A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY INVESTIGATING ACCOUNTING STUDENTS’ JOB SELECTION PREFERENCE

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Public Accounting can be stressful.

Accounting industry losing its best and brightest.

Law Enforcement Industry.
Problem Statement


Pradana and Salehudin noted less than 50% junior auditors expected to survive.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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.
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?
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.
Sought out and received permission to use and modify the survey instrument of:


Received permission in Sept. 2015 from Demagalhaes to use the instrument.
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.
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.
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,
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.
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.
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

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Intrinsic Variables</th>
<th>$t$-cal</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>$p$</th>
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<td>Employer Prestige</td>
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<td>.743</td>
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<td>Meaningful Responsibilities</td>
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<td>178</td>
<td>.779</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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.
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.