
How Students Perceive Professional Courses with Special Reference to Part Time and Full Time Courses in Kolkata and its Suburbs

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Abstract

The paper focuses on the behavioural aspect of undergraduate students who want to pursue higher educational especially professional courses and deals with how students perceive full time and part time courses along with course fee structures. This also shows the perception of students regarding job guarantee along with course duration. The finding in the paper gives a clear idea that job guarantee is an important factor while opting for professional courses irrespective of gender. The investigation here finds that if students were offered a professional course that would actualize their dreams, they were even willing to migrate to other cities. The paper also investigates preference order of sample students' career options in some selected sector among FMCG/CD, Retail, Manufacturing, IT, and BPO.

Introduction

There are a lot of educational institutions in India offering Full time and Part time Professional courses mushrooming here and there in various parts of the country. Students coming from different education and cultural background may have different perceptions towards higher education particularly expectations related to teaching and learning. Students' approach and orientation to education may further affect their academic decisions, expectations, and performance.

Though magnificent advertisements appear every day in the newspapers to lure the students for admissions in professional Courses, the course fees designed are skyrocketing specially for middle-class and the lower-middle class students. Lots of lucrative bank loans are also available to fulfill the dreams of aspiring students. Students are running after professional courses in the expectation of having career options in renowned companies. This

paper investigates students perceptions on comparable features of part time and full time courses with respect to fees, duration, job prospects etc. This paper also attempts to investigate aspects of the lifestyles, expectations and attitudes of undergraduate students opting for professional courses in their higher education. Private participation in professional education (especially management education,) has brought changes in the perception of the society in general and students in particular on education perceived as a welfare activity to a business activity. Private

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institutes of higher education is the producers of marketable education services and students as the consumer. Thus, as in other fields, the market forces have started dictating whether or not these institutes survive and excel. The study explores the expectations and perceptions of students regarding quality and support services in a higher education Institute.

Objectives

1. To analyse the perception and attitude towards full time and part time courses.
2. To find whether students perceive that duration of course depends on the fee structure.
3. To find out whether students perceive that duration of course depends on the opinion to job guarantee.
4. To find out whether there exist any relationship between gender and opinion regarding job guarantee.
5. To highlight most important factors for selecting a course.
6. To enumerate the important reasons for pursuing professional course.
7. To enlighten the attitude towards migrating to other cities instead of Kolkata.
8. To list out the most attractive sectors as per the opinion of respondents.

Literature Survey

Throughout the study, the Project Team reviewed a number of research and theoretical articles addressing issues and questions on the topic. Those articles that appeared to be most pertinent to the objectives of the study are briefly summarized below.

Patti, Tarpley, Goree and Tice (1993) conducted a study to examine the link between part time and full time course with assurances of job, facilities, and programs. Their results showed a significant portion of variance in retention, predicted by three factors: 1) use of the Counseling Center; 2) use of the Career Services Center; and 3) responses to the item addressing "concern for you as an individual." The authors suggested that students were using counseling and career services as they

anticipate leaving and the stronger, innovative programs in these areas may facilitate student retention.

In a study designed to assess undergraduate business alumni satisfaction on the basis of the customer satisfaction framework, Hartman and Schmidt (1995) found significant role of satisfaction on the choice of full time and part time courses in the professional world such as why the need of full time and part time arose, what are the basic advantages and disadvantages of full time and part time courses. The authors concluded that depending upon needs and future prospects for the job, the student decides to opt for a full time and a part time course and also found that students choose full time / part time course only for the purpose having a degree.

Dr. (Mrs.) Olabisi Olasehinde-Williams(2003) also investigated the comparative degree of satisfaction of full - time and part-time students to their programme facilities. Although she observed slight variations between full-time and part-time students, in their mean ratings of aspect of the programmes, on account of type of programme, gender and level of study were observed, no significant difference was observed between full-time and part-time students on account of any of the three variables.

Singh and Khatri (2011) found that most of them attach great degree of importance to infrastructure facilities and support services for assessing an institute. It may also be noted that satisfaction levels of the undergraduate students are very low with respect to special lectures conducted, industry interaction arranged by the institute and updating courses. This has some relevance in many aspects of the paper under study.

On the other hand, Hongjiang Xu, in his research paper titled " Students' perceptions of university education – USA vs. China", has emphasized that educational systems are the foundation upon which progress depends and the quality of educational systems heavily impacts the long term political and economic success of countries.

Research Methodology

The research paper is mainly explorative type as the objective was to identify and analyse students' opinions about a course in a higher education institute on the basis of sample survey.

Sampling and Sample size: Keeping in view the limitations of present research, the empirical study was conducted by convenience sampling which is one type of non-probability sampling. The survey was conducted with the help of a questionnaire on 200 undergraduate students from different undergraduate colleges in Kolkata, its suburbs and students pursuing post graduation in conventional courses like MA, M.Sc, M.Com.

Analytical tools used

The statistical tests of the paper are based on **chi-square test for independence**. The test is applied when there are two **categorical variables** (A & B) from a single population. It is used to determine whether there is a significant association between the two variables.

Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

With a view to fulfill the Objectives of the study and to test the Hypotheses, data were collected from the selected sample of 200 undergraduate students from various private and government colleges in Kolkata and its suburbs . These were collected as per tools and means mentioned.

Data thus quantified and processed are presented in this section in the form of Tables pertaining to different variables.

The analytical part is based on chi square analysis as mentioned vividly in the previous section. The interpretations are as follows:

Chi square analysis 1

The first analysis presented here is done to find out whether according to students' perception there is any relationship between course duration and course fee.

Null Hypothesis(Ho): Students perceive that course fee does not depend upon duration of the course.

Alternative Hypothesis(Ha): Students perceive that course fee depends upon duration of the course.

Course fee	Full Time Number of responses	Part Time Number of responses
50,000-100000	25	33
150000-200000	45	20
200000-250000	35	12
250000 & above	20	10

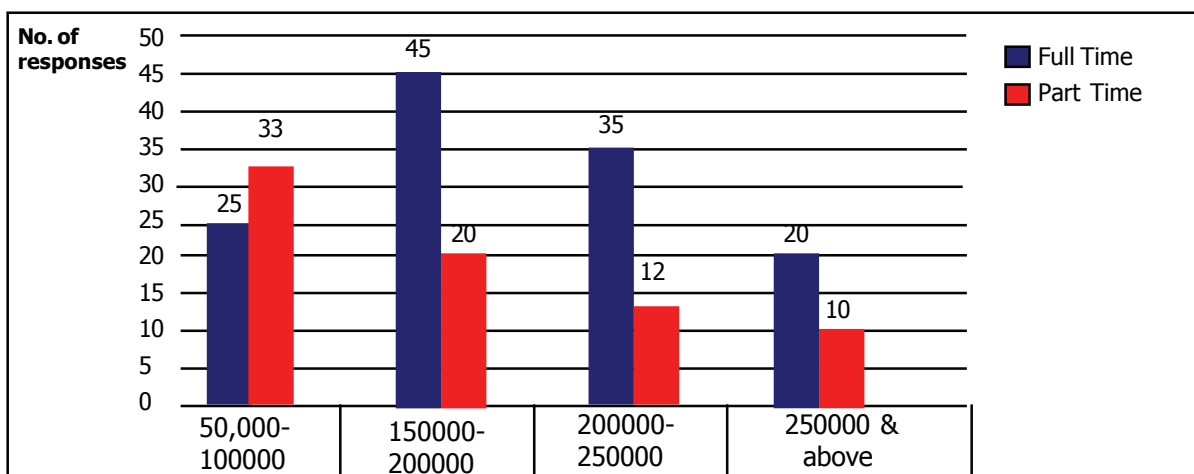


Fig.1: Responses on course fee and course duration

The chi square test of independence showed that the calculated value was found to be as $X^2_{cal} = 13.65$. With degrees of freedom as 3, at 5 % level of significance the critical value of chi square $X^2_{cri} = 7.815$. Since the calculated value of chi square is greater than the critical value of chi square, hence the null hypothesis can be rejected and can be concluded that according to students perceptions, duration of course depends on the fee.

Chi square analysis 2

The second analysis represented here is done to find out whether students perceive any relationship between course duration and job guarantee.

Null Hypothesis (Ho): Students perceive that duration of the course does not depend upon job guarantee.

Alternative Hypothesis(Ha): Students perceive that duration of the course depends upon job guarantee.

Course fee	Full Time Number of responses	Part Time Number of responses
Important	113	25
Not Important	45	20

Table 2: Course duration and opinion regarding job guarantee.

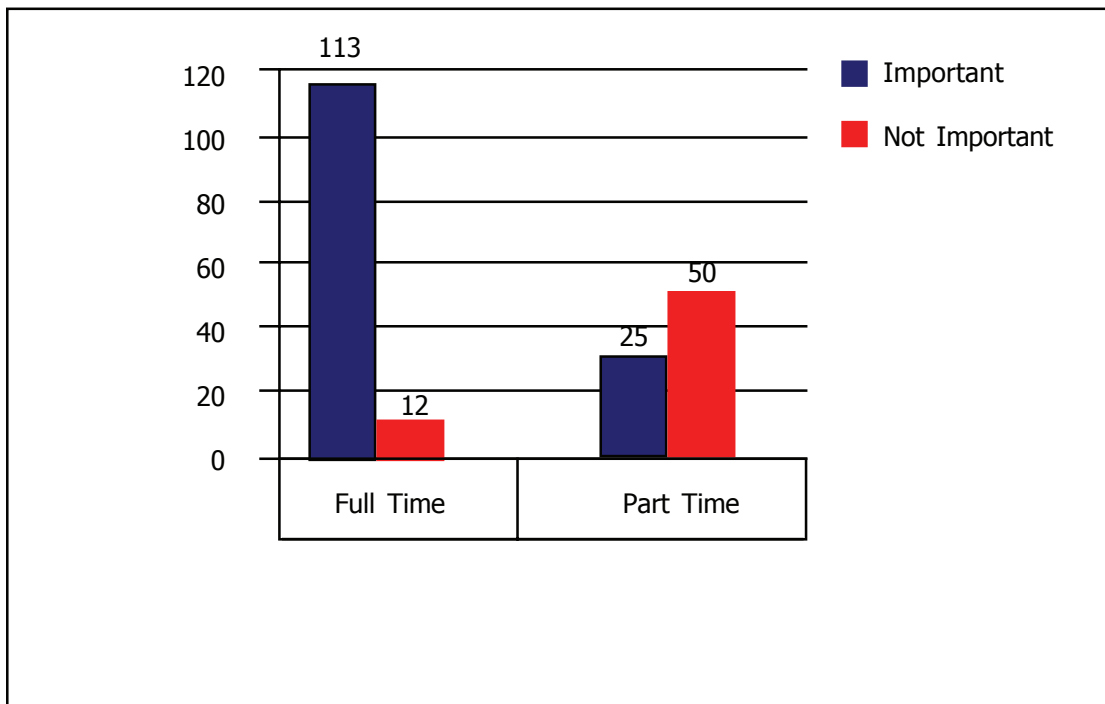


Fig.2 : Course duration and opinion regarding job guarantee

The second chi square test of independence found that the calculated value was found to be as chi square_{cal} = 71.34. Whereas with degrees of freedom as 1, at 5 % level of significance the critical value of chi square_{cri} = 3.841. Since the calculated value of chi square is greater than the critical value of chi square, hence the null hypothesis can be rejected and can be concluded that there is relationship between course duration and job guarantee.

It can be interpreted that students who opt for full time course are more interested in getting jobs

Chi square analysis 3

The third analysis represented here is done to find out whether or not there is any relationship between gender and job guarantee.

Null Hypothesis(Ho) : Gender and perception on job guarantee are independent.

Alternative Hypothesis(Ha) : Gender and perception on job guarantee are not independent.

Job Guarantee responses	Male	Female
Important	101	74
Not Important	12	13

Table3: Gender and opinion regarding job guarantee.

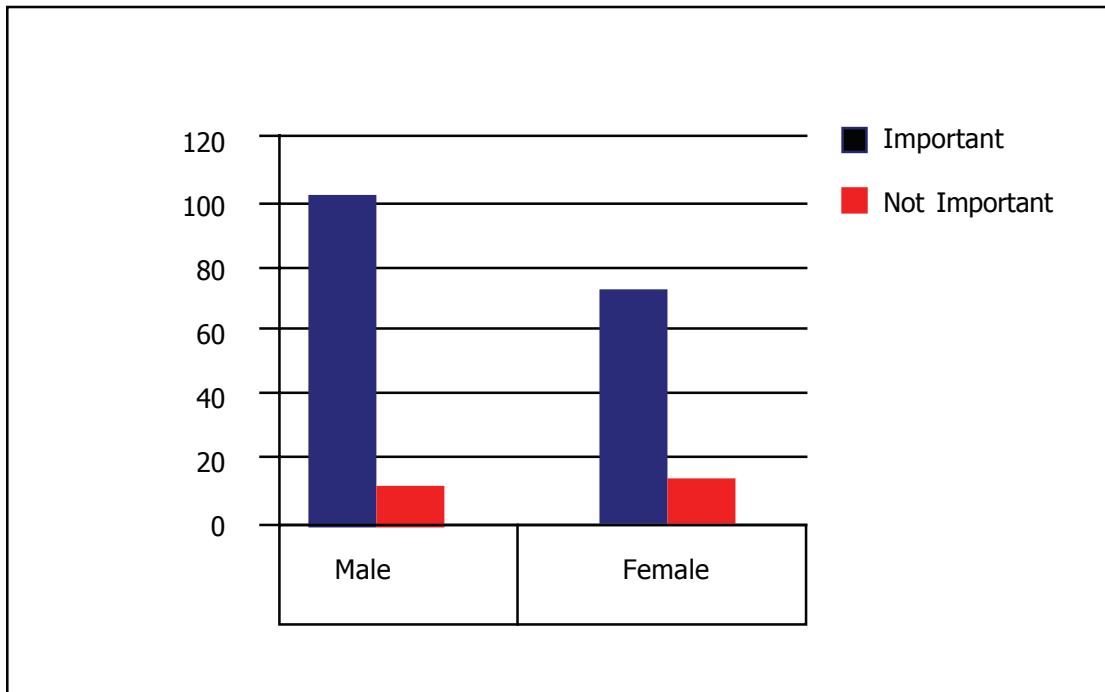


Fig. 3 Gender and opinion regarding job guarantee.

The third chi square test of independence found that the calculated value was $\chi^2_{cal} = 0.839$. with degrees of freedom as 1, at 5 % level of significance the critical value of $\chi^2_{cri} = 3.841$. Since the calculated value of chi square is smaller than the critical value of chi square, the null hypothesis can be accepted and can be concluded that both genders i.e male and female have same opinion about job guarantee.

It can be interpreted that female students are equally interested in getting jobs.

The paper also revealed some more interesting facts when the factor of job guarantee was considered along with other factors like Quality of

teachers, Quality of study materials, and Ambience/ Infrastructure of the institution. Surprisingly responses got more or less dispersed among all the factors.

From data, it is clearer that a big percentage of students get influenced by Ambience and Infrastructure of the institution, no wonder upcoming institutions invest plenty of money to get equipped with modern state-of-the-art facilities to lure their prospective students.

However, the quality of teachers also rank third in the race followed by quality of study materials which is relatively more in demand by those who wish to do part time courses.

Most Important factor while selecting a professional course	Responses
Quality of teachers	33
Job guarantee	89
Quality of study materials	25
Ambience and infrastructure of the institution	53
Table 4: Most Important factor while selecting a professional course	

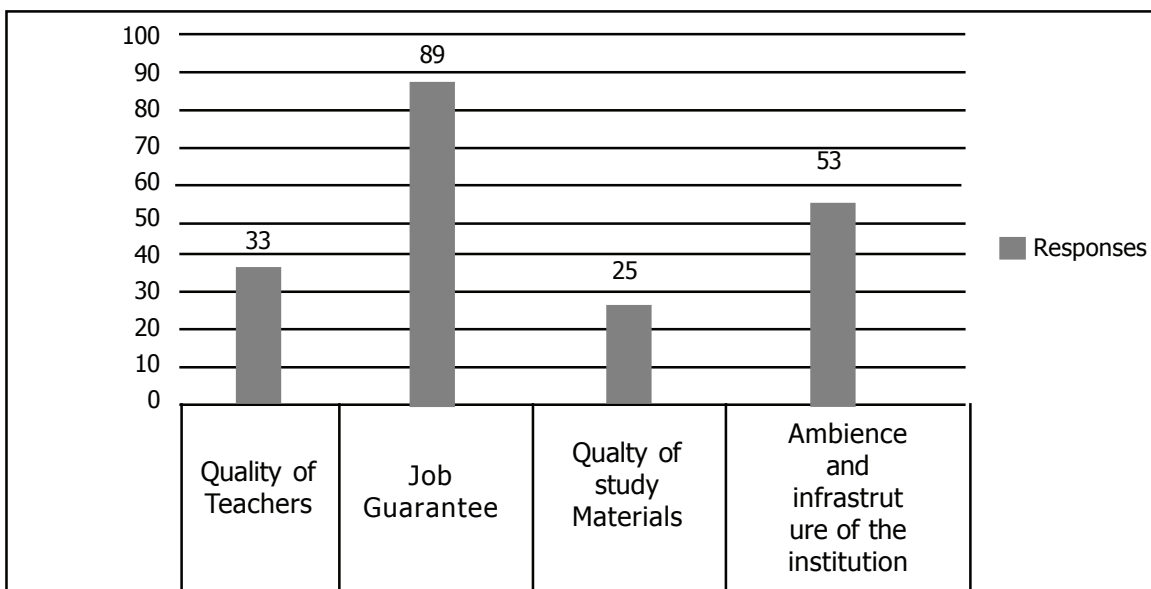


Fig.4 Responses of opinions regarding Most Important factor while selecting a professional course

Another study reveals the most important reason while opting for a professional course. And the result shows that, as expected, most respondents wish to go for professional education with the aspiration of getting better job in corporate sector followed by the promotion factor for those who are wishing to pursue professional course simultaneously with their jobs. Rest of the two factors are having almost equal ratings which also determine that there is dearth of young entrepreneurs or risk takers.

Opinion Retated to	Responses
Better job in corporate sector	104
Job promotion	42
Become an Entrepreneur.	28
Can run my family business more effectively	26

Table 5 : Reasons for opting for professional course

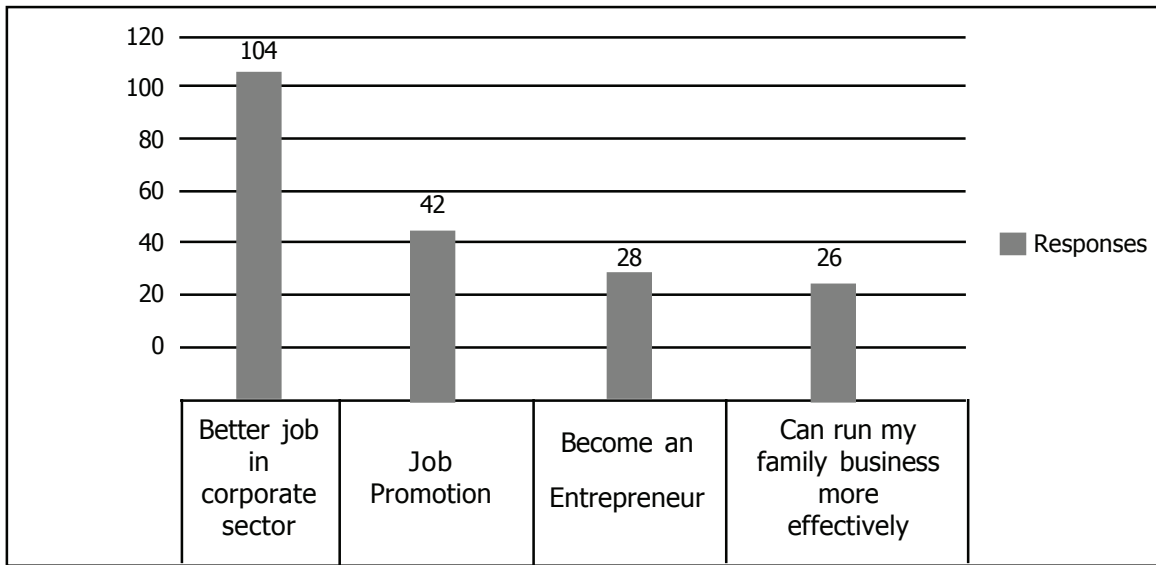


Fig.5. Responses of opinion regarding Most Important reason for pursuing a professional course

The study also presented an important issue i.e. migrating to other cities for pursuing professional course which is noteworthy to mention that most of the aspiring students wish to move out of Kolkata to fulfill their dreams in other cities like Pune, Bangalore, Mumbai, Delhi, etc. This highlights the challenge faced by the education system and its providers in Kolkata

Opinion related with migrating to other city for pursuing professional course Responses	
Yes	120
No	70
Depends on situation	10

Table 6: Responses of opinion related with migrating to other city for pursuing professional course

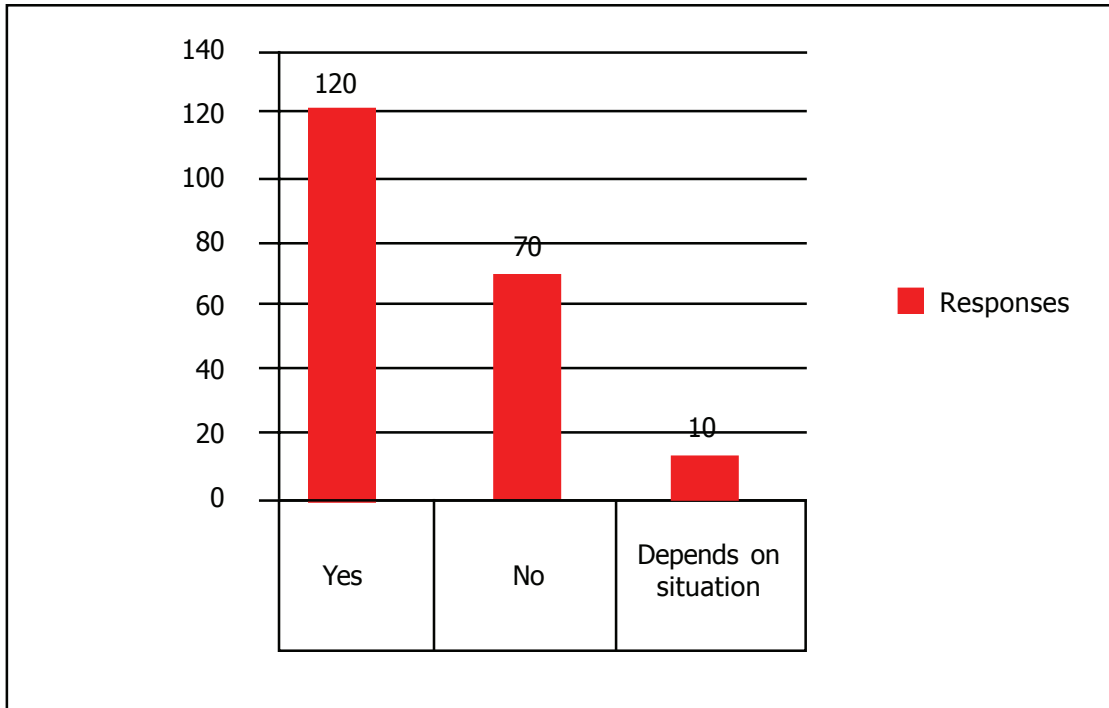


Fig. 6. Responses of opinion related with migrating to other city for pursuing professional course

One more finding is the perception of students is on the most preferred sector. And for quite obvious reasons, the FMCG/FMCD topped the chart followed by booming Retail sector. Manufacturing Industry

also attracts quite good responses. Financial sector only attracts those having specialized knowledge. IT and BPO/KPO are no longer attractive with its high attrition rate.

Different Sectors	Responses
FMCG/FMCD	69
RETAIL	63
MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY	42
FINANCIAL SECTOR	15
IT	9
BPO/ KPO	2

Table 7: Responses related to preference to different sectors after completing professional course

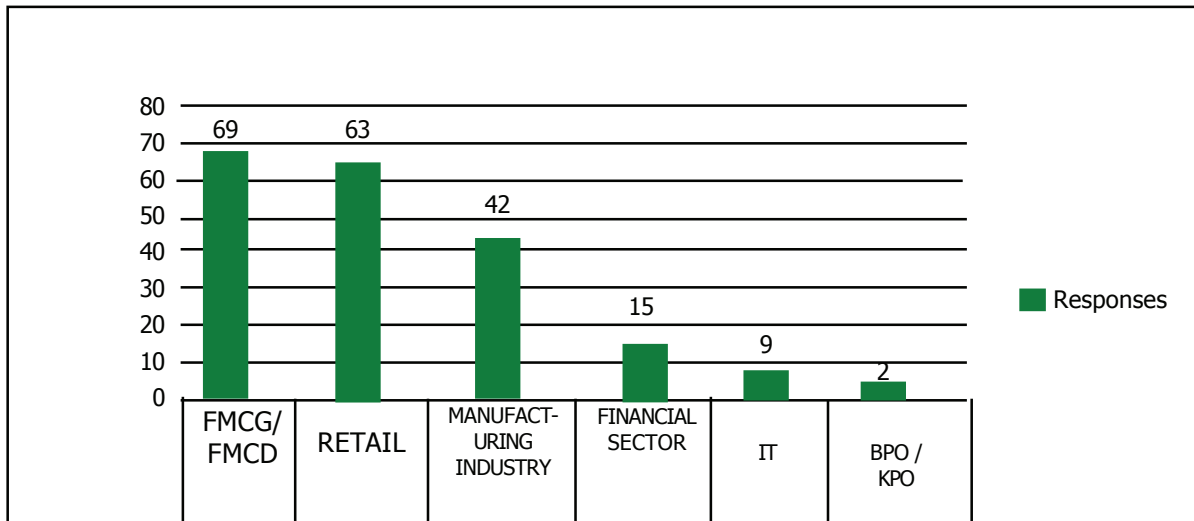


Fig.7. responses related to preference to different sectors after completing professional course

Conclusion

The research paper presented here has come up with many findings. However there should have been many other aspects which could have been explored and might have been ignored or missed. A few important things have come up which are nevertheless worth mentioning :

1. The existence of relationship between course fee and its duration. Students generally directly correlate course fee and course duration. They have more expectation from the institution with high course fees from where they wish to do full time courses.
2. It can also be concluded that students who opting for full time course are more interested in getting jobs.
3. Both male and female students consider job guarantee as an important factor for pursuing professional course.
4. After job guarantee, infrastructural facilities and quality of teachers are important factors.
5. Students in Kolkata consider other cities like Pune, Bangalore, Mumbai, and Delhi more promising in fulfilling their aspirations. This trend is not a good indicator for the people who are into education business and must take this as a serious challenge
6. Students showed performance of jobs in FMCG and Retail Sector. Also most of the prospective students wish to join professional courses for getting absorbed in corporate sector.

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