



NAVIGATING CAREER PATHS: THE ROLE OF COMPETENCY MAPPING IN GUIDING SPECIALIZATION CHOICES FOR MBA STUDENTS

Dr. Prachi Pargaonkar

Professor, SKN Sinhgad School of Business Management, Pune.

Email: prachip243@gmail.com

Prof. Mayuri Yadav

Asst. Professor, SKN Sinhgad School of Business Management, Pune.

Email: mayuriyadav88@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Career planning refers to the process of planning between different career options, developing career objectives and deciding on educational and developmental programs to increase the expertise required to achieve career objectives. Competency mapping helps to understand an individual's strengths and weaknesses which help an individual to better understand them and to indicate them where career development efforts need to be directed. This paper explores the detail explanation about competency mapping; dealing with component of competency, competency model, mapping process and application as a career planning tool. This study paper explores requirements of competencies of different specializations of MBA Students. The purpose of this study is to identify competencies possessed by management students and map them with required competencies of different specializations. This helps them to identify suitable specialization which match with their available competencies. The main objectives of this study are to study Effectiveness of Competency Mapping Model with respect to Identification of strengths, Selection of specialization, less confusion in selecting specialization, Identification of skill gap, Mapping with desired career options. This study further explores factors which are leading to having clarity about skill sets they possess. For fulfilling above objectives, researchers collected feedback of MBA students who have gone through competency mapping process. Feedback was collected through questionnaire. Researchers observed strong relationship between competency mapping recommendations and actual specialization choices. Further, the study uncovered a significant level of confusion among students during the specialization selection process, signaling a pressing need for comprehensive guidance and resources aligned with their interests and aspirations. This paper will prove that competency mapping is an innovative approach for career planning.

KEYWORDS: Competency based HRM, Competency Mapping, MBA Students, and Career Planning.

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INTRODUCTION

Education sector plays a very important role in economic development of our country. Indian government has always given value and importance to education and this is reflected in our economic and education policies. Education in India means the process of teaching, learning, and training of youth or current as well as future generations in schools and colleges. This develops and increases knowledge, skill, abilities and personal attributes of students. Hence through education the quality of the human capital of our country is enhanced. Business education is a branch of education that includes teaching the skills and operations of the business organization. In this field of education there are multiple specializations available in which students can complete their bachelor's master degree. As in students learning in business schools, this is the stage where they need to identify their own competencies to do and opt for correct specialization. If students correctly identify their skills, abilities, knowledge and personal attributes then it will be easier for them to choose correct specialization as well as career option which match with their available competencies.

The process of identification of the competencies required to perform efficiently, a chosen set of goals in a given time, is known as competency mapping. One of the applications of competency mapping is that we can use competency mapping as a tool for career planning in an education institute. Competency mapping is a crucial exercise for the progress and development of any student. Each student requires different competencies for different roles. Thus, this process plays an important role in identifying every student's skill, abilities, knowledge and personal attributes. Competency mapping

is one such powerful tool that makes use of more systematic and organized approach to define key skills, abilities and behaviors that leads to better understand him or her and to point out where career development efforts need to be directed.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To investigate whether competency mapping is effective in helping students identify gaps between their expected skill sets, as per their chosen specialization, and their actual skill sets reflected in their academic or practical results.
2. To examine whether there is a relationship between students' choice of specialization and their awareness of competencies.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

Acknowledge potential limitations such as response bias, limited generalizability, or challenges in obtaining comprehensive competency data.

HYPOTHESIS OF STUDY:

Hypothesis No 1:

H0: Competency mapping does not help students in identifying gap in their expected skill sets as per chosen specialization and their actual skill sets reflected in result

H1: competency mapping help students in identifying gap in their expected skill sets as per chosen specialization and their actual skill sets reflected in result

Hypothesis No 2:

H0: There is no relation between Students choice of Specialization and awareness of competencies.

HA: There is relation between Students choice of Specialization and awareness of competencies.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The literature review discusses various sources that explore the concept of competency mapping in the field of management and human resource development:

Seema Sanghi (2007): Sanghi's handbook emphasizes the importance of competency models and mapping for organizational decision-making. It provides valuable insights for managers and executives.

R K Sahu (2009): Sahu's textbook comprehensively covers competency models, identification, assessment tools, and their application in various HR practices. It serves as a guide for HR professionals, students, and consultants.

Opus Kinetic People Management Blog (2021): This blog article highlights how competency-based HR management is a powerful approach to reinvent HR practices and enhance organizational performance.

Charles Kamen & et. al. (2010): The researchers discuss competency-based training programs and their shift towards a "culture of competence," emphasizing the importance of competency mapping in employee development.

Competency Based Management Blog (2013): This blog post explores competency-based career development, which aligns individual career aspirations with organizational goals through competency mapping.

A. Tejeswari, Dr.T.V. Ambul (2016): This research paper delves into competency mapping's role in identifying strengths and weaknesses in employees, aiding in career development, and informing training and development programs.

Shivanjali, Mitushi Singh, Tripti Singh (2019): The study investigates factors

related to competency mapping that impact talent retention in IT companies, highlighting the importance of utilizing skills effectively.

Dr. Saikumari V1, Ms. Sunitha (2021): This study emphasizes the use of competency mapping in training and development, focusing on improving training effectiveness through modern approaches.

Ms. Y. V. Naga Kumari and Mr. G. Kamal (2021): The research analyzes the link between competency mapping and HR practices, emphasizing its role in optimizing human capital and career growth.

Role of Competency Mapping in Performance Improvement: Gilbert's paper discusses the optimization of behavioral and environmental factors to achieve superior performance through competency mapping.

Dawn R. Deeter-Schmelz & et. al. (2008): This research examines the connection between personal attributes and sales staff effectiveness through competency mapping.

Nadine J. Kaslow & et. al (2012): The study focuses on competencies required for transformational leadership and competency-based supervision in professional psychology education and training.

Nalini Devi.S, Dr.N.Panchanathan (2013): This study is centered on competency mapping for nurses and its role in patient care, especially in the context of Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs).

These sources collectively demonstrate the significance of competency mapping in organizational decision-making, HR practices, training, and leadership development across various industries.

Research Gap Identified: The literature review reveals that while competency mapping research exists, it's primarily

focused on performance improvement in various sectors such as IT, automotive, and pharmaceuticals. Limited research has explored competency mapping in the education sector, particularly for students' employability skills and teachers' required competencies. However, the application of competency mapping for career planning in educational institutes remains unexplored. Hence, this study aims to use competency mapping as a career planning tool in the educational sector.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

Research Design

Research Approach: Employed quantitative method. This is suitable for comprehensively addressing the study's objectives.

Participant Selection

Sampling: The researchers used purposive sampling method to select MBA students for participation in the study.

Sample Size: The aim was to collect feedback from a sample of MBA students that is statistically significant and representative of the larger MBA student population. The researchers collected feedback from total 170 respondents out of total population of 343 students.

Questionnaire Development: Developed a questionnaire with closed-ended (quantitative) questions. The closed-ended questions were expected to assess competencies, strengths, specialization choices, skill gaps, and career preferences.

Data Collection Procedure: The questionnaire was administered to MBA students through a secure online platform. They were given clear instructions and a reasonable deadline for responses was set.

PROCEDURE EMPLOYED IN THE COMPETENCY MAPPING MODEL:

The process designed and followed was expected to help the students identify the

most suitable specialization based on their skills, knowledge, and abilities. It contained:

Step 1: Identification of Skills, Knowledge, and Abilities: Specific skills, knowledge, and abilities required for each specialization for the underlying program to be identified in consultation with faculty members, industry experts, and by reviewing program curriculum.

Step 2: Preparation of Questionnaires: To develop questionnaires tailored to each specialization. These questionnaires should be designed to assess a student's existing skills, knowledge, and abilities relevant to the specializations they are considering.

Step 3: Attribution Test: To administer the questionnaires as attribution tests to students. These tests help students self-assess their strengths and weaknesses in relation to the identified skills, knowledge, and abilities for each specialization.

Step 4: Evaluation of Student Results: To evaluate the results of the attribution tests to gauge how well students match the skills, knowledge, and abilities required for each specialization. This evaluation can provide initial insights into their suitability for different specializations.

Step 5: Competency Mapping Interview: To conduct competency mapping interviews with students who have completed the attribution tests. During these interviews, the researcher delve deeper into their experiences, interests, and motivations related to each specialization. Structured questions to be used to explore their preferences and goals.

Step 6 : Evaluation of Students Based on Interviews: To evaluate the results of the competency mapping interviews. This evaluation should provide a more comprehensive understanding of students' competencies and their alignment with different specializations.

Step 7: Suggest Specialization: Based on the results of the attribution tests and competency mapping interviews,

recommendations to students regarding which specializations align best with their skills, knowledge, and abilities, as well as their personal interests and career goals are to be given.

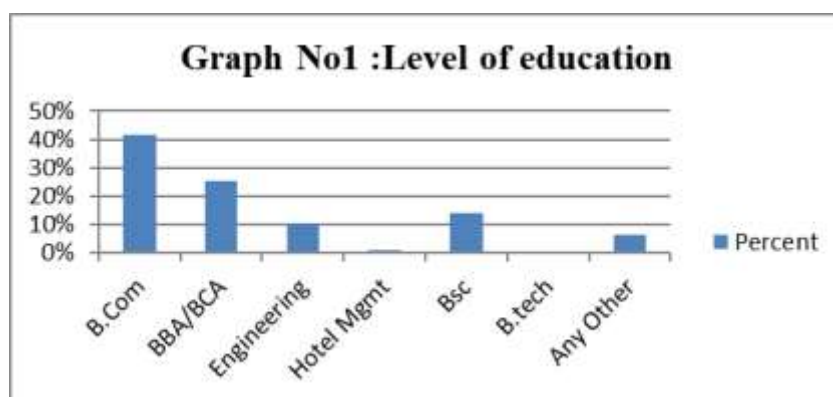
It's important to note that this process involves a combination of self-assessment (through the attribution tests), structured interviews, and expert guidance to help students make informed decisions about their specialization. The goal is to guide students toward specializations that are a

good fit for their strengths and career aspirations.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION:

Descriptive statistics to analyze quantitative data from the closed-ended questions is done which will address objectives such as identifying strengths, selection of specialization, and identification of skill gaps.

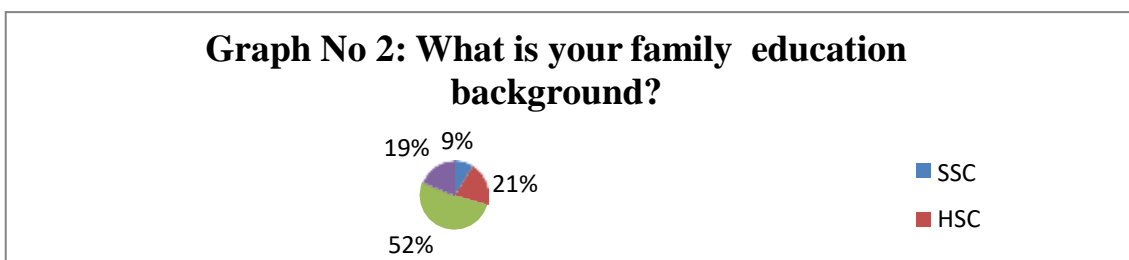
Question: What is the highest degree or level of education you have completed?



Interpretation: The results show a diverse range of educational backgrounds among the respondents. The majority of respondents have backgrounds in commerce (B. Com) or business-related fields (BBA/BCA), which together

constitute a significant proportion of the sample. Engineering is also fairly represented in the sample. Hotel Management, B.Sc., and B.Tech backgrounds are less common among the respondents.

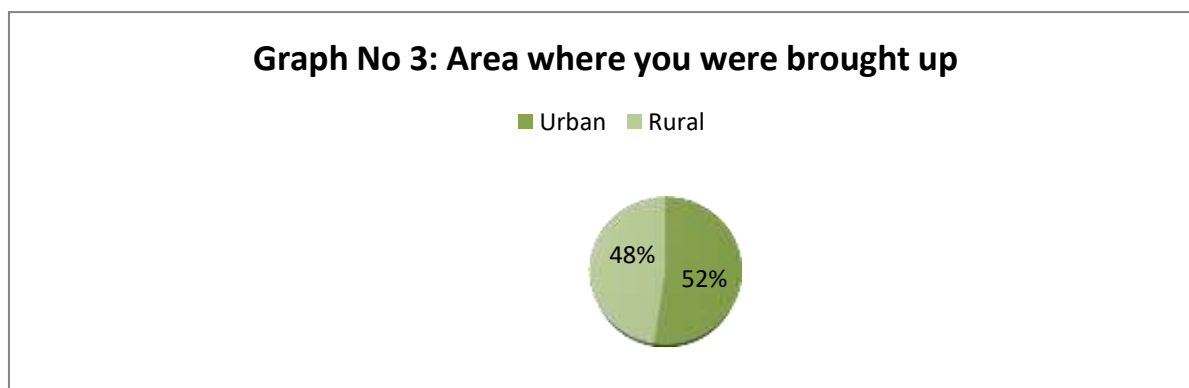
Question: What is your family education background?



Interpretation: A significant proportion of respondents come from families where members have completed their undergraduate or bachelor's degrees. This suggests a culture of higher education within their families. The data underscores

the diversity of educational experiences within respondents' families, encompassing a range of educational levels from secondary education to post-graduate studies.

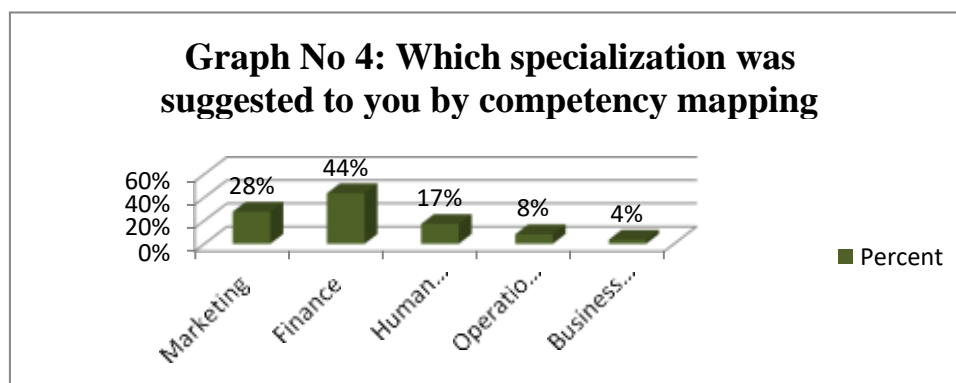
Question: Area where you were brought up



Interpretation: The survey results reveal a balanced representation of respondents with urban and rural upbringing backgrounds. Understanding whether respondents were brought up in urban or

rural areas can provide context for various aspects of their lives, including their access to educational and career opportunities, lifestyle preferences, and potentially their cultural backgrounds.

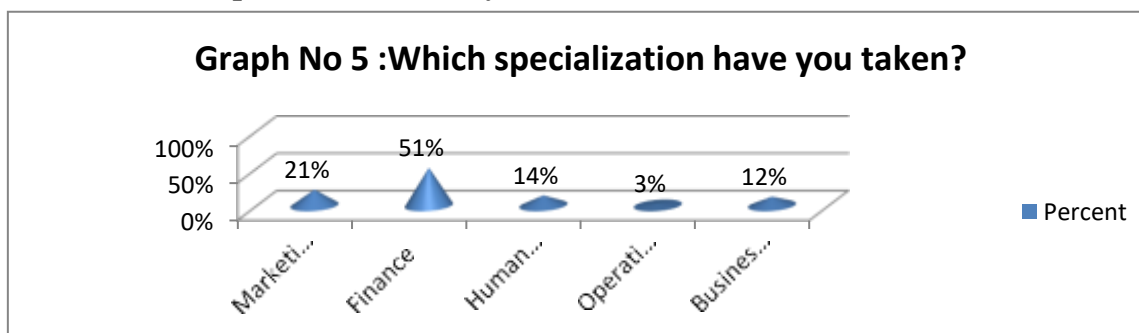
Question: Which specialization was suggested to you by competency mapping result?



Interpretation: The diversity of specialization recommendations indicates that respondents have varying skill sets and competencies, and competency mapping aims to align their strengths with suitable specializations. Overall, these findings highlight the tailored nature of competency

mapping in suggesting specializations that align with individual strengths and competencies. It underscores the value of personalized career guidance based on a systematic assessment of skills and aptitudes.

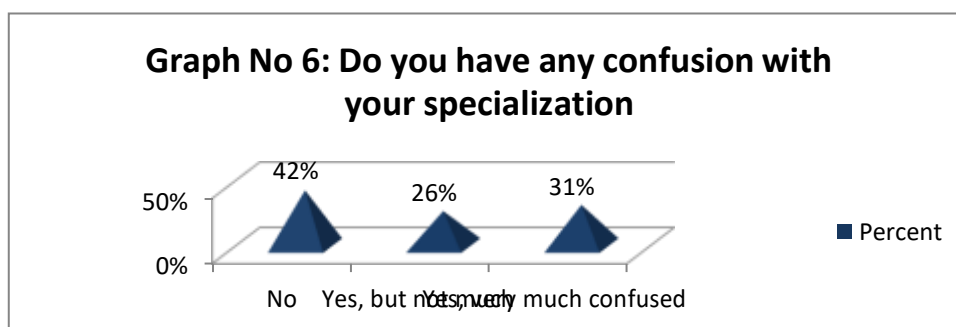
Question: Which specialization have you taken?



Interpretation: Results show a relationship between the specialization recommendations from competency mapping and the actual specializations chosen by respondents, with Finance being a dominant choice in both. However, individual factors also influence the final decision, highlighting the importance of

personalized career choices in alignment with one's skills and interests. The findings emphasize that while competency mapping can provide valuable recommendations, individual preferences, career aspirations, and personal interests also play a role in the final choice of specialization.

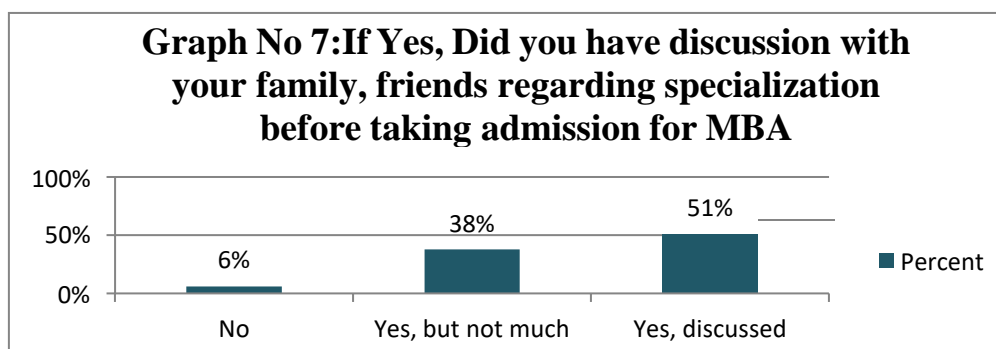
Question: There is general feeling that students are confused about what specialization to take. Did you have such confusion?



Interpretation: The findings highlight the challenges students face when making decisions about their academic and career paths. These challenges may arise from various factors such as the multitude of specialization options, varying personal interests, and career aspirations. The results indicate that a significant number of

students experience confusion when selecting their specialization. This finding emphasizes the need for educational institutions and career advisors to offer guidance and resources to assist students in making well-informed decisions aligned with their interests and goals.

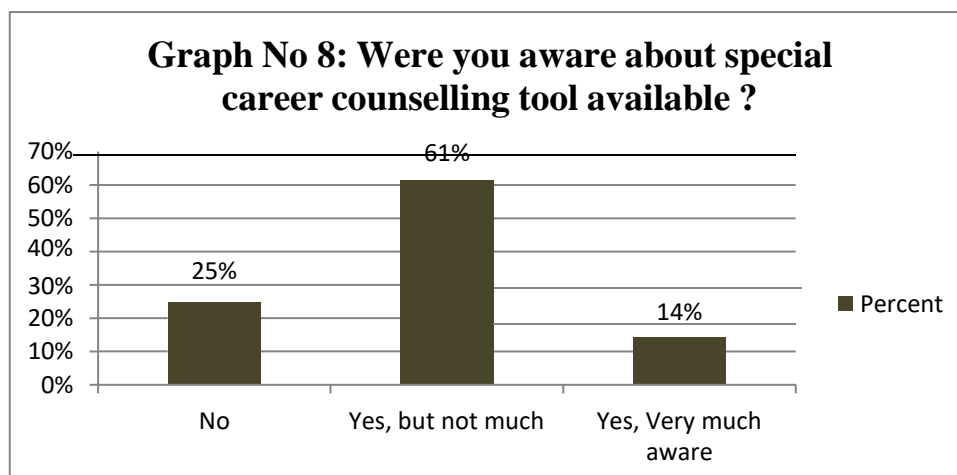
Question: If Yes, did you have discussion with your family, friends regarding specialization before taking admission for MBA



Interpretation: The findings underscore the importance of seeking guidance and input from trusted sources, such as family and friends, when making decisions about specialization, as it can help students make informed choices. Overall, these results

highlight the role of family and friends as valuable sources of advice and support when students are making choices about their specialization, underscoring the significance of personal networks in the decision-making process.

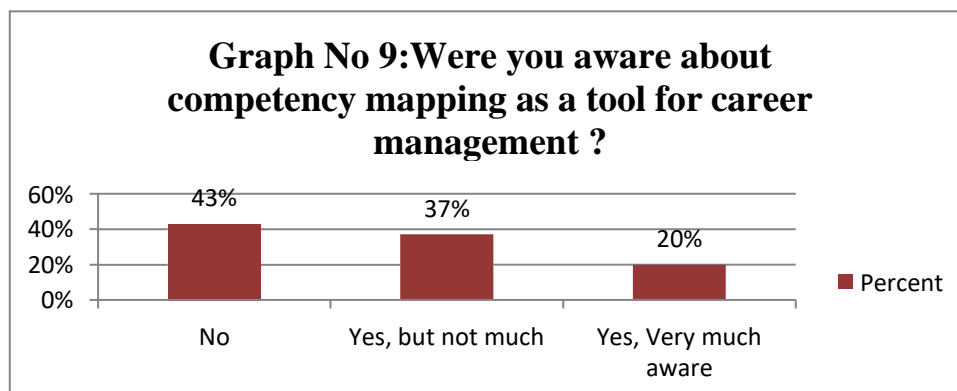
Question: Were you aware about special career counselling tool available?



Interpretation: The majority of respondents (61%) indicated some level of awareness regarding the availability of special career counseling tools. However, this awareness was not extensive. Overall, the results indicate a range of awareness

levels among students regarding special career counseling tools. There is an opportunity to enhance awareness and accessibility to these tools to better support students in their career decision-making processes.

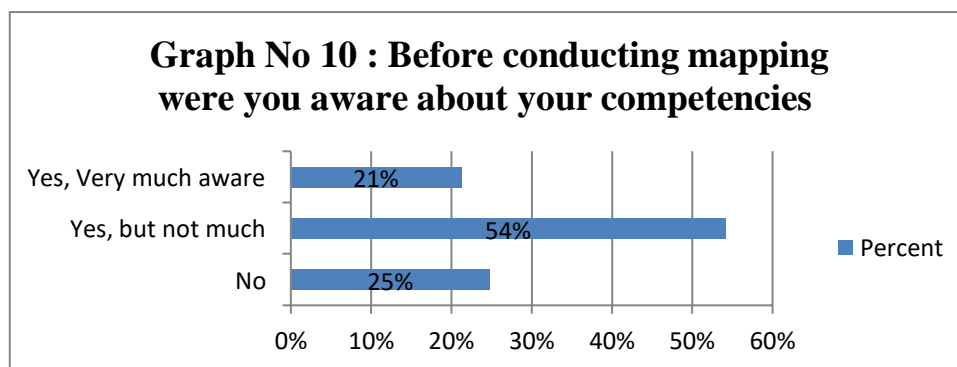
Question: Were you aware about competency mapping as a tool for career management?



Interpretation: These findings highlight the potential for educational institutions and career counseling services to further promote and educate students about the concept and benefits of competency mapping in the context of career management.

Overall, the results indicate a range of awareness levels among students regarding competency mapping as a career management tool. There is an opportunity to enhance awareness and understanding of competency mapping to better support students in their career planning and development processes.

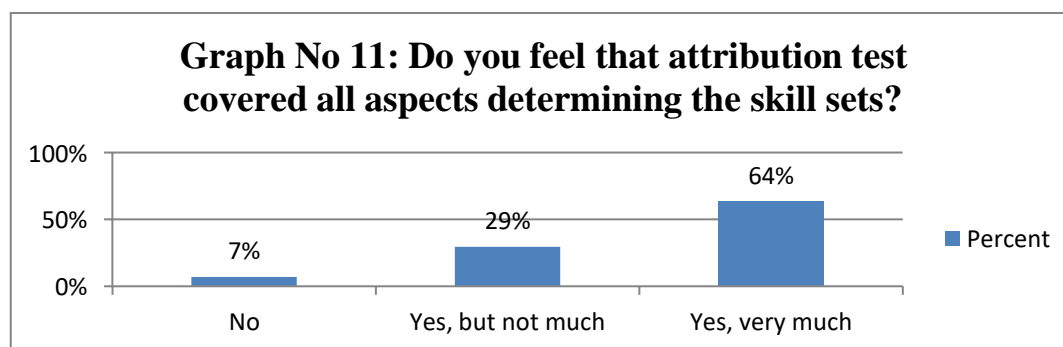
Question: Before conducting mapping were you aware about your competencies



Interpretation: The results indicate varying levels of awareness among students regarding their competencies before conducting competency mapping. Competency mapping may serve as a

valuable tool for enhancing self-awareness and guiding career development by identifying strengths and areas that require improvement.

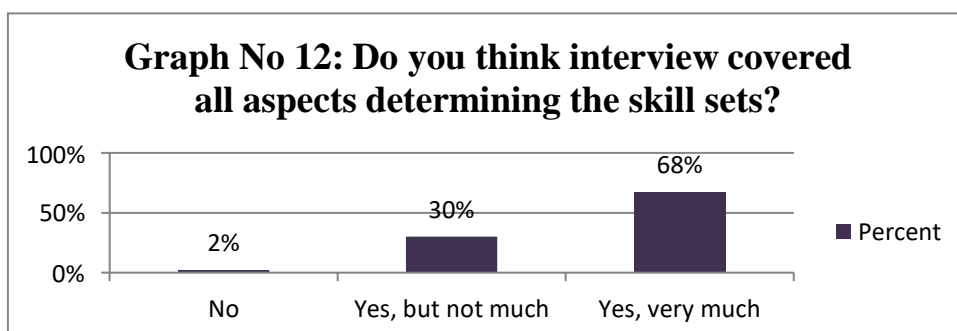
Question: Do you feel that attribution test covered all aspects determining the skill sets?



Interpretation: The results suggest that a significant proportion of respondents found the attribution test to be effective in assessing skill sets, with 64% expressing a high level of satisfaction. However, a notable portion (29%) felt that there was

room for improvement, indicating that further refinement of the test might be beneficial. The 7% who responded negatively may represent a minority with specific concerns that should be explored to enhance the test's effectiveness.

Question: Do you think interview covered all aspects determining the skill sets?

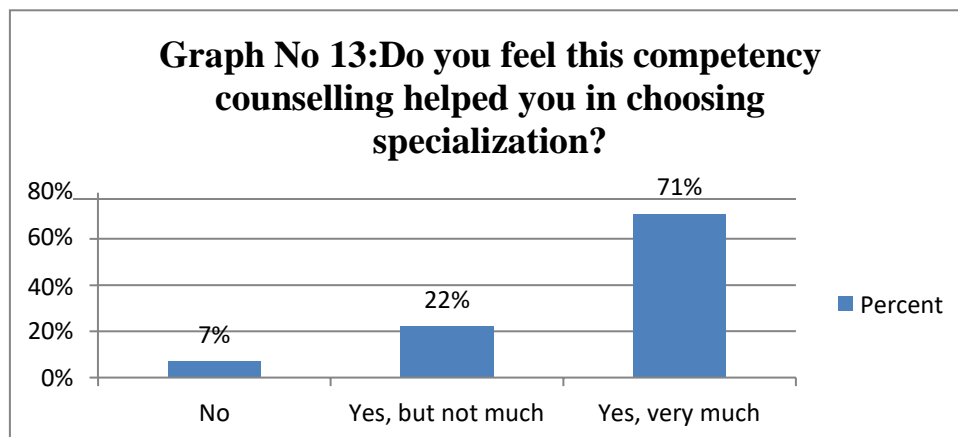


Interpretation: The results suggest that a significant proportion of respondents found interviews to be effective in assessing skill

sets, with 68% expressing a high level of satisfaction. However, there is a minority (2%) who responded negatively, indicating

significant concerns about the comprehensiveness of interviews.

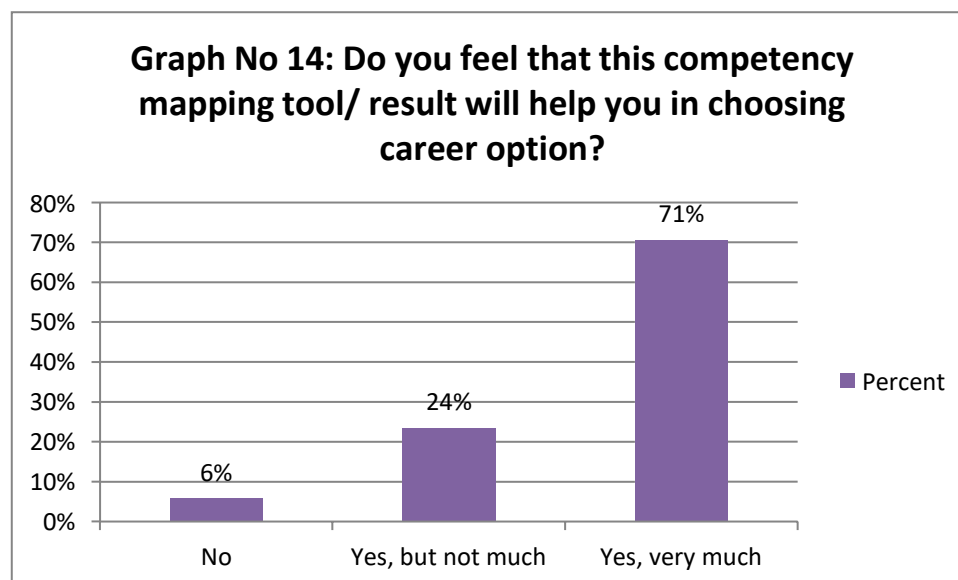
Question: Do you feel this competency counselling helped you in choosing specialization?



Interpretation: The results suggest that a significant proportion of respondents found competency counseling to be very helpful in guiding them toward choosing their specialization, with 71% expressing a high

level of satisfaction. However, a smaller portion (22%) felt that it was somewhat helpful but not to a great extent, and a minority (7%) did not perceive any benefit from the counseling.

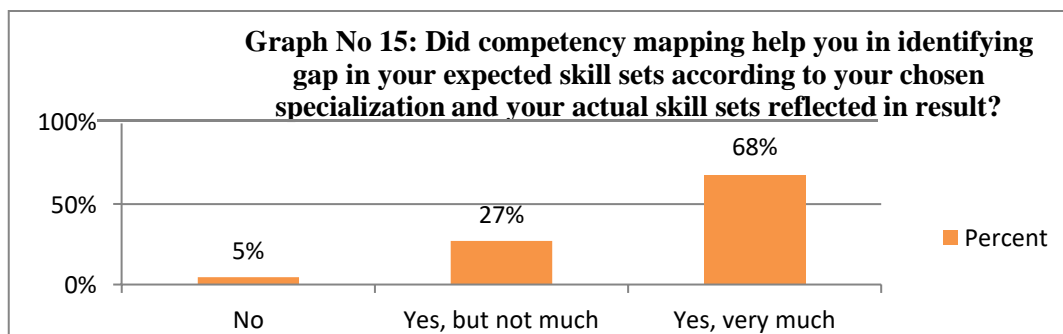
Question: Do you feel that this competency mapping tool/ result will help you in choosing career option?



Interpretation: The results suggest that a significant proportion of respondents found the competency mapping tool or its results to be very helpful in guiding them toward choosing a career option, with 71% expressing a high level of satisfaction.

However, a smaller portion (24%) felt that it would be somewhat helpful but not to a great extent, and a minority (6%) did not perceive any benefit from the tool or its outcomes.

Question: Did competency mapping help you in identifying gap in your expected skill sets according to your chosen specialization and your actual skill sets reflected in result?



Interpretation: The results suggest that a significant proportion of respondents found competency mapping to be very helpful in identifying gaps in their skill sets between their chosen specialization and their actual skill sets, with 68% expressing a high level

of satisfaction. However, a smaller portion (27%) felt that it was somewhat helpful but not to a great extent, and a minority (5%) did not perceive any benefit from competency mapping in this context.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING:

Hypothesis No 1:

H0: Competency mapping does not help students in identifying gap in their expected skill sets as per chosen specialization and their actual skill sets reflected in result

H1: competency mapping help students in identifying gap in their expected skill sets as per chosen specialization and their actual skill sets reflected in result

One-Sample Statistics				
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Did competency mapping help you in identifying gap in your expected skill sets according to your chosen specialization and your actual skill sets reflected in result?	170	2.64	.572	.044

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 0					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper

Did competency mapping help you in identifying gap in your expected skill sets according to your chosen specialization and your actual skill sets reflected in result?	60.019	169	.000	2.635	2.55	2.72
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Interpretation: Mean value is 2.64 reflecting that competency mapping helps students to identify the gap in their skill set. To verify it t-test is applied Result shows that p-value is less than significant value hence result fail to prove null hypothesis. So alternative hypothesis is accepted. i.e., Competency mapping help students in identifying gap in their expected skill sets as per chosen specialization and their actual skill sets reflected in result.

Hypothesis No 2:

H0: There is no relation between Students choice of Specialization and awareness of competencies.

H1: There is relation between Students choice of Specialization and awareness of competencies.

Which specialization you have taken? * Before conducting mapping were you aware about your competencies Crosstabulation

Count		Before conducting mapping were you aware about your competencies			Total
		No	Yes, but not much	Yes, very much aware	
Which specialization you have taken?	Marketing	11	19	6	36
	Finance	21	44	21	86
	Human Resource	5	12	6	23
	Operations and Supply Chain	2	2	1	5
	Business Analytics	3	15	2	20
Total		42	92	36	170

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
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Pearson Chi-Square	5.999 ^a	8	.047
Likelihood Ratio	6.144	8	.031
Linear-by-Linear Association	.082	1	.024
N of Valid Cases	170		

Interpretation: The chi-square tests conducted on this data suggests that there is a statistically significant relationship between respondents' chosen specializations and their awareness of their competencies before conducting competency mapping. The p-values for the Pearson Chi-Square and Likelihood Ratio tests are both below the conventional significance level of 0.05, indicating that there is an association between these two variables hence alternative hypothesis is accepted that is there is relation between Students choice of Specialization and awareness of competencies.

FINDINGS:

Based on the data analysis and hypothesis testing results, the findings of the research can be summarized as follows:

Education Background: The study found a diverse range of educational backgrounds among the respondents, with a majority having backgrounds in commerce (B.Com) or business-related fields (BBA/BCA). Engineering was also fairly represented. This suggests a varied mix of educational experiences among the respondents.

Family Education Background: A significant proportion of respondents come from families where members have completed their undergraduate or bachelor's degrees, indicating a culture of higher education within their families.

Specialization Choices: The study observed a relationship between the specialization recommendations from competency mapping and the actual specializations chosen by respondents. Finance was a dominant choice in both suggested and actual specializations, emphasizing the role of individual

preferences and career aspirations in final decisions.

Confusion in Specialization Choice: A significant number of students experienced confusion when selecting their specialization, highlighting the need for guidance and resources to assist students in making well-informed decisions aligned with their interests and goals.

Awareness of Career Counseling Tools: The study revealed that while a majority of respondents were somewhat aware of the availability of special career counseling tools, awareness was not extensive. There is an opportunity to enhance awareness and accessibility to these tools.

Awareness of Competency Mapping: Similar to career counseling tools, awareness of competency mapping as a career management tool varied among students. There is an opportunity to enhance awareness and understanding of competency mapping to better support students in their career planning and development processes.

Effectiveness of Competency Mapping: Competency mapping was found to be effective in helping students identify gaps in their expected skill sets for their chosen specialization and their actual skill sets reflected in results. The majority of respondents found it helpful in this regard.

Perception of Attribution Test: A significant proportion of respondents found the Attribution Test to be effective in assessing skill sets, with a small minority expressing concerns about its comprehensiveness.

Perception of Interviews: A majority of respondents found interviews to be effective in assessing skill sets, with a very

small minority expressing significant concerns about their comprehensiveness.

Effectiveness of Competency Counseling: A significant proportion of respondents found competency counseling to be very helpful in guiding them toward choosing their specialization.

Effectiveness of Competency Mapping Tool: A significant proportion of respondents found the competency mapping tool or its results to be very helpful in guiding them toward choosing a career option.

SUGGESTION / RECOMMENDATIONS:

Several key suggestions and recommendations can be made to enhance the career planning and decision-making process for MBA students:

Career Guidance and Counseling: Given the significant confusion observed among students when selecting their specializations, it is essential for educational institutions to provide comprehensive career guidance and counseling services. These services should be readily available to assist students in making well-informed decisions aligned with their interests and goals.

Awareness Campaigns: To address the limited awareness of career counseling tools and competency mapping, educational institutions should launch awareness campaigns. These campaigns can include workshops, seminars, and information sessions to educate students about the availability and benefits of these resources.

Competency Mapping Integration: Competency mapping has proven to be effective in helping students identify skill gaps. Therefore, educational institutions should consider integrating competency mapping into their career counseling and academic advising processes. This can

provide students with valuable insights into their strengths and areas for improvement.

Customized Career Support: Recognizing that individual preferences and aspirations play a significant role in specialization choices, career support should be customized. This means tailoring guidance and recommendations to each student's unique skills, interests, and career goals.

Attribution Test Enhancement: Address the concerns raised by a small minority regarding the comprehensiveness of the Attribution Test. Continuously improve and refine this assessment tool to ensure it accurately reflects students' skill sets and competencies.

Interview Effectiveness: Since the majority of students found interviews effective, continue to utilize this method in competency mapping. Ensure that interviews are structured and well-designed to comprehensively evaluate students' skills and motivations.

Competency Counseling: Maintain and strengthen competency counseling services as they have proven to be very helpful in guiding students toward suitable specializations. Encourage students to actively engage with these services to make informed decisions.

Enhanced Accessibility: Ensure that career counseling tools, competency mapping, and counseling services are easily accessible to all students. This includes providing online resources and support for those who may face barriers to in-person services.

Family and Peer Involvement: Encourage students to seek advice and discuss their career choices with family and friends. Institutions can facilitate workshops or information sessions involving parents and peers to provide a broader support network for students.

Continuous Evaluation: Continuously assess and evaluate the effectiveness of career counseling initiatives and

competency mapping tools. Gather feedback from students to make necessary improvements and adjustments to better meet their needs.

By implementing these suggestions, educational institutions can better support MBA students in their career planning and specialization decisions, ultimately helping them align their education with their individual strengths, aspirations, and the demands of the job market.

CONCLUSION:

The research underscores the intricate relationship between competency mapping recommendations and actual specialization choices, emphasizing the paramount role of individual preferences and career aspirations. Furthermore, the study uncovered a significant level of confusion among students during the specialization selection process, signaling a pressing need for comprehensive guidance and resources aligned with their interests and aspirations.

While awareness of career counseling tools and competency mapping existed to some extent, there is room for improvement in enhancing their accessibility and understanding among students. Competency mapping, when effectively implemented, proved valuable in helping students identify skill gaps for their chosen specialization, garnering the approval of a majority of respondents.

In sum, the research findings demonstrate that competency mapping, if thoughtfully implemented, can serve as a potent tool in helping students bridge skill gaps and make well-informed decisions about their specialization and career trajectories. To maximize its effectiveness, it is imperative to address challenges, provide guidance, and increase awareness about these valuable resources. The study highlights the importance of recognizing individual preferences and aspirations alongside competency mapping recommendations in shaping final career and specialization

choices. Ultimately, these insights contribute to the broader discourse on optimizing career development and education support for students.

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