

FACTORS AFFECTING JOB SELECTION
PREFERENCES OF ACCOUNTING STUDENTS IN
MALAYSIAN UNIVERSITIES

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A research project submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONS) ACCOUNTING

UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

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MAY 2013

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- (2) No portion of this research project has been submitted in support of any application for any other degree or qualification of this or any other university, or other institutes of learning.
- (3) Equal contribution has been made by each group member in completing the research project.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to take this opportunity to express our very great appreciation to the people who have lent us a hand and helped us most in carrying out the research.

First and foremost, we would like to offer our special thanks to Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman for providing us the opportunity to conduct this research. By the time of conducting this project, we have developed some valuable knowledge and skills that might be useful to us in our future life. Besides, we would like to thank this university for giving us a comfortable and fully-equipped library. With all the open shelf collection and online-databases, we were able to obtain some useful information from the journal articles to serve as references for our project.

Furthermore, I would like to express our deep gratitude to our supervisor, Mr. Wong Tai Seng, for his patient guidance, enthusiastic encouragement, valuable and constructive suggestions and useful critiques in keeping our progress on schedule. His willingness to spend his time so generously with us has been very much appreciated.

We would also like to extend our thanks to our coordinator, Ms. Shirley Lee Voon Hsien for her patient and professional guidance, valuable advice and assistance during the planning and development of this research work.

In addition, we would like to express our thanks to all the respondents who spent their time willingly for helping us to fill in the questionnaires and getting our data collection done.

Last but not least, we wish to thank various people for their contribution to this project.

Thank you.

DEDICATION

We would like to dedicate this thesis to our beloved parents who have supported us all the way since the beginning of our studies. With their love, endless support and encouragement, we are able to complete our bachelor's degree with the accomplishment of this thesis. They educate us to be perseverant and persistent in facing any difficulty and challenge throughout our life.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A	Agree
ACCA	Association of Certified Accountants
Adj R-Sq	Adjusted R-Square
AVG	Average
BA	Bachelor of Accounting (Hons)
BAC	Bachelor in Commerce (Hons) Accounting
CIMA	Chartered Institute of Management Accountants
CD	Career Development
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
D	Disagree
ER	Employer Reputation
GPA	Grade Point Average
Ho	Null Hypothesis
Hn	Alternative Hypothesis
IFAC	International Federation of Accountants
IFRSs	International Financial Reporting Standards
JS	Job Security
JSP	Job Selection Preferences

MANCOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Covariance
MBA	Master of Business Administration
MIA	Malaysian Institute of Accountants
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
N	Neutral
SA	Strongly Agree
SAS	Statistical Analysis System
SB	Salary & Benefits
SD	Strongly Disagree
SEGi	SEGi University College
SMEs	Small & Medium Enterprises
Std Dev	Standard Deviation
UK	United Kingdom
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
U.S.	United States
USM	Universiti Sains Malaysia
UTAR	University Tunku Abdul Rahman
UUM	Universiti Utara Malaysia
WE	Working Environment

PREFACE

Malaysia needs about 65,000 accountants by the year 2020 and currently, there are approximately 28,000 registered chartered accountants in Malaysia. Despite these amounts, thousands of graduates are produced in Malaysia every year but not everyone will opt accountants as their profession. It is thus interesting to know why this situation occurs.

This descriptive study aims to examine the factors affecting job selection preferences of accounting students in Malaysian universities. This study is important to corporate recruiters, university's accounting faculty and career advisors and professional body like Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA) for understanding the reasons why accounting students prefer one company's offer over another. Since the research findings showed that two factors, which are career development and employer reputation, have significant relationship with job selection preferences, therefore the above parties will be well-advised to focus on the two factors that are deemed to be significant for undergraduate accounting students when dealing with their respective issues.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this descriptive study is to examine the factors accounting students of Malaysian universities consider important in selecting their first job after graduation. Career development, salary and benefits, employer reputation, working environment, and job security have been chosen the independent variables for present study. To investigate the job selection preferences of accounting students, 240 final year undergraduate accounting students from universities of Malaysia were surveyed. The data collected is analyzed using Statistical Analysis System (SAS), whereby the demographic data are analyzed by descriptive statistics while the hypotheses are tested by using multiple linear regression analysis. The research findings showed that two factors, which are career development and employer reputation, have significant relationship with job selection preferences, while the rest of the three factors are not significantly related to the dependent variable. The results of this study are expected to bring insights to corporate recruiters such that they can attract more competent candidates; to university's accounting faculty and career advisors such that they can better tailor the on-campus recruiting schedules that appropriately match the students' preferences; to professional body like Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA) in the formulation of strategies to achieve a desired number of accountants.

Chapter 1 Research overview

1.0 Introduction

Chapter 1 laid down the background of present study, research problem, purposes and questions. Besides, significance of the study, both theoretical and managerial, as well as outline of the study have also been discussed.

1.1 Background

Accountancy profession is of significant importance in the era of globalization, especially to developing countries like Malaysia. Malaysia needs more accountants, to be in line with fast economic growth, to provide support for the growing business environment (International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), 2008). IFAC (2008) suggested that the number of accounting students who enrolled in the higher level of institutions has been increasing over the years. Thousands of graduates are produced every year but not everyone will opt accountants as their profession (Yusoff, Omar, Awang, Yusoff, & Jusoff, 2011). Thus, the major difficulty challenging the accounting profession has always been how to attract competent applicants (Demagalhaes, Wilde, & Fitzgerald, 2011).

As mentioned by Datuk Mohd Nasir Ahmad, the president of Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA), currently, there are approximately 28,000 registered chartered accountants in business and commerce, public practice, public sector and academia (MIA, 2012). Despite this amount, according to Mohd, I., A.W. Syed, & Khundari. (2002), Malaysia needs about 65,000 accountants by the year 2020. There is no shortage of students signing up accounting courses even though the statistics show that there is currently a shortage of

accountants in Malaysia (Nasir, Ghani, & Said, 2009). It is thus interesting to know why this situation occurs.

Shortage of accountants is not something uncommon. It does happen in some other countries as well, such as U.S., Australia and UK (Nasir et al., 2009). In U.S., it is found that the decline in the number of accountants has been due to the decline in the number of students enrolling in the accounting programs (Levy, 2004). However, the situation in our country is totally different. The year 2004 statistics from the Department of Higher Education showed that accounting programs are amongst the competitive programs at public universities for 2004/2005 academic session.

1.2 Research problem

The recruitment and retention of high quality personnel remain challenging to accounting firms. The competition among them for the competent accounting graduates is intense (Bundy & Norris, 1992). As discussed in Bundy and Norris (1992), this happens because most of the accounting firms lack the understanding of the factors that accounting students consider in choosing their first job. This issue has been the significant area of inquiry among the researchers. There were arguments in the prior studies as to whether intrinsic factors (such as employer reputation and cultures, job complexity, work-life balance, etc) or extrinsic factors (includes starting salary and benefits, job security, career advancement, etc) place greater influence in the job selection preferences among the accounting graduates (for example: Gul, Andrew, Leong & Ismail, 1989; Ahmed, Alam & Alam, 1996; Jackling & Calero, 2006). However, the set of criteria would vary in the context of different countries (Ozbilgin, Küskü, & Erdoğan, 2005).

Factors that are important to accounting students in the job selection process were examined in Bundy and Norris (1992). The result of such study showed that the respondents considered job security as the most important job attribute in selecting their first job, followed in order by, challenging and interesting work, advancement potential, employer-paid health insurance, and personalities of supervisors and co-workers. The findings of Collins and Stevens (2001) indicated that the organizational image will influence the attractiveness of the organization, which affect the intention of the job seekers to apply. Specifically, the study done by Montgomery and Ramus (2003) revealed that more than 90% of the Master of Business Administration (MBA) students from two European and three North American business schools are willing to forgo financial benefits in order to work for a company with a better reputation for corporate social responsibility (CSR) and ethics. In Malaysia, Ghani, Said, Nasir, and Jusoff (2008) found that more Malaysian public university students prefer to become a public accountant rather than holding a management post. The respondents also perceived work performance and self-confidence, followed by the salary, to be the most important factors, in an accountant.

According to Ghani et al. (2008), there are limited studies that have examined the factors influencing accounting career choice in Malaysian context. Apart from Ghani et al. (2008), all the past studies mentioned above were not conducted in the Malaysian context. Some of these studies have focused on a limited set of variables or even from a single dimension. Besides, studies like Collins and Stevens (2001) and Montgomery and Ramus (2003) did not look into the perception of accounting students. The respondents they selected are either the job seekers, which are more general, or MBA students.

1.3 Research purposes and questions

Research purposes	Research questions
<p>Our <i>general</i> research purpose is:</p> <p>To examine the factors that the accounting students of Malaysian universities consider important in selecting their first job after graduation.</p>	<p>The <i>general</i> research question is:</p> <p>What are the accounting students of Malaysian universities consider important in selecting their first job after the graduation?</p>
<p>The <i>specific</i> research purposes are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To investigate whether the career development affects the accounting students' job selection preferences. 2. To investigate whether the salary and benefits affects the accounting students' job selection preferences. 3. To investigate whether the employer reputation affects the accounting students' job selection preferences. 4. To investigate whether the working environment affect the accounting students' job selection preferences. 5. To investigate whether the job security affects the accounting students' job selection preferences. 	<p>The specific research questions are as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Does career development affect the accounting students' job selection preferences? 2. Does salary and benefits affect the accounting students' job selection preferences? 3. Does employer reputation affect the accounting students' job selection preferences? 4. Does working environment affect the accounting students' job selection preferences? 5. Does job security affect the accounting students' job selection preferences?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study is expected to bring insights to corporate recruiters and university's accounting faculty and career advisors in Malaysia. By understanding the reasons why accounting students prefer one company's offer over another, the corporate recruiters can effectively assess whether there is a good fit between the organizations and the specific applicants. The recruiters can also better tailor their offers to increase their attractiveness to the candidates. The understanding of the influential decision factors can benefit the accounting faculty and career advisors in such way that it enables them to better tailor the on-campus recruiting schedules by inviting potential employers with positions that closely match the students' preferences. Professional body like MIA may also be benefited from this research. By knowing what makes accounting students choosing their first job, whether accountant or not, this study can help MIA in formulating their strategies in attracting the accounting graduates to join them. This, in turn, helps our nation to achieve the targeted number of accountants by 2020.

From the theoretical perspective, our research model is an extended model of that of Liu (2010) by adding in a few more independent variables, including career development, salary and benefits, working environment and job security. As suggested by most researchers, these factors are amongst the popular criteria used by undergraduate students in making their job selection decision. Two antecedents, organizational reputation and corporate social performance, from Liu's model are retained and combined into one. In Katamba (2010), his findings showed that there was a positive correlation between these two, meaning, corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributed significantly to the reputation of his target respondents. Besides, the dependent variable in Liu's model was expressed in negative form (i.e. intention to refuse job offers). Whereas, the dependent variable of this study is the opposite- the job selection preferences which may be equivalent to the intention to accept the job offers. Furthermore, the outcome of this study may also add value to the literature since this research is done specifically in Malaysian context, which is limited before.

1.5 Outline of the study

In the first chapter of this paper, the literatures pertaining to factors affecting the students' job selection process, the aim of this study as well as its contribution in managerial and academic points of views are discussed. In the next chapter, the theory identified and the prior studies regarding the job choices among the undergraduates will be further examined. A comprehensive review of the key research variables and hypotheses development will also be presented in this chapter. In the following chapter, the methodology for this research will be discussed, specifically on data collection and analysis. The results obtained for pilot test, descriptive analysis, scale measurement, and inferential analysis will be detailed in chapter 4. Lastly in chapter 5, there will be a discussion on the major findings, implications and limitations of the study, as well as recommendations for future research.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter described the background, problem, purposes and questions of present research study. Also, significant contributions in theoretical and managerial perspectives, and outline of the study have been detailed.

Chapter 2 Literature review

2.0 Introduction

Chapter 2 consisted of extensive explanation and discussion of the theoretical foundation and review of prior empirical studies pertaining to factors affecting students' job selection preference. Proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses development have also been set out in this chapter.

2.1 Theoretical foundation

The theory that is related to this research is expectancy theory. Expectancy theory is a cognitive process theory of motivation that is based on the idea that people will be motivated if they believe that strong effort will lead to good performance, which in turn will lead to desired rewards (Vroom, 1964). This theory is first developed by Victor Vroom in 1964 with direct application to work settings. It was then expanded and refined by Porter and Lawler (1968) and others (Pinder, 1987).

Vroom (1964) suggested that expectancy theory is based on four assumptions, one of which is that people join organizations with the expectations about their needs, motivations and past experiences. These expectations affect their reaction towards the organization. Secondly, this theory assumes that an individual's behavior is a result of conscious choice. This means that individuals are free to choose those behaviors according to their own expectancy calculations. The third assumption is that people expect different things from the organization, such as

good salary, advancement, job security and challenge. The final assumption is that people will select among alternatives in order to optimize their outcomes personally.

There are three key elements in expectancy theory: expectancy, instrumentality and valence. The basic equation, $F = E (\sum I \times V)$, hypothesizes that the level of effort that an employee will direct towards a given behavior (force) is based on a multiplicative relationship between the three elements (Vroom, 1964, 1965).

The first element, expectancy (also denoted as effort-to-performance), is a belief that job-related effort will result in a given level of performance. It is based on probabilities and ranges from 0 to 1. An expectancy of 1 indicates that the individual is certain that a given level of performance can be achieved if he or she has put forth effort. In contrast, if an individual sees no chance that effort will lead to the desired performance level, the expectancy is 0. For example, job seekers believe that there is a greater chance of getting a job if they make effort to visit several career fairs (Vroom, 1964).

Instrumentality (also denoted as performance-to-outcome) is a belief that a given level of achieved performance will lead to a particular outcomes. Similarly, instrumentality ranges from 0 to 1. For instance, the instrumentality has a value of 1 if an individual believe that a good performance rating will always lead to a salary increase. The instrumentality will be 0 if they perceive no relationship between a good performance rating and a salary increase (Vroom, 1964).

Valence as refers to the strength of an individual's preference for a particular reward. According to Vroom (1964), different individuals will value the rewards differently. For instance, rewards like salary increases, promotion and employee recognition might have more or less value to individual employees. Valences can be positive or negative, ranging from -1 to +1. It is positive if an individual has a strong preference for attaining a reward, otherwise, it is negative. Valence can also be 0 if an individual is indifferent to a reward.

Expectancy theory has been used in many other research areas, one of which is shown in the study of Chen and Miller (1994). They used this theory in explaining the competitive reprisal by one company to the strategic actions of another company. The application of expectancy theory could also be seen in similar area whereby the conditions under which stakeholders will take action against an organization to secure their interests were examined (Hayibor, 2008). Besides, this theory was used to apply in developing a conceptual framework and a measurable model on the motivation to blogging among bloggers (Liao, Liu & Pi, 2010). Caulfield (2007) employed this theory in studying the motivational factors that might lead students to provide anonymous feedback to teachers.

This study aims at examining the factors influencing the accounting students in seeking for their first job. Expectancy theory may be applied here. As discussed in Gregory (2010), the decisions and choices that job seekers must make about how to best utilize their efforts will be significantly affected not only by immediate needs, but also their expectations about how these decisions will affect their future needs and behavior. This represents the element of expectancy. For instance, they believe that there is a good chance of getting a job if they have made an effort on it. Instrumentality beliefs may be based on the organizational policy or values. The information that the individuals are exposed to about the organization (eg. promotions are normally within the first three years of employment) might affect how motivated they are to seek employment with that organization (Chapman, Uggerslev, Carroll, Piasentin, & Jones, 2005). The valued outcomes may vary across individuals and may be socially determined (eg. prestige, wealth, influence) or based on their own desires (eg. comfort, excitement, challenge). If they believe that an organization will increase their likelihood of attaining these outcomes, it is more likely that they will pursue employment with that organization (Gregory, 2010).

2.2 Review of prior empirical studies

Job selection preferences

Job selection preference can be seen as the students' preference in accepting one company's employment offer over another (Iacovou, Shirland, & Thompson, 2004). The most attractive criteria will be the students' motivators for selecting particular job over another (Millar, Kincaid, & Baloglu, 2009). It is important for human resource personnel to understand how to attract ideal job candidates and how to make their job offers accepted by qualified and best job applicants (Michaels, Handfield-Jones, & Axelrod, 2001), since this will help lead to higher work performance (Evers, Anderson, & Smit-voskuijl, 2005) and reduce employee turnover (Novick, Morrow, & Mays, 2005), and hence, saving the recruiting costs for companies.

Career development

Career development is long-term career prospects relating to the employee development. It deals with how the organizations provide opportunities for employee progress and promotion (Moy & Lee, 2002).

A study was conducted to evaluate the job selection criteria of economics final year students in Universiti Utara Malaysia (Lim & Soon, 2006). 307 survey questionnaires were collected back from these students. This research, using Wald test and general specification test, found that long-term career prospect was the most important job selection criterion.

Demagalhaes et al. (2011) have done a study to assess the relative importance of extrinsic, intrinsic, and other employment factors influencing students' employment choices. The students' views were compared with those of the practitioners. The survey questionnaires were distributed to the accounting students enrolled at the University of North Dakota and audit and tax professionals from Eide Bailly LLP, a regional accounting firm. The survey's results, analyzed using Chi-Square tests, revealed that both groups agreed that the opportunity for advancement with employer is the most important factor.

Job selection preferences of business students were assessed in Iacovou, Shirland, & Thompson (2004). 241 undergraduate and MBA students were given the survey questionnaires to evaluate the importance of 20 job attributes. A repeated-measures MANCOVA test was conducted, and the findings showed that growth potential was rated as the most important criterion among these job attributes.

Salary and benefits

Salary is defined by Moy and Lee (2002) as the payment to an employee for his services, particularly remuneration on an hourly, daily, or weekly basis or by the piece. It also includes bonuses and incentives. Benefits may include medical, dental, and/or disability insurance, vacation, paid sick leave, pension, etc provided to the employees by the employer in addition to salary (Moy & Lee, 2002).

Ghani et al. (2008) sought to identify respondents' preferred accounting career, their career exposure, the factors perceived to be important for, and acquisition qualities of an accountant. 802, out of 1500, questionnaires were gathered from lecturers in charge of first and final year university students. The t-test analysis showed that salary was one of the factors perceived to be important for an accountant.

Mahony, Mondello, Hums, and Judd (2006) have conducted a study to examine the factors influencing the willingness of sport management faculty to accept new positions, and the likelihood of leaving their current positions. 427 faculty members teaching in sport management programs in North America were surveyed using self-administered questionnaires. The results of multiple regression analysis revealed that salary was one of the most important factors in affecting the likelihood of taking a new job.

In Aycan and Fikret-Pasa (2003), the factors influencing Turkish University students' career choices, job selection criteria and leadership preference were explored. 1213 senior and junior management students from 17 universities across 6 regions of Turkey were given the 4-part questionnaires to collect data. The data analysis methods used were paired-sample t-test and Pearson's product moment correlations. The research findings revealed that pay was the most motivating factor in job selection.

Employer reputation

Employer or organizational reputation, in general, is a perceptual representation accompanying past actions and future prospects that describes the firm's overall appeal to various stakeholders and constituency groups (Fombrun, 1996). In Clardy (2005), a reputation is a representation or image of an organization held by either external people or members of the organization or both.

A research was undertaken to investigate whether organizational reputation, corporate social performance and interviewer behavior have influence on college job applicants' intention to refuse job offer (Liu, 2010). Apart from in-class data collection, data was also collected through online survey of all the undergraduate students of University of Missouri. The results of independent sample t-test supported the hypothesis that good

organizational reputation decreases college job applicants' intention to refuse job offers.

The purpose of the study in Chan and Ho (2000) was to identify the attributes of public accounting firms that accounting graduates find most desirable in their job selection decisions, and the impacts of individual differences on these perceptions. They conducted factor analysis on the responses of 167 final year accounting students in Hong Kong to a 30-item questionnaire and identified 7 factors. The results suggested that accounting graduates with higher GPA were more concerned about the firm's reputation and profile than those with lower GPA.

In Montgomery and Ramus (2003), they measured the utilities of MBA graduates for the full range of job factors that could affect their choices of employment. 279 MBAs from two European and three North American business schools were studied using an adaptive conjoint analysis survey tool. Their results showed that more than 90% of their target respondents were willing to forgo financial benefits in order to work for an organization with a better reputation for CSR and ethics.

Working environment

Moy and Lee (2002) defines working environment as the conditions relating to the job environment of the workers. These may include working hours, paid holidays, safety, rest periods, free uniforms, etc.

The skills needed to find a job and factors important in selecting a job after completing business courses were examined in Bathula and Karia (2011). They used questionnaire to collect data from 92 International students. Both descriptive (means and standard deviations) and influential (one-sample t-test) statistics were used for

data analysis. The survey findings showed that friendly working environment was one of the important factors in choosing job.

Ramasamy, Yeung, and Yuan (2008) determined job characteristics that influence job seekers' decisions in the Greater China region. 500, 300, 400 and 200 copies of the questionnaires were distributed among graduating students at universities in Xian, Shanghai, Taiwan and Hong Kong respectively. The survey findings, using conjoint analysis, showed that job seekers placed greater importance on working environment in selecting job.

Aycan and Fikret-Pasa (2003) explored the factors that influence Turkish university students' career choices, job selection criteria, and leadership preferences. Data collection was accomplished through a self-administered four-part questionnaire distributed to 1,213 senior and junior management students from 17 universities across 6 regions of Turkey. The results of paired-sample t-test and Pearson's product moment correlations revealed that peaceful work environment was one of the most motivating factors in job selection.

Job security

Job security refers to employees' perception of whether or not they will keep their job (Moore, 2011). Job security can also be defined as the perceived stability and continuance of job as one knows it (Probst, 1998). According to Probst (1998), one's perceived job security can be affected by both continuance of one's job and stability with respect to the desired features of one's job.

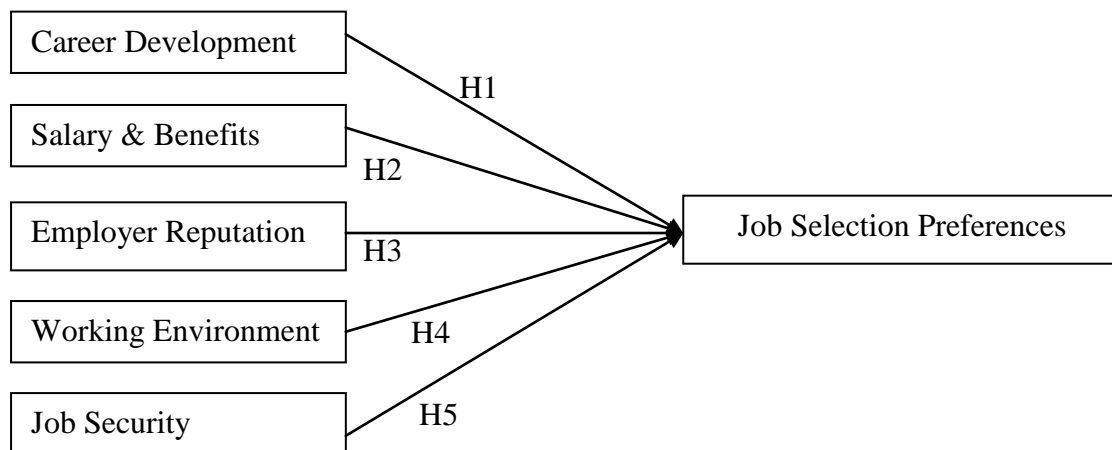
The factors influencing the career choices and the perception of 300 business graduates, from different universities of Islamabad, towards multinational corporations (MNCs) or small & medium enterprises (SMEs), and their service packages were investigated (Ahmed, Noor, Khan, Afzal, & Reman, 2010). Descriptive statistics with means and standard deviations were used. The findings suggested that job security was more attractive in MNCs than in SMEs.

Lyon, Filmer, and McDougall (2010) investigated the traits of the Generation Y, organizational characteristics that attract and retain them, and their career aspirations and implications for employers trying to attract, develop and retain them. More than 3200 individuals from 122 countries responded to this survey, and a number of leading organizations were interviewed. The results of descriptive analysis showed that job security was an important factor in attracting Generation Y.

In the study done by Tang (2009), the vocational interests of Chinese college students and the relationship between those interests and their career choice were examined. 165 Chinese college students were asked to complete a Chinese version of Self-Directed Search and a questionnaire. The outcomes of several multiple regression analyses and multidimensional scaling analysis suggested that job security were one of the top reasons for Chinese students' career choices.

2.3 Proposed conceptual framework

Figure 1: The relationship between career development, salary and benefits, employer reputation, working environment and job security, and job selection preferences.



Source: Adapted from: Liu (2010).

2.4 Hypotheses development

Several prior studies, as discussed above, have examined the factors that undergraduates consider to be important in their job selection decisions. Among these factors, career development, salary and benefits, employer reputation, working environment and job security were suggested by most literature to be popular criteria in accepting a job offer. Therefore, we hypothesize that our five independent variables will be significantly related to the dependent variable.

H0: Career development is not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H1: Career development is significantly related to job selection preferences.

H0: Salary and benefits are not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H2: Salary and benefits are significantly related to job selection preferences.

H0: Employer reputation is not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H3: Employer reputation is significantly related to job selection preferences.

H0: Working environment is not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H4: Working environment is significantly related to job selection preferences.

H0: Job security is not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H5: Job security is significantly related to job selection preferences.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the theoretical foundation and reviewed the past literatures relevant to present research in detail. Besides, the proposed conceptual framework and hypotheses development have been demonstrated in such chapter.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter detailed the research design, data collection method, and population and sampling procedures. Research instruments, variables and measurements, data processing, and data analysis techniques were also explained in chapter 3.

3.1 Research design

This research was a cross-sectional, quantitative study investigating whether factors including career development, salary and benefits, employer reputation, working environment and job security, were positively related to job selection preferences. The research approach was deductive or quantitative as we were testing an existing theory to confirm if the theory was applicable in our research context through data collection, analysis, and interpretation of results. Survey research strategy was in use whereby the primary data source for the research was collected using self-administered questionnaires.

3.2 Data collection method

To test the above hypotheses, a questionnaire survey was undertaken to collect primary data in November and December 2012 among the final year accounting students in Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Universiti Putra

Malaysia, and SEGi University College. The reason of choosing final year students to be the target respondents for this study was that they should have the greatest reason to be interested in their job choice by this time (Borchert, 2002). 350 questionnaires, which consisted of part I: demographic information; and part II & III: 24 close-ended questions, were distributed both electronically and physically. Only 257 questionnaires were returned at the end of December 2012, achieving a response rate of 73.4%.

3.3 Population and sampling procedures

Final years accounting students in Malaysian universities were chosen to be our population because these people would be going to enter the job market soon. Due to the huge size of the population, which approximately amounted to 32,083 accounting students (Ministry of Higher Education, 2011), sampling was needed. It was impossible to either collect or analyze all the data available from the population because of the restrictions of time, money and access (Saunders et al., 2009). Convenience sampling was used due to the unknown sampling frame, since there was no possible way that the information regarding every single unit of analysis within the population could be obtained. Those target respondents who were easiest to obtain were selected haphazardly. For example, we asked our friends in other universities to help send out the questionnaires. The sample was continually selected until the size reaches 240. The sample size should be based on the item-to-response ratios which should range from 1:4 to 1:10 (Hinkin, 1995). Since there were 24 items in the questionnaire and 10 respondents were needed for each item, giving a total of 240.

3.4 Research Instrument

Structured questionnaire was used as it was an effective data collection mechanism in testing hypotheses (Cavana, Delahaye, & Sekaran, 2001). Large amount of data could also be

collected from a sizable population in a highly economical way (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). Before the distribution of questionnaires, a pilot test was conducted to make sure that the questions in the questionnaire were reliable and the results were relevant to the study. There are no rules set for the number required for the pilot test. Based on the common practice, the pilot test was conducted on approximately 10% of the sample. Thus, 30 sets of the questionnaires were sent out for pilot test.

3.5 Variables and measurements

There were 3 sections in our questionnaire. The first section was used to collect the basic demographic information about the target respondents (eg. year of study, age, course of study). While the second and third sections were used to obtain the assessment information regarding the independent (career development, salary and benefits, employer reputation, working environment, and job security) and dependent (job selection preferences) variables respectively. The 5 independent variables and a dependent variable were each further split into 4 items, giving a total of 24 items. Each of the items was placed on a 5-point Likert scale in a form of statement, where 1 was strongly disagree and 5 was strongly agree. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements in relation to the independent and dependent variables by circling the appropriate Likert scale (Katamba, 2010). The overall distribution of variables, structure of questionnaires, scales being used and the sources were organized in table 1.

Table 3-1: Distribution of variables

Section	Variables	Dimensions	Items	Scale	Sources
I	Demographic	Year of study, age and course of study	-	-	-
II	Career development (CD)	-	CD1	5-point	Public Service Secretariat (2009)
			CD2	Likert	Mcgaha (2005)
			CD3	scale	Slaughter, Richard, and Martin (2006)
			CD4		
	Salary & benefits (SB)	-	SB1	5-point	Borchert (2002)
			SB2	Likert	Sia (2010)
			SB3	scale	Tan (2010)
			SB4		Mcgaha (2005)
	Employer reputation (ER)	-	ER1	5-point	Gregory (2010)
			ER2	Likert	
			ER3	scale	
			ER4		
	Working environment (WE)	-	WE1	5-point	Maharaj (2008)
			WE2	Likert	Mcgaha (2005)
			WE3	scale	Jurgensen (1978)
			WE4		
Job security (JS)	-	JS1	5-point	Jurgensen (1978)	
		JS2	Likert	Jones (2010)	
		JS3	scale	Brown (2006)	
		JS4		McKnight, Philips, & Hardgrave (2008)	
III	Job selection preferences (JSP)	-	JSP1	5-point	Borchert (2002)
			JSP2	Likert	
			JSP3	scale	
			JSP4		

Source: Adapted from: Tan (2010).

3.6 Data Processing

Data processing took place after the questionnaires have all been collected from the respondents. All the questionnaires were checked to examine whether every question was answered and only one answer was filled for each question. Questionnaires that were not completed in answering or that were answered by non-accounting undergraduates have been removed to ensure the completeness and quality of the questionnaires. As a result, only 240 questionnaires were relevant to the study. Before the data was entered into the system, each response from the respondents was assigned with a number. Thereafter, the coded data was keyed in into the Statistical Analysis System (SAS) for further analysis.

3.7 Data analysis technique

Statistical Analysis System (SAS), including both descriptive and inferential statistics, were used for data analysis. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics to obtain the frequencies, means and standard deviations. Multiple linear regression analysis was also used to test the hypotheses since this study was testing the association between 5 independent variables and a dependent variable which were both parametric variables. The regression equation for our research is:

$$JSP = \alpha + \beta_1 CD + \beta_2 SB + \beta_3 ER + \beta_4 WR + \beta_5 JS$$

Where:

JSP=Job Selection Preferences;

CD=Career Development;

SB= Salary and Benefits;

ER=Employer Reputation;

WR= Working Environment;

JS=Job Security

However, in order to use this parametric test, the data was first examined for normality, reliability and multicollinearity. Normality was evaluated using univariate normality of the skewness and kurtosis values and multivariate normality. In Kline (1998), the variables that have a skewness index out of the range of ± 3 , and kurtosis index out of the range of ± 10 are assumed to fail the normality test. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test for the reliability of the questions. Nunnally (1978) suggested that reliability level should exceed 0.70 to be considered as acceptable. Pearson correlation was used to test for the multicollinearity problem among the independent variables. The benchmarks of 0.9 for correlations among independent variables and 10 for variance inflation factors are usually used as indicators of serious multicollinearity problem (Belsley, Kuh, & Welsch, 1980; Barkan, 2007).

3.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, the methodology of this study was presented. This included the research design, method used for data collection, population and sampling procedures, research instruments, variables and measurements, data processing, and data analysis techniques.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis and Findings

4.0 Introduction

Chapter 4 contained the discussion and explanation of pilot test conducted and the analysis results generated by using SAS program. The analysis results were separated into three sections: descriptive analysis, scale measurement, and inferential analyses.

4.1 Pilot Test

Pilot test was conducted before the distribution of questionnaires to the target respondents. This step was taken to ensure the appropriateness and reliability of the questions contained in the questionnaire. Any problem that was identified during such test could be rectified soon enough to prevent future trouble that might affect the analysis of data collected from the targeted sample.

30 sets of questionnaires have been sent out for pilot test. Skewness and kurtosis test was conducted to examine the normality. As mentioned earlier, normality assumption is met when the values for skewness and the kurtosis of the variables are respectively within the range of ± 3 and ± 10 (Kline, 1998). Based on Table 4-1, the skewness values for all variables were in the range of ± 3 ; while their kurtosis values were in the range of ± 10 . Thus, the data was assumed to be normally distributed.

The reliability of the questions contained in the questionnaire was examined by using Cronbach's Alpha test. The results of the Cronbach's Alpha generated by the SAS program,

as noted in Table 4-2, have all exceeded 0.70. This meant that all the items in the questionnaire have met the reliability test.

Table 4-1: Skewness and Kurtosis Tests (Pilot Test)

Variables	Items	Skewness	Kurtosis
Career Development	CD1	-0.473311	0.918347
	CD2	-0.832243	0.638022
	CD3	-0.480952	-0.11499
	CD4	-0.445366	-0.19912
Salary and Benefits	SB1	-0.491059	0.629736
	SB2	-1.165267	1.248859
	SB3	-0.240764	-0.51167
	SB4	-0.951538	0.395227
Employer Reputation	ER1	-0.158738	-0.60348
	ER2	-0.183686	-1.15607
	ER3	-0.192408	-0.56107
	ER4	0.1692929	-0.53381
Working Environment	WE1	-0.105371	0.82513
	WE2	-0.267663	0.065388
	WE3	-0.678738	-0.43762
	WE4	0.6556205	0.037873
Job Security	JS1	-0.556858	-1.70418
	JS2	-0.661988	-0.61596
	JS3	-0.234518	-1.23309
	JS4	0.0905893	1.325536
Job Selection Preferences	JSP1	-0.180076	-0.58617
	JSP2	-0.204585	-1.04733
	JSP3	-0.421744	-1.16842
	JSP4	-0.403084	-0.13653

Source: Developed for the research.

Table 4-2: Reliability Analysis (Pilot Test)

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Career Development	4	0.739390
Salary and Benefits	4	0.744005
Employer Reputation	4	0.850176
Working Environment	4	0.720625
Job Security	4	0.701309
Job Selection Preferences	4	0.809896

Source: Developed for the research.

4.2 Descriptive Analysis

4.2.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Descriptive analysis was used to identify the demographic characteristics of the respondents by age, course of study, universities, and year of study. Table 4-3, table 4-4, table 4-5, and table 4-6 below set out the frequency and percentage of the demographic profile of 240 respondents.

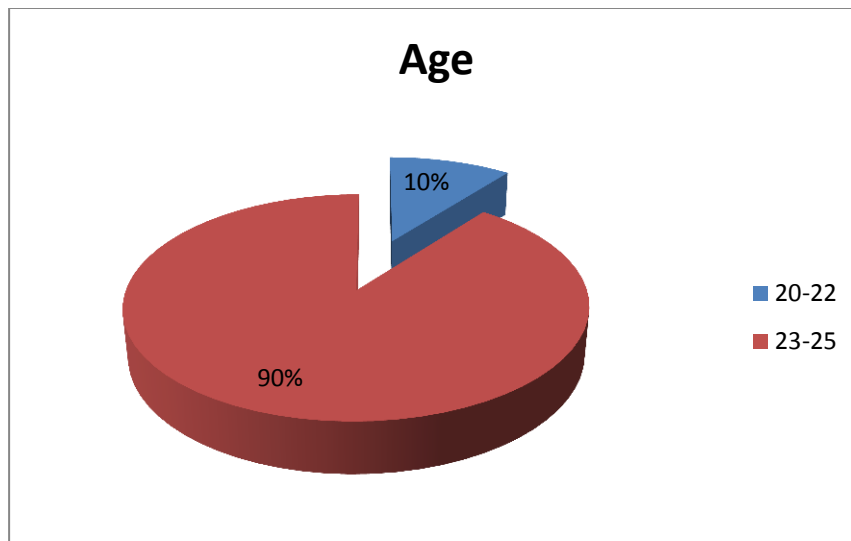
4.2.1.1 Age

Table 4-3: Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics: Age

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age:		
20-22	25	10.42
23-25	215	89.58

Source: Developed for the research.

Figure 2: Age



Source: Developed for the research.

Amongst all, 25 respondents (10.42%) are in between of 20 to 22 years old, while the rest of 215 respondents (89.58%) are in the range of 23 to 25 years of age.

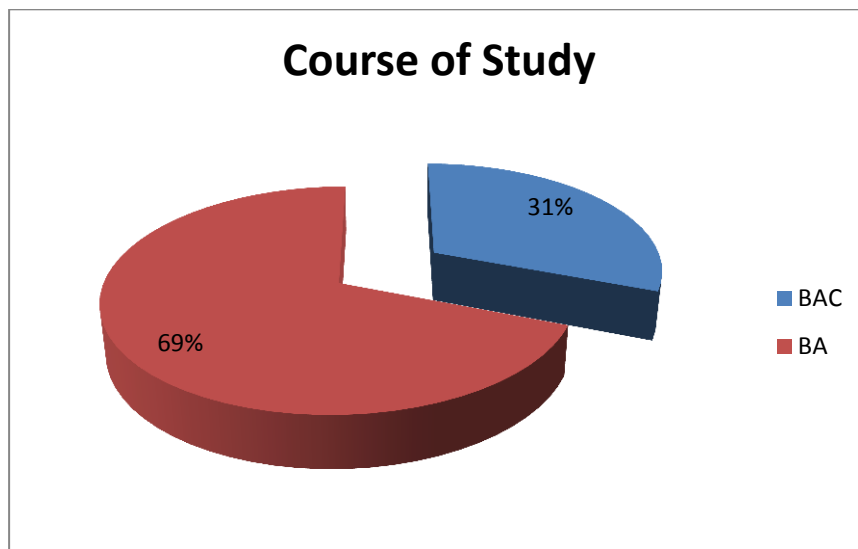
4.2.1.2 Course of Study

Table 4-4: Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics: Course of Study

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Course of Study:		
Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) Accounting	74	30.83
Bachelor of Accounting (Hons)	166	69.17

Source: Developed for the research.

Figure 3: Course of Study



Source: Developed for the research.

Based on the analysis result, 74 respondents (30.83%) are taking the course of Bachelor in Commerce (Hons) Accounting; and 166 respondents (69.17%) are under the Bachelor of Accounting (Hons) course.

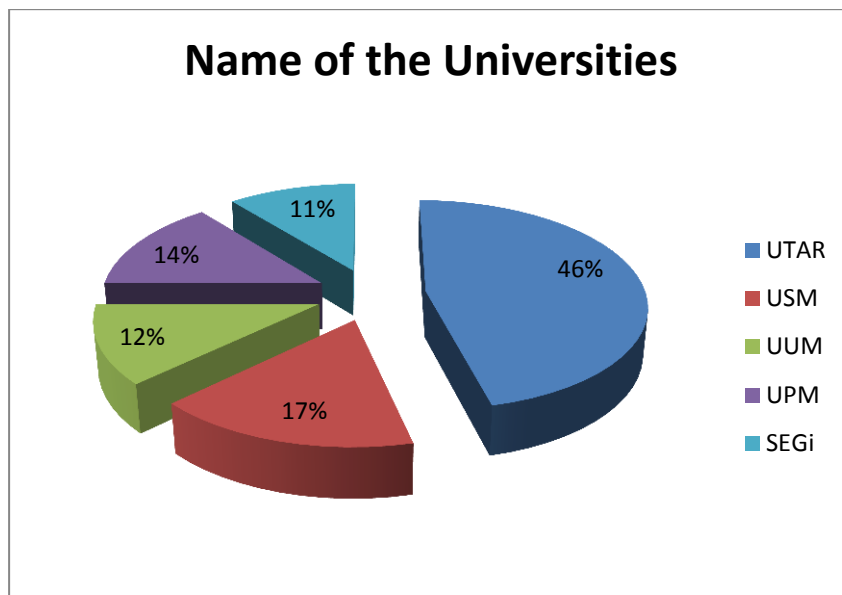
4.2.1.3 Universities

Table 4-5: Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics: Name of the Universities

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Name of the Universities:		
University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)	111	46.25
Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM)	40	16.67
Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM)	29	12.08
Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM)	34	14.17
SEGi University College (SEGi)	26	10.83

Source: Developed for the research.

Figure 4: Name of the Universities



Source: Developed for the research.

The 240 respondents consist of 111 students (46.25%) from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR), 40 students (16.67%) from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), 29 students (12.08%) from Universiti Utara Malaysia, 34 students (14.17%) from Universiti Putra Malaysia, and 26 students (10.83%) from SEGi University College.

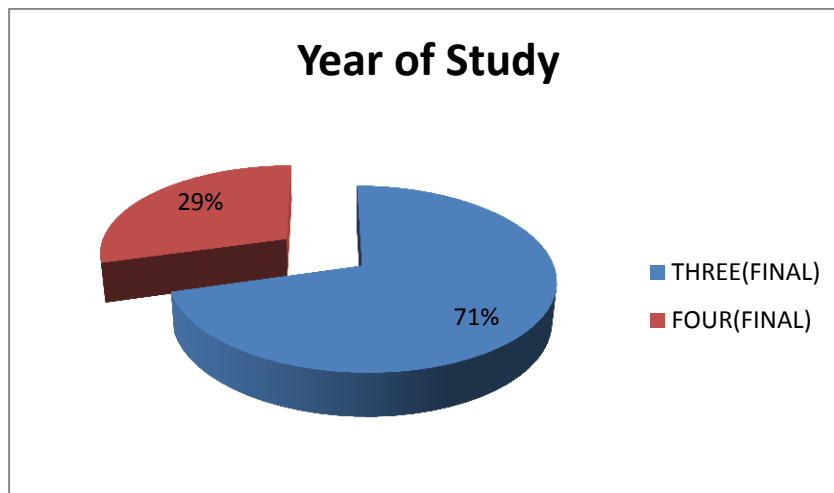
4.2.1.4 Year of Study

Table 4-6: Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics: Year of Study

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Year of Study:		
Three (Final)	74	30.83
Four (Final)	166	69.17

Source: Developed for the research.

Figure 5: Year of Study



Source: Developed for the research.

Based on the results obtained, 74 respondents (30.83%) are year-3 students and 166 respondents (69.17%) are year-4 students, but both of these groups represent final year students in the different universities.

4.2.2 Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs

4.2.2.1 Career Development

Table 4-7: Descriptive Statistics: Career Development

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Career Development	CD1	3.8	0.65456	-0.491059	0.6297363
	CD2	3.7	0.64165	-1.165267	1.2488592
	CD3	3.39583	0.76371	-0.240764	-0.51167
	CD4	3.3	1.0715	-0.951538	0.3952273

Source: Developed for the research.

Table 4-7 shows that the first item has the highest mean of 3.8. Followed in sequence, the second item has the second highest mean of 3.7, the third item of 3.3958, and the fourth item of 3.3.

The highest standard deviation of 1.0715 belongs to the fourth item, followed by the third item of 0.7637, and the first item of 0.6546. Lastly, the second item has the lowest standard deviation of 0.6417.

The mean for the items of career development ranges from 3.3 to 3.8 only. This means that all the respondents are averagely in the range of ‘neutral’ to ‘agree’ along the 5-point Likert scale.

4.2.2.2 Salary and Benefits

Table 4-8: Descriptive Statistics: Salary and Benefits

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Salary and Benefits	SB1	4.16667	0.63816	-0.158738	-0.603479
	SB2	3.66667	1.04568	-0.183686	-1.156066
	SB3	4.23333	0.61683	-0.192408	-0.561075
	SB4	3.56667	0.80514	0.1692929	-0.533812

Source: Developed for the research.

Table 4-8 reveals that the highest mean of 4.2333 belongs to the third item, followed by the first item with 4.1667, and the second item with 3.6667. Lastly, the lowest mean of 3.5667 belongs to the fourth item.

With regard to standard deviation, the second item has the highest standard deviation of 1.0457. It is then followed by the fourth item with the standard deviation of 0.8051, the first item of 0.6382, and the third item of 0.6168.

The entire mean for the items is above 3.5, indicating an optimism of the respondents toward the items under salary and benefits variable.

4.2.2.3 Employer Reputation

Table 4-9: Descriptive Statistics: Employer Reputation

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Employer Reputation	ER1	3.9375	0.50958	-0.105371	0.8251301
	ER2	3.26667	0.8938	-0.267663	0.065388
	ER3	3.5375	1.23014	-0.678738	-0.437621
	ER4	2.79583	0.74597	0.6556205	0.0378726

Source: Developed for the research.

As noted in Table 4-9, the first item has the highest mean of 3.9375, followed by the third item of 3.5375, and the second item of 3.2667. The fourth item has the lowest mean of 2.7958.

In term of the standard deviation, the third item has the highest standard deviation of 1.2301, followed by the second item of 0.8938, and the fourth item of 0.7460. Finally, the first item has the lowest standard deviation of 0.5096.

The mean values for the items are ranged from 2.7958 to 3.9375. This indicates that, on average, most of the respondents are in the range of ‘disagree’ to ‘agree’ along the 5-point Likert scale.

4.2.2.4 Working Environment

Table 4-10: Descriptive Statistics: Working Environment

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Working Environment	WE1	4.63333	0.4829	-0.556858	-1.704181
	WE2	4.4	0.66471	-0.661988	-0.615961
	WE3	4.475	0.53281	-0.234518	-1.233094
	WE4	4.03333	0.4829	0.0905893	1.3255361

Source: Developed for the research.

In accordance with the results shown in Table 4-10, the first item has the highest mean of 4.6333, followed by the third item of 4.475, and the second item of 4.4. Lastly, the fourth item has the lowest mean of 4.0333.

The second item has the highest standard deviation of 0.6647 amongst all. The third item has the second highest standard deviation of 0.5328. Both of the first and fourth items have the lowest standard deviation of 0.4829.

From the Table 4-10, the mean of the items under working environment is all above 4. This shows that most of the respondents agreed with the items in the questionnaire for working environment.

4.2.2.5 Job Security

Table 4-11: Descriptive Statistics: Job Security

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Security	JS1	4.3	0.58717	-0.180076	-0.58617
	JS2	4.13333	0.71952	-0.204585	-1.047331
	JS3	4.23333	0.76244	-0.421744	-1.16842
	JS4	3.76667	0.49657	-0.403084	-0.136528

Source: Developed for the research.

Based on the results shown in Table 4-11, the first item has the highest mean of 4.3, followed by the third item of 4.2333, and the second item of 4.1333. Lastly, the fourth item has the lowest mean of 3.7667.

In term of standard deviation, the third item has the highest standard deviation of 0.7624, followed by the second item of 0.7195, and the first item of 0.5872. The fourth item has the lowest standard deviation of 0.4966.

The mean of all the four items ranges from 3.7667 to 4.3. This indicates that, on average, all the respondents have positive responses toward the items of job security.

4.2.2.6 Job Selection Preferences

Table 4-12: Descriptive Statistics: Job Selection Preferences

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Job Selection Preferences	JSP1	3.85	0.60886	-0.473311	0.9183472
	JSP2	3.5375	0.77531	-0.832243	0.6380223
	JSP3	3.47083	0.98905	-0.480952	-0.114988
	JSP4	3.10417	0.99032	-0.445366	-0.199125

Source: Developed for the research.

Based on the analysis results (Table 4-12), the first item has the highest mean of 3.85, followed by the second item of 3.5375, and the third item of 3.4708. The fourth item has the lowest mean of 3.1042.

The fourth item has the highest standard deviation of 0.9903, followed by the third item of 0.9891, and the second item of 0.7753. Lastly, the standard deviation of the first item is the lowest, which is 0.6089.

Since the mean values of all the items are ranged from 3.1042 to 3.85, it can be suggested that most of the respondents are in the range of ‘neutral’ to ‘agree’ along the 5-point Likert scale.

4.3 Scale Measurement

4.3.1 Normality Test

Table 4-13: Skewness and Kurtosis Tests

Variables	Items	Skewness	Kurtosis
Career Development	CD1	-0.491059	0.6297363
	CD2	-1.165267	1.2488592
	CD3	-0.240764	-0.51167
	CD4	-0.951538	0.3952273
Salary and Benefits	SB1	-0.158738	-0.603479
	SB2	-0.183686	-1.156066
	SB3	-0.192408	-0.561075
	SB4	0.1692929	-0.533812
Employer Reputation	ER1	-0.105371	0.8251301
	ER2	-0.267663	0.065388
	ER3	-0.678738	-0.437621
	ER4	0.6556205	0.0378726
Working Environment	WE1	-0.556858	-1.704181
	WE2	-0.661988	-0.615961
	WE3	-0.234518	-1.233094
	WE4	0.0905893	1.3255361
Job Security	JS1	-0.180076	-0.58617
	JS2	-0.204585	-1.047331
	JS3	-0.421744	-1.16842
	JS4	-0.403084	-0.136528
Job Selection Preferences	JSP1	-0.473311	0.9183472
	JSP2	-0.832243	0.6380223
	JSP3	-0.480952	-0.114988

	JSP4	-0.445366	-0.199125
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Source: Developed for the research.

The multivariate normality is assessed using skewness and kurtosis test. Univariate normality is a necessary condition for testing multivariate normality (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010). According to Kline (1998), the critical values of skewness and kurtosis that are commonly used for testing univariate normality are ± 3 and ± 10 respectively. As shown in Table 4-13, the critical values of skewness of all the variables are ranged from -1.1653 (CD2) to 0.6556 (ER4); while their critical values of kurtosis are ranged from -1.7042 (WE1) to 1.3255 (WE4). The results of both skewness and kurtosis have satisfied the rules of thumb and a bell shape is reflected in all the histograms as shown in figure. Hence, it can be concluded that the data of present study are normally distributed.

4.3.2 Reliability Test

Table 4-14: Reliability Analysis

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Career Development	4	0.839026
Salary and Benefits	4	0.744005
Employer Reputation	4	0.708595
Working Environment	4	0.710139
Job Security	4	0.739390
Job Selection Preferences	4	0.786743

Source: Developed for the research.

In accordance with Nunnally (1978), the questions are reliable if the Cronbach's coefficient alpha exceeds 0.70. The coefficient of the variables ranged from 0.7086

(ER) to 0.8390 (CD), which have satisfied the required minimum level of reliability (see Table 4-14).

4.4 Inferential Analysis

4.4.1 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis

Table 4-15: Correlation Matrix

	JSP_AVG	CD_AVG	SB_AVG	ER_AVG	WE_AVG	JS_AVG
JSP_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	1					
CD_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.5661 <.0001	1				
SB_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.22614 0.0004	0.33221 <.0001	1			
ER_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.25123 <.0001	-0.16617 0.0099	0.03608 0.5781	1		
WE_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.06651 0.3049	-0.01737 0.789	0.21538 0.0008	0.16844 0.0089	1	
JS_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.069 0.287	0.20277 0.0016	0.3431 <.0001	-0.19028 0.0031	0.28064 <.0001	1

Source: Developed for the research.

4.4.1.1 Correlation among the Independent Variables

Multicollinearity problem exists when the coefficient of Pearson correlation among the independent variables is 0.90 or above (Belsley et al., 1980; Barkan, 2007). As shown in Table 4-15, the Pearson correlation coefficients of all the independent variables are less than 0.90. Hence, the independent variables of the study are not highly correlated among each other, indicating the non-existence of multicollinearity problem.

4.4.1.2 Correlation between the Independent Variables and Dependent Variable

The correlation matrix (Table 4-15) shows that career development (CD) and employer reputation (ER) have significant positive relationship with the dependent variable, job selection preferences. Among these independent variables, two, which are working environment (WE) and job security (JS), are also positively related to job selection preferences. However, such positive relationships are not significant. Lastly, there is a moderate positive relationship between salary and benefits (SB), and the job selection preferences.

4.4.2 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 4-16: Model Summary

Model	Dependent Mean	R-Square	Adj R-Sq	F Value	Pr > F
1	3.49063	0.4434	0.4315	37.29	<.0001

Source: Developed for the research.

In this study, the value of R- Square obtained from the SAS program is 0.4434 (as shown in Table 4-16). This indicates that 44.34% of the dependent variable (job selection preferences) can be explained by the independent variables (career development, salary and benefits, employer reputation, working environment, and job security) jointly, while the rest of 55.66 % of the dependent variables can be explained by other variables.

From the results provided in Table 4-16, the value of F statistic is 37.29 with the p-value of <0.0001. The results provide statistical evidence that the overall model is considered as significant. As the F-value is large and the p-value of the F test is significant, it can be concluded that much of the variation in job selection preferences can be well explained by the independent variables. In overall, the model fit is good.

Table 4-17: Table of Coefficients

Variable	Parameter Estimate	P-value	Tolerance	Variance Inflation
Intercept	-0.14413	0.7574	.	0
CD_AVG	0.63322	<.0001	0.84798	1.17927
SB_AVG	0.00117	0.9849	0.77705	1.28691
ER_AVG	0.36528	<.0001	0.88403	1.13118
WE_AVG	0.02732	0.7576	0.85303	1.17229
JS_AVG	0.00653	0.9317	0.77397	1.29205

Source: Developed for the research.

Other than Pearson product moment correlation, multicollinearity can also be identified by referring to the tolerance and variance inflation factor values. Independent variables are detected with serious multicollinearity problem if the tolerance values are below the cut off value of 0.10 (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1998; Liu, 2010); and if the variance inflation factor values exceed 10 (Griffith & Amerhein, 1997; Nash & Bradford, 2001). As Table 4-17 provides, the tolerance values of the independent variables range from 0.7740 (JS) to 0.8840 (ER); and the variance inflation factor values range from 1.1312 (ER) to 1.2921 (JS), both of which have satisfied the rules of thumb. These results strengthen the assumption made earlier: the absence of multicollinearity problem among the independent variables.

According to the results obtained (as shown in Table 4-17), the equation of multiple linear regression is formed as below:

$$JSP = -0.1441 + 0.6332(CD) + 0.0012(SB) + 0.3653(ER) + 0.0273(WE) + 0.0065(JS)$$

Where:

JSP = Job Selection Preferences;

CD = Career Development;

SB= Salary and Benefits;

ER=Employer Reputation;

WR= Working Environment;

JS=Job Security

Provided that all the other variables remain constant, the multiple linear regression equation above can be interpreted as follows:

For every unit increase in CD, JSP will increase by 0.6332;

For every unit increase in SB, JSP will increase by 0.0012;

For every unit increase in ER, JSP will increase by 0.3653;

For every unit increase in WE, JSP will increase by 0.0273; and

For every unit increase in JS, JSP will increase by 0.0065.

Besides, the regression line will intercept y-axis at -0.1441 when all the independent variables (CD, SB, ER, WE, and JS) are equal to zero.

4.4.2.1 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1

H0: Career development is not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H1: Career development is significantly related to job selection preferences.

Based on the results shown in Table 4-17, the p-value for career development is <0.0001 , which is below the level of significance at $\alpha = 0.05$. The null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant relationship between career development and job selection preferences.

Hypothesis 2

H0: Salary and benefits are not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H2: Salary and benefits are significantly related to job selection preferences.

The p-value for SB, as noted in Table 4-17, is 0.9849. The null hypothesis is not rejected since the p-value is above the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). Hence, salary and benefits are not significantly related to job selection preferences.

Hypothesis 3

H0: Employer reputation is not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H3: Employer reputation is significantly related to job selection preferences.

The null hypothesis for this construct is rejected simply because its p-value is <0.0001 (see Table 4-17), which is less than the alpha. Therefore, a significant relationship exists between employer reputation and job selection preferences.

Hypothesis 4

H0: Working environment is not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H4: Working environment is significantly related to job selection preferences.

According to the analysis results (Table 4-17), the null hypothesis is not rejected for variable 'working environment' as the p-value is 0.7576, which is

greater than the significance level. Thus, there is no significant relationship between working environment and job selection preferences.

Hypothesis 5

H0: Job security is not significantly related to job selection preferences.

H5: Job security is significantly related to job selection preferences.

As noted in Table 4-17, the p-value for job security is 0.9317, which is more than the alpha value of 0.05. The null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, significant relationship does not exist between job security and job selection preferences.

4.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, pilot test performed and the results of data analysis were presented. Under descriptive analysis, the demographic profile of respondents and the central tendencies measurement of constructs were demonstrated. The results of normality test and reliability test were described under scale measurement. Lastly, the results of inferential analysis, which was used to test the hypotheses, were shown. These included the results from Pearson product moment correlation test and multiple linear regression analysis.

Chapter 5 Discussion, Conclusion and Implications

5.0 Introduction

Chapter 5 summarized the results of descriptive and inferential analyses detailed in the previous chapter, followed by an extensive discussion of major findings on the research objectives and hypotheses. Managerial and theoretical implications of the study, limitations of the study and recommendations for future research have also been included in this chapter. Lastly, this chapter provided the overall conclusion of the entire research study.

5.1 Summary of Statistical Analysis

5.1.1 Descriptive Analysis

5.1.1.1 Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Table 5-1: Frequency and Percentage of Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age:		
23-25	215	89.58

Name of the Universities:		
University Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR)	111	46.25
Course of Study:		
Bachelor of Accounting (Hons)	166	69.17
Year of Study:		
Four (Final)	166	69.17

Source: Developed for the research.

Out of the total respondents, as shown in Table 5-1, 89.58%, representing 215 respondents, are in between of 23 to 25 years of age, and 69.17 % (166 respondents) are under the course of Bachelor of Accounting (Hons). Most of the respondents (69.17%) are the year-4 accounting students, while 111 respondents (46.25%) are actually the final year students from UTAR. In fact, all of the respondents are in the final year of their studies. The difference between year-3 and year-4 students depends on which course are they pursuing. Generally, the course of Bachelor of Accounting (Hons) will take around 4 years to be completed, while students can complete the course of Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) Accounting within 3 years time.

5.1.1.2 Central Tendencies Measurement of Constructs

Table 5-2: Table of Significant Statistics

Variables	Items	Mean	Std Dev
Career Development	CD1	3.8	-
	CD4	-	1.071502
Salary and Benefits	SB2	-	1.045679
	SB3	4.233333	-
Employer Reputation	ER1	3.9375	-

	ER3	-	1.230135
Working Environment	WE1	4.633333	-
	WE2	-	0.664711
Job Security	JS1	4.3	-
	JS3	-	0.762438
Job Selection Preferences	JSP1	3.85	-
	JSP4	-	0.990321

Source: Developed for the research.

As noted in Table 5-2, the first item for career development has scored the highest mean of 3.8000. Whereas, the third item for salary and benefits, the first item for employer reputation, and the first item for working environment, have respectively generated the highest mean values among the items under each construct. For job security, the first item has the highest mean of 4.3000. Out of the four items, the highest mean belongs to the first item of the dependent variable (job selection preferences).

5.1.2 Scale Measurement

Table 5-3: Summary of Values for Skewness, Kurtosis and Cronbach's Alpha

Variables	Items	Skewness	Kurtosis	Cronbach's Alpha
Career Development	CD1	-0.491059	0.6297363	0.839026
	CD2	-1.165267	1.2488592	
	CD3	-0.240764	-0.51167	
	CD4	-0.951538	0.3952273	
Salary and Benefits	SB1	-0.158738	-0.603479	0.744005
	SB2	-0.183686	-1.156066	
	SB3	-0.192408	-0.561075	
	SB4	0.1692929	-0.533812	
Employer Reputation	ER1	-0.105371	0.8251301	0.708595
	ER2	-0.267663	0.065388	
	ER3	-0.678738	-0.437621	
	ER4	0.6556205	0.0378726	
Working Environment	WE1	-0.556858	-1.704181	0.710139
	WE2	-0.661988	-0.615961	
	WE3	-0.234518	-1.233094	
	WE4	0.0905893	1.3255361	
Job Security	JS1	-0.180076	-0.58617	0.739390
	JS2	-0.204585	-1.047331	
	JS3	-0.421744	-1.16842	
	JS4	-0.403084	-0.136528	
Job Selection Preferences	JSP1	-0.473311	0.9183472	0.786743
	JSP2	-0.832243	0.6380223	
	JSP3	-0.480952	-0.114988	
	JSP4	-0.445366	-0.199125	

Source: Developed for the research.

5.1.2.1 Normality Test

As shown in Table 5-3, the critical values of skewness of all the variables, including dependent variables, are ranged from -1.1653 (CD2) to 0.6556 (ER4); while their critical values of kurtosis are ranged from -1.7042 (WE1) to 1.3255 (WE4). These results indicate that the normality assumption of the data has been met.

5.1.2.2 Reliability Test

As noted in Table 5-3, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the variables ranged from 0.7086 (ER) to 0.8390 (CD). Thus, the variables have satisfied the required minimum level of reliability.

5.1.3 Inferential Analysis

5.1.3.1 Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis

Table 5-4: Correlation Matrix

	JSP_AVG	CD_AVG	SB_AVG	ER_AVG	WE_AVG	JS_AVG
JSP_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	1					
CD_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.5661 <.0001	1				
SB_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.22614 0.0004	0.33221 <.0001	1			
ER_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.25123 <.0001	-0.16617 0.0099	0.03608 0.5781	1		
WE_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.06651 0.3049	-0.01737 0.789	0.21538 0.0008	0.16844 0.0089	1	
JS_AVG 1=SD,2=D,3=N,4=A,5=SA	0.069 0.287	0.20277 0.0016	0.3431 <.0001	-0.19028 0.0031	0.28064 <.0001	1

Source: Developed for the research.

5.1.3.1.1 Correlation among the Independent Variables

The Pearson correlation coefficients of all the independent variables are less than 0.90 (see Table 5-4). This means that the independent variables of the study are not highly correlated among each other, which in turn indicating the non-existence of multicollinearity problem.

5.1.3.1.2 Correlation between the Independent Variables and Dependent Variable

Based on the summary (Tables 5-4), two independent variables (CD and ER) have significantly positive correlation with the dependent variable. There are also positive correlations between the other three independent variables and the dependent variable. However, the magnitude of the correlations is either weak (WE and JS) or moderate (SB).

5.1.3.2 Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 5-5: Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Null Hypotheses	P-value	Rejected / Not Rejected
H01: Career development is not significantly related to job selection preferences.	<.0001	Rejected
H02: Salary and benefits are not significantly related to job selection preferences.	0.9849	Not rejected
H03: Employer reputation is not significantly related to job selection preferences.	<.0001	Rejected
H04: Working environment is not significantly related to job selection preferences.	0.7576	Not rejected
H05: Job security is not significantly related to job selection preferences.	0.9317	Not rejected

Source: Developed for the research.

The summary above (see Table 5-5) implies that the null hypotheses for the two independent variables (career development and employer reputation) are rejected since their p-value is <0.0001 , which is less than the alpha value of 0.05. While the null hypotheses for the other three independent variables (salary and benefits, working environment, and job security) are not rejected because their p-values are all above the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). Hence, it can be concluded that both career development and employer reputation are significantly related to job selection preferences. Conversely, there is no significant relationship between the rest of the three constructs and the dependent variable.

5.2 Discussion of Major Findings

5.2.1 Relationship between *Career Development* and *Job Selection Preferences*

The findings of this study demonstrate that a significant relationship appears between career development and job selection preferences. This result is consistent with that of the past studies including Lim and Soon (2006), Demagalhaes et al. (2011), and Iacobou et al. (2004), whereby it was stated that career development was a top criterion to consider for job selection.

In this era of globalization where most of the organizations are starting to move internationally, accounting career is getting more popular worldwide. This is especially true when most of the countries have already converged or in the process of converging to the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRSs), making the similar accounting principles and treatments to be practiced across the

national boundaries. This has offered vast opportunities to accounting students in getting a job in foreign countries. As such, most of the respondents reflected their concern towards the ability of the potential employer in providing them with appropriate training and development programs so that they can continuously upgrade and prepare themselves with the most up-to-date accounting knowledge in order to compete in the overseas market. Thus, in the future, whether they will stay with the same employer, or move further, it is generally recognized that ‘employability security’ is more important than ‘employment security’ (Dany, 2003; Pang, Chua, & Chu, 2008).

5.2.2 Relationship between *Salary and Benefits* and *Job Selection Preferences*

The independent variable, salary and benefits, is found to be not significantly related to job selection preferences. This finding is contradictory to the past studies detailed in chapter 2 (Ghani et al., 2008; Mahony et al., 2006; Aycan & Fikret-Pasa, 2003) in which salary and benefits were found to have significant relationship with job selection preferences. Most of these studies, however, were either targeted at non-accounting students and/or not conducted in Malaysian context. Thus, the inconsistency of present study’s results with that of those studies might seem to be reasonable.

In Montgomery and Ramus (2007), the results showed that the respondents (MBAs) have substantially revealed their willingness to forgo income in order to work with a reputable organization that cares about the natural environment and communities. Besides, Dutta and Punnose (2010) provided that the management graduates would prefer growth opportunities to short-term salary and benefits in making their choice of the first job. Although our result is not fully consistent with these two past studies, they do support our findings. The existence of more influential constructs (career

development and employer reputation) in our research model has overridden the significance of salary and benefits in affecting the dependent variable.

Salary and benefits are not the main concern of the undergraduate accounting students since they might have realized that the average market rate for fresh graduates' pay is rather fixed. It is a market trend that the initial salary for them is low. What bothers them the most should be the chance to gain more relevant practical experience in order to obtain a membership in professional bodies such as MIA, ACCA, and CIMA.

5.2.3 Relationship between *Employer Reputation* and *Job Selection Preferences*

Based on the research findings, there is a significant relationship between employer reputation and job selection preferences. This outcome is consistent with the studies done by Liu (2010), Chan and Ho (2000), and Montgomery and Ramus (2003) in which the researchers suggested that organizational reputation was a very important factor not only to attract, but also to retain, qualified and talented job applicants. If the job applicants find the reputation of a particular organization favorable, they would associate themselves to the organization in order to support their self-esteem.

More often, accounting students desire to have amongst the 'Big Four' audit firms (Deloitte, Ernst & Young, PricewaterhouseCoopers, and KPMG) as their internship company and/or their future employers. This culture is built among the accounting students not because of the high pay, but merely, their reputation in this industry. Working in reputable organizations may signal someone's abilities and standard over those who are working in small and less reputable companies. The former usually have a sheer size of customer base made up of big multinational corporations. This has provided a great opportunity for job hopping. Having reputable ex-employers may serve as a competitive advantage for them to negotiate better employment terms with

the successive employers. Instead of seeking for a job with high initial pay, the accounting students may rather work with a well-known employer that has a good market standing.

5.2.4 Relationship between *Working Environment* and *Job Selection Preferences*

The findings of present study show that there is no significant relationship between working environment and job selection preferences. This result is inconsistent with that of Bathula and Karia (2011), Ramasamy et al. (2008), and Aycan and Fikret-Pasa (2003). These past studies, whose target respondents were not accounting based, showed that there was a significant relationship between working environment and job selection preferences. Difference in research results exists as present study focuses on the accounting students in Malaysian universities.

However, in Iacovou et al. (2004), the results revealed that job characteristics, including company recognition, work culture and work flexibility, were affected by the experience of the respondents (undergraduate and graduate students). Company recognition was found to be more significant to undergraduate students, whereas the graduate students perceived work culture and flexibility as more significant. These supported the findings of present study.

More often, only those with working experience are more likely to emphasize on factors that will assist them in achieving work-life balance. Conversely, factors relating to working conditions and company's cultural background are unknown to undergraduate students, as in the case of this study, since they have not yet been in that particular company and thus, cannot picture or imagine the actual working environment. As a result, they do not perceive this to be the significant in influencing

their job selection decision. Although the undergraduate accounting students did not show out right disregard for this factor, the interest was there but not that significant.

5.2.5 Relationship between *Job Security* and *Job Selection Preferences*

According to the results obtained, job security has no significant relationship with job selection preferences. This finding is conflicting with these past studies: Ahmed et al. (2010), Lyon et al. (2010), and Tang (2009). In the studies done by these researchers, job security was found to be an important factor influencing non-accounting students' job selection.

In view of the globalization of businesses, it is of crucial need to achieve 'employability security' as opposed to 'employment security' (Dany, 2003; Pang, Chua, & Chu, 2008). Indeed, with greater and wider opportunities globalization offers, undergraduate accounting students may consider job security as less significant as compared to career development. No matter how secure one's job might be, without proper engagement in continuous learning and self-improvement, he or she will eventually be eliminated in this competitive job market.

Unlike previous generations where there were not many international job opportunities, people may seek for job security in selecting a job. In fact, everyone is afraid of losing their jobs. The difference is that the 21st century undergraduates may focus more on upgrading themselves with skills and knowledge so that they will not easily lose out in the competition.

5.3 Implications of the Study

5.3.1 Managerial Implications

The findings of this study have implications to corporate recruiters, and university's accounting faculty and career advisors. Accounting bodies in Malaysia like MIA can also expect to be benefited by our findings. These parties will be well-advised to focus on factors that are deemed to be significant (career development and employer reputation) for undergraduate accounting students when dealing with their respective issues. For instance, organizations can emphasize on providing professional training and development programs to attract more talented accounting students who are of higher concern for advancement opportunities. They can also increase their engagement in more corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities as well as avoiding themselves from any unethical business transactions or events in order to enhance their organizational reputation.

University's accounting faculty and career advisors can improve their effectiveness of the internship placement and career fair by enlisting and inviting more reputable employers that can satisfy the top preferences of the accounting students, such as offering opportunities for self-improvement. In respect of accountancy bodies, they may try to work closely with those accounting and audit firms in organizing more accounting seminars and conferences. This can ensure that these young people are always updated with the latest changes in financial reporting issues and upgraded with necessary skills to sustain in accountancy profession.

5.3.2 Theoretical Implications

Prior empirical studies relevant to this topic were mostly carried out in the context of foreign countries and non-accounting students whereby their applicability and implications did not properly reflect the factors affecting the job selection among accounting students in Malaysia. Therefore, the present study, which is done in Malaysian context, will be able to contribute to the local research by serving as a reference for local researchers in their future studies. Besides, current findings are important since this study reanalyzed the five of the factors that were rated as top criteria by previous researchers. The results of the study demonstrated that, among these five factors, only career development and employer reputation are significantly related to job selection preferences of the respondents. These results are interesting as the rest of the three factors are in opposition to the previous findings.

5.4 Limitations and Recommendations

5.4.1 Low R-square

This study emphasized only on five factors, which are career development, salary and benefits, employer reputation, working environment, and job security. The model of present study, represented by the combination of these five independent variables, has contributed to an R-square of 0.4434. Meaning, only 44.34% of the dependent variable, job selection preference, were explained by these five factors, while the rest of 55.66% could be better explained by other factors.

Recommendation

Future researchers are recommended to include more variables in conducting similar study. They may consider involving other factors with more influential power in determining their relationship with job selection preferences. For example, employer location, nature of work, students' personal interest, and parental influence, may be incorporated into the future research model to generate a higher R-square.

5.4.2 Survey Strategy: Self-Administered Questionnaire

Present study employed survey strategy with self-administered questionnaires in collecting the primary data. This approach for data collection has a few limitations. Some of the respondents may wrongly interpret or not fully understand the questions. Besides, there is a chance that they may miss out some of the questions or not tell the truth due to tiredness. Thus, the responses received could be less accurate and reliable, leading to poor research results.

Recommendation

In conducting future studies, the potential researchers may try to make use of other research strategy or approach that is more effective in collecting data. For instance, structured interview session may be held to obtain the responses from targeted respondents. With this approach, any ambiguity can be clarified immediately by the interviewer and omission of questions is less likely to occur.

5.4.3 Emphasis on Malaysian Accounting Students

Present study placed emphasis only on undergraduate accounting students in Malaysian universities. As such, the results of this research study may generate limited or no contributions to those employers, association or institutions that are non-accounting related. Besides, the findings may not be applicable to those in outside Malaysia due to different cultural and environmental factors.

Recommendation

Future researchers who are interested in similar research topic may try to target on students from different courses or fields so that a wider range of parties can be benefited. Also, the examination of the factors affecting students' job selection preference can be done in comparative perspective so that the research contributions can go beyond the cultural as well as geographical borders.

5.5 Conclusion

This research examined the factors affecting job selection preferences of undergraduate accounting students in Malaysian universities. The study was conducted among 240 respondents by using survey questionnaires. The primary data collected was being processed and analyzed, represented by both descriptive and inferential statistics, using SAS program.

The findings of present study revealed that only two factors, which were career development and employer reputation, were significantly related to the dependent variable, job selection preferences. In contrast, the other three constructs, including salary and benefits, working environment, and job security, were found to have no significant relationship with job

selection preferences. Hence, the research objectives of this study were not fully met since only two factors, out of five, were found to be significantly related to the dependent variables.

Summary of the statistical analyses and discussion of the major findings were presented in this chapter. Besides, implications, from both managerial and theoretical perspectives, limitations of the study as well as recommendations for the future research were also discussed in this chapter.

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Appendix A Summary of Past Empirical Studies

	<i>Study</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Data</i>	<i>Major Findings</i>
Career Development	Demagalhaes, Wilde, & Fitzgerald, 2011	USA	Survey questionnaires were distributed to the accounting students enrolled at the University of North Dakota and audit and tax professionals from EideBailly LLP, a regional accounting firm.	The survey's results, analyzed using Chi-Square tests, revealed that both groups agreed that the opportunity for advancement with employer is the most important factor.
	Iacovou, Shirland, & Thompson, 2004	USA	241 undergraduate and MBA students were given the survey questionnaires to evaluate the importance of 20 job attributes.	A repeated-measures MANCOVA test was conducted, and the findings showed that growth potential was rated as the most important criterion among these job attributes.
	Lim & Soon, 2006	Malaysia	307 survey questionnaires were collected back from economics final year students in Universiti Utara Malaysia.	This research , using Wald test and general specification test, found that long-term career prospect was the most important job selection criterion.

Appendix A Summary of Past Empirical Studies

Salary and benefits	Mahony, Mondello, Hums, & Judd, 2006	USA	427 faculty members teaching in sport management programs in North America were surveyed using self-administered questionnaires.	The results of multiple regression analysis revealed that salary was one of the most important factors in affecting the likelihood of taking a new job.
	Aycan&Fikret-Pasa, 2003	Turkey	1213 senior and junior management students from 17 universities across 6 regions of Turkey were given the 4-part questionnaires to collect data.	The data analysis methods used were paired-sample t-test and Pearson's product moment correlations. The research findings revealed that pay was the most motivating factor in job selection.
	Ghani, Said, Nasir, & Jusoff, 2008	Malaysia	802, out of 1500, questionnaires were gathered from lecturers in charge of first and final year university students	The t-test analysis showed that salary was one of the factors perceived to be important for an accountant.

Appendix A Summary of Past Empirical Studies

Employer reputation	Montgomery & Ramus, 2003	Singapore	279 MBAs from two European and three North American business schools were studied using an adaptive conjoint analysis survey tool.	More than 90% of their target respondents were willing to forgo financial benefits in order to work for an organization with a better reputation for CSR and ethics.
	Liu, 2010	USA	Data was collected through online survey of all the undergraduate students of University of Missouri	The results of independent sample t-test supported the hypothesis that good organizational reputation decreases college job applicants' intention to refuse job offers.
	Chan&Ho, 2000	China	Factor analysis on the responses of 167 final year accounting students in Hong Kong to a 30-item questionnaire indentified 7 factors.	Accounting graduates with higher GPA were more concerned about the firm's reputation and profile than those with lower GPA.

Appendix A Summary of Past Empirical Studies

Working environment	Ramasamy, Yeung, & Yuan, 2008	China	500, 300, 400 and 200 copies of the questionnaires were distributed among graduating students at universities in Xian, Shanghai, Taiwan and Hong Kong respectively.	The survey findings, using conjoint analysis, showed that job seekers placed greater importance on working environment in selecting job.
	Aycan&Fikret-Pasa, 2003	Turkey	Through a self-administered four-part questionnaire distributed to 1,213 senior and junior management students from 17 universities across 6 regions of Turkey.	The results of paired-sample t-test and Pearson's product moment correlations revealed that peaceful work environment was one of the most motivating factors in job selection.
	Bathula&Karia, 2011	New Zealand	Used questionnaire to collect data from 92 International students.	Friendly working environment was one of the important factors in choosing job.

Appendix A Summary of Past Empirical Studies

Job Security	Ahmed, Noor, Khan, Afzal, & Reman, 2010	Pakistan	300 business graduates, from different universities of Islamabad, towards multinational corporations (MNCs) or small & medium enterprises (SMEs), and their service packages were investigated.	Job security was more attractive in MNCs than in SMEs.
	Tang, 2009	China	165 Chinese college students were asked to complete a Chinese version of Self-Directed Search and a questionnaire	The outcomes of several multiple regression analyses and multidimensional scaling analysis suggested that job security were one of the top reasons for Chinese students' career choices.
	Lyon, Filmer, & McDougall, 2010	UK	More than 3200 individuals from 122 countries responded to this survey, and a number of leading organizations were interviewed.	The results of descriptive analysis showed that job security was an important factor in attracting Generation Y.

Appendix B Variables and Measurement Table

Variable	Item	Description	References	Measurement
Job selection preferences (JSP)	JSP1	I am quite clear with my job selection preference.	Borchert (2002)	Interval
	JSP2	I have made plans about my future career path.		
	JSP3	I will accept a job after my graduation so long as my results or grades allow.		
	JSP4	I will accept a job according to its market availability.		
Career development (CD)	CD1	I would like a job where the organization will help me achieve my work-related learning and development needs.	Public Service Secretariat (2009)	Interval
	CD2	I would like a job that gives me good opportunity for promotion.	Mcgaha (2005)	
	CD3	I would like a job that, over time, allows me to reach high-power position with considerable authority.	Slaughter, Richard, and Martin (2006)	
	CD4	I would reject a job if there is only a little opportunity for advancement.		

Appendix B Variables and Measurement Table

Variable	Item	Description	References	Measurement
Salary and benefits (SB)	SB1	Money has been an issue for me in choosing a career.	Borchert (2002)	Interval
	SB2	I would choose any other occupation in which I could earn as much money.	Sia (2010)	
	SB3	I would choose a job that will provide me an opportunity to achieve a good standard of living.	Tan (2010)	
	SB4	I would reject a job offer if the salary is inadequate and/or the benefits do not meet my needs.	Mcgaha (2005)	
Employer reputation(ER)	ER1	I would select a job where the organization would probably have a reputation as being an excellent employer.	Gregory (2010)	Interval
	ER2	I would be proud to say that I work in such reputable company.		
	ER3	I would probably find this company to be a prestigious place to work in.		
	ER4	I would certainly select this company to be my future employer if there are probably many others who would like to work in this company.		

Appendix B Variables and Measurement Table

Variable	Item	Description	References	Measurement
Working environment (WE)	WE1	A good work atmosphere (i.e. clean, comfortable, absence of noise) would probably influence my intention to accept an employment offer.	Maharaj (2008)	Interval
	WE2	I would like to work with a good boss who is considerable and fair.	Mcgaha (2005)	
	WE3	I would like a job where the fellow workers are pleasant, agreeable and good working companion.	Jurgensen (1978)	
	WE4	I would reject a job offer if the working hours are too long.		
Job security (JS)	JS1	I would like a job that represents a steady work, no layoffs and sureness of being able to keep my job.	Jurgensen (1978)	Interval
	JS2	I am concerned that, within the next five years, my employer may replace me with others who are willing to do my job for less money.	Jones (2010)	
	JS3	I would like a job where most people doing this job within this organization have long-term security.	Brown (2006)	
	JS4	Given an opportunity, I would accept a similar position with another employer for the same or even lesser compensation if I feel I will have better job security.	McKnight, Philips, & Hardgrave (2008)	



UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN

Faculty of Business and Finance

BACHELOR OF COMMERCE (HONS) ACCOUNTING

FINAL YEAR PROJECT

RESEARCH TITLE: Factors affecting the job selection preferences of accounting students in Malaysian universities

.....
Dear respondent,

We are the final year undergraduates of Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) Accounting, from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR). The purpose of this survey is to examine the factors that the accounting students of Malaysian universities consider important in selecting their first job after graduation.

Your participation is highly appreciated. Thank you.
.....

Instructions:

1. There are Three (3) sections in this questionnaire. Please answer ALL questions in ALL sections.
2. Completion of this questionnaire will take you approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

Section I: Demographic Profile

Please place a tick “√” or fill in the blank for each of the following:

1. Age:
 - below 20
 - 20 to 22
 - 23 to 25
 - above 25

2. Name of the university: _____

3. Course of study:
 - Bachelor of Commerce (Hons) Accounting
 - Bachelor of Accounting (Hons)
 - Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons)
 - Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) Banking & Finance
 - Bachelor of Business Administration (Hons) Entrepreneurship
 - Bachelor of Marketing (Hons)
 - Bachelor of Finance (Hons)
 - Others: _____

4. Year of study:
 - one
 - two
 - three
 - three (final)
 - four (final)

Section II: Assessment on independent variables (IV)

This section intends to seek your opinion regarding the perceived importance of the factors (career development, salary and benefits, employer reputation, working environment, and job security) in looking for a job.

Please circle your answer to each statement using the 5-point Likert scale [(1) = strongly disagree; (2) = disagree; (3) = neutral; (4) = agree; and (5) = strongly agree]

IV 1: Career development (CD)

Definition: Career development is the long-term career prospects relating to employee development (Moy & Lee, 2002).

Item	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
CD1	I would like a job where the organization will help me achieve my work-related learning and development needs.	1	2	3	4	5
CD2	I would like a job that gives me good opportunity for promotion.	1	2	3	4	5
CD3	I would like a job that, over time, allows me to reach high-power position with considerable authority.	1	2	3	4	5
CD4	I would reject a job if there is only a little opportunity for advancement.	1	2	3	4	5

IV 2: Salary and benefits (SB)

Definition: Salary is the payment to an employee for his or her services. Benefits may include healthcare, retirement plan, sick pay, vacation, insurance, etc that are provided to an employee in addition to salary (Moy & Lee, 2002).

Item	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
SB1	Money has been an issue for me in choosing a career.	1	2	3	4	5
SB2	I would choose any other occupation in which I could earn as much money.	1	2	3	4	5
SB3	I would choose a job that will provide me an opportunity to achieve a good standard of living.	1	2	3	4	5
SB4	I would reject a job offer if the salary is inadequate and/or the benefits do not meet my needs.	1	2	3	4	5

IV 3: Employer reputation(ER)

Definition: Employer reputation is a perceptual representation accompanying past actions and future prospects that describes the firm's overall appeal to various stakeholders and constituency groups (Fombrun, 1996).

Item	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
ER1	I would select a job where the organization would probably have a reputation as being an excellent employer.	1	2	3	4	5
ER2	I would be proud to say that I work in such reputable company.	1	2	3	4	5
ER3	I would probably find this company to be a prestigious place to work in.	1	2	3	4	5
ER4	I would certainly select this company to be my future employer if there are probably many others who would like to work in this company.	1	2	3	4	5

IV 4: Working environment (WE)

Definition: Working environment is the conditions relating to the job environment of the workers, including working hours, paid holidays, safety, rest periods, free uniforms, etc (Moy & Lee, 2002).

Item	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
WE1	A good work atmosphere (i.e. clean, comfortable, absence of noise) would probably influence my intention to accept an employment offer.	1	2	3	4	5
WE2	I would like to work with a good boss who is considerable and fair.	1	2	3	4	5
WE3	I would like a job where the fellow workers are pleasant, agreeable and good working companion.	1	2	3	4	5
WE4	I would reject a job offer if the working hours are too long.	1	2	3	4	5

IV 5: Job security (JS)

Definition: job security is the employees' perception of whether or not they will keep their job (Moore, 2011).

Item	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
JS1	I would like a job that represents a steady work, no layoffs and sureness of being able to keep my job.	1	2	3	4	5
JS2	I am concerned that, within the next five years, my employer may replace me with others who are willing to do my job for less money.	1	2	3	4	5
JS3	I would like a job where most people doing this job within this organization have long-term security.	1	2	3	4	5
JS4	Given an opportunity, I would accept a similar position with another employer for the same or even lesser compensation if I feel I will have better job security.	1	2	3	4	5

Section III: Assessment on dependent variable (DV)

This section intends to seek your opinion on your preference in accepting a company's employment offer over another in the presence of a particular factor.

Please circle your answer to each statement using the 5-point Likert scale [(1) = strongly disagree; (2) = disagree; (3) = neutral; (4) = agree; and (5) = strongly agree]

DV: Job selection preferences (JSP)

Definition: Job selection preference is the students' preference in accepting one company's employment offer over another (Iacovou, Shirland, & Thompson, 2004).

Item	Questions	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
JSP1	I am quite clear with my job selection preference.	1	2	3	4	5
JSP2	I have made plans about my future career path.	1	2	3	4	5
JSP3	I will accept a job after my graduation so long as my results or grades allow.	1	2	3	4	5
JSP4	I will accept a job according to its market availability.	1	2	3	4	5

Thank You Very Much!

