UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CAREER PREFERENCE, CAREER INTENTION, AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTING STUDENTS IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA

EMMANUEL YAW ARHIN

2022

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

CAREER PREFERENCE, CAREER INTENTION, AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTING STUDENTS IN SELECTED UNIVERSITIES IN GHANA

BY

EMMANUEL YAW ARHIN

Thesis submitted to the Department of Business and Social Sciences Education of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Education of the College of Education Studies, University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree in Accounting Education

NOVEMBER 2022

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original research and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature: ……. Date……

Name: Emmanuel Yaw Arhin

Supervisors' Declaration

We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Principal Supervisor's Signature……..……... Date……

Name: Prof. Edward Marfo-Yiadom

Co-supervisor's Signature …… Date…….

Name: Prof. Joseph Tufuor Kwarteng

ABSTRACT

The study examined career preference and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana. The study was informed by the social cognitive career theory, theory of planned behaviour and trait factor theory, and followed the pragmatist research philosophy. Sequential explanatory design and follow-up explanations model were employed for the study. The study engaged all the 360 undergraduate accounting students in the quantitative phase of the study. Through convenience sampling, 15 participants were selected for the qualitative phase. Questionnaire and interview guide were used to gather quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Descriptive (mean and standard deviation) and inferential (ANOVA, t-test, linear regression and structural equation modelling) statistics were used to analyse the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative data. It emerged from the study that personal factors, reference factors and job factors significantly influenced career preference of accounting students. However, only job factors such as salary directly influenced students' academic performance. Academic performance in Management Accounting was positively influenced by performance in Financial Accounting. There was no statistically significant difference between the academic performance of male and female accounting students. Career preference intention was found to mediate the relationships between job factors, personal factors, reference factors and academic performance. Accounting students who were willing and determined to pursue accounting career put in maximum effort to perform academically better. Accounting educators must expose students to accounting career opportunities and the positive outcomes of the accounting profession.

KEYWORDS

Career preference

Academic performance

Accounting education

Personal factor

Job factor

Reference factor

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Prof. Marfo-Yiadom and Prof. Joseph Tufuor Kwarteng for their immense contributions, support, motivations, guidance and directions throughout the study.

I am extremely grateful to the Management of accounting departments in the selected universities, for permitting this study to be conducted in their departments. I also express my appreciation to the undergraduate accounting students who supplied the needed data to make this study a success. I am thankful to the entire staff of the Department of Accounting and Department of Business and Social Sciences Education for their creative criticisms and comments during the early stages of the study. To Rev. (Dr.) George Tackie, Dr. James Tuffour and Dr. Samuel Kweku Agyei all of the School of Business, I say special thanks for your encouragement.

I also appreciate the support of Miss. Abigail Atuahene during the fieldwork and Mr. Frederick Appiah who checked the appropriateness of the statistics used for the study. To my siblings, Dinah, Samuel, Paul and Isaiah, I say many thanks for your prayers, encouragement and moral support. Finally, I am grateful to my late parent, Paul and Sarah who have been the pillar behind my success in education. May their souls rest in perfect soul.

DEDICATION

To my wife Afrakoma, and children Bernice, Emmanuel and Reuel.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
KEYWORDS	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
DEDICATION	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xvi
LIST OF ACRONYMS	xvii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Background to the Study	1
Statement of the Problem	7
Purpose of the Study	9
Research Objectives	10
Research Questions	10
Research Hypotheses	10
Significance of the Study	11
Scope and Delimitation of the Study	13
Limitations of the Study	13
Definition of Key Terms	14

Organization of the study 15

CHAPTER TWO: DEVELOPMENTS OF ACCOUNTING EDUCATION IN GHANA

Introduction 16

Historical Background of Ghana – a brief profile 16

Overview of Accounting Education 19

Overview of Accounting Education in Ghana 22

Antecedents of Accounting Education in Ghana 26

Accounting Education at the Secondary Level in Ghana 29

Accounting Education at the Tertiary level in Ghana 34

Professional Accounting Education in Ghana 40

Gender and Accounting Education 44

Challenges of Accounting Education in Ghana 48

Chapter Summary 52

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Introduction 53

Theoretical Framework 53

The Concept of Career 69

Classification of Professional Career 70

Career Preference 72

Concept of Academic Performance 77

Academic Performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting 88

Conceptualising Career Preference Factors, Career Preference Intention, and Academic Performance 91

Chapter Summary 98

CHAPTER FOUR: EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Introduction 99

Personal Factors and Career preference 99

Reference Factors and Career Preference 110

Job-Related Factors and Career Preference 115

Reference Factors and Academic Performance 126

Job Factors and Academic performance 129

Other School Factors and Academic Performance 131

Students' Performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting 137

Gender and Academic Performance 140

Career Preference Intention and Academic Performance of Accounting Students 143

Chapter Summary 145

CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction 147

Research Philosophy/Paradigm 147

Research Approach 149

Research Design 150

Profile of Institutions engaged in the Study 152

Population 155

Subjects of the study 156

Data Sources 157

Data Collection Instruments 157

Pre-Testing of Instruments 160

Validity and Reliability of Instrument 161

Data Collection Procedures 161

Fieldwork Challenges 163

Data Processing and Analysis 164

Ethical Considerations 165

Chapter Summary 166

CHAPTER SIX: FACTORS INFLUENCING ACCOUNTING CAREER PREFERENCE

Introduction 168

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents 168

Diagnostics 170

Measurement model assessment 171

Internal Consistency Reliability 172

Convergent Validity 174

Discriminant Validity 174

Structural Model Assessment 176

Factors influencing accounting students' career preference 178

Assessing coefficient of determination and predictive relevance 179

Personal Factors and Career Preference 181

Reference factors and career preference 185

Job Factors and Career Preference 190

Chapter Summary 195

CHAPTER SEVEN: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTING STUDENTS

Introduction 196

Academic performance of Accounting Students in Ghana 196

Students' satisfaction with their performance (grades) in accounting and accounting-related courses. 202

Performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting 205

Diagnostic Tests 206

Test of independence 206

Test of Hypothesis 207

Goodness of Fit 207

Influence of Gender on the performance of Accounting Students 212

Factors influencing academic performance of accounting students 216

Reliability and Validity Test 216

Confirmatory Factor Analysis 218

Assessing Internal Consistency Reliability 220

Convergent and Discriminant Validity 221

Assessing the structural model 222

Assessing Coefficient of Determination and Predictive Relevance 223

Personal factors and Academic performance 226

Reference factors and Academic performance 228

Job factors and Academic performance 230

Other factors influencing Academic Performance among accounting students. 231

Effect of Career Intention on Academic Performance of Accounting Students 241

The Mediating Role of Career Intention on the Relationship among Job factors, Personal factors, Reference factors and Academic Performance 243

Chapter Summary 250

CHAPTER EIGHT: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction 252

Summary of the study 252

Key Findings 255

Conclusions 257

Contribution to Knowledge 260

Recommendations 261

Suggestions for Further Research 264

REFERENCES 266

APPENDICES 301

APPENDIX A 301

APPENDIX B 307

APPENDIX C 309

APPENDIX D 310

APPENDIX E 311

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Operationalization of Academic Performance	85
2	Grading system for UCC and UEW	152
3	Examples of modifications made to some questionnaire items	158
4	Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents	169
5	Item loading and Cross Loadings	171
6	Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	173
7	Fornell-Lacker criterion	175
8	Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)	176
9	Collinearity amongst constructs	177
10	Structural Model Assessment	180
11	Summary of Career Preference Factors Hypotheses	194
12	Descriptive Statistics	197
13	Model Summary	207
14	ANOVA Results for Performance in Financial Accounting Management Accounting	208
15	Coefficients	208
16	Group Statistics	212
17	Independent Samples Test result on gender differences in academic performance of accounting students	214
18	Cross Loadings	217
19	Model Fit Measures for Final Measurement Model	219
20	Model Fit Measures for Final Measurement Model	220
21	Fornell-Lacker Criterion	221

22 Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) 222

23 Collinearity amongst constructs 223

24 Summary of the Result 225

25 Descriptive statistic of other factors influencing academic performance 231

26 Regression Output 242

27 Direct Mediating Effect 245

28 Indirect Mediation Effect 245

29 Summary of Academic performance-related Hypotheses 249

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1	Conceptual Framework	97
2	Sequential explanatory design and follow-up explanations model	151
3	Outer and Inner Model Results	178
4	Bootstrapping Model	180
5	PLS Algorithm – Outer and inner model results	224
6	Bootstrapping	225
7	Mediation Role of Career Preference Intention	248

LIST OF ACRONYMS

WAEC	West African Examinations Council
ICAG	Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
IFAC	International Federation of Accountants
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
AICPA	American Institute of Certified Public Accountants
KCT	Kumasi College of Technology
CCS	Corporation of Certified Secretaries
CIS	Chartered Institute of Secretaries
ACCA	Association of Certified and Corporate Accountants
ICUE	International Commission on University Education
GIMPA	Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
KNUST	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
UDS	University of Development Studies
UPSA	University of Professional Studies, Accra
VVU	Valley View University
GCE	General Certificate of Education
GBCE	Ghana Business Certificate Examinations
LCC	London Chamber of Commerce
SSSCE	Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination
WASSCE	West African Senior School Certificate Examinatons
SHS	Senior High School
GTEC	Ghana Tertiary Education Commission

KATTC	Kumasi Advanced Technical Teachers College
UEW	University of Education, Winneba
UCC	University of Cape Coast
URC	University Rationalisation Committee
HND	Higher National Diploma
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
NBTE	National Board for Technical Education
IES	International Education Standards
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
GPI	Gender Parity Index
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
SCCT	Social Cognitive Career Theory
TFT	Trait and Factor Theory
TRA	Theory of Reasoned Action
TPB	Theory of Planned Behaviour
IASB	International Accounting Standards Board
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
PLS	Partial Least Square
SEM	Structural Equation Model

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Globally, education is considered a vital component of human and national development (Issahaku, 2017). Developing a nation largely depends on the availability of quality education to its populace, especially, the younger generation. Education within higher institutions of learning helps a country to equip learners with the required knowledge, skills, attitude and expertise needed to be actively involved in the development of a country. For instance, accounting education has contributed to the development of the necessary managerial and financial tools which enable graduates of higher educational institutions to occupy managerial positions in government and private sectors (Ayuba & Mohammed, 2014).

Background to the Study

The universal relevance of education has paved the way for policymakers in Ghana to put in place measures to ensure that students in higher institutions of learning are empowered with the necessary skills, knowledge, and attitude required for the development of the country. The best indicator of students' abilities in terms of the requisite skills to meet the demand of the nation is academic performance (Ahinful et al., 2019).

One of the main objectives of education is for pupils to achieve well academically (Afrogha et al., 2020). According to Kumar et al. (2021) it is referred to as the information acquired by pupils that is evaluated by tutoring scores and/or educational goals set by students and teachers to be attained over

a predetermined length of time. Academic excellence for students, as demonstrated by improved academic performance, is the primary goal of academic institutions (Narad & Abdullah, 2016). For accounting students to advance smoothly along their professional path, academic success is crucial. So, for accounting students looking to pursue a career in the profession, strong academic achievement is a stepping stone (Ahinful et al., 2019). Igere (2017) and Ahinful et al. (2019) noted that academic performance is an efficient tool for the measurement of a student's success. They further explained that academic performance is used to assess students' ability to meet laid down standards by educational institutions of higher learning. Also, in higher educational institutions, students' academic performance often determines how successful they would be in their studies (Aminu & Timothy, 2014). For example, good academic performance assists in meeting the demand for accountants, especially in developing countries where there is a high demand for accountants due to economic growth (Dalci et al., 2013; Ahinful et al., 2019).

A study of the factors affecting the performance of accounting students is critical, especially, for the Ghanaian setting where students' performance has declined over a period of time (Siagian & Khan, 2016). Although the West African Examination Council (WAEC) (2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020) report on the West African Senior High School Certificate Examinations shows a consistently high pass rate in Financial Accounting, the same cannot be said about accounting students at the higher educational institutions and the professional level. At the tertiary level (higher educational institutions), general performance in the accounting programme has not been impressive, resulting in

the rustication of students and a reduction in enrollment in some institutions (Issahaku, 2017; Ahinful et al., 2019). Similarly, according to the Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG) (2016, 2018), the results of most professional qualification papers have been hovering below expectations. Some accounting students, according to the Chief Examiner, entered the professional examinations not adequately prepared. Generally, the substandard performance of some accounting students could be caused by a lack of commitment and interest in accounting courses (Issahaku, 2017; Saayir & Sande, 2020) which affects their intentions to pursue accounting careers.

Career preference has a significant influence on an individual's future life (Owusu et al., 2019). They further asserted that students often have complex decisions regarding the kind of profession that they intend to pursue in life. As students ponder their carrier preferences, they encounter challenges of relating their preferences with their personalities, attitudes, abilities and academic performance (Xu, 2017). Career, according to Tang and Seng (2016) is a profession for which a student undergoes formal education over a period of time with the intention of pursuing it for one's entire life. Tan and Lasward (2006) referred to career as the training or education of an individual that often leads to lifetime employment. Career, therefore, is about the occupation, vocation or profession that a person pursues in his lifetime.

Career preference is a preferred choice of a programme by a student, which often culminates in a specific job (Aminu & Timothy, 2014). A student's career preference intention is developed in three sequential stages from childhood to the end of active service (Igere, 2017). The beginning stage, according to Igere, is an unrealistic conceptualization of one's abilities and

potential concerning careers. Gradually, the child grows to be more realistic in evaluating him/herself with potential occupation. The second phase of career development often sets in at the high school level (Igere, 2017; Owusu et al., 2019). The third and final stage is known as realistic career preference which extends from the beginning of higher educational institutions (tertiary institutions) till one's earned occupation. It is, therefore, submitted in this study that for one to earn a professional career such as accounting, engineering, law, and medicine, it demands a good academic foundation. Further, a good academic foundation can be obtained when students enhance their career preference intention.

Students' interest in a programme of study is, therefore, of paramount importance as they rise through the career developmental stages (Aminu & Timothy, 2014). Aminu and Timothy further asserted that if students are not interested in their programme of study, it can affect their attitude towards the programme and ultimately influence their academic performance. Thus, making the right career choice positively influences one's academic performance. Choosing a career, according to Igere (2017), is a path which essentially leads to a career decision-making process. Thus, career preference is an individual decision which prepares the behaviour of students in choosing a programme of study that consequently unveils the end result of the programme chosen (Yamen, 2019). Most students fail academically because of a wrong choice of programme or lack of interest in a programme (Igere, 2017).

The choice of a programme of study by students has a long-term effect on their lifetime careers (Umar, 2014). Umar, however, noted that students often experience challenges when deciding on their choice of career, and therefore

greater attention must be given to determinants of career preference intention by students. In as much as some students fail academically as a result of wrong programme choices as stipulated by Igere (2017), most employees fail in jobs for psychological reasons, though they might have the requisite skill for the job.

When undergraduate students make the right choice of programme which culminates in the right future career or profession, students become interested and satisfied with the programme of study, thus, influencing their academic performance positively (Owusu et al., 2019). To make the right choice of a programme according to their preference or interest, students must rigorously investigate the possible programmes of study before their selection (Koech et al., 2016). This indicates that if undergraduate students make wrong choices either as a result of a poor assessment of the available options or poor judgment both their academic performance and career life are affected negatively.

According to Bekoe et al. (2018) and Owusu et al. (2019), in Africa, and Ghana in particular, many students commit to inappropriate careers because of ignorance, and undue pressure from peers, family, and teachers. Thus, some people develop intentions to pursue accounting careers due to their associated monetary rewards or prestige in society rather than genuine interest emanating from appropriate career guidance and counselling (Bekoe et al, 2018). Debatably, such students develop feelings of annoyance which culminates in poor academic results. At work, such individuals constitute a nuisance to their employers and society, since they are not able to perform to meet employers' expectations, failing to contribute meaningfully to society. On the contrary, pressure from the referent group (for example family and peers) and association

with monetary rewards or job prestige positively influence the academic performance of some accounting students as they enhance their intention to pursue accounting careers (Ahinful et al., 2019; Owusu et al., 2019).

The lack of professional accountants available to meet the rising demand for accountants is a current issue that has attracted a lot of attention in accounting education research (see, for instance, Mustapha & Hassan, 2012; Ng et al., 2017; Ahinful et al., 2019; Owusu et al., 2019; Muhamad et al., 2020). By 2020, Malaysia would need roughly 60,000 professional accountants, however the Malaysian Institute of Accountants only had 36,000 chartered accountants at the time (Muhamad et al., 2020). The scenario in Malaysia is not all that unlike from Ghana, where only half of the more than 8000 professional accountants predicted be produced (ICAG, 2017).

While nations are having trouble deciding what steps to take to address the shortages in the supply of professional accountants, it is anticipated that the demand for accountants will rise globally in the future due to the abrupt increase in business activities (Owusu, et al., 2019). Inference: If governments do not take dramatic actions to solve the lack or deficit in the supply, the difficulty of satisfying the global demand for accountants might get worse. The rate of accountants leaving the sub-Saharan African area in search of better opportunities in industrialized nations is rising, which poses a significant threat to many economies in the region (Ng et al., 2017; Muhamad et al., 2020).

A common theme from earlier studies (Porter & Woolley, 2014; Ng et al., 2017) attributes this unfavorable trend to the persistent decline in the enrolment of accounting students in higher educational institutions of learning, particularly universities. This is true despite attempts to identify causes for the

shortage in the supply of accountants around the world. This research's findings connected the lack of supply to certain accounting graduates' unwillingness to enter the field. According to Ng et al. (2017), enrollment in accounting programs is decreasing in several nations. Many of these students choose not to pursue a career as professional accountants, which contributes to the growing shortage of such individuals.

Issahaku (2017) and Ahinful et al. (2019) claim that the declining cumulative grade point average (CGPA) scores of accounting education students in Ghana indicate a decline in their academic performance. The researcher has seen a rise in the number of repeat accounting courses in her work as an instructor and examiner. The accounting program must graduate the top students (both males and females) with high aptitudes in order to maintain Ghana's economic growth and satisfy employers in the job markets. However, a decline in quality can indicate an inability to meet the demands of the labor market.

Statement of the Problem

Lack of appropriate career guidance has resulted in most accounting students choosing their careers ignorantly, without assessing their future orientation (Owusu et al, 2019). Most students are often influenced by peers, parents, and teachers or the prestige attached to the job without adequate career counseling, contributing to the production of unemployed graduates as a result of poor or average academic performance. However, Ghana lacks the needed number of qualified accountants to help attain organizational and national goals. The Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana (ICAG) in 2017 reported a massive shortage of accountants in Ghana (8000 qualified accountants against

4,471 as at 2017). Thus, the production of more brilliant accounting students by tertiary institutions can enhance the production of more qualified professional accountants since one's attainment of a bachelor's degree in accounting enhances one's potential for registering and sitting for professional accountancy exams. The increase in qualified accountants will, therefore, result in improved financial reporting for all firms and elevated degrees of responsibility and openness in financial disclosure which are crucial for sustaining Ghana's economic expansion and achieving its middle-income status. Failure to address the above issue will hamper the professional accountants' number in Ghana as well as their performances.

Currently, at the senior high level, students who pursue business (accounting) as a subject do not have the freedom to divert to other equally lucrative careers such as nursing, resulting in no or limited access to the other disciplines. The unique nature of accounting (unlike other disciplines such as Medicine and Agriculture) with its career path from the senior high level need to be considered. A study of career preference and academic performance of accounting students will help students choose the right career path as they climb the academic ladder. Failure to address this issue may result in the enrolment of accounting students without interest in the area, thereby affecting their performance.

A substantial amount of literature (Jackling & Keneley, 2009; Dalci, Arash & Baradarani, 2013; Umar, 2014; Alanezi et al., 2016; Igere, 2017, Ng. et al., 2017; Xu, 2017; Hammour, 2018; Muhamad et al., 2020) have examined career preference factors and academic performance. Meanwhile, the above studies were centred on developed countries and some developing countries.

Again, the previous studies on career preferences (Porter & Woolley, 2014; Aslam, 2018; Saayir & Bosu, 2021) focused on basic and senior secondary (high) school students, hence, limited concentration on the career preferences of students in higher education set-up where students of accounting programmes often determine their career preference (Ng et al., 2016). Thus, there is a paucity of similar literature from less developed countries like Ghana, hence, the focus of this study is on Ghana.

To accomplish their study goals, the majority of the earlier researchers used either qualitative or quantitative research approaches (examples include Alanezi et al., 2016, Muhamad et al., 2016, Ng et al., 2017, and Muhamad et al., 2020). The quantitative technique was adopted by some researchers, but they merely performed descriptive analyses, which do not look for statistically significant associations. Once more, some of the few researchers that combined quantitative and qualitative research techniques (e.g., Law & Yeun, 2012; Anis & Hanafi, 2015; Hashim & Embong, 2015) did not adhere to the mixed methods research integration criterion as stated by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009). Therefore, it is justifiable and appropriate to adopt a mixed-method approach for better and valid result, to understand the relationship between accounting career preference intention factors and academic performance in a developing country set-up.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine and analyse the effect of career preference on the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. examine the factors influencing accounting students' career preference in Ghana.
2. examine the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.
3. analyse the effect of personal factors, reference factors, and job factors on academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.
4. analyse the mediating role of career intention on the relationships between personal factors, reference factors, job factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.

Research Questions

The following research questions were developed to guide the study:

1. What are the factors influencing career preference of accounting students in Ghana?
2. What is the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana?
3. What is the effect of personal factors, reference factors, and job factors on academic performance of accounting students in Ghana?
4. What is the mediating role of career intention on the relationships between personal factors, reference factors, job factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana?

Research Hypotheses

1. H_0: Personal factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students in Ghana;

2. H_0: Reference factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students in Ghana;
3. H_0: Job factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students in Ghana;
4. H_0: There is no statistically significant relationship between performance of Financial Accounting and Management Accounting of accounting students in Ghana;
5. H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance of male and female accounting students in Ghana;
6. H_0: There is no statistically significant effect of personal factors on the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;
7. H_0: Reference factors do not significantly predict the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;
8. H_0: There is no statistically significant effect of job factors on academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;
9. H_0: Career Intention has no statistically significant effect on the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;
10. H_0: There is no statistically significant mediating effect of career intention on the relationships between career preference factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;

Significance of the Study

Examining the key elements that have shaped students' preferences in accounting education is a concern for researchers and educators working in the field of accounting across the world. Since a student's choice of accounting programs may have a substantial impact on resources, accounting professors

should be curious about the variables that influence students to choose one over the other. Therefore, it is crucial for academics and the accounting profession to comprehend students' excitement for the subject, especially if they hope to recruit the brightest students to pursue specialization in accounting.

It is expected that the study's findings will significantly benefit the key stakeholders in education – university students, higher educational institutions, and counsellors. Students would appreciate the importance of career preference and pay attention to their abilities, interest and aptitude before making a career choice that may affect their performance.

The findings will also inform the accounting departments of senior high schools and tertiary institutions as to how students should be grouped for lectures. Accounting students in tertiary institutions are often grouped arbitrarily into manageable numbers for lectures. The study's findings will help heads of accounting departments to conduct diagnostic tests and group the students based on their career preference factors. Such groupings will assist the lecturers to know the appropriate instructional approach to be used for each group since they are informed about the dynamism of each student, improving students' academic performance.

Furthermore, the findings of this study will assist academic advisors and counselors in grasping the factors that impact the career decisions of university students. Thus, the above-named professionals would have access to scientific data that would be used to guide their students to attain success in the courses they pursue.

If a relationship between career preference and academic performance exists, then understanding how accounting education students arrived at their

career goal may aid in predicting if they will be successful. This study would also contribute to accounting education literature in developing countries by establishing the predictive ability of career preference factors (job-related, reference, and personal) that have the capacity to influence academic performance.

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study was confined to public universities in Ghana, although there are private and technical universities that offer accounting as a programme. Also, the respondents were level 400 accounting students who were enrolled in the programme during the time of data collection. Students in other programmes and levels were not considered. Finally, although there are several factors influencing academic performance, career preference – personal, reference, and job-related – factors were considered for the study.

Limitations of the Study

Despite the strengths of the study, some limitations were also noted. First, data was gathered from only two public universities in Ghana. Although an attempt was made to include all universities, the very few which accepted to be part of the study and with similar features were used. The inclusion of all the universities in Ghana would have generated an improved generalisability of the findings.

Self-reported statistics, which to some extent may not be a real depiction of the subject matter, were included in the questionnaire that served as the

research instrument for the quantitative data. This is due to the possibility that some respondents may select answers that do not accurately reflect the situation. However, the interviews that were done following the quantitative data collection helped to alleviate this problem. These do not, however, compromise the study's goals.

Definition of Key Terms

Accounting Education: Programs in accounting are taught at a higher educational level with the goal of preparing students to work as accountants.

Academic Performance: the success rate on exams for accounting courses. In light of what has been formally taught in an academic context, what a pupil is able to accomplish may be determined. A student's cumulative grade point average (CGPA) is used to calculate it.

Career Intention: the readiness and tenacity of a person to pursue a desired vocation. It is a significant factor in forecasting a person's career.

Personal Factors: These are the intrinsic factors that influence students' preference for an accounting career. These include interest in the subject, quantitative skills, willingness to learn accounting, ability to maintain a high-grade point average, among others.

Job-related Factors: these are the economic factors and the job attributes that influence accounting students' preference for a specific career. These factors include job availability, higher financial rewards, prestige, and career advancement, among others.

Reference Factors: These refer to the influence of significant others within a community such as family members, friends, counselors, and high school teachers among others.

Organization of the study

There are eight major chapters in the work. The study's history, problem statement, aims, importance, delimitations, operationalization of important terminology, and organization of the study are all included in Chapter One, which serves as the study's introduction. The second chapter examines the literature on the growth of accounting education in Ghana. The topics covered include the history of accounting education in Ghana, accounting education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, Ghana's embrace of international education standards, and gender concerns in accounting education.

The many ideas and theories that support the study are presented in Chapter Three. In Chapter Four, the relevant empirical literature is reviewed in connection to the study's conceptual framework, research questions, and hypotheses. The research techniques used to carry out the study are described in full in Chapter 5. Some of the subheadings discussed in the chapter are the research paradigm, methodology, design, population, sample and sampling methodologies, and research tools. Chapter Five also included ethical concerns and data processing and analysis. Findings on the variables affecting career preference are covered in Chapter 6 while academic performance-related variables influencing career preference are covered in Chapter 7. The key conclusions and summaries of the study's findings are presented in the last chapter. Additionally, it emphasizes the contribution to knowledge, offers suggestions to key players, and identifies areas that require more study.

CHAPTER TWO

DEVELOPMENT OF ACCOUNTING EDUCATION IN GHANA

Introduction

Around the world, accounting education is developing in a variety of cultures and legal systems. The primary method for training accountants to efficiently satisfy a nation's needs is through accounting education programs at higher educational institutions of learning (IFAC 2013). Accounting education programs should be designed such that students are given the necessary groundwork to acquire a broad range of information and abilities to effectively serve their community (IFAC, 2013; Helliar, 2013).

Critical challenges regarding the growth of accounting education in Ghana have been covered in this chapter. This chapter discusses environmental factors influencing the development of accounting in Ghana, including social, political, and economic influences. It also provides a brief historical overview of Ghana's economy, an overview of accounting education, the evolution of accounting education with its challenges, and an overview of accounting education. In addition, concerns related to accounting education at various educational levels, including secondary school (senior high), college, and the professional level, are covered in this chapter. The presentation also includes gender concerns related to accounting education.

Historical Background of Ghana – a brief profile

Understanding the structure and practices of accounting education in a specific nation requires looking at its historical and cultural context (Gallhofer et al., 2009; Asenso-Okofo, et al., 2011). According to Asenso-Okofo et al.,

national history and culture have a considerable impact on undergraduate accounting education, which may differ from that of Western nations in developing nations like Ghana.

The Republic of Ghana is situated at the point where the Greenwich Meridian intersects the countries that make up the Gulf of Guinea coastline of Western Africa, between latitudes of 40 and 120. The land area of the nation is 239,460 square kilometers. On March 6, 1957, Ghana, once known as the Gold Coast because to the wealth of gold, became the first country in sub-Saharan Africa to achieve independence.

Ghana is bordered on the west by Cote d'Ivoire, on the east by Togo, on the north by Burkina Faso, and on the south by the Atlantic Ocean. Ghana is home to more than 90 distinct ethnic groups, each of which speaks a unique language. But English, a holdover from Britain, continues to be the official tongue. Ghana's climate is often mild and dry, drawing tourists from other countries during the winter months. Agriculture makes up a sizable portion of Ghana's economic activity. Over 40% of the gross domestic product is made up of forestry, livestock, and fisheries, all of which are thoroughly covered. About 60% of the labor force is employed by it, and it accounts for 70% of export revenues.

The British colonized Ghana in 1821. After that, the British established the British Gold Coast Colony to further solidify their hold over the coastal areas and set up administrative and educational institutions until 1957, when Ghana gained its independence. Following the 1966 overthrow of Ghana's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, the country was subsequently governed by a succession of military coups. Ghana began experimenting with democracy in

1992, and after persevering for a while, it established a reputation as the top democracy in Africa.

According to data from the United Nations and the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) for the year 2021, Ghana's population is thought to be 31,072,940, or 0.4% of the world's population. According to Belkaoui (1983), the population size of a nation has a considerable impact on the level of public interest in the accounting profession and the standard of accounting processes. From 6.7 million in 1960 to 14 million in 1989, Ghana's population increased at a steady rate of 27% (Anyane-Ntow, 1992; UNICEF Annual Report, 2010; GSS, 2011).

Ghana has been undergoing a change in its economic base since gaining independence, moving away from traditional agriculture and commerce and toward contemporary industry. Raw materials, completed consumer and capital products, as well as finished capital goods are all produced by the industrial sector. The export of numerous natural resources, including goods like gold, cocoa, manganese, bauxite, diamonds, oil, lumber, and rubber manufacturing, is essential to the economy. Once more, a substantial portion of the economy is dependent on imports, which has a negative effect on the GDP and drives up the cost of products and services over time (Asenso-Okofo, Ali, & Ahmed, 2011).

In Ghana, inflation has an impact on earnings owing to fluctuating prices, in addition to limiting the capacity of potential investors to obtain capital for growth and development. Due to the difficulties the nation has faced over the years, many professionals have left the country in search of better opportunities abroad. This migration of skilled laborers, such as accountants and

accounting tutors, has left the nation severely short of the number of accountants needed, necessitating the creation of more qualified accountants.

Overview of Accounting Education

According to some scholars, accounting education is the practice of transferring to accounting students the appropriate competence required for managing the accountancy profession (Sinclair, 2015). According to Bayerlein and Timpson (2017), accounting education is also seen as a process that results in graduates who are prepared with the fundamental know-how and abilities required for a successful entry into the accounting profession. Celik and Ecer (2009) thought of accounting as the business language, nevertheless.

According to Celik and Ecer (2009), accounting is the language used to convey important information to stakeholders like investors. Investors, policymakers, people, and enterprises may all benefit from the pertinent financial data provided by individual firms' accountants in order to make informed judgments that are also economically sound. This idea that accounting education is a "service activity" backs up an earlier claim made by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA, 1970) that accounting provides quantitative financial information about economic firms that is helpful in making rational decisions about the best course of action.

Additionally, accounting education is seen as a social tool that aids in understanding and improving management of the business environment (Mustapha & Hassan, 2012). In a larger sense, accounting gives people and organizations the ability to quantify, aggregate, and analyze intangible business activities that may be supported by monetary transactions.

In this research, "accounting education" is defined as all the activities, procedures, and experiences that a university undergraduate accounting student will experience prior to earning a degree or its equivalent in accounting. As a result, accounting courses taught at the university level, such as Financial Accounting, Managerial Accounting, Tax Accounting, and Auditing, were designed to prepare students to work as accounting instructors or professionals.

However, schools must provide other pertinent courses if they want to prepare accounting students for economic decision-making, ensure that they have the abilities to fill management and other leadership roles as well as deal with organizational difficulties utilizing the general skills. The cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of accounting education students is influenced by how well they perform in such a pertinent course, and they also become better employees and employers.

Apostolou et al. (2015) found that the majority of research in the accounting education literature concentrated on specific study programs, educational technologies, teaching and learning strategies, and issues between faculty and students. Accounting academicians, including professors and instructors, play a crucial role in introducing students to both the required material and contemporary accounting concepts and principles, including international financial reporting standards on accounting, auditing standards, ethical standards, and taxation principles (Bekoe et al., 2018).

The goal of accounting education is to provide aspiring accountants with knowledge of the advantages of implementing ethical standards and accounting principals (Hammour, 2018). He continued by saying that the goal of accounting education is to provide a system of instruction that is carefully planned to

prepare accounting graduates for the professional and vocational excellence expected of university-trained accountants. Since graduates of accounting school will go on to work for these businesses, accounting education's goal must be compatible with them. In order to adequately educate accounting students for the workforce, higher education institutions must provide them with the necessary tools, according to Hammour (2018). In order to convey information from accounting academics to accounting students and to achieve worldwide harmonization, curricular adjustments and a greater adoption of international practices are necessary (Ahinful et al., 2019).

Accounting education does not match the expectations of students who enter the accounting practice or profession, despite the continual admission, processing, and certification of accounting graduates (Apostolou et al., 2015). Students may therefore graduate with excellent grades yet be unable to perform to standards at work. This might be the consequence of a variety of things, such as a lack of interest in the field but peer or family pressure to continue the program, or poor school grades.

However, other researchers (for instance, Awayiga et al., 2010; Foong & Khoo, 2015; Ahinful et al., 2019) who investigated the discrepancy between employers' expectations and accounting graduates came to the conclusion that while employers are generally satisfied with the technical expertise of accounting graduates, they are not with the generic skills like communication and problem-solving skills. Therefore, the capacity of accounting graduates to accomplish specified work schedules successfully and efficiently is what businesses and modern higher education institutions demand of them. Since the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) takes into account students' overall

performance rather than their technical area (particular grades), it must be used as the best predictor of academic success (Ahinful et al., 2019).

In order to properly convey information and complete complicated activities in industries, brilliant and knowledgeable people with the necessary abilities are needed due to the demanding nature of accounting topics and employment (Bayerlein & Timpson, 2017; Ahinful, et al., 2019). One of the primary goals of modern accounting education, according to Blackmore et al. (2017), Tyurina and Troyanskaya (2017), is to provide students the necessary IT skills so they can utilize accounting software to create financial reports.

The explanation above shows that academia and practice are the two main goals of accounting education. Academics view accounting education as a way to generate graduates who will go on to work as professors and researchers, continuing the cycle of producing new accountants. In reality, companies anticipate that an accounting degree will provide workers with the necessary technical and general abilities to work as accountants and account officers and behave as responsible stewards across a range of company sectors.

Overview of Accounting Education in Ghana

According to Hammour (2018), the perception of accounting is that it is a product that is molded by its environment, with each unique environment being unique to a given time and place. Hammour went on to say that the colonial era was to blame for accounting education and practice in the majority of developing nations, including Ghana. For instance, Ghana built its accounting education approaches and procedures on British models. According to Belete and Dessalegm (2011), the standard of accounting education and the profession of accounting are positively correlated. Therefore, accountants

perform better in a culture where the caliber of accounting education is important.

In the Gold Coast throughout the eighteenth century, professional groups' need to combine and regulate their activities was understood (Ghartey, 1992). According to him, the 1911 census report divided jobs into three categories: professional and clerical, commercial and industrial, and manual and unskilled. According to Ghartey (1992, p. 37), "the percentage composition of the groupings in the labor force was 9.4, 25.5, and 54.1, respectively. The bulk of the population was therefore unskilled. Tradespeople who worked in the industrial and commercial sectors made up 47% of these groupings, along with carpenters, blacksmiths, tailors, butchers, and masons. Some of these merchants established guilds, which are analogous to the present trade unions.

The associations' goals were to supervise pay and wage standards, create apprentice legislation, deal with concerns of unfair competition, and settle disputes among themselves. The groups utilized penalties and nonviolent influence to enforce the different rules. The master-servant relationship was also governed by national tradition, which the courts respected.

The professional and clerical divisions' makeup had undergone a significant alteration by 1948. There were one German and 29 British accountants, but no African accountants (Ghartey, 1992). Ghartey, on the other hand, observed that throughout the same time period, the number of African physicians and attorneys rather continued to rise to the point that their presence was noticed by the populace. The growth in membership made it necessary to establish regional professional organisations.

Only enterprises run by Europeans sought the services of educated Africans, according to African educational scholars like Ghartey (1992), Anyane-Ntow (1992), and Awayiga et al. (2010). The three most desired professions were law, medicine, and cocoa broking. Up to the conclusion of the Second World War, Gold Coast mostly supplied raw materials to other nations since there were no local manufacturing companies to turn raw materials into completed items for consumer use (Ghartey, 1992).

But in the years after 1945, African nationalists became more self-assured, African education significantly increased, and the Gold Coast came to the notice of the world. This established favorable circumstances for the excitement for accounting education to flourish quickly. Ghartey (1992) highlighted that the government of the Gold Coast (now Ghana), seeing the enormous need for accounting education, provided several scholarships to Africans in 1947 so they could get professional accounting training in British schools. Harry Amoo Dodoo passed the Institute of Chartered Accountants England and Wales professional test and became the first person from the Gold Coast to become a chartered accountant in 1950 (Ghartey, 1992). The number of accountants trained in Africa has been progressively increasing on a yearly basis since the first African accountant earned his or her degree and certification.

Despite the fact that there were no professionally educated African accountants until 1950, it is clear from the historical backdrop that the Gold Coast understood the importance of accounting and auditing (Ghartey, 1992; Onumah et al., 2012). Ghartey claimed that the people of Gold Coast were extremely picky about their business dealings. Prior to the entrance of the

Europeans, these residents had an accounting system for their goods and services and had a strong sense of business ethics (Ghartey, 1992).

The King of Ashanti, apart from encouraging commercial trade, mandated all traders to maintain accurate records of their transactions. The royal treasury functioned as the only financial institution for the community, where all money was kept and withdrawn. Occasionally, the king lent money to traders purposely, for trading and rewarded those who submitted faithful accounts of their transactions. The king, before the nineteenth century, was the sole individual amassed the majority of the society's wealth, which was used in the interest of the society (Ghartey, 1992). Despite the fact that most people couldn't read or write and that money wasn't frequently used for commerce, the residents' accounting awareness forced the monarch to maintain accurate books and schedule regular external audits. As the Gold Coast economy continued to flourish and become more cash-oriented, people in the community began to amass private wealth and, as a result, began maintaining accurate records and employing the services of qualified accountants.

Despite the fact that immigrants made up the majority of the Gold Coast's professional accountants, an organisation known as the organisation of Accountants was needed for them to band together. The majority of the association's members are certified accountants who hail from abroad. The Association of Accountants and Practicing Accountants and Auditors was created by members who also have professional touch or practical expertise.

The goals of both the professional and experienced organizations were to raise awareness of the importance of accurate and trustworthy accounting and to offer a structure for educating and testing indigenous people to become

professional accountants. The majority of the seasoned account officers were then supported by the Gold Coast government to earn professional degrees in accounting education from the UK.

Antecedents of Accounting Education in Ghana

When the Kumasi College of Technology (KCT) was founded in 1952 to provide business programs, accounting education in Ghana officially began (Awayiga et al., 2010). According to Onumah et al. (2012), just before Ghana gained its independence in 1957, the government realized the need to start a program for the development of indigenous young men and women so they could take on the managerial roles previously held by foreigners in business and industry. The Department of Commerce was established with this goal in mind in October 1952.

The Department of Commerce at KCT provided training and preparation for business students taking the exams for the London-based Association of Certified and Corporate Accountants (ACCA), Chartered Institute of Secretaries, and Corporation of Certified Secretaries (CCS). When Ghanaians were needed to staff the different state, parastatal, and private organizations, especially at the upper levels, this method of business education was highly helpful.

There were 195 students who started the College of Technology's business program in 1952 and graduated with honors in 1962. The ongoing pupils were severely demoralized by these outcomes. The Ghanaian graduates also came out as novices in the laws and customs of their own country since the teaching provided to them was foreign and based on these international tests. Accountants, politicians, and businesspeople faced a significant difficulty since

this training structure was not enough for the growth of the accounting profession in Ghana.

The Ghanaian government decided to move the KCT Department of Commerce to Accra, especially Achimota, in 1960. The objective was to establish a separate educational organization with the exclusive goal of teaching management and accounting people for business and other governmental organizations (Onumah et al., 2012). The Kumasi College of Technology's Commerce Department's duties were transferred to the newly created school, which was given the name College of Administration. This college offers courses in public administration, accounting, and health service administration. It was anticipated that it would generate personnel for regional and other institutional administrations. Additionally, it was anticipated to generate middle-level statisticians.

The college was also given the duty of creating strategies for the quick development of management and accounting professionals to run the numerous institutions around the nation (Onumah et al., 2012). The college decided to discontinue all foreign-based courses that were offered with the goal of preparing students for international exams and replace them with suitable courses for the training of citizens required to work in Ghana in order to meet the demands of the nation's accounting and management personnel (Ghartey, 1992).

According to Onumah et al. (2012), a group in Ghana called the International Commission on University Education (ICUE) was established to make recommendations on how to switch from courses with a global focus to courses with a local focus. In 1962, a BSc (administration) Program was

introduced in place of the secretaryship and administration courses as well as the ACCA course, per the committee's advice. On October 1, 1962, the University of Ghana changed the name of the College of Administration to become the School of Administration (today known as the School of Business). The majority of the pupils passed the ACCA exams two years later (1964). The School of Administration has graduated students every year since 1965, when it produced its first group of accounting graduates.

Among other things, the goal of the introduction of the three-year BSc degree program in accounting at the School of Administration (now School of Business) was to attract the best students to the field and to give candidates the comprehensive university accounting education that accountants desire (Ghartey, 1992; Onumah et al., 2012). Students having BSc degrees from the School of Administration were frequently excluded from the intermediate examinations of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana (ICAG).

According to Asenso-Okofo et al. (2011), the local accounting profession has trouble luring a sizable proportion of the top accounting students. Scholarships for postgraduate study in the UK were awarded to the majority of the "best" accounting students who graduated with first- and second-class (upper division) honors. Unfortunately, the majority of these students never went back to Ghana after finishing their education. The Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana's professional accountancy tests were only attempted by a select fraction of the graduates who remained in Ghana.

The high failure rate of the examination, the lack of training facilities for students to prepare for the examinations, and the excessive centralization of activities in Accra make it difficult for accounting graduates living outside

Accra to have easy access to information in their preparation for the examination. These factors are among the reasons accounting graduates were unwilling to take the professional examinations. Candidates were need to relocate to Accra in order to obtain the facilities and resources they would need to pass the test. The relocation cost was rather high, which decreased the interest of potential applicants (Ghartey, 1992).

In order to lessen the aforementioned difficulties, the School of Administration established a four-year curriculum in 1973. Unfortunately, the goal of this program's formation was not accomplished because, between 1975 and 1978, less than five applicants were successful annually (Ghartey, 1992). Due to a lack of teaching staff and other logistical issues, the Fourth Year Accounting program was eventually discontinued in 1978.

After the University of Ghana Business School opened, Ghana now boasts a large number of postsecondary institutions with business schools that grant degrees ranging from certificates to doctorates. The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), the University of Cape Coast, the University of Education, Winneba, the University for Development Studies (UDS) (Wa Campus), the University of Professional Studies, Accra (UPSA), Valley View University (VVU), and other private universities across the country are a few of the institutions.

Accounting Education at the Secondary Level in Ghana

Up until 1876, when Methodist Boys Secondary School (Mfantsipim), the first secondary school, was founded in Cape Coast, Ghana, education above the elementary level was either received in Europe or at local seminaries and teacher training institutions (Quist, 1999). This was followed by other

missionary boys' secondary schools such as Anglican-established Adisadel College (1910) at Cape Coast, and the first Catholic boys' secondary school, St. Augustine's College (1930) also at Cape Coast. The then colonial government of Gold Coast (Now Ghana) under the rulership of Governor Gordon Guggisberg joined the secondary education enterprise and established a gender-based school, Achimota school (initially Prince of Wales College) in 1927 in Accra to offer secondary and technical education.

While apprenticeship and on-the-job training predated official business education, Quist (1999) claims that in the 1930s, institutions like Mfantsipim, Adisadel, and Achimota offered commercial courses. Up until the 1960s, when the government collaborated with private entrepreneurs and with support from the World Bank, the expansion of facilities for business education received little attention during this time.

The Ministry of Education constituted two committees – Ford Foundation and Atkinson - in 1962 to examine the present facilities for business education, provide recommendations after conducting a survey of private businesses and the government's department of business education to the Ministry (Quist, 1999). The Ministry, in 1975, upon recommendation from the committees, ruled that all Secondary Schools (now Senior High Schools) were to teach business/commercial subjects (Ghartey, 1992). The Ministry of Education took over and improved roughly 13 private business secondary schools started by private people and missionaries after further review of the 1966–1967 Education Review Committee report. The schools offered predominantly business courses such as Business Arithmetic, Accounting, and Business Principles.

The takeover, according to Hanson (1971), was required since the majority of private schools operated in a way that ensured profit for the owners rather than providing students with business education. The fees paid and the results have no correlation. Despite the fact that the schools bragged of offering a wide range of business courses, a lot of graduates from secondary business schools lacked the necessary skills (Hanson, 1971; Ghartey, 1992). For the last decade, until recently, private secondary schools offering business courses had remained staffed with ill-qualified and inexperienced teachers, mostly senior high school graduates (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). This, generally, dwindled the students' interest and also negatively affected their performance. The then Government of Ghana was able to absorb most of the private secondary schools due to the unqualified and inadequate business teachers. Trained business skills are very essential as a developing country is much involved in commerce and industry, hence good business education from the basic level.

The so-called best private schools finally received government sector promotions while the worst closed their doors in an effort to address this issue. To those who couldn't attend public secondary schools, however, the unconverted private schools continued to provide business courses. The private schools persuaded most parents to admit their children and offer them fees within their reach. From the early 20th century business (accounting) education became an area in which private initiative flourished.

Business (Accounting) Education examinations have gone through a series of restructuring processes. Most secondary schools in Ghana, including those that provided business education, were well-established by 1960 and offered a seven-year framework based on the British model (Quist, 1999; Adu-

Gyamfi et al., 2016) for the General Certificate of Education (GCE). The model for the GCE 'O' levels was 5 years and additional two years for the sixth form programme for the GCE 'A' levels (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). The Business (Accounting) education syllabus was adapted from the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) for our local context. A few Business Secondary Schools started the Ghana Business Certificate Exams (GBC) in 1966 and later extended to all secondary schools in 1970 (Quist, 1999). The GBC was introduced to parallel the General Certificate Examination in business subjects with the objective of eliminating the need for foreign examinations such as the RSA and London Chamber of Commerce (LCC) (Adu-Gyamfi et al, 2016).

In 1974, the Dzobo Education Committee Reform was established to restructure secondary education in Ghana. The secondary education format was changed to 3-2-2 based on the committee's proposal, according to Adu-Gyamfi et al. (2016). Three years are spent in junior secondary school, then two years spent in lower senior secondary and two years in upper senior secondary. Another significant overhaul of the secondary educational system took place in 1987 when the Dzobo Education Committee's recommendations were updated and put into practice by the Ghanaian administration, led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). The new version had a 3-3 structure, with three years of junior high school and three years of secondary school. At the conclusion of the three years of secondary education, the Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) was first administered in 1993. Exams were given on business-related topics including costing and financial accounting.

The SSSCE which was introduced to replace the O-Level and A-Level systems run parallel until the transition was completed in 1996 when the last class took the A-Level examinations (Quist, 1999; Adu-Gyamfi, 2016). Up until 2005, when the final test was given, the SSSCE was still in operation. Then, in 2006, the senior high school was launched, and the SSSCE was replaced by the West African Senior School Certificate Examinations (WASSCE). The Senior High School (SHS) structure was adopted in 2007, a year after the launch of WASSCE, extending the system to four years and introducing business (Accounting) courses among other elective subjects in the second year. This policy was reversed after three years, as a result of which there was no graduation in 2010, with two cohorts graduating in 2013 (Adam-Yawson et al., 2021). With these changes, business students were still introduced to the foundation of accounting. The introduction of accounting at the senior high school stage prepared the students to appreciate the role and function of accounting, and also served as a stepping-stone for degree and professional programmes.

The West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE), a requirement for postsecondary education, is now awarded to students who successfully complete the three-year Senior High School programm in Ghana (Adam-Yawson et al., 2021). Therefore, tertiary institutions must create quality accounting education graduates, some of whom will be employed as senior high school instructors, in order to spark the students' interest in choosing a profession in their field of study and to provide quality accounting education.

Some senior high school business students now do not want to pursue a profession in accounting, but owing to the few alternatives available and pressure from peers and parents, they choose to continue accounting education at a higher level and do poorly. Therefore, research into performance and career preference determinants, as well as their interactions, is necessary.

Accounting Education at the Tertiary level in Ghana

When the Kumasi College of Technology (KCT) was formed by an ordinance of the then-Gold Coast, undergraduate accounting teaching began in 1952 (Asenso-Okofo et al., 2011). The Department of Commerce was created at KCT in October 1952 to prepare business students for several international professional exams. In order to launch a new, autonomous higher education school called the College of Administration, the Government of Ghana relocated the Department of Commerce from KCT to Achimota, Accra in 1960 (Asenso-Okofo et al., 2011). A three-year Bachelor of Science (Administration) degree debuted in 1962, two years after the college was founded. The School of Administration, presently University of Ghana Business School, replaced the College of Administration on October 1, 1962.

According to Ghartey (1992), the University of Ghana received accounting instruction with the intention of integrating it into the university curriculum. A thorough university education and proper preparation for the professional exams given by the Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana were the goals of the transfer, to reiterate. With the exception of the colleges of education, all postsecondary levels of education in Ghana provide accounting instruction. According to the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC), the body in charge of overseeing the operations of tertiary institutions, there

were ten public technical universities, 110 private tertiary institutions offering Higher National Degrees and Degree programs, seven chartered private tertiary institutions, and 15 public universities as of the year 2021 (Adam-Yawson et al., 2021). Most of these colleges provided accounting courses at different levels. Two state universities, University of Cape Coast and University of Education, Winneba, were specially chosen for this study.

In the academic year 1975–1976, University of Cape Coast (UCC) established the Department of Business Studies and began offering bachelor's degree programs in both business and arts (secretarial studies). Additionally, obtaining an education diploma was required of all students. The department and the Department of Economics were combined in 1991. During the academic year 1996–1997, the department's status was flipped to split the Department of Business Studies from the Department of Economics. The Department of Business Studies was promoted to the rank of a Faculty in the 2004–2005 academic year, with the Departments of Accounting and Finance and Management Studies each providing a Bachelor of Commerce and a Bachelor of Management Studies. The Department of Accounting was established together with four other departments, one center, and one unit in 2016 as a result of ongoing departmental development within the School of Business. The School of Business's major department is the Department of Accounting.

Seven diploma-granting colleges located in several places were combined to become the University College of Education, Winneba. Ajumako's School of Ghana Languages; Kumasi's Advanced Technical Teachers' Training College; Akwapim-Mampong's College of Special Education; and Mampong-Ashanti's St. Andrews Agricultural Training College were among the colleges

included in this group. The Advanced Teacher Training College, the National Academy of Music, and the Specialist Training College were also included. These institutions were all located in Winneba. With a satellite campus at Ajumako, the three locations in Winneba were collectively referred to as the Winneba Campus (main campus). In 1992, the Kumasi Advanced Technical Teachers College (KATTC) with the other two sites in Akwapim-Mampong and Mampong-Ashanti was converted to Kumasi Campus of the University College of Education. Business programmes were introduced in the year 1976 at Winneba, where diplomas were awarded in programmes such as accounting and secretaryship. The business programmes were then transferred to the Kumasi Campus whiles the main campus concentrated on education programmes.

In 2005, a year after the university became autonomous and converted the name to University of Education, Winneba, Department of Accounting Education was established at the Kumasi Campus. Later in September 2017, the Department of Accounting was established under the School of Business, located at the south campus of UEW (Winneba Campus). The Department of Accounting was created with the intention of educating students to become effective business professionals in the areas of accounting and financial management. The department provides programs leading to a four-year Bachelor of Business Administration (Accounting) degree that are intended to equip students with the fundamental accounting knowledge and skills necessary for successful employment in the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors.

Even though it was not their primary purpose for creation, most public universities felt it essential to build business schools with programs like accounting education after the University of Ghana became home to the first

business school. Examples include the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology Business School, the University of Education's Winneba Faculty of Business Administration, and the University of Cape Coast School of Business. Almost all public and private colleges now have business schools, faculties, or departments that provide accounting programs as their top priority due to the rising need for accountants and accounting services inside the nation and abroad.

Particularly in the area of business education, private universities in Ghana are expanding quickly. Numerous reasons that caused an excess of demand over supply hampered the growth and expansion of Ghana's higher education industry in the early 1990s (Boateng, 2014). The inclusion of excluded secondary schools, a population that is expanding quickly, the unsustainable subsidization of higher education, and a socialist philosophy that forbade private involvement were a few of the contributing causes (Tsevi, 2015). According to Akplu (2016), the demand for higher education, under these constraints, exceeded the supply to the extent that 51 percent of applicants (the majority of them being business students) who were qualified could not be offered admission. He noted that the higher education system, between 1966 and 1990, consisted of only three universities characterized by frequent strikes, student protests and academic calendar disruptions. There was therefore the need to amend the existing policies to curb these challenges.

The policy changes (Ghana's education liberalization policies) made it possible for private business owners to take part in the delivery of higher education. The objectives of these policies were to increase access to university education by fulfilling the growing demand for degrees among young people

and to involve entrepreneurs in providing education and infrastructure development (Tsevi, 2015). Private universities started increasing in number when a structure (National Accreditation Board, now Ghana Technical Education Commission) for accrediting private universities was established in 1993. One of the first private universities is Valley View University which was established in 1979 and became the first chartered private university in Ghana, in 2006. The first programme offered was accounting education, with the objective of responding to national development issues through trained business and accounting professionals (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). Private tertiary institutions outnumber public institutions but account for less than 25 percent of enrollments (Akplu, 2016). Akplu went on to say that the industry has become more market-oriented than it was when it was subject to government monopoly and that private tertiary institutions have also added competition and dynamism to it. For instance, the majority of private colleges accept applicants twice a year and provide flexible course schedules, including evening and weekend sessions for business and accounting professionals (Tsevi, 2015). The majority of private universities provide cutting-edge business programs including accounting, management, and business administration, but just a handful of them offer programs in religion and technology (Akplu, 2016).

Technical universities (formerly Polytechnics) were first established as part of Ghana's tertiary education system to provide an alternative path to tertiary education and also to make tertiary education more accessible to the numerous youths qualified to further their education at the then few tertiary institutions (Iddrisu et al., 2014). Technical education in Ghana became a necessity in 1960 when an industrial development policy was established

following rapid technological progress. The polytechnics were first established as technical institutes offering second-cycle craft courses (Iddrisu et al., 2014) until 1963 when they were re-designated as polytechnics to offer non-tertiary programmes. To reform tertiary education in Ghana, the government in 1987, constituted a University Rationalisation Committee (URC) to develop proposals for the management, restructuring and funding of Technical Education in Ghana. Based on the recommendations of the URC, the Polytechnic Law, 1992 (PNDCL 321) was promulgated resulting in the upgrade of polytechnics to tertiary status in 1993 (Effah & Hoffman, 2010). In 1994, the polytechnics started offering Higher National Diploma (HND) programmes in technological and business areas creating a niche in the tertiary education sector by providing career-based programmes with an emphasis on practical and hands on experience (Iddrisu et al., 2014). The polytechnics were then mandated by the revised Act 754 (2007) to award higher degrees in technical and business programmes including accounting education.

In order to improve the teaching of advanced technical skills in the areas of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and to provide more pathways for advancement from the secondary level, the government of Ghana converted polytechnics into technical universities in 2013 (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). Currently, there are 10 public technical universities in Ghana offering accounting programmes such as Bachelor of Technology (Accounting with computing) and HND Accountancy. Technical universities cultivate excellent individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to let them contribute to the realization of the socioeconomic development agenda and to drive the national economy via hands-on experience (Iddrisu et al., 2014).

Students of accounting education receive training at the tertiary level to build the skills necessary for national growth. To help graduates find employment as accountants, auditors, and financial analysts in Ghana, the development of technical and general skills is crucial. Since the outcomes of all the abilities are computed collectively to define a student's academic success, the usage of the CGPA is acceptable for assessing students' performance. Assessment and evaluation of the variables influencing performance and job choice are necessary for accounting education students to perform above average and to keep their interest both in and outside of the classroom.

Professional Accounting Education in Ghana

To provide guidance to the government on the creation of a regional examination body, a subcommittee of the Association of Accountants from Great Britain was established in 1957. The group then released an interim report in April 1958 after seeking input from all parties involved, according to Ghartey (1992). From their report, several conclusions were formed. First, they discovered that, principally because of the unique qualities of the courses, the United Kingdom accounting bodies' curricula had no relevance or practical applicability in Ghana. Second, it was discovered that Ghana only had one accredited United Kingdom accounting organization (ACCA) that held local exams. Once more, it was acknowledged that a curriculum and policy for exams should be created that are specific to the requirements of the nation. Last but not least, a change in status (independence) made the creation of a local examining body necessary (Ghartey, 1992).

Due to insufficient facilities for practical training, insufficiently qualified examiners, a lack of international recognition, and a lack of incentives

to entice students for training, the government of Ghana came to the conclusion that the time was not right for the establishment of a local examining body after the subcommittee delivered its report in 1958 (Asenso-Okofo et al., 2011). The Ghanaian government then implemented strict measures to examine the findings and set requirements for founding a national institute. These included the construction of an overseas examination advisory board for accounting, a school of administration, and a school of law, as well as a thorough reevaluation of Ghana's business legislation (Onumah et al., 2012).

The Ghanaian government then issued a study in 1961 that took into account the prerequisites outlined in the preceding sentence. These prerequisites pave the way for the establishment of an accountants' association that will provide standards for student certification and assessment. In order to create the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ghana (ICAG), the Ghanaian parliament approved the Chartered Accountants Act 1963 (Act 170) in 1963 (Onumah et al., 2012). Following its founding, the Institute's original membership consisted of 142 practicing accountants who were not also members of the organization since the 142 members came from already existing associations and international associations.

According to Ghartey (1992) and Asenso-Okofo et al. (2011), the Ghanaian president gave the Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants the go-ahead to begin operations and carry out the duties that had been delegated to them on July 29, 1963. The council was tasked with, among other things, conducting student qualifying tests, licensing public practice businesses, and upholding professional standards among Institute members (Owusu et al., 2018). Since the institute's founding, an accountant who obtains registration and

practice credentials from the organization is regarded as a practicing professional (chartered) accountant in Ghana.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants Act 1963 (Act 170), as amended in 2020, grants the Institute the ability to create initial professional development (IPD) and continuing professional development (CPD) requirements for its members. These included passing the ICAG final test and finishing a professional accountant education program. To become certified as practicing accountants or auditors, accounting professionals must pass a series of exams, obtain the necessary training, and gain relevant experience (International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), 2021). Therefore, in order to qualify, a student must either pass the ICAG examinations or write a few papers after receiving an equivalent overseas certification from the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). For future admission to the association's membership, a certified practicing accountant must also provide three years of relevant practical experience. The institute's Education and Training Committee is in charge of developing the professional qualification curriculum and holding qualifying exams (Owusu et al., 2018). Once more, the National Council for Tertiary Education (NCTE) and the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) are in charge of establishing educational standards for colleges and universities that take part in programs that qualify students for the ICAG test.

The worldwide Education Standards (IES) for accounting were accepted, and the ICAG joined IFAC in 1982 to get worldwide recognition (IFAC, 2021). Since its introduction, the ICAG has continuously reviewed its curriculum against new and amended IES to ensure that the educational programs delivered are in compliance with the IES criteria. Again, the

institution has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with numerous universities that provide accounting programs to monitor their programs in order to verify that the programs given by the universities are in line with the professional programmes and IES (ICAG, 2016).

According to the International Education Standards (IES), accounting students in higher education must acquire a certain set of knowledge, skills, values, ethics, and attitudes as well as the capacity to combine them (IES 2, 2008). The fundamental information that accounting students must learn is outlined in IES 2 "Content of Professional Accounting Education Programmes." This includes knowledge of business and organizational structures, accounting and finance, and information technology (IES2, 2008, para. 14). In addition to the professional knowledge needed by accounting students, IES 3's "Professional Skills and General Education" specifies the skills needed by accounting students. Technical and functional skills, aptitude for interpersonal and verbal communication, intellectual curiosity, aptitude for organizational and managerial tasks, and personal skills are among these (IES3, 2008).

Students in tertiary accounting education are also concerned about the attitudes, morals, and values required for accountants to use professional judgment and act ethically in the best interests of the profession and society at large. The IES 4 "Professional Values, Ethics and Attitudes" states that accounting education programs should promote a commitment to the IFAC Code of Ethics, the public interest and understanding of social duties, as well as constant development and lifelong learning. Additionally, it must to inspire a dedication to accountability, dependability, punctuality, civility, and respect, as well as adherence to rules and laws (IES 4, 2008). Future professionals in

accounting and accounting educators must not view these skills as ancillary to their primary educational programs if they are to understand the worth of professional values, ethics, and attitudes in their job.

As noted by Asenso-Okofo et al. (2011), the accounting industry has a significant impact on how accounting, financial reporting, and auditing are prepared. Consequently, the establishment of such a profession heavily relies on the provision of high-quality education and training. High-quality professional accounting education and training result in a more profound comprehension of accounting standards and their effective implementation. (Asenso-Okofo et al., 2011). Although almost all the traditional and technical universities in Ghana offer business programmes, the high standard of Ghanaian accounting education is primarily contingent on professional institutions like the ICAG (Asenso-Okofi et al., 2011; Ahinful et al., 2019).

Gender and Accounting Education

Governments and academic institutions throughout the world have been interested in gender research, leading to the creation of the fourth and fifth Sustainable Development Goals (SDG 4 & 5) on gender equality and women's empowerment. A particular culture defines gender as the attitudes, feelings, features, and actions associated with a person's biological sex (American Psychological Association, 2015; United Nations, 2019).

SDG 4 and 5 seek to end discrimination against women and girls since it is crucial for sustaining economic growth and development. Thus, avoiding discrimination in status, rights and privileges granted to persons regardless of their sex, religion, or race. Gender equality is the state where males and females enjoy equal social status, equal rights, responsibilities, privileges, and equal

educational opportunities among others. According to United Nations (2019), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Ghana, has made gender equality a priority in all of its work, and in recent years, impressive progress has been accomplished. There are currently more females in school than there were 15 years ago, and gender parity in primary and secondary education has been achieved in the majority of Ghana's regions.

Although Ghana has made great strides in achieving gender parity at the elementary and secondary levels, gender parity has been growing at a decreasing rate at the university level. The Gender Parity Index (GPI) 2019 for tertiary education gross enrolment in Ghana was 0.8, indicating that more men than women were given access to educational opportunities. According to data, Ghana enrolled 496,150 students in tertiary education in 2019, with 222,019 females making up 45% of the total. This proportion was attained as a consequence of the Ghanaian government's strategic goal, set for the years 2010 to 2020, to enhance gender parity in tertiary education (Ministry of Education, 2019). According to the Ministry of Education's 2019 report, there has been a considerable improvement in the options available to women in Ghana for university education.

Elu and Price (2017) assert that there is a sizable gender gap in higher education institutions. This large discrepancy is frequently related to the program of study that a person chooses, which contributes to how cultures perceive certain programs as being more or less feminine or masculine (Elu & Price, 2017). Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) choices vary more and more between men and women. Although females' participation in STEM can reduce gender disparity in institutions and society at

large, females in sub-Saharan Africa are more likely to choose programmes in humanities, arts, and education as compared to STEM programmes (Elu & Price, 2017). This behaviour is frequently brought on by women's propensity for reading and acquiring languages, by discriminatory barriers rather than their preferences, and by societal gender stereotypes (Sahoo & Klasen, 2018).

Accounting is also perceived as one of the courses or programmes which is gendered. The Accounting profession has been noted traditionally to be masculine or male dominated (Kherfi, 2008; Parker, 2015; Honicke & Broadbent, 2016), while other studies perceived it to be feminine (Gracia & Jenkins, 2003; Istrate, 2012; Atena & Tiron-Tudor, 2019). The background of the accounting profession being male-dominated has altered as a result of contemporary social and political development, and the participation of women in the profession is overwhelming, particularly in Europe (Atena & Tiron-Tudor, 2019). This shows that the gender of the accounting profession is largely influenced by the circumstances.

Although there remains a gender gap in several higher education institutions around the world, with more male accounting students than females, the percentage of female students enrolling in accounting programmes has increased. As a result, the proportion of women studying accounting globally has increased from 48% in 2014 to 49% in 2018, coming near to parity (Financial Reporting Council, 2019; Catalyst, 2020). Since many years, accounting has been seen as a male-dominated field in Israel and the US. However, as of late (Association of Certified Public Accountants, 2019), women have reached parity among accounting graduates and make up 52.8% of accounting students. Again, in the United Kingdom, there is a gender disparity

among students with 57% of female accounting students and 43% of male accounting students (Financial Reporting Council, 2019).

The statistics in developed countries concerning gender disparity are not too different from those in developing countries, where there are inconsistencies with gender disparity in accounting education. The ratio of female to male accounting students has increased in Botswana and Malaysia. According to Wally-Dima and Mbekomize (2013), compared to Malaysia, which had slightly more than 51% female enrolment in the accounting program, Botswana had 63% female enrollment. In Ghana, 44.7% of females enrolled in accounting programs at various tertiary institutions (Ministry of Education, 2019), indicating that despite a significant improvement, the gender parity in accounting still favors men more than women.

It could be inferred that gender disparity in accounting education has been tremendously reduced with more women enrolling in accounting education programmes in higher educational institutions. Despite this progress, there is a high gender disparity in accounting careers worldwide (Atena & Tiron-Tudor, 2019). There are more male accounting lecturers and Professional Accountants compared to female accounting lecturers and professional accountants. In Ghana, the story about gender disparity in the accounting profession is similar to the international case. For instance, there was only one female lecturer in the department of accounting at the University of Cape Coast and the University of Education in Winneba at the time of this study, and there were few female accounting instructors at other Ghanaian universities.

The accounting profession has been male-dominated since its inception (Komori, 2008). In the early part of the 20th century, certain professions such as

Accounting were considered inappropriate for females due to the nature and culture of the society (Bruce-Twum, 2013), limiting opportunities for women to manifest their professional prowess. The "ideal" accountant was perceived as career-focused with a supportive female partner. In such societies, women accountants who wanted to climb the ladder to higher positions had to emulate masculine behaviour (Parker, 2015). That is, they had to be aggressive and competitive, suppressing any perceived feminine behaviour such as being emotional.

However, according to Atena and Tiron-Tudor (2019), since the early part of the 21st century, this stereotype began to change, stressing the importance of women accountants in higher positions such as on boards of directors. Women have therefore not only been acknowledged and recognized in the accounting profession in most countries but also at the top positions. According to Parker (2015), the inclusion of women in the top positions integrates into businesses certain features such as intuition, reflection, patience, logic, creativity, stability, and sacredness. It also promotes stakeholder relationships with key stakeholders such as customers, investors, and employees.

Although there are fewer women than males in Ghana's accounting academics, many women work in the field and have earned the title of Professional Chartered Accountant (CA) (Bruce-Twum, 2013; Ahinful, et al., 2019). Such designation opens the doors for top positions and various boards adding to industries essential features as discussed above.

Challenges of Accounting Education in Ghana

Despite its benefits, accounting education has faced significant difficulties in poorer nations. According to Asenso-Okofo et al. (2011), the main

cause of difficulties in the practice of accounting in developing nations like Ghana was an accounting education system that was not adjusted to the specific economic and cultural surroundings. They believed that because the majority of imported accounting educational systems operate in distinct accounting environments, they may not be able to produce accountants who can tackle the unique difficulties of their countries.

The first issue to be addressed is the dearth of quality accounting textbooks. One of the issues with accounting education in Ghana continues to be the lack of sufficient local textbooks, periodicals, and other teaching and learning tools. The majority of books used in management accounting and financial reporting courses are imported from industrialized nations like the United States of America and the United Kingdom. These textbooks, sadly, are based on the accounting requirements of their civilization and may not be very useful to new countries. Where these textbooks are imported from emerging and developing countries such as India which are known to produce brilliant accounting books, inadequate funds prevent the purchase of up-to-date books. For these reasons, students sometimes learn illustrations and phenomena which do not exist in their local settings (Oheneba-Asenso et al., 2011 & Mbawuni, 2018). Relying on foreign textbooks shapes the focus of accounting education to revolve around advanced economies rather than our local context. It is, therefore, recommended that Ghanaian lecturers of accounting courses should jointly develop local textbooks with domestic illustrations for better understanding since it is accompanied by a relatively low cost. Whiles taking steps to achieve this objective, the foreign textbooks imported should be carefully translated to determine their relevance for Ghana's needs. Institutions

should also purchase currently available or updated accounting textbooks for their libraries to be used by both lecturers and students.

The senior high school level's lack of curriculum covering is another issue with accounting education in Ghana. There's a chance that some of the senior high accounting instructors don't fully understand every accounting issue included in the accounting curriculum. As a result, some accounting instructors struggle to teach the topic since they lack sufficient accounting experience. According to Alsharari (2017), the reduction in the caliber of accounting education in emerging nations is a result of underqualified professionals. Because of this knowledge gap, several crucial subjects are either not covered in class or are inadequately covered. The understanding of first-year topics by accounting students at higher education institutions is typically impacted by this approach. It is, therefore, recommended that all accounting educators at senior high school institutions attain a degree in accounting from a recognized higher institution. Again, continuous workshops on accounting content and teaching approaches must be organized for the senior high school accounting tutors to update their knowledge in the subject area.

One of the difficulties with teaching accounting in Ghana and other developing nations is the sheer number of pupils crammed into lecture rooms (Owusu et al., 2019). Most students in these large classes have limited opportunities to take part in class discussions or ask questions for clarity on issues discussed in class. According to Owusu et al., (2019), such accounting students may have the technical skills but may lack the critical-thinking and communication skills that are often developed in class participation. Due to the large class size, lecturers tend to employ multiple-choice questions more

frequently than long essays or practical problems, which are frequently used by accounting students to demonstrate their practical accounting expertise. Since it would take a lot of time to mark and score students' work before the conclusion of a semester, lecturers with big courses are sometimes discouraged from assigning practical problems for quizzes and assignments. In such instances, students may not have the opportunity to receive feedback from lecturers after writing quizzes and presenting assignments due to limited time and large classes. As a result of this, students are often not taught to identify and solve structured and practical problems that require the use of critical thinking, hence they find it difficult to practice in the job market. Again, students in large classes, who often sit at the back find it difficult to read from the board. Though projectors are mostly used in Ghanaian public universities, accounting education requires that practical questions are solved in lecture rooms for students to appreciate how practical solutions are arrived at.

Higher educational institutions in Ghana must attach high importance to both technical and generic skills required by accounting graduates. To achieve this objective, measures must be put in place to reduce class sizes, so that students can fully participate by responding to questions and asking questions in class. Additionally, it is suggested that the Ghanaian government hire more accounting professors for its public colleges and build additional lecture halls. With these enhancements, new classes with suitable class sizes may be developed, enabling the teaching of both technical and non-technical skills to students.

Chapter Summary

The chapter discussed how accounting education has evolved in Ghana. First, a quick overview of Ghana's history and the origins of accounting education in Ghana were covered. Additionally, it included both academic and professional levels of accounting education in Ghana. The chapter also covered concerns with Ghana's acceptance of the International Education Standards (IES) and its applicability to tertiary accounting education. Again, the topic of gender difficulties in accounting education came up. Finally, literature-based analysis of the difficulties facing accounting education in Ghana was done. The study made recommendations about how to lessen these difficulties in Ghana.

CHAPTER THREE

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual review of career preference and academic performance. It reviews the relevant theories for the study as well as assertions and observations of several writers on factors influencing career preference and academic performance in accounting education. It also examines the representation of male and female accounting students at the collegiate level. Finally, based on theories and evaluated literature, a conceptual framework is suggested to direct the investigation.

Theoretical Framework

To better understand occupational selection and academic success, the study is guided by four ideas. The social cognitive career theory (SCCT), trait and factor theory (TFT), theory of reasoned action (TRA), and theory of planned behavior (TPB) are among the theories that will be explored. The study's goals and assumptions were built on propositions from these ideas.

Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT)

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT) was propounded by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994). The hypothesis is grounded in Albert Bandura's social cognitive hypothesis, an essential system for understanding cognitive and motivational methods that has been expanded to different spaces counting scholastic execution. SCCT looks for to explain three interconnected features of career advancement: the advancement of scholastic and career interface, the definition of instructive and career inclinations, and the achievement of

scholastic and career targets (Lent et al., 2000). In this way, SCCT alludes to the movement of a person shaping his or her career inclinations, professional interface, and reliably taking after a chosen career way (Wang et al., 2007). They set that a person's career inclinations and targets are spurred by the individual's self-efficacy, career desires, and convictions. As stated by Brown and Lent (2019), SCCT comprises three primary factors: self-efficacy, result desire and objectives.

"Self-efficacy alludes to people's convictions around their capabilities to organize and execute practices to reach specific objectives or to succeed totally different activities" (Brown & Lent, 2019, p564). Hence, it is an individual's faith in his or her capabilities to attain particular course of activity related to career achievement (Lent & Brown, 2008). Brown and Lent (2019) declared that a person with a solid capability to engage in an activity or conduct will more often than not put in awesome exertion to achieve the errand in spite of the related impediments. Self-efficacy beliefs are somewhat dynamic and specific to certain movement environments. In different contexts associated to words, people's self-efficacy regarding the intended practices changes. Agreeing to Lent et al. (2000), self-efficacy convictions are seen to infer from four essential sources of data: individual execution accomplishments (victories and disappointments with specific obligations), vicarious encounters (perception of individuals with comparative highlights), social influence and physiological and passionate states.

Result desires allude to an individual's convictions approximately the results (positive and negative) of performing particular practices or exercises (Joshi & Kuhn, 2011). The choices or inclinations that people make around

particular exercises and their exertion and tirelessness at these exercises involve cautious consideration to self-efficacy convictions and result desires (Lent & Brown, 2008). For occurrence, individuals are likely to lock in in exercises that have positive results such as alluring rewards, great working conditions, glory and social endorsement. Result desires motivate individuals' practices or activities and maintain exertion when stood up to with challenges (Brown & Lent, 2019). By suggestion, the inclination for a accounting career is affected by certainty within the capacity (self-efficacy) of an person to meet the instructive prerequisites (improve scholarly execution) as well as the convictions around the positive results that will results from one's endeavors (result desires) (Owusu et al, 2018).

Individual objectives allude to an individual's purposeful to take an interest in a particular movement such as seeking after a specific scholastic program or to attain an obvious level of execution in a specific course (Lent et al., 2002; Joshi & Kuhn, 2011). Agreeing to Lent and Brown (2008), the two sorts of objectives (seeking after a scholastic program and exceeding expectations in a specific course) are individually referred to as choice objectives and execution objectives. Objectives are tied to self-efficacy and result desires to the degree that people tend to set objectives that are reliable with their interface, capabilities and the results they anticipate to attain from seeking after a specific movement (Brown & Lent, 2019)

Self-efficacy, result desires and individual objectives, concurring to Lent et al. (2000), are interconnected with certain natural variables or factors in an individual's life, contributing to the forming of their career improvement. These natural factors incorporate those that energize or dishearten career

inclinations such as family impacts, peer impacts, and the accessibility of stores. Be that as it may, career impact inside the environment may not continuously lead to the choice of a specific career by students. Additionally, the presence of career obstructions may not discourage a few students from picking for a specific career.

SCCT and Interest. SCCT joins significance to intrigue. Lent et al. (1994) characterized interest as "patterns of likes, disdains, and indifferences with respect to career-relevant exercises and occupations" (Lent et al., 1994, p88). Self-efficacy, result desires and individual objectives play key parts within the improvement of instructive interest, career inclination and execution fulfillment (Brown & Lent, 2019). They encourage declared that an individual's interest in exercises germane to their career stems from their sense of self-efficacy and their desires of the results related with those exercises. Children and youths are exposed to occupationally pertinent activities within their educational institutions, homes, and communities throughout their developmental stages (Lent & Brown, 2008). The nature of these activities is, to some extent, shaped by the context and cultural surroundings in which they are raised (Ireland & Lent, 2018).

According to Lent et al. (1994), consistent exposure to activities, ongoing practice, and feedback lead individuals to enhance their skills, establish individual performance goals, cultivate a perception of their competence in specific tasks, and foster specific expectations concerning the results of participating in an activity. People are more inclined to develop an interest in activities or programmes when they possess a sense of competence and anticipate positive outcomes from engaging in those activities (Ireland & Lent,

2018). Therefore, a student will develop a long-lasting interest in a program where they believe they are capable of performing and where they anticipate the program will provide valuable outcomes. On the other hand, when students doubt their competency in a programme and expect negative outcomes, interests are unlikely to be developed in such programmes (Brown & Lent, 2019).

The level of interest students has in a particular course of study, as well as their self-efficacy or belief in their ability for pursuing that course and the outcome expectations they have for performing, will influence their future aspirations, thus influencing their involvement and achievement in that particular course. For example, an accounting student who has a high interest in accounting will result in continuation, expansion and high performance in that course. Continuation and expansion will then help the student to acquire more practice and accounting skills (Owusu et al., 2018). On the contrary, a student who has little interest in accounting but is rather compelled by other factors is unlikely to seek out accounting-related experiences.

SCCT and Career Choice. The social career cognitive hypothesis sets that career-related interest are cultivated by self-efficacy and result desires. These interface in this way drive specific instructive and professional objectives, counting the intention to seek after a particular career direction (Lent & Brown, 2008). People will take activity to achieve choice objectives that are clear, particular and bolstered by critical others in a community. For occasion, students will look for to pick up section into a specific scholastic program or pursue a work that's freely acknowledged and supported by family individuals, peers and seniors within the community (Ireland & Lent, 2018). Such students' ensuing scholarly execution gives pertinent input that can either improve or

lessen their self-efficacy and result desires and, eventually, offer assistance to reexamine or affirm their choices (Lent & Brown, 2008). SCCT emphasizes that career inclinations are in some cases impacted by convictions in one's capacity, result desires, or natural variables than they are by interface.

Students' interface is expected to exceedingly impact their scholarly execution and career choice beneath empowering natural circumstances, that encourage the interest of these interface (Brown & Lent, 2019). Be that as it may, various people might discover themselves incapable to seek after their interface as a result of family pressures or confinements in instruction. In such cases, individuals may get to compromise their interface and define career inclinations based on accessible work openings, their self-efficacy discernments with respect to the work, and their desires of the job's results, such as compensation. Referent bunches such as family individuals, and peers may moreover reduce the part of individual interface in forming career inclinations (Lentd et al., 2000; Brown & Lent, 2019).

SCCT sets conditions for seeking after an interest in a career and natural variables that impact people's choice for a specific career (Lent et al, 1994). These conditions and components incorporate bolster from family individuals, need of accounts, lacking levels of instruction, and accessible work openings (Lent & Brown, 2008). In this way, SCCT notes that interface will be a critical indicator of one's career choice made beneath steady natural circumstances. Beneath prohibitive natural circumstances, individuals' interface may have to be yielded in support of more commonsense, squeezing, or socially supported variables.

SCCT and Performance. Two primary aspects of performance are predicted and explained by SCCT: the level of achievement individuals reach in their educational and professional pursuits as well as their determination to persevere despite obstacles (Lent et al., 2000). SCCT centers on the impact of capacity, result desires, and execution objectives on both the fulfillment of victory and the capacity to hold on within the confront of challenges. Capacity influences execution and tirelessness through two essential pathways: coordinate and roundabout pathways (Lent & Brown, 2008). To begin with, capacity specifically impacts execution and perseverance. For occasion, students with more noteworthy fitness (a composite of natural potential and procured information) in a particular course frequently accomplish way better execution compared to students with lower fitness. Besides, capacity by implication impacts execution and tirelessness by influencing self-efficacy and result desires. (Ireland & Lent, 2018). Hence, capacity and inspiration are fundamental for great execution.

SCCT underscores the motivational noteworthiness of self-efficacy and result desires in connection to execution objectives (Lent & Brown, 2008). Particularly, the hypothesis proposes that individuals' conviction in their claim competence and desires of results have an effect on the sorts of execution goals they set. Students having higher self-efficacy and more positive result desires are slanted to set challenging execution targets for themselves (Brown & Lent, 2019). As a result, they may perform superior scholastically than those with lower self-efficacy and less hopeful result desires. In this way, concurring to Brown and Lent (2019), great self-efficacy objectives, and result desires

contribute to students saddling their capacities successfully, examining tirelessly, and accomplishing superior execution in school.

It must be famous, that, self-efficacy is seen as a complementary figure to, instead of a substitution for, capacity. SCCT does not set that self-efficacy can compensate for inadequately task-related abilities or capacities (Brown & Lent, 2019). Be that as it may, it predicts that self-efficacy convictions encourage the accomplishment of students at the same level of capacity. For illustration, scholastically capable students with more positive self-efficacy convictions compared to their similarly able peers who belittle their scholastic abilities, are inclined to building up yearning execution targets, drive forward when gone up against with impediments, challenge themselves scholastically, and as a result, perform superior with tall review focuses.

This ponder considered SCCT as one of the hypothetical systems to illustrate the forms in spite of the fact that which career and scholastic interface develop, develop, and decipher into concrete activities. It depends on the connection between individual traits, anticipated result and objectives with behavioral and natural impacts on one's career inclination. Advance, the sum of introduction and hone a understudy gets with respect to accounting, impact the inclination for that career and the level of scholarly execution, thus the require for Social Cognitive Career Hypothesis for this study.

Trait and Factor Theory (TFT)

TFT was propounded by Frank Parsons within the year 1909. He created the talent-matching approach, which was afterward changed into the TFT of career choice. This theory is based on the measurement of specific personality

features represented as traits and factors. Parsons (1909) referred to the trait as the typical features of an individual over time, comparatively stable, consistent in situations and which provide a basis for assessing, describing and predicting human behaviour, in making decisions. He then described a factor as a construct which represents a group of traits that relate to each other.

Concurring to Parsons (1909), work related decision-making is based on three components. The first is an exact understanding of a person's characteristics (aptitudes, interface, individual capacities). The second component is information of occupations and the work showcase. This incorporates information of the merits and demerits, emolument, openings and prerequisites of each work or occupation. A prudent and impartial assessment of the relationship between a person's traits and the demands of the job market may be the third element of this theory that is particularly significant. From these components, it might be derived that at the middle of TFT is the concept of matching. Adjusting people's characteristics with the essentials of different occupations.

The TFT work beneath the presumption that it is doable to evaluate both persons aptitudes and the highlights fundamental for particular work parts. Once more, it also states that people may be adjusted with a work that best fits them. Parson advanced that people exceed expectations and accomplish ideal efficiency when they are locked in occupations that adjust well with their capacities.

TFT proposes that individuals' career choices in life are impacted by their inclinations to achieve most extreme fulfillment from the labor market, considering their interface and capabilities (Ginzberg, et al., 1951). In expansion

to Parson's concept of matching, Ginzberg et al., (1951) proffered that career choice that utilize TFT look at the association between work properties favoured by people and their imminent career ways. These traits have for the most part been classified into inborn components (such as interest, work fulfillment, and personal abilities), outward variables (such as job-related variables) and interpersonal components (e.g. parents' and peers' impact in society).

The trait and factor theory is critical within the improvement of devices for surveying strategies related to work related investigation, as well as highlighting the significance of an individual's values (Zunker, 2006). In spite of its advantage, the TFT is not without criticism. The coordinating concept propounded in this hypothesis expect a degree of steadiness within the work market. In any case, the instability within the market implies people must be willing to alter and adjust to situational changes. Once more, the theory does not explain some vital terms as clarified in SCCT (Herr, Cramer & Niles, 2004). These are interest, values, aptitudes, accomplishment, individual development and change. Moreover, the truth that much consideration was not given to variables such as sex, race and financial status may be an awesome restriction.

This study considers the individual and work variables of career choice propounded by Parsons as basic inborn and outward components impacting career choice of accounting education students in Ghana. As proposed by this theory, career choices are made on the combination of interest, work accessibility and work market. Such factors as affirmed by Koech et al. (2016), are seen to be influential in this study.

Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The TRA is one of the prevailing theories utilized to explore students' career inclination or programme/course intentions in earlier studies (Tang and Seng, 2016; Bekoe et al., 2018). It was created by Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) who stated that the eagerness of people to attempt a specific activity are decided by their assessment of the activity (states of mind) and their convictions about socially expected activities (subjective standards).

Concurring to Tand and Seng (2016), the intentions depicted by Ajzen constitute the significant variables that decide human conduct. Therefore, the likelihood that someone will engage in a behaviour increases with how well-founded their desire is to do so. TRA anticipate that manner and subjective norms will have a significant impact on intents. When determining whether a behaviour is positive or negative, a person's attitude or manner reflect their temperament. Demeanor is regularly decided by the convictions of a person as the results of performing the conduct. The state of mind towards a conduct is as a result of the convictions (anticipated results of conduct) and the appraisal of these anticipated results.

Contrarily, subjective norms refer to the social influence that a person's environment has on them (Tand & Seng, 2016). According to Tad and Seng's analysis, subjective norms are connected to the perceived influence of society on an individual's decision to engage in a specific behavior or not. Therefore, a subjective standard depicts a person's propensity to behave in a certain way depending on the influences of other, more important members of the community (Bekoe et al., 2018). Past analysts like Jackling, De Lange, Philips, and Swell (2012) also declared that subjective standards are characterized by an

individual's discernment of the endorsement or dissatisfaction of a behavior by noteworthy individuals of society. In this way, they perceived that people regularly consider the results of their activities and carry on in similarity with their convictions around the results of their activities and their appraisal of those results.

In career preference, agreeing to Owusu et al., (2018), TRA illustrates that a person is more likely to create solid intentions to seek after a career when they hold positive assessments around that career and accept that critical reference groups (such as guardians, peers, instructors, etc.) would moreover back their choice. Aside from the presumption that people would act deliberately by surveying the fundamental variables to carry out activities, social standards moreover determine whether the person will lock in a conduct or not. Agreeing to Ajzen and Madden (1986), the TRA attests that the intention to embark on a particular conduct precedes the actual conduct.

Previous analysts (Jones & Wright, 2011; Ahinful et al., 2019) contended that a few of the fundamental components that impact students in choosing accounting as a programme incorporate recognitions of the accounting profession, discernment of accounting courses, individual aptitudes, sexual orientation, first accounting course and basic referent members. Before the statements of these analysts, Jackling and Keneley (2009) had contended prior that accounting students career inclination is impacted by components related to behavioural convictions and normative convictions based on TRA.

For the reason of this study, the TRA was utilized in deciding the inherent and outward factors in choosing accounting as a career. Application of the TR requests that a person’s intention to seek after an accounting programme

is affected by two components: inherent and outward components. The inherent components incorporate individual interest, individual abilities, discernment of work prospects, recognition of accounting instruction and discernments of the first accounting course. Outward variables too incorporate the referent groups such as family individuals and companions, which are considered in this study. This study also depended on TRA to clarify the impact of career preference on academic performance.

The major shortcoming of TRA is its failure to anticipate conduct in occasions where certain imperative variables like a person's capacity to perform a conduct (self-efficacy) are controlled by the nearness or nonappearance of relevant variables such as assets or openings. The theory of planned behaviour (TPB) is an advancement of TRA considering perceived behaviour control as a basic factor forecasting behaviour.

Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

The TPB is an extension of TRA, amplified by Ajzen (1988) due to its shortcomings. TPB just like the TRA hypothesizes that an individual's behavioural intentions and demeanors about a particular conduct are decided by being able to understand the individual's behavioural and normative convictions as well as the social standards for the individual's society.

The fundamental distinction between the TPB and TRA is the inclusion of the behavioural control concept. With TPB, there is a more probability of being able to understand an individual's real attitudes that result in the physical conduct being carried out. TPB employs an individual's atitude and supposition as well as society's subjective standards and the perceived control of the

conduct to impact the behavioural intention which leads to the choice of a specific career (Tan & Laswad, 2006).

According to Ajzen (2011), though TRA characterizes intention as demeanor and subjective standards, TPB portrays intention a result of state of mind, subjective standards and perceived behavioural control. Perceived behavioural control (PBC) is characterized as an individual's certainty in his or her capacity to perform a conduct of interest (Ajzen, 2011). Ajzen attests that PBC may either encourage certain variables, openings, assets or activity control. Hence, when assets and favours are available to a person they lead to particular execution of a conduct. It is seen that an individual's execution of a conduct is exceedingly affected by the individual's capacity to perform that conduct. Whereas TPB does not expressly propose that subjective standards, demeanors and perceived behavioural controls autonomously impact an individual's intention in all circumstances, it infers that certain circumstances may include the impact of as it were one or two variables on intention, whereas in other circumstances all three viewpoints are required (Cohen & Hanno, 1993).

Perceived behavioral control is non-motivational to the degree that it is not impacted by any activity but is subject to personal control. Subsequently, no matter how strong a purpose is, it may not be adequate for performing an act. Ajzen (1988) attested that there might be circumstances beyond a person's control which hinder the conversion of intentions into activities or conduct. This implies that PBC which may be a substitution of real control, emphatically influences intention.

For instance, a student may have the intention to seek after science as a programme but the parents' impact may lead such a student to select accounting

as a subject. In expansion, a student may have grounded intentions as a result of ideal individual convictions, parental and societal pressures but may not be able to perform a conduct due to a need of required abilities, assets or control. Agreeing to Ajzen (2011), intention and capacity must be associated for a person to perform an act. In this way, when a person has the intention to perform a conduct and has all the desired skills or assets, the conduct may be performed.

According to the TPB, intention is considered the central indicator of conduct (Ajzen, 2012). Ajzen stated that intention is impacted by three sorts of convictions: normative, behavioral and control convictions. Normative convictions which are communicated as subjective standards are the seen social forces behind a certain conduct or activity. Behavioural convictions or beliefs result in an unconventional attitude toward activity or conduct. Control beliefs contain perceived conduct control and self-efficacy (Ajzen, 2012). Perceived self-efficacy within the TPB alludes to the trouble in performing an action or behaviour and conviction in an individual's capacities to overcome those troubles.

The TPB has been to a great extent utilized by accounting research (Cohen & Hanno, 1993; Felton, Dimnik & Northey, 1995; Tan & Laswad, 2006; Jackling & Keneley, 2009; Law & Yeun, 2011; Zakaria, Fauzi & Hasan, 2012; Zakaria, Fauzi, & Hasan, 2013) to help the clarification of accounting students' practices towards career choice and academic performance. Behavioral beliefs allude to the demeanor toward a career. In this way, people shape convictions about a conduct as they assess the charateristics and results of the conduct (Ajzen, 2012). The more favourable the result of a career, the higher one's intention to seek after the career. The result of pursuing or seeking after a career

has been categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic (Jackling & Calero, 2006). The extrinsic components allude to the rewards that people expect from pursuing a career such as salary whereas intrinsic variables are the anticipated individual fulfillment from seeking after a career. For the reason of the study, the behavioral beliefs/convictions or attitudinal variables are alluded to as Job factors.

Normative convictions or beliefs concerning accounting career intention allude to one's discernment of the endorsement of seeking after a scholastic career by noteworthy others such as family individuals (Ajzen, 2012). Control convictions too influence scholarly career intentions. The quality of an individual's career intention is straightforwardly related with their level of interest in the career and their certainty in effectively completing the fundamental steps required to attain academic objectives. Hence, people will have higher intention to undertake an action or conduct they feel competent of. For the reason of this study, the normative beliefs or subjective standards and perceived behavioral control are operationalized as referent factors and personal factors as proposed by Odia and Ogiedu (2013).

With respect to this study, academic performance can be viewed as the particular scholastic objective to be accomplished. Behavioral convictions (job factors), normative convictions (referent factors) and perceived behaviour control (personal factors) are the basic variables that might clarify accounting students' intention to seek after an academic career (career preference) and their academic performance.

The Concept of Career

The word career encompasses a French and Latin beginning. It is characterized by Bedu-Addo (2009) as the commercial, work-related, or mechanical movement received by a person amid his or her instructive life or till his death (Bedu-Addo, 2009). Sullivan and Baruch (2009) defined a career as a person's job-related and other key interactions, both inside and outside of affiliations, that form a unique design over the person's life expectancy. Mulhall (2014) too characterized career as the utilization of an individual's cognitive capacities and aptitudes, driving to dominance in a specific field, the securing of convenient and important work involvement, and the foundation of an establishment for improving and developing professional networks. According to Fatoki (2014), a career may be a work for which an individual passes through education over a time period with the purpose of carrying it through one's life. It is hence, a chosen interest, life work and victory in one's profession. Amoor and Aliyu (2014) also defined a career as individual's education or instruction that will lead to his or her work all through a lifetime.

A career is frequently seen as the arrangement of occupations, employments, and craved positions involved amid the course of a person's working life (Vroom, 1974 as cited in Aminu & Timothy, 2014). A career is an occupation or calling which one decides to take after or seek after in his lifetime. It alludes to the assignments and positions enveloped in professions, employments, occupations, and business, alongside the interconnected endeavours connected to an individual's work path. Lesnikova and Lenkhova (2018) utilized the terms professional direction or counseling and career direction which consider the way to an individual's lifetime occupation or

calling. They stated that a fruitful Career is characterized by self-awareness, which encourages an individual to stand out with a certain job. In line with the views of Lensnikova and Lenkhova, Yamen (2019) portrayed a career as an opportunity to choose an educational way concurring to a person's capacities and wants of society. It is the result of an individual's possessed proficient methodology, frequently named a professional career.

The development of a person's professional career involves a number of formative stages, including the professional inclination that determines a person's background, education, and employment (Chistyakova, 2018; Yamen, 2019). Career advancement may be seen as a "continuous process of formative encounters that centers on looking for, obtaining and preparing data about self, work-related and instructive options, ways of life and role options" (Hensen, 1976, p44). Hensen further stated that it could be a process where people have the opportunity, through an efficient and successive sets of encounters, to know themselves, know their environment, and intentionally and inventively act on that information. Chistyakova (2018) asserted that career advancement begins the minute one chooses a proficient zone to function instead of appointment to a position. He, in this manner, upheld the view that appropriate choice of a job is basic for a fruitful career.

Classification of Professional Career

Professional career which is defined as a process by which a person's work life goes through series of developmental stages can be classified into four types: Adaptive, Reproductive, Competitive, and Creative professional careers (Sotnikova & Sotnikov, 2015; Chistyakova, 2018; Yamen, 2019). The classification was based on the interaction among individual, personal and

professional development. An adaptive professional career is defined as having the psychological tools necessary to deal with shifting jobs and job requirements (Chistyakva, 2018). It takes into account the capacity for task adaptation, constant self-learning, and career direction control. Individual growth does not produce the circumstances for both personal and professional development in an adaptable professional career. Professional interest and abilities are not demonstrated but rather the ability to adapt to the learning and working environment (Sotnikova & Sotnikov, 2015). This means that an individual must learn to be flexible with a particular career to the extent that if one's ideal or desired career is unavailable, applicable experiences can be secured to perform in alternative careers.

Reproductive careers are a form of professional career where accomplishing a professional aim comes before any consideration of competitiveness (Sotnikova & Sotnikov, 2015; Yamen, 2019). In this category, personal development is prioritized over both individual and professional development. Another type of professional career is competitive professional career, where professional achievements are necessary for self-assertion. It causes professional self-awareness and influences the motives and intentions of an individual (Yamen, 2019). Professional development prevails among individual and personal development. Last is the creative professional career, where there is a relative correlation among the rates of individual, personal, and professional development (Sotnikova & Sotnikov, 2015). Thus, the individual type (inherent characters) grants an individual the ability to evaluate alternative works to develop his/her professional career. In other words, one's future career

depends on his/her personal ability to make something out of nothing (Yamen, 2019).

Career Preference

An extant literature review in vocational psychology indicates general agreement among scholars that there is a relation between the terms career choice and career preference. However, though the scholars in this field agree with the relation between these two terms, there appears to be a lack of agreement on the extent to which these terms are related.

Several years ago, Crites (1969) asserted that research on the relationship between career choice and career preference led to the conclusion that, though they are relatively distinct, they are also related to each other. According to Crites, the two terms are distinct because they vary in the degree to which they represent the reality-oriented selection of a profession, and they are the same because they are both concerned with the selection of an occupation, regardless of the selection basis.

Career choice and preference could be arranged along a continuum of reality orientation. Choice seems to be more realistic than preference, in the sense that, for an individual to make a choice, so many factors which may affect his employment are considered before selecting one that is perceived to provide greater satisfaction. Career preference considers which occupation an individual likes best and would opt for it, given the favourable circumstances. Notwithstanding Crites' (1969) distinctions, other researchers (for example, Aminu & Timothy, 2014; Aslam, 2018) also defined choice and preference as synonyms.

It could be argued that the essential features entailed in these two concepts are almost similar when considered in the process of career decision-making (Aslam, 2018) and this may justify why some researchers use them as synonyms. For instance, an individual's course of action by way of career decision indicates a career choice and to the extent that the choice discriminate among alternative careers suggests preference. Choice has different meanings at different age levels. To a child or youth, choice means preference because the need for realism at that age is minimized since preference does not need to be actualized until the remote future. The term preference, however, could be associated with all stages up to the final stage where the individual actually enters into an occupation (Yamen, 2019).

There are some levels of agreement as to whether career choice is the same as career preference. While some researchers use them interchangeably, others distinguish among these terms. In this study, no attempt was made to distinguish between the terms career choice and career preference. They were used interchangeably to explain the motives, wishes and desires of an individual to attain certain career objectives. Career preference is therefore a preferred choice of a course which ends at a specific career (Hellen & Kitainge, 2016). Thus, a career path that is attractive to a student regardless of the job market conditions (Aslam, 2018).

Career preference has gotten to be a complex science with the approach of the post-industrial insurgency, work competition and the development of data innovation (Jemini-Gashi et al., 2019). It was a custom in the past days when career preference was a family undertaking, where the child of a carpenter, for example, was ordained to be a carpenter and an accountant's child was ordained

to become an accountant (Super, 1990). Industrialization and post-industrialization have made it conceivable for an individual to select a career which may lead one to be wealthier as long as the due abilities and information have been obtained (Mulhall, 2014; Jemini-Gashi et al., 2019).

Choosing a favoured career in accordance to Koech et al. (2016) could be a course of activity which basically leads to a career decision-making process. That is to say, career inclination or preference may be a choice made by a person that has an awesome effect on the individual's entire future. Before a career is favoured or chosen, it is anticipated that a student would inquire about all the conceivable careers considering the line of study (Yamen, 2019). This is often known as career exploration, where conceivable careers are investigated and considered. Exploring career options before selecting a career, enhances future career victory and fulfillment (Koech et al., 2016). Thus, components that impact career investigation in teenagers ought to be recognized.

Before choosing a career, youth are not only encouraged but also compelled to conduct thorough research (Jemini-Gashi et al., 2019) in order to prepare themselves for the changing socioeconomic landscape. Numerous variables, including the environment in which an individual lives, their unique aptitudes, and their level of educational accomplishment, have an impact on each person choosing a vocation (Mulhall, 2014). In most cases, imminent undergraduate students go through bad experiences during the choice of careers, courses of study and their career path (Koech, 2016). Most frequently, choosing the proper course of study can make the distinction between being excited with a career in future or not. Career planning, according to Jemini-Gashi et al. (2019), could be a complex path where numerous variables relate to and

influence decision-making. They declared that the steps to career planning include self-esteem, information of the accessible career choices, the association between a person and the career and the activities involved in accomplishing objectives. To appropriately plan for the accomplishment of objectives, individual factors as well as assistance from family, peers and the society are fundamental.

Students, from the formative point of view, are within the stage of career exploration (Super, 1990; Yamen, 2019), a stage characterized by the realization of career-related plans. Diverse career alternatives are attempted by these youth through school subjects, leisure activities and current occupations. It is in this manner fundamental for students to be oriented about the available occupation to help them obtain sufficient data develop decision-making skills (Yamen, 2019).

As clarified by Lent et al. (2000) in SCCT, career preference findings from the combination of individual, contextual and cognitive factors, leading to career enthusiasm, objective advancement, and performance. Individual factors play a fundamental part in career decision-making, considering an individual's interest in a career. In the view of Lesnikova and Leukhova (2018), contextual factors incorporate family assistance, school and peer impact. All these factors, to an expansive degree, impact an individual's intention to seek after a career. The concept of career choice as stated by Yamen (2019), requests the understanding of oneself, setting achievable career objectives, investigating suitable abilities, looking for suitable career alternatives, and understanding the components that influence career intentions.

Career intention refers to the individual's availability and readiness to seek after a particular preferred career. Intentions are the instructions that guide people to take a certain decision or put up a particular behaviour (Tan & Laswad, 2006). Agreeing to Tang and Seng (2016), career intentions are the pinnacle of the decision-making process that results in the standard of performance set for oneself, the commitment to the execution, and the time and exertion used to perform. Hence, an individual's activity or conduct is ordinarily led by intentions. Intentions have been utilized to forecast different actions of students including conduct of study and academic achievement (Tang & Seng, 2016). Intentions represent the key components that influence the conduct of students and thus, the more grounded the career intention of a student, the more prominent the plausibility of the student performing scholastically well (Bekoe et al., 2018). The conduct or activities of a person is decided by his/her intentions, which is anticipated by demeanors, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control (Tang & Seng, 2016). They further concluded that, if attitude towards a career (job factors), subjective norms (reference factors) with regard to a career and perceived behavioural control (personal factors) are ideal, they enhance an individual career intention, which culminate in a behaviour (performance) towards the career.

Career intention is a cognizant objective interest which may be a necessary factor for impacting conduct or performance (Ajzen, 2012). Individuals, in this manner, do not continuously act or perform agreeing to their intentions due to obstructions to the conduct or objective accomplishment such as habits, memory disappointments or reprioritizations of objectives (Tan &

Laswad, 2006). Individuals select careers for reasons such as creating a fortune, recognizing a gain and status or being an interesting or challenging work.

Concept of Academic Performance

The concept of academic performance is considered to be vague in essence since it widely incorporates diverse array of elements that span from the acquisition of educational credentials to the moral development of students (York et al., 2015). Academic performance is also perceived to be "perspective oriented" in nature, creating barriers to providing the exhaustive meaning of the term (York et al., 2015). For some entities, academic performance is perceived as the ability to gain knowledge and skills, whiles others perceive it as the ability to secure a progressive career (Kumar, Agarwal & Agarwal, 2021).

Academic performance of students according to Narad and Abdullah (2016) is one of the basic objectives of education, which is characterized as the achievement of information by students, examined by scores by a teacher or educational objectives set by educators and students to be accomplished over a particular period of time. One of the goals of most educational institutions is to ensure that students strive for excellence through better scholastic performance (Singh et al., 2016). They further declared that scholastic performance is exceptionally fundamental and basic for any person or student who is concerned about education. Academic or scholarly performance is the center around which basic components of the education framework rotate, clarifying why students' scholarly performance has captured the consideration of researchers, guardians, organizers and policy framers (Kumar et al., 2021). Kumar et al. advanced their argument by stipulating that students' performance is exceptionally critical

since a brilliant performance is considered a precondition for securing a better career and accomplishing a quality career life.

Academic performance of students is exceedingly vital in each economy as the social and financial improvement of a country are inferable to the scholastic performance of students (Narad & Abdullah, 2016). Akinleke (2017) concurred with the assertion of Narad and Abdullah when he stipulated that the better the performance of students, the brighter the prospects of human asset improvement, subsequently contributing to the nation's social and financial development (Dev, 2016). Sharing in the concept of academic performance for national development, Singh et al. (2016) stipulated that the acquisition of significant knowledge and abilities required for the financial and economic development of a nation is obvious through the scholarly performance of students, hence the importance to prioritize the academic performance of students in the education segment. Academic performance, therefore, serves as a springboard for gaining knowledge and skills required for national advancement.

The term "academic performance" can be characterized from a huge number of viewpoints (Mihaela, 2015) leading to several definitions. The accessible definitions can be categorized into knowledge-centric, academic achievement-centric, skill and ability-centric, persistence-centric and career-centric (York et al., 2015). From the point of achievement-centric, academic achievement is defined as the accomplishments shown by learners in class works, tests, and examinations. Hoffman (2014) further characterized it as the result of students' features (such as motivation and skills) as well as the environmental characteristics facing students. Finally, the achievement-centric

classification, Narad and Abdullah (2016) viewed students' performance as the quantifiable conduct of a student within a particular period of time and as a sum of scores obtained by a student in diverse evaluations such as class tests, end-of-semester examinations. Academic performance serves as a criterion for measuring the degree to which a student, teacher, or educational establishment has accomplished victories or experienced misfortunes (Narad &Abdullah, 2016).

The knowledge-centric classification of characterizing scholastic execution considers the degree to which a student fulfills his/her studies and related errands or how well a student meets benchmarks developed by educational institutions (Mihaela, 2015). Mihaela (2015) shared in this centric as the item result characterized by the student as a result of exposure to learning and preparation and has been communicated through grades. The preparation may take different shapes, including instruction from instructors, guardians, or autonomous learning. This thought is exemplified in people who have gotten particular training (Mihaela, 2015). Mihaela concluded that schools utilize evaluation tests to evaluate a student's understanding of particular subjects that have been taught. Subsequently, once students have taken part in a series of lectures, they are evaluated to assess their level of knowledge. This assessment enables teachers to evaluate students' results and find out their actual performance.

Skill-and-ability-centric classification characterizes academic performance as the degree to which a student's scholastic and mental improvement occurs (Dev, 2016). Narad and Abdullah (2016) moreover defined academic performance as the attainment of knowledge which is evaluated by

scores and/or educational objectives set by teachers and students to be accomplished over a period of time. They see learning performance from both skill-and-ability-centric and achievement-centric classifications. Singh et al (2016) also shared the same view and perceived educational excellence as the skills learnt by students usually assessed with a specific tool such institutionalised tests and portfolio appraisals.

From the career-centric classification, educational excellence is characterized through the forms of job offers, the status related with the job, fulfillment obtained as well as the commitment level depicted by the student's career (Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006). This was upheld by Akinleke (2017) who characterized educational performance as the period in one's life where the educational training acquired presents an opportunity for students to set up their capabilities, progress in their careers and secure a high fulfillment level concerning the career. Last but not least academic attainment classification is the persistence-centric. York et al. (2015) characterized this centric as the scholarly progression of students, with the objective of completing a programme of study to attain a degree regardless of institution-related settings and issues. This is often where students remain in education with the trust of attaining a better performance in spite of the negative organization variables such as difficult courses, inadequate class ventilation, insufficient course readings and huge classroom sizes.

The definitions above demonstrate that the larger part of students who pull back from school do so as a result of poor educational attainment (Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006; Lamas, 2015). Profoundly performing students contribute to academic institutions to meet the institutional targets for the advancement of

their careers. Students who perform well at school encounter a level of fulfillment whereas low performance of students on the other hand results in disappointments (Lamas, 2015). The assessment or measuring of students' academic excellence continues to be disputable issue among policymakers, evaluation and assessment experts, and teachers, and hence next subject for review.

Measuring Academic Performance

Numerous tools have been used to quantify academic success because there are many different viewpoints about it. These tools are arranged in accordance with the conceptual categories for academic performance. The achievement of learning objectives, the development of abilities, and the acquisition of competencies were the often measured aspects of academic success, with academic achievement being the most frequently measured, according to York et al. (2015). The majorly used criterion for measuring academic performance has been the Grade Point Average (GPA) (Hijazi & Naqvi, 2006) to evaluate the performance of students. The same measure was adopted by Bertrams and Dickhauser (2009) and Lamas (2015). In agreement with the earlier researchers, Igere (2017) asserted that academic performance criteria include standardized test scores, instructor's ratings, cumulative grade point average, grade retention and dropout rates. Prominence has been given to GPA in measuring academic performance (York et al., 2015; Igere, 2017; Ahinful et al, 2019; Kumar et al., 2021)

In measuring the academic performance of students, Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) has been identified by researchers as the best evaluative indicator of students' academic performance (Garkaz. Banimahd & Esmaeili,

2011; Aminu & Timothy, 2014; Igere, 2017; Ahinful et al, 2019). Aminu and Timothy (2014) for instance, used a Likert scale questionnaire and students' cumulative grade point average as measuring instruments in a study on learners' scholastic achievement. CGPA plays an important role in assessing learners' overall past academic achievement and future potential for further higher education admissions and employment. Though there are other indicators for measuring academic performance, GPA is often preferred since it expresses the academic ability of students and their future performance in numerical and easily comparable ways.

According to York et al. (2015), academic achievement can be gauged by achieving learning goals and developing skills and competencies at the course, program, and institutional levels. At the course level, assignments and course evaluations are the main means of measurement while programme evaluation through curricular capstone or by professionals from an accreditation office could be the means of measurement at the programme level (York et al, 2015; Narad & Abdullah, 2016). Academic performance under skills and ability centric classification can be measured by Educational Testing Service Proficiency Profile (ETSPP) which assesses general education skills such as critical thinking, reading and writing which are often administered to first-year students and sophomores (York et al, 2015; Dev, 2016). Again, another measuring criterion is the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency-Critical Thinking (CAAP-CT) which measures students' skills in clarifying, analysing, evaluating and extending arguments. Further, the Problem-Solving Inventory (PSI) which was propounded by Heppner and Peterrson (1982) is a measuring instrument designed to assess how well individuals make a decision,

with specific attention on problem-solving abilities (York et al, 2015). Another instrument designed to measure a person's critical thinking skills is the Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA) developed by Watson and Glaser (1980). Other measuring tools under skills and ability centric include Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQI) (by Bar-on, 2004); Non cognitive questionnaire (NCQ), Hope Scale, and Measurement of Intellectual Development (MID) propounded by Tracey and Sadlacek (1989), Snyder, Harris and Irving (1991) and Moore (1988) respectively.

Besides the critics and debates about grades, some researchers (Bertrams & Dickhauser, 2009; York et al., 2015; Igere, 2017 & Ahinful et al., 2019) refer to grade point average measure as the best reflection of academic performance. This criterion is frequently taken into account when providing scholarships, promoting students to higher education levels, and hiring new employees. It also acts as the primary indicator of students' academic achievement at schools and has been shown to be the most widely utilized academic performance criteria.

School grades, the most common academic criterion, are relevant for two main reasons (Lamas, 2015). First and foremost, creating an efficient and effective education system that gives kids a pertinent framework to develop their capabilities and potential is one of the social and academic challenges that concerns government leaders, professional educators, parents, and people in general. Second, in practically every developed and growing country, grades from school have been and will continue to be a good predictor of the education level attained (Lamas 2015; Romero et al., 2012; Ahinful et al., 2019). Academic institutional cumulative grade point is a reflection of assessments in

which students must exhibit the knowledge acquired on different courses considered relevant for a student's development I society.

Intelligence according to Lamas (2015) is the most essential psycho-pedagogical factor relevant for predicting academic performance. Therefore, there is a need to use tests and or examinations for assessing students. Intelligence is a variable often used as a predictor of academic performance (Bertrams & Dickhauser, 2009; Romero et al., 2011) since the cognitive processes are required in tasks and academic activities. It must, however, be noted that human intelligence is not easily identifiable for determining the academic success or failure of students, since it assesses other variables such as projections of life, talent development, interacting with others, as well as cognitive tests and educational grades. Despite this challenge, educational grades through cognitive test have been proven by earlier and current researchers (Steinmayr & Spinah, 2009; Lamas, 2015; Ahinful et al., 2019) to be the most reliable way of assessing the academic performance of a student. Table 1 shows the operationalization of academic performance through GPA and the justification of the use of GPA within the various classifications (centric) of academic performance.

Table 1: Operationalization of Academic Performance

Classification of Academic Performance	Justification for using GPA as a measurement tool
'Academic Achievement-Centric Academic performance'	The development of information and skills is used to calculate a student's grade point average (GPA) (Narad & Abdallah, 2016). The advantages of adopting GPA include preserving a clear record of students' academic success as well as increasing their motivation.
'Skill and Ability-centered Academic Performance'	According to Singh, Malik, and Singh (2016), academic success is a measure of the indicative and responsive skills that convey what a person learns via education. GPA is a reliable indicator of academic achievement.
Knowledge-centric Academic Performance	In addition to measuring academic success, GPA provides information on the qualities of the students, including their motivation, effort, and level of attendance and attendance security. (2015) Mihaila.
Career-centric Academic Performance	The success of students' future careers and their academic performance are directly related. One's intellect, which is proven by their GPA, can be connected to their likelihood of success in the workplace (Akinleke, 2017). Additionally, the GPA is the criteria that recruiters most frequently utilize to assess applications.

Persistence-centric Academic Performance	According to Hijazi and Naqvi (2006), retention of students is considered to be a key predictor of their academic performance and success. According to York et al. (2015), a student's ability to achieve academically is closely tied to how persistent they are in their studies.
	higher education According to York et al. (2015), one of the most trustworthy markers of students' perseverance and degree of completion is GPA.

Source: Adapted from Kumar, Agarwal and Agarwal (2021)

According to Table 1, GPA is acceptable for use in calculating academic achievement across all categories (centric) of academic performance. Although different centers have different methods for evaluating academic success, evidence from Table 1 shows that the GPA is heavily weighted when evaluating academic performance. The degree to which a student is able to complete a particular piece of classwork in a classroom context is considered student academic performance for the purposes of this study. Once more, the cumulative grade point average of a student is calculated after a series of tests to determine their academic success. Numerous factors, such as job preferences, have an impact on students' academic achievement.

The nation as a whole, educational institutions, and students all place a high value on the aspects that affect academic achievement (Bakre & Lauwo, 2016). While the possibility to pursue an accounting job is increased by the strong academic performance of accounting students, educational institutions

are frequently rated as the best when such students' academic performance is comparatively superior to that of the other students. Once more, student academic achievement has a significant impact on the social and economic growth of a country. As a result, graduates with strong academic records provide the country with the kind of graduates it needs to contribute to the labour force. For instance, business students have been working in management capacities in both the public and private sectors (Ayuba & Mohammed, 2014). In a developing country like Ghana, where there is an increasing demand for accountants as a result of economic growth, accounting students at higher institutions of learning are expected to graduate with good CGPAs to help meet the market demand for accountants.

Various researchers (Shafiq et al., 2011; Olanipekun, 2015; Issahaku, 2017; and Gupta & Maksy, 2019) have examined factors affecting the academic performance of students in general, while others (Gracia & Jenkins, 2003; Garkaz, Banimahd & Esmaeili, 2011; Kukreja & Aali, 2013; Fallan & Opstad, 2014; Maksy & Rodriguez, 2018; Ahinful et al., 2019, Afrogha, Oladele & Wright, 2020) examined factors affecting accounting students' academic performance. Some of the factors include academic interest, mathematical skills, academic interaction, learning attitude and gender. Others include home environment, family, peers, previous level teachers, volition, expectation (job, remuneration, prestige), internal classroom factors (class size, classroom environment, technology) and extracurricular activities. For the purpose of this study, career preference factors as well as other internal and external factors relating to accounting students' academic performance were considered.

Academic Performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting

Financial accounting and management accounting are two of the four primary topics of accounting education. Among the others are auditing and tax accounting. Financial Accounting includes the recording of financial transactions as well as the development and presentation of financial statements that show the condition and performance of an entity (Sangster, 2015). From the senior high school level through higher educational institutions, Financial Accounting is frequently used interchangeably with accounting in definitions and explanations. After taking an introductory course in Financial Accounting, students are frequently exposed to Management Accounting. According to Horngren et al. (2009), Management Accounting is the use of concepts and processes to give managers the financial information they need to make business choices. It is focused with giving members of the organization access to financial data so they may make wiser financial decisions and enhance an entity's current operations (Drury, 2018).

In order to facilitate commercial transactions, management accounting was developed in the private sector (Johnson & Kaplan, 1987). Thus, they traced the origin of modern Management Accounting to the early 19th century when hierarchical enterprises were emerging. During this era, factory owners realized the need to produce efficiently by employing workers in a centralized location on a long-term base (Waweru, 2010). Before this period, firms were located at a distance from the head office and an information system was needed to determine the efficiency of the employees (Waweru, 2010). Workers were temporarily employed by the owner-managers and paid for work done.

Management Accounting evolved with the objective of motivating employees and evaluating the effectiveness and efficiency of internal systems (Johnson & Kaplan, 1987). It was not intended to measure the overall earnings of the firm. For profit measurement, there was the need for a separate Financial Accounting system to record, summarize and analyse financial transactions in order to prepare and present annual financial statements for the stakeholders of the entity. Hence, the need for Management Accounting and Financial Accounting to operate independently (Waweru, 2010)

The predominant roles of managers lead to the difference between financial and Management Accounting. Despite many similarities between the two branches, there are significant differences that are worth discussing. Firstly, whereas Financial Accounting generally provides information to external users outside the organization for economic decisions, Management Accounting provides information for internal usage (Blocher et al., 2019). Secondly, Financial Accounting reports historical information whereas Management Accounting deals with past, present and future information (Drury, 2018). Thus, Management Accounting considers past performance and projects into the future.

Again, regulatory organizations like the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) create Financial Accounting to be compliant with law specifications and widely accepted accounting principles. The International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) is a governing organization tasked with creating IAS and regulating its use. The IAS make sure that financial statement preparation and reporting are consistent, standardized, and verifiable. These features make trend comparisons within an entity and intercompany

comparisons possible. In contrast, Management Accounting does not conform to any generally accepted accounting principles. The objective is to ensure that enough information is prepared to provide internal users such as management with timely information to assist them make useful economic decisions.

Furthermore, Financial Accounting, according to Blocher et al. (2019) reports on the entire firm, whereas Management Accounting focuses on specific parts of an entity. For instance, a Management Accounting report is often prepared on departments, services, products, customers and other activities within a firm. Lastly, on reporting frequency, Financial Accounting reports are prepared annually and semi-annually. Often, less detailed accounts are published semi-annually by large firms (Drury, 2018). Management Accounting reports, on the other hand, are produced frequently such as daily, weekly or monthly. Such interval of reporting in Management Accounting, according to Horngren et al., (2009) is determined by the decision-making needs of the internal users.

Despite the above differences, Financial Accounting and Management Accounting have some similarities. Firstly, they all provide useful financial information to users. Financial Accounting according to the IASB has for its purpose the provision of information to existing and potential users. Management Accounting also provides relevant information to internal users for economic decision-making. Both deal with economic and business transactions (Richardson & Kilfoyle, 2012). Though Management Accounting provides similar information as provided in Financial Accounting for the same purpose, Management Accounting is solely for internal users. Again, Financial Accounting and Management Accounting require accounting education

expertise. Accounting programmes in tertiary institutions require accounting students to study both financial and Management Accounting before completion of the programme. Thirdly, financial and Management Accounting quantify the results of business transactions in monetary terms. Though they have different ways of presenting financial statements, they both deal with financial statements with elements such as revenues, expenses, assets and liabilities (Drury, 2018; Blocher et al., 2019).

Furthermore, Financial and Management Accounting use the same accounting information system for the preparation and presentation of reports. Management Accounting reports are often based on the same database created originally for Financial Accounting purposes (Richardson & Kilfoyle, 2012). Therefore, in most entities, the system used for collecting and classifying financial information is created in such a way that it will be appropriate for both financial and Management Accounting systems. Lastly, with regard to the determination, measurement and allocation of costs, Financial and Management Accounting are similar. The approaches and concepts used in Financial Accounting for cost accumulation and allocation may also be appropriate for Management Accounting as well (Waweru, 2010; Ahmed & Duellman, 2013; Ahmed & Duellman, 2013). This means that the concepts or principles developed for Financial Accounting can be equally used for Management Accounting.

Conceptualising Career Preference Factors, Career Preference Intention, and Academic Performance

Ferry (2006) concurred with Bandura et al. (2001) in stating that a variety of factors, including the student's living environment, individual

aptitudes, and educational achievement, impact their choice of career. Watson et al. (2010) and Koech (2016) backed up this assertion that a person's desire for a career is likely to be influenced by a variety of factors, including personal interest, cultural values, family background, career counseling, and employment expectations. For instance, some students base their career decisions on the occupations of their parents and elder siblings (Koech, 2016).

Tan & Laswad (2006) define the process of choosing a vocation as determining a person's necessary abilities and skills for success in a certain occupation. Career choice variables may be innate, extrinsic, or a combination of both, according to Aslam (2018). He said that while some students choose occupations based on their educational choices, the majority of students are affected by the careers that their parents or other family members like. In addition, Hammour (2018) noted that while some students desire occupations with big salaries, others select careers based on their interests, regardless of how likely they are to succeed.

Several research (for example, Koech et al., 2017; Ahmed, Sharif & Ahmad, 2017; Jemini-Gashi et al., 2019; Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020) show that globally, students are usually faced with a dilemma in choosing a career that leads to the wrong choice of programmes of study and ultimately affecting their performance. Salami (2008) observed that in Nigeria, many students choose the incorrect careers due to ignorance, peer pressure, parental and academic guidance, or the prestige associated with specific professions in the absence of adequate career counseling. Academic institutions are social institutions that promote appropriate behavior, interests, and jobs, according to Odia and Ogiedu's (2013) study. Students' profession choice was found to be

significantly influenced by factors including good teaching, student engagement in school activities, institutional regulations, and learning resources for the student.

Students studying accounting are not free from the influences affecting their preferences for careers. However, a number of career-choice studies have been carried out to uncover variables affecting students in selecting accounting as a career due to the distinctive character of accounting students and the importance of the accounting profession in an economy. The Paolillo and Estes (1982) model for career preference includes twelve factors, such as earning potential, parental influence, affiliation with peers in the field, cost of education, achieving social status, job satisfaction, peer influence, prior work experience, number of years of formal education required, aptitude for the subject matter, teacher influence, and employment availability. These elements were modified by Odia and Ogiedu (2013) to fit the circumstance, and they were then divided into personal, reference, and job-related aspects. These parameters were modified for this study's career preference variables.

Personal factors identified by researchers include personal interest, quantitative skills, willingness and ability to study accounting, facing challenging courses, and aptitude for accounting (Jackling & Calero, 2006; Uyar, 2011; Odia & Ogiedu, 2013; Wally-Dima, 2013; Porter & Woolley, 2014; Ahmed et al., 2017; Kumar, 2017; Owusu et al., 2018; Bekoe et al., 2018). The path observed is that personal factors such as interest and quantitative skills are likely to influence accounting students' preference for a career. Hence, the hypothesis that *personal factors do not significantly predict the career preference of accounting students.*

Reference factors including influence of parents/ parents' occupation, peers, other students, senior high school teachers and counsellors (examples include Zakaria, Fauzi & Hasan, 2012; Odia & Ogiedu, 2013; Anis & Hanafi, 2015; Bekoe et al., 2018; Etiubon, Ugwu & Ado, 2018; Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2020) have been analytically observed to influence career preference both negatively and positively. From the theory, reference factors influence the life of undergraduate students, which affects their career preference, hence, the hypothesis that *reference factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students.*

Job factors include the availability of employment, high financial rewards, prestige and desired working conditions (examples are Tan & Laswad, 2006; Ahinful et al., 2012; Odia & Ogiedu, 2013; Wally-Dima, 2013; Ahmed et al., 2017; Owusu et al., 2018; Bekoe et al., 2018). Theoretically, the preferences of individuals to gain maximum satisfaction from the labour market influence their career preference. Hence, the hypothesis that *job factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students*.

Academic performance of accounting students has been an area of concern for higher educational institutions and developing countries because, poor academic performance decreases the number of students completing the professional level exams to become professional accountants (Gracia & Jenkins, 2003). Good academic performance of accounting students, therefore, helps in meeting the market demand for accountants (Bakre & Lauwo, 2016) in developing countries such as Ghana where there is an increase in demand for accountants due to the nation's economic growth. Assessing the stated hypotheses, academic performance which was measured by CGPA, needs to be

examined. “Hence the formulated research question for the study: *What is the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana?”*

The two major branches of accounting are Financial Accounting and Management Accounting. Drennan and Rohde (2002) found a relationship between accounting students’ performance in Financial Accounting and performance in Management Accounting while Eddey and Bauman (2009) found no significant relationship between the two. Hence the hypothesis: *“There is no statistically significant relationship between the academic performance of Financial Accounting and Management Accounting of accounting students in Ghana.*

Over time, studies on gender and academic achievement have yielded a variety of results and recommendations. According to certain research (e.g. Koh & Koh, 1999; Garkaz et al., 2011), male accounting students do better than female students, but other studies (e.g. Arthur & Everaert, 2012; Ahinful et al., 2019) showed that male accounting students outperform female students. The academic performance of male and female accounting students did not, however, show a substantial difference, according to certain investigations (e.g. Taylor, 2013; Olufolakemi et al., 2020). Hence the hypothesis: *There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance of male and female accounting students.*

According to Koech et al. (2016), students' job preferences either make them happy with or disgusted with the professional route they have selected. They said that when students do their research and select the appropriate path of study, they feel accomplished and content with their academic progress. According to studies (such as those by Aminu & Timothy (2014) and Hellen &

Kitainge (2016)), students' academic performance is impacted if they make decisions without sufficient information. The following hypotheses were developed to analyze how career preference factors affected academic performance:

1. *There is no statistically significant effect of personal factors on accounting students' academic performance*
2. *There is no statistically significant relationship between reference factors and academic performance of accounting students.*
3. *Job factors do not significantly predict the academic performance of accounting students.*

According to TPB, when students have high aspirations for their future employment, it boosts their desire to pursue that vocation and improves their academic achievement. One's desire to follow a career increase in direct proportion to how well it turns out. Once more, students' perceptions of peer pressure affect their decision to pursue a job, which in turn affects their academic achievement in the career-related programme (Ajzen, 2012). According to personal factors, a student's academic career intention is stronger and will lead to high academic performance if they are passionate about their profession and confident that they can complete the necessary tasks to achieve their academic goals (Igere, 2017). Individuals will thus be more likely to engage in an activity or behaviour that they believe they are capable of. Therefore, the hypothesis

Career preference has no statistically significant effect on the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana; and

There is no statistically significant mediating effect of career preference intention in the relationship between career preference factors and academic performance of accounting students were examined.

Figure 1 presents the conceptual framework for the study.

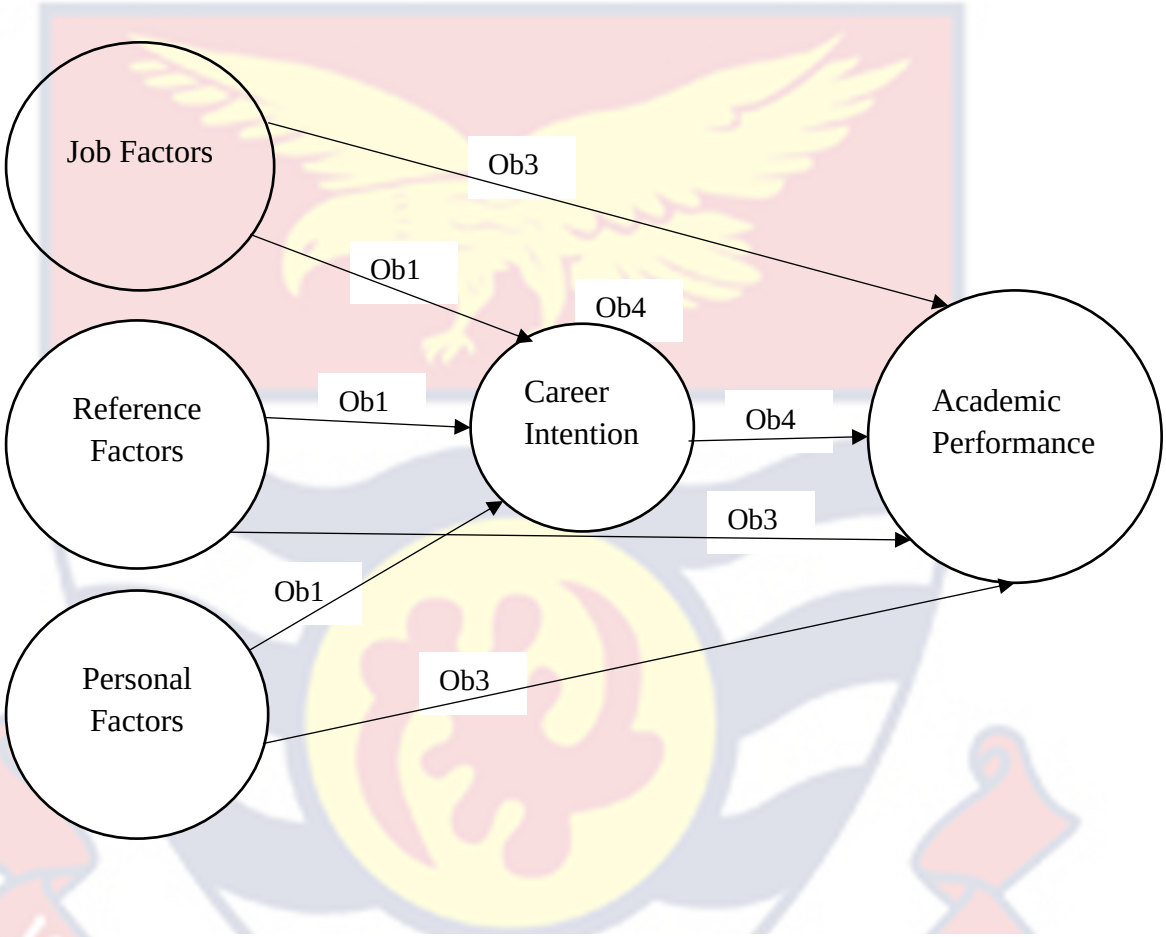


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author's construct (2022)

According to the framework, personal, reference, and job variables all have an impact on a person's desire for a profession in accounting. These elements from the literature are also directly related to academic success. It also demonstrates the connection between academic achievement and the concept of career intention in accounting. The framework also shows a direct impact of other factors on academic achievement in addition to the career preference factors that affect academic performance. Other aspects of academic

achievement include gender, the family environment, extracurricular activities, internal classroom characteristics, and attitude elements (study habits, class attendance and involvement, and study hours). The framework also illustrates how career choice intention is likely to mediate the link between the factors.

Chapter Summary

The theoretical underpinnings and study themes were offered in the chapter. Theories supporting the study were examined, including the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent et al., 1994), which provides a framework for understanding how and why career and academic interests emerge and become manifested in behaviour. Once more, characteristics were employed as a foundation in the Trait and Factor Theory (Parsons, 1909) to evaluate, describe, and forecast human behaviours while making judgments. The study also advocated the theory of planned behaviour (Ajzen 1986). The theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), which was also covered in the research, is expanded upon by the TPB. Since circumstances beyond a person's control might prohibit the conversion of intentions into actions, it was shown from the notion that intention alone is insufficient to anticipate an action.

Academic achievement and the idea of career preference were also covered. The chapter covered professional choice and preference ideas, demonstrating how the two phrases are used differently and similarly. The topics of academic performance and academic performance measurement were once again covered in detail in the chapter. One of the greatest ways to gauge academic success, according to the research, is the grade point average. These two key concepts were related to accounting education. Finally, the theories and concepts were used to build the conceptual framework.

CHAPTER FOUR

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Introduction

A review of the empirical literature that is pertinent to the current investigation is discussed in this chapter. The review is divided into many sections according to themes that were obtained from the questions and hypotheses that were developed for the study. These sections reviewed the relationships between personal factors and career preferences, reference factors and career preferences as well as those between job factors and career preferences among accounting students. It also discusses research on the academic performance of accounting students, the relationship between gender and academic success, the academic success in Financial and Management Accounting; and the relationship between academic success and career intention. The chapter concludes with an overview and recommendations for the present research.

Personal Factors and Career Preference

Individual characteristics have a basic part in affecting people's decision-making. The perspectives individuals have on numerous issues may be impacted by these characteristics. People's recognitions of circumstances, and particularly students' conceptions about their careers, are often based on certain personal factors. Personal factors in this study include interest for the subject, quantitative skills, willingness and capacity to study and facing challenging courses. The conceptual framework for the study demonstrated that there may

be an association between these personal factors and students' preference for accounting careers.

In Australia, McDowall and Jackling (2010) examined undergraduate students' attitudes of the accounting profession including accounting as an occupation. A questionnaire was utilized to gather data from 131 accounting students at Victorian College on the factors that were pivotal in their choice of the accounting programme. Utilizing the Accounting Attitude Scale (AAS), a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to disagree was constructed. Students' interest was significant in selecting accounting programme as a career. It was recommended that a larger sample of students must be examined over a period of time using in-depth interviews to explain further the quantitative data collected.

Prior to their findings, in another Australian study, Jackling and Calero (2006) assessed the factors that impact undergraduate students' career aspirations to pursue chartered accounting. 1,782 first-year accounting students from five educate were given a survey. To address issues like interest in accounting as a career inclination, Paolillo and Estes' (1982) questions measuring reactions on a 5-point Likert scale were adjusted. To determine how much it has shown components had an effect on first-year students' slants to seek after a accounting calling, the consider utilized a calculated relapse demonstrate. It was found that accounting students' individual interface had a huge effect on whether or not they needed to become accountants. In terms of the energy required to educate accounting to extend the interest of accounting students, the discoveries have results for accounting mentors and speakers.

Their findings concurred with those from Modern Zealand analysts Tan and Laswad (2006).

In New Zealand, Tan and Laswad (2006), utilizing the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) examined the components that has effect on students' eagerly to major in accounting. Survey was managed to gather information from 1,009 first-year accounting students from three colleges. The findings, with the help of ANOVA, uncovered that all three constructs (individual, referents, and control) were altogether related to career choice intention. Among the variables, individual interest had a more grounded impact on students' purposeful to major in accounting. They concluded that students will select a program that best fits their interface or personal want. Students with tall self-efficacy have more certainty and are more likely to settle for their career inclinations rather than following to the impact of other outside variables.

In a related study, Sugaharaand Bolan (2009) conducted a study that examined the major components that impact Japanese tertiary commerce students' professional choices. Surveys were managed to 373 commerce students from eight tertiary teach. Students were asked to rank 18 characteristics on a 5-point Likert scale, where a score of one indicated no importance in choosing a vocation and a score of five indicated an extreme necessity. The next step was to undertake exploratory factor investigations to develop customized factor profiles for commerce students. Students studying accounting were able to recognize six components using the eigenvalues-greater-than-one run the show method. The biggest calculate for accounting students was natural interest with a figure stacking of 0.828. The ponder concluded that accounting students are accepted to select accounting careers based on their interface or individual

want. In this way, the higher the interest of students in a career, the more likely they will succeed in it related program. Assist, they found that the interface of students may be assembled to a few degree levels – capacity and glory. Interface based on capacities are more grounded and more practical than interface affected by variables such as glory. Their conclusion was in consistent with Tan and Laswad (2006).

Odia and Ogiedu (2013) examined the factors affecting students' decisions about their accounting careers in Nigeria. The study adopted a quantitative methodology and made use of a survey involving 300 test subjects from three colleges. The components were gathered into three: individual, reference, and work. Closed finished sort of survey was basically managed to gather information, after which free t-test and relapse were utilized to examine the information. The study found that personal variables have a really profoundly noteworthy impact on students' choice of accounting, with an individual interest in accounting positioning to begin with. The creators prescribed that prepared and qualified accounting instructors and teachers who can relate speculations with viable substances must be utilized. Once more, heads of accounting offices must create a broad-based accounting program and educational modules which are for all intents and purposes situated to create more interest in students and their future wards.

In a comparative review in Nigeria, Umar and Bello (2019) affirmed the discoveries of Odia and Ogiedu (2013). Umar and Bello's study looked for to determine the linkage among students of accounting's self-efficacy convictions, result desires, and their intention to seek after a career as accountant. The study studied 125 accounting students from Yobe State College. Surveys were

managed amid accounting lectures which students were required to fill out and return some time after the conclusion of the questionnaire. Pearson Chi-square was embraced to test the relationship between self-efficacy (capacity and interest) convictions and purposeful to ended up an accountant. Based on SCCT, it was found that students' capacity and interest altogether affected their purposeful inclinations to end up as chartered accountants. It got to be apparent that students' interest and conviction in accounting are noteworthy indicators of the intention to seek after an accounting career in spite of the fact that students are mindful that an accounting career is related with thorough measures and common negative recognition. His discoveries bolstered the prior discoveries.

Ahmed, Sharif, and Ahmad (2017) in Pakistan uncovered that interest or individual crave for a job was the foremost powerful figure that impacted the career choice of commerce students in Pakistan, taking into thought budgetary results, future work openings, and ease of subject. Collecting information from 120 members with an organized survey, using correlation and numerous relapse, they found that interest in a subject is the foremost overwhelming outcome impacting the career choices of trade students. Despite the fact that the study was quantitative, they managed the survey using a comfort inspecting approach.

In Ghana, Owusu et al. (2018) detailed that commerce students in Ghanaian Colleges put much more premium on interest in their career major choices than most of such components like glory and wanted working for others conditions. Organized surveys were utilized to gather data from 354 undergraduate students. Bekoe et al. (2018) moreover investigated demeanors with a preference for accounting and the desire to major in it. Employing a self-administered survey to gather information from 457 respondents from College

of Ghana Commerce School, the creators found inborn interest to be a great indicator for students' determination to major in accounting.

From the discussed surveys above, students who have an interest in accounting are more likely to seek after it as a career inclination. Regardless this reality, a few analysts (Paolillo & Estes, 1982; Auyeung & Sands, 1997; Ahinful et al., 2012) found that accounting students don't put much premium or accentuation on natural interest as a figure impacting career choice. Considering the conflicting discoveries by diverse analysts, the relevance of natural interest as a figure impacting the career inclination of accounting students cannot be overemphasized.

Accounting is seen to be more quantitative, centering on numerical precision, schedule recording, and calculation strategies (Odia & Ogiedu, 2013). Odia and Ogiedu's study on components impacting the choice of an accounting career found numerical aptitudes and capacities as one of the indicators of personal components within the choice of accounting as a programme. Utilizing the study plan with a test estimate of 300 undergrad colleges, they discovered that interest in calculations is among the foremost affecting individual components for career inclination in accounting. Their discoveries affirmed that of Jackling and Calero (2006) who found a noteworthy positive relationship between students' quantitative abilities and mathematics foundation and their inclination for an accounting career.

In South Africa, Mkhize (2019) inspected the effect of mathematics foundation on the desire of accounting subject as a programme. The study utilized a subjective investigate approach and substance investigation to look at the transdisciplinary relationship. The scientific mathematical foundation of

accounting students at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan College was examined utilizing substance examination to look at their past findings and execution in science. The study by Mkhize found that arithmetic abilities were fundamental to understanding accounting. Further research revealed that accounting students needed to be confident in their ability to perform computations. The study concluded that since accounting students were to employ workings or nitty gritty calculations to support solutions in accounting questions, they required fundamental information in mathematics to form beyond any doubt that such calculations are cross-referenced to the ultimate arrangement. From Mkhize's (2019) substance examination, he found that most accounting definitions included numerical and expository abilities which are necessarily angles of arithmetic. He suggested that higher instructional centres for education must guarantee that students who are conceded to study accounting have way better execution in arithmetic, to improve their interest in accounting.

Past study by Pritchard et al. (2004) in New Jersey, inspected the key components that impacted students' choice of commerce major. Exploring 87 students at a territorial college, with an expressive study, they discovered that pupils with much stronger numeric aptitudes tended to major in accounting and finance, whereas those with poorer quantitative backgrounds majored in marketing and administration. They concluded that knowledge in mathematics emphatically influenced students' accomplishment in accounting learning and accounting career.

Within the Philippines, Villamar et al. (2020) investigated the value of arithmetic subjects in accounting courses. The expressive inquire research design was embraced for the work. Their overview survey was utilized to collect

information from all the final-year accounting students from the College of Saint Louis. The survey was liable on a 4-point Likert scale with 4=Very Valuable to 1=Not valuable. The average was utilized to dissect the value of arithmetic aptitudes in accounting courses. They found Trade Arithmetic as the foremost valuable aptitude in Money related Accounting, Progressed Accounting, and Audoiting. They advance found college Polynomial mathematics as the foremost valuable arithmetic aptitude in Taken a toll Accounting, Administration Accounting, and Tax collection, thus concluded that Mathematics aptitudes are imperative in seeking after accounting programmes. They also concluded that a student aspiring to become an accountant needs strong math skills to pursue an accounting programme

In contrast, Barnes et al. (2009) contended that statistics along with other variables such as sexual orientation, age, and type of school attended to did not essentially affect the career choice of accounting students. Furthermore, Mkhize (2019) concluded that there is a limited comprehension of the connection between mathematical influence and the career decisions of accounting students. Thus, further investigation is warranted to delve deeper into this factor's impact on career preferences.

Gender can potentially influence a person's selection of subjects or programs in school, which in turn affects their career choices, albeit to varying degrees (Simiyu, 2015). Simiyu (2015) conducted a study in Kenya that looked at how gender affected the job preferences of 140 postsecondary students from five different institutions (n = 140). With the help of the SPSS, descriptive measurements were utilized to dissect the information collected with the close-ended and open-ended surveys. In spite of the fact that a quantitative plan was

utilized for the study, the content analyses strategy was utilized for analysing the qualitative information collected with the open-ended survey. The examination found that sexual orientation impacts the choices of careers among trade students in Kenya. It was revealed that social beliefs hinder the career choices made by tertiary students in Kenya. The examination proceduresalso observed that generalization beliefs have discouraged female students from pursuing certain careers, such as computing and engineering.

In Switzerland, Makarova et al. (2019) inspected the effect of sex generalizations in Arithmetic and Science on high school students' career desires. The cross-sectional examination, utilized the quantitative approach, to gather information from 1,364 Swiss high school students in their last year. Semantic differentials were employed in the standardized test to evaluate pupils' views of masculinity in the subjects of science and mathematics. The findings appeared that for both genders, mathematics had the most grounded manliness attribution, followed by science. The findings revealed that female students rated all subjects positively in terms of masculinity. The study concluded that gender-science generalizations of mathematics and science might possibly impact students' goals to select in a STEM major at a tertiary institution. It was suggested that a less pronounced masculine perception of science promoted by the authorities could potentially enhance the enthusiasm for STEM careers. The study corroborated the findings of Simiyu (2015) regarding the influence of gender on students' career choices, even though the population and scope of the study were different.

In order to better understand the factors influencing students' decisions to major in accounting, Law and Yuen (2012) performed a study in Hong Kong.

Employing a mixed-methods approach, they conducted open-ended interviews with 19 students from four universities, alongside questionnaires completed by 422 respondents. Multinomial logistic regression and structural equation modeling were coopted to analyze the survey data. The work, which was in line with the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), found that gender had a big impact on students' decisions to choose accounting as a major in college. Furthermore, the research discovered that the likelihood of females selecting an accounting program was notably high. In contrast, in Nigeria, the findings of Odia and Ogiedu (2013) using a survey involving 300 accounting undergraduate learners from three Nigerian universities revealed that when it comes to choosing an accounting job, male students were more impacted by reference considerations than their female counterparts.

Nishiyama et al. (2014) in USA looked into why men and women choose to work in accounting. They examined 580 accountants using a survey design. The ordered probit estimation method was used to analyse the data after the accountants responded to an online survey. It was discovered that a strong link between gender and profession choice in accounting. Additionally, it was found that women instudies were 40% very likely more than men to select a job in accounting. Locational independence, social standing, and stable income were the three key factors that contributed to the higher number of women than males who entered the accounting field. The study supported the conclusions made by Law and Yuen (2012).

In Egypt, Anis and Hanafi (2015) found no critical relationship between sexual orientation and the selection of accounting career in Egypt. Using a mixed-method approach, they looked into how Egyptian students perceived the

factors that affected their propensity to major in accounting. In order to collect data from 273 students in Egypt's trade schools, a formal survey was used. Respondents were inquired to rate articulations along a 5-point Likert scale, where 5 represented ‘strongly agree’ and 1 represented ‘strongly disagree’. In an attempt to provide deeper insights into the factors affecting the preference for an accounting major, semi-structured interviews were carried out involving 24 students from two business schools in Egypt. The study's results indicated that, despite a greater number of females engaging with accounting compared to males, there was no statistically significant indication that gender played a substantial role in the selection of accounting as a program of study. Although the study's findings echoed those of Law and Yuen (2012), who also observed a higher representation of women studying accounting than men, there was a lack of statistical substantiation in this regard.

In Romania, Atena and Tiron-Tudor (2019) delved into the disparities between men and women within the accounting profession. Using a review of management and accounting journals spanning the years 1994 to 2017, they scrutinized the diverse dynamics contributing to gender-based disparities, viewed through the lenses of both employees and employers. The study unveiled that certain organizational practices yield substantial gender-related consequences. Additionally, it was revealed that contemporary human resource activities, such as hiring, choosing, and advancing in careers, as well as perceptions of workplace visibility; and the responsibilities tied to motherhood and childcare constitute societal and organizational barriers that hinder women's career progression within the accounting field. These barriers, giving rise to disparities, hinder female students from choosing an accounting career

trajectory, while concurrently amplifying male students' inclination towards accounting careers.

In a study done in Ghana, Bekoe et al. (2018) looked at the perspectives of commerce students (n = 457) on the field of accounting and the relationship between those perspectives and the students' intentions to follow accounting as a course of study. Collecting survey data from students at the College of Commerce School in Ghana, the researchers employed a binary logistic regression analysis to analyze the gathered information. The results of the study showed that there was little correlation between students' intentions to pursue an accounting career and their gender. This finding from the Ghanaian context was consistent with the results of Anis and Hanafi (2015). An uncertain relationship was observed between gender and inclination towards an accounting career, thus warranting further investigation.

Reference Factors and Career Preference

Reference groups like parents, friends, and teachers from secondary schools could play a role in influencing accounting students' career decisions. Baloch and Shah (2014) looked into the significance of selection process awareness in Pakistan with regards to students' career choices. 572 questionnaires were gathered from students at three different schools, two of which were located in metropolitan areas and one in a rural area. Regression analysis was used in the study to find a significant and positive link between students' understanding of the recruitment and selection process and their career preferences. Families were found to have a considerable influence on students' job decisions, according to the study. The researchers further elaborated that a person's interactions start at home, where parents and relatives are present,

prompting students to seek guidance from their families when making career decisions. This finding aligns with the conclusions of Odia and Ogiedu (2013) in Nigeria, who determined that parents exerted a substantial influence on students' career choices.

In Ghana, Lawer (2015) performed research on the factors impacting senior high school students in the Kumasi Metropolis' choices of studies and vocations. The research employed a mixed-method approach and a descriptive design. Questionnaires were administered to 420 students, and data were gathered from 12 staff members using an interview guide. The results showed that parents, siblings, and teachers had an impact on the choices made by kids. The study highlighted that most students heavily relied on these reference factors because they have no exposure to information about the world of work. As a recommendation, the study suggested that career counselors should devise ways to involve family members in students' decisions towards their career activities to assist them in making informed career choices.

In Malaysia, Hashim and Embong (2015) explored parental and peer impacts on accounting students' career inclinations. The research utilized the mixed-method approach. Surveys were distributed to 309 final-year accounting students who utilized an avearage of 15 minutes to reply to the survey. The discoveries of the research uncovered that guardians were the most people who impacted accounting learners career decisions in spite of the fact that mothers were more compelling compared to fathers. It was advanced and uncovered that parental impact superseded the impact of instructors and career guides who, in spite of the fact that had more information about the career field were not trusted as the student's guardians. Be that as it may, it was moreover found that

parents' instruction had no impact on their children's career inclinations. The report suggested that comparable studies be conducted at the collegiate level in several African nations.

In India, Agarwala (2008) investigated how various factors impacted the career decisions of management students. Using a quantitative approach, they distributed self-administered surveys to assemble information from 99 University of Delhi undergraduates who are in their last year. They employed a 14-item scale to collect information concerning different factors influence on the career preferences of respondents. A seven-point Likert scale, with a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), was used by participants to rate their responses. Agarwala analyzed through averages, standard deviations, and t-tests. The study's conclusions were derived from its findings, which showed that dads, followed by peers, had the greatest impact on students' career decisions. No notable gender-based distinctions were detected in terms of the impact of relationship types (e.g., father and mother) on career decisions among male and female students. This discovery received subsequent support from Hashim and Embong (2015), who also focused on the role of parental influence. It's important to note that this study didn't differentiate between the specific roles of individual parents; instead, it collectively considered their roles as parents.

Jackling and Keneley (2009) performed a scholastic research on the possible supply of accounting graduates in Australia by taking into account the social and personal aspects that affect students' decisions to major in accounting.. They employed the theory of reasoned action as their framework. A total of 428 final-year Bachelor of Commerce students participated and

completed questionnaires. The decision to major in accounting may be influenced by fourteen different factors, which were looked at. Students rated the importance of these items using a four-point Likert scale, ranging from "not at all important" to "very important.". The research uncovered that reference groups, specifically parents and other relatives, displayed a significant factor loading of 0.761, exerting a noteworthy influence on the career exploration of prospective accounting professionals.

In Pakistan, Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) investigated the variables influencing students' job decisions. A sample of 432 students were purposefully chosen from two Colleges in Lahore. The study used a mixed-method technique that incorporated questionnaire and interview guide items. Twelve students were interviewed to provide more context for the quantitative results after the questionnaires had been distributed. While the qualitative data were categorized and organized into thematic classification, ANOVA was used for the quantitative aspects. According to the study, peer impact was second in importance to parental influence. Most students' job decisions were influenced by their parents. Again, because young people are impressionable, they may be readily persuaded by their peers to choose certain academic programmes.

In Ghana, Owusu et al. (2018) explored the determinants of career choices among business students within a specific tertiary institution. The survey participants were asked to assess the level of influence exerted by referent groups on a magnitude ranging from 1 to 7, where 1 represented a low level of influence and 7 represented a high level of influence. The researchers discovered that career decisions in the business field were significantly impacted by parents who worked in professions related to business, such as

accountants. Following this, peers of the students held the next level of influence. As a result, parents' own professional decisions and positive experiences were cited as the reason for their influence on their kids' job inclinations.

This finding aligned with the conclusions of Ikonen et al. (2018), who had a similar work in Finland with 246 participants. The Finnish study emphasized the significance of parents and their respective occupations as principal influencers of students' career preferences. Many parents were observed to be particularly keen on steering their children toward pursuing the same career paths they themselves had chosen.

At the University of Eldoret in Kenya, Koech et al. (2016) performed research to examine the factors influencing undergraduate students' career decisions. The study used questionnaires developed from a descriptive research style. These questionnaires were given to 210 respondents selected through convenience sampling. The research notably revealed a positive correlation between career choice and the influence of peers. Similarly, in a parallel study conducted in Benin, Oduh et al. (2020) explored the impact of peer groups on students' career preferences. Employing a correlational survey, the researchers used an Ex-Post-Facto research design and distributed questionnaires to 306 participants. Frequencies and ANOVA statistics were employed data analysis. It was found that a peer substantially influence the career decisions of students, aligning with the outcome from Koech et al. (2018).

Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012), delved into how the career preferences of psychology students at the Venda University are anchored by their sociodemographic characteristics in South Africa. A questionnaire was used in

the study's Ex-Post-Facto research design to collect information from 200 respondents. The collected data were analyzed using chi-square and t-tests. The outcomes indicated that career choices of students were largely impacted by teachers, fathers, mothers, and colleagues. Among the teacher characteristics that students perceived as supportive of their career preferences were effective pedagogical skills, subject interest, strong content knowledge, practical learning experiences, high expectations, and adept classroom management. These findings aligned with the SCCT, which emphasizes the relevance of providing career guidance to students. As a result, teachers' everyday activities were crucial in directing pupils toward specific professional options.

In Ghana, Zotorvie (2016) investigated career preference factors among Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana, students. Through a questionnaire-based survey, he collected data and employed inferential analysis to identify the primary influences on students' career preferences in accounting. His findings highlighted that teacher influence came up as the most prominent variable shaping accounting learners' career preferences. This discovery concurred with the results of Mudhovozi and Chireshe (2012) and Bekoe et al. (2018), who also emphasized the essential duty of teachers and other societal factors in shaping the career paths preferred by business students. However, contrary to these findings, Odia and Ogiedu (2013) identified no significant impact of teachers on accounting students' career preferences in Nigeria. Such discrepancies warranted further investigation, particularly within the Ghanaian context.

Job Factors and Career Preference

Tan and Laswad (2009) investigated the academic major choices of business students in New Zealand. Employing a quantitative approach, they

collected data from 1,009 students in their third year who signed up for an introductory accounting course. The authors tested the predictions of TPB through path analysis using Chi-square statistics. The findings showed that all students had a positive perception of work criteria like a high starting income, future earnings potential, and job chances. The findings of Odia and Ogiedu (2013), who looked into the factors impacting accounting courses in Nigerian universities, are in line with this study. Using a quantitative approach and survey design, they sampled 300 undergraduate accounting students from three universities and found that job-related factors such as prestige, job prospects, and high pay significantly influenced students' career choices in accounting. This demonstrates that if students think the accounting profession is well-known, they are more likely to choose accounting as their academic major and want to work in this field.

Umar and Bello (2019) looked into the connection among accounting students' outcome expectancies, beliefs in one's self-efficacy, and desire to be a chartered professional accountants in a study conducted in Nigeria. Employing a quantitative approach, they administered questionnaires to 125 students during accounting lectures at Yobe State University. The collected data were analyzed using Pearson Chi-square to assess the relationships. The goal to become a chartered accountant was found to be positively correlated with projected outcomes, which is statistically interesting. Additionally, they explained that a higher expected income from becoming a chartered accountant corresponded to a stronger the desire to work in this industry. Students are often motivated and intrigued by specific careers due to external incentives associated with the work. This perception stems from their view of careers as a means to

achieve a better standard of living (Grobelna, 2017). Consequently, careers lacking financial incentives might be less appealing and motivating.

In Malaysia, Zakaria, Fauzi, and Hassan (2012) conducted a study to explore the variables influencing students' decisions to enroll in accounting as a major. 340 accounting students at Universiti Teknologi MARA Kelantan received questionnaires as part of the study's survey-based methodology. The results showed that financial incentives had the greatest influence on students' decision to enroll in an accounting programme, with an average score of 5.61. Additionally, other job-related factors such as prestige, social status, and job security significantly influenced the accounting students' program preferences. According to the study's findings, individuals are more motivated to choose an accounting program when the results are expected to be beneficial.

In South Africa, Fatoki (2014) conducted research into the determinants of career choices among international business students. Using a quantitative approach and a descriptive design, Fatoki distributed self-administered questionnaires to international business students in two major colleges in South Africa. The research showed that elements such as interest in the career and the prestige associated with the accounting profession were the most essential determinants influencing the job preferences of international business students. These results agreed with those from Zotorvie (2016), who identified prestige as one of the most crucial elements affecting accounting students in Ghana as they choose their careers.

In Ghana, Zotorvie (2016) corroborated the findings of Odia and Ogiedu (2013) and Fatoki (2014). In his study at Ghana's Institute of Chartered

Accountants, Zotorvie studied the variables influencing students' career decisions. The purpose of the work was to identify the key variables that affected accounting students' preferences for careers. Employing a questionnaire-based survey to determine the main determinants influencing students' preferences for an accounting career, the study used confirmatory factor analysis. The analysis of the correlation matrix among the indicator variables indicated significant inter-correlations, indicating that the variables have a high degree of association. Among the job-related factors, Zotorvie found that high earnings expectations (factor loading of 0.771), job opportunities in the accounting field (factor loading of 0.720), and the accounting profession prestige (factor loading of 0.708) were the most pivotal elements impacting the career preferences of prospective accounting professionals.

Another project conducted in Ghana by Ahinful et al. (2012) explored the variables affecting the selection of accounting programme in Ghanaian universities. The study included 338 students from various levels (300 and 400) majoring in accounting at two universities. Questionnaires were administered during a Financial Accounting lecture. The study revealed that among the eleven factors perceived to influence accounting students' choice of major, earnings and a good initial salary were the most influential factors, followed by the availability of jobs. Future economic conditions were also considered when making career preference decisions. Additionally, a sizable proportion of business students selected accounting as their major due to the variety of careers it offered. The findings of Ahinful et al. (2012) in Ghana were supported by Zotorvie (2016).

In a probe explored in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Hammour (2018) examined the perceptions of behavioral control, subjective norms, and attitudes of students who desired to master in accounting. The study looked at the effects of these three elements of the TPB on Emirati students' choices to pursue accounting careers. The study's cross-sectional design used an online survey that participants self-administered to solicit data from 442 students. Since the dependent variable was binary, logistic regression was used to evaluate the data. First, a univariate analysis was performed to identify potential factors. Variables that demonstrated statistical significance (at the 0.1 level) in the univariate regression model were also included in the multivariate regression model in an effort to uncover independent significant predictors. The results revealed that the most desired factor influencing students' career choice was the high salary offered by the accounting profession (56% considered it as very desirable). The ambition of students to pursue careers in accounting was found to be significantly correlated with their sentiments regarding the accounting profession. Students with positive attitudes regarding variables such as prestige, earnings, and expectations in career were more likely to have strong inclinations to opt for a career in business accounting.

Cahyadi et al.'s (2019) investigation of the perspectives of accounting students in Indonesia was focused on the variables influencing their occupation preferences. They looked at elements influencing the choice of the accounting profession, such as monetary benefits, professional accounting’s recognition, consideration of the job market, and personality. The researchers used the Kruskal-Wallis test to evaluate the statistical significance of relationships between the variables in the study, which involved administering questionnaires

to 230 accounting students in their final year of study. The findings revealed a statistically significant impact of financial rewards on accounting students' career preferences, which indicates that accounting students are more likely to choose an accounting programme and pursue an accounting career due to the perceived financial benefits associated with the profession.

In contrast to the positive relationships observed in previous studies, Owusu et al. (2019) conducted an academic project in Ghana to investigate the elements impacting the decisions of non-accounting and those enrolled in accounting as students when selecting their academic majors. The study involved undergraduate business students (n = 550) from a single university in Ghana and employed a quantitative approach with a survey design. Drawing on the social cognitive career theory, the researchers developed questionnaires and administered them to the participants. To investigate the underlying dimensions of the constructs, exploratory factor analysis was performed on the acquired data. Additionally, in-depth inferential analysis was done to delve into the factors affecting students' major decisions. Surprisingly, the findings revealed that less monetary incentives and external considerations, including greater compensation, had a less significant impact on accounting major selection than other majors and hence did not strongly impact their decision-making. This result ran counter to the common assumption that high earning potential significantly drives students toward accounting majors. This observation aligned with a similar study by Uyar (2011), when he found a substantial inverse relationship between the desire to pursue an accounting job and the anticipation of high pay. Similarly, Ahmed et al.'s (2017) research similarly found no conclusive link between the decision to pursue an accounting career and job

expectations. These findings collectively indicate the necessity for further investigations to gain a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics influencing the selection of accounting as a major and a career route by students.

Personal Factors and Academic Performance

In Wales, Welsh University undergraduate accounting students' academic performance was examined by Gracia, and Jenkins (2003). A questionnaire was used to gather information for the research, which concentrated on students in their second and final years. Their project intended to comprehend how these accounting students' academic performance was affected by demographic and attitude characteristics. The study's conclusions showed that some elements connected to attitudes and involvement in school significantly impacted the academic performance of undergraduate accounting students. More specifically, factors such as attitude towards class participation and study habits were found as relevant influencers of students' academic qualification. Additionally, academic interest was highlighted as another key factor that influenced the students' brilliant performance in their accounting studies. This study underscores the importance of not only considering demographic factors but also understanding students' attitudes, behaviours, and interests in the context of undergraduate accounting students' academic achievement.

Guney (2009) also emphasized the significance of attitudinal factors, particularly study habits and class attendance, in influencing academic performance. His findings indicated that students who exhibited positive learning attitudes, such as dedicating more time to studying and consistently attending classes, were more likely to develop effective study skills, ultimately

leading to improved academic performance. This suggests a strong link between students' attitudes towards learning and their overall academic outcomes.

Subsequent literature researched by Ahinful et al. (2019) supported the earlier findings and further reinforced the importance of positive learning attitudes. Their study underscored that possessing good study habits and maintaining a favourable learning attitude directly and positively impacted performance of learners academically. The researchers highlighted the correlation between positive learning behaviors like attending classes, spending more time on studying, and actively engaging in learning new concepts. These actions were discovered to help to a greater comprehension of the material and consequently enhance academic performance among students. This collective body of research emphasizes the vital role of learning attitudes and behaviours in shaping students' academic achievements.

Issahaku (2017) explored the components impacting scholarly execution of 626 undergrad students in open colleges in Ghana. With the adoption of surveys and relationship investigation, he found that as it were, hours of learning were emphatically related to CGPA. An independent-sample t-test moreover appeared that students who had individual interface and created individual learning timetable, frequently attended lectures, and took part in the lesson had a higher cumulative grade point average (CGPA). Issahaku's discoveries affirmed the declaration of Gracia and Jenkins (2003) and George et al. (2008) who unveiled a noteworthy correlation within time of study and achievements. They encouraged and further stipulated that, for students to perform scholastically, they have to spend over 14 hours a week learning. Agreeing to George et al, learning time could be a solid indicator of scholarly execution

(CGPA). In fact, improving the academic performance of accounting students who have a genuine interest in the topic necessitates a conscious effort to change their perspectives on education. This includes cultivating positive study habits, dedicating sufficient hours to studying, consistently attending classes, and actively participating in classroom activities.

Another important element that significantly affects accounting students' scholastic contribution is their academic interest. Students who possess a genuine intrigue in an scholastic programme tend to engage more enthusiastically and effectively in their learning activities (Kukreja & Aali, 2013). An illustrative study conducted in Bahrain by Kukreja and Aali focused on factors impacting undergraduate students' performance at Ahlia University. Using a sample of 286 students and employing correlation coefficient and multiple regression models, personal interest and academic achievement have a favourable and significant association, according to Kukreja and Aali. The findings underscored that students who exhibit a high level of academic interest in accounting tend to develop the necessary skills to comprehend and appreciate the subject more deeply. This heightened interest in the subject matter outweighs any negative perceptions or challenges, ultimately leading to a heightened level of understanding and intellectual growth. As a result, pupils who are organically motivated by a sincere interest in accounting are more likely to succeed in their chosen field of study.

At Iran's Islamic Azad University, Garkaz et al. (2011) looked at the variables influencing accounting students' performance. They used a survey study design and a quantitative technique. 450 undergraduate accounting students received questionnaires. They discovered through the use of t-test

analysis that academic curiosity had a significantly positive impact on academic achievement. Their conclusion was reinforced by the observation that learners who are academically intrigued in accounting are frequently driven to select accounting as a a major programme and also self-driven to work hard in class by utilizing a variety of learning strategies to improve their academic performance in accounting. Their findings agreed with those of Kukreja and Aali (2013).

Fallan and Opstad (2014) looked at personality differences impact on academic excellence of accounting students in the USA. The study made use of 166 Trondheim Business School undergraduate participants who were given questionnaires to complete during accounting classes. They discovered using multiple regression that accounting students' academic interest significantly affected their academic success. A direct and positive correlation between academic curiosity and self-efficacy was also discovered by Fallan and Opstad. A student who is academically interested in accounting must therefore be able to accomplish the necessary tasks for success in a given task (academic achievement in an accounting course).

Ahinful et al. (2019) investigated the factors that affect accounting students' academic performance in secondary and higher education institutions in Ghana. 500 final-year accounting learners from five senior secondary schools and one university took part in the survey as sample and as respondents. To guarantee that the study solely included accounting students, the researchers gave out a self-administered questionnaire during accounting lectures and classes. The respondents were asked to rate their past performance and future performance on a seven-point scale that went from "extremely dissatisfied = 1"

to "extremely satisfied = 7" in order to gauge academic success. On a 5-point scale, from "not at all = 1" to "to the greatest extent = 5," items suggested by Fallan and Opstad (2014) were used to assess academic curiosity. The project found a strong and gratifying relationship between academic interest and performance through correlation and regression analysis. These results were consistent with the judgments made by Fallan and Opstad (2014) as well as Gracia and Jenkins (2003). According to the findings, students who had a high level of enthusiasm in their academic program were more likely to independently engage with advanced study materials because of their sincere desire.

In contrast to the aforementioned findings, Olufemi, Adediran, and Oyediran (2018) conducted a study in Nigeria that did not observe any influence of academic interest on academic performance. According to their research, while students' interest in a particular programme may motivate them to study, comparing among their peers, it might not necessarily translate into better academic performance. In their study, they linked students' performance to both internal and external factors, including parental influence and the quality of lecturers and the availability of instructional materials, in the school setting. Similarly, Wu et al. (2019) carried out a study in China that examined academic interest effects on the learning achievements of students in diverse subjects. The researchers utilized an inferential statistics to estimate the effects. Their results indicated that success in medical sciences did not require a significant level of academic interest to attain success academically, particularly when compared to environmental sciences and agricultural programmes. However, compared to the arts or social sciences, excellence in the medical sciences did need a greater

level of academic interest. Wu et al.'s findings, which are important, revealed that academic performance in fields like the social sciences, including business programs, was not significantly influenced by academic interest.

Reference Factors and Academic Performance

In order to better understand students' home environments connection and their scholastic achievement, Khan, Begum, and Imad (2019) performed a study in Pakistan. They gave out questionnaires to 510 learners in their last secondary school year sing a quantitative descriptive approach. Measures like mean, standard deviation, and Pearson's correlation were used to assess the acquired data. According to the undertaken research, there is a powerful link between family connections and students' school success. The researchers explained that the term "home environment" encompasses an individual's family background, including both human and material resources present in the home. This encompasses factors such as basic facilities, parents' education, profession, financial status, and the interactions among family members. Their findings aligned with previous research conducted by Garkaz et al. (2011), who also considered factors related to the home environment. Garkaz et al. found that aspects such as the family's nature and parents' educational levels indluenced the attainment of success. Again academic achievement of students were influenced by family financial situation. This shows that the family setting, or home environment, has a significant impact on how well students perform academically.

In India, Arora and Singh (2017) did a survey which was focused on understanding the influential factors of academic performance of college students. Employing a quantitative methodology, they collected data from 117

university students through a questionnaire. The students' cumulative grade point averages (CGPAs) served as an item for measuring the academic excellence. In the study, factor analysis was used to determine the relative importance of different factors, and multiple regression analysis was used to determine how these factors affected students' academic performance. The findings of their investigation suggested a considerable connection between students' familial environments and academic success. Specifically, family monetary support emerged as one of the influential factors within the family environment. This finding implies that when students lack strong financial support from their families, they may be compelled to dedicate more time to working to financially push their families and themselves. Additionally, due to their socio-economic circumstances, some students might find themselves needing to allocate substantial time to family-related activities aimed at supporting the family. Drawing from the literature discussed earlier, spending excessive hours on such activities might potentially have a negative effect on university accounting students' academic achievement.

A comparative study in Nigeria by Odoh et al. (2017) inspected parents' occupation's impact on the scholastic execution of accounting learners. The work utilized a purposive testing method to choose 60 final-year accounting students from the College of Nigeria. For the study, a questionnaire was used as the primary data gathering tool, following the survey design. The gathered data was analyzed using chi-square and t-test results. Results demonstrated that parental job levels and educational levels essentially impacted students' scholastic execution in accounting in Nigeria. The research prescribed that the

Nigerian government support teaching through grown-up proficiency programmes for uneducated guardians within the nation.

Gobena (2018) also looked at how students' academic performance in Ethiopian families' socioeconomic level. The descriptive survey was utilized with 172 students from Haramaya University. After collecting the information with a survey to demonstrate the strength of the link at a significance level of 0.05, the analyst used one-way ANOVA and multiple regression. Students' scholastic execution was measured by their CGPA. The findings portrayed no significant relationship between family wage and scholarly execution. This was conflicting with the discoveries of Arora and Singh (2017).

In order to determine the effects of family income and several other family-related characteristics on learners' scholastic performance in their introductory college-level Financial Accounting subject, Xiang and Yu (2018) performed a study in the USA. They employed a quantitative research approach and used a questionnaire to gather information from 281 students. The study employed the ordinary least squares regression model to investigate the relationships between the aforementioned factors and students' academic achievement as shown by their cumulative grade point averages (CGPAs). Their study's conclusions showed that students' academic performance was significantly influenced by family income. The findings of this study, which support Arora and Singh's (2017) assertion that family money has a relevant effect on learners' academic achievement, are noteworthy. But there were discrepancies between Xiang and Yu's and Gobena's (2018) findings on some elements affecting accounting students' academic performance.

Job Factors and Academic Performance

According to Jansen and De Villiers (2016)' analysis of the elements that affect students' success in an accounting degree program, career motivation was one of the 15 variables that had an effect on how well they performed academically. 154 Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting) students from a chosen college in South Africa filled out the survey for information collection. The school also provided grades for the several accounting courses and total grade points for the students. The parameters that were significantly related to accounting learners performance were investigated using linear regression. According to their findings, women looked to be more achievement-oriented than men, which benefited their academic success. The study suggested additional research to delve into and illuminate the causes of the strong associations found utilizing qualitative data.

In a study conducted by Akhter and Rahaman (2020) in Bangladeshthe researchers looked into the elements that affected college students' academic success. They chose a sample of 250 undergraduate students using a straightforward random selection procedure. The study involved data collection through a questionnaire given to the chosen students, using a survey design and a quantitative technique. The CGPA of the pupils was used to gauge their academic success. According to the conclusions from the research, there is a considerable link between students' academic success (as measured by their CGPA) and their expectations for the employment market.

In Nigeria, Olufemi, Adediran, and Oyediran (2018) inspected the components influencing students' scholarly execution in colleges of instruction. The study utilized the mixed-method approach and inspected 480 students from

six colleges employing a survey as the information collection instrument. The interview guide was moreover utilized to gather information from 20 final-year students. The information collected were dissected with inferential statistics measurements. The findings uncovered that learning abilities, tutors' quality, and career desires among others affected the scholastic execution of students.

In Ghana, Ahinful and colleagues (2019) conducted a study that aimed to uncover the elements at play in secondary and tertiary schools that affect accounting students' academic performance. The researchers chose a sample of 500 accounting students from various secondary and postsecondary schools in Ghana using a quantitative research approach. The study used questionnaires to gather data from the subjects who were chosen, and it also used ordinary least squares regression analysis to look at the link. It was shown that there was a strong correlation between students' aspirations for work chances and their academic success.

In the United Kingdom, a study by Brook and Roberts (2021) sought to pinpoint the elements that have a substantial impact on undergraduate accounting students' academic success. The researchers collected information from 134 students' records at a UK university. Employing a quantitative approach and an exploratory research design, they utilized descriptive statistics and regression analysis to examine how various factors were associated with scholastic excellence, using CGPA. The likelihood of finding employment (employability) and students' academic achievement were found to be significantly correlated. The researchers suggested that the prospect of entering a competitive job market motivated accounting students to dedicate more effort

to their studies, resulting in higher CGPAs. The results align with the outcomes reported by Olufemi and colleagues (2018) in Nigeria.

Other School Factors and Academic Performance

According to Baker (2008), there is evidence to support the idea that extracurricular activity engagement may enhance academic success for accounting students. Data for Baker's study came from the National Longitudinal Survey of Freshmen, which included a sample of 3,924 students from 28 top institutions in the USA. The survey's data were used in the study, which employed a longitudinal survey approach.. Using the STATA program, the data were analyzed using the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression analytical technique. According to Baker's research, pupils' personal development benefited by their active participation in extracurricular activities. According to the study's findings, accounting students' participation in extracurricular activities and academic achievement are significantly positively correlated.

Shamsudin et al. (2014) found no noteworthy affiliation between extracurricular exercises and scholarly execution among open colleges in Malaysia. A quantitative approach and cross-sectional plan were connected in regulating the survey to 150 students from three open colleges in Peninsular Malaysia. The study’s finding was disturbing since colleges and the Service of Instruction in Malaysia were emphasizing more on consolidating extracurricular exercises into the schools’ educational programmess to enhance students’ knowledge and performance. The study, subsequently, prescribed an in-depth exploratory study to look at the impact.

Singh (2017) looked into the effect of extracurricular activities on academic success in an Indian study. In order to conduct this study, the researcher used a quantitative methodology. To that end, she created a checklist in the form of questionnaires, which she then sent to a sample of 100 students in the city of Allahabad. The 45 specified extracurricular activities were compared to their impact on academic achievement using correlation analysis and t-tests. The results showed a link between co-curricular activity participation and academic achievement. These findings agreed with Baker's (2008) findings but disagreed with Shamsudin et al.'s (2014) findings.

In a comparable study in Singapore, Perez et al. (2019) inspected the impacts of extracurricular exercises on scholarly excellence of accounting, trade, and administration students. The study utilized the quantitative approach with questionnaires to 50 final-year accounting students who had taken part in various extracurricular exercises. The discoveries of the project uncovered that involvement in extracurricular exercises positively impact scholarly execution of accounting and administration students. Despite the fact that kids were active in a variety of extracurricular activities, they could adjust their time taking part in both non-academic and scholastic activities. Whereas Perez et al. (2019) finding was consistent with the discoveries of Baker (2008) and Singh (2017) it was conflicting with Shamsudin et al. (2014). The researchers propose additional research because of the discrepancies in the findings across time in other nations.

Classroom factors, including class size, class attendance, availability of textbooks, lecture environment, and technology, have been examined in relation to their impact on academic performance. Among these factors, class size is

often considered a significant determinant of students' academic success. In Australia, Zyngier (2014) conducted a study to explore the effects of class size on the academic performance of children. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach, reviewing 112 papers spanning from 1979 to 2014 to assess the continued relevance of early research findings regarding the impact of class size. The study concluded that larger class sizes tend to have a negative influence on students' academic performance. In instances where higher educational institutions combined two classes into one, resulting in larger class sizes, the learning environment became less favourable and could adversely affect students' mood and engagement.

Zyngier (2014) went on to say that this might be because students are more likely to interact with lecturers in smaller classrooms. Again, because everyone has equal access to the projection or the board's writings, students feel at ease participating in class without any restraints. Finally, according to Bloom's (1956) taxonomy, lecturers may combine different teaching strategies to assist students in acquiring more sophisticated abilities.

Research by Kusi and Manful (2019) looked into the impact of class size on tertiary students' academic performance in Ghana. A sequential explanatory design was utilized in the study as a part of its mixed methods research approach. The 131 students and 56 instructors were selected using stratified and simple random selection techniques for the quantitative phase.. Additionally, 20 participants were purposefully chosen for a qualitative phase. During the quantitative and qualitative phases, data were gathered using both questionnaires and interviewing protocols. The project used ANOVA and multiple regression with a significance threshold of 0.05 for data analysis, as

well as descriptive statistics like mean and standard deviation and inferential statistics like ANOVA. The study's conclusions showed that class size significantly affected students' academic performance at all levels. Specifically, students in smaller class sizes tended to achieve higher academic performance compared to their peers in larger class sizes. This highlights the importance of considering class size as a crucial factor that can impact students' educational outcomes in tertiary institutions.

Zarb (2021) conducted a study in Malta to assess how class size affect the scholastic achievement of management, commerce, and business learners within a specific tertiary institution. An exploratory quantitative technique was used in the investigation. Secondary data from a sample of 874 business, management, and commerce students were utilized for the analysis. To investigate the relationship, ordinary least squares under multiple regression was employed. This statistical method allows for examining the association between variables. The study's conclusions showed a substantial inverse association between higher class sizes and students' average test scores.

The objective of the Financial Accounting subject at the tertiary level often extends beyond basic knowledge acquisition and should include the acquisition of higher-order abilities as described in Bloom's (1956) Taxonomy. One key consideration in achieving these objectives is smaller class sizes. Smaller class sizes are often advocated for courses that prioritize interactive learning, discussion, critical thinking, and personalized attention. In such an environment, students have more opportunities to engage in meaningful interactions with their peers and instructors, resulting in the improvement of critical thinking abilities and a deeper comprehension of topics (Kherfi, 2008).

In contrast, Ake-Little and colleagues (2020) engaged in a research that explored class size impact on academic excellence within a university setting in Philadelphia. Their findings revealed varying outcomes based on the controlled independent variables and the specific academic programs. Notably, in the fields of social science and STEM, they observed a negative correlation where students exhibited poorer performance in smaller classes. This trend was attributed to the potential inclination of instructors to be more motivated and better prepared when teaching larger groups of students, consequently leading to enhanced academic outcomes. In contrast, no meaningful correlation between class size and academic achievement was discovered in the arts and humanities fields.

The presence of instructional resources, including accounting textbooks, plays a constructive role in shaping students' academic achievements (Atieh, 2013). A study focusing on student perceptions of the underlying factors contributing to low performance in introductory accounting courses within Saudi Arabia underscored the impact of subpar textbooks, oversized classes, and disengaged educators on the academic outcomes of accounting students. This investigation was substantiated by Ezeagba (2014), who identified insufficient accounting textbooks and ineffective pedagogical approaches as principal contributors to unsatisfactory academic performance among accounting students in Nigeria. Ezeagba's findings indicated that the availability, sufficiency, and relevance of locally crafted accounting textbooks, aligned with the local context, significantly contribute to fostering quality teaching and learning experiences, thereby fostering positive effects on the academic achievements of accounting students.

Enu, Agyeman, and Nkum (2015) carried out a scholastic survey to explore the determinants of students' mathematics achievement across selected colleges in Ghana. Through a descriptive approach, they distributed questionnaires to a cohort of 50 students from three distinct colleges. The investigation revealed that insufficient teaching and learning resources, among other variables, had an impact on students' academic achievements Similarly, within the Ghanaian context, Osei-tutu, Yeboah-Appiagyei, and Darkwa (2014) embarked on a comparable inquiry. Their research focused on the impact of the learning environment on senior high school students' academic performance, notably in the area of financial accounting. Employing a descriptive design, the researchers administered questionnaires to 260 Financial Accounting students. The outcome showed a strong connection between the availability of tutorial materials such as textbooks and information and communication technology (ICT) tools and students' scholastic achievement in financial accounting.

Olufemi et al. (2018) conducted a study in Nigeria with a sample size of 480 participants to investigate the elements impacting tertiary institution students’ brilliant achievements. The gathered questionnaire output were examined with descriptive and inferential statistics. The results of the study showed that a number of variables, including those pertaining to the school, the students, and their parents, had an impact on how well pupils performed academically. Within the context of school factors, aspects such as classrooms, instructional materials, laboratories, access to electricity, available playing areas, and hostel facilities were considered. From the cumulative literature presented, it is evident that the presence of suitable textbooks tailored to the local context of the subject area holds a substantial impact on learners' academic

achievement, particularly in the realm of accounting. Such textbooks contribute to the enhancement of students' understanding of accounting concepts within a local context, providing practical and accessible illustrations. This, in turn, fosters a high standard of academic performance in the field of business accounting. Notably, the output drawn from the aforementioned studies have unearthed certain inconsistencies, thereby emphasizing the necessity for further research in this domain.

Students' Performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting

Various researchers have delved into the realm of academic achievement of accounting students in specialized courses like Financial Accounting course and Management Accounting course, aiming to uncover potential relationships. In Australia, Drennan and Rohde (2002) embarked on an exploratory study with the objective of empirically scrutinizing accounting learners' scholastic performance, particularly in the context of advanced Management Accounting. They found a noteworthy correlation between accounting students' excellence in both the subject called Financial Accounting and subject like Management Accounting. Furthermore, their findings indicated that the most robust predictor of accounting students' academic success in Management Accounting subject was derived from their achievement score in the Financial Accounting course which was initially undertaken.

In Saudi Arabia, Al-Twaijry (2010) validated the outcomes established by Drennan and Rohde (2002). Al-Twaijry conducted an investigation into potential determinants influencing the undergraduate managerial-accounting learners' academic achievement. The study encompassed a survey of 312

accounting students, utilizing methods such as mean comparison and correlation analysis. The outcomes showed a strong association between the students' Management Accounting performance after they completed Financial Accounting. Because Financial Accounting served as the foundation for Management Accounting courses, students who performed well in Management Accounting also demonstrated considerably better performance in that course.

In contrast, a parallel investigation conducted in Australia by Eddey and Bauman (2009) yielded contrasting results. The study discovered an absence of a substantial correlation between achievements in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting. 1,049 graduates from a specific university provided data through the use of a questionnaire as the data collection tool. The results showed no discernible connection between accounting students' academic success in their earlier study in financial accounting and their eventual success in management accounting.

Alanzi and Alfraih (2017) looked at the influence of financial accounting knowledge accumulation on academic success in Kuwait. The researchers used a quantitative methodology to obtain data from 89 accounting learners who were admitted in the business school of a chosen university. The study's focus was on assessing the influence of accumulated knowledge in Financial Accounting on the students' academic performance in Cost Accounting. To measure academic performance, the researchers utilized the overall score obtained by the students in the Cost Accounting course. The independent variable was the students' accumulated knowledge in Financial Accounting, quantified through their performance in prior accounting courses before undertaking the Cost Accounting course. The findings pointed to a

noteworthy impact of the accumulated gains in Financial Accounting on the academic performance of learners in the realm of Cost Accounting.

In England, Maksy and Rodriguez (2018) undertook an investigation into the determinants linked to student achievements in Managerial Accounting. Employing a quantitative methodology, the researchers distributed questionnaires to a cohort of 151 students enrolled in Managerial Accounting at a chosen university. The collected data were subjected to analysis utilizing techniques such as one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA), correlation analysis, and ordinary least square linear regression. The findings revealed a noteworthy connection (at the 0.01 significance level) between the grades achieved in Financial Accounting subject and the subsequent scholastic achievement of learners in Managerial Accounting subject.

In Pennsylvania, the examination by Hao et al. (2021) delved into the variables influencing students' performance in the domain of Managerial Accounting. Utilizing a questionnaire, the researchers gathered data from 112 accounting students who were in their final year at a public university. To scrutinize the collected data, the study employed a blend of statistical methods including ANOVA and partial correlations. The outcomes of their investigation unveiled a noteworthy correlation between learners' performance in the prerequisite course, namely Business Accounting, and their subsequent achievements in the realm of Management Accounting. This observation aligns with the findings of Al-Twaijry (2010) and Maksy and Rodriguez (2018), though it stands in contrast to the outcomes reported by Eddey and Bauman (2009). Furthermore, other researchers such as Guidry (2015), Gupta and Maksy (2019), and Leshchinskii and Maksy (2019) similarly identified a

significant connection between Financial Accounting subject performance and the domain of management (cost) accounting subject. Given the diversity of these findings, it becomes imperative to establish the link and correlation between these closely related courses within the context of Ghana. The following hypothesis was investigated to see if the preceding findings may be confirmed or refuted: "*There is no statistically significant relationship between the academic performance of Financial Accounting and Management Accounting".*

Gender and Academic Performance

Gender has become a notable variable in the exploration of academic performance, with particular attention being paid to the notion that female students tend to excel in accounting courses compared to their male counterparts. In South Africa, Callaghan and Papageorgiou (2015) undertook a study aimed at understanding gender distinctions in terms of locus of control and its influence on the academic performance of accounting students (sample size of 719). The researchers employed a locus of control questionnaire to collect data from the participants, which was subsequently subjected to analysis through the employment of a structural equation modelling software named "AMOS." The academic achievement of the students (as determined by CGPA) served as the dependent variable in the analytical process, which included a confirmatory factor analysis followed by the testing of a structural model. A t-test was also performed to evaluate gender differences in academic success.

The results of the study outdoored an essentially relevant correlation between gender and performance. Academic success was greater among girls than males. Their research supported the conclusions of Khwaileh and Zaza

(2011). They studied 26,122 Jordan University students over the course of five years and discovered that female students consistently had better CGPAs.

Garkaz et al. (2011) in Iran, inspected the variables influencing accounting students' execution at the Islamic Azad College. With a stratified arbitrary examining strategy, information were collected from 450 respondents utilizing surveys. T-test was utilized to dissect the information collected. The study found that gender ranks high among other variables that are altogether related to scholastic execution.

Alanzi (2018) examined the linkage between gender and academic success among accounting students (comprising 141 participants) in their senior year in Kuwait enrolled in the College of Business Studies. Academic data, represented by the CGPA, were extracted from students' academic records via the institution's registration system. A study using linear regression was used to examine how gender affects academic performance. When Levene's test for equality was employed to analyze the pupils, the results from the t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in the mean performance between male and female students. The regression model subsequently affirmed the influential role of gender in shaping the scholastic achievement of accounting students.

Ahinful et al. (2019) undertook a parallel investigation into the ramifications of sex on the scholastic accomplishments of accounting students in Ghana. Employing a questionnaire, they surveyed 500 accounting students across both secondary and tertiary levels from chosen educational institutions within Ghana. The gathered data was subsequently subjected to analysis through ordinary least squares regression. The research discerned that gender exerted a noteworthy impact on the academic performance of accounting

students. However, their findings deviated from those observed by Garkaz et al. (2016) and explained male accounting students demonstrated superior academic performance compared to their female counterparts at the same educational level (Ahinful et al., 2019).

In Nigeria, Olufolakemi, Femi, and Olatunde (2020) delved into the determinants impacting the academic achievement of accounting undergraduate students. The investigation involved 153 accounting students enrolled at Bowen University. The researchers used a questionnaire to collect data using a cross-sectional research methodology. The study's conclusions showed that age and gender were not reliable determinants of how well accounting students would achieve academically. This result was at odds with the findings of Garkaz et al. (2016) and Ahinful et al. (2019), who also found a significant correlation between gender and academic performance, albeit one that favored particular genders.

Over the course of various studies, substantial evidence has emerged to lend credence to the notion that female students exhibit a propensity for better academic performance. This pattern has been attributed to factors such as higher levels of emotional intelligence commonly observed among female students compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, research has indicated that females often exhibit superior reading abilities and skills in comparison to males. Given the advent of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), advanced accounting studies now necessitate a profound comprehension of these standards before their quantitative application. In this context, the heightened reading ability demonstrated by female accounting students could contribute to their superior academic performance, particularly in the realm of

accounting that demands precision and thorough understanding. Conversely, in favour of males, it has been observed that they tend to possess a heightened interest in quantitative subjects, which subsequently translates into superior academic performance in those areas. These varied outcomes in different countries, each utilizing diverse research methodologies and tools, underscore the necessity for further exploration and investigation into the intricate interplay of gender, academic performance, and the multifaceted factors at play.

Career Intention and Academic Performance of Accounting Students

According to Koech et al. (2016), students' job choices either make them happy with or hate their selected degree or programme. They also discovered that students who do their research and select their desired path of study wisely are successful and happy with their academic progress.

In order to assess the effects of career choice on academic achievement, Aminu and Timothy (2014) conducted a study on employment decisions and academic excellence of students of Microbiology at a Nigerian University. To find the linkage between the student's profession choices and scholastic achievement (CGPA), data were gathered from 106 levels 300 and 400 students utilizing questionnaires. When compared to students who transferred to the course after losing their first choice—medicine—they discovered that students who had a self-interest in the subject matter did much better.

Hellen and Kitainge (2016), who looked at the effect of job preference on academic achievement at the University of Eldoret in Kenya, corroborated the conclusions of Aminu and Timothy's (2014) study. To gather information from respondents, they used an unstructured interviewing technique called a case study. It was revealed from the work that parents who compelled their kids

to enroll in classes that they didn't want to did poorly academically. As a result, many students became disappointed, disillusioned, and demoralized with the course because it did not lead to their ideal jobs. The male students' discontent and disappointments caused them to spend their tuition money and free time with their girlfriends rather than studying because they had no interest in the subject matter.

According to Igere (2017), employment choice significantly affects students' academic success in social sciences, arts and humanities. She said that the majority of students choose to stick with the University's given program of study (Library studies) rather than pursuing their desired course of study. According to Igere, these kids underperformed in the program because they had no interest in or desire for it. According to the aforementioned study, selecting a course against one's preferences resulted in bad outcomes (academic achievement). Lee and Lee (2018) argued that there exist a substantial correlation between scholastic achievement and profession desire (valence), which is consistent with these findings. They also suggested that since they had a favorable attitude about the subject, students who had self-interest in a course or program of study outperformed their peers in the classroom. They also discovered that a student's academic success is significantly impacted by parental influence on their career.

Additionally, Owusu et al. (2019) investigated the factors influencing accounting and other business students at the University of Ghana's major course selections. 550 undergraduate business students were given questionnaires, which were then analyzed using logistic regression. Their findings demonstrated that self-interest is frequently a driving force for students

who declared accounting as a major or program. Additionally, Owusu et al. observed that students who chose the accounting field of study out of self-interest had good grade point averages. This suggests that accounting students' self-interested occupational preferences had a positive effect on their academic achievement.

Contrary to the above findings, Etiubon, Ugwu and Ado (2018) found that education academic achievement of students is not considerably impacted by their job preferences.. The results were achieved after collecting data from 124 students with questionnaires. The data were analyed quantitatively, using descriptive statistics as well as ANOVA and MANOVA. From their results, though the career factors (parental desire, students' interest and specialization) influenced the career choice, they did not significantly influence the student's academic performance in their course of study.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed empirical research on the variables affecting academic achievement and career preference. These are the personal, professional, and reference elements. Once more, the academic performance of accounting students in Management Accounting was compared to Financial Accounting to see how well they performed in each subject.

According to reports, a variety of personal qualities, including curiosity, aptitude for math and attitude, have occasionally had an impact on academic success and job choice. In the case of reference variables, it was observed that parents, classmates, counselors, and senior high school had an impact on the job preference and academic achievement of accounting students. Finally, although there was some disagreement on the relationship between academic

achievement and career desire, it was widely agreed that the availability of employment, salaries, and status were high.

Some of the studies had a number of methodological and contextual deficiencies that were noted. In terms of setting, the majority of research on profession desire and academic achievement were carried out in industrialized nations like Europe, with a focus on secondary schools and a few postsecondary institutions. With little studies in accounting, the focus topics were management and mathematics. The mediating influence of occupational desire on the link between predictors and academic achievement was only briefly investigated in research conducted in industrialized nations. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the impact of personal, professional, and occupational characteristics on the academic performance and career preferences of accounting students in Ghana.

The majority of research employed a quantitative technique, and the handful that used a mixed-methods approach did not employ the sequential method, in which the qualitative results were expanded upon by some of the quantitative findings. Without adequate justifications, this method could provide some unexpected results. The current study, the topics covered, and the research strategy chosen for the study were all influenced by the gaps in the body of literature.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter explains the research methods used to carry out the study. It details the study area, data source, research area, research strategy, and research philosophy. This chapter also covers the target population, sample and sampling method, data collecting tools, data processing method, fieldwork difficulties, and ethical issues.

Research Philosophy/Paradigm

The word paradigm is used to characterize the researcher's point of view in educational research (Kuhn, 1962). The worldview takes into account the point of view, ideology, or general body of ideas that influences how study facts are understood and interpreted. It consists of the amorphous notions and ideas that shape how a researcher views, understands, and behaves in the environment. In order to make judgments about what to investigate, how to study it, and how to interpret the results, researchers need a framework of beliefs and principles known as a paradigm (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Positivism, interpretivism, and critical paradigms were the three main taxonomies of educational research paradigms that Kivunja and Kuyini identified. While acknowledging the three categories, some scholars such as Tashakkori and Teddlie (2003) have offered a fourth paradigm known as the pragmatic paradigm that incorporates components from the three put out by Kivunja and Kuyini (2017).

Positivists believe that reality can be observed, measured, experimented with, and anticipated. In order to answer research questions, it is the chosen paradigm for the interpretation of observations and experiences involving facts or other quantifiable things that have been experimentally discovered via the use of scientific procedures (Pring, 2008). Positively oriented research draws its results through deductive reasoning, the design and testing of hypotheses, computations, and extrapolations. Furthermore, positivists believe that everyone perceives reality (the truth) in the same way.

According to interpretivists, there is no one truth or reality; rather, truth is socially constructed based on interactions, and reality only exists in people's imaginations. As a result, it is subjective and each responder gave a different definition (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). The goal of interpretivism is to comprehend and interpret the thoughts of the subjects being researched by attempting to read their minds. This paradigm places more focus on comprehending from the viewpoint of the participant being observed than from the viewpoint of the observer. Once again, interpretivism involves gathering and analyzing data in relation to a grounded theory that is created based on the information gathered throughout the study. Positivism relies on quantitative measuring methods, whereas interpretivism emphasizes qualitative concerns.

Philosophers who believed that it was impossible to determine social reality, as the interpretivist paradigm argued, or to determine the truth solely by applying the scientific method, as the positivist paradigm argued, developed pragmatism (Creswell, 2009; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). Pragmatism advocates a multi-paradigmatic approach where both quantitative and qualitative approaches are employed because it places a strong emphasis on a worldview

that offers research tools that are suited for studying the reality at hand. This strategy uses both probability and non-probability approaches for selecting the sample size and gathering the data in order to solve a research issue under inquiry.

The pragmatism philosophical paradigm was used in this investigation. The pragmatic philosophy provides the chance to learn about the actual behavior of participants and responders, the ideas affecting those behaviors, and the expected outcomes of those behaviors, which has an impact on the choice. Once more, pragmatism enables the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a better understanding of a phenomenon, such as issues relating to career preference and academic performance of accounting students, which would otherwise not have been accessible by using a single method (Creswell & Clark, 2011).

Research Approach

The study used mixed methods, a practical strategy to studying human behaviour that combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The goal of the mixed methods approach is to combine the advantages of quantitative and qualitative techniques in order to address the shortcomings of each separate approach. The "what", "how", and "why" of profession selection and academic success cannot be readily and satisfactorily addressed by either a quantitative or qualitative method. When using a mixed methods approach, the qualitative approach complements the quantitative approach and vice versa to fully solve the study topic by utilizing the advantages of each method (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

Research Design

The sequential explanatory design of the mixed methods technique was used in the investigation. In particular, the paradigm of follow-up explanations was used. It was a two-phased mixed methods design, with phase one consisting of the collection and analysis of quantitative data, and phase two consisting of the gathering and analysis of qualitative data. In accordance with this methodology, the qualitative findings from phase two were added to the quantitative data from phase one. Since the quantitative approach dominated the design, more emphasis was focused on quantitative procedures than qualitative ones.

The study's approach was acceptable since it attempted to understand the correlations between the several variables or factors that affect accounting students' choice of employment. It also intended to describe the elements that affect accounting students' academic performance and how those aspects affect their preferences for professional paths. The quantitative data was originally gathered using questionnaires in order to find statistically significant variations and anomalous outcomes on profession desire and academic achievement. This was done in order to meet the objectives of the sequential explanatory design. The qualitative phase that followed these results employed interviews to further explore anomalous situations or extremes in the quantitative findings. Thus, the gathering of the qualitative data was influenced by the quantitative data in order to explain significant quantitative results.

According to the embedded approach in a sequential design, different sections were assigned in the study's results section for presenting the quantitative and qualitative data. The connecting method in a sequential design,

however, allowed for linking the qualitative results to the quantitative data in the discussion part. In other words, the outcomes of the qualitative results were used to explain or clarify the quantitative findings. The research design model is summarized in Figure 2.

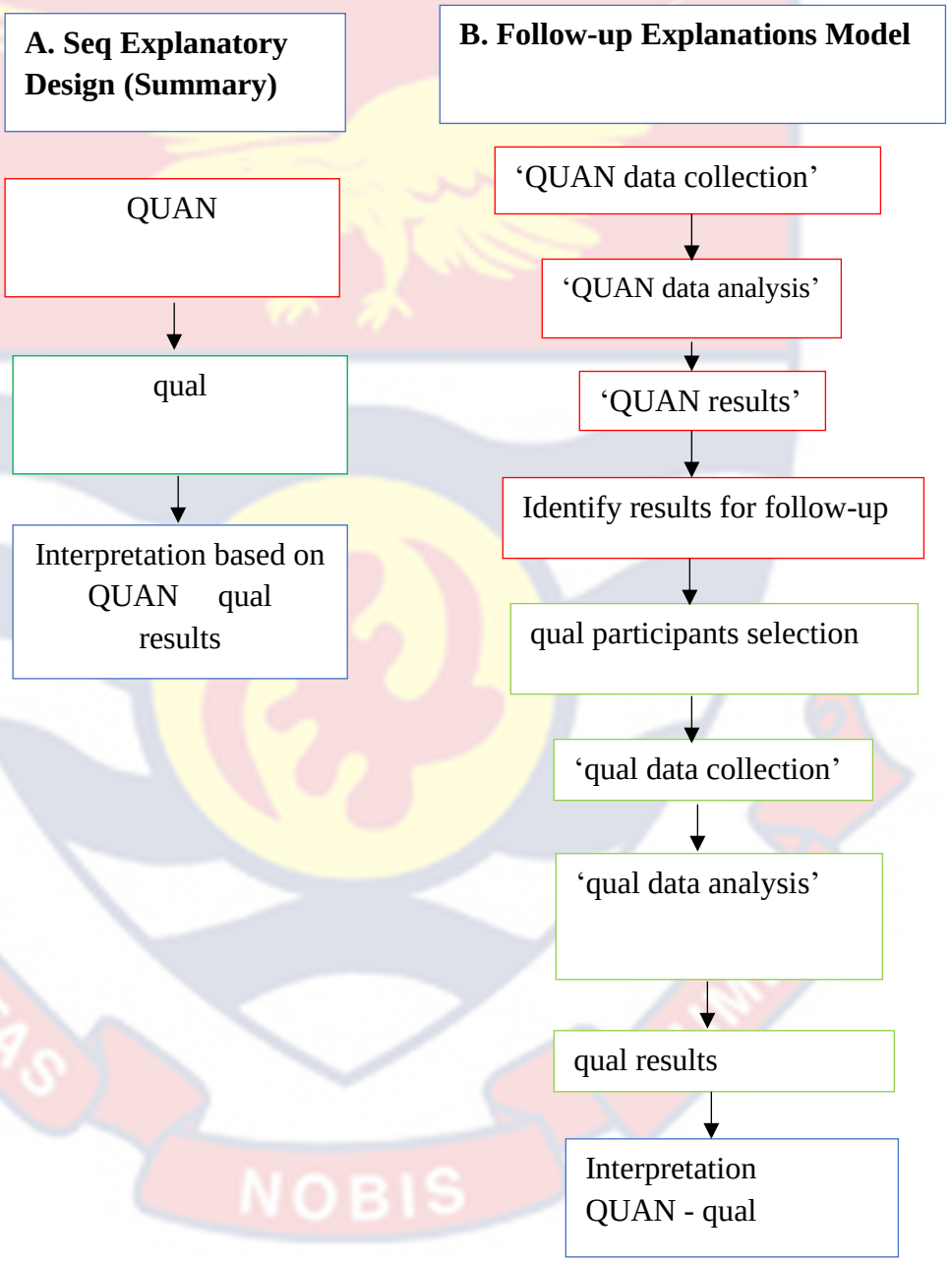


Figure 2: Sequential explanatory design and follow-up explanations model

Source: Adapted from Creswell (2009)

Profile of Institutions engaged in the Study

The University of Cape Coast (UCC), Cape Coast, and the University of Education, Winneba (UEW), two universities in Ghana, served as the sites for the study. It was attempted to utilize all Ghanaian universities that provide Accounting as a programme. The two universities shared the same grading schemes among the few universities who replied. The grading scheme used by UEW and UCC is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Grading system for UCC and UEW

Grade	Score	Grade Point
A	80% – 100%	4.0
B+	75% – 79%	3.5
B	70% – 74%	3.0
C+	65% – 69%	2.5
C	60% – 64%	2.0
D+	55% – 69%	1.5
D	50% – 54%	1.0
E	Below 50%	

Source: Academic Directorate, UCC and UEW (2022)

For the purpose of using CGPA to measure the academic performance of the students, there was a need to ensure that all the respondents had the same standard of measurement for fair and reliable results.

Accounting students at UCC and UEW start with accounting courses from Level 100 unlike some universities, where students read general courses at Level 100, the success of which determines specific programmes to be pursued from Level 200. In such a case, accounting students start accounting

courses from Level 200. For the purpose of the study, respondents were expected to enroll in the accounting programme from Level 100. This decision was justified by Paolilo and Estes (1982), and Ng et al. (2016) who asserted that accountants tend to initiate their career preference intentions during their first year (Level 100) at the university.

University of cape coast

The University of Cape Coast (UCC), which is based in the historic town of Cape Coast, was founded as a University College of Cape Coast in October 1962 in response to the demand for highly trained and educated labor in the country's educational sector. A graduate teacher training program for the second cycle and other tertiary institutions was its initial purpose. On October 1, 1971, UCC achieved the status of a complete and autonomous university, with the power to award its own diplomas and degrees according to a parliamentary act. With time, faculties grew and various programs were added to better serve ministries and businesses besides education in need of skilled labor. For instance, UCC has expanded on its fundamental mission to include the training of professionals in business, medicine, agriculture, and law.

The institution, which opened with 155 students enrolled, now has more than 80,000 students enrolled in certificate programs through graduate programs. It began with two departments, Arts and Science, which in the same year expanded into faculties. During the academic year 1975–1976, the Department of Business Studies was established within the Faculty of Social Sciences to administer the Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Art in Secretaryship programs. Later, in the academic year 1990–1991, the Department of Business Studies and the Department of Economics were

combined to become the Department of Economics and Business Studies. Beginning with the academic year 1996–1997, the two departments were split apart. From the academic year 2003–2004, the Department of Business Studies was thereafter promoted to the level of a faculty as the School of Business. With five academic departments (Accounting, Finance, Human Resource Management, Marketing, Procurement and Supply Chain, and Management), a center (Entrepreneurship and Small Enterprise Development), and a unit (Professional and Management Development), the UCC School of Business, now a part of the College of Humanities and Legal Studies, has the most students enrolled in the Department of Accounting.

In the top five universities in Africa, UCC was recognized by Times Higher Education's 2022 world university rankings as the best university in Ghana, the best institution in West Africa, and the top university in the world for research influence.

University of Education

A government legislation (PNDC Law 322) created the University of Education (UEW), Winneba in 1992 as a university institution under the University of Cape Coast. It is situated 140 kilometers east of Cape Coast in the ancient fishing harbor of Winneba in the Central Region of Ghana. Its original mandate was to train teachers to teach from the early childhood to pre-university stage. Thus, it was set up to produce professional educators to assist in producing the manpower needed for rapid economic and social development. UEW has added to its core mandate other relevant programmes needed to achieve it aim of producing professionals with the requisite skills and knowledge to focus on the demands of the contemporary global environment.

As of the time of this study, 2022, UEW has seven faculties/schools and twenty-nine academic departments and centres with 62 academic programmes.

The School of Business has three departments namely Department of Accounting, Department of Marketing, Procurement and Supply Chain Management, and the Department of Banking and Finance with the Department of Accounting being the oldest and largest department at the School of Business. UEW is one of the fastest-growing universities in Ghana, with a great expansion in the business programmes including information, communication and technology. In May 2021, the University signed an agreement with a Non-governmental organisation with the objective of transforming teaching, education, and learning to ensure that quality students are produced with the requisite skills to meet the needs of the nation.

Population

The population of the study was all Level 400 undergraduate accounting students (N = 438) in the two selected Universities. The two universities (UCC and UEW) running accounting programmes were purposively selected because, among the tertiary institutions in Ghana, three universities consented to use their students as respondents and to provide data on students' CGPA for the study. Out of the three universities, UCC and UEW had the same grading system, so they were selected for the study. The study used CGPA for determining the academic performance of accounting students and therefore, there was a need to target institutions with the same grading system. Lastly, in examining the career preference of accounting students, Paolilo and Estes (1982); Mauldin, Crain and Mounce (2000); and Ng et al. (2016) asserted that in a four-year stay at the tertiary institution, students of accounting programmes often determine

their career preference after their first year at the university. Therefore, since UCC and UEW offer accounting programme from the first year to the final year, it was appropriate to target these two universities. Again, at level 400, students have their highest cumulative grade point average (CGPA) from levels 100 to 300 (Afrogha et al, 2020). They further concluded that, few students graduate with a different class of CGPA from that of Level 300, hence all Level 400 students from UCC and UEW were targeted for the study.

Subjects of the study

All (438) Level 400 accounting students from the two universities consisted the respondents for the quantitative phase of the study. The census method was employed to include the entire population. According to Kothari (2004), when every element of the population is considered in such a study, the highest level of accuracy can be assumed as no element of chance remains. Also, there are no issues of sampling errors when the census method is adopted.

During the qualitative phase, participants for the interview sessions were conveniently selected from the target population at different sites for the interview. Since all the students had the required features and abilities to participate in the interview, those who were accessible and willing were engaged until reaching a saturation level. Thus, twelve students from University of Cape Coast and eight from University of Education, Winneba formed the participants for the interview sessions.

During the submission of completed questionnaires from students, they were informed of a follow-up interview session, where interested students were asked to submit their phone numbers. The responses from the students were used to conveniently invite 20 students for the interview.

Data Sources

Both primary and secondary data were used in this investigation. In-depth information was gathered from the respondents using a questionnaire and interviewing guidelines. Secondary data was also gathered from the West African Examinations Centre (WAEC) and the accounting departments of the institutions. Additionally, data from books, journals, and the internet were utilised in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

Data from the respondents was gathered using two different types of devices. These were the interview questions and guidelines. The questionnaire was used to collect data for the quantitative phase, and the interview guide was used to collect qualitative information to help interpret the quantitative results.

Questionnaire

The study's questionnaire had both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The self-administered questionnaire was most suitable for collecting the necessary data for the study since the respondents were undergraduate students who could understand the English language. Once more, the questionnaire's self-reporting format safeguarded respondents' privacy and anonymity, leading to more accurate answers. Three sections, A, B, and C, made up the questionnaire. The undergraduate accounting students were asked to answer questions about their socioeconomic status in Part A. On a five-point Likert scale (1–5) with 1 denoting highly disagreement, 2 denoting disagreement, 3 denoting undecided, 4 denoting agreement, and 5 denoting strong agreement, Part B prompted the respondents to indicate their level of agreement with the accounting job choice intention criteria. The information in

this section was taken from Odia and Ogiedu (2013), with certain comments changed to reflect the Ghanaian and academic context. Examples of reworded sentences are shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Examples of modifications made to some questionnaire items

Factors	Original Items	Items Re-worded
Personal Factors	I have interest in *working with numbers*	I have interest in *calculations*
	Learning accounting is very *difficult*	Learning accounting is very *challenging*
Reference Factors	My *secondary school tutor* think I should take accounting course	My *senior high school teacher* thought I should take accounting course
	My *advisors* recommended accounting to me	My *counsellors* recommended accounting to me
Job Factors	My starting *remuneration* will be *gratifying* if I graduate with accounting degree	My starting salary will be satisfying if I graduate with accounting degree
	Being an accountant has a lot of *prominence.*	Being an accountant has a lot of *prestige.*

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The career preference construct was also measured on the five-point Likert scale, using Intention to pursue Accounting Career Preference indicators proposed by Odia and Ogiedu (2013) and Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020).

Part C was made up of close ended items and an open-ended item on academic performance. Students were to provide data on their academic performance. These included their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) at the end of Level 300 and the expected CGPA after Level 400. Measuring CGPA using the self-report model is often used in educational research (Hensley, 1995;

Connely et al., 1998 & Mansfield et al., 2009). To determine their performance in the accounting-related courses, the students were to indicate the grades obtained for each accounting-related course and if not satisfied, the expected grades. The last part of this section which was adapted from Principe (2005) elicited students' perception of academic performance, to solicit data on internal (classroom) and external factors influencing such performance. The measurement of the items (independent and dependent variables) in the questionnaire with their sources are found in Appendix A.

Interview Guide

Interview guide was used to obtain the necessary explanation of the quantitative results generated. Unusual issues that required further explanation from the quantitative data were addressed in the interview session. The guide consisted of seven sections. Section A covered the introduction which included the welcome address, the objective for the interview, and the estimated duration of the interview. Section B covered the background of the participants, which included gender, age and nationality. Section C focused on the reasons behind the factors influencing their career preference. Section D covered the satisfaction of grades obtained in accounting-related courses. Influencers of academic performance were also covered in Section E. Section F covered the possibility of differences in the academic performance of male and female accounting students, while Section G solicited general comments regarding the interview.

The interview guide offered deeper understanding of the exceptional issues that were identified from the quantitative results. Face-to-face interviews have the advantage of capturing verbal and non-verbal gestures including body

language, which can indicate a level of discomfort with questions or a level of enthusiasm for the issues being discussed. Gorman and Clayton (2005) emphasized that it offers a pathway for gathering high-quality data as the interviewer keeps the participant focused until completion. Lastly, interviews assist in exploring unanticipated aspects of the issues under study.

Pre-Testing of Instruments

A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted in order to refine the questionnaire and also to ascertain its validity and reliability. Leedy and Ormrod (2005) stipulated that preceding the main study with pre-testing supports the criterion and construct validation of the instrument. As asserted by McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the instrument for primary data collection must be pre-tested before the fieldwork to examine and test the individual items in the instrument. Perneger et al. (2015) recommend that the pre-test sample size should be a minimum 10% of the sample proposed for the main study. Taherdoost (2016) also asserted that 10 to 30 respondents are ideal for feasibility studies in educational and social science research where the respondents possess similar features as those in the main study. The main data collection was preceded by pre-testing of the questionnaire at University of Professional Studies Accra, with 40 Level 400 accounting students. This procedure was relevant in refining the questionnaire by eliminating irrelevant and misleading items, enhancing its legibility and reducing the possibilities of ambiguity and misinterpretation before the final administration of the instrument.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Validity according to Taherdoost (2016) is the extent to which results obtained from data analysis actually represent the phenomenon under study. That is, it is the degree to which the items in the instrument actually measure what they are supposed to measure. Supervisors assessed the face and content validity of both the questionnaires and interview guide. The inputs were used to refine the instruments.

Reliability as asserted by Taherdoost (2016) is the degree to which an instrument is devoid of significant errors to yield consistent results over a period of time. Thus, the instrument is reliable if it produces the same results after repeated administration over a period. A reliability test was conducted to test the consistency of the research instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha of the scales used in the questionnaire was used to establish reliability. The instrument's reliability for the study was established on the grounds that all scales exhibited a Cronbach's Alpha range of 0.89 to 0.95. The results were above the minimum acceptable level of 0.70 as recommended by Hair et al. (2014).

Data Collection Procedures

The field work commenced on 25th April, 2022. Ethical clearance and introductory letters were obtained from the University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board and the Department of Business and Social Sciences Education respectively. The introductory letter was submitted to the various heads of department and lecturers to obtain permission to undertake the fieldwork. The researcher together with the field assistants (teaching assistants from UCC) administered the questionnaires to the respondents. A sample questionnaire was distributed to each of the field assistants and further

discussions concerning the purpose of the exercise and issues in the questionnaires were done with the assistants. Again, ethical issues as well as possible challenges to be encountered on the field and how to address them were also discussed.

On the day of administering the questionnaires, the items were well explained to the respondents with the assurance of confidentiality. With permission from Financial Reporting course lecturers, the questionnaire was administered to the students after Financial Reporting lecture periods. The class representative was later contacted to collect the questionnaires. On the whole, the quantitative data collection process lasted for two weeks.

After the collection of the quantitative data, qualitative data collection commenced using the face-to-face interview. The interview sessions started on 30th May 2022 and lasted for about two weeks. Students who were conveniently selected were called to meet at an appropriate location on each university campus at an agreed day and time. Before the commencement of each interview session, the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the average interview period. They were also assured of the confidentiality of the information and made aware that interviews would be recorded for transcription. Students were further assured of anonymity by using codes for data entry instead of names, phone numbers or any other possible cues for participants' identification. The interviewees were also informed that they were not under mandatory obligation to respond to all questions during the session. Thus, they could refuse to answer specific questions or discontinue the interview if they so wish.

However, to avoid this condition to a larger extent, the measures of confidentiality and anonymity were put in place to ensure that interviewees participated willingly without any form of coercion. Out of the targeted 20 students for the interview, 15 students were available and made time for the exercise. On average, an interview session with each interview lasted for 15 minutes, 20 seconds.

Fieldwork Challenges

The data collection processes encountered some difficulties. One significant challenge encountered was the difficulty in getting all the targeted students to fill the questionnaire. Since a census approach was adopted for the quantitative data, all the level 400 accounting students in the two universities were required to fill the questionnaires. Some of the students who were reluctant to fill the questionnaire excused themselves from the lecture room and never returned.

Also, some students requested to send the questionnaire home while others asked for more time to complete them and submit them later. Such questionnaires were either not returned or partly completed. In the lecture rooms where the questionnaires were filled, some students returned the questionnaire, with the excuse that they were not interested. Others completed some sections while leaving other sections unfilled, leading to an increase in the number of questionnaires that could not be used.

Finally, during the interview session, some of the participants, especially those with low academic performance (low CGPA) felt uncomfortable and doubtful about the objective of the study. Some of them too, after all the

assurances, doubted whether information about their academic performance could be kept secret since their voices could be identified from the recordings.

In spite of all the challenges, 360 questionnaires were deemed suitable for quantitative analysis, resulting in a response rate of 82% for the quantitative data. Regarding the interviews, 15 out of the 20 targeted students participated, indicating a response rate of 75%.

Data Processing and Analysis

When they were finished, the questionnaires for quantitative data were gathered at various times. To guarantee that each questionnaire was fully filled out, each one was carefully reviewed. After gathering the quantitative data, interviews (qualitative data) were also performed and recorded.

The quantitative information was serially modified, coded, and numbered in SPSS version 25 before being extracted to Smart Partial Least Square (Smart PLS) 3.1.7. The data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) accessible in SmartPLS as well as descriptive statistics (means, standard deviation, percentages, and frequencies) and inferential statistics (t-test and linear regression) available in SPSS. An investigation of the link between measured variables and latent constructs is done using the multivariate structural analysis method known as the PLS-SEM. SEM is superior than linear regression because it provides the capability to analyze measurement errors of the observed variables as an inherent element of the model. Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics. The PLS-SEM was used to analyze the variables affecting students' choice of career in accounting education.

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used to analyze the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.

Again, the independent t-test was employed to look into the gender representation of accounting education students, while the linear regression was utilized to investigate the association between performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting. The impact of the determinants on academic achievement was then examined using the PLS-SEM.

To further clarify the findings of the quantitative analysis, qualitative information from face-to-face interviews was collected using the recording device and manually transcribed. The information was then organized into themes. Deductive coding was used to analyze the qualitative data using the thematic method, and predetermined codes were used to direct participant interviews. Because the quantitative data had previously been analyzed, this strategy was workable. The interviews were therefore based on specific topics or themes from the quantitative analysis, such as "developed personal interest," "family coercion," "well influenced peers influence," and "job availability."

Ethical Considerations

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board granted ethical approval under approval number UCCIRB/CES/2022/13. The heads of the accounting departments at UEW and UCC as well as accounting instructors were also asked for permission to enter. Since it was expected that the instructors would present the researcher and the field assistants to the students, this procedure was vital. The introduction made it possible for the research to be carried out efficiently in the chosen universities. To safeguard the

respondents and participants, other ethical standards including informed permission, confidentiality, and anonymity were upheld.

According to Neuman (2007), participants in study cannot be forced to participate. Participants in study must voluntarily consent to take part. Therefore, before distributing the questionnaires for completion, the respondents were fully informed of the study's goal and the kind of questions that would be asked. The audio cassette recording of the interviews was also disclosed to the interviewees. This rule made guarantee that participants who choose not to take part were not in any manner coerced.

Additionally, respondents received guarantees that all information would be kept anonymous and that it would only be used for research reasons, and nothing else. To preserve the privacy of the participants, only the lead researcher had access to the completed questionnaires and interview recordings.

Regarding the idea of anonymity, neither the questionnaires nor the interview sessions included any questions asking for details that would expose the respondents' identities, such as names, home addresses, or phone numbers. They were not expected to physically return the surveys in any specific sequence, but rather to submit them through their class representatives in order to further preserve the respondents' anonymity. All identifying cues were avoided during the interview sessions in the data processing and presentation.

Chapter Summary

The chapter described the methodological principles that underpinned the study. The study was guided by the pragmatism philosophical ideology. To achieve the objectives of the study, a mixed method approach and sequential explanatory design were adopted. Data were obtained from both primary and

secondary sources. Primary data were purposively obtained from undergraduate accounting students from University of Cape Coast and University of Education, through the use of questionnaires and interview guide. A response rate of 80.1% was achieved from the targeted population for the study. Challenges encountered were also outlined.

The data were described and analyzed using descriptive (means and standard deviation) and inferential (PLS-SEM, t-test, and linear regression) statistics. To provide further context for certain quantitative findings, interview sessions were held. The chapter came to a close with a review of the ethical issues that served as the study's ethical framework. The findings of factors influencing accounting students in Ghana's desire for careers are presented in the next chapter along with a discussion of the findings.

CHAPTER SIX

FACTORS INFLUENCING ACCOUNTING CAREER PREFERENCE

Introduction

The findings and analysis of the variables influencing accounting students in Ghana's desire for careers in the field are presented in this chapter. It starts out by outlining the sociodemographic details and other background information of the respondents. After that, the validity and reliability test were administered. It also covers the numerous aspects that affect a person's desire for an accounting job. Personal, referential, and work-related variables are categorized.

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Vogt (2007) posited that descriptive statistics are essential for running a meaningful analysis of data as it depicts the demographics of a sample or population, including details about who was selected, rationale behind their selection, and the methods employed to gather the data. This section presents results on the background information of the respondents, using frequency and percentage as descriptive measures. Gender and age were measured on a nominal scale and ordinal scale questionnaire respectively. Table 4 presents the fourth-year accounting students' demographics.

Table 4: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Female	127	35.28
Male	233	64.72
Age		
Below 18	21	5.83
18-20	79	21.94
21-23	219	60.83
24-26	27	7.50
Over 26	14	3.89
Total	360	100

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Concerning gender, respondents were dominated by males (n = 233, 64.72%), representing the ratio of male to female students enrolled in accounting programmes across. The result confirms the fact that accounting programmes have been traditionally noted to be masculine-gendered (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016). Although gender parity in accounting education has been attained in most developed and some developing nations, Ghana is still experiencing some level of gender disparity where more male students are enrolled on accounting education programmes compared to their female counterparts. Female students, in percentages, were in a minority of less than 40% (n = 127, 35.28%) in accounting programmes in Ghana. Though there is an increase in female enrolment in accounting programme, the gender disparity is quite wide. This result confirms the work of Parker (2015), Honicke and

Broadbent (2016), and Atena and Tiron-Tudor (2019), who concluded that the accounting profession is masculine-gendered or male-dominated. However, it contradicts the findings from Botswana and Malaysia where there is an increase in female proportion to males studying accounting education (Wally-Dima & Mbekomize, 2013). The result is also similar to the report produced by the Ministry of Education (2019) that 44.7% of females are enrolled in business programmes in institutions of higher learning in Ghana. This result may be due to the traditional perception in most Ghanaian societies where accounting careers were considered inappropriate for females due to the nature and culture of such societies (Bruce-Twum, 2013). Again, males are perceived to have a preference for subjects involving computations whiles females prefer more reading subjects. This gender parity is also manifested in the accounting career, where there are more males than females.

Most of the respondents ((*n* = 219; 60.83%) were between the ages of 21-23 years, representing a relatively youthful population in accounting education programmes. Respondents who were more than 26 years were 14 representing about four percent. This means that most of the respondents were relatively young.

Diagnostics

The study's first goal was to examine the variables that influence accounting students' choice of career.. According to Odia and Ogiedu (2013) factors influencing the preference for accounting careers could be personal, referent or job-related. The research sought to establish the effect of these factors on the intention to choose an accounting career. To achieve this, the partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) available in

SmartPLS was employed. According to Hair et al. (2014), the estimate of structural models typically entails two steps: the estimation of the measurement (outer) model and the estimation of the structural (inner) model.

Measurement Model Assessment

The structural measurement model's reliability and validity assumptions (i.e., the PLS Algorithm) were assessed. According to Hair et al. (2014) and Taherdoost (2016), an evaluation of a measurement specifically takes into account the determination of the individual item reliability, internal consistency reliability, content validity, convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The individual item reliability was assessed by examining the outside loadings of each construct's measure. The factor loadings of the elements or items must be greater than 0.6 (Hair, 2014). Table 5 presents the direct and cross loadings of the items.

Table 5: Item loading and Cross Loadings

	Career Preference	Job Factors	Personal Factors	Reference Factors
CP1	**0.8881**	0.6853	0.758	0.7466
CP2	**0.8025**	0.5813	0.7616	0.7829
CP3	**0.9144**	0.6799	0.7157	0.7693
CP4	**0.8766**	0.5699	0.743	0.7178
CP5	**0.9025**	0.6293	0.7234	0.7057
JF1	0.6995	**0.7414**	0.7484	0.7071
JF2	0.5959	**0.8946**	0.6099	0.61
JF3	0.5489	**0.84**	0.5177	0.5897
JF4	0.5197	**0.8449**	0.5578	0.5108
PF4	0.7947	0.61	**0.8233**	0.7271
PF5	0.7084	0.5827	**0.8111**	0.7787
PF6	0.684	0.671	**0.842**	0.7017

PF7	0.6031	0.6699	**0.811**	0.6709
PF8	0.6399	0.5449	**0.7962**	0.739
PF9	0.6915	0.5707	**0.8353**	0.7626
RF2	0.6439	0.5724	0.6962	**0.7957**
RF3	0.6178	0.5877	0.6092	**0.7574**
RF4	0.6409	0.6496	0.6622	**0.7721**
RF5	0.7331	0.5703	0.7534	**0.8639**
RF6	0.7089	0.5588	0.7515	**0.7952**
RF7	0.6899	0.5615	0.776	**0.804**
RF1	0.757	0.664	0.7834	**0.8669**

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Following the rule of thumb, it was revealed in Table 5 that each indicator had direct loading (as bolded) of between 0.7414 and 0.9144, signifying how strong the indicators are for their corresponding latent variables. Additionally, it could be observed that the cross-loadings are lower than the direct loadings, indicating that each indicator measured the correct latent variable.

Internal Consistency Reliability

The degree to which all the items on a scale are assessing the same measure or notion is referred to as internal consistency reliability (Hair et al., 2014). The most universally used estimators in organizational and social research are the composite reliability coefficient and Cronbach's alpha coefficient. In this study, both estimators were examined and assessed to ascertain the internal consistency and reliability of the adapted instruments, though preference was given to the composite reliability coefficient.

Cronbach's alpha accepts all items including contributions similar to its construct without paying attention to the actual contribution of individual

loadings, whiles the composite reliability coefficient considers the constructs in question as well as the actual contribution of individual loadings, providing a much less biased estimate of reliability (Hair, 2014; Suleiman et al., 2017). Thus, Cronbach's alpha assumes factor loadings to be the same for all items, whereas Composite reliability considers the varying factor loadings of the items.

Because Cronbach's alpha may overestimate or underestimate the reliability of the scale, the composite reliability was chosen. One presumption underlying composite reliability is that indicators can be described using Cronbach's alpha while having varied loadings. According to Suleiman et al. (2017), composite reliability is considered a more suitable metric for assessing internal consistency than Cronbach's alpha. Acceptable values of composite reliability are generally considered 0.7 and above as recommended by Hair et al. (2014). Table 6 shows the composite reliability and average variance extracted for the study.

Table 6: Composite Reliability and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

	AVE	Composite Reliability	R^2	Cronbach's Alpha	Communality	Redundancy
CPI	0.7703	0.9436	0.7654	0.9248	0.7703	0.138
JF	0.6923	0.8996	0	0.8502	0.6923	0
PF	0.6724	0.9249	0	0.9027	0.6724	0
RF	0.6542	0.9296	0	0.9114	0.6542	0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From Table 6, the composite reliability coefficients are above 0.7, ranging from 0.8996 to 0.9436, signifying adequate internal consistency

reliability of the measures. This indicates that the multiple measures are highly reliable for the measurement of each construct.

Convergent Validity

When items accurately reflect the intended construct and correlate strongly with other measures of the same construct, this is known as convergent validity. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each of the latent constructs is used to evaluate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE measures the amount of variance that is represented by a construct in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error. To achieve this, the AVE should have a minimum loading of 0.5 for each construct (Hair, 2014; Engellant et al., 2016) indicating that the construct explains at least 50 per cent of the variance of its items. From Table 6, the AVE values revealed high loadings (> 0.50) for each construct (Career preference = 0.7703; Job-related factors = 0.6923; Personal factors = 0.6724; Reference factors = 0.6542), indicating that the items for each construct adequately explained the construct they represented, supporting the derived measures' convergent validity. As a result, the factor loadings (0.8987 to 0.9436) demonstrated strong convergent validity. With the highest being accounting career preference and the least being job-related factors, the constructs in this model are able to account for more than half of the variance in their indicators.

Discriminant Validity

As portion of assessing the estimation demonstrate, discriminant legitimacy was moreover inspected. Discriminant legitimacy shows that a build is unmistakable and captures wonders not secured by other develops within the

show (Taherdoost, 2016). The Fornell-Lacker foundation and the HTMT were both used in this work to establish discriminant legitimacy. The Fornell-Lacker model compares the square root of the AVE values with the inactive variable relationships (Fornell & Larckers, 1981). Particularly, the square root of each construct's AVE ought to surpass its most noteworthy relationship with any other build (Hair et al. 2019). The Fornell-Lacker model is displayed in Table 7.

Table 7: Fornell-Lacker criterion

	CP	JF	PF	RF
CPI	**0.8777**			
JF	0.3252	**0.8320**		
PF	0.2449	0.4485	**0.8200**	
RF	0.4503	0.2412	0.2916	**0.8088**

Bold values are the square root of each construct's AVE which are higher than their correlation with other constructs.

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The findings from Table 7 uncover that the square root of each variable impressively surpasses their relationships with other develops inside the study. This means that each build has particular characteristics, and there's no cover where two builds capture the same marvel. The Fornell-Larcker model illustrates generally moo execution, especially in cases where the pointer loadings of the considered develops have as it were slight varieties (e.g., all marker loadings change between 0.60 and 0.80). When marker loadings show more significant varieties, the Fornell-Larcker criterion's capacity to distinguish discriminant legitimacy issues moves forward but its viability in surveying in general discriminant legitimacy remains destitute (Voorhees et al., 2016). As a

cure, Henseler et al. (2015) and Hair et al. (2019) propose evaluating the Heterotrait Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) to assess the relationships. The HTMT is characterized as the normal esteem of the thing relationships over builds relative to the cruel of the normal relationships for the things measuring the same build (Hair et al., 2019). Agreeing to Hair et al., a inactive build has discriminant legitimacy when its HTMT proportion is underneath 0.850 for conceptually distinctive builds. Table 8 appears the HTMT proportion findings for the factors.

Table 8: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	CP	JF	PF	RFs
CPI				
JF	**0.510**			
PF	0.553	**0.586**		
RF	0.822	0.731	**0.654**	

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The results shown in Table 8 indicate that the construct measures what it is designed to assess with HTMT values far below 0.850. The bold items represent the figures for the constructs (0.510(job-related factors and accounting career preference); 0.586(personal factors and career preference and 0.654(reference factors and career preference)). It is, therefore, palpable that discriminant validity has been achieved for each construct.

Structural Model Assessment

After obtaining the measurement model, the structural model was assessed after applying the normal bootstrapping process to assess the significance of the model as suggested by Hair et al. (2019). The collinearity

between constructs, the coefficient of determination, predictive relevance, effect size, path coefficient, and its significance are all examined throughout the structural model's evaluation. Based on the recommendation made by Nitzl et al. (2017), both the direct and the indirect models were examined concurrently in this work.

Collinearity is examined before assessing the structural relationships to make sure it does not bias the regression results (Hair et al., 2019). Table 9 showed the result for assessing multicollinearity among the indicators for the study.

Table 9: Collinearity amongst constructs

	(VIF)	(Tolerance)
CPI	2.162	0.463
JF	2.099	0.476
PF	1.483	0.674
RF	1.322	0.756

Source: Field Survey (2022)

In the context of PLS-SEM, a tolerance value of 0.20 or below and a variance inflation factor (VIF) value of 5 or higher, indicate a potential collinearity issue (Hair et al., 2014). Specifically, an indicator's VIF level of 5 suggests that 80% of its variance is explained by the remaining formative indicators associated with the same construct. In the case of the endogenous variable (career preference), the results presented in Table 9 demonstrated a minimum VIF of 1.322 and a maximum of 2.162. Furthermore, the minimum

tolerance value was 0.463 and the highest of 0.756. These values obtained from the analysis indicate the absence of multicollinearity among the indicators.

The VIF results provided in Table 9 further validate the absence of common method bias. Following the criteria put forth by Kock and Lynn (2012), a VIF value exceeding 3.3 is considered as an indication of pathological collinearity, and may indicate potential contamination by common method bias. Therefore, if all VIF values obtained from a comprehensive collinearity test are equal to or less than 3.3, the model can be deemed free from vertical or lateral collinearity and common method bias (Kock & Lynn, 2012).

Factors influencing accounting students' career preference

The first objective of the study was to analyse the factors that influence accounting education students' career preference in Ghana. The path model in Figure 3 shows the estimates for the full structural model, as well as the path model results of three direct paths from the factors to career preference.

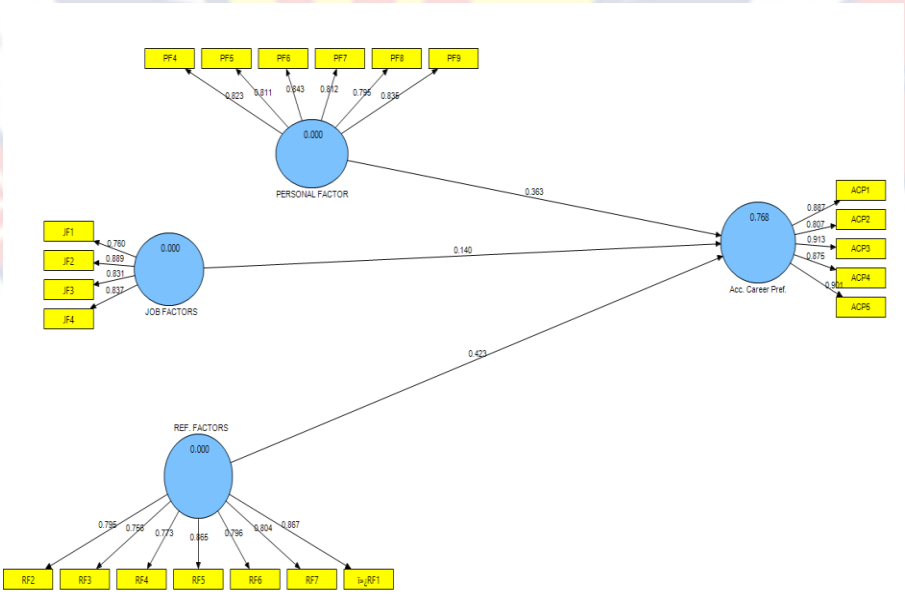


Figure 3: Outer and Inner Model Results

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Results from Figure 3 indicate the factor loadings of personal factors, job-related factors and reference factors. All the items in the three factors had direct loadings from 0.741 to 0.914 signifying the strength of the indicators. The positive significant path coefficients of 0.140 between job-related factors (JF) and career preference (CP); 0.363 between personal factors (PF) and career preference (ACP) and 0.423 between reference factors (RF) and career preference (ACP) show that JF, PF and RF positively influence accounting career preference.

Assessing coefficient of determination and predictive relevance

The reliability of a model's predictions is gauged by the coefficient of determination (R^2). R^2 can also be seen from the viewpoint that it represents the overall effect of exogenous variables on the endogenous variable. Hair et al. (2019) categorized coefficient of determination (R^2) values of 0.25, 0.5, and 0.75 for structural models as weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively. Furthermore, it was suggested by Hair et al. that in structural models, predictive relevance (Q^2) values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, as well as effect size (f^2) values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, are interpreted as small, medium, and large effects, respectively.. Table 10 and Figure 4 show the regression results of the factors influencing accounting career preference.

Table 10: Structural Model Assessment

	Path	T Statistics	P-Value	F^2	R^2	Adj R^2	Q^2
CPI					0.7678	0.7511	0.283
JF→CPI	0.1401	2.633	0.021	0.017			
PF→CPI	0.3633	5.104	0.000	0.053			
RF→CPI	0.4226	5.217	0.000	0.046			

Source: Field Survey (2022)

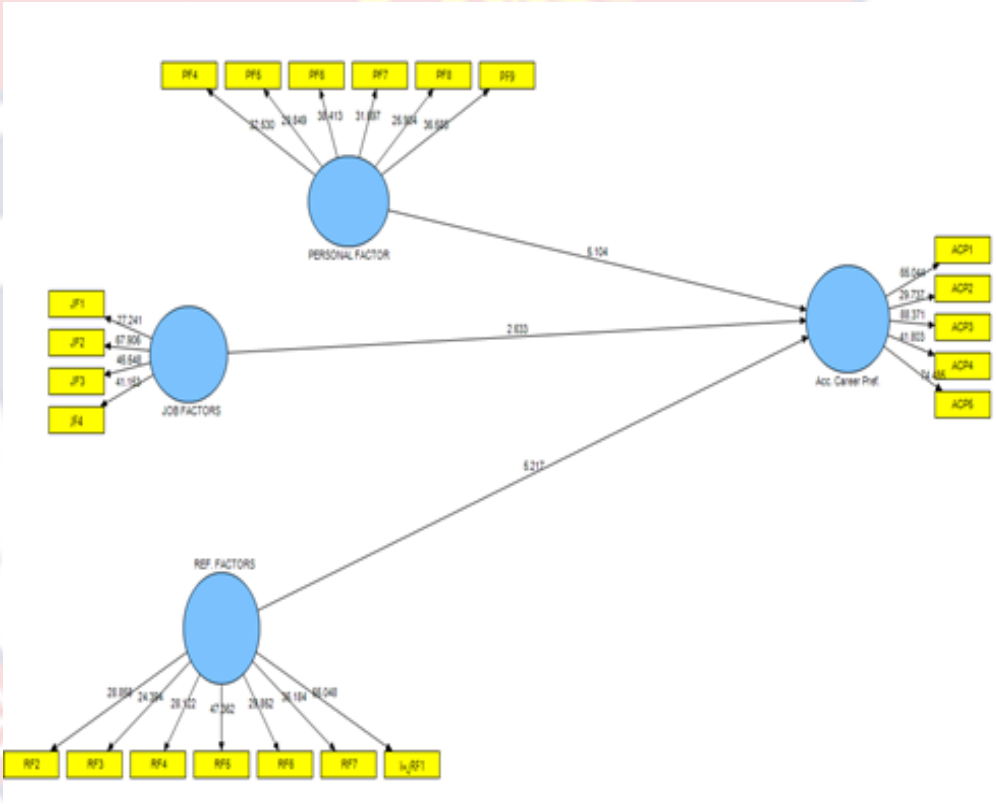


Figure 4: Bootstrapping Model

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Referring to Table 10, it can be concluded that job factors (JF), personal factors (PF) and reference factors (RF) had a large (0.768) coefficient of determination on accounting career preference (intention to choose a career in accounting). That is, the identified factors accounted for 76.8 percent of the

variation in career preference among accounting students. In terms of predictive relevance, the results reveal a medium level of predictive relevance for the model concerning the endogenous variable (0.283). This suggests that the exogenous variables predict the endogenous variable. The effect size results also show that all variables exert a small effect size on the endogenous variable.

To assess the significance of the model, the normal bootstrapping process was applied (see Figure 4), as suggested by Hair (2014). From Figure 4 and Table 10, the T-statistics (2.633, 5.104 and 5.217 for job factors, personal factors and reference factors respectively) and the P-values results for the factors influencing career preference of accounting students were depicted. From the Literature review, three factors were considered. These are job factors, personal factors and reference factors. The results are discussed as follows:

Personal Factors and Career Preference

H_0: Personal Factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students

From objective one, the study, among others, sought to establish the relationship between personal factors and career preference (Hypothesis one). Thus, how personal factors influence students' intention to choose careers in the accounting profession. From the conceptual framework, it was proposed that accounting students' intention to choose accounting careers is influenced by personal factors. Personal factors construct (an independent variable) was measured by six indicators while career preference intention (dependent variable) was measured by five indicators (Figure 4).

Results in Table 10 and Figure 4 revealed that personal factors (PF) had a significant positive effect on intention to pursue accounting careers (β =

0.3633; t(360) = 5.104; p < 0.05), thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. Thus, personal factors significantly predicted accounting career preference intention (ACP). This indicates that a unit increase in personal factors will positively influence accounting career preference intention by 36%. It shows that accounting students who have the intention to pursue accounting careers are influenced by such personal factors. Again, the results of the study show that, among personal factors, interest in calculation subject (PF6) was the best predictor, followed by students' willingness to study accounting as a subject (PF4), with cross-loadings of 0.84 and 0.82 respectively (Table 5). Thus, one's efficiency in using figures enhances the intention of pursuing an accounting career. Students would choose accounting as a career path only if they have an interest in accounting as a course. Also, the willingness of students to dedicate enough time to study accounting can also influence their career path.

This finding is congruent with the findings of Odia and Ogiedu (2013), Bekoe et al. (2018) and Villamar et al. (2020) that accounting students' preference for accounting careers is influenced by personal factors such as students' willingness to study accounting as a subject; students' interest in calculations, and students who want to challenge themselves by learning accounting as a subject. Also, the findings confirm that of Anand and Sankaran (2019), that individual personal factors of students play a key role in career preference. This explains why students choose courses of their interest. However, the findings of the study disagree with the results of Ahinful et al. (2012) who found no significant relationship between personal factors and career preference.

Personal factors and Accounting Career preference (Evidence from interviews conducted)

Evidence from the interviews conducted with students, further underscored that, on the whole, students' preference for an accounting career was influenced by personal factors such as interest and enthusiasm for the accounting profession. Other students also developed the intention for an accounting career due to their love for calculation courses. For example, as one respondent recounted,

> *'I love accounting because of the interest from childhood and looking at the way accountants are treated; I just love it and I have a great passion for it. Though my Aunty advised me to pursue education as a programme due to job readiness I refused it because of the passion I have for accounting…. I have never regretted choosing accounting as my career path* (24-year-old male accounting student).

Similarly, another student reported that:

> *'...I had always wanted to be a chartered accountant, it is something I admire a lot and have passion for, though some people in the society say ummmm accountants are thieves and they add zeros to figures which sometimes makes me confused, I will still do it, because I believe I can make a difference…I also like calculations a lot and feel more confident solving numerical questions and quantitative analysis, and since accounting has a lot of figures, I will enjoy being an accountant.'* (23-year-old female accounting student).

A respondent (student) who had the passion of becoming an entrepreneur also had an interest in accounting because he needed it to fulfil his dream as an entrepreneur. In sharing his experience, one respondent indicated that

when coming to the university, I wanted to learn accounting because I needed accounting skills in my future entrepreneur business. I had always love to be an entrepreneur (businessman) therefore having the accounting skills will enhance the achievement of my dream (22-year-old male accounting student).

Despite their interest and passion for the accounting career, some of the students had challenges and opposition in the choice of the accounting career but due to high level of interest they still pursued it. Being quite emotional, one participant recounted his experience:

...therefore having the accounting skills will enhance the achievement of my dream. But in the course of choosing the accounting programme, my friends and other members in the society, that is where I live, passed comments like I am fit to be a soldier or work at the immigration due to my physique and that I am not for accounting. I almost gave up on accounting career but because of the personal interest I had in accounting, I made a firm decision to pursue accounting (22-year-old male accounting student).

Another student who pursued an accounting career despite the challenges recounted that

I chose accounting at the senior high school because I wanted to be an auditor in one of the top auditing firms in Ghana due to my love for the auditing work. During my decision taking, my family members like my mother said reading accounting after school will be difficult for me to get a job immediately so they had wanted me to go into nursing by reading a science course. Hmm, in fact, it was a big challenge for me

but that was not where my interest was' (24-year-old female accounting student).

Reference factors and career preference

H_0: Reference factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students

Reference factors have also been reported (Odia & Ogiedu, 2013; Awadallah & Eghabany, 2020) as one of the factors influencing career preference intention and determination. With the use of PLS-SEM, the reference factors construct was measured by seven indicators against career preference intention with five indicators. From research objective one, it was hypothesized (hypothesis two) that accounting career preference intention does not depend on the reference factors of career preference. Results in Table 10 and Figure 4 depict a significant positive relationship between reference factors and accounting career preference intention ($\beta = 0.4226$; $t = 5.217$; $p < 0.05$), thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. This shows that reference factors such as family members and peers are influencers of accounting career preference. A marginal increase in reference factors will positively influence career preference intention by 42.2% which makes reference factors the highest predictor of accounting career preference.

The results further show that among the reference factors, parents' influence (RF1) was the highest reference influencer (cross loading of 0.867) followed by recommendation from counsellors (RF5) and parent's occupation influence (RF7) with cross loadings of 0.864 and 0.801 respectively. Senior high school teachers' and friends' influence were among the least influencers of referent factors. This means that quite a sizeable number of accounting

students' preference for an accounting career was a result of reference factors such as parents, friends, and teachers' influence.

Again, parents' occupation in the accounting career also had a significant influence on the student's preference for an accounting career. Moreover, students usually take references from popular people in society in shaping their career preferences. According to the social cognitive career theory, people live in communities and are influenced by their social interaction whether negatively or positively within the society. Thus, people learn and imitate behaviour with favourable outcomes. Therefore, students with parents or other family members in accounting occupations consider the favourable things in their career and increase their intention of choosing an accounting career.

The study's finding is in consonance with the findings of Kazi and Akhlag (2017) and Ikonen et al. (2018) who asserted that students' career preferences are often suggested and influenced by parents' favourable careers since most parents are particular in making their children follow their line of career. Again, the study's findings confirm that of Baloch and Shah (2014) who concluded that parents, peers and role models had a strong influence on accounting student's choice of accounting careers. The finding of Mohd and Abdul (2015) that, among the referent factors, parental influence is the most significant factor that affects accounting students' career preference is also confirmed by this study. However, the findings of Odia and Ogiedu (2013) were incongruent with the study's findings.

Reference factors and Accounting Career preference (Evidence from interviews conducted)

Evidence from interviews with students revealed that their intention to choose an accounting career was influenced by referent groups such as family members, friends and teachers. Some also had the view that the referent group influenced them negatively in their intention to choose accounting careers. The following is the view of one participant:

> *I never had any interest in accounting because my vision after junior high school, was to become a journalist in future. I chose general art when entering the senior high school but my father forced me to change to business. After completing senior high school, my father gave me the option to either continue with the business programme for him to pay my school fees or I end my education. In fact, I never liked accounting and I always regret doing accounting.*. (24-year-old female accounting student).

It was revealed from the findings that some accounting students were forced by their parents to read accounting. When probed further as to why the father forced her into the accounting programme, another participant lamented that

> *my father being one of the top business men in Ghana with a group of firms or companies, expected me to become an accountant to manage the firms' finances. I am not good at the calculation courses, therefore making the programme very challenging* (23-year-old female accounting student).

Similarly, another participant recounted that

> *I was really pressured to do accounting by my family in order to take care of my father's business. I have no interest so I struggle to learn accounting* (23-year-old male accounting student).

Other students were influenced by referent groups but developed an interest after enrolment. One student who recounted his experience said

> *….before entering the university, my parents made the choice for me to read accounting so I will say my accounting journey has not been solely my personal choice but from my uncle and parent…..since I entered, per the influence and advice of these family members I have developed some level of interest for the accounting career and I have never regretted reading the accounting programme…* (22-year-old male accounting student).

Some Senior high school teachers also played a significant role in the career preference of accounting students in tertiary institutions. It was recounted by one participant that

> *…my senior high school teachers advised me to choose the accounting career path. At the senior high school, I was very good at elective mathematics and economics so one accounting teacher admonished me based on my strength and proffered many advantages for choosing that profession, though my parent preferred nursing* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Role models also influenced the career preference of some accounting students. Some students admired the characters of these significant individuals and decided to pursue an accounting career. A student reported that

> *I chose accounting programme because growing up, I had always aspired to be like one of my role models who is a forensic accountant in Accra. So, as it were, he really influenced my preference for the accounting career* (23-year-old male accounting student).

When probed further about his experience with his role model, he said "*that man is just a good person and I want to emulate his steps*" (23-year-old male accounting student). Aside from the family members, teachers and role models' influence, some students asserted that their friends somehow influenced them to read the accounting programme at the university in order to pursue an accounting career in future. One respondent emphatically mentioned that

> *Many of my friends who were in the accounting programme encouraged me to do likewise. According to my peers, especially one of my good friends who is one year ahead on the academic ladder advised that, graduating with an accounting degree comes with several job opportunities* (23-year-old male accounting student).

On the contrary, some of the participants also talked about the negative influences from the referent groups towards the accounting career and that the influence of other factors assisted them developed the intention to pursue an accounting career. These students mentioned that their family members advised them not to choose accounting as a programme at the tertiary institution due to the unavailability of accounting-related jobs or difficulty in being employed in accounting careers. One respondent revealed that "*my Aunty advised me to enroll in education programme at the college of education since their job was assured after school*" (24-year-old male accounting student). Similarly, other students recounted that

…my family partially influenced me not to read accounting programme. They suggested that it will be difficult to get a job immediately after school if I offer accounting at the tertiary level and that I should target nursing since their job is assured after school. So that was the challenge I had with some of my family members because job opportunity will be difficult (24-year-old female student).

….as I told you earlier, I needed accounting skills to help me achieve my objective as an entrepreneur. …when I was contemplating buying form for the tertiary level, my uncle told me to either go into the army or immigration because my stature is fit for such careers (22-year-old male accounting student).

It was revealed from the interview conducted that some male and female accounting students were influenced by referent groups within the society. Some had no initial interest but due to the pressures from their parents and other significant individuals, they chose the accounting career by enrolling on an accounting programme. Other students had negative influence from some reference groups such as family members but found themselves reading accounting due to peer pressure and other reasons.

Job Factors and Career Preference

H_0: Job-related factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students.

From the conceptual framework of the study, a possible influence of job factors on the accounting career preference intention of accounting students was established. To achieve the first objective and hypothesis three of the study, four measures were used to measure the job factors construct against accounting

career preference intention construct as the dependent variable (Figure 4). The PLS path modeling result (Table 10) indicates that job factors showed a significant and positive effect on career preference intention ($\beta = 0.1401$; $t(360) = 2.633$; $p < 0.05$), thereby not supporting Hypothesis one. Thus, Job factors (JF) significantly predicted accounting career preference intention (CP). This indicates that a unit increase in standard deviation in job-related factors would lead to an increment in standard deviation in accounting career preference by 14%. It shows that accounting students who have the intention to pursue accounting careers are somehow influenced b job factors, though it is the least predictor of accounting career preference. Again, the results of the study show that, among the measures of job-related factors, availability of market demand (JF2) with a cross-loading of 0.89 was the best predictor, followed by a satisfying salary (JF4) as an accountant with a cross-loading of 0.84 (see Table 5).

In a broader view, individuals would only choose a specific career based on the availability of jobs in the job market with respect to preferred careers. It is usually difficult for students to prefer a career in which getting access to such a job is very difficult. Also, the demand for Accountants has a greater effect on the career accounting students choose. The salary attributed to a job also affects students' decisions to choose a specific career path. Also, the skills and requirements of a particular job have a significant effect on the career path of students. Students usually match their abilities to the skills required to undertake a job before the decision is taken in relation to their career path. Moreover, the prestige attached to the job is a job factor that can affect the career path determination of accounting students.

The influence of job factors such as earnings and prestige on career preference had been reported by different authors. Similar to the study's findings, Umar and Bello (2019) reported that accounting students' career preference were influenced by job factors such as earnings. Again, the study confirmed the findings of Odia and Ogiedu (2013) and Zotorvie (2016) that job factors such as job availability and high earnings influence accounting career preference of accounting students. However, the finding of this study was inconsistent with those of Ahmed et al. (2017) and Owusu et al. (2019) who did not find the job factors significantly influencing accounting career preference.

Job factors and Accounting Career preference (Evidence from interview conducted)

To understand further, how job-related factors influenced the career preference of accounting students, interviews were conducted. The results suggest that students held varying responses, although a majority of them asserted that job factors played a significant role in their intentions to choose accounting careers. The following is an illustrative quote by one of the respondents who was motivated by the high earnings and prestige choose accounting career path:

> *although I like calculations, I chose accounting as a programme because, I mean, when it comes to money, yea yes. I want to enjoy the high earnings associated with the profession. So, what influenced me most to choose accounting is the high salary and when you charter in the profession, I tell you, you will get more money…..again accountants have respect, they are valued in our societies and I like the way they*

dress – very professional. I just love it (21-year-old female accounting student).

Other participants had similar views:

accounting profession is one of the lucrative professions that a lot of people undertake and I see them as one of the highly paid jobs in the current world. It is really admirable and encouraging to become an accountant.. (23-year-old male accounting student).

I will enjoy being a senior auditor. Accounting in itself I will say is one of the important programmes in the world and pursuing it will make me feel good. It is a self-fulfilling job. The accounting profession looks very nice and they are highly respected in society and therefore influenced my intention to work as a senior auditor… (23-year-old male accounting student).

On the contrary, some respondents also mentioned that the negative perceptions about accountants negatively influenced them towards the accounting career path. Other factors apart from the job-related factors influenced them to pursue an accounting career. It was recounted by one participant that

…growing up, I often heard accountants are thieves and they often add zeros to figures. This actually made me form a poor image of the accounting profession. I often heard people referring to accounting as boring and a job for middle-aged men always calculating to the extent that I got convinced that the accounting profession does not always attract high quality students unlike professions like medicine.…I choose the accounting programme because I will need the accounting skills in

the future as an entrepreneur to report and understand my financial statement (22-year-old male accounting student).

The negative perception influence was furthered by another student who recounted his experience:

W*ith the introduction of software in accounting, any sharp student can learn and use it like an accountant and therefore I do not see the work of accountants as a prestigious one. I want to be marketer in future and therefore read marketing at the polytechnic (now technical university). I therefore decided to read accounting to acquire the accounting skills as a marketer in the near future* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Table 11 is a summary of the results of the three hypotheses.

Table 11: Summary of Career Preference Factors Hypotheses

	Hypotheses	Conclusion
1	H_0: Personal factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting education students in Ghana.	Rejected
2	H_0: Reference factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting education students in Ghana.	Rejected
3.	H_0: Job factors do not significantly predict accounting career preference of accounting education students in Ghana	Rejected

Note: $p \leq 0.05$
Source: Field Survey (2022)

The first objective for the study was to examine the factors influencing accounting students' career preference. From Table 11, three null hypotheses were developed and tested to achieve the objective. From the results, all the

three hypotheses were rejected signifying that there is a statistically significant relationship between Job factors and career preference, Reference factors and career preference; and personal factors and career preference.

Chapter Summary

The influence of personal, job and reference factors on career preference was examined using a partial least square structural equation model (PLS-SEM). Personal factors, job factors and reference factors had statistically significant influence on career preference of accounting students. Among the personal factors, interest in the calculation subject was the best predictor, followed by students' willingness to study accounting as a subject. Availability of market demand was the best predictor among the job factors. Reference factors were also predicted, among others, by parents' influence, recommendation from counselors, and parents' occupation influence. Interviews with students, further provided some explanations to some quantitative findings.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTING STUDENTS

Introduction

This chapter presents the results and discussion of findings of career preference factors affecting the academic performance of accounting students. The chapter analysed the study's objectives by using SPSS and Structural Equation Modelling. The chapter begins by examining the perceived level of academic performance of accounting education students. It also assesses the relationship between the academic performance of Financial Accounting and performance of Management Accounting and the gender representation in accounting education in Ghana. Lastly, it examines the influence of job, personal and reference factors on academic performance. The chapter ends with a summary.

Academic Performance of Accounting Students in Ghana

The second objective of the study aimed at analysing the academic performance among accounting students in Ghana. In order to achieve this objective, descriptive statistics were adopted. The mean score, as well as the standard deviation of the students' grades, were computed. The highest grade (A) was given the highest number (8) and the least grade (E) was labelled with one (1). The result is presented in Table 12 and centred on the students' performance in accounting courses.

Table 12: Descriptive Statistics

Course Title	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Foundations/Principles of Accounting I	360	4.69	2.264
Cost and Management Accounting II	360	4.68	2.344
Foundations/Principles of Accounting II	360	4.66	2.316
Financial Reporting II	360	4.57	2.276
Financial Reporting I	360	4.49	2.296
Cost and Management Accounting I	360	4.44	2.268
Taxation	360	4.42	2.314
Financial Reporting III	360	4.28	2.329
Public Sector Accounting	360	4.27	2.246

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From Table 12, it was found that students' performance in Foundations/Principles of Accounting I recorded the highest average. This had an average of 4.69 with a corresponding standard deviation of 2.264. This indicates that accounting students are really equipped in Foundations/Principles of Accounting I. This result is obvious since the syllabus for Foundations/Principles of Accounting I and II concentrates more on the topics that were built at the Senior High School (SHS). This could explain why most students perform very well in Foundations/Principles of Accounting which becomes the introduction to financial reporting at the tertiary level.

Cost and Management Accounting II was the second course with the highest average. Aside from the Foundations/Principles of Accounting I, of which students perform very well, Cost and Management Accounting is the next highly performed course. This recorded a mean of 4.68, accompanied by a corresponding standard deviation of 2.344. Cost and Management Accounting

II is a continuation of Cost and Management Accounting I. Since students would have some level of pre-knowledge, it explains why students perform very well in the course. Foundations/Principles of Accounting II was the third course in which students' performance was very high. This recorded an average of 4.66 with a standard deviation of 2.316. Most of the topics in this course have been treated in the Senior High Schools. A little revision would enhance the student's knowledge of the Foundations of Accounting II.

Financial Reporting II yielded a mean of 4.57 with a corresponding standard deviation of 2.276. This was the fourth most performed course among the accounting courses read by the accounting students. This was followed by Financial Reporting I. This resulted in an average of 4.49 along with a corresponding standard deviation of 2.296. Financial Reporting I exposes students to new areas under International Financial Reporting Standards that students are unfamiliar with from senior high school. This could be a reason for the comparatively low performance with Financial Reporting II. With Financial Reporting II, students had acquired introduction to international financial reporting standards, and they are familiar with most of the issues, hence performing better than Financial Reporting I.

Cost and Management Accounting I had the next highest average. This recorded a mean of 4.44 with a corresponding standard deviation of 2.268. It was observed that whereas Financial Accounting is compulsory for accounting students at the Senior High School level, principles of Cost Accounting is optional. Most of the students, therefore, were introduced to the course for the first time and may be struggling to get the concept, hence affecting their academic performance. This can be supported by the fact that, students'

knowledge in the previous course can affect their performance in the related current course (Kukreja & Aali, 2013). The same reason could be associated with taxation. The performance in Taxation though good was below the average of Cost and Management Accounting. This recorded a mean and standard deviation of 4.42 and 2.314 respectively.

Financial Reporting III was the next course in which students performed well with a mean of 4.28 and a corresponding standard deviation of 2.329 followed by Public Sector Accounting (mean = 4.27, standard deviation = 2.246). This could be attributed to how bulky the course is and the technicality of the subject matter of the syllabus.

To gain more insight into the levels of performance, students were asked during the interviews to share with the researcher their performances in the accounting courses and possible reasons for differences in their performance. Their responses were put under two themes: pre-knowledge effect and increase in students' academic load.

Pre-knowledge effect

Some of the interviewees asserted that their best grade in the accounting courses was in the level 100 accounting course. This was influenced by their previous accounting exposure at the senior high school level. For example, as one respondent recounted,

> *...accounting at the first year is quite simple since it is a direct continuation from the SHS. As you progress with International Accounting Standards from level 200, it becomes tougher and tougher.*

> *New concepts are introduced and you find it very difficult to understand* (23-year-old male accounting student).

The influence of previous accounting exposure on the current accounting course is furthered by another student who recounted her experience:

> *...from level 100 accounting was very interesting. Most of the topics at the senior high school were repeated and expanded. Once you remember the previous topics, you could easily apply them. At level 200, when the International Accounting Standards were introduced, they became very difficult and begun to decrease my CGPA* (22-year-old female accounting student).

The pre-knowledge effect was not only from the senior high school level but also from the previous accounting exposure at the tertiary level. As intimated by one respondent,

> *I performed averagely in the level 100 accounting course. Most of the concepts were known to me because of my accounting background at the senior high school. But in level 200, my performance in the accounting courses was better than level 100. My previous understanding in some of the level 100 topics helped me to appreciate the accounting course in level 200 and hence enhanced my performance* (22-year-old male accounting student).

A few students were also of the view that foundation of accounting at level 100 was difficult. They could not obtain good grades due to a lack of foundation in the accounting course at the SHS as well as the introductory accounting at the University.

…at the senior high school, I did not understand most of the concepts in accounting due to the interest that I did not have in the course. Ummm though I did my best by memorizing and passing, level 100 accounting results were not good at all especially foundations of accounting 2….it has affected all the accounting courses in levels 200 and 300. At level 200, the accounting course was such that you cannot memorise. You needed to understand and apply but since my foundation is weak, I could not perform... (A 22-year-old female accounting student).

Increase in students' academic load

As students move from one level to the other, their total credit hours increase. Students are required to mount additional courses where relatively difficult topics are introduced. The academic load of students is, therefore, increased affecting their performance. One participant aptly highlighted that

…at level 100, few topics in accounting were introduced. Because these topics were familiar, I was able to revise after every lecture. At level 300, so many courses were introduced in addition to the accounting-related courses. With the accounting-related courses, some of the sub-topics were too technical that you needed more time to understand from different sources. My load was increased to the extent that revising after every lecture was very difficult…I always had unfinished topics to revise. Even during examinations, not all topics were covered. This really affected my performance at level 300 (23-year-old male accounting student).

Once students' loads are increased by the introduction of related and unrelated accounting courses, they are expected to implement appropriate measures to enhance their study habits to influence their academic performance.

In summary, prior accounting exposure had a significant influence on students' academic performance in current accounting or accounting-related courses. Students' performance is also affected by the academic load since they have many courses to study compared to the previous level. The study confirms the findings of Siagian and Kahn (2016) that tertiary-level accounting students who read accounting at the secondary level had a higher probability of earning better grades in introductory accounting courses. Thus, students with a good accounting background from the secondary school level performed better in the first-year accounting programme at the tertiary level. They further stated that accounting students with a strong foundation in the first part of a subject is critical for their success in the second part at the tertiary level. Further, the study's finding is in consonance with that of Kukrega and Aali (2013) who found a positive relationship between the performance in ACCT101 course and the performance in ACCT201 course. They concluded that the grades received by students in ACCT101 course is the most important indicator of the performance in ACCT201 course.

Students' satisfaction with their performance (grades) in accounting and accounting-related courses.

Students' satisfaction with their performance could be gauged from grades obtained in examinations of the various courses that they read. The grades obtained by students could also serve as motivation as they progress in their programme of study. When the accounting students were requested to

express their contentment regarding the grades obtained, the majority (205) representing 56.9% indicated that they were not satisfied with their grades.

Another 152 of the respondents representing 42.2% were satisfied with their grades, while three (0.9%) were indifferent. Those who were not satisfied had high expectations but were either nowhere near their expectations or very close to their expectations. Evidence from the interview results confirms the descriptive results of students' satisfaction with their grades. When the question was asked, "are you satisfied with your CGPA?" most of the participants answered "no". Some of these dissatisfied participants lost interest in the programme due to the challenges they encountered in studying the accounting-related courses, hence affecting their CGPA. For example, one participant said

> *No because I think I could have done better if I realized early that emmmm, no matter the decision I made, I still enrolled in the accounting course. At level 200 things were a bit challenging so I lost interest in the programme and it affected my performance. I am not happy at all; I wish I could do better* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Other students were not satisfied because they could not meet their expectations. They set achievable goals, yet they could not achieve them. Two of the participants recounted their experiences:

> *No, my CGPA is very bad so I have decided to improve upon it because it is very very bad. I am not satisfied because that was not my expectation* (21-year-old female accounting student).
>
> *not at all, I am not satisfied. What I have now is not what I was expecting to get. Though I tried to study things are not the way they should have been* (23-year-old male accounting student).

Similarly, some of the participants' dissatisfaction was to the extent that they wanted to change their programme of study. One of them recounted his experience:

> *Infact I am not satisfied with my CGPA. At level 200 I even wanted to change the programme but I was told I had to start over again and because I was not the one paying the school fees I could not. When given the opportunity to convert my programme of study to any other business programme I will be the first person to do so* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Other participants claimed that their only satisfaction was to be in the range of first class. A participant emotionally said

> *…hmmm! Though my results in the accounting courses were quite good I am not satisfied because I am not in the range of first class as I expected. From Level 100, my CGPA was above 3.6 until second semester of level 300 when I dropped to 3.423. For now I am not happy and not satisfied but I hope to rise before the end of the programme next year* (24-year-old female accounting student).

Other students, though with good results, within the range of first-class were still not satisfied because they claimed they could have done better. For example, as one participant recounted, "although I am a first-class student, I am not satisfied with my CGPA at all. I wanted to obtain 3.9" (A 23-year-old male student). However, despite the dissatisfaction of some students, others were satisfied with the grades they obtained in their accounting courses as well as their CGPA because they have improved on the level 100's grades. One participant responded that

> *Yes. I am satisfied with my grades. When I compare my level 100 results to levels 200 and 300, there is a great improvement. I am really satisfied…..It all boils down to dedicating maximum time for your studies* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Similarly, another participant also responded,

> *"Yes, at this point I will say yes but I could have done better"* (22-year-old male accounting student).

The results contradict the findings of Siagian and Khan (2016) that most accounting students rated the accounting courses excellent or very good and strongly agreed with the achievements of the course objectives. They further found that most (78%) students were satisfied with their performance in the accounting and accounting-related courses and would recommend the course to their peers who are yet to enroll on the tertiary programmes. Those who were satisfied with their grades asserted that their performance was consistent with the Department of Accounting's objectives to provide a solid accounting foundation to students and enhance their analytical skills.

Performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting

H_0: There is no statistically significant relationship between academic performance of Financial Accounting and Management Accounting of Accounting Students in Ghana.

The third objective and hypothesis four of the study were to analyse the effect of the performance of Financial Accounting / Reporting on the performance of Management Accounting. Linear regression was adopted to achieve this objective. The variable Financial Reporting II was regressed on Management Accounting. Financial Reporting II was adopted for Financial

Accounting because as explained by Al-Twaijry (2010), students had acquired accumulated knowledge in Financial Accounting before studying Management Accounting. It is the cumulative Financial Accounting from level 100 to level 200 second semester. Thus, the objective was to analyse whether accumulated knowledge in Financial Accounting and reporting had a significant effect on knowledge acquired in Management Accounting.

Diagnostic Tests

A diagnostic test was carried out in order to draw conclusions about the connections between the variables under investigation. This test was designed to determine with precision whether multiple regression analysis should be used to empirically analyze the data. When the underlying assumptions are upheld, regression can be calculated with reliability, as explained by Greene (2002). Therefore, it was deemed crucial to determine whether there was autocorrelation among the study variables.

Test of independence

The test of Independence, also known as the autocorrelation test evaluates whether observations are independent of each other. This assessment was conducted using the Durbin-Watson (DW) test to verify that the model's residuals did not display autocorrelation. According to Garson (2012), DW statistics with scores between 1.5 and 2.5 and ranges from 0 to 4 signify independent observations. Table 13 shows the estimated model summary results to explain the autocorrelation test.

Table 13: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.323[a]	.104	.102	1.878	2.069

a. Predictors: (Constant), FR II
b. Dependent Variable: MA
Source: Field survey (2022)

From Table 13, the Durbin-Watson score was 2.069, which ranged between 1.5 and 2.5, indicating that there was no autocorrelation in the model. The results further indicated that all the variables satisfied the necessary threshold of being below 2.5. This demonstrated that none of the variables exhibited autocorrelation, aligning with the principles outlined by Garson (2012).

Test of Hypothesis

In testing for the hypothesis, regression analysis was adopted on whether to reject or fail to reject the null hypothesis that:

There is no statistically significant relationship between performance of Financial Accounting and Management Accounting.

Regression analysis was utilized to determine the intensity and extent of the relationships between the variables, as well as to assess the proposed relationships as hypothesized.

The hypothesis was tested at 95% level of confidence in order to draw a conclusion.

Goodness of Fit

Table 13 also shows the estimated model summary results to explain the variations through R^2 change between Financial Reporting II and Management

Accounting. The regression analysis in Table 13 shows that the adjusted coefficient of multiple determinants was 0.102 which implied that Financial Accounting explained 10.2% of the variation in Management Accounting

Table 14 shows the ANOVA results estimated to indicate the model fitness through F-ratio results between Financial Reporting and Management Accounting.

Table 14: ANOVA Results for Performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	146.798	1	146.798	41.603	.000[b]
	Residual	1263.202	358	3.528		
	Total	1410.000	359			

a. Dependent Variable: MA
b. Predictors: (Constant), FRII
Source: Field Survey (2022)

The result in Table 14 was also observed to have a good fit of the model as it was significant at $F(1, 359) = 41.603$ ($p < 0.05$), thus the proposed model fitted well.

Table 15 provides the regression results for the relationship between performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting.

Table 15: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	4.338	.325		13.356	.000
	FR II	.354	.055	.323	6.450	.000

a. Dependent Variable: MA
Source: Field Survey (2020)

From Table 15 there was a significantly positive relationship between Financial Reporting and Management Accounting performance (β = 0.354, t = 6.450, p < 0.05) at 95% level of confidence. A unit increase in Financial Accounting performance would lead to a 0.354 increase in Management Accounting performance, rejecting the null hypothesis four that there is no statistically significant relationship between performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting.

The finding suggests that students who performed well in Financial Accounting are likely to perform better in Management Accounting. This could be associated with the fact that some topics in Management Accounting were introduced in Financial Accounting. This explains why the course outlines of most tertiary institutions in Ghana are structured with Financial Reporting preceding Cost and Management Accounting. For instance, in UCC and UEW, accounting students are introduced to Financial Accounting / Reporting at Levels 100 and 200. Cost and Management Accounting is then introduced at Level 300 where students might have obtained some prerequisite topics for the course.

Evidence from the interviews conducted with students further indicated that there is some level of relationship between financial reporting performance and Management Accounting performance. For instance, as one respondent recounted,

> *...I had the same grade for both financial reporting and Management Accounting. They are somehow related. Once you have the love for accounting you should have the same love for Management Accounting* (A 23-year-old male accounting student).

Some of the respondents further explained that some topics in Management Accounting were similar to topics in Financial Accounting, hence, enhancing their performance. As one respondent mentioned,

> *….some of the topics handled in financial reporting also surfaced in Management Accounting making it easier to understand. Example breakeven and other topics and some of the principles you need to know to handle some figures…Inventory valuation principles like First-in-First-out (FIFO) and weighted average under International Accounting Standard 2 were introduced in Financial Reporting. At the Management Accounting class, these principles were further discussed and the previous knowledge I acquired from the financial reporting class influenced my understanding* (A 24-year-old female accounting student).

The influence of related topics in financial reporting on the performance of Management Accounting is furthered by another respondent who recounted her experience:

> *…..in cost and Management Accounting at semesters 1 and 2, I performed well because some of the topics were in Financial Accounting and made me perform well in Management Accounting. Despite the fact that I did not perform well in financial reporting, when the topics were introduced for the second time in Management Accounting, I appreciated the principles better, influencing my performance in Management Accounting* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Some students, however, had contrary views concerning the relationship between Financial Accounting and Management Accounting performance.

Their argument was based on the application of standards. One of the students asserted that

> *…financial reporting is more of international standards but Management Accounting has no standards. I could not relate the standards in Financial Reporting to Management Accounting… in fact, my performance in Management Accounting was not influenced by my performance in Financial Accounting at all (*21-year-old male accounting student).

Another student who found no linkage in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting performance recounted his experience:

> *…ok I will say not at all because financial reporting is very very different from Management Accounting since financial reporting is more of standards and Management Accounting has no standards and therefore there is no linkage between the two* (22-year-old male accounting student).

The study's result confirms the findings of Drennan and Rohde (2002) who investigated the performance of undergraduate accounting students in advanced Management Accounting and found a significant relationship between accounting students' performance in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting. They further asserted that the best predictor of accounting students' academic performance in Management Accounting was their score in the prerequisite Financial Accounting course.

Again, the finding is also in congruence with a study by Al-Twaijry (2010), Alanzi and Alfraih (2017) and Maksy and Rodriguez (2018) who found that Financial Accounting performance significantly correlated with

performance in Management Accounting. This is relevant in terms of the sequencing of courses in a programme of study. It is in this regard that students are first introduced to Financial Accounting and Reporting before they are introduced to Cost and Management Accounting.

However, on the contrary, the findings were not in consonance with that of Eddey and Bauman (2009). Using 1,049 graduates from Australian University, they found no significant relationship between accounting students' prior studies in Financial Accounting and Management Accounting performance. Thus, accounting students' performance in Management Accounting was not dependent on their performance in Financial Accounting.

Influence of Gender on the Performance of Accounting Students

Ho: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance of male and female accounting students in Ghana.

The second objective and hypothesis five of the study examined whether there was a significant difference in the performance of male and female students. In order to achieve this, the independent samples t-test was adopted. The assumptions underlying this test include, normality and homogeneity of variance. Table 16 presents the descriptive results of the group statistics.

Table 16: Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
CGPA	Females	127	3.73	.963	.085
	Males	233	3.86	1.008	.066

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 16 indicates that there is gender imparity in favour of males (233:127; male: female) in the study of accounting programme in Ghana. Thus, it was observed that 233 representing 64.7% of the accounting students' respondents were males, with a mean score of 3.86 and 127 representing 35.3% were females with a mean score of 3.73. This means there were more males than females studying accounting as a programme at public universities in Ghana. This is an indication and confirmation of the fact that accounting is more of a masculine programme than a feminine as posited by Parker (2015), Broadbent (2016) and Atena and Tiron-Tudor (2019). They were of the view that males have a preference for arithmetic courses while females have higher reading ability and skills than males, hence their preference for reading courses or programmes. A test of difference between the mean scores for males and females in the level of academic performance was conducted to test for the significant difference between male and female students' performance. The results of the test have been presented in Table 17.

Table 17: Independent Samples Test result on gender differences in academic performance of accounting students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
CGPA	Equal variances assumed	.125	.724	-1.191	358	.234	-.130	.109	-.346	.085
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.207	269.167	.228	-.130	.108	-.343	.082

*Significance level .05

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From Table 17, there was no statistically significant difference in mean scores for males (M=3.86, SD= 1.008) and females [M= 3.73, SD=0.963; t(360)= -1.191, p >.05] in their academic performance. The study, therefore, rejected the null hypothesis five that there is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance of male and female accounting students in Ghana. Though more males were identified in the accounting programme than females, there was no evidence to prove that male accounting students performed better than female accounting students.

The finding was consistent with that of Taylor (2013), Fallan and Opstad (2014); and Olufolakemi, Femi and Olatunde (2020) who concluded that gender is not a significant predictor affecting the academic performance of accounting students and that there is no significant difference in the level of male and female accounting students' performance. The finding, however, is inconsistent with Garkaz et al. (2011) and Ahinful et al. (2019), who found a significant difference in the level of performance of male and female accounting students. Garkaz et al., (2011) found that female accounting students' academic performance was better than males. They further added that this significant difference may be due to the fact that female students often had higher emotional intelligence levels compared to males. Again, Ahinful et al. (2019) also concluded that the level of academic performance of males was higher than the academic performance of females. They reported that societal gender role prescriptions influence the expectation of differential performance between males and females.

Previous research has pointed to evolutionary pressures, the domestic roles that women have traditionally played, and the patriarchal social order.

These accounts suggest that men are more competitive because the payoffs of competition are higher for them. However, the result of this study has proven that there is no difference in the academic performance between males and females. This is because, at the University level, equal opportunity is given to male and female students who are both affected by academic pressures. This explains why there is no significant difference between male and female accounting students' academic performance.

Factors influencing academic performance of accounting students

The third objective of the study was to assess the factors influencing accounting students' academic performance and the influence of career preference on academic performance. In order to achieve this objective, four hypotheses (hypotheses six, seven, eight, and nine) were formulated. The academic performance factors were demarcated into three components. These are personal factors, job factors and reference factors. The partial least square-structural equation model was employed in the analysis. Internal consistency and discriminant reliability were used to test the validity and reliability of the constructs.

Reliability and Validity Test

Reliability and validity in are crucial aspects in research for assessing the extent to which measurement scales are both valid and reliable. To achieve this, the Cronbach Alpha test was employed to investigate the internal consistency of the constructs. A Cronbach Alpha value of 0.7 or higher was considered acceptable, and any construct scoring below this threshold indicated inadequate internal consistency. Additionally, factor analysis was conducted to

evaluate the validity of the measurement scale. The factor loadings of the elements or items must be greater than 0.6, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must be 0.5 or better (Hair, 2010). The reliability and validity of the individual constructs have been presented in details in Table 18.

Table 18: Cross Loadings

	Aca Perf.	Career Preference	Job Factors	Personal Factors	Reference Factors
CGPA	**1**	0.7263	0.6693	0.6892	0.6848
CP1	0.6663	**0.8881**	0.6853	0.758	0.7466
CP2	0.5756	**0.8025**	0.5813	0.7616	0.7829
CP3	0.6647	**0.9144**	0.6799	0.7157	0.7693
CP4	0.6365	**0.8766**	0.5699	0.743	0.7178
CP5	0.6397	**0.9025**	0.6293	0.7234	0.7057
JF1	0.5344	0.6995	**0.7414**	0.7484	0.7071
JF2	0.6131	0.5959	**0.8946**	0.6099	0.61
JF3	0.5413	0.5489	**0.84**	0.5177	0.5897
JF4	0.5254	0.5197	**0.8449**	0.5578	0.5108
PF4	0.6501	0.7947	0.61	**0.8233**	0.7271
PF5	0.5741	0.7084	0.5827	**0.8111**	0.7787
PF6	0.5552	0.684	0.671	**0.842**	0.7017
PF7	0.477	0.6031	0.6699	**0.811**	0.6709
PF8	0.5465	0.6399	0.5449	**0.7962**	0.739
PF9	0.5625	0.6915	0.5707	**0.8353**	0.7626
RF2	0.5211	0.6439	0.5724	0.6962	**0.7957**
RF3	0.5205	0.6178	0.5877	0.6092	**0.7574**
RF4	0.4991	0.6409	0.6496	0.6622	**0.7721**
RF5	0.5726	0.7331	0.5703	0.7534	**0.8639**
RF6	0.5592	0.7089	0.5588	0.7515	**0.7952**
RF7	0.5835	0.6899	0.5615	0.776	**0.804**
RF1	0.6112	0.757	0.664	0.7834	**0.8669**

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From Table 18, it can be concluded that each indicator's direct loadings (bolded) is very strong for their corresponding latent variables. However, their cross-loadings are lower than the direct loadings. This indicates that each indicator measured the correct latent variable.

Confirmatory Factor Analysis

In the confirmatory factor analysis, the variable codes used in the exploratory factor analysis remained consistent. In absolute fit, the commonly used model fit criteria are chi-square (χ^2), goodness-of-fit index (GFI), adjusted goodness-of-fit index (AGFI), root-mean-square residual (RMR) and Root-Mean-Square-Error of Approximation (RMSEA). These criteria assess disparities between the observed and model-implied correlation or covariance matrix (Hair et al., 2014). Comparative fit addresses whether the considered model surpasses a competing model when accounting for observed data. Comparative fit assessment juxtaposes a "baseline" model against theoretically derived models (Kelloway, 1998). Normed fit index (NFI), comparative fit index (CFI), and the relative non-centrality index (RNI) are some criteria in this category.

The following fit indexes with their threshold were employed to assess the degree to which the measurement model fit the data collected: Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA $\leq$ 0.08), Normed Fit Index (NFI $\geq$ 0.90), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI $\geq$ 0.90), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI $\geq$ 0.90) (Bagozzi & Yi, 2012; Hair et al., 2010). The χ2 goodness-of-fit value examines the adequacy of the theorised model in generating a covariance matrix and comparing coefficients with the observed covariance matrix. However, since the value of χ2 is influenced by the sample size, a larger number of participants can result in an inflated χ2 when evaluating model fit (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Numerous researchers have employed a method that involves dividing χ2 value by the degrees of freedom, rather than relying solely on the overall χ2

value and its associated significance test. It is generally recommended that a $\chi 2$/df ratio (Normed Chi-square) below 3 is considered favourable for a large sample. These fit indices were employed to evaluate the reliability and appropriateness of the construct measurements. The choice of these fit indices was based on the classification proposed by Byrne (2013) which is widely accepted as the most common criteria in the social sciences.

Testing the model fitness, twenty-three (23) measurement items or questions were used with the view that items that did not achieve some of the indicators will be deleted to acquire a model fit or improvement in the Fit of Measurement Model. However, all measurement items were fit hence no item was deleted to achieve the model fit indices. Table 19 shows the model fit measures generated from the Smart PLS version.

Table 19: Model Fit Measures for Final Measurement Model

Measure	Estimate	Threshold	Interpretation
CMIN	1877	-	-
DF	360	-	-
CFI	0.921	>0.90	Excellent
SRMR	0.072	<0.08	Excellent
RMSEA	0.005	<0.08	Excellent
PClose	0.087	>0.05	Excellent

Source: Field Survey (2022)

According to Hu and Bentler (1999), certain indicators are necessary to measure how fit the data are. These indicators are Comparative fit index (CFI), Root Mean Squared Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Goodness of Fit Index (GFI) and Normed Fit Index (NFI). From Table 19, the results are consistent

with Hu and Bentler (1999) and Bagozzi and Li (2012) for model fit. This result, therefore, shows that all the items in the questionnaire and constructs have a significant relationship among themselves.

Assessing Internal Consistency Reliability

In this study, composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha were used to measure the internal consistency reliability. The composite reliability, however, is a more suitable measure of internal consistency than Cronbach's alpha (Rossiter, 2002). Table 20 shows the internal consistency reliability of the study.

Table 20: Model Fit Measures for Final Measurement Model

	AVE	Composite Reliability	R Square	Cronbachs Alpha	Communality	Redundancy
AP	1	1	0.5781	1	1	0.4194
CPI	0.7703	0.9436	0.7654	0.9248	0.7703	0.138
JF	0.6923	0.8996	0	0.8502	0.6923	0
PF	0.6724	0.9549	0	0.9027	0.6724	0
RF	0.6542	0.9296	0	0.9114	0.6542	0

Source: Field Survey (2022)

According to Cronbach (1951), a data collection instrument is deemed reliable when its Cronbach alpha value is equal to or more than 70%. The results in Table 20 indicate that all latent variables in this study are reliable, as they all loaded about the 0.7 thresholds by Bagozzi and Yi (1988). Academic Performance (AP) had the highest score of composite reliability (1.00) since the construct was measured using a single latent variable. This was followed by personal factors (0.9549), with reference factors having the third highest composite reliability score (0.9296). Job Factors was the variable with the least score of composite reliability (0.8996). Thus, the results indicated that the

model has internal consistency reliability. Table 20 also includes effects on convergence validity.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

The results from Table 20 indicate that all constructs have an AVE of more than 0.50, with the highest being academic performance (AP) and the least being reference factors (RF). This means that the constructs in this model can account for more than half of the variance in their indicators. Table 21 shows the Fornell-Lacker Criterion of the study.

Table 21: Fornell-Lacker Criterion

	AP	CP	JF	PF	RF
Aca Perf.	**1**				
Career Pref Int.	0.7263	**0.8777**			
Job Factors	0.6693	0.7183	**0.8320**		
Personal Factors	0.6892	0.6213	0.7403	**0.82**	
Reference Factors	0.6848	0.7165	0.7345	0.81	**0.8088**

Bold values are the square root of each construct's AVE which is higher than their correlation with other constructs.

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The results from Table 21 indicate that the square root of each variable significantly exceeds their correlations with other constructs in the study. This signifies that each construct is distinct, and no two constructs capture the same phenomenon. The Fornell-Larcker criterion performs poorly, particularly when the indicator loadings of the analysed constructs exhibit only slight differences (e.g., when all indicator loadings range between 0.60 and 0.80). However, when indicator loadings display stronger variations, the Fornell-Larcker criterion becomes more effective in identifying discriminant validity, but it is still

relatively poor in assessing overall discriminant validity (Voorhees, et al., 2016). As a remedy, Henseler, et al. (2015) proposed assessing the correlations' Heterotrait Monotrait ratio (HTMT). According to Henseler et al. (2015), a latent construct is considered to possess discriminant validity when its HTMT ratio is below 0.850. Table 22 presents the HTMT for the study.

Table 22: Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio	HTMT
Job Factors	0.712
Personal Factors	0.617
Reference Factors	0.502
Aca Performance	0.601

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The results presented in Table 22 show HTMT values of 0.712, 0.617 and 0.502, well below 0.850. The constructs are therefore, deemed to have discriminant validity.

Assessing the structural model

A tolerance value of 0.20 or less and a VIF value of 5 or higher in the context of PLS-SEM suggest a potential problem with collinearity (Hair et al., 2011). When an indicator's VIF level reaches 5, it means that the other formative indicators linked to the same construct account for 80% of that indicator's variance. Table 23 shows the result for multicollinearity among the indicators for the study.

Table 23: Collinearity amongst constructs

Collinearity amongst constructs	VIF
Career preference int.	2.162
Job factors	2.099
Personal Factors	1.483
Reference Factors	1.322

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Table 23 shows a minimum VIF of 1.322 and the highest of 2.162. The values obtained from this analysis indicate the absence of multicollinearity between the indicators. The VIF results in Table 23 provide further affirmation of the absence of common method bias. According to the criteria established by Kock and Lynn (2012), a VIF value exceeding 3.3 is indicative of severe collinearity issues and suggests that a model may be influenced by common method bias. Therefore, if all VIFs derived from a comprehensive collinearity test remain at or below 3.3, the model can be considered devoid of the concerns associated with vertical or lateral collinearity and standard method bias (Kock, 2013).

Assessing Coefficient of Determination and Predictive Relevance

The R^2 is a measure of the model's predictive accuracy. Another way to view R^2 is to represent the exogenous variable's combined effect on the endogenous variable(s). Figure 5 shows the predictive accuracy of the study.

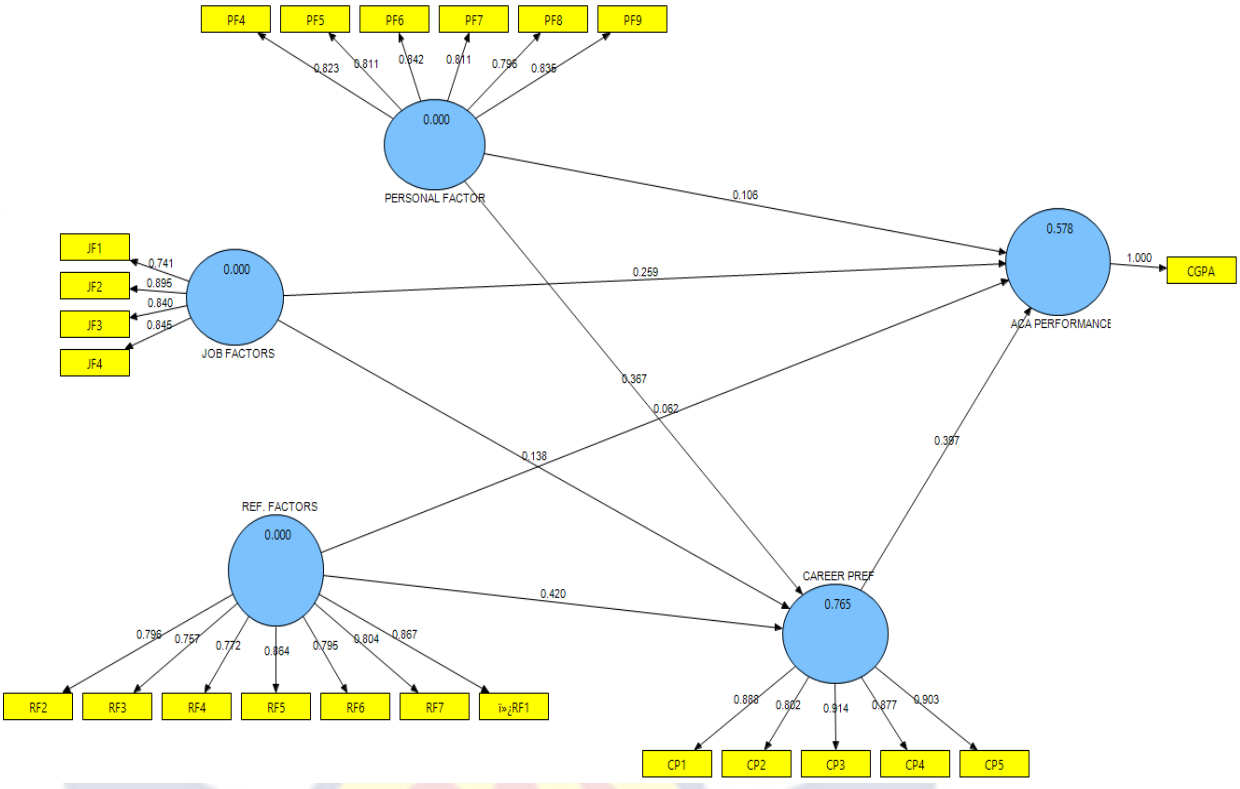


Figure 5: PLS Algorithm – Outer and inner model results

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From Figure 5, job factors, personal factors and reference factors have a moderate (0.578) coefficient of determination on performance (Hair et al., 2014). That is, 57.8 per cent of the variation in Academic Performance (AP) is being explained by job factors, personal factors and reference factors. Hair et al. further asserted that a predictive relevance (Q^2) and effect size (f^2) of "0.02, 0.15 and 0.35" are seen as "small, medium and large" respectively for structural models. Table 24 and Figure 6 show the structural model assessment and bootstrapping of the study respectively.

Table 24: Summary of the Result

	Path	T-statistics	R^2	Adjusted R square	Q^2	P-value	F^2
Aca Performance			0.578	0.551	0.553		
Job Factors	0.2595	4.676				0.000	0.54
Personal Factors	0.1065	1.145				0.092	0.03
Reference Factors	0.0619	0.593				0.210	0.01

Source: Field Survey (2022)

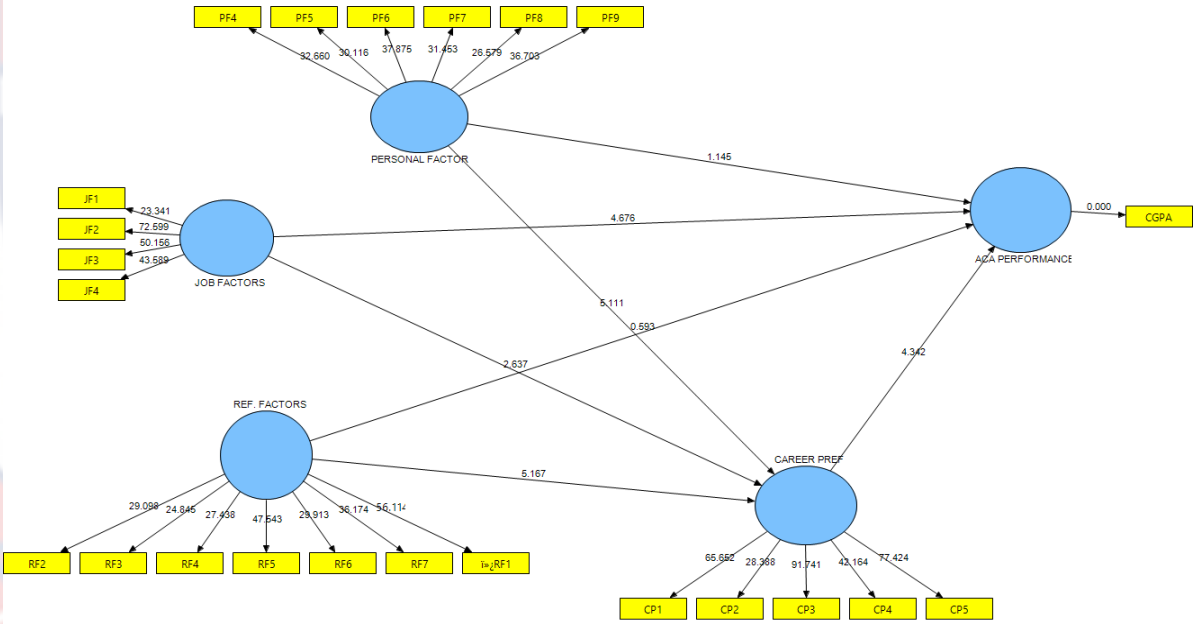


Figure 6: Bootstrapping

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Concerning predictive relevance, Table 24 shows a robust predictive relevance of the model on the endogenous variable (0.553). This suggests that the exogenous variables effectively predict the endogenous variable. The effect size results indicate that job factors exert a substantial influence on the endogenous variable while personal factors and reference factors have a

relatively minor effect on the endogenous. From Table 24, the path coefficients were 0.2595, 0.1065 and 0.0619 for job factors, personal factors and reference factors respectively as depicted in Figure 5. From Table 24 and Figure 6, the T-statistics were 4.676, 1.145 and 0.593 for job factors, personal factors and reference factors respectively. The following section further explains the results as depicted in Table 24 and Figure 6.

Personal factors and Academic performance

H0: There is no statistically significant effect of personal factors on academic performance of accounting students.

The sixth hypothesis was formulated to determine the effect of personal factors on accounting students' academic performance. With the use of PLS-SEM, the personal factors construct was measured by six indicators against academic performance with one indicator (CGPA). From research objective three, hypothesis six was formulated that the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana is not predicted by personal factors. Results in Table 24 and Figure 6 indicate that personal factors was not statistically significant at 5 percent [β=0.1065; $t(359)$=1.1446; P > 0.05], thereby not rejecting the null hypothesis.

According to the study's findings, individual characteristics including interest in the accounting programme, desire to become an accountant, and willingness to learn accounting do not influence how well accounting students perform academically. Though accounting students career preferences are influenced by personal factors, their performance at school is not predicted by personal factors. The finding could be attributed to the fact that although accounting students with high levels of interest are committed to studying and

dedicating more time to studying accounting and other related courses, they do not necessarily predict their success in such courses.

A student may have an interest in accounting and study for more hours but may not understand the principles and facts needed for better academic performance. There is also the tendency for such students with academic interests to read advanced textbooks and articles, which may enhance their academic knowledge in the area of study but may not enhance their academic performance due to other factors. Again, students who find accounting to be enjoyable are likely to develop an interest and put in maximum effort to understand the course. Interestingly, although academic interest could help enhance efforts and motivation to succeed academically, it does not predict one's academic performance (grades).

The study's outcome is in consonance with Olufemi et al. (2018) who found no significant impact of academic interest on academic performance. Again, it confirms the findings of Wu et al. (2019) who found no significant effect of academic interest on academic performance in the area of humanities and social sciences. Contrary to the study's finding, however, was the finding of Aminu and Timothy (2014) who concluded that students who had a self-interest in the course of study perform significantly better than those who were coerced. Again, the study's finding was inconsistent with the results of Fallan and Opstad (2014); Issahaku (2017); and Ahinful et al. (2019) who found that students' personal factors such as academic interest significantly influenced their academic performance.

Reference factors and Academic performance

H0: There is no statistically significant influence of reference factors on the academic performance of accounting students

The conceptual framework, with guidance from previous literature, reported some level of influence of Reference factors (RF) on academic performance. The study adopted PLS-SEM, to determine the kind of relationship between reference factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana. Reference factors construct was measured by seven indicators against academic performance with one indicator (CGPA). From research objective three, it was hypothesized (hypothesis seven) that accounting students' academic performance does not depend on reference factors. Results from Table 24 and Figure 6 depict no significant relationship between reference factors and students' academic performance [β=0.0619; t(359)=0.274; P > 0.05], thereby, failing to reject the null hypothesis. This indicates that students' performance does not depend on the reference factors.

The result shows that reference factors such as family members and peers are not strong predictors of accounting students' scholarly performance. Although the reference factors such as parents' and peers' influence have been found to have an effect on accounting career preference intention, this might not be the case for the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana, where the influence of parents, peers or teachers have no significant effect on the academic performance of such students.

The result is quite surprising in a society where students usually take reference from popular people from the society in shaping their career preference according to the social cognitive career theory. Again, in a society

where young students who fail to adhere to the directions of referent people such as parents and make their own decision are seen as disrespectful or "non-conformers", students may be influenced by such reference in deciding on their career preference. However, at school, such students need to own their decision and develop an interest in the accounting programme in order to improve their academic performance. Moreover, students will also consider their expectations in the job market and study hard to graduate with high CGPA in order to achieve their expectations.

The finding indicates the need for students to have the freedom of making informed decisions relating to career preference in a collectivist society like Ghana. The "hierarchical order" should not infringe on an individual's true preference for a particular programme. To improve pupils' academic achievement, however, the respect and favorable treatment for the reference group in Ghana should be put to use by giving them timely access to relevant information about careers..

This finding is in consonance with the findings of Gobena (2018) and Etiubon, Ugwu and Ado (2018) who asserted that education students' career preference determinants do not significantly influence their academic performance. From their results, though reference factors of career (such as parental desire) influenced the career preference intention of students, they did not significantly influence the student's academic performance in their course of study. However, the finding is contrary to the findings of Arora and Singh (2017), and Khan et al. (2019) who found that parental influence towards a student's career had a significant impact on the academic performance of students.

Job factors and Academic performance

H_0: There is no statistically significant effect of job factors on the academic performance of accounting students.

From the literature reviewed for the study, a possible impact of job factors on accounting students' academic performance was established. To achieve the third objective through hypothesis eight of the study, four indicators were used to measure the job factors construct against the academic performance construct as the dependent variable (Figure 6) which was represented by the cumulative grade point average (CGPA) of the respondents. From Table 24, job factors were statistically significant in explaining academic performance at five per cent [β=0.2595; $t(359)$=4.6763; $P < 0.05$], thereby not supporting Hypothesis eight. This indicates that job factors have a positive influence on academic performance. Students' motivation by job-related factors will lead to 0.2595 increments in academic performance.

It shows that accounting students who have high cumulative grade point average are somehow influenced by job factors. Again, the results of the study show that accounting students' academic performance is influenced by the availability of market demand for an accounting career in the job market (JF2). Thus, students' academic performance is enhanced due to the perception that there is high demand for professional accounting careers. Again, considering the satisfying salary of the accounting profession careers (JF4), students are motivated to academically perform better with high CGPAs, in order to enjoy a high starting salary after graduation. The findings imply that students' academic performance is boosted by the belief that choosing an accounting career path

will raise their chances of landing a good position and receiving a good wage or income.

The finding confirms the result of Guney (2009) and Ahinful et al (2019) who observed a positive effect of job factors on academic performance. They found that accounting learners' academic achievement is improved by the belief that the accounting career will increase their chances of getting a preferred job and a good starting salary. However, the finding of this study was inconsistent with the findings of Byrne and Flood (2008) who concluded that job factors did not significantly influence academic performance. From the positive relationship above, when students have great job expectations, it increases their intention to pursue such careers and hence enhances their behaviours by performing better academically.

Other factors influencing Academic Performance among accounting students.

Other elements were considered to be supplemental factors that affect academic performance of accounting students in Ghana, in addition to the three fundamental career preference criteria.. In order to analyse these factors, the descriptive statistics were adopted as presented in Table 25.

Table 25: Descriptive Statistics of other factors influencing academic performance

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
My performance was positively impacted by the numerous hours I spent preparing for the accounting classes.	360	4.02	1.037
The assignment agreed with the concepts discussed in Class	360	3.89	.908

My learning was facilitated by the lecturer's participation in the instructional process.	360	3.89	1.006
My understanding was enhanced by the lecturers' connections between the ideas presented in class and the actual details of business operations on a daily basis.	360	3.86	1.035
The vocabulary used in the courses and discussed in class served as the basis for the examinations that were given.	360	3.86	.979
The accounting textbooks purchased, aided my learning	360	3.70	1.048
My learning and performance were enhanced by the ideas (such as accounting concepts) that were clearly explained in class.	360	3.58	1.119
Technology was crucial to the teaching-learning process, which had a favorable impact on my performance.	360	3.44	1.206
My learning was enhanced by the physical, lighting, and ventilation conditions in the classroom.	360	3.13	1.255
The time I spent participating in extracurricular activities helped me learn.	360	2.93	1.250
The time I spent working for money helped me learn.	360	2.76	1.355
The time spent participating in family activities helped me learn.	360	2.63	1.180
The Class size aided my performance	360	2.51	1.137

Field Survey (2022)

Table 25 depicts the other factors perceived by accounting students to affect academic performance. From Table 25, it was found that hours spent on studying accounting courses affected students' performance. Accounting is a course that is quantitative in nature. Understanding the concepts demands enough time. This explains why the number of hours is rated the highest among the other factors. This recorded a mean of 4.02 with a corresponding standard

deviation of 1.037. The result confirms the findings of Issahaku (2017) who asserted that daily study hours significantly affect the academic performance of accounting students positively.

The next variable with the highest average was "assignment agreeing with concepts discussed in class." This resulted in an average of 3.89 accompanied by a standard deviation of 0.908. Usually, students build on what they have been taught in class. This is in agreement with the findings of Enu, Agyeman and Nkum (2015) who found that when concepts of accounting topics are well understood and tested, it affects the performance of accounting students. Lecturers' role in the teaching process as the next factor obtained the next highest average score of 3.89 and standard deviation of 1.006. Knowledge is given to students through the help of lecturers. If the lecturers play their role very well, students would be equipped with the courses which would improve their academic performance. The work of Ezeagba (2014) was confirmed by the study.

The next item with a higher average (mean = 3.86, SD = 1.035) was lecturers relating concepts discussed in the classroom to the real facts of daily business operations, which aided learning. The concepts of accounting are really appreciated when it is applied in the field. This would give students the actual issues when practising accounting. It is obvious that when students appreciate the practicability of the theories taught in class, it enhances their interest in the course of study and further influence their academic performance.

Students are being assessed based on quizzes, internal assessments (IA), and examinations. "The tests administered were prepared based on the course' terminology discussed in the classroom" was the next variable with the highest

average. This item achieved a mean of 3.86 with a standard deviation of 0.979. When students are assessed on what they are being taught in class or guided to read on their own, it improves their confidence and interest in the course areas taught since they know that their labour would be rewarded. This would improve their academic performance.

The purchase of accounting textbooks was the next variable with a mean of 3.70 and a corresponding standard deviation of 1.048. The availability of textbooks and students' ability to own them enable students to revise on consistent bases what they have been taught in class. Also, students with textbooks can have advanced studies to build their knowledge of the required areas of study before and after lectures. Thus, the unavailability of textbooks may impact the students' scholastic achievement. The finding confirms the findings of Atieh (2013), who posited that instructional materials such as accounting textbooks have a positive influence on students' academic performance. Ezeagba (2014) further stated that the availability, adequacy and relevance of local textbooks in accounting written in the local context significantly influence quality teaching and learning, which positively influences accounting students' academic performance.

When the concepts are clearly explained in the classroom, applying them during an examination time would be easy. Also, using these concepts in the job market would also be effective and efficient. This factor observed an average score of 3.58 accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.119. Accounting is fully made up of concepts and standards which guide the preparation and presentation of financial reports. Students who understood the accounting concept and standards from levels 100 and 200 respectively

conveniently apply these concepts as they climb the academic ladder and therefore perform better academically.

Technology in education plays a key role in accounting students' studies. Most of the concepts being taught are usually practised using accounting software such as Tally, QuickBooks and TOPAS. Using the right technology in the classroom would improve the rate at which students would absorb what they are been taught. Technology use had a standard deviation of 1.206 and an average score of 3.44. This indicates that one of the elements influencing the academic success of accounting students in Ghana is technology in the classroom. This finding is consistent with that of Ahinful et al. (2019), who proposed that the use of digital technology in teaching and learning improves the academic performance of accounting students.

Conducive classrooms, including ventilation, illumination and physical facilities, could also impact the academic performance of students. This variable recorded an average score of 3.13 accompanied by a standard deviation of 1.255. The classroom temperature is very essential for the students' learning process. A conducive environment positively affects the concentration level of learners and hence influences their academic achievement. Too warm or cold class temperatures may impact the academic achievement of students negatively. A conducive environment would give the students a stress-free mind which would enable them to concentrate on what they are been taught in class. This is likely to reflect in their academic performance. The outcome is in agreement with the finding of Jansen and De Villiers (2016) who found that the classroom environment significantly affects the academic performance of accounting students.

Hours spent on extracurricular activities was the next variable with an average of 2.93 and a corresponding standard deviation of 1.250. As the saying goes, "all work and no play make jack a dull boy", is a clear indication of the impact of spending time on other extracurricular activities. Accomplishments of extracurricular activities add flavour to students' academic performance. It is often perceived that one's ability to master control over a diverse set of skills (such as athletics and music) demonstrates curiosity and intelligence are often considered in the process of recruitment (Baker, 2008). This explains why it has a significant impact on academic performance.

The finding is consistent with the conclusion of Singh (2017) who in his nationally representative study of over 500 students demonstrated that involvement in extracurricular activities is positively correlated with academic performance. Again, it is also in consonance with early writers' findings such as Fletcher, Nickson and Wright (2003) and Baker (2008). Fletcher et al., were of the view that students who participate in extracurricular activities have higher educational aspirations, increased self-esteem and self-discipline. These factors are necessary for facilitating studying and learning and hence increase students' academic performance. However, the study's outcome was inconsistent with that of Shulruf (2010). He found that more hours spent on extracurricular activities have a negative influence on students' academic performance. Thus, students who spend less hours on extracurricular activities often perform better academically than students who spend more hours.

Finally, the variable with the least average was "the class size". This factor demonstrated an average score of 2.51 and a corresponding standard deviation of 1.137. Even though small classes can be easily managed by

lecturers but it doesn't have a strong effect on students' academic performance. The university has large classes to cater for classes with large class numbers. This shows that class size is not really a key variable affecting students' academic performances. The finding confirms the result of Ajani and Akinyele (2014) who asserted that larger class sizes have an influence on the academic performance of students. The possible reason proffered included the fact that lecturers feel more motivated and prepare the class better when lecturing a large number of students.

Evidence from the interviews conducted with students, further indicated that academic performance is mostly influenced by the other factors enumerated above.

Class attendance

The following is an illustrative quote by one of the participants concerning class attendance:

> *Accounting is a great programme and necessary for all to be well endowed in. The only reason I have been performing badly is my own level of commitment to lectures and assignments. In fact, the truth is I don't often go for lectures and don't often participate in assignment especially when it comes to group assignments. Group members will work on it and present on my behalf. If I work on these, Accounting would be my best friend. I am doing Accounting because I chose Accounting. I need to get back to my first love* (23-year-old male accounting student).

Similarly, another participant recounted that

> *I expect to gain more understanding from attending classes regularly, because the more I attend classes and understand what is taught in class, the better I appreciate when having my personal studies. This has contributed to an enhanced CGPA so far* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Textbooks, assignments and quizzes

The use of textbooks, assignments and quizzes also permeated the discussion. The attitude of the participants toward the purchase of textbooks was mixed however, the majority of them were positively influenced. One student said

> *… my academic performance is influenced by the time I spend with books. I saved enough money to purchase accounting text books and I ensure that I spend more time with those books and seek for clearer understanding when the need be* (24-year-old female accounting student).

Contrary to the majority views, another participant shared his experience:

> *...for me I have never purchased any text book in accounting before…our lectures give PowerPoint slides and rely on those slides. Most of the textbooks are foreign and though useful, you hardly get contextualized illustrations… for me it is a waste of money because I attend lectures, go for group discussion, study the PowerPoint slides and I am making it..* (22-year-old male accounting student).

Classroom environment

Some students also posited that the classroom environment affected their performance. A student emotionally described the size of her class:

> *…our class size is very large, even after dividing us into groups. Because of the size you don't get the chance to ask questions…aside that, sometimes if you don't get to the lecture hall before the time for the class and secure a place, you either stand at the back or outside whiles lecture is ongoing and you can neither see nor hear whatever is said in class. Infact I agree to the fact that small class size enhances understanding and performance of students since a participatory class is very effective for understanding* (22-year-old female accounting student).

In addition to the class size effect, another student described the effect of class room temperature on teaching and learning. She mentioned that

> *…aside the class size being large, some lecture halls like….is very warm and very uncomfortable during lectures. You will see the lecturer sweating and most of us the students too sweating. Infact it affect our concentration level and I think something must be done about it by the authorities* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Extracurricular activities

Concerning extracurricular activities and their influence on academic performance, a participant recounted his experience:

> *…I would also say my association with friends has really affected my performance. At level 200, I spent most of my time socializing with friends…watching football, betting and moving out to entertainment places at night. I must confess that I have regretted all those hours I*

> *spent on these outings because it has really affected my performance…My CGPA has grown lean. I wish I could reverse all those years but…* (21-year-old male accounting student).

Extracurricular activities positively influenced some of the students' academic performance. Students who managed their time properly and apportioned appropriate time for extracurricular activities appreciated the effect of such activities on academic performance. One participant mentioned that,

> *in my view, I will say some of the extracurricular activities also help in academic performance. For instance, I am a footballer for the school, and I spend most time rehearsing and playing football…ooh I will say in a week I spend about 20 hours rehearsing and playing football. Anytime I pick my books to study, I am able to concentrate and understand. I think the exercise I engage in when playing has influenced my academic performance positively* (22-year-old male accounting student).

Similarly, the positive effect was furthered by another student who recounted her experience:

> *…I will say that some extracurricular activities also help students to perform academically. I remember when coming to the university I was advised not to engage in any extracurricular activities but as a choir member of PENSA I decided to allocate part of my time going for choir rehearsals twice in a week…for me I think it is about how you use your time judiciously. Some extracurricular activities are very useful and I think they influence our performance positively whiles too much of it may affect it negatively* (22-year-old female accounting student).

Lecturers' attitude and information techhnology

Finally, some participants also explained that the attitude of lecturers and information technology influence academic performance. For example, as one respondent recounted,

> *...in my view most of the accounting lecturers are good unlike the other courses where you could see that they understand the concept but lack the appropriate teaching approach to help us understand. Again, some lecturers overuse the PowerPoint slides and reiterate the same illustrations given in textbooks. It makes the course boring and hence it effects on academic performance* (21-year-old male accounting student).

Another participant had a similar view:

> *The use of information technology really aided my learning. Some of the lecturers, apart from the use of power point slides, use internet resources and other online platforms like LMS to give assignments and sometimes to write quizzes. We could go to such platform and download materials and lecture slides at any time. I think the nature of accounting demands more information technology techniques to aid our performance* (A 23-year-old male accounting student).

Effect of Career Intention on Academic Performance of Accounting Students

H_0: Career intention has no statistically significant effect on the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.

The ninth hypothesis under objective three was to assess the relationship between career intention and academic performance. The structural equation

model was adopted to test the null hypothesis that career intention has no significant effect on academic performance of accounting students in Ghana. Five constructs were used to measure accounting career intention and one indicator (CGPA) for academic performance. The internal consistency of the construct, career intention was very high since all the indicators loaded above 0.70. The highest indicator loading was 0.904 with the minimum being 0.796 (see Figure 5, p223). The output from the structural equation is presented in Table 26.

Table 26: Regression Output

	Path Coefficient	Standard Error (STERR)	T Statistics (|O/STERR|)	P-value
Career Int.	0.3959	0.0915	4.3422	0.000

Source: Field Survey (2022)

From Table 26, the path coefficient was 0.3959 with a p-value of 0.00, which indicates a positive statistically significant relationship between career intention and academic performance [β=0.3959; $t(360)=4.3422$; P <0.05], rejecting the null hypothesis. Thus, a unit increase in career intention would lead to a 0.3959 increase in academic performance.

Students with higher intentions (willingness and determination) to pursue a particular career perform academically better.

From the output, accounting students who have intentions to pursue careers in accounting are likely to perform better academically. The willingness and determination of students to achieve an accounting career are likely to enhance students' academic performance. In case of a wrong choice, it may lead to resultant failure and disappointment. Students with the right career path are likely to perform excellently in order to obtain the career they intend to achieve.

The result is supported by the theory of planned behaviour (TPB) which asserts that intentions lead to actual behaviour. TPB uses an individual's actual attitudes and opinions as well as society's subjective norms and perceived control of the behaviour to influence the behavioural intention as indicated in the factors that influenced career preference intention, resulting in the preference for a particular discipline. This intention will then lead to actual behaviour or performance, in this context, academic performance.

The finding is consistent with Aminu and Timothy (2014), and Lee and Lee (2018) who found a significant relationship between a student's intention to pursue a career and its positive influence on academic performance. However, the finding is contrary to the conclusion of Byrne and Flood (2008) who found no significant relationship between career preference and academic performance.

The Mediating Role of Career Intention on the Relationship among Job factors, Personal factors, Reference factors and Academic Performance

H0: There is no statistically significant mediating effect of career intention on the relationship between career preference factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana

The fourth and final objective of the study was to analyse the mediating role of job, personal and reference factors on academic performance. The null hypothesis ten was formulated to test the relationships. An analysis of its mediating effect was done to provide more solid proof that career preference could have an impact on the correlations between the variables and academic achievement. The mediating role was investigated in light of the findings provided in the preceding sections. The involvement of a second variable that

mediates the relationship between the independent and dependent variables is a critical component of a mediating effect (Nitzl et al., 2017).

A two-step approach was employed in this research according to Nitzl et al. (2017). The first step involved assessing the three conditions suggested by Nitzl et al. If any of the suggested conditions are not met, the mediating effect will be insignificant. Once these conditions are met in the first approach, a mediating test would be performed. From the previous analyses, the three conditions were met. First, personal factors, reference factors and job factors were significantly associated with career preference intentions. Second, at least one of the factors (job factors) was significantly associated with academic performance. Third, career preference intention and academic performance were significantly related after controlling for personal factors, reference factors and job factors. It was found from the given results that only job factors had a significant influence on the academic performance of accounting students. Personal factors and reference factors had no relevant effect on students' scholastic excellence. However, all three factors (job, personal, and reference) had a statistically significant effect on career preference. The second approach is to perform the coefficients test to test for mediation effects.

As indicated by Nitzl (2016), the only need for proving a mediation effect is a sizable indirect effect. As a result, there is a third variable that functions as a mediator between the independent and dependent variables. According to the procedure outlined by Nitzl (2016), Hair et al. (2017) and Nitzl et al. (2017), the mediating effect of career preference on the relationship between career preference factors and academic performance was assessed

through bootstrapping, using the PLS-SEM. The results of the total effect are presented in Table 27.

Table 27: Direct Mediating Effect

	Path	Stand Error	T-Stats	P-Values
Career Int. -> Aca Perf	0.3959	0.0915	4.3422	0.000
Job Fact - > Career Int.	0.1393	0.0524	2.6367	0.001
Person. Fact - > Career Int.	0.3655	0.0718	5.1107	0.000
Reference Fact ->Career Int.	0.4202	0.0813	5.1665	0.000
Job Fact - > Academic Perf.	0.2579	0.0555	4.6763	0.000
Person Fact - > Academic Perf.	0.111	0.093	1.1446	0.092
Reference Fact - > Academic Perf.	0.0602	0.1044	0.5927	0.210

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 27 shows a direct relationship among the variables for the study. Job factors, personal factors and reference factors had a significant relationship with career preference. Job factors also had a significant relationship with academic performance, while personal factors and reference factors had no significant effect on academic performance. That is, personal factors and reference factors had no direct influence on academic performance. This called for the test of the mediating role of career intention on the relationship between the factors and academic performance. The mediation analysis was tested among job, personal and reference factors; career intention and academic performance. The results of the indirect effects are presented in Table 28.

Table 28: Indirect Mediation Effect

	Path	Standard Error	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values

Job->Career Int.->Academic Perf.	0.3144	0.0596	5.2713	0.000
Personal->Career Int->Academic Perf.	0.2523	0.0938	2.6915	0.001
Reference->Career Int.->Academic Perf.	0.2289	0.0967	2.3676	0.002

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Results from Table 28 show that career intention significantly mediated the relationships between job factors and academic performance (β=0.3144; P<0.05); personal factors and academic performance (β=0.2523; P<0.05); and reference factors and academic performance (β=0.2289; P<0.05). According to Nitzl et al. (2017)'s criteria, it can be said that the study's findings showed partial and full mediation. When both the direct and indirect effects are sizeable, partial mediation occurs. It might be cooperative or hostile. In a complementary partial mediation, the direct and indirect effects show the same (positive or negative) direction (Nitzl et al., 2017). However, in a competitive partial mediation, the direct and indirect effects take different forms.

When the direct effect is not considerable but the indirect effect is, full mediation is seen. This indicates that only a mediator can create an indirect effect. To put it another way, full mediation refers to the complete transmission of the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable through the use of a mediator. As a result, the independent variable only influences the independent variable when certain mediator variable criteria are met.

There was a complementary partial mediating relationship between job factors and academic performance. Thus, both the direct and indirect relationship between job factors (for example job availability, prestige and salary) and academic performance showed a positive and significant relationship. The result means that career preference intention partially processed job factors to determine its influence on academic performance.

While career ambition mediates some of the impact of job factors on academic success, job factors still account for some of academic performance independently of career intention. Due to employment availability, job reputation, and predicted compensation, accounting students' academic performance is improved. Students will study hard and perform academically better because they will easily get employed after school. Also, the prestige attached to the accounting profession will influence their performance as well as the expected attractive salary attached to the career. Some accounting students will only perform academically better due to their career intention (indirect effect). Once students are determined to obtain an accounting career, influenced by the job factors, they will put in the maximum effort to study and enhance their academic performance in order to achieve their objective.

With respect to the mediating role of career intention between personal factors and academic performance, there was a fully mediating role. The mediation is full because there was no direct significant relationship between personal factors and academic performance. However, the indirect relationship between personal factors and academic performance was positive and significant. Similarly, the role of career intention in the relationship between reference factors and academic performance was also full. Whereas there was no direct effect between the variables (reference factors and academic performance), the indirect effect was positive and significant.

Personal factors and reference factors were completely processed by career intention to determine their influence on academic performance. This means that the effect of personal factors and reference factors was completely transmitted with the assistance of career intention. The indirect relationships

between these factors (personal and reference) and academic performance further mean that there is a need for a mediator (career intention) to link personal and reference factors' influence on academic performance. Thus, students' academic performance is influenced by academic interest, quantitative ability, families and other reference groups only through career intention. The result as supported by the Theory of Planned Behaviour, is shown in Figure 7.

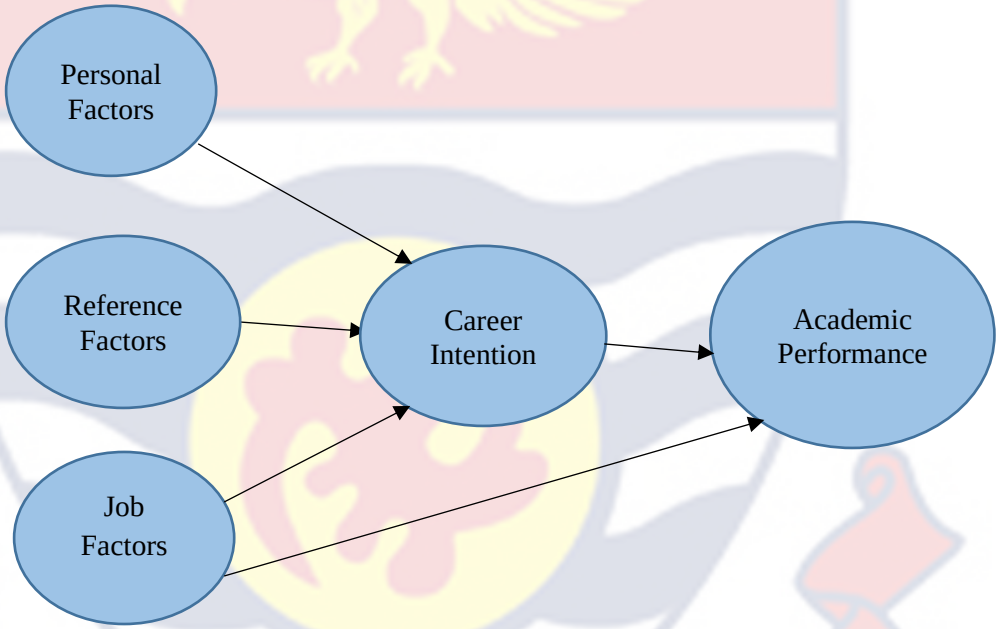


Figure 7: Mediation Role of Career Intention

Source: Author's Construct

From Figure 7, Job factors directly influence academic performance and indirectly influence it through the mediation role of career preference intention. Personal factors and reference factors influence academic performance indirectly through the mediation role of career preference intention. Thus, it is impossible for accounting students' academic performance to be influenced by

personal and reference factors without the process of their career preference intention (willingness and determination to pursue a career).

The findings of the study are consistent with Etiubon et al. (2018) and Owusu et al. (2019) who revealed that students who were willing and determined to pursue the accounting career due to academic interest were found with high cumulative grade points. Again, the study's finding was also consistent with the results of Lee and Lee (2018) who found that parental influence can only affect a student's academic performance significantly when the student is willing and determined to pursue a related career.

Table 29 shows the summary of the academic performance-related hypotheses.

Table 29: Summary of Academic performance-related Hypotheses

	Hypotheses	Conclusion
4	H_0: There is no statistically significant relationship between the academic performance of Financial Accounting and Management Accounting of accounting students in Ghana.	Rejected
5	H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance of male and female accounting students in Ghana	Failed to reject
6	H_0: There is no statistically significant effect of personal factors on accounting students' academic performance in Ghana	Failed to reject
7.	H_0: There is no statistically significant relationship between reference factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana	Failed to Reject
8.	H_0: Job factors do not significantly predict academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.	Rejected
9.	H_0: Career intention has no statistically significant effect on academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.	Rejected

10.	H_0: There is no statistically significant mediating effect of career intention on the relationships between personal factors, reference factor, job factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.	Rejected

Note: $p \leq 0.05$
Source: Field Survey (2022)

Chapter Summary

The perceived levels of academic performance of accounting students were examined using descriptive statistics. Foundation/principles of accounting recorded the highest average followed by Cost and Management Accounting II, with least performance in Public Sector Accounting. More than 50 percent of the students were not satisfied with their grades.

Additionally, linear regression was used to evaluate the correlation between accounting students' performance in financial accounting and management accounting. The two variables showed a positive significant link, showing that accounting students who score well in Financial Accounting are probably going to perform better in Management Accounting. Once more, the independent t-test was used to determine whether there was a discernible difference between the performance of male and female students. Although there is gender parity in favor of men among accounting students, it was discovered that there was no discernible difference between male and female performance.

From the structural model assessment, job factors significantly influenced academic performance while personal factors and reference factors did not predict one's academic performance. Interviews with students further provided more explanations for some quantitative findings. Finally, career

preference intention was found to partially mediate the relationship between job factors and academic performance while it fully mediated the relationships between personal factors, reference factors and academic performance.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study's last chapter outlines the research methodologies used in data collection and analysis to get the key findings in addressing the research objectives stated for the study. Conclusions are formed based on the primary results in order to provide suitable suggestions to solve the concerns presented. The chapter also emphasizes the study's contributions to literature on factors impacting accounting students' career preferences and academic performance. Finally, the chapter suggests areas for further investigation.

Summary of the study

This is divided into two sections. The synopsis of the research procedure is offered first. Second, a summary of the important findings is provided.

Summary of Research Process

The main objective of the study was to examine the relationship between career preference and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana. Subsidiary to this were the following objectives:

1. Examine the factors influencing accounting students' career preference in Ghana.
2. Examine the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.
3. Analyse the effect of personal factors, reference factors, and job factors on academic performance of accounting students in Ghana

4. Analyse the mediating role of career intention on the relationships between personal factors, reference factors, job factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.

To achieve these objectives, the following research questions and hypotheses were crafted to guide the study:

Research questions:

1. What are the factors influencing career preference of accounting students in Ghana?
2. What is the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana?
3. What is the effect of personal factors, reference factors, and job factors on academic performance of accounting students in Ghana?
4. What is the mediating role of career intention on the relationships between personal factors, reference factors, job factors, and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana?

Research hypotheses:

1. H_0: Personal factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students in Ghana;
2. H_0: Reference factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students in Ghana;
3. H_0: Job factors do not significantly predict career preference of accounting students in Ghana;
4. H_0: There is no statistically significant relationship between performance of Financial Accounting and Management Accounting of accounting students in Ghana;

5. H_0: There is no statistically significant difference in the academic performance of male and female accounting students in Ghana;
6. H_0: There is no statistically significant effect of personal factors on the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;
7. H_0: Reference factors do not significantly predict the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;
8. H_0: There is no statistically significant effect of job factors on academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;
9. H_0: Career intention has no statistically significant effect on the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;
10. H_0: There is no statistically significant mediating effect of career intention on the relationships between career preference factors and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana;

Three primary theories influenced the study: social cognitive career theory (SCCT), trait factor theory (TFT), and the theory of planned behavior (TPB), which evolved from the theory of reasoned action (TRA). The mixed research technique was used to carry out the study using the pragmatic research philosophy. To collect quantitative and qualitative data, the questionnaire and interview guide were used. This was accomplished by employing explanatory sequential design to gather data in the proper sequence, analyze, and interpret the findings. Accounting students from two Ghanaian public colleges were recruited to collect the data needed to answer the study questions. Only Level 400 pupils were targeted. The study polled 360 Level 400 accounting students in total. Questionnaires and interview guides were utilized to collect the necessary data from these chosen respondents. The data was analyzed using a

mix of descriptive (frequency, percentages, averages), inferential (t-test, Linear regression, and partial least square structural equation model (PLS-SEM)) and thematic statistics.

Summary of Key Findings

1. Generally, undergraduate accounting students in Ghana who have the intention to pursue an accounting career are significantly and positively influenced by job factors. Among the job factors, the availability of market demand was the strongest predictor of accounting career preference intention. Other predictors cited in order of decreasing intensity are satisfying salary (earnings), the skills and background of a particular job, and the prestige attached to an accounting career.
2. Personal factors significantly predicted accounting students' intention to pursue accounting careers. Interest in calculations, willingness to study accounting as a subject, and willingness of students to dedicate enough time to study accounting were the main personal factors that predicted undergraduate accounting students' intention to choose an accounting career. Interest in calculations was the strongest personal factor predictor.
3. Parents' influence and occupation, and counselors' recommendations were the main predictors of reference factors influencing accounting students' intention to choose an accounting career. Senior high school teachers' and friends' influence were among the least predictors of reference factors. With reference to the three factors, reference factors of career preference were the highest predictor of accounting career preference intention.
4. Students' performance in introductory accounting courses such as Foundations of Accounting 1 was above average (mean score of 4.69). The

accounting-related courses such as Cost and Management Accounting II, and Financial Reporting II were averagely performed. However, students' performance in new accounting-related courses introduced at the higher levels (Level 300) such as Taxation and Public Sector Accounting was below average. 56.9% of the students were not satisfied with their results obtained in the accounting-related courses whiles 42% and 0.9% were satisfied and indifferent respectively. Also, students' performance in Financial Accounting was found to have a positive significant influence on their performance in Management Accounting. Explanations of the findings pointed to the fact that some topics in Management Accounting were introduced in Financial Accounting.

5. More males were identified in the accounting programme than females. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the academic performance of male and female students in accounting courses at the undergraduate level.
6. Academic performance in accounting was directly influenced by job factors such as availability of market demand and satisfying remuneration. Personal factors (such as interest in accounting and quantitative ability) and reference factors (such as parents, peers, and counselors) had no direct significant influence on the academic performance of accounting students. Although personal and reference factors were found to predict accounting career preference, these factors had no direct influence on the academic performance of accounting students.
7. Career preference intention of accounting students was found to have a positive significant relationship with academic performance of accounting

students in Ghana. Students who were willing and determined to pursue a career in accounting performed academically better.

8. Career preference intention mediated the relationships between job factors, personal factors, reference factors, and academic performance. The mediation of career preference on the relationship between job factors and academic performance was partial. The links between reference factors and academic success and between personal factors and academic performance were both fully mediated. The study is one of the first to use the Social Cognitive Career Theory and the Theory of Planned Behavior to examine the association between accounting career preference intention and academic achievement in Ghana.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made:

Personal factors, reference factors and job factors were found to be significant predictors of career preference. This implies that personal factors such as interest in accounting and ability to use figures in solving business problem Accounting students' job choices are influenced positively by s. Accounting students' inclination for an accounting job is also predicted by the roles and impacts of major persons in society (for example, parents, friends, role models, and counselors). Parents, for example, may persuade their children to pursue an accounting career in order for their offspring to take over their firm or because of the prominent nature of the profession. Accounting students are also impacted by job considerations such as job availability after school, greater pay, and the prestige associated with the profession. As a result, the more

appealing the accounting program's outcomes, the stronger the ambition to pursue a career in accounting.

Among accounting and accounting-related courses, the Introduction to Accounting course did the highest. This outcome is clear since the course structure focuses more on concepts covered in Senior High School, which explains why most accounting students score well in Foundation of Accounting I. Students' prior knowledge from previous semester's courses impacts their performance in relevant courses this semester. For example, Cost and Management Accounting II outperformed Cost and Management Accounting I. However, when students move through the levels, more challenging topics are offered, hurting their academic performance in advanced accounting-related courses. The effect of Financial Reporting (Accounting) performance on Management Accounting performance suggests that students who perform well in Financial Accounting will also perform well in Management Accounting. This might be ascribed to some Financial Accounting subjects acting as the foundation for some Management Accounting issues. Manufacturing Accounts, for example, in Financial Accounting (Reporting), serve as the foundation for costing elements and break-even analysis in Management Accounting.

According to the findings of the survey, the male-female ratio of accounting students was 1.8:1. This reflects the fact that accounting is seen as having a male gender (Atena & Tiron-Tudor, 2019). Thus, everything else being equal, males show a strong preference for mathematical courses, whereas females have strong reading abilities and skills, resulting in a strong preference for reading programs. Although males prefer accounting programs over girls, there is no indication that male accounting students outperform female

accounting students. This is due to the fact that at the university level, male and female students are both subjected to academic demands.

Job considerations were shown to impact academic success but not personal or reference elements. Thus, based on the idea of planned behavior, it is possible to deduce that when students have high employment expectations for an accounting profession, such as high pay and prestige, it enhances their behavioral intention to work harder to improve their academic achievement. This means that students' academic performance is boosted by the desire that an accounting profession would increase their prospects of obtaining a good job, a decent pay, and societal status. As a result of being exposed to the benefits of choosing an accounting job, students' academic performance improves, because graduating with a high CGPA is more likely to be rewarded in an accounting career. Accounting students' interests, family members, and friends, on the other hand, have no meaningful effect on their academic success.

According to the findings, accounting students' career intentions affected their academic performance positively. As a result, students who are eager and committed to pursue a profession in accounting are more likely to succeed academically. Accounting students who are on the correct track and committed to pursue their desired job after high school are driven to improve in order to attain their career goal. The higher a student's desire to participate in an activity, the more likely their academic performance will improve.

Finally, career intention moderated the impact of employment variables on academic success but not the influence of personal and reference factors on academic performance. This means that work considerations will impact accounting students' academic performance whether or not they decide to

pursue a profession in accounting. Personal and reference elements, on the other hand, will only impact accounting students' academic achievement through career ambition. As a result of personal and reference variables, students will perform better when they are committed to pursue an accounting job.

Contribution to Knowledge

First, the study presents an empirical addition to variables influencing accounting students' job preferences and how these factors, both directly and indirectly, impact their academic performance in a variety of ways. Empirically, the study has added to the existing literature by demonstrating the predictive potential of job variables, referent factors, and personal factors that impact career selection. It has also statistically demonstrated the function of career goal as a mediator (partial and full) between personal variables, reference factors, work factors, and academic performance of accounting students in Ghana.

Second, the study contributes to methodologies. The study used rigorous methodologies to overcome the shortcomings of previous methods in the literature. A pragmatist research philosophy was applied, including both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The study also used different statistical approaches (ANOVA, linear regression, and SEM) in tandem to investigate the association between profession desire and academic achievement. The sequential explanatory strategy was used to give further explanations for the quantitative findings.

Finally, by providing details on the necessity of gender policies in business programmes, particularly accounting, this research helps to shape policy. It has provided knowledge on the gender parity index (1.8:1) in accounting programmes in Ghana. This is critical since knowledge about gender

parity is needed to take affirmative actions and design quota policies to address accounting education disparity in gender. Also, heads of tertiary institutions in Ghana must make it a policy to set up counselling units in all departments within the business school. Professional counselors must be hired to provide career guidance to students before and after admission.

Recommendations

University accounting educators and academic advisors must inform higher education students about the job prospects of accounting graduates. Accounting students should be exposed to and educated about accounting career opportunities and the positive outcomes of the accounting profession, including a good salary, the prestige attached to the job, and advancement opportunities. Whereas the prestige linked to an occupation was sufficient to drive individuals to a career, this study highlights from the job factors, that students are more likely pursue professions with substantial financial rewards. Therefore, in order to encourage more accounting students to stay in the accounting profession, professional accounting bodies like The Institute of Chartered Accountants Ghana (ICAG) and tertiary business schools should offer pertinent seminars and campaigns on job security and job opportunities.

As demonstrated by the results, interest in accounting, which was found to be one of the main predictors of personal factors, is key in the selection of an accounting programme by students. The first-year accounting course should be designed to pique students' interest in the subject because doing so can encourage them to think about a career in accounting. Again, it is essential for accounting educators to implement suitable measures to retain students who show an interest in pursuing accounting. To attain this goal, accounting lecturers

should embrace contemporary and inventive teaching approaches. This includes utilizing case studies, interactive teaching methods, and technology-driven instruction that encourages active engagement among students, thereby sustaining their interests.

Again, lecturers from the accounting departments should visit senior high schools that offer business courses to provide early accounting career guidance to business students to pique senior high pupils' interest in the accounting field. Also, accounting educators at senior high schools must ensure that accounting students with weak mathematical foundations are given adequate attention by their tutors by adopting different strategies to develop an interest in mathematics since the appreciation of mathematics (calculations) was found to be the highest personal factor predictor of accounting career preference. Further, the results also indicated that referent groups or subjective norms are important people that can influence students to choose an accounting programme. Hence, accounting professional bodies and institutions of higher learning must organize accounting programmes such as workshops and seminars on the accountancy career for parents, counsellors, teachers, and the entire public. Since they have an impact on accounting students' career preference intentions, the goal is to convey pertinent information about their roles and responsibilities as well as a better understanding of the accountancy profession.

It is also recommended that University Accounting Educators consider splitting some courses taught for one semester into two semesters. The study found that Taxation and Public Sector Accounting courses were among the poorly performed accounting-related courses. From the interviews conducted,

the students explained that the bulky nature of the courses compressed into one semester made teaching and learning very difficult. Again, Financial Accounting at the tertiary level should precede the introduction of Management Accounting to enhance students' performance in Management Accounting. This is because it was found from the study that essential topics in Financial Accounting influence the study of Management Accounting, hence enhancing the academic performance of the latter.

Moreover, there is a need for stronger collaboration between the Ministry of Education and the Higher Educational Institutions' Accounting Educators to initiate affirmative action and quota policies designed to address accounting education gender inequalities and disparity in enrolment. This will reduce to some extent, the gender disparity in accounting students at the tertiary level.

According to the study, work considerations had an impact on accounting students' academic performance, but personal and reference elements had no bearing. Therefore, chiefs of accounting departments must arrange seminars with top accounting professionals to discuss their experiences and the advantages of being a professional accountant in order to improve the performance of accounting students. Then, students will learn about the achievements of these top professionals, their professional histories, and the contributions they have made to society and the economy of the country. Thus, students' academic performance can be improved by the belief that pursuing a career in accounting will raise their prospects of landing a good job, receiving a decent salary, and enjoying social status.

Also, although reference factors indirectly influence performance through career intention, no direct influence was found. Through the mass media, Counselors should therefore, educate parents not to compel their wards to choose career paths at the tertiary level. They should be further educated on the importance of allowing their wards to choose careers of their interest to enhance their academic performance.

Finally, the findings would also inform the accounting departments of tertiary institutions as to how students should be grouped for lectures. Accounting students in tertiary institutions are often grouped arbitrarily into manageable numbers for lectures. The study's findings will help heads of accounting departments to conduct diagnostic tests and group the students based on their career preference factors. Such groupings will assist the lecturers to know the appropriate instructional approach to be used for each group since they are informed about the dynamism of each student, to enhance students' academic performance

Suggestions for Further Research

The study aims to investigate accounting profession preference characteristics as well as academic performance of accounting students in Ghana. Previous research on the issue were evaluated as part of the study, as were theories and conceptual frameworks linked to the study. However, there are certain holes that may be filled with more study on this issue.

For starters, the survey was done at only two of the eight public colleges that offer accounting programs. A comparable study at technical and private colleges is advised to discover potential parallels and contrasts with the existing findings. It will also be important to replicate this study in other sub-regional

nations in order to compare the findings of this study with the findings of other countries. Furthermore, duplicating this study in other nations within the same sub-region would be beneficial for comparing the results of this study to those from other countries.

Second, because this study was done over a specified time period, it is proposed that a longitudinal study be conducted. This will assist accounting researchers in documenting changes that are anticipated to occur as students progress through the accounting curriculum from one level to the next, as well as after graduation in terms of factors influencing their accounting career preference and performance.

Finally, the study relied on student self-reports to assess academic success. The researcher advises that a more robust strategy for collecting multi-source data from academic records and professors at higher education institutions be used.

REFERENCES

Adam-Yawson, N. A., Mensah, V. A., Arkorful, P. & Akuamoah, G. E. (2021). Comparative analysis of education reforms and access to quality education as a tool for national development: A case of Ghana's educational reforms. *American Journal of Education and Practice, 5*(3), 9-28

Adu-Gyamfi, S., Donkoh, W. J., & Addo, A. A. (2016). Educational reforms in Ghana: Past and present. *Journal of Education and Human Development, 5*(3), 158-172.

Afrogha, O., Oladele, F., & Wright, O. (2020). Influencing factors on academic performance in Bowen University: The perceptions of accounting undergraduate students. *International Journal of Accounting and Finance*, *9*(2), 120–138

Agarwala, T. (2008). Factors influencing career choice of management students in India. Career *Development International*, *13*(4), 362–376. https://doi.org/10.1108/13620430810880844

Aggestam, C. (2009). Accounting education, training, and qualifications in selected countries in West Africa. *Association of Accountancy Bodies in West Africa Journal, 1*(6), 6-17.

Ahinful, G. S., Paintsil, R. O., & Danquah, J. B. (2012). Factors influencing the choice of accounting as a major in Ghanaian universities. *Journal of Education and Practice, 3*(15), 101–105.

Ahinful, G. S., Tauringana, V., Bansah, E. A., & Essuman, D. (2019). Determinants of academic performance of accounting students in

Ghanaian secondary and tertiary education institutions. *Accounting Education, 28*(6), 553-581.

Ahmed, A. S., & Duellman, S. (2013). Managerial overconfidence and accounting conservatism. *Journal of Accounting Research, 51(*1), 1-30.

Ahmed, K. A., Sharif, N., & Ahmad, N. (2017). Factors influencing students' career choices: *Empirical evidence from business students. Journal of Southeast Asian Research*, 2017, 1-15

AICPA (2019) *2019 Trends in the Supply of Accounting Graduates and the Demand for Public Accounting Recruits*

Ajani, I. R., & Akinyele, O. B. (2014). Effects of student-teacher ratio on academic achievement of selected secondary school students in Port Harcourt Metropolis, Nigeria. *Journal of Education and Practice, 5*(24) 100-107.

Ajzen, I., & Madden, T. J. (1986). Prediction of goal-directed behaviour: Attitudes, intentions, and perceived behavioural control. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *22*(5), 453-474.

Ake-Little, E., Ebse, N., & Dawson D. (2020). Does class size matter in the university setting? *Educational Researcher, 49*(8), 595-605.

Akhter, R. & Rahaman, S. (2020). Factors affecting academic performance of university students: A study among the students of MBSTU. *Journal of Economics and Sustainable Development, 11*(20), 16-25.

Akinleke, W. O. (2017). Impact of family structure on the academic performance of secondary school students in Yewa local government area of Ogun State, Nigeria. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology Research, 3*(1), 1-10.

Akplu, H. F. (2016). Private participation in higher education in sub-saharan Africa: Ghana's experience. *International Higher Education*, 86, 20-22.

Alanezi, F. S., Alfraih, M. M., Haddad, A. E., & Altaher, N. A. (2016). Factors influencing students' choice of accounting as a major: Further evidence from Kuwait. *Global Review of Accounting and Finance, 7*(1), 165-177.

Alanzi, K. A. (2018). Female accounting students and their academic performance: Evidence from Kuwait. *Journal of Islamic Accounting and Business Research, 9*(5), 662-672.

Alanzi, K. A., & Alfraih, M. M. (2017). Does accumulated knowledge impact academic performance in cost accounting? *Journal of International Education in Business, 10*(1), 2-11.

Alsharari, N. M. (2017). The development of accounting education and practice in an environment of socio-economic transformation in the Middle East: The case of Jordan. *International Journal of Educational Management, 31*(6), 735-751.

Al-Twaijry, A. A. (2010). Student academic performance in undergraduate managerial-accounting courses. *Journal of Education for Business, 85*(6), 311–322.

Aminu, M. & Timothy, J. (2014). Career choice and academic performance of Microbiology students in a Nigerian university. *International Journal of Science and Technology Educational Research, 5*(5), 58-66.

Amir, S., & Sarwar, S. M. (2012) Factors having impact on the performance of business students. *International Journal of Business and Social Science 3*(17), 279-293.

Amoor, S. S., & Aliyu M. M. (2014). An empirical analysis of factors influencing the career choice of undergraduates in secretarial option of business education programme in Nigeria Universities. *Journal of education and practice, 5*(39), 184-192.

Anis, A., & Hanafi, R. (2015). Factors influencing students' choice of an accounting major in Egypt. *International Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Performance Evaluation, 11*(4), 225-254.

Anyane-Ntow, K. (1992). 'Accounting Education and Certification in Ghana. In K. Anyane-Ntow (Eds.), *International Handbook of Accounting Education and Certification* (pp. 56-69). New York, USA: Pergamon Press Ltd

Apostolou, B., Dorminey, J. W., Hassell, J. M., & Rebele, J. E. (2015). Accounting education literature review. Journal of Accounting Education, *35*, 20-55

Arora, N. & Singh, N. (2017). Factors affecting the academic performance of college students. *i-manager's Journal of Educational Technology, 14*(1), 47-53.

Arthur, N., & Everaert, P. (2012). Gender and performance in accounting examinations: Exploring the impact of examination format. *Accounting Education, 21*(5), 471–487.

Aslam S. (2018). Career Preferences and academic achievement of secondary school students with respect to their dichotomy. *International Journal of Advanced Educational Research, 3*(2), 167–175.

Asenso-Okofo, O., Ali, M. J., & Ahmed, K. (2011). The development of accounting and reporting in Ghana. *The International Journal of Accounting*, *46*(4), 459-480.

Atena, F. W., & Tiron-tudor, A. (2019). Gender as a Dimension of Inequality in Accounting Organisations and Developmental HR Strategies. *Administrative Sciences 10* (1), 1-24

Atieh, S. H. (2013). Student perceptions of the causes of low performance in principles of accounting: A case study in Saudi Arabia. *JKAU: Economics and Administration*, *10*, 35-50.

Auyeung, P., & Sands, J. (1997). Factors influencing accounting students' career choice: A cross-cultural validation study. *Accounting Education 6*(1), 13-23.

Awadallah, E., & Elgharbawy A. (2021). Utilizing the theory of reasoned action in understanding students' choice in selecting accounting as major. *Accounting Education*, *30*(1), 86-106. https://doi.org/10.1080/09639284.2020.1811992

Awayiga, J. Y., Onumah, J. M., & Tsamenyi, M. (2010). Knowledge and skills development of accounting graduates: The perceptions of graduates and employers in Ghana. *Accounting Education: An International Journal, 19*(2), 139-158.

Ayuba B., & Mohammed, N. (2014). Investigating the factors affecting performance of business management students in Nigerian universities. *IOSR Journal of business management*, *16*(8), 11-20.

Ajzen, I. (1988). *Attitudes, personality and behaviour*. Chicago: Dorsey Press

Ajzen, I. (2011). The theory of planned behaviour: Reactions and reflections. *Psychology and Health, 26*(9), 1113-1127.

Ajzen, I. (2012). The theory of planned behaviour. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski & E. T. Higgins (Eds). *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (pp. 438-459). Sage Publications Ltd.

Azjen, I., & Madden, T. (1986). Prediction of goal-directed behavior: Attitudes, intentions, and perceived behavioral control. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology, 22*(5), 453–474. https://doi.org/10.1016/0022-1031(86)90045-4

Babalola, Y. A., & Abiola, F. R. (2013). The importance of mathematics in the recording and interpretation of accounting. *International Journal of Financial Economics, 1*(4), 104–107.

Baker, C. N. (2008). Under-represented college students and extracurricular involvement: The effects of various student organizations on academic performance. *Social Psychology of Education, 11*(3), 273-298.

Bakre, O. M., & Lauwo, S. (2016). Critical perspectives on accounting privatisation and accountability in a "crony capitalist" Nigerian state. Critical Perspectives on Accounting, 39, 45–58. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpa.2016.01.003

Baloch, R. A. S., & Shah, N. (2014). The significance of awareness about selection and recruitment processes in students' career decision-making. *European Scientific Journal, 10*(14), 536-552.

Bandura, A., Barbaranelli, C., Caprara, G. V., & Pastorelli, C. (2001). Self-efficacy beliefs as shapers of children's aspirations and Career trajectories. *Child Development,* 72(1),187-206.

Barnes, H., Dzansi, D., Wilknson, A. & Viljoen, M. (2009). Researching the first year accounting problem: Factors influencing success or failure at South African Higher Education Institution. *Journal of New Generation Sciences, 7*(2), 36–58.

Barrow, M., Reilly, B., & Woodfield, R. (2009). The determinants of undergraduate degree performance. How important is gender? *British Educational Research Journal, 35*(4), 575-597.

Bayerlein, L., & Timpson, M. (2017). Do accredited undergraduate accounting programmes in Australia meet the needs and expectations of the accounting profession? *Education + Training, 59*(3), 305-322.

Bedi, I. (2016). Impediments to accountancy education change in Ghana. *International Journal of Accounting and Finance, 6*(2), 118-126

Bedu-Addo, P. K. A. (2009). *Guidance and counselling "unmasked"*. (3rd ed.). Accra, Ghana: Type Company Limited.

Bekoe, R. A., Owusu, G. M. Y., Ofori, C. G., Essel-Andeson, A., & Welbeck, E. E. (2018). Attitudes towards accounting and intention to major in accounting: A logistic regression analysis. *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies, 8*,(4), 459-475.

Belete, J. B., & Dessalegn, G. M. (2011). *The misalignment between accounting education and practice in Ethiopia*: A resource dependence perspective. Paper presented at Accounting and Finance Association of Australia and New Zealand (AFAANZ) Open Conference Module.

Belkaoui, A. (1983). Accrual accounting and cash accounting: Relative merits of derived accounting indicator numbers. *Journal of Business Finance and Accounting, 10*(2), 299-312.

Bertrams, A., & Dickhauser, O. (2009). High-School students' need for cognition, self-control capacity, and school achievement: Testing a mediation hypothesis. *Learning and Individual Differences, 19*(1), 135-138.

Blackmore, J., Gribble, C., & Rahimi, M. (2017). International education, the formation of capital and graduate employment: Chinese accounting graduates' experiences of the Australian labour market. *Critical Studies in Education, 58*(1), 69-88.

Blocher, E. J., Stout, D. E., Juras, P. E., & Smith, S. (2019). *Cost management: A strategic emphasis* (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Bloom, B.S. (Ed.) (1956): *Taxonomy of educational objectives: The classification of educational goals: Handbook I, cognitive domain*. New York, Toronto: Longmans, Green

Boateng, J. K. (2014). Barriers to internal quality assurance in Ghanaian private tertiary institutions. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 4*(2), 1-9.

Brook, S., & Roberts, M. (2021). What are the determinants of student performance on an undergraduate accounting degree? *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 45*(1), 1-16.

Brown, S. D., & Lent, R. W. (2019). Social cognitive career theory at 25: Progress in studying the domain satisfaction and career self-management models. *Journal of Career Assessment, 27*(4), 563-578.

Bruce-Twum, E. (2013). The accounting profession and the female gender in Ghana. *Accounting and Finance Research, 2*(1), 54-60.

Byrne, M., & Willis, P. (2013). Irish secondary students' perceptions of the work of an accountant and the accounting profession. *Accounting Education: an international journal, 14*(4), 367-381.

Byrne, M., & Flood, B. (2008). Examining the relationships among background variables and academic performance of first-year accounting students at an Irish university. *Journal of Accounting Education, 26(*4), 202–212.

Cahyadi, D. D., Andayani, S., & Suryaningrum, D. H. (2019). Accounting students perceptions on factors affecting career choices. *Journal of Accounting and Strategic Finance, 2*(2), 170-182.

Callaghan, C., & Papageorgiou, E. (2015). Gender differences in locus of control and student performance in the South African context of accounting studies. *Meditari Accountancy Research, 23*(3), 348–368.

Catalyst (2020). *Quick Take: Women in Accounting*. Retrieved from https://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/ women-accounting (accessed on 15 August 2020).

Celik, O., & Ecer, A. (2009). Efficiency in accounting education: evidence from Turkish Universities. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting, 20*(5), 614-634.

Chistyakova, S. N. (2018). Professional career development as the most important resource for the adaptation of a graduate in the labor market. *Bulletin of Voronezh State University: Series: "Problems of Higher Education", 3*, 199-202.

Cohen, J., & Hanno, D. M. (1993). An analysis of underlying constructs affecting the choice of accounting as a major. *Issues in Accounting Education, 8*(2), 219-238.

Cohen, J., & Hanno. D. M. (1993). An analysis of the underlying constructs affecting the choice of accounting as a major. *Issues in Accounting Education, 8*(2), 219–238.

Connely, K. P., DuBois, N. F., & Staley, R. (1998, April 15). *Structured interview study of the long-term effects of a college study skills course: Traces and self-report measures*. Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Diego, CA.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research design: *Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Creswell, J. W., & Plano Clark, V. L. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd Edition). Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Crites, J. O. (1969). *Vocational psychology: The study of vocational behavior and its development*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Dalci, I., Arash, H., & Baradarani, T. S. (2013). Factors that influence Iranian students' decision to choose accounting major. *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies, 3*(2), 145–163.

Damron-Martinez, D., Presley, A., & Zhang, L. (2013). A study of undergraduate student intent to minor in business: A test of the theory of planned behaviour. *Journal of Education for Business, 88*(2), 109-116.

Demaki G. O. (2013). Prospects and challenges of International Financial Reporting Standards to economic development in Nigeria. *Global Journal of Management and Business Research, 13*(1), 68-75.

Dev, M. (2016). Factors affecting the academic achievement: A Study of Elementary School Students of NCR Delhi, India. *Journal of Education and Practice, 7*(4), 70-74.

Dibabe, T. M., Wubie, A. W., & Wondmagegn, G. A., (2015). Factors that affect students' career choice in Accounting: A case of Bahir Dar University Students. *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting, 6*(5), 146-153.

Drennan, L. G., & Rohde, F. H. (2002). Determinants of performance in advanced undergraduate Management Accounting: An empirical investigation. *Accounting and Finance, 43*, 27–40.

Drury, C. (2018). *Management and cost accounting*. London: Cengage Learning

Eddey, P., & Baumann, C. (2009). Graduate business education: Profiling successful students and its relevance for marketing and recruitment policy. *Journal of Education for Business, 84*(3), 160-168.

Effah, P., & Hoffman, A. (2010). *Regulating Tertiary Education. The Ghanaian and International Perspective*. Accra: Ghana Universities Press

Elu, J. U., & Price, G. N. (2017). Science labor supply in Sub-Saharan Africa: Is there a gender disparity in preferences? *African Development Review, 29*(3), 367–375.

Engellant, K. A., Holland, D. D., & Piper, R. T. (2016). Assessing convergent and discrimimant validity of the motivation construct for the technology integration education model. *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice, 16*(1), 37-50.

Enu, J., Agyman, O. K., & Nkum D. (2015). Factors influencing students' mathematics performance in some selected colleges of education in Ghana. *International Journal of Education Learning and Development, 3*(3), 68-74.

Etiubon, R. U., Ugwu, A. N., & Ado, I. B. (2018). Career choice determinants and academic achievement of first year science education students of University of Uyo, Akwa ibom state, Nigeria. *International Journal for Innovation, Education and Research, 6*(7), 136–147.

Ezeagba, C. E. (2014). Problems in the teaching and learning of accounting as a vocational subject in Nigeria secondary schools. *International Journal of Science and Technology, 3*(2), 208-226.

Fallan, L., & Opstad, L. (2014). Beyond gender performance in accounting: Does personality distinction matter? *Accounting Education: An International Journal, 23*(4), 343–361.

Fatoki O. (2014). The determinant of the career choice of international students in South Africa. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Science, 5*(23), 668-673.

Felton, S., Dimnik, T., & Northey, M. (1995). A theory of reasoned action model of the chartered accountant career choice. *Journal of Accounting Education, 13*(1), 1-19.

Fenollar, P., Román, S., & Cuestas, P. J. (2007). University students' academic performance: An integrative conceptual framework and empirical analysis. *British Journal of Educational Psychology, 77*(4), 873-891.

Ferrington, A. S., Gray, R., & Gary, H. I. (2012). Discriminant analysis in career studying "decision/indecision": The career factors inventory (CFI) a diagnostic measure. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology, 13*(2), 927-940.

Ferry, N. M. (2006). Factors influencing career choices of adolescents and young adults in rural Pennsylvania. *Journal of Extension 44*(3), 1-6.

Financial Reporting Council (2019), *Key Facts and Trends in the Accountancy Profession* (October 2019): p. 61.

Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (1975). *Belief, attitutde, intention, and behavniour: An introduction to theory and research*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Foong, S.-Y., & Khoo, C.-H. (2015). Attitude, learning environment and current knowledge enhancement of accounting students in Malaysia. *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies, 5*(2), 202–221.

Fornell, C. G., & Larcker, D. F. (1981). Evaluating structural equation models with unobservable variables and measurement error. *Journal of Marketing Research, 18*(1), 39-50.

Gallhofer, S., Haslam, J., & Kamla, R. (2009). Educating and training accountants in Syria in a transition context: Perceptions of accounting academics and professional accountants. *Accounting Education: An International Journal, 18*(4), 345-368.

Garkaz, M., Banimahd, B., & Esmaeili, H. (2011). Factors affecting accounting students' performance: the case of students at the Islamic Azad University. *Procedia – Social and Behavioural Sciences, 29*(2011), 122-128. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.11.216

George, D., Dixon, S., Stansal, E., Gelb, S. L., & Pheri, T. (2008). Time diary and questionnaire assessment of factors associated with academic and

personal success among university undergraduates. *Journal of American College Health, 56*(6), 706-715

Ghana Statistical Service (2011). *Ghana population and housing census Report 2010.* Ghana Statistical Service, Accra.

Ghana Statistical Service (2021). *Ghana population and housing census Report 2020.* Ghana Statistical Service, Accra.

Ghartey, J. B. (1992). Evolution, problems and challenges of accountancy education and certification in Ghana. In K. Anyane-Ntow (Eds.), *International Handbook of Accounting Education and Certification* (pp. 37-54). New York, USA: Pergamon Press Ltd

Ginzberg, E., Ginsburg, S., Axelrad, S., & Herma, J. (1951). *Occupational Choice.* Columbia University Press, New York.

Gobena, G. A. (2018). Family socio-economic status effect on students' academic performance at college of education and behavioural sciences, Haramaya University, Eastern Ethiopia. *Journal of Teacher Education and Educators, 7*(3), 2017-222.

Gorman, G. E. & Clayton, P. (2005). *Qualitative research for the information professionals: A practical handbook*. London: Facet Publishing.

Gracia, L., & Jenkins, E. (2003). An exploration of student failure on an undergraduate accounting programme of study. *Accounting Education, 11*(1), 93–107. https://doi.org/10.1080/09639280210153290

Grobelna, A. (2017). The perception of job-related motivators when choosing a career in the tourism and hospitality industry: A comparative study between Polish and Spanish Students. *International Journal of Management & Economics, 53*(2), 84-106.

Guidry, K. (2015). Does course delivery method impact performance in subsequent courses? evidence from a financial management course. *Business Education and Accreditation, 7*(2), 1-8.

Guney, Y. (2009). Exogenous and endogenous factors influencing students' performance in undergraduate accounting modules. *Accounting Education: An International Journal, 18*(1), 51–73.

Gupta, K., & Maksy, M. M. (2019). Factors associated with student performance in investment portfolio management: An empirical study at a US residential public university. *Journal of Accounting and Finance*, *19*(2), 56–84.

Hair, J. F. (2014). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Hair, J. F., Sarstedt, M., Hopkins, L & Kuppelwieser, V. G. (2014). Partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM): An emerging tool in business research. *European Business Review, 26*(2), 106-121.

Hair, J. F., Risher, J. J., Sarstedt, M., & Ringle, C. M. (2019). When to use and how to report the results of PLS-SEM. *European Business Review, 31*(1), 2-24.

Hammour, H. (2018). Influence of the attitudes of Emirati students on their choice of accounting as a profession. *Accounting Education, 27*(4), 433-451.

Hanson, J. W. (1971). *Secondary Level Teachers: Supply and Demand in Ghana.* (Report on the Supply of Secondary level teachers in English speaking Africa. Overseas liaison committee of the American council on Education, Country study No. 12) Institute for International Studies

in Education and the African Studies Center, Michigan State University, Michigan

Hao, Q., Kaufinger, G., & Maksy, M. M. (2021). Factors affecting student performance in managerial accounting: An empirical study at a US residential public university. *Journal of Applied Business and Economics, 23*(4), 54-72.

Hashim, H. M., & Embong, A. M. (2015). Parental and peer influences upon accounting as a subject and accountancy as a career. *Journal of Economics, Business, and Management, 3*(2), 252-256.

Hellen, M., & Kitainge, K. (2016). Influence of career preference on academic performance and graduation of male students: a case study of a university in western region of Kenya. *Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, 4*(8), 9-20.

Helliar, C. (2013). The global challenge for accounting education. *Accounting Education, 22*(6), 510-521.

Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2015). A new criterion for assessing discriminant validity in variance-based structural equation modeling. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 43*(1), 115–135.

Hensen (1976). Career development education. *Journal of Career Education, 3*(1), 42-48.

Hensley, W. E (1995, April 27-30). *What do grades mean? A pilot study using sex, GPA, and cognitive/semantic consistency.* Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern States Speech Communication Association, Pittsburgh, PA.

Herr, E. L., Cramer, S. H., & Niles, S. G. (2004). *Career guidance and counselling through the lifespan: Systemic approaches* (6th ed.). Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Hijazi & Naqvi (2006). Factors affecting student's performance: A case of private colleges. *Bangladesh e-Journal of Sociology, 3*(1), 2006.

Hoffman, E. M. (2014). Faculty and student relationships: Context matters. *College Teaching, 62*(1), 13- 19.

Honicke, T., & Broadbent, J. (2016). The influence of academic self-efficacy on academic performance: a systematic review. *Educational Research Review* 17, 63–84.

Horngren, C., Datar, S., Foster, G., Rajan, M., & Ittner, C. (2009). *Cost Accounting: A Managerial Emphasis.* New Jersey: Upper Saddle River: Prentice Hall.

Iddrisu, S., Alhassan, E. & Kinder, T. (2014). Educational reforms and the role of polytechnic education in the socio- economic Development of Ghana. *Africa Development and Resources Research Institute Journal*, *11*(2), 29-52

ICAG (2017). 2017 Annual report and financial statements. Accra: ICAG

ICAG (2018). 2018 Annual report and financial statements. Accra: ICAG

IES 2 (2008). *Content of professional accounting education programmes*. New York: IFAC

IES 3 (2008). *Professional skills*. New York: IFAC

IES 4 (2008). *Professional values, ethics and attitudes.* New York: IFAC

IFAC (2013). *Handbook of the code of ethics for professional accountants 2013 edition*. New York: IFAC

IFAC (2021). *Framework for international education standards for professional accountants.* New York: IFAC

Igere, M. A. (2017). Career choice and its influence on academic performance of library and information science students in a Nigerian University. *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management, 8*(2), 90-98.

Ikonen, K., Leinonnen, R., Asikainen, M. A., & Hirvonen, P. E. (2018). The influence of parents, teachers, and friends on ninth graders‘ education and career choices. *Journal of Gender, Science & Technology, 9*(3), 316-338.

Ireland, G. W., & Lent, R. W. (2018). Career exploration and decision-making learning experiences: A test of the career self-management model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior,* 106, 37–47.

Issahaku, P. A. (2017). An investigation of factors that influence the academic performance of undergraduate students of public universities in Ghana. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 8*(3), 259-275.

Istrate, C. (2012). Gender issues in Romanian accounting profession. *Review of Economic and Business Studies, 5*(2), 21-45.

Jackling, B., & Calero, C. (2006). Influences on undergraduate students' intentions to become qualified accountants: *Evidence from Australia. Accounting Education, 15*(4), 419–438.

Jackling, B., & Keneley, M. (2009). Influences on the supply of accounting graduates in Australia: a focus on international students. *Accounting & Finance, 49*(1), 141-159.

Jackling, B., De Lange, P., Phillips, J., & Sewell, J. (2012). Attitudes towards accounting: Differences between Australian and international students. *Accounting Research Journal, 25*(2), 113-130.

Jansen, J., & De Villiers, C. (2016). Determinants of student performance in an accounting degree programme. *SA Journal of Accounting Research, 30*(1), 1–28.

Jeffres, M. N., Barclays, S. M., & Stolte, S. K. (2014). Academic enlightenment and academic performance in graduating pharmacy students. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education,78*(6), 1-9.

Jemini-Gashi, L., Hyseni Duraku, Z., & Kelmendi, K. (2019). Associations between social support, career self-efficacy, and career indecision among youth. *Current Psychology, 40,* 1–7. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-019-00402-x

Johnson, H., & Kaplan, R. (1987). *Relevance Lost – The Rise and Fall of Management Accounting*. Harvard Business School Press, Boston, Ma.

Jones, S., & Wright, M. (2011). Effect of cognitive style on performance in introductory Financial Accounting and the decision to major in accounting. *Global Perspectives on Accounting Education, 7*(1), 7–26.

Joshi, K., & Kuhn, K. (2011). What determines interest in an IS career? An application of the theory of reasoned action. *Communications of the Association for Information Systems, 29*(8), 133-158.

Kazi, A. S., & Akhlaq, A. (2017). Factors affecting students' career choice. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education, 2*, 187-196

Khan, F. N., Begum, M., & Imad, M. (2019). Relationship between students' home environment and their academic achievement at secondary school level. *Pakistan journal of distance and online learning, 5*(11), 223-234.

Kherfi, S. (2008). Economic education in the Middle East: Are the determinants of success in introductory economics any different? *Journal of Economic Education, 39*(1), 22-40.

Khwaileh, F. M., & Zaza, H. I. (2011). Gender differences in academic performance among undergraduates at the University of Jordan: Are they real or stereotyping? *College Student Journal, 45*(3), 633-647

Kivunja, C. & Kuyini, A. B. (2017). Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International Journal of Higher Education, 6*(5), 26-41.

Kock N., & Lynn, G. S. (2012). Lateral collinearity and misleading results in variance-based SEM: An illustration and recommendations. *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 13*(7), 546-580.

Koech, J., Bitok, J., Rutto, D., Koech, S., Okoth, J. O., Korir, B., & Ngala, H. (2016). Factors influencing career choices among undergraduate students in public universities in Kenya: A case study of University of Eldoret. *International Journal of Contemporary Applied Sciences*, *3*(2), 50-63.

Koh, M. Y., & Koh, H. C. (1999). The Determinants of performance in an accountancy degree course. *Accounting Education: An International Journal, 8*(1), 13-29.

Komori, N. (2008). Toward the feminization of accounting practice: lessons from the experiences of Japanese women in the accounting profession. *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal, 21*(4), 507-538.

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research methodology: Methods and techniques.* New Delhi: New Age International (P) Ltd., Publishers.

Kuhn, T. S. (1962). *The structure of scientific revolutions*. (1st ed). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Kukreja, G. & Aali, M. H. (2013). The determinants of students' performance in introductory accounting course: Evidence from kingdom of Bahrain. *Journal of Emerging Issues in Economics, Finance and Banking, 1*(3), 183–201.

Kumar S., Agarwal, M. & Agarwal N. (2021). Defining and measuring academic performance of Hei students – a critical review. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education, 12*(6), 3091-3105

Kumar, T. (2017). Factors that influence Bangladeshi student's decisions to major accounting at the entrance of university. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research, 6*(2), 147–171.

Kusi, H. & Manful, H. O. (2019). Class size and academic performance of students in selected nursery and midwifery training colleges in the central region, Ghana. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 6*(9), 225-246

Lamas, H. (2015). School Performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology - Propósitos y Representaciones, 3*(1), 313-386.

Law, P., & Yuen, D. (2012). A multilevel study of students' motivations of studying accounting: Implications for employers. *Education+ Training, 54*(1), 50-64.

Lawer, T. D. (2015). Factors that inform students‘ choice of study and career. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(27), 43-49.

Lee, P. C., & Lee, A. (2018). The importance of career goal in relation to academic performance: A case study of hospitality management students. *Journal of Teaching in Travel & Tourism, 18*(2), 159-176.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D. & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45* (1), 79-122.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (2000). Contextual supports and barriers to career choice: A social cognitive analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 47*(1), 36-49.

Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2008). Social cognitive career theory and subjective well-being in the context of work. *Journal of Career Assessment, 16*, 6–21

Leshchinskii, D., & Maksy, M.M. (2019). Factors associated with student performance in finance electives: An empirical study at a US private college. *Journal of Applied Business and Economics, 21*(7), 53–72.

Lesnikova, S. L., & Leukhova, M. G. (2018). Professional self-determination of university students as a condition of professional identity: an aspect of attitude to a professional career. *Baltic Humanitarian Journal, 7*(3), 253-256.

Mahoney, J. L., Cairns, B. D., & Farmer, T. W. (2003). Promoting interpersonal competence and educational success through extracurricular activity participation. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 95*(2), 409-418.

Makarova, E., Aeschlimann, B., & Herzog, W. (2019). The gender gap in STEM fields: The impact of the gender stereotype of math and science on secondary students' career aspirations. *Frontiers in Education, 4*(60), 1-11.

Maksy, M. M., & Rodriguez, C. (2018). Factors associated with student performance in managerial accounting: An empirical study at a New England public university. *Journal of Applied Business and Economics, 20*(7), 101-125.

Mansfield, P. M., Pinto, M. B., Parente, D. H., & Wortman, T. I. (2009). College students and academic performance: A case of taking control. *NASPA Journal, 45*(3), 502-518.

Mauldin, S., Crain, J. L., & Mounce, P. (2000). The Accounting principles instructor's Influence on students' decision to major in accounting. *Journal of Education for Business, 75*(3), 142-150.

Mbawuni, J. (2018). Perceived benefits and challenges of IFRS adoption in Ghana: views of members of Institute of Chartered Accountants, Ghana (ICAG). *International Journal of Financial Research, 9*(1), 99-114.

McDowall, T., & Jackling, B. (2010). Attitudes towards the accounting profession: An Australian perspective. *Asian Review of Accounting, 18*(1), 30-49.

McMillan, J. H., & Schumacher, S. (2010). *Research in Education – Evidence-Based Inquiry*. (7 th ed.) Boston: Pearson Education, Inc

Mihaela, P. L. (2015). Psychological factors of academic success. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 180*, 1632-1637.

Ministry of Education (2019). *Education sector performance report 2019.* Accra: Ministry of Education.

Mkhize, M. V. (2019). Transdisciplinary relationship between mathematics and accounting. *The Journal for Transdisciplinary Research in Southern Africa, 15*(1), 1-18.

Mudhovozi, P. & Chireshe, R. (2012). Socio-demorgraphic factors influencing career decision-making among undergraduate psychology students in South Africa. *Journal of Social Sciences, 31*(2), 167-176.

Muhamad, H., Salleh, M. M., & Nordin, M. S. M. (2016). Factors influencing career choice of accounting students in University Putra Malaysia: Qualitative pilot study. *Journal of Advanced Research in Social and Behavioural Sciences, 5*(1), 25-34.

Muhamad, H., San, O. T., Ni, S. W., & Safingi, A. R. B. (2020). Accountant as a career choice from the perspective of secondary school and undergraduate accounting students in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 10*(10), 613-636.

Mulhall, S. (2014). Career and career development. In B. Harney & K. Monks (Eds.), Strategic HRM*: Irish Research and Practice Edition*: *First Chapter: Career and Career Development*. Blackhall Publishing Editors

Mustapha, M., & Hassan, M. H. A. (2012). Accounting students' perception on pursuing professional examination. *International Journal of Education, 4*(4), 1-15.

Narad, A., & Abdullah, B. (2016). Academic performance of senior secondary school students: Influence of parental encouragement and school environment. *Rupkatha Journal on Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities Special Issue, 3*(2), 12-19.

Neuman, W. L. (2007). *Basics of social research methods: qualitative and quantitative approaches* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Ng, Y. H., Lai, S. P., Su, Z. P., Yap, J. Y., Teoh, H. Q. & Lee, H. (2017). Factors influencing accounting students' career paths. *Journal of Management Development, 36*(3), 319-329.

Nishiyama, Y., Camillo, A. A., & Jinkens, R. C. (2014). Gender and motives for accountancy. *Journal of Applied Accounting Research, 15*(2), 175-196.

Nitzl, C., Roldán, J. L., & Cepeda, G. (2017). Mediation analyses in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling, Helping Researchers Discuss More Sophisticated Models: An Abstract. In: Rossi, P. (Eds) *Marketing at the Confluence between Entertainment and Analytics. Developments in Marketing Science: Proceedings of the Academy of Marketing Science*. Springer, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-47331-4_130

Odia, J. O., & Ogiedu, K. O. (2013). Factors affecting the study of Accounting in Nigerian Universities. *Journal of Educational and Social Research, 3*(3), 89–96.

Odia, J. O., & Ogiedu, K. O. (2013). IFRS adoption: Issues, Challenges and Lessons for Nigeria and other Adopters. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 4*(3), 389-399.

Odoh, L. C., Ugwuanyi, U. B., Odigbo, B. E., & Chukwuani, N. V. (2017). Influence of parental occupation and level of education on academic performance of accounting students in Nigeria. *Research on Humanities and Social Sciences, 7*(10), 21-27.

Oduh, W. A., Agboola, J. O., & Eibhalemen, F. A. (2020). Influence of peer group on the career choice of secondary school students in south senatorial district of Edo state, Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education, 7*(6), 214-221.

Olanipekun, S. S. (2015). Analysis of students' academic performance in general English in Kwara State college of education, Lafiagi, Nigeria. *Open Access Library Journal 2*(7), 1 – 7.

Olufemi, O. T., Adediran, A. A., & Oyediran, W. O. (2018). Factors affecting students' academic performance in college of education in southwest, Nigeria. *British Journal of Education, 6*(10), 43-56.

Olufolakemi, A., Femi, O., & Olatunde W. (2020). Influencing factors on academic performance in Bowen university: The perceptions of accounting undergraduate students. *International Journal of Accounting and Finance, 9*(2), 120–140.

Onumah, J. M., Gariba, F., Packeys, A., & Agyapong, R. A. (2012). The Banking Industry Requirements of Accounting Graduates in Ghana. In V. Tauringana, & M. Mangena (Ed.), *Accounting in Africa (Research in Accounting in Emerging Economies)*, Vol. 12 (pp. 75-105).

Osei-Tutu, J., Yeboah-Appiagyei, K., & Darkwa, B. F. (2014). The school environmental factors that affect the academic performance of senior high Financial Accounting students in tamale metropolis in the northern

region of Ghana. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal, 1*(7), 133-144.

Owusu, G. M. Y., Bekoe, R. A., Okyere, S. A., & Wellbeck, E. E. (2019). What influences the course major decision of accounting and non-accounting students? *Journal of International Education in Business, 12*(1), 26-42.

Owusu, G. M. Y., Essel-Anderson, A., Kwakye, T. O., Bekoe, R. A., & Ofori, C. G. (2018). Factors influencing career choice of tertiary students in Ghana: A comparison of science and business majors. *Education + Training, 60*(9), 992–1008.

Owusu, G. M. Y., Kwakye, T. O., Bekoe, R. A., & Welbeck, E. E. (2019). Approaches to learning of accounting students in Ghana. *UCP Management Review, 3*(1), 69-93.

Paolillo, J. G., & Estes, R. W. (1982). An empirical analysis of career choice factors among accountants, attorneys, engineers, and physicians. *Accounting Review*, *57*(4), 785-793.

Parker, L. D. (2015). Accounting historiography: looking back to the future. *Meditari Accountancy Research, 23*(2) 142-157.

Parsons, F. (1909). *Choosing a vocation*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Perez, C. A., Deotoy, M. E., Varron, R., Macasinag, J., Tomenio, J., & Perfecto, M. G. A. (2019). The effects of extracurricular activities on the academic performance of grade 12 ABM students: Basis for a proposed action plan. *Ascendens Asia Singapore – Bestlink College of the Phillipines Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 1*(1) https://ojs.aaresearchindex.com/index.php/aasgbcpjmra

Perneger, T. V., Courvoisier, D. S., Hudelson P. M., & Gayet-Ageron (2015). Sample size for pre-tests of questionnaires. *Qual Life Res, 24***,** 147–151. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11136-014-0752-2

Porter, J., & Woolley, D. (2014). An examination of the factors affecting students' decision to major in accounting. *International Journal of Accounting and Taxation, 2*(4), 1– 22.

Principe, H. R. (2005). *Factors influencing students academic performance in first accounting course: a comparative study between public and private universities in Puerto Rico*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, Argosy University, Puerto Rico.

Pring, R. (2008). Fides quaerens intellectum. In L. J. Waks (Ed.), *Leaders in philosophy of education* (pp. 185-200). Rotterdam: Sense.

Pritchard, R., Potter, G., & Saccucci, M. (2004). The selection of a business major: Elements influencing student choice and implications for outcomes assessment. *Journal of Education for Business 79*(3), 152–156.

Quist, H. O. (1999). Secondary education in Ghana at the dawn of the twenty-first century: profile, problems and prospects. *Prospects 23*(3), 425-442.

Quist, H. O. (2003). Transferred and adapted models of secondary education in Ghana: What implications for national development? *International Review of Education, 49*(5), 411-431.

Rau, W., & Durand, A. (2000). The academic ethic and college grades: does hard work help students to "make the grade?" *Sociology of Education, 73*(1), 19-38.

Richardson, A. J., & Jones, D. B. (2007). Professional "brand", personal identity and resistance to change in the Canadian accounting profession a comparative history of two accounting association merger negotiations. *Accounting History, 12*(2), 135-164.

Richardson, A. J., & Kilfoyle, E. (2012). Merging the profession: A historical perspective on accounting association mergers in Canada. *Accounting Perspectives, 11*(2), 77-109.

Romero, J. G., Lugo, S. G., Hernandez, Z. C., & Villa E. G. (2012). Predictors of academic performance in adolescents with resilient and non-resilient dispositions. *Journal of Resilient Psychology, 30*(1), 47-74.

Saayir, P. T., & Bosu, L. (2021). Students' choice of business studies as programme of study: The case of senior high schools in the Wa Municipality. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science, 5*(3), 491-498.

Saayir, P. T., & Sande, W. A. (2020). Retention of senior high school Financial Accounting teachers in Ghana: *A qualitative Elemental Analysis. International Journal of Psychology and Education, 4*(4), 145-160.

Sahoo, S., & Klasen, S. (2018). Gender segregation in education and its implications for labour market outcomes: Evidence from India. IZA Discussion Paper No. 11660.

Salami, S. O. (2008). Roles of personality, vocational interest, academic achievement, and socio-cultural factors in educational aspirations of secondary school adolescents in southwestern Nigeria. *Career Development International, 13*(7), 630-647.

Sangster, A. (2015). *Business Accounting*. London: Pearson Education Limited.

Sedgwick, R. (2000). *Education in Ghana*. World Education News and Review. Retrieved from https://wenr.wes.org/2000/03/ewenr-marchapril-2000-education-in-ghana.

Shafiq, M., Farooq, M. S., Chaudhry, A. H., & Berhanu, G. (2011). Factors affecting students' quality of academic performance: A case of secondary school level. *Journal of Quality and Technology Management, 7*(2), 1-14.

Shamsudin, S., Ismail, S. F., Al-Mamun, A., & Nordin, S. K. B. S. (2014). Examining the effect of extracurricular activities on academic achievements among the public university students in Malaysia. *Asian Social Science, 10*(9), 171-177.

Shertzer, B., & Stone, C. (2006). *Educational counseling*. (3rd ed.). Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Shulruf, B. (2010). Do extracurricular activities in schools improve educational outcomes? A critical review and meta-analysis of the literature. *International Review of Education, 56*(5), 591–612.

Siagian, F. T., & Khan, M. (2016). The impact of a participant-based accounting cycle course on student performance in intermediate Financial Accounting I. *Journal of Education for Business, 91*(6), 311-317.

Simiyu, N. R. (2015). Influence of gender on career choices by students in youth polytechnics in Bungoma County, Kenya. *International Journal of Innovation and Scientific Research, 14*(1), 83-88.

Sinclair, R. C. (2015). *A study of the scarcity of qualified applicants for governmental accounting positions.* Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Phoenix.

Singh, A. (2017). Effect of co-curricular activities on academic achievement of students. *International Journal of Education and Multidisciplinary Studies 6*(3), 241-254.

Singh, S. P., Malik, S., & Singh, P. (2016). Research paper factors affecting academic performance of students. *Indian Journal of Research, 5*(4), 176-178.

Sotnikova, S. I., & Sotnikov, N. Z. (2015). Professional career of the worker: Relevance, essence, types, determinants, indicators of research. *Herald of Omsk University. Series "Economics", 1*, 100-107.

Steinmayr, R., & Spinath, B. (2009). The importance of motivation as a predictor of school achievement. *Learning and Individual Differences, 19*(1), 80-90.

Sugahara, S., & Boland, G. (2009). The accounting profession as a career choice for tertiary business students in Japan - A factor analysis. *Accounting Education: An International Journal, 18*(3), 255-272.

Suhas, P. S., & Panya, P. S. (2016). Factors influencing students' academic performance in mathematics. *International Journal of Education and Applied Social Sciences, 7*(3), 291-298.

Suleiman, Y., Hanafi, Z. B., & Taslikhan, M. B. (2017). Structural equation modeling of relationship between teachers' capacity building and students' academic performance in secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. *Journal of Quantitative Methods, 1*(1), 99-131.

Sullivan, S. E., & Baruch, Y. (2009). Advances in career theory and research: A critical review and agenda for future exploration, *Journal of Management, 36*(6), 1542–1571.

Super, D. E. (1957). *Psychology of careers*. New York: Harper.

Super, D. E. (1990). A life-span, life-space approach to career development. In D. Brown (2002). *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 16(*3), 282–298.

Taherdoost, H. (2016). Validity and Reliability of the research instrument; How to test the validation of a questionnaire/survey in research. *International Journal of Academic Research in Management, 5*(3), 28-36.

Tan, L. M., & Laswad, F. (2006). Students' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions to major in accounting. *Accounting Education, 1*5(2), 167-187.

Tan, L. M., & Laswad, F. (2009). Understanding students' choice of academic majors: A longitudinal analysis. *Accounting Education: an International Journal, 18*(3), 233-253.

Tang, L. C., & Seng, C. (2016). Factors influencing students' choice of accounting major in Cambodian universities. *Asian Review of Accounting, 24*(2), 231-251.

Taylor, A. (2013). Ethics training for accountants: does it add up? *Meditari Accountancy Research, 21*(2), 161–177.

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tsevi, L. (2015). *Quality Assurance in Private Higher Education: The Case of Ghana.* (Doctoral dissertation, State University of New York) https://www.proquest.com/docview/1719259608/previewPDF/6B2F6633279A4DD9PQ/1?accountid=63126

Tyurina, Y., & Troyanskaya, M. (2017). Perspectives of increase of university education effectiveness: Use of private educational resources. *International Journal of Educational Management, 31*(3), 396-403.

Umar, I. (2014). Factors influencing students' career choice in accounting: The case of Yobe State University. *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting, 5*(17), 59-62.

Umar, I., & Bello, M. S. (2019). The relationship between accounting students' self-efficacy beliefs, outcome expectations on intention to become chartered accountants. *East African Scholars Journal of Economics, Business and Management, 2*(7), 376-381.

United Nations (2019). *The sustainable development goals report 2019*. New York: United Nations

United Nations (2021). *The sustainable development goals report 2020*. New York: United Nations

UNICEF (2010). *Annual reports 2010*. New York: UNICEF

Uyar, A., Gungormus, A. H., & Kuzey, C. (2011). Factors affecting students' career choice in accounting: The case of a Turkish university. *American Journal of Business Education, 4*(10), 29–38.

Villamar, A. J., Gayagoy, M., Matalang, F., & Catacutan, K. J. (2020). Usefulness of mathematics subjects in the accounting courses in Baccalaureate Education. *Mathematics and Statistics, 8*(1), 27-31.

Vogt, W. P. (2007). *Quantitative research methods for professionals* (pp. 117-118). Boston: Pearson, Allyn and Bacon.

Voorhees, C. M., Brady, M. K., Calantone, R., & Ramirez, E. (2016). Discriminant validity testing in marketing: An analysis, causes for concern, and proposed remedies. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 44*(1), 119–134.

WAEC (2020). Chief examiners' reports on the business subjects. Accra, Ghana: WAEC.

Wally-dima, L. B. (2013). Factors influencing students' choice of accounting as a major : The case of Botswana accounting students. *Asian Journal of Empirical Research, 3*(4), 464–476.

Wang, C., Lo, Y. Y., Xu, Y., Wang, Y., & Porfeli, E. (2007). Constructing the search for a job in academia from the perspectives of self-regulated learning strategies and social cognitive career theory. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 70*(3), 574-589.

Watson, M., McMahon, M., Foxcroft, C., & Els C. (2010). Occupational aspirations of low socio-economic black South African children. *Journal of Career Development 37*(4), 717–734.

Waweru, N. M. (2010). The origin and evolution of Management Accounting: a review of the theoretical framework. *Problems and Perspectives in Management,* 8 (3), 165–182.

Wu, H., Zheng, J., Li, S., & Guo, J. (2019). Does academic interest play a more important role in medical sciences than other disciplines? A nationwide cross-sectional study in China. *BMC Medical Education, 19*(301), 1-8.

Xiang, M., & Yu, T. (2018). Relation between family-related factors and students' learning performance in the first post-secondary accounting course. *The Accounting Educators' Journal, 28*, 139-158.

Xu, Y. J. (2017). Attrition of women in STEM: Examining job/major congruence in the career choices of college graduates. *Journal of Career Development, 44*(1), 3-19.

Yamen, V. (2019). Development features of the students' career building skills. *International Journal of Humanities and Natural Sciences, 7*(1), 18-21.

York, T. T., Gibson, C., & Rankin, S. (2015). Defining and measuring academic success. *Practical assessment, research, and evaluation, 20*(1), 1-20.

Zakaria, M., Fauzi, N. A., & Hasan, J. S. (2012). Accounting as a choice of academic program. *Journal of Business Administration Research, 1*(1), 43–52.

Zakaria, M., Fauzi, W. N. A. W., & Hasan, S. J. (2012). Accounting as a Choice of Academic Program. *Journal of Business Administration Research, 1*(1), 43-52.

Zarb, A. (2021). Assessing the impact of class sizes on the educational performance by business, management and commerce students: A vocational education and training case study. *Science Journal of the Malta Chamber of Scientists, 9*, 47-63.

Zotorvie, J. S. T. (2016). Determinants of career choice among students of Institute of Chartered Accountants (Ghana). *European Scientific Journal 12*(31), 255–274.

Zunker, V. G. (2006). *Career counselling a holistic approach.* Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole, Publishers

Zyngier, D. (2014). Class size and academic results, with a focus on children from culturally, linguistically and economically disenfranchised communities. *Evidence Base, 2014*(1), 1 - 23.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

"The items in this questionnaire are being used purposely for research work on the topic: "Career Preference and Academic Performance of Accounting Students in Ghana".

Please rest assured that all information you enter will be kept strictly secret. Thank you for your assistance.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND DATA

1. Name of School
   …….

2. Age (In completed years)
   A. Below 18[ ] B. 18 – 20[ ] C. 21 – 23 [ ] D. 24 – 26 [ ]
   E. Over 26 [ ]

3. Gender
   A. Female [ ] B. Male [ ]

4. Nationality
   A. Ghanaian [ ] B. Please specify if other ……..

SECTION B: FACTORS INFLUENCING ACCOUNTING STUDENTS CAREER PREFERENCE

"Please indicate the degree to which you Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD) or are Undecided (U) with each statement."

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
	Personal Factors					
5	"I like accounting"					
6	"Accounting is interesting"					
7	"I would enjoy being an accountant"					
8	"I am willing to learn accounting as a subject"					
9	"I am willing to spend a lot of time studying accounting"					

10	"I have interest in calculation"					
11	"I like to answer questions with figures."					
12	"Accounting is a course with lots of class work."					
13	"Learning accounting is very challenging."					
14	"I can maintain high grade point average"					
15	"I made a personal decision to pursue accounting program"					
	Reference Factors					
16	"My parents made me to choose accounting course."					
17	"My friends influenced me to choose accounting."					
18	"Other students recommended accounting to me."					
19	"My SHS Teachers thought I should take accounting course."					
20	"My counselors recommended accounting to me."					
21	"My performance in SHS made me choose accounting."					
22	"My parent's occupation encouraged me to choose accounting."					
	Job related factors					
23	"I chose accounting because there will be job available for me when I graduate."					
24	"I chose accounting because there will always be a great job market demand for people like me."					
25	"I can get a high paying job if I graduate with accounting degree."					
26	"My starting salary will be satisfying if I graduate with accounting degree."					
27	"Accounting requires skills and background in mathematics."					
28	"Being an accountant has a lot of prestige."					
29	"The accounting profession is well respected."					
30	"Accounting is a profession in par with medicine and law."					

31	"Accounting is a field with broad exposure to business."					
	Intention to Pursue Accounting Career Preference					
ACP1	"I am very interested in pursuing accounting career after obtaining my degree "					
ACP2	"I am happy about obtaining a position in Accounting career (accounting is interesting)"					
ACP3	"I am determined to obtain a position in accounting careers (would enjoy being an accountant)"					
ACP4	"I intend to get a good job related to accounting with a high CGPA in my degree"					
ACP5	"I made a personal decision to pursue accounting career."					

SECTION C: ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF ACCOUNTING EDUCATION STUDENTS

32. Please indicate your range of cumulative grade point average (CGPA).

	Actuals			Expected
	Level 100	Level 200	**Level 300**	Level 400
A. 3.6 – 4.0				
B. 3.0 – 3.5				
C. 2.5 – 2.9				
D. 2.0 – 2.4				
E. 1.0 – 1.9				
F. Below 1.0				

Please indicate the Grades you obtained in the following accounting courses

S/N	Course	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	E
33	Foundation/Principles of Accounting I								
34	Foundation/Principles of Accounting II								
35	Financial Reporting I								
36	Financial Reporting II								
37	Financial Reporting III								

38	Cost and Management Accounting I (Cost Accounting)								
39	Cost and Management Accounting II (Management Accounting)								
40	Taxation								
41	Public Sector Accounting								

42. Were you satisfied with the grades obtained above?

A. Yes [ ] B. No [ ]

43. If Yes to question 42, please indicate the extent of satisfaction.

A. Very Satisfied [ ] B. Satisfied [ ] C. Somehow Satisfied [ ] D. Not Satisfied [ ] E. Not Very Satisfied [ ]

If NO, please indicate your expected Grades in the following accounting courses

S/N	Course	A	B+	B	C+	C	D+	D	E
44	Foundation/Principles of Accounting I								
45	Foundation/Principles of Accounting II								
46	Financial Reporting I								
47	Financial Reporting II								
48	Financial Reporting III								
49	Cost and Management Accounting I (Cost Accounting)								
50	Cost and Management Accounting II (Management Accounting)								
51	Taxation								
52	Public Sector Accounting								
53	Advanced Financial Reporting								
54	Auditing								

Indicate the number of hours (on the average) spent during a week on the following activities

S/N	Activities	Zero Hours	Less than 5 Hours	5-9 Hours	10-14 hours	More than 14 Hours
55	"Extracurricular activities (socializing					

	with friends, exercise/sports, partying, student clubs/groups, watching TV, playing and any other activity not related with the accounting programme)."					
56	Family Activities					
57	Working for pay					
58	Studying Accounting courses					

Please indicate how much you agree (A) or disagree (D) on the following statements related to academic performance

S/N	Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD
59	The Class size aided my performance					
60	"The accounting textbooks purchased, aided my learning."					
61	"The Lecturers related concepts discussed in the classroom to the real facts of the daily business operation, which aided my learning."					
62	"The classroom environment aided my learning (consider ventilation, illumination and physical facilities)."					
63	"The concepts (like accounting concepts) discussed in the classroom were clear (easy to understand) which aided my learning and performance."					
64	"The assignments agreed with the concepts discussed in class."					
65	"The role played by the lecturer in the teaching process aided my learning."					
66	"The tests administered were prepared based on the course's terminology discussed in the classroom."					
67	"Technology was essential in the teaching-learning process, which affected my performance positively."					
68	"The hours spent on extracurricular activities aided my learning"					

69	"The hours spent on family activities aided my learning."					
70	"The hours spent working for pay aided my learning."					
71	"The hours spent studying for the accounting courses affected my performance positively."					

72. Kindly provide other comments if any:

……

……

……

……

……

……

Thank you.

APPENDIX B

Interview Guide

"This interview is a follow up on an earlier questionnaire you filled with respect to a research work, which sought to examine accounting career preference factors influencing the academic performance of accounting students in Ghana. You are assured of confidentiality of the information you will give. For this reason your name is not required. Also this conversation is being recorded; purposely to allow for transcribing later on after the interview. You are free to decline the interview or refuse to answer certain questions if you so wish. Thank you"

Section A: Introduction

a. Welcome Address
b. Inform the participant about confidentiality and the right to withdraw without prejudice
c. Request for permission to record the conversation
d. Explain to the participant that the interview will last between 25 and 30 minutes.

Section B: Demographics of Participants

1. Gender ……
2. Age (specific or range) …….
3. Nationality …….
4. Name of University ……..

Section C: Reason for Career preference

5. What is your future employment preference?
6. What drew you to accounting as a program?
7. Have you encountered any inconsistencies between your personal interests and the opinions of others (for example, family members) when choosing accounting as a subject of study?
8. If so, please explain.
9. Have you encountered any inconsistencies between your own interests and job-related reasons (for example, high income, prestige) when selecting accounting as a field of study?
10. If yes, please explain.
11. Did you want to study accounting before enrolling in university? If you said no, why did you change your mind?

12. Have you ever regretted your decision to study accounting?
13. How do you see the accounting profession in relation to other professions?
14. What abilities and competences should a student have in order to be a successful accountant in the future?

Section D: Satisfaction of grades obtained in accounting-related courses

15. Are you satisfied with your CGPA? Why?

Section E: Reason for Performance in CGPA

16. Was your grade in Management Accounting influenced by your performance in financial reporting?
17. On the average, how many hours do you spend in a week on extracurricular activities (example socializing with friends, engaging in sporting activities, partying etc) if any?
18. Please describe your classroom environment (ventilation, lighting, class size etc)
19. Are you satisfied with the mode of lecturing by the accounting lecturers?
20. If no, kindly describe your general expectation on how the accounting courses should be delivered.
21. Which factors influence your academic performance?

Section F: Perception of male and female accounting students' academic performance

22. Kindly state the gender parity in your class. (eg. Male to female ratio).
23. Do you perceive any difference in the academic performance of males and females in your class? Explain.

Section G: Closing remarks:

a. Comments regarding the interview

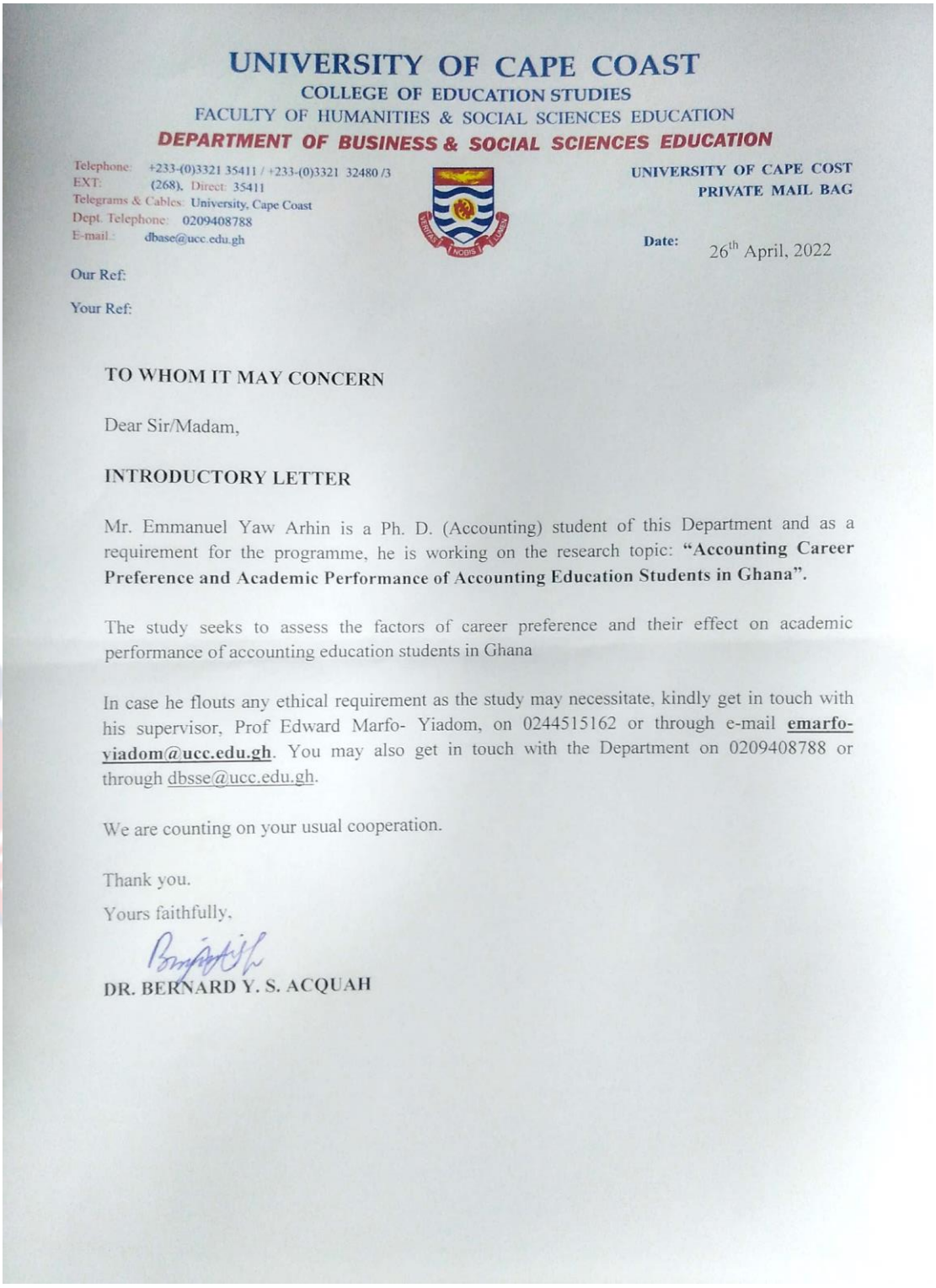
b. Further contact(s) to be made if needed

c. Thank the interviewee(s)

d. Cordial parting

APPENDIX C

Introductory Letter



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION STUDIES
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS & SOCIAL SCIENCES EDUCATION

Telephone: +233-(0)3321 35411 / +233-(0)3321 32480 /3
EXT: (268), Direct: 35411
Telegrams & Cables: University, Cape Coast
Dept. Telephone: 0209408788
E-mail.: dbase@ucc.edu.gh

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COST
PRIVATE MAIL BAG

Date: 26th April, 2022

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Mr. Emmanuel Yaw Arhin is a Ph. D. (Accounting) student of this Department and as a requirement for the programme, he is working on the research topic: **"Accounting Career Preference and Academic Performance of Accounting Education Students in Ghana".**

The study seeks to assess the factors of career preference and their effect on academic performance of accounting education students in Ghana

In case he flouts any ethical requirement as the study may necessitate, kindly get in touch with his supervisor, Prof Edward Marfo- Yiadom, on 0244515162 or through e-mail **emarfo-yiadom@ucc.edu.gh**. You may also get in touch with the Department on 0209408788 or through dbsse@ucc.edu.gh.

We are counting on your usual cooperation.

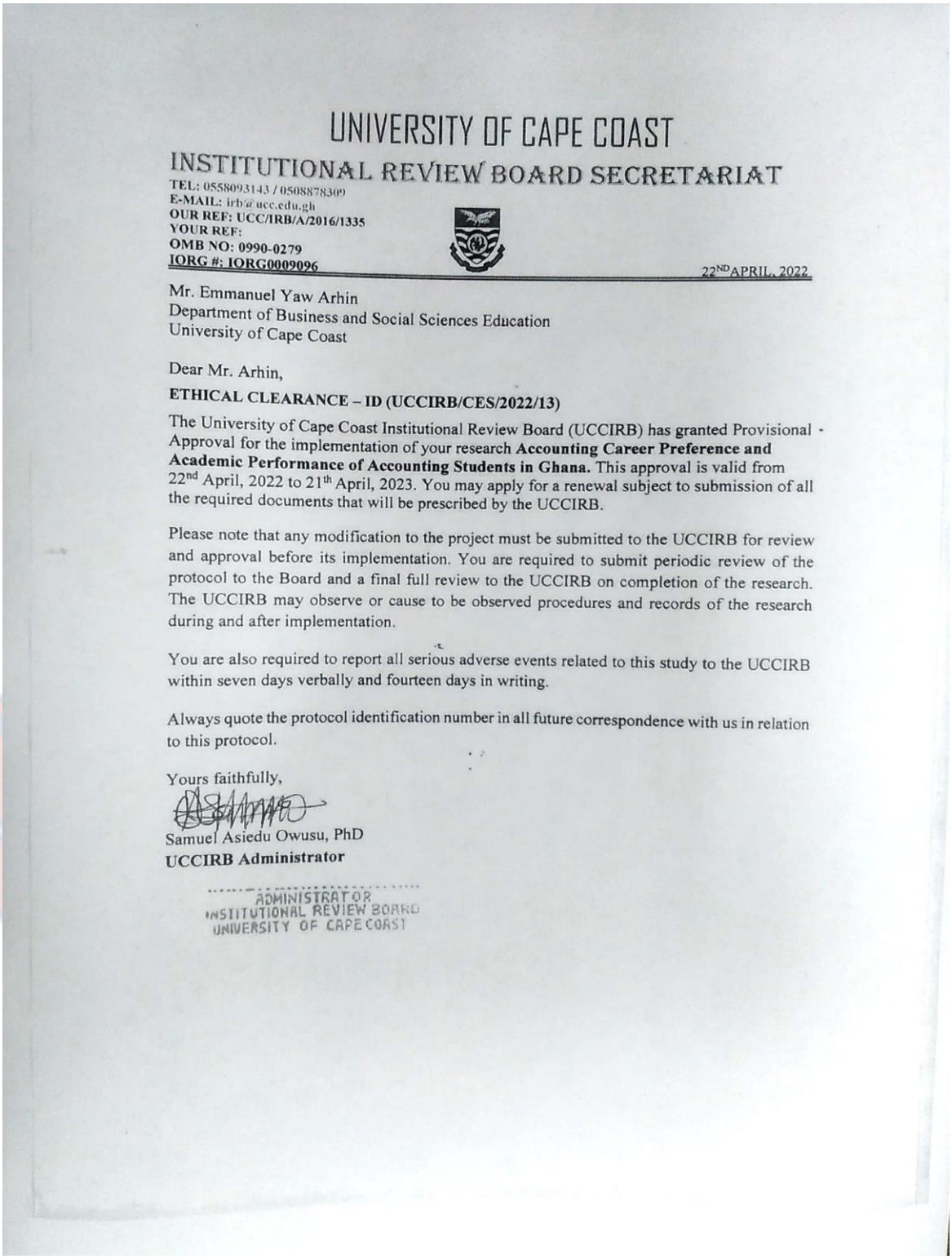
Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

DR. BERNARD Y. S. ACQUAH

APPENDIX D

Ethical Clearance



UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD SECRETARIAT

TEL: 0558093143 / 0508878309
E-MAIL: irb@ucc.edu.gh
OUR REF: UCC/IRB/A/2016/1335
YOUR REF:
OMB NO: 0990-0279
IORG #: IORG0009096

22ND APRIL, 2022

Mr. Emmanuel Yaw Arhin
Department of Business and Social Sciences Education
University of Cape Coast

Dear Mr. Arhin,

ETHICAL CLEARANCE – ID (UCCIRB/CES/2022/13)

The University of Cape Coast Institutional Review Board (UCCIRB) has granted Provisional Approval for the implementation of your research **Accounting Career Preference and Academic Performance of Accounting Students in Ghana.** This approval is valid from 22nd April, 2022 to 21th April, 2023. You may apply for a renewal subject to submission of all the required documents that will be prescribed by the UCCIRB.

Please note that any modification to the project must be submitted to the UCCIRB for review and approval before its implementation. You are required to submit periodic review of the protocol to the Board and a final full review to the UCCIRB on completion of the research. The UCCIRB may observe or cause to be observed procedures and records of the research during and after implementation.

You are also required to report all serious adverse events related to this study to the UCCIRB within seven days verbally and fourteen days in writing.

Always quote the protocol identification number in all future correspondence with us in relation to this protocol.

Yours faithfully,

Samuel Asiedu Owusu, PhD
UCCIRB Administrator

ADMINISTRATOR
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

APPENDIX E

Research constructs and measurement items

Code	Dimensions and items of Evaluation	No of Items	Source
	Personal Factors	11	Odia and Ogiedu (2013)
PF1	"I like accounting"		
PF2	"Accounting is interesting"		
PF3	"I would enjoy being an accountant"		Agarwala (2008)
PF4	"I am willing to learn accounting as a subject"		Peltier et al. (2014)
PF5	"I am willing to spend a lot of time studying accounting"		Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020)
PF6	"I have interest in calculation"		
PF7	"I like to answer questions with figures"		
PF8	"Accounting is a course with lots of class work"		
PF9	"Learning accounting is very challenging"		
PF10	"I can maintain high grade point average"		
PF11	"I made a personal decision to pursue accounting programme"		
	Reference Factors	7	Odia and Ogiedu (2013
RF1	"My parents made me to choose accounting course"		
RF2	My friends influenced me to choose accounting		Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020)
RF3	Other students recommended accounting to me		

RF4	My SHS Teachers thought I should take accounting course		
RF5	My counselors recommended accounting to me		
RF6	My performance in SHS made me choose accounting		
RF7	"My parent's occupation encouraged me to choose accounting"		
	Job related factors	9	Odia and Ogiedu (2013); Karakaya, Quigley and Bingham (2011) Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020)
JF1	"I chose accounting because there will be job available for me when I graduate"		
JF2	"I chose accounting because there will always be a great job market demand for people like me"		
JF3	"I can get a high paying job if I graduate with accounting degree"		
JF4	"My starting salary will be satisfying if I graduate with accounting degree"		
JF5	"Accounting requires skills and background in mathematics"		
JF6	"Being an accountant has a lot of prestige"		
JF7	"The accounting profession is well respected"		
JF8	"Accounting is a profession in par with medicine and law"		
JF9	"Accounting is a field with broad exposure to business"		
	Intention to Pursue Accounting Career Preference	5	Ajzen (1991),

ACP1	"I am very interested in pursuing accounting career after obtaining my degree"		Azevedo and Sugahara (2012)
ACP2	"I am happy about obtaining a position in Accounting career (accounting is interesting)"		Awadallah and Elgharbawy (2020)
ACP3	"I am determined to obtain a position in accounting careers (would enjoy being an accountant)"		
ACP4	"I intend to get a good job related to accounting with a high CGPA in my degree"		
ACP5	"I made a personal decision to pursue accounting career"		
	Academic Performance CGPA	1	Hensley (1995); Connely, Dubois and Staley (1998); Mansfield, Pinto, Parente and Wortman (2009) Lamas (2015)

Source: Author's construct (2022)