

Ustaad Connect

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Design Thinking Project

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Design Thinking Project Overview

We embarked on a Design Thinking project with a focus on university students. We chose this domain because it provided a familiar and accessible demographic, making it feasible to implement the entire design thinking process effectively.

To further refine our focus, we narrowed the scope to the skill sets of university students. This allowed us to explore the challenges, opportunities, and solutions related to the development, assessment, and enhancement of student skills within the university environment.



Empathy map

As part of the research phase, each team member conducted at least two individual interviews to gain a deeper understanding of our users. The primary goal of these interviews was to explore the **needs**, **behaviors**, and **motivations** of university students, alongside gathering insights into their **demographics** and **psychographics**. This step allowed us to empathize with our target audience and collect qualitative data essential for identifying key pain points and opportunities for skill development among university students.

Questionnaire

1. Demographics and Background

Can you tell me about your current program of study and year of enrollment?

Do you have any part-time jobs, internships, or side projects?

What are your career goals after graduation?

How do you usually spend your free time?

2. Psychographics (Values, Beliefs, and Interests)

What are your personal and professional aspirations?

How important is skill development to you, and why?

Do you prefer learning independently, in groups, or through mentorship?

Are there any specific industries or fields you're particularly passionate about?

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3. Empathy Map: Key Categories

Say (What they express openly):

What are some of the challenges you face when trying to develop new skills?

How do you currently approach improving your skills?

Do you discuss skills development with your peers or mentors? If yes, what do you usually talk about?

Think (What they reflect internally):

What are your thoughts about the skills gap between university education and industry requirements?

Do you feel your current university environment is helping you prepare for your career?

What do you think is missing from the current skill development resources available to you?

Feel (What emotions they experience):

How do you feel about your current skill set in relation to your career goals?

Are you ever stressed or anxious about being underprepared for the industry?

What motivates you the most when learning new skills?

Do (Their actions and behaviors):

How do you usually learn new skills (e.g., online courses, workshops, mentorships)?

How often do you engage in skill development activities?

Do you participate in university-organized events or external opportunities to enhance your skills?

4. Motivation and Challenges

What motivates you to work on improving your skills? What barriers or challenges prevent you from acquiring new skills? Are there any resources or platforms you've found particularly helpful? 5.

Observational Questions (if applicable): Can you walk me through how you recently learned a new skill? How do you organize or prioritize your time for skill development?

Interview Outcomes :

1. Demographics and Background

I interviewed five individuals: two from NED University and three from GU tech. At NED, one student is in the 2nd semester of Electrical Engineering, and the other is in the 2nd semester of Telecommunication. The three students from GUtech are in their 1st semester of the Computer Science program.

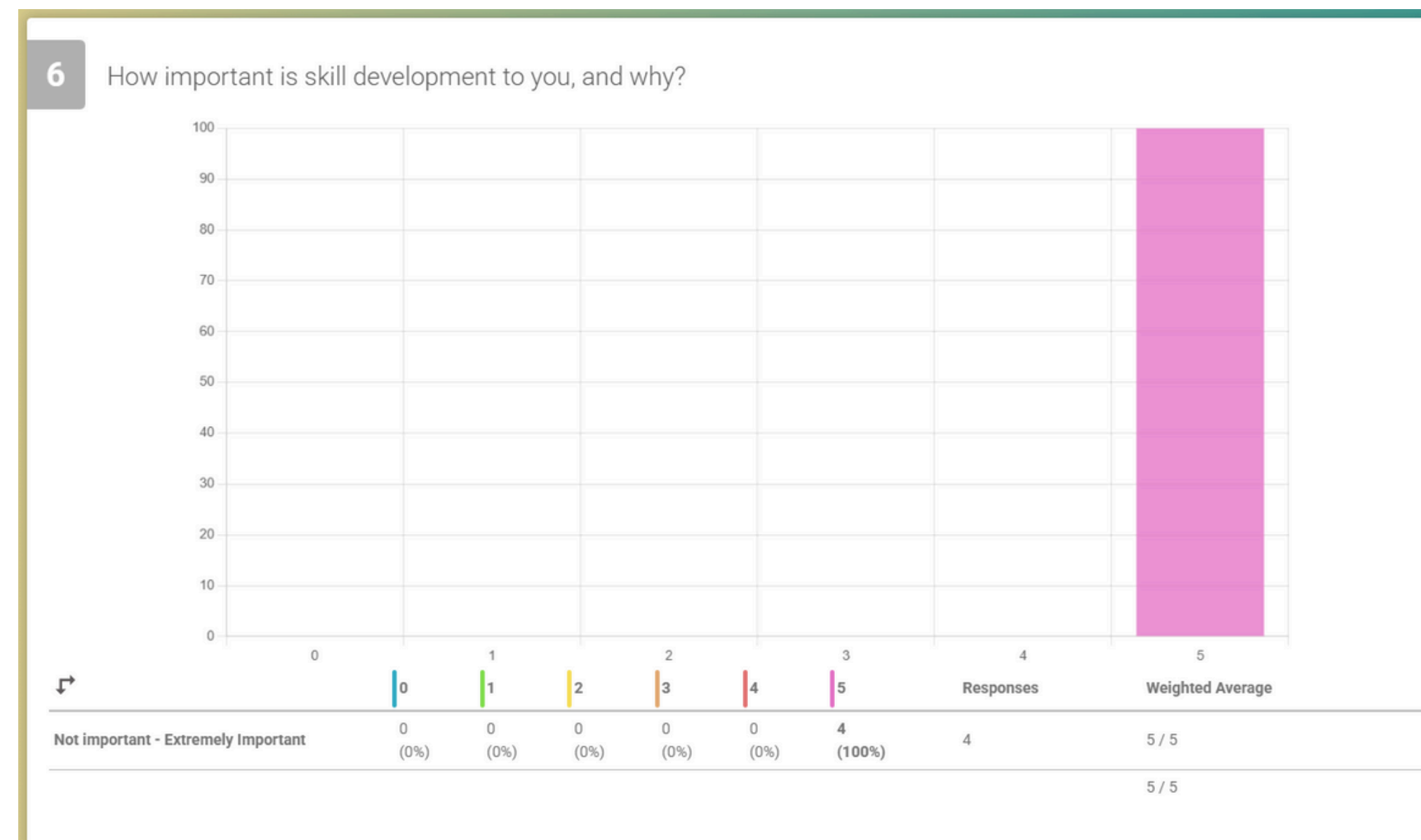
Interview Outcomes :

Empathy Map for University Students

The empathy map summarizes the insights gathered from the survey responses, grouped into Say, Think, Feel, and Do categories:

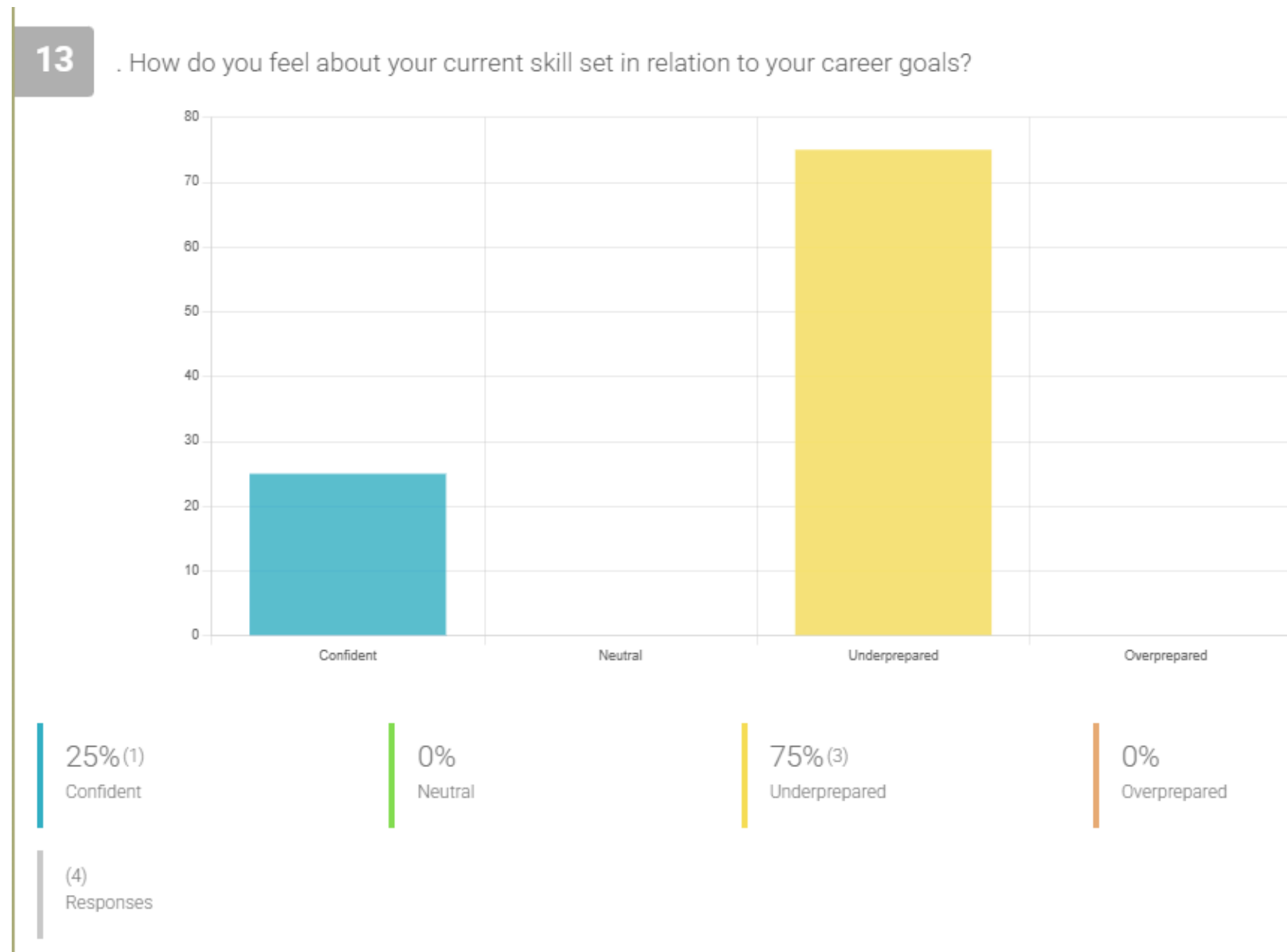
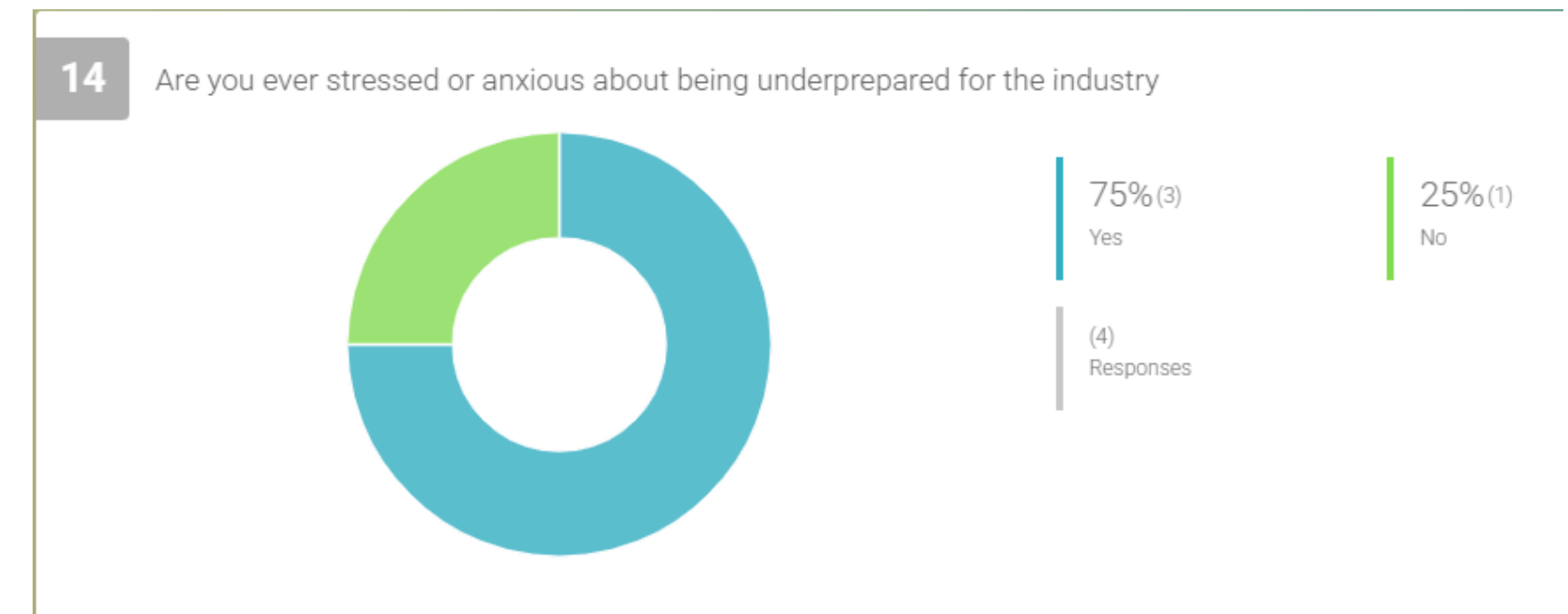
1. SAY (What users express openly):

- Skill development is critical for bridging the gap between theory and practical application.
- Students emphasize the importance of staying updated due to the rapid evolution of the tech industry.
- Challenges include a lack of **motivation**, **procrastination**, and **limited guidance or roadmaps**.
- Peer discussions focus on **shared resources**, **industry trends**, and tackling learning challenges.



2. THINK (What users reflect internally):

- Many feel there's a gap between university education and industry requirements, especially in terms of practical skills.
- Students are aware that employability often requires additional efforts outside the academic curriculum.
- They believe skill development is essential for competitiveness and staying relevant.



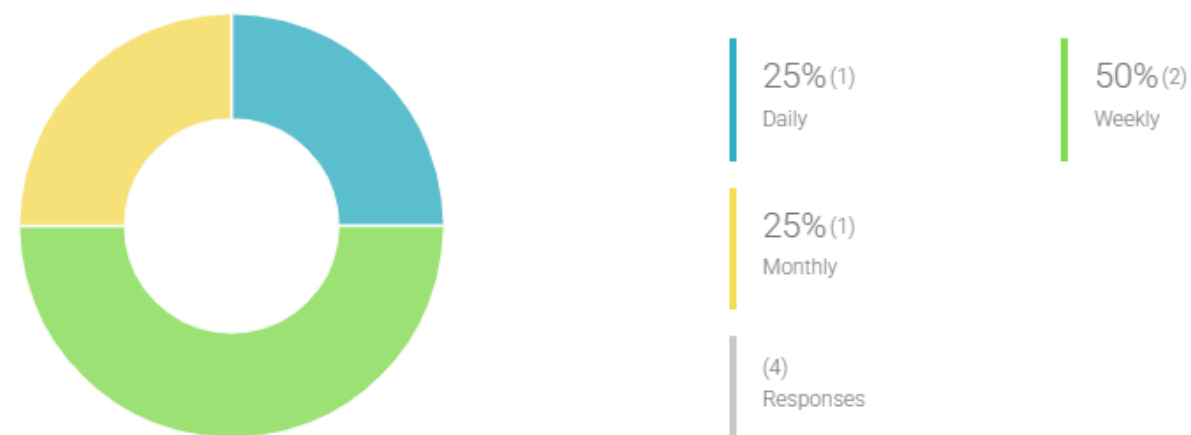
3. FEEL (What emotions users experience):

- **Motivation** challenges: A common struggle with maintaining focus and direction.
- **Stress/Anxiety:** Transitioning to new fields or being unsure about **which skills to prioritize** causes pressure.
- **Excitement/Passion:** There's a clear enthusiasm for learning new skills and applying them in innovative ways.

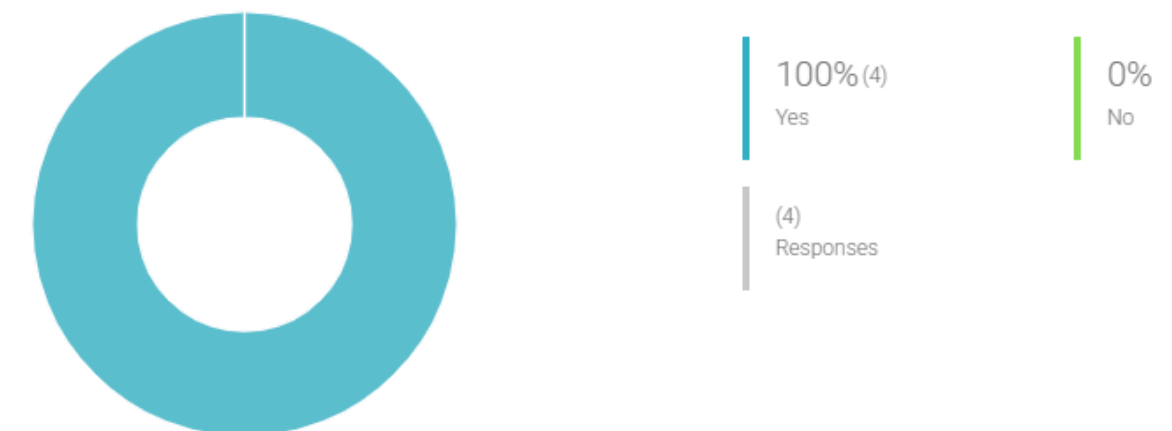
4. DO (What users do in terms of actions):

- Most students rely on online courses (75%) for skill development, followed by university classes (25%).
- Students actively discuss skill-building with peers and mentors to share resources and roadmaps.
- They engage in extracurricular activities like freelancing, personal projects, or exploring trends to stay competitive.

16 How often do you engage in skill development activities



17 Do you participate in university-organized events or external opportunities for skill development?



Key Insights (Summary):

- **Needs:** Students require practical resources, roadmaps, and structured guidance to prioritize and develop relevant skills.
- **Behaviors:** They proactively use online resources and peer networks for skill-building but struggle with consistency and motivation.
- **Motivations:** A desire to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and industry demands drives their efforts.
- **Challenges:** Students face time constraints, lack of clear direction, and insufficient institutional emphasis on practical skills.

Define Problem :

Pain points

Extracted from interviews to understand problem

- Students often feel low on motivation
- procrastinate a lot
- They don't have enough proper guidance
- They don't get enough exposure to the skills related to their fields or clear roadmaps
- Students want to stay updated, but it's tough because there's a big gap between what universities teach and what the industry needs
- students get confused about which skills they should focus on first.
- students don't get a lot of time to explore skills

Problem statement:

This problem statement is part of a design thinking project. The domain is university students, with a specific focus on skill development for university students.

The problem is the insufficiency in skill development, particularly for university students. During university years, students tend to stay within the "university bubble" due to their academic responsibilities. They have limited free time, which is often hard for them to spend on skill development because of procrastination, technology addiction, lack of motivation, and focus. *Additionally, much of the content taught in universities is not required in a large part of the industry, although it helps shape students' personalities [observation].*

Most students realize some aspects of this problem during their university years. However, due to a lack of resources, guidance, and time availability, they are usually unable to stay on track.

It is crucial to address this issue because of the growing need for skill development among students. Moreover, since most students are aware of this gap, it becomes even more important to take steps to resolve it.

Problem statement:

Problem Statement

Skill development during university years is a significant challenge for students, particularly in South Asia. While students recognize the importance of staying updated with industry demands, they often find themselves confined to the "university bubble." Academic responsibilities leave them with limited free time, which they struggle to utilize effectively due to procrastination, lack of motivation, and distractions like technology addiction.

Moreover, the content taught in universities often focuses heavily on theoretical knowledge, which, although essential for shaping students' personalities, does not align with the practical skills demanded by the industry. This disconnect between academia and industry leaves students uncertain about which skills to prioritize and how to approach their development effectively.

Even when students realize this gap during their university years, they are often held back by insufficient resources, limited guidance, and inadequate time management. Addressing this issue is crucial, as students are eager to bridge this gap but lack the necessary structure and support to stay on track.

By providing actionable roadmaps, mentorship, and accessible resources tailored to industry-relevant skill development, we can empower university students to overcome these challenges, make the most of their academic journey, and prepare for successful careers.