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BQOM 2521
Assignment 1b: Personal Decision Model
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Personal Decision: What is the best career path post-graduation?

1. Summary

As an MBA student and a JD/MBA applicant, my interest in post-graduation career choices has several major paths if I choose to primarily seek jobs requiring a law degree. The starting point of my career and the type of industry segment that I choose to pursue have the potential to primarily impact the lifestyle, influence, income, and future career opportunities available. Considerations for the alternatives and their criterion are based on a career in Pittsburgh, PA and the surrounding region. The scenario presented requires that I choose between seeking jobs in a law firm, a corporate legal department, or a government legal organization. Given the considerations and the characteristics of the options, the decision is difficult as all of the choices have value. Even so, the complications of the decision and the potential impact on my life and that of my family make the process of selecting the right career path of utmost importance.

By using the Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) and the SuperDecisions Software, the decision and the correct choice, based on my present preferences, can be seen through the hierarchy model. The following report details the specifics of the hierarchy model with an emphasis on the goal, the decision criteria, and the alternatives of the decision. Following the overview of the model, I will review the results of the model and provide an assessment of the sensitivity analysis.

2. Alternatives

The alternatives for my career path fall into three main areas as shown below:

- **Law Firm:** Based on incoming first-year Associate position in Pittsburgh, PA.
- **Corporate Legal Department:** Based on Assistant General Counsel position in Pittsburgh, PA.
- **Government Legal Organization:** Based on Assistant United States Attorney position in Pittsburgh, PA.

3. Network

Figure 1 below shows the overview of the hierarchical pairwise comparison decision model.

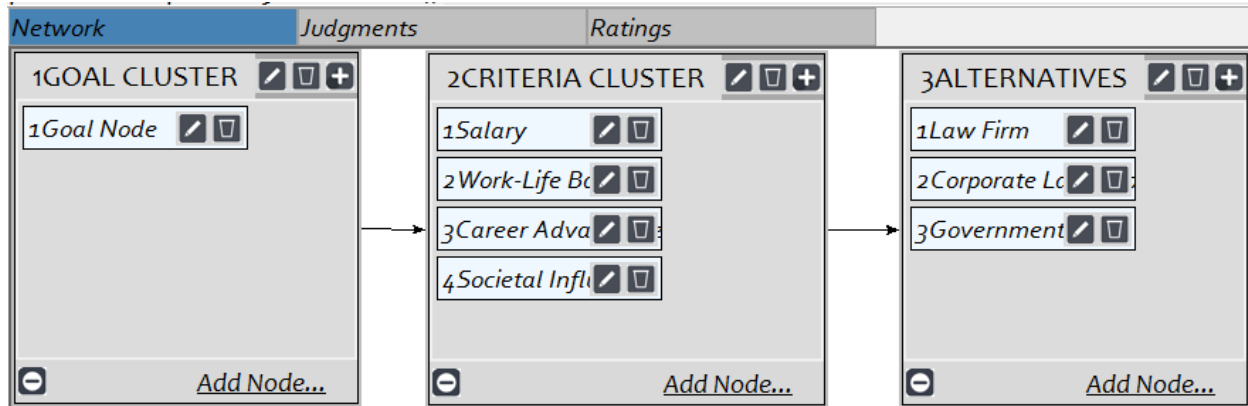


Figure 1. Personal Decision Model

The model consists of the decision, criteria, and alternatives clusters. Each cluster has one or more nodes. From the goal of choosing the best career path post-graduation, the criteria nodes were linked and judgements were made about how each criterion impacted the goal. The criterion selected for the model were: salary, work-life balance, career advancement, and societal influence. At the bottom of the hierarchy, the alternative nodes were linked to each criterion in the model. As discussed above, the alternatives of the decision were: law firm, corporate legal department, and government legal organization.

Next, I created judgements about each criterion to create a decision-making framework for the model. When making judgements, I used paired comparisons. For example, the question I asked myself in the criteria cluster was, “For my future salary, does a law firm or a corporate legal department generally offer higher compensation?” Below is an overview of the general judgements that were made about the alternatives:

- **Alternative #1: Law Firm**
 - Salary is good (range of \$105,000 to \$145,000)¹
 - Work-Life Balance is medium to low
 - Career Advancement is very good
 - Societal Influence is very good
- **Alternative #2: Corporate Legal Department**
 - Salary is very good (range of \$120,000 to \$227,000)²
 - Work-Life Balance is medium
 - Career Advancement is medium
 - Societal Influence is good

¹ Tascarella, Patty. "Exclusive: Pay for new lawyers in Pittsburgh lags metros, but one big employer has boosted starting salaries." Bizjournals.com. April 21, 2015. Accessed March 13, 2018. <https://www.bizjournals.com/pittsburgh/blog/financial-district/2015/04/pay-for-new-lawYERS-in-pittsburgh-lags.html>.

² "Salary: Assistant General Counsel in Pittsburgh, PA." Glassdoor. September 6, 2016. Accessed March 13, 2018. https://www.glassdoor.com/Salaries/pittsburgh-assistant-general-counsel-salary-SRCH_IL.0,10_IM684_KO11,36.htm.

- **Alternative #3: Government Legal Organization³**
 - Salary is medium to low (range of \$62,799 to \$147,349)⁴
 - Work-Life Balance is good
 - Career Advancement is good
 - Societal Influence is very good

Figure 2 below shows the Questionnaire view of the SuperDecisions Software that was used to create judgements. As well, Figures 3 – 6 show the criteria and alternatives judgements. The general guidelines mentioned above for the comparisons were used to more precisely determine the pairwise comparisons using the Questionnaire and Matrix modes.

Graphical	Verbal	Matrix	Questionnaire	Direct	
Comparisons wrt "1Goal Node" node in "2CRITERIA CLUSTER" cluster					
1Salary is equally to moderately more important than 2Work-Life Balance					
1.	1Salary	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	2Work-Life B~
2.	1Salary	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	3Career Adva~
3.	1Salary	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	4Societal In~
4.	2Work-Life B~	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	3Career Adva~
5.	2Work-Life B~	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	4Societal In~
6.	3Career Adva~	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	4Societal In~

Figure 2. Judgements on Criteria

Graphical	Verbal	Matrix	Questionnaire	Direct	
Comparisons wrt "1Salary" node in "3ALTERNATIVES" cluster					
2Corporate Law Department is equally as likely as 1Law Firm					
1.	1Law Firm	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	2Corporate L~
2.	1Law Firm	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	3Government ~
3.	2Corporate L~	>=9.5	9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9	>=9.5 No comp.	3Government ~

Figure 3. Judgements on Alternatives - Salary

³ "Entry-Level (Honors Program) and Experienced Attorneys - Attorney Salaries, Promotions, and Benefits." The United States Department of Justice. August 5, 2015. Accessed March 12, 2018. <https://www.justice.gov/legal-careers/attorney-salaries-promotions-and-benefits>.

⁴ "Assistant U.S. Attorney." The United States Department of Justice. March 12, 2018. Accessed March 13, 2018. <https://www.justice.gov/legal-careers/job/assistant-us-attorney-38>.

		Graphical	Verbal	Matrix	Questionnaire	Direct																								
Comparisons wrt "2Work-Life Balance" node in "3ALTERNATIVES" cluster																														
2Corporate Law Department is equally to moderately more likely than 1Law Firm																														
1.	1Law Firm	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	2Corporate L~								
2.	1Law Firm	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	3Government ~								
3.	2Corporate L~	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	3Government ~								

Figure 4. Judgements on Alternatives – Work-Life Balance

		Graphical	Verbal	Matrix	Questionnaire	Direct																							
Comparisons wrt "3Career Advancement" node in "3ALTERNATIVES" cluster																													
1Law Firm is moderately to strongly more likely than 2Corporate Law Department																													
1.	1Law Firm	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	2Corporate L~							
2.	1Law Firm	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	3Government ~							
3.	2Corporate L~	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	3Government ~							

Figure 5. Judgements on Alternatives – Career Advancement

		Graphical	Verbal	Matrix	Questionnaire	Direct																							
Comparisons wrt "4Societal Influence" node in "3ALTERNATIVES" cluster																													
1Law Firm is equally to moderately more likely than 2Corporate Law Department																													
1.	1Law Firm	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	2Corporate L~							
2.	1Law Firm	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	3Government ~							
3.	2Corporate L~	>=9.5	9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	>=9.5	No comp.	3Government ~							

Figure 6. Judgements on Alternatives – Societal Influence

As I refined my judgements, I verified the inconsistency of the model. The goal node had a 0.036 measure of inconsistency and the salary, work-life balance, career advancement, and societal influence nodes had inconsistency measures of 0.02, 0.00, 0.00, and 0.00, respectively. All the inconsistency measures were less than about 0.10, so they are permissible. I also completed a sanity check; there were no errors or warnings.

4. Results Analysis

After completing the pairwise comparison judgements, I ran the synthesis. The results of the synthesis are shown below in Figure 7.

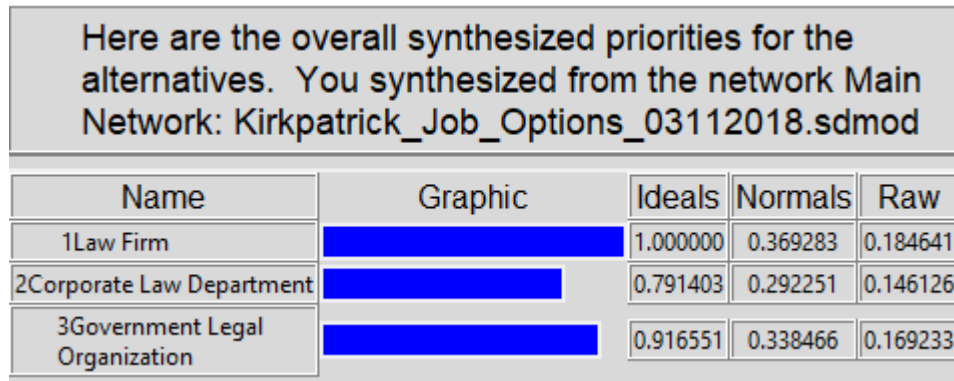


Figure 7. Overall Synthesis Priorities

The ideal choices shown in the synthesis, ranked from highest to lowest were: law firm, government legal organization, and corporate legal department. The results were on target with my top choice, the law firm. However, I was surprised that the government legal organization was such a close second. I had envisioned the corporate legal department to be the second highest ranked alternative. The synthesis also shows that the selection of one option over the other is fairly close. While the ideal of the law firm is 1.00, the government legal organization follows closely behind at 0.92, and the corporate legal department is only slightly less preferable at 0.79. Based on the criteria in the model, it is evident that all the choices have benefits and drawbacks that rank the synthesis within a range between 0.79 and 1.00.

5. Sensitivity Analysis

The parameters were input into the sensitivity analysis with respect to salary, work-life balance, career advancement, and societal influence. The results of the analysis are shown below in *Figures 8 – 11*.

By using the sensitivity analysis, I can see how the results will change if my preference for certain criteria changes over time. For instance, at about 32% priority, the salary benefits between the corporate legal department and the government legal organization are equal. However, if my priority is greater than about 65% for salary, then the corporate legal department is the best position. For work-life balance, if my priority is higher than 52%, the government legal organization is the best choice, but if the priority is less than roughly 31%, then the law firm is the preferred option. Next, in relation to career advancement opportunities, for any priority over 29%, the law firm is the correct choice, whereas, for anything less than 25%, the government legal organization is the appropriate selection. Lastly, in *Figure 11*, it is clear that for any preference level, the law firm is considered the best selection for societal contribution. Overall, the supplementary information provided by the output of the sensitivity analysis is useful as it provides additional insight on the results, allowing for a broader understanding of the decision-making process.

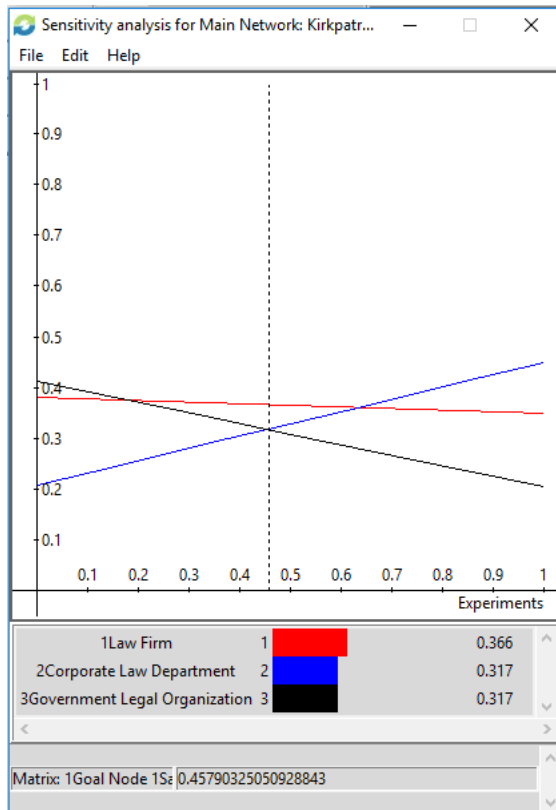


Figure 8. Sensitivity – Salary

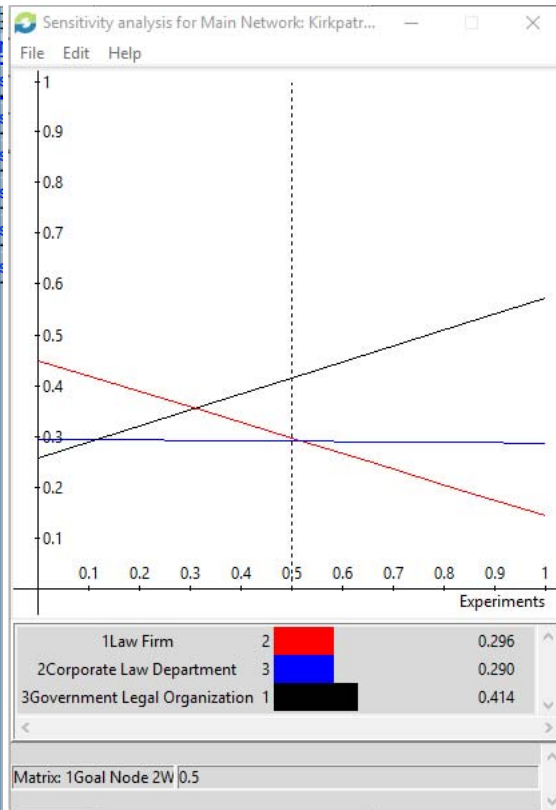


Figure 9. Sensitivity – Work-Life Balance

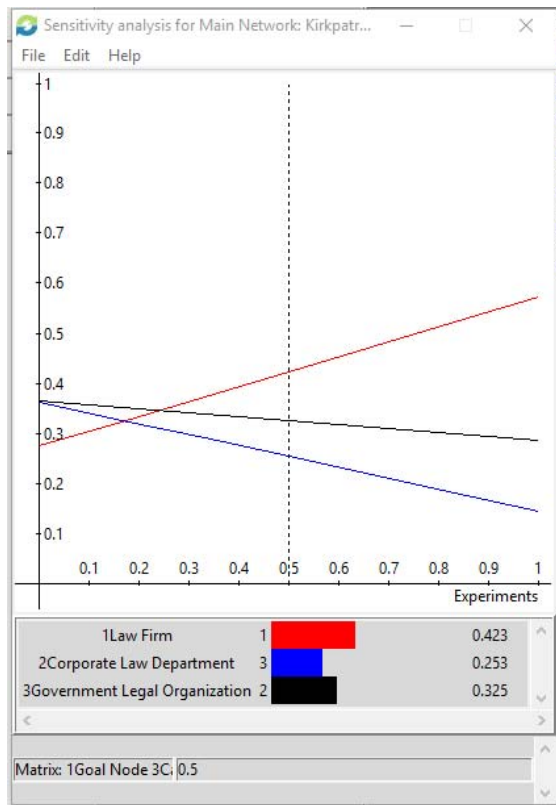


Figure 10. Sensitivity – Career Advancement

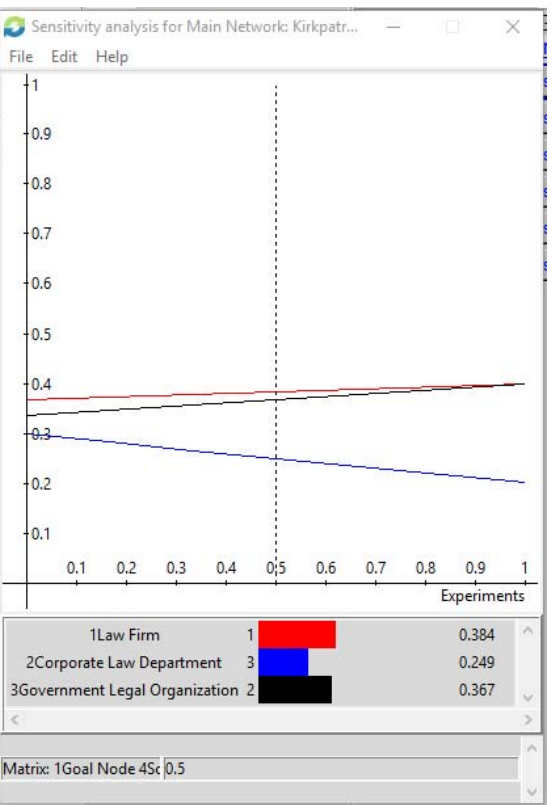


Figure 11. Sensitivity – Societal Influence