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Bangladeshi Students' Motivation, Aspiration and Satisfaction Regarding Journalism Education

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Abstract

Journalism as a university degree is unpopular in Bangladesh. It has relative low enrollment numbers and these numbers have been slightly decreasing over the years. But there are young Bangladeshis who still aspire to join the profession and have enrolled on programs. In the hope of convincing more young people to enter the field, it is necessary to investigate the motivations of these students. What are their aspirations? Who is supporting them in their dream? What are the positions they aim for? What are their perceived obstacles in sustaining a career in journalism? What is their satisfaction regarding their internship program and their overall educational experience? This study draws on 327 journalism students from different private and public universities. Data gathering, via a survey questionnaire, was conducted in October and November 2018, and reveals a host of challenges such as family pressure, inadequate financial support and outdated journalism curricula.

Keywords: Journalism Education; Bangladesh; Students; Higher Education; Mediascape
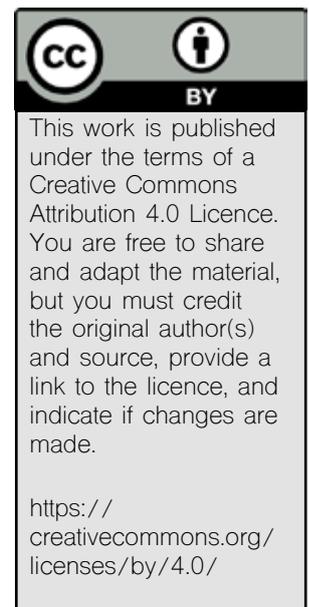
Introduction

Journalism as a university degree has never been popular in Bangladesh. This is mainly due to the market-driven approach in university education. After the 1971 Liberation War, Bangladesh inherited from Pakistan a small number of higher education institutions. The newly independent country had six public universities - four general and two technical. In the 1980s, however, the country felt pressed to open up private universities given the re-orientation of the economy and the politicization of public university administration. Multinational

corporations started setting up operations in the country in light of privatization policies and the lowering of import barriers. With their entry, there was an increased demand for profession-related degrees. The public universities, on the other hand, were not about to re-think their academic approach. Worse, frequent season jams (necessitating an extra two to three years to complete a degree) brought about an exodus of students to India and Western countries (Alam et. al., 2007).

Given the situation, the Parliament passed the Private University Act of 1992. Months after its passage, the government approved the establishment of the first private university – North South University (NSU) - with a charter to offer degree level courses. The following year, another four or five universities were set up (Alam et. al., 2007). In 2015, the University Grants Commission (UGC) listed 80 private universities on their website. Five years later, the number increased to 129 private and 41 public universities – a total of 170. Chowdhury (2007) identifies social recognition as a key motivator for owners to set up private universities. At the same time, however, he observes that owners desired profit despite being registered as not-for-profit. To ensure profitability, private universities established a market-driven approach which sought to entice the upper class by adopting the North American education model. Kabir (2012) explains that the professional orientation of North American education enabled graduates to dominate the job market. This strategy attracted the upper class given their preference for the American system, the exclusiveness of private education and the guarantee of landing lucrative job placements. Monem and Baniamin (2010) add that, unlike their public counterparts, private universities can follow market trends, they can offer better student-teacher ratios, they monitor student attendance and participation better, and they evaluate student performance in line with the North American model which has an embedded continuous assessment procedure.

Private education institutions initially targeted the elite residing in Dhaka and metropolitan cities. Then, they expanded their market to include middle income students from relatively richer districts. With limited public university seats, many meritorious secondary education graduates eventually seek private university education (Mohammad et. al., 2008). The demand for tertiary education, however, has not been uniform across disciplines and across universities. Kabir (2012) argues that parents perceive that market-related degrees are key to economic survival. Hence, they convince their children to take courses that would ensure absorption into the corporate sector. They are less concerned with their children's likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses. Parents and students believe that job-related courses would result in quick employment with higher starting salary levels (Alam et. al., 2007). They see higher education as a means to get a diploma – a gate pass for a job – and not as a way to acquire knowledge and skills (British Council, 2014).

Alam (2009), Alam et. al. (2007), Mohammad et. al. (2008) and Kabir (2012) identify these popular market-driven degrees as follows: business, computer science, engineering, medicine, ICT and English. The British Council (2014) suggests that business and management degrees continue to be popular since students anticipate jobs in banking and other private firms, or look forward to becoming entrepreneurs. In an interview, a student commented to Kabir (2012) that "my family thought that a business administration degree would help me get a job in a corporate line quickly. They thought that if I got a degree in education, I would be a high school teacher at best." Another student admitted taking computer engineering due to "family pressure. They think that beyond medical, engineering and business, other degrees have no value in the job market." A student "experienced bad talk after I changed my area and began doing undergraduate work in mass communication. They tell me: 'what will you do with this degree? This subject has no value and will not get any job but a journalist.'"

Examining annual reports submitted by the various public and private universities reveals that the most popular fields of study are engineering and business. In 2018, the number of students in social science (where journalism sits) was only 8,427 compared to engineering with 139,093 and business with 102,029. Moreover, the number of social

Faculty	Number of Students		
	2016	2017	2018
School of Engineering	109,979	122,256	139,093
School of Business	112,553	115,145	102,029
School of Arts and Humanities	35,399	37,289	36,615
School of Social Science	9,403	8,474	8,427

Source: University Grants Commission (2020)

Table 1. Number of Students in Selected Schools in 2016, 2017 and 2018

science students has decreased slightly from 2016 to 2018. Among the social sciences, there were 4,509 journalism students in 2018 - accounting for 53.5% of the total number of students in the said school.

Economic payback in the journalism profession

Given the cost of private university education, parents and students evaluate degree programs based on their ability to secure high paying jobs. Unfortunately, in Bangladesh, journalists face a myriad of economic woes including irregular and unstandardized wages, unclear promotion policies and job insecurity. In December 2019, German Media Organization Deutsche Welle reported that Bangladesh has experienced a huge expansion in its media sector, but has failed to establish a set of work and payment standards for the people working in the field. Genilo

et. al. (2019, p. 43), after interviewing nine senior media professionals, discovered that most media houses "have no written human resource policies on regularization and promotion." Regularization is the process where an employee moves from probationary to permanent status. In the media industry, it may take as little as three months to as long as two years to obtain regularization. For promotion, some media houses use a panel while others rely solely on the editor's wishes. It can take up to four years to get a promotion. Regarding salaries, only a few follow the guidelines of the government's Wage Board. The uncertainties facing the media industry may have caused the unsatisfactory economic packages given to journalists. Journalism Professor Kaberi Gayen, in a November 2019 opinion column in *The Daily Star*, explained that there have been employee cuts in several established newspaper houses. These houses are facing competition from online and social media, which are attracting more advertising revenue. Moreover, the number of media outlets is also increasing – leading to a shrinking market size ratio. Settles and Ahmed (2021) made similar observations. According to them, "the viability of media in Bangladesh to support the regular production of high quality, impactful journalism is at a crossroads" (p.9). This is due to the digital transition, the decrease in advertising revenue, the public's decreasing trust in the media, and government regulations that are not supportive of established media organizations and new media start-ups.

On-the-job training or university education

Another reason for the unpopularity of journalism as an academic degree may be traced to the on-going debate between practitioners and educationalists regarding the best place to train journalists – in the newsroom or in the classroom. As with other countries, the training of journalists in Bangladesh started out informally, i.e. journalists learned on the job. Berger and Foote (2017, p. 246) referred to this training as "apprenticeship style".

However, as mass communication expanded, the media industry saw the need for hiring people with more high-end skills. Public higher educational institutions were first to cater to this demand, offering diploma and degree programs on journalism and mass communication. In the 1980s, there was a media boom in Asia and a corresponding demand for formal journalism education (Berger and Foote, 2017). By the 2000s, university-level journalism education courses were ubiquitous the world over, offered by public universities, private universities and stand-alone educational institutions. The World Journalism Education Council's worldwide journalism education census has registered nearly 3,000 global programs in its database.

University journalism and media programs play a big role in the professionalization of journalism. Evans (2014, p. 75) argues that universities "can mould, engender or encourage qualities and

dispositions traditionally associated with good journalism." While studying, students develop self-efficacy beliefs, skepticism, tenacity, resilience and confidence. Universities play a role as a place of practice and reflection, developer of networks, extender of knowledge and instiller of ethics. Focusing on skills, Deuze (2006, p. 23) adds that journalism education traditionally covers "practical skills training and general contextual education and liberal arts courses." Journalism programs around the globe balance these three areas depending on their position vis-a-vis ten categories: motivation; paradigm; mission; orientation; direction; contextualization; education; curriculum; method; and management and organization.

Such efforts by universities have not been lost on the media industry. With the rise of journalism and media educational institutions, more proprietors, journalists and institutional authorities have begun to see the benefit of professionalization on the trade (Bossio, 2011). University education in journalism and media meant the articulation of a cultural identity for journalists and the articulation of their role in good governance. Deuze (2006) concurs that as more and more journalists graduated from schools, departments and institutes, the more professionalized the industry became.

Journalism Education in Bangladesh

In Bangladesh, the first journalism program was established in 1962 at Dhaka University. It took around three decades before the second program was set up at Rajshahi University. Two years later, the third program was introduced by a private university – the Independent University of Bangladesh (IUB). By the end of 2018, there were 18 journalism and media-related programs – nine from private and another nine from public universities. There were a total of 4,509 journalism and media students in the country – 52.8 percent from the private universities and 47.2 percent from the public universities. Tables 2 and 3 provide the general profile of journalism programs in public and private universities.

The growth of journalism education in the country simply mirrored market movements. Driven by internal and external factors, by the end of the 2000s, the economy had "consistently sustained impressive growth rates of close to 6 percent a year" (Lewis, 2011, p. 148). As a result, the country witnessed tremendous growth in all media sectors – print, radio, television, film and new media. Shoesmith and Mahmud (2013) observe that local conglomerates played a crucial role to this phenomenon as they saw "both economic value and the accruing of political influence as sufficient for investment in the field" (p. 20). Shoesmith and Genilo (2013) described it as "the symbiotic relationship between the media and the marketplace" (p. 379). Journalism education would have been stagnant had it not been for the explosion of jobs in the media sector.

University	Year Established	Academic Staff (Full Time)	Academic Staff (Part Time)	Non-academic Staff	Student Number
Dhaka University (DU)	1962	29	39	13	262
Rajshahi University (RU)	1991	22	2	8	250
Chittagong University (CU)	1994	21	0	6	370
Jagannath University (JUN)	2009	14	0	4	307
Jahangirnagar University (JU)	2011	10	9	6	300
Begum Rokeya University Rangpur (BRUR)	2011	5	3	6	353
Khulna University (KU)	2015	7	8	3	120
Comilla University (CoU)	2015	3	0	1	144
Barisal University (BU)	2018	3	0	2	20

Source: Genilo et. al. (2019)

Table 2. General Profile of Journalism Programs in Public Universities

University	Year Established	Academic Staff (FT)	Academic Staff (PT)	Non-academic Staff	Student Number
Independent University Bangladesh (IUB)	1993	16	9	5	400
University of Development Alternatives (UODA)	2002	10	10	5	140
University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB)	2004	19	13	6	770
Stamford University	2005	10	3	7	233
Daffodil International University (DIU)	2007	7	6	2	315
Manarat International University (MIU)	2013	5	2	1	193
Port City International University (PCIU)	2013	4	1	3	135
North Bengal International University (NBIU)	2014	2	2	2	105
Varendra University (VU)	2015	3	7	2	92

Source: Genilo et. al. (2019)

Table 3. General Profile of Journalism Programs in Private Universities

According to Ullah (2013), there have been seven development stages in journalism education since the 1960s. These stages were as follows: (1) vocational training to diploma, (2) basic journalism to mass communication and journalism, (3) interdisciplinary approach, (4) liberal humanistic to social science approach, (5) technology-less to technology-plus approach, (6) privatization of public education, and (7) collaborative efforts with foreign universities. Ullah (2016) explains that the curricular shifts have been prompted by the realities of political change coupled with socio-economic transformation, demands from journalism graduates for job-specific skillsets, the introduction of new communication technologies in media houses, and the influence of globalization on journalism education.

At the onset, similar to the experiences in several countries, many practitioners treated journalism as an open profession for all. They believed that there was no need to have a formal university degree in journalism or communication to become a journalist (Ullah, 2008). They maintained that journalists would receive the best schooling in the editorial offices, not in journalism departments. In the mid-1970s, however, the government felt the necessity of improving the profession and established the Press Institute of Bangladesh (PIB) in 1976. The PIB offered various short courses and a post-graduate diploma in journalism (with a duration of ten months). In 1980, it instituted the National Institute of Mass Communication, which offered four three-month long journalism-related short courses.

In an interview with Ullah (2008), DU Journalism Professors Sakahwat Ali Khan and Golam Rahman (considered the country's journalism education pioneers) observed that the lack of well-rounded education is one of the primary reasons for the proliferation of ill-trained and irresponsible media practitioners. Hence, they proceeded to develop curricula that covered a range of courses including mass communication, media studies, digital production, and sociology. With this, journalism fell under the umbrella of communication and/or media studies (Ullah, 2008). As a result, the Bangladesh Centre for Development, Journalism and Communication (BCDJC)-UNESCO (2009) survey reported that there were no traditional journalism curricula in the country. Instead, the report showed that the various syllabi were a mixture of journalism, media studies, communication, social science and multimedia elements. The syllabi also emphasised theory at the expense of practice.

Ullah (2008) notes that the movement towards the fifth to seventh stages was brought about by student demand for greater job opportunities. Ullah and Akther (2016) explain that the normative practice was for higher education to be about gathering knowledge and generating new ideas. But, nowadays, educators cannot ignore the demands of the profession; there is a need to consult the industry when preparing

the curricula. Given this situation, a few private universities (such as IUB and ULAB) have taken a pro-industry approach to education. Their course offerings have started to focus on the professional skillsets of their graduates, measuring student success in terms of employability and placing emphasis on the application of new technologies in line with the job requirements of the media industry (Ullah and Akther, 2016). They invested a great deal in their media laboratories and equipment. However, these universities also have a liberal arts foundation for all their students, who develop interdisciplinary problem-solving approaches. These private universities have likewise strengthened their links with industry. In 2013, Dhaka Tribune and ULAB's Media Studies and Journalism Department collaborated to list traditional, new, and specialized skills that journalists must possess to succeed in the profession. Traditional skills are the tried and tested general skills all journalists must acquire in order to enter and sustain in the profession. The specialized skills relate to reporting in specific

Traditional Skills	Specialized Skills	New Skills
Finding own stories	Media Law	Cyber Security
Language use	Business Journalism	Computer Program Knowledge
News Writing	Health and Safety	Blogging
News Gathering	Right to Information Act	Writing for Multi-Platforms
Interviewing	Environmental Journalism	User Generated Content
Basic sub-editing	Code of Ethics in Journalism	Assembling News Bulletins and Audio/Video Packages Moderating User Comments
Feature Writing	Religious Reporting	Using Web Statistics to Drive News Agenda
Basic Photography	Science Reporting	Remote Working
Photo journalism	Copyright Law	Writing for Search Engine Optimization
Time management	Conflict Reporting	Video Skills – Recording and Editing
	Data Journalism	

Table 4. Skillsets to be possesed by aspiring journalists

sectors or areas – areas requiring specialized knowledge such as health, business, science, etc. The news skills refer to the skills needed to navigate and negotiate the digital age. These are shown in Table 4.

On one hand, public universities (like DU, RU, CU, BRUR, JUN and JU) maintained their emphasis on the social sciences and liberal arts with the aim of producing well-rounded graduates for media and government entities. They strongly opposed the teaching of trade courses such as advertising and public relations in journalism because they thought that these were more relevant to business and marketing studies (Ullah and Akther, 2016). Instead, they focused on the sociological links between

media and politics. Some journalism departments in private universities (such as Stamford University and DIU) followed the curriculum of public universities. They almost replicated the DU curricula given that academics from that institution served as their advisers.

In light of this complex situation, this research investigated the motivations of Bangladeshi students in pursuing journalism education. In addition, it examined the perceptions of the said students vis-à-vis their aspirations and perceived challenges in the profession. The study also inquired about their satisfaction regarding their journalism education and addressed underexplored areas of a previous study entitled "Journalism Education in Bangladesh: From Aspiring Journalists to Career Professionals." In this earlier study, using the leaky pipe as its metaphor, Genilo et. al. (2019) identified the points where aspiring journalists fail to enter and thrive in their profession – identifying factors that prevent them from entering and/ or progressing in journalism schools and in media organizations. The present study, on the other hand, examines why the pool of aspirants considering journalism education in the country is relatively small. It is hoped that some insights can be gleaned in the hope of increasing enrollment in journalism schools in the country.

Problem Statement
Given the market-driven nature of higher education and the gap between academia and industry regarding producing quality professionals, journalism degree programs have become unpopular in the country. However, there are still young people who aspire to become journalists by entering journalism programs of universities. In this regard, it is important to find out the following: What are the motivations of students in entering journalism school? Who is supporting them in their dream? What journalism positions do they aspire to? What news beats do they wish to cover? What are their perceived challenges in sustaining a journalism career? What are their perceptions about their journalism education?   What types of skills are they confident about possessing?

Research Objectives
The objectives of the study were as follows:

1. to determine the motivations of students in entering journalism schools in terms of:
- influences to study journalism;
- reasons to study journalism;
- family support to study journalism;
- school support to study journalism.

2. to know the aspirations of journalism students regarding their professions in the aspects of:
- news media type to work in;

- •   newsroom positions sought;
- •   news beats to cover;
- •   perception on career prospects.

3. to examine their satisfaction with their journalism education in the following areas:
- •   general journalism education standard;
- •   satisfaction with internship program;
- •   skills learned and possessed.

Study Methodology

The researcher was more interested to find out the "what" than the "why" behind the existing demand for journalism education. Hence, the study was descriptive and quantitative - making use of a survey method. The survey provided a general picture regarding the various factors affecting journalism students' motivations, aspirations and satisfaction. The sample size for the survey in the universities was 327. The sample was based on the population of journalism students (which is 2,203) provided by Ullah (2016). The confidence level was 95%, in other words, the researcher had 95% confidence that repeating the survey would get the same results. The methodology used cluster sampling in the sense that six separate groups were created from upper level students of select public (DU, RU and CU) and private (ULAB, Stamford and DIU) universities.

Sl.	Type of institution	Total No. of Students	Percentage	Sample Size
1.	University (Public)	1296	58.83	192
2.	University (Private)	907	41.17	135
	Total	2203	100	327

Table 5. Sampling frame for survey

The researcher ensured that the sample size was proportional to public vs. private institutions as shown in Table 5. The survey was conducted using a self-administered, semi-structured questionnaire; a Likert scale with a range from one to five was utilized in several questions (one being the lowest and five being the highest). An enumerator handed over the questionnaire to the respondents and collected it once done. S/he also inspected the completed questionnaire before accepting those to see whether all the required questions had been answered. As it was quite complicated and time consuming to randomly look for journalism students studying in the target level, the survey was done after the conduct of journalism classes (students were requested to remain to complete the questionnaire). The following criteria were observed for selection of respondents:

•In public universities: Graduate students; Senior (third and fourth year) undergraduate students taking journalism courses.
•In private universities: Senior (third and fourth year) undergraduate students taking a journalism major.

The research team first formulated and pretested the survey instrument before finalizing these towards the end of September 2018. Interview guides were drafted and finalized during this time as well. After which, the team conducted training on survey instrument administration. In October and November, the research team gathered the necessary information; first from outside Dhaka and later in Dhaka City. The data were then analyzed and processed using the statistical software SPSS.

Findings and Discussion
This section was divided into the following parts: (1) Profile of Respondents; (2) Motivations in Entering Journalism School; (3) Aspirations for a Journalism Career; and (4) Satisfaction with their Journalism Education.

Profile of Respondents
The profile of survey respondents is shown in Figures 1 to 3. The majority of respondents belonged to the age range 22 to 26 years old (62.08 percent), male gender (72.48%), Islam religion (81.35 percent), single civil status (87.16%), Secondary School Certificate/ SSC (91.44 percent) and Higher Secondary Certificate/HSC (93.88 percent) with a Science and Humanities background. It should be noted that there were considerable differences between private and public university respondents in terms of their origin and income status. Private university respondents mostly came from urban (43.7 percent) and semi-urban (28.89 percent) spaces; and from upper (31.1 percent) and middle (43.7 percent) income families. Pub-

Figure 1. Respondents' Profile in terms of Age, Gender, Religion and Civil Status
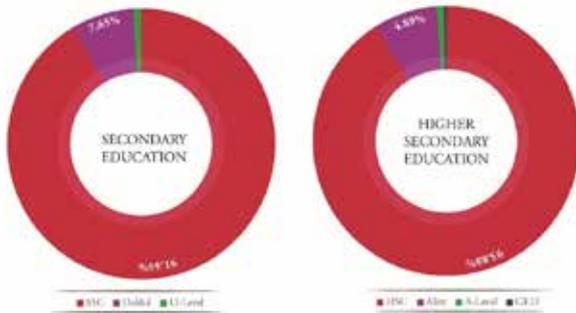
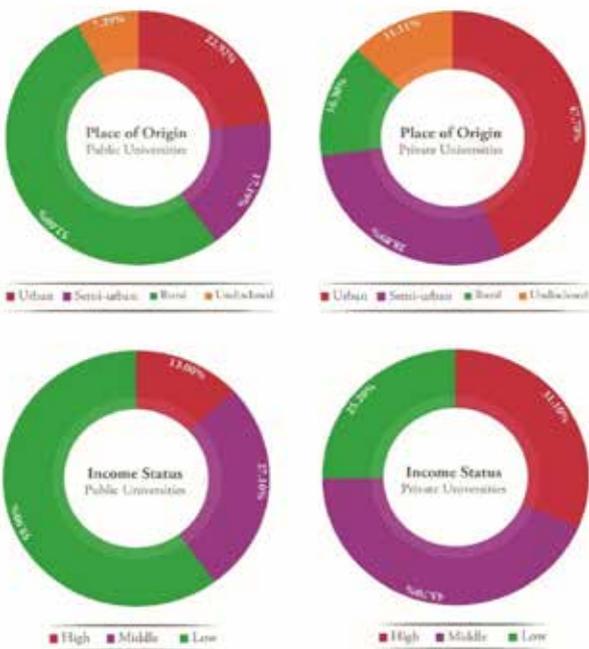Figure 2. Respondents' Profile in terms of Secondary and Higher Education

Figure 3. Comparative Profile of Public and Private University Respondents' in terms of Place of Origin and Income Status

lic university respondents, as opposed, mostly hailed from rural areas (52.6 percent); and from lower income families (59.9 percent).

Such respondents' profile may have resulted from the location of the universities and the amount of tuition fees. Most private universities were located in Dhaka City. Only three private universities with journalism programs were opened in other cities. These were: PCIU (Chattogram, formerly Chittagong), VU (Rajshahi) and NBIU (Rajshahi). Private university tuition fees were also a lot higher than their public counterparts.

Motivations for Entering Journalism School

The respondents decided to enter journalism school based on their own judgment and self-motivation. They were the ones who mainly influenced themselves. The total mean rating for self was 4.14. The next most influential persons for respondents were friends (2.73), teachers (2.72), parents (2.53)
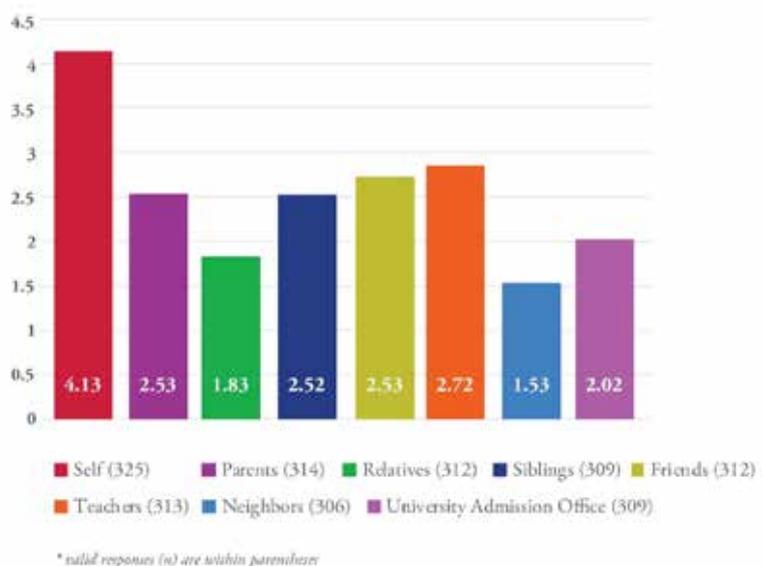
Figure 4. Degree of perceived Influence from Various Sources on Studying Journalism
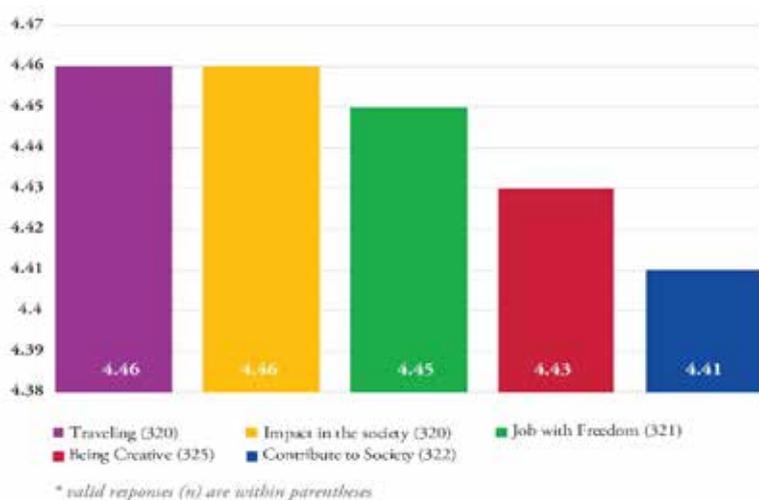

Figure 5. Strongest Motivations for Choosing Journalism Education

and siblings (2.52). The findings are shown in Figure 4.

The motivations of respondents for choosing to study journalism (Figure 5) were to make impact on society (4.46), travel (4.46) and gain a job with freedom (4.45), creativity (4.43) and to contribute to society (4.41). Not so strong motivations for aspiring journalists included job excitement (3.83), financial security (3.75) and celebrityhood (2.53). Respondents were, then, not primarily motivated by fame and fortune, rather they chose this field of study to travel and make an impact on society.

Respondents, as shown in Figure 6, viewed the advantages of the journalism profession in terms of social status mobility (3.45),
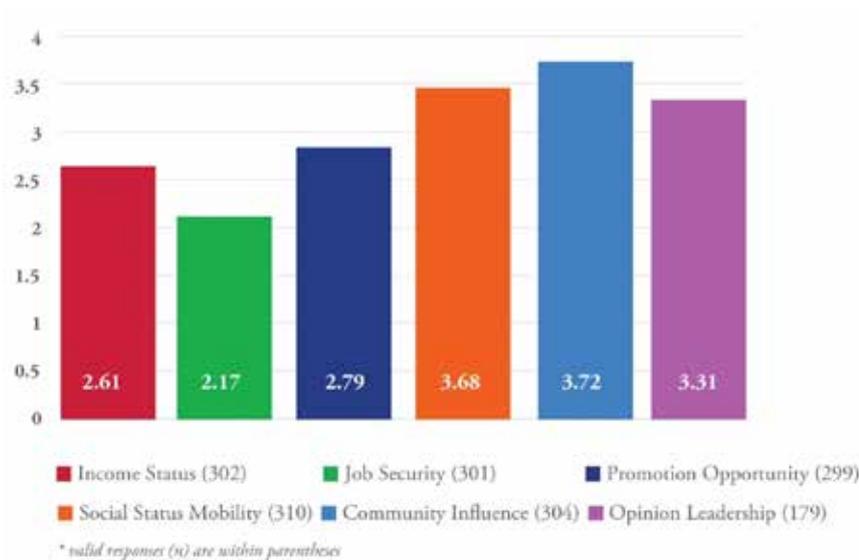
Figure 6. Respondents' Perceptions regarding the Advantages of the Journalism Profession

community influence (3.28), promotion opportunity (3.21) and opinion leadership (3.01). They did not see the profession as having relative advantages in terms of income status (2.77) and job security (2.36).

Although most respondents chose to study journalism by themselves, more than two-thirds of them (67.89 percent) had the support of their family and friends. From the family and social network (Figure 7), the support they obtained were financial (38.84 percent), moral (36.09

	Public University	Private University	Total
FAMILY	62.30%	76.30%	67.59%
MORAL	37.50%	34.10%	36.09%
ADVICE	25.10%	34.10%	28.75%
FINANCIAL	31.40%	49.60%	38.84%

Figure 7. Forms of Family Support Received by the Respondents

	Public University	**Private University**	**Total**
SCHOOL	7.90%	15.7%	7.95%
CAREER COUNSEILING	1.6%	6.7%	3.67%
CAREER TALK	5.2%	12.6%	8.26%
ADVICE	2.6%	5.9%	3.98%
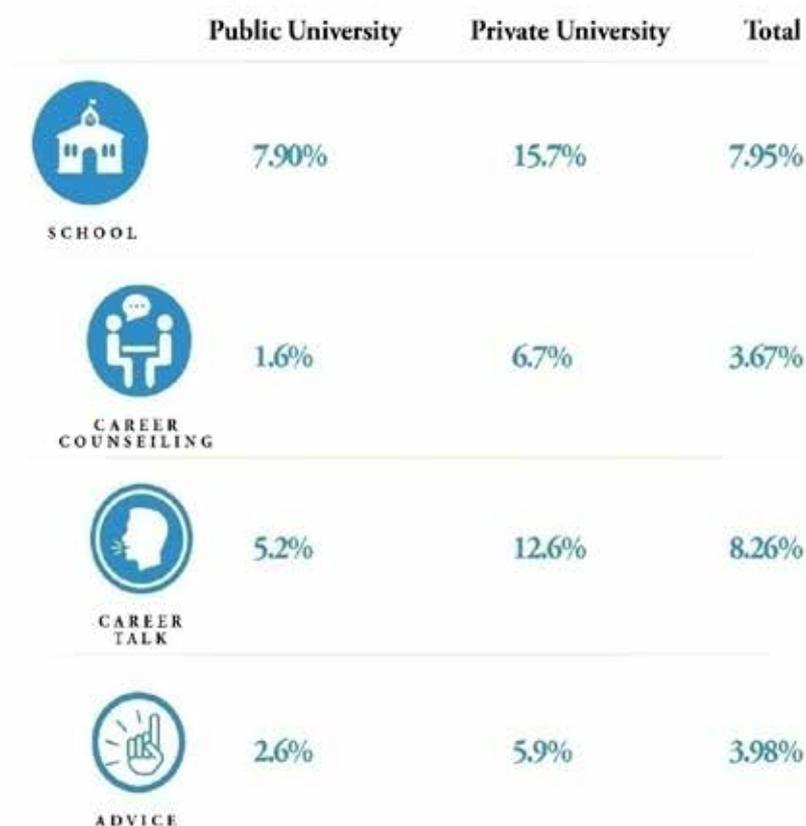
Figure 8. Forms of Support from School Received by the Respondents

percent) and advice (28.75 percent). From schools and colleges (Figure 8), a few got some support through career talks (8.26 percent) and received information regarding the societal contribution of the profession (7.03 percent). Clearly, even without financial support, 61.2 percent of respondents continued with their journalism education. They found ways to pay for their matriculation and living expenses such as scholarships and taking on part-time jobs. A great majority of them also did not receive moral support and advice from family members. Such circumstances did not prevent them from pursuing journalism studies.

Aspirations for a Journalism Career

The news media most aspired to by respondents were television with a mean rating of (4.08), newspapers (3.61) and online news portals (3.21). Radio and magazines were not popular with them. This is shown in Figure 9. In terms of newsroom positions (Figure 10), university respondents expressed preference towards working as news reporters (52.3%), copy-editor/sub-editors (35.5%), feature writers (31.2) and radio/TV newscasters (30.3%). The least popular newsroom positions were video persons (7.03 percent) and graphic designers (9.48 percent). Private university respondents preferred news reporters (65.2 percent), feature writers (33.3 percent) and photojournalists (29.6 percent). Public university respondents, on

the other hand, preferred copy editor/sub-editor (43.8 percent), news reporter (43.2 percent) and TV/radio newscaster (37.0 percent).

Among the news beats university respondents aspired to work in (Figure 11), the most popular were sports (3.57), crime and law
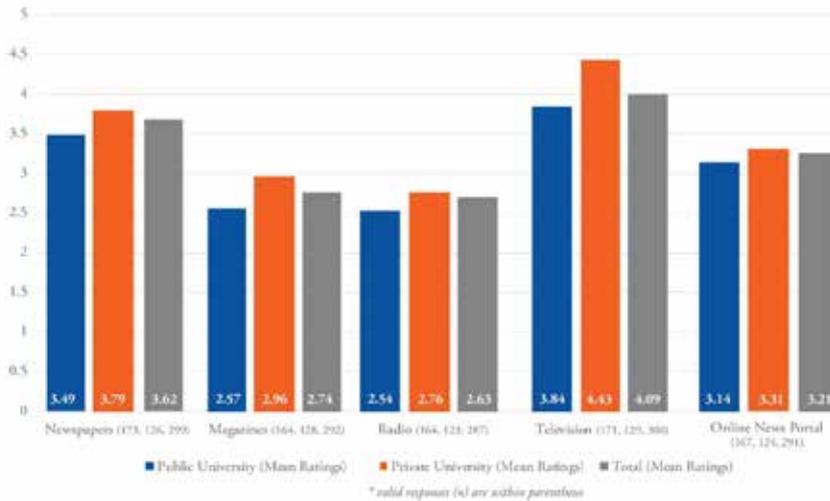

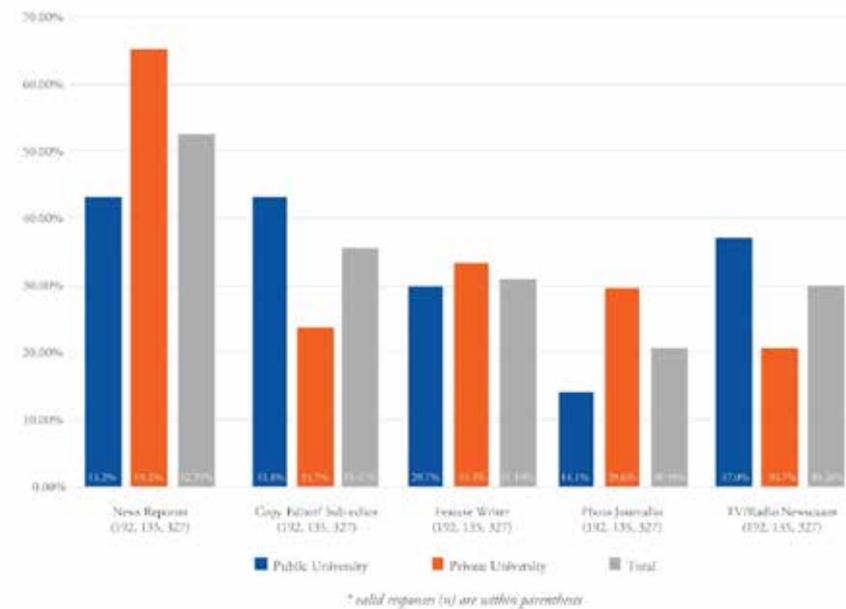Figure 9. Type of News Media Respondents Aspire to Work in

Figure 10. Newsroom Positions Respondents Aspire to

(3.54), environment (3.41), foreign relations (3.41) and education (3.34). The least popular news beats included business and economy (2.74), public health (2.90), lifestyle and culture (2.94) and science and technology (2.94). Private university respondents aspired most to be in crime and law (3.69), sports (3.52) and politics (3.39) while public university respondents aspired most to be in sports (3.58), environment (3.54) and education (3.53).
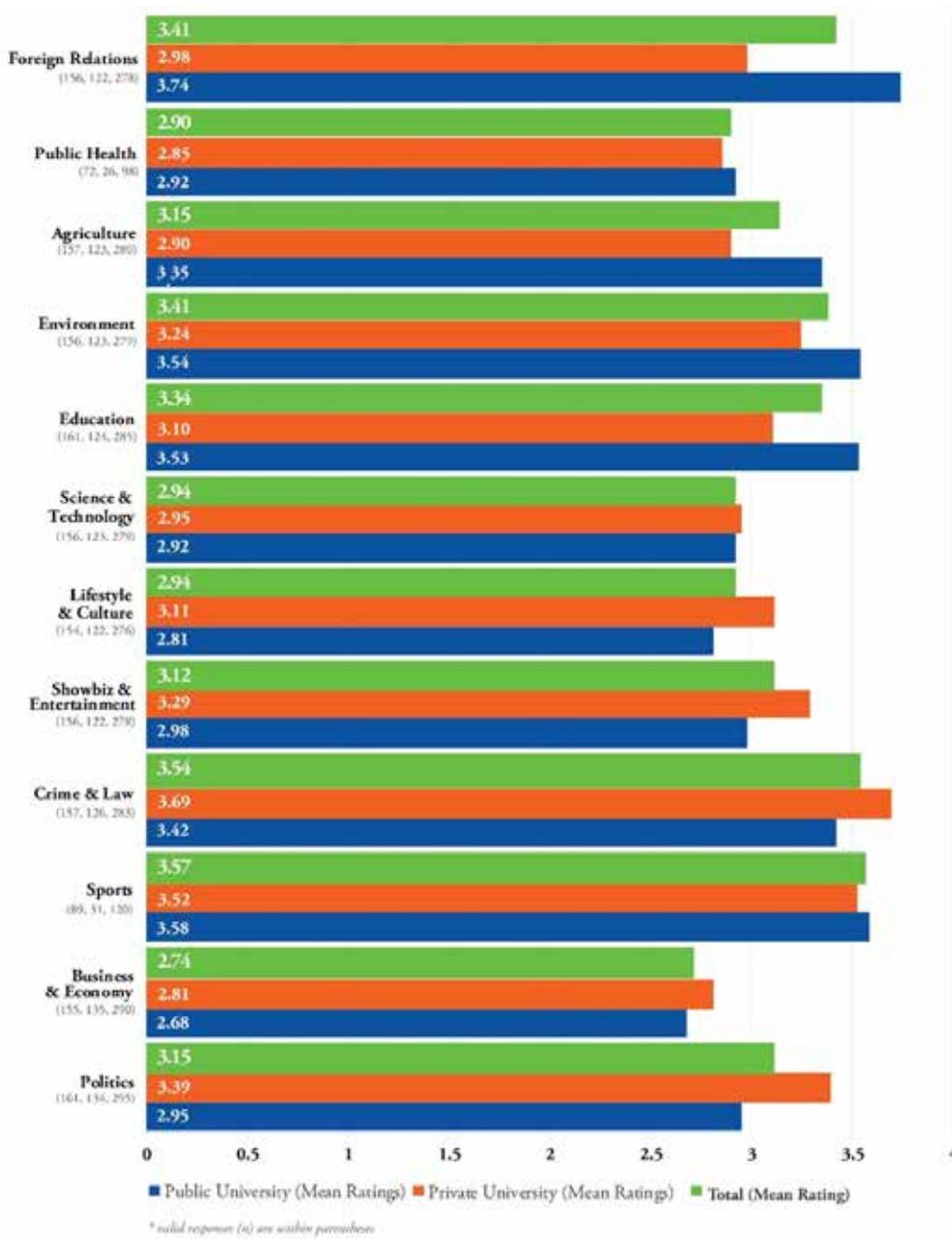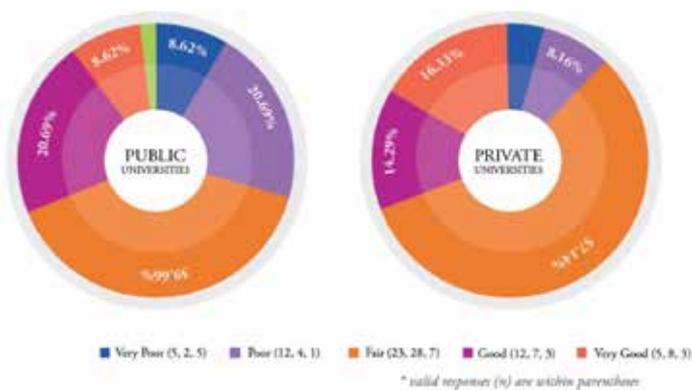
Figure 11. Beats the Respondents Aspire to work in

Figure 12. Perception of Respondents on Journalism Career Prospects

Regarding their journalism career, around 69.15 percent of respondents perceived very poor to fair prospects (Figure 12). This may be related to the perception that media organizations pay low salary, low benefits, job insecurity and unclear career progression. Although financial benefits were not the main reasons for aspiring journalist to enter the profession, they clearly need to be provided with adequate wages and job security.

Satisfaction with Journalism Education

Figure 13 indicates that respondents were more or less satisfied with their internship experience given the ratings were above 3.5 in all aspects except "university internship process" (3.46). Some of the aspects were rated close to 4, such as learning experience (3.9), faculty adviser guidance (3.89), placement (3.82). However, the ratings differed significantly in some aspects between public university
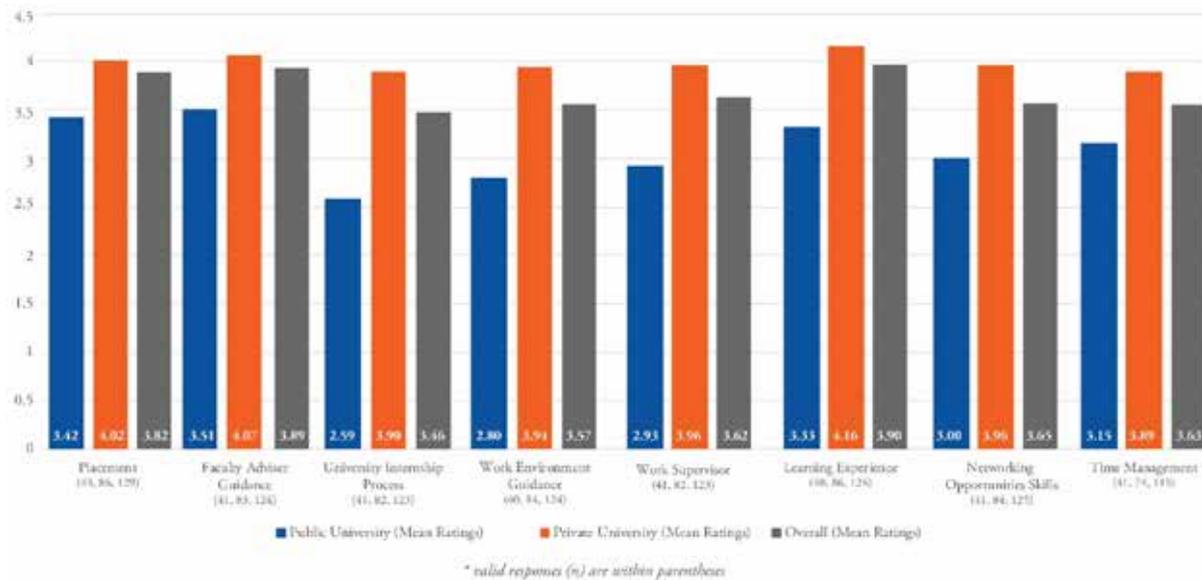

Figure 13. Respondents' Assessment of their Internship Program

respondents and private university respondents. Respondents from private universities gave high ratings to all aspects of their internship experience - placement, faculty adviser guidance, university internship process, work environment, work supervisor guidance, learning experience, networking opportunities and time management skills. They gave the highest ratings to learning experience (4.19), faculty adviser guidance (4.07) and placement (4.02). Public university respondents gave below average ratings to the aspects of university internship process (2.59), work supervisor guidance (2.80) and learning experience (2.93). The highest was placement with 3.42.

In Figure 14, respondents rated their overall journalism education experience as moderate given most of the aspects received a rating over 3. They rated faculty quality the highest (3.61); followed by
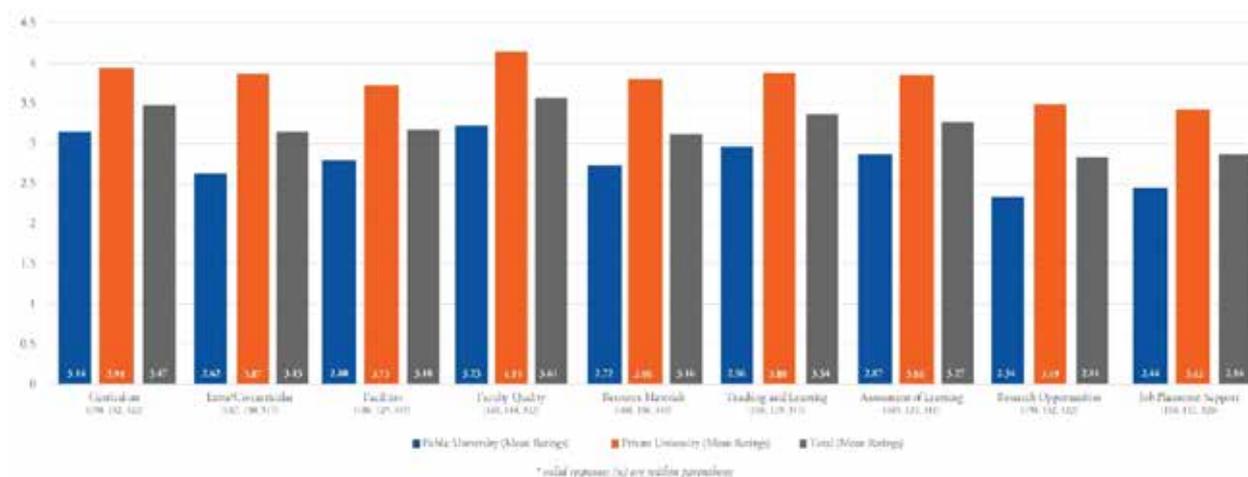
Figure 14. Respondents' Assessment of the standard of journalism education

curriculum (3.47), teaching and learning (3.34), assessment of learning (3.27), facilities (3.18), resource materials (3.16) and extra/co-curricular activities (3.13). Research opportunities (2.81) and job placement support (2.84) received the lowest ratings.

In assessing their overall journalism education experience, private university respondents gave high ratings to all aspects: curriculum, extra-co-curricular activities, facilities, faculty quality, resource materials, teaching and learning, assessment of learning, research opportunities and job placement support. They gave the highest ratings to faculty quality (4.15), curriculum (3.94) and teaching and learning (3.88). Public university respondents, meanwhile, gave the highest ratings to faculty quality (3.23) and curriculum (3.14) and the lowest ratings to research opportunities (2.34) and job placement support (2.44).

For traditional skillsets (Figure 15), both private and public university respondents viewed themselves most positively in terms of being able to find own stories (3.75) and language use (3.75); least positively for photojournalism (3.23) and photography (3.33). Private university respondents saw themselves more favorably with regards to interviewing (4.02) while public university respondents assessed themselves better with time management (3.50).

In terms of new journalism skill sets (Figure 16), both types of university respondents perceived themselves to be good at user generated content (3.53) and assembling news packages (3.30). Private university respondents also perceived themselves to be adequate in video skills (3.65) and computer programming
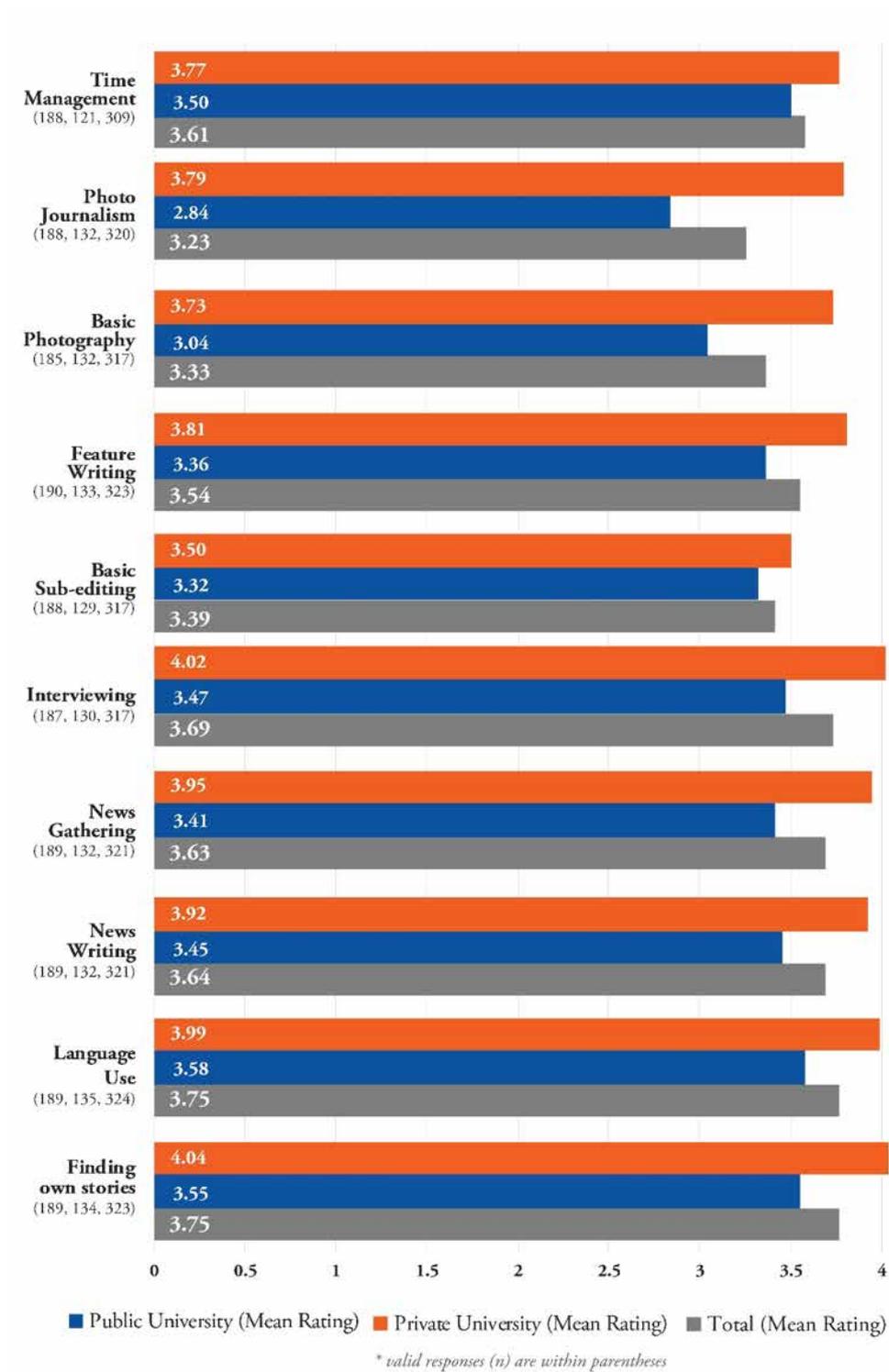
Figure 15. Respondents' Self–Reflection on their Traditional Journalism Skill Set
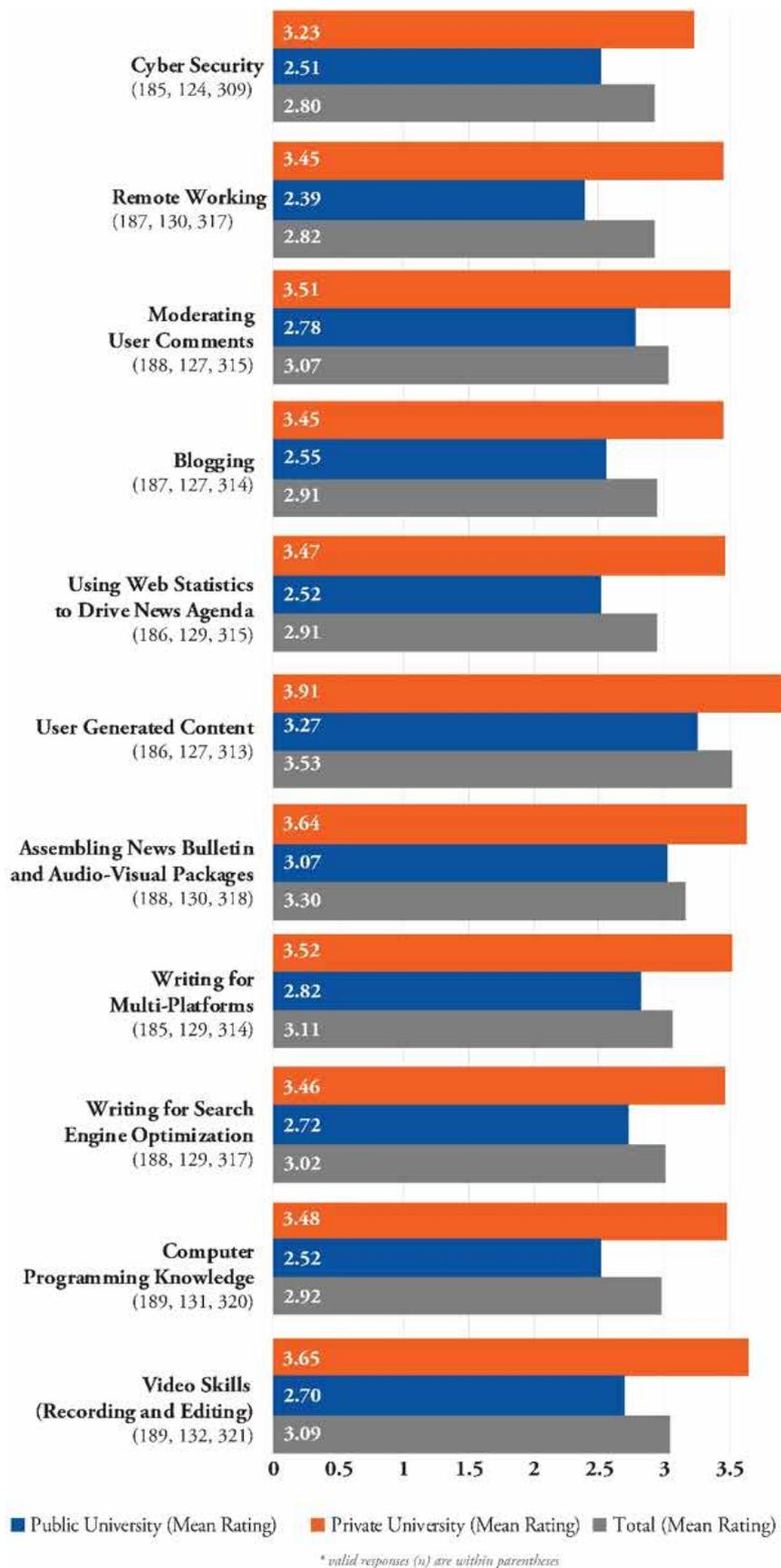
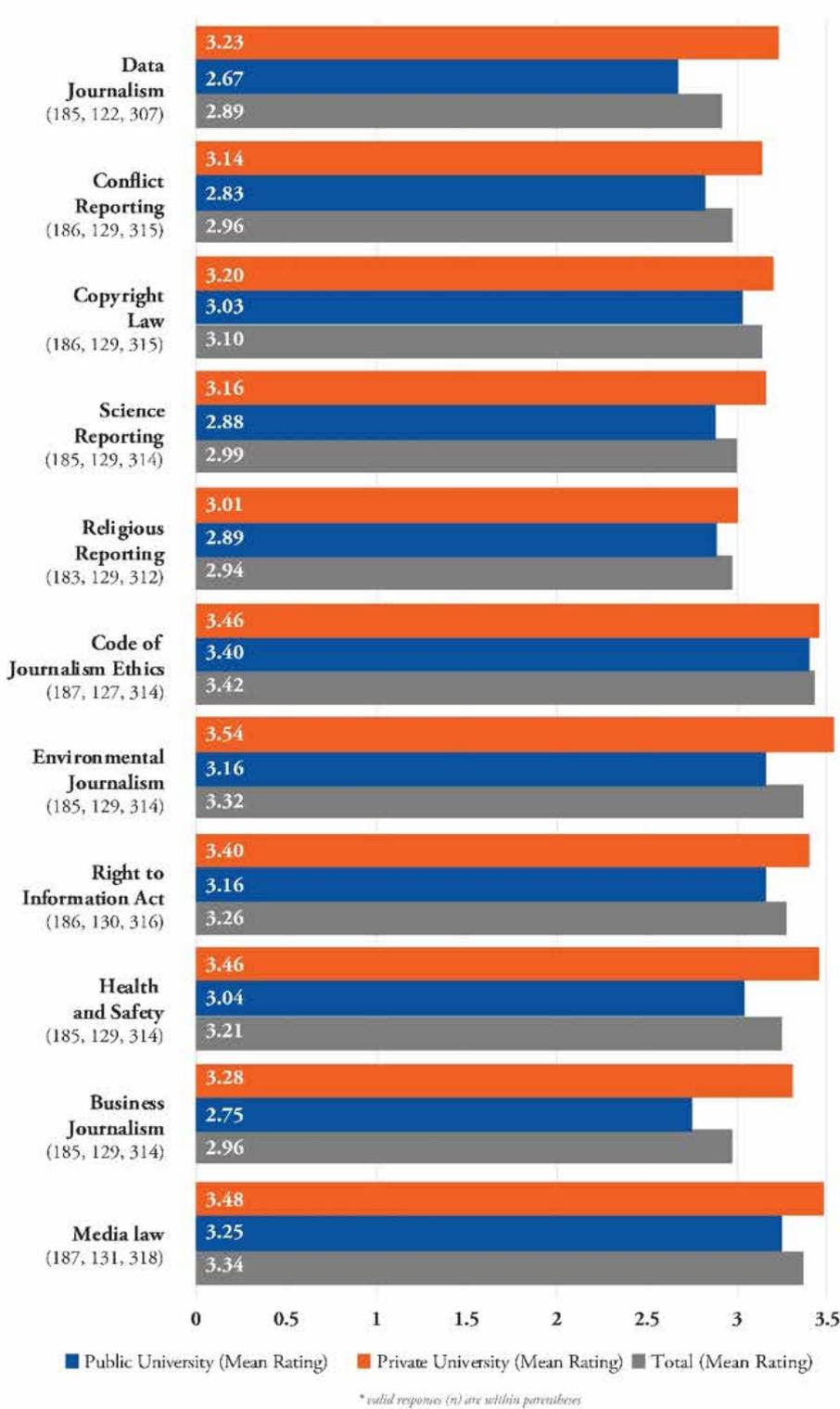Figure 16. Respondents' Self–Reflection on their New Journalism Skill Set

Figure 17. Respondents' Self-Reflection on their Specialized Journalism Skill Set

knowledge (3.48) while public university respondents expressed satisfaction of their skills in assembling news packages (3.07).

For specialized journalism skill sets (Figure 17), both types of respondents evaluated themselves satisfactorily for code of ethics in journalism (3.42), media law (3.34) and environmental journalism (3.32) and gave themselves the lowest mean ratings for data journalism (2.90), religious reporting (2.94) and science reporting (2.99).

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

From the findings, students entering university journalism programs have been found to be unique and dedicated. Unlike most of their peers, they did not have a market-driven agenda in selecting their university degree. Instead, the study respondents were motivated by their desire to travel (4.46), make an impact on society (4.46) and have a job with freedom (4.45). They knew that the journalism profession did not have an advantage regarding income status (2.61), job security (2.17) and promotion opportunity (2.79). Around 69.15 percent of respondents perceived very poor to fair career prospects given the financial packages and benefits of media organizations, yet, they decided to study journalism anyway, and were largely self-motivated (4.13) about the career choice; their parents (2.53), friends (2.53) and siblings (2.52) had less influence on them. As a result, although 67.59 percent of respondents mentioned getting family support, only 38.84 percent acknowledged receiving financial support. In addition, only 36.09 percent received moral support and 28.75 percent advice from their family. In this sense, the families appeared to be displeased with the respondents' career decision as shown in the lack of support. It should also be mentioned that less than 10% of respondents had the support of their high schools and colleges for them to study journalism. Whatever little support they had been given were related to career talks, advice and career counseling.

In spite of these, the study respondents had big aspirations. They intended to work in television (4.09), newspapers (3.62) and online news portals (3.21). Around 53 percent of them aspired to be become news reporters covering the following preferred beats: sports (3.57), crime and law (3.54), foreign relations (3.41), education (3.34) and politics (3.15). Other top newsroom positions aspired for were copy editor (35.47 percent), feature writer (31.19 percent) and TV/radio newscaster (30.38 percent). With these aspirations, they expected a lot from their journalism education.

In general, the study respondents were satisfied with their journalism education, especially in the aspects of faculty (3.61), curriculum (3.47), extra/co-curricular (3.18) and facilities (3.18). However, they mentioned areas that were unsatisfactory such as job placement support (2.84) and research opportunities (2.81).

Private university respondents gave relatively higher ratings to their overall education experience compared with their public university counterparts, given private universities' links with the media industry.

In light of these findings, the government, particularly the Ministry of Information, may find it wise to develop a scholarship fund for aspiring journalists (both male and female). This would help poor but deserving students, unable to get places in public universities, to study in private universities. The Ministry can also adopt measures to set standards in the human resource aspects of the profession, particularly in terms of the regularization of new journalists and the enforcement of Wage Board decisions on the minimum wage of journalists. Media organizations, on the other hand, may find it beneficial to streamline their human resources and provide competitive and reasonable financial packages to their employees, in order to encourage better qualified and motivated journalists.

Universities offering journalism programs may work together through an educators' network to come up with a balanced curriculum - one that acknowledges the importance of the media in democracy as well as the commercial side of the industry. Academia and industry need to engage in dialogue regarding how to produce journalism graduates who fit the requirements of media organizations. There is no point in arguing whether the newsroom or the classroom is the best place to train journalists; instead, it is better to join forces to launch initiatives that cater to the common goal of quality journalism. Aside from these, universities may find it prudent to continue investing in media laboratories, equipment and co-/extra-curricular programs in order to ensure adequate professional skillsets of its graduates. They should continue exploring internship and career opportunities for their students and graduates, as the study respondents mentioned, they were most dissatisfied with the job placement support of universities. Journalism programs also need to enhance theirr process management mechanisms to ensure continuous improvement of their programs.

Regarding the curriculum, universities may need to reflect on the development of skills student respondents did not feel confident in. For traditional journalism skills sets, these included photojournalism (3.23), basic photography (3.33) and sub-editing (3.39). Under new skill sets, these included cyber security (2.80), remote working (2.82), computer programming (2.91), using web statistics (2.91) and blogging (2.91). Under specialized skill sets, these included data journalism (2.89), business journalism (2.96), conflict reporting (2.96) and religious reporting (2.94). Universities may need to conduct a mapping exercise to ensure that the various courses cover the skills needed by aspiring journalists.

Given a market-driven orientation, it has become difficult for students

to enroll in journalism degrees at universities. They face opposition from their parents, friends, relatives and siblings. Hence, they need to stand steadfast in their desire to contribute and make an impact in society. They need to find ways to pursue their education in terms of scholarship applications and self-financing mechanisms (such as paid employment, pursuing grants and joining competitions). Once in the university, they may find it wise to maximize the offerings at the universities – curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular programs. If they have mastery over skill sets, they would be given greater value and better financial incentives in media organizations. Moreover, they would need to network with other journalists and professionals to sustain their dreams. The road ahead for aspiring journalists in Bangladesh is arduous. Hopefully, they will get some much-needed support in taking the first step, that is, entering universities for a journalism degree.

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