic knowledge and real-world practice.

The study concludes that internships play a pivotal role in shaping career aspirations of BBA students and bridging the gap between academic learning and industry practice. It also sheds light on the areas that need improvement such as enhancing the internship practices, improving the guidance and mentoring/ recruiting mechanism, and augmenting theoretical knowledge with practical applications. At last, this study emphasizes the need for redefining the collaboration between academic institutions and banks so that interns at large can benefit from a more optimized internship mechanism.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background Information

Internship programs refer to those programs that the banks offer to provide valuable opportunities for the students to gain pre-service experience in the chosen field. These programs run for a fixed period, somehow for two/three months, during which a student gets an opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge into real-world use practically. These programs offer students the opportunity to gain practical insights of theoretical knowledge, to enhance essential skills for working soon as well as it also helps the students to build up the social networks within the Nepalese business community. These programs also focus on digital skills, emphasize corporate social responsibility (CSR) and provide professional development works to enhance student's career aspirations in the banking sector.

Overall, not incorporating internship programs in BBA course of Pokhara university in Nepal could have significant implications for student's professional development, career prospects, and industry engagement. As we all know, this is also a mandatory requirement as a part of the BBA program at Pokhara University. So, not incorporating internship programs can hamper student's skill acquisition and career aspirations regarding banking sector.

This study aims to explore the impact of internship programs in the career aspirations of BBA students studying at colleges of Mahendranagar with a view to developing an insight into the importance of such programmes in preparing students for banking career. The study will be based on the experiences of interns who have completed internships at different banks located in Mahendranagar and as well as on the viewpoints of the BBA students. A groundwork conducted by the researcher on this topic revealed that no prior research has been conducted by the researcher to study the internship experiences of BBA students in Nepal to see their impact on the career aspirations of BBA students. In this sense, this research will be seminal in the context of Nepal. The preliminary study also revealed that out of the 150 students on average that

graduated from the two selected BBA colleges located in Mahendranagar, 90% had already got internship as part of their academic program. Among those interns 75% opt for internships in Banks and Financial Institutions (BFIs). Another startling finding of my preliminary exploration reveals that almost all the BBA graduates that get internship experience from BFIs find placement opportunities in the same banks where they get internship experience. This preliminary finding provides sufficient impetus for the current study.

Global perspective

The concept of internships in business administration is globally recognized as a vital component of a student's educational journey. Internships provide the students with massive opportunities to develop practical experience, professional skills and insights into the functioning and day-to-day operations of an industry (Vocal, et al., 2023).

Internships offer students an opportunity to delve into different cultures and business environments which is crucial in today's interconnected world economy. For example, Harvard Business School's Global Research Centers Summer Internship Program sends interns to different regions around the world to help them gain innovative ideas about different cultures and business environments (Global Experiences, 2024). This kind of international exposure is crucial for students to build a deep understanding of global business practices.

Furthermore, international internships tailor business internships abroad to align with a student's prior experience, education, and future goals, emphasizing the importance of hands-on projects over administrative tasks (Hermann & Fauskanger, 2024). Such experiences are instrumental in helping students learn necessary professional skills and expand their horizons.

The global perspective on internships also highlights the importance of building global teams through international programs. These programs enhance cultural competence and help develop a global mindset within teams, which is essential for any business operating on an international scale.

In the context of Nepal, providing BBA students with international internship opportunities can significantly enhance their understanding of global business dynamics. It can also prepare them for careers that may transcend national borders, especially in the banking sector, which is increasingly influenced by global financial trends and regulations.

By incorporating a global perspective into the internship programs, Pokhara University can ensure that its graduates are not only ready for the local job market but are also equipped with the skills and experience needed to succeed in a global business environment. This approach will prepare students to navigate and contribute to the diverse and dynamic world of international business.

A Glimpse into the Banking Situation in Nepal

Nepal has centrally controlled economy regulated through Nepal Rashtra Bank (NRB). The banking industry plays a crucial role in financial intermediation (Singh, 2021). Since the establishment of Nepal Bank Ltd, the first commercial bank of Nepal, banking sector plays an important role in the country's economy, providing financial service to individuals, business enterprises and the Government through commercial banks, development banks and financial institutions (Bista, 2023). This growth is reflected in the banking sector's ability to provide a wide range of services to customers, from traditional banking to more complex financial products. There has also been an influx of foreign banks like Standard Chartered Bank Nepal, which has been operating in the country since 1987, offering full commercial banking services (Bista, 2023). Of late Nepal Rashtra Bank has been implementing the policy of merger and acquisition (M&A) to strengthen the financial standings of the existing banks. Such a merger and acquisition certainly has a significant impact on the internship opportunities and internship experiences of BBA students. As of mid-January 2024, there are 20 commercial banks, 17 development banks, 17 finance companies, 57 micro-finance companies and more than a dozen of other financial institutions like Nepal Infrastructure Development Bank Ltd. and Rastriya Sahakari Bank Ltd (Nepal Rashtra Bank, 2024). These BFIs not only play a vital role in providing financial services, but also play a crucial role in recruiting and fostering the human resources they need through providing internship opportunities to collegiate

students. Some of these BFIs provide paid internships whereas others do not offer any emoluments.

Internship programs in the banking sector work as a bridge between academic pursuit and the practical requirements of the job market. The banking industry provides BBA students with the opportunity to gain hands-on experience, thereby shaping their career aspirations. As such the incorporation of internship programs into the BBA curriculum of Pokhara University is a kind of strategic move towards aligning the students' career aspirations with the dynamic needs of the banking industry.

Statement of Problem

Although internship programs provide real-world exposure with different skill enhancing opportunities, what might be the impact of internship programs on BBA student's career aspirations in the banking sector?

Objectives of the Study

This research will be conducted to analyze the impact of internship programs on BBA student's career aspirations in the banking sector.

The other specific objectives are as follows:

1. To assess the overall interest of BBA students in pursuing banking career before and after their internship experiences.
2. To find out the percentage of BBA students who aspire to pursue a career in the banking sector after the completion of internships.
3. To assess the overall experience of BBA interns in the banking sector.
4. To evaluate BBA students' self-reported improvement in technical, soft, and digital skills post their banking internship experience.
5. To analyze the perceived value of internship programmes in the career aspirations of BBA students.

Research Questions

1. What are the average levels of interest in banking careers among BBA students before and after their internship experiences?

2. What percentage of BBA students that have completed internship programmes in the banking sector aspire to pursue a career in the same sector?
3. What is the overall experience of BBA interns?
4. How do BBA students rate their perceived improvement in technical, soft, and digital skills post their banking internship experience?
5. How valuable are internship programmes for shaping the career aspirations of the BBA graduates?

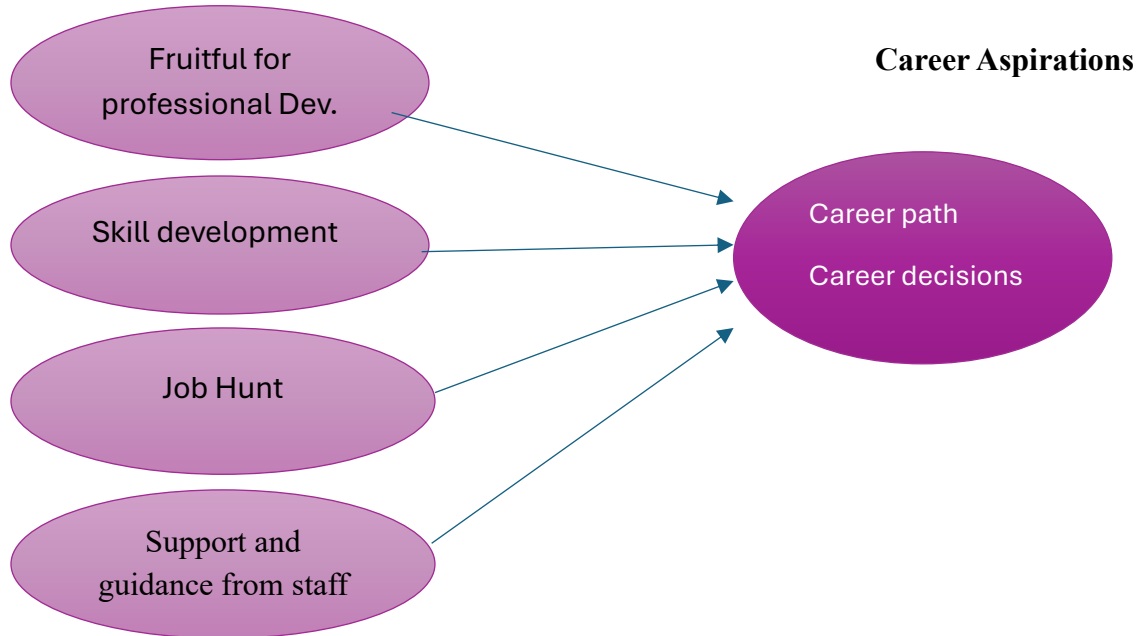
Significance of the Study

This study will help to analyze the impact of internship programs on BBA student's career aspirations in the banking sector. This research will provide valuable insights for career counselors to better guide student's career paths within the banking sector. Moreover, findings from this study aim to contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical application in the areas of internships, skill acquisition, career development, and personal development. Overall, this study will provide the opportunity to gain practical insights of theoretical knowledge, to enhance essential skills used in the banking sector.

Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework will be developed based on the theories.

Internship Experiences



Literature Review

Internships have emerged as an integral part of business study programmes, offering practical experience and insights into job prospects to BBA students. This literature review explores the existing research on the impact of internship programs on business students' career aspirations, especially in the banking sector of Nepal.

Impact of Internships on Career Aspirations and Employment Opportunities

At global level, a large number of studies have underlined the significant impact of internships on shaping students' career aspirations and job prospects ((Karakiraz, Üstündağ, Karataş, & Özdemir, 2021), (Rothman & Sisman, 2016), (Galbraith & Mondal, 2020), (Lamichhane, Gurung, Chapagain, Baral, & Adhikari, 2022), (Anjum, 2020), (Poudel, 2016)). However, in Nepal no study has been conducted so far to study the internship experiences of BBA students. Therefore, this area is under-researched.

The literature study conducted by the researcher at global level reveals that internship programmes are an integral part of business study programmes in most of the universities and such internship programs prepare the student for career aspirations, thereby shaping their career paths. Moreover, BBA graduates who have completed internships in banks are more likely to be hired in the same bank. In this line, Karakiraz, Üstündağ, Karataş, & Özdemir (2021) found that internships aligned with students' career choices and led to faster job acquisition and career path in the same field. The study underscores the importance of early career planning and the significant impact of undergraduate internships on career choices.

Similarly, Rothman & Sisman (2016) explored the role of internship programmes in shaping business students' career aspirations. Their research revealed that more than 50 percent of the interns consolidated their interest in the job hunting after the completion of internship although only less than 50 percent of them expressed a desire to do a job in the same field. The authors emphasize the value of internships in making career choices, boosting self-confidence, and preventing potential job dissatisfaction.

Galbraith & Mondal's (2020) study at Slippery Rock University further supports these findings. Their research showed that around one third of the students were offered

full-time jobs at the end of their internships out of which 67% accepted these offers. This underscores the potential of internships to boost employment opportunities.

Professional and Personal Development Through Internships

Anjum's case study from Pakistan provides insights into the impact of internship programs on the professional and personal development of business students (Anjum, 2020). Her survey of 800 undergraduate business students across 15 universities revealed that internship programmes positively impacted students' professional growth, skill development, and personal abilities. This research underlines the role of internships in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

Domholt (2018) examined the impacts of internships on career outcomes and starting salaries for college graduates. The results showed that students who completed any type of internship had a higher employment rate and those who completed paid internships had higher starting salaries. This research provides insights into the benefits of internship programmes in terms of employability and financial benefits.

Internships in the Banking Sector

Although no study has so far been conducted in Nepal to explore the internship experiences of BBA students, the internship reports prepared by some BBA students of Pokhara University and Kathmandu University provide an important insight into this topic ((Poudel, 2016), (Bajracharya, 2018), (Bhattarai, 2021)). Poudel's (2016) internship report on Mega Bank Limited, Nepal provides insights into the benefits of internships in the banking sector of Nepal. The report underscores how internships in different departments of the bank provide students with practical insights into banking operations, customer service skills, and a thorough understanding of the functions of the banking industry in Nepal.

Similarly, Bajracharya's (2018) internship report on Himalayan Bank Ltd. and Bhattarai's (2021) report on HBL Bank describe the valuable experiences gained during banking internships in Nepal. These reports emphasize the development of professional skills such as communication, behavior, and teamwork, as well as the opportunity to work alongside experienced professionals in the banking sector (Bajracharya, 2018).

Factors Influencing Career Choices

To understand the impact of internships on career aspirations, it's important to consider the broader factors influencing students' career choices. Lamichhane, Gurung, Chapagain, Baral, & Adhikari (2022) identified four primary factors that influence the career aspirations of BBA students at Pokhara University in Nepal:

Intrinsic factors (personal interest, career advancement opportunities, motivation to jobs)

Extrinsic factors (lucrative job positions, high-paid job opportunities, job security)

Interpersonal factors (influence of parents, siblings and peers/ colleagues)

Institutional factors (career counseling, impact of teachers, academic programs)

This study underscores the complex intersection of factors associated with students' career decisions and explains how internships influence such career decisions.

Conceptual Review

1. Insights into Internship Programmes

Internships are on-the-job work experiences that augment classroom knowledge with practical insights in a workplace setting. In the context of BBA programmes, internships serve as a bridge between academic learning and real-world experiences. Key aspects include:

Duration: Internship programmes typically range from two to three months

Structure: It involves rotation of interns in different departments focusing on specific roles and tasks. However, most interns are given the responsibilities of customer service like filling up the forms and opening bank accounts.

Supervision: Such internship programmes are supervised by both senior officials and managers.

Learning objectives: Interns most commonly cultivate new skills together with industry exposure, and professional networking

2. Career Aspirations

Career aspirations refer to an individual's desires and goals related to a prospective career path. For BBA students, this might include:

Short-term goals: Such as entering banking profession as junior assistants

Long-term ambitions: Such as attaining executive officer and manager positions or specializing in specific banking areas like loan department and operations department

Values alignment: Most interns seek positions and job roles that match with their personal preference or values.

Work-life balance considerations: Most interns consider job security, working conditions, career prospects and lifestyle choices while some do not mind working till late hours provided that they are given robust salaries

3. Banking Sector in Nepal

The banking sector in Nepal embodies the following features:

Types of banks: Commercial banks, development banks, financial institutions

Regulatory environment: Regulated by Nepal Rastra Bank

Job roles: Various positions ranging from tellers and assistants to executives and managers

Industry trends: Such as automation, digitization, merger and acquisition, financial services, credit facilities, branch expansion

4. Impact of Internships

"Impact" refers to the influence or effect of internship experiences on students' career decisions and career paths. It includes:

- Consideration and change in career path
- Enriched understanding of job roles as well as insight into the functioning of the banking industry
- Engagement in professional networks

- Increased efficiency in banking-related tasks

5. Professional Skills Development through Internship

Internship programmes help in the acquisition and enhancement of skills required in pursuing a banking career, such as:

- Technical skills: Financial analysis, software proficiency, report writing
- Soft skills: Interpersonal skills, collaboration, teamwork, customer service
- Industry-specific knowledge: Banking regulations, functioning, products, and services

6. Career aspirations and career decisions

The career decisions of BBA students are shaped by several factors such as:

- Information collection: About various roles, positions, career paths and job opportunities
- Personal judgment: Self-assessment of personal interests, skills, and values
- Exploration: Exploration of different career options within the banking sector
- Career decision: Settling for a specific career/ job

7. Cultural and Societal Influences

Cultural and social factors directly influence the career choices of BBA students. These factors include:

- Family expectations and pressure
- Prestige issues
- Gender specific choices in choosing the career
- Working conditions: salaries and fringe benefits, prospect of promotion, working environment, workload, work-life balance

Implications of the Literature Review

While the existing literature provides valuable insights into the impact of internships on BBA students' career aspirations and career paths, there are several gaps that future research could address:

Limited research specific to Nepal: No research has so far been conducted to reflect the role of internship programmes in shaping the career aspirations and career paths of BBA students of Nepalese universities specifically examining the Nepalese context. This research is first of its kind but it has certain limitations of its own.

Focus on the banking sector: While some internship reports provide insights into the experiences of banking interns in Nepal, there is a lack of comprehensive research on how these internships shape career aspirations in the banking sector.

Long-term impact: Many studies conducted so far focus on the immediate outcomes of internship programmes and there is lack of longitudinal studies exploring the long-term impact of internships on career aspirations and career paths in the banking sector of Nepal.

Qualitative insights: Much of the existing studies are quantitative in approach. In-depth qualitative studies and mixed-methods research could provide deeper insights into how internships shape students' career aspirations.

Research Methodology

Under this research, descriptive research design will be used in which cross-sectional research design will be used to collect and analyze data. Descriptive research design will help the researcher to study the characteristics, behaviors and attitude of students towards banking career path. It will help the researcher develop insights into the value of internship in fostering career aspirations in the selected interns. It will provide the researcher with the current situation which will help her in describing naturally occurring phenomena.

Study Area

This research aims to study the impact of internship programs on BBA students studying at different colleges of Mahendranagar with a view to developing an insight into the importance of such programs in preparing students for banking career. This research study will help both student's and banking industries to get insights regarding the internship programs.

Sample Size and Population

All the students of Mahendranagar, who have completed the internship programs, and all the BBA students will be the population of the study. The study will consider about 100 BBA students as the sample size.

Sampling Method

There are two types of sampling methods i.e. probability sampling and non-probability sampling methods. In this research study, we will use convenience sampling method which falls under non-probability sampling method.

Sources of Data

On this research study, primary sources of data will be used.

Primary sources of data

Primary sources of data are those data that are collected by the researcher himself/herself directly from different sources like, surveys, interviews, observations, scheduled questionnaire methods and so on. These will be the firsthand data that will give original as well as reliable data for study.

In this research study, the researcher will use direct questionnaire method and direct personal contact methods for collecting the primary sources of data.

Personal contact. In this method, the data will be collected by visiting the previous BBA students who have experienced the internship programs in order to gain insights and attitudes of those students towards internship programs and their aspiration of choosing a career on the banking sector.

Scheduled questionnaire method. In this method, a set of structured questions will be made and submitted to the students to know about the feelings, opinions and attitudes of the students towards choosing a career path in the banking sector.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are as follows:

- This research only incorporates the internship experiences of selected respondents. The researcher herself does not have any internship experience but aims to explore the internship experiences of selected respondents in determining and shaping the career paths.
- This research uses convenience sampling technique to select candidates as there are only a few colleges that run BBA programmes in Mahendranagar.
- This study is limited to the selected colleges of Mahendranagar so the results may not be universally applicable.

CHAPTER II

Data Analysis and Major Findings

Data Presentation and Analysis

This study employed descriptive statistics to examine the overall impact of internship on the career aspirations of BBA students, especially in the banking sector. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using the SPSS software. In this section, the research discusses the results and their interpretations.

Career aspirations of BBA students

The following table more accurately specifies the same fact by showing the valid percentage of BBA students opting for a job in the banking sector after the completion of their internships:

Table 1

Career Aspirations of BBA Students who have Completed Internships in Banks

| AspireBankingCareer | | | | | |
|----------------------------|-----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | yes | 49 | 49.0 | 53.3 | 53.3 |
| | no | 13 | 13.0 | 14.1 | 67.4 |
| | undecided | 30 | 30.0 | 32.6 | 100.0 |
| Total | | 92 | 92.0 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 8 | 8.0 | | |
| Total | | 100 | 100.0 | | |

The above table (Table 1) shows that the valid percentage of BBA students who have completed internships in banks and want to pursue a career in banking sector is 53.3% (valid n=92) which is considerably higher than that of the respondents who do not

want to go in the banking career after BBA whose percentage is 14.1%. This shows that a majority of BBA interns aspire to secure a career in the banking sector.

Overall Experience

A large number of BBA students who had priorly completed internships reported a positive internship experience as displayed in the following table:

Table 2

Overall Internship Experience of Respondents

| Overall Experience | | | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
| Valid | Boring | 6 | 6.0 | 6.7 | 6.7 |
| | Somewhat boring | 4 | 4.0 | 4.4 | 11.1 |
| | Neutral | 27 | 27.0 | 30.0 | 41.1 |
| | Somewhat enjoyable | 24 | 24.0 | 26.7 | 67.8 |
| | Enjoyable | 29 | 29.0 | 32.2 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 90 | 90.0 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 10 | 10.0 | | |
| Total | | 100 | 100.0 | | |

The study examined the overall internship experience of BBA students in the banking sector (N = 100). Table 2 presents the distribution of responses regarding their experience. Of the 90 valid responses, most students reported positive experiences. Specifically, 32.2% (n = 29) found their internship enjoyable, while 26.7% (n = 24) reported it as somewhat enjoyable. This indicates that over half of the respondents (58.9%) had a favorable experience in total.

A substantial portion of the students (30.0%, n = 27) remained neutral about their experience, neither deeming the internship as favourable nor unfavourable.

On the lower end of the scale, 6.7% (n = 6) of students found their internship boring while 4.4% (n = 4) reported it as somewhat boring. Overall, only 11.1% of respondents had a negative experience. Although 10 of the responses were missing, it does not have any significant effect on the above analysis.

These findings render valuable insights for both educational institutions and banking organizations to enrich the quality and standard of internship programs for BBA students.

Sufficient Guidance

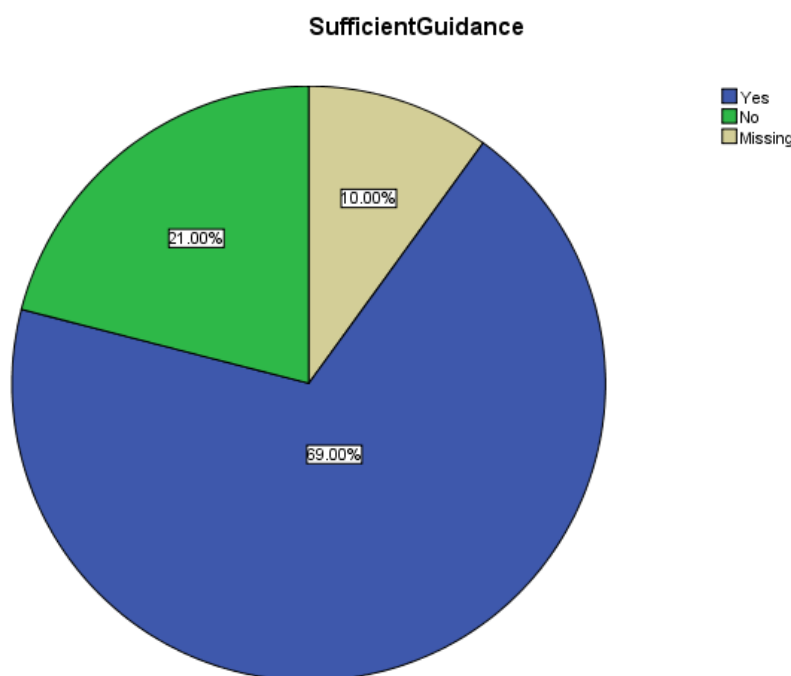


Figure 2. *Guidance Received by Interns During the Internship*

The above pie chart presents data on the perceptions of adequate guidance from bank officials during their internships. A majority of the respondents (69%) indicated that they received sufficient guidance, suggesting overall satisfaction with the support they received while nearly a quarter of respondents (21%) reported insufficient guidance, highlighting a need to be addressed in banks. Although 10% of responses were missing, it does not have a significant effect on the overall interpretation. The results indicate that while the guidance system in banks is effective for most of the interns, there is need for

improvement in this area. Further examination into the reasons behind negative responses and the nature of missing data could provide valuable insights for improvement.

Productive experience

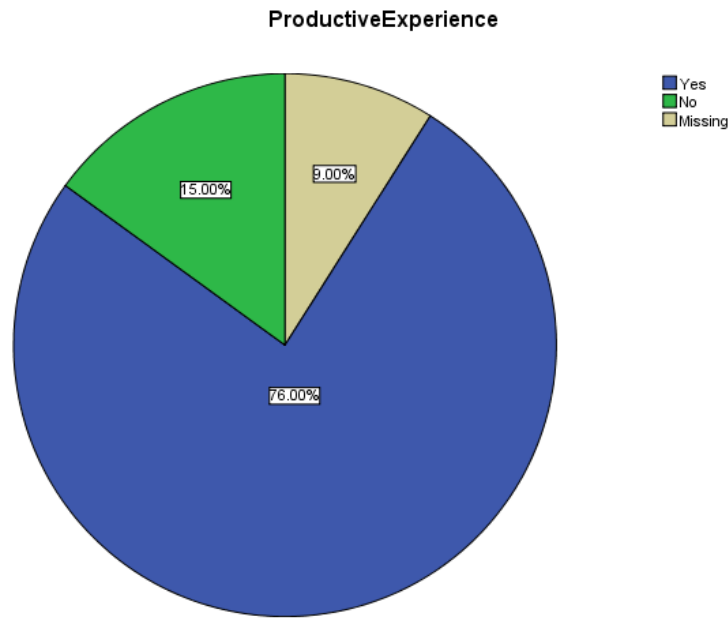


Figure 3. *Productive Experience of Interns During the Internship*

The above pie chart (Figure 3) illustrates the perceptions of the respondents regarding their productivity during the internships. A substantial percentage of respondents (76.00%) reported having a productive experience, indicating that most respondents found value or efficiency in their internship practice. In contrast, only a small percentage (15.00%) of respondents did not deem their experience to be productive. This indicates that the internships were generally successful in providing a meaningful or useful experience for most of the respondents although 9.00% of responses were missing from the data.

Internship as an added advantage for job hunt

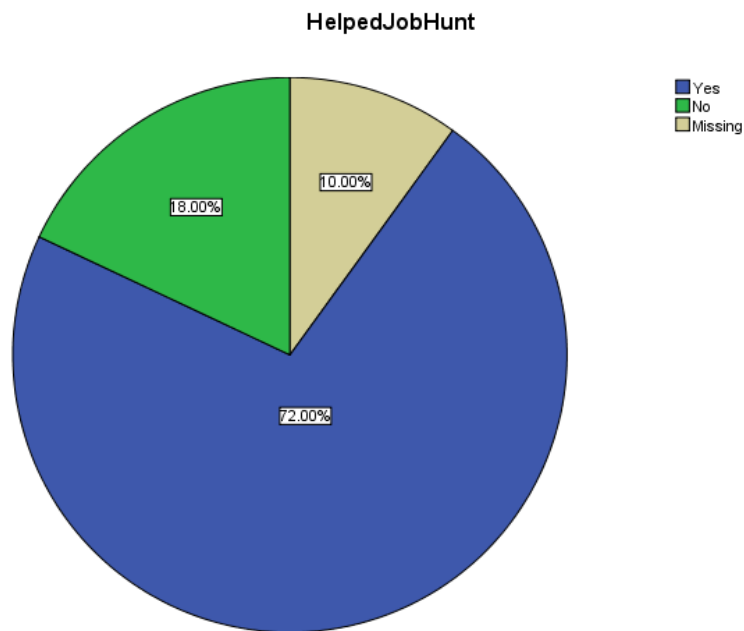


Figure 4. *Internship as an Added Advantage for Job Hunt*

The above pie chart (Figure 4) shows how useful internship experiences are for job hunt. A large number of respondents (72.00%) indicated that the internship experience helped them in securing jobs, suggesting that the internship experience is very useful for job hunt. In contrast, only 18.00% of the respondents reported that internship did not aid them in job search.

Application of Theoretical Knowledge in the Internship

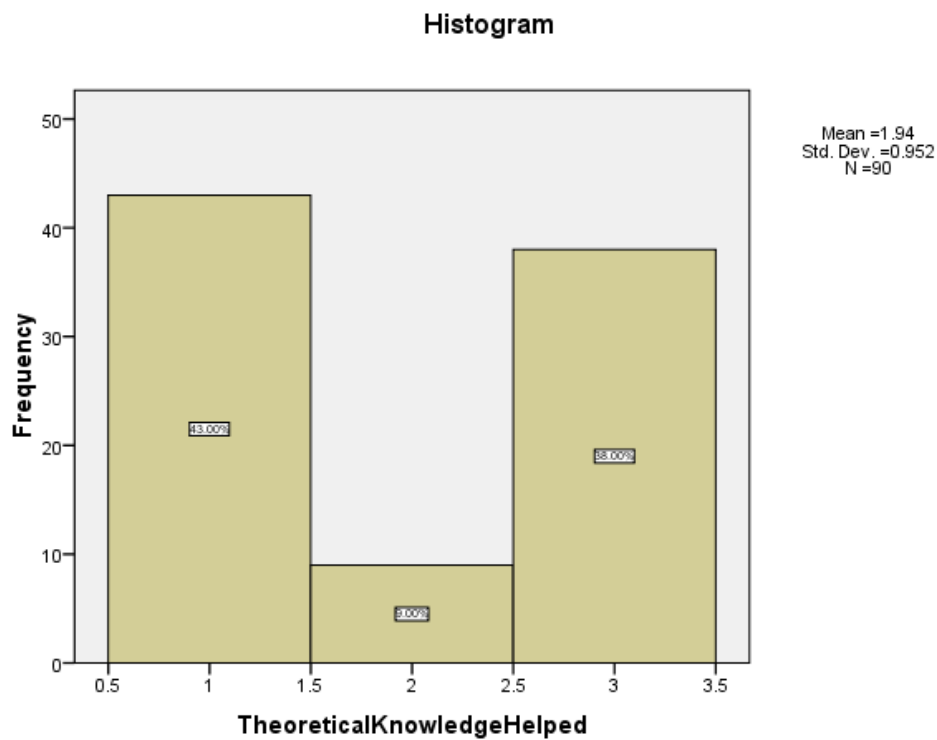


Figure 5. *Application of Theoretical Knowledge in the Internship*

The above bar diagram (Figure 5) illustrates the respondents' perceptions regarding whether their theoretical knowledge facilitated learning during the term of their internships. The bar diagram reveals that 43.00% of respondents reported that their theoretical knowledge was helpful in carrying out their internship practices indicating a positive while 9% of respondents reported that theoretical knowledge did not help. Interestingly, a substantial portion (38%) of respondents were uncertain about whether their theoretical knowledge was helpful or not.

The distribution of responses suggests that while theoretical knowledge is generally perceived as useful for internship practices, its practical value needs to be researched with further research as it can provide a valuable insight into shaping the career paths of students.

Skill-building in Internship

Table 3

Summary of Skill-building During the Internship in a Five-point Rating Scale

Note: The rating scale ranged from Very Poor (1) to Excellent (5)

| | | Statistics | | |
|--|---------|-----------------|------------|---------------|
| | | TechnicalSkills | SoftSkills | DigitalSkills |
| N | Valid | 92 | 93 | 93 |
| | Missing | 8 | 7 | 7 |
| Mean | | 3.62 | 3.57 | 3.57 |
| Median | | 4.00 | 4.00 | 4.00 |
| Mode | | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Std. Deviation | | 1.212 | 1.228 | 1.280 |
| a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown | | | | |

The above table (Table 3) presents descriptive statistics for three skill categories: Technical Skills, Soft Skills, and Digital Skills respectively. As the table illustrates, Technical Skills (Mean = 3.62, SD = 1.212, Md = 4, Mode = 3) show the highest mean score among the three categories, suggesting that respondents gained technical skills more than the other two skills. The median (Md = 4) indicates that 75% of the respondents rated their technical skills at or above this level. Standard deviation (SD = 1.212) indicates that this data is consistently distributed, thus signifying the results.

Soft Skills and Digital Skills display identical mean scores (Mean = 3.57) and medians (Md = 4.00) indicating that the interns gained about the same degree of soft skills and digital skills. However, their modes differ, with Soft Skills having a mode of 4 and Digital Skills a mode of 5 signifying that larger number of respondents rated digital skills higher than soft skills.

The above-average mean scores indicate the fact that most of the interns gained the above three professional skills to a considerable degree during their internships. This

fact also highlights the favourable role of internships practices in shaping the career aspirations of BBA students.

Technical Skills

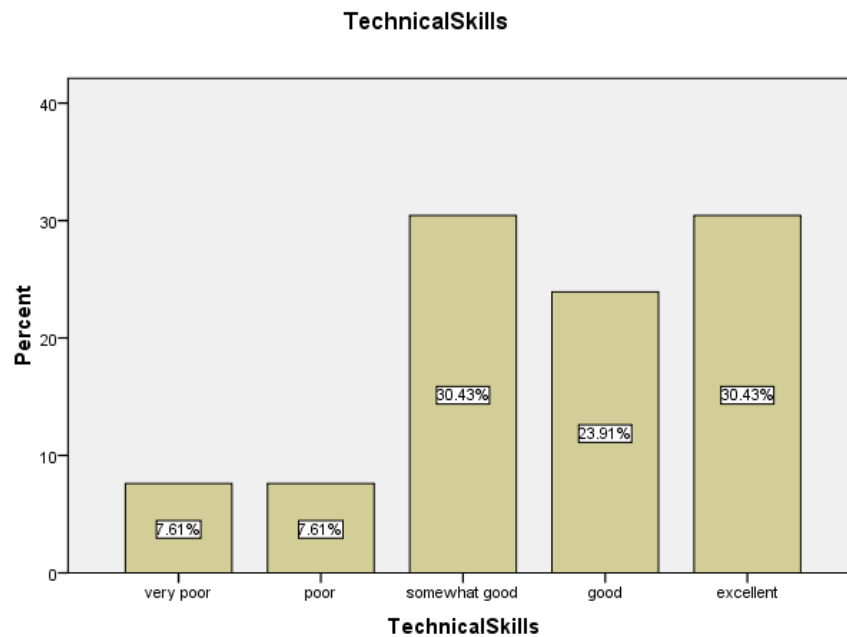


Figure 6. *Technical Skills Gained During the Internship*

The above bar diagram (Figure 6) illustrates the distribution of the respondents' self-reported technical skills gained during their internship practice. The data shows a significant increase in the technical skills of the interns. As the diagram illustrates 30.43% rated their technical skills as “Excellent”, 29.91% rated “Good” and 30.43% rated “Somewhat Good”, thus signifying the role of internship practices in boosting the technical skills of the interns.

Soft Skills Gained During the Internship

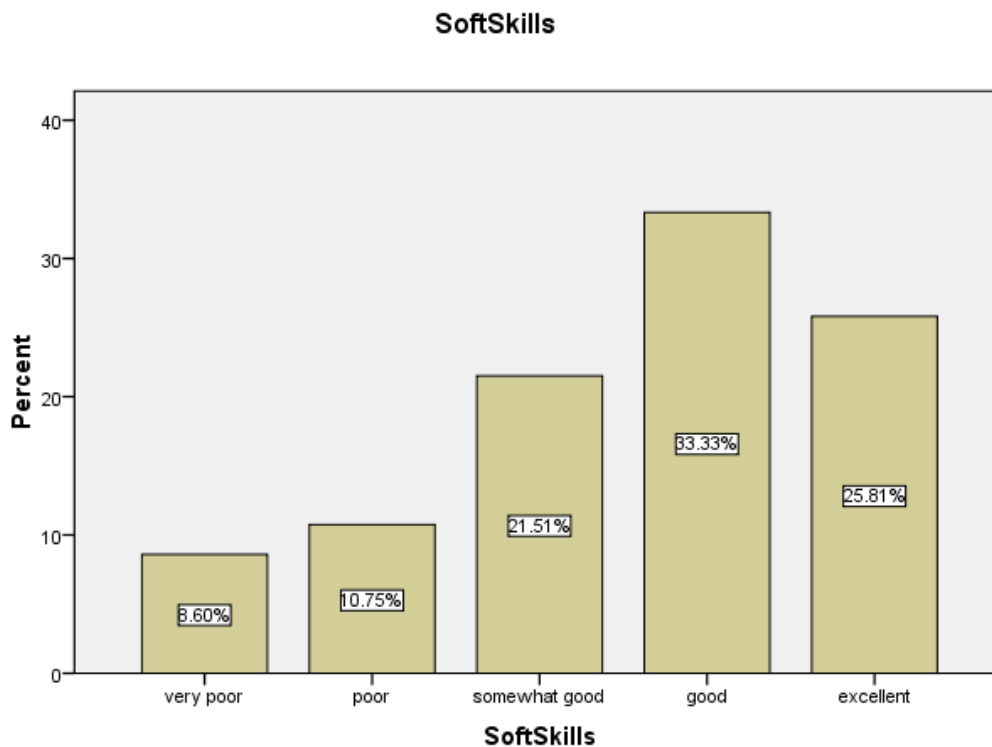


Figure 7. *Soft Skills Gained by Respondents During the Internship*

The above bar diagram (Figure 6) illustrates the distribution of the respondents' self-reported soft skills gained during their internship practice. The data shows a significant increase in the soft skills of the interns. As the diagram illustrates 25.81% rated their soft skills as “Excellent”, 33.33% rated “Good” and 21.51% rated “Somewhat Good”, thus signifying the role of internship practices in boosting the soft skills of the interns.

Digital Skills Gained During the Internship

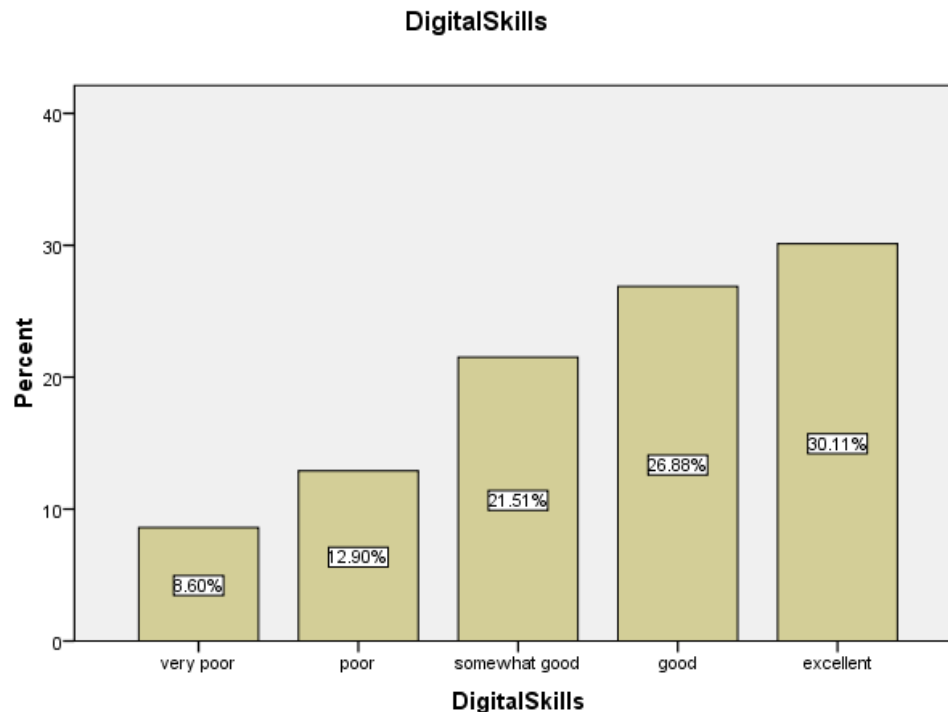


Figure 8. *Digital Skills Gained by the Interns*

The above bar diagram (Figure 6) illustrates the distribution of the respondents' self-reported digital skills gained during their internship practice. The data shows a significant increase in the digital skills of the interns. As the diagram illustrates 30.11% rated their acquisition of digital skills as “Excellent”, 26.88% rated “Good” and 21.51% rated “Somewhat Good”, thus signifying the role of internship practices in boosting the digital skills of the interns.

Value of Internship Programmes for Professional Development

The analysis of our survey data reveals striking insights into the perceived value of internship programmes for professional development. The findings underline the significant role that internships play in bridging the gap between academic learning and real-world application.

A majority of respondents reported positive outcomes from their internship experiences. The data suggests that internships provide invaluable opportunities for skill development, particularly in areas not typically covered in traditional classroom settings.

Of the 100 respondents queried, 73% of respondents indicated that their internship significantly improved their understanding of industry practices and professional expectations while 8 of the responses were missing.

The results also highlight the importance of internships in career decision-making. 65% of the respondents reported that their internship experience consolidated their career aspirations signifying the importance of internship practice in paving the career path.

Table 4

Value of Internship Programmes for Professional Development

Note: The response ranks were “Yes” = 1, “No” = 2, “Maybe” = 3

| | | Statistics | | |
|----------------|---------|------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| | | FruitfulForPr ofDev | UnderstandBa nkOperations | PriorInterestI nBanking |
| N | Valid | 92 | 92 | 92 |
| | Missing | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Mean | | 1.67 | 1.63 | 1.59 |
| Median | | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 |
| Mode | | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Std. Deviation | | .891 | .898 | .854 |

The above table (Table 4) presents descriptive statistics for four variables related to the perceived value of internship programmes (N = 92).

1. Fruitfulness indicator : In a 3-point rating scale (1 = yes, 2 = maybe, 3 = no), FruitfulForProfDev (Mean = 1.67, Md = 1) indicates that the respondents found internships highly fruitful for professional development. The low mean and median near 1 suggest strong agreement with this statement.
2. Understanding bank operations: In a 3-point rating scale (1 = yes, 2 = maybe, 3 = no) UnderstandBankOperations (Mean = 1.63, Md = 1) shows that the interns gained a good understanding of banking operations. Again, the low mean and median indicate strong agreement.
3. Prior interest in banking profession: In a 5-point rating scale (1 = yes, 2 = maybe, 3 = no), PriorInterestInBanking (Mean = 1.59, Md = 1) indicates that most

respondents had a prior interest in banking before their internship, as shown by the low mean and median.

These results suggest that while respondents generally found internships fruitful and increased their understanding of banking operations, the influence of internships on their career decisions was more varied.

Fruitfulness of Internship Programmes

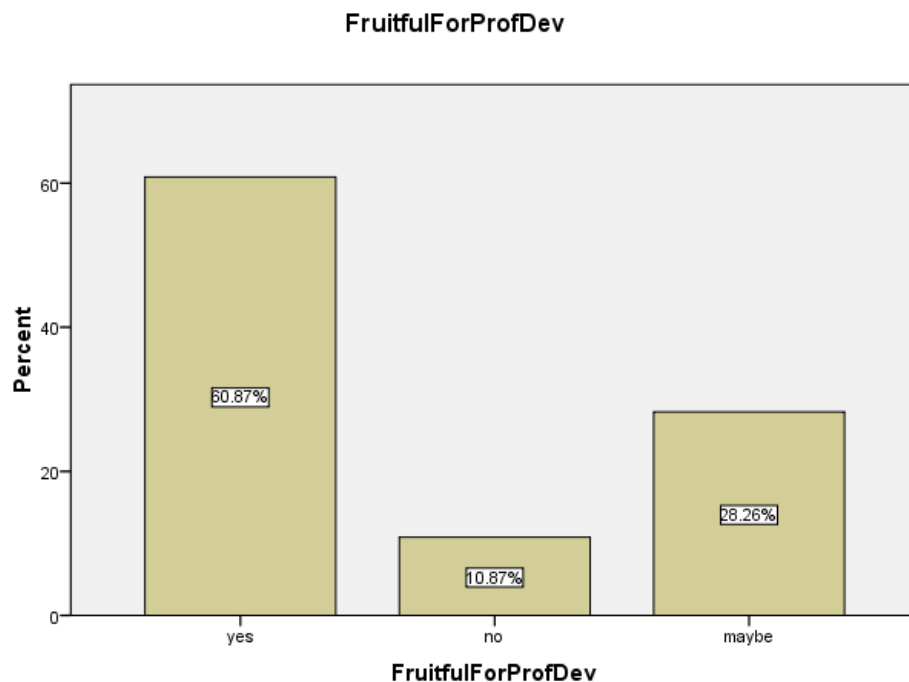


Figure 9. *Fruitfulness of Internship Programmes*

The above bar graph (Figure 9) illustrates the distribution of responses regarding the fruitfulness of internships for professional development (FruitfulForProfDev). The majority of respondents, 60.87%, indicated "Yes," affirming that internships were fruitful for their professional development, 28.26%, responded with "Maybe," 10.87% recorded "No" indicating that internships were not fruitful for their professional development. This bar graph clearly reveals that most respondents viewed their internship experiences as fruitful for their professional growth with only a small fraction of them found the internship unfruitful.

Understanding of Banking Operations

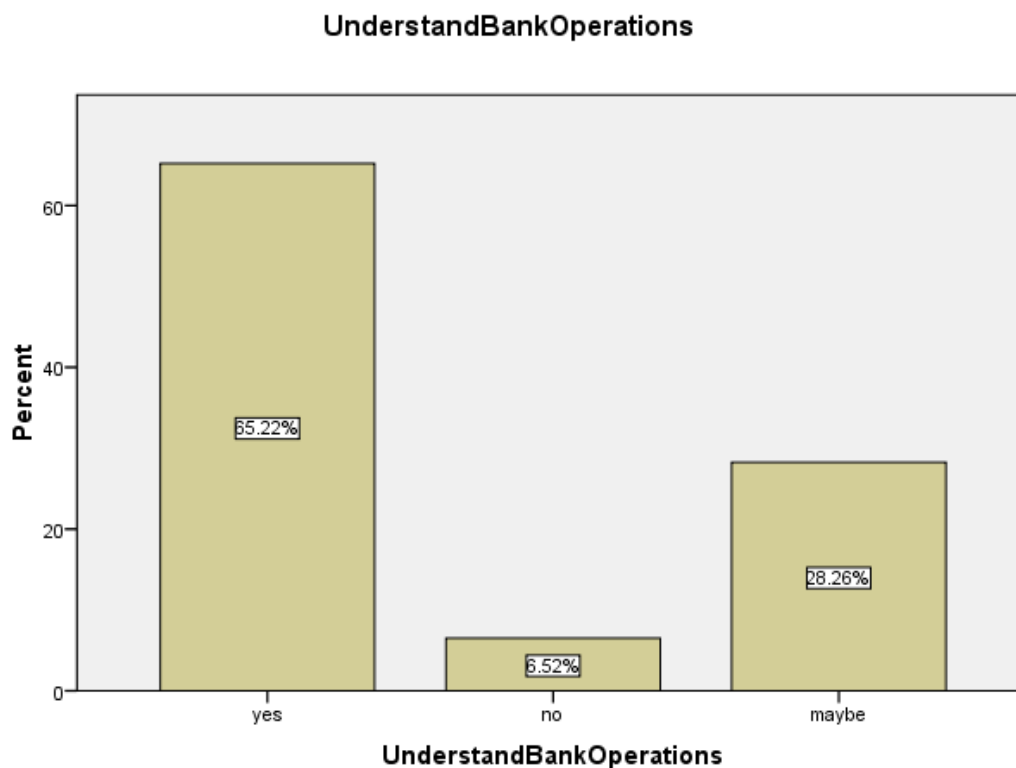


Figure 10. *Understanding of Banking Operations*

The above bar graph (Figure 10) presents the distribution of responses regarding respondents' understanding of bank operations after the completion of their internships. As the bar graph illustrates, a majority of respondents (65.22%) recorded "Yes," suggesting that they gained a clear understanding of bank operations during their internship practice. On the contrary, only 6.52% responded "No," signifying that they did not understand bank operations. A moderate percentage of respondents (28.26%) recorded "Maybe," signifying uncertainty about their level of understanding. These results strongly suggest that internships were largely effective in helping respondents gain valuable insights into banking operations.

Prior Interest in Banking Career

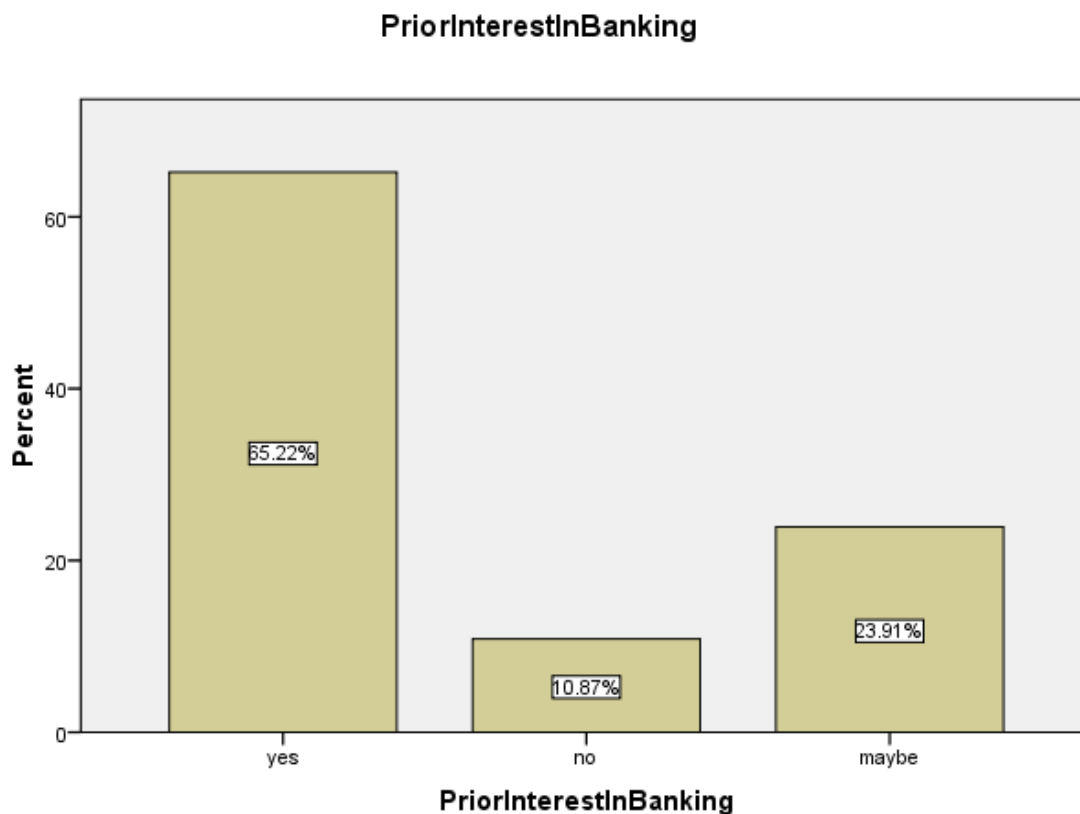


Figure 11. *Prior Interest in Banking Profession*

The above bar graph (Figure 11) displays prior interest in banking among respondents. As the bar graph illustrates, a majority of respondents (65.22%) expressed interest in banking career ("Yes" category) whereas only 10.87% indicated no prior interest ("No" category). 23.91% recorded "Maybe" indicating that they were uncertain of any prior interest in banking career. These results suggest that most respondents had a prior interest in banking career.

Influence of Internship

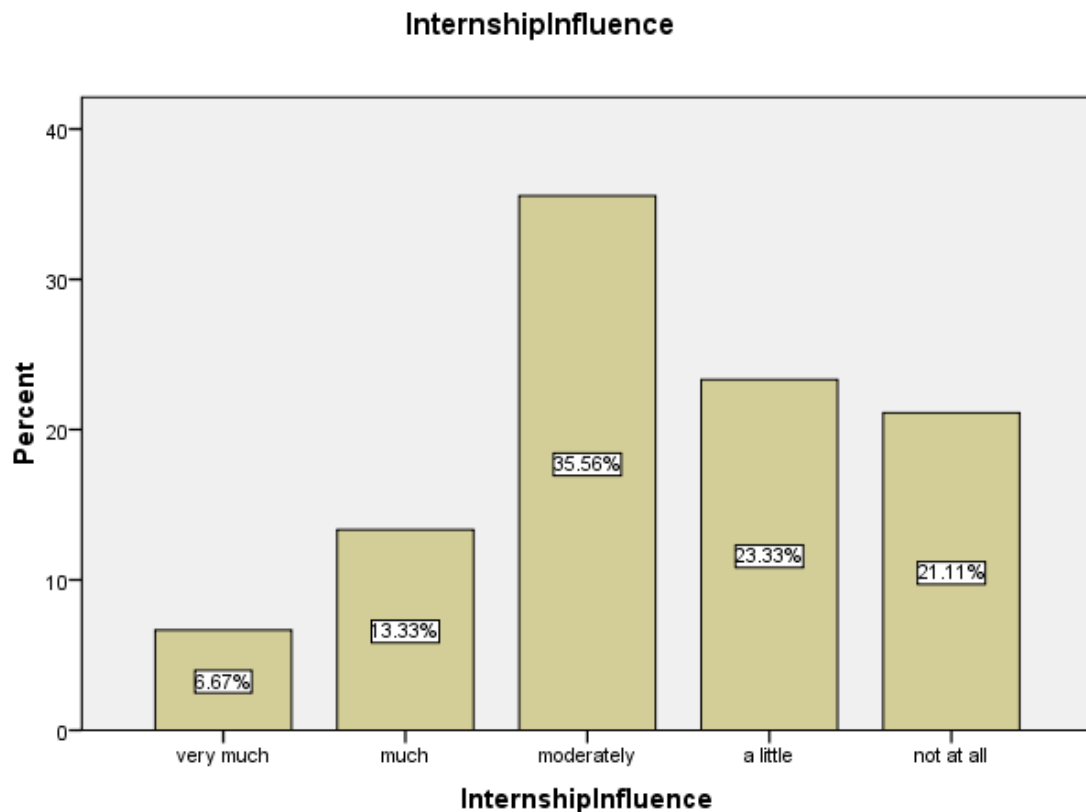


Figure 12. *Influence of Internship among Respondents*

Note: The responses were recorded in a five-point rating scale

The above bar diagram shows the responses of respondents (N = 92) regarding the overall influence of the internship experience in their career decisions. As the diagram shows, only 6 respondents (6.67%) recorded 5 (Very much) in the 5-point rating scale, 13.33% recorded 4 (Much), and 35.56% recorded 3 (Moderately) indicating that more than half of the respondents (55.56%) deemed the internship experience influential for career development. The rest 44.44% (“A little” and “Not at all” responses) did not find the internship experience influential for career development.

Major Findings and Discussion

This study explored the impact of internship experiences on the career aspirations of BBA students in Nepal's banking sector. The findings reveal several key insights into the value and influence of these internships.

Findings and Discussion

This study explored the impact of internship experiences on the career aspirations of BBA students in Nepal's banking sector. The findings reveal several significant insights into how internships influence students' career choices and professional development.

Career Aspirations in the Banking Sector

More than half of the respondents (BBA students) who completed internships in banks (53.3%) expressed a desire to pursue a career in the banking sector. This is significantly higher than those who did not want to pursue a banking career (14.1%). The remaining 32.6% were undecided about it. These findings suggest that internships play a significant role in shaping students' career aspirations by providing practical insights into the banking environment and banking operations. Studies conducted by Domholt (2018) and Karakiraz, Üstündağ, Karataş, & Özdemir (2021) also highlight this finding.

Overall Internship Experience

The study found that a significant number of students had positive internship experiences as 58.9% of respondents reported their internship as either enjoyable (32.2%) or somewhat enjoyable (26.7%). Only 11.1% had negative experiences while 30% remained neutral. This implicates that more than half of the interns have fairly good internship experiences.

Guidance and Productivity

Of the total of 92 respondents who answered the queries, 69% reported that they received adequate guidance during their internships and 76% found their experience productive. These figures suggest that banks are offering ample opportunities to interns to gain valuable work experience. However, the remaining 21% who did not get guidance spotlight an area for improvement in banking internship programs.

Value of Theoretical Knowledge

Of the total of 92 respondents who answered the queries, 43% of respondents reported that their theoretical knowledge was helpful during the internship whereas 38% were uncertain about it. This finding indicates a potential gap between academic curriculum and practical application of knowledge in the real world. So, there is a stark need for a more effective coordination between the academic institutions and the banks.

Skill Development

A significant number of respondents reported substantial improvements in technical, soft, and digital skills. Technical skills showed the highest mean score (3.62 out of 5) as compared to soft skills and digital skills (both Mean = 3.57). This is a remarkable skill development in banking internships which prepares the BBA students for future careers endeavours.

Value for Professional Development

A great majority (73%) of respondents indicated that their internship significantly enhanced their understanding of banking operations, business environments and professional requirements/ standards. Furthermore, 65% reported that the internship experience shaped their career aspirations. These findings underscore the significant role of internship programmes in bridging the gap between academic learning and practical applications in the real world. Studies conducted by Galbraith & Mondal (2020) also corroborate this fact.

Understanding of Banking Operations

A majority of interns (65.22%) reported that they gained a clear understanding of bank operations during their internship. This statistics percentage suggests that internships are effective in providing practical insights into the banking operations. Such insights prove valuable assets for the BBA graduates for their future professional lives.

Prior Interest and Internship Influence

Surprisingly, while 65.22% of the respondents reported that they had a prior interest in banking career, the influence of internships on career decisions was limited after the completion of the internship, i.e., only 53.3% aspired to join banking career post the internship. This figure contrasts with the influence indicator which indicates that

55.56% of the respondents deemed the internship experience influential for career development in the banking sector and 35.56% rated it as moderately influential. This suggests although the banking internships are influential and effective, a small percentage of the interns chose to change their career path after the internship.

Discussion

These findings collectively highlight the significant impact of internships on the career aspirations of BBA students in the banking sector. The high percentage of students aspiring to pursue banking careers post the internship indicates that internships are effective in attracting fresh college graduates in the banking sector. Thus, internships not only provide valuable skills and insights, they also recruit and the interns to pursue banking career.

The study also suggests some areas for improvement such as providing expert guidance to interns and providing optimum professional platforms to BBA students to complement their theoretical knowledge with practical experience from the real world. There is also a stark need to review and redefine the coordination between academic institutions and banks so that the BBA students find better internship platforms with payment for work and expert mentoring from the bank officials.

The influence of internships on career decisions also suggests that internships not only serve to the career interests of the interns but also to provide realistic job previews. To this effect, they provide the essential skill sets like technical skills, soft skills and digital skills together with a valuable insight into the banking operations and business environments. This helps BBA graduates make more informed career decisions potentially leading to sophisticated professions in both public and private banks.

To sum up, this study highlights the significance of internships in shaping career aspirations of BBA students and preparing them for banking careers. It provides valuable insights for academic institutions, banks, and policymakers to reformulate and enhance internship programs and bridge the gap between academic curricula and banking industry needs.

CHAPTER III

Summary and Conclusions

Summary

This study explored the impact of internship experiences of BBA students on their career aspirations in the banking sector of Nepal. Questionnaires were administered under quantitative approach to collect information from 100 BBA students from different colleges of Mahendranagar who completed internships in banks. While 8 of the respondents did not respond to some of the queries, the data collected from 92 respondents gives an insight into this topic.

Overview of results

1. Career Aspirations: 53.3% of respondents expressed a desire to pursue a career in the banking sector post the internship indicating a strong positive impact of internships on career decisions.
2. Internship Experience: 58.9% of the respondents reported a positive internship experience, 76% deemed it productive and 60.8% found it fruitful for career development while 72% reported that internships can help in the job hunt. 69% interns found sufficient guidance from the bank officials during the internships and 43% found their theoretical knowledge helpful in the internship.
4. Skill Enhancement: Significant improvements were reported in technical skills (90.07%), soft skills (80.65%), and digital skills (69.57%) from the internship practice.
5. Career Impact: 42.86% of respondents were influenced by their internship experience for making career decisions while overall influence was 91.925%.
6. Job Market Advantage: 72% believed their internship helped in job hunt.

The study concludes that internships play a pivotal role in shaping BBA students' career aspirations in the banking sector of Nepal. They serve as an integral bridge between academic learning and professional practice, shaping career aspirations and career choices.

Conclusions

In conclusion, this research underscores the crucial role of internships in shaping the career aspirations and professional development of BBA students in the banking sector of Nepal. These experiences not only influence career choices but also significantly contribute to skill development, provide insights into the banking operations and business environments, and boost the employability of the BBA graduates. Nevertheless, the findings also highlight the areas for improvement, especially redefining the collaborations between academic institutions and banks, improving guidance and mentoring/ recruiting mechanism, and integrating theoretical knowledge with real-world practical applications. Further research needs to be conducted in these directions and universities need to review their policy frameworks regarding these improvements. If these issues are addressed, it would further amplify the impact of internships.

These conclusions have important implications for educational institutions, banking organizations, and policymakers. They underscore the need for continued investment in and refinement of internship programs. By optimizing these experiences, stakeholders can better prepare BBA students for successful careers in banking, ultimately strengthening the talent pipeline for Nepal's banking sector.

Directions for further research

There seems to be space for further research to explore the role of internships in long-term career designs in the banking sector. Universities, banks and professionals can forge lasting improvements in the professional setups through further research in this direction.

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Appendix

Questionnaire