

# A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY INVESTIGATING ACCOUNTING STUDENTS' JOB SELECTION PREFERENCE



Richard H. Wesley, MBA, CPA  
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# Context and Background

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⌘ Public Accounting can be stressful.

⌘ Accounting industry losing its best and brightest.

⌘ Law Enforcement Industry.

# Problem Statement



- ❧ Pradana and Salehudin (2015) expressed public accounting firms experienced a high turnover rate.
- ❧ Pradana and Salehudin noted less than 50% junior auditors expected to survive.



# Problem Statement



- ❧ DeZoort, Lord, and Cargile (1997) advanced that many accounting students leave the academic setting with inaccurate perceptions.
- ❧ Corkern, Parks, and Morgan (2013) expressed, it is perplexing that some students spend 20 hours studying for one intermediate accounting exam; and just one hour preparing for a job interview.

# Problem Statement



- ❧ Collins and Killough (1992) explained, the long hours contribute difficulty of work/life balance.
- ❧ MacLean ( 2013) found turnover rates of women associated with starting a family.

# Research Purpose



- ❧ The purpose of this study is to provide research about job selection preferences in public accounting in order to help students and administrators when selecting a public accounting employer.

# Literature Review: Public Accounting Culture



- ✧ Church (2014) added that many promising recruits never fully assimilate.
- ✧ Church further asserted, careful job choice and preference, daily supervision and team building, partner involvement with new hires can go a long way toward of stemming turnover.

# Literature Review: Job Security



- ❧ Felton, Buhr, and Northey (1994) learned that accounting students placed more importance on job security than other business students who do not choose accounting as a career.



# Literature Review: Intrinsic and Extrinsic



- ❧ Dibabe, Wubie, and Wondmagegn (2015) noted accounting students considered extrinsic factors as very significant.
- ❧ El-Mousawi and Charbaji (2016) found intrinsic factors (attitude toward behavior) and parental influence (subjective norm) make statistical significant difference to predicting career choice.

# Research Questions



1. How do male accounting students compare extrinsically with female accounting students when selecting a public accounting employer?
2. How do male accounting students compare intrinsically with female accounting students when selecting a public accounting employer?
3. How do Caucasian accounting students compare with non-Caucasian accounting students when job security is a preference in selecting a public accounting employer?

# Significance of Study



- ❧ This research project may provide accounting graduates a resource to use when selecting a public accounting firm as an employer.
- ❧ Demagalhaes, Wilde, and Fitzgerald (2011) noted, it will provide administrators with sufficient information so that they may make informed decisions when advising accounting graduates about public accounting career choice.

# Significance of Study



- ✧ Also, this research project may help students to be better prepared during interviews.
- ✧ It may also provide public accounting recruiters research data to use when recruiting potential accounting graduates .



# Significance of Study



- ❧ It may also help reduce employee turnover once accounting graduates are able to select the right public accounting employer.
- ❧ Finally, using this research projects, student may be in a better position to convey their job selection preferences from an extrinsic and intrinsic perspective.

# Research Design



- ❧ Consists of a descriptive quasi non-experimental fixed design using quantitative methods.
- ❧ Leedy and Ormrod (2013) conveyed, the quasi portion of a design is best used when there is no random assignment.
- ❧ Robson (2011) noted that Non-experimental fixed designs are commonly used for descriptive purposes.

# Research Design Methodology-Permission



- ❧ Sought out and received permission to use and modify the survey instrument of:
  - ❧ Demagalhaes, Wilde, and Fitzgerald (2011).
- ❧ Received permission in Sept. 2015 from Demagalhaes to use the instrument.

# Research Design Methodology- Data Collection



- ❧ The Researcher sent a link of the survey questionnaire to the Accounting Department Chairs of four universities.
- ❧ The department chairs at each institution administered the surveys.
- ❧ Sent survey questionnaire via online to (NABA) National Association of Black Accountants.



# Participants



- ❧ Sample size consisted of 2,293 accounting participants:
  - ❧ Accounting participants choosing to participate was 182, resulting in a participation rate of 7.9%.
  - ❧ Gender
    - ❧ 57.2% female ( $n = 103$ )
    - ❧ 42.8% male ( $n = 77$ );
    - ❧ Two participants did not select a gender.

# Participants



## ✧ Ethnicity

- ✧ 60% Caucasian ( $n = 109$ ),
- ✧ 39.5% Non-Caucasian ( $n = 71$ )
- ✧ Two participants did not select a race category.

# Survey Instrument and Scale



- ❧ Survey questionnaire comprised of 25 Job Selection statements.
- ❧ Demagalhaes, et al. (2011) Employment Decision Factors five -point Likert scale was used to rank the students' responses (1= not important, 5=very important).
- ❧ Instrument had .815 overall Cronbach Alpha.
- ❧ Content Validity- Established by WIU's Department Accounting Chair.

# Measurement (Extrinsic)



- ❧ RQ1 = How do male accounting students compare extrinsically with female accounting students when selecting a public accounting employer?
- ❧ Nine extrinsic variables were used:
  - ❧ Job security,
  - ❧ Benefits,
  - ❧ Starting salary,
  - ❧ CPA Exam Prep,
  - ❧ Opportunity For Advancement,



# Measurement (Extrinsic) Cont'd



- ❧ Opportunity To Gain Experience,
- ❧ Opportunity of “In house” training and professional development,
- ❧ Employer-sponsored opportunity for Graduate Study,
- ❧ Flexibility of career options with employer.

# Findings: Research Question 1



- ❧ **Descriptive Statistic:** Extrinsic mean score for males ( $M = 38.57$ ,  $SD = 3.39$ ) and female ( $M = 38.68$ ,  $SD = 4.58$ ).
- ❧ **Inferential Statistics:** independent samples *t*-test.
- ❧ **Rationale:** Best measurement to use when measuring the mean difference of two between subject groups
- ❧ **Written Result :** Based on the results there was no statistically significant difference between accounting males and females extrinsic job selection score  $t(173) = 1.71$ ,  $p = .86$ ,  $d = .27$ .
- ❧ **Effect size** measures the magnitude of the significant between the two means.

# Measurement (Intrinsic)



- ❧ RQ 2 = How do male accounting students compare intrinsically with female accounting students when selecting a public accounting employer?
- ❧ Five intrinsic variables were used:
  - ❧ Employer Reputation and Prestige.
  - ❧ Flexible work schedule and work-life balance.
  - ❧ Dynamic and challenging work environment.
  - ❧ Employer culture and values.
  - ❧ Meaningful duties and responsibilities.

# Finding: Research Question 2



- ❧ **Descriptive Statistic:** Intrinsic mean score for males ( $M = 21.03$ ,  $SD = 2.52$ ) and female ( $M = 21.73$ ,  $SD = 2.27$ ).
- ❧ **Inferential Statistics:** independent samples *t*-test.
- ❧ **Rationale:** Best measurement to use when measuring the mean difference of two between subject groups.
- ❧ **Written Result :** Based on the results there was a statistically significant difference between accounting males and females intrinsic job selection score  $t(177) = 1.98$ ,  $p = .05$ ,  $d = .30$ .
- ❧ The results indicate female accounting students tend to rely more on their intrinsic attributes when selecting an employer than males.



# Independent *t*-test Table results for Intrinsic Values



## Intrinsic Variables Independent *t*-test Results

Intrinsic Variables	<i>t</i> -cal	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Work-life balance	2.92	125	.004.	.44
Employer Prestige	.328	178	.743	.04
Dynamic work environment	1.35	178	.179	.20
Employer culture/values	1.47	177	.144	.22
Meaningful Responsibilities	-.280	178	.779	.04

# Measurement (Job Security)



- ❧ RQ 3= How do Caucasian accounting students compare with non-Caucasian accounting students when job security is a preference in selecting a public accounting employer?
- ❧ Job Security variable was used.

# Findings: Research Question 3



- ❧ **Descriptive Statistic:** Caucasian ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = .67$ ) and Non-Caucasian ( $M = 4.67$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) Job Security score.
- ❧ **Inferential Statistics:** independent samples *t*-test.
- ❧ **Rationale:** Best measurement to use when measuring the mean difference of two between subject groups.
- ❧ **Written Result :**Based on the results there was no statistically significant difference between accounting Caucasian and Non-Caucasian job security score  $t(177) = .94$ ,  $p = .35$ ,  $d = .14$  when selecting an employer.

# Conclusion



- ❧ Most students are excited to land a job with a public accounting firm.
- ❧ They do not do a thorough job of researching the accounting firm.
- ❧ Students, administrators and recruiters having a better understanding of the students' preference and the employer's expectation.
- ❧ May lead to a better outcome for both the student and employer.



# Implications



- ❧ The results of the study revealed that accounting firms when hiring should focus on intrinsic factors.
- ❧ Accounting firms should focus on creating a work-life balance work environment.
- ❧ Practitioners must arm themselves with conveying to first and second-year employees that their firm values job security.

# Limitations



- ❧ Because the research design was quasi-non experimental there was no way to explain the results or discuss the influence.
- ❧ Also, could not discuss or argue cause and effect about the results.
- ❧ For this study the researcher could only describe and predict the results.

# Recommendations



- ❧ A study from public accounting firms' perspective, assessing the practitioners' views and expectations about accounting students' preparedness for public accounting work.
- ❧ Assess accounting students' soft skills – mainly interpersonal and communication skills.
- ❧ Additional focus on women's work-life balance needs when recruiting in public accounting.
- ❧ True experimental study that include random assignment to conditions.

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