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## Factors Influencing Students' Decisions to Study the Professional Accounting Programs – Evidence from Vietnam

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### **Abstract**

*In Vietnam it can be said that people who intend to pursue accounting career have to make the decision to choose whether to pursue professional accounting or just study accounting programs at universities and colleges. However, there is no research in Vietnam to help them solving this problem. Therefore, we conduct this study to explore the factors influencing students' decision/intention to study the professional accounting programs – evidence from Vietnam.*

*Using the regression analysis method, results of the study show that “the fit between intrinsic factors and professional accounting career”, “the prospects of professional accounting career”, “the professional accounting career in line with modern trend” and “the influences from significant people” have a positive impact on the decision/intention to study professional accounting programs at professional accounting bodies. Moreover, this study also reveals that “the opportunity cost of studying and becoming a member of the professional accounting bodies” has a negative impact on this decision/intention.*

**Keywords:** *Professional accounting programs, professional accounting body, accounting career, career choice, intrinsic factors*

**JEL Classification:** *M41; A2*

### **INTRODUCTION**

In Vietnam, with the trend of international integration, more and more international professional accounting associations enter into the Vietnamese market to promote their images and develop strategies to attract auditors and financial and accounting practitioners becoming their members. At present, in addition to appearance of professional financial accounting bodies in Vietnam, for example Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) and Certified Public Accountants (CPA Australia), professional managerial accounting associations, such as the Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) and Institute of Management Accountants (IMA), have appeared and gradually asserted their positions as a result of the increasingly important role of management accounting in organizations.

Accountancy bodies are facing the challenge of making differences in the market of accounting services, compared to non-professional accounting organizations like universities and colleges. Therefore, these bodies are constantly emphasizing on their reputation for quality assurance of the provision of accounting practice certificates. This is evidenced through the changes in the training content to broaden professional knowledge as well as develop a range of required skills for members. However, the opportunity costs of attending a professional program are also high (Coleman, Kreuze & Langsam, 2004; Felton, Dimnik & Northey, 1995). Therefore, the persons who want to pursue accounting career have many difficulties in choosing the training programs to study. It is important to make decision whether to choose a training program of a



professional accounting body because this affects the learner's cost, time and future benefits. However, no study in Vietnam has discovered factors influencing the students' decision/intention to study professional accounting programs at professional accounting associations. In addition, current researches in the world show that there are very few evidences of the effects of factors on the learners' decision to study the professional accounting programs. These factors includes "personality and skills" (Said, Ghani, Hashim & Nasir, 2004; Sugahara & Bolland, 2006; Omar, 2009; Azevedo & Sugahara, 2012), "learning and working experience" (Sugahara, Hiramatsu & Boland, 2009; Omar, 2009; Azevedo & Sugahara, 2012), "opportunity costs" (Ahmed, Alam & Alam, 1997; Sugahara & Bolland, 2006; Sugahara et al., 2009), "influences from significant people" (Ahmed, Alam & Alam, 1997; Sugahara & Bolland, 2006; Ahmadi, Helms, & Nodoushani, 1995) and "attributes related to professional accounting occupation" such as "job prospects" (Ahmed et al., 1997; Sugahara & Bolland, 2006) and "job perception" (Sugahara & Omar, 2009; Azevedo & Sugahara, 2012). Moreover, the vast majority of above studies are limited to the usage of descriptive statistics method, instead of regression analysis method, to compare the factors influencing this decision of two groups of students who decided to study and did not decide to study. As a result, we choose to study the issue of "factors influencing students' decision/intention to study professional accounting programs – evidence from Vietnam".

Factors like "personality and skills" and "learning and work experience" are grouped in this study, namely intrinsic factors. Moreover, studies in the world have not deeply exploited the specialty of the professional accounting association. For example, although the brand and reputation are outstanding and easily identifiable features of professional accounting associations, there have not been any research show that these features bring any differences for associations. Therefore, we identify a new factor that is related to the specialty of professional accounting associations, called the "the professional accounting career in line with modern trend".

## **LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT**

Choosing an accounting training program to study is considered as a career choice. The career choice is a decision-making process of choosing an occupation of a person to achieve job satisfaction. Career choice theories suggest that when a person needs to make a career decision, he will balance between career's benefits, career's opportunities, his aptitudes and the cost of pursuing these opportunities.

The theory of vocational personalities and work environment by Holland (1959) suggests that a person is interested in a job with its environment fitting his personalities. Thus, this theory argues that a person's behaviour depends on his personalities, his interests and the environment in which he lives as well as the way he expresses himself (Holland, 1992).

Along with globalization, the world is getting closer and closer together but at the same time it is facing with an increasingly fierce competition, not only for economic competition but also for human resources competition. This makes the competition for academic achievements more and more evident than ever (Harmon & Walker, 2001). According to Grobler & Myburgh (2001), learners always desire to attain high academic achievements. In addition, the social cognitive career theory introduced by Lent, Brown & Hackett (1994) emphasizes the interaction of learning experiences, self-efficacy and career choice. This theory proposes that a person's learning experiences influences on



the way he develops self-efficacy and also on his outcome expectations, resulting in his career choice. Similarly, theory of planned behaviour by Ajzen (1988) suggests that the more experiences a person has, the higher degree of perceived behavioural control he achieves. As a result, the higher degree of intention to perform a certain behaviour he has, leading to the higher likelihood of behavioural performance.

Gallagher, Clarke & Wilson (2008) have recognized that a person who has an aptitude in a career will perform that career better than expected. They conclude that we should choose a career based on our aptitudes. This is explained by Bandura's theory of self-efficacy (1977). A person with aptitude in an occupation will have belief on his ability to successfully perform that occupation and thus he tends to choose it. The above analyses inspire us to construct the following research hypothesis:

***H<sub>1</sub>: The fit between intrinsic factors and professional accounting career positively associates with decision/intention to study the professional accounting programs.***

A number of previous studies conducted surveys on students' perceptions regarding career prospects of professional accounting occupation. The career prospects are perceived as the career future benefits, including opportunities for future success, opportunities for promotion and opportunities for achieving a high social status (Sugahara & Boland, 2006). These studies have found that the more respectfully students perceive toward the professional accounting career, the more likely they are to choose this career (Horowitz & Riley, 1990; Sugahara & Boland, 2006). According to the theory of career anchors by Edgar H. Schein (1978), if a person's career anchor is career prospects, he tends to make career decisions based on the career's future benefits. Based on an argument that prospects of professional accounting career motivate the behavior of choice such a career, the following testable hypothesis is developed:

***H<sub>2</sub>: The prospects of professional accounting career positively associate with decision/intention to study the professional accounting programs.***

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, an individual may perform his or her intended behavior after considering the opportunity cost of a such behavior. Therefore, an individual's intention to pursue professional accounting career may be influenced by the opportunity cost of becoming a member of professional bodies. The fact shows that Vietnam students feel many high pressures, like spending much time, much efforts and workload, in studying professional accounting programs to attain professional certificates. By applying the Theory of Planned Behavior, Felton et al. (1995) have explored the differences in perceptions of some non-financial costs such as "you have no time to relax in the first few years from being a professional accountant" or "there are too many barriers to be qualified as a professional accountant" among students who decide to pursue professional accounting career and students who do not decide to choose that career. In order to obtain a professional accounting certificate, students are burdened by a huge expenditure on both time and money in order to attend and pass some challenged subjects. In addition, there is much controversy surrounding the recent incidents of accounting failures such as Enron's collapse that may negatively affect to students' perception toward the accounting profession, particularly the bad consequences that accountants may suffer from the other people's actions (Sugahara & Boland, 2006). Coleman et al. (2004) concluded that the high opportunity cost of studying and becoming a member of the professional accounting body may discourage



an excellent student to choose professional accounting as a career. The above arguments motivate us building the hypothesis as follows:

***H<sub>3</sub>: The opportunity cost of studying and becoming a member of the professional accounting body negatively relates to decision/intention to study the professional accounting programs.***

Today's globalization trend requires business units around the world to communicate in similar languages to promote collaboration. The professional accounting associations thus play a very important role in helping accountants make breakthroughs to keep up with changes. These professional associations constantly build their own characteristics to attract members. The first characteristic is building their own brand names. Velayuthaym & Rahma (2000) have found that the reputation of accounting professional associations is the way for them to differentiate and create the brands for their members. The second is developing curriculum that suit to the practical work of accountants (World Bank, 2016). The third is building a network of financial, accounting and auditing practitioners. The Australian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (2011) have asserted that the professional associations regularly organize events to connect accountants and auditors around the world in order to help their members expand their network as well as exchange their knowledge. The forth is training their members to attain the expertise knowledge in a specific area of accounting profession (Sidaway, Lange, Bouiheres & Sangster, 2013). These four characteristics of professional accounting associations are grouped under the name of "professional accounting career in line with modern trend" that is a new variant of this study. From the above analysis, we come up with the following research hypothesis:

***H<sub>4</sub>: The professional accounting career in line with modern trend positively relates to decision/intention to study the professional accounting programs.***

The perception of a career is known as a person's feeling about its characteristics. We often choose and pursue an occupation as a result of our impression on its specialties. Aranya, Meir & Bar-Ilan (1978) have found that prior to making career choices, a person often finds information relating to various professions to derive their own characteristics. The profession chosen is that he perceives himself fitting into its characteristics. Using Gough's creative personality scale (Gough, 1979), Saemann & Crooker (1999) have concluded that accounting work is normally perceived requiring high precision, statutory compliance and repetition, leading to discourage creative persons' aspiration of being accountants. These misperceptions also contribute to restrain the accountants' creativity (Dminik & Felton, 2006).

Consequently, it takes much time for the public to clearly distinguish between bookkeepers and professional accountants (Dimnik & Felton, 2006). Contrary to the inherent negative perception of accounting profession in previous studies, some recent studies emphasize that professional accounting career in the present society has characteristics different from what people previously thought about. For example, based on interviews with Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), Myers (2002) has indicated that Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) who want to become CFOs need to have various generic skills, such as decision-making skills, instead of technical expertise only. These arguments motivate us to state the following research hypothesis:

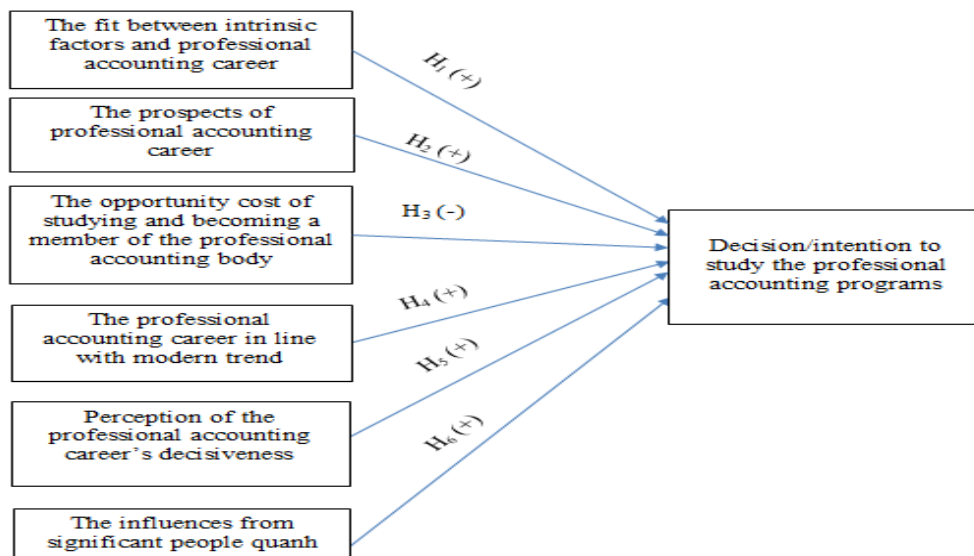
***H<sub>5</sub>: Perception of the professional accounting career's decisiveness positively associates with decision/intention to study the professional accounting programs.***

According to the theory of Reasoned Action by Ajzen & Fishbein (1980), our behaviours are affected by intentions and that intentions may be driven by subjective norms. The subjective norms are then influenced by our normative beliefs - our beliefs that everyone, especially the person who is meaningful to our decisions, is in favour of us doing something. Applying the theory of Reasoned Action, previous studies have discovered that the choice of a student's profession can be strongly influenced by parents, parents' careers, high school teachers and friends (Pimpa, 2007; Paolillo & Estes, 1982).

In addition, some studies have explored factors influencing to the choice of accounting profession instead of choice of career in general and have concluded that the consultation from the teachers, parents and friends have a great influence on the professional accounting career choice (Paolillo & Estes, 1982; Silverstone & Williams, 1979; Sugahara & Boland, 2006). Therefore, we recommend the following hypothesis:

***H<sub>6</sub>: The influences from significant people positively associate with decisions /intention to study the professional accounting programs.***

**Figure 1.** The theoretical model



## METHODOLOGY

### Variables measurement

Most of variables in this study, including "the fit between intrinsic factors and professional accounting career", "the prospects of professional accounting career", "the opportunity cost of studying and becoming a member of the professional accounting body", "the professional accounting career in line with modern trend", "perception of the professional accounting career's decisiveness" and "the influences from significant people", are measured through the usage and adjustment of available scales in previous studies, such as Carpenter & Foster (1979), Sugahara & Boland (2006) and Azevedo & Sugahara (2013) and in the Likert scales of 1-5.

The new concept in this study - "the professional accounting career in line with modern trend" - measures the interviewees' perception of suitability with the new and advanced trend of professional accounting career. In order to measure this concept, we use a set of four observed variables, in the Likert scales. These observed variables are developed



based on the interviews of experts who are members of professional accounting associations in order to achieve a level of satisfaction of opinions. The number of interviewees to reach the satisfied level of opinions is 6 experts. The opinions selected in order to build scales for the concept of "the professional accounting career in line with modern trend" are those with the highest rate of repetition.

The concept of "decision/intention to study the professional accounting programs" is measured in the form of a Likert scales with three levels. The level 1 was the interviewees who did not decide (or intend) to study a professional accounting program. The level 2 indicated that the interviewee was hesitant to study. The last level reflected the interviewee decided, intended or attended to study this program.

### **Sampling frame and sample size**

This empirical research is conducted in Vietnam - an Asian country tends to massively join many international professional accounting associations with the increasing number of students. We use a convenient sampling approach to reach out to potential respondents including students and alumni in accounting, auditing, and other majors belonging to four Universities in Southern Vietnam - University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City, University of Finance and Marketing, Can Tho University and Da Nang University of Economics. The source of email data is from the archive file through The Potential CPA exams held by school of Accounting - University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City. A list with more than 2,000 email addresses is prepared. Then the emails are sent to respondents through the Google Survey. After eliminating invalid responses, the final sample has 223 valid responses with 80.3% from students and alumni of the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City, 8.1% from students of Financial Marketing University, 7.1% from students of Can Tho University and 4.5% from students of Da Nang University of Economics. In addition, the data also shows that 79 respondents studied/have been studying in accounting majors, 61 respondents have major in auditing and 83 respondents belonging to other disciplines.

According to Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson, & Tatham (2006), the sample size was at least five times the total number of observed variables in the Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA). For multivariate regression analysis, the minimum sample size needs to achieve is  $n = 50 + 8 * m$  (where  $m$  is the independent variable) (Tabachnick & Fidell, 1996). Cohen & Cohen (1983) asserts that the sample size should be at least 20 times the number of independent variables. With 27 observed variables belonging to 6 independent variables, sample size with 223 responses satisfies the above conditions.

### **Validity and reliability**

We assess the reliability of the scales by using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for 6 independent variables and 1 dependent variable. These coefficients are in the range of 0.696 and 0.814 (see Table 1), which are satisfactory because they are greater than the required value (0.6). Then we use the EFA and the model proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) to test the validity of the scales. The results of the EFA show that the observed variable DEC\_ADA was omitted due to its factor loadings  $< 0.5$ . The observed variable PRO\_EXC was also omitted due to the cross-factor loadings  $< 0.3$ . The remaining 25 observed variables are then allocated to 6 factors comprising INF, INT, TRE, OPP, DEC, PRO with the factor loadings of observation variables from 0.583 to 0.844, highly satisfactory because they are greater than the desired value (0.5) and also ensures



cross-factor loadings greater than 0.3. The square roots of the AVEs of these six factors (from 0.673 to 0.834) (see table 1) is higher than the correlation coefficients between the factors in the model (-0,041 to 0,502). For the DEC\_PAC factor - not a latent variable, it should have AVE equal to 1 and therefore, of course, greater than correlation coefficients between this factor with others factors (-309 to 0.675). Therefore, the convergent and discriminant validity of the scales is satisfactory.

**Table 1.** The result of validity and reliability

Variables	Factors Loadings
<i>The fit between intrinsic factors and professional accounting career (IND)</i> <i>AVE = 0,815; Cronbach Alpha = 0,83 (scales adjusted from Carpenter &amp; Foster, 1979)</i>	
✓ Work tasks/subject matters relating to professional accounting career interest me (INT_INT)	0.802
✓ My personality suits professional accounting career (INT_PER).	0.833
✓ I have aptitude for handling the subject matters/work tasks relating to professional accounting career (INT_APT).	0.802
✓ With my past working experience/academic achievements in the field of professional accounting and auditing, I think that I have abilities to study professional accounting program (INT_EXP).	0.614
<i>The prospects of professional accounting (PRO)</i> <i>AVE = 0,771; Cronbach Alpha = 0,814 (scales adjusted from Sugahara &amp; Boland, 2006)</i>	
✓ Accounting professional career provides excellent prospects (PRO_EXC) (omitted)	
✓ Accounting professional career gives me powerful authority (PRO_AUT).	0.744
✓ Accounting professional career gives good advancement opportunities (PRO_ADV).	0.698
✓ Accounting professional career has a high social prestige (PRO_PRE).	0.595
✓ Accounting professional career gives you a high salary (PRO_SAL).	0.743
<i>The professional accounting career in line with modern trend (TRE)</i> <i>AVE = 0,801; Cronbach Alpha = 0,814</i>	
✓ Professional accounting curriculum are highly appropriate to the practical work of accountants (TRE_APP).	0.656
✓ The reputation of professional accounting associations brings the brand for their members (TRE_BRA).	0.73



✓ Each professional accounting association builds and develops its curriculum expertise in a specific area of accounting (such as financial accounting, managerial accounting) (TRE\_SPE). 0.819

✓ Professional accounting association builds a network of financial, accounting and auditing practitioners (TRE\_NET). 0.719

*The opportunity cost of studying and becoming a member of the professional accounting body (OPP)*

*AVE = 0,673; Cronbach Alpha = 0,696 (scales adjusted from Sugahara & Boland, 2006)*

✓ I have no time to relax in the first few years from being a professional accountant (OPP\_REL). 0.595

✓ I have to spend much time on studying to become a professional accountant (OPP\_TIM). 0.694

✓ It costs a lot of money to sit for a professional accounting exam (OPP\_MON). 0.703

✓ The professional accountant career requires a difficult entry qualification (OPP\_DIF). 0.681

✓ A professional accountant may absorb personal liabilities for the other people's malpractices (OPP\_ILL). 0.583

*Perception of the professional accounting career's decisiveness (DEC)*

*AVE = 0,834; Cronbach Alpha = 0,696 (scales adjusted from Azevedo & Sugahara, 2013)*

Attributes of work tasks which a professional accountant has to deal with:

✓ Inflexible	/	Adaptable (DEC_ADA) (omitted)	
✓ Record keepings	/	Decision makings (DEC_DEC)	0.836
✓ Fixed	/	Changeable (DEC_CHA)	0.775
✓ Uniform standards	/	Alternative views (DEC_ALT)	0.844

*The influences from significant people (INF)*

*AVE = 0,737; Cronbach Alpha = 0,783 (scales adjusted from Sugahara & Boland, 2006)*

✓ My family advises me to study the professional accounting program (INF\_FAM). 0.638

✓ My peers advise me to study the professional accounting program (INF\_PEE). 0.723

✓ My lecturers advise me to study the professional accounting program (INF\_LEC). 0.675

✓ Friends of my family advise me to study the professional accounting program (INF\_FFR). 0.763

✓ Professional practitioners advise me to study the professional accounting program (INF\_PRA). 0.672





Decision/intention to study the professional accounting program (*DEC\_PAC*)

$AVE = 1$

## TESTING THEORETICAL MODEL AND RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

### Testing theoretical model

The formal theoretical model after adjusting the scales has 6 independent variables, including INF, INT, TRE, OPP, DEC and PRO, and a dependent variable, namely DEC\_PAC. This research uses the correlation analysis in SPSS to identify whether there are linear correlations between factors, including INF, INT, TRE, OPP, DEC and PRO, and DEC\_PAC variable. The results show that these correlations exist due to the sig values less than 5%.

The adjusted R Square is also used to assess the appropriate level of research model with the results presented in the following table.

**Table 2.** Testing the appropriateness of the model – using the adjusted R Square

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the estimate
1	0.775	0.601	0.59	0.435

As shown in the table 2, adjusted R square is 59% means that 59% of students decide/intend to study the professional accounting program can be explained by regression relationship of independent variables in the model.

### Testing research hypotheses

**Table 3.** Results of regression coefficient

Model	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Sig.	Multicollinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.157	0.25		0.629	0.53		
INF	0.108	0.046	0.122	2.363	0.019	0.692	1.445
INT	0.173	0.044	0.199	3.933	0	0.719	1.391
TRE	0.39	0.05	0.421	7.791	0	0.633	1.58
OPP	-0.233	0.046	-0.222	-5.087	0	0.969	1.032
DEC	0.009	0.031	0.014	0.303	0.762	0.931	1.074
PRO	0.16	0.054	0.159	2.976	0.003	0.646	1.549

From the table 3, we can draw conclusions that of the six components which are put into the regression analysis model, there are five components - including INT, TRE, OPP, PRO and INF - have a linear relationship with decision/intention to study the professional accounting program at significant level of 5%. The DEC factor is excluded from the model because of its sig = 0.762 greater than 0.05. The above table also prove that there is no phenomenon of multicollinearity in regression model because variance inflation factors (VIF) of all factors are less than 2.

In conclusion, most of hypotheses in the theoretical model are accepted after testing hypotheses, except for H<sub>5</sub>, with the detailed results of multiple regression analysis presented as follows:



Hypothesis H<sub>1</sub> "The fit between intrinsic factors and professional accounting career (INT) positively associates with decision/intention to study the professional accounting program (DEC\_PAC)" is accepted because of the  $\beta = .173$  and Sig = .000 < 0.05. Based on the results of this test and the content of the survey questionnaire, the students have intrinsic characteristics suit professional accounting career. For example, a student has his personality, aptitudes, academic achievements or working experience which are appropriate to work tasks of professional accounting career tends to pursue this career after his graduation from university.

Hypothesis H<sub>2</sub> "The prospects of professional accounting career (PRO) positively associate with decision/intention to study the professional accounting program (DEC\_PAC) can not be rejected because the  $\beta = .16$  and sig = .003 < 0.05. This shows that a person who realizes the potential and prospects of this career will have an incentive to become a member of a professional accounting association.

Hypothesis H<sub>3</sub> "The opportunity cost of studying and becoming a member of the professional accounting body (OPP) negatively relates to decision/intention to study the professional accounting (DEC\_PAC)" with the  $\beta = -0.233$  and sig = 0.000 < 0.05 is also approved. This implicates that in addition to the benefits (e.g. the prospects) of professional accounting career, its cost is also an important factor that students concern when they decide/intend to study at professional accounting associations. In other words, the higher opportunity costs of professional accounting career students perceive, the less likely they are to pursue this career.

Hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> "The professional accounting career in line with modern trend (TRE) positively relates to decision/intention to study the professional accounting program (DEC\_PAC)" is also accepted as a result of the  $\beta = .39$ ; sig = .000 < 0.05. Of the hypotheses provided in the model, hypothesis H<sub>4</sub> with the highest  $\beta$  value has the highest correlation between dependent and independent variables. The result of positive regression coefficient indicates that students who appreciate the modern trend of professional accounting career, such as reputation, network of financial, accounting and auditing practitioners and practical curriculum, tend to choose professional accounting as a career.

Hypothesis H<sub>6</sub> "The influences from significant people (INF) positively associate with decision/intention to study the professional accounting program (DEC\_PAC)" is also realized with the  $\beta = .108$  and Sig = .019 < 0.05. This result show that, in general, if the students are encouraged by significant people like family, friends and lecturers, they have a motivation to study the professional accounting program.

## IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS



With the aim of building a scientific basis for deciding on professional accounting program choice at professional associations in Vietnam, thereby proposing practical recommendations, this study is important for researchers in the fields of financial accounting, management accounting and auditing; professional accounting bodies; universities and colleges; and learners who needs to make a learning decision.

For professional accounting bodies as well as providers of professional accountancy training, they should organize activities to attract students to study. Firstly, they should introduce the curriculum and the opportunities of professional accountancy to potential students via newspapers or specialized seminars by certified accountants. In addition, it is also necessary to build groups for current and future accountants so that the groups can effectively advise and support their members. The next activity is developing the practical training programs. Finally, it is also important to link with other accounting training institutions such as universities, colleges and high schools in order to provide professional accounting training programs in these institutions for potential learners based on their academic achievements and aptitudes regarding professional accounting career.

For universities and colleges, this research results also gives their educational administrators numerous implications, leading to helping them realising the important role of the following activities in order to support their students best. The first activity is building up centres of counselling and vocational guidance. Based on each student's aptitude and personality, counselling centres will help them choosing the most suitable major. The second activity is realising the differences of accounting training curriculum between the professional accounting bodies and universities that makes the accounting and auditing graduate students continuing to study professional accounting programs at these bodies. In addition, universities and colleges also need to connect with businesses so that students can practise and apply their knowledge they have learned in practical situations. For lecturers, they might assist their organisations in developing and updating its accounting training curriculum to suit the trend and practice. Moreover, when students need make decisions like whether to choose a professional body of financial accountancy or management accountancy, lecturers should advise them to rely on their learning experiences and aptitudes to make that decisions.

For learners themselves, the results of this study help them understand the importance of understanding their own aptitudes, personalities and interests as well as the requirements of professional accounting curriculum in order to identify whether they are suitable to professional accounting bodies. In addition, results of the study also communicate to the learners that they should consider benefits versus costs of becoming a member of a professional accounting body.

Similar to any research project, this study also has certain limitations. Firstly, most of surveyed subjects are mainly belongs to University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City. Second, some factors impact on this professional accounting program choice - such as the perception of the professional accounting career's certainty and repetition - has not yet been verified by this study with the Vietnamese context. Thirdly, we have not separately tested each characteristic of the sample like students' genders and majors. Due to the time and cost constraints, this study mainly surveys female in accounting and auditing majors.



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