

**IS ACCOUNTING PROFESSION THE RIGHT CAREER CHOICE?  
(A CASE OF FIRST YEAR ACCOUNTING STUDENTS  
IN UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA SARAWAK)**



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## ABSTRACT

This study attempts to examine empirically the factors influencing the career choice of the first year Diploma in Accountancy students who have selected accounting as a profession. First year students at Universiti Teknologi Mara, Negeri Sarawak (UiTM) were used in this study as the introductory courses shapes their perceptions of the profession, the aptitudes and skills needed for successful careers in accounting and the nature of career opportunities in accounting. The data for this study were gathered through the use of questionnaires and interview. It was indicated that from the findings, self interest, parents' advice and friends or peers influence greatly influenced the respondents' decision in selecting accounting as a profession. The results are consistent with the findings of JE Myburgh (2005) and Auyeung and Sands (1997), who found that parents, teachers' and peers' influence was the strongest influence. Concerning the perception on benefits gain from accounting profession, most of the respondents perceived that opportunity to work with a large corporation is the most important benefit in accounting profession, while future high earnings potential and ability to choose career specialization are ranked second and third as most important. The results of the study should help accounting firms, companies and educational institutions in planning recruiting strategies and admission policies, as well as funding facilities for loans and bursaries. Factors such as family socioeconomic background, students' academic achievement and the educational achievements of parents, can be used by higher learning institutions to

## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF RESEARCH

#### 1.0. Introduction

Deciding upon a career direction is difficult and normally produces some anxiety. People entering the job market today are interested in money, just as their parents were. At the same time, college-educated or universities-educated people today are likely to want a job that is creative and stimulating, and that offers some measure of independence.

Career decisions are complicated by parental expectations. Not uncommonly, parents try to influence their children's career choices, perhaps by approving of a "practical" profession (accounting, business) and disapproving of an "impractical" one (history, sociology). Parents may also approve white-collar work and disapprove work in a skilled trade. Young people cannot avoid dealing with their parents' values in this area. Choosing a direction in college or universities with a potential career in mind is often one of the first times a young person makes a fundamental decision in which he or she must try to differentiate parental from personal values. Simply following the parents' wishes might avoid friction, but is likely to leave lingering doubts or resentments. Automatically discarding the parents' thoughts is a sign of immaturity and an equal impairment of genuine free choice.

## 1.1. Background

The accounting profession in Malaysia is relatively young. Before 1958, there were no home-grown accountants and all the accountants in Malaya then had received their professional qualifications and tertiary accounting qualifications from overseas, mainly in the United Kingdom and Australia. They were mainly chartered accountants from the U.K. and Australia and those with accounting qualifications from the Australian Society of Accountants. During that period, the country also did not have any legislation to regulate the accounting profession. This was mainly because the Government then was very pre-occupied with various developmental and administrative programmes for the newly independent nation. The accounting profession was very much left on its own. At that time, accountants were not required to register with any local professional body and as a result the profession was for all intents and purposes not regulated and controlled by a national statutory accountancy body (Lee, 1996).

As the country progressed and prospered, it became increasingly obvious to the government that it might not be healthy to let the accounting profession developed without proper guidelines and regulations. In September 1967, for the first time, the Accountants Act was passed by the Parliament under the new legislation known as the Accountants Act 1967. Arising from it, a professional