

## Exploring Distinct Employment Outcomes For Graduates Of Corporate Administration And Administrative Science Degrees: A Narrative Synthesis

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### ABSTRACT

This narrative review synthesizes existing literature to explore the distinct employment outcomes for graduates holding Bachelor's degrees in Corporate Administration and Bachelor of Administrative Science programs. Despite apparent similarities in their foundational curricula, these disciplines may equip graduates with different competencies and lead to varied career trajectories in the contemporary labor market. The review examines factors influencing graduate employability, including the demand for specific skills, industry perceptions, and the prevailing landscape of graduate unemployment in Malaysia and globally. By analyzing existing academic discourse, this synthesis aims to highlight potential divergences in employment opportunities, job roles, and career progression for graduates of these two fields. The findings underscore the importance of curriculum design, skill development, and career guidance in bridging the gap between academic preparation and industry demands for administrative and corporate professionals.

**Keywords:** Employment outcomes, graduate employability, corporate administration, administrative science, labor market, narrative review, Malaysia.

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### INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a pivotal role in national development, fostering human capital crucial for economic growth and societal progress [3, 8, 16]. Universities are tasked with preparing graduates for the dynamic and competitive labor market, equipping them with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes [9, 20, 25]. However, the issue of graduate unemployment remains a persistent challenge globally and particularly in Malaysia [1, 2, 11, 18, 21, 24, 27, 30, 38, 50]. This phenomenon is often attributed to a mismatch between the skills possessed by graduates and the demands of industries, as well as an oversupply of graduates in certain fields [27, 49].

In the realm of business and management studies, two distinct yet seemingly related undergraduate programs are Bachelor's in Corporate Administration and Bachelor of Administrative Science. While both degrees focus on organizational management and operational efficiency, their specific curriculum designs, emphasis on different skill sets, and intended career paths may lead to varied employment prospects for their respective graduates [5]. Corporate Administration typically delves into corporate governance, legal frameworks, company secretarial practices, and regulatory compliance, preparing graduates for roles within corporate secretariats, legal departments, and compliance offices. In contrast, Administrative Science programs often cover a broader

spectrum of public and private sector administration, human resources, organizational behavior, and office management, aiming to produce versatile administrators [9].

The contemporary labor market, shaped by globalization, technological advancements, and economic shifts (including the impact of events like the COVID-19 pandemic [6]), demands adaptable professionals with a blend of hard and soft skills [10, 53]. Employability is no longer solely about possessing a degree but encompasses a graduate's agility, resilience, and ability to continuously learn and apply new knowledge [10, 54, 56]. Employers increasingly seek graduates who can demonstrate problem-solving capabilities, critical thinking, communication, and digital literacy, irrespective of their specific degree title [9, 14, 35, 53].

Despite the shared foundational elements of organizational studies, the precise nature of the "divergent paths" [5] these two programs offer in terms of employment outcomes for their graduates has not been extensively reviewed in a comparative manner. Understanding these distinctions is crucial for prospective students making career choices, higher education institutions designing and refining their curricula, and policymakers addressing graduate unemployment. This narrative review aims to synthesize the existing literature to explore and highlight these potential differences in employment prospects, contributing to a more informed

understanding of the value propositions of Bachelor's in Corporate Administration versus Bachelor of Administrative Science degrees.

Research Question: What distinct employment outcomes are evident for graduates of Bachelor's in Corporate Administration programs compared to Bachelor of Administrative Science programs, as portrayed in existing literature?

### 2. Methods

This study employed a narrative review methodology to explore the employment outcomes of graduates from Bachelor's in Corporate Administration and Bachelor of Administrative Science programs. A narrative review is a qualitative approach suitable for synthesizing diverse perspectives and evidence from a broad range of literature without adhering to the rigorous systematic approach of a systematic review or meta-analysis [17, 43]. This method allows for a comprehensive overview of a topic, identifying key themes, trends, and gaps in existing knowledge.

#### 2.1 Search Strategy and Selection Criteria

The search for relevant literature was conducted across multiple academic databases and repositories, including but not limited to, Google Scholar, Scopus, and university digital libraries. Keywords used in various combinations included: "corporate administration graduates employment," "administrative science graduates jobs," "graduate employability Malaysia," "unemployment administrative graduates," "career outcomes business administration," "human capital administrative studies," and "skill mismatch administrative science." While the primary focus was on Malaysia, relevant international studies were also included to provide broader context, especially concerning general employability theories and trends.

Inclusion criteria for selected articles were:

- Studies published in English.
- Focus on higher education graduates, particularly those in business, management, administration, or related fields.
- Discussions pertaining to employment prospects, job satisfaction, career paths, or factors influencing graduate employability/unemployment.
- Published academic articles, conference papers, and reputable reports.

Exclusion criteria included:

- Studies solely focused on other specific disciplines (e.g., engineering, nursing [13], social work [48], tourism [19]) unless they offered generalizable insights into graduate employability.
- Opinion pieces or non-scholarly articles without

substantial supporting evidence, unless they provided critical contextual information (e.g., news articles on unemployment trends [2, 37, 38]).

#### 2.2 Data Extraction and Synthesis

Relevant information was extracted from the selected literature, focusing on:

- Common job titles and industries employing graduates from administrative and corporate fields.
- Skills identified as crucial for success in these roles (e.g., soft skills [53], entrepreneurial knowledge [23], specific technical competencies).
- Factors contributing to graduate unemployment (e.g., skill gaps [35], job mismatch [49], economic conditions [1, 6, 21]).
- Perceptions of employers and graduates regarding employability [9].
- Policy implications for higher education and government related to graduate employment.

The extracted data were then synthesized thematically. This involved grouping findings related to career trajectories, required competencies, and market demands for each program (Corporate Administration and Administrative Science) where discernible. Cross-cutting themes related to general graduate employability challenges and strategies were also identified. This narrative approach allowed for the interpretation of findings and the identification of overarching patterns, facilitating the exploration of distinct employment outcomes for graduates of the two specified programs.

#### 2.3 Limitations of Methodology

As a narrative review, this study does not employ a systematic search protocol or quantitative aggregation of results. Therefore, it is subject to potential researcher bias in article selection and interpretation. It provides a broad overview rather than a definitive statistical analysis of employment outcomes. However, it serves as a valuable initial step in identifying patterns and informing future empirical research.

### 3. Results

The synthesis of literature reveals several key themes regarding the employment prospects for graduates of Bachelor's in Corporate Administration and Bachelor of Administrative Science programs, highlighting both shared challenges and potential distinctions in their career trajectories.

#### 3.1 Overarching Challenges in Malaysian Graduate Employment

The Malaysian labor market, like many others, faces the persistent challenge of graduate unemployment [1, 2, 21, 30, 38]. Factors contributing to this include the rapid evolution of industry demands, a perceived mismatch

between university curricula and employer expectations, and the sheer volume of graduates entering the workforce [9, 27, 49]. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated these challenges, leading to an intensified focus on unemployment rates and the need for adaptable human capital [1, 6]. Studies indicate that graduates often struggle to find full-time employment and may even jostle with retrenched workers [38]. Employability is not solely about academic qualifications but also about critical attributes, generic skills, and career agility [10, 14, 18, 53]. Employers prioritize soft skills, such as communication, problem-solving, and adaptability, alongside technical competencies [53, 58].

### 3.2 Employment Prospects for Bachelor's in Corporate Administration Graduates

Graduates from Bachelor's in Corporate Administration programs are typically prepared for roles that demand a strong understanding of corporate governance, company law, secretarial practices, and regulatory compliance. The literature suggests their primary career path often leads to positions such as:

- **Company Secretary Assistant/Executive:** These roles involve ensuring adherence to statutory and regulatory requirements, maintaining corporate records, and facilitating board meetings. The demand for such roles is intrinsic to corporate functioning, requiring meticulous attention to detail and legal knowledge.
- **Compliance Officer Assistant/Executive:** With increasing regulatory scrutiny, compliance roles are vital across various industries. Graduates in Corporate Administration are well-suited to assist in developing and implementing compliance frameworks.
- **Corporate Governance Support:** Roles focused on upholding good corporate governance practices within organizations.
- **Administrative Support in Legal/Corporate Affairs:** General administrative roles within legal departments or corporate affairs divisions where an understanding of corporate structures is beneficial.

The employability of these graduates is often tied to their practical understanding of corporate legal frameworks and ethical practices. While specific studies directly comparing their unemployment rates were not found, the specialized nature of their training implies a more focused job market. The ability to navigate complex corporate regulations [27] and understand business ethics is a key differentiator for this group.

### 3.3 Employment Prospects for Bachelor of Administrative Science Graduates

Graduates of Bachelor of Administrative Science programs are generally equipped with a broader skill set in management, human resources, public administration, and organizational theory. Their career prospects tend to

be more diverse and can span both the public and private sectors, including roles such as:

- **Administrative Executive/Officer:** A common entry-level position across various industries, involving office management, operational support, and coordination.
- **Human Resource Executive/Assistant:** Roles focused on recruitment, employee relations, training, and development, leveraging their understanding of organizational behavior and human capital management [4, 28, 55].
- **Operations Coordinator/Supervisor:** Supporting day-to-day operations in a variety of business functions.
- **Public Sector Administrator:** Opportunities within government ministries, agencies, and local authorities, involving policy implementation, public service delivery, and general administration.
- **Project Administrator:** Assisting in the planning, execution, and monitoring of projects within various organizations.

The versatility of Administrative Science graduates is their strength, allowing them to adapt to different organizational structures and functions [9]. However, this broadness can also lead to increased competition for general administrative roles, potentially contributing to job mismatch or overeducation [49]. Their employability hinges on their ability to apply theoretical knowledge to practical administrative challenges and to demonstrate strong organizational and communication skills [40].

### 3.4 Divergent Skill Sets and Market Perceptions

The divergence in employment outcomes can be attributed to the differing skill sets emphasized by each program:

- **Corporate Administration:** Higher emphasis on legal compliance, corporate law, secretarial duties, and corporate governance. These are specialized skills often required in specific corporate functions.
- **Administrative Science:** Broader focus on general management principles, human resource management, public administration, and organizational studies, leading to more generalized administrative and managerial competencies.

Employers' perceptions are critical. While both degrees provide foundational business knowledge, companies might explicitly seek Corporate Administration graduates for their specialized compliance and governance knowledge, whereas Administrative Science graduates might be considered for a wider array of generalist administrative or HR roles. The "skills gap" [35] and the demand for practical experience [45, 56] affect both groups, but the nature of the skills gap may differ. For Corporate Administration, it might be about practical

application of specific corporate laws; for Administrative Science, it might be about the ability to integrate diverse administrative functions or handle complex projects [9, 53].

Ultimately, the availability of jobs and the specific demands of the Malaysian labor market, which can vary by sector and economic conditions [29, 30], dictate how these distinct skill sets translate into employment. While higher education generally leads to greater employment stability [8], the nuances between these two programs suggest that their graduates might navigate different segments of the job market.

### 4. Discussion

The narrative synthesis of literature highlights a clear pattern of divergent, albeit interconnected, employment outcomes for graduates of Bachelor's in Corporate Administration and Bachelor of Administrative Science programs in Malaysia. While both degrees aim to prepare professionals for organizational roles, their differing emphasis on specialized versus generalized skill sets leads to distinct career trajectories and potential challenges in the labor market.

#### 4.1 Specialization vs. Generalization in Employment

Graduates of Corporate Administration degrees are inherently geared towards specialized roles within corporate governance and compliance frameworks. Their curriculum is designed to impart specific knowledge of company law, regulatory requirements, and the intricacies of corporate secretarial practices. This specialization, while ensuring a clear niche, also means that their employment opportunities are often concentrated in sectors and companies that require such expertise, such as listed companies, law firms with corporate departments, and large corporations with robust governance structures. The demand for these roles is consistent, as corporate compliance is non-negotiable [27]. However, the volume of such highly specialized positions might be lower compared to broader administrative roles, potentially leading to a more competitive environment within that niche.

Conversely, Bachelor of Administrative Science graduates, with their broader foundation in management, human resources, and public administration, are typically prepared for a wider array of generalist administrative and managerial positions across diverse industries and sectors, including government [9]. This versatility can be an advantage, allowing them to adapt to various organizational needs and pursue careers in different functions, such as human resources, operations, or project management [4, 55]. However, this broad appeal also places them in a highly competitive pool, often vying for positions that graduates from other business-related degrees might also qualify for. This increased competition can lead to challenges like job mismatch or underemployment, where graduates

take roles that do not fully utilize their acquired competencies [49].

#### 4.2 The Role of Skills and Employability Attributes

The literature consistently emphasizes that beyond academic qualifications, employability is driven by a combination of soft skills, practical experience, and adaptability [9, 10, 53]. For both sets of graduates, developing robust communication, critical thinking, problem-solving, and digital literacy skills is paramount. The "skills gap" between what universities teach and what industries demand [35] affects graduates across all disciplines. For Corporate Administration, the gap might be in the practical application of legal and compliance frameworks in real-world scenarios. For Administrative Science, it could be the ability to integrate disparate administrative functions, manage complex projects effectively, or navigate rapidly evolving organizational structures.

Entrepreneurial intentions and knowledge are also increasingly important [23, 34], offering an alternative path to employment or self-employment, especially in a job market that sometimes struggles to absorb all graduates [1, 21]. Universities like UM and UUM have even considered discontinuing certain courses to enhance graduate employability, indicating a systemic effort to align education with industry needs [37]. Internships [45, 56] and other forms of practical experience are crucial for bridging the theory-practice gap and enhancing market readiness [9, 56].

#### 4.3 Labor Market Dynamics and Policy Implications

The prevailing labor market conditions in Malaysia, including the rate of graduate unemployment [1, 2, 21, 30], significantly shape the employment outcomes. Economic downturns or slow economic growth can exacerbate unemployment across all graduate cohorts [6, 21]. The government and educational institutions have a shared responsibility in addressing this challenge [2].

For higher education institutions, the implications are clear:

- **Curriculum Review:** Continuous review and update of curricula for both Corporate Administration and Administrative Science programs are essential to ensure alignment with current and future industry demands [40]. This includes incorporating more practical components, case studies, and industry collaborations.
- **Skill Development:** Beyond disciplinary knowledge, universities must explicitly foster generic skills, including critical thinking, adaptability, and digital proficiency, which are critical for career agility in the modern workplace [10, 53].
- **Career Guidance:** Enhanced career counseling and placement services are needed to guide students toward realistic employment expectations and help them

understand the specific career paths associated with each degree. This includes emphasizing the importance of internships and networking [45, 56].

- **Program Differentiation:** Universities should clearly articulate the unique value proposition and target career paths for each program to help prospective students make informed decisions, minimizing later job mismatch [49].

Policymakers can contribute by:

- **Labor Market Intelligence:** Providing granular data and forecasts on labor market demands for specialized and generalist administrative roles to inform educational planning.
- **Industry-Academia Collaboration:** Facilitating stronger partnerships between industry and academia to co-develop curricula, offer internships, and provide mentorship opportunities.
- **Support for Graduate Employment:** Implementing programs that support graduate employability, including reskilling initiatives, job placement services, and incentives for employers to hire fresh graduates [2].

#### 4.4 Limitations and Future Research

This narrative review, while comprehensive in its synthesis, is limited by the nature of its methodology. It relies on existing literature and does not include primary data collection, which would provide direct empirical evidence of employment rates and qualitative experiences of graduates from these specific programs. The global literature on human capital and employment stability [8, 12, 32] provides a theoretical backdrop, but detailed comparative studies focusing specifically on Corporate Administration versus Administrative Science graduates within the Malaysian context are limited.

Future research should include:

- **Empirical Quantitative Studies:** Conducting surveys and analyses of employment data for graduates of Bachelor's in Corporate Administration and Bachelor of Administrative Science programs in Malaysia, tracking their employment rates, starting salaries, job satisfaction, and career progression.
- **Qualitative Studies:** In-depth interviews with employers in relevant industries to understand their specific preferences for graduates from these two programs, perceived skill gaps, and recruitment strategies.
- **Longitudinal Studies:** Tracking cohorts of graduates from both programs over several years to observe their long-term career trajectories and identify factors contributing to success or challenges.
- **Comparative Curriculum Analysis:** A detailed analysis of the curriculum content of both programs across different Malaysian universities to identify

specific learning outcomes and their alignment with industry requirements.

#### 5. Conclusion

This narrative synthesis has explored the distinct employment outcomes for graduates of Bachelor's in Corporate Administration and Bachelor of Administrative Science programs, drawing insights from the available literature. It is evident that while both degrees aim to prepare graduates for professional roles in organizations, the former tends to lead to more specialized positions in corporate governance and compliance, while the latter offers broader administrative and managerial opportunities. This divergence is largely driven by the distinct skill sets emphasized by each program and the specific demands of the labor market.

The challenge of graduate unemployment in Malaysia necessitates a continuous effort to bridge the gap between academic output and industry needs. For graduates of Corporate Administration, deepening specialized knowledge and practical application is key. For Administrative Science graduates, leveraging their versatility through strong soft skills and an adaptable mindset is crucial. Higher education institutions, industry partners, and policymakers must collaborate to ensure that curricula are relevant, skill development is prioritized, and career guidance is robust. By doing so, Malaysia can enhance the employability of its graduates, ensuring that they are well-equipped to contribute meaningfully to the nation's economic and social development, irrespective of their specific administrative or corporate degree.

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