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Accounting profession by the view of School of
Business Administration students

Ivana Koštuříková, Markéta Šeligová, Beáta Blechová

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Silesian University in Opava
School of Business Administration in Karviná
Institute of Interdisciplinary Research
Univerzitní nám. 1934/3
733 40 Karviná
Czech Republic
<http://www.iivopf.cz/>
email: iiv@opf.slu.cz
+420 596 398 237

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Abstract

Ivana Košťuríková, Markéta Šeligová, Beáta Blechová: **Accounting profession by the view of School of Business Administration students**

With the growing importance of accounting information for the accounting entity's management in connection with its financial decision-making, the role of a quality professional accountant is growing. The aim of the article is to evaluate the view of the students of the economic university at the accounting profession in the Czech Republic. It was determined by a questionnaire survey how students of both full-time and combined forms of study at the School of Business Administration perceive the accounting profession in the Czech Republic. Based on the acquired nominal data, the dependence of the perceptions of the accountant profession to form, degree and field of study was examined using the Pearson chi-square test in the contingency table. In addition, the intensity of this dependence was examined using the Pearson coefficient of contingency. It was found that the perception of entrepreneurial risk associated with the selection of a professional accountant does not depend on the form of university studies. On the other hand, it has been shown that the form of university studies influences the perception whether the level of qualifications of professional accountants is reflected in their salary assessment and whether the impact of the economic decline of past years has increased the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs. The results also showed that the perception of the accounting profession in the Czech Republic is independent on the degree of university studies.

Key words

accountant profession, university studies, questionnaire survey, Pearson's chi-square test, Pearson contingency coefficient, qualifications of professional accountants, entrepreneurial risk

JEL: M41, M59

Contacts

Ivana Košťuríková, Department of Finance and Accounting, School of Business Administration, Silesian University, Univerzitní nám. 1934/3, 733 40 Karviná, Czechia, e-mail: kosturikova@opf.slu.cz.

Markéta Šeligová, Department of Finance and Accounting, School of Business Administration, Silesian University, Univerzitní nám. 1934/3, 733 40 Karviná, Czechia, e-mail: seligova@opf.slu.cz.

Beáta Blechová, Department of Finance and Accounting, School of Business Administration, Silesian University, Univerzitní nám. 1934/3, 733 40 Karviná, Czechia, e-mail: blechova@opf.slu.cz.

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Introduction

Environment where the accounting entities carry out their business activities is constantly evolving and changing. Gradual globalization, technical progress, innovation, but also changing social values, the diversification of human resources or the use of the natural environment, among others, are the driving forces behind these changes. These changes are reflected in the accounting and consequently affect financial reporting. Nowadays more and more emphasis are being placed on increasing transparency in financial reporting and interest in non-financial information is growing at the same time. This is the reason for gradual evaluation of the profession of accountants, not just accounting, but also the provision of comprehensive information, including tax or financial one. From this point of view, accounting is a broad area in which almost everything related to the leadership and management of the company is intertwined.

The aim of the article is to evaluate the perception of the accountant profession in the Czech Republic by the students of the School of Business Administration in Karviná. In the survey, 1,035 students were approached, and the questionnaire filled 709 people. The study was attended by 252 full-time students and 457 students in the combined form of study. Most students (521) were from bachelor's degree, 188 students attended a follow-up master's degree. The field Accounting and Taxes was attended by 178 respondents, while another 531 respondents were students of other economic fields.

The dependence of the perception of the accounting profession on the form, degree and field of university studies has been researched. To verify these dependencies the following range of hypothesis was established:

- perception of entrepreneurial risk associated with the selection of a professional accountant does not depend on the form, degree or field of university studies,
- perception of whether the level of qualifications of professional accountants is reflected in their salary assessment, does not depend on the form, degree or field of university studies,
- perceiving whether the impact of the economic decline of recent years has increased the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs, does not depend on the form, degree or field of university studies.

1. Review of Literature

With the growing importance of accounting information for the accounting entity's management in connection with its financial decision-making, the role of a quality professional accountant is growing. According to Šípková (2013), the accounting profession can play a crucial role in stabilizing the business environment. The credibility of the accountant profession depends on how the public perceives the value that financial professionals bring. Accounting information is important for managerial decision making. The higher the share of the accounting profession in decision-making on the strategy, the search for business opportunities or the risk management of the accounting entity, the greater its significance is (Jaworska, 2016).

According to IFAC (2012), more than half of all accountants around the world are professional accountants. Their main tasks include, for example, bookkeeping in accordance with legislation, analysis and interpretation of accounting information for corporate strategy and economic decision making, internal control, risk management, business transaction

logging. Paseková et al. (2018) suggest that accounting should be used only as a source of information that allows us to calculate the amount of tax liability and draw up the required statements. Accounting along with other financial management tools should be a source of complete data for both internal and external users. Accounting provides certain types of quantitative information for company decision-making and management. Accounting information has become a basic source of information for most interest groups (Otrusínová and Šteker, 2013). According to Gibassier, Rodrigue and Arjaliés (2015), accounting specialists are responsible for, among other things, the processing of key performance indicators of the success of the accounting entity and their monitoring. In order to provide relevant information, the accounting officer should comply with the rules and policies, on which the processing of accounting data is based (Avram, Dutescu a Puican, 2011).

According to Suddaby, Gendron and Lam (2009), professional accountants are defined as guardians of public interest. Professional expertise, experience, independence, honesty and objectivity should be their attributes. The importance of professional accountants is the subject of research and expert studies of international organizations such as IFAC (2018) or ACCA (2012). The issue of the importance of professional accountants and growing demands on their expertise has begun to be more discussed in the Czech Republic since 2014, when the responsibilities of the members of the statutory bodies were strengthened. According to the Act on commercial corporations the statutory body is responsible for ensuring proper accounting in accordance with the concept of care of a good manager.

2. Data and methodology

In an internal project "New trends and specifics of accounting in the context of legislative changes in the Czech Republic" among others the view of the students of the economic university at the accounting profession in the Czech Republic was examined. It was determined by a questionnaire survey how students of both full-time and combined forms of study at the School of Business Administration perceive the accounting profession in the Czech Republic. In the survey, 1,035 students were approached and the questionnaire filled 709 people. Based on the acquired nominal data, the dependence of the perceptions of the accountant profession to form, degree and field of study was examined using the Pearson chi-square test in the contingency table. There were determined H0 hypothesis that the researched characters are independent. Empirically determined frequencies (n_{ij}) were compared with the theoretical, or expected (e_{ij}) frequencies, which represent the associated frequencies expected under the assumption of independence of the variables. The magnitude of the differences between empirical and theoretical frequencies is assessed using test statistics (1).

$$\chi^2 = \sum_{i=1}^r \sum_{j=1}^c \frac{(n_{ij} - e_{ij})^2}{e_{ij}} \quad (1)$$

If the H0 hypothesis is not rejected and assuming that all theoretical frequencies e_{ij} are greater than 1 and at least 80 % of them are greater than 5, the test criterion χ^2 has approximately Pearson's distribution $\chi^2(v)$ with degrees of freedom (2).

$$v = (r - 1)(c - 1) \quad (2)$$

The H0 hypothesis of independence is then rejected on the level of significance α when the test statistic value χ^2 exceeds the appropriate 100 (1- α)% quantile of the distribution χ^2 (3).

$$\chi^2 \geq \chi^2_{1-\alpha}(v) \quad (3)$$

For the hypothesis testing using Pearson's chi-square, the SPSS statistical program was used to calculate the level of statistical significance (i.e. p-value). The achieved level of statistical significance was examined at a significance level $\alpha = 0.05$. If the p-value is greater than 0.05, the zero hypothesis cannot be rejected.

In the case of the rejection of the zero hypothesis, the intensity (tightness) of dependence was further researched by the Pearson coefficient of contingency (4).

$$C = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{n + \chi^2}} \quad (4)$$

The closer the coefficient is to 1, the more intensity of the dependence is between the characters, the closer the coefficient is to 0, the less intensity of the dependence is.

3. Results and discussion

As mentioned above, the perception of the accountant profession in the Czech Republic by students of the full-time and combined forms of study at School of Business Administration in Karviná was researched in the internal project "New trends and specifics of accounting in the context of legislative changes in the Czech Republic."

3.1. Perception of the accounting profession according to the form, degree and field of university studies

Students of both full-time and combined forms of study perceive the risk of entrepreneurs associated with the selection of the professional accountant very similarly. Slight differences in the perception of risk are between students of bachelor and follow-up master's degrees. The difference is also evident among students of the field Accounting and Taxes and others. Details are shown in Figure 1.

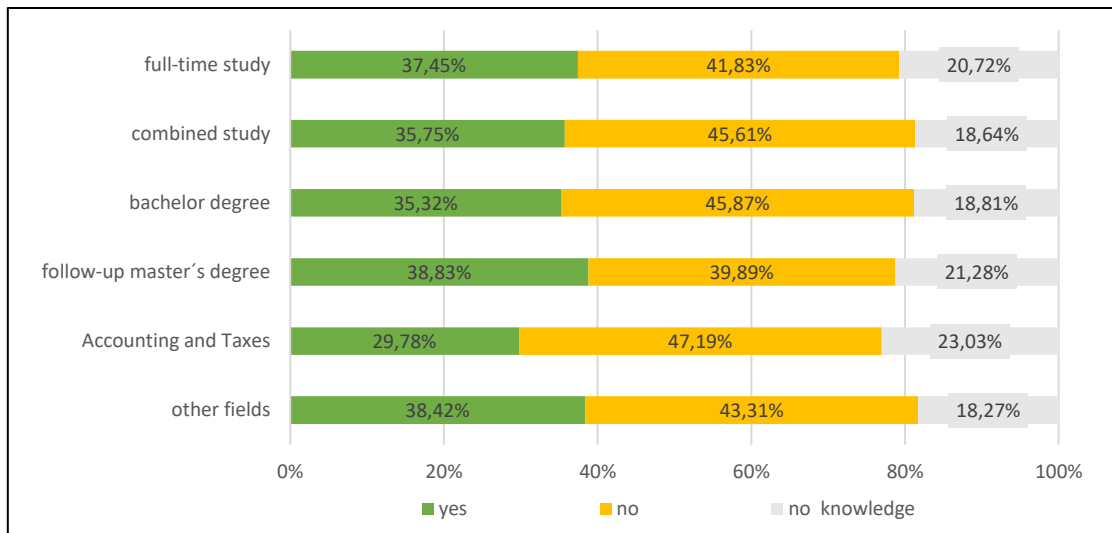


Fig. 1: Perception of business risk associated with the selection of a professional accountant by form, degree and field of university studies
(Source: own processing)

Also, the perception of the influence of the qualification level of professional accountants on the salary assessment shows the difference between students of the full-time and combined form of study, where 41% of full-time students have no knowledge of this influence, while the same percentage of students in the combined form believes that in the current labour market the level of qualifications of an accountant profession is not reflected in their salary assessment.

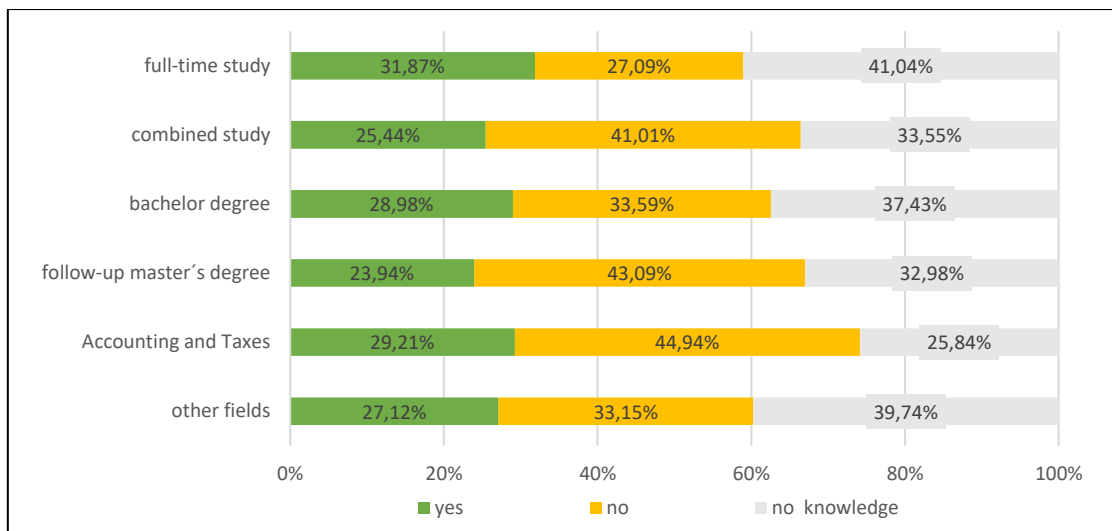


Fig. 2: Perception of the influence of professional accountants' qualifications on salary assessment by form, degree and field of university studies
(Source: own processing)

In previous Figure 2, we can see again the difference in perception among students of bachelor and follow-up master's degree studies, the smaller the divergence in the perception of the facts then can be seen by students of other fields and Accounting and Taxes.

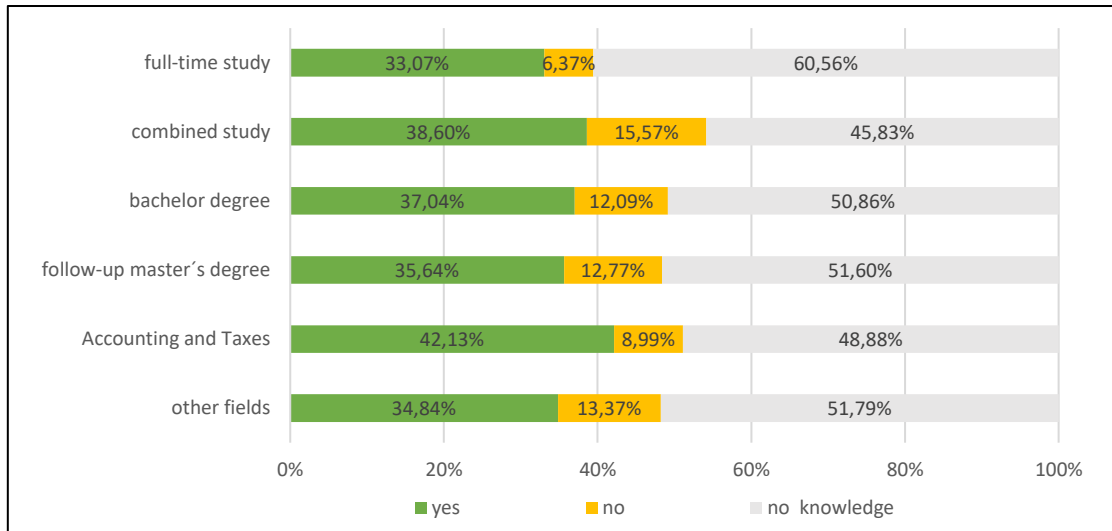


Fig. 3: Perception of the impact of the economic decline in recent years on the importance of the accounting profession for entrepreneurs by the form, degree and field of university studies
(Source: own processing)

Figure 3 shows that the perception regarding the impact of the economic decline in recent years on the importance of the accounting profession for entrepreneurs, is again noticeable difference in students of full-time and combined studies. From the point of view of the degree, bachelors and follow-up masters perceive this fact very similarly. In this respect, students of Accounting and Taxes have expressed a positive attitude to a greater extent than students of other fields.

3.2. Dependence of the perception of the accountant profession on the form, degree and field of university studies

To verify the dependence of the perception of the accountant profession on the form of studies, the following hypotheses were determined:

- perception of entrepreneurial risk associated with the selection of a professional accountant does not depend on the form of university studies,
- perception of whether the level of qualifications of professional accountants is reflected in their salary assessment, does not depend on the form of university studies,
- perceiving whether the impact of the economic decline of recent years has increased the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs, does not depend on the form of university studies.

Only in the case of perceiving entrepreneurial risk in the selection of the professional accountant is the value of significance greater than 0.05 and so the zero hypothesis cannot be rejected (Table 1). On the other hand, the other two levels of statistical significance are already less than 0.05 and consequently we reject zero hypotheses.

Tab. 1: Perception of accountant profession by form of university studies

Chi-Square Tests		Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
Entrepreneurial risk and selection of a professional accountant	Pearson Chi-Square	1.013 ^a	2	0.603
Influence of professional accountants' qualifications on salary	Pearson Chi-Square	13.615 ^a	2	0.001
Impact of economic decline on the increasing importance of the accountancy profession	Pearson Chi-Square	19.349 ^a	2	6.285E-05

Source: own processing in SPSS

Based on these results, it can be stated that the perception of entrepreneurial risk associated with the selection of the professional accountant does not depend on the form of university studies but the form of university studies influences perception of whether the level of qualification of professional accountants is reflected in their salary assessment and whether due to the economic decline of recent years increasing the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs. In order to determine the intensity of the dependence between nominal variables, the contingency coefficients were calculated using SPSS as shown in Table 2 below. Since the values of both coefficients are close to 0, it cannot be assumed that there is a high intensity of the dependence.

Tab. 2: Perception of accountant profession by form of university studies

Symmetric Measures		Value	Appr. Sig.
Influence of professional accountants' qualifications on salary	Contingency Coefficient	0.137	0.001
Impact of economic decline on the increasing importance of the accountancy profession	Contingency Coefficient	0.163	6.285E-05

Source: own processing in SPSS

In order to analyze the dependence of the perception of the accountant profession on degree of university studies, three other hypotheses were determined:

- perception of entrepreneurial risk associated with the selection of a professional accountant does not depend on degree of university studies,
- perception of whether the level of qualifications of professional accountants is reflected in their salary assessment, does not depend on degree of university studies,
- perceiving whether the impact of the economic decline of recent years has increased the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs, does not depend on degree of university studies.

As can be seen from Table 3, all significance values are greater than 0.05 and therefore zero hypotheses cannot be rejected. Therefore, it can be stated that with 95% probability the perception of accountants in the Czech Republic is not dependent on degree of university studies.

Tab. 3: Perceptions of the accountant profession by degree of university studies

Chi-Square Tests		Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
Entrepreneurial risk and selection of a professional accountant	Pearson Chi-Square	2.018 ^a	2	0.365
Influence of professional accountants' qualifications on salary	Pearson Chi-Square	5.477 ^a	2	0.065
Impact of economic decline on the increasing importance of the accountancy profession	Pearson Chi-Square	0.140 ^a	2	0.932

Source: own processing in SPSS

Finally, the dependence of the perception of the accounting profession on the field of university studies was also examined. The following hypotheses were determined for testing:

- perception of entrepreneurial risk associated with the selection of a professional accountant does not depend on the field of university studies,
- perception of whether the level of qualifications of professional accountants is reflected in their salary assessment, does not depend on the field of university studies,
- perceiving whether the impact of the economic decline of recent years has increased the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs, does not depend on the field of university studies.

The following Table 4 shows levels of statistical significance, which indicate that in two cases the zero hypothesis cannot be rejected because the significance values are greater than 0.05. It follows from these results that perceiving the entrepreneurial risk associated with the selection of the professional accountant and perceiving the effect of the economic decline of previous years on increasing the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs is not dependent on the field of study.

Tab. 4: Perception of accountant profession by field of university studies

Chi-Square Tests		Value	df	Asymp. Sig.
Entrepreneurial risk and selection of a professional accountant	Pearson Chi-Square	4.755 ^a	2	0.093
Influence of professional accountants' qualifications on salary	Pearson Chi-Square	12.451 ^a	2	0.002
Impact of economic decline on the increasing importance of the accountancy profession	Pearson Chi-Square	4.242 ^a	2	0.120

Source: own processing in SPSS

We only reject the hypothesis that the perception of whether the level of professional accountant qualifications is reflected in their salary assessment is independent of the field of study. Also, in this case, the contingency coefficient for the determination of dependence intensity was calculated and since its value is close to 0, it cannot be assumed that there is a high intensity of the dependence (Table 5).

Tab. 5: Intensity of perceptions of the accountant's profession by field of university studies

Symmetric Measures		Value	Appr. Sig.
Influence of professional accountants' qualifications on salary	Contingency Coefficient	0.131	0.002

Source: own processing in SPSS

Conclusion

The aim of the article was to evaluate the perception of the accountant profession in the Czech Republic by students of full-time and combined study at the School of Business Administration in Karviná. To determine the dependence of the perception of the accounting profession by university students there were established hypotheses, which were divided into 3 groups (according to the form of university studies, degree of university studies and field of university studies).

Using Pearson's chi-square test and the Pearson coefficient of contingency, it was found that perceptions of entrepreneurial risk associated with choosing a professional accountant did not depend on the form of university studies. On the other hand, it has been shown that the form of university studies influences the perception of whether the level of qualifications of professional accountants is reflected in their salary assessment and whether the economic importance of the past years has increased the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs.

The results also showed that the perceptions of accountants in the Czech Republic are not dependent on the degree of university studies. The results also show that perceiving the business risk associated with choosing a professional accountant and perceiving the impact of the economic downturn of recent years on increasing the importance of professional accountants for entrepreneurs is not dependent on the field of study.

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