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Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Internal Examinations

Netra Prasad Nyaupane
Lecturer
Baneshwor Multiple Campus, Kathmandu, Nepal

Correspondance email: netranyaupane45@gmail.com
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Abstract

This study examines the undergraduate students' perceptions and experiences towards internal examinations. The study uses an exploratory research design with a quantitative approach. The data of the study were collected using a stratified random sampling. The total number of respondents of the study is 123 students from Humanities, Management, and Education faculties. It excludes the first-year students. Alignment with board examination standards, clear assessment criteria, efficient exam management, scheduling and contribution to learning are considered as the key components of this study. The findings show that the different groups exhibit identical knowledge of internal examinations. But the male and Management students exhibit relatively favorable knowledge to these exams. The male and second year students have a positive and significant perception towards internal examinations. In the faculty wise analysis of the result, the students of all faculties show stable perceptions. The second year students have more favourable perception and experiences. The findings reveal that there is moderate satisfaction towards internal examinations among students in an overall satisfaction analysis. The second year and Management students exhibit the highest satisfaction levels. This research also pinpoints some areas of improvement. The exam transparency and proper exam management are the main suggestions, which need to be improved. By this, the students' satisfaction and learning will be more favorable.

Keywords: Internal examinations, perceptions, experiences, satisfaction, undergraduate students

Introduction

The education landscape is influenced by classroom content and the methods used to evaluate student progress. Internal examination is one of the critical aspects of evaluation. It plays a vital role in assessing students' comprehension and application

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of knowledge (Shamkuwar & Mokhasi, 2019; Subedi, 2019). To make the internal examinations effective, number of various key factors must be considered. These factors ensure the students that the assessment process is fair, comprehensive, and conducive to their learning. They also enhance the educational experience.

Alignment with board examination standards

The questions in the internal exam should maintain the standards of board examinations so that every student is prepared to face the final evaluation (Kibble, 2017). If internal assessments reflect certain characteristics of board exams in terms of format, degree of difficulty, and content, this gives students realistic practice, helps them get familiarized with types of exams, reduces their level of anxiety, and enhances confidence (Fuentealba, 2011).

Proper management of examinations

Well-organized exam management is vital for any educational institution. Such management involves clear timetable, sufficient preparation time, and well-organized administration. Thorough planning makes the exam administration smooth without logistical issues (Linn & Miller, 2008). Timely distribution of timetable and early communication of changes help students prepare and manage stress. Maintaining integrity also depends on handling exam materials securely(Getachew et al., 2022).

Contribution to overall learning and academic improvement

Internal examinations provide continuous feedback, identifying strengths and areas for improvement for students. They significantly enhance their learning and academic performance(Irira, 2014). Frequent participation in these exams enables students to monitor their progress, modify their study techniques, and form reliable study habits. They also contribute to a deeper comprehension of the subject matter and academic success. (Atuhurra & Kaffenberger, 2022; Ismail et al., 2022).

Clear and transparent criteria

Assessment criteria play vital roles in successful and effective internal examination. So it needs to be developed earlier and communicated clearly. Students should know the way that their performance will be evaluated. These assessment criteria include detailed rubrics and specific guidelines for subjective answers and for objective questions (Jonsson, 2014). The understandable criteria help students prepare better and promote equality in grading.

Scheduling and time management

For students to succeed, they must have enough time to prepare. Exams should be planned well in advance to give students enough time to prepare and prevent last-minute scrambling. Students' learning outcomes are improved when results are published on time and they receive performance feedback(Bayerlein, 2014). Exams should be set apart out and not grouped together in a short period of time. It reduces stress and improves performance.

It is necessary to evaluate the students' perceptions and experiences towards these internal examinations for providing inspirational education for Baneshwor Multiple Campus. These examinations are conducted as different term-exams throughout the year and they serve as formative evaluations. The result of the exams shows the students' progress in systematic format. It also gives the information about their educational achievements and provides the areas of improvement (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Bell & Cowie, 2001). It is necessary to pay attention towards the factors that the students opine and which directly impact the exams. By doing so, the institution can refine the overall outcomes of the educational process.

Considering the different social and cultural backgrounds of students studying at Baneshwor Multiple Campus, it is essential to understand their perceptions and experiences towards internal examinations. This study aims to identify the gaps between the students' perceptions and experiences and the institutional assessment practices. There exists very little research regarding how students view the present examination and their learning outcomes besides the significant roles of the internal examinations. This study aims to explore students' perceptions and experiences towards internal examinations. By investigating these issues within the context of Baneshwor Multiple Campus, the research seeks to enhance assessment practices and create favorable teaching and learning environment. The results of this study will benefit educators, legislators, and eventually the students themselves by giving the academic institution useful information to improve assessment procedures and the general learning environment.

Methods and materials

Research design

In this study, an exploratory research design was used to explore the perception and experience of internal examination among undergraduate students at Baneshwor Multiple Campus. For providing comprehensive results, a quantitative approach was applied, which involve the collection and analysis of numerical data.

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Population and sample

The total population of this study is 1,374 students studying in three faculties at Baneshwor Multiple Campus. They are distributed across Management (640 students), Humanities (454 students), and Education (280 students) (EMIS Report, 2024). This population excludes the first-year students because they do not have the experience of the final board examination. A stratified random sampling technique was used as it ensures the representative findings of the whole students. This method divided the population into the three strata and then a sample was selected randomly from each stratum.

Sample size

The sample size was calculated using Slovin's (Umar, 2008) formula. It has a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 9%.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$$

where:

- n is the sample size,
- N is the total population size,
- e is the margin of error.

In order to account for possible non-responses, incomplete questionnaires, or missing data, 10% more respondents were included in the sample size calculation than the 113 students. In survey research, this adjustment is frequently used to guarantee that, in spite of potential data loss, the final sample size is still statistically sound and sufficiently representative. The study attempts to maintain the intended level of confidence and margin of error in the results by accounting for this margin of missing or unusable data.

In the present study, there were no cases of missing data encountered, as 123 questionnaires accounting for the 10% excess were distributed, though it was collected and analyzed. This proactive approach ensured the integrity and completeness of the data while sacrificing no representative aspects of that sample.

Data collection

This study used a structured questionnaire for collecting the data, aiming to gather detailed information about students' perceptions and experiences of internal examination. The

questionnaire included demographic information, knowledge, belief, and experience toward the different dimensions of internal examination. The tool demonstrated a moderate level of internal consistency. The current Cronbach's Alpha is 0.685, which is considered acceptable for exploratory research. Although there is still room for improvement and validation in subsequent research, this degree of reliability shows that the questionnaire items are fairly consistent in measuring the intended constructs. The chosen sample of students in each stratum received the questionnaire.

Data analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistical tools were the key tools for data analysis. Descriptive statistics included measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode), and variability (standard deviation, range) to summarize the data. Inferential statistics, such as t-tests and ANOVA, were used to generalize findings and assess differences across groups. The software, SPSS, was used to analyze the whole data for a comprehensive understanding and correct outputs.

Ethical considerations

The study complied with research ethics, guaranteeing that each participant gave informed consent and that their answers would be kept private and anonymous. Participants will be made aware of their freedom to leave the study at any moment without facing any effects.

Limitations

Although this study aims to provide detailed information about students' perceptions and experiences of internal examination, it may be limited by self-reported data. It can be subject to bias. Furthermore, the findings of this study may not be generalizable and may only be applicable to the specific context of Baneshwor Multiple Campus.

Results and findings

The findings of this study are presented and discussed as follows under the separate headings.

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Table 1

Demographic information

		Count	Layer Total N %
Sex	Male	51	41.5%
	female	72	58.5%
	Total	123	100.0%
Faculty	Education	26	21.1%
	Management	55	44.7%
	Humanities	42	34.1%
	Total	123	100.0%
year	Second	59	48.0%
	Third	42	34.1%
	Fourth	22	17.9%
	Total	123	100.0%

(Source: Survey 2024)

Table 1 shows the demographic information of the respondents. There is a higher representation of female students (58.5%) compared to male students (41.5%). In the sample, the students from Management faculty are the largest proportion (44.7%), which is followed by Humanities faculty (34.1%). The students come the least from the Education faculty (21.1%) as the sample population.

There is the highest representation in the sample from second-year students (48.0%), and it is followed by third-year students (34.1%). and then fourth-year students (17.9%) is the least representation.

Knowledge of the internal examination-related aspects

The following section explores the students' knowledge of the internal examination-related aspects with reference to sex, faculty, and academic year.

Table 2

Knowledge of Various Aspects Related to Internal Examination

		Mean
Sex	Male	1.26
	Female	1.22
	Total	1.24
Faculty	Education	1.18
	Management	1.26
	Humanities	1.24
	Total	1.24
Year	Second	1.28
	Third	1.23
	Fourth	1.14
	Total	1.24

(Source: Survey 2024)

Table 2 presents the mean knowledge score of various aspects related to internal examination with reference to sex, faculty, and academic year. The male students' mean knowledge score is slightly higher (1.26) compared to female students (1.22). There is a very small difference between the mean score of knowledge of male and female students, as the overall mean knowledge score is 1.24. The Management faculty students have the highest mean knowledge score (1.26) and it is followed by the students of Humanities faculty (1.24). The students of Education faculty show the least mean knowledge score (1.18). This indicates that there is the need of proper communication regarding internal examination between the institution and the students, especially with the students of Education faculty.

Regarding the academic year, the second year students have the highest mean knowledge score (1.28) and it is followed by the students of third year students (1.23). The students of fourth year show the least mean knowledge score (1.14). Analysing the trend, the earlier year students poses higher level of awareness and declines it in later years. This finding demands the continuous reinforcement of the benefits of internal examination across all the years.

Overall, there is the moderate and consistent knowledge of internal examination across all students.

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Students' perception towards internal examination

The following sections explore the students' overall perception of internal examination concerning sex, faculty, and academic year.

Table 3

One Sample Test for Mean Scores of Sex and Students' Perception Towards Internal Examination

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 1					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Sex	13.124	122	.000	.58537	.4971	.6737
Students' perception towards internal examination	24.970	122	.000	1.58885	1.4629	1.7148

(Source: Survey 2024)

Table 3 shows one-sample test for mean score of sex and students' perception towards internal examination. The is a meaningful difference in perception between male and female students as shown by the high t-value (13.124) and the significant p-value (.000). The male students likely have a more positive view towards internal examination. This indicates that attitudes towards internal exams may be gender based, and thus consideration of different student experiences is necessary. On the whole the students have very positive attitudes about internal exams as illustrated both by the very high t-value (24.970) and mean difference value (1.58885), which means that generally students like internal exam. These results emphasize the need to take demographics into account while developing assessments, and suggest that in-house exams are successful in enhancing student response rates and performance. Additional qualitative studies could examine the reasons behind these gender differences further and may develop richer insights into students' perspectives.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Analysis of Students' Perceptions Towards Internal Examinations by Faculty

Descriptive								
Students' perception towards internal examination								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Education	26	2.3736	.68223	.13380	2.0981	2.6492	1.29	4.00
Management	55	2.7299	.82692	.11150	2.5063	2.9534	1.57	5.14
Humanities	42	2.5374	.48861	.07539	2.3852	2.6897	1.00	3.57
Total	123	2.5889	.70571	.06363	2.4629	2.7148	1.00	5.14

ANOVA					
Students' perception towards internal examination					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	2.409	2	1.205	2.477	.088
Within Groups	58.349	120	.486		
Total	60.759	122			

(Source: Survey 2024)

Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics and ANOVA analysis of students' perceptions towards internal examinations by faculty. The descriptive statistics show that the students of Management faculty have the highest mean score (2.7299) in perceptions of internal examinations. It indicates that they have more positive perception compared to the students of Education faculty (2.3736) and Humanities faculty (2.5374). The confidence intervals indicate that we can be 95% confident that the actual mean perception scores for each faculty reside within these ranges.

Although the descriptive data show variations in perceptions towards internal examinations, the ANOVA results indicate no statistically significant differences across three faculties. It is supported by the F-value (2.477) and p-value (.088). The implications of these non-significant differences permit deeper discussion to understand the underlying factors.

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Table 5

Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA Analysis of Students' Perception Towards Internal Examinations by Academic Year

Descriptive								
Students' perception towards internal examination								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
second	59	2.7676	.75121	.09780	2.5718	2.9633	1.57	5.14
Third	42	2.3537	.69646	.10747	2.1367	2.5708	1.00	4.86
Fourth	22	2.5584	.43175	.09205	2.3670	2.7499	1.57	3.00
Total	123	2.5889	.70571	.06363	2.4629	2.7148	1.00	5.14

ANOVA					
Students' perception towards internal examination					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.226	2	2.113	4.485	.013
Within Groups	56.532	120	.471		
Total	60.759	122			

(Source: Survey 2024)

Table 5 explores the descriptive statistics and ANOVA analysis of students' perceptions towards internal examinations by academic year. The descriptive statistics show that the students of second year have the highest mean score (2.7676) in perceptions of internal examinations. It indicates that they have a more positive perception compared to the third year students (2.3537) and fourth year students (2.5584). The confidence intervals indicate that we can be 95% confident that the actual mean perception scores for each faculty reside within these ranges.

The ANOVA results show that the F-value is 4.485 and the p-value is .013. So the students of different academic years have different perceptions towards internal examination, which are also statistically significant. However, the present significant statistical findings are not sufficient for a full understanding of the interpretation. It needs to consider the factors like academic experience, exposure to exam patterns, or facing the curriculum challenges for a full understanding of the implications; which answer the different perceptions in different academic years. As a result, meaningful findings would be achieved for the improvement of internal examination.

Students' experience with internal examination

The following sections provides the students' overall experience with internal examination with relation to sex, faculty, and academic year.

Table 6

One Sample T-Test for Sex and Mean of Experience with Internal Examination

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 1					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
sex	13.124	122	.000	.58537	.4971	.6737
Mean of experience with internal examination	31.170	122	.000	1.77507	1.6623	1.8878

(Source: Survey 2024)

A one-sample t-test examining "sex" and average experience with internal examination is shown in the table 6 above. A t-value of 13.124 with a p-value of 0.000 refutes the common 0.05 significance level. It confirms that there is a significantly different average value for the "sex" variable compared with the t-test value of 1. The average difference, 0.58537, shows that women and men were significantly more experienced with internal examination compared with 1. Also, it can be seen that the 95% confidence interval does not include 1.

Likewise, it provides a t-value of 31.170 with a p-value of 0.000, which again clearly falls below 0.05, indicating that the average value for "Mean of experience with internal examination" is significantly different from 1. The difference value stands at 1.77507, indicating that it is highly above 1. The confidence interval completely lies above 1, thus clearly indicating that it is significantly above 1. Again, an interpretation of these statistically significant results needs more consideration.

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Table 7

Mean of Experience with Internal Examination by Faculty

Descriptive								
Mean of experience with internal examination								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Education	26	2.8846	.67292	.13197	2.6128	3.1564	1.50	4.33
Management	55	2.7364	.61505	.08293	2.5701	2.9026	1.50	4.33
Humanities	42	2.7579	.63460	.09792	2.5602	2.9557	1.17	3.83
Total	123	2.7751	.63159	.05695	2.6623	2.8878	1.17	4.33

ANOVA					
Mean of experience with internal examination					
	Sum of Squares		Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.407		.203	.506	.604
Within Groups	48.259		.402		
Total	48.666				

(Source: Survey 2024)

Table 7 presents the mean score of students' experience towards internal examination by faculty. The descriptive statistics provides that the students of all faculties experience the internal examination in similar ways. The students of Education faculty show a slightly higher score in experience of the exam.

The ANOVA analysis reports that the p-value is 0.604 which is greater than the standard significant value (0.05). So, it indicates that there are no statistically significant differences in the experiences of internal examination of all faculty students.

The implications of these pieces of evidence require more discussion for a clearer interpretation of what these experiences could signify. It will be useful to discuss why there might be a slightly higher experience score for the Education faculty and what factors might be at play here. A discussion on why there might be no significant difference and exploring its implications on assessment practices and policies will make it more useful as a finding.

Table 8

Mean of Experience with Internal Examination by Academic Year

Descriptive								
Mean of experience with internal examination								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
second	59	2.8559	.55056	.07168	2.7125	2.9994	1.50	4.17
Third	42	2.8690	.64658	.09977	2.6676	3.0705	1.67	4.33
Fourth	22	2.3788	.68077	.14514	2.0770	2.6806	1.17	3.67
Total	123	2.7751	.63159	.05695	2.6623	2.8878	1.17	4.33

ANOVA					
Mean of experience with internal examination					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	4.212	2	2.106	5.684	.004
Within Groups	44.454	120	.370		
Total	48.666	122			

(Source: Survey 2024)

Table 8 explores the descriptive statistics and ANOVA analysis of students' experience towards internal examinations by academic year. The descriptive statistics show that the students of second year (2.8559) and third year (2.8690) have the similar experience scores in internal examination. The fourth year students have lower mean score (2.3788), which indicates that they have less favourable experience compared to the juniors.

The ANOVA results show that the F-value is 5.684 and the p-value is .004. So the students of different academic years have different experiences towards internal examination, which are also statistically significant. By this it is indicated that the academic year has a substantial effect on the experience towards internal examination.

Students' overall satisfaction with internal examination

The following sections shows the students' overall satisfaction with internal examination with relation to sex, faculty, and academic year.

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Table 9

Students' Overall Satisfaction with Internal Examination by Sex, Faculty and Academic Year

		Mean	Std. Deviation	Number	% of Total N
Sex	Male	2.3020	.77498	51	41.5%
	female	2.1667	.86301	72	58.5%
	Total	2.2228	.82708	123	100.0%
Faculty	Education	2.1462	.98234	26	21.1%
	Management	2.2982	.80173	55	44.7%
	Humanities	2.1714	.76582	42	34.1%
	Total	2.2228	.82708	123	100.0%
Year	second	2.3017	.87523	59	48.0%
	Third	2.1905	.91166	42	34.1%
	Fourth	2.0727	.43881	22	17.9%
	Total	2.2228	.82708	123	100.0%

(Source: Survey 2024)

Table 9 presents overall satisfaction with internal exams for students grouped based on gender, faculty, and year. From here, it can be seen that while the average satisfaction for males (2.3020) marginally surpasses that for females (2.1667), that for females fluctuates with a higher standard deviation, suggesting more variability within these group results compared to males. It might be hypothesized that males have a slightly more positive perception or experience regarding the subject area at stake compared to females' responses. Based on faculty, it can be determined that students from the Management faculty have an average satisfaction level that slightly surpasses Education faculty (2.2982 vs. 2.1462), with Humanities faculty averaging 2.1714. Again, on more precise observation, it would be noted that Education faculty has a significantly higher standard deviation, suggesting more variability within these faculty responses. It might be suggested that there exist divergent views and experiences within Education faculty. Second-year students have an average satisfaction that slightly surpasses third and fourth-year student average satisfaction levels (2.3017 vs. 2.1905 and 2.0727). Third-year students have shown the highest standard deviation on more precise observation. It might be suggested, therefore, that second-year student responses are slightly more favorable compared to third and fourth-year students, with fourth-year responses demonstrating least variability.

The fact that the overall average value for all groups was 2.2228 shows that there is moderate satisfaction or experience on the part of the students. The divergent values of averages and standard deviations for various categories, such as sex, faculty, and year, indicate varying perceptions and experiences.

Discussion

From the outcomes of this research, it is revealed that overall, the students at Baneshwor Multiple Campus have a positive attitude and moderate satisfaction with internal exams, with some fluctuations based on gender, faculty, and year. As suggested by various research papers, student satisfaction with internal exams being based on board standards and easier criteria plays an important role in developing a positive attitude among students (Kibble, 2017; Jonsson, 2014). Moreover, proper management and timing of internal exams have been pointed out as an area of importance, as suggested by Linn and Miller (2008). A similar observation among third- and second-year students belonging to the Faculty of Management aligns with research conducted by Atuhurra and Kaffenberger (2022), who suggested a similar pattern related to academic engagement and CAs.

Compared with previous research, this study's findings were consistent with Ismail et al. (2022), who indicated that formative assessment, like internal exams, increases learning motivation and performance due to regular feedback. Conversely, unlike Shamkuwar and Mokhasi (2019), who reported gender based perceptions indicating discrepancies among genders with better perceptions among females, it was revealed that more males have slightly higher positive perceptions, even though there was a marginal difference. The statistically significant difference among academic years indicating dynamic perceptions with academic experiences aligns with Subedi (2019).

Despite the largely positive perspective, there still exist some considerations for improvement based on moderate satisfaction and somewhat low experiences among fourth-year students with regards to examination scheduling and timeliness of feedback (Bayerlein, 2014; Getachew et al., 2022). It becomes clear that there should be tailored examination systems within learning institutions such as Baneshwor Multiple Campus based on needs and with a focus on optimizing the learning environment, as suggested by Black and Wiliam in 1998 on the role of formative assessments within learning.

Conclusion

Analysis of knowledge, perceptions, and experiences among students on internal exams with regards to sex, faculty, and academic year shows a comprehensive understanding of student attitudes. Students' knowledge is relatively uniform with some minute changes

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in favor of male and Management students, and slightly more knowledgeable among second-year and fourth-year students. Students have a relatively good perception about internal exams, with males and second-year students having more favorable perceptions. Perceptions are relatively consistent among various faculties, but there are significant differences among academic years.

Experience with internal exams is more variable among faculties but varies greatly by year, with second and third-year experiences being more positive compared with fourth-year experiences. Satisfaction with internal exams is moderate, with slightly higher levels among males, Management students, and second-year students. The implications are that internal exams are viewed relatively positively but that specific changes are required so that internal exams remain as successful as they can be.

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