EXPLORING SKILL PREPAREDNESS AMONG MBA HOSPITAL AND HEALTH MANAGEMENT GRADUATES ENTERING HEALTHCARE IT ROLES

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OVERVIEW

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Background

- India’s healthcare sector is rapidly digitizing with tools like EHRs, HIS, and analytics platforms.
- Healthcare IT roles demand professionals with both clinical knowledge and digital skills.
- MBA Hospital & Health Management (MBA-HHM) programs primarily focus on administration and policy, not IT readiness.
- Graduates, especially from clinical backgrounds (MBBS, BPT, BDS), struggle with digital workflows post-placement.
- Employers observe skill gaps in data tools, IT systems, and communication – impacting onboarding and efficiency.

Literature Review (Global Context)

Author(s)	Year	Focus	Key Findings	Relevance
Frenk et al.	2010	Global reform in health education	Advocated Competency-Based Education (CBE) over theory-heavy learning	Foundation for theoretical model
WHO	2019	Digital Health Competency Framework	Identified core digital skills: HIS, EHR, data interpretation, cyber-awareness	Provides international benchmark for digital health training
Lomis et al.	2017	Graduate tech preparedness (US context)	Graduates in developed countries still feel underprepared for EHR/CDSS systems	Shows global skill gap despite resources
McGowan et al.	2021	Health informatics education evaluation	Need for curriculum alignment even in the US and Australia	Reinforces global relevance of problem
Padmini et al.	2010	Project-based learning in tech (India + global)	Push for real-world IT projects and hands-on evaluation	Guides curriculum suggestions in tech-heavy fields

Literature Review (Indian Context)

Author(s)	Year	Focus	Key Findings	Relevance
Kumar & Krishnamurthy	2018	Health informatics education in India	MBA programs lag behind NDHM expectations; lack of HIS/EHR exposure	Reveals gap between healthcare education and IT expectations
Misra & Bhardwaj	2021	Digital preparedness among MBA health grads	<20% had hands-on training in digital tools	Validates graduate-side findings
Awadhiya	2022	Data and BI tool usage in healthcare MBA	Only 15% used Power BI, Tableau, or other analytics tools	Matches quantitative responses from graduate survey
Mercer Mettl	2023	Graduate employability in India	Employers cite lack of digital skills as top issue	
Healthworld (ET)	2023	Skill gap and onboarding delays	72% of hiring managers spend 3–6 months upskilling new recruits	Mirrors employer interviews in study

Literature Review (Indian Context)

Author(s)	Year	Focus	Key Findings	Relevance
Bansal & Dhanesh	2020	Curriculum updates and industry relevance	67% of curricula outdated; no digital system exposure	Urges academic reform
Muneer (ET)	2025	Collaboration between academia and industry	Calls for partnerships for curriculum co-creation	Aligns with employers' willingness to collaborate
Times of India (Various)	2024–25	General employability and education standards	94% of medical professionals want upskilling in tech	Reflects system-wide awareness of education gap

Rationale

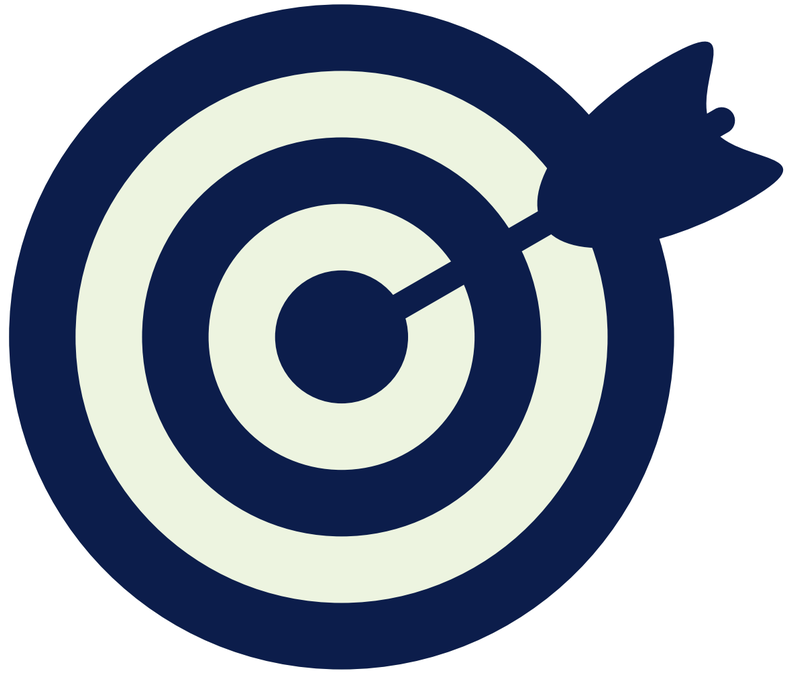
- Placement stats don’t reveal how prepared graduates truly feel for digital healthcare roles.
- Employers face onboarding delays and retraining costs due to technical skill gaps.
- There is limited qualitative research capturing real-world experiences in India’s healthcare IT hiring.
- Rise of skills-based hiring platforms highlights the need to understand perceptions, not just qualifications.
- This study provides a dual perspective—graduates and employers—to uncover practical gaps and solutions.

Research Questions

1. **What is the self-assessed level of technical and digital readiness among recent MBA Hospital and Health Management graduates?**
2. **What are the common skill gaps observed by employers when hiring these graduates for Healthcare IT roles?**
3. **How do these perceptions vary based on background (e.g., clinical degree, project experience)?**

Objectives

- To explore how MBA Hospital and Health Management graduates from clinical/life sciences backgrounds perceive their preparedness for Healthcare IT roles.
- To understand the skill-related expectations and hiring challenges faced by employers in Healthcare IT roles.
- To identify the recurring gaps between academic curriculum and industry requirements.



Methodology

Study Design	Cross-sectional study
Tools Used	Two structured Google Forms (separate for graduates and employers)
Sample Size	100 Graduates (from 5 colleges), 20 Employers
Sampling Technique	Convenient sampling

Methodology

Participant Groups	• Graduates from IIHMR Jaipur, Chitkara University, MGMC, NMIMS, Symbiosis • Employers from hospitals, consultancies, health bodies and startups
Analysis Approach	• Thematic Analysis (Braun & Clarke) for qualitative data • Descriptive stats and charts
Ethical Considerations	• Informed consent, anonymity, no personal data collected

Participant Profile

Graduate Respondents (n = 100)

Educational Background

- 35.1% BDS
- 16.1% B.Pharm
- 6.3% MBBS
- 32.7% BPT/BAMS/BHMS
- 9.8% B.Sc

Institutions Represented

- IIHMR University, Jaipur
- Chitkara University, Rajpura
- Mahatma Gandhi College, Mumbai
- NMIMS, Mumbai
- SIHS, Pune

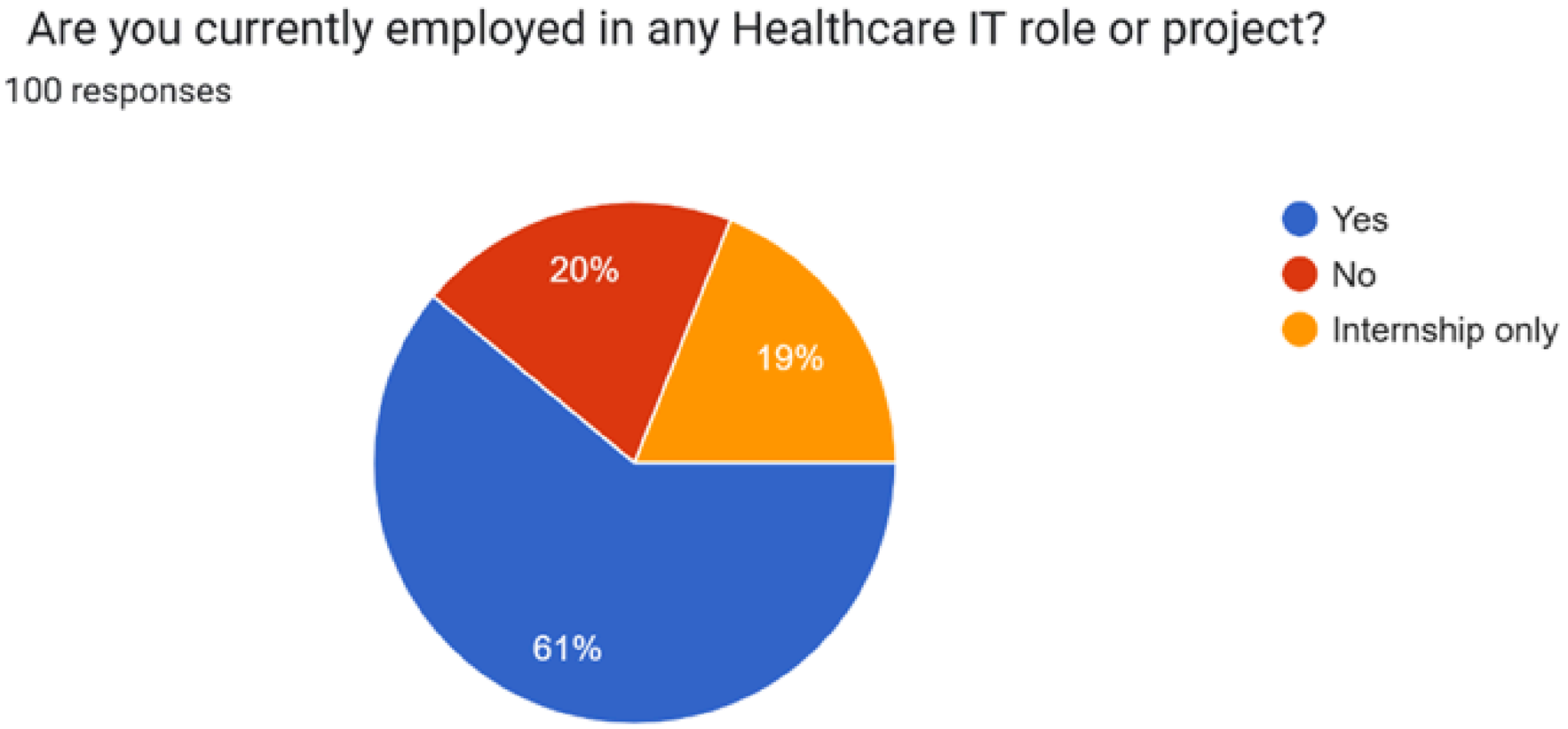
Participant Profile

Year of Graduation

- 49% will graduate in 2025
- 44% graduated in 2024
- 7% in or before 2023

Current status

- 61% employed in Healthcare IT roles
- 20% exploring other opportunities
- 19% are doing an internship



Participant Profile

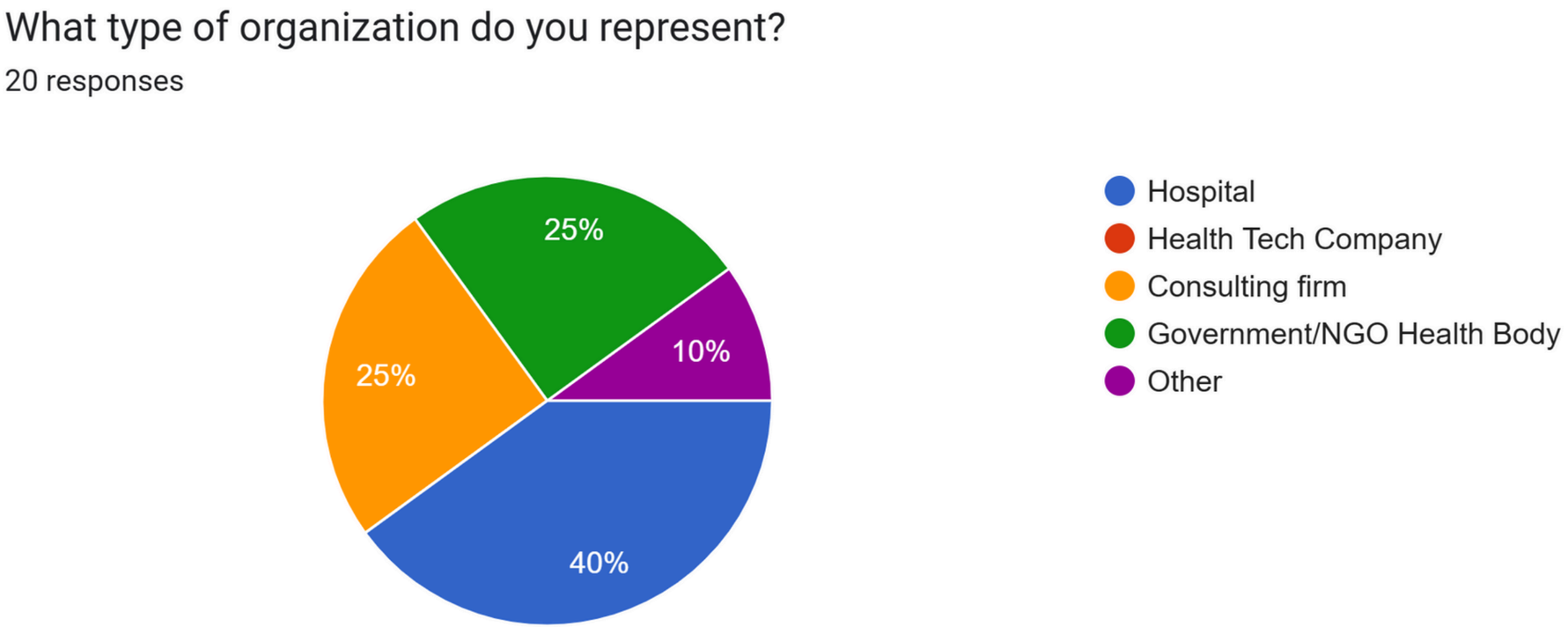
Employer Profiles (n = 20)

Type of organization

- 40% Hospitals (public or private)
- 25% Consulting firms
- 25% NGOs or public health bodies
- 10% others that employed healthcare professionals

Roles of respondents

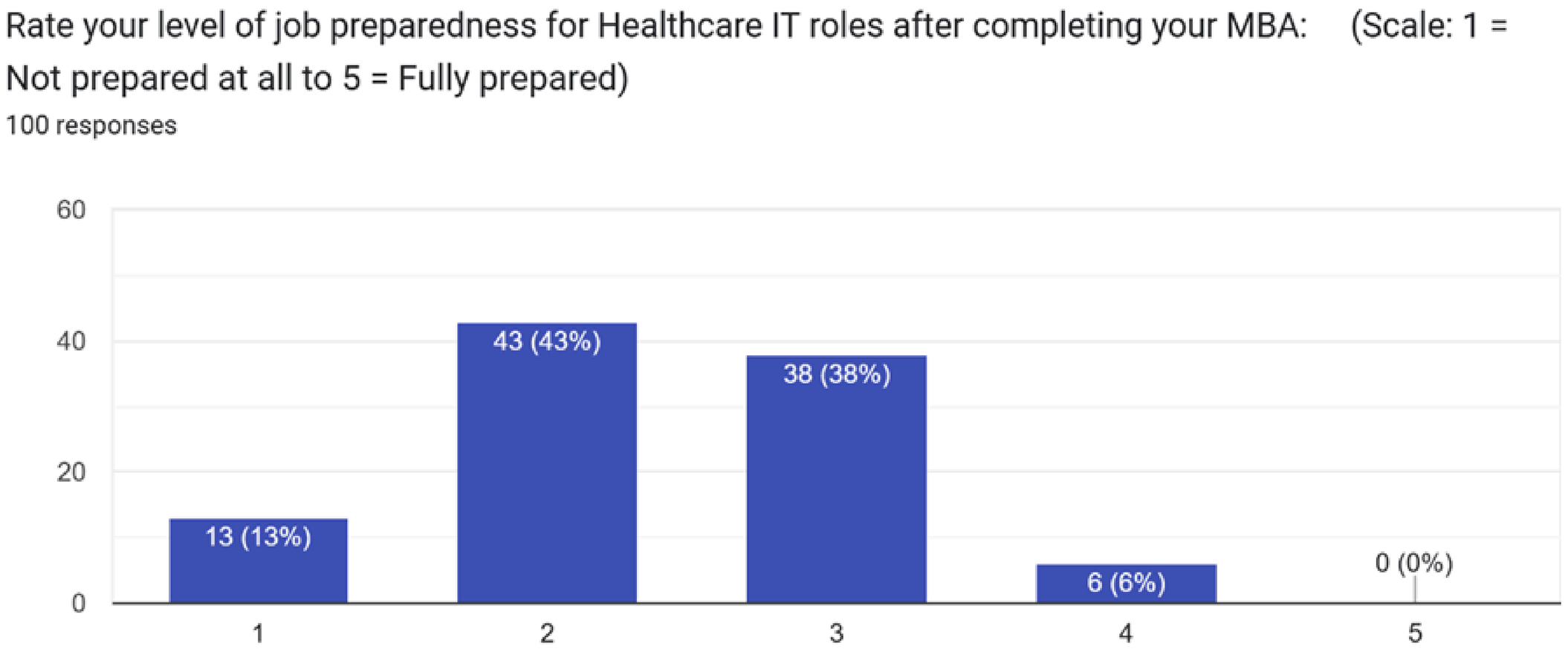
- 40% in HR or recruitment
- 50% in departmental/project leadership
- 20% were techleads



Findings from graduate responses

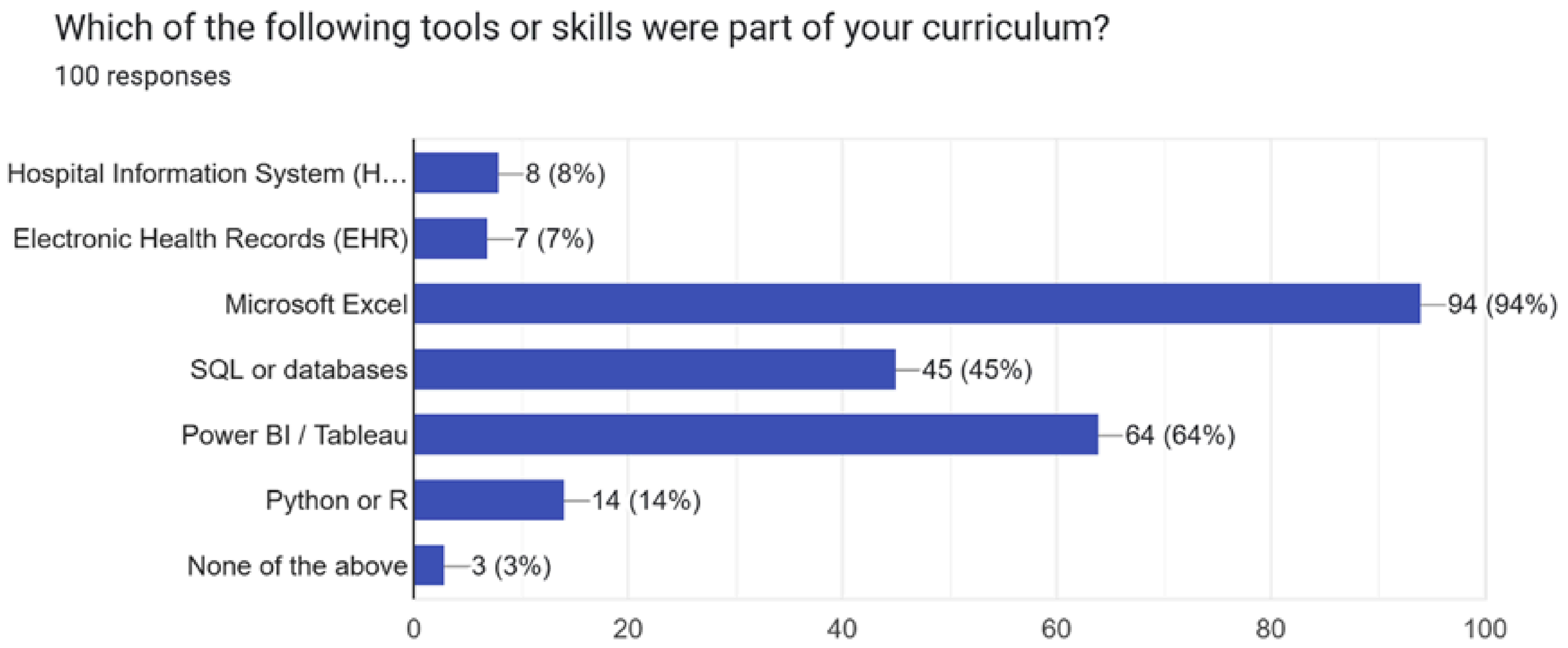
Area	Key Observations
Self-Perceived Readiness	69%+ rated themselves as moderately or poorly prepared for Healthcare IT roles
Tool Exposure	- Only theoretical exposure to HIS/EHR, Excel, SQL in curriculum
	- Practical skills acquired independently via YouTube or internships
Certifications	94% pursued external courses (Google Health, Coursera, Power BI, etc.)
Soft Skills	22% felt communication, reporting, and adaptability were not adequately taught
Curriculum Suggestions	Strong demand for dedicated Health IT modules, hands-on training, capstone projects

Findings from graduate responses



Self Assessment of graduates about level of preparedness for entering into healthcare IT roles

Findings from graduate responses

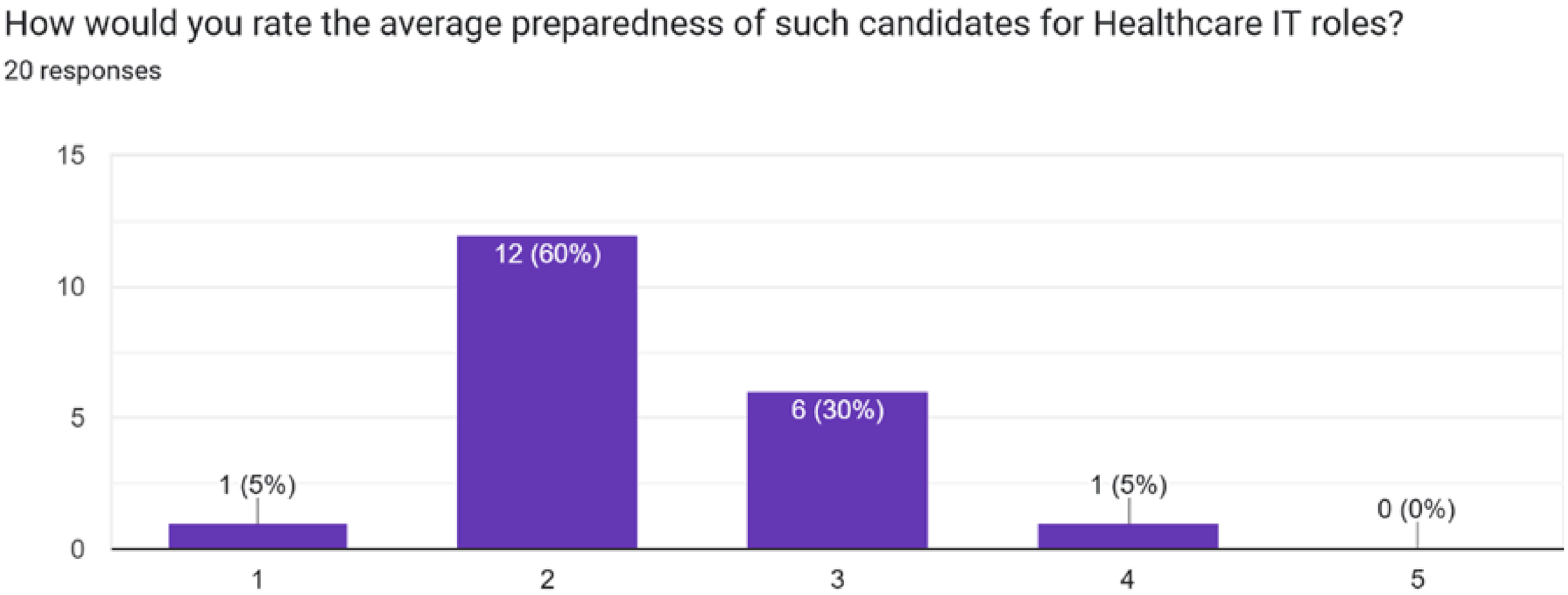


Tools part of the curriculum

Findings from employer responses

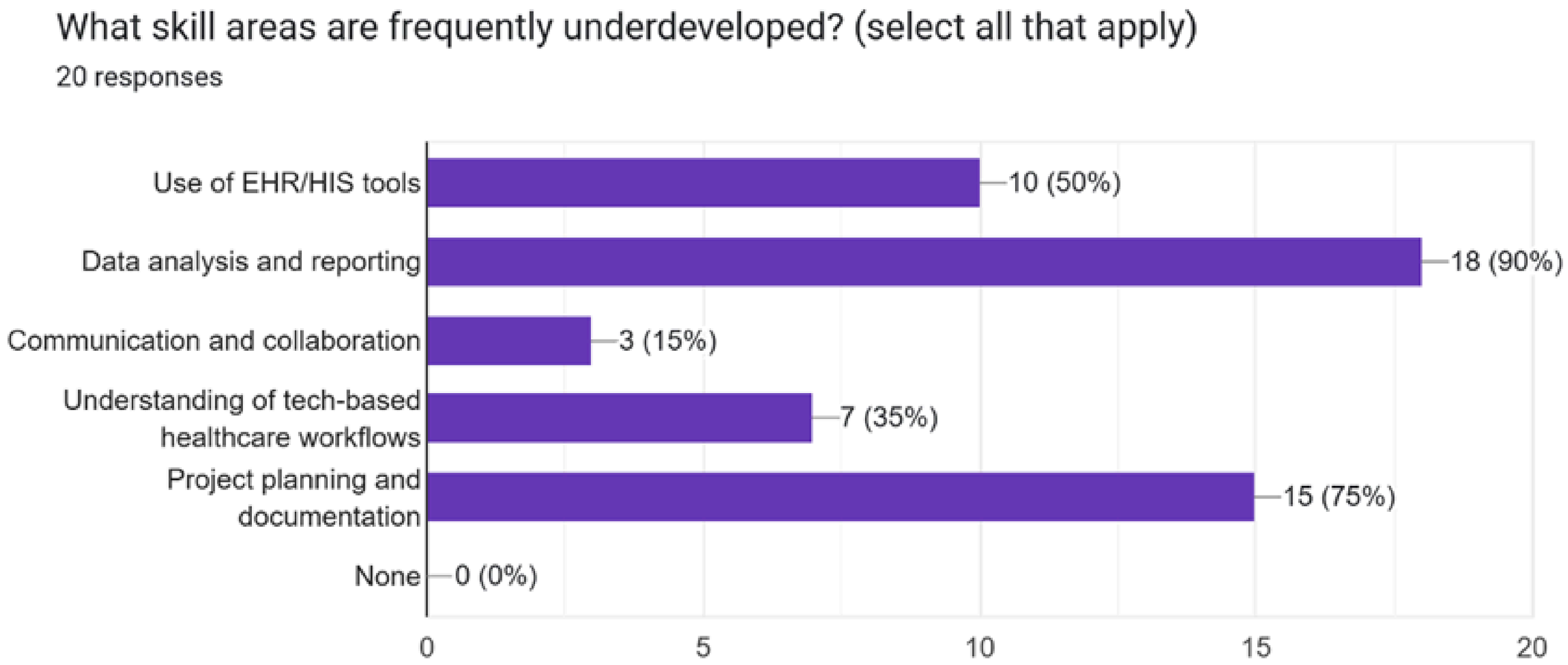
Area	Key Observations
Hiring Practices	75% regularly hire MBA healthcare grads for digital roles
Skill Readiness Rating	Average score: 2.4/5 – “moderate or below”
Technical Training Needs	85% provide mandatory in-house training post-hiring
Observed Gaps	- Poor confidence in data handling tools (Excel, dashboards, SQL)
	- Lack of structured documentation and project communication

Findings from employer responses



Employer rating of candidate preparedness

Findings from employer responses

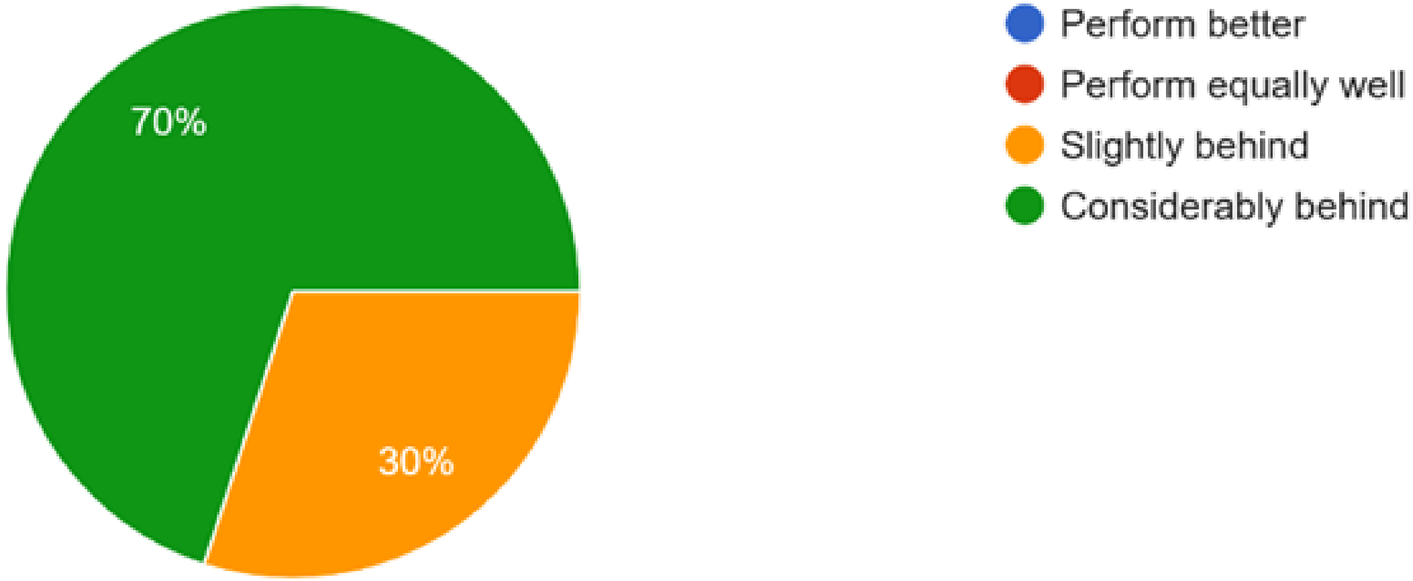


Frequently underdeveloped skills in graduates

Findings from employer responses

How do MBA healthcare graduates perform in IT roles compared to technical graduates (e.g., B.Tech)

20 responses



Comparison of healthcare graduates to other graduates for IT roless

Four major themes (via Braun & Clarke Thematic Analysis)

1. Curriculum–industry mismatch
“we had theory, no labs. Learned his on the job.” – graduate

2. Lack of technical confidence
“didn’t know how to build a basic dashboard.” – graduate

3. Soft skills and interdisciplinary challenges
“struggled to explain tasks in tech teams.” – graduate

4. Employer willingness to collaborate
“we’d love to mentor students or co-design modules.” – employer

Interpretation of themes

1. Curriculum–Industry Mismatch

- Academic programs remain outdated despite rapid digital health reforms (e.g., NDHM).
- Students learned about HIS/EHR only in theory — no practical exposure.
- Result: Organizations must spend time and money on training instead of innovation.

2. Lack of Technical Confidence

- Graduates lack hands-on skills in Excel, SQL, dashboards, and analytics.
- Lab-based training is either missing or superficial.
- Employers view these as baseline job requirements today.

3. Soft Skills & Interdisciplinary Readiness

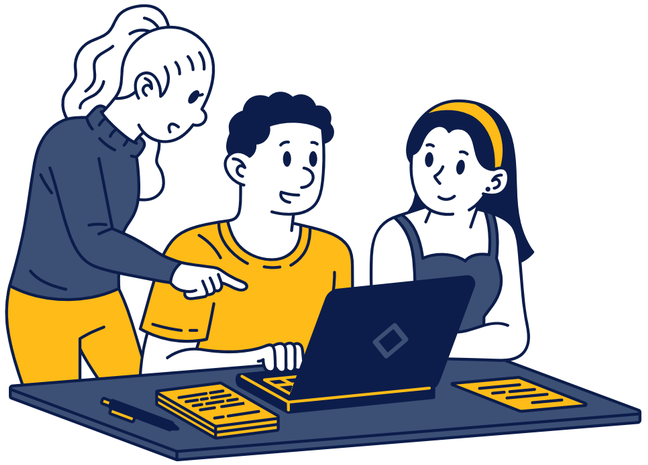
- Collaboration, reporting, and documentation skills are underdeveloped.
- Graduates feel unprepared for cross-functional roles.
- Matches industry findings: communication is a top gap (Bansal & Dhanesh, 2020).

4. Employer–Academia Collaboration: Underutilized

- Employers are willing to engage via mentoring, lectures, live projects.
- However, students report no structured exposure to industry professionals.
- Bridging this divide could improve job fit, onboarding, and motivation.

Discussion and comparison with existing literature

Competency-Based Education (CBE)



- This study's theoretical grounding in Competency-Based Education (CBE) is supported by the literature. Frenk et al. (2010) argue that health professional education should move from traditional, knowledge-heavy formats to systems-based, experiential learning that mirrors industry demands.

- Employers in our study expressed similar preferences, valuing "job-ready" professionals who can demonstrate applied knowledge in IT workflows, communication, and adaptability. Misra and Bhardwaj (2021) similarly call for Indian curricula to realign with evolving job markets, particularly in health data roles.

Discussion and comparison with existing literature

Academic Preparedness and Digital Skills

- The findings of this study echo the work of Kumar & Krishnamurthy (2018), who concluded that Indian healthcare programs often exclude formal training in HIS and EHR systems. Similarly, graduates in our study indicated that while their curriculum discussed IT systems, there was little to no hands-on exposure.

- Awadhiya (2022) and Bansal & Dhanesh (2020) also emphasized the shortage of industry-oriented skill development in Indian education, particularly in soft skills and digital proficiency. These are consistent with our results: most employers observed low confidence among graduates in using Excel, SQL, and other tools critical for data-based decision-making in hospitals and health tech firms.

Recommendations

Integrate Practical IT Training in Curriculum by Including lab-based modules on HIS/EHR. Simulate dashboards, patient record management, and billing analytics.

Add Mandatory Digital Skill Courses like advanced Excel, SQL, Tableau/Power BI in the early semesters.

Mandatory certification in at least one digital tool for graduation.

Include Employer Feedback in Curriculum Design.

Shift Curriculum Toward Competency-Based Education.

Launch Digital Readiness Bootcamps Before Internships. 1–2 week joint training in digital tools and soft skills to be done.

Designing Capstone Projects on Digital Healthcare Topics like EHR, NDHM evaluation, telehealth workflow.

Formalizing placement-linked skilling Tracks by combining coursework, assessments, and internship in one stream

THANK YOU

For your attention