



Cooperative Education Report
Business Development in a Nepali Startup: Inside Nochini

Written by
Ms. Ashwini Thapa Magar
Student ID: 6008040090

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Title: Business Development in a Nepali Startup: Inside Nochini

Written by: Ms. Ashwini Thapa Magar

Department: Bachelor's in Business Administration (Finance and Banking)

Academic Advisor: Dr. Eng. Duminda Jayaranjan

We have approved this cooperative report as a partial fulfillment of the cooperative education program semester 1/2020

Oral Presentation Committees


.....
(Dr. Eng. Duminda Jayaranjan)

Academic Advisor



.....
(Mr. Sonam Shrestha)

Job Supervisor



.....
(Mr. Sabbir Hossain)

Cooperative Education Committee



.....
(Asst. Prof. Maruj Limpawattana, Ph.D.)

Assistant President

and Director of Cooperative Education

Project Title : Business Development in a Nepali Startup: Inside Nochini
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By : Ashwini Thapa Magar
Advisor : Dr. Duminda Jayaranjan
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Abstract

The cooperative report entitled ‘Business Development in a Nepali Startup: Inside Nochini’ aims to examine the working culture and the operational activities inside the company. The objective of the study includes: to understand the process of how a brand tries to sustain in the market after it has created a name for itself in the market, the process of a startup’s journey of creating a new product from scratch to final launch in collaboration with another company and put theoretical knowledge into practice. At Nochini Pvt. Ltd, the student was assigned to work as the Business Development Officer for a span of 4 months. The main responsibilities of the student were to conduct concrete research on potential new products to be produced in the market, study on the market and the ongoing trends, communicate with stakeholders such as suppliers and online and physical retail stores for orders and placement of products. The problems encountered during the internship were time constraint for the deadline of a project and imbalance of workload. The student was able to experience working in a dynamic environment, developing the professional ability to work in a fast-paced environment which is essential for future profession and career.

Keywords: *Startups/Business Development/ Sustainability/ New product launch*

COVID-19 Pandemic Situation

The Government of Nepal imposed a whole country lockdown on 19th March 2020. This was when the “corona cases” were slowly being reported. The completion of 6th semester has been done through online classes. By schedule, class of 2017-21 was supposed to report to Siam University during June for the 7th semester however due to the rising risk of pandemic, our semesters were reversed. Since we started our internship semester (8th), amidst the pandemic, it was really difficult to find positions in renowned companies as they were already conducting redundancies. After having worked for multinational companies like JCB and Perfetti Van Melle during the first 2 internship periods, finding the perfect internship opportunity took a toll on me. I was doubtful about whether I should intern at a small company after all my past work experiences. I applied to Nochini Pvt. Ltd., a Nepali startup company for the position of Business Development Officer. Due to lack of opportunities during the economic meltdown, almost 35 people applied for the same position. On receiving the confirmation letter for my recruitment, I was extremely happy and was in for a good start.

Due to the pandemic, we were given directions to work from home. This was my first experience with this modality of work and I was quite nervous. In Nochini, we had two compulsory meeting timings in a day; 1) Stand-up Meeting scheduled at 11.30 a.m. to sum up what we worked on the previous day, to list down our work priorities for the day and to ask if any department’s work overlapped with another or for collaboration and 2) Check-in Meeting scheduled for 3.30 pm to tick off the work done throughout the day and to plan for the things to do the next day. All the meetings were conducted through video call using Google Meet. We also used applications like Slack and Whatsapp for formal communication.

Acknowledgment

The 4 months internship experience at a startup has given me firsthand insights on the process of how a product gets its life and forms into real life from one idea. This report is prepared to reflect my internship experience during the internship period. I would like to put forth my gratitude to everyone for their support, guidance and endless feedback.

I would like to thank Kathmandu College of Management and Siam University for including an internship as a core part of the BBA degree. I would also like to thank the management for their precious support during the internship program. Likewise, it has been an honor to prepare this report under the guidance of my academic advisor and supervisor, Dr. Eng. Duminda Jayaranjan and Mr. Sitaram Dhakal. I sincerely appreciate their active supervision and feedback throughout the completion of this report.

I would like to extend my gratitude to my supervisors at Nochini Pvt. Ltd, Mr. Sonam Shrestha and Ms. Tsewang Sadutshang , for guiding me during the internship period. I am also deeply thankful to the entire team at Nochini Pvt. Ltd. for guiding me throughout my internship period, supporting and giving a golden opportunity. I strongly believe that this experience will be fruitful for my future career and endeavors. I am also grateful to my parents and my friends for their consistent support and faith in me which motivated me further to complete this report.

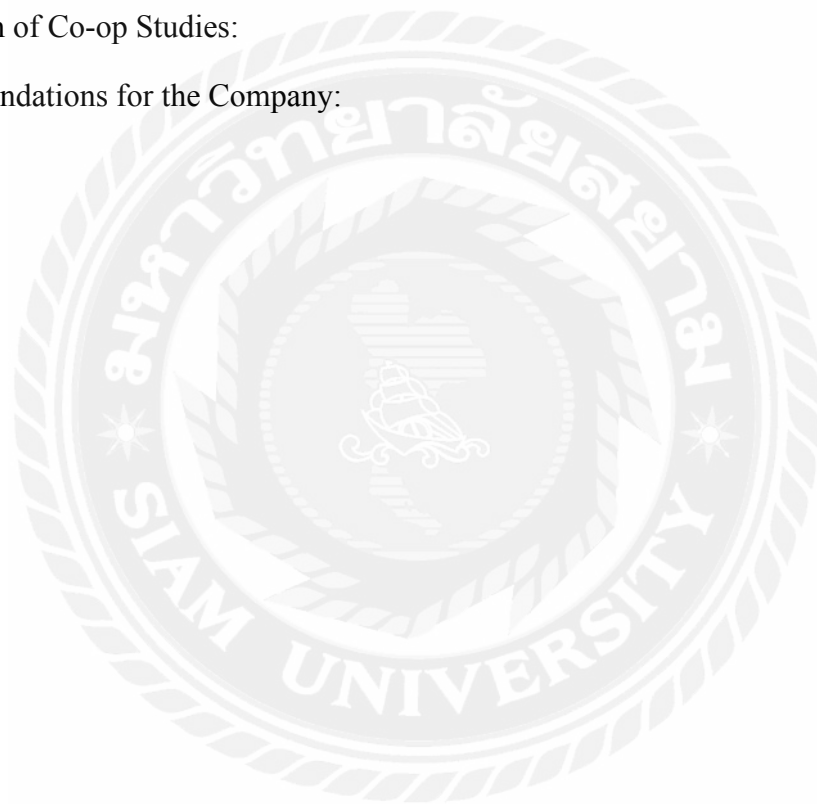
Ashwini Thapa Magar

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List of Acronyms

COVID: Corona Virus Disease

MNC: Multinational Company

ERP: Enterprise Resource Planning

R&D: Research and Development

E-commerce: Electronic Commerce



Chapter 1: Introduction

Nochini Private Limited is a Nepali Startup company that was started with a mission to create products and build communities that help people become healthier. It is Nepal's first cold pressed juice producing company using all-natural ingredients. Now, Nochini is the market leader in naturally pressed juice and has an expanding product portfolio including breakfast cereal and infused water. Nochini prides itself in being a responsible producer, championing sustainability and health. (Nochini Pvt. Ltd. , 2021)

During my employment at Nochini, I was fortunate to witness and be a part of the company's growth of branching out from the juice market to breakfast cereals segment. Since it is a startup, the learning prospect was massive, and it was a great platform to put my theoretical knowledge into practice. The internship was fruitful and allowed me to sharpen my saw for my future career.

1.1 Company Profile

Nochini Private Limited was established in July 2018. It came into life by the union of two health conscious youths of Nepal; Ms. Tsewang Sadutshang and Mr. Sonam Shrestha who had seen lack of healthy no preservative added juices and the possibilities of a health focused company here in Nepal.

Currently Nochini provides 8 juices and 4 smoothie variations. The juices contain all natural ingredients and have fruits ranging from pomegranate, watermelon, carrot, and beetroot to spinach. The juices names are 1) Hydrator, 2) Beet It, 3) Starburst, 4) Spa Cucumber, 5) Revitalize, 6) Beta Boost, 7) Crush and 8) Trim Green. It also offers 4 cleanse options with 6 different flavored bottles of juices which serve different purposes of its own kind. They are 1) Detox 2) Reset 3) Lean and 4) Radiance.

Recently, Nochini has collaborated with Pad2go, a for- profit organization that deals with ongoing issues such as sanitary and menstrual hygiene. The mutual sentiments of giving back to society has helped the two companies come together to create a Granola brand Wake&Bake for a

healthier today and tomorrow. The granola comes in 3 flavors 1) Simply Original 2) Cocoberry Kisses and 3) Choco Almond. Certain percent of profit earned through sales goes to cause fighting against anemia as a part of the CSR plan.

1.2 Vision of the company

The vision of the company is to create products that have health benefits to create and build healthier communities. Its aim is to encourage healthy consumption habits throughout the nation with the supply of less processed, all natural ingredient based products. Nochini entered the market as Nepal's first cold pressed juice brand. It envisions itself expanding its product portfolio and becoming a leading healthy consumable products brand in Nepal.

1.3 Mission of the company

The mission of the company is to be Nepal's best health brand. Since the day the company was started, its mission has always been to create products and communities that help people become healthier. The company aims to build and deliver products including food and beverages that are primarily good in taste and health centered. It aims to cater to people with a strong drive of living a health focused life.

1.4 Strategies of the Company

The company's corporate strategy is to achieve stability in terms of sales in its cold pressed juices and smoothie line. On the other hand, it aims to lead growth by diversifying its product portfolio into the breakfast cereal market with the launch of a granola brand. Nochini also has other products planned in the pipeline after the launch of granola.

Nochini follows the principles of agility. Agility theory supports quick understanding and moving accordingly. It promotes flexibility and balance. The concept of scrum is followed in Nochini. Scrum is a framework for project management that emphasizes teamwork, accountability and iterative progress toward a well-defined goal. The three pillars of scrum are transparency, inspection and adaptation. The company believes in a lean management system where continuous improvement is prioritized.

1.5 Organizational structure

2.1) Diagram of organizational structure

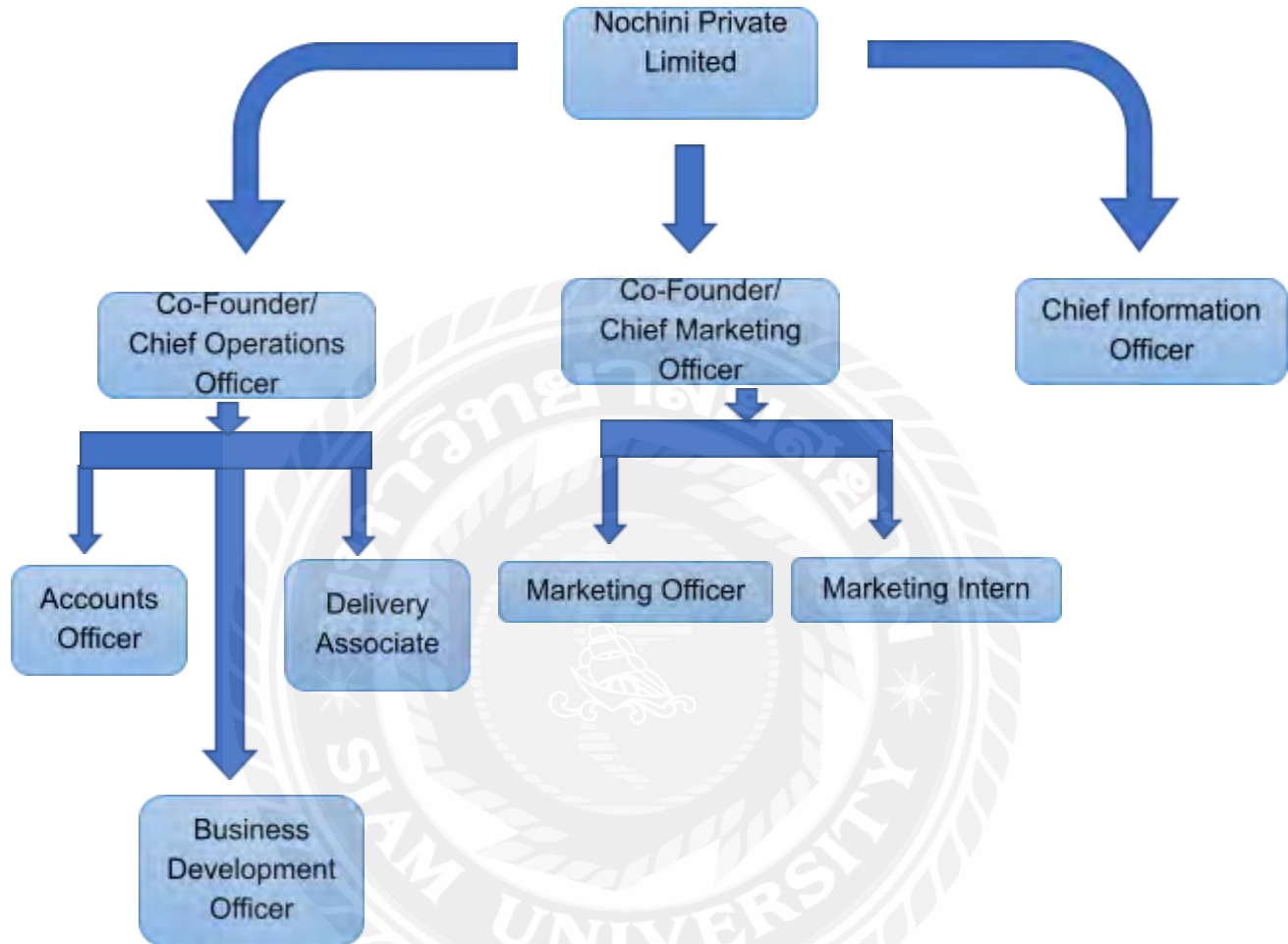


Figure 1: Organization Chart

As Nochini is a startup, the manpower is comparatively marginal than big corporate houses. However, the team members are multi-tasking and branched out to single handedly look into different departments. There are 7 team members in the company. The company was founded by Mr. Sonam Shrestha and Ms. Tsewang Sadutshang respectively. Mr. Shrestha leads the Finance and Operations Department whereas Ms. Sadutshang leads the Marketing Department. Mr. Dipesh Raj Pandey is the Chief Information Officer. He handles the technical aspects of the company. I, Ms. Ashwini Thapa Magar was appointed as the Business Development Officer who

looked after the research and development, operations, communication and marketing department. Ms. Riya Karkee is the Marketing Officer who handles social media marketing, conducts KPIs and creates marketing campaigns. Ms. Tathata Manandhar is a marketing intern who creates Marketing Insights and conducts research. Mr. Manish Shrestha is the accounting officer who looks after the company accounts and governmental registration. Mr. Nima Sherpa is the logistics officer who commutes all the deliveries and pickups.

1.6 My job position

I was appointed as the Business Development Officer at Nochini Private Limited after the recruitment process of online application and interview. My position demanded me to work in collaboration with all the departments. My primary tasks were to conduct and deliver research findings for new products with future prospects that would fit the criteria for Nochini's brand name. I also looked under the procurement and operations by constantly contacting suppliers for raw materials. I would sit in to work in finances to estimate and calculate costs and sales and also have my attention and input in the marketing department for social media content. I would ensure the product's visibility by talking to brands for product placement and handling logistics for a period of 2 weeks.

1.7 My position in the organizational structure

The term 'Business Development Officer' is a very vast term and a position in itself. I consider myself fortunate enough to have witnessed all the facets of a business. Not only witnessing, I was actively involved in majority daily operational activities. My primary task was research for the first month where I was to report to the co-founder, Mr. Shrestha. For the finance estimation and projection too, I worked under him. I was allotted tasks of the day by him as he was my supervisor and my mentor. With the marketing department, I was in close contact with Ms. Sadutshang who leads the department for social media content and visualization of new ideas. I also worked with Ms. Riya Karkee, Marketing Officer and a fellow KCM internee during my internship term.

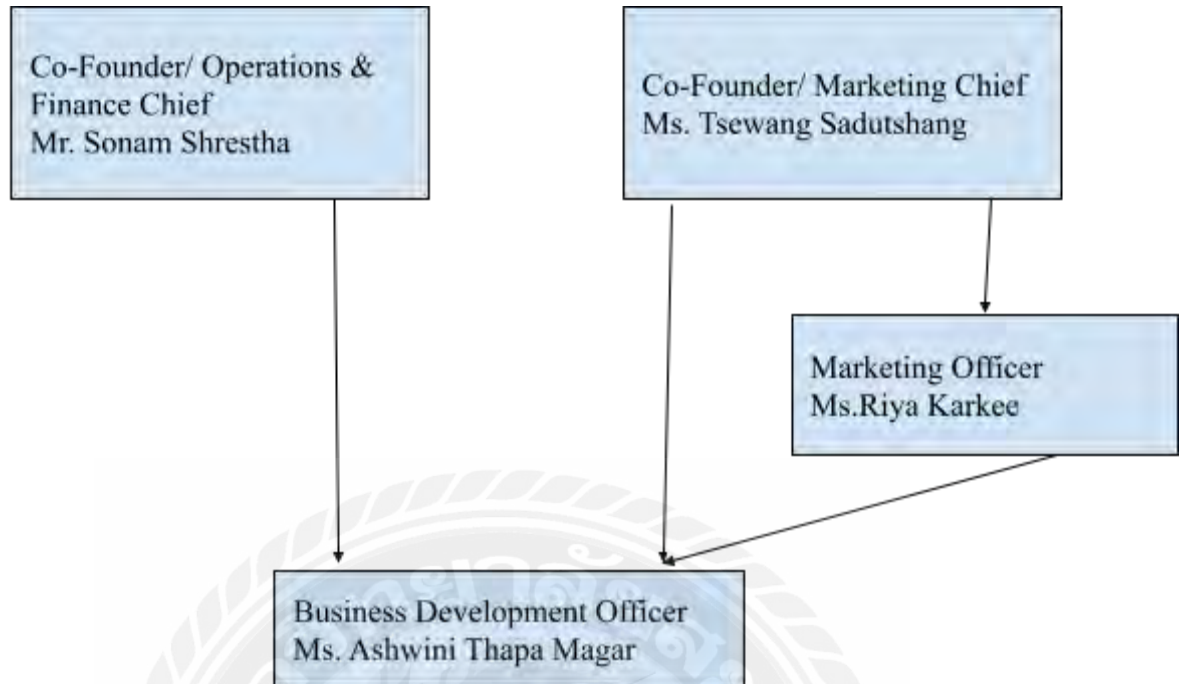


Figure 2: my position in the organization (Direct units I worked for)

1.8 Intentions to join this company

The company that I interned for during my first year's internship term of 2 months is JCB. JCB is a multinational company that deals with heavy machineries and equipment for construction. Under the finance and accounting department as an intern, I dealt with numbers and arrangement of files. Working hours were scheduled from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. My second internship was as a marketing and sales intern for Perfetti Van Melle, another Multi National Company (MNC). It was more of a field work where I had to make market visits consistently and create a presentation reporting current performance and suggesting changes. The work timings were always changing.

During the search for an internship amidst the pandemic, I was unsure as to how to land a position into another MNC. I had big plans to find an international internship for my final internship period. As the situation was unfavorable, I started looking for vacancies posted online and Nochini was one of the companies that was looking for a Business Development Officer. I wasn't really sure about joining a Startup firm in the beginning but I applied. The reason behind me applying was the position that the company offered with the job responsibilities and perks. I

fit into the needs of the job title. Also, after working for such diverse departments in my past internships, I didn't want to limit myself to just being a finance officer or a marketing associate. I wanted to experience myself in a more dynamic role.

Working as a Business Development Officer would mean that I would get a closer look into all the faces of the company. From initial research and development to production and operations to marketing and sales. This motivated me more than anything else. My other most important concern was to be safe during the widespread Corona virus. The modality for the work demanded us to work from home during such a situation which was an added advantage as it would mean less physical contact and reduced risk of getting exposed to the virus.

I don't believe in the idea that excessively forcing work from 9.00 a.m. to evening 5.00 p.m. with a routine timetable always gives off the best productivity. At Nochini, work quality always weighs more than work duration. The meeting schedules are strict but the matter of when to do what is totally up to the team members as long as they perfect the job they're assigned. This is one major reason why I chose the company as it respects the work quality and time of its team members.

1.9 Strategic Analysis of the Company

Having able to work in a startup company, I have closely analyzed and lived through some of the achievements and shortcomings within the company. Under strategic analysis, I have conducted SWOT analysis which is as follows:

Table 1: SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strong vision and core team - Great work culture - Strong Product Quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Untimely Clearance of Dues - Cost Control Mismanagement During R&D Phase

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Established Brand Recognition & Market Leader - New Product Collaboration with Another Reputed Brand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Payment Delay Could Affect Supplier Relations - Increase in Competitors

1) Strengths:

Strong vision and core team: One of the greatest strengths of Nochini is that the company is run by diverse young minds but with the same vision of creating healthy products to build healthier communities. Nochini is built with a strong foundation of two very likeminded people in terms of what they stand for as a company but at the same time very contrasting perspectives on how to take decisions and face challenges. Mr. Sonam Shrestha, one of the two co-founders is great at calculations, research and operations and Ms. Tsewang Sadutshang, another co-founder, is great as the marketing and design lead. This synergy has really led the company to a long way and has the potential to do more in the future.

Great work culture: Nochini also has a very good work culture. The work environment is very flexible and welcoming to new challenges. The work time schedule is not fixed but deadlines are set which gives employed their space and peace of mind to fulfill their tasks ethically leaving them feeling more responsible for the liberty they receive.

Strong Product Quality: Another strength is the fact that Nochini is a health focused brand and after the corona virus especially, people have become more health conscious and double check what they put into their body. Due to this, the demand for a brand like Nochini would increase as health and wellbeing is major concern of people during such times and Nochini doesn't compromise with quality of the product it delivers.

2) Weaknesses:

Untimely Clearance of Dues: One weakness that I closely witnessed was the problem of untimely payment to suppliers due to logistic issues. Nochini uses check as a form of payment to its suppliers. For example, Nima, the delivery associate, usually collects the stickers from Ganpati Printing Press, the print suppliers for Wake&Bake stickers along with the bill and then drops it to Sonam. The bill payment is only done when Nima dai has to collect stickers for the next round or has a route that way, as the payment is made through check only after the PAN bill has been received and to cut logistic costs, payment is delayed which could cause friction in the relationship and quality of service from suppliers.

Cost Control Mismanagement during R&D Phase: Another weakness would also be cost control in development of new products. A lot of expenses were created during the trial phase of Wake&Bake. Sending out trial products to all survey form respondents for example as very expensive. Also, due to lack of knowledge of suppliers with cheaper rates and also the fact that such big wholesale suppliers only sell bulk amounts, the whole research and development phase turned out to be very expensive. However after all the trials and making a final decision to launch the products, there were significant tie ups made with suppliers selling at a much cost friendlier rate which helped to save cost further and the issue has been solved.

3) Opportunities:

Established Brand Recognition & Market Leader: One of the major strengths for Nochini is the brand value that it carries and the products it has produced. Its first product, cold pressed juice was the first of its kind in the market. It's second launched product, Granola is also one of the first local granola brands. Customers of Nochini really trust the brand as a non-comprising health brand. Hence, this is an asset of the company. The coming generation of Nepal is health driven and ready to pay the price for the goodness of health concerned brands which is an opportunity.

New Product Collaboration with Another Reputed Brand: This current partnership with Pad2go has opened doors for future collaborations for Nochini. The collaboration with Pad2Go has helped expand Nochini's reach to new customers. New entry into another market segment of granola cereal brand has expanded Nochini's product portfolio. This could lead to extensive future networking with other health focused brands as well to create newer products.

4) **Threats:**

Unpunctuality Could Affect Supplier Relations: Although delay in payment is largely an internal logistic issue, this could harm the company's image in the long run. Off-timings and delay in payment for the services provided by suppliers could lead to suppliers cutting off services in the future as any business would wish to receive payment immediately after the service has been offered. Untimely payment to printing houses and other suppliers could lead to them cutting off ties or not providing timely services in case of urgency. This could also tarnish the reputation of the company.

Increase in Competitors: Another threat could be the rise of competition in the industry. As the health industry is flourishing, many brands are attracted to enter the market. For cold pressed juices, we have Kombucha which is a probiotic tea which is in great popularity now. However as of yet, there are no new cold pressed juice manufacturers. For granola, target customers are mostly switching between oats, muesli and granola. As per my research, the majority of the target segment even find it difficult to differentiate between granola and muesli. Hence, they could opt to buy muesli for cheaper. This could be a problem. There are also upcoming local granola brands with loose granola like Wake&Bake and also granola bars which could be a threat to the brand as they might cater to Wake&Bake's potential customers.

To sum up, Nochini stands strong with its roots being health and wellness and the foundation being two like-minded people who stand for the same but different

approaches to tackling situations. The work culture motivates the employees to work responsibly for the liberty that they receive. It has a chance of being a market leader in the local breakfast cereals market as well with the new Granola brand. However, internal inefficiencies of logistics could hinder the company performance and brand image in the long run.

1.10 Objectives of the study

The primary objective of an internship as a part of cooperative education is to apply theoretical business ideas into practice, learn how to be professional under the guidance of most proficient role models and potential coaches for constructive criticism and support. Likewise, through this internship period one must be able to expand her system of expert connections and contacts. As well as sharpen her saw. Writing this report allows me to see where I stand and how much I have grown during the internship period.

The internship program at Nochini Private Limited had several objectives. The internship opportunity experience circled around these major objectives:

1. To deliver potential new product idea after conducting extensive research
2. To understand procurement process and operations in the company
3. To keep expense record and understand sales projection in units and amount
4. To actively participate in marketing campaigns with feedback
5. To ensure product visibility in Nepal's top e-commerce websites

Chapter 2: Co-op Study Activities

2.1 Job Description

The designation that I was appointed was Business Development Officer. My primary responsibility was to ensure company growth. As it is a startup company, I was associated with helping the company identify profitable prospects and business areas. As the company is a startup, there is limited manpower and a lot of departments to look over. Hence, even though my core responsibilities were to identify growth prospects and business opportunities, I also worked simultaneously in finance, external communications and marketing departments side by side.

The job description focused around finding growth ideas and execution of operational responsibilities. It also includes uploading data in all Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. It further expanded to analyzing financial data and identifying internal efficiencies.

2.2 My job responsibilities

My core duties were business analysis and growth. It was divided into different parts and developed with time. During the first month, I conducted business research for our first potential product which was granola cereal and the second one whose information cannot be disclosed due to the signing of a non-disclosure agreement with the company. I created and presented a presentation to our potential investors for granola. I also had to create Google forms for our team and circulate them to fill in after completing the taste test which ran its course for over 5 times. I took lead in creating Google forms and conducting data analysis for 5 phases of both potential products in a span of four months. One of my major duties was also to create product development and launch timeline for which I had to set dates and activities accordingly. Under this timeline development, I also had to track the team performance and see well the product was developing to ensure the workflow was going as per the plan in the calendar. Another one of my major duties was to create an expense sheet and keep track of it by recording all raw materials and packaging costs. To be in constant contact with our printing and packaging suppliers was also one of my major duties. For the final month, my tasks were to land our newly launched granola in Nepal's top e-commerce sites in Nepal such as Daraz, Sastodeal and Thulo.

By the end of every month, we would have a discussion with our supervisor about the performance, progress and what is to be done in the future. Every new month that I got to work for the company, I was handed over heavier duties and responsibilities. The initial days were all about researching, collecting facts and figures and trying to come up with new business ideas or select the best of all the ideas the company already had in mind. The next phase was about making presentations and delivering messages to and fro with our partners for the Granola brand. The third big phase for me on my job list was when I got the opportunity to be in constant communication with major stakeholders that wasn't just limited to our partners but also external parties such as our suppliers. The major duty in my final month of work was to be able to build contact with top e-commerce companies in Nepal which was quite exhausting but really helpful for my career in future as it enhanced my networking skills.

2.2.1 Finding Growth ideas; how do you do this?

After my recruitment, my major responsibility was to look into growth prospects as Nochini juices and smoothies were already thriving and had made a name for themselves in the market. Nochini's aim was to expand into a new product horizon. Growth opportunities were to be looked through by following up on research documents created by our co-founders. Among all the business opportunities short listed in the documents, I had to come up with top 2 potential products that would extract the most returns by researching. My research was mostly secondary because of the ongoing pandemic. I read a lot of articles, created questionnaires and also created extracts from articles and reports from different trusted sources through Google. We would have meetings within the team after I completed my research and shortlisted some products. After a detailed meeting, we would plan the development of the product. For our granola brand, the product was shortlisted before I joined Nochini. After I was recruited, I supported the idea of developing a granola brand and was responsible for making presentations and approaching our then potential investors and partners. That was a successful one and we launched a granola brand.

2.2.2 How do you execute operational responsibilities?

Operational responsibilities include taking care of everyday activities that are required for a company to function smoothly. Under this, my major responsibility during product development for granola was to co-operate deliveries for our prototype samples by communicating with Nepal's top delivery services such as NepXpress. After the product was finalized and shortlisted, we moved to the next step which was finalizing packaging material and label. I had to coordinate with our packaging and label suppliers with our creative head, Ms. Tsewang. For this process, I also contacted with Indian suppliers through online websites for raw materials and packaging sellers such as IndiaMart for cheaper packaging but the issue was we had to purchase in bulk. For suppliers from Nepal such as Ganpati Printing Press and Subash Printing Press, I was constantly on calls with them to ensure the quality of packaging was great and the labels looked fine. After the product launch, my major operational responsibility was to contact the vendor support management team from 6 various top e-commerce websites in Nepal. I received access to their website from sellers in the name of Nochini and uploaded our products on their site.

2.2.3 ERP System:

Under the enterprise resource planning system, there are various components under one big umbrella. Mr. Dipesh Raj Pandey, Nochini's Chief Information Officer would look into the company's official website and update it accordingly. The CIO has full access to all the technological aspects and web portal of the company. For ensuring the project development and time was banded together with proper record of data, use of an application called Air table was done which is a cloud-based collaboration service. It is a spreadsheet-database hybrid, with the features of a database but applied to a spreadsheet application. The customer's information records, sales records and marketing post as per date plans were locked in Air table on a day-to-day basis. To make sure every team member was on the same page, Nochini also uses another application called Trello which is a list making application. The use of it is that it allows team members to create task boards and various sub-task boards within it. It has options where the level of progress in work can be checked through meters like To Do, In Progress and Done. This application also helped to identify cross sectional work between various departments and

figure out if there was overload or lack of tasks for any individual so that work balance can be created to avoid pressure or extra leisure time.

I was responsible for being in constant communication with suppliers and e-commerce websites who would act as our sellers for our granola product. Under Sales and Customer Relationship Management, I had to ensure sales was top priority. For this, my major duty was to be in constant contact with e-commerce websites and seller platforms like Daraz, Sastodeal, Thulo. After registering and creating an account for the company, our products were to be uploaded into their system by logging in. This was done to enlist our products in their websites so that products were visible to their customers. This would increase their wide availability of product range and our product visibility in the market. I had access to their platforms such as seller center to upload and edit our products, pricing, stock availability and record tracking of orders.

2.3 Activities in coordinating with co-workers

Financial data was created after my recruitment in the form of sales estimation and forecast for our first potential product. I was guided by my supervisor, Mr. Sonam Shrestha, to create the presentation. We had meetings where we discussed the sales amount and minimum sales quantity forecast per day for breakeven of the product after the launch. We made estimations based on our actual expenses and how much sales per day was required to keep the brand afloat in the market. After the estimation, as the product development phase was progressing, I was accountable for keeping track of the expenses made for granola brand product test phase to launch phase whereas my colleague, Ms. Riya Karkee was responsible for tracking the incoming of the money after sales were made as she coordinated the deliveries and kept record of sales.

Internal efficiency was assessed on a daily basis to ensure that the company had full proof plans to make a return on investment for every marketing move that we made. Team Nochini believes in continuous improvement and stands for a value that perfection is achieved after making mistakes and having the willingness to learn from it. For which, we had regular standup and check-in meetings to see where every team member stood throughout the day. To ensure everyone was on track with their responsibilities, we had different applications like Air table and Trello where every team member could witness what the other member was working on.

Expenses were made with proper calculation so that the financial resources are not wasted without earning any benefits from it. To ensure human resources were efficiently managed, one team member would lend support and help in other's tasks if they completed their task before the deadline.

2.4 Job Process Diagram

1. Market Research

- To research on potential winning products for the company's product portfolio expansion
- To conduct research on individual product planning; identification of potential products for manufacturing, tracking market segmentation, help with product costing and sales target



Figure 3: Market Research

2. Create Test Forms and Data Interpretation

- To create sensory and customer preference tests for two potential products for product testing
- To analyze and summarize data collected from forms
- To suggest changes for product adjustment and development

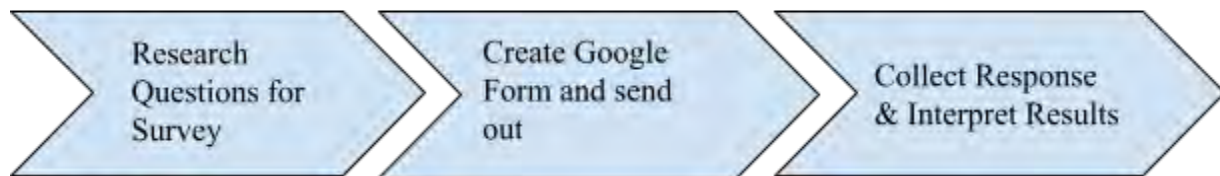


Figure 4: Form Creation Process

3. Create Product Calendar, Expense Sheet and assist Investment Plans

- To create investment and product plan and present it to potential investors
- To create product launch timeline to set deadlines for
- To create and maintain an expense sheet for the Granola brand

4. Coordinate and communicate with national and international suppliers

- Contact printing and creative houses to negotiate prices and to place order for stickers and pouches for packaging
- Contact international suppliers from India for packaging through IndiaMart

5. Ensure Product Listing on E-commerce/Online Selling Platforms

- Contact vendor assistance team to land our products in Nepal's top e-commerce
- Successfully Listed our granola brand in 5 e-commerce sites

2.5. Contribution as a Co-op student in the Company

I have contributed to various departments of the company throughout my internship period. From ground research to planning to operations to marketing and sales, I have touched upon all the areas. The detailed breakdown in terms of different months of work is presented below.

For the first half (0- 2nd week) of the 1st month, I was given the job of conducting market research for our upcoming potential products. After the research and discussions, there were 2 shortlisted products which was 1) Granola Cereal 2) A type of Beverage (which I cannot disclose as of now because we haven't launched the product and the non-disclosure agreement I have signed with the company). Granola was a product formed through partnership whereas Beverage was an independent project. For both of which, I was constantly performing secondary market research through various articles from online portals as primary research was not feasible at that moment. I have created a lot of research findings documenting the link to which will be attached in this report.

For the second half (2nd week - 4th week) of the 1st month, I was closely working on granola and beverages that we were planning to launch before Dashain. I worked on creating a Google form for 'Sensory and Consumer Preference Test' of our 1st potential product (beverage) which took into consideration a potential customer's spending pattern, taste, appeal and many other factors. I was also given the responsibility of circulating it to our test participants. As per our 2nd potential product (granola), I conducted market, competitors and product analysis. This included SWOT analysis, market demographics and segmentation plan. I also presented a product and investment plan to our potential investors for the Granola brand.

For the first half (4th week - 6th week) of the 2nd month, we were on our second phase of testing for the beverage because as per the respondents, the product lacked something. I was to work on sensory test results and suggest product adjustments. I contributed by analyzing and reporting feedback on the first round as well as the second round of sensory testing. I created a product launch calendar to track the stage and performance of our product development. It included the schedule for pre-launch campaign, countdown days to launch, launch giveaway and Dashain offers. I also coordinated work mails to and from our then potential investors (Pad2go). We also created a 'Team Thursdays' segment for Nochini's instagram page where during that week, it was my turn to bring out new content.

For the second half (6th week - 8th week) of the 2nd month, I began with circulating, collecting and interpreting the data received from the form after the 3rd sensory test phase for our potential beverage brand. We then finalized the product after 3 rounds of sensory testing for a soft launch as the results from data interpretation led to mixed signals. The initial plan was to launch the

beverage brand in a big manner. However, due to different feedback from the survey form from our team members regarding the beverage taste and appeal, the plan was changed to a soft launch. I worked on the change in launch plan and created a sales and marketing plan. Alongside the 1st potential product i.e. beverage, I was also creating an expense sheet and tracking records for 2nd product (granola) which included raw materials, packaging and logistics costs. I was a part of the meetings between our company heads to take notes and provide insights for setting the brand goals, vision and mission. The first sensory test was going around for granola. The first launch deadline set by the team was before Dashain. However, it could not be accomplished.

For the first half (8th week - 10th week) of the 3rd month, we sent out the beverages for trial to our close family and friends as a part of a soft launch campaign. The feedback was received and interpreted. The beverage brand was on hold because we had another product in line that was the granola brand. It is created in collaboration with Pad2go, a for-profit social enterprise that started off with Sanitary and Menstrual Hygiene and now deals with various other issues. Pad2go and Nochini joined hands to create Wake&Bake, a healthy granola brand that welcomed a healthier tomorrow where the social impact (CSR) is that certain percent of the sales goes to the cause that fights against anemia in Nepal. The team postponed the granola launch before Tihar. We conducted the next 2 rounds of granola sensory taste and finally confirmed the product variation and taste.

For the second half (10th week - 12th week) of the 3rd month, on the auspicious day of Laxmi Puja we pre-launched Wake&Bake, a Nepal made granola brand. Before the launch, my major task was to compare the prices of various suppliers and create deals with the best price and quality of stickers and packages. I coordinated and communicated with printing and packaging suppliers for color label stickers and pouches for the granola packaging. I also sat in marketing meetings and the marketing officer with our co-founder who also happens to be the marketing lead by researching product social media picture inspirations from other granola brands. I was in charge of uploading Nochini Originals juices and smoothies and also Wake&Bake granola in Daraz, an online selling platform from the seller center. Alongside, I was also maintaining and updating the cost sheet for granola. As a part of a pre-launch campaign, I direct messaged influencers on instagram for sending out PR packages.

For the first half (12th week - 14th week) of the 4th month, I contacted various online and physical stores to place our Granola brand. I reached out to Farmers mart (physical store) via Pad2go team members and the product placement is fixed in the Bishalnagar location as of yet. I was successful in placing products at top e-commerce stores in Nepal through contacting them, signing registration/ agreements and entering various seller/ vendor programs. They are 1) Daraz 2) Foodmandu 3) Bhoj 4) UG bazaar 5) Thulo. I also contacted various sellers for bulk buying of raw materials for production. I also assisted our marketing team for the December holiday campaign and helped with planning the ad campaign for granola.



Chapter 3: Identification of Problems Encountering During the Internship

3.1 Problems identified

Problems and issues within the workplace are a growing concern. There are numerous kinds of jobs that individuals from various backgrounds are engaged in. All kinds of jobs require individuals to possess certain qualifications, traits, abilities and skills. Individuals do experience problems and issues at the workplace, these problems and issues would be concerning various factors such as, working environmental conditions, problems with time management, resolution of conflicts and disputes, lack of knowledge and information, stress in the workplace, diversity in the workplace, and communication at the workplace. (Kapur, 2018)

I encountered a few problems with myself and the company's operations while working at Nochini Private Limited. However, there was always something new to learn from each problem. All the problems faced turned into lessons. This being my first time carrying the designation of such a diverse position, I felt the pressure to perform exceptionally as per the set standard. Also, the online meeting was a new modality of work where physical communication wasn't really present, this made me more conscious. This led me to struggling with my articulation skills. I couldn't fully voice out my opinions and ideas during the first few days. I also struggled with content creation for team Thursdays due to technical issues. The video that I had made had a really bad quality while posting on our brand's social media and I didn't have enough time to solve it. This was a setback I faced which made me realize that you have to be prepared beforehand to make sure there are no issues. This was my learning from the setback.

From my observation, there were 3 problems within the company operations; 1) Not setting priorities accordingly 2) Time management and Workload imbalance 3) Dependency of one factor amongst the other.

The first problem was not setting top priorities beforehand which led to clashing of 2 new product developments at the same time. The focus was diverted into two very different kinds of products at the same time with close launch deadlines to meet. This was a challenge.

The second problem was dependency of one factor amongst the other. Since we had to wait for the raw materials to arrive, it cost us a lot of time. This led to pushing back on sensory and customer preference test. Waiting for the order from packaging and printing houses also caused us to lose a lot of time. Also, since the company is a startup, some interdepartmental work overlapped and in case of one team member's absence, the whole work was on hold.

The third problem was time management and workload imbalance. On some days there would be a lot of work to finish and on some days, there would be not so much. This would lead to high performance pressure on some days and too much leisure on the other. Due to the launch of our granola brand, Wake&Bake, during the festive season, we had to rush in a lot of things such as running the last sensory test, printing, packaging and social media, this showed us lack of planning and result of not prioritizing.

3.2 Indicate how you successfully solved the problems

There were some problems within me and a few within the company's operations. It took me some time and with the willingness to learn as I go, I overcame my weaknesses and also came up with some solutions to fix the issues.

3.3 Provide some examples

The following are a few examples:

3.3.1 Example 1: Advising the use of one application only to clear communication and eradicate confusion

During the first 2 days, I was confused and nervous as there were many applications that were used by the company for daily operations. We had 'Google Meet' for Call Meetings, 'Whatsapp' for team group chat, 'Slack' to post documentations and pass important information, 'Trello' to track our things to do, things in progress, things done and backlog, 'AirTable' to plan posts and record sales and KPI and 'Zoho Mail' for Nochini's sales mail. However, the team was patient enough to give me guidance and gave me time to settle in the modality. Also, having a lot of applications for communications sometimes messed up the main motive, 'communication'

because there arose a lot of miscommunications. This saved a lot of time and energy from the entire team.

3.3.2 Example 2: Built self-confidence to pitch our potential investors the ‘product plan’

The pressure of underperforming was very high as this was my first appointment in such a prestigious position which affected my articulation skills. However, the team and I shared a comfortable bond as the time passed which helped. Also, as I have a curious mind, I let my head over heart and asked questions frequently if I didn’t understand any instruction or work assigned which lifted my work spirit. In the very first month, I was appointed to create a product and investment proposal. I was assisted by my supervisor to use the right kind of template and add more graphics to grab attention and create the right impact. I was nervous to pitch the presentation to our potential investors but I actually performed better than my self-expectation. The end result was we successfully landed us the investment.

3.3.3 Example 3: Solved Technical error for social media content

Regarding the technical issue while posting my content on instagram story, I tried to solve the issue by posting it as an IG TV video which maintained the quality of the video. I have learned a great lesson from this set back. It means that technology is really important but some slip off at times, we have to have a backup plan.

3.3.4 Example 4: Creating Product Development Calendar to resolve Products Clash

I tried to fix the issue of clash between 2 product developments by creating two different product development timeline to keep the whole team aligned with the progress level of individual products. This gave us a reality check on where we stood and where we were lagging behind.

3.3.5 Example 5: Solving Work Load Issues by clearing communication lines

The problem of one work holding the other was mainly due to clarity in communication within the team and improper time management. The problem was solved as during the meeting it was decided that we call out team members whose work overlaps and coordinate accordingly. Also, the calendar helped to identify duties and prevent work overlapping. The uneven distribution of

workload during different work days is something that the company was working on with the help of an application 'Trello' which helps in setting work priorities and progress.

3.4 What are the things you have learned during the internship?

My major learning was through witnessing what really goes behind the scenes for creating a marketable product and what it takes to keep a renowned brand going. Through this internship, I have learnt the idea development, research, planning and production, operations, setting targets and generating sales through marketing. My research skills grew stronger. As I worked on new product planning, it really helped me hone my analytical skills. Hence, this role has taught me to have an open mind and cross check on various planning requirements. By coordinating work related mails, I have developed my professional communication skills. I have learnt the etiquette and format of drafting professional work related emails and responding back accordingly. I was also a part of Nochini juice's 'Team Thursday' campaign by creating content. This gave me an insight on how to create and monitor performance on social media. I've learnt to create timelines and product calendars for event planning which has helped in setting priorities and deadlines.

At Nochini, we followed the concept of agility which is different from any other company's working modality at least in Nepal. This means to be flexible and have a quick thinking mindset with an adaptive personality. I adjusted to the work culture here where it is not required to sit down together in a video chat or a physical work premise for a minimum of 8 hours. Throughout the day, we have gaps and intervals to be our most productive self in the way we want rather than being forced to work. I have learnt a new concept of productivity.

I have developed the skill of using many corporate friendly applications. I learnt how to set sales targets and create a marketing plan for a new product launch. I learnt how to track records of expenses during the trial phase. Presenting business ideas to investment proposals is a great new milestone for me. Someday, I aim to be able to do this for myself when I start my own company. The learning was how to separate two ideas and work on them simultaneously. Multi-tasking was a major learning experience and definitely, a new one for me.

3.5 Details of the related learning process and new knowledge student has received

In big corporate houses, when we intern for a short period of time, we only get to witness a small facet of the business. Working in a startup has given me the opportunity to involve myself in all the departments and learn from it. My major learnings can be dissected as:

3.5.1 Research and Presentation Skills: The first responsibility handed on my shoulders was conducting research where I was taught to validate my research findings with evidence to back up. I learnt how to pitch a sales and product plan in front of actual potential investors which was a big milestone in my professional life. It gave me a lot of confidence after I presented and I've learnt the importance of having proper research and realistic plans.

3.5.2 Being in charge for Professional Communication: This work opportunity gave me access to communicate with almost 20+ stakeholders who helped our company's operations smoothly. I communicated with 8 top e-commerce companies in Nepal and managed to successfully land our product on their site. However, it was not an easy job. There would be times where miscommunications would take place which would result in additional expenses for the company. The learning from this is that our business runs because of these stakeholders so we should maintain a cordial relationship with them and also that both the parties should be open for communication.

3.5.3 Concept of Agility: The concept of having a flexible schedule for work was new to me. However, this has taught me that productivity for me doesn't depend upon long working hours but solely on division of work priorities and willingness to fulfill all the assigned tasks within the given time. This also gave me a sense of liberty to choose what I do and how I choose to perform it so long I meet the performance standards.

Chapter 4: Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Highlights of Co-op Studies at Nochini Pvt. Ltd.

The internship opportunity at Nochini Private Limited has given me an opportunity to turn theoretical knowledge of co-operative education into practical field work. Every day was a new learning during 4 months of internship. The major highlights of the experience are:

1) **Learning and adjusting into a new work culture:** Every company follows a different type of work culture that is best suitable for it. At Nochini, the work culture is a flexible team culture where there is no such differentiation as boss and lower level staff. Everybody works as a team here in the company. The company also follows the concept of agility. Business agility is the ability of an organization to: Adapt quickly to market changes - internally and externally. Respond rapidly and flexibly to customer demands. The company also believes in a lean management system. Lean is a performance-based, continuous-improvement strategy that focuses on eliminating waste and unnecessary steps in company processes. During the internship period, I learnt how to make a proper estimate of resources to be purchased and proper utilization without any going to waste for the profitability of its production processes. Also the work timings were very flexible. Unlike traditional work settings from 9 am to 5 pm. We were to attend 2 meetings a day for one hour each and the rest of the day we were packed with our duties to complete which gave a sense of independence and acted as a form of positive motivation.

2) **Getting professional exposure:** When the internship started, I had expectations regarding having a learning environment inside the company. But I got exposure by being able to propose a product and sales plan for the granola brand to the Pad2go team which was overwhelming. Being entrusted to be able to represent Nochini to potential investors was a big achievement for me. Another highlight was communicating with the vendor support and management team of various top e-commerce sites.

3) **Built self-confidence to start something on my own:** Since Nochini is a start-up company and the team has a limited number of people. Every team member is co-related to

another team member and sharing of tasks is welcomed. This made me learn all the aspects of launching a product from idea generation to product making, testing to sticker, label and packaging print out and design. This gave me a motivation to start my own business and in the winter time in Nepal after my internship, I started my own small business of Strawberry dips and served over 30 customers in a span of 3 months. This has given me further push to start something bigger on my own as I had shown keen interest and learnt the basics of operation at a startup.

4.2 Evaluation of Work Experience:

The internship experience at Nochini Private Limited has given me a different approach to see startups. As an outsider, I always heard the struggle story which is why I always wanted to be associated with big multinationals. I wanted the easy way out. During my time at Nochini, I saw the struggle and I was a part of the struggle. The team and I helped each other constantly to get past them which I wouldn't have possibly learned at any other well established company as they already have gone past it and have set rulebooks to do things. Working closely with a startup has made me realize that nothing worth having comes easy and there is no shortcut to success.

From day 1 at work, I realized that everything was different and fresh in this organization. I have learnt to value quality work during a relatively short span of time extra-long hours of mind fog with zero outcome. There were also days where we had to multitask and go back and forth between two brands. It was tiring but a great experience. I have learnt to present myself in a professional setting. I have communicated with over 7 e-commerce platforms, landed our products in 5 of them, I have managed to create a great formal relationship with renowned printing and creative houses. Nochini has trusted and given me my first professional experience of presenting a product and investment plan to a potential investor.

Syncing of Individual tasks assigned and team work really matters at Nochini Private Limited. I learnt to carry myself as a responsible employee and fulfilled my assigned responsibilities in time. I am honored to have worked with a team that was always ready for help and assistance. I have realized that I am a team player. I am extremely grateful to my mentors, my supervisors,

Mr. Shrestha and Ms. Sadutshang for never making me feel like an outsider and always giving me the best opportunities.

Today, if I have to start my own business venture, I think I have all the resources and motivation to do so, all of which I learnt from my job supervisors. I can do my research, I learnt to create targets, I have built my connections with suppliers and sellers, I have contacts with various online platforms and I have grasped marketing skills. I am a curious learner and this internship program has really helped me see the entrepreneurial side of me.

The internship program created an incredible platform to upgrade my capacity and further development of my skill and knowledge. I am lucky to be able to have such an amazing experience. The knowledge and skills I acquired here would surely prove fruitful for my further career.

4.3 Limitation of Co-op Studies:

The major limitation of the internship program was that it was online based due to the ongoing pandemic. Work from home is a new concept in a country like Nepal where physical presence during work hours at an office set up is highly valued. Also as all the past internship experiences have been in physical formal settings, it was a type of limitation not being able to physically witness the process of being a part of the company and taking collective decisions and solving problems in the actual presence of the team.

4.4 Recommendations for the Company:

Recommendations have the sole purpose of wishing the company to do well and advising the company do better in the days to come. After my 4 months of internship with the company, I have come up with certain recommendations for the company:

Sorting of payment issues: One noticeable problem was the issue of payment to suppliers and printing houses. The delivery associate wouldn't always start and end the day at the office which is why this issue was caused. As most of the payments were made through checks, this problem arose. After the bill was sent to the co-founder with the products from the suppliers, only then

the check was to be written and dropping the check back to the suppliers location was another hassle and expensive. This is why to save time and cost, the payment through check for the earlier order was sent out mostly only when the next order was placed after the raw materials went out of stock. This was slowly turning into a problem as the printing houses mentioned that the payment was delayed. This could be solved through using online payment sources such as online banking or use of esewa and Khalti wallet which are renowned and trustable online payment platforms in Nepal. This could save the company both time and money and could also be safe during the time of a pandemic.

Management of overlapping or under work: As the team members are limited and all the departments are co-working with each other, the workload is sometimes uneven. Sometimes I and Riya, marketing officer, would be working on the same project with research and design and the work results would clash. It also worked as synergy sometimes which led to positive outcomes like planning out road maps for product launches. Sometimes, I wouldn't have a lot of work and had a day to myself but the marketing teams had back to back meetings and a lot of work to do. The company had timely realization of this uneven distribution of work and tried to solve it with the use of an app like Trello which was a very good idea as the app helps in figuring out who is working on what and helps save the work clashes. The company could also solve it by constant communication and planning out and assigning the weekly task beforehand.

References

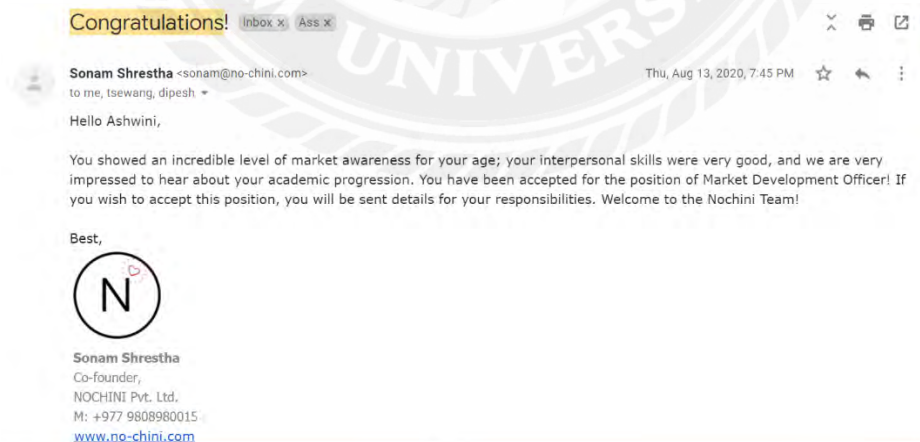
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List of Pictures



Picture 1: Members of Nochini Team



Picture 2: Acceptance Email from Nochini



Picture 3: Prototype: Vitamin Water



Picture 4: Sample Round 1 for Granola Testing



Picture 5: 3 Different launched Granola Flavors



Picture 6: Packaging back side of Granola

Google forms and documents for Granola that I created while my internship at Nochini Pvt. Ltd.:

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1						
2						
3		Price	Qty(gms)	Cost per gm	Average	
4	Kellogs					
5	Crunchy Granola Almonds and Cf	580	480	1.260869565		
6						
7	Gala					
8	Crunchy Muesli Real Fruit	895	1000	0.895		
9	Crunchy Muesli Nutty	880	1000	0.88		
10						
11	Sara Food Muesli	389	150	2.46		
12						
13	Buddha Muesli	160	500	0.32		
14						
15	Soulfull essential living					
16	Muesli			1.9975		
17	100g	199.75	100g	1.9975		
18	500g	998.75	500g	1.9975		
19	1kg	1997.5	1kg	1.9975		
20	500g	1093.75	500g	1.712857143		
21	1kg	2187.5	1kg	1.712857143		
22						
23	Baggrys					
24	Protein Muesli	890	500	1.38		
25						
26					1.516649846	
27						
28	Natures Valley granola bar 24 bar	590	508	1.166007905		
29	Oat Krunch breakfast	225				
30						
31	Name	Price				
32	Mountain man granola bar (280 gm)					
33	5 bar pack	410	51.25	35	1.464285714	
34	Alpen bar- original (140 gm)	340			2.428571429	
35	5 bar pack	330			3.473684211	
36	Alpen bar- light (95 gm)					
37	Vegan Dairy energy bar (per piece)	200-210				
38	Kellogs Cereal bar (6 bar pack) (30 gm)	\$10.85			2.833333333	
39	Peak Sherpa energy balls (8 bite size balls)	\$12				
40	Sara Foods - Protein Balls (500 gm)	1050			2.1	2.459974937

Document 1: Competitor's Pricing Analysis

Nutrition Facts

Servings: 8

Amount per serving

Calories **150**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 4.8g	6%
Saturated Fat 0.7g	3%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 15mg	1%
Total Carbohydrate 22.6g	8%
Dietary Fiber 3.7g	13%
Total Sugars 4.5g	
Protein 4.9g	
<hr/>	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 23mg	2%
Iron 2mg	13%
Potassium 151mg	3%

Document 2: Nutrition Label for Packaging

Granola	23 Nov.2020	24 Nov.2020	25 Nov. 2020	Link
Online:				
Daraz	Uploaded/OC rejected	Updated/Waiting for approval	LISTED	https://www.daraz.com.np/shop/nochimi-pvt-ltd?spm=a2a0e.pdp.seller_1_23c938f65ChY9I&itemid=104530524&channelSource=pdf
Foodmandu	Called/Poor Service	Will email us	LISTED	https://foodmandu.com/Restaurant/Details/630
Bhojdeals	No network on call	Mail sent out with product details	LISTED	https://www.bhojdeals.com/deal/674
Timro concept	DMed I/G/no reply			
Thelocalhepal	DMed I/G/no reply			
Durbar Mart		Will email us contract to sign	In Process	
UG bazaar		Account being set up	LISTED	https://www.ugbazaar.com/product/5325-wakrebaki-granola-choco-almond-300-gms
Thulo		Application for registration sent	LISTED	
Sastodeal		Vendor application filled		
Physical Stores:				
Farmers Mart Jhar	Contacted	Waiting for response		
Farmers Mart Bish	Contacted	10 pieces (100%)		

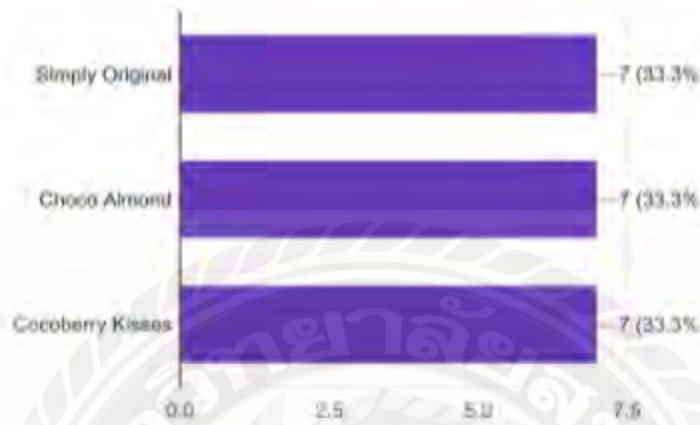
Document 3: Product Listing Record in E-commerce sites

PHASE 3 SENSORY RESULT

1)

Sample Number

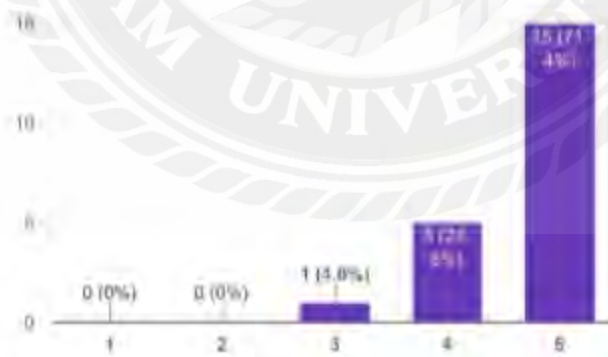
21 responses



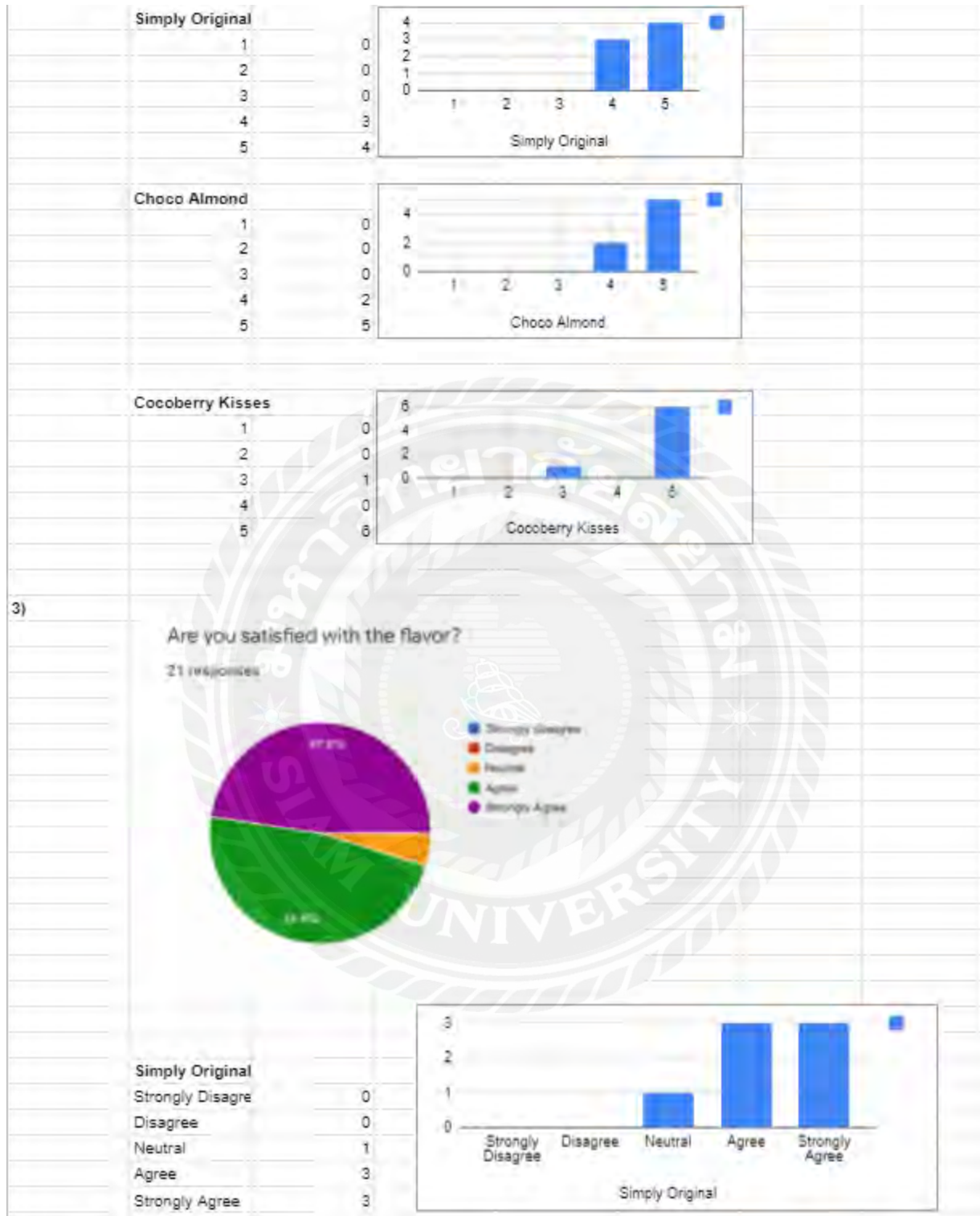
2)

Do you like how the overall product looks/feels?

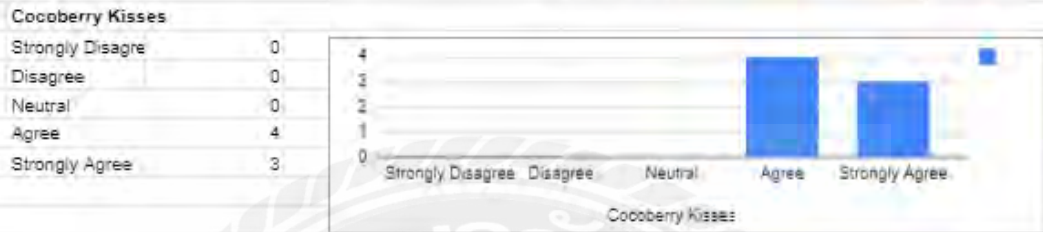
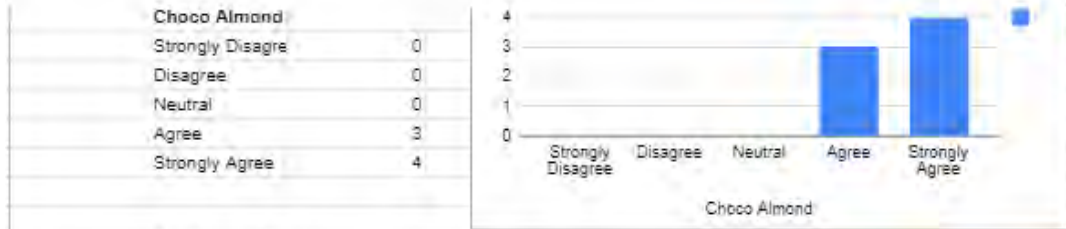
21 responses



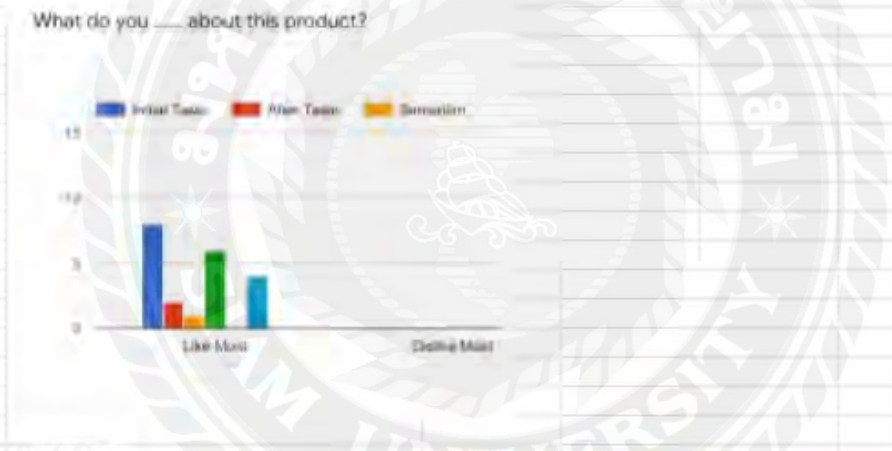
Document 4: Sensory Test Phase 3 Result Analysis



Document 4: Sensory Test Phase 3 Result Analysis



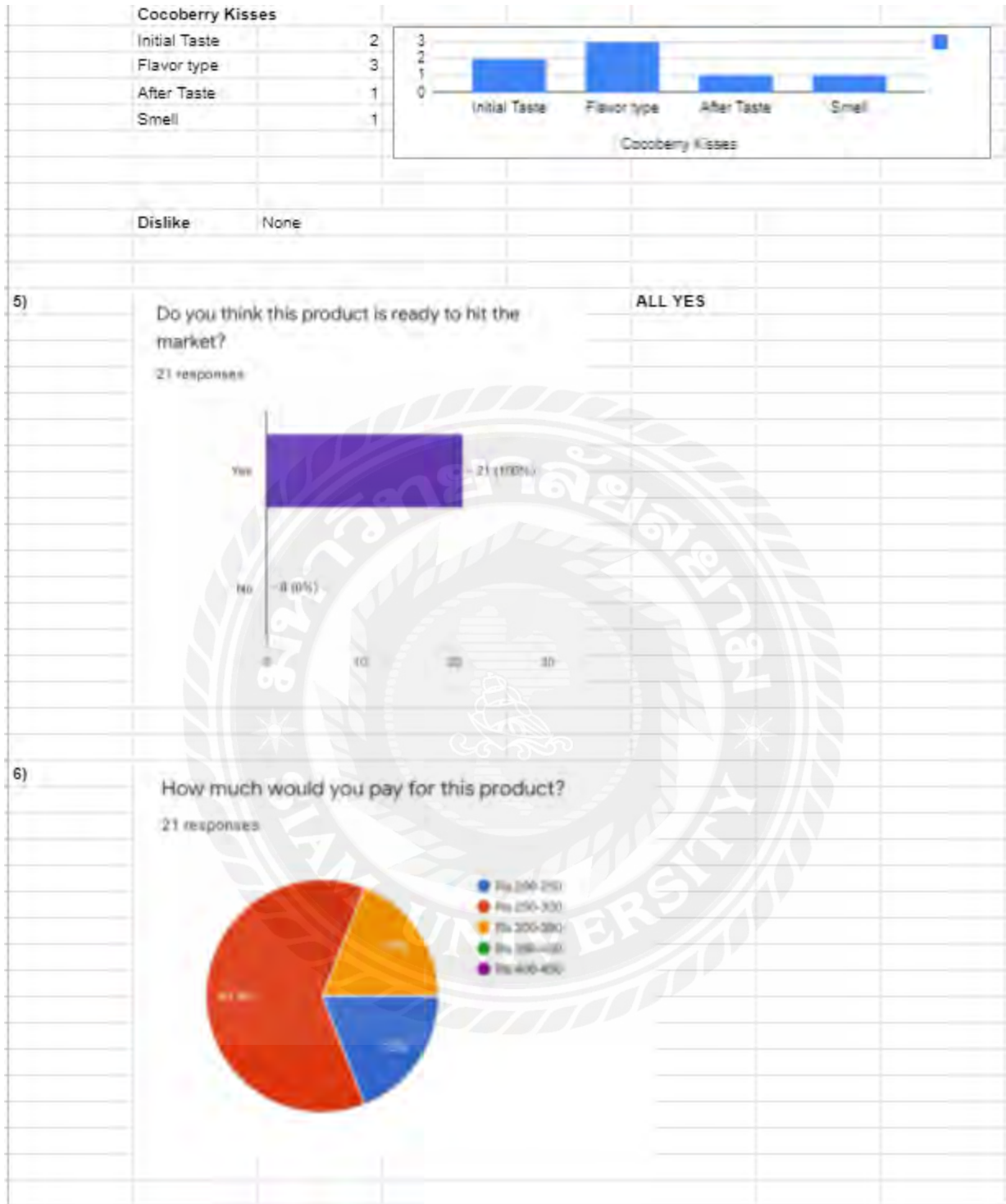
4)



LIKE MOST



Document 4: Sensory Test Phase 3 Result Analysis



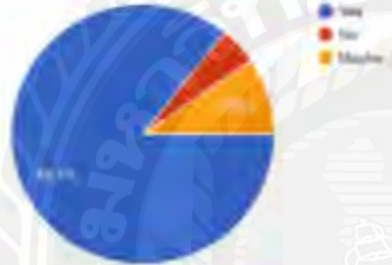
Document 4: Sensory Test Phase 3 Result Analysis

Simply Original	
200-250	3
250-300	4
Choco Almond	
250-300	5
300-350	2
Cocoberry Kisses	
250-300	5
300-350	2

7)

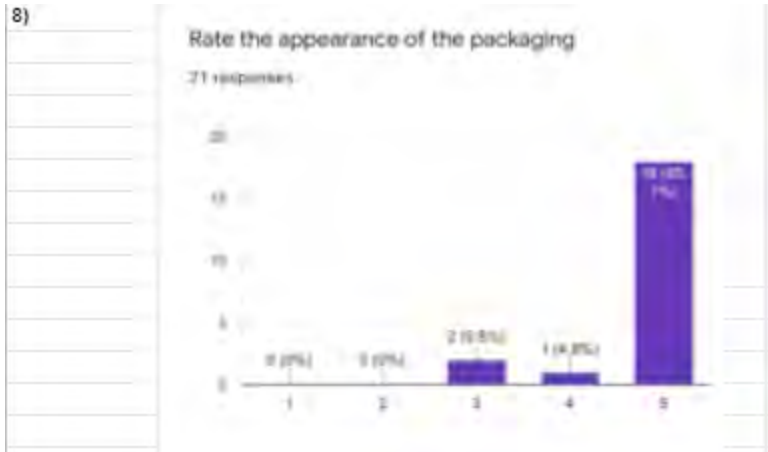
Would you purchase it if it was available in the market?

27 responses



Simply Original	
Yes	5
Maybe	1
No	1
Choco Almond	
Yes	7
Maybe	0
No	0
Cocoberry Kisses	
Yes	6
Maybe	1
No	0

Document 4: Sensory Test Phase 3 Result Analysis



Simply Original

3	1
5	8

Choco Almond

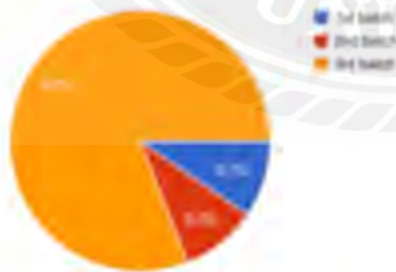
4	1
5	8

Cocoberry Kisses

3	1
5	8

9) Which granola test batch did you like best among all?

21 responses



Document 4: Sensory Test Phase 3 Result Analysis