

A Fresh Look at the Interplay of Work Goals, Work Attributes and Graduates' Intention to Apply for a Job

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University graduates are a favorable source of human capital but due to changing dynamics of the external environment and growing uncertainties, managers of both public and private sector find it difficult to attract, recruit and retain competent graduates. Therefore there is a need to study work goals and work attributes of a new generation of workforce. To fill this void, the present study aims to explore the effect of work goals and work attributes on graduates' intention to apply for the job. To this end, we involved (n = 270) university graduates from Pakistan and the data were analyzed using SPSS 24.0. Results show that the majority of university graduates intend to join public sector organizations upon their graduation. Our findings further indicate that work goals influence university graduates to apply for a job at different types of organizations. Finally, we discuss the limitations, future research opportunities, and implications for theory and practice in depth.

Keywords: talent management, university graduates, work attributes, work goals, public sector

INTRODUCTION

Recruitment of competent workforce is an integral part of the HR managers' job in both the public and private sectors. Accordingly, Taylor (2005) has reported that recruiting competent university graduates is an important part of public administration, but in recent time managers in public and private sector find it difficult to attract, recruit and retain competent university graduates. University graduates are a favorable source of human capital in the knowledge economy (Hooijen et al., 2017). Hooijen et al. (2017) cited that it is important to understand why they switch jobs in order to retain a larger number of graduates. It is further argued by Glaeser et al. (2001) that university plays a pivotal role in producing human capital globally, therefore graduates are considered as ideal and highly skilled individuals to retain, as they do not only share and demonstrate their latest acquired knowledge but also contribute to regional economy (Hooijen et al., 2017).

Because of uncertainty and changing dynamics of internal and external environments, talent management has become a critical issue for organizations of all types across the globe (Oppong, 2013). There is a strong need to study work attributes of university graduates to attract and retain talented minds. Due to changes in the external environment, today's workers have given more value to a high salary and job security as compared with workers of the past three decades (Karl and Suttan, 1998). Since the advent of New Public Management (NPM), which emphasizes to employ practices of private sector to public sector to increase performance and competitiveness in public sector (Knies and Leisink, 2018; Siddiquee, 2010; Siddiquee, 2006; Sarker, 2006), trend of downsizing in public sectors is seen in developed countries. This trend of downsizing has shaken the confidence of employees towards the public sector in terms of their job security. This downsizing experience and outsourcing of workforce (replacement of permanent and full-time employees with part-time employees hired by the third party) had shifted employees' employment contracts from relational to transactional (Taylor, 2005). Relational contracts are those which emphasize long-term career prospects, training, development, equipping with related skills required to do a job, whereas, the transactional contracts focus on short-term financial relationships with low emotional commitment and attachment (Rousseau and Parks, 1993). This weakening employee-employer relationship clues that employers can no longer rely on the loyalty of employees (Taylor, 2005).

As discussed above, due to changing dynamics of the job market, managers of both public and private sector need a fresh perspective regarding the work goals and work attributes of the future generation of workers to attract, recruit and retain talented minds. The present study aims to address this issue by examining university students' views about work goals, work attributes and their preference to join different types of organizations upon their graduation. By employing multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) work goals and work attitudes of university students across specific disciplines (e.g., education, business, electrical engineering, software engineering, and computer science) are compared in order to get insights that how much a certain goal or attribute is important to students from different disciplines. Regression analysis is conducted to determine whether certain work goals and work attribute influence graduates to apply for a job upon their graduation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

University graduates are considered a favorable source of human capital in a knowledge-based economy (Hooijen et al., 2017). Therefore, it is critical to understand why they switch jobs in order to retain a larger number of graduates (Hooijen et al., 2017). University plays a pivotal role in producing human capital globally; therefore graduates are considered ideal and highly skilled individuals to retain (Glaeser, Kolko, & Saiz, 2001). It is because graduates not only share and demonstrate their latest acquired knowledge but also contribute to the regional economy (Hooijen et al., 2017). Due to uncertainty and changing dynamics of external and internal environments, talent management has become a critical issue for organizations (Oppong, 2013). Talent management is receiving growing attention from researchers and practitioners and is viewed as an integral aspect of organizational performance enhancement (Collings and Mellahi, 2009). Collings and Mellahi (2009, p. 304) defined talent management as "the activities and processes that involve the systematic identification of key positions which differentially contribute to the organization's sustainable competitive advantage, the development of a talent pool of high potential and high performing incumbents to fill these roles, and the development of a differentiated human resource architecture to facilitate filling these positions with competent incumbents and to ensure their continued commitment to the organization".

According to McCracken et al., (2015), a number of practices and activities are involved in talent management. These practices and activities ranging from recruitment and selection, employer branding, succession planning, retention management, and training development. The way in which these practices are prioritized depends upon the talent management approach an organization adopts. A number of challenges can arise at the time when deciding for most appropriate talent management practices for graduates (McCracken et al., 2015). For example, fresh graduates do not pose any previous experience; their performance is not up to the quality standards set by the organization (McCracken et al., 2015). Most

of the literature on university graduates recruitment is dominated concerns related to the employability of graduates. Employability can be described as the skills required to obtain a job, skills needed to do a job effectively, attributes and specific abilities (Heyler and Lee, 2014). Since a long time, researchers are commenting that there is a discrepancy between skills and competencies required by employers from graduates and those actually graduates possess (Crebert et al., 2004; Eisner, 2010; Rae, 2007; Raybould & Sheedy, 2005).

It is also argued that employers perceived that universities and degree awarding institutes are not producing work-ready graduates, although graduates have specific knowledge related with their degree, they do not have soft skills required for work (De la Harpe, Radloff, & Wyber, 2000; Medhat, 2003). Soft skills can be regarded as communication, team working, problem-solving and adaptability (Eisner, 2010; Huq & Gilbert, 2013).

There are growing concerns about activities related to recruitment and development of graduates among the organizations that give preference to attract and recruit the best talent. Majority of the researchers and practitioners in the field of HR accepts that there is growing need to understand characteristics of fresh graduates belong to millennials (the generation born between the early 1980s and early 2000s) needed to be understood to ensure effective recruitment and development activities (McCracken et al., 2016). Studies conducted by Luscombe et al. (2013) and Terjesen et al. (2007) suggest that millennials have unique attitudes, motivations, and expectations. It was found that they have expected to have extensive training and development opportunities, desire for long-term career progression, variety in work, opportunities of collaboration and to work in a dynamic and forward-looking business that have advanced technologies (McCracken et al., 2015). Below we will briefly discuss the work goals and work attributes in order to get a better understanding of the terms.

Work Goals

Harris *et al.* (2003) defined goals as “internal representations of desired states such as outcomes, processes and Events” (p-1). Bu and Mckeen (2001) defined work goals as “the end states people desire and expect through working” (p-2). Sometimes the same concept is referred to as work value, job orientation, and desired job characteristics (Bu and Mckeen, 2001). The role of work is very important in the life of the people living around the globe regardless of their geographical locations. The number of time people contribute to work, the economic and social consequences of work to society and organizations, and efforts of individuals and groups to reposition their jobs and organizations for which they work (Harpaz, 1990). Kanfer *et al.* (2013) defined work goals as “purposive goals and motivation to enter into a formal or informal public work arrangement in which the individual allocates personal resources (e.g., time, attendance, mental and/or physical effort) in exchange for a portfolio of expected intrinsic (e.g., sense of competence) and/or extrinsic (e.g., pay, healthcare benefits) outcomes” (p-5). According to Kanfer *et al.* (2013), however, the strength of work goals does not determine the amount of effort at work, rather it shows a person’s motivation to participate in this exchange. Work goals are conceptualized as motivation for participation in terms of full time or part time employment as an entrepreneur, business owner or volunteer (Kanfer *et al.*, 2013). On basis of findings of Morbarack (1995) study, Dendinger *et al.* (2005) identified four reasons for working that are; Social (communicate with others and get positive attention from others), personal (to get financial and non-financial rewards), financial, and generative (knowledge transfer).

Work Attributes

Work attributes of university graduates vary according to factors like the disciplinary background and any previous work experience (Taylor, 2005). Disciplinary background of an individual is normally regarded as a determinant of his/her profession. Professionalism is linked with an occupational field and knowledge acquired from an educational degree (Perry, 1997). Every profession shares a distinguished set of values and worldview, particularly when a hypothesis has adopted that loyalty a profession may displace loyalty to organization and population (Gouldner, 1957; Perry, 1997). This indicates that views about working can be different in different professions and likewise preferences vary about rewards and organizations. For example, students of public administration, public policy, and politics are more likely to

join public sector and non-profit organizations as compared with students of other disciplines like business, law, education, arts, and science, who are more likely to join private sector (Taylor, 2005). Although it is reasonable to say that individuals belong to a particular discipline have no choice other than joining a certain sector or organization, it is also reasonable to say that after becoming an employee of any organization or sector, regardless of disciplinary background an individual can involve and make choices (Lee and Olshfski, 2002).

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A survey questionnaire was prepared to collect the data and we initially distributed 400 questionnaires to full-time university students who were enrolled in different disciplines at Sukkur IBA University. After skimming and scanning the returned surveys, 130 responses containing incomplete data were dropped from the analysis (Sekaran and Bougie, 2016). The final sample size was 270 university students.

Instrument

Data were collected using a self-explanatory questionnaire which comprised of 38 items. and we asked all the respondents to indicate their agreement or disagreement with the series of statements provided using a 5-point Likert scale where 1 indicated strongly disagree and 5 indicated strongly agree.

Based on the procedure suggested in the literature (Giral et al., 2018), we divided the questionnaire into three sections. The section on comprised of 6-items measuring work-related goals. A force rank approach was adopted to distinguish the preferences of respondents from multiple factors. Researchers like (Chan, 2002; Jurkiewicz, 2000; Jurkiewicz and Brown, 1998; Meaning of Work International Research Team, 1987) also used this approach to examine motivational attributes.

Similarly, section two comprised of 29-items measuring work-related attributes. These items were borrowed from past studies conducted in the management context (Jurkiewicz and Brown, 1998, and Meaning of Work International Research Team 1987). All the responses were assessed along a Likert-type scale (1 = “*strongly disagree*,” 5 = “*strongly agree*”) and all the variables demonstrated good reliability coefficients

Finally, the last section of the questionnaire comprised of several questions regarding the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the type of organization in which they intend to work after completion of a degree.

Technique

To assess the demographic profile of respondents and their attitudes towards work and different types of organizations, descriptive statistics were used. Multivariate analysis of variance (*MANOVA*) was employed to determine any significant difference between respondents’ preferences by disciplinary groups (e.g., business administration, education, electrical engineering, software engineering, and computer science). Regression analysis was conducted to examine whether work goals and work attribute influence graduates to apply for job after completion of their degree program.

RESULTS

Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA)

Data in Table I and Table II shows the mean values of all statements. Smaller mean values show that the statement is more important to the respondent. F-value shows the significant difference between the mean values of disciplines. The results of this study indicate that the majority of respondents want to join the federal government after their graduation. The second choice of respondents is to join private sector organizations and their final choice is to join non-governmental organizations after their graduation as shown in Table I.

Regarding graduates' choices to join different organization types discipline wise, our findings reveal that first priority of respondents from the department of education is to join public sector after their graduation, their second priority is to join the private sector, and their third priority is to join non-governmental organizations. Like-wise department of education, respondents from the department of business gave first priority to join federal government upon their graduation, their second priority is to join private organizations, their last choice is to join non-governmental organizations. Respondents from the department of electrical engineering also ranked federal government as their first choice to join, likewise, they ranked private organizations as their second choice, and they ranked non-governmental organizations as their third choice. Respondents from the department of software engineering also ranked federal government as their first priority, private organizations as their second choice and non-governmental organizations as their third choice. Finally like respondents from the rest of disciplines, no difference is seen among respondents from the department of computer science. They also ranked the federal government as their first choice, private organizations as their second choice and non-governmental organizations as their third choice to join after graduation.

TABLE 1
VIEWS ON WORKING AND ORGANIZATIONAL TYPE

	Total (N= 270)	Education (N= 37)	Business (N= 141)	Electrical Engineering (N= 48)	Software Engineering (N= 23)	Computer Science (N= 21)	F-Value
<i>Work goals</i>							
Working provides me with an income that is needed	2.07 ⁶	2.21 ²	2.09 ⁶	2.00 ⁶	2.26 ⁶	1.71 ¹	1.21
Working itself is basically interesting and satisfying to me	2.01 ⁵	2.27 ³	1.96 ⁴	1.91 ⁵	2.04 ⁵	2.09 ⁵	1.19
Working allows me to have interesting contacts with other people	1.84 ¹	2.18 ¹	1.82 ¹	1.64 ¹	1.86 ²	1.71 ¹	2.77**
Working is a useful way to serve the community	1.95 ³	2.21 ²	2.02 ⁵	1.79 ²	1.65 ¹	1.80 ²	2.1*
Working gives me status and prestige	1.90 ²	2.18 ¹	1.85 ²	1.81 ³	1.95 ⁴	1.90 ⁴	1.32
Working keeps me occupied	1.96 ⁴	2.37 ⁴	1.90 ³	1.89 ⁴	1.91 ³	1.85 ³	2.61**
<i>Type of organizations</i>							
Private organizations	2.37 ²	2.67 ²	2.21 ²	2.45 ²	2.60 ²	2.42 ²	1.61
Public sector organizations	2.11 ¹	2.48 ¹	2.17 ¹	2.02 ¹	1.60 ¹	1.85 ¹	3.15
Non-profit non-governmental organizations	3.07 ³	3.35 ³	3.02 ³	3.06 ³	2.60 ²	3.38 ³	1.98

Level of significance: *p < 0.1, **p < .05, ***p < 0.01

Source: Authors' own calculations.

Regarding work goals of graduates, the majority of respondents said that working allows them to have interesting contacts with other people. Rest of the respondents said working gives them status and prestige, working is a useful way to serve the community, working keep them occupied, working itself is basically interesting and satisfying to them, and working provide them with an income that is needed accordingly.

In a similar vein, our results revealed that the majority of respondents from the department of education believe that work is important to them because it allows them to have interesting contacts with other people

and working gives them status and prestige. Other respondents from the department of education believe that working is a useful way to serve the community and working provide them with an income that is needed, working itself is basically interesting and satisfying to them, and working keeps them occupied accordingly. Respondents from the department of business believe that working allow them to have interesting contacts with other people. Rest of the respondents believe working gives them status and prestige, working keep them occupied, working itself is basically interesting and satisfying to them, working is a useful way to serve the community, and working provide them with an income that is needed accordingly. Majority of respondents from the department of electrical engineering ranked work is important to them because working allow them to have interesting contacts with other people. Remaining respondents ranked working as a useful way to serve the community, working give them status and prestige, working keep them occupied, working itself is basically interesting and satisfying to them, and working provide them with an income that is needed accordingly. Majority of respondents from the department of software engineering ranked work is important for them because working is a useful way to serve the community, while other believed that work is important for them because working allow them to have interesting contacts with other people, working keep them occupied, working give them status and prestige, working itself is basically interesting and satisfying to them, and working provide them with an income that is needed accordingly.

TABLE 2
VIEWS ON WORK ATTRIBUTES

	Total (N= 270)	Education (N= 37)	Business (N= 141)	Electrical Engineering (N= 48)	Software Engineering (N= 23)	Computer Science (N= 21)	F-Value
<i>General work attributes</i>							
Nature of work	1.72 ²	1.94 ⁴	1.66 ³	1.79 ¹	1.73 ²	1.52 ³	1.27
Working conditions	1.71 ¹	1.94 ³	1.60 ¹	1.87 ²	1.86 ⁴	1.52 ³	2.94**
Intrinsic rewards	1.73 ³	1.83 ¹	1.65 ²	1.97 ³	1.82 ³	1.38 ¹	2.5**
The management	1.87 ⁵	2.37 ⁵	1.80 ⁵	1.87 ²	1.82 ³	1.52 ³	4.18***
The organization	1.74 ⁴	1.89 ²	1.75 ⁴	1.79 ¹	1.65 ¹	1.47 ²	0.90
<i>Specific work attributes</i>							
Good match between job requirements and abilities and experience	1.88 ²	2.08 ¹	1.85 ¹	1.93 ²	1.95 ¹	1.52 ¹	1.47
Enough information, authority and equipment to do my job	1.87 ¹	2.08 ¹	1.91 ³	1.68 ¹	1.95 ¹	1.61 ²	1.80
Variety in work assignments, tasks and roles	2.01 ³	2.10 ²	2.02 ⁴	1.93 ²	2.13 ²	1.85 ⁴	0.48
Freedom from supervision	2.05 ⁴	2.27 ³	1.89 ²	2.33 ³	2.3 ³	1.80 ³	2.73**

	Total (N= 270)	Education (N= 37)	Business (N= 141)	Electrical Engineering (N= 48)	Software Engineering (N= 23)	Computer Science (N= 21)	F-Value
<i>Working conditions</i>							
Good working relationships	1.82 ⁶	2.16 ⁹	1.71 ⁶	1.87 ⁸	1.86 ⁷	1.76 ⁸	1.81
Flexible working hours	1.86 ⁸	1.91 ⁷	1.81 ⁸	1.91 ⁹	2.21 ⁸	1.61 ⁷	1.23
Good physical working conditions	1.64 ³	1.75 ¹	1.65 ⁴	1.58 ²	1.56 ³	1.57 ⁶	0.38
Opportunity to make a contribution to important decisions	1.70 ⁵	1.78 ²	1.74 ⁷	1.68 ⁶	1.56 ³	1.52 ⁵	0.62
Opportunity to engage in satisfying leisure activities	1.83 ⁷	1.81 ³	1.89 ⁹	1.83 ⁷	1.73 ⁵	1.57 ⁶	0.67
Good job security	1.68 ⁴	1.89 ⁶	1.71 ⁶	1.60 ³	1.73 ⁵	1.23 ³	1.96*
Fair salary	1.64 ³	2.05 ⁸	1.65 ⁴	1.58 ²	1.56 ³	1.14 ¹	3.66***
Opportunity for promotion	1.52 ¹	1.86 ⁵	1.51 ¹	1.52 ¹	1.34 ¹	1.9 ⁹	2.71**
High salary	1.61 ²	1.83 ⁴	1.63 ²	1.60 ³	1.47 ²	1.23 ³	1.71
Attractive fringe benefits	1.68 ⁴	2.05 ⁹	1.64 ³	1.64 ⁴	1.78 ⁶	1.33 ⁴	3.33**
High prestige and social status	1.64 ³	1.72 ¹	1.67 ⁵	1.66 ⁵	1.69 ⁴	1.19 ²	1.55
<i>Intrinsic rewards</i>							
Work that is interesting and satisfying	1.65 ²	1.59 ¹	1.65 ²	1.79 ³	1.65 ²	1.38 ¹	0.92
Opportunity for self-improvement	1.57 ¹	1.67 ²	1.58 ¹	1.56 ¹	1.56 ¹	1.38 ¹	0.45
Opportunity to benefit the wider community	1.75 ³	1.94 ³	1.72 ³	1.77 ²	1.78 ³	1.61 ²	0.53
<i>Management</i>							
Skilled	1.58 ¹	1.72 ¹	1.60 ¹	1.43 ¹	1.73 ²	1.38 ¹	1.04
Friendly and approachable	1.61 ²	1.83 ²	1.64 ²	1.43 ¹	1.69 ¹	1.38 ¹	1.44
Responsive and decisive	1.69 ³	1.91 ³	1.68 ³	1.45 ²	2.00 ²	1.57 ²	2.02*
<i>Organization</i>							
Its high standards	1.64 ¹	1.78 ¹	1.55 ¹	1.79 ²	1.73 ²	1.61 ²	1.05
Its high profile	1.74 ²	2.00 ²	1.72 ²	1.77 ¹	1.60 ¹	1.52 ¹	1.21
Its geographical location	1.85 ³	2.00 ²	1.79 ³	1.97 ³	2.00 ³	1.61 ²	0.92
Level of significance: *p < 0.1, **p < .05, ***p < 0.01							

Source: Authors' own calculations.

Majority of respondents from the department of computer believes that work is important for them because working allows them to have interesting contacts with other people and working provide them with an income that is needed. Rest of the respondents ranked work is important for them because working is a useful way to serve the community, working keeps them occupied, working give them status and prestige, and working itself is basically interesting and satisfying to them accordingly.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents ranked working conditions as their first preference, nature of work second, intrinsic rewards third, organization fourth, and management fifth preference accordingly. Discussing general work attributes across the disciplines, it is revealed that respondents from the department

of education ranked intrinsic rewards as their first priority, the organization as second, working conditions as third, nature of work as fourth, and management fifth priority accordingly. Respondents from the department of business ranked working conditions as their first priority, intrinsic rewards as second, nature of work as third, organization as fourth and management as fifth priority accordingly. Those from the department of electrical engineering ranked organization and nature of work as their first preference, working conditions, and management as second, and intrinsic rewards third preference accordingly. Respondents from the department of software engineering ranked organization as their first choice, nature of work as second, intrinsic rewards and management as third, and working conditions as their fourth choice. Finally, those from computer science ranked intrinsic rewards as first, the organization as second, nature or work, working conditions, and management as their third choice.

When asked about specific work attributes, respondents ranked enough information, authority, and equipment to do the job as their first priority, a good match between job requirements and abilities and experience as second, variety in work assignments, tasks, and roles as third, freedom from supervision as their fourth priority. Talking about specific work attributes across the disciplines we came to know that respondents from department of education ranked good match between job requirements and abilities and experience, and enough information, authority, and equipment to do job as their first choice, variety in work assignments, tasks and roles as their second, and freedom from supervision as their third choice. Those from the department of business ranked good match between job requirements and abilities and experience as their first, freedom from supervision as second, enough information, authority and equipment to do the job as third, and variety in work assignments, tasks, and roles as their fourth priority. Respondents from the department of electrical engineering ranked enough information, authority, and equipment to do the job as first, variety in work assignments, tasks and roles, and a good match between job requirements and abilities and experience as second, and freedom from supervision as their third priority. Those from the department of software engineering ranked good match between job requirements and abilities and experience, enough information, authority and equipment to do the job as first, variety in work assignments, tasks and roles as second, and freedom from supervision as their third priority. Respondents from the department of computer science ranked good match between job requirements and abilities and experience as first, enough information, authority and equipment to do my job as second, freedom from supervision as third, and variety in work assignments, tasks, and roles as their fourth choice.

When it is talked about working conditions, respondents ranked the opportunity for promotion as their first priority, high salary as second, fair salary, good physical working conditions, and high prestige and status as third, attractive fringe benefits, good job security as fourth, opportunity to make a contribution to important decisions as fifth, good working relationships as sixth, opportunity to engage in satisfying leisure activities as seventh, and flexible working hours as their eighth choice.

Comparing working conditions across the disciplines, we came to know that respondents from department of education preferred high prestige and social status as their first choice followed by good physical working conditions, opportunity to make a contribution to important decisions, opportunity to engage in satisfying leisure activities, high salary, opportunity for promotion, good job security, flexible working hours, fair salary, and good working relationships accordingly. Respondents from department of business ranked opportunity for promotion as their first choice followed by high salary, attractive fringe benefits, good physical working conditions, fair salary, high prestige, good job security, good working relationships, opportunity to make a contribution to important decisions flexible working hours, and an opportunity to engage in satisfying leisure activities accordingly. Respondents from the department of electrical engineering ranked opportunity for promotions as their first choice followed by fair salary, good job security, attractive fringe benefits, high prestige, and social status, opportunity to make a contribution to important decisions, opportunity to engage in satisfying leisure activities, good working relationships, and flexible working hours accordingly. Respondents from department of software engineering ranked opportunity for promotion as their first priority followed by high salary, fair salary, opportunity to make a contribution to important decisions, good physical working conditions, high prestige and social status, good job security, opportunity to engage in satisfying leisure activities, attractive fringe benefits, good working relationships, and flexible working hours accordingly. Respondents from department of commuter science

ranked fair salary as their first choice followed by high prestige and social status, high salary, attractive fringe benefits, opportunity to make a contribution to important decisions, good physical working conditions, opportunity to engage in satisfying leisure activities, flexible working hours, good working relations, and opportunity for promotion accordingly.

In intrinsic rewards, respondents ranked opportunity for self-improvement as their first choice followed by work that is interesting and satisfying as a second choice, and opportunity to benefit the wider community as their third choice. Comparing results of intrinsic rewards across the disciplines we came to know that respondents from the department of education ranked work that is interesting and satisfying as their first choice followed by an opportunity for self-improvement and opportunity to benefit the wider community accordingly. Respondents from the department of business ranked opportunity for self-improvement as their first choice followed by work that is interesting and satisfying, and opportunity to benefit the wider community accordingly. Respondents from the department of electrical engineering also ranked opportunity for self-improvement as their first choice followed by an opportunity to benefit the wider community, and work that is interesting and satisfying. Respondents from software engineering also ranked opportunity for self-improvement as their first choice followed by work that is interesting and satisfying, and opportunity to benefit the wider community accordingly. Respondents from the department of computer science ranked opportunity for self-improvement and work that is interesting and satisfying as their first choice followed by an opportunity to benefit the wider community.

Regression Analysis

Next, we conducted a regression analysis examine whether work goals and work attribute influence graduates' intention to apply for a job.

TABLE 3
RESULTS OF REGRESSION ANALYSIS

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Beta (Standardized)	t-value	Sigma
Graduates' intention to apply for job	Work goals	0.242	3.538	0.000
	Work attributes	0.126	0.126	0.065

Source: author's own calculations

Our results of the regression analysis are presented in Table 3, which revealed that our regression model explains $R^2 = 0.107$, $F(2, 267) = 5.672$ variance. The findings further provide strong support for a positive relationship between work goals and graduates intention to apply for a job ($b = 0.242$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, our results revealed an insignificant relationship for the effect of work attributes and graduates intention to apply for a job ($b = 0.126$, $p > 0.05$).

Our findings further reveal a positive relationship between work goals and graduates intention to apply for a job, suggesting that graduates intend to apply for a job upon their graduation because they give value to work goals. However, there is a negative relationship between graduates' intention to apply for a job and work attributes. This finding suggests that work attributes do not matter for graduates who intend to apply for a job, they need work no matter whatever work conditions there might be.

DISCUSSION

Multivariate analysis of variance indicates the priorities of graduates to various work goals and work attributes. Regarding the work goal of university graduates, our study revealed that the majority of graduates

give importance to work because it allows them to have interesting contacts with other people. Discipline wise respondents from the department of education, business, electrical engineering, and computer science ranked work is important because it allows them to have interesting contacts with other peoples as their first choice, except respondents from the department of software engineering who ranked work is a useful way to serve the community as their first choice.

As far as university graduates preferences to join different types of organizations upon their graduation is concerned, surprisingly it is inferred that all of the respondents combinedly as well as across the disciplines ranked public sector organizations as their first choice to join upon their graduation followed by the private sector and non-governmental organizations.

Results of university graduates work attributes indicate that majority of overall respondents ranked working conditions as their first choice among general work attributes. Across the disciplines, respondents from the department of education and computer science ranked intrinsic rewards, those from bunnies ranked working conditions, from electrical engineering and software engineering ranked organization as their first choice among general work attributes. Results for the nature of work and the organization were found insignificant.

Coming towards specific work attributes of university graduates, results indicate that overall respondents ranked enough information, authority, and equipment to do the job as their top priority. Across the disciplines, respondents from the department of education, business, software engineering, and computer science ranked good match between job requirements and abilities and experience as their first priority and those from the department of electrical engineering ranked enough information, authority and equipment to do the job as their first priority. Except for freedom from supervision, results were found insignificant for the rest of the variables.

In working conditions, overall respondents ranked opportunity for promotion as their top priority. Across the disciplines, respondents from the department of education good physical working conditions, those from departments of business, electrical engineering and software engineering ranked opportunity for promotion while those from the department of electrical engineering ranked fair salary as their top priority. Except for good job security, fair salary, the opportunity for promotion, and attractive fringe benefits, all results were found insignificant.

In management, overall respondents ranked skilled management as their first priority. Across the disciplines, respondents from the department of education, business, electrical engineering, and computer science also ranked skilled management as their top priority, while those from software engineering ranked management that is friendly and approachable as their first choice. Except for management that is responsive and decisive, all results were found insignificant. Results for work attributes related to intrinsic rewards and organization were found insignificant. Regression analysis indicates that there is a positive relationship between graduates intention to apply for a job and work goals. No relationship was found between work attributes and graduates intention to apply for a job. It suggests that work attributes do not matter for those graduates who intend to apply for a job upon their graduation.

IMPLICATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

This study shows the importance and preference that the future generation of workers has to work goals and work attributes. The results of this study show that majority of graduates intend to join public sector upon their graduation which indicates that despite the growing concerns regarding the job security and downsizing, joining public sector is still the top priority of younger generation of workers. Therefore managers of public sector need to devise strategies to communicate opportunities and minimize the misconceptions about the image of public service to attract and induct talented minds in public service. Further research can be done to explore the factors that help managers of the public sector to develop effective recruitment strategies that create positive word of mouth and eliminate misconceptions about public service. Sample size was also small and taken from one university. Further research should be carried out by taking a large sample size from multiple universities in order to generalize the findings of the study.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this study was to examine work goals and work attributes of university graduates and their preferences to join different types of organizations and to find a relationship between organization choice, work goals, and work attributes of university graduates. From the results of this study, we can make the following conclusions.

Joining the public sector after graduation is the first preference for graduates. Graduates preferences to join different types of organizations were also compared across the disciplines and we surprisingly came to know that students from all disciplines preferred to join public sector organizations upon their graduation followed by private and non-governmental organizations.

A positive relationship found between work goals and graduates intention to apply for a job. It suggests that graduates intend to apply for a job because they give value to work goals.

Finally, on the basis of the results of this study, it can be concluded that work goals and work attributes influence career choice of university graduates. Furthermore, it is needed to include more variables to enhance the scope of the study to know more about the career choice of university graduates.

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