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Research Article

Understanding the students` perceptions towards the Campus Placement Cell and their preferences for placements and analyzing the need for counseling.

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Abstract

The original motivation to carry out this research was less participation of students in the campus placement activities conducted in undergraduate commerce colleges in Pune. The research was carried out using a participatory action research approach to understand the students` perceptions about the campus placement cells with special reference to undergraduate commerce colleges. This research is focused on understanding the student`s side of taking up or not taking up the placement opportunities available or offered by campus placement cell from the colleges.

In addition to above, this qualitative research shows how the campus placement activities are conducted and also some light is thrown on the experience of the Human Resource Managers about the campus placements. It is hoped that the insights along with the advices offered up by researcher after detail study will definitely benefit to the colleges to make their placement cells more active and facilitate the students in a better way. The researcher made an effort to throw some light on the need of employment counseling for getting better results. It will also benefit to third parties directly or indirectly related to them. At the outset researcher hope that this research work will promote the students` participation in undergraduate commerce colleges.

Introduction

Many Campus Placement Officers, believe that campus placements are of immense importance in today`s era. Statistics shows that India is set to become the world`s youngest country by 2020, with an average age of 29 years. More precisely, as per the report published by ASSOCHAM, India is having 62% of the population in the working age group (18 to 59 years) and more than 54% of the total population is below 25 years of age. So, it is very important to channelize these youths of working age group i.e. 18 to 25 in a proper direction to get the advantage of this situation for country`s growth.

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In India a student gets his/her graduation/bachelor`s degree normally at the age of 21 to 22 years. It will be ideal if these students/youths get channelized through the campuses itself. The companies also prefer to hire its workforce directly from the colleges by Campus Placement Program. This is beneficial for colleges to facilitate the students through Campus Placement Cells for getting a good job immediately after their graduation which will also help the students to start their career at early stages.

Campus recruitment is considered to be a significant factor for both the educational institutions and corporate. The major advantage of the campus recruitment process is for the students. They get their first job from the campus which helps them to get settled in their career at earlier stages. Campus placements are also cost effective and time saving for the companies. There are few challenges in this process such as mismatch between aspirations of students and their level of preparation for a particular job, which needs to be addressed for the success of the process. It is said by many of the Training and Placement Officers that majority of the students don`t turn up for placements through Campus Placement Cell. Importance of campus placements can be explained in detail with the help of below slicer.

For students

- Getting the 1st job before getting the degree.
- No need to go out and compete in the open market for job.

For Campuses

- Improves the brand value of the college.
- Establishes a close connect with the industry which will help in developing the students

For Companies

- Cost saving
- Gets the surety about the joining of the selected candidate.
- Helps in employer branding

In spite of the above experience shared by the Placement Officers it is also observed that students pay special attention to placement records while selecting a college or university for the admission. Considering all these factors we can say that some or the other thread is missing and there is a Gap in expectations and reality of Campus Placement Process.

In the above context the researcher is curious to know what are the expectations of the students and their perceptions about campus placement. It is observed that the campuses are providing the placement opportunities to the students but somehow the students seem to be unresponsive to those opportunities. Campus placement cells put in a lot of efforts for students for getting them placed. Companies are also having good opportunities for undergraduate commerce students still why the placement ratio is not reflecting that? When we try to find a common thread in this process then we can find that it is very much essential to study the situations from students` perspective.

For understanding the student`s perception the researcher has prepared the questionnaire and collected the responses from 135 students representing 10 colleges in Pune which were established before 1990 (Annexure 1).

Objectives -

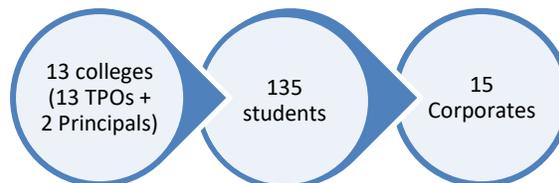
1. To understand the students perceptions about the campus placement cell.
2. To find out the difficulties faced by the campus placement cell.
3. To suggest the remedial solutions which can enhance the employment ratio of campus placements?

Methods -

Data Collection –

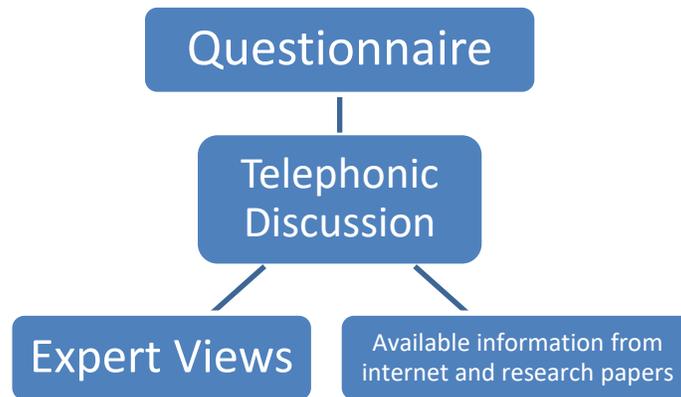
Data collection was done in the form of a structured questionnaire and telephonic interviews conducted with the stakeholders. Few experts were also interviewed and the researcher tried to club all the findings and suggested the remedies.

Questionnaire was sent to the final year students from the colleges established before 1990. 15 HR Manages who regularly recruit for undergraduate students and 13 Training and Placement Officers were also interviewed from the colleges where the questionnaire was sent.



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Total emails sent to the students were 1187 and received responses from 135 students which is 11.37%. All the Training and Placement Officers from the selected colleges filled the questionnaire and participated in the interviews.



Discussion -

Hypothesis – 1

a) **Null Hypothesis:** Most of the students are indecisive about various career options available.

b) **Alternative Hypothesis:** Most of the students are not indecisive about various career options available.

The results of Hypothesis testing,

Chi – Square test is applied and **p value is 5.63154E-28**, So, **null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance**. Thus H1 is accepted indicating that most of the students are NOT indecisive about the career options available.

Hypothesis – 2

a) **Null Hypothesis:** The students` perceptions are different than the intentions behind campus placement cell.

b) **Alternative Hypothesis:** The students` perceptions are similar with the intentions of the campus placement cell.

Here we have applied mode for testing and the results show that,

Alternative hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. Thus H₀ is accepted indicating that the student`s perceptions are different than the intentions behind campus placement cell.

Results-

Data Analysis –

Difficulties faced by the campus placement cells.

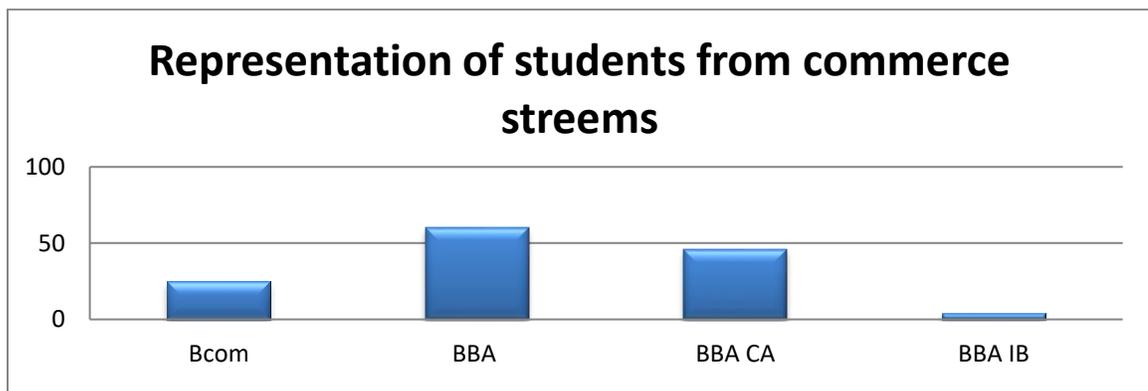
- Students didn't turn up as per the expectations for the campus placement process.
- Imbalance in expectations of the students and expectations of the corporates.
- If selected it is not very sure that the student joins the company which becomes a pain area for campus placement cell.
- Campus placement cells find it difficult to get the registrations for the companies coming in campus for recruitment.
- Companies are not getting right candidate for right job and vice a versa.

When a detailed interview was conducted with the Training and Placement Officers of the 13 selected colleges it is found that there is a lot of requirement for counseling.

Sending the students randomly for the interviews is not enough, the Training and Placement Officers find it important to discuss about the opening shared with the students and make the students comfortable about it. Every time it is essential for the student to understand the need and the expected outcome of the position created. This will enable the student to work efficiently.

Analysis of Questions asked to the students.

1. Which course/UG degree you are pursuing?



Above table shows that the students who have participated in the survey comprises of B Com and BBA students.

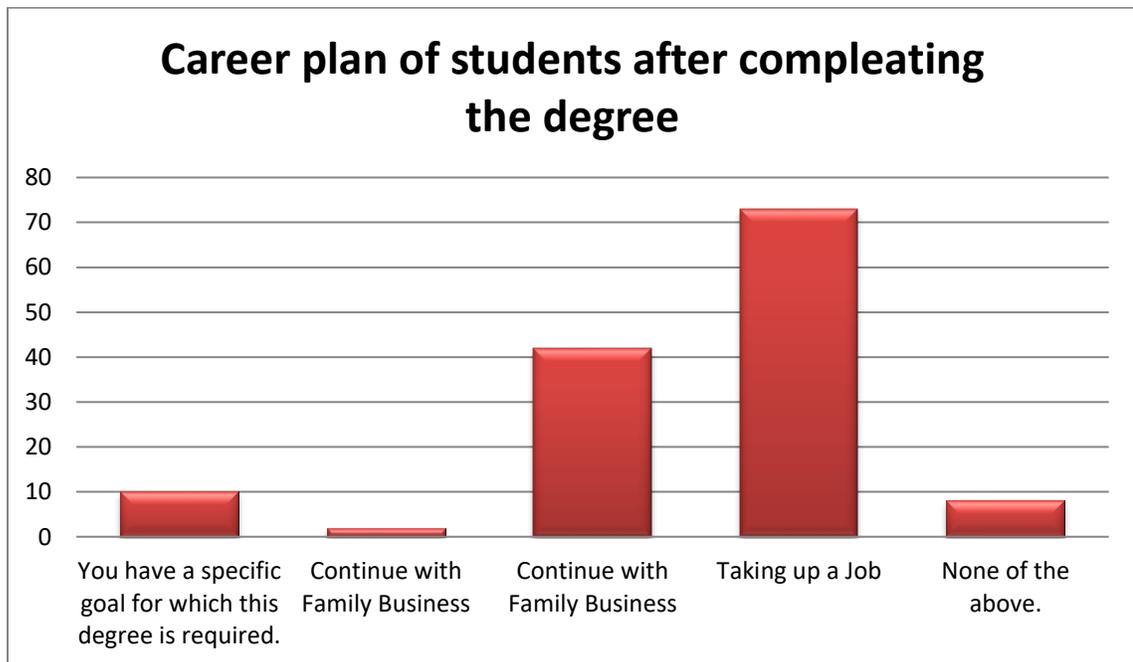
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2. Why have you chosen this degree?

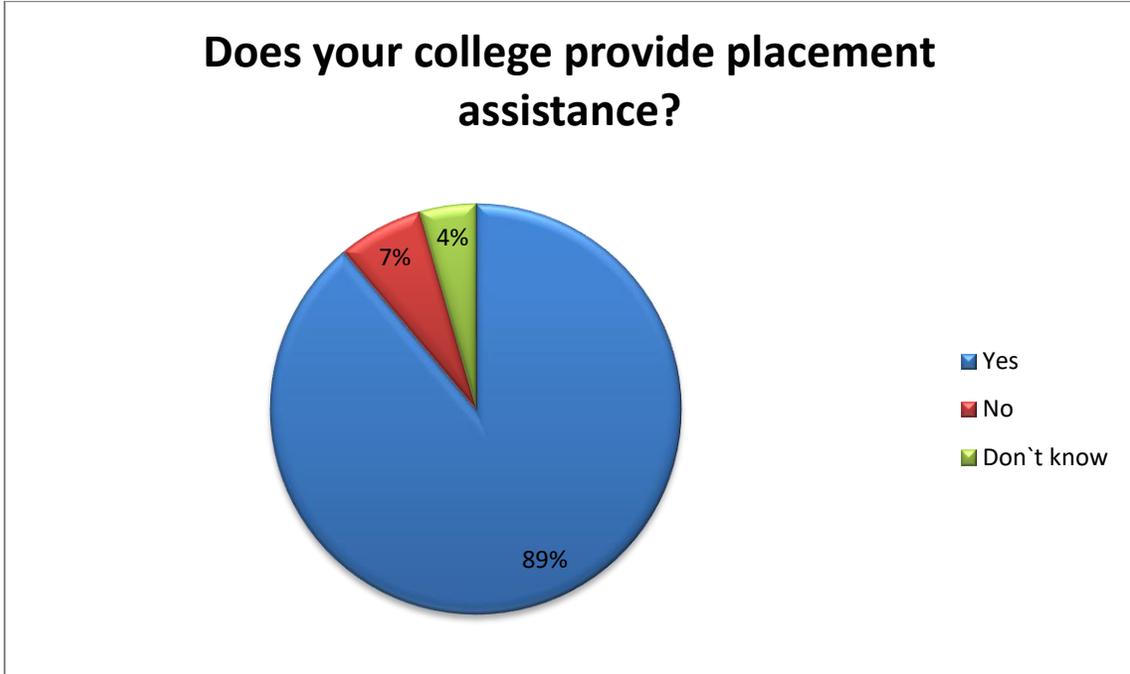


We can see from the above table that the decision of selecting the course which a student is pursuing is majorly driven by the behavior friends.

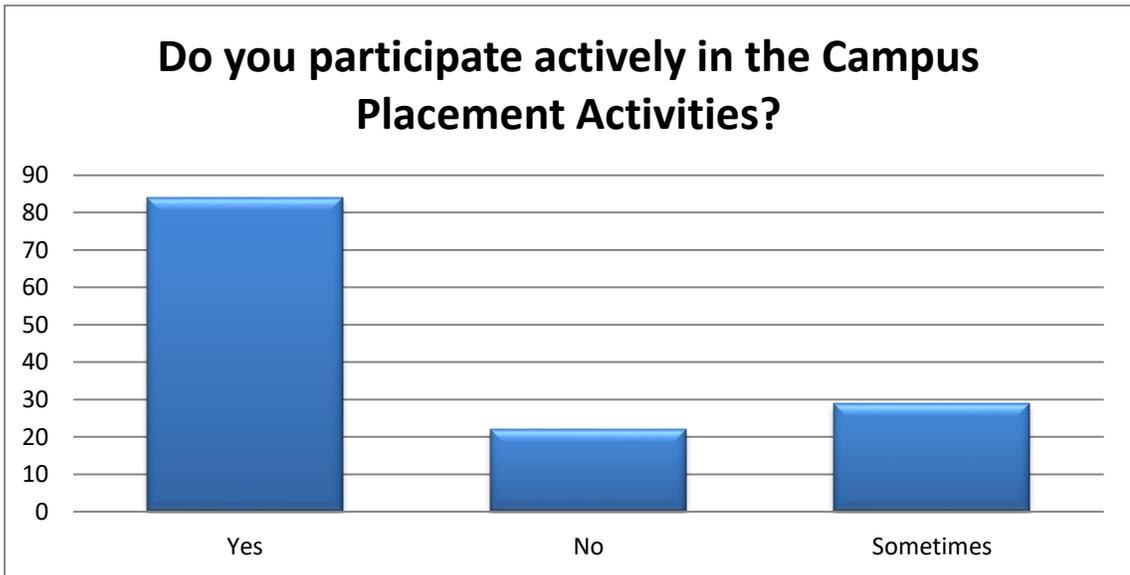
3. What are your plans after completing your graduation?



4. Does your college provide placement assistance?



5. Do you participate actively in the Campus Placement Activities?



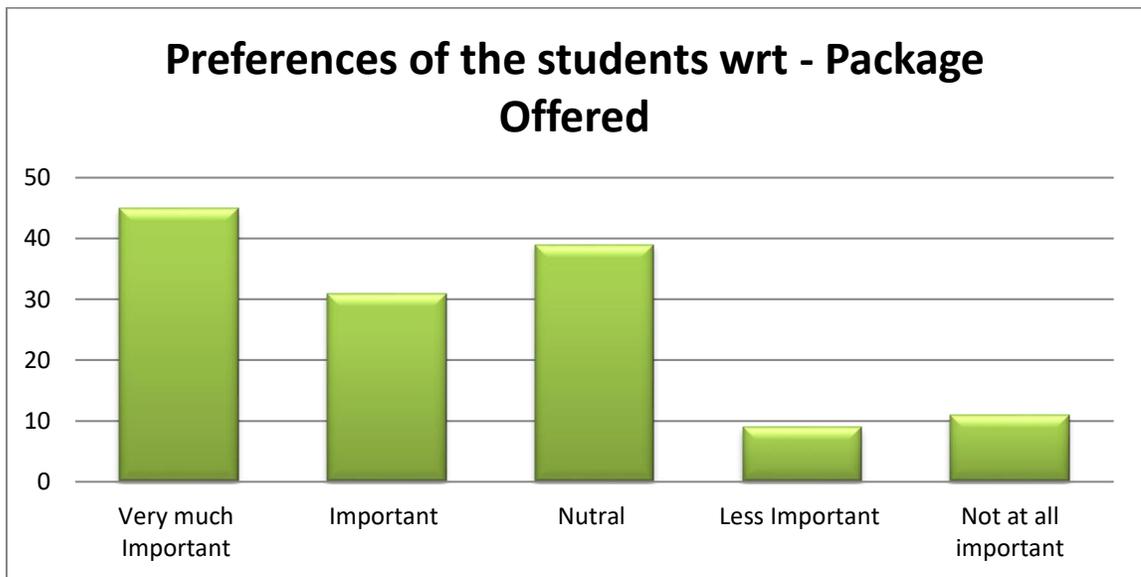
6. What are your perceptions about the campus placement cell?

Perceptions about the campus placement cells shared by the students are listed below,

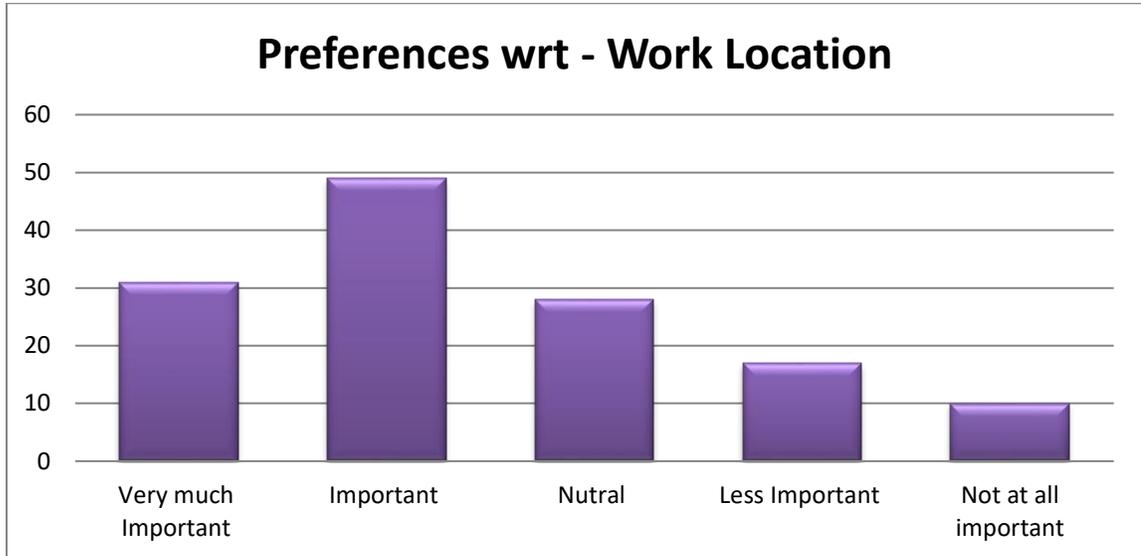
- a. The opportunities provided by the campus placement cell are average.
- b. The designation is not attractive.
- c. The job profiles offered by the companies through campus placement cell are not as per the expectations.

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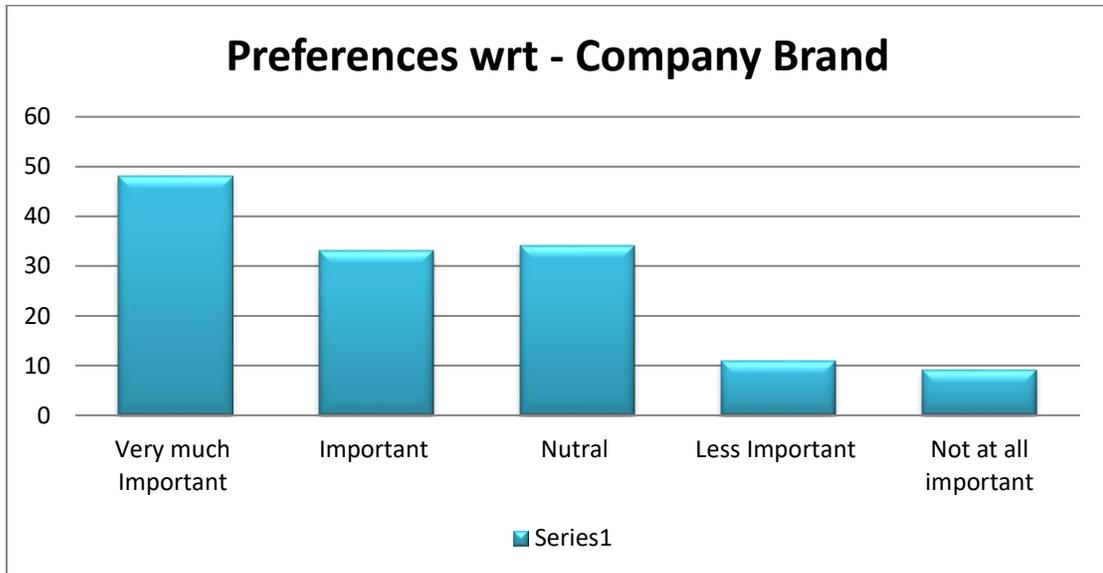
- d. Campus should place the students in the companies offering high package.
 - e. Direct job interviews should be conducted and don`t want to go for GD and aptitude test.
 - f. Ready to apply only for well known companies.
 - g. We can get a better job on our own/through references than whatever is offered from campus placement cell.
 - h. Campus placement cell should provide a job within the vicinity.
 - i. Don`t want the jobs which involve field work.
 - j. Don`t want the jobs which involve tele calling.
 - k. Notifications about the companies coming in campus are received late.
 - l. Campus placement cell should focuses Mock tests, GDs and mock personal interviews .
 - m. We are ready for part time job as well to support my family.
 - n. Campus Placement cell is providing the opportunities matching our expectations.
7. Please rate your preferences while selecting a job on the scale of 1 to 5, 1 being top priority and 5 being less important. [Package]



8. Please rate your preferences while selecting a job on the scale of 1 to 5, 1 being top priority and 5 being less important. [Work Location].

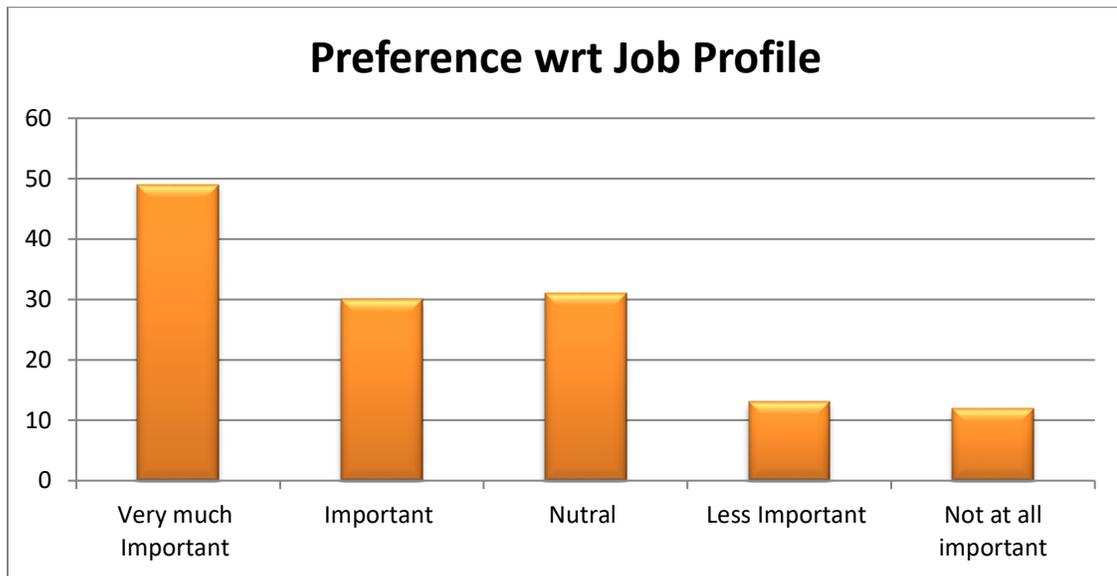


9. Please rate your preferences while selecting a job on the scale of 1 to 5, 1 being top priority and 5 being less important. [Company Brand].

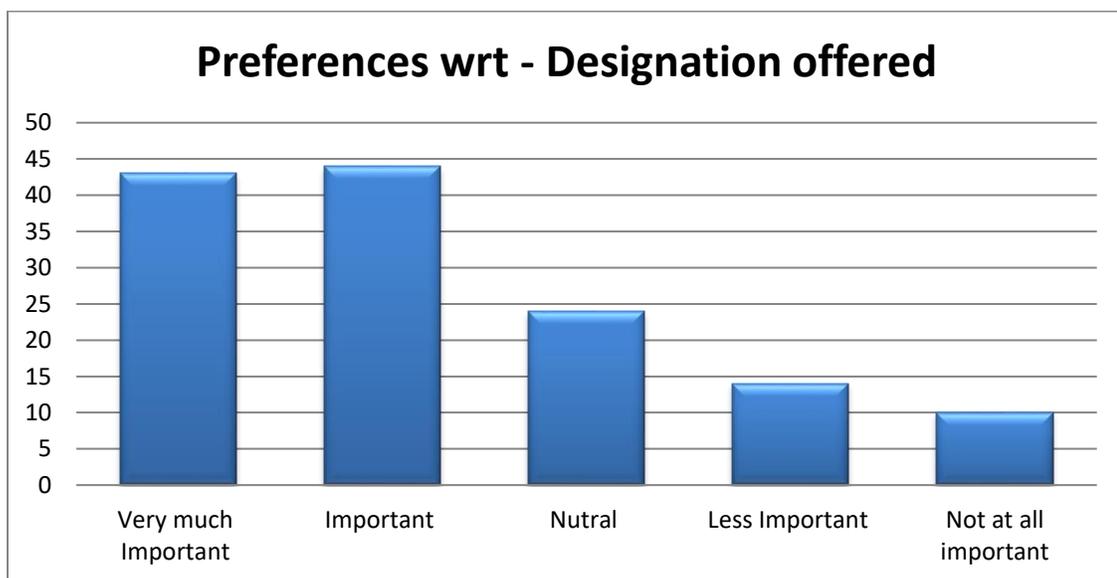


10. Please rate your preferences while selecting a job on the scale of 1 to 5, 1 being top priority and 5 being less important. [Job profile (description) offered]

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11. Please rate your preferences while selecting a job on the scale of 1 to 5, 1 being top priority and 5 being less important. [Designation offered.]



Conclusion:

From the above graphical interpretation of the data collected we can conclude,

From the above data we could see that the students take decision based on the offering made by the companies, here it is very important for a student to know whether he/she is capable of handling the responsibilities which will come along with the role.

In such cases it is essential to undergo employment counseling by experts to better understand the role and future prospects of the role.

The decision of students is also driven by the peer reviews 83% of the students are actively participating in the campus placement activities conducted by the respective colleges. 45% of the students feel that “Package offered” is the most important thing which they consider before appearing for any company.

When students take the decisions to appear for the interview based on the work location it is advisable to engage the student by telling both the sides of a coin to him as , 49% of the students feel that “Work Location” is the second important thing which they consider before appearing for any company. Results also show that the company Brand image, Job profile and Job title are also equally important factors which the students consider before appearing for any company.

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AUTHORS PROFILE



MPM, M.Phil. from SPPU 10years experience in Training and Placements

Head Corporate Relations – MBA@IICMR Taking care of end to end campus placements and Corporate Interface of MBA@IICMR. Making the students job ready and place them in respective companies according to their specialization is taken care by the Corporate Relations team.

Here my core expertise are to guide the student to decide their career goals understand their potential and areas of concern which may become barrier during the campus placement process and their final placement.

In addition to this understanding the requirement from the company and getting exact need and accordingly line up the students is also a skill. Published 5 papers in National Journals on employability.