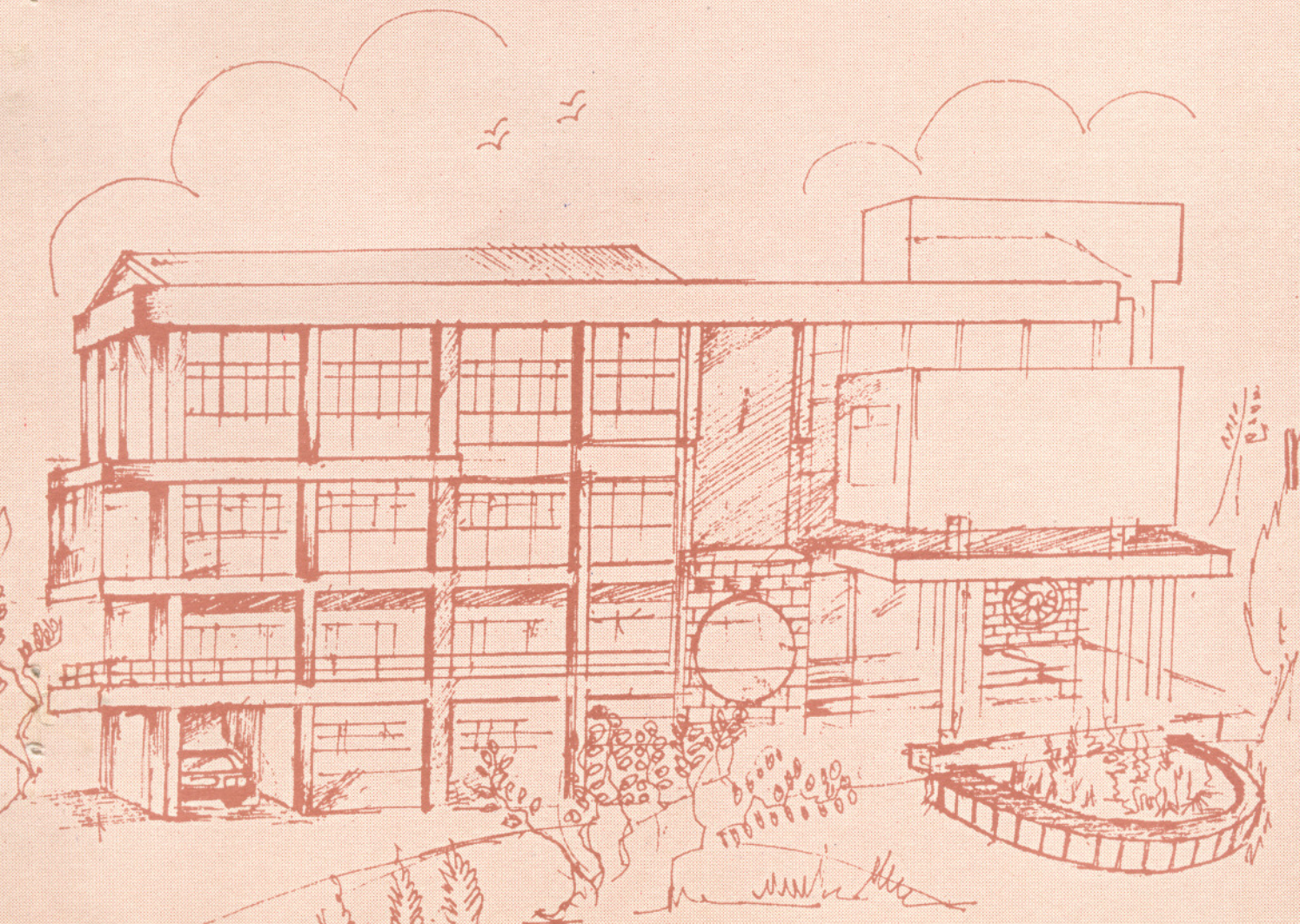# Working Paper Series

Factors Motivating The Choice Of Specialisation Of PGP 2 Students

Factors Motivating The Choice Of Specialisation Of PGP 2 Students

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RESEARCH METHODOLOGY IN BEHAVIOURAL SCIENCE

PROJECT REPORT

FACTORS MOTIVATING THE CHOICE OF SPECIALISATION OF PGP 2 STUDENTS

A study by
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESEARCH STATEMENT

The project was initiated with a foundational reading of articles on behavioral science research. For deciding the research statement, ten topics were proposed, and then critically examined with respect to relevance and feasibility. Finally, the research statement was decided as *"To identify the factors that motivated PGP 2 students to choose their respective specialization."* Specialization was defined here to be the "primary area of interest" specified by the PGP 2 students on their CVs; and the project was undertaken with the assumption that the students are conscious about the factors that influenced them to take up their choice of specialization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Articles on motivational theories and other relevant subject matter were reviewed to provide a base for the project.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

An exploratory study was carried out to determine the factors which would be tested in the data collection phase. This was done in the form of a focus group discussion. Once the factors were available, a sample questionnaire was drafted and was reviewed by the project co-ordinator. This was used to construct the final questionnaire which was administered to the respondents.

DATA COLLECTION & ANALYSIS

The final questionnaire was administered to a sample of 60 respondents. The respondents were chosen by a stratified sampling method. The responses of the questionnaires were coded and analyzed. The questionnaire was designed with one open-ended question also to facilitate the collection of qualitative response.

FINDINGS

The dominant factors that influenced the sample to choose their specialization are their interest level in the field, and the job prospects. Other influencing factors were the career progression and the job profiles. Factors like parents, mentors, etc. did not influence the decision. A cluster analysis showed that the sample could be divided into two clusters.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The project was initiated with a reading on inquiry systems. This gave an insight into research in fields of behavioural science. For the project, a number of topics were listed out. These were evaluated considering feasibility and some of the topics were eliminated. Finally, a research statement was decided.

RESEARCH STATEMENT

To identify the factors that motivated PGP 2 students to choose their respective specialization.

ASSUMPTIONS

- For the project, specialization is defined as the primary area of interest that the student specified in his/her CV.
- It is assumed that the students are conscious about the factors that motivated them to take the respective decision.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The group has based their literature review initial phase on the book on Motivation by V S Mahesh, Articles on Self motivation and the various theories on motivation. The research team submitted their index cards on the various chapters. The following is the compilation of all the index cards and review of articles found on the internet regarding self motivation. The entire literature review which will consist of more articles being reviewed by the research team would be then divided under different concepts of motivation as proposed by various experts. The framework for the same was suggested by Prof. Anuradha in the class and additions would be made to the same.

The project involves finding out and measuring various factors that motivate students to take up their respective specializations. As a prelude to this the research team has identified some researched facts concerning the students who join MBA. This is regarding the factors that they consider before joining MBA. The following facts are regarding the Hong Kong Executive Business Students' Motivations for pursuing an MBA.

ARTICLE REVIEW

High market demand for MBAs due to growth, FDI, more local universities & foreign business schools looking to tap the Asian Market, superficial gestures of localisation in approach to management education (e.g. cases on regional firms)

Methodology undertaken: Open ended question survey "Why are you studying an MBA?" followed by a 5-point-Likert-scale based instrument to 130 students studying in School of Business, University of Hong Kong… Justification for sampling: Hong is a window for absorption of managerial knowledge into nearby Asian regions.

These factors influencing choice of MBA could be considered as inputs for developing our actual initial hypothesis about factors influencing choice of specialisation in MBA.

Findings:

TABLE 2. Motivations for Pursuing an MBA

The following are very, very strong reasons why you decided to pursue an MBA:	No.	M	Variance
To improve your analytical ability	112	4.5	0.57
To learn more about business management	113	4.4	0.35
To get an MBA degree qualification	113	4.4	0.43
To learn practical approaches to business management	112	4.3	0.42
To make you better at your job	113	4.3	0.50
To obtain better prospects of switching career path	111	4.2	0.77
To learn theoretical approaches to business management	111	4.0	0.56
To improve your own self-esteem/image	112	3.9	0.78
To make new business contacts	113	3.7	0.88
To make new friends	112	3.7	0.85
To make more money	111	3.5	1.22
To gain the respect of others	112	3.4	0.74
Good way to use spare time	111	3.0	1.32

Note. Scale ranged through 1 (*strongly agree*), 2 (*disagree*), 3 (*neutral*), 4 (*agree*), and 5 (*strongly agree*). Items are listed in order of mean score and not by the order in which they originally appeared in the survey instrument.

The birth and growth of various theories that we are going to analyze have been vividly explained in the 2nd chapter of V S Mahesh's book on motivation.

Hindu Philosophy (4th millennium BC) said that life spark in every human being is a representation of godliness. One should apply oneself to one's tasks without thinking of the fruits of that effort.

Western World View – Greek philosophers in 6th century BC recognized balance of individual and societal role. Aristotle recognized the need for enabling atmosphere for growth as well as constraints to growth. With the advent of scientific thinking, two lines of thought emerged: exploration of physical universe and focus on the nature and purpose of human existence.

In 1776 Adam Smith advocated specialization of labor, as well as recognized its effect – that it would make workers ignorant, and assessed that there needs to be comparable compensation as per the work done. With Industrial Revolution came the concepts of standardization, specialization, synchronization, maximization, etc., and there was the situation where people had to make compromises on the quality of life.

Enquiries into human morality, aspiration, goodness, etc., were being marginalized. Karl Marx and others sought development of associations for workers' welfare, these led to the perception of the employer as an evil exploiter; and that man works only for incentives. Behavioral science gained importance, proof of principle of reinforcement; man as a maximiser of self interest. Perception changed by later efforts like the Hawthorne Studies.

In conclusion, meritorious ideas need to be adapted from various schools of thought.

INDEX CARDS FROM V S MAHESH

The basic understanding regarding the various motivating factors has to be preceded by understanding the basic psychology and human anatomy. V S Mahesh in his books 3rd chapter explains the same. The following is a brief summary of the same in his words.

Three schools of psychology

1. Freudian
2. Behaviourist
3. Humanist

Humanist- As proposed by Abraham Maslow

Concept of Self actualization – Kurt Goldstein

Physiological needs – primary needs
Safety needs
Love needs   Progression   Regression
Esteem needs
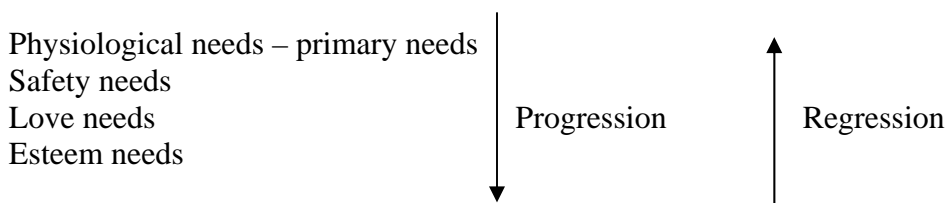
Self actualization

Progression refers that people want to satisfy higher needs when lower level needs are satisfied

Regression refers to the fact that people regress to lower need when they cannot achieve higher needs or are suddenly deprived of lower level needs

The chapter also refers to commonalities of Maslow's Hierarchy to Indian text on progression of a student

- Aupedheshika – training under a teacher
- Anusila – Obedience
- Abhyasa – Practice these are required in this phase
- Aharya – Self esteem of a craftsman – the person understands the worth of his work
- Sahaja – Merger of the art and the artist

These phases are similar especially the last two bear striking resemblance to Maslow's need of self esteem and self actualization. Aupedheshika can be seen as part of the lower level needs

Threshold limits vary across groups.

At the physiological level, high threshold limits translate into an excessive need for food, sleep etc. This could result in tags like gluttony, "Sleepy Tom", sex mania etc.

At the safety level high threshold limits are ascribed to risk averse people or misers. Young MBAs or recruits may face difficulties in dealing with executives who do not take a stand as they are risk averse. Such senior executives are considered excellent subordinates and hence, are found in large numbers.

By deliberately setting low threshold limits at the early stages it is possible to move on to the higher stages of the need hierarchy.

Setting high threshold limits at the belongingness level would lead to negative needs for a group. This could result in fierce group loyalty and developing a cult like behaviour which could have debilitating effects. For e.g.-being part of an elite society, interdepartmental animosity etc.

High profile executives generally display higher threshold limits for recognition by others.

Interestingly, this means that recognition would come to you only if denied to others. Hence, there is an inherent dependency on others, in terms of being denied recognition. In this view, therefore, it would seem important to have large offices, lackeys, expensive holidays etc. In such a distorted world, people are reduced to either puppets or puppeteers.

However, the above are cases of extrinsic motivation and the output of extrinsic motivation always leads to lower quality than that of intrinsic motivation.

A manager can be either puppeteer or gardener. If he is a believer in the latter, then he would space out rewards and guide his subordinate through the first 4 levels and then reduce the controls. On the other hand, a puppeteer would deny the needs at a lower level and force the subordinate into a lower level "dependency" relationship.

In the next step we tried to find the difference between the Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation. The Chapter 4 of the same book distinguishes between the two. The following are a few differences between the two.

THE QUALITY OF ENDEAVOUR – INTRINSIC V/S EXTRINSIC

Distinct correlation between the need level and the quality of one's endeavors.

Chinese Paintings –   **shen (divine)**
                      Miao (profound / mysterious)
                      Neng (accomplished)

Shen – (absolute perfection)-Sahaja

- no effort
- hands appear to move spontaneously
- Result of a self-actualizing individual's efforts

Miao – (mastery) - Aharya

- style appropriate to the subject
- Separation of artist from painting
- Level is of self-esteem

Neng – (adeptness) - Aupadeshika

- Dexterity
- level of recognition by others

Intrinsic motivation leads to relatively superior performance as against extrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic – motivated by the interest, enjoyments, satisfaction and challenge of the endeavor itself

Extrinsic – other goals through accomplishment that satisfies physiological, safety or recognition needs.

Introduction of extrinsic motivation negatively affects the level of intrinsic motivation previously present. Man's ability and work skills have always been treated as a commodity to be bought by extrinsic rewards. Hence intrinsic motivation eroded and problem of 'quality' arose.

True quality of perfection can be reached only when the doer and the done merge. It can never be achieved when the doer is consciously trying to trade with what he can do.

Today, it is ironic that we witness true quality whenever people are engaging in hobbies rather than when they are working. Presumption is 'play is more enjoyable than work."

PYGMALION EFFECT/ SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

Expectation of a result most often leads to that result actually being achieved. New age organizations 90% lower level employees will be front line service or knowledge workers in remote locations. Management must communicate high expectations strongly and clearly to them.

To understand the psychology of the employee in the organization one has to look into how the human psychology has evolved from the childhood. The 8th chapter of V S Mahesh talks about the same. The highlights of the chapter are given below.

- Understanding the psychology of a human being for the first 18-20 years.
- Understanding what a youngster goes through before the start of his work carrer.
- Understanding the extent of crookedness so that appropriate corrective actions can be taken.
- Youngster can develop various knots and turns in the early days. Just as they are counselled, adults can also be dealt in a similar manner in the organizations.
- Nature- nurture controversy--- Nature alone determines traits (Hereditarians), environmental conditions determine traits (Environmentalists).
- Erikson – identified 8 sets if crises a human being faces before reaching full maturity. At each stage child has an option of developing a trait that will eventually help in reaching adulthood focussing of self-actualization.

1. Basic trust vs. basic mistrust (0 - 1 yr)

When child's physiological and safety needs are met, trust develops (nurturing by the parents). When subject to random, unreasonable behaviour, doubt & mistrust develops.

2. Autonomy vs. shame & doubt (1-3 yrs)

Trust leads to increase in self confidence – develops sense of autonomy. Parental caution, disapproval & discouragement leads to – doubt in natural instincts, develop sense of shame, guilt – doing things secretively.

	Known to self	Unknown to self
Known to others	Area of free activity	Blind spot
Unknown to others	Mask	Unknown

Johari Window

To increase area of free activity- openness to feedback & self disclosure.

3. Initiative vs. guilt (3-5 yrs)

Trust breeds to use of energy positively-self learning through initiative. Mistrust & restrictiveness thwarts child's growth. Threshold springs-learning to share love with the arrival of a sibling.

4. Industry vs. inferiority (6-7 yrs)

Trust & autonomy-initiative-industriousness (intrinsic motivation). Mistrust-loss of faith in intrinsic ability.

A number of contributions summarize groups of factors influencing careers and career success. Frequently, a differentiation is made between individual characteristics, especially personality traits and behavioral patterns, social context and the wider institutional context such as opportunity structures. In this context we see a few personal

characteristics that the research team feels that would influence the career decision of an Individual

Adaptability

This refers to the ability of a person to modify his or her behavior in different social contexts as requested. It consists of three individual traits: 'self-monitoring', 'flexibility' and 'emotional stability':

Self-monitoring: This construct, developed by Snyder (1987), refers to the ability of a person to adapt his/her own behavior to external situational factors as an "active construction of public selves to achieve social ends". Thus, high self-monitors respond to social and interpersonal cues of performances in a contextually appropriate way. Low self-monitors do not control their expressive behavior to the same extent in order to match situational demands. We assume that within post-organizational career fields it is essential to establish contact with a diverse spectrum of individuals and institutions. This requires high adaptability performance in the sense of self-monitoring.

Flexibility: In our context, flexibility is limited to vocational activities. People who score high on this scale "display a high preparedness and ability to adjust to changing work related conditions and situations". At present, no relevant empirical findings for this factor are available. Therefore, we assume that flexibility is positively linked with an inclination towards post-organizational career fields.

Emotional stability: The 'emotional stability' measures the degree to which an individual is calm, self-confident and cool, as opposed to insecure, anxious and depressed. People who score high on this scale are not easily upset and tend to be free from persistent negative feelings. They hold realistic ideas and are good at controlling their impulses and desires. A number of studies show emotional stability to be a good predictor for job performance in a number of different jobs, across occupations and cultural contexts. We assume that individuals with lower values of 'emotional stability' tend towards the organizational career field offering more safety and structure, thus compensating for a lack of internal structural stability.

Sociability

This denotes establishing and maintaining contact with others across and within different social fields. It includes a behavioral characteristic — 'networking' — as well as a personality trait — 'openness for social contacts'.

Networking: It describes social behavior seeking numerous and various business contacts that may also spill over into private life.

Openness for social contacts: As operationalised by Hossiep and Paschen (1998), this overlaps with 'extraversion' and describes the degree to which individuals are gregarious, assertive and sociable as opposed to reserved, timid and quiet.

A number of studies show positive effects on careers for both factors. Individuals linking a multiplicity of socially unconnected people and groups have both information and control advantages. This has positive effects on career outcomes such as early promotion, hierarchical progression and salary level and other performance and development indicators. A central reason lies in the reduced information redundancy accompanying the 'social bridging' of so-called structural holes.

Therefore, we assume that people who score high on 'sociability' prefer a career field where a strong bridging functions between structural holes is relevant, thus using this capability to their advantage. In post-organizational career fields, this is expected to be the case more often. Vice versa, individuals with low 'sociability' should value organizational careers.

Power and politics motive pattern

This relates to building or maintaining status, dominance, power and a positive self-image. It includes the personality trait 'leadership motivation' and two behavioral characteristics: 'self-promotion/self-assertion' and 'demonstrating power and status'. Leadership motivation People who score high on Hossiep and Paschen's (1998) 'leadership motivation' scale are motivated actively to influence and shape social

processes. They perceive themselves as having natural authority and/or serving others as a reference person. This factor overlaps with McClelland's (1987) concept of power motivation. Studies show that this factor plays an important role in a person's desire to take on leadership positions (House et al, 1991). People scoring high on this scale tend to be promoted more often than those who do not (Howard and Bray, 1990; Jacobs and McClelland, 1994).

Self-promotion/self-assertion and demonstrating power and status: The factor 'self-promotion/ self-assertion' refers to behavior where individuals emphasize their abilities, qualifications and achievements and — if necessary — overcome resistance to their plans with sheer pressure. 'Demonstrating power and status', describes the use of position power, symbols of status, influence and bluff to gain respect and compliance from people in one's occupational environment. Studies on the use of political tactics to advance one's career show that tactics based on self-promotion are negatively correlated with career advancement, contrary to 'ingratiation' tactics. In another study, the so-called 'organizational strategy', including the use of power and status to influence promotion decisions, was a major factor in promotion to middle management (Ferris et al, 1992).

We assume that individuals with high scores on the 'power and politics motive pattern' scales prefer the company world career field favoring such patterns.

Need for achievement and accuracy

'Need for achievement and accuracy' describes the readiness of an individual to meet high vocational standards and fulfill tasks with attention and precision. It includes two personality traits: 'achievement motivation' and 'conscientiousness'.

Achievement motivation: In our context, achievement motivation is the willingness to accept high performance standards as well as continually to benchmark and, if necessary, improve one's own performance. Findings show that a high achievement motivation represents a strong impulse for above-average vocational efforts.

Conscientiousness: This personality trait describes the extent to which individuals are hardworking, organized, dependable and persistent. Most meta-analyses on the relation between conscientiousness and job performance show that it is the variable with the strongest positive effect on performance across all occupational groups and all measures of performance.

We assume that individuals with high scores in 'need for achievement and accuracy' prefer post-organizational career fields primarily demanding technical professionalism instead of power and political tactics.

The material on motivation would be further added to this and would then be fitted into the framework as suggested by research facilitator Prof. Anuradha in the class discussion held with the research team.

THEORIES ON MOTIVATION – CONTENT AND PROCESS

MOTIVATION

Motivation is defined as 'the forces within a person that affect his or her direction, intensity, and the persistence of voluntary behaviour'.
From the above definition, we observe that motivation is:

1. The forces within the person, or *intrinsic forces*
2. Influences the *persistence* shown
3. Deals with *voluntary* behaviour

Hence, a motivated person will be self-**driven to produce results over time.**

A person has certain 'needs', which are 'deficiencies that energize or trigger behaviors' to satisfy those needs.

Motivation theories fall into two main categories:

1. Content theories of motivation – theories that explain the dynamics of human being needs, such as **why** people have different needs at different times.

2. Process theories of motivation - theories that describe the **process** through which needs are translated into behaviour

For the purpose of our project, after discussion we decided to consider both theories.

CONTENT THEORIES

1. *Maslow's Needs Hierarchy:*

   Maslow recognized that a human being's behavior is motivated mostly by the lowest unsatisfied need at the time. As a person satisfies a lower level need, the next higher need in the hierarchy becomes the primary motivator.

   Thus Maslow's hierarchy sets the broad framework in which we can examine organisational behaviour.
   The drawback of this theory is that researchers have found that individual needs do not cluster neatly around the five categories described in the model.

   Hence, we also considered Alderfer's ERG Theory.

2. *Alderfer's ERG theory:*

   The ERG theory groups human needs into three broad categories: existence, relatedness and growth.

   This theory addresses the problem of Maslow's hierarchy, as the categories are broader. Existence needs corresponds to Maslow's physiological and safety needs, relatedness needs to the belonging needs and growth needs to the self-esteem and self actualization needs.

Hence, the ERG theory states that a human being can be motivated **simultaneously by more than one need level.**

In contrast to Maslow's satisfaction-progression model, the ERG theories includes a frustration-regression model whereby those who are unable to satisfy a higher need become frustrated and regress to the next lower level.

Hence, we have a more accurate explanation of why human beings need change over time.

3. *Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene Theory:*

The motivator-hygiene theory differs from Maslow's and Alderfer's needs hierarchy models because it does not suggest that people change their needs over time.

This theory proposes that human beings are motivated primarily by growth and esteem needs, such as recognition, responsibility, achievement, advancement and personal growth. These factors are called motivators, as human beings experience job **satisfaction** when these factors are received.

Factors extrinsic to the work, such as working conditions, company policies, co-worker relations etc will reduce job **dissatisfaction**.

Thus improving motivators increases job satisfaction, but does not improve dissatisfaction. Similarly, improving hygiene reduces job dissatisfaction, but does not improve job satisfaction.

However, many companies use the hygiene factors to attract human beings. For example, many hi-tech firms have found that the young recruits are motivated as much by a 'cool' work environment, as the work they perform.

4. *McClelland's Theory of Learned Needs:*

So far, the content theories have looked at the individual's primary or instinctive needs and their relative importance in life.

However, people also have secondary needs or drives that are **learned** and reinforced through childhood learnings, parental styles and social norms.

McClelland has considered three secondary needs that he considered particularly important sources of motivation: needs for achievement (nAch), affiliation (nAff) and power (nPow).

PROCESS THEORIES

1. *Expectancy theory of motivation:*
   This is based on the idea that work effort is directed towards behaviors that will lead to desired outcomes. Through experience, we develop expectations about whether we can achieve various levels of job performance.

   The expectancy theory model identifies effort as the key variable, the individual's actual exertion of energy. The effort to performance (E$\rightarrow$P) expectancy is the individual's perceived probability that his or her effort will result in a particular level of performance. The performance-to-outcome (P$\rightarrow$O) expectancy is the perceived probability that a specific behaviour or performance level will lead to a particular outcome. The third element in expectancy theory is the valence of each outcome that you consider, where valence refers to the anticipated satisfaction/dissatisfaction that an individual feels toward an outcome.

2.

Equity theory:

This theory explains how people develop perceptions of fairness in the distribution and exchange of resources. It explains what human beings are motivated to do when they feel inequitably treated.

There are four main elements here:

a. Outcome/Input ratio: this is the value of the outcomes you receive divided by the value of inputs you provide in the exchange relationship.

b. Comparison order: The theory states that we compare our situation with that of a 'comparison other', which may be a person, group, or even ourselves in the past.

c. Equity evaluation: this is formed after determining our own outcome/input ratio and comparing it with the comparison other's ratio.

The way to improve equity is thus to change the inputs.

3. *Goal setting:*

Goals are the immediate or ultimate objectives that human beings are trying to accomplish through their work. Goal setting is the process of motivating human beings and clarifying their role perceptions by establishing performance objectives.

For e.g. MBO or management by objectives. MBO is a participative goal-setting process in which organizational objectives are cascaded down to work units and individual human beings.

SOURCE:

Organizational Behavior – Steven L. McShane & Mary Ann Von Glinow

THEORIES USED IN THE PROJECT

CONTENT THEORIES

For the project, we considered both the primary and secondary motivating factors.

Primary motivating factors:

For the primary factors, we considered Herzberg's motivator-hygiene factors as we are considering *needs at a particular point of time, assuming that people do not change their needs over time, in this case for a year as the specialization is fixed.*

We can say that the students consider motivators such as the need for growth, responsibility and advancement.

There are also the hygiene factors, such as reasonable expectations from company policies, working conditions and coworker relations.

Here, we have primarily focused on the motivators.

Secondary motivating factors:

For secondary factors, we have considered McClelland's Theory of Learned Needs, as students also have secondary needs or drives that are learned and reinforced through childhood learnings, parental styles and social norms.

For e.g., there are factors such as family background which influence the choice of specialization. A student from an entrepreneurial background may be motivated to take up a specialization which will help her in running the business.

PROCESS THEORIES

From the Process theories, we have chosen the <u>Expectancy theory of motivation</u>, as we see that a student's work effort is directed towards behaviors that will lead to desired outcomes.

Through experience, the student develops expectations about whether he/she can achieve various levels of academic or job performance.

For e.g., if a student has consistently performed well in a particular course, where effort leads to desired performance and outcomes, then the student may feel over time that he/she is well suited to the subject, and opt to specialize in it. The reverse situation, where performance does not result even from effort, may lead a student to drop the subject even if he/she was initially interested in it.

OTHER REFERENCES

Other than the book by V S Mahesh on motivation, and the Organisational Behaviour book quoted above, these are the other references for the Literature Review:

1. *Graduates' career aspirations and individual characteristics*, By: Mayrhofer, Wolfgang, Steyrer, Johannes, Meyer, Michael, Strunk, Guido, Schiffinger, Michael, Iellatchitch, Alexander, Human Resource Management Journal, 09545395, 2005, Vol. 15, Issue 1

2. *Hon Kong Executive Business Students' motivation for pursuing an MBA*, By: Edmund R Thompson, Quin Gui, Journal of Education for Business, 2005, Vol. 20, Issue 1

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

FLOW CHART OF ACTIVITIES

J | FGD I | T→ | FGD II | E→ | Questionnaire | N→ | In-depth Interview
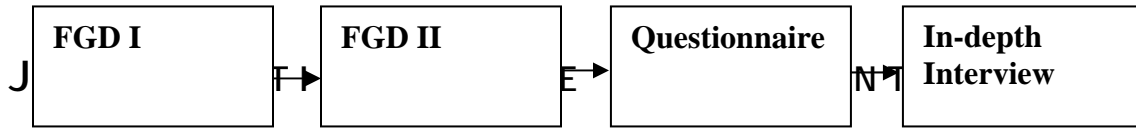
Focus Group Discussion

Focus groups can be used at the preliminary or exploratory stages of a study, during a study, to evaluate or develop a particular programme of activities ; or after a programme has been completed, to assess its impact or to generate further avenues of research. They can be used either as a method in their own right or as a complement to other methods.

Focus groups can help to explore or generate hypotheses and develop questions or concepts for questionnaires and interview guides. They are however limited in terms of their ability to generalise findings to a whole population, mainly because of the small numbers of people participating and the likelihood that the participants will not be a representative sample.

Potential and limitations

Interaction is the crucial feature of focus groups because the interaction between participants highlights their view of the world, the language they use about an issue and their values and beliefs about a situation. Interaction also enables participants to ask questions of each other, as well as to re-evaluate and reconsider their own understandings of their specific experiences.

Another benefit is that focus groups elicit information in a way which allows researchers to find out why an issue is salient, as well as what is salient about it. As a result, the gap between what people say and what they do can be better understood. If multiple understandings and meanings are revealed by participants, multiple explanations of their behaviour and attitudes will be more readily articulated.

The benefits to participants of focus group research should not be underestimated. The opportunity to be involved in decision making processes , to be valued as experts, and to be given the chance to work collaboratively with researchers can be empowering for many participants.

Not everyone will experience these benefits, as focus groups can also be intimidating at times, especially for inarticulate or shy members. Hence focus groups are not empowering for all participants and other methods may offer more opportunities for participants. However if participants are actively involved in something which they feel will make a difference, and focus group research is often of an applied nature, empowerment can realistically be achieved.

Although focus group research has many advantages, as with all research methods there are limitations. Some can be overcome by careful planning and moderating, but others are unavoidable and peculiar to this approach. The researcher, or moderator, for example, has less control over the data produced than in either quantitative studies or one-to-one interviewing. The moderator has to allow participants to talk to each other, ask questions and express doubts and opinions, while having very little control over the interaction other than generally keeping participants focused on the topic. By its nature focus group research is open ended and cannot be entirely predetermined.

It should not be assumed that the individuals in a focus group are expressing their own definitive individual view. They are speaking in a specific context, within a specific culture, and so sometimes it may be difficult for the researcher to clearly identify an individual message. This too is a potential limitation of focus groups.

On a practical note, focus groups can be difficult to assemble. It may not be easy to get a representative sample and focus groups may discourage certain people from participating, for example those who are not very articulate or confident, and those who have communication problems or special needs. The method of focus group discussion may also discourage some people from trusting others with sensitive or personal information. In such cases personal interviews or the use of workbooks alongside focus groups may be

a more suitable approach. Finally, focus groups are not fully confidential or anonymous, because the material is shared with the others in the group.

Questionnaires

Questionnaire would be administered to **60 respondents**, mainly from PGP2 .This is because the PGP 2 members have already chosen a specialization and hence are in a better position to evaluate the reasons for their choice of specialization. The Questionnaires are the ultimate instrument for collecting quantitative data. The questionnaires would be designed based on the factors that were decided after the two FGD's.

In-Depth Interviews

In-depth Interviews will be used to validate the responses after the data has been collected and for clarification purposes.$1/10^{th}$ of the sample, i.e., 6 interviews will be conducted (1/10*60=6). This will provide qualitative inputs and would aid in a more comprehensive understanding of the responses. The Interviewees would be selected based on the understanding of the Research group of the process and the personality of the respondent.

Objective of the Instrument (Focus Group Discussion)

Powell et al define a focus group as

"A group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research."

The main purpose of focus group research is to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings, beliefs, experiences and reactions in a way in which would not be feasible using other methods, for example observation, one-to-one interviewing, or questionnaire surveys. These attitudes, feelings and beliefs may be partially independent of a group or its social setting, but are more likely to be revealed via the social gathering and the interaction which being in a focus group entails. Compared to individual interviews, which aim to obtain individual attitudes, beliefs and feelings, focus groups elicit a multiplicity of views and emotional processes within a group context. The individual interview is easier for the researcher to control than a focus group in which participants may take the initiative. Compared to observation, a focus group enables the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time. Observational methods tend to depend on waiting for things to happen, whereas the researcher follows an interview guide in a focus group. In this sense focus groups are not natural but organised events. Focus groups are particularly useful when there are power differences between the participants and decision-makers or professionals, when the everyday use of language and culture of particular groups is of interest, and when one wants to explore the degree of consensus on a given topic (Morgan & Kreuger 1993)

Focus Group Discussion I

The FGD I would be used as a brain storming session to explore as many motivating factors for specialization in MBA for second year students. The primary respondents in the FGD would be 6 second year students from various streams and other criterion the research team has agreed upon. The criteria are listed below:

1. Work Experience/ Fresher
2. Gender – Male/Female
3. Specialization Stream
4. Background- Entrepreneurial/ Non Entrepreneurial
5. Academic Background – Engineer/Non Engineer

These criteria were the result of preliminary discussion among the research team members. The six respondents would be selected giving consideration to all the above listed criteria. In addition to the above, the group also took into consideration personality characteristics, of the respondents, including Introversion/Extroversion, and other traits. This was to ensure a valid representation of not only objective criteria but also other hidden and behavioral criteria. The work load / allocation on the research group members were also considered before deciding on the number of respondents. As there are 6 respondents in the first FGD, there would be six observers (each for one respondent), one moderator, and a silent observer. Though there are 10 members in the research team, only 8 were considered, giving some external and unexpected expediency that might have to be accommodated at the last minute.

The FGD I would be conducted at around 7:00 PM in the evening so that the respondents would be free after classes and would also be able to participate in the discussion. The research team decided upon the duration of the first FGD to be around 45 minutes. This has been arrived at after giving consideration for individual contribution in the FGD by the respondents and the time required for the moderator to open, lead and close the session. It has also been decided to solicit a written output from the respondents at the close of the session regarding the proceedings of the session and any points that were not covered in the discussion. It might also provide those introverted respondents to express their views on the topic.

The time plan for the FGD has been planned as,

6 Minutes for each individual respondent to speak – This is not to be considered as a sequential round of discussion. Rather it would be the cumulative and aggregate time a speaker has spoken in the FGD. This is an average time the research team thinks that an individual might contribute in the FGD.

5 Minutes for the moderator to open the session. The script for the moderator's introduction to the topic is as appended. The closing of the session would be left to the discretion of the Moderator.

4 Minutes would be allocated for the individuals to prepare the write up.

The FGD would open with an introductory note by the moderator. Some of the points to lead the FGD, as discussed by the research group in a brain storming session are listed below:

- Remuneration
- Career opportunities
- Interest
- Ability(Self belief and performance based)
- Job security
- Peers
- Seniors
- Parental influences
- Family background
- Academic background
- Career growth
- Status associated with specialization
- Quality of faculty
- MIP
- Role models
- Faculty counselor
- Prior work experience

The tentative list of the respondents for the FGD I, as has been decided by the Research group is given below. The respondent selection meets the criteria set out by the objective of the research project and are assumed to be a true representative of the target respondents.

- Rima Naware – Female, Fresher,. Non Engineer, HR Specialization
- Sonia Ann Vergis – Female, Work Experience, Non Engineer, Marketing Specialization
- Anish Gupta – Male, Work Experience, Engineer, Marketing Specialization.
- Guruprasad Jambhunathan – Male, Fresher, Non Engineer, Finance Speicalization
- Venkatasubramaniam – Male, Work Experience, Engineer, System Speicalization
- Vivek Ramsisaria – Male, Fresher, Non Engineer, Entrepreneurial Background

Role Responsibility for members of the Research Group:

Members	Role
Renjith	Moderator
Ramakrishna V	Observer
Swagatha	Observers, Documentors
Dipti Sangolli	
Swarnasrikrishnan	
Mansi Gupta	
Rajarshi Samuael Rao Betha	
Madhur Rajeev Garg	
Navnit Shetty	
Karthik Abhirama Krishna	

Introductory Note to be used by the Moderator

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen!!! We, the RBSC group, are doing a research on the factors that motivate students of MBA schools to choose a particular specialization in their second year. We are here for a discussion on the same topic. The discussion would be completely open to any views and opinions. We encourage you to participate in the discussion and share your opinions on the topic. The discussion would last for 40 minutes, and we request you to give us a write up on the discussion and other points that might not have been discussed at the close of the session. I would be acting as the moderator and the other members of the research team would be silent observers. I would also be keeping track of time. Though there is not mandatory for you to be time conscious, it would be highly appreciated and helpful, if everyone sticks to the time limits and ensure a healthy discussion.

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

A focus group was conducted on 20-02-2005 (Sunday) at 7:00 in the Library basement with the following respondents:

- Souveer Raghav
- Venkatasubramaniam
- Guruprasad Jambhunathan
- Rajkumar
- Rima Naware
- Sonia Ann Vergis
- Ruchi Jaju

The research team too was present. The responsibilities of each member of the research team were divided based on the earlier plan as submitted. Renjith moderated the focus group discussion. The members of the research team took seating arrangement, such that they would be able to observe the particular individual. Swarnasrikrishnan observed Venkatasubramaniam, Karthik observed Guruprasad Jambhunathan, Ramakrishna observed Souveer Raghav, Madhur observed Rajkumar, Dipti observed Ruchi Jaju, Swagatha observed Rima Naware and Mansi Gupta observed Sonia Ann verges. Rajarshi Samuel was the silent observer. The discussion stared with the introduction by Renjith based on the already prepared guide sheet. The discussion was started by Souveer Raghav and was carried forward by other group members. Every respondent had opportunity to speak and was very helpful in the process. The individual observation sheet has been attached with this report.

The discussion went on for around 40 minutes. The discussion touched upon many factors including the factors that were discussed by the research team in their brain storming sessions. The moderator too guided the discussion on certain topics which the research group felt would need some more inputs from the respondents. Navnit Shetty was checking the research group's output with the respondents output and helping the moderator on the topics that needs more clarification.

The discussion was closed by Renjith formally thanking the respondents and the research team too thanked the respondents for their response.

4. DATA COLLECTION

Based on the factors brought out by the FGD, a questionnaire was designed and reviewed by the project coordinator. The final questionnaire was administered to the respondents.

A sample size of 60 students was chosen for administering the questionnaire. The sample was chosen in a stratified way (based on gender, work experience and specialization), so as to reflect the population of PGP 2 students. The details are given below.

QUESTIONNAIRE

The objective is

- To find out the extent of each factor as discussed by the group – prevailing among the respondents.
- To quantify the qualitative phenomenon.

The different factors obtained from the FGD were clearly listed down. These were matched with our own assumptions derived from class discussions and literature reviews. They could be classified into 6 domains

- Self
- Peers
- Family
- Mentor
- Institute
- Job market

Finally we listed down the variables that defined an individual's motivation in choosing his/her specialization. The questions have been framed accordingly.

We are using a 4-point scale - strongly disagree-disagree-agree-strongly agree to obtain responses. Obviously, the neutral/don't know option has not been provided. This means we are depending on the respondent's judgement to clearly distinguish his opinions, one way or the other.

We used a random generation to finalize our actual respondents. We divided the entire population of PGP-2 into certain strata based on gender and specializations.

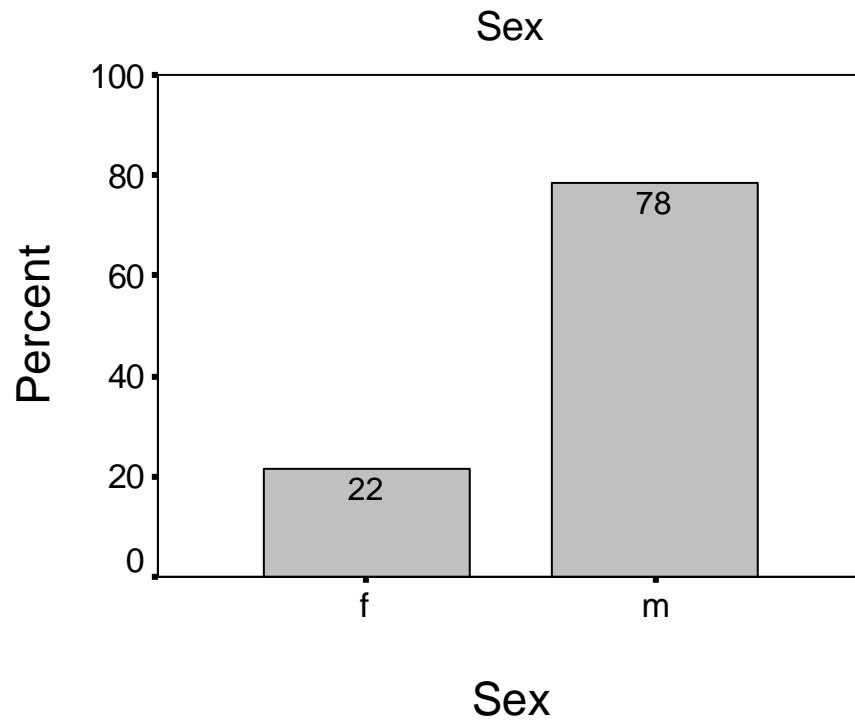| First specialization	Total Strength	Sample Size
Marketing	70	34
Finance	39	19
Systems	8	4
HR	10	1
EM	2	2
Total	**129**	**60**

We have maintained the female: male ratio at 1:4, same as existing in the overall batch.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

RESPONDENT PROFILE
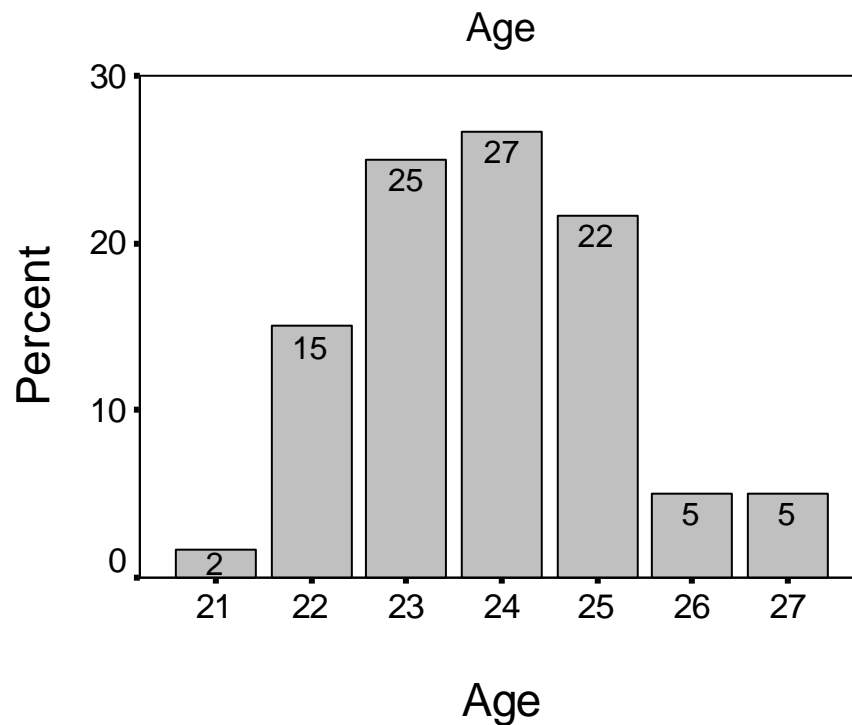
The ages is almost normally distributed around 24 years.

Sex

Sex

78% of the sample is male.

Specialization
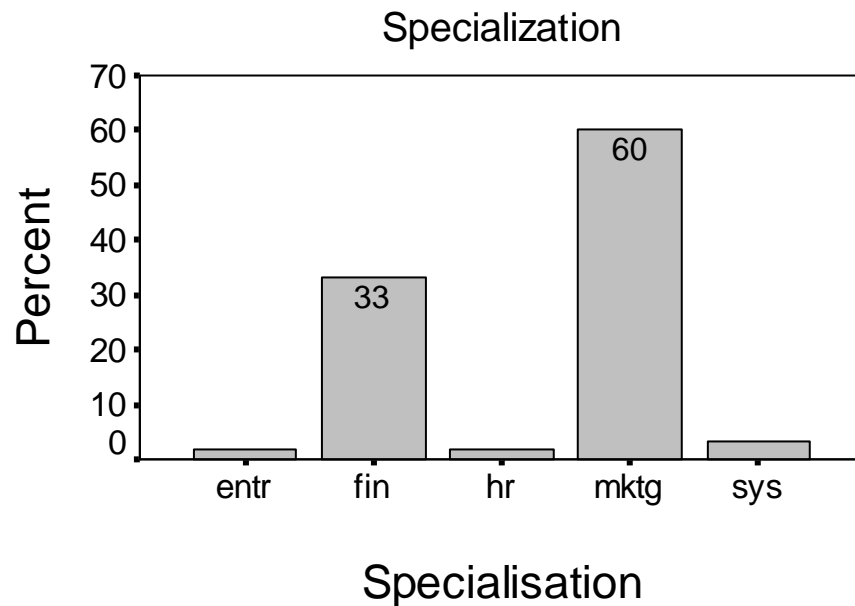
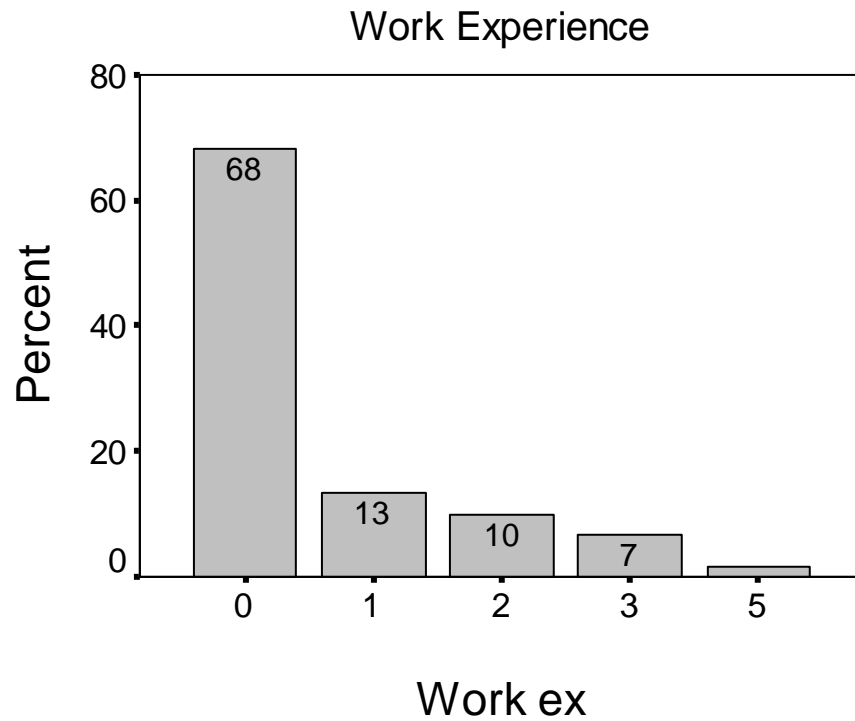Specialisation

mktg - Marketing fin - Finance hr - Human Resources

sys - Systems em - Entrepreneurship

The above chart shows the split across specializations.

Work Experience

The chart shows that majority of the student do not have a work experience. Just 9 % has work experience above 2 years.

RESPONSE TO FACTORS

Peer Influence

Q1_Peers

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
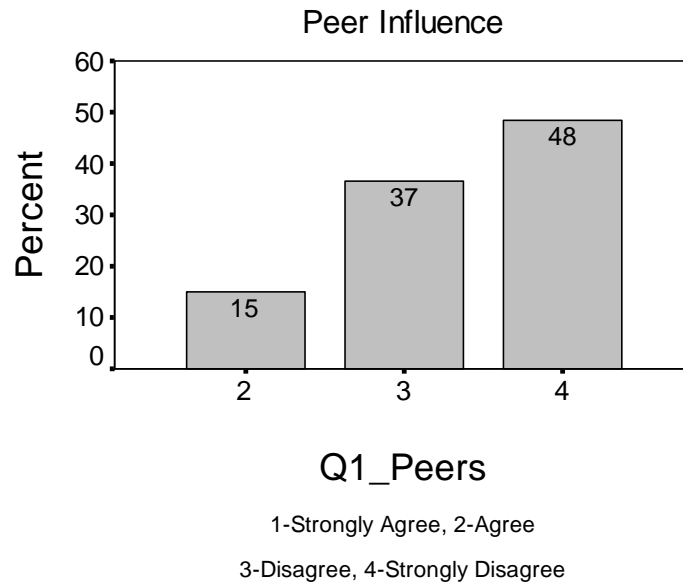
85% of the students said they are not influenced by their peers in their choice of specialization. Nobody strongly agreed to the statement reflects that peer influence is not a strong influence in choice of specialization. A minor 15 % seemed to agree to peer influence. It may be inferred that only a few students were unable to make a decision of specialization on their own and had depended on the friends to give them inputs.

Senior Influence

Q2_Seniors

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
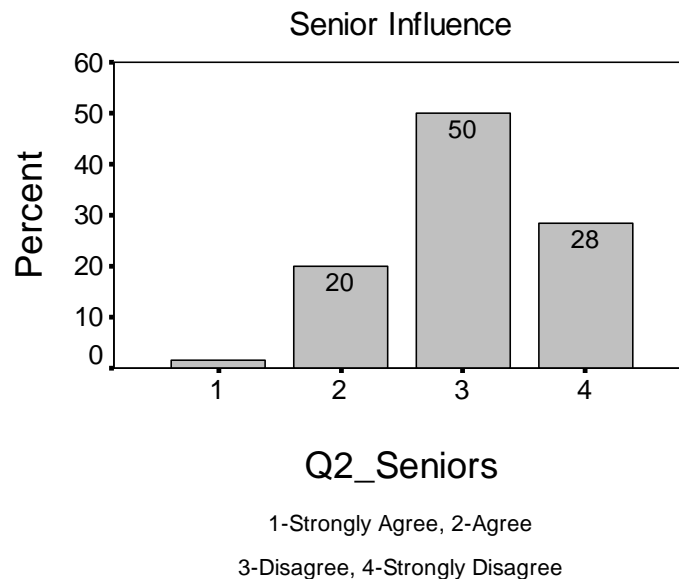
Students are not largely influenced by seniors in taking a specialization decision. But many opined that they took the advice of the seniors while choosing subjects within a specialization. This gives us a clue that the actual decision of specialization is not influence by the seniors but clearly the number of credits that a student took under the course was influenced by seniors.

Parental Influence

Q3_Parents

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
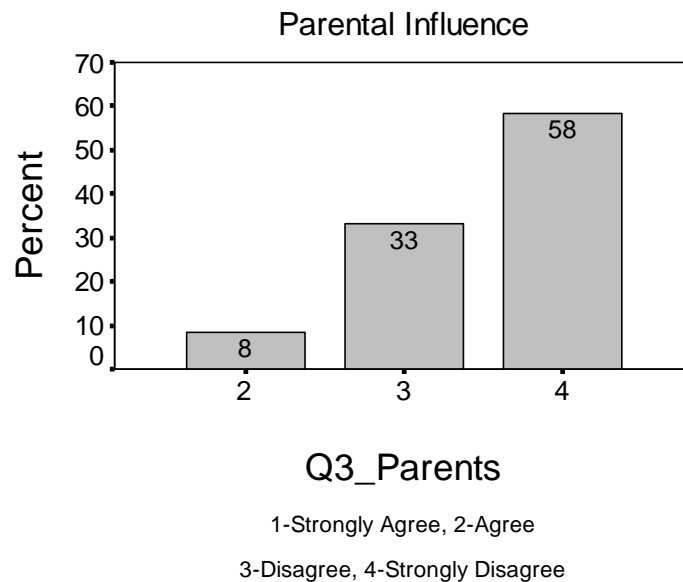
Parental influence seemed minimal among the student community in TAPMI in helping them take a specialization decision. Most of the students felt that the parents did not have the specialized knowledge to help them in making the decisions. Also parent tend to leave the decision to the students as most have reached an age where they can take decisions for them selves.

Interest

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
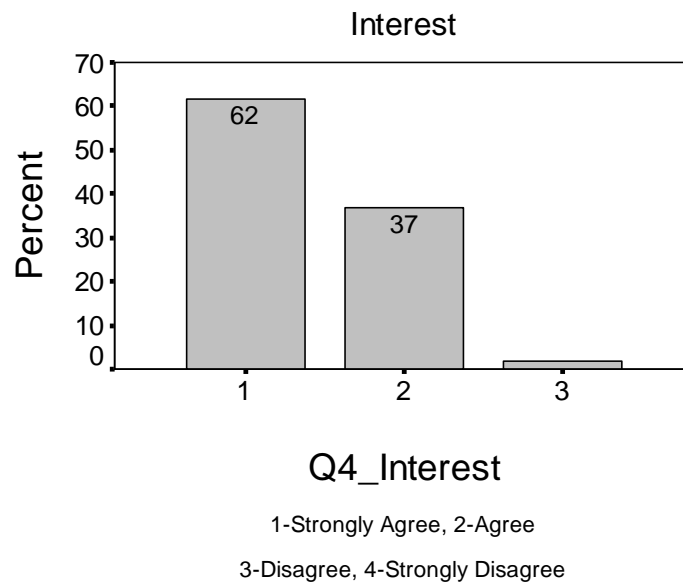
Most students felt that their interest in the particular specialization was one of the reasons for them choosing a particular specialization. This seems to have emerged as the strongest factor with 99 % of the students agreeing that this have influenced their decision. This is an intrinsic motivation and comes from within the student.

Influence of Work Experience

Q5_Work-Ex

0-Not Applicable 1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
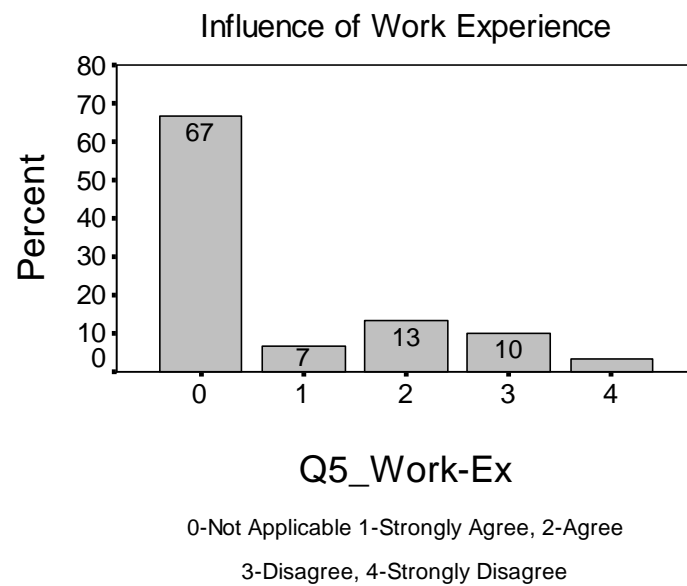
The people with work experience differed in their opinion about the influence of their previous job in choosing a specialization. This has been further researched later in the cluster analysis.

Job Market

Q6_Job_Mkt

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
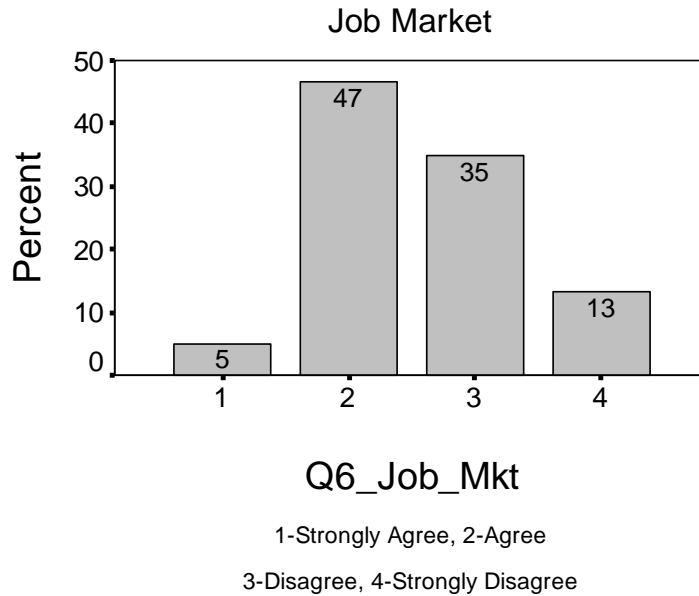
Concerns about the job market were not a strong factor but people generally agreed that it influence their decisions. The job market as it currently is influences the decision as the students are concerned about the jobs they get after completing the course. In general students have a perception that is created by the previous year's placement and also from the alumni who is working in the industry about which specialization offer better opportunities. This influence their decision on most desirable combination of subjects
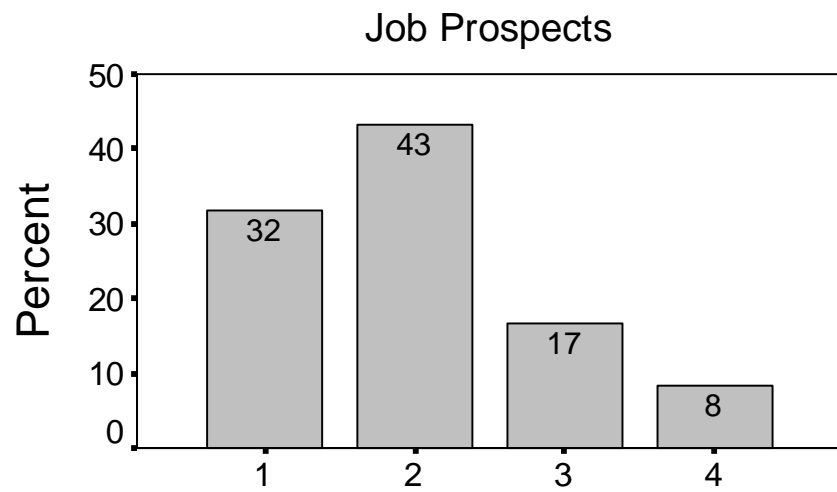
Job Prospects

Q7_Job_Prospects

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree

In contrast job prospects came out as a strong factor for most of the respondents influencing their specialization decision.

Perceived Career Progression

Q8_Career_Prog

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
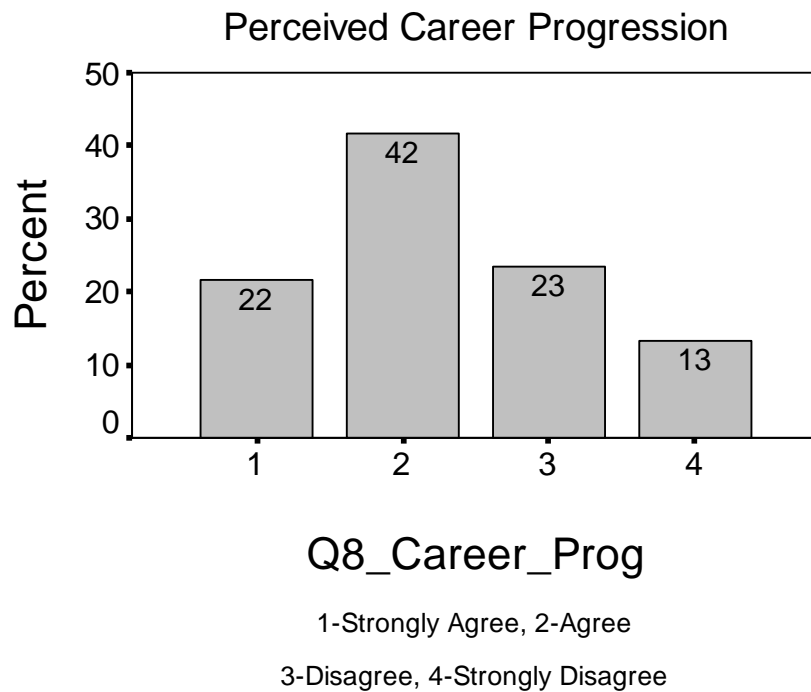
Perceived career progression received a mixed response. But majority thought that their choice would influence their progression in the organizations they are going to join.

Job Profile

Q9_Job_Prof

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
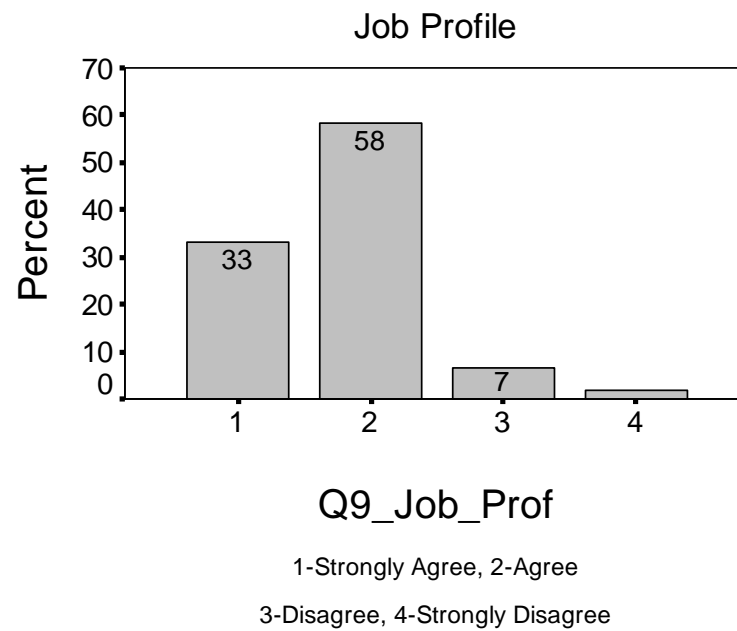
Most of the people were concerned about their job profiles that would await them in their future jobs and this seemed to influence their decision.

Perceived Compensation

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree
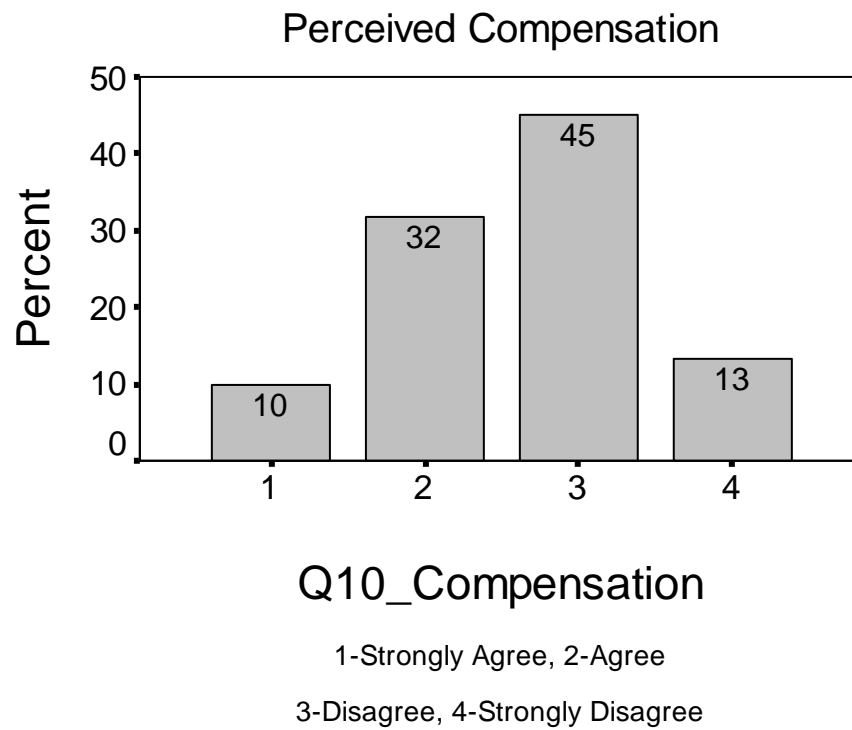
Students in TAPMI did not believe that the compensation in a future job would influence their specialization.

Brand Equity of Institute

Perceived Image of the Institute for Particular Specialisation
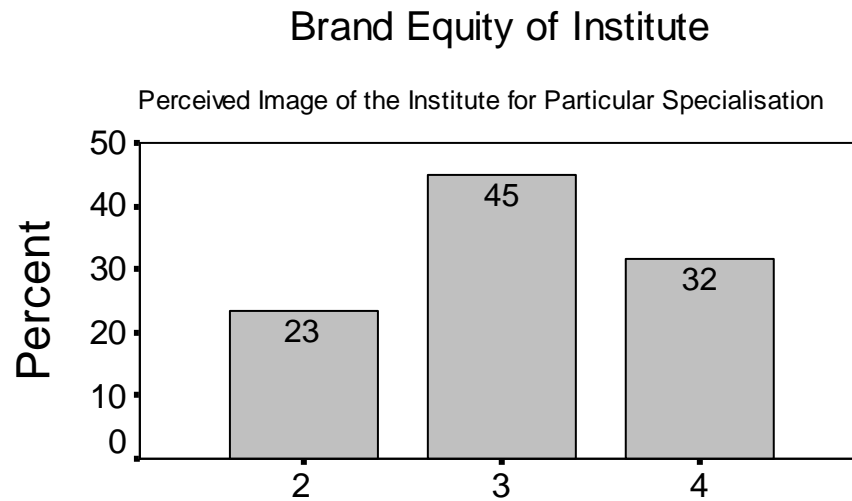
Q11_Brand_Equity

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree

The choice of the subject was not influenced by the image of the institute pertaining to a particular specialization.

Quality of Faculty

Technical Know ledge, Communication Skills,Presentation Ability
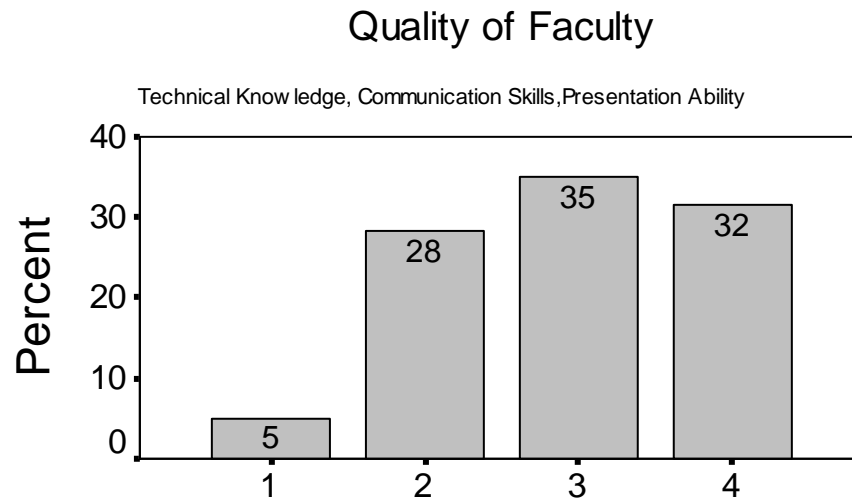
Q12_Faculty

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree

Most students did not report their perceived quality of faculty to be a guiding factor for choosing specialization. Students reportedly believed that whether a faculty member was good or bad did not matter because once a student chose a particular subject he/she would put in sufficient work to learn the same. Only 33% of the students agreed to quality of faculty being a factor influencing choice of specialization.

Mentor Influence

Percent

50	
40	43
38	
30	
20	
17	
10	
0	

1   2   3   4
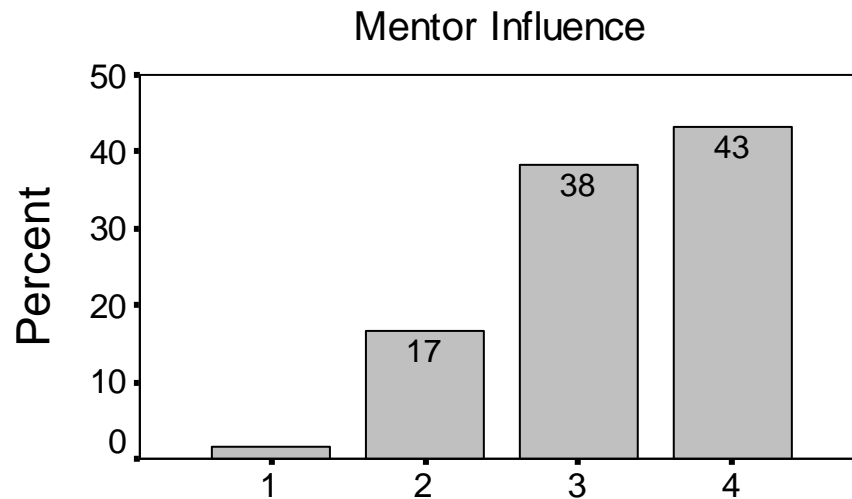
Q13_Mentor

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree

More than 80% perceive that mentors hardly have any say in the choice of specialization. A minor 1% perceive a strong influence of mentors in their choice of specialization. It could be inferred that it depends on the mentor and relationship with the mentee, and the level of detail to which the mentor pays attention to the mentee's need.
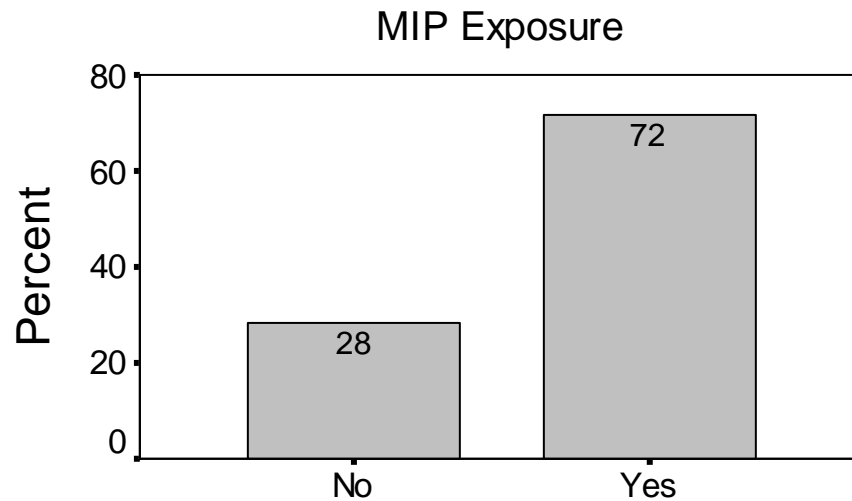
MIP Exposure

Q14_MIP

1-Strongly Agree, 2-Agree

3-Disagree, 4-Strongly Disagree

The student made their choice of specialization before their summer projects in organizations. A large number of students felt that MIP exposure in advance would have helped them make a better specialization decision.

All the students were satisfied with their choice of specialization.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SPECIALIZATIONS

Specialisation * Q10_Compensation Crosstabulation

Count

		Q10_Compensation				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Specialisation	entr				1	1
	fin	1	4	9	6	20
	hr			1		1
	mktg	5	15	15	1	36
	sys			2		2
Total		6	19	27	8	60

From the cross tabs it can be seen that a remarkable portion of marketing students think that compensation in future jobs is one of the important criteria for their choosing specialization. This is because a major chunk of the students of the marketing specialization think that they would be better off than their counterparts if they chose marketing specialization.

The presence of companies like Wipro Consumer Care and Titan must have modeled this response.

Specialisation * Q12_Faculty Crosstabulation

Count

		Q12_Faculty				Total
		1	2	3	4	
Specialisation	entr		1			1
	fin	3	7	7	3	20
	hr				1	1
	mktg		8	14	14	36
	sys		1		1	2
Total		3	17	21	19	60

Marketing students feel that the faculty did not influence their decision to choose the particular specialization. The students were not exposed to many marketing faculty in the first year. Where as in finance, few of he experience finance faculties had a chance to teqach and hence were able to impress the students.

CLUSTER ANALYSIS

Based on the response of the students to the factors we ran a cluster analysis which gave two different clusters.

Q5_Work-Ex * CLUST Crosstabulation

Count

		CLUST		
		1	2	Total
Q5_Work-Ex	0	40		40
	1	4		4
	2	5	3	8
	3	1	5	6
	4		2	2
Total		50	10	60

The second cluster consisted of the students with work experience of 2 years and above. The differentiating factor of this cluster can be identified as the work experience. The experience would have given them further insights into what specializations would give them a better chance in future.

Q8_Career_Prog * CLUST Crosstabulation

Count

		CLUST		
		1	2	Total
Q8_Career_Prog	1	13		13
	2	23	2	25
	3	10	4	14
	4	4	4	8
Total		50	10	60

The second cluster was concerned about their career progression. Being in a job already would have helped the people understand the intricacies of career progression. This made them more achievement oriented with respect to their career.

Q7_Job_Prospects * CLUST Crosstabulation

Count

		CLUST		Total
		1	2	
Q7_Job_Prospects	1	18	1	19
	2	25	1	26
	3	5	5	10
	4	2	3	5
Total		50	10	60

The second cluster is more concerned about job prospects than the first cluster. The people with work experience had sacrificed their jobs for doing an MBA. So they were concerned about their job prospects than the freshers.

6. CONCLUSION

From the research conducted, a number of inferences can be drawn.

- The study has indicated that the primary factor influencing the choice of specialization is the interest level of the PGP 2 students. It can be inferred that the students therefore choose their specialization to satisfy their intrinsic needs.

- Many of the respondents have indicated that their interest in that specialization was present even at the time of joining MBA. This indicates that although the choice of specialization may not have been made at the time of joining MBA, there was a definite *inclination* towards a particular specialization nevertheless.

- The group's assumptions of influence of parents, mentors, and peers has been disproved. This indicates that the choice of specialization is determined by intrinsic factors and not so much by extrinsic factors.

- For the present batch of PGP 2 students of TAPMI, the choice of specialization was made before the MIP itself, and therefore MIP was not an influence on the choice of specialization, contrary to the expectations of the group.

In conclusion the group would like to suggest ways to extend the project.

- The interest level has turned out to be the strongest influencing factor, that motivates students to take up a particular specialization. A study could be conducted to find out what the interest level actually arises out of.

- The cluster analysis has revealed two clusters – one consisting of people with work experience and the other consisting of the others. A deeper insight could be gained into these clusters by undertaking a study on what factors come into play after work experience.

A PPENDIX

A. FGD OBSERVATIONS

Guruprasad Jambunathan (Observed by Karthik)

- Guru was interested in finance because it is quantitative and structured

- Raj took his specialization as he eliminated the others – he did not like HR, he felt he could not do finance, he did not have a systems background. The only other choice was marketing.

- Venkat – there are fewer options at TAPMI – e.g. we do not have an operations specialization.

- Venkat – professors of 1st Year courses have an impact on the choice of specialization.

- Souveer – the difference would be for the marginal candidates only, not for those who have already fixed on a specialization.

- Guru – had finance in mind, the decision was reinforced after 1st Year courses.

- Souveer – placements is very important in deciding specialization.

- Venkat – you cannot change the primary specialization once you make your decision at the end of the third term. 4th term courses cannot be changed so a large number of credits are fixed. You can only make changes in the second specialization.

- Raj – had options open when joining TAPMI (was open to finance/marketing) but chose marketing because he liked it and had done better in the courses.

- Raj – past year's placements influence choice of specialization. It could be negatively also, because if the placements in one stream are not good there would be fewer people taking it up.

- Guru – wanted finance and continued with it and has had no problems at all.

- Raj – decision was made after 2nd term, he was comfortable with marketing and interested in it.

- Guru – seniors had no influence in his choice.

- Souveer – seniors usually advise you to take whatever specialization interests you. They can advise you on courses to take under a particular specialization but not the stream itself. They can give information on the stream.

- All – there is no "community feeling" in terms of choosing specialization, it is all individual choice.

- All – "status" of the particular stream does not matter.

- Raj – placement is a high priority. Specialization choice is a safety net.

- Venkat, Raj – Basically worried about placement first, and salary next.

- Raj – regarding the perceived kind of work that one would have to do in a job, may be it would be more of an influencer for girls.

- Parents are not an influence as they may not know about MBA.

- Economy of country is not a factor for choosing specialization.

- Reg. security or higher order needs – Venkat – would have done systems anyway. Guru also would have chosen finance.

- Raj – Choice is influenced by interest, however the market conditions are also considered when choosing specialization.

- Venkat – Institute also matters – if he had been in XLRI he might have specialized in HR.

- Interest depends on where you were also.

- Many people do not know what the MBA course involves at the time of joining the institute.

- Raj – comparing current MBA to previous job – "MBA is better than a blast furnace".

Venkat: (Observed by Swarnasrikrishnan)

I was working in a software company. I want to choose some career, same career prospects, my friends who have work along with me and who got into IIMs were doing good, so I also thought of doing the same specialization

Probably the other thing was faculty. Faculty in finance is better than faculty in marketing. There were only 4 options left with me…marketing, finance, systems and HR. No operation specialization available…had it been there may be I would have taken

operations. No HR..I didn't want to sit through the sessions. After the first year experience, I would not want to be in certain classes.

I didn't like certain professors in the first year…so; I didn't take certain specializations that those professors handled.

The quality of the faculty in the first year is very critical in the choice of specialization. May be not for me, but for some one who has not yet decided on the specialization, those marginal candidates that too that would make a difference only with the second specialization. I don't think that it would not be a determining factor for the first specialization. For people who are very sure of what they want, the faculty wouldn't make a great difference.

But something, system faculty doesn't bother me…I know what I want and hence I didn't worry too much about the faculty.

The placement too is very important consideration. The choice was made in the third term itself so MIP couldn't have much influence on your first specialization. May be in the second specialization it would have had some influence. Its influence in the first specialization is negligible. MIP phase is too late in the day for choice of specialization. It does not influence the choice, as people had already made a choice for the specialization even in the third term. The fourth term is the crucial term and so, when students go to MIP itself, they had taken the specialization.

Probably he did not decide on the second specialization. After MIP may be I can decide on the second specialization. Suppose in my case, had there been operations specialization here in TAPMI, may be I would have chosen it…but who has got the guts to go for operations in TAPMI, when you know getting a job would be difficult..

"Why do you go for marketing", it is because of Hedging…you hedge your risks, and the only reason for this is placements….in most of the cases majority has made up their minds with the primary area of interest. I was sure in systems and so do many others.

The seniors were not greatly influencing in the decision, though they had an influence in the choice of subjects in a specialization. They common refrain from the seniors would be to choose the specialization that I like rather than proposing something. But they would also be some words regarding the scope of such specialization and related issues-sort of Hinting

No feeling, I don't think so. The seniors didn't have an influence on the choice of specialization.

"Will I get placed when I get out of TAPMI???" is the more important question to answer. "I want to go out with a Job"; "Nobody knows where they will land up". The Parents or relatives had virtually no influence on the choice of specialization. This might be because of the fact that not many parents know what MBA is about…Upbringing in the short term might also be a factor…

The effect of economy of the country is far fetched. The hedging factor too would come at the start of the CV filling session. "I am not sure of the way the interests are formed. I don't have an answer for it". The interests get formed up over a long period of time. It might be influenced by various factors like, seniors, Parents, Upbringing, and many more.

I would have taken system specialization no matter what. But the nature of the institute that I joined also played a role. Had I been into XLRI, may be I would have chosen HR..But with TAPMI, I would not do that…Infrastructure and the reputation of the institute too has a major role to play in the decision.

Souveer Raghav: (Observed by Ramakrishna)

- Wanted a career in software Industry
- Interested in computers and related stuff
- The background has given an Idea about the specialization
- Career Prospects on doing a particular job may be too far fetched to think about
- Finance in quantitative and structured which interested me to take it – Guru
- It was the only spec left after I removed things which I cant do – Raj
- The finance faculty at TAPMI is good and that motivated me to take it up – Guru
- No operations specialization at TAPMI so marketing was the next choice – Raj
- First year faculty influenced the decision
- Placements – Ex Marketing and Finance have good placements
- No Influence of MIP on choosing the specialization
- Courses in first year and how they do in those courses also have a major impact
- Level of comfort with the subjects in first year
- Seniors play a part in just choosing subjects under specializations only

- Can I get placed with the specialization is the biggest issue
- Market situation do not make much difference except in adverse cases

Sonia: (Observed by Mansi Gupta)

I think, in my case, work experience would have to be the major influence…in fact, I think for most people who have work-ex that would be the case. Because you know the realities in the market and the specialization is a chance to capitalize on the work experience. Like I had done marketing in a pharmaceutical company, so that is what influenced me, my choice of marketing v/s HR. as it gave me a chance to build on something I already had.. Plus, the chances of getting a lateral placement with a better job profile improve if you have *relevant* work experience else your work experience may not count for anything. So, yes, for me, I would say work experience was the key influencer.

Marketing or Finance people generally head an organization so marketing seemed like a good choice from that point of view, as well. That is, it gives you the chance to aspire to leadership positions.

I think a lot of people may consider taking it up because they think marketing is commonsensical or it's perceived to be easy. But that is not my viewpoint. The faculty for a particular specialization may also be a consideration.

As far as the gender issue is concerned, I think it can't be completely discounted because I know of quite a few friends who have not taken marketing because it involves a lot of traveling and time away from home. This means you would need lot of support from home, be it husband or parents. So, I do think that in some cases this may have been an elimination factor for a particular specialization. So things like family values, plans for an early marriage etc may affect the choice that a person makes.

Rima: (Observed by Swagata)

I think choices in specialization are largely made by how you see yourself and others see you, their opinions. I mean, we seek inputs from everybody-seniors, peers, industry people ,faculty, Faculty guides…almost everyone who has some idea of industry, because this is such an important decision that very few would rely on only themselves.

It's also about what you think you can or will do and will be able to do.

For me the choice was made purely out of interest. I mean I did have a leaning towards HR when I joined the institute. That probably was influenced by the people I had met outside, from the industry etc.

I think when we talk about Faculty it's not just the perception of the faculty that's going to teach you because that is basically what your seniors tell you. It's actually also the faculty who has taught you. If the faculty in a particular specialization, say, like HR, in the first year is good it gets you interested in the subject and you are ready to take on more of it. You get a taste of what to expect. I do agree with Sonia, that some people would take certain specializations because they are supposed to be easy subjects that can be studied by one also.

I think, to a large extent, it is an elimination principle at work, for many cases. Because many people have a perception of certain specializations and job profiles. I do not really think that at this stage compensation is really that important. Most of us look at the job profiles that come to campus, the kind of companies or generally the growth in that area or field.

Ruchi: (Observed by Dipti)

I think interest and personality are very important, but I think interest is the greater influence. I have been told that my personality is better for marketing and it probably is, but I chose Finance because I was curious about it and interested in learning. I think your academic background would also matter. A lot of commerce students have chosen Finance, probably because it is a certain comfort level that engineers may not have.

Moreover, your family background is also very important. Coming from a Marwari business background there was an interest in Finance –so the community could also be an influencer.

Feedback from seniors was another major factor because they have had first hand experience of the teaching and the job offers for particular specializations. The compensation is not too important, but the profile and the type of companies available to a particular specialization are.

I think there is also a lack of career counseling so for certain people this may have been a drawback as they would be confused.

In my case, MIP also served as elimination. After doing that, I just did not want to do systems. I knew I did not have the interest or patience with it.

I agree with Sonia. Some people do choose specializations so that they have a desk job and there is some stability after marriage, so girls may consider that as well.

B. FINAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear friend, this questionnaire is part of our research project in Research Methodology in Behavioral Sciences. Please cooperate with us by filling in the questionnaire.

Age:

Sex:

Specialization:

Work experience in no. of years:

Please tick the most appropriate choice:-

Q.1. My peers influenced me to choose my specialization.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Q.2. My seniors influenced my choice of specialization.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Q.3. My parents influenced me to choose my specialization.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Q.4. My interest in a particular discipline was the primary factor in choosing my specialization.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Q.5. My prior work experience influenced my choice of specialization.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Q.6. The job market (openings in a particular field) influenced me to go for a particular specialization.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Q.7. The job prospects influenced my decision to choose a particular specialization.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Q.8. The expectations about the career progression influenced my choice of specialization.

1. Strongly Agree 2. Agree 3. Disagree 4. Strongly Disagree

Q.9. The job profile (challenge, mobility, skill set) influenced my choice of specialization.

1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Disagree   4. Strongly Disagree

Q.10. The compensation influenced my choice of specialization.

1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Disagree   4. Strongly Disagree

Q.11. The brand equity of the institute influenced my choice of specialization.

1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Disagree   4. Strongly Disagree

 Q.12. The quality (technical knowledge, communication skills, ability to present the subject) of faculty influenced me to go for a particular specialization.

 1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Disagree   4. Strongly Disagree

Q.13. My mentor influenced me to choose my specialization.

1. Strongly Agree   2. Agree   3. Disagree   4. Strongly Disagree

Q.14. In hindsight, do you think having the MIP exposure before choosing the specialization would have helped in making a better decision? (Yes/No)

Q.15. In hindsight, are you satisfied with your choice of specialization. (Yes/No)

Are the reasons for which you chose the specialization still holding good? If no, what are the reasons for not being satisfied?

C. LIST OF TOPICS CONSIDERED FOR THE PROJECT

As mentioned earlier, there were ten topics considered by the group for the study. Out of this the present topic was selected as it was deemed practical and feasible. The complete list of the topics is given below:

What motivates students to take up higher studies? (Ramakrishna V.)

Related topics: Needs

- What are the different factors that motivate students for higher studies?
- What is the strength of each of those factors?
- Can there be a serialization made?

Factors that influence motivation levels in different academic courses (Karthik Abhiram)

Related topics: Likes/Dislikes, Self-efficacy

- What are the general course characteristics?
- How could they affect motivation levels?
- Are there any other characteristics or factors involved?

Linkage between leadership style and group performance at college events (Dipti Sangolli)

Related topics: Leadership, Motivation Theory

- Identification of leadership styles and determination of a corresponding leadership theory.
- Effect of group composition on leadership style.
- Linkage between performance orientation and leadership.

Factors motivating the choice of specialization in students (Rajarshi Samuel)

Related topics: Motivation Theories

- Do students have a specific idea when they join?
- What are the factors that influence choice?
- Does choice change after MIP?

What factors motivate faculty members to join TAPMI? (Madhur Garg)

Related topics: Self-actualisation

- Identification of factors
- Analysis and Ranking of factors

What motivates people to take up call-centre jobs in Manipal? (Swagata Basu)

Related topics: Security, Autonomy

- Literature Review
- Identification of factors
- Analysis under PEST framework

Relationship between student performance and locus of control (Renjith Nath)

Related topics: Self-belief

- Is there a relationship between locus of control and student performance?
- Derive the relationship.

Comparative study of motivational factors for PGP 1 and PGP 2 students (Mansi Gupta)

Related topics: Personality, Motivation Theories

- Find motivational factors of PGP 1 and PGP 2 students
- Do a comparison
- Find reasons for transition

Factors that motivate students for group work (Swarnasrikrishnan G.)

Related topics: Human Relations, Need Theories

- What are the factors that are responsible for successful group work?
- What is the ranking of these factors among TAPMI students?

Why do people associate themselves with certain people and stay away from others during their stay at TAPMI? (Navnit Shetty)

Related topics: Human Relations

- Do people look for others similar/different to them? In what ways?
- What characteristics are a must?
- Are others' perceptions very important? Do they affect our perceptions?
- Does our motivation to make friends decrease as time passes?
- Are there little "signals" which help in deciding?

D. TIME BREAKUP

The following table shows the total man hours spent by the group members on the project.

Phase	Karthik	Ramakrishna	Swagata	Madhur	Swarna	Samuel	Navnit	Dipti	Mansi	Renjith
Problem Definition	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Research Design	3	3	3	3	5	2	3	5	3	5
Literature Review	1	6	8	1	1	3	1	1	1	3
Data Collection	2	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	1
Data Analysis	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	1	4
Report Writing	5	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	2

(Total time: 137 hours)

ANNEXURE

Verbatim recording of the individual researcher's learning from the research

 Sepcialisation choice is a major decision, something which remains with us forever. For most students, it is the first time they have to make a choice independently (exercising their personal DM …..)

Of course, certain external factors and innate strengths affect this decision.

Choice of specialization is done by converting a lot of data that is received from all quarters. You make a decision and more forward with the knowledge that all the factors that could contribute towards chalking out a 'fruitful career' have been considered in totality.

Renjith G. Nath

1. Compensation is not an important factor in influencing specialisaton. But most of the people believed that all the specialization received equitable compensation. The general impression is the if you get a God's first job, you will be able to translate that later into a high paying job. Many placed job content above compensation. People expect a minimum level of compensation, irrespective of the specialization.
2. The influence of people close to the students ie. Peers, parents, professors and mentors seem to be insignificant. This may be because the student considers himself responsible for the decision. The self awareness in such kind of course is high. So the student decides to take the ownership on himself.
3. MBA is considered as a path to a dream job. So all job related factors would be considered important to a large number of students.
4. There were differences in the reactions of students from each specialization. This reflects that the need of students from each stream is different at least with respect to compensation and influence of professors. This can reflect the attitude of these students.
5. The students with work experience reacted differently. This means that these people have developed insights into intricacies of a job already.

Samuel

Predetermine interest, influenced by culture (Gujarati) and abilities (quantitative and financial aptitude) could be behind their intrinsic motivation for choice of specialization.

Some people came in with a predetermined mindset based on prior work experience (One of the respondents did a systems job and wanted to shift to Marketing). And for such people, they are concerned about their liking and fit with the job(s) related to the specialization.

Some people maintain only a single orientation to learning – deterministic – a carry over from previous education experiences. Hence such people evaluate specializations through such lenses, and may find specializations such as HR or GM "gaseous" (which translated means indefinite and vague). Handling abstract is impossible.

Some people are confused about what each specializations offer at a later stage in their career but maintain a mash of knowing and satisfaction. These are mostly experiential learners -they majorly learn from experience only and hence would always be able to judge accurately in retrospect only.

Some people are good at studies and are equally adapt at any stream /specialization. For these people, excellence is the main factor and hence they do consider the quality of faculty and brand equity of institute with different specializations.

Disclaimer

Observations are influenced by researchers personal views and opinions and need not necessarily reflect truth accurately. The validity of these is matched to some extent by the questionnaires administered. However, it is still open to interpretation

Mansi

Inferences

1. Most people were driven by intrinsic factors such as self interest.
2. The influence of peers, family and seniors was negligible, as it was felt that the decision of specialization comes from within.
3. Extrinsic factors such as – career progression
   - Job profile
   - Job prospects
   - Job market

   As MBA is a professional course and played an important role for most people, the placement is most important.
4. Though some respondents replied that their self interest had been evident even before firming up the specialization , others felt that they changed their need once they got here.

5. It may be interesting to conduct a further research in to the area of self interest. (Self Esteem).

<div align="right">Karthik Abhirama Krishna</div>

Inferences from the Project

- The respondents seem to have had an inherent interest in their specialization, meaning that the <u>inclination</u> for the specialization selected was present even before joining MBA. Although they may not have consciously made up their mind, the tendency towards the specialization (natural inclination) seemed to be there.
- On the other hand, one of the respondents mentioned that despite being extremely satisfied with his choice of specialization (Marketing), he would have liked to also explore finance courses.

<div align="right">G. Swarnasrikrishnan</div>

Personality types of persons can be linked to the research findings. Though not researched upon by he research team, the findings of the research can be linked with the personality types, when the research revealed that 'Self-Interest" is the predominant factor that influences the choice of specialization, it can be inferred that, (based on the personality theories), the students are generally in an achievement, and "attribution to self" motivating phenomenon. They attribute the decisions to themselves and stick to it. They generally tend to validate their decisions with external factors, though their decisions are not influenced, by those external factors. Though, the validity of these are to be conclusively proved, it can be safely inferred by referring to personality theories.

<div align="right">Ramakrishna V</div>

My Interpretation of the Project findings

- that compensation, which came out strongly in the FGD, was not validated so strongly in the questionnaire because the students may have felt it rude to mention on paper that they have taken the specialization based on the compensation that will be offered to them. As many people felt that career progression and job prospects were important but could not say strongly about the compensation. I think more in depth interviews could have helped us to validate this point, or a further research into personality traits and then linking it to the answers would have made more sense.

<div align="right">Dipti S</div>

Inferences

- Intrinsic motivators were the chief influences in the choice of specialization. However, the constituents / concepts that define the construct 'self interest' have not been studied.
- In terms of other influences like peers, teachers, parents etc. there was no influence. While most students did refer to seniors for advice on various courses, the ultimate choice of specialization was not influenced by seniors.
- Since a MBA course is generally taken up by students who are highly ambitious and who are looking for better job prospects that a graduate degree would give them, job-related factors were important.   These factors included career progression, job prospects, job market, job profile etc.
- Work experience was an influencer in the choice of specialization as a form of 'building' on past experience.
- There is a possibility of further studying personality types and the choice of specialization if she were to explore self interest in more detail.

Swagata

Motivating Factors

The project revealed that 'interest' is the main motivating vector when choosing a specialization.
Reason: Referring to the expectancy theory, we know that:

Effort ⟶ Performance ⟶ Outcome 1
                      ⟶ Outcome 2
                      ⟶ Outcome 3

If a student has interest in one subject, he/she will be motivated to put in maximum effort, which will in most circumstances ensure at least an average outcome, irrespective of other factors. Hence, the student will be motivated to put in further effort, resulting in better outcomes.
Hence, interest is prerequisite for motivation.

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