

**INTEREST IN THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING  
PROFESSION: ACCOUNTING STUDENTS'  
PERCEPTIONS IN POLITEKNIK SEBERANG PERAI  
(PSP), PULAU PINANG.**

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SEBERANG PERAI (PSP), PULAU PINANG**      **MASTER OF SCIENCE  
(INTERNATIONAL  
ACCOUNTING)**

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ACCOUNTING STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS IN POLITEKNIK SEBERANG  
PERAI (PSP), PULAU PINANG.**

**By**

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Project Paper Submitted to  
Othman Yeop Abdullah Graduate School of Business,  
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in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Science  
(International Accounting)

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## **ABSTRAK**

*Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk menyiasat minat di kalangan pelajar-pelajar perakaunan dalam mengikuti sijil profesional perakaunan pengurusan pada masa hadapan dan faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi minat di kalangan pelajar perakaunan dalam mengikuti sijil professional perakaunan pengurusan pada masa hadapan. Populasi kajian ini mensasarkan pelajar dari Politeknik Seberang Perai (PSP). Soal selidik digunakan sebagai instrumen utama untuk mengumpul data daripada responden. Kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa faktor-faktor seperti peluang pekerjaan dan pendapatan, keluarga dan rakan-rakan, pengajar, rakan-rakan dan kursus perakaunan pengurusan mempengaruhi minat di kalangan pelajar-pelajar perakaunan dalam mengikuti sijil profesional perakaunan pengurusan pada masa hadapan dengan ketara. Penyelidikan yang diberikan pemahaman yang lebih baik mengenai faktor yang mempengaruhi minat di kalangan pelajar-pelajar perakaunan dalam mengikuti sijil profesional perakaunan pengurusan pada masa hadapan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan pelajar yang berminat dalam perakaunan kewangan daripada perakaunan pengurusan dan faktor yang paling penting yang mempengaruhi minat mereka secara negatif adalah peluang-peluang pekerjaan dan pendapatan. Walau bagaimanapun, ia menekankan bahawa masih terdapat keperluan untuk menjalankan penyelidikan tambahan untuk mengisi jurang yang belum disentuh dalam kajian semasa. Di akhir bab ini, beberapa cadangan telah disediakan untuk kegunaan masa depan kepada mana-mana penyelidik dalam bidang akademik ini.*

*Kata Kunci: Perakaunan pengurusan, pelajar, minat, politeknik.*

## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the interest among accounting students in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future and the factors that influence the interests among accounting students in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. In this study, the targeted population is the accounting students from Politeknik Seberang Perai (PSP). Questionnaire was used as the main instrument for collecting data from the respondents. The study shows that the factors such as job opportunities and income, family and friends, instructors, colleagues and management accounting course (s) significantly influence interests among accounting students in pursuing certificate of professional management accounting in the future. The research provides a better understanding regarding the factors affecting the interests among accounting students in pursuing certificate of professional management accounting in the future. The result shows that students are most interested in financial accounting rather than management accounting and the most important factor that may negatively influence their interest is job opportunities and income. However, it is emphasized that there is still a need to conduct additional research to fill the gaps that have not been covered in the current study. In the final chapter, some recommendations were provided for future use to any researcher in this academic field.

**Keywords:** Management accounting, student, interest, polytechnic.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background of the study

The polytechnic is one of the public institutions of higher education under the Ministry of Education (MOE). The aim of Polytechnics is to train future semi-professional workers to meet the requirement of industrial demand majoring in technical, commerce and services. To meet those demands, polytechnic act as a center of learning that offers technical, commerce and services programmes. There are 32 polytechnics in Malaysia and one of them is Politeknik Seberang Perai (PSP) located in Pulau Pinang.

PSP offers full time and part-time programme for Diploma level in the field of Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Commerce and Information Technology. There are four departments in PSP, including Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Commerce and Information Technology Department. The focus of this study is on Commerce Department. One of the program offers for the Diploma in Accountancy.

The Diploma in Accountancy for polytechnics aims to produce the future graduates with knowledge and skills in areas of financial accounting, auditing, taxation and cost & management accounting as well as management knowledge, information technology, entrepreneurship and interpersonal development. The aim of this programme is to equip the future graduates with accounting and management skills in

business environment in order to build their careers in accountancy which encompass the entire spectrum of commercial and governmental activities as well as graduate education and lifelong learning.

Management accounting is one of the discipline core course that student need to completed in the fifth semester. This course is about management accounting system which accumulates, classifies, summarizes and reports information to assist management in decision making. The management accounting information needs have emerged, and future-oriented, forward-looking information to support strategic planning and decision-making, is required (Bromwich, 1990; Granlund and Lukka, 1998a, 1998b).

Business is more on focusing on profit in other words business is more in demand in using financial accounting by hiring a particular person for doing multitasking roles such as a financial accountant must be able to perform management account roles as well. As long as making profit in business is of most concern, hiring two different people in making two different tasks would not be helpful. Otley (2008), for instance, suggests that financial management and analysis exist but that middle management often undertake such analyses themselves, thus do not need a designated accounting professional for this purpose.

Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) is the most prestigious management accounting professional qualification, and, while not as high profile as its more financial accounting and auditing-oriented competitors, it proves a real career alternative in the United Kingdom (UK) market. Yet, beyond those borders, it is

relatively little known (Hoffjan et al., 2009). Nowadays in the job market, a person who held a university degree and professional accounting certificate will have extra advantages. However some students also believed that professional accounting programmes are tougher than degree programmes, thus it is only suitable for those who are disciplined and highly committed students, and only those with excellent cumulative grade point aggregate (CGPA) can pursue professional accounting programmes (Omar, 2009).

According to previous study by Hutaibat (2005), found management accounting practices in Jordanian organisations to be lacking, and the question arises whether there is a link to formal education. Among the most popular professional certificates are the American Certified Public Accountant (CPA), the Jordanian Certified Public Accountant (JCPA) (Hutaibat, 2005) and recently the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), but management accounting and a related qualification are not as desirable (Hutaibat, 2005). Thus, this study is conducted to investigate the phenomena but using the different work field, namely Malaysia. Diploma in Accountancy is not offered by all public higher institutions. In Malaysia, there are only two public higher institutions that offer diploma level for accountancy including Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) and polytechnic.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

There is one issue that needs to be discussed further so that the problem can be solved in the future. The main cause of the problem lies on formal education that emphasize more on financial accounting rather than management accounting. As stated in

polytechnic syllabus itself, only 3 credit hours provided to management accounting course compare to financial accounting's total credit hours are 17 credit hours. Furthermore management accounting is also significant in helping organisations to plan and control their businesses. According to President of CIMA Malaysia, there are only 5500 registered members and student of CIMA (Utusan Malaysia, 2008). This number considers small as compared to the number of registered members under the Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA) is about 29,654 members (MIA, 2013). Therefore, the aims of this study are on the perceptions of PSP's student and to discuss the main factors that may influence the students' interest to pursue a professional qualification in management accounting in the future.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

- 1.3.1 To investigate the interest among accounting students in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future.
- 1.3.2 To examine the impact of external factors upon students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The research questions will be:

- 1.4.1 To what extent accounting student's interested in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future.

1.4.2 To what extent is the influence of external factors upon students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future.

### **1.5 Significance of Study**

In Malaysia there are very limited studies on management accounting profession as a career choice. Therefore this study is conducted to investigate the interest of accounting students at polytechnic level in becoming a management accountant. The purpose of this study is to supplement this limited research on accounting student perceptions of career opportunities in management accounting, and identify the significant factors affecting the PSP students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future.

The results of this study will be useful to employers and the professional accounting bodies, such as CIMA, the Malaysian Institute of Accountant (MIA) and the Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants (MICPA) by providing information on accounting students' perceptions and identifying the factors that influence their future career and profession. For academic field, this research may help management accounting lecturer in improving teaching and learning strategies.

### **1.6 Organization of Study**

The study is organize according to several chapters. Chapter One consists of the introduction, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions and the

significance of this study. Chapter Two covers the literature review on polytechnic syllabus, interest in management accounting and factors that influenced that students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. Chapter Three describes the research design, population and sample, instrument and data analysis technique. Chapter Four discuss in finding from the survey responses. Chapter Five consists of the limitations, recommendations and conclusions of the study.

### **1.7 Summary**

The aims of the study is to investigate the interests among accounting students in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future and to examine the impact of external factors upon students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. External factors such as job opportunities and income, family and friends, instructors, colleagues and management accounting course.



## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.1 Reviews of polytechnic syllabus**

Diploma in Accountancy of polytechnic aims at producing accounting graduates who have knowledge, technical skills and attitude to adapt themselves with the growing and challenging business environment. Students of Diploma in Accountancy must complete 96 credit hours before being awarded a diploma. Apart from that, there are 3 credit hours allocated to the subject of management accounting. Students must take and pass the subject because it is a core subject in Diploma in Accountancy program. Management accounting subjects are offered during students in semester 5.

According to the polytechnic syllabus (Department of Polytechnic Education, 2011) management accounting provide knowledge to students on management accounting system which accumulate, classify, summarize and report information to assist management in decision-making. Upon completion of this course, the students should be able to :

- i. Prepare a correct standard costs and variances statements, relevant and irrelevant cost and revenues in short term decision making and preparing a static budget, flexible budget and performance report.
- ii. Identify a correct timing and cost of the project using Program Evaluation Review Technique (PERT) and analyze clearly cost volume profit (CVP) in decision making via group discussion.

- iii. Demonstrate leadership and teamwork skills efficiently while doing discussion.

## **2.2 Reviews on management accounting**

Ittner & Larcker (2002, p. 788) defined management accounting practices as a variety of methods specially considered for manufacturing businesses so as to support the organisation's infrastructure and management accounting processes. Management accounting practices can include budgeting, performance evaluation, information for decision-making; and strategic analyses are some of the methods used among many others. Recently, Chenhall (2008) recognised management accounting innovations as strategic management accounting "to connect the strategies to value chain and link activities across the organization that relates to cost objects". In addition, Hansen and Mouritsen (2007), management accounting is regarded as performance number 'at a distance' whereas operations management is considered as 'hands-on' activities in the operations. Meanwhile Abernethy and Bouwens (2005) perceived management accounting system innovation as either new systems or the redesign of an existing system. Within innovation studies, the term entails different interpretations particularly when referring to the organisational context.

## **2.3 Interest in the management accounting**

Kaplan (1984) has argued that there has been no development of management accounting techniques during the period of 1925 to the 1980s. Consistently with the study by Atkinson (1987) confirmed a crisis of the management accounting

profession that had lost relevance in Canada and that one of the solutions was to define a set of relevant and practical management accounting skills. Supported by Johnson (1990) reported that management accounting systems in a variety of organisations were lagging behind the technological systems by seventy five years. This shows that lack of interest among practitioners in management accounting. Although the view has been expressed that some of this criticism has been excessive (Bromwich and Bhimani, 1989), there has been a general acceptance that a major challenge faces practitioners, educators and researchers of management accounting to ensure its continued relevance to the information needs of managers.

However, the subject is argued to be of significant importance for competitiveness and efficiency, not only within a nation/region, but also in a globalised world (Ghosh and Chan, 1997; Islam and Kantor, 2005). Inconsistent with Joshi (2001) examined accounting practices of 60 large- and medium-sized manufacturing companies in India and found that the adoption rate of management accounting in practice had been rather slow. However Johnson & Kaplan, (1987) stated that at various times cost accounting has been driven by financial accounting and the need to supply information on inventory value and costs.

Sugahara and Boland (2006) revealed that non-CPA students tend to view the CPA as a profession with low communication skills; poor career prospects and being very much male dominated. Students have bad perceptions towards CPA. On the other hand, Hutaibat (2005) found that the American CPA was the most commonly held professional accounting qualification in respondent companies, followed by the Jordanian Certified Public Accountant (JCPA) qualification.

Beside that, there is a lacking also in the real practice of management accountants worldwide. This statement was supported by Institute of Management Accountants (IMA) study of practicing “management accountants” (IMA, 2000) apparently no management accountants are left in practice. Professionals in practice overwhelmingly have favored job titles such as financial analyst, business advisor, and consultant over “cost accountant” or “management accountant.” Perhaps this is not a purely cosmetic change. The IMA study also shows that current job titles reflect broader duties than traditionally executed by accountants. Instead of viewing this change as the end of management accounting, a more optimistic viewpoint is to see this as an opportunity to broaden management accounting, both in education and in research. This opens doors for exciting new research opportunities.

#### **2.4 Factors influencing students’ interest in the management accounting profession**

Previous studies revealed several factors that may influence students’ interest in choosing a profession. The findings of Felton et al. (1994) in Canada reveal that accounting students place greater emphasis on job availability and good long-term earnings. Ahmed et al. (1997) found that New Zealand students place considerable importance on financial factors when choosing an accounting major.

Other studies claimed that students’ perceptions are influenced by teachers, the study of the subject at school and the factual media by Byrne and Willis (2005). This study also suggests that if the profession would like to be successful in attracting students with the necessary skills and attributes to become accountants, students’ perceptions

need to be influenced. It also suggests that students should be given a realistic portrayal of the work of an accountant. Contrast with Wells and Fieger (2005) reported that New Zealand high school teachers' opinion of accounting as a career option is extremely low. This implies that there are significant issues for educators and the profession. This would include a possible mismatch between the required skills perceived by teachers and those required in the profession.

Meanwhile studies by Lowe and Simons, (1997); Marshall, (2003); Mauldin et al., (2000) found that in making discipline choices, students may be influenced by their parents, teachers, career advisors, and peers. Supported by the latest finding by Tan and Laswad (2006) parents, in particular, appear to have a stronger influence on students' intentions to major in accounting. The parents' perception and the students' view of the profession as a whole therefore influence students' career choice. This finding contrast with a United States study by Strasser, Ozgur, and Schroeder (2002), who reported that parents, peers and advisers had little influence on students' choice of business major.

There are many studies on students' perception of financial accounting field but none in management accounting. Some author found out that is course performance is not a factor that influence students' decision in making choice of choosing accounting field. For example, Allen (2004), claimed that course performance does not have any impact on students' choice of accounting as a major. The study also notes that students could be discouraged from majoring in accounting because they perceive the accounting courses to be boring, highly number-oriented, and requiring heavy workload. However Jackling and Calero (2006) assert, the first course in accounting

at the undergraduate level has been considered to have an important role in shaping students' perceptions of the profession.

Kim et al., (2002) conducted a study on business majors (e.g. accounting, finance, general business, management, marketing, MIS/CIS, and double major). They discovered that the top five reasons for choosing a major were: interest in a career associated with the major, good job opportunities, "good fit" with respondents' abilities, a desire to run a business some day, and projected earnings in the related career. The least selected reasons for choosing a major were the reputation of the major at the university, the perceived quality of instruction, the parents' influence, the amount and type of promotional information, and the influence of friends.

Given the results of prior studies, this current study is expected to investigate the students' interest in pursuing management accounting qualification in Malaysia. The sample size is different and small as compared to previous study (Hutaibat,2011) so comparative differences are expected.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This study adopts a survey approach rather than interviews because it will gather larger responses. This technique is a more viable approach since it is a relatively new study at polytechnic level. In addition, students at polytechnic usually are from Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) leavers or certificate from polytechnic or Kolej Komuniti that may have different perceptions on management accounting compared to university students. As mentioned before the information was collected by using the quantitative questionnaires. First, the research process has been identified and the research problems have been formulated. Then, there were also a discussion about the instruments to be used and the decisions that should be made in achieving the aims of the research. After that, the research design was created to answer the research objectives.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

As a quantitative study, results are based on the questionnaires distributed to the respondents. The questionnaires consist of two parts. Part A for demographic questions while part B for factors that influence students' interest in the management accounting profession. This quantitative study used statistical data as a tool to obtain the needed information. The findings and the conclusion of the study will solely depend on the full utilization of the statistical data collected.

### **3.3 Population and Samples**

The population of this study targeted final year accounting students in Politeknik Seberang Perai in Pulau Pinang. The population of this study consisted of a sample of senior accounting students or students in final year. 120 questionnaires were distributed to the accounting students in Politeknik Seberang Perai in Pulau Pinang. Only 119 of them were returned and useable.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

The questionnaire is one of the main instruments for collecting data from the respondents. The types and designs of questionnaires used depend on the studies that have been carried out. The questionnaire of this study consists of two parts. The first part designed to collect general information about the respondent. The second part consists 3 types of questions : first is regarding accounting students' interest in pursuing professional accounting qualification. Second is about the importance of selected factors decreasing students' interest in the management accounting profession after graduation. Third is about the importance of some suggestions (factors), which may increase students' interest in the management accounting profession after graduation.

The students were asked that the study was voluntary basis but their participation was appreciated. The questionnaire was answered within thirty minutes without any difficulties and ambiguous questions. For rendering valid and reliable result of the



questionnaire, pilot survey has been done and tested on a small group of accounting students in Politeknik Seberang Perai, Pulau Pinang.

### **3.5 Questionnaire Preparation**

This study investigated two aspects. Firstly, the extent of PSP's accounting students' interest in the management accounting profession was examined. Secondly, the factors, that influence accounting student to choose management accounting as their future career and profession. The questionnaire used in this research was adapted from Hutaibat (2011).

Part one designed to collect information about general information such as gender, polytechnic level, accounting background, rank of choice of majors applied for polytechnic, advice to pursue a management accounting qualification and rank of performance in management accounting course.

Part two consists of 3 questions. First question is about choice of professional accounting qualification. Respondents are required to rate items based on a 5 point Likert scale. Those are 1 = extremely not interested, 2 = not interested, 3 = not sure, 4 = interested, 5 = extremely interested. The second and third questions are about the factors influence student's interest in the management accounting profession. Still 5 point Likert scale use in this section. 1 = not important, 2 = below average important, 3 = average important, 4 = above average important, 5 = extremely important. The full questionnaire for the study is shown in Appendix.

### **3.6 Data Analysis Technique**

In this study, the data collected from the survey were tested using statistical techniques such as frequency distribution, mean and standard deviation. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences' (SPSS, version 20) for the statistical analysis.

#### **3.6.1 Descriptive Analysis**

This study uses descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviation and percentage values for each variable analysis. Frequency distributions were obtained for all the general information and variables.

### **3.7 Summary**

This chapter discusses about the research design, research instruments, questionnaire preparation and data analysis technique. Next part will discuss the findings using descriptive analysis.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will discuss the results and the outcome based on the analysis done on the data collected from respondents. The discussion then will try to achieve all the objectives outlined in Chapter 1 and also will attempt to answer the research questions. This chapter will discuss about the general information of respondents, interest in the management accounting profession, factors influencing students' interest in the management accounting profession and suggestions encourage students' interest in the management accounting profession.

#### **4.2 Survey Respondents**

Questionnaires were distributed to accounting student of Politeknik Seberang Perai. A total of 120 sets of questionnaires were distributed to the respondents. From these sets, only 119 were returned back to the researcher. Hence, the findings and discussion will focus on the response of the 119 respondents.

#### **4.3 Profile of Respondents Surveys**

Table 4.1 shows that out of the 119 questionnaires collected, 84.9% (101) were female and 15.1% (18) were male out of the 119 respondents. As expected, the majority of the respondents are female because of the current phenomena in the

institutions of higher education where female students are more than male students (Said et al, 2004).

TABLE 4.1

*GENERAL INFORMATION*

<b>Question (n=119)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Standard Deviation</b>
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	18	15.13	1.85	0.36
Female	101	84.87		
<b>University level</b>				
Second year	4	3.36	2.97	0.181
Third year	115	96.64		
<b>Accountant(s) among family</b>				
Yes	60	50.42	1.5	0.502
No	59	49.58		
<b>Rank of accounting major</b>				
First choice	84	70.59	1.5	1.016
Second choice	24	20.17		
Third choice	4	3.36		
Fifth choice	7	5.88		
<b>Management accounting professional certificates</b>				
Extremely not recommended	4	3.36	2.61	0.895
Not recommended	67	56.30		
Neutral	21	17.65		
Recommended	26	27.96		
Extremely recommended	1	0.84		
<b>Students' performance in management accounting course (s)</b>				
Extremely not good	1	0.84	3.05	1.111
Not good	49	41.18		
Average	30	25.21		
Good	21	17.65		
Extremely good	18	15.13		

In Commerce Department normally consist of a large number of female students. This is because most of male students more interested in the Engineering Department. This study aims respondents from final year which is third year students. There are about 96.6% of respondents were in their final year. The survey found out almost half of

respondents (50.4%) have an accountant among their families and friend. A majority of respondent's rate for first choice rank of accounting major when they applied for polytechnic offer. The survey also found out that 56.3% of the respondents do not recommend others to pursue the management accounting professional certificate. But there are 28% will recommend others to pursue the management accounting professional certificate. Respondent also were asked about their performance in management accounting course. Most of the respondents (58%) achieve average and upper marks.

#### **4.4 Descriptive Statistics**

##### **4.4.1 Interest in the management accounting profession**

Based on the Table 4.2, the survey shows that respondents were most interested to pursue Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) with highest score mean are 3.99. Certified Public Accountant (CPA) was the second most of respondents interested to pursue with the second highest score mean is 3.66. There were only a few of respondents were interested to gain professional certificates in Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) with lowest score means 2.66.

Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) becomes most popular professional qualification among students because of today's job market most demanding person with that qualification rather than Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) professional qualification. In real business practice in Malaysia, there are lack demands for management

accountants. Opportunity for advancement is also significantly related to accounting students' intention to pursue accounting career (Germanou and Hassall, 2009).

TABLE 4.2  
*RESPONDENTS' INTEREST IN SELECTED PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING  
QUALIFICATION*

Professional accounting qualification	Interest level*					Mean (Rank)	Median	S.D
	1 % (#)	2 % (#)	3 % (#)	4 % (#)	5 % (#)			
ACCA	0.00 0	2.52 3	21.85 26	49.58 59	26.05 31	3.99 (1)	4	0.765
CIMA	9.24 11	56.30 67	4.20 5	20.17 24	10.08 12	2.66 (3)	2	1.195
CPA	6.72 8	13.45 16	9.24 11	48.74 58	21.85 26	3.66 (2)	4	1.16

\* 1 = Not interested, 2 = Below average interest, 3 = Average interest, 4 = Above average interest, 5 = Extremely interested.

(#) = Frequency

#### 4.4.2 Factors influencing students' interest in the management accounting profession

This part is trying to find out what factors will decrease students' interest in the management accounting profession. Based on table 4.3, result of the survey shows that the most important factors influencing students' interest in the management accounting profession is the influences of job opportunities and income with a highest score mean is 4.12. Second most important factor influencing students' interest in the management accounting profession is the influences of instructors with score mean is 3.98. Influence of family and

friends was ranked third highest in importance with score mean 3.86. The fourth highest factor that influencing students' interest in the management accounting profession is an influence of colleagues with score mean is 3.41. The least important factor that influencing students' interest in the management accounting profession is influence of management accounting course (s) with the lowest score mean is 3.13.

TABLE 4.3

*FACTORS THAT HAVE DECREASED ACCOUNTING STUDENTS' INTEREST IN THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING PROFESSION*

Factors	Importance level*					Mean ( <b>Rank</b> )	Median	S.D
	1 % (#)	2 % (#)	3 % (#)	4 % (#)	5 % (#)			
Influence of job opportunities and income	1.68 2	10.92 13	9.24 11	30.25 36	47.90 57	4.12 ( <b>1</b> )	4	1.075
Influence of family and friends	7.56 9	16.81 20	10.92 13	11.76 14	52.94 63	3.86 ( <b>3</b> )	5	1.41
Influence of your Instructors	0.00 0	6.72 8	5.88 7	69.75 83	17.65 21	3.98 ( <b>2</b> )	4	0.713
Influence of your colleagues	0.00 0	19.33 23	32.77 39	35.29 42	12.61 15	3.41 ( <b>4</b> )	3	0.943
Influence of management accounting course (s).	6.72 8	44.54 53	4.20 5	18.49 22	26.05 31	3.13 ( <b>5</b> )	2	1.393

\* 1 = Not important, 2 = Below average importance, 3 = Average importance, 4 = Above average importance, 5 = Extremely important.

(#) = Frequency

In Malaysia as mentioned before, there is a lack demands for management accountants. As we can see there are many job advertisements seeking for

financial accountants rather than management accountants. As students, they are not truly exposed to the real practice of management accounting. To get some idea on that, they are totally relying on instructor on the lecture class. Based on informal interview, the heaviest of workloads in management accounting courses may affect their perception towards the management accounting profession. Students become bored and tired to struggle in management accounting.

#### **4.4.3 Suggestions encourage students' interest in the management accounting profession**

During the pilot test survey, several numbers of suggestion factors have been identified to rectify the lack of interest in the management accounting profession among accounting students at the Politeknik Seberang Perai. The most important factors that may increase the students' interest in the management accounting profession are placements opportunities in management accounting for accounting students with a highest score mean of 4.14. Support from management accounting professional bodies for accounting students was ranked as second important factors that may increase the students' interest in the management accounting profession by the respondents with score mean is 4.13. A third factor with score mean of 4.12 is the existence of local professional management accounting association and qualification. The next factor is tutorial courses in solving real problems and cases in management accounting at PSP with score mean of 3.57. The lowest score mean of 3.49 is the factor of seminars and workshops in management accounting at PSP.



TABLE 4.4

*FACTORS THAT MAY INCREASE ACCOUNTING STUDENTS' INTEREST  
IN THE MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING PROFESSION*

Factors	Importance level*					Mean (Rank)	Median	S.D
	1 % (#)	2 % (#)	3 % (#)	4 % (#)	5 % (#)			
Tutorial courses in solving real problems and cases in management accounting at PSP.	13.45 16	15.97 19	17.65 21	5.88 7	47.06 56	3.57 (5)	4	1.527
Seminars and workshops in management accounting at PSP.	10.92 13	7.56 9	22.69 27	39.50 47	19.33 23	3.49 (6)	4	1.206
Placements opportunities in management accounting for accounting students.	0.84 1	0.84 1	4.20 5	71.43 85	22.69 27	4.14 (1)	4	0.601
The existence of local professional management accounting association and qualification.	1.68 2	15.13 18	14.29 17	7.56 9	61.34 73	4.12 (3)	5	1.229
Support from management accounting professional bodies to accounting students.	7.56 9	7.56 9	9.24 11	1.68 2	73.95 88	4.13 (2)	5	1.369
Support from companies to pursue the management accounting profession.	7.56 9	10.08 12	11.76 14	3.36 4	67.23 80	3.89 (4)	5	1.389

\* 1 = Not important, 2 = Below average importance, 3 = Average importance, 4 = Above average importance, 5 = Extremely important.  
(#) = Frequency

#### **4.5 Summary**

This chapter discusses the outcome from the questionnaire survey at PSP. The results from the survey are as follows:

1. There are lack of interest among accounting students in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. This finding consistent with previous study (Hutaibat, 2011) claimed that only the minority students were interested in a management accounting qualification such as CIMA (19%).
2. Influence from job opportunities and income are the most important factors that influence students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. This finding also proven in previous studies (Felton et al, 1994; Ahmed et al, 1997).
3. Influence of instructor is second highest ranking than previous study (Hutaibat, 2011) probably due to lacks of experiences and expose to real business practices. Similarly with the finding by Byrne and Willis (2005).
4. The most important suggestion factors that may increase the students' interest in the management accounting profession are work placement opportunities in management accounting for accounting students. This finding not consistent with previous study (Hutaibat, 2011) where his finding shows that an important factor is the need of support from companies to the pursue management accounting profession.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter consists of overall conclusion of the study, limitation of the study that needs to be improved and recommendation for future research scope.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

As mention above, there are two objectives of this study. First is to investigate the interest among accounting students in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. Result from the survey shows that there are lacks of interest among accounting students in PSP in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. Most popular accounting professional certificates among PSPs' students are Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA). They also interested to become certified public accountant (CPA) rather than obtain management accounting professional certificates (CIMA qualification).

The second objective of this study is to examine the impact of external factors upon students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. Result from the survey shows that the most important factor that have a negative impact on students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future is the influence of job opportunities and income obtain. Other

factors bring minor negative impact towards students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future.

Besides that, this study also tries to figure out other factors that may propose to give positive influence on students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future. Result found out most important factor is work placements opportunities in management accounting for accounting students in real business practices will be positively influenced the students' interest in pursuing management accounting professional certificates in the future.

### **5.3 Limitation of the study**

This study suffered several limitations. First, the sample size of this study is quite limited, as it comprises of students from one polytechnic only, future study should extend it to include students from other polytechnic. The second is this study only use simple statistical analysis.

### **5.4 Recommendation**

As mentioned above, one of recommendation is the future research should consist a sample size of students from other polytechnics. Future research should also investigate the employability of graduate who have the management accounting professional certificate and the income that the Malaysia market can offer.

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