# Career Goal Setting Knowledge and Practices among Mid-West University Students

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## Abstract

*This study examines Mid-West University student's career goal setting knowledge and practices among Mid-West University student's. Main objective of the research is to assess and describe MU student's knowledge and real life practices in the course of their career goal setting efforts and getting desired success. Thematic analysis associated with qualitative approach was used to analyze qualitative data derived from students studying at Mid-West University School of Management (MUSOM), Central Campus of Education and Central Campus of Humanities and Social Sciences. To explore and describe the ways students perceive career goal setting process, experience faculty member's teaching, view linkage between courses and career, importance of hearing parents, conducting internship, ideological influence, pressure, and network in terms of shaping career path. 220 graduates were asked questions related to career goal setting and practices via email and group interview. Six themes were generated from the data collected through the purposive sampling. 20 student's were provided the list of questions for collection of more comprehensive information and 200 students were provided just list of activities they could use when developing career goal. The interpreted data offers the conclusion that graduates lacked analytical skill to contextualize their understanding. But they clearly understood different activities such as seminar, presentation, workshop, research, networking, planning and developing communication and leadership skills, and continued reading for making them aware of developing relevant career goal and achieving practical outcomes.*

**Keywords**: *Career goals, ideology, internship, hearing, network, self-confidence, theme, qualitative approach, communication and leadership skills*

## Background

Identifying and describing university graduate's perceptions towards career goal setting experiences is the relevant topic for the research. In addition, exploring and interpreting their views on academic activities such as involvement in presentation, seminar, workshop, research, network, hearing people, and talk for enhancing leadership and communication skills are the most essential issues for university graduates' career transformation. Career goals (Claudia Hosltschlog, 2014) are of useful and practical to manage individuals' career success. Personal goals lead individuals into critical thought process for desired and healthy life functioning (Locke & Latham, 2002). Focused goals (Lindsey M. Greco and Maria L. Kraimer, 2020) guide and direct individual thinking and actions to stay focused on the activities that help in achieving rewards. Therefore, effective goal-setting thinking and action (Bayn Dik, Adam M. Sargent and Michael F. (2008) are very important in career decision-making and that a clear process that requires to analyze priorities and planning, and individual action relating to career development. Goal-setting theory was developed through empirical research and research on career development assessment (Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Lathamm, 2002) shows that career conscious goals affect action. Career counselors (Hosltschlog, 2014) have identified that goals are helpful in understanding context. The study provides information that goals based on contextual grounds and continuous involvement of client in goal-setting activities help clients in getting mental satisfaction. Effective goal setting strategies benefits individuals seeking career counseling in terms of achieving career success (Hosltschlog, 2014). Psychological study on career development has constructed applicable theoretical framework for exploring how the context determines career development and success of an individuals (Hosltschlog, 2014). Edwin A. Locke and Latham (2002) argued that  specified goals are directly linked with task performance. Research conducted by previous researchers provide information research on career goal setting is essential in the higher academia to make students more sensitive and focused for goal setting practices and accomplishing desired outcomes. Therefore,  no assessment has been conducted to understand Mid-West University graduates' knowledge, skills and real life practices of career goal setting practice. The study is required to generate valid information and knowledge about Mid-West University graduate's goal setting knowledge and practices so that  graduates would be more responsible and conscious towards conceptualization of career goal setting  and developing a clear path for professional success.

Mid-West University (MU) offers diverse academic programs to cultivate knowledge and skills in young students. MU believes in philosophy of developing knowable and skilled leaders to transform backward community and national socio-economic practice for just society.  It is necessary to assess MU student's knowledge and real life practices to generate useful literature for making university research-oriented and students aware of how goal setting benefits them for overall career success.

## Problem Statement

University graduates are required to specify their career goal setting concept and skills. They need to be clear regarding the process and steps of career goal setting. Many university graduates are not clear about how to identify and consolidate desired career goal for success. Yet, it is necessary to explore and describe how university graduates practice career goal setting process. With assessment of their career goal setting knowledge and skills it would be easy to introduce them to the basic process of goal setting

and make them feel confident while making decision for their future in the interested field through academic activities.

## Literature Review and Research Goals

No article has been published on the topic of assessing Mid-West University graduates' career goal setting trend and practice. Many students come to university with a dream to be professional but they do not appear to be practically engaged in the process of identifying their goal setting competence and execute what they desire much.

The main purpose of this article is to describe and present university graduates' career goal setting knowledge and live practices in course of seeking better future. As no relevant amount of literature found on the topic to be reviewed, this study just provides theoretical review and review of literature by researchers related to concepts, knowledge, practices, and assessment of goal setting.

## Theoretical Review

Qualitative research (Alan Bryman, 2016) is a research strategy that describes words collected from respondents. As a research strategy it is based on inductivisim, constructionism, and interpretivism. This strategy focuses on perception of social world with the examination of the interpretation of the issues by its participants. It analyzes experiences and attitude of respondents involved in creating meaning of the issues and events. Since 1970s, many critics speak for and against this strategy. It is used as social research which does not examine numbers. Qualitative research (Johan W. Creswell, 2011) is a relevant tool for exploring and analyzing individual or group's understanding of social problems. Its process involves developing questions and procedures, data collection in the participant's setting, analysis of the data and offering general themes derived from the particular evidences. Alan Bryman describes process of the qualitative research such as asking general research questions, selecting relevant subject, collecting relevant data, interpreting data, preparing conceptual and theoretical framework, and preparing research report. It differs from quantitative research approach as presented below by Bryman (2016):

| Qualitative | Quantitative |
|---|---|
| research examines words, theory emergent | research examines numbers, theory testing |
| process, researcher close, unstructured | static, research distant, structured |
| Artificial setting, macro, generalization | natural setting, contextual understanding |

Qualitative research (Creswell, 2011) number of research strategies are used; ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, phenomenological, narrative and thematic strategies. Qualitative research (Prem R. Pant, 2012) goes through the specified methods of analyzing data. Qualitative data is inductive contents, categories, themes and patterns provided by participants. Pant further elaborates methods of analyzing data in qualitative research as below:

Content analysis: It analyzes words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, pictures, and ideas provided by participants through classification and comparison. Thematic analysis: It analyzes patterns and themes of qualitative data. It identifies number of themes and describe them systematically with evidences presented by participants. Narrative analysis: It examines stories told in an oral and written form.

Critics also argue that thematic analysis does not have more specified procedures (Bryman, 2016). Bryman (2016) thematic analysis provides an identification of what theme is, relates data to research questions, theme identified as code focusing on interpretation of themes in the context. Qualitative research (Bryman, 2016) derived data using different sampling approaches such as purpose sampling, theoretical sampling, and snowball sampling.

## Review of the Literature Related to Goal Setting Theories and Practices

Literature related to career goal setting is widely diversified across research communities. Research on goal setting and career development has become the more significant in the current competitive market context of management education offering insights into career plan of action for desired outcomes. Study on career development and practice-counseling (Mancini, 2012) emerged from the development of the career guidance by Frank Parson in early 1900s. This movement (as quoted in Mancini, 2012) produced useful theories and knowledge in the areas of career counseling through development of positivistic theoretical perspective that views career development from a perspective of social constructivism describing career as self-reflection, context conceptualization and reflection of growing experiences. Positivistic perspective claims that career can be understood through scientific measurement and observation. On the contrary, the social constructivist perspective views career as social construct and reflection of individual action and interaction. According to Zunker, theoretical development (as quoted in Mancini, 2012) took place into three different phases; first, second, and third.

First theoretical phase occurred from vocational psychology associated with Frank Parson's work in early 20th century with a focus on objectivism or positivistic perspective. This perspective highlights that career development can be measured through quantification of individual's traits and aptitude. This phase gave an idea that counseling teaching would be useful by using objective perspective. Second phase emerged as a reaction to the first phase describing career as a reflection of continuous evolution and maturation of an individual. This phase interprets career from social learning theories and context. Third phase became more subjectivity oriented giving values to subjective experiences.

Goal-setting theory (Andrew James Clements and Caroline Kamau, 2017) proposes that individuals can perform better when they have specified career goals. Locke and Latham (as qtd in Andrew James Clements and Caroline Kamau, 2017) argue that career goals should more specific and focused as it enables people to evaluate and control their progress and contextualize their performance as per emerging context. Personality psychology is the major source that helps in developing a strategic approach to assessing goals and motivation.

Straining approach has been developed to assess career goals and motivation. Bryan J. Dik, Adam M. Sargent and Michael F. Steger (2008) are responsible for developing striving approach. They argued striving approach has got special space in examining career growth of participants. Participants need to rate each striving on the basis of criteria such as self-efficacy, difficulty, meaningfulness. In other words, they need to give information on thinking and actions that are directly concerned with the accomplishment of their particular striving. Dik, Sargent and Steger used striving approach and presented valid result of how participants practiced career development. Major merits of using the strivings approach to measure career development goals and motivations are useful in motives of people. Based on Dik Sargent assessment (Prez- DSSA, 2018) career development assessment has been

developed to career goals and satisfaction of company's employees. Striving approaches become more flexible tool assessing career goals and practices.

Cheryl Carrico, Holly M. Matusovich, and Marie C. Paretti (2017) defined Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) as the most popular theoretical tool to examine career goals. As Carrico argued SCCT assumes that individuals practice agency through the interaction of their self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations, and personal goals associated to particular activities that they face in the career decision-making and planning process. Self-efficacy beliefs mean people's confidence in their ability to effectively perform a task, and outcome expectations refer to people's beliefs about the outcome of successful performance for that that task. Personal goals (Bryan J Dik & Steger, 2008) refer to people's indentation in to get engaged in a task. This theory offers an idea that people want to stick with goal- directed behavior for which they have greater levels of self-efficacy, ensuring desired outcomes are hoped to achieve from the behavior. SCCT defines this process as the major tool of developing interest, making choice of the thinking and action and seeking better performance.

With greater emphasis on SCCT study goes on to value that individual's self-efficacy and outcome expectations for a particular task than on the specified matter of the activity itself. Existing approaches are just concerned to measure specific task or activity areas with focus on math, science of career decision-making, but existing approaches have not focused on examination of a specific task or activity generated by an individual (Bryan J Dik & Steger, 2008). The study describes the participants' identification of career development goals that they were asked to rate each in terms of their self- efficacy that focuses on confidence in successfully gaining the goal and outcome expectations that ensure success of achieving goal to give an illustration of the strivings approaches. Researchers have tried to investigate the role of spirituality and religion in career development decision-making of an individual Cheryl Carrico, Holly M. Matusovich, and Marie C. Paretti (2017). It is difficult to point out to what extent people perceive spirituality in defining and directing them towards career development goals. All major religions of the world view that spiritual or religious qualities and influence of these qualities upon goal setting define as "sanctification" Cheryl Carrico, Holly M. Matusovich, and Marie C. Paretti (2017). Some research findings suggest that a sense of calling also plays crucial role in guiding career development activities (Bryan J Dik & Steger, 2008). A sense of calling is associated with an orientation toward work that is motivated by external call for connectivity with sense of purpose in life and goals oriented tasks. Self-Determination Career Development developed (Jo-Ann Sowers and Poul R. Swark, 2017) was developed to help people with disabilities for learning self- determination skills and apply the skills to set goals. Finding is that self-determination would be increased partially through career planning activities.

A human agentic perspective (Michael, L Wehmeyer and Wendy Parent, 2011) on self-determination claims that self-determination is construct that largely contributes to attainment of positive outcomes with support of enhanced self-determination. This perspective views people as active contributors to their career development and achievement. Contextual approach to career (Richard A. young, Sheila K. Marshal and Ladislav Valach, 2007) views career as common experiences of people across culture. Culture shapes career and career also affects culture. This means there is direct link between action, project and career.
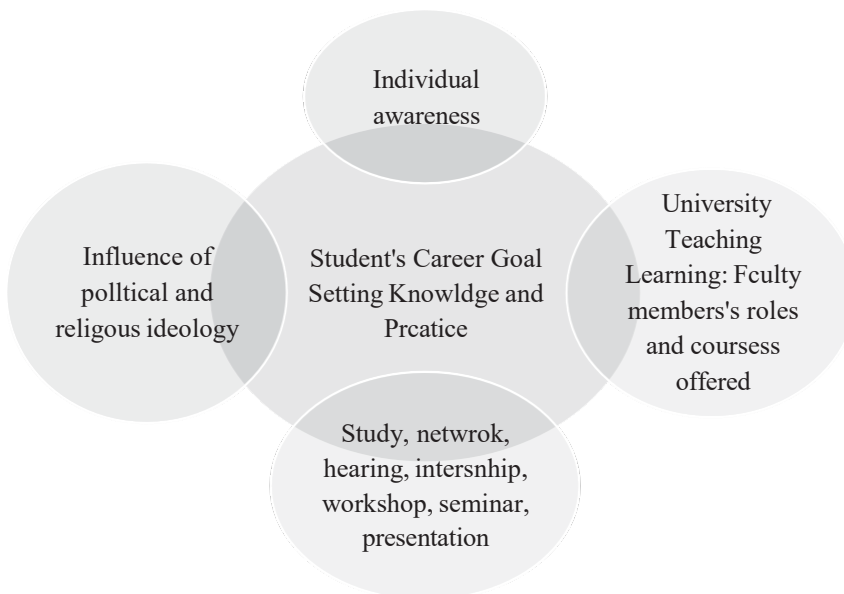
Previous researches on career goals have shown that career goals are future-oriented. Goals are shaped by cultural and learning contexts. Career goals reflect objective plan of action for desired outcomes. Goals guide and orient individuals towards higher level of achievements. Goals represent personality and make people stay more focused on getting desired outcomes by specifying their aims. Goals give them sense of purpose. Different goal theories; self-determination theory, goal-setting theory, motivation system theory, social cognitive career theory and self-verification theory have commonly concluded that goals guide individuals to become action-oriented and successful.

Having seen study on empirical and qualitative approach to assessing career development goals, the present study argues that the qualitative approach is an instrumental for analyzing university graduate's knowledge, skills and practice. At the same time, the study describes graduate's perceptions and attitude towards materialist and spiritual the issues when developing practical goals. This article is to report application of graduate's goal setting knowledge and practice as they do in their real life. The study also makes an attempt to reveal how university graduates perceive their self-generated career development goals in terms of political ideology, spirituality and materialistic ends.

The internal consistency reliability and construct validity of this study are examined with a focus on examination of correlations among qualitative research scales with analysis of data collected in terms of words.

## Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

The study analyzed qualitative data derived from university graduates. Perceptions and variables were closely analyzed to provide the valid findings about Mid-West university student's career goal setting knowledge and practice. The following conceptual framework guided the study for establishing the scientific result based on logical observation and interpretation of correlation among variables.



Individual awareness

University Teaching Learning: Fculty members's roles and coursess offered

Influence of polltical and religous ideology

Student's Career Goal Setting Knowldge and Prcatice

Study, netwrok, hearing, intersnhip, workshop, seminar, presentation

**Research Questions**:

1. What extent students are aware of career goal setting knowledge and skills?
2. How students see faculty members, courses and academic activities in relation to their career setting goal practice?
3. What is student's experiences towards political and religious ideology?

## Research Objectives

1. To assess student's perceptions towards career goal setting for real life success.
2. To describe faculty members and courses connectivity towards students' career development.

## Study Design, Methods Tools and Data Analysis

The study employed qualitative study method and design. Qualitative design described, words, sentences and paragraph by respondents using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis (Bryman, 2016) included steps such as reading patterns of perceptions from the materials collected, coding the materials into different categories, elaborating codes into themes symmetrically with names, and comparative examination of themes with adequate evidences. Method of data collection was purpose sampling that provided the list questions for unstructured interview via email and group discussion. 220 students participated in proving data in written form. Purpose sampling led researchers to choose the elements to be included in the study to obtain experiences of the targeting group that few students studying in bachelor and master programs at Mid-West University.

## Analysis

Data was collected from 220 students studying in bachelor and master program at Mid-West University, Surkhet, Nepal. Data collected helped in generating five major variables; student's career development knowledge and skill, faculty member's role for shaping student's career goal, connectivity between courses and student's practical career goal development, political and religious influence upon student's career development, and student's individual freedom in realizing and achieving career goal. Variables reveal a crucial gap between research questions asked and responses provided by students. The way students demonstrated their knowledge, skills, experiences and practices in terms of developing and achieving career goal clearly shows that students lack applicable theoretical concepts and real life skill for the innovative career goal development and practices. Purpose of the study was to identify student's level of career development understanding and application of their understanding to the real life. Only ten students gave relatively relevant response to the questions and rest of the student's responses lacked accuracy and critical thinking while giving responses. Students showed poor knowledge, skill and clear understanding of how to develop career goal and its practice. They seem to hear their friends and lack dedication towards development and application of their own career goal based on study experiences and personal career path. All students agreed that faculty members help for career development and see close connectivity between study experiences and professional goal development. Very few student, almost five students out of 220 expressed that political ideology is helpful in developing and achieving their career goal. Only eight students believed in god for career goal setting and achievement. 215 students agreed that study, network, hearing parents, internship, and self-assessment are the reliable instruments for career goal setting and achievement. All students wanted to avoid pressure upon them for entering certain career.

## Results and Discussion

The six themes as presented below were generated out of the data collected from student's literature for the thematic description of student knowledge and skill relating to career development through goal setting:

Theme 1 :    Knowledge towards career goal setting practices and awareness towards types of career goals

Theme 2 :    Constructive role of faculty members towards career development

Theme 3 :    Close connectivity between study experiences and professional goal development

Theme 4 :    Weak influence of Political and spiritual ideology in career development

Theme 5 :    Hearing positive people, parents and internship for career development

Theme 6 :    Avoiding pressure for entering certain career path Vs Self-assessment and network

### Theme 1: knowledge towards career goal setting practices and awareness towards types of goals Knowledge towards career goal setting practices

2020 respondents did not give relevant concepts and examples to show their comprehensive knowledge on career goal development and practices. 20 graduates were given 2 subjective questions; What do you know about your career goal setting? Briefly discuss with a clear example and Clearly mention your short term, midterm and long terms career goal. In case of the giving their own career goal setting with a clear example, all graduates provided same definition of goal setting copied from other source. They lacked clear way to define their own career goal setting and use of their knowledge in their day to day life. For example, 21 years old female respondent studying in BBA said "goal setting is about setting & being settlement in a profession that we aim to be in the future period. e.g: To become a manager of bank is also an example of career goal setting." The concept given is too general. Respondent failed to define goal setting concept in her own context. She did not tell about her career goal setting practice. She just provided meaning of goal setting which does not tell about her own career goal development and practice. Similarly, 21 years old male respondent studying in BBA gave answer the "Career goal setting of my life is to obtain the best knowledge in professional method. Goal is to obtain the proper job and proper salary with the help of business knowledge." Respondent focused on meaning of goal setting. He did not tell anything about his own goal setting process. Nobody gave accurate answer to the question What do you know about your career goal setting? Briefly discuss with a clear example. All of them presented the similar concepts which do not reveal graduates' original thinking skill in terms of describing their own career goal developing process. Even graduates studying in MBA program provided the poor ideas regarding their goal setting process and practice. For example, 25 five years old male respondent studying in MBA program said:

> A career goal is a well-defined statement explaining the profession that an individual intends to pursue throughout his career. It is important for every employee or job seeker to define their career goals clearly. It helps them to come up with effective action plans. Goals are often assigned by others (e.g employers, parents, teachers), but people also set goals on their own.

My Self set goals, however, are often influenced by others, for example, when goals are conjointly set like in participative decision making and employee involvement, or when goals are adopted from highly respected models (adopting standards for self-reward). My personal attributes that strongly determine goal choice are perceived desirability and feasibility. I prefer to choose goals that are desirable and feasible. The content of set goals is influenced by needs, wishes, and higher order goals. For an example, the contents of my goals reflect my needs, Autonomy, competence, and social integration needs expected to promote goal setting focused on self-realization rather than materialistic gains.

Career goal setting concept and practices as stated in the above given paragraph does not say much about respondent goal setting activities rather paragraph gives respondent's general understanding of goal setting derived from other source. He was not supposed to say what he said in the above paragraph. He was asked to describe what and how he does involve in developing career goal development and practice in real life activities. He is just wordy without providing solid proof to demonstrate his own goal setting practice that could show his original thinking. In the same fashion, 22 years old respondent studying in MBA program provided answer:

> *I know career goal setting means future plan of young people. This is too much for every people's daily behavior by career goal. People make own strategic plan which is easy to behave their personal life. For example; Business is the occupation of people and work is his/her career. That defined career goal setting.*

This statement does not tell anything about respondent's goal setting activities and use of knowledge in real life. As other respondents he just made general statement which lacks contextual facts.

## Awareness towards types of career goals

Data derived from respondent's answers shows that 18 graduates were more aware and only 3 graduates were less aware of short-term, mid-term and long-term career goal. They clearly mentioned short-term. Mid-term, and long-term long while answering "Clearly mention your short term, midterm and long terms career goal." For example, 21 years old female respondent studying in BBA program said "Short Term Goal: To complete BBA, Mid-Term goal: To work in a bank, Long Term Goal: To become a manager of a bank." The way she stated three types of goals with clear ideas provides the evidence that she was clear about her short-term, mid-term and long-term career goal. A female respondent studying in BBA program also clearly expressed his career goal types as below:

### Short term goal

Short term goals are more immediate goals I set for myself to achieve my larger, long - term goals. Therefore, my short term goal is complete my BBA course (4 years) and to earn a undergraduate certificate of BBA.

### Mid - term goal

My mid - term goal is to earn a degree or certificate of MBA

**Long - term goal**

My long -term goal is starting my own Business become an Entrepreneur.

21 years old graduate studying in BBA program presented less awareness towards types of her career goal as she expressed:

Short term        : completion of BBA
Midterm           : job settlement
Long term goal :  career development

She just provided words without clear meanings as others. The first "completion of BBA is clear, second "job settlement" and third "career development" are vague. She seemed less conscious towards different steps of career goal for her career development.

## Theme 2: Constructive role of faculty members towards career development

19 respondents agreed positive attitude towards the role of faculty members for professional career development and achievement of the students when answering the question " Do your faculty members guide on developing your professional goal and its achievement? Information derived from 20 respondents revealed constructive role of faculty members for developing graduate's career goal. 20 years old female respondent studying in BBA program said "Yes, my faculty members guide me on developing my professional goal and its achievement by encouraging and providing fruitful suggestions." Another female respondent studying in BBA program expressed how did her faculty member helped in shaping her career:

Obviously my faculty members Guide on developing my professional goal and it's achievement . They Guide on my set my direction, Identifying competencies, self-Assessment and Individual development plan implementation. They help me in my creating a vision of success, knowledge of the skills required to succeed, formal or informal Assessment, and an Individual development plan. They teach me how to present my ideas professionally, how to think critically, analysis of data, effective presentation of business analysis, critical thinking and reasoning skills to Identify problems and apply problem-solving abilities. They teach me a sense of ethics and values which can be applied in a personal and professional environment. They establish my learning communities and improve the learning environment so my faculty members Guide on  developing my professional goal and it's achievement .

The above paragraph makes sure that university faculty members conducted their teaching learning activities linking with graduate's career development. They made their efforts for making their students aware of learning and career development. Even courses provided to students were relevant to lead students into direction of career path.

Female respondent studying in MBA program also agreed with an idea that faculty members were supportive in developing graduates' career goal as he said:

Yes, of course. Faculty member's guide on developing our professional goal and its achievement. They provide projector for helps teachers and students in teaching and learning process. They make group as well as individual presentation according to courses for us. They

help in solving difficult problems. They call foreign students to interact with us by communication skills and learned their teaching and learning process. They take examinations for our better knowledge and skills.

**Theme 3: Close connectivity between study experiences and professional goal development**

Respondents were asked to give their understanding on their courses and professional career development by putting the questions; Explain how your study experiences and course learning support in developing your professional goal achievement and Do you see any link between your study and identification of your profession? All 20 respondents agreed that the courses they were studying had close connectivity with their professional goal development.

21 years old female respondent studying in BBA program provided her positive understanding relating to study experience, courses and professional goal development. She expressed "study experiences and course learning support in developing my professional goal achievement as all the courses of BBA are related to banking sector & seminar, other programs support my goal. "She further said" I see the educational course linkage, experiences during study between my study & profession." As per her statements it could be easy to conclude that BBA courses, teaching learning and graduate's professional development were closely associated. 18 years old female respondent studying in BBA also provided the same experience that BBA courses, teaching and career development were related to each other. She clearly mentioned "Presentation skill and interacting with people kind of helping us to support in developing our professional goal development." It was through Class activities such as practice of presentation and interaction with other people were some solid evidences showing how teaching learning helped in shaping graduate's professional growth. Some respondents provided a paragraph describing how study experience, courses, and professional development were interconnected. One of the examples goes as below:

> It seems to me that, There is various link between my study and identification of my profession. I might find that a Bachelor's in Business Administration is the perfect fit for me and my future.

> In a BBA course, I learn all about starting and managing a business. I can take this knowledge, and become an Entrepreneur to start my own business. My BBA degree Will prepares for all the hard work that comes with starting a business. I Will also be equipped knowledge of Accounting, organizational structure, and marketing. When it comes to earnings, with my own business, the sky's the limit .

> The MBA is the next step after completing BBA. Though BBA is a professional degree that prepares me to be a part of the professional world, with an additional MBA, I can go for specialized professions that excite me. BBA and MBA programs concentrate on giving me skills to manage business, so the most likely MBA career path is becoming an Entrepreneur. The MBA coursework prepares me for high-intensity work, managing people and resources, so these skills Will be extremely useful in whatever field or industry. I choose to establish my business in. My study of BBA Will help me what sort of business are most demanded in my field of expertise. This Will help me in tailoring my business to match the demand and Will increase the likelihood that it Will succeed.

Through the above paragraph graduate provided an evidence BBA and MBA courses would be instrumental in exploring better career of entrepreneurship. Courses would give insights into business project development and application. Courses would lead graduates into understanding of resources, skill development, marketing, an organization, and industry along with expertise. Respondents studying in MBA program also found close linkage between courses, study experiences and professional development. 25 five years respondent studying in MBA program provided the more comprehensive understanding of course, study experience and professional development as below:

> As of myself, a higher education gives you the shoes to take that next step. A **Forbes article by Jacquelyn Smith** states that many adults return to school to enhance their career. The article cites author Laura Vanderkamp in saying that many believe "additional education will help them achieve their career goals, like making more money, advancing in their current occupation, or starting in a different one."

> My study experiences and course learning is providing me influential step in staying competitive and enhancing my skills. whether I'm starting out in career or returning to continue to build upon my years of experience, the course i have learned and the experience of study helps me to keep moving forward.

> On the whole, the study experiences and course learning is comforting or co-operating me to gain knowledge from which I'll be equipped with practical skills and knowledge that i can apply in my workplace. For example, in a business administration degree program I'll learn best practises in accounting to understand the financial aspect of my work and learn about leadership principle and how to deal with conflict. Furthermore, the study experiences and course learning is enhancing my soft skills to demonstrate a strong work ethics and boost my confidence to develop my professional goal achievement.

This elaborated paragraph presents an idea that MBA course would provide an informed knowledge and leadership skills to boost confidence in graduates. Courses would give ethics and energy for moving ahead for better career. All respondents were hopeful with courses and study for being equipped with best knowledge and skills for professional growth.

## Theme 4: Weak influence of Political and spiritual ideology upon career development

200 students were asked to give their experiences and understanding on influence of political and religious ideology in shaping career development. Only 7 respondents believed that their network with political parties, people and ideological maturity would shape their better career. Respondents just expressed: "to network with my political leaders and enhance ideology for my career." Other six respondents having faith in political ideology for career said that network with political leaders and ideological advancement would equip them well for career goal achievement. 193 respondents did not see close association between political network and career development. They did not tell anything about how their political association could shape their career.

Only 8 respondents expressed an understanding that their prayer to god would bless them for career development. All respondents just said "I pray for career." Rest of all respondents did not show any

connectivity with religious ideology and practice. Moreover, they strongly believed in enhancing their communication, reading, presentation, and research skills for career development.

## Theme 5: Hearing parents and internship for career development

All 200 respondents agreed with the common notion that hearing parents and internship could help a lot in exploring and consolidating career. They also focused on positive people. By positive people they referred to role model, successful and famous people from different business and social backgrounds. Respondent said "surrounded myself with positive people." All respondents presented common focus that they wanted to hear their parents when exploring career development. Respondent said "talking to my parents about what they think about my future." Similarly, 200 respondents gave the same focus on importance of internship for exploring career path. They commonly said "conduct research for career development." Internship was taken as a relevant research project to develop career goal. They wanted to collect more information on their desired field so they could know what would be stimulating for career.

## Theme 6: Avoiding pressure Vs Self-assessment and network for career path

All 200 respondents completely came with the same understanding that they would avoid pressure upon them for entering certain career. They wanted to work out of their own self-confidence and realization when choosing career. All respondents said "Avoid people who pressure me to enter certain career." In the same way, they also expressed similar statement" "avoid negative people from life and daily routine." In addition, they presented people putting pressure upon them as negative. The statement makes sure that graduates were aware of individual freedom and choice for going into their desired career path with the support of self-assessment and network. They wanted to increase their self- confidence and expand network among relevant people and resources which could assist them for being clear on career direction. Graduates found self-assessment and network more appropriate means of promoting their career path. They focused on assessment and network development to explore and create their desired future. For instance, all respondents expressed the common statement "take assessment to help me understand myself." They related assessment to knowing own self, taking support from counselor, learning cross-culture ideas, studying market, watching relevant documentary, seminar, workshop talk programs, leadership and communication skills. Respondent came with the expression "get help from counselor." Another respondent said "enhance my ability through the help of internet." Graduates were aware of significance of developing leadership and communication skills through their active involvement in seminar, workshop, presentation and talk. Respondent wrote "visit new places to know the culture and environment." In the same way, another respondent expressed " improve English and computer skills." Almost all respondents highlighted an idea that developing leadership skills such as decision making abilities and communication skills which they could develop through their involvement in interaction, presentation, seminar and project works. This shows that graduates were familiar with the major instrumental ways of developing career.

## Findings

### Major Findings

The first major finding of the study offers reason that university graduates lack analytical thinking to contextualize career goal setting process that could give a clear picture of their own understanding of career goal setting practice. Second major finding demonstrates graduate's clear understanding of types of career goals such as short-term, mid-term and long-term except few number of graduates failing to tell about short-term, mid-term and long-term goal. Third major finding is that graduates reflective on giving evidences on how faculty members were supportive in enhancing their career goals and how courses were instrumental for shaping their career development. Both faculty member's teaching learning activities and courses offered are presented as genuine means in course of developing career development of the graduates. Fourth finding presents that gradates did not link their career development with political and religious ideology. Only 5 percent graduates believed in political network and prayer for being successful. Fifth finding is that graduates took hearing parents and conducting internship as good methods of exploring and achieving their desired career goals. All graduates viewed pressure for entering certain career path as unnecessary which all wanted to avoid for enhancing self-confidence.

### Minor Findings

All graduates came up with perception that their involvement in study, seminar, workshop, and presentation associated with career development would be more valid ways of developing their career goal and achieving goals established. They agreed that developing communication skills and leadership skills through participation in talk, presentation and real life research could enrich their insights into career development.

### Limitations

The study focused on graduate and undergraduate students studying in Mid-West University. Students studying in BBA and MBA program at Mid-West University School of Management (MUSOM) were selected for being respondents. Students studying in Bachelor of Education and Master of Education at the Central Campus of Education, students studying in BA and MA English at Central Campus of Humanities and Social Sciences participated in providing their perceptions for this study.

### Conclusion

The findings demonstrate university graduates need to enhance their analytical thinking skills to contextualize what they understand. Although courses offered and faculty members are helpful as graduates argued, I would be better to offer real life practice based courses, seminar, workshop, research projects and presentation to develop critical thinking skills in graduates. Findings do not show gap between female and male graduates in course of developing career goals. Graduates focused on defining meaning of goal setting without their emphasis on how they developed their particular goal for successful career. Obviously, this presents how they lacked critical skill for telling the correct idea. They were asked to present their own ways of developing career goal, but they presented meaning of career goal in general. Findings also show that graduates were aware of activities that could improve their career goal setting and achieving practices as they argued their involvement in study, internship,

talk, interaction, research, planning, presentation, hearing people, and developing network are real life instruments for making them equipped for being professional.

## Implications of the Study for all Stakeholders

The study has presented an authentic document for young people to understand how their involvement academic activities such as study, research, presentation, seminar, workshop, and planning could empower them for being successful goal developer and achiever. It would be original work for university to gain insights into courses development and teaching learning activities. Faculty members would understand what do for making students familiar with practical issues related to career, courses and learning activities.

## Ethical/Safety Issues

The study maintained ethical issues at each step for producing valid result and findings. Name and sources would not be revealed.

## Recommendations

This study was limited to describe general perceptions provided by graduates. It could not deal with graduate's perceptions using case method. To bring real life understanding of graduates to the surface and make them realize their strengths and weaknesses related to career development and study experiences. Future researcher could make more rigorous study on real life career development using case method.

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