



## **Faculty Reform, Curriculums Development, and Motives of Accounting Specialization: Evidence from Egypt**

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## **Faculty Reform, Curriculums Development, and Motives of Accounting Specialization: Evidence from Egypt**

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### **Abstract**

The main objective of this study is to determine the motives that influence the decision of business school students to specialize in accounting, consequently, selecting accounting as their future career. Four main motives are examined in the study including educational, student capabilities, psychological, and market and societal. The primary source of data was collected through structured questionnaires from the students at reputable university in Egypt, Cairo University, Faculty of commerce, English section, and Georgia programs. These programs have changed to a new system recently and made changes and development in their curriculums. The findings reveal that students' capabilities and psychological motives are the most influencing motives on their decisions, then comes the educational motives and eventually the market motives. The results also show the effect of gender and the students' faculty level on their decision. The current study might benefit accounting education institutions to set their strategies to attract more students to select accounting as their major. Further, the findings of this study may be beneficial to professional accounting bodies in establishing their strategies to enhance the image of accounting career.

**Keywords:** Accounting education, curriculums development, accounting specialization, accounting major, Egypt.

### **1. Introduction**

Higher education institutions are under increasing pressure to better prepare students for future employment (Jackson & Meek, 2021). Hence, these institutions should play a critical role in mentoring students to establish their sense of preprofessional identity, accordingly, become work-ready upon graduation (Herbert, et al., 2021). Accountancy is one of the professions that provide a graduate environment, high job opportunities, professional certification, people contact, good remuneration, and prospects for advancement (Samsuri, Arifin & Hussin, 2016; Baliyan & Baliyan, 2016). Accounting, according to the definition of a profession, necessitates "specific knowledge" and "intense" academic preparation (Bergner, Chen & Simerly, 2020). However, prior research has shown that the number of university students studying accounting has decreased significantly in several parts of the world (Jackling & Calero, 2006; Law, 2010; Sugahara & Boland, 2009; Umar & Bello, 2019).

Despite that globalization, internationalization, and the increased use of technology have widened the economic environment, particularly for developing economies. Hence, to survive and thrive in this competitive economic environment, developing economies require more skilled specialists. Accountants are regarded as the best profession and an essential component of the economic process, capable of meeting the new difficulties of the current competitive economic environment. Accordingly, creative professional accountants are in high demand to meet changes in the economic environment (Baliyan & Baliyan, 2016; Birkey & Hausserman, 2019).

Recently, the accounting programs in business schools have a main objective is to provide the market with a sufficient number of graduates with extensive accounting knowledge, as well as strong communication and analytical capabilities (Dibabe, Wubie & Wondmagegn, 2015). Accordingly, several studies examined the motives of students' career choices in accounting in an attempt to attract the brightest and best students to the profession (Jackling & Calero, 2006; Umar & Bello, 2019; Aziz et al. 2017). Egypt as well as one of the developing countries needs to cope with those changes in the economic environment with qualified professional accountants.

### **1.1. Accounting Education at Cairo University-Faculty of Commerce**

The Faculty of Commerce is a prominent faculty at Cairo University. The university is dedicated to preparing students for the challenges of the workplace that change rapidly. The faculty of Commerce was founded in 1911. The English section of the Faculty of Commerce was established in 1991 as a promising section of the faculty, where English Section students are taught by highly qualified academic staff with teaching, professional, and academic research experience. Students are also given the most recent international textbooks. The main objective of the English Section is to prepare students to succeed in today's business environment by providing them with the technical knowledge and intellectual skills they need to meet national and regional standards of excellence. The English section program was internationally recognized in March 2004 after it was reviewed as part of the project "Enhancement of Quality and Institutional Planning at Arab Universities," which is sponsored and funded by the United Nations Development Program's Regional Bureau for Arab States (UNDP/RBAS).

The Faculty of Commerce also has a Georgia program, which is in cooperation with Georgia State University, Robinson College of Management, and it has the following majors: Finance and investment - Marketing – Accounting. The two programs offered by the faculty, and relevant courses and majors, were reviewed recently to meet the current labor market requirements and improve the employability of graduates. These developmental efforts resulted in the accreditation of the new bylaw for the bachelor's degree enclosing the credit hours system application, starting from the academic year 2017/2018. The faculty of Commerce-English Section offers four programs: Accounting, Business Administration, Insurance, and Actuarial science. Specialization in the first three programs is determined in the third year, while the Actuarial science specialization starts in the first year.

The accounting program is regarded as the first program established within all Egyptian universities, since its approval on 13/5/1991. Accounting programs provide students with the accounting experience and knowledge required by nearly all business organizations in today's changing world. The curriculum is used to focus on the professional examination content. The content of the courses is current and is updated on a regular basis to reflect changes in accounting regulations and practice. Therefore, the current study focused on the students of the English Section and Georgia programs to explore their motives to select accounting as their major considering the development of the system, changes in curriculums, and changes in the specialization level.

## **2. Motives of the Study**

The objective of the current study is to identify the key motives or factors that influence students' decisions in one of the reputable public Egyptian universities that is Cairo university- Faculty of Commerce; English section, and Georgia programs to specialize in accounting, especially after the development and the application of the credit hours system starting from the academic year 2017/2018. In addition to considering the recent development in the curriculums and the changes in the specialization level as it is determined now in the third year. The current study represents an attempt to extend the prior literature on the motives that affect student choice to pursue an accounting career in a developing country.

Especially, this study extends the study of Anis & Hanafi (2015) which was the first study undertaken in Egypt to explore the factors influencing students'

choice of an accounting major. Anis & Hanafi (2015) hoped for changes in curriculum designs in both the education and training context that what happened after their study starting from the academic year 2017/2018. Consequently, the current study examines the students' motives to specialize in accounting after the new reform in the system. This new system makes developments in the curriculums, provides the students with some non-credit hours courses to enhance their skills, and changes the specialization decision level to the third level.

Furthermore, the current study merges many elements found in the previous studies under four main motives or factors: educational (15 statements), student capabilities (9 statements), psychological (18 statements), and market and societal (15 statements). Consequently, this study could benefit educational institutions, especially accounting departments, in setting their strategies to attract students to the accounting profession. Moreover, it reveals whether the changes and the new developments in the system change the domain motives that affect their decision to specialize in accounting.

### **3. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development**

Prior literature in accounting education includes many attempts to explore the motives and factors that might enhance students to choose accounting as their major in business schools, accordingly, as their future career path. Prior research shows that many factors influence a student's choice of an accounting major, and these factors vary by country (Alanezi et al., 2016). Studying these factors is important, especially, in Egypt as a developing country with changes in the economic environment and with the claims that the accounting profession might vanish in the near future.

Dibabe, Wubie & Wondmagegn, (2015) demonstrated that there are several theories about career preference, such as social cognitive theory, which states that family and relatives influence students' career decisions. Parsons' theory reveals that individuals should take into consideration their skills and abilities concerning how they might fit into a specific career. Furthermore, individuals should seek knowledge of different jobs, the labor market as well as remuneration, which includes salary and benefits when taking their decisions (Bandura, 1986 as in Dibabe, Wubie & Wondmagegn, 2015). According to socioeconomic theory, social conditions such as parental influence, teachers' and friends' influences, and social status, as well as economic conditions such as career opportunities, and the amount of salary, have an impact on the career choices of students (Venable, 2011 as in Dibabe, Wubie & Wondmagegn, 2015).

Based on the theory of reasoned action (TRA), a study by Awadallah & Elgharbawy (2021) revealed that subjective norms elements (influence of instructor and the social influence from family and peers) as well as attitudinal factors (personal interests, perceptions of accounting education, including introductory courses, and perceptions of job prospects) impact students' decisions to major in accounting in Qatar as a fast-developing country. Their results were consistent with a former study by Myburgh, (2005) that aimed at pinpointing the aspects that influence Asian, black, and white accounting students at the University of Pretoria's decision to pursue a particular career path. Myburgh's study found that the student's choice to be a chartered accountant depended on performance in accounting at school and the advice that is given by parents, relatives, and schoolteachers.

In a similar context, Alanezi et al. (2016) have studied the factors that influence a two-year college student to accept the offer of accounting as a major at the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training College in Kuwait. The data shows that employment chances, prestige, and an engaging subject have a substantial impact on students' decision to study accounting. The findings also suggest that gender and kind of high school education had little effect on students' decision to major in accounting. In an attempt to examine the African students' motives to choose accounting as a career, Odia & Ogiedu (2013) investigated the factors affecting Nigerian students' career choice of accounting. Their study revealed that factors can be summarized in three general and the most influencing factors personal, reference, and job factors. Specifically, these factors are performance in secondary school, students' interest in the subject, job prospects, and high pay. Furthermore, the gender diversity indicated that reference factors are more domain factors within the male students than their female counterparts.

Given the challenges that the accounting profession has faced over the last decades, Wally-Dima (2013) study examined the factors that affect students at the University of Botswana to choose accounting as a major. Data was gathered from Botswana University's final-year accounting students. According to their findings, personal interest in the subject, the availability of advancement opportunities, availability of employment after graduation, passion for the profession, and high earnings in comparison to other professions are the major factors influencing students to pursue accounting. Moreover, the findings showed that most students chose to major in accounting after high school but before starting university, with about a third deciding on high school.

The main purpose of Dibabe, Wubie, & Wondmagegn (2015) was to study the factors influencing students' career choices in accounting. Their data were collected from 197 regular students at Bahir Dar university College of business and economics in Ethiopia. The factors included in their study were intrinsic factors, extrinsic factors, perception toward accounting, and other social factors. Additionally, they employed gender as a control variable. Under the intrinsic factor, they found that students' choice of accounting is positively and significantly influenced by their interest in the course, their ability to run a business, and the need for a dynamic and challenging environment. Under extrinsic factors, they found that job opportunity, responsibility, and the chance to get experience to have a positive impact on a student's choice of accounting, but social status has a significant negative impact.

The first study that explored the factors influencing Egyptian students' choice of an accounting major rather than non-accounting was conducted by Anis & Hanafi (2015). A structured questionnaire was used to collect data from 273 students. Their findings revealed that perception of accounting education followed by perception of the accounting profession, personal skills and important referents are the main discriminator factors between the accounting and non-accounting majors. However, the impression of introductory accounting courses and gender, were found to be the weakest predictors and they don't relate to the degree major chosen.

In one of the developed countries Tan & Laswad (2006) conducted an earlier study at New Zealand University to investigate the factors that affect students' intentions to major in accounting and non-accounting fields based on a survey. The findings demonstrate that three variables; personal, referents, and control are associated with students' intentions to major in accounting or other business-related fields. Further investigation demonstrated that the perceptions of significant referents have an impact on the students' main intents. Parents seem to have a greater impact on students' intentions to major in accounting. Tourna Germanou, Hassall & Tournas (2009) study also investigated the similarities and differences between Malaysian and English accounting majors' students. Their findings show that both groups have positive perceptions of the accounting profession and that there is a substantial relationship between students' perceptions and their intent to pursue a career in the accounting profession. Further, Malaysian and English students had different perspectives of the accounting profession's attributes and outcomes.

Further, the study of Yusoff et al. (2011) in Malaysia, examined whether the students' past knowledge of professional accounting influences their decision to become professional accountants in Malaysia. The findings showed that students' exam grades have little impact on their knowledge of professional accounting backgrounds. In addition, the findings revealed a significant relationship between students' decision to pursue a career as a public accountant and their understanding of professional accounting backgrounds. Porter & Woolley (2014) used a survey of accounting and non-accounting students to find out what motivates a student to major in accounting. They discovered that accounting students place a greater emphasis on career objectives and less emphasis on the intrinsic characteristics of their major. A more powerful predictor is that accounting students believe accounting is better intrinsically than non-accounting students. Further, non-accounting students believe that their major is much more intrinsically rewarding than accounting.

In another study in Malaysia, Samsuri, Arifin, and Hussin's (2016) investigated the determinants influencing undergraduate accounting students' perceptions of professional accounting careers. Their results suggest that only a small percentage of students intend to seek professional qualifications, while the remainder intends to work in non-accounting fields immediately after graduation. Most accounting undergraduate students anticipated that professional accountants would have greater career prospects, would be in high demand in the job market, would be known internationally, and would be paid well by their employers. Recently, Enget, Garcia & Webinger (2020) indicates that accounting majors are more likely to be chosen by students who perceive their career opportunities as high in comparison to other majors. Furthermore, students with high imposter phenomenon (IP) are more likely than other students to major in accounting. Interestingly, women with high IP who also perceive accounting to be a challenging field are more likely than other students to major in accounting.

Lidiyawati (2021) aimed at analyzing the various factors influencing accounting students' decision to pursue a career in accounting at Bina Nusantara University. Data was gathered through questionnaires distributed to accounting students. The results of his study indicate that accounting students' interest in pursuing a career in accounting is significantly influenced by Intrinsic Value, GPA, and Financial Rewards.

According to the literature review, researchers have different results and lack agreement on which factors most influence students' decision to major in accounting. Generally, it can be noted that students' future career choices are subject to various factors and motives. The current study would extend the literature in African countries, especially in Egypt, considering the attempt of improving the educational system in one of the business schools and the development of the curriculums to cope with the changing economic environment. Moreover, the current study combines the various factors into four general motives: educational, capabilities, psychological, and market and societal.

The prior literature reveals that some educational factors found to affect students' choices such as performance in accounting at school (Myburgh, 2005), understanding of professional accounting backgrounds (Yusoff et al., 2011), performance in secondary school, student's interest in the subject (Odia & Ogiedu, 2013; Wally-Dima, 2013), interest to the course (Dibabe, Wubie & Wondmagegn (2015) and their GPA before specialization (Lidiyawati, 2021). Accordingly, the first hypothesis states that:

**H01:** There is no significant impact of educational motives on the students' choice to specialize in accounting.

Capabilities are included as a factor based on Parsons' theory which reveals that individual skills and abilities affect career choices (Bandura, 1986 as in Dibabe, Wubie & Wondmagegn, 2015). Further, the results of Brink & Stoel (2019) survey consistently show that accounting professionals need some skills to be able to make data-driven decisions and data communication and interpretation in addition to the necessity to have technical skills to perform data analytic tasks. Therefore, the current research considers the capabilities as one of the factors that could influence students' choices and the second hypothesis states that:

**H02:** There is no significant impact of student capabilities on the students' choice to specialize in accounting.

The psychological factor can be related to the attitudinal factors and the perception or beliefs about the accounting profession that could impact students' choice and their intent to pursue a career in accounting profession (Tan & Laswad, 2006; Tourna Germanou, Hassall & Tournas, 2009; Anis & Hanafi, 2015; Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2021). Hence, the third hypothesis states that:

**H03:** There is no significant impact of psychological motives on the students' choice to specialize in accounting.

Extensive literature considered the impact of societal and market factors that could influence students to choose accounting majors and careers. Based on social cognitive theory and socioeconomic theory many studies indicate that parental influence, instructors', teachers', and friends' influences, social status, as well as economic conditions such as career opportunity, job prospects, the chance to get experience, prestige, the labor market, and remuneration, which includes salary and benefits are important in making their decisions (Myburgh, 2005; Oda & Ogiedu, 2013; Bandura, 1986; Venable, 2011; as in Dibabe, Wubie & Wondmagegn, 2015; Samsuri, Arifin, and Hussin, 2016; Alanezi et al., 2016; Awadallah & Elgharbawy, 2021; Lidiyawati, 2021). Accordingly, the fourth hypothesis states that:

**H04:** There is no significant impact of market and societal motives on the students' choice to specialize in accounting.

#### **4. Data Collection**

Data was gathered through a questionnaire to determine the motives affecting students' choice to specialize in accounting, consequently, choose accounting for their future career. The researchers collected primary sources of data through structured questionnaires from the respondents. It included a cover page indicating the main purpose of the research and assuring confidentiality. Each respondent completed a survey consisting of sixty-four statements, besides six questions, addressed demographic information. It was divided into 5 sections: demographic information (6 questions), educational factors (15 statements), student capabilities (9 statements), psychological factors (18 statements), and market and societal factors (15 statements). Furthermore, 7 statements were used to indicate, specifically, the student's choice of accounting as his future career.

Most of the statements used in the questionnaire were adapted from prior studies. However, we added several additional statements to consider the different components of students' choice of accounting. A five Likert scale was used for each statement under each category: completely agree, agree, neutral, disagree, or completely disagree. These categorical data were then converted into numeric data for regression analysis; from 1 (completely disagree) to 5 (completely agree). Then, for each motive and accounting career choice, an aggregate value is calculated to have one value for each motive from each respondent.

## **5. Population and Sample Size**

The study target population consists of all undergraduate accounting students at the third and fourth levels of the faculty of commerce-English section and Georgia program at Cairo University. The target population as per the registrar's record, for the academic year 2020-2021, was 2553 which included 1199, 1142 third and fourth level at the English Section, respectively, and 129, 83 third and fourth level at the Georgia program. The researchers distributed the questionnaires to the target group, through an online copy using "Google Forms". Responses were gathered for two months, and we received 164 responses. The response rate is 6.4%, which is considered acceptable as the number of responses exceeded the minimum number of observations required to run the statistical analysis program.

## **6. Research Model**

To test the research hypotheses and indicate whether the four motives affect students' choices, the following regression model will be applied.

$$\text{Acc.Car.} = \alpha + \beta_1 \text{Educ.} + \beta_2 \text{Cap.} + \beta_3 \text{Psych.} + \beta_4 \text{Mark. \& Soc.} + \beta_5 \text{Grd} + \varepsilon$$

Where; "Acc.Car" variable is the aggregate value of (7) statements representing the students' definite choice of accounting and their plans or experience in the field. "Educ" variable is the aggregate value of (15) statements representing the educational motive to have one value from each respondent. "Cap." is the aggregate value of (9) statements about students' capabilities and skills. "Psych." is the aggregate value of (18) statements about psychological motives. "Mark. & Soc" variable is the aggregate value of (15) statements regarding the market and societal motives. "Grd" variable is the grade of the student that is included as a control variable.

## **7. Data analysis**

Data were analyzed using Stata for statistical analysis; both descriptive (Frequencies and Principal components), as well as statistical analyses (Cronbach's Alpha and Multiple regression), were used. The frequencies were used for each factor. While the Principal components are used for the statements that represent each factor. Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the validity of the questionnaire. Finally, a multiple regression was conducted to test the study hypothesis.

## **6.1. Descriptive Statistics**

The descriptive statistics for each factor are summarized in table (1), which includes measures of central tendency (mean, minimum, and maximum) as well as measures of variability (standard deviation).

**Table (1) Descriptive Statistics**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Dev.</b>	<b>Min</b>	<b>Max</b>
<b>Educational</b>	164	56.0061	8.279991	28	75
<b>Capabilities</b>	164	37.91463	4.833932	23	45
<b>Psychological</b>	164	63.34756	10.82691	29	90
<b>Market and societal</b>	164	57.34756	10.794	17	75

Descriptive statistics' results show that the students' opinions regarding the educational factor range from (28) to (75) where some students indicate that educational factors are not the main reason to choose accounting, while others totally agreed that educational factors are the main motives to choose accounting as their future career. However, the educational factor mean is (56.0) which indicates that on average, respondents agreed that educational factors are one of the influencers with about 75%. Regarding the students' capabilities, it ranges from (23) to (45) as some students consider their capabilities while others do not give it their priority in such decisions. The mean of the capabilities variable is (37.9) that reveal on average students consider their capabilities with 82%.

Furthermore, the psychological factor has a very wide range from the respondents' opinions from (29) to (90). Despite that, the average opinion is (63.3) as they agreed by 70% on the impact of psychological factors on their choice. The range of the Market and societal factors is from (17) not agreeing on its impact to (75) totally agreeing on its impact that is a wide range. While the mean (57.3) indicates that on average respondents agree with 76% that the market and society affect their choice.

## **6.2. Principal components for the four motives**

A principal components analysis was applied to evaluate the data collected in the questionnaire following previous studies (Ahmed et al., 1997; Jackling & Keneley, 2009). The analysis was performed separately for the statements compromising each motive of students' choice, educational, student capabilities, psychological, and market and societal. Component loading scores were used to identify which statements were more representative in creating the final motive.

The components that compromise each factor have an Eigenvalue greater than 1 (Field, 2005). In addition to the factor analysis, the internal validity of each motive was tested by Cronbach Alpha. Overall, the statements that comprise the motives have acceptable Cronbach Alpha scores.

The principal component results for the statements related to students' decision to specialize in accounting, and the importance of a component in choosing this major are shown in Tables 2, 3, 4, and 5.

**Table (2): Principal Components of Educational motive**

1. Select accounting is affected by the pre-major education	0.099
2. Studying accounting before joining the faculty	0.094
<b>3. Accounting courses are interesting</b>	<b>0.343</b>
4. Accounting courses are market-oriented	0.261
<b>5. Accounting courses' difficulty is reasonable</b>	<b>0.286</b>
6. Accounting courses are mainly practical	0.187
<b>7. Accounting courses' contents are reasonable</b>	<b>0.353</b>
8. Accounting courses' contents fairly distributed among semesters	0.285
<b>9. Accounting courses' materials are available</b>	<b>0.299</b>
<b>10. Accounting exams' difficulty level is fair</b>	<b>0.294</b>
11. Accounting exams duration of is appropriate	0.266
12. Well performance in the previous accounting courses	0.252
13. My past grades in previous accounting courses affected my choice	0.224
14. Accounting courses would help me in pursuing professional certificates	0.243
15. The specialization introductory sessions helped me in my choice	0.231
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>4.465</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>.809</b>

The principal component of the educational factor as shown in table (2) reveals that the main statements that constitute the educational motive are the reasonableness of accounting courses' contents, the accounting courses are interesting, and the availability of the materials and the exams' difficulty level is fair.

**Table (3): Principal Components of Capabilities Motive**

<b>1. I considered my capabilities in the choice</b>	<b>0.326</b>
2. I am good at calculations	0.315
<b>3. I can solve challenging problems</b>	<b>0.417</b>
<b>4. I have critical thinking capabilities</b>	<b>0.366</b>
5. I have problem-solving skills	0.316
6. I can adapt to changes	0.305
<b>7. I can focus on details</b>	<b>0.326</b>
<b>8. I have good capabilities in practical courses</b>	<b>0.331</b>
9. I can spend a lot of time studying accounting	0.278
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>3.704</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>.816</b>

The principal component of capabilities motives as shown in table (3) indicates that the domain capabilities that constitute the motive are problems solving, critical thinking capabilities, and the ability to focus on details.

**Table (4): Principal Components of Psychological Motive**

1. My choice is affected by psychological factors	0.202
2. I like accounting	0.263
3. I believe that the accounting specialization is more general	0.224
<b>4. I believe that the accounting career is promising</b>	<b>0.311</b>
5. I believe that the accounting will provide me with good job opportunities	0.289
6. The accounting profession is more appropriate to my gender	0.196
7. I have accountants in my family who I consider role models	0.173
8. My choice of the accounting is affected by family members	0.175
9. My choice of the accounting is affected by my friends' choice	0.130
10. My elder colleagues advised me to choose accounting major	0.135
11. My choice of the accounting major is affected by my instructors	0.203
12. My choice of the accounting major is affected by the media	0.198
13. I was not exposed to any pressure to select accounting	0.126
14. I chose accounting just to exclude other majors	0.036
<b>15. I am sure that I will be a good accountant</b>	<b>0.317</b>
<b>16. I would enjoy being an accountant</b>	<b>0.349</b>
<b>17. Accounting is consistent with my beliefs, values, and ethics</b>	<b>0.327</b>
<b>18. The accounting profession is well respected</b>	<b>0.314</b>
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	<b>4.654</b>
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>.801</b>

The principal component of psychological motive as shown in table (4) shows that accounting profession would be enjoyable, accounting is consistent with the beliefs, values, and ethics of the respondents, beliefs on the ability to be a good accountant, the beliefs that accounting profession is well respected, and the accounting career is promising.

**Table (5): Market and Societal**

1. My choice of the accounting major is affected by the market	0.195
2. The accounting profession is dynamic	0.172
3. The accounting profession is flexible	0.253
<b>4. The society regards the accounting profession as prestigious</b>	0.294
5. I expect that the working environment of the accounting profession is challenging	0.204
6. I expect that the workload in the accounting profession is reasonable	0.262
<b>7. The accounting profession allows a suitable work-life balance</b>	0.308
8. Accounting jobs are more secure and stable	0.274
9. There are training opportunities in the market for the accounting major	0.262
10. Studying accounting would help me in attaining my career objectives	0.273
<b>11. There is a great job market demand for accounting graduates</b>	0.295
<b>12. The salary scale of the accounting profession is appropriate</b>	0.297
<b>13. There are many advancement opportunities in the accounting profession</b>	0.294
14. The accounting profession encourages continuous education	0.208
15. The professional bodies of accounting support accounting students	0.232
<b>Eigenvalue</b>	6.639
<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	.906

The principal component of the market and societal motives as shown in table (5) demonstrate that a suitable work-life balance, salary scale, great job market demand, prestigious of the profession, and advancement opportunities are the main components of the market and societal motives.

### **6.3. Multiple Regression**

This section shows the results of the statistical analysis applied to test the study's hypotheses. Regression was applied to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between Accounting-Career and each of the four motives for the entire sample. Since the students' grades "GPA" might affect their choice of an accounting career, we include this variable as a control in testing our hypotheses. The first model tests which of the four motives educational, student capabilities, psychological, and market and societal would affect student choice to specialize in accounting and choose accounting as their career, considering their grades as a control variable.

Regression results, in table (6), show that 48.4% of the students' choice can be attributed to the four motives, which indicates that there are other factors beyond our analysis and focus that might affect their choice. Further, Accounting-Career was found to have a significant positive relationship with educational motives (at .05 level). This result is consistent with previous studies by Myburgh, (2005), Odia & Ogiedu (2013), and Dibabe, Wubie, & Wondmagegn (2015). Hence, the first null sub-hypothesis is rejected; indicating that educational motives would not affect students' choice of the accounting career.

In addition, students' capabilities and psychological motives were found to have a significant positive relationship with Accounting-Career (at .01 level). These results support the prior studies of Wubie & Wondmagegn, (2015) and Brink & Stoel (2019) that accountants need technical skills and abilities to perform many tasks such as data analytic tasks. Concerning the psychological motive result, it confirms Awadallah & Elgharbawy (2021) and Tourna Germanou, Hassall & Tournas (2009) that attitudinal factors and perceptions impact students' choices. Accordingly, the second and third hypotheses are also rejected. Finally, the market and societal motives have a significant positive relationship with Accounting-Career choice but at 0.1 level. This result is consistent with the argument in the literature that job prospects and high pay or financial rewards are the main motives to major in accounting (Odia & Ogiedu, 2013; Lidiyawati, 2021).

**Table (6): Multiple Regression Results**

<b>Accounting-Career</b>	<b>Coef.</b>	<b>St.Err.</b>	<b>t-value</b>	<b>p-value</b>
<b>Educational</b>	.119	.0498	2.4	.018**
<b>Capabilities</b>	.201	.0746	2.69	.008***
<b>Psychological</b>	.164	.0442	3.72	.000***
<b>Market</b>	.081	.0479	1.68	.094*
<b>Grade</b>	4.98	5.239	0.95	.343
<b>Constant</b>	-10.304	5.041	-2.04	.043**
<b>Mean dependent var</b>	23.287	<b>SD dependent var</b>	5.299	
<b>R-squared</b>	0.484	<b>Number of observations</b>	164	
<b>F-test</b>	29.69	<b>Prob &gt; F</b>	0.000	

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$

#### **6.4. Splitting the Multiple Regression Results by Gender and Level:**

To have more understanding of these results, the tests are repeated to consider the differences in the results according to gender following Odia & Ogiedu (2013), Alanezi et al. (2016), and Dibabe, Wubie, & Wondmagegn (2015) and their college level. The gender results as revealed in table (7), reveal that the four motives explain 56% of the male choice, while 43% of the female choice. These preceding results indicate that for the females there are more other motives affecting their choice than males. In addition, it is found that educational motive has no significant effect on the female choice of accounting career. This is contradicting with male results that educational motive does have a significant impact on their choice at the .05 level.

It can be noted that the students' capabilities for each gender have significant relationships with their choice of accounting. However, it is more significant for male students at the .05 level compared with females at the .1 level. Moreover, the psychological motive of the female students has a high significant relationship with their choice of accounting at .01 level while no relation to male students' choice. This preceding result supports the assumption that for females the psychological motive is an important motive. Finally, the market and societal motives were found to have no significant relationship with students' choices.

**Table (7): Multiple Regression Results by Gender**

Regression Results for Female					Regression Results for Male			
Accounting-Career	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value
<b>Educational</b>	.082	.069	1.18	.24	.167	.073	2.27	.027**
<b>Capabilities</b>	.184	.097	1.90	.06*	.253	.125	2.01	.049**
<b>Psychological</b>	.196	.059	3.32	.001***	.099	.069	1.43	.159
<b>Market</b>	.059	.06	0.98	.331	.125	.086	1.44	.155
<b>Grade</b>	9.479	7.449	1.27	.206	1.543	8.414	0.18	.855
<b>Constant</b>	-12.381	6.671	-1.86	.066 *	-10.172	8.288	-1.23	.225
<b>Mean dep. Var.</b>	22.556	<b>SD dep. Var.</b>	5.221		<b>Mean dep. Var.</b>	24.696	<b>SD dep. Var.</b>	5.208
<b>R-squared</b>	0.434	<b>Num. of obs.</b>	108		<b>R-squared</b>	0.556	<b>Num. of obs.</b>	56
<b>F-test</b>	15.662	<b>Prob &gt; F</b>	0.000		<b>F-test</b>	12.532	<b>Prob &gt; F</b>	0.000

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$

The college-level results as revealed in table (8), show that the four motives explain 55% of third-level students' choices, while 45% of the fourth-level students' choices indicate that more other motives affect their choice. For the third-level students, it is found that their capabilities and psychological motive are the domain reasons to select accounting as a career at a significant level of .05 and .01 levels, respectively. Since in their third level, the students choose their preferred major, this preceding result is reasonable as these two motives depend on what they expect they are capable of, and their beliefs and assumption may affect their choice also.

In the fourth level, the students select their minors, which are more specific in accounting, and they are one step from the market. Accordingly, their results reveal that they view the market as the main motive that positively affects their choice for accounting as their future career at a significant level of .05. While the educational motive comes second motive that positively affects their choice at a significant level .1. These results indicate that once the student is near to his graduation all their concern will be on the market and the available opportunities for their specifications.

**Table (8): Multiple Regression Results by Level**

Regression results for Third level students					Regression results for Fourth level students			
Accounting-Career	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value	Coef.	St.Err.	t-value	p-value
<b>Educational</b>	.118	.079	1.50	.138	.124	.066	1.88	.064*
<b>Capabilities</b>	.279	.124	2.25	.028 **	.136	.096	1.41	.162
<b>Psychological</b>	.229	.063	3.64	.001 ***	.088	.063	1.39	.168
<b>Market</b>	-.001	.071	-0.01	.99	.166	.068	2.45	.016**
<b>Grade</b>	6.058	7.596	0.80	.428	7.282	7.604	0.96	.341
<b>Constant</b>	-13.86	7.385	-1.88	.065	-9.706	7.167	-1.35	.179
<b>Mean dep. Var.</b>	23.000	<b>SD dep. Var.</b>	5.445		<b>Mean dep. Var.</b>	23.528	<b>SD dep. Var.</b>	5.192
<b>R-squared</b>	0.551	<b>Num. of obs.</b>	75		<b>R-squared</b>	0.454	<b>Num. of obs.</b>	89
<b>F-test</b>	16.966	<b>Prob &gt; F</b>	0.000		<b>F-test</b>	13.799	<b>Prob &gt; F</b>	0.000

\*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .1$

## 7. Conclusions

The main objective of this study is to determine the main motives that influence the decision of business school students to specialize in accounting in one of the Egyptian Universities, Cairo University, Faculty of Commerce, English section, and Georgia programs. This study was conducted to extend the exploratory study of Anis & Hanafi (2015) in Egypt which suggests that curriculums need improvement in the Middle East. Therefore, the current study considers the new improvement and developments of the educational system in the Faculty of Commerce at Cairo University.

The results reveal that the most influencing motives to specialize in accounting are students' capabilities and psychological motives. Regarding the capabilities, the students considered their ability to solve challenging problems, critical thinking capabilities, and ability to focus on details are the main capabilities that influenced their decision. The most psychological factors that affect their decision are their beliefs that being an accountant would be enjoyable, consistent with their values, and ethics, and ability to be good in this profession, and accounting career is a promising one.

Furthermore, the educational motives come after the students' capabilities, and psychological motives influence students' decisions. The students are affected by the main features of the accounting courses during the introductory levels before the specialization. These features are the reasonableness of the contents, accounting

courses are interesting, the availability of the materials, the exams' difficulty level is fair, and the course difficulty level is reasonable. Surprisingly, the market and societal are the least influencing motives in their decision. Whereas, they considered in their decision the suitability of work-life balance, appropriateness of the salary scale, prestigious of the profession, and the availability of advancement opportunities. The findings also showed that there were no significant impacts of the students' grades before specialization on their decision to major in accounting.

These preceding results show that the motives that most influence students' decisions are their capabilities or skills which was found to be the third motive in Anis & Hanafi (2015) study. In addition, the psychological motives that represent the perceptions of the students remain to be one of the most influencing motives while it comes after capabilities. Accordingly, the students' decisions recently are built based on their abilities. However, the educational motive such as introductory accounting courses was found to affect the student decision contradicting with the results of Anis & Hanafi (2015) study that reveals it was not associated with the choice of accounting major. Hence, continuous courses developments are crucial in drawing more students to the profession.

Despite that in Egypt Anis & Hanafi (2015) study indicated that gender variables might not to be associated with the choice of accounting major, the current study conducted a further analysis to consider the effect of gender and the level in the college, whether third- or fourth-year student, variables. The female choice was found to be not affected by an educational motive that is contradicting with male results. The students' capabilities for each gender have a significant relationship with their choices. Moreover, the psychological motive of female students has a highly significant relationship while no relation to male students' choices. This preceding result supports the assumption that for females the psychological motive is an important motive. For third-level students, it is found that their capabilities and psychological motives are the domain reasons to select accounting. The fourth-level students, as they are one step away from graduation, select their minors based on market motives and then educational motives.

These findings might help educational institutions, especially, accounting departments in various universities to better understand the elements and motives that influence students' major choices, consequently, drawing more students to the field of accounting. This may require some development in the accounting courses curriculums and providing consulting to students to help them be aware of the

challenges and the promises of the profession. Changes are also needed in accounting education to cope with changes in the accounting profession. In addition, this study would help professional accounting associations in formulating strategies and policies that help in supporting accounting careers and professions to meet the needs of the workforce and fill the gap of qualified accountants. Thus, society would benefit from a highly skilled accountant that graduates with a true knowledge of the profession.

### **8. Research Limitations and Future Research**

There are some limitations to the current study. First, the questionnaire was only administered to a single university and faculty, Cairo University, Faculty of Commerce. Especially, the questionnaire was directed toward the English section and Georgia program third- and fourth-year students. Hence the results might not be generalized. Second, the findings are limited to the factors or motives employed in the current study. There are various prospects for future research as it could consider the opinions of students in other universities. Further, a comparative study between the respondent of students in public and private universities may be beneficial. This study's scope could be extended to include another way of categorizing and even other factors that might yield different results. Using interviews with the students could enhance the awareness of the factors influencing their choice. Further, considering the opinions of accounting professors about both the factors that could affect students' decisions to specialize in accounting or/and the development in the accounting courses curriculums are other ways to extend the current study. Conducting a comparative study between the Egyptian universities' accounting courses curriculums and structure with those in the developed countries' universities could be beneficial in improving accounting curriculums as well.

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## إصلاح نظام الدراسة وتطوير المناهج ودوافع التخصص في المحاسبة: أدلة من مصر

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المستخلص:

الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الدراسة هو تحديد الدوافع الرئيسية التي تؤثر على قرار طلاب كلية إدارة الأعمال بالتخصص في المحاسبة، وبالتالي اختيار المحاسبة كمهنة مستقبلية لهم. تم فحص أربعة دوافع رئيسية في الدراسة تشمل العناصر التعليمية، وقدرات الطلاب، والعوامل النفسية، والسوقية والمجتمعية. تم الاعتماد على البيانات الأولية من خلال استبيان منظم من طلاب إحدى الجامعات المرموقة في مصر، وهي جامعة القاهرة، كلية التجارة، برنامج الدراسة باللغة الإنجليزية، وبرنامج جورجيا. تغيرت هذه البرامج إلى نظام جديد مؤخرًا وأجرت تغييرات وتطويرًا في مناهجها الدراسية. تكشف النتائج أن قدرات الطلاب والعوامل النفسية هي أكثر العوامل تأثيرًا على قراراتهم، ثم تأتي العوامل التعليمية وعوامل السوق في النهاية. تظهر النتائج أيضًا تأثير الجنس والمرحلة الدراسية للطلاب على قرارهم. قد تفيد الدراسة الحالية مؤسسات تعليم المحاسبة لوضع استراتيجياتها لجذب المزيد من الطلاب لاختيار تخصص المحاسبة. علاوة على ذلك، وقد تكون نتائج هذه الدراسة مفيدة أيضًا لهيئات المحاسبة المهنية لوضع استراتيجياتها لتعزيز صورة مهنة المحاسبة.

**الكلمات الرئيسية:** تعليم المحاسبة، تطوير المناهج، التخصص في المحاسبة، مصر.