

Curtin Business School

**Professional accounting body affiliation: Understanding the
drivers of membership attraction and retention in Vietnam**

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Doctor of Philosophy
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Declaration

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Human Ethics

The research presented and reported in this thesis was conducted in accordance with the National Health and Medical Research Council National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007) – updated March 2014. The proposed research study received human research ethics approval from the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (EC00262), Approval Number # HR 121/2014 (see Appendix .

Signature:



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Table of abbreviations

| | |
|---------------|---|
| AACSB | Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business |
| ACBSP | Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs |
| ACCA | Association of Certified Chartered Accountants |
| AICPA | American Institute of Certified Public Accountants |
| ALTC | Australian Learning and Teaching Council |
| ASEAN | Association of South East Asian Countries |
| CA | Chartered Accountant |
| CAANZ | Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand |
| CAPA | Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants |
| CIMA | Chartered Institute of Management Accountants |
| CICPA | Chinese Institute of Certified Public Accountants |
| CPA | Certified Public Accountant |
| CPA Australia | Certified Public Accountants Australia |
| CPD | Continuing Professional Development |
| GAA | Global Accounting Alliance |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| IAS | International Accounting Standards |
| ICAA | Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia |
| ICAEW | Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales |
| IFAC | International Federation of Accountants |
| IFRS | International Financial Reporting Standards |
| IT | Information Technology |
| MBA | Master of Business Administration |

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| MOF | Ministry of Finance |
| MOU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| PAO | Professional Accounting Organisation |
| PBC | Perceived Behavioural Control |
| SAV | State Audit of Vietnam |
| TEQSA | Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency |
| TPB | Theory of Planned Behaviour |
| TRA | Theory of Reasoned Action |
| UAS | Unified Accounting System |
| U.K. | United Kingdom |
| U.S. | United States of America |
| VACPA | Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants |
| VAA | Vietnam Association of Accountants and Auditors |
| WTO | World Trade Organisation |

Abstract

Challenges faced by professional accounting bodies relate to the recruitment of new members (graduates) and retention of existing members (Albrecht and Sack 2000, Tan and Laswad 2006). Despite studies on the perceptions of benefits and costs of joining a professional body (Sidaway et al. 2013, Inglis et al. 2011a), little empirical evidence is available on the deciding factors for joining one specific professional body, let alone multiple ones in a developing country. Using the theoretical lens articulated within the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) and drawing from a sample of accounting students, foundation candidates and members of a professional accounting body in Vietnam (N=485) this thesis investigates, through surveys, the factors affecting the decisions by final-year university students, members and associate members to affiliate with one or more professional bodies in Vietnam. The research questions addressed in this thesis are:

- RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ2. Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding affiliation with professional accounting bodies?

The results of the tests conducted in order to answer Research Question 1 show that attitude is the most significant factor in explaining the intentions of accounting students and foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body. The results of the independent t-test comparing members and foundation candidates in terms of behavioural, normative and control beliefs show that members are more likely

than foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body if their employers cover the membership fee. A three-way comparison of students, foundation candidates and members in terms of factor importance shows that most students are preoccupied with the quality of the programs rather than with their professional status. The comparison between those who intend to professionally affiliate and those who do not reveals that the main factors affecting the decision are the reputation of the professional body, career and networking opportunities, international recognition, professional status, international mobility opportunities, perceived expertise of members and continuing professional development. Finally, the comparison between single and multiple memberships reveals that those who are members of more than one professional accounting body probably chose multiple memberships because of perceived pressure from important referents.

The implications of this study are threefold. First of all, in order to attract new members or retain current ones, professional accounting bodies would be wise to emphasise the benefits of affiliation such as reputation of the professional body, career and networking opportunities and international recognition. It seems that their marketing strategies should be aimed at future members, such as students, rather than employers for example with the exception of Big 4 employees who tend to comply more with their employers in terms of choice of professional body. It also seems that reducing the costs of affiliation would not bring any benefit because cost is not perceived as a significant inhibiting factor except by multiple body members who commonly belonged to one local and one foreign professional body. In addition, this study contradicts findings by other researchers in the accounting field who show that normative pressure and perceived behavioural control are factors affecting a wide range of decisions.

The study of the accounting profession in Vietnam through memberships of professional associations is a departure from the traditional Anglo professionalisation model and contributes to the literature on the development of accounting in emerging economies. Additionally, Vietnam offers a model of professionalisation with complex dependencies, including imperatives of the State and the professions, and thus provides a rich tapestry of comparison with other state-controlled transitional economies.

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Chapter 1 - Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This thesis investigates the ongoing professionalisation of accounting in Vietnam through the lens of membership of professional accounting bodies. In particular, it analyses the intentions of accounting students to affiliate with professional accounting bodies in Vietnam, as well as factors affecting the decisions by members and associate members of a particular professional body to continue or cease affiliation with this body. Professions and professionalisation have been a focal point of inquiry from a number of perspectives. They emphasise ‘the peculiarities of particular professions or the special features of the professions in a particular historical context’ (Siegrist 2002, 12154) or, in other words, apply a historical perspective to specific professions. Another approach is to look at the uniqueness of each profession, or its specific characteristics, regardless of time. The latter perspective invariably argue that professions and professionalisation processes have their roots in an almost standardised Anglo-Saxon model which provides a blueprint for professions to acquire their coveted superior status and which is independent of specific contexts (Johnson 1982). Yee and West (2010, 2), on the other hand, emphasise that ‘occupational status and the outcomes of professionalisation processes are contingent upon the particular cultural, political and socio-economic setting within which an occupation is constituted.’

The study of the accounting profession through membership of professional associations in Vietnam serves to depart from this traditional Anglo-Saxon professionalisation model and contributes to the literature on the development of accounting in emerging economies. Additionally, Vietnam offers a model of professionalisation with intricate dependencies with the State and thus allows for some comparison with other state-controlled transitional economies. The main Vietnamese professional association, the Vietnam Association of Accountants and Auditors (VAA) is an emanation of the Ministry of Finance and occupies a mostly regulatory function despite a recent move towards training rather than compliance. Foreign professional

bodies also contribute to the story of the professionalisation process in Vietnam in a unique way when Vietnam is compared with other ex-colonies of Western Europe. This thesis looks at potential drivers with the view that this new knowledge can be used by stakeholders to inform strategy to counteract the dwindling numbers of accounting students and thus provide insight into and potential solutions to the shortage of qualified accountants, as well as contributing to the economic development of the country. The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), which partners with several local and international higher education institutions in Vietnam, adopts the same view in that its 'partnerships and collaborations [with tertiary institutions] have helped not only to improve the knowledge and skills of our future accountants but also to raise awareness among the younger generation about the importance and role of the profession in the country's economic development. We hope that these collaborations increase the number of young individuals becoming professional accountants and help to close the capacity gap that currently exists in the country' (ACCA 2016). This insight could be useful to the accounting profession in other emerging or developed economies facing the same issues.

This chapter is structured as follows. The background and context for the research are provided in Section 1.2, followed by an explanation of some common terms in Section 1.3 and discussion of the research questions in Section 1.4. In Section 1.5, the significance and contributions of this thesis are presented. Key assumptions and limitations are established in Section 1.6 and finally, the outline of the thesis structure is presented in Section 1.7 and concluding remarks are made in Section 1.8.

1.2. Background

Accounting graduates and practitioners in Vietnam as in many countries have choices with regard to their professional affiliation. In Vietnam, the biggest foreign professional accounting body in terms of members is the U.K. based Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), with more than 8,500 students and 700 full members as of June 2016 (ACCA 2016). ACCA first opened its representative office in 2002, becoming the first international professional accounting organisation in Vietnam. A Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2012 with the Ministry of Finance allows

ACCA members and students to sit the Vietnamese CPA examination which is a requirement for those legally allowed to audit companies in Vietnam. Other CPA certifications are not recognised for legal purposes. ACCA's self-declared aim in Vietnam is that it 'works closely with the national accountancy bodies, State Audit of Vietnam (SAV), Vietnam Accounting Association (VAA), Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants (VACPA), Vietnam Tax Consultants Association and other bodies to ensure better collaboration and best-practices sharing to disseminate information on key developments to stakeholders more efficiently' (ACCA 2016).

The next largest foreign professional accounting body in Vietnam is CPA Australia which also competes with local professional bodies. It will be noted that the Vietnam Accounting Association (VAA) only admits Vietnamese nationals. Its relatively low number of members is explained by Nguyen, Hooper, and Sinclair (2012, 13) who consider that 'accountants in Vietnam do not belong to an independent profession so they cannot gain symbolic capital. Thus, they have no sense of wanting to belong to their association – the Vietnamese Association of Accountants and Auditors (hereafter VAA)'.

CPA Australia signed several cooperation agreements with Vietnamese professional bodies, aiming to 'strengthen the accounting and auditing profession in Vietnam' (APEC n.d.). These agreements indicate that the accounting profession in Vietnam is in desperate need of developmental support and training which it cannot source domestically.

Challenges faced by professional accounting bodies relate to the recruitment of new members (graduates) and the retention of existing members (Albrecht and Sack 2000, Tan and Laswad 2006). Despite studies on the perceptions of costs and benefits of joining a professional body (Sidaway et al. 2013, Inglis et al. 2011a), little empirical evidence is available on the deciding factors for joining one specific professional body, let alone multiple bodies in a developing country. The aim of this thesis is to investigate the factors affecting the decisions of final-year university students and members as well as associate members to affiliate with one or more professional bodies in Vietnam. This thesis is critical in the context of the professionalisation of accountancy in an emerging and state-controlled transitional economy and explains the need to understand what drives current and future practitioners to choose membership of one or more professional bodies, remain with those bodies or cease their affiliations.

1.2.1. Vietnam in an historical context and globalization of its economy

After centuries of invasion, colonisation and war, Vietnam is nowadays a rapidly developing country with a population of nearly 90 million people and is the 13th most populous country in the world (Bui, Yapa, and Cooper 2011). Despite suffering two decades of a U.S. trade embargo Vietnam became one of the fastest growing economies worldwide, showing growth of around seven percent in the 1990s, maintaining a comfortable four to five percent growth even after the Asian Economic crisis hit in 1997 and picking up seven percent again in 2000 (Fforde 2009). This steady growth continued in the 2000s despite the rampant inflation in the late 2000s, with a record high 23 percent annual inflation rate in 2008 (The World Bank 2016). The Vietnam Socio-Economic Development plan 2006-2010 achieved its target when the country moved from being a 'low income' country to a 'lower middle-income' country in the late 2000s. The World Bank (The World Bank n.d.) defines a lower middle-income country as one whose Gross National Product per capita is between \$756 and \$2,995. One reason for this success can be attributed to the incredible rise in exports from being non-existent at the end of the 1980s to equalling half of the country's GDP ten years later, only 20 years after the end of a devastating war (Fforde 2009), and amounting to 86 percent of the GDP in 2014. Vietnam's main exports include machinery, textiles, footwear and agricultural products such as coffee, rice and seafood, with the main destination being the U.S.

In the decade following the end of the American War (as it is called in Vietnam) the Vietnamese economy witnessed a tremendous slow down through its 'socialist transformation', particularly in the defeated South. Most of the State budget was invested in heavy industries, farms were collectivised and businesses nationalised. As output and productivity decreased, industry and commerce stagnated and food became scarce, leading to an estimated two million people leaving Vietnam (Pham, Trinh, and Nguyen 2008). In 1986 Vietnam launched a political and economic renovation strategy (Doi Moi) that introduced reforms intended to facilitate the transition from a centrally-planned economy to a socialist-oriented market economy (Bui, Yapa, and Cooper 2011). Doi Moi established a clear departure from the former central economy by

encouraging the establishment of private business in various sectors including foreign investments and even foreign-owned businesses. Pham, Trinh, and Nguyen (2008) qualify the economic shift as a reactive and 'bottom-up process' as opposed to a top-down and State-directed process.

Another economic milestone was reached in 2007 when Vietnam joined the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in hopes of further boosting its economy, showing a progressive and continuous process of independence from the State. Economic development, along with the freeing of industry from centrally controlled sources, has driven the need for the professionalisation of the Vietnamese work force. The impact of such professionalisation is far reaching and this thesis focusses on the increasing need for suitably qualified financial services professionals.

1.2.2. Vietnamese culture and professionalism

Vietnam, like most Asian societies is a collectivist society. The most fundamental levels in the organisation of the Vietnamese society are the family and bloodline, the village and the nation state (Tran 1997, Tran 1999, 2000). Not only does the immediate family but also the extended family play a vital role as a way to protect the group from immediate threats either environmental or other. Being an agricultural society, it makes sense that the next level up in order of importance is the village and that Vietnamese people have a strong sense of community which also explains the predominance of collectivism as opposed to individualism. This also explains why they value uniformity. At the highest level, the importance of the state translates into a very strong sense of patriotism, independence and national identity. Foreign influences are accepted but usually customised to suit Vietnamese needs and context. Vietnamese people can be characterised by their flexibility which entails an aversion for following the rules.

Vietnam, like many other countries is also seeing a generational gap appearing with younger generations less rooted in traditions. This is summarised by Lam (2013) who tells the story of a Vietnamese refugee family in the U.S.A where the father is still rooted in Vietnamese culture where social hierarchy, deference to elders and saving face takes precedence over the individual and where the son embraces the American culture that is based on individualism and equality.

Following the economic failure of the centrally planned economy and despite moving towards a market-like economy after Doi Moi (Economic renovation program), the Communist party of Vietnam has not given up on the idea of pursuing socialism and preserving its ideology. Vietnamese accounting bodies are legally structured as associations which are regulated separately from the Vietnamese Law on Accounting. For example, the VAA charter is approved by the Ministry of Home Affairs but its activities are regulated by the Ministry of Finance, an example of State dominance over professions (Bui 2011b). The VAA charter states that 'the VAA is a body for organizations and individuals practising accounting and auditing in Vietnam. The Association's operation aims to mobilize and unite the organizations and individuals operating in the field of accounting and auditing in Vietnam for the cause of maintaining and development of the profession; enhancing professional quality; maintaining professional ethics to better serve economic and financial management requirements of the country and integrating with professional accounting and auditing bodies in the region and the world' (Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) 2004). Unlike accounting associations in China, however, communist ideology is not embedded in the charter in Vietnam, associations are not by definition, political organisations. However the state still maintains a strong grip on the accounting profession and most professions in general through regulations issued by the respective ministries creating markets for and maintaining control over services provided. This situation resonates with Freidson's (1994) view of the professionalization projects in continental societies where professional practice is institutionalised, organised, regulated and at times mainly used by the state itself. Some industries in Vietnam such as secondary education and banking are still restricted to fully foreign investment and all business activities require a government licence to be able to operate. The aim of these so-called professions in Vietnam is to control the knowledge base through examinations and granting of qualifications. Foreign associations in general and ACCA in particular have been used as models for training however it was not a matter of blind adoption but one of customisation to the Vietnamese needs as the Communist party wants to preserve the socialist ideology and avoid foreign influence that could pervert it (Bui 2011b).

1.2.3. The professionalisation of accounting in Vietnam

Traditionally in Vietnam, the State is heavily involved in the regulation of accounting. Surprisingly, unlike most former British colonies which followed the British accounting rules and conventions even after their independence, accounting in Vietnam 'was not established by the French during their domination but rather by the independent Vietnamese Government to serve the needs of the post-war economy for building socialism' (e.g. reporting statistics, collecting taxes) (Bui, Yapa, and Cooper 2011, 4). Taxation was fundamental to colonial rule as taxes were primarily collected to fund the colonial administration in South Vietnam (Saigon, now Ho Chi Minh City). Annual budgets were set up and 'accounting was used in Vietnam under the French colonial rule to enable them to exercise central control of revenues, tax collection and export earnings and expenditures' (Bui, Yapa, and Cooper 2011, 10). Given this situation, it is clear that under French rule there was little need for local accountants because accounting was undertaken by French accountants, in French, and reported to the French administration. Following Vietnamese independence in 1945 and until the complete withdrawal of French rule in 1954, accountancy did not evolve significantly because the country was in a state of war and the economy was not developing. Accounting was primarily for budgeting purposes. Following the Geneva Accords in 1954, the country was divided into two entities with the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in the north following a Soviet Union and Chinese inspired socialist accounting model and the Republic of Vietnam in the South still following the French accounting system. Under this centrally planned economy, accounting was standardised and the only user of accounting was the State (Bui, Yapa, and Cooper 2011). An example of the unusual reporting regime was the absence of the requirement for independent auditing as the primary user of accounting information was the State (Nguyen and Tran 2012, Bui, Yapa, and Cooper 2011).

Following the reunification of the country in 1975 and in order to build socialism for the newly unified country, a unified accounting system was needed. After the economic renovation of the country and the internationalisation of its economy, there was a need for accounting reform (Nguyen and Eddie 1995). However, unlike the situation in other former colonies, the Vietnamese accounting system in the post-Doi Moi transition period 'was not directly influenced by the French accounting system, in spite of their rule of the country for over eighty years, nor by the Americans. Rather, it is

a product of a learning process in which the Vietnamese government played an influential role in selecting the relevant elements of French, Soviet and American accounting systems to build its own accounting system to suit the economic management requirements of the state' (Bui 2011a, 189). Shortly after the start of the economic renovation, a 1988 ordinance requiring companies for the first time to be audited once a year created a de facto market for accounting and auditing. It was during that same period that the CA's Club, the very first Vietnamese accounting association and the precursor of the Vietnam Accounting Association (VAA), was established by the Ministry of Finance (MOF). However, unlike the VAA, the CA's Club established in 1989 was merely a social club as opposed to a true professional body whose aim was for its voluntary members to share their experience. In 1991, the first two auditing companies were created by the MOF as State-Owned Enterprises and they employed only Vietnamese auditors (Bui 2011a). With the creation of the VAA in 1994 and the introduction by the MOF in 1995 of a new accounting system, Vietnam clearly set itself on the path of harmonisation with international accounting standards and ASEAN practices (Nguyen and Pham 1997). Additionally, with the convergence of the Vietnamese Accounting Standards with the International Accounting Standards (IAS), the State clearly showed its intention to open Vietnam to the global economy while maintaining control of accounting through a Uniform Accounting System (UAS)¹ (Nguyen and Tran 2012). Chu (2004) summarise the differences between socialist and western accounting by showing that the comparison 'reveals that whereas the regulation of western accounting, based on accounting standards issued by professional associations of accountants, is focused on defining the quality of the final products (outputs) of the accounting system (that is, financial statements), the regulation of socialist accounting aims to direct and control the whole accounting cycle' (Chu 2004, 161).

Although this renovation period saw a lot of changes in the accounting landscape, Bui (2011a) argues that there was still no accounting profession in Vietnam at the time as the only professional association, the VAA, had no regulatory power (accounting rules and licenses were issued by the MOF) and acted only as a social organisation, not unlike the situation in other civil law countries such as France where the profession is not self-regulated. The end of the 1990s saw another milestone

¹ In Vietnam, a Uniform Accounting System and Vietnamese Accounting Standards coexist

reached with the VAA's membership of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) which marked an international recognition of Vietnamese accounting (Bui 2011a).

As Vietnam opened its doors to foreign investment, the need for independent auditing activities naturally followed. Until 2007, all auditors and auditing practices were subject to the direct management and supervision of the MOF. This arrangement was deemed unsatisfactory and, from 2000, international organizations and auditing firms recommended that the Government authorise the management of accounting and auditing practice by professional accounting organizations (Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants 2013). To facilitate the transition in authority from the MOF to the private sector, the Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants (VACPA) was established in April 2005. The arguments put forth around its inception suggest that the VACPA was necessary to the developing accounting and auditing profession (Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants 2013). From 1 January 2007, VACPA was authorized by the MOF to oversee the auditing profession. VACPA provides support, training, technical updates, quality inspection, professional ethics monitoring, technical advice and experience sharing. This State-professional body arrangement is summarised by Bui who claims that 'this indicates that although the State is still the main source of accounting and auditing knowledge via its control over accounting legislation, the dissemination of this knowledge is in the hands of the newly established VACPA' (Bui 2011a, 264). However, it is noted that the VACPA as a subsidiary of the Vietnam Accounting Association is indirectly State controlled, demonstrating that self-regulation of the profession is not quite on the agenda yet. Another important milestone was the first Law on Independent Auditing which was passed by the National Assembly of Vietnam on 29 March 2011. This created a stable and sustainable legal foundation for the development of an independent auditing profession (Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants 2013).

Another stage in the ongoing development of the financial services sector in Vietnam was achieved in 2007 when the Accounting Practice Management Unit was established directly under the Central Office of the VAA. This led the way for self-regulation of the accounting profession. Professional accountancy education programs are in their infancy in Vietnam, however professional development organised by the VAA and VACPA in the area of audit practice is now available for members. In terms of

affiliation, not all Vietnam CPA holders are VACPA members as VACPA membership is not compulsory for practitioners.

The initial push into Vietnam by foreign professional accounting bodies was instigated by the ACCA when it opened its representative offices in Ho Chi Minh City in 2002 and in Hanoi in 2004. This was followed by CPA Australia who established their office in Vietnam in 2008. In April 2012, ACCA signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the MOF for coordinated testing for public accountant certification. Replacing the MOUs signed in 2004 and 2009, this newly signed MOU allowed ACCA students and members to sit the Vietnam CPA Examination. It should be noted that, unlike other countries where ACCA has a significant presence, the British professional body does not compete with local bodies but cooperates with them (through the Ministry of Finance) thus indirectly affecting the development of the profession. The ACCA has adapted its content to suit local needs (Bui 2011a). Bui (2011a) argues that 'the cooperation between the MOF and the ACCA is one of the significant milestones in the development of the accounting profession in Vietnam' (Bui 2011a, 276). The perceived advantages of the foreign professional bodies over local ones are their brand and image and their willingness to provide education and continuing professional development. As Annisette and Kirkham (2007, 9) argue: 'practitioner-based professional associations have powerful incentives to maintain control of the examination process since it not only facilitates the ability to control the size and composition of the membership, but it also enables control over the content, (re)presentation and development of the profession's knowledge base. Control over the examination process therefore helps to facilitate a profession's control over some of the most important parameters of the market for practitioners' services ...' The initial push for the introduction of foreign qualifications such as ACCA in Vietnam came from the Big 4 which needed internationally qualified practitioners to audit foreign companies. The Big 4 indeed pushed their employees to obtain not only Vietnamese CPA qualifications in order to be able to audit companies but also foreign qualifications such as ACCA and CPA Australia to ensure they had adequate knowledge and skills for the job (Bui 2011a).

In summary, it can be said that the professionalisation of accounting and auditing in Vietnam is very recent as the VACPA was only created in 2005. Bui (2011a) argues that there was no formal accounting profession in Vietnam until the VAA was created in 1997. Moreover, the VAA's membership of IFAC in 1998 signalled that

accounting in Vietnam had now emerged as a legitimate profession, or at least was on the path to become one. Proponents of the traditional Anglo-American professionalisation model would argue that until accounting professionals regulate themselves accountancy will remain an occupation and not a (liberal) profession despite their organisation controlling the examination process and possessing a code of ethics.

One of the reasons why professional associations in Vietnam do not issue accounting standards is their lack of experience and expertise (Chu 2004). Nguyen and Tran (2012, 443) echo this opinion and argue that ‘it is difficult to establish accounting standards in Vietnam because the accounting profession is weak, and the regulators have little or no experience in developing accounting standards. Thus, Vietnam must inherit its standards largely from IAS² which are suitable for developed capitalist economies, but less consistent with the needs and economic structure of developing countries, especially the “socialist market economy” in Vietnam’. Indeed, in countries where accounting is heavily regulated by the state it might be challenging to adopt western concepts and principles which are less rigid than the rules approach adopted in such developing economies (Chu 2004). This conundrum could explain the mixed gradualist approach to accounting reform in Vietnam, comprising the application of a Unified Accounting System as well as the adoption of International Standards. This approach can be compared with that of China but differs largely from reforms in other socialist countries in Eastern Europe and Russia in particular (Nguyen and Richard 2011). This tension between local and international rules results from on one hand the need for the State to control its macro and political economy (compiling statistics, implementing the plan and preserving State assets) and on the other hand international pressure, in particular from the WTO, to adopt internationally recognisable and credible standards (Nguyen and Tran 2012). In fact, Chu (2004) equates socialist accounting with bookkeeping, which is of limited use for managing the transition economy, and claims that accounting in such transitional countries is attempting to align with western accounting systems.

² Vietnamese Accounting Standards (VAS) are based on the 2003 version of the IAS and thus are not completely aligned with the IFRS.

1.2.4. The international presence of professional bodies: reaching the 'Asian Century'

CPA Australia released a survey report in 2013, entitled *Australia's competitiveness survey: from lucky country to competitive country*, which shows that Australia's lack of integration with Asia is affecting its ability to compete internationally (Enright and Petty 2013). Arguably, CPA Australia embraced the ACCA model by attempting to grow member numbers offshore, in Asia generally and in Vietnam specifically (ICAA, 2010). CPA Australia has 144,000 members worldwide, 25 percent of whom are domiciled in South-East Asia (CPA Australia annual report 2012).

CPA Australia and ACCA have identified the fast economic growth of South-East Asian countries as providing fertile frontiers for new memberships. In an effort to attract new student members CPA Australia is implementing several initiatives, such as the signing of a MOU with RMIT University Vietnam which grants full scholarships to students undertaking the professional accreditation program. CPA Australia and ACCA also organise information sessions with local universities and sponsor various students events. Given the transition from State control to a more market-oriented economy in Vietnam and the emerging issues of deepening professionalisation in this new market, evidence suggests that a significant proportion of accountants have become members of more than one professional accounting body (Carnegie and Parker 1999). A recent survey of accounting professionals in Vietnam (N=728) shows that 16 percent of the respondents are members of two professional accounting bodies, one local (VACPA or VAA) and one foreign (ACCA or CPA Australia) (Phan, Joshi, and Mascitelli 2016). It is questionable whether this trend is motivated by the need to be part of an internationally recognised body, granting a de-facto higher professional status, or a real business need to hold qualifications that foreign companies will be familiar with and therefore accessing more employers willing to recruit accounting professionals with such qualifications. Dual membership may also be motivated by the fear of future moves by the State against a particular professional body. Moreover, many Asian cultures also place a high value on individuals holding several credentials. Another explanation of multiple professional affiliation is put forth by Carnegie and Parker (1999) who suggest that the prestige of some professional bodies might explain dual membership and that its benefits 'may have included the ability to boast of numerous credentials (especially to clients) and, more generally, the ability to appeal to different loyalties' (1999, 95).

The next section presents the research questions addressed in this thesis.

1.3. Research Questions

It is anticipated that the results of this thesis would provide invaluable insights into the reasoning behind professional accounting body membership in a state-controlled emerging Southeast Asian market. The objectives of the study are:

- to promote understanding of the ongoing professionalisation of accounting;
- to provide a better understanding of member recruitment and retention.

Based on the literature associated with the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) and the aims and objectives of this thesis, the following research questions have been developed within the context of Vietnam. As there are three independent variables, the first research question is broken down into three sub-questions, one for each independent variable:

- RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ2. Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding affiliation with professional accounting bodies?

Research questions 1a, 1b and 1c apply the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) in attempting to find out which factors affect the decisions of students and

foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body. This theory was chosen because it is widely used to explain a variety of behaviours. The theory posits that intention to perform a behaviour is affected by attitude towards the behaviour (positive or negative view about the outcomes of the behaviour), normative pressure from important others to perform or not perform the behaviour and perceived facilitating or inhibiting factors affecting the behaviour (perceived behavioural control). These three main constructs affecting intention to perform a behaviour explain why Research Question 1 is broken down into three sub research questions. Regression analysis is used to answer these questions. Members of professional accounting bodies are not included because they have already performed the behaviour and thus no variance in intention and behaviour can be observed.

The second research question aims to understand what differentiates accounting students (as potential future accounting professionals), foundation candidates (as soon-to-be members) and current members in terms of factors driving their affiliation choices and it potentially highlights changes over time in the relative importance of different drivers as well as shedding some light on reasons for affiliating with several professional bodies.

The next section provides some explanations of terms commonly used in this thesis.

1.4. Terminology

The terminology frequently used in this study is defined in this section. In this thesis, the following terms have the following meanings:

Accounting firms: refers to firms who employ accountants who provide accounting and auditing services to non-accounting firms.

Accounting profession: refers to accountants working in accounting firms (public practice) and organised into professional associations as opposed to accounting in industry or commerce.

Big 4: refers to the four largest international accounting firms/professional services firms, namely Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu, Ernst & Young, KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers. This group was originally made of the Big 8 which became

Big 6 and Big 5 after several mergers and finally Big 4 after the collapse of Arthur Andersen following the Enron scandal.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD): refers to minimum requirements for professional accountants to maintain skills and knowledge through formal or informal continuing education, which must be tracked and evidenced, beyond their initial training or qualification.

Dual membership: refers to membership of more than one professional body.

Foundation candidate: a candidate completing the foundation levels of the CPA Australia program.

Generic skills: skills that are not related to a specific domain of activity. They are sometimes referred to as soft skills as opposed to hard skills which are specific to an occupation. These skills include communication, problem-solving, critical and creative thinking and analysis.

Practitioner: a professional accountant working for a public accounting firm in industry or in a service business.

Professional body: refers to a professional accounting association granting membership based on a specific qualification such as Chartered Accountant (CA) or Certified Public Accountant (CPA). In Australia, the main professional bodies are CPA Australia and the CAANZ.

Professionalisation: refers to the process of an occupation becoming a profession, including characteristics of superior status, collective social mobility and occupational closure.

State-controlled economy: a centrally planned economy in which economic decisions are made by the state rather than by the market.

Transitional economy: an economy which is changing from a centrally planned economy to a market economy.

1.5. Contribution to knowledge

Members' organisations rely on their members for voice, influence and impact in an increasingly globalised world (Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2013). Vietnam is a unique setting as the need for professionals who provide specialised financial services was non-existent until 2005 and is emerging along with its markets (Bui, Yapa, and Cooper 2011). Professional accounting bodies have identified the opportunities that these new markets represent for the ongoing development of their market share of new members. In addition, history shows that accountants in new and developing markets often hold dual membership (Carnegie and Parker, 1999). Individuals who hold dual membership can choose whether or not they will remain affiliated with second and subsequent professional accounting bodies. That said, improved understanding as to what drives member affiliation with professional accounting bodies is vital for the ongoing professionalisation of the sector in emerging and transitional markets. Using the theoretical lens articulated within the theory of planned behaviour (TPB), this thesis investigates the factors that current and future accounting practitioners (including final-year university students, members and foundation candidates of foreign professional accounting bodies) regard as important when selecting their professional affiliations.

This thesis contributes new knowledge of the rationale behind single and dual membership (of a local and foreign body for example) in state-controlled emerging countries and the implications for the professionalisation of accounting. Specifically, this thesis contributes knowledge in four respects:

- it provides empirical evidence about what drives professional affiliation;
- it contributes to the literature on the use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) in the accounting field;
- it contributes to the literature on the professionalisation of accounting in state-controlled emerging economies and in particular dual membership;
- It contributes to the accounting education literature by investigating the intentions of students to pursue accounting careers, consequently affiliate to a professional accounting body such as CPA Australia and thus acquire CPA

certification. The study provides a contrast to similar research because of the unique setting in Vietnam.

Regarding the first aspect, few studies have investigated the factors that drive accounting professionals and students to affiliate with professional accounting bodies in general, let alone with specific professional bodies (Inglis et al. 2011a, Sidaway et al. 2013). This evidence is critical in the light of the worldwide shortage of suitably qualified accountants and the perceived lack of interest by students in the field of accounting.

Regarding the second aspect, despite a widespread use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) in the social sciences, its use in the accounting field remains limited and inconclusive. For example, some studies find that intrinsic factors, such as interest in the subject, affect the decision to choose accounting as a career (Ahmed, Alam, and Alam 1997, Tan and Laswad 2006, Wen, Hao, and Bu 2015, Sugahara, Boland, and Cilloni 2008) while other studies find that extrinsic factors such as potential for high earnings have more influence (Chen, Jones, and McIntyre 2008, Lowe and Simons 1997). The effect of normative pressure on the accounting career decision is widely contested, with some studies finding referents such as parents and professors affect the decision (Tan and Laswad 2006, Cohen and Hanno 1993) and other studies finding no such effect (Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012).

Regarding the third aspect, despite extensive literature on the professionalisation of accounting in developed countries (Chua and Poullaos 1998, 2002, West 1996, Richardson 1997, Annisette and Kirkham 2007), the literature on the same subject in developing countries is limited and inevitably reverts back to the Anglo-American model of professionalisation. However, evidence shows that professionalisation projects do not always follow the same model, which warrants further investigation of the subject in under-explored emerging economies.

Regarding the fourth aspect, there is extensive literature on the career choices of accounting students in developed countries (Ahmed, Alam, and Alam 1997, Chen, Jones, and McIntyre 2008, Felton, Dimnik, and Northey 1995) but such literature is quite limited in developing countries such as Vietnam.

The next section states the assumptions under which this thesis was prepared and also its preliminary limitations.

1.6. Assumptions and limitations

As with any research project, this thesis has a number of assumptions and limitations.

The first assumption is that the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) is suitable for decisions related to professional accounting body affiliation. Although the TPB was not used according to the originally-specified boundaries, it is shown to have high predictive utility making it a useful tool for exploring decision-making towards performing a behaviour in the accounting context. This theory assumes that individuals have complete volitional control over their decisions. Secondly, this study assumes that all factors potentially affecting such individuals' decisions are of equal importance.

Nevertheless there are several limitations inherent in this study. The first limitation is that this study focuses on one country, Vietnam, as a reference point for professional accounting body affiliations and this may limit the generalisability of the findings. Another limitation is that this study is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal which renders questionnaires more vulnerable to consistency biases and which does not enable the testing of the belief-attitude-intention-behaviour link. Any changes to the way individuals make decisions at a future point in time might not be captured. A third limitation is that members and foundation candidates were selected from one professional body only, however as previous literature shows that multiple membership is likely, single member bias is limited. The main limitation inherent in this study, however, relates to the theoretical framework itself. Although the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) has been used extensively to explain a range of decisions in many disciplines, it does have certain limitations that researchers need to be mindful of. These include the need for a short time interval between intention and behaviour to ensure that intentions have not changed, the potential lack of consideration of individual personality traits and the challenge of measuring subjective norm (Conner and Armitage 1998). This study explores the attitude-subjective norm/intention/behaviour link for one alternative only, thus ignoring attitude and subjective norm towards competing alternatives. Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw (1988) argue that this is a limitation as it considers the intention to perform a behaviour but ignores the subjective probability of performing the behaviour. Another limitation is that the consistently low

variances in intention found in other studies suggest that some other factors not included in the TPB (such as belief salience, past behavioural habits, the structure of the PBC construct, moral norms, self-identity, and affective beliefs) may influence intention and behaviour (Conner and Armitage 1998).

1.7. Structure of the thesis

This thesis follows a typical positivist empirical study structure with seven chapters. The diagrammatic representation of the structure of this thesis follows (figure 1) and it highlights the sequencing of each chapter in relation to the overall thesis. This structure is dissected and revisited at the commencement of each chapter where the chapter headings are used to provide a signpost for readers.

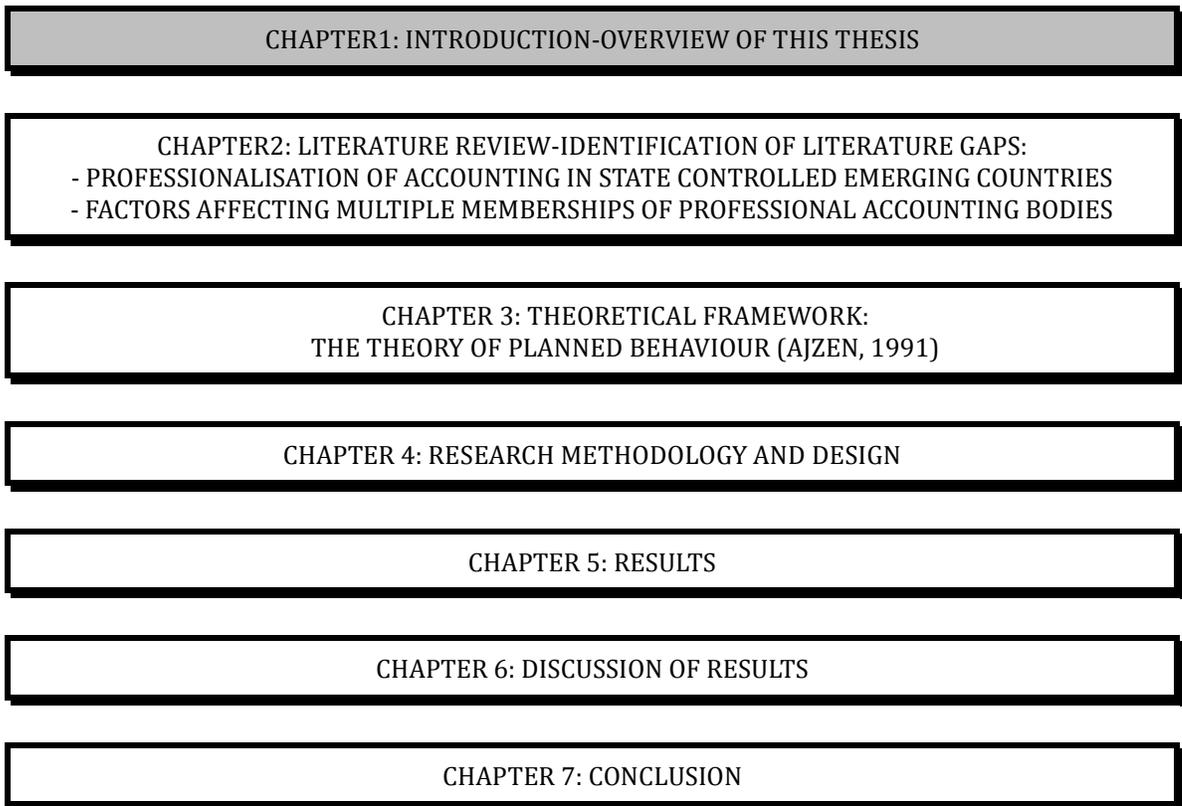


Figure 1 Overview of the thesis

CHAPTER 1 provides an overview of this thesis including the background and motivation for the thesis, its objectives and research questions, a glossary of some commonly used terms, its contribution to knowledge as well as assumptions and limitations and finally its structure.

CHAPTER 2 provides a review of the literature regarding the concept of professionalisation, and of the professionalisation of accounting in developed and emerging economies. The second section of this chapter covers alternative pathways to the accounting profession and the tensions with more traditional pathways while also highlighting changes and issues in accounting education. The third section reviews the literature around accounting as a career choice and student' perceptions of the profession, and in particular deals with the negative image of accounting in relation to the shortage of accountants, as well as factors and profiles affecting the choice of accounting as a career. Finally the last section of Chapter 2 reviews the drivers for and importance of membership of professional accounting bodies, including multiple memberships.

CHAPTER 3 provides a description of Azjen's Theory of Planned Behaviour (1991) including details of its constructs, namely Behaviour, Intention, Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioural Control and salient antecedent beliefs. This chapter also explains how the theory is used in this thesis to explain individual intentions to affiliate with professional accounting bodies. It shows how the theoretical framework provides a sound theoretical base for this thesis, and develops the hypotheses to be tested in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 4 outlines the research methodology and design employed for this thesis, including an explanation of why a positivist research approach and quantitative methodology were chosen. It also details who the survey participants were, explains how the research instrument (the questionnaire) was developed and what it contained. The chapter concludes with a description of the way data was collected.

CHAPTER 5 presents the results for each of the research questions, details the statistical tests used to answer each question and confirms the reliability and validity of the data. Tests used include factor analysis, independent samples t-tests, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and multiple regression analysis.

CHAPTER 6 discusses the quantitative results supporting the research questions. This chapter answers the questions about whether attitude, subjective norm

and perceived behavioural control affect the intentions of members and foundation candidates to affiliate with professional accounting bodies. It also explains whether or not there are differences between students, foundation candidates and members in terms of affiliation drivers. Finally these results are compared with previous literature on the application of the Theory of Planned Behaviour to the accounting field and to affiliation drivers.

CHAPTER 7 concludes the thesis. It summarises and discusses the results and draws implications for professional accounting bodies and accounting educators. The limitations of the thesis are elaborated, areas for future research are suggested and an overall conclusion is provided.

1.8. Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the thesis by laying out the historical context and background and explaining why this study is important in the current accounting context in Vietnam. It has also posited the research questions to be answered, provided a brief explanation of some of the commonly used terms, elaborated on how this thesis contributes to new knowledge and set out the assumptions and limitations. It concluded with an overview of the structure of the thesis.

The next chapter provides a review of the literature on the professionalisation of accounting, membership pathways, accounting career choices and the drivers of professional affiliation decisions.

Chapter 2 - Literature review

Professional accounting bodies need more members in order to enhance their voice and impact. Global trends and changing membership pathways have implications for the recruitment and retention strategies of professional accounting bodies. In view of this changing landscape, member organisations need to rethink their tried and trusted membership recruitment, engagement, satisfaction and retention strategies. This research is motivated by the evolving market conditions in emerging countries. Further, it explores notions of changing member perceptions and provides insights which may provide greater understanding and serve to guide the future strategies of these organisations. Strategies which require reinvestigation are products of changes in membership dynamics. These include the professionalisation of accounting, changing membership pathways, multiple memberships, member perceptions and individual career choices.

The diagrammatic representation of the structure of this thesis follows (figure 1) and it highlights the sequencing of this chapter in relation to the overall thesis.

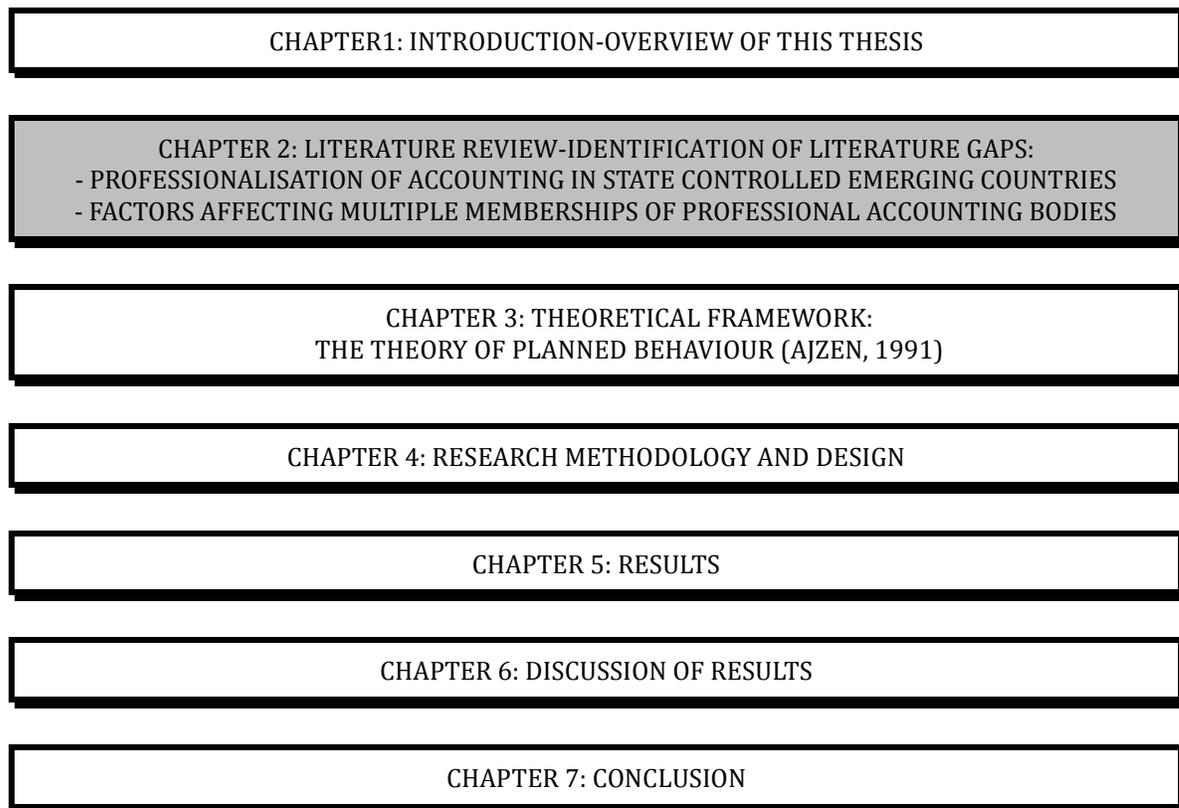


Figure 1 Overview of the thesis

This chapter is structured as follows: Section 2.1 reviews the literature on professionalisation processes and the professionalisation of accounting in developed and emerging countries. Section 2.2 details the alternative pathways to the accounting profession including changes to and issues with accounting education and tensions between traditional and new pathways. Section 2.3 reviews the literature on accounting as a career choice and on student perceptions of the profession. In particular it explores issues of the shortage of accountants, the negative image of the profession, intrinsic and extrinsic factors affecting accounting as a career choice and the profiles of accounting students and accounting professionals. Section 2.4 explores perceptions of the costs and benefits of affiliating with a professional accounting body, the drivers of affiliation and dual membership.

This literature review helps put in perspective the entire journey from accounting student to professional accountant by highlighting issues and tensions arising from accounting as a career choice, possible pathways to becoming an accountant, the

decision to affiliate with a professional body and, more generally, concerns about the development of the profession and the role professional bodies have to play in this process. This literature is essential in addressing the research questions as to what factors drive professional membership (RQ1) and whether these factors change over the course of the accountant's journey from student to professional body member (RQ2).

2.1 Professionalisation of accounting

The following examination of the literature is focused on both the history of professionalisation of accounting in developed countries and the deepening professionalisation of the accounting profession in developing economies, in particular state-controlled economies.

2.1.1 Professionalisation and professional associations

Larson (1977, xvi) defines professionalisation as 'the process by which producers of special services sought to constitute and control a market for their expertise'. Factors which denote professionalisation include the formation of a professional association or body (Carnegie and Edwards 2001, Mihret, James, and Mula 2012), however it is not the formation of the professional association itself which creates the profession but the collective social mobility and/or closure of its members. 'Collective social mobility' refers to members acquiring a higher social status as a group while 'closure' refers to "how members of an interest group seek market dominance by monopolizing social and economic opportunities and closing off opportunities to outsiders" (Chua and Poullaos 1998, 156). However, the same authors provide an early example of an Australian accounting association which did not seek monopolistic closure but rather openness in order to attract members and proposed that salaried accountants were as deserving as professional accountants. Richardson (1997) considers that in order to complete a professional project an occupational group must successfully carry out four strategies: market enhancement followed by market closure, professional closure and finally professional power. This last strategy deals with the

level of influence the group holds over its clients and technology. The best examples of complete professional projects are assurance services with auditors exercising power over their clients through legal enforcement of auditing practice and the development of auditing technologies.

As mentioned above, professional associations may validate the profession. 'Professional associations are primarily but not exclusively, political bodies whose purpose is to define, organise, secure and advance the interests of (their most vocal and influential) members' (Willmott 1986, 556). Puxty et al. (1987) refer to this strategy as 'Associationism' where 'regulation is accomplished through the development of organisations that are formed to represent and advance the interests of their members' (ibid, 284) with the U.K. being the most prominent example of this. One example of Associationism in the U.K. is that accounting standards are set by a body, the Accounting Standards Committee (ASC), where a large majority of members represent the main professional accounting bodies.

Privileges associated with membership include market monopoly, self-regulation and higher social status. Willmott (1986, 564) considers that 'the monopoly and self-regulating privileges granted to 'professions' is more a reflection of their position and role within the social division of labour than an acknowledgment of any distinctive, politically neutral technical attributes or competences they may possess'. Ramirez (2001) adds that the perceived quality of service associated with membership of a professional association is not in fact a reflection of any individual merit but is "collectively constructed".

One of the long-lasting and unresolved debates is to determine what makes accounting a profession, or if indeed it is a profession. Is it technical knowledge? Then what of nursing and other vocational occupations? Armstrong (1985) provides some answers by suggesting that a 'codifiable' body of knowledge is necessary but not sufficient as some form of professional judgment needs to exist to deter outsiders from claiming that knowledge too easily. Is it high social status? This is true particularly in the U.K. where professional associations which were granted Royal Charters saw their status increase (Mitchell and Sikka 1993). This argument is weakened by the poor image of accountants in western countries (Sugahara, Boland, and Cilloni 2008). Ramirez (2001) even argues that in France a lacklustre image hindered the initialisation

of the professional project from the practitioners themselves.³ Is it exclusivity over some types of practice, for example auditing, that gives accounting professional status? Is it the fact that it was recognised as a profession in the past? Is it elitism and social closure? Or is it simply the fact that professional accounting bodies exist and that, as was argued earlier, the professional association makes the profession?

To answer the last question, two theoretical perspectives can be adopted: the functionalist approach, which sees professional associations as fulfilling an economic function in society through the regulation of those whose technical competence contribute to this economic development, or the interactionist perspective where members strive for social recognition (Willmott 1986). By adopting the first approach, Elliot and Jacobson (2002, 69) argue that 'a new economic model has created a need for a new type of information professional'. Reviewing the main economic paradigms, they claim that knowledge work in this information economy is more valuable as a differentiator than the physical product itself. As the world went through each of these paradigms, the name and function of the information professional changed from the shaman of the hunter-gatherers to the scribe and book-keeper of the agricultural economy and the accountant of the industrial period. In this information economy the shape of the new information professional is blurry and constantly evolving as new knowledge professionals emerge. Functions once restricted to accountants are now claimed by other professionals, forcing the accounting profession to adapt. The information professional contributes to decision-making more than ever but the future of the accountant is uncertain as information services automate.

The following section elaborates on examples of professionalisation projects in developed countries.

2.1.2 Professionalisation of accounting in developed countries

Johnson (1982, 189) argues that 'professions are emergent as a condition of state formation and state formation is a major condition of professional autonomy - where such exists'. However Flint (1980) considers that state intervention, and in

³ In France, the profession is regulated by the State via two main professional bodies: the Ordre des Experts Comptables (CAs) and the Compagnie Nationale des Commissaires aux Comptes (CPAs).

particular state regulation of accounting as in Vietnam, France and China, goes against the Anglo-American tradition where professional associations are self-regulated. Puxty et al. (1987, 288), in their comparative analysis of four capitalist countries, found that 'there is in all cases some state control over the entrance to the accountancy profession. This is weakest in the U.K., in the other three countries the state must either register a candidate directly before s/he is permitted to practice as an accountant (Germany, Sweden and the U.S.A.) or there is a state-designed organization to supervise accountancy (as in the German Kammer)' .

Johnson (1982, 190) notes that '...the historical characteristics of the British professions in much of the literature, are regarded as providing a model of the "classical" features of the professions in general'. However as Willmott (1986) argues, self-regulation can only be maintained if these professional bodies ensure that the highest standards within the profession are applied and that no other form of regulation can prevail. The accounting profession in the U.K. has always been characterised by numerous competing professional bodies including some of the first such associations worldwide: the Society of Accountants in Edinburgh and the Institute of Accountants and Actuaries in Glasgow were both founded in 1854 and were the precursors of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland (Willmott 1986). The reasons for these competing bodies were firstly the legal antagonism between the English and Scottish systems, secondly the diverse nature of accountancy work (Macdonald 1985) and thirdly the self-regulation of the profession (Gendron, Suddaby, and Qu 2014). However, before these bodies existed and before the advent of formal types of examinations, access to the profession was largely non-meritocratic (Sikka and Willmott 1995). Traditionally professional associations, and in particular accounting associations, were dominated by elite white males and in some cases explicitly rejected other types of members on the basis of gender (women were initially excluded from ICAEW and only allowed in from 1920), socio-economic background or race (West 1996). However, the accounting profession like other professions has seen an increased feminisation in recent years and now over 50 percent of the members in Australia are women (Howieson 2003). According to Roberts and Coutts (1992), this may have threatened the privileged status of the profession given that women mostly assumed subordinate roles in society. Driving forces such as pressure for workforce diversity, the push from professional associations, adoption by large firms of socially responsible policies, legal

requirements and labour shortage have made it inevitable that women take more senior roles in the accounting sphere. (Howieson 2003).

An extensive literature exists on the development of imperial or colonial accounting as a means of controlling an empire's resources from a distance, whether British (Chua and Poullaos 1998, 2002, Sian 2011), American (Dyball, Poullaos, and Chua 2007) or Portuguese (Gomes, Carnegie, and Rodrigues 2013). In Australia it was the development of capital markets that initiated the creation of professional associations, however some earlier professional associations were not readily accepted as there was a fear that monopolies would be created which was against the spirit of free competition (Chua and Poullaos 1998). Professional associations in Australian, Canadian and South-African colonies were largely inspired by the Anglo-American model and sought mutual recognition with ICAEW. Mutual recognition of CA brands can be seen as a form of post-colonial expansion (Chua and Poullaos 2002). Another reason for the professionalisation of accounting in Australia was in order for self-proclaimed elite accountants to differentiate themselves from so-called inferior accountants. This process culminated in 1928 with the granting of a Royal Charter to the ICAA (now CAANZ), which pinnacle of the professionalisation pursuit allowed the use of the most coveted title of Chartered Accountant. What these elite accountants could not achieve legally was in the end achieved through the traditional British professionalism model (Poullaos and Evans 2008).

As was argued earlier, if the British professions are be regarded as the model for professionalisation projects, what of other models where the accounting profession is not self-regulated? One such example is France, where the accounting profession is still to date state regulated and follows a very similar pattern to the Vietnamese accounting profession. In order to be a *Commissaire aux Comptes* (CPA), French law dictates that one has to belong to *the Compagnie Nationale des Commissaires aux Comptes* (the body of CPAs). The same is true for *Experts Comptables* (CAs) and their relevant body, the *Ordre des Experts Comptables*. It will be noted that, maybe not completely accidentally, the word for the CAs' body, *Ordre*, is the same word that is used for older recognized professions such as medical doctors (eg. *Ordre des medecins*). Each of these bodies reports to the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finances respectively. The precursor to these two bodies was the *Société Académique de Comptabilité* which was comprised of salaried accountants and whose aim was to

separate good accountants from bad accountants and elevate the status of the profession (Ramirez 2001). With the creation of the *Ordre des Experts Comptables*, the profession did indeed gain a perceived higher status by virtue of its self-titled 'expertise'. One peculiarity of the CPA profession in France is that there was no initial professionalisation 'project' in itself as the intention, honourable as it may have been, was to protect investors and in particular small ones. Ramirez (2001) argues that it is the State itself which built the profession through (professional) closure but the reason the accounting profession in France has never reached the equivalent status of older professions such as medical doctors is because of a lack of connection between the practitioners on one hand and the State and academia on the other. In fact the French accounting profession never reached a natural market closure equivalent to the British profession because of its perceived lack of efficiency. This explains why the State had to intervene and grant the profession a status it was unable to acquire for itself. Even the term profession in French does not bear the same connotation as in English and simply means occupation. Could it be that there is in fact no one-size-fits-all model and that the characteristics of professionalisation projects are deeply rooted into social, economic and cultural factors as demonstrated by MacDonald (1985)?

As Puxty et al.(1987, 287) claim, 'there is some provision for the accountancy profession to share with the state in the control mechanism over financial reports. This may be through representations and argument over the substance of statute law (Germany), promulgating its own standards and being presented on the government's own standards board (Sweden), administering a standards board itself (U.K.) or partly funding and partly having its members staff the quasi-independent (of the state, that is) standard-setting authority (U.S.A.)'.

Numerous examples exist of the latent two-tiered status between CAs and non-CAs. In Canada, the CAs being the first organised professional association defined the accounting 'profession' and de facto set the standards by which everyone else would abide. Conditions of admission were different for different segments of the profession, with accountants in public practice being potentially exempted from examinations and simply voted in (Richardson 1989). However as the technical gap reduced between the different factions, the boundaries of the profession got blurred. Richardson (1997) considers that the professional project in Canada failed as the CAs failed to close the market and could not claim a unique technical knowledge.

For most professions a link between the profession and the universities exists but surprisingly this is not always the case for the accounting profession. Annisette and Kirkham (2007) provide the example of England where none of the professional accounting bodies require their members to hold a university degree. Even when they do possess such credentials, the vast majority of the members do not hold a degree in the accounting discipline (4 percent of ICAEW in 2004). This separation between the accounting profession and universities is argued by Annisette and Kirkham (2007) as demonstrating the importance of control over the examination process and thus over the characteristics of new entrants, as well as the generally-held view that general skills are more important than specific ones with the profession considering itself as the main provider of technical knowledge. The separation of tasks is quite clear: general foundation knowledge, problem-solving and critical thinking enhancement for universities and professional technical training for the professional associations (Gammie and Kirkham 2008). Ironically, it has been perceived that too strong a link between the accounting profession and accounting schools would diminish the former's status by equating university education with vocational education.

The next section reviews the professionalisation of accounting in emerging countries, in particular state-controlled ones.

2.1.3 Professionalisation of accounting in emerging countries

Most professionalisation projects in emerging countries do not follow an established Anglo-American pattern and do not fall into one of the neatly drawn categories of collective social mobility or closure as described above for developed countries. In emerging economies the common denominator seems to be state intervention, particularly in socialist or centrally-planned economies.

Some studies (Seal, Sucher, and Zelenka 1996, Hao 1999, Yapa and Hao 2007, Yee 2012) suggest that when an economy moves away from the centrally planned model, as in Vietnam, the need emerges for the professionalisation of financial services. In a centrally planned economy, accounting serves as a tool for the state to administer and control resources whereas market economies emphasise accountability and decision-making for managers and shareholders and therefore an increased need

for professional standards of accounting. As these professional standards need to be regulated to ensure consistency in application, professional associations are viewed as gatekeepers of the knowledge and enforcers of the rules. Carnegie and Edwards (2001) emphasise the importance of the creation of professional associations as a trademark of the professionalisation process. Accounting in socialist countries is considered by Bailey (2006) to have no more than book-keeping as its sole function in order to keep track of all state activities. Socialist countries did not adopt the same type of accounting as capitalist countries, as the capitalist model was perceived to facilitate the oppression of the lower classes by private owners. In the Czechoslovakian example (Seal, Sucher, and Zelenka 1996), the big beneficiaries of the post-socialist reform and its laissez-faire principles were the then Big 6 who helped shape the accounting profession without giving it a distinctive local flavour. By way of contrast, in China the state still plays a major role in regulating the accounting profession even after the economy shifted from a centrally planned model to a more market oriented economy. Under the centrally planned economy there were no professional public accountants or auditors as accounting was confined to being a controlling tool for the state and no private market existed (Hao 1999). The state even created the country's sole professional accounting body, the CICPA, which was a merger of two competing bodies, with the aim of boosting China's economic reform through its accounting profession (Yee 2012). CICPA was meant to be a bridge between the state and the accounting professionals (Yee and West 2010). However Yapa and Hao (2007) consider that the Chinese professional accounting project has failed due to a lack of connection between 'the profession' and educational institutions. CPA membership is limited to those who complete the only available professional association examination, paving the way for foreign professional qualifications (ACCA from the UK and CPA Australia) which offer more flexible entry modes. Nigeria is another example of state influence in the development of the accounting profession but in this case the indigenous professional association itself lobbied to take control of regulating the profession (Uche 2002). Kenya's example is similar to Nigeria's in that the Kenyan government also exerted some influence in the creation of a professional association, however it had a specific agenda which ensured that African Kenyans would hold the power after independence (Sian 2006). The Kenyan strategy was inclusive rather than exclusive in that it recognised and incorporated into the newly-formed profession a wide range of foreign qualifications and roles. In both cases, issues of colonialism and race were at stake.

Other studies discuss emerging countries where professional associations did not develop because they were constrained by the state and members were not committed because membership was not compulsory (Mihret, James, and Mula 2012, Yapa 1999, Bopta, Yapa, and Jacobs 2007). Mihret, James and Mula (2012), in their study of the Ethiopian accounting professionalisation experience, consider that two perspectives can be adopted when looking at professionalisation. In the first, the stepping stone in the formation of a profession is specialist knowledge rather than the regulation of the profession itself, in other words an emphasis of product over process which may explain why membership of national associations is not regarded as crucial. The other approach is to consider that the role of professional associations is to promote their members' interests, therefore the profession will develop in the process. In the Ethiopian example the main professional association did not develop because it did not receive the support of the state, was not properly regulated, did not monitor the activities of its members and did not provide any benefit to members. It was therefore considered more of a voluntary club than a truly professional association. In the Cambodian example (Bopta, Yapa, and Jacobs 2007), accounting under French rule was used to control local resources and was primarily undertaken by French civil servants with little training of the local workforce. During the Khmer Rouge regime all business activities were abolished, resulting in the elimination of the accounting profession. The period following the regime (the early 1980s) saw the establishment of a centrally-planned economy, not unlike that in Vietnam, with little need for private sector accounting and auditing. Ten years after the initiation of an economic reform in Cambodia in the 1990s, the national professional accounting body was created under the auspices of the Ministry of Finance, demonstrating a lack of self-regulation of the accounting profession and the fact that the profession re-emerged through direct pressure and oversight from the government. To date, very few professional accountants are trained by the national association as the main players in the industry are the Big 4. In the case of Brunei (Yapa 1999), it is the political economy of the state which restrains the profession leading to most professional accountant credentials being obtained overseas. This limits the attraction of the only local accounting association, which does not issue licences or regulate the profession and whose membership is optional.

Other examples of failed local professionalisation projects can be widely found. For example, Yapa (2006, 2010) provides evidence that the profession in Sri Lanka can

be characterized as being beset by cross-border competition between British institutions seeking to exert influence within a former colony and a local organization concerned with achieving closure over practitioners. This is a striking example of imperial closure by an elite educated overseas restricting access to the profession by local practitioners and university graduates who are thought to be less proficient in English and lacking the necessary socio-economic status. However this closure was not an overt one but a disguised attempt to restrict entrance to the profession by using foreign training methods only understandable to the elite, limiting exemptions for local graduates and adopting examination techniques with high failure rates. Other emerging countries which were ex-colonies chose not to develop their own qualifications at all, rather to adopt overseas qualifications (Annisette 2000, Chua and Poullaos 2002). In the case of Trinidad and Tobago (Annisette 2000) which was a non-settler colony of the British empire, foreign professional associations were developed with the state's blessing as a means to boost the potential of its human resources. The fact that no local qualification was developed can be attributed to an arrangement between the existing profession and the British association (ACCA) which was perceived to be mutually beneficial. In contrast to the case of Brunei above (Yapa 1999), the local profession saw an advantage in adopting foreign qualifications, made a conscious decision to do so and had no intention of developing its own. Trinidad and Tobago is not the only example of a country that has not developed its own accounting credentials. Other examples of imported qualifications, albeit with some localised content, include Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore (Briston and Kedsle 1997) which are all former British colonies. In former colonies that did develop their own credentials in parallel with imported qualifications, the foreign qualifications holders enjoy a superior status to the locally trained ones (Wallace 1992).

Former British colonies which have undergone the accounting professionalisation process can be grouped into three categories: British settler colonies (e.g. Australia, Canada) adopting their own qualifications albeit largely inspired by the British ones, British non-settler colonies (e.g. India) where foreign accountants dominated, and non-settler colonies (Trinidad and Tobago, Malaysia) where British professional associations helped to develop local ones. Johnson and Caygill (1971) examined the membership statistics of the main U.K. professional bodies and found two distinct patterns explaining the exponential growth of these bodies overseas and in particular in Commonwealth countries: the export of qualified accountants before-World

War II and an export of accounting qualifications after World War II. This latter trend, as shown by Briston and Kedslie (1997), has only intensified, in particular for ACCA and CIMA whose members are mostly located in Commonwealth countries, and with a significant expansion of ACCA in South-East Asia (62 percent of their total membership in 1995) particularly in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore. This domination of British accounting qualifications in countries that were once part of the Empire and that may not fully benefit from qualifications so far removed from local needs, could be qualified as colonialism by proxy.

The example of the Philippines is a unique case of professionalisation-as-resistance to the new U.S. colonizer (Dyball, Poullaos, and Chua 2007). In this case, the profession did not emerge from an increased market for financial services, state willingness to regulate accounting nor from a desire of closure from the accounting practitioners. The profession literally erupted to counteract the invader's covert plan to control the finances of the country. This example is in stark contrast with the situation in Vietnam where accounting was almost non-existent under the French coloniser as accounting functions are undertaken by the French for the French to administer the colony and the only user of accounting information was the State.

The professionalisation project in emerging countries can also be defined, rather than with respect to collective social mobility or closure, by the quality of accounting education and training and its capacity to include or exclude potential candidates. Yapa (2000, 297) notes that 'almost all developing countries which have been colonies under powerful Western rulers for a considerable length of time inherited their accounting education from a colonial system'. Consequently, most of these countries which relied on such 'imported' training methods failed to adapt to their changing economic context. Yapa (2003) provides a comparative analysis of the nature of accounting education and training in four ASEAN countries – Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Brunei Darussalam. This comparative analysis provides evidence to confirm the generally held view that some developing countries which were colonies of western countries in the past are still following the same colonial system of accounting education, which is irrelevant and inadequate for producing accountants suitable for their economies. The reason for adopting foreign accounting methods was that accounting was needed in the first place for reporting to foreign companies, but their adoption was not necessarily consistent or planned. Some countries, for example Singapore and Malaysia as well as

Sri Lanka, were more successful than others at transitioning to more local training methods (Yapa 2000). This was mostly due to the connections between higher education institutions and professional accounting bodies. In these cases the nexus between higher education institutions and professional bodies is accreditation, the latter focusing on providing continuous professional development to its members. On the other hand Indonesia, which continued to apply the Dutch accounting system without localising it, failed to train enough qualified accountants for the country's needs.

Table 1 provides a summary of the accounting professionalisation process in several emerging countries

Table 1 Comparison of professionalisation processes in emerging countries

| Country | State intervention in professionalisation process | Compulsory education requirement | Focus of professional associations (product or process) | References |
|----------------|---|--|--|--|
| Czechoslovakia | Yes initially. Led by Big 6 afterwards | No accountancy exam. Professional exam for auditors. | Product (knowledge) and process (regulation of Auditors) | Seal, Sucher, and Zelenka 1996 |
| China | Yes, main professional accounting body, CICPA, controlled by the State | Chinese examination mandatory to legally companies CPA to audit | Product (knowledge) | Hao 1999, Yee 2012, Yee and West 2010, Yapa and Hao 2007 |
| Nigeria | Yes through creation of main professional association but then self-regulated | Professional examination compulsory to become member | Process (regulation) | Uche 2002 |
| Kenya | Yes through creation of main professional association but then self-regulated | All recognized local and foreign qualifications accepted | Process (regulation) | Sian 2006 |
| Ethiopia | No, foreign qualifications encouraged | Practicing certificates as chartered or certified accountants | Process (social club) | Mihret, James, and Mula 2012 |
| Cambodia | Yes through creation of national professional accounting body (all members are government officials). | Professional qualification only available through examination by national body | Process (knowledge) | Bopta, Yapa, and Jacobs 2007 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---------------------------------|
| Brunei | No | No. Most qualifications come from overseas. Audit licence issued by MOF | Product (knowledge although no local standards issued) | Yapa 1999 |
| Sri Lanka | Yes through creation of national professional accounting body | Local professional examination required to become member | Process (closure) | Yapa (2006, 2010) |
| Trinidad and Tobago | Yes through promotion of foreign qualifications (not local qualification) | No, practitioners holding mostly foreign qualifications | Product (knowledge) | Annisette 2000 |
| Philippines | No | Yes initially with CPA certificate issued by government | Process (resistance) | Dyball, Poullaos, and Chua 2007 |

After reviewing the literature on the professionalisation process in general and the professionalisation of accounting in different contexts, the next section will review recent changes to accounting education and the tensions between the various pathways to the accounting profession.

2.2 Alternative pathways to the accounting profession

2.2.1 Changes in accounting education

Historically, professional accounting bodies in Australia followed the so-called 'model' of British professionalism in an attempt to distinguish themselves as Chartered Accountants from the mass of underqualified accountants (Poullaos and Evans 2008). ICAA⁴ in particular was the first professional accounting body outside of Great Britain to be granted a Royal Charter, which self-defined the ideal professional accountant through 'the passing of examinations devised by a watchful professional body, supplemented by on-the-job training with a properly-qualified man, restrictions on the range of work performed and the way it was performed, a range of personal attributes ('character') and a firm delineation between public practice and salaried employment'

⁴ Now called CAANZ

(Poullaos and Evans 2008, 5). From the 1960s onward the onus of accounting education shifted from apprenticeship to a university based approach with the requirement to complete a three-year undergraduate degree in accounting followed by the completion of professional qualifications with one of the professional accounting bodies while working full time. CPA Australia marketed their program to new graduates as it does not require any previous work experience. Some researchers lament that despite the arrival of international students in the 1990s and the consequent changing profile of the typical accounting student, little has been done to reform accounting education, particularly in terms of building adequate generic skills (Cable, Dale, and Day 2007). However in 2009 the two main Australian professional accounting bodies, in a concerted effort, compiled a list of skills that accounting graduates should possess. These are divided into cognitive skills and behavioural skills and then further classified into five sub categories: routine skills (e.g. report writing), analytic skills (e.g. ability to analyse, reason logically, conceptualise issues; solve problems, interpret data and reports), appreciative skills (.e.g. knowledge of what questions to ask, engagement in lifelong learning, appreciation of the ethical dimensions of situations), personal skills (flexibility in new/different situations, independence of thought and action, focus on outcomes, tolerance of ambiguity, creative thinking) and interpersonal skills (effective listening, ability to negotiate with people from different backgrounds, collaboration with colleagues) (CPA Australia and Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2009). In 2012 these accreditation guidelines were revised, and one professional body stated that 'the accounting profession needs graduates from diverse backgrounds with a range of competencies. It required all graduates to have capacities for inquiry, abstract logical thinking and critical analysis, in addition to appropriate written and oral communication and interpersonal skills' (CPA Australia and Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia 2012, 5). The objectives of these guidelines are said to encourage innovation in teaching and learning with a specific focus on critical thinking, ethical judgment and communication skills, all considered essential attributes for accounting graduates. In 2015, CPA Australia signed a memorandum of understanding with TEQSA, the Australian Higher Education regulator, in order to avoid double handling of accounting degree accreditation (CPA Australia 2015). Finally, still in 2015, CPA Australia and CAANZ issued their most recent set of accreditation guidelines with an emphasis on meeting graduate attributes such as critical thinking, ethical judgment and communication through innovative teaching approaches. Professional skills are divided

into five categories: intellectual skills such as problem solving, data handling and inquiry; technical and functional skills which can be general or specific to accountancy; personal skills such as self-management, self-learning and professional scepticism; organisational and business management skills and interpersonal and communication skills. It will be noted that this last set of skills emphasises for the first time sensitivity to cultural diversity (CPA Australia and Chartered Accountants Australia and New Zealand 2015).

In the light of the perceived failure of higher education institutions to incorporate these skills into their degrees, and probably for financial motives, alternative pathways were created by these same professional accounting bodies and this led to perceived or actual conflicts of interest (Hancock, Howieson, Kavanagh, Kent, Tempone, Segal, et al. 2009).

2.2.2 Pathways to the accounting profession

Currently entry to the accounting profession is diverse and is normally facilitated through three pathways:

- i. Completing a university accounting degree accredited by the professional bodies followed by a professional level of qualification run by those same professional bodies;
- ii. completing an accounting conversion course, usually a Masters degree with eight or more subjects (for non-accounting business graduates);
- iii. Direct entry via completion of foundation and professional levels through a professional accounting body.

In western countries the first way was traditionally the most common but the other two pathways are growing in popularity, in particular with non-accounting students, with the introduction of 'alternative pathways'. One example of an accounting conversion course is the CAANZ's Graduate Certificate of Chartered Accounting Foundations, which is offered by one of the Australian universities to non-accounting degree holders and covers the core knowledge areas of financial accounting, management accounting, finance, taxation, audit and corporations law. Completion of this certificate allows the graduate to progress to the Institute's Graduate Diploma of

Chartered Accounting. However, this type of conversion course is unlikely to solve any of the generic skills deficiencies. The Birrell report (2006) claims that the reason why these graduates do not work in professional accounting firms is because of their poor communication skills. One example of direct entry is the CPA Australia foundation program, consisting of six foundation level exams and developed 'to ensure that those who hold a degree qualification that is not in accounting are given the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge and the acumen required to be fully prepared to successfully complete the CPA Program' (CPA Australia n.d.). This program is marketed to be flexible in terms of entry requirement (accounting degree holders may be exempted from some or all of the units) and timing (enrolment exams can be scheduled all year long) but as all the questions are multiple choice questions it is unlikely that these units will foster any 'soft' skills.

The aim of the professional accounting bodies is clearly to take control not only of the examination process but also of the dissemination of knowledge. For the second pathway - the so-called "vocalization of the curriculum" - 'a conversion degree allows graduates from other disciplines to qualify to study at either the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (the Institute) or CPA Australia in about half the time that it takes to complete an undergraduate degree in accounting' (Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2010, 59). The justification for professional accounting bodies to have gone down the path traditionally reserved for universities is explained by Howieson (2003, 93) with the example of CPA Australia which 'has recently launched its own MBA programme as a means of meeting the expected skill needs of its members, while at the same time signalling to the community that the MBAs of its members are associated with an organisation with 'professional' and 'ethical' standards'. Currently 15 universities including thirteen in Australia and two in Singapore offer conversion degrees for CPA Australia members.

The available accounting pathways can be summarised metaphorically as follows: 'There are three types of accounting education in Australia. Within the university accounting education makes a person capable of being an accountant - the intellectualisation of accounting. Within the workplace accounting education makes a person ready to be an accountant - the vocalization of accounting. Within the profession accounting education enables a person to be professional in being an

accountant – the professionalisation of accounting’ (Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2010).

2.2.3 Accounting education in flux

Looking at how these alternative pathways developed, it appears that professional accounting bodies took advantage of the setbacks suffered by university accounting education providers, including a drop in funding availability per student for business degrees in general and accounting degrees in particular especially in Commonwealth countries, along with high student-to-staff ratios and the ageing demographic of accounting academics leading to issues in recruiting for new positions (Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2010). In any university, worldwide business degrees provide high revenues with low costs. Such courses are staffed by a high proportion of sessional staff in large classes, leading to a loss of face-to-face interaction and, some would argue, contributing to the lowering of education quality particularly in relation to developing higher order skills (Hancock, Howieson, Kavanagh, Kent, Tempone, Segal, et al. 2009). De Lange and Watty (2011) claim that Australian accounting education has made no progress in the last two decades due to the imbalance in the international/domestic students funding model, falling numbers of domestic students and a lack of achievement of desired employability skills such as communication. The Birrell and Rapson report concludes that ‘Australian employers seem to prefer accountants born in Australia..., largely because of concerns about the communication skills of those coming from non-English speaking backgrounds’ (Birrell and Rapson 2005, 18). The expectation is that the situation will not improve and will in fact get worse as revenue from international students, traditionally the largest share, is cut.

Since 2000, students in the U.S. have to complete 150 semester hours of education in order to obtain a CPA qualification by combining either an undergraduate accounting degree with a general master’s degree or a general undergraduate degree with a master’s in accounting, or else by completing a five year professional accounting degree. The reason the American Institute of CPAs has switched its degree requirements from four to five years is that ‘A certified public accountant (CPA) in today’s environment must not only have a high level of technical competence and a sense of commitment to service, but must also have good communications and

analytical skills, and the ability to work well with people. Employers are looking for individuals who have the ability to analyse and evaluate complex business problems and the interpersonal skills and maturity to make decisions in a client- and customer-service environment... Significant increases in official accounting and auditing pronouncements and the proliferation of new tax laws have expanded the knowledge base that professional practice in accounting requires. Business methods have become increasingly complex... The demand for a large quantity of people to perform many routine auditing tasks is rapidly diminishing' (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants n.d.). This requirement seems to be in line with IFAC's recommendation that at least two years full time study in accounting, either through a university degree or a professional qualification, is required in order to qualify as a professional accountant (International Accounting Education Standards Board 2015). However, this trend towards lengthening the curriculum seems to be in opposition to the Australian trend, described above, towards shortening the amount of time required to complete a recognised qualification. One may wonder whether the Australian accounting profession, in trying to accommodate various competing demands, has set itself on a dangerous path which could, if anything, lower standards and lead to unsuitable and underprepared candidates facing the challenges of today's modern accounting world. De Lange, Jackling, and Gut (2006, 381) warn that 'without an additional fourth year of study, practical necessity dictates universities will continue to prepare students for professional accounting accreditation examinations at the expense of greater generic skills development'. Several studies confirm that analytical and communication skills, and in particular presentation skills, are the most important skills required by accounting employers and that university degrees should prepare students both technically and generically (Apostolou et al. 2013, Apostolou et al. 2015).

Studies in the U.S. that have examined the impact of the 150 hours requirement on students employability found that out of all the possible combinations a master's degree in accounting and an MBA with a specialisation in accounting were most likely to increase recruitment opportunities for the student (Apostolou et al. 2015). Regarding the effectiveness of this requirement on CPA pass rates, findings are mixed with some studies finding a significant positive effect on some tests only (Apostolou et al. 2013).

2.2.4 Pathway tension

There is undoubtedly a growing tension between direct entry to the profession through those new processes established by accounting bodies and indirect entry to the profession through universities accredited by the same bodies (Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2010). According to the *Professional Accreditation Guidelines for Higher Education Programs* 'professional accreditation seeks to ensure the suitability of graduates to take an entry role in a field of accounting practice' (CPA Australia and Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2009, iii). One may question the objectivity and fairness of accrediting external programs while offering competing internal ones. Assuming these foundation programs do provide the basic knowledge required by the profession, what then is the purpose of completing an accounting degree if one can become a CPA without one? What is the purpose of accreditation in the first place if these accredited programs become redundant? Poullaos and Evans (2008, 40) remind us that 'accreditation [in Australia] has a much shorter history, being an attempt to protect the CAANZ from the massification of the "accounting degree". It offered protection to the CAANZ and its members by providing some assurance that the holders of those degrees had at a standardised minimal degree of knowledge (and later, 'generic skills') before they attempted the CAANZ's exams.' Ironically, accreditation is now almost nonsensical as every university and most private tertiary institutions in Australasia, whether delivering their degrees in English or in another language, are accredited by CPA Australia. Accreditation thus does not confer any significant market advantage, but institutions still seek it as not being accredited would constitute a disadvantage (Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2010). However, this protection from accounting education massification has unintended effects in that the accounting profession, and in particular the Big 4, struggles to find enough graduates of a suitable quality (Poullaos and Evans 2008). This situation is still prevalent in Australia in 2016 with such categories as general accountant, management accountant, taxation accountant and internal and external auditor on the 2017 Medium and Long Term Strategic Skills List (which replaced the Skilled Occupation List), showing that demand for these occupations are not able to be filled by the local workforce and must be met by a supply of foreign workers (Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection 2017). In Vietnam, the situation is slightly different but not much better with the country producing a large amount of graduates albeit of a low quality according to the ministry of education (Van 2016).

2.2.5 Accounting education issues and recommendations

The failure of accounting education to provide graduates with adequate attributes is summarised by Bui and Porter (2010) into four main points: differences in the expectations of accounting academics and employers regarding required graduates attributes (in particular written communication and interpersonal skills); students' negative perceptions of accounting programs, the profession, their abilities and aptitude; institutional constraints; and the ineffectiveness of university teaching. This last point relates to an emphasis on student numbers rather than the quality of students and teaching, leading to large class sizes, heavy academic workloads and the reluctance of accounting academics to adopt innovative teaching approaches.

Perhaps the solution lies in the accounting profession providing some input into accounting education, particularly in terms of the skills needed. New accounting graduates confirm that the two most important skills for an accountant are communication and analysis and that there is an under-emphasis on interpersonal skills, oral expression and computing skills (De Lange, Jackling, and Gut 2006), while at the same time university programmes continue to focus on written communication skills followed by teamwork with interpersonal and verbal communication coming last (Jackling and De Lange 2009). Naidoo et al.(2011) confirm that graduates have not effectively developed graduate capabilities when they enter the workforce and that, more worryingly, employers do not trust universities to be able to develop in their graduates the coveted communication and interpersonal skills.

Another suggestion is that higher education institutions should be accountable for the manner in which generic skills are included in their curricula. CPA Australia, for example, as part of its accreditation process requires universities to report how they embed generic skills into their undergraduate programs. However, the problem may lie either in academia's lack of knowledge of which skills are crucial for professional accountants or in the difficulty of embedding these skills, in particular interpersonal ones, into the curriculum (De Lange, Jackling, and Gut 2006). It may also be that reporting is not as compelling as evidencing and if universities are compliance-driven, as Watty (2005) argues, then the accreditation process could play a meaningful role in the long-awaited reform of accounting education that would deliver what the profession expects of its graduates.

CAANZ (2010) suggests a suite of actions to remedy issues facing accounting education, such as setting up a taskforce composed of accounting practitioners and management educators (but not accounting academics) to discuss these issues and the requirements of the profession, clarifying the objectives of the professional bodies (safeguarding accounting standards, safeguarding or growing membership), defining the employability skills of accounting graduates and the responsibility for developing them, enhancing collaboration between academics, profession and industry in particular regarding graduate attributes and within accounting academia to bring about policy change, addressing access to work experience for international students and establishing a forum on endemic issues in accounting education such as funding and staff shortages. A focus on increasing the number of domestic students, as opposed to international students, would also help the accounting profession recruit from universities rather than set up its own pathways. This will only be achievable if the profession focuses its marketing effort on embellishing its image (Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2010).

Regarding generic skills development, De Lange, Jackling, and Gut (2006) suggest this could be left to the universities together with a broad business knowledge, while professional accounting bodies could focus their training on technical skills. However, while agreeing with the onus on soft skills, the majority of Hancock et al.'s (2009) interviewees considered that technical skills were also the responsibility of universities despite reluctantly agreeing to develop them themselves if necessary. This last view was also espoused by Howieson et al.'s (2014) wide range of interviewees who, despite recognising that universities cannot be everything to everyone, believed it was the responsibility of universities to develop both the technical and non-technical skills of accounting graduates. One concrete action the three Australian accounting bodies jointly implemented in 2009 was the creation of a Skilled Migration Internship Program Accounting (SMIPA) which aims to remedy the subpar communication skills of international students. This year-long professional program targets new overseas accounting graduates who struggle to find employment by providing work experience while contributing to the development of their soft skills (Hancock, Howieson, Kavanagh, Kent, Tempone, and Segal 2009).

2.2.6 Accounting profession- a changing landscape

The CAANZ (formerly ICAA) (2010, 66) lamented these new pathways when it wrote: 'The Big 4, who pushed hard for the Institute's alternate pathway, are arguably 'professional services' rather than 'accounting' firms and seek the flexibility to mix various forms of expert labour to suit the circumstances of particular engagements.' One of the main contributing factors to the diverse profiles of accounting entrants has been 'a perceived need to increase opportunities for attracting individuals with more "breadth and depth" to enter the profession' (Lane 2007, 41), not only to satisfy Big 4 demands for more variety and flexibility but also to 'cure' the negative image of accountants as being procedural, mechanical, inflexible and lacking communication skills. This market broadening is in turn creating new career pathways for the profession (Inglis et al. 2011a). AICPA, in its CPA Horizons 2025 report, concurs with this vision that 'the services provided by CPAs have become so varied and diverse that the concept of core services is no longer representative of the profession' (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants n.d.). Interestingly, the core competencies listed in this report do not include any technical ones but focus on generic skills such as communication, leadership, critical thinking and problem-solving, integration and collaboration, the ability to anticipate and serve changing needs and broader business knowledge encompassing finance, economics and technology.

Studies in the U.K. have documented similar experiences for those who enter the U.K. professions through a process where the training, education and certification of accountants has not been developed in the university (Annisette and Kirkham, 2007; Gammie and Kirkham, 2008). Annisette and Kirkham (2007) point to the unique case of ICAEW entry requirements, where a university degree in any discipline is welcome, as opposed to the requirements of most other professional accounting and non-accounting bodies which usually require a specialist degree. In the case of ICAEW, professional training is the prerogative of the employer and private colleges. Scotland has devised a similar system which makes it possible to enter the Institute of Chartered Accounting in Scotland directly from school (Gammie and Kirkham 2008). It seems that the loophole has been closed, with professional bodies reverting back to the so-called traditional models of professionalism where training is self-contained. However Yapa (2000) highlights the need for university-professional partnerships in accounting and Poullaos and Evans (2008, 43) stress the need 'to define an agreed "core of accounting

knowledge and skills” as an underpinning to accounting education (broadly defined and diversely located) which can be understood, agreed and used by all providers of accounting education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels’.

2.2.7 Global accreditations

Globalisation has not spared the accounting domain and although the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards is the tip of the iceberg other more subtle changes, particularly in Australia, have shifted the focus. These include a rise in the number of international students, who now represent the majority of accounting graduates and who are likely to practice outside of Australia. To follow suit, business schools now have their eyes on global rather than domestic accreditations. One such accreditation is provided by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) which in its own words is ‘the longest serving global association dedicated to advancing management education worldwide’ (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business n.d.). AACSB claims to offer the highest accreditation standard for business schools, earned by only five percent of the business schools. An institution, a business school or an accounting school can have its business and accounting degrees accredited, however no institution in Vietnam has earned AACSB accreditation and only one in Australia has earned both business and accounting accreditation (AACSB 2016). These accounting accreditation standards were developed in the 1980s (60 years after the first business standards were issued) in response to the needs of the accounting profession. AACSB program accreditation is required to take the Certified Public Accountant exam in some U.S. states. The latest set of accounting accreditation standards were issued in 2013 and updated in January 2016 and include the three pillars of engagement, innovation and impact through continuous improvement. Engagement refers to encouraging ‘an appropriate intersection of academic and professional engagement that is consistent with quality in the context of the missions of the school and accounting academic unit. Accounting accreditation should also support professional interactions between accounting faculty, accounting students, and accounting practitioners’ (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business 2016, 2-3). The aim is clearly to foster the relationship between academia and the accounting profession. Innovation deals with fostering ‘quality and consistency, but not at the expense of the creativity and experimentation necessary for innovation. Also,

accreditation standards and processes should not impede experimentation or entrepreneurial pursuits' (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business 2016, 3). Finally, impact deals with ensuring that assurance of learning is embedded in the curriculum and that the units demonstrate intellectual contribution to the field. It also implies a positive impact on the global community. Interestingly, the AACSB positions itself as contributing to the continual improvement of accounting for global economic and market activities and does not restrict the definition of the accounting profession to professionally qualified accountants but labels it 'a learned profession'.

The Accreditation Council for Business Schools and Programs (ACBSP) followed suit in 2009 by releasing its first set of accounting accreditation standards. The benefit for schools or programs of receiving a separate accounting accreditation is that graduates undergo less scrutiny and are able to sit CPA exams.

AICPA is also branding itself as a 'worldwide profession' with the vision to 'position the CPA as a premier designation of the accounting and finance profession throughout the world' (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants n.d.).

And obviously IFAC is the main global association representing accountants worldwide.

2.2.8 Alternative pathways in Vietnam

In complete contrast to the increasing number of pathways to the accounting profession in developed economies and in particular Australia, the main entry to the accounting profession in Vietnam is through a university degree (private and private/public higher education is articulated in government policy). Vietnam and several other Asian countries consider that public and private higher education are matters of government policy (Institute of Chartered Accountants Australia 2010) with private providers proliferating in the last decade.

However foreign accounting bodies such as ACCA and CPA Australia, which are both present in Vietnam, do offer alternative pathways. CPA Australia offers both foundation level and professional level exams through its two offices in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City. ACCA, which claims to be '*the* global body for professional accountants with over 178,000 members and 455,000 students in 181 countries', offers qualifications based on international standards and localized tax and law options.

Similarly, CPA Australia offers foundation level programs but the difference is that they are marketed for those candidates who do not meet the three years minimum work experience requirement (CPA Australia does not require this). ACCA also offers conversion courses, from a BSC degree for students having passed all foundation levels to a MSC degree for students who have passed foundation and some professional levels, and even a pathway to an MBA for members in partnership with British universities. ACCA also offers pathways to other in-house professional qualifications such as Certificate in International Financial Reporting, Certificate in International Financial Reporting Standard for SMEs, Diploma in International Financial Reporting, Certificate in International Auditing, Certificate in International Public Sector Accounting Standards and Certificate in Business Valuations (Association of Chartered Certified Accountants n.d.). ACCA offers special support for members in Vietnam in the form of support material for members wishing to take the CPA Vietnam conversion exam. It also offers support to students in Vietnam with a bridging program at the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City, consisting of benefits (e.g. soft skills training) granted to student ambassadors who would be promoting the brand.

This section has reviewed the literature on accounting education, in particular changes to accounting education and the tensions between the traditional and alternative pathways and their effect on the accounting profession. The next section will examine how accounting is perceived as a potential career choice and profession, how this affects entry to the profession and the subsequent shortage of qualified accountants.

2.3 Accounting as a career choice and student perceptions of the profession

2.3.1 Accountant shortage

Numerous studies from researchers around the world point to a global shortage of suitably qualified accountants. This issue was identified as early as the 1990s and was already predicted to be long lasting (Gul et al. 1989). For example, in 2000 a report from the Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs in Australia (cited in

Jackling and Calero 2006) stated that although the number of students selecting a business degree was increasing, the proportion of students choosing accounting as a major study was declining which led to fierce competition in the recruitment of accounting graduates. Despite an increase in the number of accounting graduates in absolute value, this number falls short of the demand for qualified accountants. A 2015 report from the Australian Department of Employment shows that although there is not technically a shortage of accountants, employers are still dissatisfied. They perceive a mismatch between their needs and the applicants' skills and would rather wait for the ideal candidate than hire someone they judge unsuitable (Department of Employment Australia 2015). Similar trends are witnessed in the U.S. (Albrecht and Sack 2000, Simons, Lowe, and Stout 2003), the U.K. (Marriot and Marriot 2010), New Zealand (Ahmed, Alam, and Alam 1997), Canada (Felton, Buhr, and Northey 1994) and South Africa (Myburgh 2005). A recent news article in the *AICPA Journal of Accountancy* predicts yet another salary increase for accountants as their number still fall short of the demand (Tysiac 2016). Sugahara, Kurihara, and Boland (2006) even claimed that in the mid-2000s the number of students opting for a major in accounting and transferring afterwards to pursue a career in accounting had reached its lowest level. Tan and Laswad (2006) posit the hypothesis that large corporate failures may have had an impact on the general disinterest in accounting. It will be noted that their study ran only five years after the demise of Enron, the largest corporate collapse at the time, and HIH which is still to date the largest Australian corporate collapse. Mauldin (2000) argues that the 150 hours requirement for obtaining CPA certification in the U.S. could also be a strong deterrent. This requirement, which came into effect in 2000, entails completing 150 semester hours of education. However, Simons, Lowe, and Stout (2003), in their literature review, found the deterring effect of this new scheme to be non-existent or only partial and, as a matter of fact, no study has examined the effect on student enrolment of this requirement only.

In Australia, accountants have been listed on the federal government's Skilled Occupations List (formerly Migrant Occupations in Demand List) since 2004 (Birrell and Rapson 2005) and although full-fee-paying international students contribute to the majority of the growth in accounting students – while domestic students numbers are stalling (Sugahara, Boland, and Cilloni 2008) – a study by Cheng, Kang, Roebuck and Simnett (2009) shows that only ten percent of the overseas students reported that they had jobs. This shows that the influx of international students does not help solve the

shortage of accountants. This low rate of employment of overseas students might be related to costs such as securing a permanent residence. If governments want to increase the number of accountants, it might be wise to provide incentives or reduce barriers to recruiting foreigners. The Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia (2010) concurs with this statement, urging the profession to address the issue of access to work experience positions. This might be resolved through offering internships, as Cheng et al. (2009, 342) showed that '90% of students who undertake internships receive a job offer from the sponsoring organisation upon completion of their degrees'. One of the main issues with international students entering the accounting profession in Australia is that although technically competent, their soft skills such as communication skills are not up to the expected standard of the profession (Sugahara, Boland, and Cilloni 2008) and that they are more likely to perceive accounting as primarily associated with number crunching and focused on rigid regulations (Jackling et al. 2012). Jackling and Calero, however, found no evidence of this. Additionally, Jackling et al.'s (2012) Australian study and Saemann and Crooker's (1999) U.S. study found that personality type was correlated with choice of a major, with less creative types more likely to major in accounting and vice versa. In turn, personality type was found to strongly correlate with nationality, with Chinese students exhibiting less creativity than Australian students. Thus we should be able to conclude that, everything else being equal, Chinese students in Australia are more likely to major in accounting by virtue of their lack of creativity. Previous studies (Frisbie 1988) confirm that accounting attracts personalities mostly associated with attention to detail, order, carefulness, rules, procedures and precision. However, although around one third of the students surveyed by Andon (2010) exhibited typical cognitive styles associated with the image of the accountant, an equal proportion of non-accounting students exhibited the same cognitive style and no major differences in cognitive styles were found between international and local students. What this means is that 'the results of this study indicate that whilst initiatives to attract more non-accounting graduates to the profession may provide a larger pool of talent from which to recruit, they are unlikely to deliver the extra diversity of entrants to the profession that they promise, at least in terms of behavioural tendencies such as cognitive style and attitude' (Andon 2010). However, Andon's (2010) Australian study showed that the majority of accounting students surveyed exhibited cognitive styles mostly associated with intuition (looking at the big picture, the future and patterns) rather than sensing (focusing on what can be gathered

directly). This means that efforts to try and attract graduates with a different set of skills such as decision-making, problem-solving, analytical and communication skills are finally paying off. This looks like good news for the accounting profession, at least in Australia, which can be reassured that the pool of talents is indeed wider and more suitable to today's demands.

Another issue is that the main motivation for international students to study accounting is to obtain permanent residence in Australia (Jackling et al. 2012) which leads to a poor conversion rate from students enrolled in an accounting degree to professional accountants. Another example of this "conversion" issue is Malaysia, where only 30 percent of accounting graduates end up practicing accounting (Mustapha and Hassan 2012).

A recent report by the World Bank on the state of the accounting and auditing profession in ASEAN shows that Vietnam produced comparatively few accounting graduates (2,000 in 2014 compared with 20,000 in Thailand for an approximately 25% smaller population) and that IFRS are not covered in the curriculum, demonstrating that the country is probably not producing enough suitably qualified accountants for its growing international financial market. The same report estimates the number of locally affiliated professional accountants in Vietnam to be just under 10,000 thus representing a mere 5% of the total number of accountants in ASEAN for a Vietnamese population itself represent almost 15% of the total ASEAN population.

2.3.2 Student perceptions of the accounting profession

As early as the 1990s in the U.S., business degrees including accounting degrees were losing ground to healthcare degrees, with students moving away from careers dealing with financial matters and favouring more socially responsible sectors (Lowe and Simons, 1997). Byrne and Willis (2005) report an AICPA study comparing six occupations found that accounting was ranked low, if not lowest, in terms of being rewarding, making a contribution to society, interpersonal relationships and work-life balance compared to other business and non-business professions such as medicine and engineering. Work-life balance, together with work recognition and job variety, were found to explain 65 percent of the variance in accountants' job satisfaction, with work-

life balance the main concern for accountants in New Zealand. A poor work-life balance alone would explain the low ranking of accounting compared with other occupations.

Studies in the U.S., U.K. and Australia show that accounting enrolment numbers are dropping because of a poor perception of the profession in particular (Albrecht and Sack, 2000) and the attractiveness of alternative business majors such as finance and business advisory services (Jackling 2002). In particular, other business majors are perceived to be more responsive to changing economic conditions. The perceived over-emphasis on numeracy skills, perpetuated by traditional book-keeping tasks, financial statements preparation and tax returns completion, is not helping to promote the profession as challenging or intellectually rewarding and this in turn prevents bright students from selecting accounting as a major (Lowe and Simons 1997, Jackling 2002). Further, high schools teachers and career counsellors are not promoting the profession as attractive (Sugahara, Kurihara, and Boland 2006). A recent study by Wells (2015) confirmed that high-school students who had studied accounting did not have a more positive image of the profession than those who did not, however they were more specific in their representation and attributed this negative perception to the repetitive nature of the accounting tasks they had performed in class. Students who had not studied accounting, on the other hand, lacked specificity in their representation through their association of accounting with general financial matters. Both groups agreed that financial rewards and career opportunities could, however, be deciding factors in choosing the profession regardless of their negative perceptions. On the other hand, a recent African study showed that despite generally negative perceptions held by the public at large about accounting, accounting students themselves did not share these views (Mbawuni 2015). Some studies found that this negative image of the profession was not shared equally by accounting majors and non-accounting majors, with non-accounting majors significantly more critical of the profession. However, both groups of students' perceptions of the first accounting course deteriorated through the semester (Geiger and Ogilby 2000). This emphasis on numeracy, even in times where accountants in general and auditors in particular deal more and more with advisory services, stems from the origins of the profession when accountants and auditors mostly dealt with numbers and rules (Jackling 2002). Similar findings were observed by Bui and Porter (2010), in their New Zealand study. Cohen and Hanno (1993) found a similar perception to that of Jackling's (2002) study but they also found that accounting majors were more interested in jobs with a broad exposure to business. Both studies,

as well as Chen, Jones, and McIntyre's (2008) study, emphasise the need for introductory accounting courses, as initial explorations of the world of accounting, to be redesigned in order to become more attractive and better portray the complexity of accounting. In particular, learning tasks and classroom activities need to depart from the rules-based procedural tasks that require rote learning and almost entirely omit qualities of decision-making and professional judgment. Jackling and Calero (Jackling and Calero 2006) even claim that 'a highly satisfied student is almost certain to intend becoming an accountant', as the main variable in their regression analysis was course satisfaction. However, findings by Marriott and Marriott (2003) paint a pessimistic picture as students surveyed by the end of their three year degree found accounting less interesting and enjoyable and considered that accountants themselves probably found little enjoyment in their work. Similar results were found by Chen, Jones, and McIntyre (2008). Despite a change in perceptions of the profession the students surveyed were still pursuing accountancy as a career, a fact which the researchers attributed to the investment that students had already made in the degree. They warned that this could contribute to generating unmotivated graduates who would thus be less likely to contribute to the profession or last in it. This study would tend to show that exposure to accounting does not actually improve the perception of the profession, on the contrary, however this surprisingly did not have any effect on the students' intentions to pursue such a career. Despite this decrease in attitude towards accounting, students still considered the profession to be well respected. This study also showed a difference in attitude between domestic and international students, attributing it to cultural factors.

Albrecht and Sack (2000, 1) conclude that if declining enrolments in accounting programmes, the obsolete nature of the accounting education model and the poor image advertised by practitioners and academics themselves were not 'seriously addressed and overcome, they will lead to the demise of accounting education'.

A recent report by the American Accounting Association and AICPA (Pathways Commission 2012) recommends closer linkage between the accounting profession and accounting educators as well as better showcasing of career opportunities in order to attract high quality students. Additionally, mentoring programmes where accounting professionals are partnered with accounting students can help in correcting students'

misconceptions about the profession and retain the brightest while eliminating those that are deemed unsuitable to a career in accounting (Adler and Stringer 2016).

2.3.3 Intrinsic versus extrinsic factors affecting accounting as a career choice

One of the surprising findings of Jackling and Calero's (2007) study was that the poor image perpetuated by the media did not significantly affect intention to join the profession, as it was not shared by those who planned to study accounting. Another approach is to consider that those choosing a career in accounting do not place a great deal of importance on intrinsic factors, which means that they could potentially consider the profession dull but not care because other factors such as long-term earnings could be the deciding factors (Felton, Buhr, and Northey 1994, Ahmed, Alam, and Alam 1997, Lowe and Simons 1997, Gul et al. 1989). However other studies have found opposite results, with intrinsic factors such as interest in the profession making a significant contribution to the choice of career in public accounting but extrinsic factors such as financial rewards being less significant (Law 2010). This difference may be explained by the timing of the studies and what could be considered as a post-Enron syndrome, with students selecting accounting nowadays appearing to be more genuinely interested in the discipline. Another potential explanation could be cultural factors, according to studies by Felton, Buhr, and Northey (1994) and Ahmed, Alam, and Alam (1997) set in western countries (respectively Canada and New Zealand), and Law's (2010) study set in Hong Kong. Overall, Felton, Buhr, and Northey (1994) found that the most important factor for students in choosing a career in accounting was the ratio of benefits to the costs of that career, while Ahmed, Alam, and Alam (1997) found this to be the second most important factor after extrinsic rewards. In other words, students may perceive high costs (such as long and inflexible working hours) in an accounting career but may still decide to pursue this career if the benefits such as long term earnings and job market conditions exceed those costs. Rare are the studies that find both intrinsic factors (genuine interest in the field) and extrinsic factors (job opportunities and high earnings potential) affecting the career decisions of students (Adams, Pryor, and Adams 1994). To date, there is no general agreement on which factors are important in choosing a career in accounting, with some studies refuting the idea that extrinsic factors are decisive (Jackling and Calero 2006) and others citing low entry salaries as

adverse factors in such a career choice (Tan and Laswad 2006). A Malaysian study (Mustapha and Hassan 2012) found that job security and career advancement were the most important factors in selecting accounting, which may be explained by the fact that students in developing countries are more interested in securing a stable and sustainable job in order to provide for their families rather than selecting something they are genuinely interested in. It might also be due to the fact that the families rather than the students themselves are making the career choice, thus favouring good long term earnings over interest in the subject.

Paolillo and Estes (1982), Gul et al. (1989), Adams, Pryor, and Adams (1994) and Tan and Laswad (2009) all emphasise the importance of availability of employment as a factor in career decisions, which might explain the popularity of accounting in Vietnam where there is a high demand for accountants (Bui, 2011) and monetary compensations add to the attractiveness of the profession. In a more recent study, Lee and Schmidt (2014) also found that job market considerations were significant and, not surprisingly, became even more important during and after the recession. Sugahara, Kurihara and Boland (2006) and Law (2010) confirm this trend as their study provides evidence that some Asian countries still consider a career in accounting attractive and prestigious. It should be noted though that in the former study, secondary teachers in both the U.S., New Zealand and Japan perceived accounting to be less prestigious than other professions such as medicine and law which both require national examinations for entrance. Other comparatively poorly rated attributes included earning potential, communication skills, complexity, membership status and more generally the perceived ease (which was considered negatively) of entering the profession. However Cohen and Hanno (1993), despite similar results regarding career opportunities, also found that the poor image of the profession as described above would be a strong deterrent.

2.3.4 Accountant profiles and the importance of generic skills

In a 2001 U.K. survey, Marriott and Marriott (2003) reported that only four percent of trainees with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales were accounting graduates and there was a drop in the number of students studying accounting. The reason the majority of these trainees did not hold a specialised degree might be the recognition by professional accounting bodies that accounting firms were

in fact becoming financial services firms and consequently the skill sets required by these professionals, namely communications, problem solving, analysis and client relations, were more important than technical knowledge. Or it might be that these soft skills are perceived as somehow innate but that technical expertise can be taught, therefore it is important to find people (many of whom are found outside the accounting sphere) who exhibit the former and can learn the latter. Interestingly, Jackling and Calero's (2006) study found that the more students perceived that accountants needed soft skills, the more likely they were to pursue such a career. Even then, generic skills fitting their perceptions of the profession were found to have a relatively low weight in terms of the intention to become an accountant compared to extrinsic factors such as high status and job opportunities. Inman, Wenzler, and Wickert (1989) even blamed accounting institutions for narrowing their focus and thus limiting the skills developed by accounting students as future professionals. Some professional accounting bodies have tried to remedy this by providing workshops for younger members wishing to improve these skills. One solution could be the offering of internships as a way to develop these coveted generic skills, as studies have shown that employers favour students who have had some kind of work exposure during their studies (Cheng et al. 2009). The advantage to the employer is that internships act as probation periods, at the end of which they can decide to keep the intern as a permanent employee or let him or her go without fear of legal action. Another solution adopted by CAANZ's new CA programme is the move away from a technical focus on financial accounting, taxation and auditing towards a broader focus on business knowledge and skills (Howieson 2003).

Shortly after the introduction of this new programme, the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) issued a new education standard specifying both technical and general skills required of professional accountants, namely intellectual, technical and functional, personal, interpersonal, organisation and business management skills (International Federation of Accountants 2003). The 2015 International Education Standard 3 (International Accounting Education Standards Board 2015), which deals with professional skills and general education, prescribes that as well as intellectual and technical skills professional accountants should possess interpersonal and communication skills. IFAC's role in developing and promoting the implementation of international standards is clearly aligned with its aims to globalise the accounting profession and strengthen economies.

In 2009, CAANZ and CPA Australia jointly produced higher education accreditation guidelines in which the skills to be developed by higher education institutions through their accounting courses and/or other general business courses included inquiry, abstract logical thinking and critical analysis as well as written and oral communication and interpersonal skills. In 2012 these guidelines were revised to encapsulate broad generic skills such as communication, teamwork and self-management (Bunney, Sharplin, and Howitt 2014).

A few years ago, some authors suggested that soft skills should be included as minimum academic standards set by the Higher Education regulator (TEQSA in Australia) as this would force institutions either to increase their English entry level requirements or to devise strategies to embed communication skills into their programs therefore helping students develop these skills through completion of their degrees. Interestingly, it seems that the regulator heard the message, as ALTC released in 2010 the Academic Standards Statement for Accounting which outlined threshold learning outcomes for bachelor and master level degrees. These included technical skills as well as the same generic skills required by the Australian professional accounting bodies mentioned in the previous paragraph. This development demonstrated the seriousness with which the Australian accounting profession considered the issue of accounting graduates exhibiting appropriate generic skills (Bunney, Sharplin, and Howitt 2014).

2.3.5 Important referent influences

Studies (Cohen and Hanno 1993, Salazar-Clemeña 2002, Byrne, Willis, and Burke 2012, Van Zyl and de Villiers 2011, Jackling et al. 2012) showed that the influence of important referents such as parents or professors and the positive or negative experience of an initial exposure to accounting (for example from an introductory course) were significant. Interestingly, as Cohen and Hanno's (1993) study was set in the U.S., it might have come as a surprise to find that parents had an influence on the choice of a major or career whereas Sugahara, Kurihara and Boland's (2006) findings are more in line with expectations regarding the weight of the family on a student's choice (of career or other matters) in Asia. Another U.S. survey (Lee and Schmidt 2014) found that social influence affected the choice of accounting as a major degree subject, with this factor becoming more important over time (pre and post-recession), and further that it was at any time the most important contributing factor in a

student's study choices. One consequence could be that marketing efforts should be directed at parents rather than the students themselves, particularly in times of economic uncertainty when families try to secure financially stable jobs for their offspring. Tan and Laswad's (2006) study, although not set in Asia, included a high proportion of international students, in particular from China. It similarly found a significant effect of normative pressure, especially from parents, on the intention to pursue a career in accounting. However, it appeared that the normative pressure regarding career choice decreased with exposure to accounting throughout the completion of a degree, showing that parents had some sort of influence where students had no prior knowledge of the field. However this influence of parents on a choice of a major had not completely disappeared by the end of their degree (Tan and Laswad 2009). Paolillo and Estes (1982) also found an influence of important referents, mostly teachers, while Gul et al. (1989), Lowe and Simons (1997), Ahmed, Alam, and Alam (1997) and Strasser, Ozgur, and Schroeder (2002) on the other hand found no influence of normative pressure of parents or others on choice of a major. The latter study found that, similarly to previous studies cited, career benefits were a factor albeit a lesser one than personal interest in the subject. Surprisingly, job availability was not an important factor in Paolillo and Estes' (1982) study while although it was one of the three main factors for Gul et al. (1989) whose Australian study was largely inspired by Paolillo and Estes' research and it was also a major factor for Lowe and Simons (1997) who replicated Gul's study. Economic circumstances at the time of the study can be ruled out as a possible explanation of the difference as both studies were run in the 1980s when the U.S. and Australian economies were flourishing. However one of the main differences in research methodologies was the sample chosen, with Gul surveying first year students and Paolillo surveying practitioners through their respective professional associations. In the latter study, practitioners from four disciplines including accounting were asked to reflect in retrospect about their career choices, which could explain the importance of normative pressure if accounting practitioners realised in hindsight that their so-called free career decision was in fact heavily influenced by their teachers at a time where they were most vulnerable.

2.3.6 Accounting student profiles and their impacts on career choice

Some studies showed that a significant proportion of accounting majors switched to other majors during their studies either because they liked other majors more (Strasser, Ozgur, and Schroeder 2002) or because they perceived accounting to be too numerical and with too heavy a workload (Tan and Laswad 2009). These changes in orientation during studies have to do with a misperception of the profession in the initial stages and in particular about job opportunities. Tan and Laswad (2009) confirm that those students who were attracted to accounting did indeed exhibit the expected characteristics of an accountant, such as numerical skills and high academic performance. However one of the worrisome findings from Adams, Pryor, and Adams (1994) was that high-performance students who had initially chosen accounting tended to drop out and low-performance students who had not initially chosen accounting had tendencies to opt in. This confirms the previously-held assumption that accounting deters bright students, even when they have a genuine interest in the discipline. These findings contrast sharply with Inman, Wenzler, and Wickert (1989) who found that quantity of students was more of an issue than quality as accounting programs were losing students during transfer but the ones they were gaining were of a higher calibre. Regardless of this issue, brighter students were more likely to work for an accounting firm with a good working environment, reputation and profile (Chan and Ho 2000) and to get job offers earlier than other students and well before they graduated, which means that firms who want to recruit elite students need to be able to identify and secure them early on (Cheng et al. 2009).

Few studies have explored the impact of gender on intention to become an accountant and the results are mixed, with some studies finding females had positive attitudes towards accounting (Marriott and Marriott 2003) and others finding no significant difference between males and females (Jackling and Calero 2006). Saemann and Crooker's (1999) longitudinal survey showed a change in attitude over a semester with women more likely to choose accounting at the beginning of the first introductory course but no gender difference exhibited at the end of that course. This lack of research on the role of women in the accounting profession is even more surprising considering that women have represented a larger proportion of college graduates for decades (Lowe and Simons) and that most accounting graduates are now

women (Howieson 2003). Those studies that find significant differences between males and females in terms of accounting career choice indicate that females did not find accounting to be boring or solitary (Marriott and Marriott 2003) and tended to place more importance on intrinsic factors such as interest in the subject, accounting being intellectually challenging, and academic performance (Lowe and Simons 1997). On the other hand, Chan and Ho (2000) found that males placed more emphasis on the reputation of the accounting firm but less on travelling for work and transfer. This finding is not surprising if we consider that most societies still view women as the main child carers, which limits possibilities of spending extended periods of time away from home.

Even fewer studies explored the role of race on accounting career choice. Myburgh (2005) explored the reasons for the very low percentage of black and Asian professional accountants affiliated with the main professional accounting bodies. His findings showed that cost of qualifying and difficulty of qualifying were major hurdles for black and Asian students respectively. Saemann and Crooker (1999) found a significant difference between African American and Hispanic students on one hand and white students on the other in terms of their likelihood to choose accounting as a major by the end of their first accounting course, with the former group more likely to do so than the latter.

Some studies explored specific career choices within the accounting field, for example tax versus audit (Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan 2014) or Big 4 versus non-Big 4 (Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012). The latter study found an effect of job opportunities and subjective norm on the accounting careers of Big 4 job seekers only, while long hours were found to be a deterrent for non-Big 4 job seekers. This may indicate that work-life balance could be used as a promotional tool for small and medium size accounting firms trying to recruit young graduates. Interestingly, Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan's 2014 study found that students interested in a tax career believed that it would lead to a more routine job than auditing, with less seasonal fluctuation, and that it would create more interactions with clients. These beliefs were not shared by accounting practitioners. Chan and Ho's (2000) Hong Kong study confirmed a distinction between the intended career paths of Chinese students, with those applying for jobs with the then Big 5 placing greater importance on initial salary, training, support in obtaining a professional qualification and career opportunities than those applying for non-Big 5 positions.

2.3.7 Solutions to accountant shortage

Suggestions regarding possible improvements to students' enrolment in accounting degrees and solutions to the shortage of suitable qualified accountants usually focus on the first accounting course experience emphasising accounting as challenging and dynamic rather than rules-based, the possibilities of high future earnings and career opportunities or, in some cases, focusing the marketing effort on parents as final decision makers. However, little has been done to raise awareness of professional accounting bodies which may influence the students' decisions (Inglis et al. 2008).

The Big 4 in particular have tried to remedy the shortage of qualified accountants by offering internships but Cheng et al. (2009, 349) warn that this will 'not necessarily solve the issue, unless they attract students into the profession who would otherwise have chosen alternative career paths'. Jackling and Calero (2006) suggest that professional bodies could address the shortage of accountants by promoting the profession as challenging rather than boring, based on decision-making and problem-solving rather than number-crunching. Leading the way, CPA Australia instigated appealing advertising campaigns, following the assumption that perceptions of accountants and choice of an accounting major were associated. These campaigns portray young and dynamic accountants in non-stereotypical careers with an over-representation of females and minorities. Another initiative was the introduction by CAANZ of the Graduate Certificate of Chartered Accounting Foundations in the context of a perceived shortage of 'quality graduates' from accredited programs as the Big 4 grew their professional services practices (Poullaos and Evans, 2008). Previously, in the U.S. AICPA had commissioned a private organisation to develop a marketing campaign in order to attract students to the profession after business degrees, including accounting degrees, started to lose a significant proportion of students to other more attractive fields (Mauldin, Crain, and Mounce 2000). These associations have a role to play in improving the image of the profession through their public relations campaigns (Felton, Buhr, and Northey 1994).

2.3.8 Conclusion

Some of the studies mentioned in this section are not very recent but despite this they are still relevant as the area of accounting career choice is well researched and findings tend to point to similar trends. Nevertheless, some of these studies may have limitations and these are explained in turn. First of all, most studies exploring career decisions in accounting have provided inconsistent results, possibly because most of them do not use theoretical frameworks to explore these decisions, which tends to limit their generalisability. Another potential explanation for inconsistent results is the range of samples chosen for the studies. Some of them focused on first year accounting students (Gul et al. 1989, Paolillo and Estes 1982), others on second year students (Lowe and Simons 1997) in order to assess initial career intentions, while other studies surveyed final year accounting students or even accounting practitioners to account for the fact that students may switch majors through their studies and therefore students who might have intended at the beginning of their degrees to complete a career in accounting may have ended up in a completely different field four years later. Another reason for surveying students rather than practitioners is that they are easier to access while still at university rather than when they are dispersed in the workforce (Gul et al. 1989).

Despite the lack of consensus on factors that drove students to choose accounting as a career, it seemed that two factors recurred in most studies. Communication with prospective and first-year students should therefore emphasise 'the excellent long-term income potential and the plentiful and diverse job opportunities in accounting to students with a predisposition for selecting the accounting major' (Adams, Pryor, and Adams 1994). These factors are even more important in times of economic uncertainty and, regardless of the cultural context, promoters of accountancy as a career should certainly speak to parents in developing economies who are desperate to secure good financial conditions for their children (and themselves).

After exploring career choice and its potential drivers, the next section will review the literature on the cost-benefit perceptions of professional body affiliation which forms an integral part of the accountancy professionalisation process.

2.4 Affiliation with professional bodies: perceptions of benefits and costs

Research has shown (Mathews, Jackson, and Brown 1990, De Lange, Jackling, and Gut 2006) that in Australia, students graduating with an accounting major typically complete professional training with one of the large professional accounting bodies such as CPA Australia or CAANZ.

2.4.1 Affiliation in Vietnam

However, the case is different in Vietnam as the Vietnam Association of Accountants and Auditors (VAA) and the VACPA were only established by the Ministry of Finance in 1994 and 2005 respectively and provide very little training (VAA does not have a training function). The VAA is the only professional accounting body in Vietnam and includes 27 member associations including VACPA. It is a member of IFAC although its status as of June 2016 indicated that it was suspended. According to the IFAC Member Body Compliance Program - Criteria for Biennial Update of the SMO Action Plan, 'member bodies risk suspension by the IFAC Board for the following causes: failure to maintain ongoing compliance with the relevant admission criteria (including participation in the IFAC Member Body Compliance Program); failure to pay its financial contributions in full prior to the date of the following Council meeting after such contributions have become due and acts bringing IFAC or the international accountancy profession into disrepute' (International Federation of Accountants n.d.). The IFAC website did not release any information about the cause of the suspension or its duration.

VACPA is a sub-unit of VAA and thus is not a professional body per se. It will be noted that the VACPA website claims the association 'has chosen the same business model to that of an international professional accountancy organisation in which each member is directly administered by the central office' but does not specify which accounting organisation it is referring to. It also acknowledges the difficulties, in particular in terms of facilities, faced by the association in carrying out its operations and mentions that it is assessed by the Confederation of Asian and Pacific Accountants (CAPA) but does not provide any details about the outcome of the

assessment (Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants 2015). VACPA is currently at the 3rd level of maturity, according to the CAPA model which demonstrates good practices, and is considered as having met the minimum standards of a Professional Accounting Organisation (PAO). Its goal for the next 10 years is 'to become a high profile professional organization in Vietnam, in the ASEAN region and in the world which is trusted by its members and whose role, professionalism and operating quality are acknowledged by the state bodies and associations of higher levels and whose maturity is at the 4th level [best practices] in accordance with the maturity model of CAPA' (Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants 2015). VACPA, in opposition to the Anglo-American model of professional association, is not self-regulated but in recent years has had more regulatory prerogatives delegated from the Ministry of Finance, in particular conducting reviews of audit firms and updating Vietnamese Auditing Standards. However the association is trying to move away from its compliance-driven approach to a more value-added approach by developing its own quality assurance program rather than enforcing the Ministry of Finance review program (Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants 2015). It also plans to take charge of accounting and auditing training, manage CPA membership and provide professional updates (Bedford n.d.). As of mid-2015, the association had 1,600 individual and 80 firm members which means there is one CPA member for every 56,000 inhabitants in Vietnam, compared to the U.S.A. which has around one CPA member for every 800 inhabitants and Australia which has one CPA member for every 200 inhabitants. Its closest neighbour, China, does slightly better than Vietnam with one CPA member for every 10,000 inhabitants, and Singapore has a record ratio with one CPA member for every 200 people. The ratio of accountants per head of population is highest in small countries such as Singapore with 'Anglo-Saxon' type financial reporting. These proportional differences can be explained by the relative size of equity markets, the number of listed companies and the number of organisations requiring an audit, all of which are smaller in Vietnam (Parker 2001). VACPA claims to be an effective training provider but does not publish information on how many CPD training hours it provides per year, only on the number of courses it offers. The professional association is pushing hard for mutual and international recognition and has to date signed Memorandums of Understanding with ten local universities and eleven foreign professional accounting bodies including ACCA, CPA Australia, ICAEW and CIMA. It

is applying for membership of the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) where it is currently an associate, indicating that affiliation with a local body is not sufficient in itself particularly in developing countries where the accounting profession is relatively new.

2.4.2 Globalisation of accounting designations

'The ever growing number of supra-national professional associations that now coexist with national associations also exemplifies the emergence of transnational professional projects' (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2012, 142). However, the engrained notion of national professional projects has led to variations in the knowledge base of the professions through content and/or education which in turn has an effect on the practice and values of the professionals themselves. It has also led to variations in the role of professions in society from technical experts to value-adding resources. Finally this has also led to variations in the extent and involvement of the state into the professional reforms (Faulconbridge and Muzio 2012). Globalisation of businesses is part of the reason why most countries, including Vietnam, are fully or partially adopting IFRS as their accounting standards. This allows for adequate financial comparison across borders and thus aims to boost transnational activities. Membership of international organisations such as IFAC, ASEAN and WTO are also flourishing in the same attempt at increasing international economic activities.

Changing technology and rapid globalisation of business has increased demand both for lifelong professional affiliations and for education programs to help professional accountants remain abreast of legislative changes, emerging corporate governance and international issues. Increasing use of technology means that stakeholders are more informed about their businesses and want to take a bigger role in managing them and thus require more accountability. This phenomenon, in addition to recent corporate collapses, means that there is an increasing shift away from purely financial measures of performance to alternative measures such as triple bottom line reporting (Howieson 2003). Overall, the consequence for the accounting profession is that accounting is moving from compliance work to value-added work such as business advisory services, which implies an increase in competition with other consulting professionals. Globalisation is increasingly affecting professional accounting bodies, whether through

the merging of a given country's entire accounting designations (Canada), joint ventures between two seemingly-unrelated designations (CIMA and AICPA), mutual recognition agreements (particularly in Asia), the creation of accounting alliances between random countries (GAA includes the U.K., U.S.A., Canada, South Africa, Japan, Hong Kong and Germany) or the offshore exponential growth of a western 'brand' (ACCA).

2.4.3 Importance of professional body membership

Researchers have noted that in order to achieve long-term career success it is necessary to be able to adapt to changes in environmental and economic conditions. Membership of professional accounting bodies is essential in order to gain the status and receive the rewards associated with 'gold collar' employees, as is a commitment to continuous development of professional skills (Howieson 2003). CAANZ (1998) established a list of competencies for these 'gold collar' workers and divided them into four categories: knowledge, skills, attitude and values, and intellectual framework. The emphasis on knowledge was even then based on generalist rather than specialist knowledge and computing. In the area of skills the requirement was to possess broad business management skills and communication as well as technical skills, interpersonal as well as team work skills. Another focus was on leadership skills and a global market approach. ICAEW (1996) produced a similar summary of required skills with details for each work category (e.g. auditing, consultancy) and size of business. Here again the emphasis is on communication as well as analytical and problem-solving skills together with broad business skills such as marketing and negotiation. However, recent literature reviews have shown that there are still gaps in the expectations of educators and practitioners regarding communication skills, with the former emphasising formal (written) communication and the latter focusing on informal (verbal) communication (Apostolou et al. 2015, Apostolou et al. 2013). Additionally, very little research seems to be focused on communication skills in accounting education, and limitations that were identified in earlier studies still have not been addressed which would tend to explain why the aforementioned gaps still exist.

In terms of knowledge, computing was mentioned not only in terms of specialist expertise in the relevant field but also for auditing purpose and the corporate sector in particular. Interestingly, ICAEW (1996) recommends that large accounting firms recruit staff with MBA degrees and experience in disciplines other than accounting. This

confirms that the Big 4, moving away from accounting, need to recruit staff with non-accounting specific backgrounds.

However, with the globalisation of economies and professional services, issues of membership and accreditation arise as accountants are operating in borderless domains. The outsourcing of bookkeeping tasks to developing countries has become widespread. Memorandums of understanding, reciprocal recognition schemes and cross-accreditation are flourishing but they are not always the saviour everyone expects and are sometimes met with scepticism. One example was when AICPA considered amending its bylaw with the 'granting of an interdisciplinary global credential by an affiliated entity to qualified persons who seek to obtain it' (American Institute of Certified Public Accountants 2002). That affiliated entity was to be called the International Institute of Strategic Business Professionals but the proposal was rebuffed in 2001 when almost two thirds of AICPA members voted against it. Their rationale was that this global credential would mostly benefit other associations to the detriment of AICPA itself.

2.4.4 Drivers of affiliation

'Associations enable the construction of accounts delineating the domain of a profession—that is, the portfolios of activities and services over which members claim jurisdictional exclusivity—and of accounts specifying conditions of *membership*: that is, who can practice authoritatively within that jurisdiction, and how...They act as the means whereby communities represent themselves to others in the field. The act of representation is partly a process of social construction.' (Greenwood, Suddaby, and Hinings 2002, 61-62).

Membership of professional associations in fields such as accounting, law and medicine evolve around specialised knowledge and exclusion of non specialists. Lawrence (2004) refers to the interaction between members as interaction rituals from highly formalized ones in accounting and law through professional education and examination to less formal ones in less institutionalised professions. In this context, professionalisation is considered the epitome of these rituals with standardised practices and codes of conduct and ethics.

Some accounting studies (Inglis et al. 2011b, Sidaway et al. 2013) tried to identify the drivers of affiliation, such as perceived intrinsic (e.g. job satisfaction) and extrinsic (e.g. salary) benefits, to professional bodies but these studies fail to indicate the determinants that drive membership choice and the decision to cease membership of specific professional bodies. Inglis et al.'s (2011) study of students and practitioners in Australia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia showed that brand/reputation, international recognition of qualifications and career opportunities were all important determinants, followed by place of work and educational requirements. Despite their importance, these factors in themselves did not make a difference to which specific body students chose to affiliate with. Forty-two percent of the students had provisionally joined a professional accounting body before graduation and the location of the students influenced their choice of body, with students based in Australia primarily selecting Australian associations and overseas students primarily selecting large international bodies such as ACCA. Cost of joining was a factor, with CPA Australia mostly favoured by students who indicated that cost was important, whereas practitioners were more likely to choose CPA Australia because of the benefits provided to its members. Sidaway et al. (2013) followed a similar research method and their comparison of students and practitioners indicates significant differences in the relative importance of factors affecting affiliation. Similarly to Inglis et al. (2011), 'career opportunities, international recognition and brand or reputation were identified as being the factors that are most important to students in their choice of which professional accounting body to join' (Sidaway et al. 2013, 612). For practitioners, brand and reputation was considered one of the three most important factors. A comparison between students and practitioners revealed significant differences in the importance of all factors except for members' benefits, showing that the importance of different factors changes over time and that marketing efforts need to be targeted.

As mentioned in the introduction, in Vietnam, it is not uncommon for Vietnamese accountants working in public accounting firms and in particular the Big 4, who are already members of local professional bodies to join foreign professional bodies if they seek foreign clients or employment with a branch or subsidiary of a foreign company. The local designation allows them to audit local companies while the foreign designation gives them the credentials to audit foreign clients. ACCA is preferred over the VAA by foreigners in Vietnam, as the VAA only admits Vietnamese nationals (Bui 2011a). This peculiar situation shows the complementary nature of local and foreign

accounting bodies which alludes to different types of loyalties. Additionally, the foreign professional bodies and particularly ACCA which has the longest established presence in Vietnam play a pivotal role in developing the profession through their certification and training which are unequalled by local bodies. A certain attraction to their brand and image is however undeniable. Social privileges also foster un certain sense of superiority and may motivate membership (Lawrence 2004)

Studies in other fields where membership of professional bodies is voluntary, such as nursing, have failed to identify discriminating factors of membership or lack thereof except for cost and lack of time to attend professional development trainings (DeLeskey 2003). Another study in the field of athletics (Chen 2004) found that 'informative' incentives (enhancing understanding of new knowledge and regulations, exchanging ideas, learning about new trends) and 'solidary' incentives (socialising, developing a sense of belonging to professional association) where the main factors affecting membership of professional associations with utilitarian incentives (membership benefits, receiving free goods) being the least important. In the higher education field, finding colleagues with similar research interests and willing to collaborate on research projects was listed as one of the main factors for joining a professional association (Hitchcock et al. 1995).

2.4.5 Dual membership

Inglis et al.'s (2011a) study showed that almost 20 percent of the students and 8 percent of the alumni surveyed had affiliated with more than one professional accounting body. In Sidaway et al. (2013) approximately 50 percent of the practitioners surveyed were members of two or more professional bodies.

Carnegie and Parker (1999) note that 'accountants might be motivated to join the most prestigious body willing to accept them' and add that despite the additional membership fees, dual membership must bring additional benefits such as granting higher status or recognition.

In Australia, the membership cost per body is around AU\$600, which means that multiple affiliations can be financially constraining although it can provide an advantage if one of the bodies fails to deliver on its promises. Multiple membership allows the option of ceasing affiliation with any of the underperforming bodies while still benefiting

from the credentials associated with belonging to a professional association. The comparison by Sidaway et al. (2013) between those with single and those with multiple memberships revealed that the only difference in their decision-making process was in terms of international recognition, a factor which members of multiple organisations placed more emphasis on. An examination of the characteristics of these multiple members revealed that many of them were members of an Australian accounting body as well as a foreign one (ICAEW, Malaysian Institute of Accountants, Accounting Society of China) which would explain the importance of international recognition. However, no difference was found between members of single or multiple Australian bodies, showing that these bodies do not appear to be differentiated in the eyes of the members. It might be therefore that the reasons for affiliation are political and that different spheres of activity require different loyalties.

Uche (2002) warns that dual membership of professional associations could lead to jurisdictional issues or create conflicts of interest, however this stance reflects the particular Nigerian situation at the time of the writing. A few years after the Institute of Taxation in Nigeria was founded, it tried to restrict taxation practice to its members alone, in contrast with previous customs where chartered accountants held that prerogative. Traditionally many members of the former body were also members of the latter, explaining the potential conflict of interest. This hypothesis is refuted by Bui, Yapa, and Cooper (2011) in the case of Vietnam, where the foreign professional bodies are not in competition with the local ones but rather help professionalising accounting by offering contextualised and localised training. 'It is very important to note that the ACCA has been working cooperatively with Vietnamese accounting associations, the VAA and VACPA, not competing with them. As such, the ACCA works in partnership with the MOF and does not dominate the development of the Vietnamese accounting profession. It is, therefore, observed that the case of Vietnam differs from that of [other emerging countries] where the ACCA influenced the formation of an accounting profession' (Bui 2011a, 274). One of the rationales for not adopting western training content is argued by Bui (2011) as trying to avoid the spread of capitalist ideologies.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter explores the literature on accounting as a career choice, factors affecting the choice of accounting, the lack of attraction of the accounting discipline to students and the impact of that perception on the overall accounting profession through shortages in the number of qualified accountants entering the profession. It also reviews the changing landscape of accounting education, in particular the alternative pathways to the accounting profession and the tensions generated by the new pathways developed by professional accounting bodies and competing with traditional university degrees. This chapter also explores notions of professionalisation and its impact on occupations generally, with examples of accounting professionalization processes which occurred in various countries and the role of state and professional accounting bodies in this process. Finally, the chapter concludes with a review of the drivers for professional affiliation and the importance of those affiliations, with an emphasis on the case of dual membership of professional bodies. This chapter is critical in informing the development of the research questions and in particular the drivers of membership attraction by professional bodies and the potential differences between sub-groups such as accounting students, aspiring accounting professionals and accounting professionals in terms of these drivers.

The next chapter will explore the theoretical framework chosen for this thesis, how it is operationalised for this study and how it informed the development of the research questions.

Chapter 3 – Theoretical Framework and Hypothesis Development

The previous chapter reviewed the literature relating to the globalisation and professionalisation of accounting in various contexts including state-controlled emerging economies, pathways to the accounting profession, accounting as a career choice, affiliation with professional accounting bodies as well as the factors affecting multiple memberships of professional accounting bodies. This chapter introduces and describes the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) framework as developed by Ajzen (1991) and explains how it is used in this thesis to examine professional body affiliation choices. The diagrammatic representation of the structure of this thesis follows, highlighting the sequencing of the chapter in relation to the overall thesis.

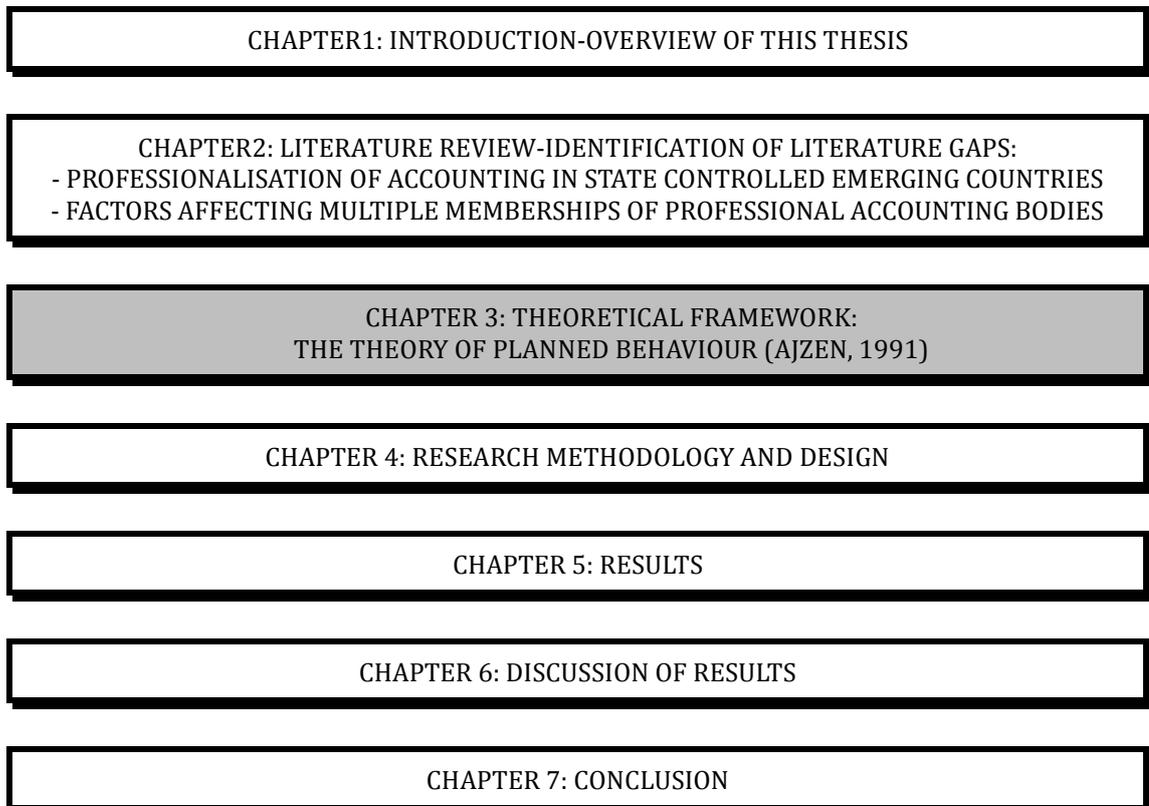


Figure 1 Overview of the thesis

The chapter is structured as follows: in Section 3.1 it describes the Theory of Planned Behaviour model including each of its constructs, namely behaviour (Section 3.1.1), intention (Section 3.1.2), attitude (Section 3.1.3), subjective norm (Section 3.1.4), perceived behavioural control (Section 3.1.5) and relevant salient beliefs (Section 3.1.6), and it explains how this theory is applied to the decision to affiliate with a professional accounting body. Section 3.2 reviews the TPB literature, in particular its application to the accounting profession, and develops the hypotheses, followed by a conclusion in Section 3.3.

3.1. The Theory of Planned Behaviour lens

When exploring how people make decisions, for example in this thesis the decision to affiliate with a professional accounting body, an appropriate approach is to use a social psychology model. One of the most used, cited and most appropriate models is the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991).

In the context of this study the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) is used as the foundation theory as it is an appropriate model for predicting a wide range of behaviours and behavioural intentions (Armitage and Conner 2001). Additionally this model allows understanding of the root cause of intention and behaviour, namely underlying beliefs. Sheppard, Hartwick and Warshaw's (1988) meta-analysis of the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA), which proved the utility of the model, has been cited over 3400 times as of November 2016. Armitage and Conner's (2001) meta-analysis showing the efficacy of the TPB has been cited over 6000 times as of the same date. This meta-analysis which covered 185 independent studies showed that the TPB accounted for 27% and 39% of the variance in intention and behaviour respectively. More impressively, the original article about the Theory of Planned Behaviour by Ajzen (1991) has been cited over 43000 times proving, if necessary, the utility and validity of the model.

The TPB is a social psychology model which aims to explain behaviour. The TPB (Ajzen 1991) is an extension of the TRA (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) and incorporates the central tenet of an individual's intention to perform the behaviour. The TPB extends the Theory of Reasoned Action (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) by introducing the perceived behavioural control variable. The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) posits that behaviour is directly affected by intention to perform the behaviour, which is itself affected by

attitude towards the behaviour and subjective norm. Each of these terms will be explained in turn. The TPB was chosen over the TRA for this thesis as the original model does not deal with ‘behaviours over which people have incomplete volitional control’ (Ajzen 1991, 181). Because the TRA does not include Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) this model assumes that individual have full control over the behaviour they intend to perform. However, in the context of this thesis, affiliating with a professional accounting body may not be entirely within a person’s control as it could be dictated by professional or political requirements. Other models for predicting behaviour, such as the Technoly Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw 1989) exist, but they are often adaptations of the TRA and in the case of the TAM, specific to computer usage thus unsuitable to the context of this thesis. The Model of Goal Directed Behaviour (MGB) was also an optional theoretical framework but was rejected as its authors acknowledge that ‘the TPB works best when actions are ends and the MGB provides the biggest improvement when actions are means to end-state goals’ (Perugini and Bagozzi 2001, 94). It was considered in this study that the action of affiliating with a professional accounting body qualifies as an end in itself.

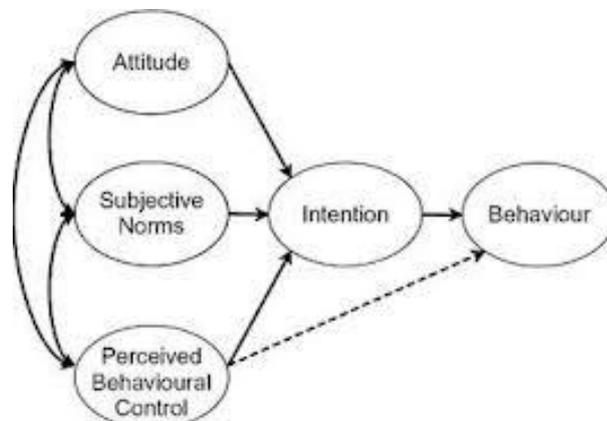


Figure 2 *The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991)*

Figure 2 is a diagrammatic representation of the TPB and shows that chances of performing a behaviour are positively correlated with the intention to perform it (Ajzen 1991) and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC), the perception of the ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. There is a presumption that when behaviours are under complete control they can accurately be predicted through intentions (Ajzen 1988, Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw 1988). In turn, an individual's intentions are directly influenced by three independent variables: attitude

towards the behaviour (negative or positive perception of the behaviour), subjective norm (perceptions of social pressure to perform or not perform the behaviour) and perceived behavioural control. Antecedents to attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control and salient beliefs, are also considered below. Each of these variables is discussed in the following sections.

3.1.1. Behaviour

Behaviour is best predicted by intention when the time interval between the two is short (Ajzen 1985). The time lag between intention and behaviour should be short as intentions may change over time. The more unstable the intention, the lower the intention-behaviour correlation (Ajzen and Fishbein 2005).

Meta-analyses covering diverse behavioural domains have reported mean intention-behaviour correlations of 0.47 (Armitage and Conner 2001), 0.53 (Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw 1988), and 0.45 (Randall and Wolff 1994). Taylor and Todd (1995b) reported an intention-behaviour correlation of 0.54 in their Information Technology usage study. This reported correlation implies that behavioural intention alone explains almost 30 percent of the variance in behaviour. It may be that explaining 30 percent of the variance is the best possible outcome and that additional factors (not included in the TPB) are situation specific (Taylor and Todd 1995b). Ajzen (2011) suggests that 0.60 is probably the best possible correlation between the variables of the model. Another possible reason for this somewhat low intention-behaviour may be the lack of correspondence between intention and behaviour scales (Sutton 1998), in particular for dichotomous behaviours such as smoking. 'However, if the intention does predict whether or not a person attempts to perform the behaviour, but fails to predict attainment of the behavioural goal, it is likely that factors beyond the person's control may have prevented the person from carrying out his intention' (Ajzen 1985, 29).

Sutton (1998) suggests nine reasons why intention may be a poor predictor of behaviour: intentions may change, intentions may be provisional, the principle of compatibility may be violated, the correspondence of scale may be violated, there may be unequal numbers of response categories for intention and behaviour (intention should be treated dichotomously in order to obtain a perfect relationship), there may be random measurement errors in the measures of intention and/or behaviour, the range/variance in Intention or behaviour may be restricted, marginal

distributions of the measures may not match, intention may not be a sufficient cause of behaviour.

Despite these concerns, the popularity of the TPB model in predicting and explaining behaviour is understandable because of its ability to provide ‘the most complete informational analysis of attitudes and, of equal importance...a coherent and highly useful model of the relationships among beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours’ (Petty and Cacioppo 1996, 204).

3.1.2. Intention

Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) and Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) do not themselves define intention explicitly. Warshaw and Davis (1985) define Behavioural Intention (BI) as ‘the degree to which a person has formulated conscious plans to perform or not perform some specified future behaviour’ (ibid, 214) and behavioural expectation as ‘the individual’s estimation of the likelihood that he or she actually will perform some specified future behaviour’ (ibid, 215). Their assumption is that expectation predicts behaviour better than intention. They also estimate that subjects will use expectations if they have not formed an intention. Intention will predict behaviour or goal attainment only if the behaviour is under complete volitional control, in which case PBC can be ignored (Ajzen and Fishbein 2005). In their meta-analysis of the TRA, Sheppard, Hartwick and Warshaw (1988) found support for the alternative use of either intention or estimation measures (correlations of 0.49 and 0.57 respectively). Taylor and Todd (1995a) found that BI is more predictive of behaviour when individuals have had prior experience with the behaviour. Sutton (1998) recommends measuring intention proximally and distally in order to evaluate change, as a change in intention over time may affect the final behaviour.

Armitage and Conner (1999a) assessed intention using three measures, each on a 7-point bipolar (-3 to +3) scale. These measures differed only by the verb employed: “I intend to ... (definitely do not/definitely do),” “I plan to ... (definitely do not/definitely do),” and “I want to ... (definitely do not/definitely do).”

3.1.3 Attitude towards the behaviour

Attitude toward behaviour is the evaluation of positive or negative outcomes associated with performing the behaviour, not to be confused with attitude towards an object. Originally the link between attitude and behaviour was unquestioned,

however a review of empirical studies by Wicker (1969) shows inconsistencies between attitude and behaviour and, in particular, the failure of general attitude to predict specific behaviour.

The TPB being an expectancy-value model, attitude is measured by multiplying the subjective value of a given outcome by the strength of the belief (perceived probability of a particular outcome). Taylor and Todd (1995b) developed a decomposed TPB model which measured attitude as the attitudinal belief that performing a behaviour will lead to a particular outcome, weighted by an evaluation of the desirability of that outcome.

The standard direct measure of attitude uses a seven-point semantic differential scale, anchored with paired adjectives such as good/bad, wise/foolish or favourable/unfavourable, which has proven to be highly valid and reliable (Davis 1993). Heise (1970) considers that the good/bad scale can be used as a sole measure of evaluation.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975) consider that 'the concept "attitude" should be employed only when there is clear evidence that the obtained measure places the concept on a bipolar affective dimension' (ibid, 56). They also add that attitude can be measured by any scale as long as it loads highly on an evaluative factor.

However one concern was that most studies relied on a single measure of attitude representing the overall positive or negative evaluation towards the behaviour, thus undermining the complexity of the construct (Allport 1935).

Manstead, Proffit and Smart (1983, 659) cite various studies that 'have shown that attitudes formed after direct behavioural interaction with the attitude object are more likely to predict subsequent behaviour than are attitudes formed on the basis of indirect, non-behavioural experience (Regan and Fazio 1977, Fazio and Zanna 1978, Songer-Nocks 1976)'. Terry, Hogg and White (1999) found that the frequency of past behaviour had an influence on the relationship between attitude and intention with attitude being more highly correlated with intention for behaviour that has not been frequently performed.

One issue with the TPB is whether attitude and PBC are actually separate constructs. Trafimow and Duran (1998) argue that PBC is merely a subset of attitude as PBC measures the advantages and disadvantages of performing a behaviour and these advantages and disadvantages determine attitude. However, if it was so then including PBC would not improve the prediction of intention beyond

what attitude contributes and the two constructs would load on two different factors if a factor analysis was performed.

Smetana and Adler (1980), found a confounded result between attitude and subjective norm, with the normative component having a direct effect on attitude rather than intention as expected from the model. This explains the claim that attitude seems to be influenced by behavioural beliefs as well as normative beliefs about referents' expectations (see figure 3).

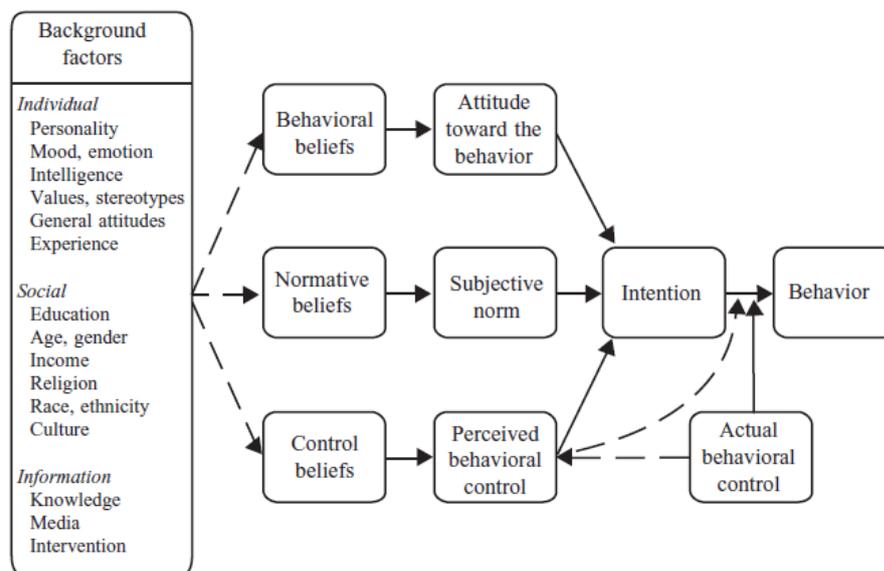


Figure 3 The developed TPB (Ajzen and Fishbein 2005)

3.1.4 Subjective norm

Subjective norm is the perception that important referents would approve or disapprove of the subjects' decision to perform the behaviour. However Warshaw (1980) points out that this concept does not distinguish between compliance, internalization and identification.

'Internalization can be said to occur when an individual accepts influence because the content of the induced behaviour – the ideas and actions of which it is composed – is intrinsically rewarding' (Kelman 1958, 53). In other words, the behaviour is aligned with the subject's value system. Internalization differs from direct compliance through the mitigation of usefulness on intention. In French and Raven's (1959) taxonomy, the basis of internalization is expert power, where the target individual attributes expertise and credibility to the influencing agent.

In the information systems field, while some studies found no link between social pressure and usage (Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw 1989), others found subjective norm to be an important determinant of IT usage (Taylor and Todd 1995b), in particular for individuals without prior experience (Taylor and Todd 1995a). They explain the predictive power of subjective norm to the decomposition into superior and peer influence. It may also prove significant in contexts where usage is organizationally mandated (Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw 1992). This could also apply to professional accounting body affiliations which, in some settings, do not stem from the individual's desire to belong to the association but from a necessity to 'look the part' – in other words, social status recognition. In Kelman's (1958) terms, this is referred to as identification as opposed to compliance or internalisation. 'Identification can be said to occur when an individual accepts influence because he wants to establish or maintain a satisfying self-defining relationship to another person or a group' (Kelman 1958, 53). The basis of identification is thus the relationship itself and not any benefit obtained from that relationship. On the other hand, 'compliance can be said to occur when an individual accepts influence because he hopes to achieve a favourable reaction from another person or group' (Kelman 1958, 53). Usually compliance is motivated by personal gain or punishment avoidance.

Further support for this concept relates to groups dynamics. As Pfeffer (1982, 85) argues, by performing behaviours that are consistent with group norms an individual 'achieves membership and the social support that such membership affords as well as possible goal attainment which can occur only through group action or group membership.'

The context (voluntary vs. mandatory) of the study (Venkatesh et al. 2003) and the type of culture (individualist vs. collectivist, see Abrams, Ando, and Hinkle 1998) proved to have an influence on constructs related to social influence, subjective norm with non-voluntary settings and collectivist culture more likely to exert an influence through normative pressure.

Venkatesh and Davis (2000) claim that 'the rationale for a direct effect of subjective norm on intention is that people may choose to perform a behaviour, even if they are not themselves favourable toward the behaviour or its consequences, if they believe one or more important referents think they should and they are sufficiently motivated to comply with the referents' (Venkatesh and Davis 2000, 187). In other words, subjective norm itself may be sufficient to override any unfavourable attitude of the individual towards performing a behaviour.

In line with the principles of expectancy-value models, subjective norm is measured by multiplying the evaluation that specific referents would approve or disapprove of the individual performing the behaviour by the willingness to conform to that referent's opinion. It can also be measured by asking a direct question about the perceived opinion of the most important referents related to performing the behaviour. Warshaw (1980) points out that this direct measure does not lack behavioural specificity despite the subjective norm being the weakest link in the model.

In studies which operationalise the construct using a single measure, and as a result a narrow conceptualisation, subjective norm has been found to have a low predictive power on intention (Armitage and Conner 2001). However, when multi-item measures were used, subjective norm showed a strong relationship with intention. It may also be that most behaviours are dictated by attitude rather than social pressure or that most people are controlled by attitude rather than subjective norm. Either tendency seems to be correlated with the strength of the collective self, where thoughts about group membership are stored (Trafimow and Finlay 1996).

Terry and Hogg (Terry and Hogg 1996) found evidence of the effect of subjective norm on intention only with people who identified strongly with a relevant reference group (high identifiers), while either attitude or PBC explained most variance for people who did not identify strongly with a relevant reference group (low identifiers).

Attitude and subjective norm have been found to be highly correlated on some occasions, suggesting an overlapping nature of the two constructs: subjective norm may represent other people's perceived opinions rather than an actual external influence (Warshaw 1980).

Finally, Ouellette and Wood (1998) found that subjective norms were more highly correlated with behaviours that were performed occasionally and irregularly than with behaviours performed frequently and consistently, which could indicate that normative pressure exerts a more prominent influence on those who are not used to performing the behaviour and perhaps need external reassurance.

3.1.5 Perceived Behavioural Control

Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC) is the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. This variable is essential as 'those who believe that they

have neither the means nor the opportunity to perform certain behaviours are unlikely to form strong behavioural intentions to engage in it, even if they hold favourable attitudes toward the behaviour and believe that important individuals would approve of their performing such behaviour' (Ajzen 1988, 134). PBC encompasses self-efficacy, resource-facilitating conditions and technology-facilitating conditions. Facilitating conditions are objective factors in the environment, including payment of the membership fee by an employer, that observers agree make an act easy to carry out. Ajzen (2002), citing empirical studies, contends that PBC is comprised of two distinct elements: self-efficacy (dealing largely with the ease or difficulty of performing a behaviour) and locus of control (controllability, or the extent to which performance is up to the actor). The distinction is not to be confused with internal/external factors. Armitage and Conner (1999a) define self-efficacy as a person's confidence in their own ability to carry out a behaviour while Bandura (2010) defines it as a person's ability to influence events that affect their own life. Self-efficacy is easier to operationalise than PBC which comprises mixed measures. White, Terry and Hogg (1994) and Terry and O'Leary (1995) found that self-efficacy only predicted intentions while PBC predicted behaviour. They add that since PBC relates to factors facilitating or inhibiting behavioural performance, there should be no difference between intentions and self-predictions for the purpose of predicting behaviour. Sparks, Guthrie and Shepherd (1997) found that items measuring perceived difficulty and items measuring perceived control showed distinct patterns of inter-correlation with perceived difficulty but not with perceived control exhibiting predictive power.

It will be noted that PBC is concerned with perceived rather than actual control but Ajzen and Fishbein (2005, 192) contend that 'it is possible that people's perceptions of the extent to which they have control over a behaviour accurately reflect their actual control and that although, conceptually, perceived control is expected to moderate the intention-behaviour relation, in practice most investigators have looked at the additive effects of intention and perceptions of control'.

Beale and Manstead (1991), in their study of mothers' intentions to limit their infants' sugar intake, found a significant effect of PBC on intention while Taylor and Todd (1995b) found a significant effect of PBC on behaviour. The latter argue that the inclusion of both self-efficacy and resource factors contributed to the explanatory power of the construct. Obviously, if performance expectancy (the degree to which an individual believes that performing the behaviour will help him or her to attain gains in job performance) is not present in the model, then one would expect

facilitating conditions (PBC) to become predictive of intention (Venkatesh et al. 2003). Performance expectancy can be measured through several constructs: perceived usefulness (to improve job performance), extrinsic motivation (e.g. to obtain a promotion), job-fit (how the capabilities of a system enhance an individual's job performance), relative advantage and outcome expectations (enhanced effectiveness, quality of tasks, quantity of output, etc.).

One way to operationalize PBC is by asking individuals about the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behaviour, however this does not differentiate between external (availability) and internal factors (motivation) (Armitage and Conner 1999a).

Like attitude and subjective norm, perceived behavioural control can be measured by asking direct questions about capability to perform a behaviour or indirectly on the basis of beliefs about ability to deal with specific inhibiting or facilitating factors (Ajzen 2002). The indirect measure asks, for each control factor, two questions: one about control belief strength (the likelihood of a facilitating or inhibiting factor being present) and the other about control belief power (the extent to which the facilitating/inhibiting factor affects the behaviour).

Following the principle of compatibility the behavioural intention, Attitude, SN and PBC questions need to be comparable as to action, target, context, and time frame. For example, if one asks about intention to affiliate with a professional accounting body in Vietnam in the next twelve months, then the behaviour itself needs to be measured within that same period and in the same country.

3.1.6 Salient beliefs as antecedents of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control

Each of the three independent variables of the TPB model are in turn affected by salient beliefs which Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) consider specific to the context of the study and which should be elicited by open-ended interviews with representatives of the participant population.

Figure 4 in Section 3.1.3, which shows the developed TPB model, posits that the determinants of intention are themselves functions respectively of underlying behavioural, normative, and control beliefs and that these salient beliefs can vary as a function of a wide range of background factors such as age, gender, knowledge or

experience, to name a few. The weight of each belief (and therefore each background factor) varies depending on the behaviour and the subject.

Fishbein and Ajzen (1975, 218) and Ajzen and Fishbein (1980, 68) suggest eliciting salient beliefs using free response interviews with representative members of the subject population. They consider that, as a rule of thumb, the first five to nine beliefs elicited are salient. Salient beliefs should be elicited in each new context, being idiosyncratic to the specific context, and not generalisable to other contexts (Ajzen and Fishbein 1980).

The importance of eliciting salient beliefs is explained by the author of the model as ‘it is at the level of beliefs that we can learn about the unique factors that induce one person to engage in the behaviour of interest and to prompt another to follow a different course of action’ (Ajzen 1991, 206). By targeting underlying beliefs, it should be possible to change global attitudes, intentions, and hence behaviour (Armitage and Conner 1999a).

3.1.7 Application of the TPB to the decision to affiliate with a professional accounting body

After exploring the various elements composing the Theory of Planned Behaviour, we can apply the model to the context of this thesis.

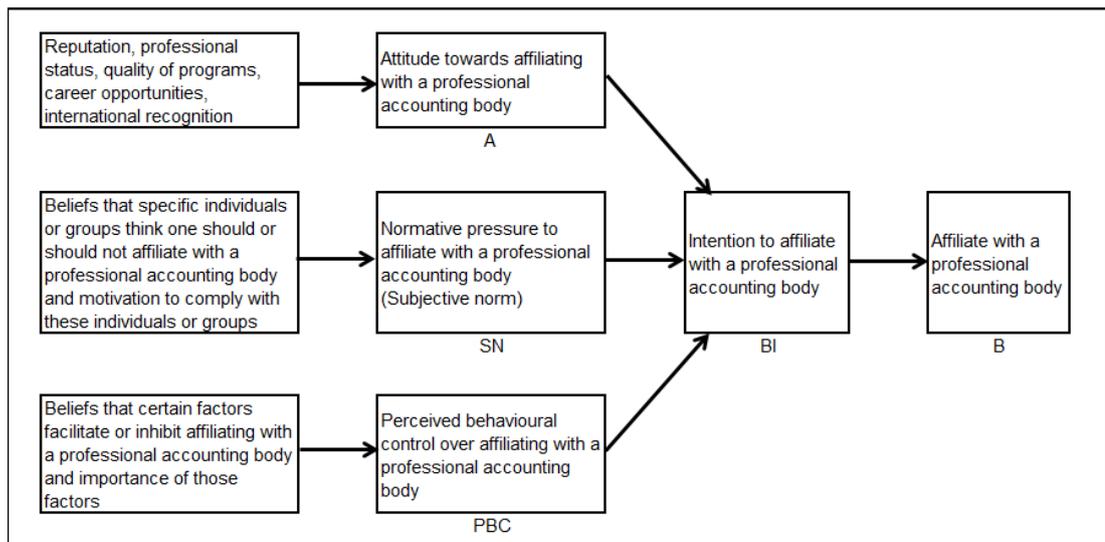


Figure 4 Application of the TPB to the decision to affiliate with a professional accounting body

Figure 4 is a diagrammatic representation of the TPB model applied to students' and members' decisions to affiliate with a specific professional accounting body as investigated in this thesis. In summary, the TPB suggests that the behavioural intention (BI) to affiliate with a professional accounting body (B) is a function of attitudes (A) towards affiliating with a professional accounting body, subjective norm (SN) towards affiliating with a professional accounting body and perceived behavioural control (PBC) over affiliating with a professional accounting body. Attitude, subjective norm and PBC are themselves a function of their respective salient behavioural, normative and control beliefs about affiliating with a professional accounting body. In the sections that follow hypotheses are developed for attitudes (A), subjective norms (SN) and perceived behavioural control (PBC) and their relationship to decisions to affiliate with a professional accounting body.

3.2. Hypothesis development

3.2.1. Attitude hypothesis development

Sugahara, Bolland and Cilloni (2008), who surveyed domestic and international students at two large Australian Universities (N=114), found a correlation between levels of creativity and choice of accounting as a career with Chinese students, who exhibited lower levels of creativity, more likely to major in accounting. They also found that Asian students other than Chinese were more likely to select accounting as a career as they had a better (less procedural) image of the profession than other students did. In general, intrinsic factors such as the image of the profession were found in that study to affect the intention to major in accounting.

In terms of extrinsic factors, financial rewards are not valued equally across cultures. Earnings are important to American and Japanese tertiary students (Allen 2004, Sugahara, Kurihara, and Boland 2006), but not as essential to final-year Canadian and Hong Kong students (Felton, Buhr, and Northey 1994, Law 2010). Auyeung and Sands' (1997) confirm that extrinsic factors (availability of employment, prestige and social status, earning potential, cost of education, and length of study) are more prominent/important to Asian students than to Australian students. Additionally, Bauder (2006) notes that South Asians value social status

while Australian tertiary students do not think social status or prestige is important (Auyeung and Sands 1997, Jackling and Calero 2006).

Some of the previous studies that attempted to explain accounting career choice using the TPB (Tan and Laswad 2006, Cohen and Hanno 1993) had limited practical application because of limitations in their research design. Cohen and Hanno's study examined students' choice of academic major, comparing accounting and non-accounting students (N=287). They surveyed students to measure each of the variables of the TPB model. They found that all three independent variables in the model, including attitude, contributed to explain the variance in intention, however they used surrogate measures of intention as the students surveyed had already performed the behaviour (they had already chosen their major). The surrogate measures of intention included questions such as 'How likely is it that you will graduate with a major in accounting?' and 'How likely is it that you will be working in accounting in five years?' Consequently, the intention-behaviour link was absent. Although these questions assess intention, the target, action and context elements were not aligned (principle of compatibility) as the behaviour the intention relates to is different from the behaviour examined in the study. The principle of compatibility implies that 'a single behaviour can be viewed as involving an *action* directed at a *target*, performed in a given *context*, at a certain point in *time*' (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980, Ajzen and Fishbein 2005). The principle of compatibility (Ajzen 1988) requires that measures of attitude and behaviour involve exactly the same action, target, context, and time elements, whether defined at a very specific or at a more general level. Tan and Laswad's (2006) study followed a similar design to Cohen and Hanno's (1993) study except for the types of participants, as Tan and Laswad selected students taking an introductory accounting course (N=1009) and who had not yet chosen their major, allowing the researchers to measure intention to major in accounting but not the behaviour itself. Moreover, this intention was dichotomously measured which is contrary to Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) recommendations. Additionally, they sought intention based on choosing an accounting major but not on career path and/or professional affiliation. Their findings also support the hypothesis that the three independent variables, including attitude, explain the intention to choose either an accounting or a non-accounting major.

Felton, Dimnik and Northey (1995) applied the theory of reasoned action to chartered accountant career choice (N=897). They defined attitude towards becoming a chartered accountant as 'the sum of the interactions between beliefs that becoming a CA will lead to certain outcomes (e.g. good long-term earnings,

variety in the work, flexibility of career, social prestige) and the evaluation of the importance of these outcomes in choosing a career' (ibid, 3). We note that the strength of the belief was not measured in terms of likelihood. This study differed from other studies using the same model in that it also measured attitude as a benefit/cost ratio. Felton, Dimnik and Northey (1995) justify their use of the TRA model with regards to economic theories of choice under uncertainty that accounting theories such as agency theory and positive theory of accounting are rooted in. This study focused only on attitude and found that attitude did affect students' intentions to choose careers in accountancy. Jackling et al.'s (2012) study used the TRA to examine the difference between Australian and international students in terms of career, specifically the choice of becoming an accountant. Their findings showed that there were no major differences between domestic and international students in terms of attitude regarding an accounting career, however international students exhibited more extrinsic interest in the profession (e.g. obtaining permanent residence in Australia) than domestic students. Bagley, Dalton and Ortegren (2012) used the TPB to explore the intentions of undergraduate students to choose careers with Big 4 or non-Big 4 employers. Measurements of their attitudes and PBC variables were based on belief elicitation procedures as recommended by the original authors of the model, however the sample chosen to elicit these beliefs (postgraduate students) was different from the sample of final respondents. This study found a significant effect of attitude on career choice, in particular salary and benefits, networking opportunities, and the quality of training and professional experience. Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan (2014) used a similar approach (including the belief elicitation procedure) to evaluate the intentions of undergraduate students to choose careers in audit or tax and also found a significant effect of attitude on career choice. Wen, Hao and Bu (2015), who surveyed accounting students at a major national university in China (N=288) and used the TPB as a framework, found that genuine interests, perceived independence/autonomy at accounting firms and better market opportunities – all of which form part of the attitude construct - can all significantly affect Chinese students' motivations to seek CPA certification. One of the limitations of this study is that the sample comes from one elite university only and may not be representative of all Chinese accounting students. Another issue is the dichotomous nature of the researchers' dependent variable, intention, which is contrary to Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) guidelines. Their regression analysis included eight dependent variables, of which five fell into the attitude construct category (including both intrinsic and extrinsic factors), one related to normative pressure (subjective norm) and two

related to the difficulty of obtaining or maintaining the CPA qualification (PBC). By including only eight salient beliefs the researchers may be omitting other important beliefs.

Based on the findings of the studies about attitude related to the field of accounting, the following hypothesis is posited:

- *H1: Foundation candidates and students who have a positive attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.*⁵

3.2.2 Subjective norm hypothesis development

There does not seem to be any general agreement as to whether subjective norm has a significant effect on intention. Sheppard, Hartwick and Warshaw's (1988) meta-analysis of the TRA found that on average, attitude and subjective norm explain 44 percent of the variance in behavioural intention and 30 percent of the variance in behaviour. However other studies (Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw 1989) did not find any significant effect of subjective norm on intention. Davis (1992, 1993) suggests that subjective norm is influential in more realistic organisational settings. Felton et al.'s (1995) study focused only on attitude and found that attitude did affect students' intention to choose a career in accountancy, but they did not measure subjective norm. Dalton and co-authors' studies (Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012, Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan 2014) did include subjective norm in the career choice decision but found mixed results, with social pressure affecting the intentions of students to choose careers in audit or tax but not their intentions to work for Big 4 firms. It will be noted that in both studies the important referents chosen were based on primary referent groups (family, friends, important others) either because the elicitation procedure did not produce any common responses or because these referents were the most commonly cited in the career choice literature. Cohen and Hanno (1993) and Tan and Laswad (2006) both found that subjective norm impacted on students' decisions to major in accounting or non-accounting disciplines. Jackling et al.'s (2012) choice to use the TRA to examine the differences between Australian and international students in terms of their choosing to become accountants was dictated by the assumption that parents of international students (important referents) have an influence on their child's career decisions,

⁵ Members, who have already performed the behavior, are not included in the regression analysis and thus are not part of the first hypothesis.

therefore subjective norm would affect the intention to major in accounting. The researchers' findings showed that there were no major differences between domestic and international students in terms of subjective norm regarding the accounting career choice. These findings contradict those of Auyeung and Sands (1997) who found that normative pressure, in particular from parents, bore more weight in career choices for Hong Kong and Taiwanese students than for Australian students. Jackling and Keneley (2009) used Felton's model for their study, which predicted that subjective norm, through Government incentives (e.g., skilled migration program) for example, would have an effect on the intention to choose accounting as a career. They also hypothesised that different cultures would generate different beliefs which in turn would affect intention and career choice differently, so that international and local students' intentions and behaviours would be affected by different attitudinal and normative beliefs. Their research method was similar to the previous accounting studies cited (Tan and Laswad 2006, Felton, Dimnik, and Northey 1995, Cohen and Hanno 1993) but used the TRA rather than the TPB. They did find a significant effect of subjective norm on intention. Several studies set in Asia show that normative pressure, in particular from family, has an influence over career choice and that parents are often the decision makers in that regard (Salazar-Clemeña 2002, Yang et al. 2002). Wen, Hao and Bu's (2015) study shows that a wide range of influences (families, professors, friends and accounting professionals) also positively affect the students' choice to take the CPA Examination. Confucian cultures – which Vietnam is rooted in – place high emphasis on hierarchy and respect for authority, in particular parents. Duty to the family is considered more important than the individual's own desires and traditionally children live with their parents or parents-in-law even after marriage, with the father making all final decisions (Vietnam Culture 2013). Based on the findings of previous studies in the accounting field and the influence of family and society in a collectivist culture such as Vietnam, the following hypothesis is posited:

- *H2: Foundation candidates and students who perceive normative pressure (subjective norm) towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.*

3.2.3 Perceived behavioural control hypothesis development

As mentioned previously, several studies applied the TRA to the accounting field and thus did not include PBC as a variable. However, the studies which applied the TPB (Cohen and Hanno 1993, Tan and Laswad 2006, Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan 2014, Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012) found an effect of PBC on the intention to choose a general or specific career in accounting. Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren (2012) found that non-Big 4 job seekers were less confident that they would have the academic credentials, such as a graduate degree, required to work for a Big 4 firm and Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan (2014) noticed that audit-track students are deterred by tax careers because they perceive the coursework in tax to be more difficult than in audit. Wen, Hao and Bu (2015) found that perceived difficulty in maintaining certification could significantly affect students' motivations to seek CPA certification. As of 2004 in Vietnam, 16 % of the practicing accountants had a local qualification while a mere two percent held an international qualification (Bui 2011a). As of March 2014, there were 9,350 accountants affiliated with the national professional accounting bodies VAA and VACPA, representing five percent of the total number of professional accountants in ASEAN (World Bank Group 2014). Reasons for such low numbers of qualified accountants might be the difficulty of the CPA examination or the issue of acquiring enough CPD hours (120 hours over a three year period for CPA Australia and 40 hours per year for VAA and VACPA).

Based on the findings of the studies related to the accounting field about perceived behavioural control, the following hypothesis is posited:

- *H3: Foundation candidates and students who perceive they have control over affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam*

3.3. Conclusion

The Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991) and its antecedent, the Theory of Reasoned action (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980) are widely used models that have proved time and time again that they are valid models for predicting a wide range of behaviours. The use of a theoretical model to describe

the decision to affiliate with a professional accounting body allows the researchers to draw inferences from the study.

This chapter described the Theory of Planned Behaviour model and how it is used in this thesis to examine professional body affiliation choices. It introduced the Theory of Planned Behaviour framework as developed by Azjen (1991), then reviewed the TPB literature, in particular its application to the accounting domain, and developed the hypotheses examined in this thesis which are:

- *H1: Foundation candidates and students who have a positive attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam*
- *H2: Foundation candidates and students who perceive normative pressure towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.*
- *H3: Foundation candidates and students who perceive they have control over affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam*

The next chapter will describe the research paradigm, research methodology and research method adopted for this study and in particular will explain why a survey-based quantitative approach was chosen, what populations were sampled and the sampling process.

Chapter 4 - Research Methodology and Design

The previous chapter described how the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) was used, as a theoretical framework to explore the factors affecting the decisions by final-year accounting students, foundation candidates and members of professional accounting bodies to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies. This chapter describes the research paradigm, research methodology and research method adopted for this thesis, in particular why a survey-based quantitative approach was chosen, the populations sampled and the sampling process. The diagrammatic representation of the structure of this thesis follows and it highlights sequencing of the chapter in relation to the overall thesis.

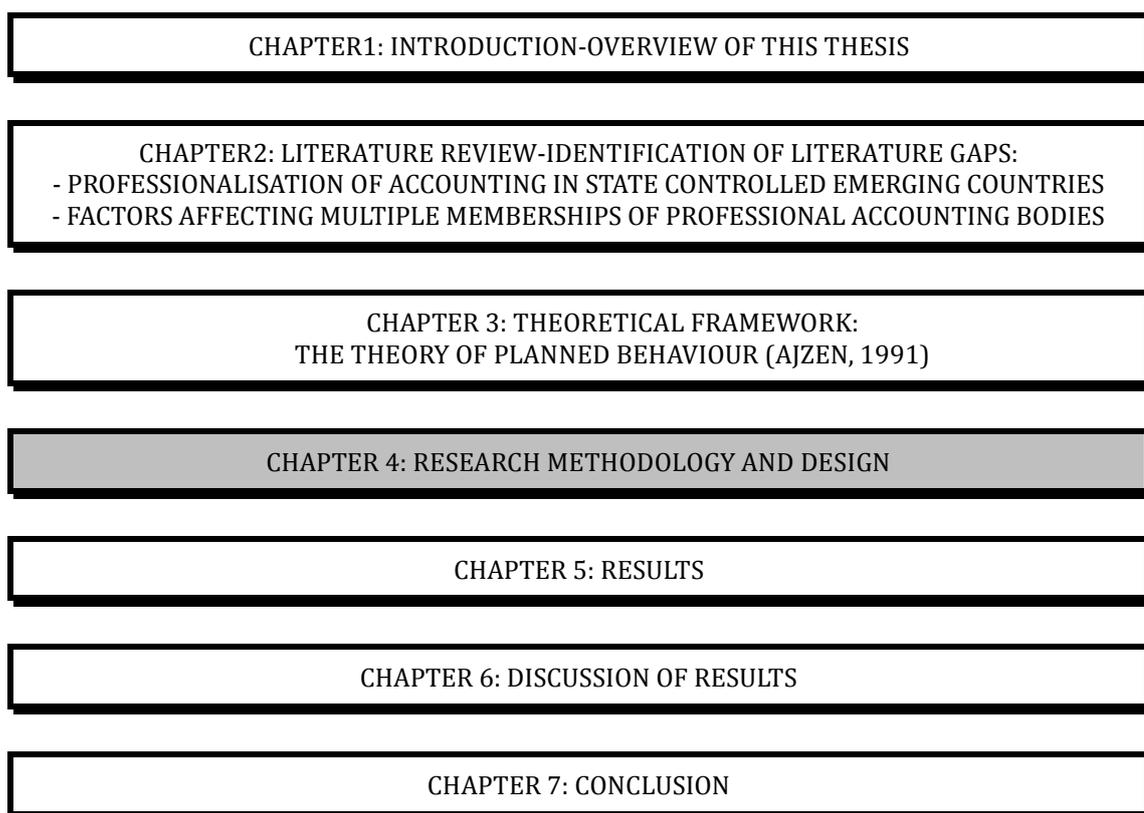


Figure 1 Overview of the thesis

The chapter is structured as follows: first the research approach adopted for this thesis is explained in Section 4.1 followed by the chosen research method in

Section 4.2. Details of the survey participants are included in Section 4.3 and how the research instrument was developed, as well as its content, is presented in Section 4.4. The data collection technique is described in Section 4.5 and finally a conclusion on the research methodology and design is presented in Section 4.6.

4.1 Research approach

Before looking into which research method and design to adopt for a study (quantitative, qualitative or mixed-method approach), it is vital to explore the researcher's own worldviews or paradigms regarding research. There are four generally agreed research paradigms: positivism, constructivism, pragmatism and transformative approach (Creswell 2014). A paradigm is a 'worldview, complete with the assumptions that are associated with that view' (Mertens 2003).

Positivism is rooted in the natural sciences and implies that the principles of natural sciences can apply to social sciences (Bryman 2012). Most traditional research lies within the positivist paradigm and lends itself more towards quantitative rather than qualitative research. This paradigm is deterministic by nature and posits that causes determine outcomes, therefore the reality needs to be broken down into small pieces (variables) that need to be tested against a theory. To prove or disprove a theory, hypotheses need to be formulated. Data, evidence and rational considerations shape knowledge. As objectivity is an essential part of this paradigm, concerns of reliability and validity become paramount. Deductive logic (moving from a theoretical standpoint to empirical evidence), the basis of positivism, aims to produce generalisable and replicable observations. In this paradigm, the researcher is independent from the research subject as a general 'truth' can be uncovered objectively and there is only one possible meaning (Blaikie 2000, Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekeran 2001).

Another research paradigm most often adopted by qualitative researchers is social constructivism or interpretivism, in which the researcher seeks to understand the world in which individuals live. In this paradigm, theories are not tested but are developed through open-ended questions as an understanding of the social constructs that are explored. Findings are interpreted on the basis of the respondent's context and the researcher's own experience and background (Creswell 2014). This paradigm does not assume that reality can be broken into

variables but that understanding social mechanisms provides an explanation of different patterns. Interpretivism contrasts with positivism in that it considers possible meanings, interpretations, motives and intentions. 'Interpretivists are concerned with understanding the social world people have produced and which they reproduce through their continuing activities' (Blaikie 2000, 115). The basis of knowledge of this paradigm is the reality that the social actors, as specific groups, mutually construct. In this paradigm, the researcher is fully and personally involved in the research and with the research subjects. One criticism of interpretivism is that it is too subjective (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekeran 2001).

The third main paradigm, pragmatism, is an attempt to bridge the gap between the previous two paradigms by rejecting binary choices (e.g. objectivism vs. subjectivism). It views knowledge as truth as well as being socially constructed (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). This paradigm focuses on problem-solving and actions rather than philosophy and methods. It is mostly implemented through mixed-methods research by using whichever method works best to find a solution to the problem; the choice of qualitative or quantitative methods depending on the 'ongoing phase of the inductive-deductive research cycle' (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009, 87). It is an approach that is open to different assumptions, data collection methods and analysis (Creswell 2014). Reflexive pragmatism tends to place the researcher at the centre by exploring different approaches and leaving all possible interpretations open (Alvesson 2002).

Yet another research paradigm, the transformative or critical approach, arose as a result of criticism of the positivist view and seeks to advocate in favour of marginalized people. It is deeply ingrained into a political agenda and draws from Marxist and feminist ideologies as well as (for example) lesbian, gay and transgender activism. It is action oriented and aims to fight oppression (Creswell 2014). For example, feminists have pointed out how 'male domination has produced a masculine social science built around ideals such as objectivity, neutrality, distance, control, rationality and abstraction. Alternative ideals such as commitment, empathy, closeness, cooperation, intuition and specificity have been marginalized' (Alvesson 2002, 3). This perspective is also associated with mixed-methods research in that it rejects the positivist/constructivist dichotomy, as the preferred research method is the one that will promote greater social justice (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009). One criticism of critical research is that it aims to empower people to make changes but does not provide the tools to make these changes (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekeran 2001).

The research paradigm adopted as the 'lens' for this thesis is post-positivism, as the study investigates how a specific theory (the Theory of Planned Behaviour; Ajzen, 1991) could explain how individuals (professional accounting body members and students) make decisions about which accounting body to affiliate with. In doing so it considers which particular factors (attitude, subjective norm or perceived behavioural control) affect this decision in a state-controlled emerging economy. In order to answer this question, the decision had to be broken down into small variables to be tested thus requiring a predominantly quantitative research design. The aim of quantitative research, as described by Creswell (2014) is to test an objective theory (Theory of Planned Behaviour) by examining the relationships between variables (intention, attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control).

Quantitative research can be thought of in terms of numbers and closed-ended questions, while qualitative research deals with words and open-ended questions. Both quantitative and qualitative research offer representations of what we as individuals perceive as our reality, and no method is purely objective. Which approach to use depends in part on the researcher's knowledge of the population in question and the resources at his/her disposal (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight 2006). It also depends on what exactly the researcher is trying to find out. For example, if the researcher needs to establish standardised comparisons, adopting a quantitative approach would be appropriate whereas if she wishes to study a phenomenon in depth, qualitative research would be most appropriate. Practical considerations such as accessibility to the subjects would also be a factor. Quantitative research through online surveys allows the researcher to reach more respondents.

The distinctions between methods thought to be qualitative and quantitative are valid but the boundaries tend to blur under scrutiny. Newman and Benz (1998) consider that they represent two ends of a continuum rather than conflicting approaches as 'modern day scientific method is both inductive and deductive, objective and subjective' (ibid, 11). They claim that every research study includes each type of research method. Questionnaires are commonly used as fact finders of certain types of behaviours, as opposed to interviews which gather people's opinions and thus might be considered less objective. Most indicators do not fit the qualitative research paradigm but interviews can be designed to achieve transparency, consistency (understanding why inconsistencies occur), coherence (explaining contradictions) and communicability (feeling real).

In both qualitative and quantitative research methods the views of researchers and their expectations of the likely answers may affect the way they ask questions, who they ask and the significance of the answers. Researchers therefore need to be aware of their influence on their research. The relationship between the researcher and the subject largely determines the quality of the data collected (Mac an Ghail 1991).

A quantitative research approach was chosen for this thesis because of the need to test a theory and be able to generalise the findings. The following section gives an overview of the research method used.

4.2 Research method

The choice of research method depends on whether the intention is to answer a set of specified questions in advance or to let themes emerge from the respondents (Creswell 2014). The research method that was adopted for this thesis is a survey approach. Survey research is the method of collecting information by asking a sample of individuals, representative of a defined population, a set of pre-formulated questions in a predetermined sequence in a structured questionnaire (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight 2006). Survey research provides numeric or quantitative descriptions of trends, attitudes or opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell 2014). Surveys involve either systematic observation or systematic interviewing. Standardisation lies at the heart of survey research and the whole point is to get consistent answers to consistent questions (Blaxter, Hughes, and Tight 2006). Typically, surveys attempt to describe what is happening. A survey was the best approach for this thesis as the intent was to test a well-known theory (TPB, Ajzen 1991) in a context (professional accounting body affiliation in Vietnam) in which this theory had not been tested. However since this theory has already been applied to related fields such as accounting career choice (Felton, Buhr, and Northey 1994, Tan and Laswad 2006, Cohen and Hanno 1993) and the topic itself – professional accounting body affiliation – has been studied albeit in different contexts (Sidaway et al. 2013, Inglis et al. 2008), it can be considered that the specific questions to be answered have already been developed, explaining why a quantitative approach is the most appropriate. The survey design and questionnaire content is discussed in detail in Section 4.4 below.

However, survey instruments are not exempt from errors. The two major sources of error in surveys are random sampling error and systematic error (Zikmund et al. 2013). In order to minimise the first risk, the respondents were chosen either purposively because they were members and foundation candidates, or because they were representative of the population (accounting students in a large public university in Vietnam). The second type of risk was managed by the use of online rather than paper surveys, which greatly reduced inputting errors as the respondents input the data themselves while response bias errors were managed through anonymity and question type. The way questions are worded is crucial to the management of random and systematic errors that may be present in a survey-based study. Following Blaxter, Hughes and Tight's (2006) advice, the researcher avoided the use of ambiguous, imprecise or hypothetical questions which may have led to less accurate answers or the need to recall events from the far past. As much as possible the survey uses questions expressed in plain language and does not lead the respondents to particular answers, avoids negative and offensive questions, and asks only one open-ended question. The layout of the questionnaire is also important, so the researcher introduces herself and assures respondents of the confidentiality of the data collected. The research instrument is discussed in greater detail below.

When interpreting the data, the author considers 'data artefacts' (Sharp, Peters, and Howard 2002) which are merely a function of the particular set of data collected and would disappear when aggregated with other data. Finally, in order to make sense of the data, concepts were needed that enabled the researcher to focus on those factors and measurements relevant to the field of study.

The following section provides details about the participants used in this thesis.

4.3 Participants

The participants in this study are drawn from three discrete cohorts: candidates completing the foundation levels of CPA Australia in Vietnam (N=145), members, in Vietnam, of CPA Australia (N=173) and students studying an undergraduate accounting degree in Vietnam (N=167). Demographic data relating to the three sample groups are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 Respondents demographic data

| Respondent group | Gender (% of females) | Median age (percentage of the sample in that age bracket) | Multiple membership in %⁶ | Main work sector | % studying⁷ |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|--|---|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Foundation candidates | 62.2% | 25-34 (51.7%) | 6.9% | Big 4 (27.1%) | 19.1% |
| Members | 58.8% | 25-34 (51.8%) | 31.8% | Big 4 (44.4%) | 0% |
| Students | 68.1% | 18-24 (99.4%) | 0% | N/A | 100% |

CPA Australia foundation candidates are those people who are completing the foundation levels of the CPA Australia program (the CPA Australia program comprises 14 levels in total including 8 foundation levels and 6 professional levels). In order to become a member of CPA Australia, candidates have to complete all 14 levels of the CPA program or justify their membership with an equivalent professional qualification. However it is possible to be exempted from completing some or all of the foundation levels if the candidate holds a recognized undergraduate degree in business and, in particular, accounting. In this context, the foundation candidates are those without a recognized undergraduate degree in accounting. The members' sample comprises those people who are associate, full or fellow members of CPA Australia in Vietnam. Associate members are those completing the professional levels mentioned above thus it is important to distinguish between foundation candidates who are not yet members of CPA Australia and associate members who have partial members status. The foundation candidates and members were recruited through CPA Australia employees in Vietnam who contacted them. The student sample comes mainly from one of the largest (50,000 students) public universities in Vietnam, which offers undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in economics, business administration, finance, accounting, information systems and law and therefore represents typical accounting students in Vietnam. This sample was recruited through a lecturer working for that university.

⁶ The other main professional accounting bodies that the members' sample belongs to are the national ones (VACPA or VAA) and ACCA (UK).

⁷ Foundation candidates are mostly full-time employees studying for the CPA program in their spare time.

The respective response rates are 22 percent for foundation candidates, 33 percent for members and 32 percent for students, which sit well within the average response rate of between 10 and 25 percent for web-based surveys (Sauermann and Roach 2013). The sample size for this study is appropriate when considering Roscoe's (1975) rule of thumb. Roscoe (1975) suggests the following rule of thumb:

- Sample sizes larger than 30 and smaller than 500
- In multivariate research, the number of responses should be several times (10 times or more) as large as the number of variables in the study.

The reason for including students as a sample is that the student cohort is in a unique position to provide a diverse range of data for this investigation as they will eventually become professional accountants. Researchers have reported that approximately 80 percent of accounting graduates join a professional accounting body (De Lange, Jackling, and Gut 2006, Inglis et al. 2011a). This data allows the author to make informed conclusions regarding the determinants that influence membership choice in regard to professional affiliation and retention as this sample, as opposed to the other two, has not yet performed the behaviour and thus intention can be directly measured. The reason for including the members' sample, despite them having performed the behaviour already (they affiliated with a professional accounting body), is to explore specific factors affecting membership choice in an actual situation as opposed to a hypothetical case.

The chosen sampling design is purposive sampling, as it is necessary to obtain information from specific target groups who could provide the information. An email with the link to the online questionnaire was sent to foundation candidates and members of a professional accounting body – CPA Australia in Vietnam. Final year students enrolled in a university degree course from which graduates meet the entrance requirements to continue with further study with any of the professional accountancy bodies were surveyed during class time or online. This sample includes students from foreign and local universities located in Vietnam. The students' and foundation candidates' surveys assessed their intention to affiliate with a professional body and the practitioners' survey assessed the reason for their decisions (behaviour) as well as asked them to reflect on their prior intent. The surveys are discussed in more detail in the section that follows.

A potential limitation of this thesis relates to the limited sampling frame which uses one professional body and two universities - albeit one of them is public and generalist thus representative of a typical Vietnamese university. However, as dual

membership is a common feature of professional affiliation (Carnegie and Parker 1999, Sidaway et al. 2013), some members (refer Table 1) were affiliated with other professional bodies thus reducing any single body bias.

4.4 Research instrument

4.4.1 Questionnaire development

This thesis uses the TPB to better understand professional accounting body affiliation and retention in Vietnam for three cohorts by measuring the effects of each of the TPB's independent variables on intention to affiliate with a professional accounting body. The questions for the survey were developed using guidelines already established in the literature (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980, Ajzen 1991) and previously validated survey instruments described in the following section. The final questionnaires in English and Vietnamese are included in Appendix I.

Sound questionnaire design principles focus on three areas: the wording of questions, planning issues (how the variables were categorised, scaled and coded) and the general appearance of the questionnaire. The language and wording of the questionnaire focus on such issues as the type and form of questions asked (open-ended and closed questions, positively and negatively worded questions, avoiding double-barrelled, ambiguous, leading, loaded questions, questions prone to tapping socially desirable answers and those soliciting distant recall) (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekeran 2001).

Content validity, which refers to ensuring that a measure covers the domain of interest entirely without going beyond it, is established by adopting questionnaires taken from previous studies on the topic (Sidaway et al. 2013, Inglis et al. 2008), using commonly-listed benefits associated with affiliation available on the professional body websites as well as discussions with staff members of the professional body in Vietnam.⁸ To address the concern of face validity, which assesses whether the questionnaire appears to measure the concepts being investigated (Burns 1994), the questionnaires were piloted with ten foundation

⁸ The four approaches to establishing validity are face validity, content validity, criterion validity and construct validity.

candidates and 17 members who completed the questionnaire and provided comments as to its understandability, appropriateness to the Vietnamese context and, more generally, whether or not any item caused confusion. These people were randomly approached during an event organised by CPA Australia and completed the questionnaires on paper as well as providing written comments on the questionnaires themselves. Given the anonymous nature of the final online survey, they may or may not have been included in the respondents' sample. After considering these comments, a final version of the questionnaire was prepared. One of the main concerns regarding the questionnaire was its length but a decision was made not to reduce it as the items included were all needed in order to assess all the constructs of the theoretical model used. Convergent validity, which requires that concepts that should be related are indeed related, and discriminant validity, which assesses whether two different concepts are truly distinct (Zikmund et al. 2013), were assessed using factor analysis for the final sample. Convergent and discriminant validity are both subsets of construct validity.

The survey commences by asking questions measuring each of the constructs of the TPB through multi-scale items. The structure of the survey is outlined in Section 4.4.2 below. Note that the behavioural intention, attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control questions are comparable as to action, target, context, and time frame which follows Ajzen and Fishbein's (1980) guidelines. This is referred to as the principle of compatibility, which implies that 'a single behaviour can be viewed as involving an *action* directed at a *target*, performed in a given *context*, at a certain point in *time* (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980, Ajzen and Fishbein 2005). In this case the behaviour involved affiliating (action) with a professional accounting body (target) in Vietnam (context) in the near future (time).

The questionnaires were translated from English to Vietnamese by a research assistant and reverse translated from Vietnamese to English by another research assistant to ensure vocabulary equivalence. Any inconsistencies were resolved through discussion with the two research assistants. Finally, the questionnaire was created on Qualtrics with both English and Vietnamese versions so that respondents were able to choose which language they wanted through a drop-down menu.

4.4.2 Questionnaire content

The content of each of the questionnaires is considered in more detail below as it relates to variations in content specific to the three groups of participants. The members' final questionnaire (included in Appendix IA and ID) contains six questions measuring the constructs identified, as well as eight demographic and other related questions and a final open-ended question allowing respondents to add a comment relating to professional accounting body affiliation. Oppenheim (1966) advocates asking for personal data at the end rather than the beginning of the questionnaire because by then respondents would be more prone to sharing personal information if they were convinced of the genuineness of the questions asked. The first question asks respondents to rate 28 statements related to professional accounting bodies. Each factor belongs to one of the three independent variable constructs from the theory of planned behaviour (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control). In the second question the same factors listed in the first question had to be rated, on a seven-point scale, in terms of importance to the respondent. The third question asks respondents to rate the importance of factors affecting their decision to leave a professional accounting body. Questions 4, 5 and 6 are direct measures of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control and make use of semantic differential scales. As much as possible simple, short questions were preferred to long ones. As a rule of thumb, a question or statement should not exceed 20 words or one full line in print (Oppenheim 1966, Horst 1968).

The foundation candidates' questionnaire (included as Appendix IB and IE) differs from the members' questionnaire only in the inclusion of an additional question asking respondents to rate on a seven-point scale the likelihood (intention) that they would affiliate with the professional accounting body in the near future. The students' questionnaire (included as Appendix IC and IF) is shorter than the other two respondent groups' questionnaires as it requires only that respondents rate factors in terms of importance, thus obtaining a direct measure of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. It also asks students whether or not they already belonged to a professional accounting body.

Following Felton, Buhr, and Northey (1994), respondents were asked to indicate how strongly they believed that affiliating with a professional accounting body would lead to each of the outcomes. The strength of the beliefs is assessed on a seven-point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The evaluation of each belief is assessed by listing the same outcomes and asking respondents to indicate

how important, on a seven-point scale, each outcome is in affiliating with a specific accounting body. The choice of a seven-point scale rather than a five-point scale followed Ajzen's guidelines (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980, Ajzen 1991), despite the fact that research indicates that a five-point scale is as good as any and that an increase from five to seven on a rating scale does not improve the reliability of the ratings (Elmore and Beggs 1975). Under the strictest definition, the five-point or seven-point response scales may not be considered interval scales as we cannot be absolutely certain that the difference between 1 and 2 is the same as that between 2 and 3, etc. However in business research it has become conventional to accept that such response scales on questionnaires are interval scales (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekeran 2001, Zikmund et al. 2013). This assumption does not hold true for scales containing fewer than five categories as the difference between each point may become significant (Zikmund et al. 2013). An interval scale allows performing certain arithmetical operations on the data collected such as measuring central tendencies (through mean and median for example) and dispersion (through standard deviation and variance). One of the advantages of an interval scale is that it allows the researcher to measure the distance between any two points on the scale, whereas the nominal scale allows the researcher to distinguish groups only qualitatively by categorising them into mutually exclusive and collectively exhaustive sets and the ordinal scale to rank-order the preferences. The interval scale taps the differences, the order and the equality of the magnitude of the differences in the variable (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekeran 2001).

Both direct and indirect measures of attitude are obtained so that the indirect, belief-based measures could be validated against direct measures. Both direct and indirect measures of attitude are obtained even though Ajzen (1985) suggests that direct measures only would be sufficient. The direction of the poles is alternated so the positive and negative ends were not always on the same side (Heise 1970). Following Taylor and Todd's (1995b, 1995a) studies, the direct measure of attitude is assessed using a semantic differential scale. The semantic differential scale is used to assess respondents' attitudes towards a particular object or individual and is treated as an interval scale (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekeran 2001, Ajzen 1991). Respondents are presented with the sentence, "My affiliating with a professional accounting body in the near future is . . ." Three pairs of adjectives are rated, each on a seven-point bipolar (-3 to +3) scale – good/bad, useful/useless, positive/negative – where the direction of the scales alternates. The good-bad scale is found to load consistently highly on the evaluative factor,

regardless of the context (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). The scores across all three scales are then added together to form an average measure of attitude. These statements are used to answer research question 1a: 'To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or multiple accounting professional bodies?'

The indirect measure of attitude is derived from the product of the perceived importance (Felton, Dimnik, and Northey 1995, Manstead, Proffitt, and Smart 1983) of modal outcomes and the evaluation of those outcomes. Both importance and outcome are measured on unipolar scales, anchored respectively from not at all important to extremely important and strongly disagree to strongly agree. This use of the importance scale is contrary to Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) recommendations, however the justification is stated by Manstead, Proffitt and Smart (1983, 669); 'the fact that other investigations have reported similar findings despite using different methods of measuring attitudes to behaviour strongly suggests that the present findings are not simply artefacts of measurement procedures'. The strength of the attitudinal beliefs is assessed through statements such as 'Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities', 'Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status' and 'Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility opportunities'. The evaluation of each attitudinal belief was assessed through rating the importance of factors such as 'Reputation of the professional body', 'Career and networking opportunities' and 'International mobility opportunities'. These responses are used to answer Research Question 2: 'Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding professional accounting bodies' affiliation?' Following Chan and Fishbein (1993), the sum of the products of the 11 behavioural beliefs and their corresponding evaluations (in terms of importance) is treated as an indirect measure of attitude. Both direct and indirect measures of attitude should be highly correlated.

The important referents (people whose opinion is important) were not elicited through pre-survey interviews. Instead the referents, such as practitioners' employers, were selected separately as they might have wanted their staff members (the participants) to affiliate with a specific body (behaviour) and they had the ability to reward the behaviour (reward power) or punish non-behaviour (coercive power) (French and Raven 1959, Warshaw 1980). The prediction is that subjective norm does have a significant influence on intention because of Vietnam's collectivist culture and the fact that identification with a group may increase the influence of

normative pressure (Terry and Hogg 1996). This is translated into the second hypothesis: *Foundation candidates and students who perceive normative pressure towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.* Both direct and indirect measures of subjective norm are taken. Following Armitage and Conner (1999b, 2001), a direct measure of subjective norm is measured with one item using the following statement: 'Most people who are important to me think I should/should not affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future'. This statement is used to answer Research Question 1b: 'To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or multiple accounting professional bodies?' The indirect measure of normative pressure is assessed by statements related to the extent to which individuals perceive social pressure from four referents (employer, co-workers, friends, and family), multiplied by the motivation to comply with those individuals. The sum of the cross-products of the four normative beliefs and their corresponding motivations to comply is treated as an indirect measure of normative pressure. The strength of the normative beliefs is obtained through statements such as 'My employer would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia' and 'My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia'. The evaluation of each normative belief is obtained through statements such as 'Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer thinks I should do' and 'Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do'. These statements are used to answer Research Question 2: 'Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding professional accounting bodies' affiliation?' Again, both direct and indirect measures of subjective norm should be highly correlated allowing for internal reliability checks. Reliability is an indicator of a measure's internal consistency (Zikmund et al. 2013). It deals with whether a research instrument shows similar results on repeated measurements. 'Internal consistency of a multiple-scale item measure can be measured by correlating scores on subsets of items making up a scale' (Zikmund et al. 2013). Past studies (Davis 1989) suggest that to achieve reliability of at least 0.8, 10 items would be needed for each variable.

Both direct and indirect measures of perceived behavioural control are obtained. The typical direct measure of perceived behavioural control (PBC) assesses how easy or difficult it is for participants to perform the target behaviour. The three items chosen to reflect PBC are assessed, following Ajzen and Madden (1986) on 7-point semantic differential scales. Respondents were presented with the

sentence, “My affiliating with a professional accounting body in the near future is . . .” Three pairs of adjectives were rated, each on a seven-point bipolar (-3 to +3) scale, easy/difficult; up to me/not up to me; and under my control/out of my control, where the direction of the scales are alternating. These statements are used to answer Research Question 1c: ‘To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or multiple accounting professional bodies?’ The indirect measure of PBC is calculated by multiplying the perceived importance of inhibiting/facilitating factors by their power to inhibit or facilitate behaviour. The strength of the control beliefs is obtained through statements such as ‘I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the membership fee’ and ‘I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the program fee (professional level)’. The evaluation of each control belief is obtained through rating the importance of factors such as ‘Employer paying membership fees’ and ‘Employer paying program fees (professional level)’. These statements are used to answer Research Question 2: ‘Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding professional accounting bodies’ affiliation?’

Intention is measured using a seven-point bipolar (-3 to +3) scale anchored from unlikely to likely. Respondents were presented with the sentence “I intend to become a member of a professional accounting body in the near future”. To overcome deficiencies reported in previous studies in the same field, student participants were asked to self-predict their future affiliation (see example of (Davis 1989, Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw 1988) who in their meta-analysis examining intention and behaviour concluded that self-predictions or ‘behavioural expectations’ are among the most accurate predictors available for an individual’s future behaviour). The data from practitioners also provides a useful ‘reflective’ source for the intention as they have already performed the behaviour (affiliated with one or multiple professional bodies). This approach is consistent with most studies on intention-behaviour that report individual reactions in retrospect (Venkatesh et al. 2003, Venkatesh and Davis 2000).

Behaviour (affiliating with a professional accounting body) is measured by asking respondents to indicate which professional accounting body they belong to.

A summary of the variable measures and statements is provided in Table 3.

Table 3 Variables and variable measures

| Variables (from TPB) | Variable measures | Instrument source | Sample statements |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|
| Attitude | Benefits and costs of affiliating with a professional accounting body | Taylor and Todd (1995a, 1995b) | “affiliating with this professional body will enhance my career and networking opportunities”, “Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status” |
| Subjective norm | Perception of social pressure from referents to affiliate with a professional body | Armitage and Conner (2001) using multiple-scale items | “Most people who are important to me would think that I should affiliate with this professional body”. |
| PBC | Capability of affiliating with a professional body/ beliefs about ability to deal with specific inhibiting or facilitating factors | Ajzen (2002) | “it is easy to become member of this professional body”, “I am more likely to affiliate with a specific professional body if my employer covers the cost of membership” |
| Intention | Intention to affiliate with a professional body | Davis, Bagozzi and Warshaw (1989), Venkatesh et al. (2003) | “I intend to affiliate with this professional accounting body in the near future” |
| Behaviour | Joining a professional accounting body | Inglis et al. (2011) | “Of which professional accounting body are you a member?” |

The following section outlines the data collection technique used for this thesis.

4.5 Data collection technique

The questionnaires for CPA Australia members and foundation candidates were sent by e-mail with a Qualtrics link to CPA Australia staff members who forwarded them to their members and foundation candidates in order to ensure anonymity. Electronic questionnaires are used as they are easy to administer, can reach out globally, are relatively inexpensive (since they eliminate the cost of paper, postage, data entry and other administrative costs), ensure anonymity, fast delivery and turnaround time and respondents can answer at their convenience. They also reach additional respondents at minimal cost once the questionnaire has been created, and reach larger samples than paper-based questionnaires on a timely basis. Electronic questionnaires can also be tailored to specific respondents' characteristics and/or specific answers by using skip/redirect functions to avoid irrelevant questions (eg. If the respondent mention they are working, it would be useless to ask them what degree they are completing) or sequencing questions based on previous responses. They can also prompt respondents when they miss a question, ensuring a more complete response. Web-based surveys also allow accurate real-time data capture – as software can prevent entering incorrect data – and real-time data analysis (Zikmund et al. 2013). Their relative disadvantages are that computer literacy is essential and respondents must have access to the facility (Cavana, Delahaye, and Sekeran 2001). Some researchers have noticed that some respondents provide more genuine answers with e-mailed questionnaires than in person or on the phone (e.g. Zikmund et al. 2013). Sauermann and Roach (2013) also noticed that online surveys tend to suffer from low response rates due to over surveying, which may in turn affect statistical power, non-response bias and even the validity of the survey. As it is important to ensure that respondents are motivated to complete the questionnaire immediately, a brief cover letter was included and reminders were sent, a few weeks and then months after the first email. The gap between the two reminders can be explained by the end of the year western holiday and the beginning of the following lunar New Year (Tet) holiday.

When possible the e-mail should be sent to a single person or, if groups are emailed, the bcc field should be used to ensure anonymity. In the end, the best incentive for respondents to complete a survey is financial, in particular if they have a small chance to win a large prize (Sauermann and Roach 2013), which is why respondents to this survey automatically entered a lucky draw allowing them to win

a surface tablet. The choice of including an incentive is due to the length of the questionnaire (one of the settings of the survey ensured that respondents were not able to fill it out over and over again and thus increase their chance of winning a prize). The concern that respondents who are motivated by a financial incentive provide lower quality data has been dismissed by Sauermann and Roach (2013) who found that such respondents missed fewer items as they were more motivated to finish the survey. The results of the survey were downloaded as an Excel file from Qualtrics and uploaded to the SPSS software for subsequent analysis.

The students' questionnaires were completed on paper for convenience, as accounting lecturers at the surveyed university agreed to distribute it during class time. Only a Vietnamese version of the questionnaire was available to these students as they belonged to a public Vietnamese University and were unlikely to have a good command of English. The responses to the paper survey were then inputted by a research assistant into an Excel template created by the researcher and subsequently imported to SPSS for analysis.

4.6 Conclusion

The quantitative research method adopted for this thesis follows Azjen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behaviour. This involves assessing members and foundation candidates of a professional accounting body as well as final-year accounting students through questionnaires covering attitude, social pressure, perceived behavioural control and intention to affiliate with a professional accounting body. This provides a basis for answering the research questions identified in the introduction in Chapter 1, namely:

- RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?

- RQ2. Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding affiliation with professional accounting bodies?

In the following chapter the method of analysis and the findings of the thesis are presented.

Chapter 5 – Results

The previous chapter outlined the research methodology and design employed for this study, including the reasons for choosing a positivist research approach and quantitative method. It also detailed who the survey participants were, how the research instrument (questionnaire) was developed and its content. Finally it concluded with a description of the data collection. This chapter presents the results of the statistical tests performed on the data collected in order to address the following research questions:

- RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ2. Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding affiliation with professional accounting bodies?

The diagrammatic representation of the structure of this thesis follows and it highlights sequencing of this chapter in relation to the overall thesis.

| |
|--|
| CHAPTER1: INTRODUCTION-OVERVIEW OF THIS THESIS |
| CHAPTER2: LITERATURE REVIEW-IDENTIFICATION OF LITERATURE GAPS: - PROFESSIONALISATION OF ACCOUNTING IN STATE CONTROLLED EMERGING COUNTRIES - FACTORS AFFECTING MULTIPLE MEMBERSHIPS OF PROFESSIONAL ACCOUNTING BODIES |
| CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOUR (AJZEN, 1991) |
| CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN |
| CHAPTER 5: RESULTS |
| CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION OF RESULTS |
| CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION |

Figure 1 Overview of the thesis

Figure 5 below re-presents the Theory of Planned Behaviour model developed in Chapter 3 identifying how each set of salient beliefs (behavioural, normative and control beliefs) affects attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control respectively, which in turn affects intention. These descriptors represent the variables considered in the analysis that follows.

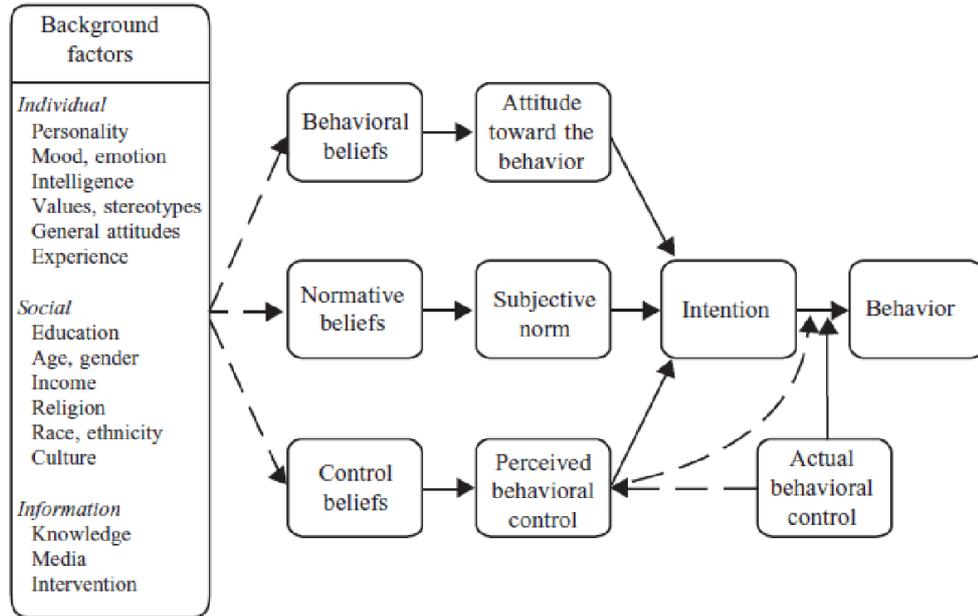


Figure 5 The developed TPB (Ajzen and Fishbein 2005)

The chapter is structured as follows: Section 5.1 details the data collection procedure, Section 5.2 provides demographic statistics for the respondents, Section 5.3 establishes the validity of the constructs. Section 5.4 establishes the reliability of the constructs, Section 5.5 analyses how much of the variance in intention can be explained, Section 5.6 provides an intergroup comparison in terms of salient beliefs (comparison of evaluations and importance of factors between samples, intenders and non-intenders comparison and single and multiple membership holders comparison), and finally Section 5.7 provides a conclusion.

5.1 Questionnaire

The quantitative data for this study were collected using three structured questionnaires administered to professional accounting body members, foundation candidates and students. The final questionnaire for professional accounting body members contains six questions measuring the constructs of interest, as well as eight demographic and other related questions. It also contains a final open-ended question allowing respondents to add any comment in relation to professional accounting body affiliation (see Appendix I for full questionnaires). The first part of the survey asks respondents to rate 28 statements corresponding to factors

affecting professional accounting body affiliation. Each factor assesses one of the salient beliefs that are hypothesised to affect the three independent variable constructs from the Theory of Planned Behaviour (PBC); attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control. The same factors listed in the first part of the survey are then rated, in the second part of the survey, on a seven-point scale in terms of importance to the respondent. The cross-product of the items in the first and second parts of the survey follows the expectancy-value model and is deemed to be an indirect measure of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control respectively. Questions in the third part of the survey measure factors affecting the decision by members and foundation candidates to cease affiliation with the professional body. This question is omitted for students as they are not affiliated with any specific professional accounting body. Parts 4, 5 and 6 of the survey included questions that are hypothesised to be direct measures of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control, and make use of semantic differential scales. The foundation candidates' questionnaire differs slightly from the members' questionnaire in that it includes an additional question asking respondents to rate on a seven-point scale their likelihood (intention) of affiliating with the professional accounting body in the near future. The students' questionnaire requires respondents only to rate deciding factors (e.g. career and networking opportunities, salary of members) in terms of importance and it also collects data to measure attitude, subjective norm and Perceived Behavioural Control (PBC). The students were also asked to indicate whether or not they already belonged to a professional accounting body.

The next section will present the statistics related to the respondents demographic.

5.2 Demographic statistics

The data is comprised of three samples: candidates in Vietnam completing the foundation level program of CPA Australia (N= 145), members in Vietnam of CPA Australia (N= 173) and students completing an undergraduate accounting degree at a public or private university in Vietnam (N= 167). All student surveys are included but 68 member surveys and 111 foundation candidate surveys are not used in the data analysis as they are incomplete. The total sample size of 485 does not include the incomplete responses.

Table 4 Demographic statistics of variables in part B of the questionnaire – foundation candidates (N=145)

| <i>Gender</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>Missing</i> | | | <i>Total</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|--------------|
| Number | 54 | 89 | 2 | | | 145 |
| Percentage (%) | 37.2% | 61.4% | 1.4% | | | 100% |
| <i>Age</i> | <i>18-24</i> | <i>25-34</i> | <i>35-44</i> | <i>45-54</i> | <i>Total</i> | |
| Number | 47 | 75 | 19 | 4 | 145 | |
| Percentage (%) | 32.4% | 51.7% | 13.1% | 2.8% | 100% | |
| <i>Multiple membership</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | | | | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 11 | 134 | | | | 145 |
| Percentage (%) | 7.6% | 92.4% | | | | 100% |
| <i>Work area</i> | <i>Big 4</i> | <i>MNC</i> | <i>Financial services</i> | <i>Accounting firm (non Big 4)</i> | <i>Other</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 39 | 29 | 25 | 14 | 38 | 145 |
| Percentage (%) | 27.1% | 20.1% | 17.4% | 9.7% | 25.7% | 100% |
| <i>Studying</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | <i>Missing</i> | | | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 27 | 114 | 4 | | | 145 |
| Percentage (%) | 18.6% | 78.6% | 2.8% | | | 100% |
| <i>University of study</i> | <i>University of Economics</i> | <i>Foreign Trade Uni</i> | <i>National Economics Uni</i> | <i>Other</i> | <i>Missing</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 43 | 18 | 11 | 62 | 11 | 145 |
| Percentage (%) | 29.7% | 12.4% | 7.6% | 42.7% | 7.6% | 100% |

As shown in Table 4, the foundation candidates sample comprises 61 percent females and 37 percent males with two respondents not indicating their gender. The respondents are mostly aged between 25 and 34 years (51%) and are largely (92%) members of only one professional accounting body. Almost one fifth (18.6%) of are currently studying at university while the remainder mostly work for one of the Big 4 accounting firms (26.9%), a multinational company (20%) or in financial services (17.2%). They have mostly (29.7%) studied at the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City. The large proportion of foundation candidates not

selecting one of the universities listed on the questionnaire comes from the fact that the questionnaire only listed the main universities in Vietnam but a lot of foundation candidates studied abroad.

Table 5 Demographic statistics of variables in part B of the questionnaire – members (N=173)

| <i>Gender</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>Missing</i> | | | | <i>Total</i> |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| Number | 68 | 97 | 8 | | | | 173 |
| Percentage | 39.3% | 56.1% | 4.6% | | | | 100% |
| <i>Age</i> | <i>18-24</i> | <i>25-34</i> | <i>35-44</i> | <i>45-54</i> | <i>55+</i> | <i>Missing</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 36 | 87 | 33 | 11 | 1 | 5 | 173 |
| Percentage | 20.8% | 50.3% | 19.1% | 6.4% | 0.6% | 2.9% | 100% |
| <i>Multiple membership</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | | | | | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 55 | 118 | | | | | 173 |
| Percentage | 31.8% | 68.2% | | | | | 100% |
| <i>Work area</i> | <i>Big 4</i> | <i>MNC</i> | <i>Financial services</i> | <i>Accounting firm (non Big 4)</i> | <i>Other</i> | <i>Total</i> | |
| Number | 75 | 29 | 16 | 28 | 25 | 173 | |
| Percentage | 43.4% | 16.8% | 9.2% | 16.2% | 14.4% | 100% | |
| <i>Studying</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | | | | | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 0 | 173 | | | | | 173 |
| Percentage | 0 | 100% | | | | | 100% |
| <i>University of study</i> | <i>University of Economics</i> | <i>Foreign Trade Uni</i> | <i>National Economics Uni</i> | <i>Other</i> | <i>Missing</i> | <i>Total</i> | |
| Number | 33 | 28 | 13 | 92 | 7 | 173 | |
| Percentage | 19.1% | 16.2% | 7.5% | 53.2% | 4% | 100% | |

As shown in Table 5, the members sample comprises 56 percent females and 39 percent males with eight respondents not indicating their gender. They are mostly aged between 25 and 34 years (50%) and 32 percent are members of more than one professional accounting body. Their employers are mainly the Big 4

accounting firms (43.4%), other accounting firms (16.2%) and multinational companies (16.8%), and they have not all come from one specific university (30 percent have studied at universities other than the ones listed in the questionnaire). The large proportion of members not selecting one of the universities listed on the questionnaire because the questionnaire only listed the main universities in Vietnam but a lot of members studied abroad.

Table 6 Demographic statistics of variables in part B of the questionnaire – students (N=167)

| | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| <i>Gender</i> | <i>Male</i> | <i>Female</i> | <i>Missing</i> | | | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 51 | 109 | 7 | | | 167 |
| Percentage (%) | 30.5% | 65.3% | 4.2% | | | 100% |
| <i>Age</i> | <i>18-24</i> | <i>25-34</i> | <i>35-44</i> | <i>45-54</i> | <i>Unknown</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 159 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 167 |
| Percentage (%) | 95.2% | 0.6% | 0% | 0% | 4.2% | 100% |
| <i>Multiple membership</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | | | | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 0 | 167 | | | | 167 |
| Percentage (%) | 0 | 100% | | | | 100% |
| <i>Student</i> | <i>Yes</i> | <i>No</i> | | | | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 167 | 0 | | | | 167 |
| Percentage (%) | 100% | 0 | | | | 100% |
| <i>University</i> | <i>University of Economics</i> | | | | <i>RMIT University</i> | <i>Total</i> |
| Number | 137 | | | | 30 | 167 |
| Percentage (%) | 82% | | | | 18% | 100% |

As shown in Table 6, the student sample comprises 65 percent females and 30 percent males with seven respondents not indicating their gender. They are mostly aged between 18 and 24 years (95%) and none of them are affiliated with a professional accounting body. The majority (82%) are currently studying at the University of Economics in Ho Chi Minh City while the remainder studies at RMIT University in either Ho Chi Minh City or Hanoi.

The next section will ascertain the construct validity.

5.3 Construct validity

This section includes details of the analysis conducted to test the salient beliefs construct validity to determine whether the data fits the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB) model. The salient beliefs are the behavioural, normative and control beliefs in Figure 5, page 107, and are measured from statements related to:

- outcomes of affiliating with a professional accounting body (e.g. 'enhancing career opportunities', 'membership benefits are good', 'enhancing professional status') and importance of these outcomes. The cross-product of these two items is deemed to be the indirect measure of attitude.
- normative pressure from important referents to affiliate with a professional body and motivation to comply with these referents. The cross-product of these two items is deemed to be the indirect measure of subjective norm.
- perceived factors positively or negatively affecting the ability to affiliate with a professional body (e.g. 'the CPA program is difficult', 'I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the membership fee') and importance of these factors. The cross-product of these two items is deemed to be the indirect measure of perceived behavioural control.

This section then establishes whether the belief-based measures (indirect measures of attitude, subjective norm and PBC) are correlated with their respective direct measures measured through semantic differential scales (e.g. 'Affiliating with this professional accounting body is good-bad' as one measure of attitude, 'Most people who are important to me think I should-should not affiliate this professional accounting body' as a measure of subjective norm and 'Affiliating with this professional accounting body is up to me-not up to me' as a measure of perceived behavioural control).

5.3.1 Salient beliefs construct validity

Construct validity of the belief-based (indirect) measures of attitude, subjective norm and PBC constructs (salient beliefs) is investigated using factor

analysis, a procedure used to ascertain the fundamental structure of a set of indicator items (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003). Exploratory factor analysis is used to determine if the items load on the *a priori* constructs as simple structures, identify items which may be loaded into several factors, and highlight those items that do not load onto any factor in a way that is theoretically meaningful. The items to be tested are those which form part of the expectancy-value model or so-called indirect measures of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control described in the previous section. Exploratory factor analysis is used for two primary purposes: (a) to reduce the number of items so that the remaining items maximize the explained variance in the scale and to maximize reliability and (b) to identify the potential underlying dimensions of the scale (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003). Principle axis factor analysis with direct oblimin rotation is selected, based on there being a hypothesized correlation between the different concepts of factors, namely attitude, subjective norm and PBC, affecting professional accounting body affiliation being measured by this instrument. For example a positive attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body (e.g. high earning) may in fact be related to normative pressure to get a financially sustainable job.

The validity of the direct measures of the Theory of Planned Behaviour model (attitude, subjective norm and Perceived Behavioural Control) is not assessed given the limited number of items for each factor (three items for attitude, one for subjective norm and two for Perceived Behavioural Control).

Since belief-based measures are a product of the perceived importance of modal outcomes and the evaluation of those outcomes, the factor analysis is performed in two steps. The initial factor analysis is conducted with the data relating to the participants' responses on evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body (part 1, items 1 to 21, 23, 25 and 27 of the members and foundation candidates questionnaire reproduced in table 6), then the identified factor structure using this data was, with subsequent analysis, tested with the data relating to the perceived importance of these behavioural and control outcomes (part 2 of the members and foundation candidates questionnaire) and motivation to comply for the subjective norm construct (part 1, items 22, 24, 26 and 28 of the members and foundation candidates questionnaire reproduced in Table 7).

Table 7 Evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body, normative pressure from important referents and motivation to comply with referents.

| |
|---|
| 1. The assessment fee of this professional accounting body is high |
| 2. The on-going membership fees are high |
| 3. The program/tuition fees are high |
| 4. The professional education programs are of high quality |
| 5. This professional accounting body has a good reputation |
| 6. The membership benefits and privileges are good |
| 7. The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible |
| 8. Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities |
| 9. Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies are facilitated |
| 10. Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status |
| 11. Its international recognition is high |
| 12. Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility opportunities |
| 13. The members of this professional accounting are recognised as experts |
| 14. The salary of the members of the accounting body are high |
| 15. The CPA program is difficult |
| 16. Work commitments limit my ability to study |
| 17. I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the membership fee |
| 18. I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the program fee (professional level) |
| 19. It is easy to become a member |
| 20. It is easy to remain a member |
| 21. My employer would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia |
| 22. Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer think I should do |
| 23. My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia |
| 24. Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do |

Table 7 (continued) Evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body, normative pressure from important referents and motivation to comply with referents.

| |
|--|
| 25. My family would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia |
| 26. Generally speaking, I want to do what my family think I should do |
| 27. My friends would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia |
| 28. Generally speaking, I want to do what my friends think I should do |

As the overall sample is made up of three distinct sample groups, the factor analysis is performed first for the overall sample then for each sample group separately (except for the students sample as these do not rate behavioural and control beliefs).

5.3.1.1 Salient beliefs validity – overall sample

Factorability can be assessed through measures of sampling adequacy such as the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and the Bartlett’s test of sphericity. Details of the results of the outcomes evaluation are reported here. The Bartlett’s test of sphericity is significant ($\chi^2 = 3738.908$, $p = .000$) indicating a determinant of between 0 and 1, minimum requirements for a correlation matrix to be factorable (Bartlett 1950, Gorsuch 1983). The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) estimate of sampling adequacy is 0.855, proving additional support for the factorability of the data as this estimate should be greater than 0.6 (Tabachnick and Fidell 1996, Kaiser 1970, 1974).

The loadings for each factor, the individual percentage of variance explained and the individual eigenvalues are presented in Table 8.

Table 8 Factor loadings – Evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body (overall sample)

| Items | Factor loadings | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Attitude | Subjective norm | Cost of affiliation | Inhibiting factors of affiliation | Membership access difficulties | Program difficulties |
| 1.1 The assessment fee is high | | | 0.672 | | | |
| 1.2 The on-going membership fees are high | | | 0.832 | | | |
| 1.3 The program/tuition fees are high | | | 0.786 | | | |
| 1.4 The professional education programs are of high quality | 0.646 | | | | | |
| 1.5 This professional accounting body has a good reputation | 0.736 | | | | | |
| 1.6 The membership benefits and privileges are good | 0.686 | | | | | |
| 1.7 The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | 0.506 | | | | | |
| 1.8 Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities | 0.836 | | | | | |
| 1.9 Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies are facilitated | 0.780 | | | | | |
| 1.10 Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | 0.857 | | | | | |
| 1.11 Its international recognition is high | 0.836 | | | | | |
| 1.12 Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility opportunities | 0.775 | | | | | |

Table 8 (continued) Factor loadings – Evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body (overall sample)

| Items | Attitude | Subjective norm | Cost of affiliation | Inhibiting factors of affiliation | Membership access difficulties | Program difficulties |
|---|----------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1.13 The members of this professional accounting body are recognised as experts | 0.799 | | | | | |
| 1.14 The salary of the members of the accounting body are high | 0.662 | | | | | |
| 1.15 The CPA program is difficult | | | | | | 0.501 |
| 1.16 Work commitments limit my ability to study | | | | | | 0.690 |
| 1.17 I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the membership fee | | | | -0.929 | | |
| 1.18 I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the program fee (professional level) | | | | -0.942 | | |
| 1.19 It is easy to become a member | | | | | -0.933 | |
| 1.20 It is easy to remain a member | | | | | -0.905 | |
| 1.21 My employer would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.655 | | | | |
| 1.23 My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.856 | | | | |
| 1.25 My family would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.875 | | | | |
| 1.27 My friends would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.805 | | | | |

NB: the negative factor loading indicates that the item is negatively correlated with the factor.

Results of the initial factor analysis show several items with loadings of more than 0.40 for at least two components, denoting that each has a complex structure and are thus removed from the factor analysis (Field 2009). The final analysis presented in Table 7 identifies six dimensions with Eigen-values exceeding 1 and which in total account for 67.2 percent of the variance:

- 'attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body',
- 'normative pressure to affiliate',
- 'cost of affiliation',
- 'Inhibiting factors of affiliation',
- 'membership access difficulties' and
- program difficulties'.

If we compare these six factors with the Theory of Planned Behaviour model, it will be noted that the Perceived Behavioural Control, as described by Ajzen (1991) is in fact in this context made of four separate constructs being the last four factors.

For the factor analysis relating to the importance of outcomes and motivation to comply responses, the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($\chi^2 = 2810.871$, $p = .000$) indicating a determinant of between 0 and 1, minimum requirements for a correlation matrix to be factorable (Bartlett 1950, Gorsuch 1983). The KMO estimate of sampling adequacy is 0.839, proving additional support for the factorability of the data (Tabachnick and Fidell 1996). The loadings for each factor, the individual percentage of variance explained and the individual eigenvalues are presented in Table 9.

Table 9 Factor loadings – motivation to comply with important referents and perceived importance of outcomes (overall sample)

| Items | Factor | | | | | |
|--|----------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----|
| | Attitude | Subjective norm | Cost of affiliation | Inhibiting factors of affiliation | Membership access difficulties | 6 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer think I should do | | 0.751 | | | | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do | | 0.872 | | | | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my family think I should do | | 0.923 | | | | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my friends think I should do | | 0.883 | | | | |
| Importance of Assessment fee | | | 0.824 | | | |
| Importance of On-going membership fees | | | 0.879 | | | |
| Importance of Program/tuition fees | 0.569 | | 0.761 | | | |
| Importance of Quality of professional education programs | 0.847 | | | | | |
| Importance of reputation of the professional body | 0.909 | | | | | |
| Importance of flexibility of the program | 0.832 | | | | -0.574 | |
| Importance of career and networking opportunities | 0.930 | | | | | |
| Importance of reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies | 0.795 | | | | | 0.5 |

Table 9 (continued) Factor loadings – motivation to comply with important referents and perceived importance of outcomes (overall sample)

| Items | Attitude | Subjective norm | Cost of affiliation | Inhibiting factors of affiliation | Membership access difficulties | 6 |
|---|----------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| Importance of international recognition | 0.935 | | | | | |
| Importance of professional status | 0.922 | | | | | |
| Importance of international mobility opportunities | 0.890 | | | | | |
| Importance of perceived expertise of the members | 0.795 | | | | | |
| Importance of salary of the members | 0.741 | | | | -0.520 | |
| Importance of entry requirements (including practical experience) | 0.536 | | | 0.596 | -0.503 | |
| Importance of employer paying membership fees | | | | 0.894 | | |
| Importance of employer paying program fees (professional level) | | | | 0.902 | | |
| Importance of Continuing professional development/education | 0.735 | | | | | |
| Importance of difficulty of the program | | | | | -0.862 | |
| Importance of time available for study | 0.653 | | | | -0.818 | |
| Importance of exam mode | 0.637 | | | | -0.830 | |
| Eigenvalue | 13.765 | 3.742 | 2.217 | 2.203 | 1.931 | 1.057 |
| Variance explained (%) | 43.015 | 11.695 | 6.927 | 6.883 | 6.035 | 3.304 |

The factor analysis relating to the importance of behavioural and control beliefs and motivation to comply with important referents reveals a similar factors structure, with a few exceptions such as 'program/tuition fees', 'flexibility of the program', 'reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies', 'salary of the members', 'entry requirements', 'time available for study' and 'exam mode' loading on multiple factors, however the main factor loadings are mostly in line with the above structure. 'Difficulty of the program' and 'time available for study' load on different factors from the first factor analysis. However, since factors 5 and 6 are both subsets of the PBC construct, the difference is not considered theoretically meaningful.

5.3.1.2 Salient beliefs construct validity – foundation candidates

Regarding the foundation candidates outcomes evaluation, the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($\chi^2 = 1912.174$, $p = .000$) indicating a determinant of between 0 and 1, minimum requirements for a correlation matrix to be factorable (Bartlett 1950, Gorsuch 1983). The Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) estimate of sampling adequacy is 0.826, proving additional support for the factorability of the data.

The loadings for each factor, the individual percentage of variance explained and the individual eigenvalues are presented in Table 10.

Table 10 Factor loadings – Evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body (foundation candidates)

| Items | Factor loadings | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | Attitude | Subjective norm | Cost of affiliation | Inhibiting factors of affiliation | Membership access difficulties | Program difficulties |
| 1.1 The assessment fee is high | | | | | | 0.583 |
| 1.2 The on-going membership fees are high | | | 0.743 | | | |
| 1.3 The program/tuition fees are high | | | 0.736 | | | |
| 1.4 The professional education programs are of high quality | 0.607 | | | | | |
| 1.5 This professional accounting body has a good reputation | 0.646 | | | | | |
| 1.6 The membership benefits and privileges are good | 0.636 | | | | | |
| 1.7 The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | 0.586 | | | | | |
| 1.8 Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities | 0.822 | | | | | |
| 1.9 Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies are facilitated | 0.750 | | | | | |
| 1.10 Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | 0.824 | | | | | |
| 1.11 Its international recognition is high | 0.807 | | | | | |

Table 10 (continued) Factor loadings – Evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body (foundation candidates)

| Items | Attitude | Subjective norm | Cost of affiliation | Inhibiting factors of affiliation | Membership access difficulties | Program difficulties |
|---|----------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1.13 The members of this professional accounting body are recognised as experts | 0.832 | | | | | |
| 1.14 The salary of the members of the accounting body are high | 0.648 | | | | | |
| 1.15 The CPA program is difficult | 0.539 | | | | | |
| 1.17 I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the membership fee | | 0.552 | | -0.521 | | |
| 1.18 I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the program fee (professional level) | | | | 0.562 | | |
| 1.19 It is easy to become a member | | | | | 0.621 | |
| 1.20 It is easy to remain a member | | | | | 0.578 | |
| 1.21 My employer would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 0.507 | 0.504 | | | | |
| 1.23 My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.654 | | | | |
| 1.25 My family would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.627 | | | | |
| Eigenvalue | 7.661 | 2.742 | 2.129 | 1.550 | 1.460 | 1.095 |
| Variance explained (%) | 31.92 | 11.43 | 8.87 | 6.46 | 6.08 | 4.56 |

NB: the negative factor loading indicates that the item is negatively correlated with the factor.

Results of the initial factor analysis show several items with loadings of more than 0.40 for at least two components, denoting that each has a complex structure and are thus removed from the factor analysis (Field 2009). The final analysis presented in Table 9 identifies six dimensions with Eigen-values exceeding 1 and which in total account for 69.3 percent of the variance. These factors are, with a few exceptions, in line with the factors identified through the overall sample.

5.3.1.3 Salient beliefs constructs validity - members

Regarding the members' outcomes evaluation, the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant ($\chi^2 = 2069.329$, $p = .000$) and the Keiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) estimate of sampling adequacy is 0.825, proving additional support for the factorability of the data.

The loadings for each factor, the individual percentage of variance explained and the individual eigenvalues are presented in Table 11.

Table 11 Factor loadings – Evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body (members)

| Items | Factor loadings | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| | Attitude | Subjective norm | Cost of affiliation | Inhibiting factors of affiliation | Membership access difficulties | Program flexibility | Program difficulties |
| 1.1 The assessment fee is high | | | 0.738 | | | | |
| 1.2 The on-going membership fees are high | | | 0.844 | | | | |
| 1.3 The program/tuition fees are high | | | 0.755 | | | | |
| 1.4 The professional education programs are of high quality | 0.682 | | | | | | |
| 1.5 This professional accounting body has a good reputation | 0.777 | | | | | | |
| 1.6 The membership benefits and privileges are good | 0.754 | | | | | | |
| 1.7 The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | | | | | | -0.711 | |
| 1.8 Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities | 0.765 | | | | | | |
| 1.9 Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies are facilitated | 0.756 | | | | | | |
| 1.10 Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | 0.820 | | | | | | |
| 1.11 Its international recognition is high | 0.811 | | | | | | |
| 1.12 Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility opportunities | 0.799 | | | | | | |

Table 11 (continued) Factor loadings – Evaluation of outcomes related to affiliating with a professional accounting body (members)

| | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1.13 The members of this professional accounting body are recognised as experts | 0.770 | | | | | | |
| 1.14 The salary of the members of the accounting body are high | 0.679 | | | | | | |
| 1.15 The CPA program is difficult | | | | | | | 0.863 |
| 1.16 Work commitments limit my ability to study | | | | | | | 0.813 |
| 1.17 I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the membership fee | | | | 0.936 | | | |
| 1.18 I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the program fee | | | | 0.933 | | | |
| 1.19 It is easy to become a member | | | | | | 0.933 | |
| 1.20 It is easy to remain a member | | | | | | 0.930 | |
| 1.21 My employer would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.603 | | | | | |
| 1.23 My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.877 | | | | | |
| 1.25 My family would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.893 | | | | | |
| 1.27 My friends would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | | 0.829 | | | | | |
| Eigenvalue | 7.199 | 2.650 | 2.292 | 1.647 | 1.330 | 1.170 | 1.059 |
| Variance explained (%) | 30 | 11.04 | 9.55 | 6.86 | 5.54 | 4.87 | 4.41 |

NB: the negative factor loading indicates that the item is negatively correlated with the factor.

Results of the initial factor analysis show several items with loadings of more than 0.40 for at least two components, denoting that each has a complex structure and are thus removed from the factor analysis (Field 2009). The final analysis presented in Table 10 identifies seven dimensions with Eigen-values exceeding 1 and which in total account for 72.8 percent of the variance. These dimensions are, with a few exceptions, in line with the factors identified through the overall sample as dimensions 6 and 7 for the members include the same three factors as dimension 6 for the overall sample.

5.3.2 Direct-indirect measure correlations

Both direct and indirect measures of attitude, subjective norm and PBC are obtained so that the indirect, belief-based measures can be validated against direct measures.

The indirect measure of attitude is calculated from the product of the perceived importance of modal outcomes and the evaluation of those outcomes. The indirect measure of normative pressure is assessed by statements related to the extent to which individuals perceive social pressure from four referents (employer, co-workers, friends, and family), multiplied by the motivation to comply with those individuals. The mean of these items provides a measure of normative beliefs. The indirect measure of PBC is calculated by multiplying the perceived importance of inhibiting/facilitating factors by their power to inhibit or facilitate behaviour.

The correlations between direct and indirect measures of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control are reported in Table 12.

Table 12 Correlation between direct and indirect measures of attitude, subjective norm and PBC

| r (p value) | Attitude | Subjective norm | PBC |
|----------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Behavioural beliefs | 0.355 (0.000) | | |
| Normative beliefs | | 0.15 (0.008) | |
| Control beliefs | | | 0.104 (0.086) |

The correlation between the direct and indirect measures of attitude is moderate ($r=0.355$), similar to the levels reported by Ajzen (1991) with an average of 0.32 to 0.6 but lower than Armitage and Conner's (2001) meta-analysis average (0.5). The 0.15 direct and indirect measure of subjective norm correlation is outside the range reported by Ajzen (1991) of 0.40 to 0.80 and Armitage and Conner's (2001) range which approximates 0.5. This could be explained by the fact that the important referents were not elicited through pre-survey interviews, however these important referents were chosen on the basis of referents commonly found in the relevant literature. The correlation between the direct and indirect measures of perceived behavioural control (0.104) is also lower than the 0.52 reported by Armitage and Conner (2001). These low correlations between global and belief-based measures could be explained by the fact that 'the expectancy-value formulation may fail adequately to describe the process whereby individual beliefs combine to produce the global response' (Ajzen 1991, 197). It might also be that not all salient beliefs can be assessed or that other mechanisms come into play that are not accounted for in the model. Cohen and Hanno (1993) found a correlation between direct and indirect measures of subjective norm and PBC of 0.781 and 0.687 respectively.

The next section will test the reliability of the attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control variables.

5.4 Reliability of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control variables

To determine that the results from this study are reliable and replicable across other potential studies, reliability estimates of the independent variables (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) are obtained using internal consistency, which requires only a single administration of the items to respondents to conduct. However, the use of internal consistency to estimate reliability assumes the availability of multiple measures or items for measuring a given construct (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma 2003). The most frequently used measure of reliability is a coefficient alpha, which is concerned with the degree of the interrelatedness among a set of items designed to measure a single construct. Cronbach alpha is calculated by

averaging all possible 'split-half' correlation coefficients resulting from different ways of splitting the scale items. Its value varies from 0 to 1 with a coefficient lower than 0.6 indicating unsatisfactory internal consistency reliability (Malhotra and Birks 2007).

Coefficient alpha should be used only after the unidimensionality of the construct has been established (Clark and Watson 1995). To establish the unidimensionality of each construct, the author looked at the correlations between each construct. The mean correlations for each of the four dimensions with all other dimensions are presented below in Table 13.

Table 13 Variables correlations

| r (p value) | Intention | Attitude | Subjective norm | PBC |
|-----------------|-----------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| Intention | 1 | 0.366 (0.000) | 0.215 (0.000) | 0.188 (0.002) |
| Attitude | | 1 | 0.487 (0.000) | 0.449 (0.000) |
| Subjective norm | | | 1 | 0.382 (0.000) |
| PBC | | | | 1 |

All estimates are low correlations, demonstrating that although the dimensions are correlated with each other they are also discriminatory, measuring different characteristics (Portney and Watkins 2000). Each of these four dimensions is measuring a unique unidimensional construct.

The attitude scale is constructed from the mean of the three direct measures of attitude namely 'Affiliating with a professional accounting body is good/bad', 'Affiliating with a professional accounting body is positive/negative', 'Affiliating with a professional accounting body is useful/useless'. The reliability for this scale is 0.784 which is considered acceptable as an estimate of 0.60 has long been regarded as a threshold of reliability for research purposes (Nunnally 1978).

The perceived behavioural control scale was initially constructed as the mean of the three direct measures of PBC namely 'Affiliating with a professional accounting

body is difficult/easy', 'Affiliating with a professional accounting body is up to me/not up to me', 'Affiliating with a professional accounting body is under my control/out of my control'. However, it was decided to remove the first question from this measure as asking individuals about the ease or difficulty of performing a particular behaviour does not differentiate between external (availability) and internal factors (motivation) (Armitage and Conner 1999a), and can thus be confusing for the respondents who would most likely consider the other two measures as internal factors only (controllability). The reliability of this scale is 0.780.

5.5 Results Research Question 1

In order to answer research questions 1a, 1b and 1c and to determine whether attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control can explain variations in students' and foundation candidates' intentions to affiliate with a professional accounting body, a regression analysis is performed. Intention is regressed on the attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control scales. Three separate regression analyses are performed: one overall regression for the two samples combined and one for each sample.

5.5.1 Results of the regression analysis for foundation candidates and students

The descriptive statistics of the various constructs for the total population utilized in the regression analysis are presented in table 13. All the items are measured on a bipolar scale from -3 to +3 with +3 indicating for each variable respectively:

- definite intention to affiliate with a professional accounting body,
- a positive attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body.
- the perception that important referents think the respondent should affiliate with a professional accounting body and,
- the perception that there are no inhibiting factors to affiliating with a professional accounting body.

Table 14 Intention, Attitude, SN and PBC descriptive statistics – full sample

| | Overall mean | Overall Std. Deviation | Overall N |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|------------------------|-----------|
| Intention | 1.18 | 1.78 | 279 |
| Attitude (ATT) | 1.59 | 1.30 | 291 |
| Subjective norm (SN) | 1.59 | 1.46 | 294 |
| Perceived behavioural control (PBC) | 1.20 | 1.31 | 297 |

In general, all students and foundation candidates have a favourable attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body (M=1.59), they perceive some pressure to do so (M=1.59) and perceive no inhibiting factors to do so (M=1.20). Consequently, they intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future (M=1.18).

The basic assumptions of the regression model – linearity, normality of errors, homoscedasticity (homogeneity of residuals variance), collinearity and independence of errors - are tested and the results are provided in Appendix II.

Table 15 Regression Results of Intention on Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioural Control – full sample

| Predictors | ATT | SN | PBC | R | R ² |
|---------------|----------|-------|-------|----------|----------------|
| BI=ATT+SN+PBC | 0.442*** | 0.115 | 0.034 | 0.383*** | 0.146*** |

*** significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

As shown in Table 15, the independent variables explain a significant 14.6 percent of the variance in intention. Additionally, only attitude is statistically significant and with a high coefficient showing that only positive or negative attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body affects intention to affiliate with that body. Normative pressure and factors facilitating or inhibiting affiliation do not seem to have any significant effect on intention.

5.5.2 Results of the regression analysis for the foundation candidates sample

The descriptive statistics of the various constructs utilised in the foundation candidates regression analysis are presented in table 16.

Table 16 Foundation candidates Intention, Attitude, SN and PBC descriptive statistics

| | Mean | Std. Deviation | N |
|-------------------------------|------|----------------|-----|
| Intention | 2.04 | 1.24 | 123 |
| Attitude | 1.97 | 1.12 | 139 |
| Subjective norm | 1.50 | 1.50 | 144 |
| Perceived behavioural control | 1.44 | 1.29 | 138 |

In general, foundation candidates have a favourable attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body as the mean (M=1.97) is positive, they perceive some pressure to do so (M=1.50) and perceived no inhibiting factor to do so (M=1.44). Consequently, they intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future (M=2.04).

Table 17 Foundation candidates Regression Results of Intention on Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioural Control

| Predictors | ATT | SN | PBC | R | R ² |
|---------------|----------|----------|-------|----------|----------------|
| BI=ATT+SN+PBC | 0.355*** | 0.183*** | 0.012 | 0.485*** | 0.236*** |

*** significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Since the residuals for the foundation candidates sample are heteroskedastic (the variance of the errors is heterogeneous, see Appendix II), robust standard errors are generated. Data in Table 17 show that the regression model is statistically significant and that the independent variables explain 23.6% of the variance in intention. Attitude is statistically significant in explaining intention to affiliate with a professional

accounting body. Subjective norm is also significant which means that foundation candidates do feel some normative pressure, albeit a limited one (coefficient is 0.183), to affiliate with a professional accounting body. Perceived behavioural control is not significant.

5.5.3 Results of the regression analysis for the students sample

The descriptive statistics of the various constructs utilised in the students' regression analysis are presented in Table 18.

Table 18 Students Intention, Attitude, SN and PBC descriptive statistics

| | Mean | Std Deviation | N |
|-------------------------------|------|---------------|-----|
| Intention | 0.58 | 1.86 | 156 |
| Subjective norm | 1.62 | 1.43 | 150 |
| Perceived behavioural control | 1.06 | 1.27 | 159 |
| Attitude | 1.33 | 1.34 | 152 |

In general, students have a favourable attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body (M=1.32), they perceive some pressure to do so (M=1.62) and perceive no inhibiting factor to do so (M=1.06). Consequently, they intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future (M=0.58) albeit only slightly.

Table 19 Students regression Results of Intention on Attitude, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioural Control

| Predictors | ATT | SN | PBC | R | R ² |
|---------------|---------|--------|--------|--------|----------------|
| BI=ATT+SN+PBC | 0.260** | 0.200* | -0.048 | 0.273* | 0.075* |

* significant at the 0.1 level (2-tailed) ** significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Data in Table 19 shows that the regression model is statistically significant but the independent variables explain only 7.5 percent of the variance. Similarly to the foundation candidates' model, attitude is statistically significant in explaining intention to affiliate with a professional accounting body. However, contrary to the foundation candidates model, subjective norm is significant at the 10% level which means that students do feel some normative pressure, albeit a limited one (coefficient is 0.200) to affiliate with a professional accounting body. Perceived behavioural control is once again insignificant.

This section has provided results for answering Research Question 1. The next section will provide support to answer Research Question 2.

5.6 Results Research Question 2

This section explores whether or not there were any significant differences in terms of salient beliefs between the three sample groups, thus answering Research Question 2: 'Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding professional accounting bodies' affiliation?'

Data from practitioners are compared against data from foundation candidates and final year students who, as new entrants, are about to embark on their careers as professional accountants. In making this comparison the thesis provides information on the reported differences in importance placed on variables associated with intention and decisions about membership of a professional body. It also provides evidence of changes between intention and behaviour over time as students, foundation candidates and members are all at different stages in their careers.

5.6.1 Intragroup evaluations of salient beliefs

Before comparing the different sample groups on different characteristics, this section explores the individual group ratings and rankings of the proposed salient beliefs to determine which beliefs contributed the most to their overall beliefs about professional accounting bodies. Accounting students are excluded from this analysis as they were not required to rate belief statements.

5.6.1.1 Foundation candidate evaluations of salient beliefs

5.6.1.1.1 Foundation candidates salient beliefs outcome evaluation

Data in table 20 show the ranking of the outcome evaluation of salient beliefs for foundation candidates from the statements with the highest level of agreement to those with the lowest level of agreement on a seven-point scale with 7 being the highest level of agreement possible.

Table 20 Salient beliefs outcome evaluation ranking (foundation candidates)

| Salient beliefs | Mean |
|--|-------------|
| This professional accounting body has a good reputation | 6.25 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and | 6.15 |
| The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | 6.12 |
| Its international recognition is high | 6.09 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | 6.07 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international | 5.89 |
| The professional education programs are of high quality | 5.88 |
| The members of this professional accounting body are recognised as experts | 5.71 |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer | 5.71 |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional | 5.7 |
| The program/tuition fees are high | 5.69 |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer | 5.57 |
| The membership benefits and privileges are good | 5.45 |
| The on-going membership fees are high | 5.4 |
| The CPA program is difficult | 5.28 |
| Work commitments limit my ability to study | 5.27 |
| The salaries of the members of the accounting body are high | 5.16 |
| the assessment fee is high | 4.95 |

Table 20 (continued) Salient beliefs outcome evaluation ranking (foundation candidates)

| | |
|---|------|
| My employer would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 4.95 |
| My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 4.57 |
| It is easy to remain a member | 4.42 |
| My friends would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 4.27 |
| My family would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 4.2 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer thinks I should do | 4.15 |
| It is easy to become a member | 4.08 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my family thinks I should do | 3.79 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my friends think I should do | 3.63 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do | 3.56 |

The reputation of the professional accounting body is the belief with the highest level of agreement, and motivation to comply with co-workers is the one with the lowest ranking. Overall foundation candidates find that CPA Australia has a good reputation (M=6.25), affiliating with CPA Australia would enhance their careers and networking opportunities (M=6.15), the program is flexible (M=6.12), its international recognition is high (M=6.09), and affiliating with CPA Australia would enhance their professional status (M=6.07) and international mobility opportunities (M=5.89). However despite the perceived quality of the programs (5.88), the associated tuition fees are considered to be high (5.69) and foundation candidates are also more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if their employer covers the program fees and membership fees (5.71 and 5.57 respectively). The respondents are quite neutral as to how easy it is to become and remain members (4.08 and 4.42 respectively). Finally, there does not seem to be any strong normative pressure to affiliate with CPA Australia except perhaps marginally from employers (4.95), and no motivation to comply with any of the referents which would confirm why subjective norm is significant but small for this group as only one referent group seems to be influential.

5.6.1.1.2 Foundation candidates factor importance evaluation

Data in Table 21 shows the full list of behavioural and control factors with their mean rating (out of 7) by order of importance for the foundation candidates sample group.

Table 21 Factor importance (foundation candidates)

| Factors | Mean |
|---|-------------|
| Career and networking opportunities | 6.30 |
| Quality of professional education programs | 6.25 |
| Reputation of the professional body | 6.20 |
| International recognition | 6.17 |
| Professional status | 6.08 |
| Flexibility of the program | 6.01 |
| International mobility opportunities | 5.99 |
| Time available for study | 5.97 |
| Exam mode (computer based, multiple choice, year round exams for foundation) | 5.92 |
| Salary of the members | 5.88 |
| Perceived expertise of the members | 5.83 |
| Continual professional development/education | 5.78 |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with international professional accounting | 5.77 |
| Access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | 5.70 |
| Difficulty of the CPA program | 5.58 |
| Tuition fees | 5.58 |
| Receiving professional updates (via emails etc) e.g., to keep abreast of change | 5.55 |
| Access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | 5.48 |
| Employer is a Recognized Employer Partner | 5.47 |
| Access to professional indemnity insurance | 5.41 |
| Entry requirements (including practical experience) | 5.40 |
| Access to discussion groups | 5.39 |
| Employer paying program fees (professional level) | 5.33 |
| Journals | 5.27 |
| Employer paying membership fees | 5.14 |
| On-going membership fees | 4.97 |
| Assessment fee | 4.20 |

When asked about the importance of each factor in influencing their choice to join CPA Australia, the foundation candidates rate career and networking opportunities as most important (M=6.30) followed by quality of professional education programs (6.25), reputation of the professional body (6.20), international recognition (6.17) and professional status (6.08). The factors perceived to have the least influence are the assessment fee (4.20) and ongoing membership cost (4.97).

An analysis per age and gender shows no difference in terms of importance of factors while the university of study has an effect (Wilk's lambda=0.005) on the importance of the quality of professional education programs (p<0.01), reputation (p<0.01), flexibility of the program (p<0.01), career and networking opportunities (p<0.01), international recognition (p=0.03), international mobility opportunities (p=0.008), salary of the members (p=0.018), employer paying program fees (p=0.008), continuing professional development (p=0.002), study support from Registered Tuition Providers (p=0.024), research facilities (p=0.07), professional updates (p=0.026) and exam mode (p=0.033) with foundation candidates having studied at the University of Economics or abroad consistently rating these items higher than other respondents.

5.6.1.2 Member evaluations of salient beliefs

5.6.1.2.1 Members salient beliefs outcome evaluation

Data in Table 22 shows the rankings of the members' evaluations of salient beliefs, from the statements with the highest level of agreement to those with the lowest level of agreement.

Table 22 Salient beliefs outcome evaluation ranking (members)

| Salient beliefs | Mean |
|--|-------------|
| This professional accounting body has a good reputation | 6.42 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and | 6.22 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | 6.18 |
| The professional education programs are of high quality | 6.14 |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the program fee (professional level) | 6.03 |

Table 22 (continued) Salient beliefs outcome evaluation ranking (members)

| | |
|--|------|
| Its international recognition is high | 6.02 |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the membership fee | 5.92 |
| The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | 5.91 |
| The program/tuition fees are high | 5.88 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility | 5.83 |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional | 5.79 |
| The members of this professional accounting body are recognized as experts | 5.7 |
| The membership benefits and privileges are good | 5.67 |
| The on-going membership fees are high | 5.58 |
| My employer would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 5.45 |
| The salary of the members of the accounting body are high | 5.17 |
| The CPA program is difficult | 5.12 |
| The assessment fee is high | 5.02 |
| Work commitments limit my ability to study | 5.01 |
| My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 4.8 |
| My family would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 4.77 |
| It is easy to remain a member | 4.57 |
| My friends would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | 4.57 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer thinks I should do | 4.49 |
| It is easy to become a member | 4.37 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my family thinks I should do | 4.1 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my friends think I should do | 3.91 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do | 3.81 |

In a similar result to the foundation candidates' sample, the belief with the highest level of agreement was the reputation of the professional accounting body, and the belief with the lowest ranking was the motivation to comply with co-workers. Overall, members find that CPA Australia has a good reputation (M=6.42), affiliating with CPA Australia would enhance their career and networking opportunities (M=6.22) and

professional status (M=6.18), the programs are of high quality (M=6.14) and its international recognition is high (M=6.02). However, despite the perceived quality of the programs, the associated tuition fees are considered high (5.88) which explain why respondents are more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if their employer covers the program fees and membership fees (6.03 and 5.92 respectively). They are quite neutral as to how easy it is to become and remain a member (4.37 and 4.57 respectively). Finally, there does not seem to be any strong social pressure to affiliate with CPA Australia except perhaps marginally from employers (5.45), and no motivation to comply with any of the referents which would confirm why subjective norm is not significant for this group. Correlation tests show a significant correlation ($r=-0.176$, $p=0.002$) between normative pressure from employer and area of work, with the not-for-profit organisations (M=6.29), the public sector (M=5.88) and the Big 4 (M=5.68) exhibiting the highest ratings. There is also a significant correlation between motivation to comply with the employer and area of work ($r=-0.121$, $p=0.032$) with public sector (M=5.38), financial services (M=4.61) and the Big 4 (M=4.49) with the highest ratings.

5.6.1.2.2 Members factor importance evaluation

Data in Table 23 shows the full list of behavioural and control factors with their mean rating (out of 7) by order of importance for the members sample group.

Table 23 Factor importance (members)

| Factors | Mean |
|--|-------------|
| Reputation of the professional body | 6.34 |
| Career and networking opportunities | 6.26 |
| Quality of professional education programs | 6.19 |
| International recognition | 6.19 |
| Professional status | 6.17 |
| Perceived expertise of the members | 5.96 |
| Flexibility of the program | 5.88 |
| Salary of the members | 5.83 |

Table 23 (continued) Factor importance (members)

| | |
|---|------|
| International mobility opportunities | 5.80 |
| Continual professional development/education | 5.78 |
| Time available for study | 5.74 |
| Exam mode (computer based, multiple choice, year round exams for foundation | 5.73 |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with international professional accounting | 5.64 |
| Access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | 5.58 |
| Tuition fees | 5.57 |
| Entry requirements (including practical experience) | 5.52 |
| Employer paying program fees (professional level) | 5.43 |
| Difficulty of the CPA program | 5.40 |
| Receiving professional updates (via emails etc) e.g., to keep abreast of change | 5.31 |
| Employer paying membership fees | 5.30 |
| Employer is a Recognized Employer Partner | 5.24 |
| On-going membership fees | 5.14 |
| Access to professional indemnity insurance | 5.13 |
| Access to discussion groups | 5.11 |
| Access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | 5.10 |
| Journals | 4.94 |
| Assessment fee | 4.34 |

Members consider that the most important factor is the reputation of CPA Australia (6.34) followed by career and networking opportunities (6.26), quality of professional education programs (6.19), international recognition (6.19) and professional status (6.17). In addition, the factors perceived to have the least influence are the assessment fee (4.34) and access to magazines/journals (4.94). Membership cost and the possibility of employers covering that cost also appear at the bottom of the table. An analysis per age, gender and university of study shows no difference in terms of importance of factors for members.

5.6.1.3 Student evaluations of salient beliefs

The student sample was not asked to evaluate the outcomes of affiliating with a professional accounting body as they do not yet belong to one but they were asked to rate the importance of several factors on their decision to affiliate with a professional accounting body.

The ranking of these factors from the most important one to the least important one is provided in Table 24 below.

Table 24 Factor importance (students)

| Factors | Mean |
|---|-------------|
| Quality of professional education programs | 6.51 |
| Career and networking opportunities | 6.44 |
| Reputation of the professional body | 6.20 |
| Salary of the members | 6.03 |
| International recognition | 5.99 |
| Flexibility of the program | 5.98 |
| International mobility opportunities | 5.79 |
| Time available for study | 5.78 |
| Professional status | 5.77 |
| Continual professional development/education | 5.67 |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with international professional accounting | 5.65 |
| Entry requirements (including practical experience) | 5.65 |
| Access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | 5.64 |
| Difficulty of the CPA program | 5.62 |
| Perceived expertise of the members | 5.60 |
| Exam mode (computer based, multiple choice, year round exams for foundation | 5.58 |
| Tuition fees | 5.51 |
| Receiving professional updates (via emails etc) e.g., to keep abreast of change | 5.51 |
| Access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | 5.51 |
| Employer paying program fees (professional level) | 5.47 |

Table 24 (continued) Factors importance (students)

| | |
|--|------|
| Access to professional indemnity insurance | 5.46 |
| Access to discussion groups | 5.40 |
| Employer paying membership fees | 5.24 |
| Journals | 4.90 |
| On-going membership fees | 4.87 |
| Assessment fee | 4.62 |

Students consider that the most important factor is the quality of professional education programs (6.51) followed by career and networking opportunities (6.44), reputation of the professional body (6.20), salary of the members (6.03) and international recognition (5.99).

In addition, the factors perceived to have the least influence are the assessment fee (4.62) and ongoing membership fee (4.87). Employers covering the membership fees also appeared at the bottom of the table, despite being considered relatively important (M=5.24).

The next section details the results of the comparison between members and foundation candidates in terms of the outcome evaluation of salient beliefs.

5.6.2 Comparison of outcome evaluation between foundation candidates and members

The comparison, between members and foundation candidates, of professional accounting body outcome evaluation, normative pressure from important referents and motivation to comply with these referents is tested using independent samples t-tests. The students sample is not included as they were not asked to evaluate outcomes (their questionnaire does not refer to a specific professional accounting body but to professional accounting bodies in general). Table 25 shows the difference between foundation candidates and members in terms of outcome evaluation, normative pressure and motivation to comply (see Appendix III for full table).

Table 25 Significant group differences on outcome evaluation, normative pressure and motivation to comply

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std dev. | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--|-----------------------|-----|------|----------|----------|----------|
| The professional education programs are of high quality | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.88 | 1.343 | -2.096 | .037 |
| | Members | 173 | 6.14 | .938 | | |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the membership | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.57 | 1.753 | -1.987 | .048 |
| | Members | 172 | 5.92 | 1.422 | | |
| My employer would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Foundation candidates | 144 | 4.95 | 1.912 | -2.687 | .008 |
| | Members | 172 | 5.45 | 1.281 | | |
| My family would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Foundation candidates | 144 | 4.20 | 1.827 | -2.818 | .005 |
| | Members | 173 | 4.77 | 1.750 | | |

This comparison reveals the following significant differences between items measured on a scale from 1 to 7, with 7 indicating strong agreement:

- Members consider that the professional education programs are of higher quality than foundation candidates considered them to be (M=6.14 and 5.88 respectively);
- Members are more likely than foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body if their employer covers the membership fee (M=5.92 and 5.57 respectively);
- Members perceive more normative pressure from their employer and family to affiliate with a professional accounting body (M=5.45 and 4.77 and 4.95 and 4.20 respectively).

No other items related to outcome evaluation, normative pressure from important referents or motivation to comply with these referents regarding affiliation with a professional accounting body are significantly different between members and foundation candidates (see full table in Appendix III).

5.6.3 Comparison between groups regarding importance of factors

Data in Table 26 shows the difference between the three groups in terms of the importance of modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factors. All items are measured on a 1 to 7 scale with 7 indicating high importance.

Table 26 Modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factor importance inter-group comparison

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--|----------------|----------------|-----|-------------|-------|------|
| Importance of assessment fee | Between Groups | 14.372 | 2 | 7.186 | 3.234 | .040 |
| | Within Groups | 1042.118 | 469 | 2.222 | | |
| Importance of on-going membership fees | Between Groups | 6.409 | 2 | 3.205 | 1.782 | .169 |
| | Within Groups | 857.582 | 477 | 1.798 | | |
| Importance of program/tuition fees | Between Groups | .505 | 2 | .253 | .171 | .843 |
| | Within Groups | 696.876 | 472 | 1.476 | | |
| Importance of quality of professional education programs | Between Groups | 9.310 | 2 | 4.655 | 6.435 | .002 |
| | Within Groups | 347.225 | 480 | .723 | | |
| Importance of reputation of the professional body | Between Groups | 2.030 | 2 | 1.015 | 1.324 | .267 |
| | Within Groups | 368.720 | 481 | .767 | | |
| Importance of flexibility of the program | Between Groups | 1.519 | 2 | .760 | .927 | .396 |
| | Within Groups | 392.566 | 479 | .820 | | |
| Importance of career and networking opportunities | Between Groups | 3.043 | 2 | 1.522 | 1.834 | .161 |
| | Within Groups | 398.290 | 480 | .830 | | |
| Importance of reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies | Between Groups | 1.534 | 2 | .767 | .802 | .449 |
| | Within Groups | 457.160 | 478 | .956 | | |
| Importance of international recognition | Between Groups | 3.830 | 2 | 1.915 | 2.364 | .095 |
| | Within Groups | 389.690 | 481 | .810 | | |
| Importance of professional status | Between Groups | 14.575 | 2 | 7.288 | 9.254 | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 376.406 | 478 | .787 | | |
| Importance of international mobility opportunities | Between Groups | 4.007 | 2 | 2.003 | 1.775 | .171 |
| | Within Groups | 538.491 | 477 | 1.129 | | |

Table 26 (continued) Modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factor importance inter-group comparison

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Importance of perceived expertise of the members | Between Groups | 11.281 | 2 | 5.640 | 5.303 | .005 |
| | Within Groups | 507.301 | 477 | 1.064 | | |
| Importance of salary of the members | Between Groups | 3.673 | 2 | 1.836 | 1.614 | .200 |
| | Within Groups | 542.652 | 477 | 1.138 | | |
| Importance of entry requirements (including practical experience) | Between Groups | 4.752 | 2 | 2.376 | 1.972 | .140 |
| | Within Groups | 574.780 | 477 | 1.205 | | |
| Importance of employer paying membership fees | Between Groups | 2.040 | 2 | 1.020 | .622 | .537 |
| | Within Groups | 783.881 | 478 | 1.640 | | |
| Importance of employer paying program fees (professional level) | Between Groups | 1.533 | 2 | .766 | .513 | .599 |
| | Within Groups | 705.936 | 473 | 1.492 | | |
| Importance of Continuing professional development/education | Between Groups | 1.314 | 2 | .657 | .881 | .415 |
| | Within Groups | 357.269 | 479 | .746 | | |
| Employer is a Recognized Employer Partner | Between Groups | 4.329 | 1 | 4.329 | 3.023 | .083 |
| | Within Groups | 443.976 | 310 | 1.432 | | |
| Access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | Between Groups | 16.541 | 2 | 8.270 | 6.257 | .002 |
| | Within Groups | 619.949 | 469 | 1.322 | | |
| Access to professional indemnity insurance | Between Groups | 10.286 | 2 | 5.143 | 3.530 | .030 |
| | Within Groups | 674.480 | 463 | 1.457 | | |
| Access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | Between Groups | 1.174 | 2 | .587 | .576 | .562 |
| | Within Groups | 485.751 | 477 | 1.018 | | |
| Access to discussion groups | Between Groups | 8.740 | 2 | 4.370 | 3.754 | .024 |
| | Within Groups | 556.511 | 478 | 1.164 | | |
| Magazine/Journals | Between Groups | 12.186 | 2 | 6.093 | 5.023 | .007 |
| | Within Groups | 578.562 | 477 | 1.213 | | |
| Receiving professional updates (via emails etc) | Between Groups | 5.609 | 2 | 2.804 | 2.569 | .078 |
| | Within Groups | 523.899 | 480 | 1.091 | | |
| Importance of difficulty of the program | Between Groups | 4.701 | 2 | 2.351 | 2.286 | .103 |
| | Within Groups | 488.328 | 475 | 1.028 | | |

Table 26 (continued) Modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factor importance inter-group comparison

| | | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|--|----------------|-----------------------|-----------|--------------------|----------|-------------|
| Importance of time available for study | Between Groups | 4.266 | 2 | 2.133 | 2.203 | .112 |
| | Within Groups | 463.744 | 479 | .968 | | |
| Importance of exam mode | Between Groups | 9.002 | 2 | 4.501 | 4.347 | .013 |
| | Within Groups | 491.784 | 475 | 1.035 | | |

The comparison of the perceived importance of modal outcomes and inhibiting/facilitating factors between the three groups is tested using an ANOVA and reveals the following differences which are explored using a LSD post-hoc:

- Students (M=4.62) place significantly more importance than foundation candidates (M=4.20) on assessment fee;
- Students (M=6.51) place significantly more importance on quality of professional education programs than both foundation candidates (M=6.25) and members do (M=6.19);
- Students (M=5.77) place significantly less importance on professional status than both foundation candidates (6.08) and members do (M=6.17);
- Members (M=5.96) place significantly more importance on the perceived expertise of members than students do (M=5.60);
- Members (M=5.10 and 5.11 respectively) place significantly less importance on access to discussion groups and study support from Registered Tuition Providers than foundation candidates (M=5.48 and 5.39 respectively) and students (M=5.51 and 5.40 respectively) do;
- Foundation candidates (M=5.41) place significantly more importance on access to professional indemnity insurance than members do (M=5.13);
- Foundation candidates (M=5.27) place significantly more importance on magazines and journals than members do (M=4.94) and students (M=4.90);

- Foundation candidates (M=5.92) place significantly more importance on exam mode than students do (M=5.58).

5.6.4 Comparison of beliefs between intenders and non-intenders

The comparison of the perceived importance of modal outcomes and inhibiting/facilitating factors between intenders and non-intenders is tested using independent t-tests (only foundation candidates and students were asked for intention to affiliate with a professional accounting body, as members have already performed the behaviour). Intenders are those respondents who rate the intention question between +1 and +3. Non-intenders are those respondents who rate the intention question between -3 and 0.

Data in Table 27 shows the significant differences, in terms of the importance of modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factors, between those who intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body and those who do not (see Appendix IV for full table).

Table 27 Intenders/Non-intenders significant differences on modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factor importance

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std dev | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|--|---------------|-----|------|---------|----------|----------|
| Importance of assessment fee | Intenders | 184 | 4.32 | 1.564 | -1.993 | .047 |
| | Non-intenders | 88 | 4.72 | 1.523 | | |
| Importance of reputation of the professional body | Intenders | 190 | 6.28 | .830 | 2.127 | .034 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 6.03 | 1.027 | | |
| Importance of career and networking opportunities | Intenders | 189 | 6.47 | .816 | 2.025 | .045 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 6.21 | 1.060 | | |
| Importance of international recognition | Intenders | 190 | 6.17 | .8687 | 2.395 | .018 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.84 | 1.1372 | | |
| Importance of professional status | Intenders | 189 | 6.02 | .922 | 2.703 | .007 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.70 | .958 | | |
| Importance of international mobility opportunities | Intenders | 186 | 6.02 | .989 | 2.484 | .014 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.63 | 1.300 | | |
| Importance of perceived expertise of the members | Intenders | 187 | 5.86 | 1.033 | 2.865 | .005 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.44 | 1.196 | | |

Table 27 (continued) Intenders/Non-intenders significant differences on modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factor importance

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-------|------|
| Importance of continuing professional development/education | Intenders | 188 | 5.83 | .829 | 2.858 | .005 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.47 | 1.035 | | |
| Importance of receiving magazines/Journals | Intenders | 188 | 5.16 | 1.128 | 2.581 | .012 |
| | Non-intenders | 86 | 4.78 | 1.192 | | |

The comparison between these two groups reveals the following difference: those who intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future place significantly more importance on the reputation of the professional body (M=6.28 vs 6.03), career and networking opportunities (M=6.47 vs 6.21), international recognition (M=6.17 vs. 5.84), professional status (M=6.02 vs. 5.70), international mobility opportunities (M=6.02 vs. 5.63), perceived expertise of the members (M=5.86 vs. 5.44), continuing professional development (M=5.83 vs. 5.47) and receiving magazines or journals (M=5.16 vs. 4.78), but less importance on assessment fees (M=4.32 vs. 4.72).

At the sample group level, the following differences emerge:

- for foundation candidates, only access to professional indemnity insurance is significantly different ($p=0.048$) between intenders (M=5.48) and non intenders (M=4.89);

- for students, there are differences between intenders and intenders in terms of importance of career and networking opportunities ($p=0.024$), professional status ($p=0.048$), perceived expertise of the members ($p=0.016$) and continuing professional development ($p=0.024$) with intenders consistently rating these four items higher than non intenders.

Additionally, a MANOVA was performed to test for effect of gender, age and university of study on importance of factors, showing the following results for those who intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body:

- Age is only marginally significant at the 10% level (Wilk's lambda=0.052) which means there is a difference between age groups in terms of importance of factors; in particular, the specific factors exhibiting a difference are assessment fee ($p=0.042$), career and networking opportunities ($p=0.047$) and employer paying program fees ($p=0.037$), with the 25-34 years old placing more importance on the first item, the older

age groups (35-54 years old) placing more importance of the second one and the younger age group (18-24 years old) placing more importance on the latter item.

- Gender is also significant at the 10% level (Wilk's lambda=0.083) which means there is a difference between genders in terms of importance of factors; in particular, the specific factors exhibiting a difference are reputation (p=0.05), professional status (p=0.009) and employer paying program fees (p=0.019), with males placing more importance on all 3 items than females.

- University of study is significant (Wilk's lambda=0.02) which means there is a difference between those who have studies in different universities in terms of importance of factors; in particular, the only factor exhibiting a difference is quality of professional education programs (p=0.021), with respondents studying or having studied in other universities than the ones listed (mostly abroad studies) placing more importance on this item.

5.6.5 Comparison of beliefs between single and multiple membership holders

The comparison of the outcome evaluation and perceived importance of modal outcomes and inhibiting/facilitating factors between single and multiple membership holders is tested using independent t-tests. Multiple membership holders are those members who replied yes to the question 'Are you a member of a professional accounting body (other than CPA Australia)?'

Data in Table 28 shows the difference between those who belong to a single professional accounting body and those who belong to several in terms of outcome evaluation, normative pressure, motivation to comply, modal outcomes and importance of facilitating/inhibiting factors (see Appendix V for full table).

Table 28 Single vs. Multiple membership significant differences on outcome evaluation, normative pressure, motivation to comply and modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factor importance

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std deviation | <i>t</i> | <i>P</i> |
|---|---------------------|-----|------|---------------|------------|----------|
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do | Single membership | 118 | 3.64 | 1.652 | 1.942 | .054 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.18 | 1.867 | | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my family think I should do | Single membership | 118 | 3.89 | 1.748 | 2.274 | .024 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.55 | 1.803 | | |
| Importance of on-going membership fees | Single membership | 115 | 5.28 | 1.159 | - 2.105 | .037 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 4.85 | 1.365 | | |

The comparison between these two groups reveals the following difference: those who are members of more than one professional accounting body (as opposed to only one) are likely to feel more motivation to comply with co-workers (M= 4.18 vs. 3.64) and family (M=4.55 vs. 3.89) in terms of affiliating with a professional accounting body. They also place less importance on on-going membership fees (M= 5.28 vs. 4.85). Additionally, a MANOVA revealed no difference in terms of age, gender and university of study between single and multiple members' ratings of importance of factors (Wilk's lambda >0.05 in all three cases).

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter presents the results of the statistical tests performed in order to answer the research questions, and in particular it established the construct validity of the salient beliefs, using factor analysis, and their reliability using Cronbach alpha. Attitude and perceived behavioural control reliability was also tested with Cronbach

alpha. Subjective norm reliability was not tested as it was a single item construct. Intention was regressed on attitude, subjective norm and Perceived Behavioural Control using multiple regression analysis in order to establish how much how the variance in intention could be explained by these three variables. The differences in salient beliefs between the sample groups were then tested through independent t-tests and ANOVA. The salient beliefs (indirect measures) and direct measures of attitude, subjective norm and PBC were correlated.

The next chapter will discuss these results in the light of the theoretical framework used and in terms of previous research on professional accounting body affiliation.

Chapter 6 – Discussion of results

The previous chapter presented the results of the analysis used to answer the research questions identified in Chapter 1 and presented in Table 28 below. This chapter discusses these results with reference to the literature on professional accounting body affiliation and the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991).

The diagrammatic representation of the structure of this thesis follows (figure 1) and it highlights sequencing of this chapter in relation to the overall thesis.

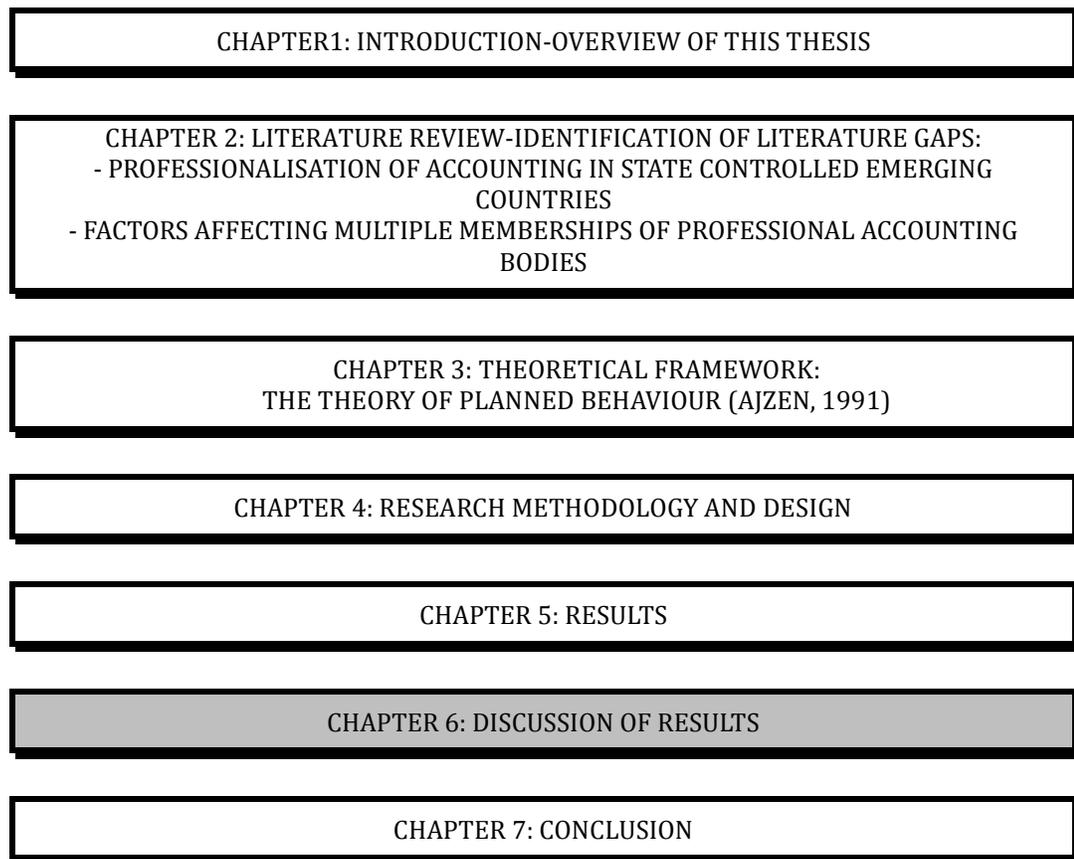


Figure 1 Overview of the thesis

The chapter is organised in the following way. The thesis objectives and research questions are restated and key results summarised in Section 6.1. Discussion

of the results supporting Research Question 1 is provided in Section 6.2. Discussion of the results supporting Research Question 2 is provided in Section 6.3 and implications of this discussion are elaborated in Section 6.4.

6.1 Summary of key results

This thesis reveals several key findings relating to professional accounting body affiliation in Vietnam. Table 29 provides a summary of the key findings for the two research questions.

Table 29 Summary of key findings

| <i>Research questions</i> | <i>Findings</i> | <i>Discussion section</i> |
|---|---|---------------------------|
| RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies? | Attitude is a significant factor in explaining the intentions of both foundation candidates and students to affiliate with one or multiple accounting bodies. Both groups have a favourable attitude towards such affiliations. | 6.2.1 |
| RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies? | Subjective norm is a significant factor in explaining the intentions of both foundation candidates and students to affiliate with one or multiple accounting bodies, however it is more significant for foundation candidates than for students. Both groups perceive some pressure to affiliate with a professional accounting body. | 6.2.2 |
| RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or multiple professional accounting bodies? | Perceived behavioural control is not a significant factor in explaining the intentions of both foundation candidates and students to affiliate with one or multiple accounting bodies. Both groups perceive no inhibiting factors surrounding such affiliations. | 6.2.3 |

Table 29 (continued) Summary of key findings

| <i>Research questions</i> | <i>Findings</i> | <i>Discussion section</i> |
|--|---|---------------------------|
| <p>RQ2. Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding affiliation with professional accounting bodies?</p> | <p>There are differences between members and foundation candidates in terms of their perceptions of the quality of professional higher education programs, their likelihood of affiliating with a professional accounting body if their employer covers the membership fee and perceived normative pressure from employers and families to affiliate.</p> | <p>6.3.3</p> |
| | <p>Students place significantly more importance than foundation candidates or members on assessment fees and quality of professional education programs but less importance on professional status.</p> | <p>6.3.4</p> |
| | <p>Members place more importance than students or foundation candidates on the perceived expertise of members but less importance on access to discussion groups and study support from Registered Tuition Providers.</p> | <p>6.3.4</p> |
| | <p>Foundation candidates place more importance than members or foundation candidates on access to professional indemnity insurance, exam mode and magazines and journals.</p> | <p>6.3.4</p> |
| | <p>Those who intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future place significantly more importance on the reputation of the professional body, career and networking opportunities, international recognition, professional status, international mobility opportunities, perceived</p> | <p>6.3.5</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|-------|
| | <p>expertise of the members, continuing professional development and receiving magazines or journals but less importance on assessment fees than those who do not intend to affiliate.</p> <p>Those who are members of more than one professional accounting body are likely to feel more motivation to comply with co-workers and family in terms of affiliating with a professional accounting body than those who are members of only one professional accounting body, but place less importance on on-going membership fees.</p> | 6.3.6 |
|--|---|-------|

After summarising the key findings from Chapter 5, the next section will discuss the findings supporting Research Question 1 in the light of the literature review and theoretical framework.

6.2 Discussion of Research Question 1

This discussion supporting Research Question 1 relates to the Theory of Planned Behaviour by considering which variable(s) in the model – attitude, subjective norm or perceived behavioural control – explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body. Among the three sample groups, only foundation candidates and students are included in this regression analysis as they have not yet performed the behaviour (affiliating with a professional accounting body). As members have chosen their professional affiliation and thus have already performed the behaviour, it is not appropriate to perform a regression analysis on that sample (we assume that, following the model's assumptions, all those who performed the behaviour had the intention to do so which means that there is no variance in intention).

The descriptive results shows that students and foundation candidates intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future ($M=1.18$ where -3 indicates lack of intention, 0 no opinion and +3 definitive intention). This thesis measures behavioural expectation rather than intention as some studies have shown that behavioural expectation predicts behaviour better than behavioural intention (Warshaw and Davis 1985). Behavioural expectation assesses the likelihood of an individual performing the behaviour, which is in this case measured through a seven-point bipolar scale anchored with unlikely/likely: 'I intend to affiliate with professional accounting body in the near future'.

The results of the regression analysis show that the three independent variables explain a significant 14.6 percent of the variance in intention, which means that almost 85 percent of the variance in intention is not explained by these three variables. This low variance, which is consistent with previous studies, suggests that some other factors not included in the TPB (belief salience, past behavioural habit, the structure of the PBC construct, moral norms, self-identity, and affective beliefs) may influence intention and behaviour (Conner and Armitage 1998).

As there are three independent variables, this research question is broken down into three sub-questions, one for each independent variable:

- RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?

Following a review of the Theory of Planned Behaviour literature, the following hypotheses were posited, each relating to one of the research questions:

- H1: Foundation candidates and students who have positive attitudes towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.

- H2: Foundation candidates and students who perceive normative pressure (subjective norm) towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.
- H3: Foundation candidates and students who perceive they have control over affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.

Each of these sub-questions and hypotheses is discussed in a separate section.

6.2.1 Discussion Research Question 1a

RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?

Research Question 1a attempts to determine whether or not attitude explains the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or multiple professional accounting bodies. To answer this research question a multiple regression analysis is performed, with intention as a dependent variable and attitude as one of the independent variables.

Attitude toward behaviour is the evaluation of positive or negative outcomes associated with performing the behaviour, not to be confused with attitude towards an object. Attitude is measured using a semantic differential scale. Respondents were presented with the sentence, “My affiliating with a professional accounting body in the near future is . . .” Three pairs of adjectives are rated, each on a seven-point bipolar (+3 to -3) scale, good/bad, useful/useless, positive/negative.

The results of the tests performed to answer research question 1a show that for the overall sample, attitude is significant ($p < 0.01$) in explaining the intention of accounting students and foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body. This means that positive or negative outcomes of affiliating with a professional accounting body matter when it comes to making the decision.

Broken down by sample group, we can see that foundation candidates have a favourable attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body ($M = 1.97$), their attitude regression coefficient is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$) and moderately large (0.355) and they do intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body ($M = 2.04$) thus H1 (*Foundation candidates and students who have a positive attitude*

towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam) is supported for the foundation candidates sample. No other study has explored the intentions of this sample group so it is not possible to compare this result with previous literature, however it is not a surprise that those who are completing the foundation level programs of a given professional accounting body intend to become members as they have already invested money and effort into that professional association.

The other sample group, accounting students, also has favourable attitudes towards affiliating with a professional accounting body (M=1.33), their attitude variable is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and moderate (0.26) and they do intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body albeit by a small margin (M=0.58), thus H1 (*Foundation candidates and students who have a positive attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam*) is supported for the student sample. These results are consistent with similar studies using the TPB which have explored the intentions of accounting students to choose accounting as a major (Tan and Laswad 2006, Cohen and Hanno 1993), to pursue careers in accounting (Felton, Dimnik, and Northey 1995, Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan 2014, Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012) or to pursue the CPA certification (Wen, Hao, and Bu 2015), with attitude making a significant contribution in each case.

This regression analysis using direct measures of attitude does not differentiate between intrinsic and extrinsic factors that would affect attitude. These factors will be explored in Section 6.3 in which salient beliefs are assessed.

6.2.2 Discussion Research Question 1b

RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?

Research Question 1b attempts to find whether subjective norm explains the intentions of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or multiple accounting professional bodies. To answer this research question, a multiple regression analysis was performed with intention as a dependent variable and subjective norm as an independent variable.

Subjective norm is the perception that important referents would approve or disapprove of the subject performing the behaviour. A direct measure of subjective norm is measured with one item using the following statement measured on a seven-point scale: 'Most people who are important to me think I should/should not affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future'.

The results of the tests performed to answer research question 1b show that for the overall sample, subjective norm is not significant in explaining the intentions of accounting students and foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body. This means that normative pressure to affiliate with a professional accounting body does not affect the respondents' intentions. This is consistent with several studies that find no effect of subjective norm on intention (Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw 1989, Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012). Consequently H2 (*Foundation candidates and students who perceive normative pressure towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam*) is not supported. The prediction was that subjective norm would have a significant influence on intention because of Vietnam's collectivist culture and the fact that identification with a group may increase the influence of normative pressure (Terry and Hogg 1996). Pressure from important referents such as employers, co-workers and family does not seem to be significant, which is contrary to the expectation that in collective societies such as Vietnam the weight of the group is an important factor (Vietnam Culture 2013) and despite the fact that the respondents did perceive some normative pressure to affiliate (M=1.59). It is also contrary to other studies (Auyeung and Sands 1997) which found that Asian students are influenced more in their major decision-making by important referents, in particular parents.

Subjective norm has been found to have a low predictive power on intention in studies which operationalise the construct using a single measure and as a result a narrow conceptualisation (Armitage and Conner 2001). Terry and Hogg (1996) found evidence of the effect of subjective norm on intention only for people who identified strongly with a relevant reference group (high identifiers) while either attitude or PBC explained most variance for people who did not identify strongly with a relevant reference group (low identifiers). It may be that the respondents do not identify strongly with a specific reference group.

Interestingly, different results appear when the two sample groups are analysed separately. Foundation candidates perceive some normative pressure ($M=1.5$) towards affiliating with a professional accounting body, their subjective norm regression coefficient is statistically significant ($p<0.01$) and small (0.183) and they do intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body ($M=2.04$) thus H2 is supported for the foundation candidates sample. No other study has explored subjective norm of this sample group so it is not possible to compare this result with previous literature. As subjective norm is measured with a general question, it is not possible to determine which referent group would exert some influence on these respondents. However the normative beliefs related to each referent category are explored in Section 6.3.

The accounting students sample group also perceives some normative pressure ($M=1.62$) towards affiliating with a professional accounting body but their subjective norm variable is only marginally significant, at the 10 percent level, in explaining their intention thus H2 is not supported for the student sample. This result partially contradicts prior literature arguing that important referents such as employers, co-workers, friends and family do exert some influence on students' career choices (Sugahara, Kurihara, and Boland 2006). These results also contradict similar studies using the TPB which have explored the intentions of accounting students to choose accounting as a major (Tan and Laswad 2006, Cohen and Hanno 1993) and, by extrapolation, to pursue careers in accounting. For example, Cohen and Hanno's (1993) study found that accounting students perceived that all the important referents (parents, classmates, professors, friends of family and business people) thought they should select accounting as a major and were therefore influenced by these referents in their decisions to major in accounting. Similarly, Tan and Laswad (2006) found that all referents (parents, other relatives, friends, and career advisors and counsellors) had an effect on accounting students' intentions to major in accounting.

These findings might be context specific, in that accounting students and their referent group in Vietnam may not be familiar with the concept of professional accounting bodies ('hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp' which means association of the accounting profession) or, even if they are, may not consider membership because of an overall perception that local bodies provide limited benefits. Indeed, continuous professional development is not mandated by the main professional body (VACPA) despite the fact that it does provide some training, and the quality of training provided

tends to be inconsistent which may limit the influence of referents over the decision to affiliate. Because of the nature of foreign professional bodies in Vietnam, this lack of influence from important referents may stem from their lack of knowledge of the existence or benefits of such bodies.

6.2.3 Discussion Research Question 1c

RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?

Research Question 1c attempts to find out whether perceived behavioural control explains the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or multiple accounting professional bodies. To answer this research question, a multiple regression analysis is performed with intention as a dependent variable and perceived behavioural control as an independent variable.

Perceived behavioural control (PBC) is the perceived ease or difficulty of performing the behaviour. The three items chosen to reflect PBC were assessed on seven-point semantic differential scales. Respondents were presented with the sentence “My affiliating with a professional accounting body in the near future is . . .” Three pairs of adjectives are rated, each on a seven-point bipolar (+3 to -3) scale, easy/difficult; up to me/not up to me; and under my control/out of my control. However the first pair of adjectives was dropped from the analysis as it proved to lower the reliability of the scale.

The results of the tests performed to answer Research Question 1c show that, for the overall sample, perceived behavioural control is not significant in explaining the intention of accounting students and foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body, which means that respondents considered no factors, not even the cost of affiliating or the difficulty in passing examinations, negatively affected their decisions to become members of a professional body. At the sample group level it is observed that foundation candidates do not perceive any factors inhibiting their affiliation with a professional accounting body ($M=1.44$) and they do intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body ($M=2.04$) but their PBC regression coefficient is not statistically significant, thus H3 (*Foundation candidates and students who perceive they*

have control over affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam) is not supported for the foundation candidates sample. No other study has explored the intentions of this sample group so it is not possible to compare this result with previous literature.

Similarly, the accounting students do not perceive any factors inhibiting their affiliation with professional accounting bodies ($M=1.06$) and they do intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body ($M=0.58$) but their PBC regression coefficient is not statistically significant, thus H3 (*Foundation candidates and students who perceive they have control over affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam*) is not supported for the accounting students sample. These results contradict similar studies, using the TPB, of the influence of perceived behavioural control on intention and in particular studies which explored the intentions of accounting students to choose accounting as a major (Tan and Laswad 2006, Cohen and Hanno 1993) or to choose specific careers in accounting (Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012, Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan 2014). In the case of Cohen and Hanno (1993) and Tan and Laswad (2006), background in maths, workload in accounting courses, success in introductory courses, interest in accounting and availability of job opportunities in accounting fields were all control factors which significantly differed between accounting and non-accounting majors. In the choice between jobs with Big 4 firms and jobs with non Big 4 firms, respondents who worked in other accounting firms saw the general work environment (long and stressful working hours, working atmosphere) of Big 4 companies as detrimental to that choice (Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012). Similarly, audit-track students seemed to be deterred by perceived heavy load in tax coursework whereas tax-track students were not (Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan 2014).

For the sample groups in this thesis it might be that the cost of affiliation and difficulty of the programs are not a burden or, even if they were, such factors are not hindrances. Regarding foreign professional bodies, it is surprising to see that financial capacity is not a significant factor as an annual membership at CPA Australia, for example, can cost up to a month's salary (500 USD) or even more for young graduates, and program fees go as high as 750 USD at the professional level. A potential explanation could be that those already involved in the programs have factored these costs in and do not perceive them to be a major hindrance, or that the overall benefits

outweigh the costs. Accounting students, on the other hand, are perhaps not aware of the cost of affiliating with a professional accounting body, the workload associated with or the difficulty of passing the CPA examination.

6.3 Discussion Research Question 2

RQ2. Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding affiliation with professional accounting bodies?

Research Question 2 seeks to answer whether there is a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding professional accounting body affiliation. As the TPB model includes different types of salient beliefs (behavioural, normative and control), the tests explore not only the differences between the sample groups in terms of beliefs but also the difference between those who do and those who do not intend to affiliate with a professional body as well as the difference between those members belonging to one professional body and those belonging to more than one. This section will start by exploring the rating and ranking of the listed salient beliefs by each sample group in order to evaluate the importance of each factor in their decision to join a professional accounting body and to establish whether any differences exist in this regard.

6.3.1 Intragroup evaluations of salient beliefs

This section discusses the individual group ratings and rankings of the proposed salient beliefs in order to determine which beliefs contributed the most to their overall beliefs about professional accounting bodies.

6.3.1.1 Foundation candidates salient beliefs evaluation

6.3.1.1.1 Foundation candidates salient beliefs outcome evaluation

Overall, foundation candidates find that CPA Australia has a good reputation, affiliating with CPA Australia would enhance their career and networking opportunities, the program is flexible, its international recognition is high and affiliating with CPA

Australia would enhance their professional status and international mobility opportunities. However despite the perceived quality of the programs, the associated tuition fees are considered high and foundation candidates are also more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if their employers cover the program fees and membership fees. This finding can be explained by the fact that all respondents in this sample group are completing one or more foundation levels of the CPA program (8 levels in total) and thus incur financial commitments relating to their decisions.

The eight highest ranked beliefs are all behavioural beliefs, confirming previous findings that attitude makes the most significant contribution to the decisions of foundation candidates to affiliate with professional bodies.

The respondents are quite neutral about how easy it is to become and remain members, which confirms the idea that perceived behavioural control is not critical in the decision making process. This echoes the perceptions of Chinese accounting students that difficulties in maintaining CPA certification may hinder their motivation to seek such certification (Wen, Hao, and Bu 2015). Finally, there does not seem to be any strong normative pressure, except perhaps marginally from employers, to affiliate with CPA Australia, and no motivation to comply with the expectations of any of the referents which would indicate why subjective norm is significant but small for this group as only one referent group seems to be influential. The fact that parents are not influential in the foundation candidates' decisions to choose professional bodies is at odds with previous findings (Tan and Laswad 2006, Allen 2004, Salazar-Clemeña 2002, Yang et al. 2002, Wen, Hao, and Bu 2015, Cohen and Hanno 1993) which showed that important referents including parents are influential in their children's decisions. These findings hold true, despite being set in different contexts, with some studies including western students and others including Asian students. Such differences might be due to the fact that in this study the majority of foundation candidates are not students (78%) whereas the other studies cited did involve students, who were potentially more vulnerable to external influences. Jackling et al. (2012) confirm that there are no significant differences between domestic and international students (mostly Chinese) in Australia in terms of parents' influence on an accounting major, whereas Auyeung and Sands (1997) found a difference between Australian students and those from Hong Kong and Taiwan, with the latter's career choices more heavily influenced by their parents.

6.3.1.1.2 Foundation candidates factor importance evaluation

When asked about the importance of each factor in influencing their choice to join CPA Australia, respondents included three control beliefs (flexibility of the program, time available for studying and exam mode) in the ten most important factors despite PBC not being significant in predicting affiliation intention (see section 6.2.3). It might be that these control beliefs are important because foundation candidates need time and flexibility to study for the foundation levels of the CPA program but that other factors (mostly behavioural) have more impact on their decisions. The most important behavioural beliefs are a mix of intrinsic (reputation) and extrinsic factors (professional status, salary of members, career opportunities). Previous studies showed mixed results, with some arguing that intrinsic factors affect intention (Sugahara, Boland, and Cilloni 2008) while other studies found an effect of extrinsic factors such as financial rewards (Allen 2004, Sugahara, Kurihara, and Boland 2006). Bauder (2006) found similar results about the value of social status to Asians. It is interesting to note that the university of study made a difference in terms of importance of factors with foundation candidates who has studied at the University of Economics or abroad rating most factors higher than those who had studied elsewhere. These findings are probably related to the quality of education that these respondents received and consequently higher general expectations as the University of Economics is one the of the top rated universities in Vietnam.

6.3.1.2 Member evaluations of salient beliefs

6.3.1.2.1 Members salient beliefs outcome evaluation

Similarly to the foundation candidates' responses, reputation of the professional accounting body is the belief with the highest level of agreement among members and motivation to comply with co-workers is the one with the lowest ranking. Despite the perceived quality of the programs, the associated tuition fees are considered high which explains why members are more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if their employers cover the program fees and membership fees. This finding can be explained by the fact that 55 percent of respondents in this sample group are associate members completing one of more professional levels of the CPA Australia program (6 levels in total) and thus incur financial burdens related to their membership decisions. They are quite neutral about how easy it is to become and remain members, which may explain why only a

minority of practicing accountants in Vietnam hold local or foreign qualifications (Bui 2011a). These overall findings are mostly in line with the findings from foundation candidates, showing that a change in status does not affect perception.

Out of the ten highest ranked beliefs eight are behavioural beliefs, confirming previous findings that attitude makes the most significant contribution to the decision to affiliate with a professional body. The normative pressure from employers and slight motivation to comply with them, as shown through correlation tests, is partially due to the particular type of employer of this sample group, with 43 percent of the members working for one of the Big 4 firms which tend to strongly encourage (and cover) affiliation with specific bodies (despite other types of employers exhibiting higher rankings, their proportion in the whole sample is much lower).

6.3.1.2.2 Members factor importance evaluation

Members consider that the most important factor is the reputation of CPA Australia, followed by career and networking opportunities, quality of professional education programs, international recognition and professional status. These findings are similar to those of Inglis et al. (2011a) who found that career opportunities, international recognition and brand or reputation were the most important factors for practitioners in their choice of professional body to affiliate with. However they slightly differ from the findings of Sidaway et al. (2013), in which practitioners ranked perceived expertise as the second most important factor and membership benefits as the third most important. These differences might be explained by the demographics of the practitioners who were largely male and over 45 years old in Sidaway et al.'s (2013) study, whereas the sample groups for this thesis are mostly female and under 40 years old. These findings are partially in line with Walsh and Borkowski (2013) who found a significant difference between male and female executives in the perception of the benefits of association such as advancement (career opportunities) with females rating this factor higher than their male counterparts. However that same study did not find a difference in terms of rating of reputation and continuing education programs. Additionally international recognition was not a factor in this study but general recognition was and did not yield any significant difference between genders. It will be noted that the male population of this study was also on average older than the female population.

In addition, the factors perceived to have the least influence are the assessment fee and access to magazines/journals which is a very similar result to the ranking by foundation candidates so it seems that a change in status (from soon-to-be member to member) does not change the respondents' perceptions. Membership costs and employers covering those costs also appear at the bottom of the table which is partially consistent with the findings of Sidaway et al. (2013) but only for the latter. In that study, membership cost was marginally important. Similar results were reported by Inglis et al. (2011), in whose study employers paying membership fees had a neutral level of importance.

The lack of importance of financial rewards (salary of members) both in terms of outcome evaluation (16 in the ranking) and importance (8 in the ranking) and their apparent lack of relationship with intention to affiliate with a professional accounting body could be attributed to Confucian culture which despises monetary rewards (Yee and West 2010).

6.3.1.3 Student evaluations of salient beliefs

It is interesting to note that the salary of members is a very important factor for students but not for the other sample groups, showing that with maturity, extrinsic motivation declines in prominence. This confirms other studies which found relationships between financial factors and accounting career choice (Ahmed, Alam, and Alam 1997, Chen, Jones, and McIntyre 2008, Tan and Laswad 2006). This difference in terms of importance of salary between different generations (students and members) could be explained by the fact that members, who are on average older than students are more anchored in Confucian tradition which places little emphasis on financial rewards while younger people, perhaps under western influence, place more emphasis on them. It is also noteworthy that the professional status of the body ranked only ninth in importance, which could be explained by the fact that students are not at that stage aware of the impact of professional affiliation on their own future professional status. However, these findings are similar to previous studies of professional accounting body affiliation (Inglis et al. 2011a, Sidaway et al. 2013) which found that career opportunities, international recognition and brand or reputation were the most important factors listed by accounting students. The prominence of extrinsic factors such as career opportunities, salary and international recognition is similar to findings

from Auyeung and Sands' (1997) Asian students and Jackling et al.'s (2012) international students (most of whom were of Confucian heritage). Similar results were also reported by Wen, Hao and Bu (2015) regarding market opportunities contributing to Chinese students' decisions to pursue CPA certification. The last study also found effects of genuine interest and autonomy, which were not listed in this study, as reasons for affiliating with professional accounting bodies.

The factors perceived to have the least influence are assessment fees and ongoing membership fees. The latter could be explained by students referring to potential affiliations with local professional bodies, whose membership fees are much lower, rather than foreign ones. Employers covering the membership fees also appears at the bottom of the table despite being considered relatively important, all of which findings are similar to those of Sidaway et al. (2013). This last factor falls under the PBC construct which is considered in the earlier regression model and is found to be non-significant. This equates with Inglis et al.'s (2011) findings that 'these attributes, while considered important, did not have a large impact on the choice of one professional body over another; that is, they are important but do not necessarily distinguish between professional accounting bodies' (Inglis et al. 2011a, 721).

The next section discusses the results of the comparison between members and foundation candidates in terms of the outcome evaluation of salient beliefs.

6.3.2 Intergroup evaluations of salient beliefs

This section discusses the results of the independent t-tests comparing members and foundation candidates in terms of professional accounting body outcome evaluation (behavioural and control beliefs), normative pressure from important referents and motivation to comply with these referents

6.3.2.1 Behavioural beliefs

The results of the independent t-tests comparing members and foundation candidates in terms of professional accounting body outcome evaluation of behavioural beliefs show that only one behavioural belief, the quality of education programs, is significantly different between the two groups. The overall rating by members shows a

high level of agreement with the statement, which meant they consider the professional education programs to be of very high quality. Members rate the professional education programs higher than foundation candidates did. This might be explained by the fact that the majority of the members (55%) are associate members who are completing the professional levels of the CPA Australia programs and would therefore be in a more 'advanced' position (having already completed all foundation levels and some or all of the professional levels) to judge of the quality of the programs overall. Quality of training has similarly been found to be a predictor of attitude in a previous study by Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren (2012).

6.3.2.2 Normative beliefs

The results of the independent t-tests comparing members and foundation candidates in terms of normative pressure from important referents and motivation to comply with these referents shows a difference between these two groups in terms of normative pressure from employer and family. In each case the members perceive more pressure from these two referent groups than foundation candidates do, which might relate to the fact that a higher proportion of members work for Big 4 firms (43% and 27% respectively) which tend to be more prescriptive about the specific body they want their employees to affiliate with. This 'prescribed' affiliation might be due to the need to build and promote the 'club' mentality. It might also be linked to employers paying the membership fee, which is a slightly more important factor for members than for foundation candidates and which could have been an incentive to follow the employers' wishes. It is unclear why family is a more important referent group for members than for foundation candidates however one possible explanation is the fact that the members sample is on average slightly older which might then result in a generational gap where younger Vietnamese people are more independent and thus rely less on their family's opinion for important decisions whereas older Vietnamese people are more rooted in traditions where the family and the parents, in particular weigh in most choices.

6.3.2.3 Control beliefs

The results of the independent t-tests comparing members and foundation candidates in terms of professional accounting body outcome evaluation of control beliefs shows that only one control belief is significantly different between the two groups, the likelihood of affiliating with a professional accounting body if the employer covers the membership fee.

Members are more likely than foundation candidates to affiliate with a professional accounting body if their employer covers the membership fee, which is quite unusual in light of the potential increased earnings of members compared with foundation candidates. However this might be explained by the similar demographics in terms of age for both groups and the fact that more members than foundation candidates belong to several bodies (31.8% and 7.6% respectively) adding some pressure to reduce or receive sponsorship for their multiple membership costs. It might also reiterate the previous section's findings that more members than foundation candidates work for the Big 4 which tend to prescribe affiliation but cover the membership cost.

6.3.3 Factor importance intergroup comparison

A three-way comparison of students, foundation candidates and members in terms of factor importance shows that students are more preoccupied with the quality of the programs and the assessment fee but less concerned with their professional status, which may stem from their lack of professional experience and from genuine concerns about their ability to obtain the required qualification. CPA examinations in Vietnam are notorious for their reliance on rote learning. These findings are in line with literature (Jackling and Calero 2006, Auyeung and Sands 1997) suggesting that social status is not always an important factor affecting students' career choice but it contradicts a New Zealand study (Tan and Laswad 2006) showing that international students, of a mostly Chinese background, have more favourable views of a career providing high social status.

Members tend to emphasise the importance of the perceived expertise of other members, which might also be related to the status of the professional body or could be explained by the social aspects of affiliation and leveraging the strengths of members.

They tend to place less importance on access to discussion groups and study support from Registered Tuition Providers, which is not surprising given that most of them would have completed most or all of the CPA program levels.

Foundation candidates place more importance on exam mode, probably by virtue of their focus on completing levels requiring examination passes. Anecdotally they also place more importance than the other two groups on access to professional indemnity insurance, magazines and journals.

6.3.4 Intenders and non-intenders comparison

The comparison between those who intend to professionally affiliate and those who do not reveals that the main factors affecting that decision are the reputation of the professional body, career and networking opportunities, international recognition, professional status, international mobility opportunities, perceived expertise of the members and continuing professional development. These findings, in aggregate, confirm previous results from this thesis and also previous studies as to which factors determine choice of professional association (Inglis et al. 2011a, Sidaway et al. 2013). They also reinforce the point that attitudes towards affiliation make a difference in comparison with normative pressure or inhibiting factors. For foundation candidates, only access to professional indemnity insurance makes a difference between the two groups while for students, career and networking opportunities, professional status, perceived expertise of the members and continuing professional development make a difference. These results are probably due to the fact that foundation candidates are already somehow committed to affiliating with CPA Australia while students may or may not be committed and thus could be more critical of what is important when becoming a member.

When looking at sub-demographic findings, it is not surprising to see that the younger the respondents (and probably the lower the income), the more the emphasis on cost (assessment and program fees) while older respondents place more emphasis on their career prospects. The findings on gender differences contradict Walsh and Borkowski (2013) who found no significant difference between male and female executives in terms of rating of reputation or recognition (professional status) but found a difference in terms of advancement (career opportunities) only for females to rate this

item higher than their male counterparts. These discrepancies might be due to the age of the respondents with participants in the Walsh and Borkowski study being mainly over 40 years old while most respondents in this thesis are under 35. Finally, the fact that respondents having studied abroad place more importance on quality of professional education programs was to be expected as their expectations of what constitutes good quality training is probably higher than locally trained students.

6.3.5 Single and multiple members comparison

Finally, the comparison between single and multiple body memberships reveals that those who are members of more than one professional accounting body probably made that choice because of perceived pressure from important referents (co-workers and family). This does not contradict initial findings showing that the subjective norm in the TPB model is not significant as members were excluded from that analysis, having performed the behaviour already. So it may be that subjective norm indeed has an influence on the members group but not on foundation candidates and students. Additionally, it can be explained by the fact that respondents do not consider on-going membership fees to be critical and are therefore willing to invest in several affiliations if they are encouraged to do so by important others. Once again, this may stem from the desire to espouse the 'club mentality' and appeal to different credentials should circumstances change or necessity arise. Almost 32 percent of CPA Australia members are also member of one or several Vietnamese accounting bodies such as VAA or VACPA and this may be dictated by political rather than objective reasons. It is surprising to note that no behavioural beliefs make a difference between these two groups whereas a previous study (Sidaway et al. 2013) showed that international recognition was one factor distinguishing single and multiple memberships. The difference between these two studies is the setting: the previous study was conducted in Australia with members belonging to both Australian and foreign professional bodies and potentially doing so in order to achieve social mobility. In this study, most members are Vietnamese and unlikely to work abroad.

After discussing the results of research questions 1 and 2 in relation to the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) and the literature review on the professionalisation of accounting, career choice and professional accounting bodies

affiliation, the next section will elaborate on the implications of these results for accounting practitioners and educators.

6.4 Implications

This section reviews the implications of these research findings for accounting practitioners and educators.

6.4.1 Implications for professional accounting bodies

There are several implications for foreign professional accounting bodies in the results of this study.

First of all, as attitude is shown to be the main and sometimes the only predictor of intention to affiliate with a professional accounting body, the benefits and costs of affiliation should be emphasised. For example, in order to attract new members or retain the current ones, professional accounting bodies would be wise to emphasise the benefits of affiliation such as reputation of the professional body, career and networking opportunities, professional status and international recognition, as these proved to be the most important factors for both members and foundation candidates. The quality of the CPA Australia program should also be emphasised as it is ranked one of the five most important factors for all three sample groups and is the number one factor for accounting students. This is where foreign professional accounting bodies have a role to play in filling the gap left by local bodies which provide little training of a perceived lower quality.

An additional effort should be made to ensure that foundation candidates, who by definition, have already exerted effort and money into the CPA Australia program, complete the foundation levels and become associate members. This could be achieved through allowing more flexibility in how the programs are delivered (face to face or online) and how and when examinations are completed as well as payment facilities.

As subjective norm has proved to be significant only for foundation candidates although it is of moderate importance for all three sample groups, mass marketing strategies may prove ineffective in reaching their true targets. As the only viable referent group target seems to be employers and, more specifically, Big 4 firms, marketing efforts should be directed at them with group membership deals as a potential focus, as these firms tend to prescribe affiliation and cover the membership costs for their employees.

It also seems that reducing the costs of affiliation would not bring any benefit, as cost is not perceived as a significant inhibiting factor except for multiple members who typically belong to one local and one foreign professional body. However, tuition fees seem to be more problematic for all groups therefore these could be revised to reflect local purchasing power and introduce a price differentiation for South-East Asian countries (currently CPA Australia programs in Vietnam are priced similarly to those in Australia and are much more expensive than those of their direct competitor ACCA).

Overall, this study contradicts other findings in the accounting field by showing that normative pressure and perceived behavioural control are factors affecting a wide range of decisions.

6.4.2 Implications for accounting practitioners

It seems that age and gender affect which factors are the most important for practitioners in deciding which professional association to belong to, with younger females privileging the quality of the programs and older males favouring extrinsic factors such as the expertise of other members and membership benefits. One implication of this finding is that if the accounting profession wants to attract and retain more females (who are the majority of accounting graduates), they should emphasise the quality of training rather than the benefits of affiliation.

Implications of this study for the accounting profession mostly relate to solving the shortage of qualified accountants. The accounting profession has a role to play in promoting the profession as challenging by emphasizing a wide array of career opportunities (not just the Big 4) and career settings with possibilities of working overseas through mutual recognition of qualifications abroad. It might be wise then to advertise each type of career (by firm size or field) in more detail in order to avoid

investing in new graduates who have prior misconceptions and would therefore be likely to rapidly change their careers. Accounting firms should also tailor their messages to the country where they are based as the importance of each factor might be affected by culture.

The profession should also appeal to females who comprise the majority of the accounting graduates but who tend not to reach senior positions as they may prioritise work-life balance and child rearing. Better and more flexible work conditions should be offered if the profession wants to diversify and survive the retirement of baby boomers. Separate advertising campaigns should target to females, minorities and young people by welcoming diversity, emphasising work-life balance and emphasising international recognition as well as the portability of credentials. The accounting profession and professional accounting bodies definitely have an important role to play in improving the image of the profession and erasing the stigma of accountancy as a profession. Large professional firms could offer more internships in lesser known areas such as advisory services and IT security in order to attract graduates outside the accounting realm. Alternative pathways may have a role to play in attracting non-accounting graduates and offering qualification equivalents in order to widen the pool of candidates.

6.4.3 Implications for accounting educators

Accounting educators also have a role to play in filling the accountancy gap. Given the importance placed by students on career opportunities, one suggestion echoes Sidaway et al.'s (2013) statement that accounting educators 'may benefit from raising awareness associated with the range of employment outcomes that exist for professional accountants and of the opportunities for travel that arise from the international recognition of the professional bodies' (Sidaway et al. 2013, 613).

Possible suggestions regarding improvements in student enrolment in accounting degrees and the solution to the shortage of suitable qualified accountants include promoting accounting as challenging and dynamic and emphasising high future earnings and career opportunities, as this study has shown that these last two factors are very important for accounting students. They are even more important in times of economic uncertainty and regardless of the cultural context, and should certainly appeal

to students in developing economies desperate to secure good financial conditions for themselves and their families.

We also reiterate Inglis et al.'s (2008) call to raise awareness of professional accounting bodies and their benefits.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the findings pertaining to the research questions with reference to the theoretical framework and relevant literature. It provided some clarifications as to which factors affect accounting students, foundation candidates and member's decisions to affiliate with professional accounting bodies. It concluded by highlighting implications for professional accounting bodies, the accounting profession and accounting educators.

The next chapter will provide a conclusion for this thesis, including a summary of the significant findings and the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behaviour. It will summarise the implications of this study and its limitations, make recommendations for future research and provide an overall conclusion.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to an understanding of the professionalisation process of accounting in Vietnam through the lens of professional accounting body membership and new knowledge relating to the rationale behind single and dual membership in state-controlled emerging countries. Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) as a theoretical framework, a model is developed to empirically test respondents' intentions with regard to professional affiliation. This chapter offers the concluding remarks of the thesis by presenting a summary of significant empirical findings in relation to the chosen theoretical framework, the relevant literature and the practical implications of the research.

The diagrammatic representation of the structure of this thesis follows (figure 1) and it highlights sequencing of Chapter 7 in relation to the overall thesis.

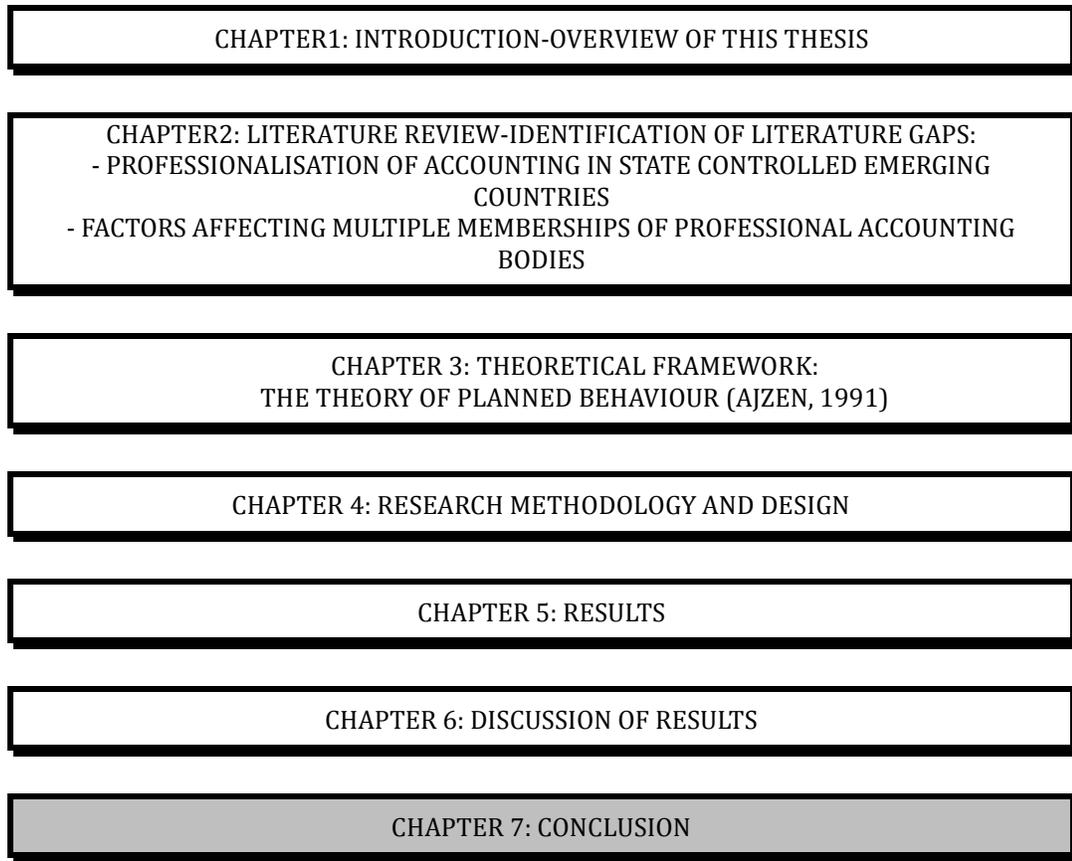


Figure 1 Overview of the thesis

This chapter is structured in the following way: the thesis objectives and research questions as well as hypotheses are restated in Section 7.2, then the significant findings and practical implications are summarised in Section 7.3 followed by a review in Section 7.4 of the implications of these findings on the chosen theoretical framework. The contribution of this thesis to knowledge is elaborated in Section 7.5, the limitations of this thesis are outlined in Section 7.6, suggestions for future research are made in Section 7.7 and finally an overall conclusion is offered in Section 7.8.

7.2 Overview of this thesis

This thesis aims to provide a greater understanding of professional accounting body membership in Vietnam by investigating the emerging accounting profession in Vietnam. In particular it analyses the intentions of accounting students to affiliate with professional accounting bodies in Vietnam as well as factors affecting associate

membership and the decisions of members of a particular professional body to maintain or cease affiliation with that body. It also examines the attitudes and motivations of those who are completing the foundation levels of the CPA Australia program of that same professional body and are thus on the way to becoming members. Exploring professional accounting body affiliation serves to develop an understanding of the professionalisation process in a state-controlled emerging economy, and departs from an Anglo-American model of the professionalisation process in which the profession is self-regulated. Such a study is critically important in times of deepening professionalisation and economic uncertainty. By understanding the drivers of membership attraction and retention, professional accounting bodies, educational institutions and the accounting profession could be empowered to devise strategies to reduce the imbalance between job supply and demand in accounting and auditing and thus provide some insight and posit possible solutions to the shortage of qualified accountants as well as contribute to the economic development of the country.

Despite studies on the perceptions of the benefits and costs of joining a professional body (Sidaway et al. 2013, Inglis et al. 2011a), little empirical evidence is available on the deciding factors for joining one specific professional body, let alone multiple bodies, in a developing country. This thesis contributes to an understanding which could inform recruitment efforts for the profession.

Drawing from three samples (final year accounting students, members of a foreign professional accounting body in Vietnam and candidates undertaking the foundation levels of the CPA Australia programs with that same professional body), this thesis addresses the following research questions:

- RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?
- RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies?

- RQ2. Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding affiliation with professional accounting bodies?

Based on a review of the relevant literature and Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991), the following hypotheses were developed:

- H1: Foundation candidates and students who have a positive attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.
- H2: Foundation candidates and students who perceive normative pressure (subjective norm) towards affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam.
- H3: Foundation candidates and students who perceive they have control over affiliating with a professional accounting body are more likely to affiliate with one such body in Vietnam

The next section will review the key findings and practical implications of this thesis.

7.3 Summary of significant findings and implications

This section provides a summary of the key findings and practical implications of this thesis. Table 30 provides a summary of the key findings for the two research questions.

Table 30 Summary of key findings

| <i>Research questions</i> | <i>Findings</i> |
|---|---|
| RQ1a. To what extent does attitude explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies? | Attitude is a significant factor in explaining the intention of both foundation candidates and students to affiliate with one or multiple accounting bodies. Both groups have a favourable attitude towards such affiliations. |
| RQ1b. To what extent does subjective norm explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies? | Subjective norm is a significant factor in explaining the intention of both foundation candidates and students to affiliate with one or multiple accounting bodies however it is more significant for foundation candidates than students. Both groups perceive some pressure to affiliate with a professional accounting body. |
| RQ1c. To what extent does perceived behavioural control explain the intention of students and foundation candidates to affiliate with one or more professional accounting bodies? | Perceived behavioural control is not a significant factor in explaining the intention of both foundation candidates and students to affiliate with one or multiple accounting bodies. Both groups perceive no inhibiting factors towards such affiliations. |
| RQ2. Is there a difference between members, foundation candidates and students in terms of salient beliefs regarding affiliation with professional accounting bodies? | <p>There are differences between members and foundation candidates in terms of their perception of the quality of professional higher education programs, their likelihood of affiliating with a professional accounting body if their employer covers the membership fee and perceived normative pressure to affiliate from employer and family.</p> <p>Students place significantly more importance than foundation candidates or members on assessment fees and quality of professional education programs but less importance on professional status.</p> <p>Members place more importance than students or foundation candidates on the perceived expertise of members but less importance on access to discussion groups and study support from Registered Tuition Providers.</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
| | <p>Foundation candidates place more importance than members or foundation candidates on access to professional indemnity insurance, exam mode and magazines and journals.</p> <p>Those who intend to affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future place significantly more importance on reputation of the professional body, career and networking opportunities, international recognition, professional status, international mobility opportunities, perceived expertise of the members, continuing professional development and receiving magazines or journals but less importance on assessment fees than those who do not.</p> <p>Those who are members of more than one professional accounting body are likely to feel more motivation to comply with co-workers and family in terms of affiliating with a professional accounting body than those who are members of one professional accounting body only, but place less importance on on-going membership fees.</p> |
|--|---|

The results of Research Question 1 which relate to the constructs in the Theory of Planned Behaviour show that attitude is a predictor of intention for both sample groups, subjective norm is a predictor of intention for both groups but is more significant for foundation candidates, and Perceived Behavioural Control is not a predictor of intention for either group. Consequently, H1 is supported for both sample groups, H2 is supported mostly for foundation candidates but H3 is not supported. The contribution of these findings relating to further validation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) is considered in the next section.

The results of Research Question 2 show that there are significant differences between the three sample groups, those who intend to affiliate and those who do not and between those who hold only one professional accounting membership and those who hold several.

The practical implications of these results suggest the need to emphasise the benefits of affiliating with a professional accounting body and in particular the reputation of the professional body, career and networking opportunities, professional status, international recognition and quality of programs. This last factor is crucial in the light of the perceived lack of quality of training offered by Vietnamese professional accounting bodies and so is the flexibility of these programs for those completing them. Marketing and promotional efforts should be directed at the Big 4 accounting firms, which have the financial capacity to cover their employees' membership and program fees. as the main employers of members. It seems that mass marketing efforts would in this context be fruitless as most referent groups did not seem to exert any influence. In general marketing should be more targeted, highlighting options in terms of careers, industries and even locations. Marketing efforts could attract more female members by promoting the quality of the programs and developing more flexible working arrangements. They could also attract more members overall by promoting the range of career opportunities as well as advertising the profession as dynamic rather than rules-based and dull. A reduced pricing strategy for Vietnamese members should be adopted, particularly for tuition fees.

The next section will review the contribution of the findings on the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

7.4 Theory of Planned Behaviour

This section will review the contribution of the findings on the further validation of the Theory of Planned Behaviour.

As predicted in Hypothesis 1, attitude is significant in predicting the intention of foundation candidates and accounting students to affiliate with a professional accounting body. In this thesis, the attitude construct is measured through an average of three statements relating to how good or bad, positive or negative and useful or useless affiliation with a professional accounting body is. Despite the fact that the reliability of this scale is sufficient, it is interesting to note that if the first pair of adjectives (good-bad) had been dropped, the reliability of the attitude scale would have increased further. This seems to contradict previous findings where the good/bad scale

has been found to load consistently highly on the evaluative factor scale, regardless of the context (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975). It might be that in the Vietnamese context, good or bad is too generic and that positive-negative and useful-useless can be better associated with professional outcomes. The indirect measure of attitude through behavioural beliefs confirms that this construct is predominant with all behavioural beliefs resulting in outcomes with a high level of agreement and all but one behavioural factor rated from quite important to extremely important. This confirms previous studies using the Theory of Planned Behaviour. The correlation between the direct and indirect measure of attitude is moderate and similar to the levels reported by Ajzen (1991). This would tend to demonstrate that attitude is significant through the effect of behavioural beliefs such as reputation, professional status and costs, which is also similar to previous findings.

As demonstrated by the findings relating to Hypothesis 2, the effect of subjective norm on intention shows mixed results. Subjective norm is significant for foundation candidates but barely registered for accounting students. The direct measure of subjective norm is taken through a generic question asking respondents to rate whether they perceived that people who are important to them thought they should affiliate with a professional accounting body. Using a single question to measure subjective norm is quite common (Armitage and Conner 2001) but makes it difficult to assess the reliability of the scale. The indirect measure of normative pressure comprises four questions asking respondents whether or not they perceive that specific referents thought they should affiliate with a professional accounting body, and their motivation to comply with those views. However the list of important referents was not established through pre-survey interviews as recommended by Ajzen and Fishbein (Fishbein and Ajzen 1975, Ajzen and Fishbein 1980). The results show that foundation candidates perceive moderate or no pressure from the referents and generally have no motivation to comply with their views, which is at odds with the fact that subjective norm was significant in explaining their intention. Additionally, the correlation between the direct and indirect measures of subjective norm is much lower than that reported by other studies and meta-analyses (Ajzen 1991, Armitage and Conner 2001). One possible explanation is that the list of referents omitted an important one, for example professors, but given the profile of the foundation candidates (78.6% are not students) this is unlikely. It could also be that subjective norm would have had a higher effect had it been measured through multiple statements rather than one, a view confirmed by previous studies.

These low correlations between global and belief-based measures could be explained by the fact that 'the expectancy-value formulation may fail adequately to describe the process whereby individual beliefs combine to produce the global response' (Ajzen 1991, 197).

Finally, findings relating to Hypothesis 3 show that perceived behavioural control (PBC) has no effect on intention for either group. The perceived behavioural control construct is measured through an average of three statements relating to how easy or difficult, under the respondent's control and up to them, it is to affiliate with a professional accounting body. The first statement relates to the concept of self-efficacy and does not differentiate between external (availability) and internal factors (motivation) (Armitage and Conner 1999a) while the other two statements relate to controllability. For this reason, and because the reliability of the scale with all three statements included was below 0.6, it was decided to drop the first statement from the PBC construct. Despite the fact that the easy/difficult scale is quite commonly used to assess PBC, it might be useful for predictive purposes to use more specific adjectives in contexts where the decision might be affected by a variety of internal and external factors. The indirect measure of perceived behavioural control is composed of questions asking respondents about the likelihood of facilitating or inhibiting factors affecting their intentions to affiliate with professional accounting bodies and the importance of these factors. The results show that some control beliefs are rated as very important (flexibility of program, time available for studying) or important (difficulty of CPA Australia program, employer paying program fees) and are likely or very likely to occur which is at odds with the fact that PBC is not significant in explaining intention. One explanation is that even if the employers did not cover the program fee the respondents would still affiliate with the professional body, showing that PBC is important but not critical. Another explanation is that positive and negative control factors cancel each other out. This idea is confirmed by the findings that general respondents do not think that becoming or remaining a member is either easy or difficult. Either way, these findings are at odds with previous studies finding an effect of PBC on intention in the accounting domain (Cohen and Hanno 1993, Tan and Laswad 2006, Dalton, Buchheit, and McMillan 2014, Bagley, Dalton, and Ortegren 2012). Additionally, the correlation between the direct and indirect measures of PBC is much lower than that reported by other studies and meta-analyses (Armitage and Conner

2001, Cohen and Hanno 1993) which might be due to the previously-cited criticism of the expectancy-value model.

One final comment on the application of the TPB to this thesis relates to the correlation between constructs. Despite no obvious issue with multicollinearity, some constructs are fairly highly correlated (attitude and subjective norm and attitude and PBC show a correlation close to 0.5) which shows that these constructs overlap to a certain extent. It might therefore be that a positive attitude towards affiliating with a professional accounting body stems from unconscious social pressure and an individual's internalised confidence in their ability to perform the behaviour.

The findings and their relationship with the TPB model are represented in Figure 6 below.

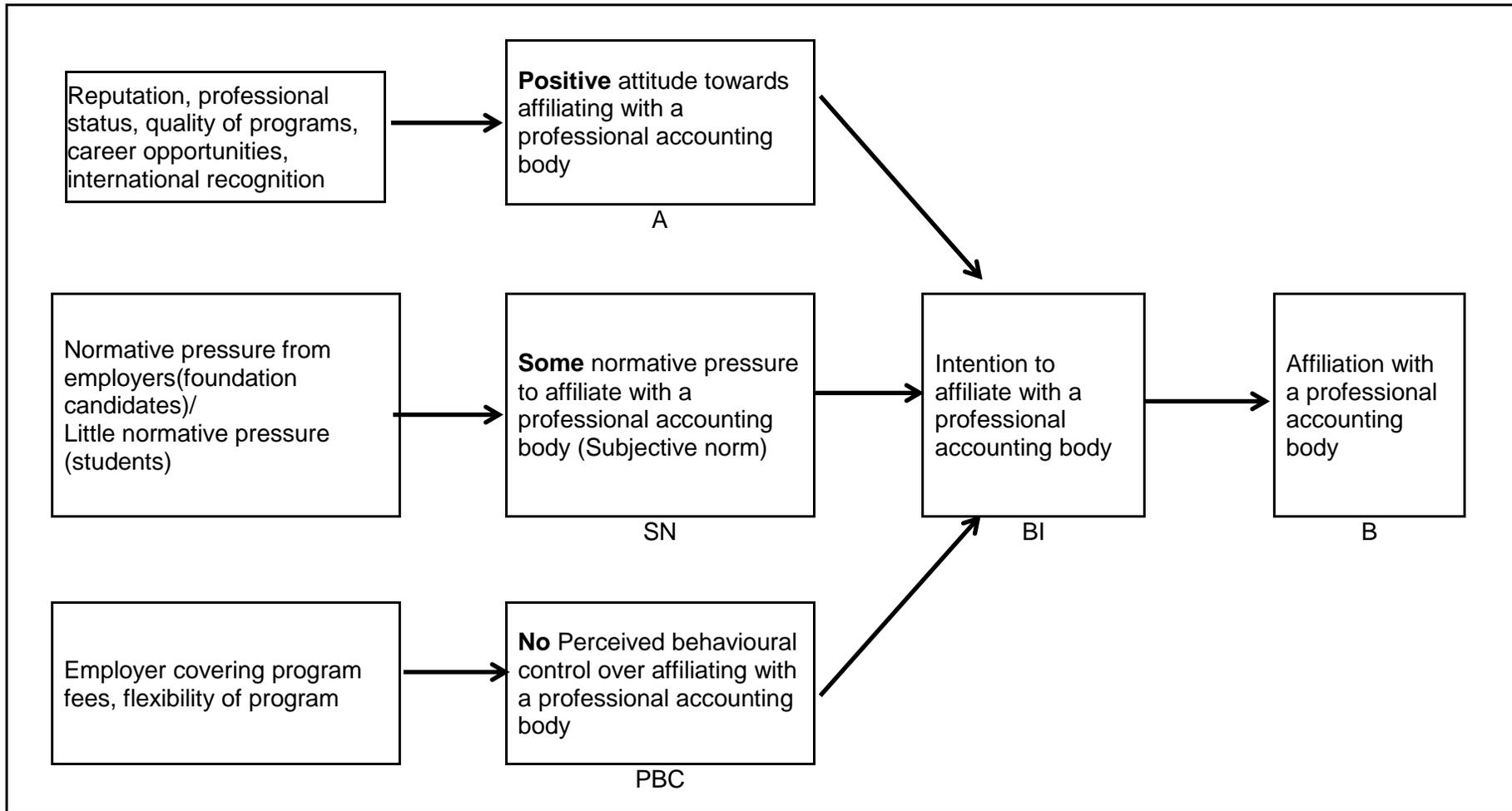


Figure 6 Results of the decision to affiliate with a professional accounting body in relation to the TPB (Ajzen 1991)

7.5 Contribution to knowledge

This study contributes new knowledge relating to the rationale behind single and dual membership (of a local and foreign body for example) in state-controlled emerging countries and the implications for the professionalisation of accounting. Specifically, this study contributes to knowledge in four respects.

First of all, it provides empirical evidence about the drivers of professional affiliation. Few studies (Inglis et al. 2011a, Sidaway et al. 2013) have provided evidence about the factors affecting the decisions of future members to choose a specific professional accounting body. This thesis confirms the previous limited findings that career and international mobility opportunities, quality of programs, professional status, reputation and international recognition are crucial factors in choosing a foreign professional accounting body in Vietnam. These findings are critical to addressing the shortage of qualified accountants in Vietnam.

Secondly, it expands the existing literature on the use of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen 1991) by extending this research in the accounting field and by confirming that positive or negative attitudes towards behaviours associated with accounting (majoring in accounting, choosing a general or specific career in accounting or affiliating with a professional accounting body) explain individual intentions and thus behaviour. However this thesis does not shed any light on whether intrinsic or extrinsic factors are predominant, as most factors listed in the questionnaire were extrinsic factors. The effect of subjective norm, similarly to previous findings, is still inconclusive with the construct very significant for one group but not the other and only one referent group (employer) having a marginal effect. This could potentially confirm, as other authors have concluded, that attitude and subjective norm are overlapping rather than distinct constructs. Surprisingly, perceived behavioural control is not significant for either group, a finding which tends to contradict previous research. It might be that PBC overlaps with attitude.

Thirdly, this thesis contributes to the literature on professionalisation of accounting in state-controlled emerging economies and serves to depart from an Anglo-American model of professionalisation with the central tenet of self-regulation. The professionalisation process in Vietnam seems to be one where foreign professional

accounting bodies do not compete with local ones but provide benefits (career and networking opportunities, quality programs and international recognition amongst others) that are yet to be found with indigenous bodies. These local professional bodies are indeed quite recent and it is appropriate to think that the various partnerships and mutual recognition schemes with foreign accounting bodies will help develop the Vietnamese accounting profession in its own right. This thesis also highlights possible reasons for dual memberships, with the motivation to comply with the opinions of important others' opinions and (un)importance of membership fees as deciding factors. It is however surprising that international recognition is not a differentiating factor. This might be due to the fact that unlike previous western centric studies (Sidaway et al. 2013), the respondents are not foreigners who could potentially practise in their home country and therefore would need to ensure the transferability of their qualifications, but local practitioners unlikely to use their foreign qualifications abroad.

Finally, this thesis contributes to the accounting education literature by extending prior studies investigating the intentions of students to pursue accounting careers, subsequently affiliate with professional accounting bodies such as CPA Australia and thus acquire CPA certification. One of the differentiating factors between accounting students and those who have already entered the profession is their emphasis on the quality of professional programs, which confirms once more that professional accounting bodies have a role to play in ensuring adequate training for the profession. It also highlights the fact that because professional status is largely unimportant to students, accounting educators need to improve communications and 'sell' the profession better by emphasising its social status.

After summarising the contribution of this thesis to new knowledge, the next section will state the limitations of this study.

7.6 Limitations of this thesis

7.6.1 Limitations of the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Although the TPB has been used extensively to explain a range of decisions in many disciplines, it does have certain limitations identified in prior research. Overall,

however, even when the TPB was not used according to the original specified boundaries it was shown to have high predictive utility making it a useful tool for exploring decision-making towards performing a behaviour but not towards attaining a goal.

Most studies explore the attitude-subjective norm/intention/behaviour link for one alternative, thus ignoring attitude and subjective norm towards competing alternatives (Sheppard, Hartwick, and Warshaw 1988). They also consider the intention to perform a behaviour but ignore the subjective probability of performing the behaviour. However, these authors found that choice improved the validity of the model rather than weakening it. Smetana and Adler (1980) suggest that incorporating alternatives should have an effect not on attitudes toward performing the behaviour but directly on intention to do so.

The consistent low variances, which is also exemplified in this thesis, suggest that some other factors not included in the TPB (belief salience, past behavioural habit, the structure of the PBC construct, moral norms, self-identity, and affective beliefs) may influence intention and behaviour (Conner and Armitage 1998). Most studies using the TPB are cross-sectional rather than longitudinal which renders questionnaires more vulnerable to consistency biases and which does not enable the testing of the belief-attitude-intention-behaviour link.

Finally, moderate correlations between direct and indirect measures of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control (average of 0.5 for Armitage and Conner's (2001) meta-analysis) show a limitation in the power of salient or specific beliefs (indirect measures) to explain global beliefs (direct measures). It might be that not all salient beliefs can be assessed or that other mechanisms come into play that are not accounted for in the model.

7.6.2 Limitations of the research design

There are several limitations inherent in this study. The first limitation is that this study focuses on only one country, Vietnam, as a reference point for professional accounting body affiliation, which may limit the generalisability of the findings. Another limitation is that this study is cross-sectional rather than longitudinal which renders questionnaires more vulnerable to consistency biases and which does not enable the

testing of the belief-attitude-intention-behaviour link, and therefore any changes at a future point in time in the way individuals make decisions may not be captured. A third limitation is that members and foundation candidates were selected from one professional body only, however as previous literature has shown that multiple membership is likely, single membership bias is limited.

The final limitation relates to the length of the questionnaire which may have created some survey fatigue for respondents.

7.7 Future research

Future research might seek to expand the range of data collected by including several universities in Vietnam and other South-East Asian countries. It is important to try and include different types of universities, public and private, small or large, domestic or foreign, in order to capture the wide range of accounting student profiles. The majority of the accounting students in the sample for this thesis came from one large public university. They should in theory be familiar with professional accounting bodies and their purpose however it is possible that, given the context, their exposure to professional accounting bodies' members and representatives might be limited. Future research could explore in more depth respondents' understanding of what professional accounting associations do, the benefits they provide and their likelihood of joining one. The remainder of the students sample is composed of students from a private foreign university in Vietnam who are likely to have been exposed to foreign professional bodies such as ACCA and CPA Australia, as these two bodies in particular organise student-focused events within the university and provide scholarships for their own programs. For this group of students, it might be beneficial to explore the reasons for affiliating with a foreign body in Vietnam and the perceived benefits compared to local professional bodies.

It might also be wise to include several professional accounting bodies to avoid a single member bias and, in particular, to include both domestic and foreign bodies in order to ascertain which factors differentiate between these two types of membership. This may confirm whether international recognition is in fact a critical factor of affiliation with foreign bodies.

Future studies could also include more stakeholders, such as employers of professional accounting body members, in their samples. By interviewing employers researchers could ascertain whether affiliation is indeed prescribed, encouraged or up to the employee, and whether such prescription is specific to one body. These results, coupled with an understanding of how attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control affect intention and decisions, could shed some light on the possibilities of construct overlap with potentially subjective norm (pressure from employer) and perceived behavioural control (employer's financial enabling of affiliation) having an effect on intention through attitude (positive view of the given body).

Further studies could also include a wider range of important referents such as professors who could be influential in informing or misinforming students about the benefits of local and professional affiliation. It is indeed suspected that local affiliations with VAA and VACPA in particular are motivated by political agendas. Because these two bodies emanate from the Ministry of Finance, career opportunities in this one-party country could dictate that belonging to one or both of those is a way of securing a career at the highest level. Similarly for foreign accounting firms, belonging to the prescribed body could be one or the only pathway to climb the professional ladder.

It would be interesting then to do some research on the content of marketing material produced by professional accounting bodies and perform a theme analysis to explore who their targets are, which benefits are primarily advertised and the medium in which they are advertised. This could be coupled with an analysis of the evolution of the image of the profession and whether these advertisements contribute to improving the dull image of the accountant.

This study could be extended by including samples from different countries in Asia in order to confirm whether positive outcomes associated with affiliation are indeed predominant. Different Asian countries may place more emphasis on different factors, which would be useful information for foreign professional bodies wishing to enter new markets, or could be more subject to normative pressure which would also inform who to target. For example, if professors or university administrators are important and significant referents then specific events aimed at them may be a worthwhile exercise. It could also be useful to further explore whether intrinsic or extrinsic factors are predominant in the choice affiliation by including more intrinsic factors in the survey.

Longitudinal rather than cross-sectional studies following accounting students and determining whether those who intended to join a professional body did indeed do so, or establishing reasons for not doing so, would help by incorporating all the elements of the Theory of Planned Behaviour and establishing the link between intention and behaviour.

Similarly, a longitudinal study of members who had ceased affiliation would help with understanding the reasons for these changes and whether the factors that were listed as the most important were the same as the ones which triggered the decisions to leave. This would be most useful in the case of members previously holding several memberships who were in a position to leave any professional body that was not delivering on its promises. An analysis of these decisions by local and foreign members would also help in differentiating between factors to ascertain what is important for the two groups.

7.8 In conclusion

The negative image of the accounting profession and the ensuing shortage of qualified accountants are well-researched topics, however what is done within the profession to counteract this phenomenon is less well understood. In particular the role professional accounting bodies have to play is blurry and this applies even more to the roles of foreign accounting bodies in Vietnam. With the shift from a centrally planned to a market oriented economy, professional services in Vietnam are booming but, as this thesis shows, the professionalisation model in Vietnam is unlike those of Anglo-Saxon countries where the profession regulates itself. Vietnam's accounting profession is largely regulated by the State and the role, if any, professional accounting bodies have to play in its development is largely misunderstood.

Through its survey of current and future accounting professionals, this thesis attempts to understand their motivations for joining one or several accounting bodies in Vietnam and therefore to make a contribution to strategies for attracting new members to the profession.

This study provides evidence that affiliation with professional accounting bodies is mostly related to the perceived positive outcomes of such affiliations or in other words

the immediate or future tangible and intangible benefits of a particular membership or memberships. Since a fairly large number of respondent members belonged to more than one body and neither cost nor the listed benefits or lack of benefits were significant inhibitors, it seems that these members chose multiple affiliations because of social pressure. This might be due to a need for recognition or a need to belong to a perceived elite group of foreign association members. This finding is important in the light of the accounting professionalisation process currently occurring in Vietnam and the penetration of foreign bodies into the Vietnamese market in recent years. This finding supports the emphasis on credentials in Asia where the perception is often that more (formal or informal) qualifications are better than less.

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APPENDIX I - Questionnaires

A. CPA Australia members questionnaire - English

For your chance to win an Ipad, please fill out this questionnaire. We ask questions which make use of rating scales with seven places; you are to make a check mark in the place that best describes your opinion.

This research is supported by CPA Australia, and it seeks information about your reasons for deciding to affiliate with a professional accounting body. Your responses to this survey form part of a research project sponsored by CPA Australia and aims to improve our understanding of the reasoning behind professional accounting body membership in an emerging and transitional market.

The survey will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. You can be assured that all responses are confidential and no attempt will be made to identify any respondent individually unless you choose to leave your contact detail. The information from surveys will only be reported in the form of statistical summaries.

Thank you for your time and co-operation

Section A

1. Please rate the following statements relating to affiliating with CPA Australia. (please circle for each statement)

1 = strongly disagree

7 = strongly agree

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| The assessment fee of this professional accounting body is high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The on-going membership fees are high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The program/tuition fees are high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The professional education programs are of high quality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| This professional accounting body has a good reputation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The membership benefits and privileges are good | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies are facilitated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Its international recognition is high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| The members of this professional accounting body are recognised as experts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The salary of the members of the accounting body are high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The CPA program is difficult | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Work commitments limit my ability to study | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the membership fee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the program fee (professional level) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| It is easy to become a member | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| It is easy to remain a member | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| My employer would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer think I should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| My family would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my family think I should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| My friends would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my friends think I should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |

**2. How important to you are the following factors in affiliating with CPA Australia?
(please circle for each factor)**

1 = not important

7 = very important

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Assessment fee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| On-going membership fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Program/tuition fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Quality of professional education programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Reputation of the professional body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Flexibility of the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Career and networking opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| International recognition | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Professional status | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| International mobility opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Perceived expertise of the members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Salary of the members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Entry requirements (including practical experience) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Employer paying membership fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Employer paying program fees (professional level) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Continuing professional development/education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Employer is a Recognized Employer Partner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Access to professional indemnity insurance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Access to discussion groups | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Magazine/Journals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Receiving professional updates (via emails etc) e.g., to keep abreast of change | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Difficulty of the CPA program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Time available for study | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Exam mode | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Other (Please specify): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |

3. How important would the following factors be in influencing your decision to leave CPA Australia? (please circle for each factor)

1 = not important 7 = very important

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Large increase in membership fees (say 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Large increase in program fees (say 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Professional education requirements were increased in the CPA program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| CPA Australia <u>programs fees</u> are NOT paid by your employer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| CPA Australia <u>membership fees</u> are NOT paid by your employer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| You change employer and your new employer is linked to a different professional accounting body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The membership benefits are reduced: e.g. online library/research facilities, newsletters were discontinued | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| You change employer and your new employer is NOT a Recognized Employer Partner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| The reputation of CPA Australia is tarnished by an event: e.g. significant fraud within the professional accounting body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Diminished international recognition (due to, for example, the emergence of another international professional accounting body) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Diminished international mobility (due to, for example, CPA Australia not being recognized in other countries) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Greater reciprocal recognition of your professional accounting status among other professional accounting bodies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Enhanced career opportunities elsewhere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| CPA program difficulty is increased | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Work commitments are increased (less time to study) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Other (Please specify): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |

4. Affiliating with CPA Australia is:

Bad _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Good
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Useful : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Useless
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Positive _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Negative
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

5. Most people who are important to me think

I should _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ should not
affiliate with CPA Australia

6. My affiliating with CPA Australia is -

Difficult _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Easy
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Up to me _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not up to me
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Under my control _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Out of my control
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Section B - Demographic Data (please tick the relevant box):

Gender: Male Female

Age at 1st January 2014

18 – 24 25 – 34 35 – 44 45-54 55+

What is your level of membership at CPA Australia?

Associate member full member fellow member

Number of years of membership: _____

**In addition to CPA Australia, which other Professional Bodies are you a member of?
(please tick all relevant box/s)**

| | Year Joined |
|--|--------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam Accounting Association (VAA) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam Association of Certified Public Accountants (VACPA) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> State Audit of Vietnam (SAV) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnam Tax Consultants Association | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chartered Institute of Management Accountants (CIMA) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Please specify): _____ | _____ |

Please indicate the area in which you are working (please tick the relevant box)

- Professional Practice (Big 4)
- Professional Practice (accounting firm other than Big 4)
- Multinational company
- Financial Services
- Government, Public Service
- Not for profit organisation
- Unemployed
- Other (Please specify): _____

Is your employer a Recognised Employer Partner?

- Yes No

Please indicate which University you studied at (please tick any relevant box)

- RMIT University Vietnam (Saigon South campus)
- RMIT University Vietnam (Hanoi campus)
- International University Ho Chi Minh City
- Banking University
- Foreign Trade University
- University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City
- University of Economics and Law Ho Chi Minh City
- National Economics University Hanoi
- Academy of Finance
- Other (Please specify): _____

If you wish to participate in the **lucky draw to win an Ipad**, please provide your name and an email address below:

Feel free to add any comments you wish to make in relation to Professional Accounting Bodies in general and CPA Australia in particular:

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

B. CPA Australia foundation candidates questionnaire – English

For your chance to win an Ipad, please fill out this questionnaire. We ask questions which make use of rating scales with seven places; you are to make a check mark in the place that best describes your opinion.

This research is supported by CPA Australia, and it seeks information about your reasons for deciding to affiliate with a professional accounting body. Your responses to this survey form part of a research project sponsored by CPA Australia and aims to improve our understanding of the reasoning behind professional accounting body membership in an emerging and transitional market.

The survey will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. You can be assured that all responses are confidential and no attempt will be made to identify any respondent individually unless you choose to leave your contact detail. The information from surveys will only be reported in the form of statistical summaries.

Thank you for your time and co-operation

Section A

1. Please rate the following statements relating to affiliating with CPA Australia as a member in the future. (please circle for each statement)

| | 1 = strongly disagree | | | | 7 = strongly agree | | |
|--|------------------------------|---|---|---|---------------------------|---|---|
| The assessment fee of this professional accounting body is high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The on-going membership fees are high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The program/tuition fees are high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The professional education programs are of high quality | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| This professional accounting body has a good reputation | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The membership benefits and privileges are good | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies are facilitated | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Its international recognition is high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The members of this professional accounting are recognised as experts | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The salary of the members of the accounting body are high | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The CPA program is difficult | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Work commitments limit my ability to study | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the membership fee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| I am more likely to affiliate with CPA Australia if my employer covers the program fee (professional level) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| It is easy to become a member | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| It is easy to remain a member | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My employer would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer think I should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My family would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my family think I should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| My friends would think that I should affiliate with CPA Australia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my friends think I should do | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2. How important to you are the following factors in affiliating with CPA Australia as a member in the future? (please circle for each factor)

1 = not important 7 = very important

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Assessment fee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| On-going membership fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Program/tuition fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Quality of professional education programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Reputation of the professional body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Flexibility of the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Career and networking opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| International recognition | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Professional status | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| International mobility opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Perceived expertise of the members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Salary of the members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Entry requirements (including practical experience) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Employer paying membership fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Employer paying program fees (professional level) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Continuing professional development/education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Employer is a Recognized Employer Partner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Access to professional indemnity insurance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Access to discussion groups | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Magazine/Journals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Receiving professional updates (via emails etc) e.g., to keep abreast of change | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Difficulty of the CPA program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Time available for study | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Exam mode (computer based, multiple choice, year round exams for foundation level) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Other (Please specify): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

3. How important would the following factors be in influencing your decision to discontinue CPA Australia program/not affiliate with CPA Australia? (please circle for each factor)

1 = not important

7 = very important

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Large increase in membership fees (say 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Large increase in program fees (say 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Professional education requirements were increased in the CPA program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| CPA Australia <u>programs fees</u> are NOT paid by your employer | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| CPA Australia <u>membership fees</u> are NOT paid by your employer (in the future) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| You change employer and your new employer is linked to a different professional accounting body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The membership benefits are reduced: e.g. online library/research facilities, newsletters were discontinued | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| You change employer and your new employer is NOT a Recognized Employer Partner | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The reputation of CPA Australia is tarnished by an event: e.g. significant fraud within the professional accounting body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Diminished international recognition (due to, for example, the emergence of another international professional accounting body) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Diminished international mobility (due to, for example, CPA Australia not being recognized in other countries) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Greater reciprocal recognition of your professional accounting status among other professional accounting bodies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Enhanced career opportunities elsewhere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| CPA program difficulty is increased | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Work commitments are increased (less time to study) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Other (Please specify): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

4. I intend to become a member of CPA Australia in the near future

| | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|----|---|---|---|---|--------|--|
| Unlikely | | | | | | | Likely | |
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | |

5. Affiliating with CPA Australia in the near future is:

Bad _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Good
 Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Useful _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Useless
 Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Positive _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Negative
 Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

6. Most people who are important to me think

I should _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ should not
 affiliate with CPA Australia **in the near future**

7. My affiliating with CPA Australia in the near future is --

Difficult _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Easy
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Up to me _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Not up to me
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Under my control _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Out of my control
Extremely quite slightly neither slightly quite extremely

Section B - Demographic Data (please tick the relevant box):

Gender: Male Female

Age at 1st January 2014

18 – 24 25 – 34 35 – 44 45-54 55+

How many units of the foundation level have you completed?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Are you a member of a Professional Accounting Body other than CPA Australia? If yes, please mention which one.

Yes (Please specify): _____

No

Please indicate the area in which you are working (please tick the relevant box)

Professional Practice (Big 4)

Professional Practice (accounting firm other than Big 4)

Multinational company

Financial Services

Government, Public Service

Not for profit organisation

Unemployed

Other (Please specify): _____

Is your employer a Recognised Employer Partner?

Yes No

Are you currently studying at University?

Yes No

Please indicate which University you are studying/studied at (please tick any relevant box)

- RMIT University Vietnam (Saigon South campus)
- RMIT University Vietnam (Hanoi campus)
- International University Ho Chi Minh City
- Banking University
- Foreign Trade University
- University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City
- University of Economics and Law Ho Chi Minh City
- National Economics University Hanoi
- Academy of Finance
- Other (Please specify): _____

If you wish to participate in the **lucky draw to win an Ipad**, please provide your name and an email address below:

Feel free to add any comments you wish to make in relation to Professional Accounting Bodies in general and CPA Australia in particular:

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

C. Accounting students questionnaire – English

This questionnaire asks questions which make use of rating scales with seven places; you are to make a check mark in the place that best describes your opinion.

This research seeks information about your reasons for deciding to affiliate with a professional accounting body. Your responses to this survey aim to improve our understanding of the reasoning behind professional accounting body membership in an emerging and transitional market.

The survey will take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. You can be assured that all responses are confidential and no attempt will be made to identify any respondent individually unless you choose to leave your contact detail. The information from surveys will only be reported in the form of statistical summaries.

Thank you for your time and co-operation

Section A

1. Are you a member of a Professional Accounting Body? If yes, please mention which one.

Yes (Please specify): _____

No

2. I intend to become a member of a Professional Accounting Body in the near future. If likely, please mention which one.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----|----|---|---|---|---|--|--------|--|
| Unlikely | | | | | | | | Likely | |
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | | |

(Please specify): _____

3. How important to you are the following factors in affiliating with a Professional Accounting Body as a member? (please circle for each factor)

| | 1 = not important | | | | 7 = very important | | | |
|--|-------------------|---|---|---|--------------------|---|---|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Assessment fee | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| On-going membership fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Program/tuition fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Quality of professional education programs | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Reputation of the professional body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Flexibility of the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Career and networking opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| International recognition | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Professional status | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| International mobility opportunities | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Perceived expertise of the members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Salary of the members | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Entry requirements (including practical experience) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Employer paying membership fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Employer paying program fees | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Continuing professional development/education | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Access to professional indemnity insurance | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Access to discussion groups | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Magazine/Journals | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Receiving professional updates (via emails etc) e.g., to keep abreast of change | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Difficulty of the program | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Time available for study | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Exam mode (computer based, multiple choice, year round exams for foundation level) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |
| Other (Please specify): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | |

4. How important would the following factors be in *influencing your decision to change* your choice of membership from a Professional Accounting Body?
(please circle for each factor)

| | 1 = not important | | | | 7 = very important | | |
|---|-------------------|---|---|---|--------------------|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Large increase in membership fees (say 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Large increase in program fees (say 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Professional education requirements were increased in the program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <u>Programs fees</u> are NOT paid by your employer (in the future) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| <u>Membership fees</u> are NOT paid by your employer (in the future) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| You change employer and your new employer is linked to a different professional accounting body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The membership benefits are reduced: e.g. online library/research facilities, newsletters were discontinued | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| The reputation of the professional accounting body is tarnished by an event: e.g. significant fraud within the professional accounting body | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Diminished international recognition (due to, for example, the emergence of another international professional accounting body) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Diminished international mobility (due to, for example, professional accounting body not being recognized in other countries) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Greater reciprocal recognition of your professional accounting status among other professional accounting bodies | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Enhanced career opportunities elsewhere | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Program difficulty is increased | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Work commitments are increased (less time to study) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Other (Please specify): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

5. Affiliating with a professional accounting body in the near future is:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|---|-------|---|----------|---|---------|---|----------|---|-------|------|
| Bad | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | Good |
| | Extremely | | quite | | slightly | | neither | | slightly | | quite | |
| | extremely | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--------|-----------|---|-------|---|----------|---|---------|---|----------|---|-------|-----------|
| Useful | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | Useless |
| | Extremely | | quite | | slightly | | neither | | slightly | | quite | extremely |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|---|-------|---|----------|---|---------|---|----------|---|-------|----------|
| Positive | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | Negative |
| | Extremely | | quite | | slightly | | neither | | slightly | | quite | |
| | extremely | | | | | | | | | | | |

6. Most people who are important to me think

I should _____ should not

affiliate with a professional accounting body in the near future

7. My affiliating with a professional accounting body in the near future is --

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|---|-------|---|----------|---|---------|---|----------|---|-------|-----------|
| Difficult | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | Easy |
| | Extremely | | quite | | slightly | | neither | | slightly | | quite | extremely |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|-----------|---|-------|---|----------|---|---------|---|----------|---|-------|--------------|
| Up to me | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | Not up to me |
| | Extremely | | quite | | slightly | | neither | | slightly | | quite | |
| | extremely | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|-----------|---|-------|---|----------|---|---------|---|----------|---|-------|-------------------|
| Under my control | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | : | _____ | Out of my control |
| | Extremely | | quite | | slightly | | neither | | slightly | | quite | |
| | extremely | | | | | | | | | | | |

Section B - Demographic Data (please tick the relevant box):

Gender: Male Female

Age

18 – 24 25 – 34 35 – 44 45-54 55+

Please indicate which University you are studying at (please tick the relevant box)

- RMIT University Vietnam (Saigon South campus)
- Hoa Sen University
- Ton Duc Thang University
- University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City
- University of Law and Economics Ho Chi Minh City
- International University Ho Chi Minh City
- Banking University
- Foreign Trade University
- Other (Please specify): _____

If you accept to be re-contacted for a follow-up survey in a few months, provide your name and a personal e-mail address:

Feel free to add any comments you wish to make in relation to Professional Accounting Bodies in general.

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

D. CPA Australia members questionnaire – Vietnamese

Hoàn thành bảng câu hỏi để có cơ hội trúng thưởng một chiếc iPad, Câu hỏi được trả lời bằng việc sử dụng thang đánh giá với 7 mức độ; đánh giá vào mức độ miêu tả chính xác hoặc gần chính xác nhất ý kiến của bạn.

Đề tài nghiên cứu này được hỗ trợ bởi CPA Úc, nhằm tìm kiếm thông tin về lí do bạn quyết định gia nhập một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp. Phản hồi của bạn qua bản khảo sát này là một phần của dự án nghiên cứu được tài trợ bởi CPA Úc với mục đích nâng cao hiểu biết về những lí do của tư cách thành viên hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp trong một thị trường chuyển giao và đang phát triển.

Bản khảo sát kéo dài không quá 10 phút để hoàn thành. Bạn được đảm bảo rằng mọi phản hồi đều bảo mật và không có khả năng xác định danh tính cá nhân người trả lời trừ khi bạn đồng ý để lại thông tin liên lạc. Thông tin từ bản khảo sát sẽ chỉ được báo cáo dưới dạng tóm tắt số liệu.

Cảm ơn bạn vì đã dành thời gian và cộng tác.

Phần A

1. Vui lòng đánh giá những phát biểu sau đây về việc gia nhập hiệp hội CPA Úc. (khoanh tròn đáp án lựa chọn)

1 = Rất không đồng ý

7 = Rất đồng ý

| | | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này có lệ phí xét tuyển cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Lệ phí duy trì tư cách thành viên cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Học phí cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp có chất lượng tốt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này có danh tiếng tốt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Lợi ích và đặc quyền dành cho thành viên tốt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Chương trình CPA (bao gồm chế độ thi cử) linh hoạt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Gia nhập hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này sẽ giúp tôi thúc đẩy cơ hội nghề nghiệp và mở rộng quan hệ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Thỏa thuận tư cách thành viên chung với các hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp địa phương và quốc tế dễ dàng | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Được công nhận quốc tế rộng rãi | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Gia nhập hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp giúp tôi đề cao hình ảnh chuyên nghiệp của mình | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Gia nhập hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này sẽ giúp tôi có thêm nhiều cơ hội làm việc tại nước ngoài | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Thành viên của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này được công nhận như những chuyên gia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Mức lương của các thành viên trong hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Chương trình CPA khó | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Những cam kết trong công việc làm hạn chế khả năng học CPA của tôi | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nhiều khả năng tôi sẽ gia nhập CPA Úc nếu nhà tuyển dụng của tôi chi trả phí thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nhiều khả năng tôi sẽ gia nhập CPA Úc nếu nhà tuyển dụng của tôi chi trả học phí (trình độ chuyên nghiệp) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Đễ dàng để trở thành thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Đễ dàng để duy trì tư cách thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nhà tuyển dụng của tôi nghĩ là tôi nên gia nhập CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nói chung, tôi muốn làm những gì mà nhà tuyển dụng của tôi nghĩ tôi nên làm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Các đồng nghiệp của tôi nghĩ là tôi nên gia nhập CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nói chung, tôi muốn làm những gì mà đồng nghiệp nghĩ tôi nên làm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Gia đình tôi nghĩ là tôi nên gia nhập CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nói chung, tôi muốn làm những gì mà gia đình nghĩ tôi nên làm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Bạn bè tôi nghĩ là tôi nên gia nhập CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nói chung, tôi muốn làm những gì mà bạn bè gia đình nghĩ tôi nên làm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |

**2. Những yếu tố sau đây về việc gia nhập CPA Úc quan trọng với bạn như thế nào?
(khoanh tròn đáp án bạn chọn)**

| | 1 = không quan trọng | | | | | | | 7 = rất quan trọng | |
|--|----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|--------------------|--|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A | |
| Phí xét tuyển | | | | | | | | | |
| Phí duy trì thành viên | | | | | | | | | |
| Học phí | | | | | | | | | |
| Chất lượng các chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp | | | | | | | | | |
| Danh tiếng của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp | | | | | | | | | |
| Sự linh hoạt của chương trình học | | | | | | | | | |
| Các cơ hội nghề nghiệp và quan hệ | | | | | | | | | |
| Thỏa thuận tư cách thành viên chung với các hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp địa phương và quốc tế | | | | | | | | | |
| Được công nhận quốc tế | | | | | | | | | |
| Hình ảnh chuyên nghiệp | | | | | | | | | |
| Cơ hội việc làm ở nước ngoài | | | | | | | | | |
| Các thành viên được nhìn nhận như chuyên gia | | | | | | | | | |
| Mức lương của các thành viên | | | | | | | | | |
| Yêu cầu đầu vào (bao gồm kinh nghiệm thực tế) | | | | | | | | | |
| Nhà tuyển dụng chi trả chi phí thành viên | | | | | | | | | |
| Nhà tuyển dụng chi trả học phí (mức độ chuyên nghiệp) | | | | | | | | | |
| Phát triển/chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp liên tục | | | | | | | | | |
| Nhà tuyển dụng là một Đối tác Tuyển dụng được công nhận | | | | | | | | | |
| Truy cập công cụ hỗ trợ học tập từ Registered Tuition Providers | | | | | | | | | |
| Quyền được bảo hiểm bồi thường chuyên nghiệp | | | | | | | | | |
| Truy cập các công cụ nghiên cứu trực tuyến ví dụ như thư viện, hội thảo | | | | | | | | | |
| Truy cập các nhóm thảo luận | | | | | | | | | |
| Tạp chí/báo | | | | | | | | | |
| Nhận các cập nhật chuyên nghiệp (qua emails v.v.) Ví dụ: để biết về các sửa đổi | | | | | | | | | |
| Độ khó của chương trình CPA | | | | | | | | | |
| Thời gian dành cho việc học | | | | | | | | | |
| Chế độ thi cử | | | | | | | | | |
| Khác (Xin nêu rõ): | | | | | | | | | |

3. Những yếu tố sau đây quan trọng như thế nào trong việc ảnh hưởng đến quyết định rời khỏi hiệp hội CPA Úc của bạn? (khoanh tròn phương án lựa chọn)

1 = không quan trọng

7 = rất quan trọng

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Chi phí hội viên tăng cao (giả sử 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Học phí tăng cao (giả sử 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Yêu cầu của chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp của CPA tăng cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nhà tuyển dụng của bạn không trả học phí CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Nhà tuyển dụng của bạn không trả phí hội viên CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Bạn thay đổi nơi làm việc và nhà tuyển dụng mới có liên kết với một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Lợi ích hội viên giảm đi: ví dụ như thư viện trực tuyến/công cụ nghiên cứu, bản tin bị gián đoạn | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Bạn thay đổi nơi làm việc và nhà tuyển dụng mới không phải là một đối tác tuyển dụng được công nhận | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Danh tiếng của CPA Úc bị suy giảm bởi một sự kiện: ví dụ như một vụ gian lận nghiêm trọng trong nội bộ hiệp hội | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Sự công nhận quốc tế bị giảm sút (ví dụ, do sự nổi lên của một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp quốc tế khác) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Cơ hội làm việc quốc tế giảm sút (ví dụ, do CPA Úc không được công nhận tại các nước khác) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Sự công nhận lẫn nhau lớn hơn về vị trí của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp của bạn so với các hiệp hội kế toán khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Tăng cường cơ hội nghề nghiệp ở nơi khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Độ khó của chương trình CPA tăng lên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Cam kết công việc tăng lên (ít thời gian để học hơn) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |
| Khác(Làm ơn nêu rõ): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | N/A |

4. Gia nhập CPA Úc thì:

Tệ _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Tốt
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Hữu ích: _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Vô ích
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Tích cực _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Tiêu cực
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

5. Những người quan trọng với tôi nghĩ rằng:

Tôi nên _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ không nên
gia nhập CPA Úc

6. Việc tôi gia nhập CPA Úc thì --

Khó _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Dễ
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Tùy thuộc vào tôi _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Không tùy thuộc vào
tôi
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Trong tầm kiểm soát _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Ngoài tầm kiểm soát
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Phần B – Dữ liệu nhân chủng (đánh dấu vào ô tương ứng):

Giới tính: Nam Nữ

Tuổi vào thời điểm 1 tháng 1 2014

18 – 24 25 – 34 35 – 44 45-54 55+

Mức độ tư cách thành viên của bạn tại CPA Australia?

Thành viên liên kết Thành viên hoàn toàn Đồng thành viên

Số năm trở thành thành viên: _____

**Ngoài CPA Úc, bạn còn là thành viên của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp nào khác?
(đánh dấu những ô tương ứng)**

| | Năm gia nhập |
|--|---------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiệp hội kế toán Việt Nam (VAA) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hội kiểm toán viên hành nghề Việt Nam (VACPA) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kiểm toán nhà nước (SAV) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hội tư vấn thuế Việt Nam | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hiệp hội kế toán công chứng Anh quốc (ACCA) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kế toán quản trị công chứng Anh quốc (CIMA) | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Khác (Làm ơn nêu rõ): _____ | |

Làm ơn cho biết lĩnh vực bạn đang làm việc (đánh dấu vào ô tương ứng)

Thực hành chuyên nghiệp (Big 4)

Thực hành chuyên nghiệp (công ty kế toán khác ngoài Big 4)

Công ty đa quốc gia

Dịch vụ tài chính

Dịch vụ chính phủ, công cộng

Không phải cho các tổ chức lợi nhuận

Thất nghiệp

Khác(làm ơn nêu rõ): _____

Nhà tuyển dụng của bạn có phải là Đối tác tuyển dụng được công nhận không?

Có Không

Làm ơn cho biết Đại học bạn đã theo học (đánh dấu ô tương ứng)

- Đại học RMIT Việt Nam (Cơ sở Nam Sài Gòn)
- Đại học RMIT Việt Nam (Cơ sở Hà Nội)
- Đại học Quốc tế Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Ngân hàng
- Đại học Ngoại thương
- Đại học Kinh tế Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Kinh tế Luật Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội
- Học viện Tài chính
- Khác (làm ơn nêu rõ): _____

Nếu bạn muốn tham gia chương trình rút thăm trúng thưởng iPad, xin để lại tên và địa chỉ email tại đây:

Bạn có thể để lại ý kiến liên quan đến các hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp nói chung và CPA Úc nói riêng:

Cảm ơn bạn đã dành thời gian để hoàn thành bảng câu hỏi này.

E. CPA Australia foundation candidates questionnaire – Vietnamese

Hoàn thành bảng câu hỏi để có cơ hội trúng thưởng một chiếc iPad, Câu hỏi được trả lời bằng việc sử dụng thang đánh giá với 7 mức độ; đánh dấu vào mức độ miêu tả chính xác hoặc gần chính xác nhất ý kiến của bạn.

Đề tài nghiên cứu này được hỗ trợ bởi CPA Úc, nhằm tìm kiếm thông tin về lí do bạn quyết định gia nhập một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp. Phản hồi của bạn qua bản khảo sát này là một phần của dự án nghiên cứu được tài trợ bởi CPA Úc với mục đích nâng cao hiểu biết về những lí do của tư cách thành viên hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp trong một thị trường chuyển giao và đang phát triển.

Bản khảo sát kéo dài không quá 10 phút để hoàn thành. Bạn được đảm bảo rằng mọi phản hồi đều bảo mật và không có khả năng xác định danh tính cá nhân người trả lời trừ khi bạn đồng ý để lại thông tin liên lạc. Thông tin từ bản khảo sát sẽ chỉ được báo cáo dưới dạng tóm tắt số liệu.

Cảm ơn bạn vì đã dành thời gian và cộng tác.

Phần A

1. Vui lòng đánh giá những nhận định sau đây về việc gia nhập hiệp hội CPA Úc trong tương lai. (khoanh tròn đáp án lựa chọn)

| | 1 = Rất không đồng ý | | | | 7 = Rất đồng ý | | |
|--|----------------------|---|---|---|----------------|---|---|
| Hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này có lệ phí xét tuyển cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lệ phí duy trì tư cách thành viên cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Học phí cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp có chất lượng tốt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này có danh tiếng tốt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lợi ích và đặc quyền dành cho thành viên tốt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Chương trình CPA (bao gồm chế độ thi cử) linh hoạt | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Gia nhập hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này sẽ giúp tôi thúc đẩy cơ hội nghề nghiệp và mở rộng quan hệ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Thỏa thuận tư cách thành viên chung với các hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp địa phương và quốc tế dễ dàng | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Gia nhập hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp giúp tôi đề cao hình ảnh chuyên nghiệp của mình | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Được công nhận quốc tế rộng rãi | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Gia nhập hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này sẽ giúp tôi có thêm nhiều cơ hội làm việc tại nước ngoài | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Thành viên của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp này được công nhận như những chuyên gia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mức lương của các thành viên trong hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Chương trình CPA khó | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Những cam kết trong công việc làm hạn chế khả năng học CPA của tôi | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhiều khả năng tôi sẽ gia nhập CPA Úc nếu nhà tuyển dụng của tôi chi trả phí thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhiều khả năng tôi sẽ gia nhập CPA Úc nếu nhà tuyển dụng của tôi chi trả học phí (trình độ chuyên nghiệp) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Đễ dàng để trở thành thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Đễ dàng để duy trì tư cách thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng của tôi nghĩ là tôi nên gia nhập CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nói chung, tôi muốn làm những gì mà nhà tuyển dụng của tôi nghĩ tôi nên làm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Các đồng nghiệp của tôi nghĩ là tôi nên gia nhập CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nói chung, tôi muốn làm những gì mà đồng nghiệp nghĩ tôi nên làm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Gia đình tôi nghĩ là tôi nên gia nhập CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nói chung, tôi muốn làm những gì mà gia đình nghĩ tôi nên làm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Bạn bè tôi nghĩ là tôi nên gia nhập CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nói chung, tôi muốn làm những gì mà bạn bè gia đình nghĩ tôi nên làm | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

2. Những yếu tố sau đây về việc gia nhập CPA Úc trong tương lai quan trọng với bạn như thế nào? (khoanh tròn đáp án bạn chọn)

| | 1 = không quan trọng | | | | 7 = rất quan trọng | | |
|--|----------------------|---|---|---|--------------------|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Phí xét tuyển | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Phí duy trì thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Học phí | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Chất lượng các chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Danh tiếng của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sự linh hoạt của chương trình học | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Các cơ hội nghề nghiệp và quan hệ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Thỏa thuận tư cách thành viên chung với các hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp địa phương và quốc tế | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Được công nhận quốc tế | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Hình ảnh chuyên nghiệp | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Cơ hội việc làm ở nước ngoài | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Các thành viên được nhìn nhận như chuyên gia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mức lương của các thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Yêu cầu đầu vào (bao gồm kinh nghiệm thực tế) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng chi trả chi phí thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng chi trả học phí (mức độ chuyên nghiệp) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Phát triển/chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp liên tục | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng là một Đối tác Tuyển dụng được công nhận | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Truy cập công cụ hỗ trợ học tập từ Registered Tuition Providers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Quyền được bảo hiểm bồi thường chuyên nghiệp | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Truy cập các công cụ nghiên cứu trực tuyến e.g. thư viện, hội thảo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Truy cập các nhóm thảo luận | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tạp chí/báo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhận các cập nhật chuyên nghiệp (qua emails v.v.) Ví dụ: để biết về các sửa đổi | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Độ khó của chương trình CPA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Thời gian rảnh để học | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Chế độ thi cử (bài thi trên máy tính, trắc nghiệm, bài thi hàng năm cho mức độ cơ bản) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Khác (Xin nêu rõ): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

3. Những yếu tố sau đây quan trọng như thế nào trong việc ảnh hưởng đến quyết định rời khỏi hiệp hội CPA Úc của bạn ? (khoanh tròn phương án lựa chọn)

1 = không quan trọng 7 = rất quan trọng

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chi phí hội viên tăng cao (giả sử 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Học phí tăng cao (giả sử 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Yêu cầu của chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp của CPA tăng cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng của bạn không trả học phí CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng của bạn không trả phí hội viên CPA Úc | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Bạn thay đổi nơi làm việc và nhà tuyển dụng mới có liên kết với một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lợi ích hội viên giảm đi: e.g. thư viện trực tuyến/công cụ nghiên cứu, bản tin bị gián đoạn | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Bạn thay đổi nơi làm việc và nhà tuyển dụng mới không phải là một đối tác tuyển dụng được công nhận | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Danh tiếng của CPA Úc bị suy giảm bởi một sự kiện, ví dụ như một vụ gian lận nghiêm trọng trong nội bộ hiệp hội | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sự công nhận quốc tế bị giảm sút (ví dụ, do sự nổi lên của một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp quốc tế khác) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Cơ hội làm việc quốc tế giảm sút (ví dụ, do CPA Úc không được công nhận tại các nước khác) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sự công nhận lẫn nhau lớn hơn về vị trí của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp của bạn so với các hiệp hội kế toán khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tăng cường cơ hội nghề nghiệp ở nơi khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Độ khó của chương trình CPA tăng lên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Cam kết công việc tăng lên (ít thời gian để học hơn) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Khác(Làm ơn nêu rõ): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

4. Tôi dự định gia nhập CPA Úc trong tương lai gần:
Không chắc **Chắc chắn**

| | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|----|----|----|---|---|---|---|

5. Gia nhập CPA Úc trong tương lai gần thì:

Tệ _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **Tốt**
 cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Hữu ích: _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **Vô ích**
 Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Tích cực _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **Tiêu cực**
 Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

6. Những người quan trọng với tôi nghĩ rằng:

Tôi nên _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ không nên

gia nhập CPA Úc trong tương lai gần

7. Việc tôi gia nhập CPA Úc trong tương lai gần thì --

Khó _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **Dễ**
 Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Tùy thuộc vào tôi _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **Không tùy**
 thuộc vào tôi
 Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Trong tầm kiểm soát _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ **Ngoài tầm kiểm soát**
 Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Phần B – Dữ liệu nhân chủng (đánh dấu vào ô tương ứng):

Giới tính: Nam Nữ

Tuổi vào thời điểm tháng 1 2014

18 – 24 25 – 34 35 – 44 45-54 55+

Bạn đã hoàn thành bao nhiêu học phần ở mức độ nền tảng?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Bạn có đang là thành viên của một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp nào khác không phải là CPA Úc hay không? Nếu có, xin cho biết đó là hiệp hội nào.

- Có (Nêu rõ: _____)
- Không

Làm ơn cho biết lĩnh vực bạn đang làm việc (đánh dấu vào ô tương ứng)

- Thực hành chuyên nghiệp (Big 4)
- Thực hành chuyên nghiệp (công ty kế toán khác ngoài Big 4)
- Công ty đa quốc gia
- Dịch vụ tài chính
- Dịch vụ chính phủ, công cộng
- Không phải cho các tổ chức lợi nhuận
- Thất nghiệp
- Khác(làm ơn nêu rõ): _____

Nhà tuyển dụng của bạn có phải là Đối tác tuyển dụng được công nhận không?

Có Không

Hiện bạn có đang học tại trường đại học nào không?

Có Không

Làm ơn cho biết Đại học bạn đã/đang theo học (đánh dấu ô tương ứng)

- Đại học RMIT Việt Nam (Cơ sở Nam Sài Gòn)
- Đại học RMIT Việt Nam (Cơ sở Hà Nội)
- Đại học Quốc tế Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Ngân hàng
- Đại học Ngoại thương
- Đại học Kinh tế Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Kinh tế Luật Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Quốc gia Hà Nội
- Học viện Tài chính
- Khác (làm ơn nêu rõ): _____

Nếu bạn muốn tham gia chương trình rút thăm trúng thưởng iPad, xin để lại tên và địa chỉ email tại đây:

Bạn có thể để lại ý kiến liên quan đến các hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp nói chung và CPA Úc nói riêng:

Cảm ơn bạn đã dành thời gian để hoàn thành bảng câu hỏi này.

F. Accounting students questionnaire – Vietnamese

Câu hỏi được trả lời bằng việc sử dụng thang đánh giá với 7 mức độ; đánh dấu vào mức độ miêu tả chính xác hoặc gần chính xác nhất ý kiến của bạn.

Đề tài nghiên cứu này nhằm tìm kiếm thông tin về lí do bạn quyết định gia nhập một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp. Phản hồi của bạn qua bản khảo sát này mục đích nâng cao hiểu biết về những lí do của tư cách thành viên hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp trong một thị trường chuyển giao và đang phát triển.

Bản khảo sát kéo dài không quá 10 phút để hoàn thành. Bạn được đảm bảo rằng mọi phản hồi đều bảo mật và không có khả năng xác định danh tính cá nhân người trả lời trừ khi bạn đồng ý để lại thông tin liên lạc. Thông tin từ bản khảo sát sẽ chỉ được báo cáo dưới dạng tóm tắt số liệu.

Cảm ơn bạn vì đã dành thời gian và cộng tác.

Phần A

1. **Bạn có đang là thành viên của một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp hay không? Nếu có, xin cho biết đó là hiệp hội nào.**

- Có (Nêu rõ: _____)
- Không

2. **Tôi dự định gia nhập một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp trong tương lai gần. Nếu chắc chắn, xin cho biết đó là hiệp hội nào.**

| Không chắc | | | Chắc chắn | | | |
|------------|----|----|-----------|---|---|---|
| -3 | -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

(Nêu rõ): _____

3. Những yếu tố sau đây về việc gia nhập một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp trong tương lai quan trọng với bạn như thế nào? (khoanh tròn đáp án bạn chọn)

1 = không quan trọng 7 = rất quan trọng

| | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Phí xét tuyển | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Phí duy trì thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Học phí | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Chất lượng các chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Danh tiếng của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sự linh hoạt của chương trình học | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Các cơ hội nghề nghiệp và quan hệ | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Thỏa thuận tư cách thành viên chung với các hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp địa phương và quốc tế | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Được công nhận quốc tế | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Hình ảnh chuyên nghiệp | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Cơ hội việc làm ở nước ngoài | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Các thành viên được nhìn nhận như chuyên gia | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Mức lương của các thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Yêu cầu đầu vào (bao gồm kinh nghiệm thực tế) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng chi trả chi phí thành viên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng chi trả học phí (mức độ chuyên nghiệp) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Phát triển/chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp liên tục | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Truy cập công cụ hỗ trợ học tập từ Registered Tuition Providers | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Quyền được bảo hiểm bồi thường chuyên nghiệp | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Truy cập các công cụ nghiên cứu trực tuyến e.g. thư viện, hội thảo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Truy cập các nhóm thảo luận | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tạp chí/báo | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhận các cập nhật chuyên nghiệp (qua emails v.v.) Ví dụ: để biết về các sửa đổi | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Độ khó của chương trình | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Thời gian rảnh để học | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Chế độ thi cử (bài thi trên máy tính, trắc nghiệm, bài thi hàng năm cho mức độ cơ bản) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Khác (Xin nêu rõ): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

4. Những yếu tố sau đây quan trọng như thế nào trong việc ảnh hưởng đến quyết định rời khỏi một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp của bạn ? (khoanh tròn phương án lựa chọn)

1 = không quan trọng 7 = rất quan trọng

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chi phí hội viên tăng cao (giả sử 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Học phí tăng cao (giả sử 25%) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Yêu cầu của chương trình đào tạo chuyên nghiệp tăng cao | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng của bạn không trả học phí (trong tương lai) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Nhà tuyển dụng của bạn không trả phí hội viên (trong tương lai) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Bạn thay đổi nơi làm việc và nhà tuyển dụng mới có liên kết với một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Lợi ích hội viên giảm đi: e.g. thư viện trực tuyến/công cụ nghiên cứu, bản tin bị gián đoạn | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Danh tiếng của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp bị suy giảm bởi một sự kiện, ví dụ như một vụ gian lận nghiêm trọng trong nội bộ hiệp hội | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sự công nhận quốc tế bị giảm sút (ví dụ, do sự nổi lên của một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp quốc tế khác) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Cơ hội làm việc quốc tế giảm sút (ví dụ, do hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp không được công nhận tại các nước khác) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Sự công nhận lẫn nhau lớn hơn về vị trí của hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp của bạn so với các hiệp hội kế toán khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Tăng cường cơ hội nghề nghiệp ở nơi khác | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Độ khó của chương trình tăng lên | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Cam kết công việc tăng lên (ít thời gian để học hơn) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Khác(Làm ơn nêu rõ): | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

5. Gia nhập một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp trong tương lai gần thì:

Tệ _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Tốt
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Hữu ích: _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Vô ích
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Tích cực _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Tiêu cực
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

6. Những người quan trọng với tôi nghĩ rằng:

Tôi nên _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ không nên

gia nhập một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp trong tương lai gần

7. Việc tôi gia nhập một hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp trong tương lai gần thì --

Khó _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Dễ
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Tùy thuộc vào tôi _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Không tùy thuộc vào tôi
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Trong tầm kiểm soát _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ Ngoài tầm kiểm soát
Cực kì khá hơi không hơi khá cực kì

Phần B – Dữ liệu nhân chủng (đánh dấu vào ô tương ứng):

Giới tính: Nam Nữ

Tuổi

18 – 24 25 – 34 35 – 44 45-54 55+

Làm ơn cho biết Đại học đang theo học (đánh dấu ô tương ứng)

- Đại học RMIT Việt Nam (Cơ sở Nam Sài Gòn)
- Đại học Hoa Sen
- Đại học Tôn Đức Thắng
- Đại học Kinh tế Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Kinh tế Luật Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Quốc tế Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh
- Đại học Ngân hàng
- Đại học Ngoại thương
- Khác (làm ơn nêu rõ): _____

Nếu bạn chấp nhận để được tái liên lạc cho một cuộc điều tra theo dõi trong một vài tháng, cung cấp tên và địa chỉ e - mail cá nhân:

Bạn có thể để lại ý kiến liên quan đến các hiệp hội kế toán chuyên nghiệp nói chung:

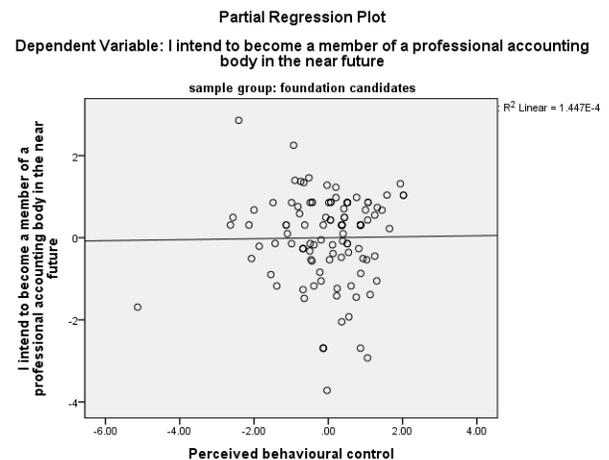
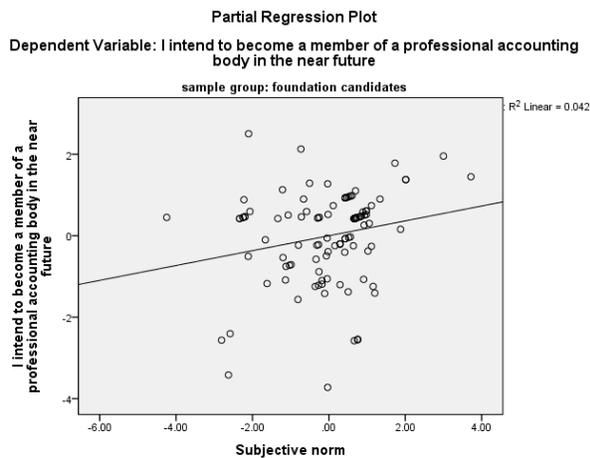
Cảm ơn bạn đã dành thời gian để hoàn thành bảng câu hỏi này.

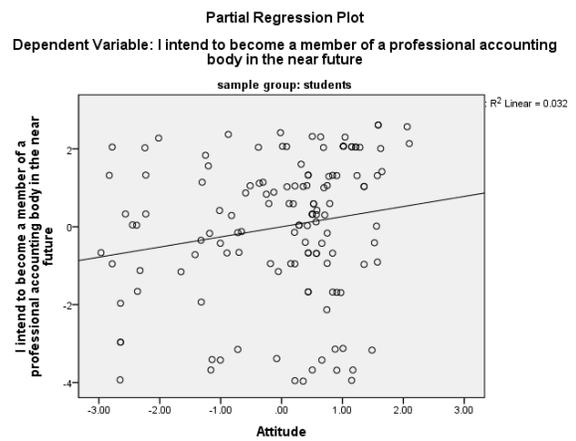
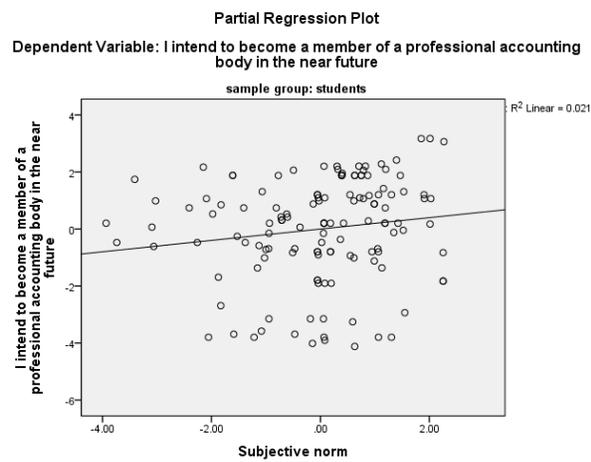
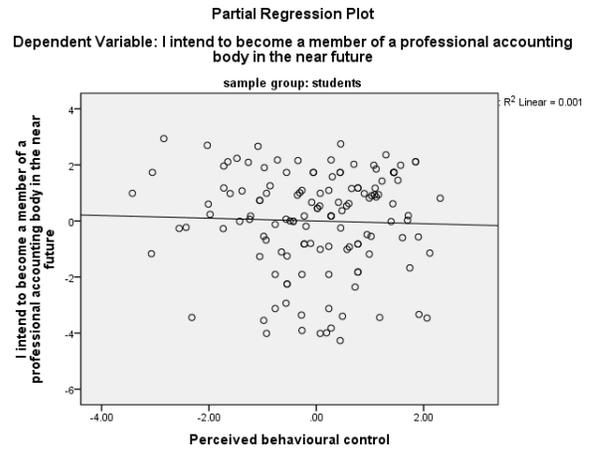
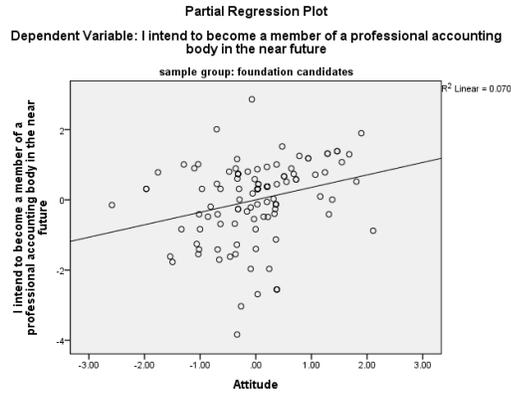
APPENDIX II - Regression assumptions testing

Before performing a regression analysis, the assumptions of multiple regression namely linearity, normality, homoscedasticity and independence of errors were tested.

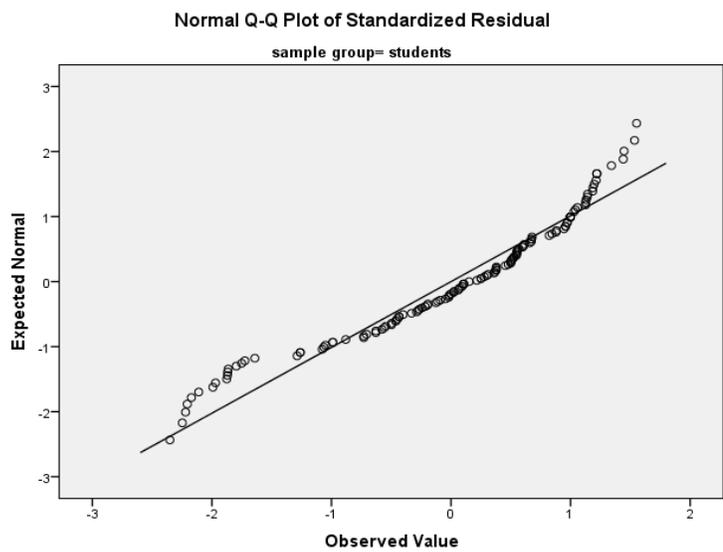
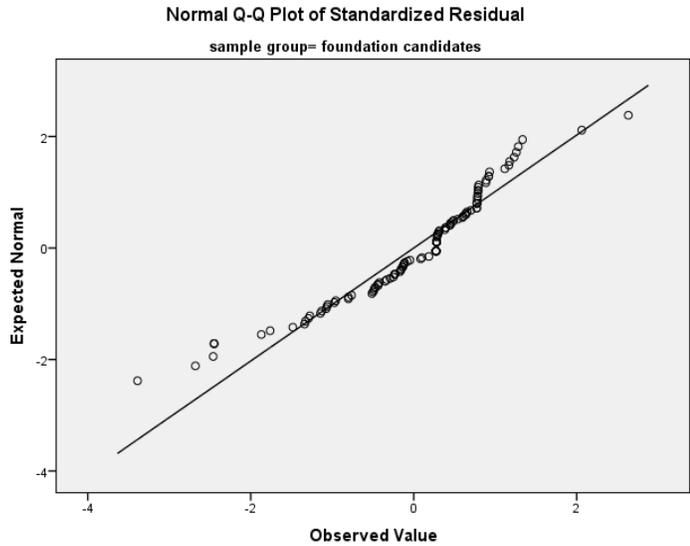
Model linearity

Linear regression assumes that the relationship between the response variable and the predictors is linear. To check if this relationship is linear, instead of looking at simple scatterplots which would be useful in the case of a simple regression, the partial regression plots between the dependent and each independent variable were examined. There seems to be some issues of linearity in particular with the attitude variable.





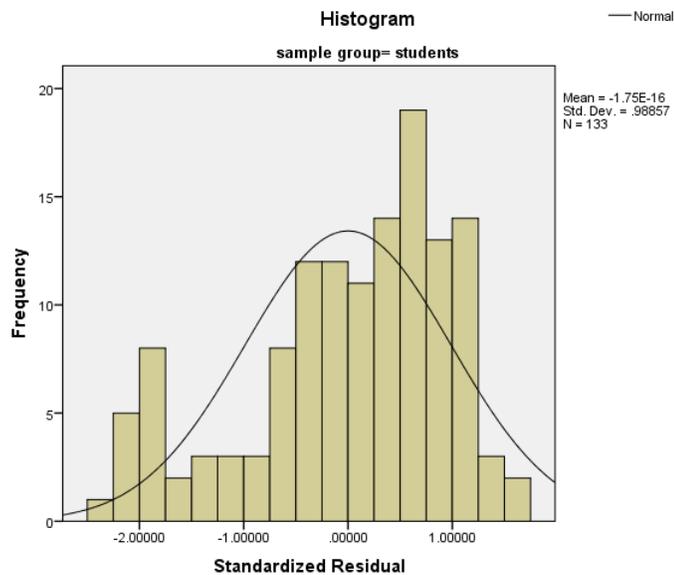
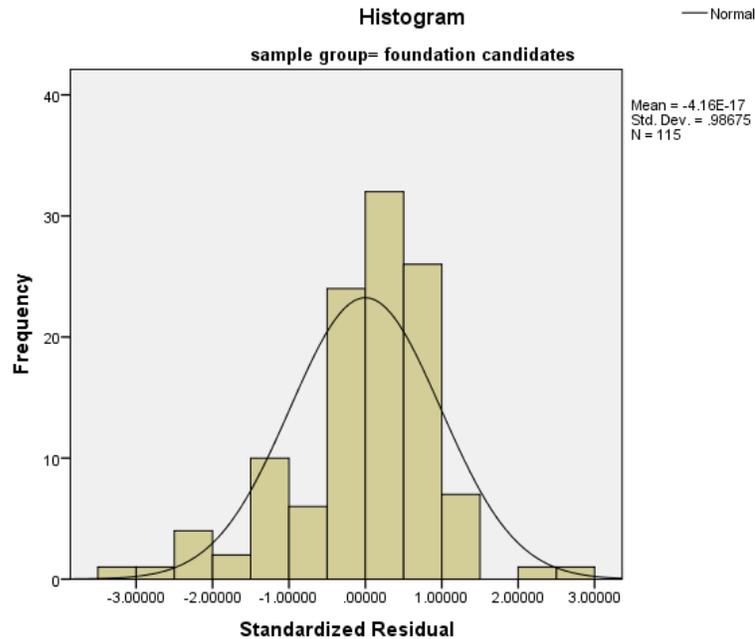
The observed vs. standardized residuals plots show a slight “bowed” pattern which could indicate some non linearity.



However since the deviation from normality is not obvious, the three variables (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) have previously been successfully used in regression analysis (Wen, Hao, and Bu 2015, Chan and Fishbein 1993, Cohen and Hanno 1993) and variables transformations were unsuccessful, the potential issue of linearity is ignored.

Normality of errors

One of the assumptions of linear regression analysis is that the residuals are normally distributed. It is important to meet this assumption for the p-values for the t-tests to be valid (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group n.d.).

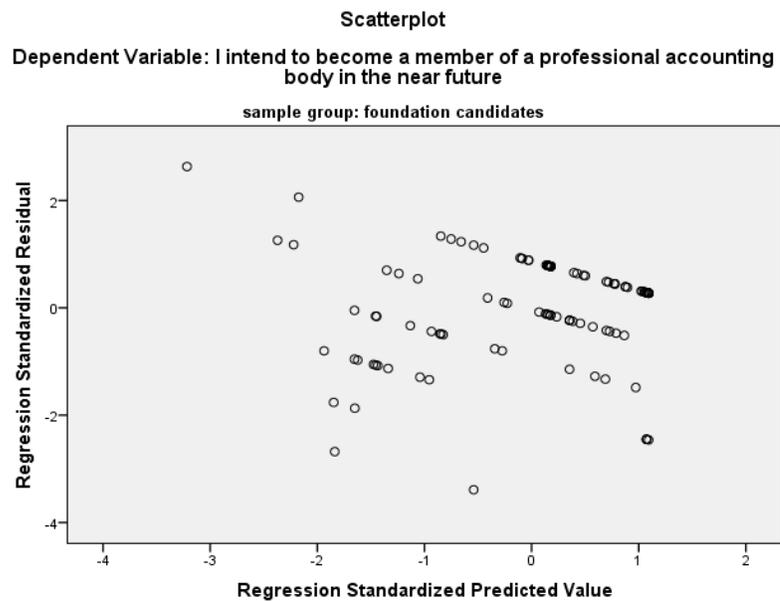


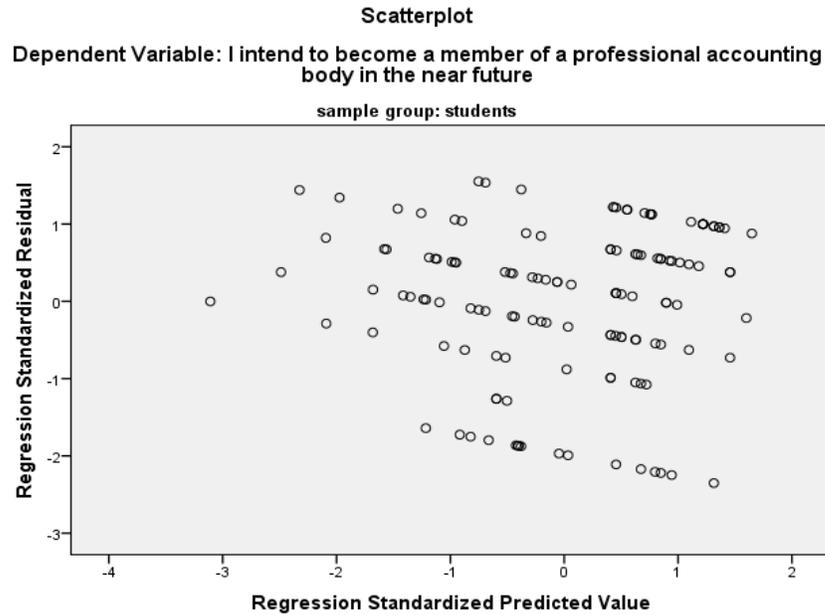
All of the results suggest that the residuals are not normally distributed for both sample groups - the skewness and kurtosis are not near 0 (-0.919 and 1.5 respectively for the foundation candidates and -0.725 and 0.26 respectively for the students), the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk "tests of normality" are significant and the histogram and the Q-Q plot does not looks normal. Based on these results, the residuals from this regression do not appear to conform to the assumption of being normally distributed. However since the three variables (attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavioural control) have previously been successfully used in regression

analysis (Wen, Hao, and Bu 2015, Chan and Fishbein 1993, Cohen and Hanno 1993) and variables transformations were unsuccessful, the potential issue of normality is ignored.

Homoscedasticity

One assumption of ordinary least squares regression is that the variance of the residuals is homogeneous across levels of the predicted values, also known as homoscedasticity. If the model is well-fitted, there should be no pattern to the residuals plotted against the fitted values. If the variance of the residuals is non-constant then the residual variance is said to be "heteroscedastic" (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group n.d.).





The scatterplots does not show a clear pattern so the White test was run for both samples and it is overall statistically non-significant ($p=0.4665$) which means that the data is homoscedastic. When the White test is run on the two samples separately it becomes statistically significant ($p=0.0051$) for the foundation candidates sample which means that this sample is heteroscedastic but non-significant ($p=0.9213$) for the students sample which means that this sample is homoscedastic.

Collinearity

Multicollinearity implies that more than two variables are near perfect linear combinations of one another. When there is a perfect linear relationship among the predictors, the estimates for a regression model cannot be uniquely computed. Multicollinearity tends to inflate the standard error of the coefficients.

The collinearity statistics shows that the “tolerance” is greater than 0.1 for all predictor variables for both samples showing that there are no multicollinearity issues (UCLA: Statistical Consulting Group n.d.).

Coefficients` foundation candidates

| | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | p | Collinearity Statistics | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| | (Constant) | 1.050 | .209 | | 5.024 | .000 | | |
| | Subjective norm | .183 | .082 | .221 | 2.219 | .029 | .697 | 1.434 |
| | Perceived behavioural control | .012 | .095 | .013 | .127 | .899 | .701 | 1.427 |
| | Attitude | .355 | .123 | .321 | 2.896 | .005 | .561 | 1.783 |

b. Dependent Variable: I intend to become a member of a professional accounting body in the near future

Coefficients` students

| | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | t | p | Collinearity Statistics | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| | (Constant) | -.038 | .267 | | -.141 | .888 | | |
| | Subjective norm | .200 | .119 | .154 | 1.670 | .097 | .841 | 1.189 |
| | Perceived behavioural control | -.048 | .130 | -.033 | -.372 | .710 | .908 | 1.101 |
| | Attitude | .260 | .126 | .188 | 2.073 | .040 | .868 | 1.151 |

b. Dependent Variable: I intend to become a member of a professional accounting body in the near future

Independence of errors

Independence of errors means that the errors associated with one observation are not correlated with the errors of any other observation. The Durbin-Watson test is used to identify issues with independence of errors. The Durbin-Watson test has a range of 0 to 4 with a midpoint of 2.

Dubin-Watson test – foundation candidates

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | .485 ^b | .236 | .215 | 1.097 | 1.830 |

Dubin-Watson test – students

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|-------|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| 1 | .273 ^b | .075 | .053 | 1.805 | 1.930 |

Both Durbin-Watson test results being close to 2 show that there are no issues with independence of errors (Nau n.d.).

APPENDIX III - Group difference on outcome evaluation, normative pressure and motivation to comply

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std dev. | t | p |
|--|-----------------------|-----|------|----------|-------|-------------|
| the assessment fee is high | Foundation candidates | 144 | 4.95 | 1.751 | -.340 | .734 |
| | Members | 173 | 5.02 | 1.689 | | |
| The on-going membership fees are high | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.40 | 1.538 | - | .259 |
| | Members | 172 | 5.58 | 1.289 | 1.130 | |
| The program/tuition fees are high | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.69 | 1.412 | - | .200 |
| | Members | 173 | 5.88 | 1.311 | 1.286 | |
| The professional education programs are of high quality | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.88 | 1.343 | - | .037 |
| | Members | 173 | 6.14 | .938 | 2.096 | |
| This professional accounting body has a good reputation | Foundation candidates | 144 | 6.25 | 1.131 | - | .109 |
| | Members | 173 | 6.42 | .763 | 1.608 | |
| The membership benefits and privileges are good | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.45 | 1.590 | - | .147 |
| | Members | 172 | 5.67 | 1.128 | 1.454 | |
| The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | Foundation candidates | 145 | 6.12 | 1.038 | 1.621 | .106 |
| | Members | 173 | 5.91 | 1.181 | | |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities | Foundation candidates | 145 | 6.15 | 1.043 | -.643 | .521 |
| | Members | 173 | 6.22 | .841 | | |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies are facilitated | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.70 | 1.201 | -.674 | .501 |
| | Members | 173 | 5.79 | 1.037 | | |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | Foundation candidates | 144 | 6.07 | 1.049 | - | .295 |
| | Members | 173 | 6.18 | .812 | 1.049 | |

| | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Its international recognition is high | Foundation candidates | 145 | 6.09 | 1.027 | .670 | .504 |
| | Members | 173 | 6.02 | .899 | | |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility opportunities | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.89 | 1.323 | .426 | .671 |
| | Members | 173 | 5.83 | 1.040 | | |
| The members of this professional accounting body are recognised as experts | Foundation candidates | 145 | 5.71 | 1.073 | .091 | .928 |
| | Members | 173 | 5.70 | 1.068 | | |
| The salary of the members of the accounting body are high | Foundation candidates | 145 | 5.16 | 1.408 | -.103 | .918 |
| | Members | 173 | 5.17 | 1.163 | | |
| The CPA program is difficult | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.28 | 1.169 | 1.177 | .240 |
| | Members | 171 | 5.12 | 1.332 | | |
| Work commitments limit my ability to study | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.27 | 1.565 | 1.434 | .153 |
| | Members | 170 | 5.01 | 1.621 | | |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the membership fee | Foundation candidates | 144 | 5.57 | 1.753 | - | .048 |
| | Members | 172 | 5.92 | 1.422 | 1.987 | |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the program fee (professional level) | Foundation candidates | 143 | 5.71 | 1.751 | - | .077 |
| | Members | 172 | 6.03 | 1.397 | 1.776 | |
| It is easy to become a member | Foundation candidates | 144 | 4.08 | 1.778 | - | .129 |
| | Members | 172 | 4.37 | 1.672 | 1.521 | |
| It is easy to remain a member | Foundation candidates | 144 | 4.42 | 1.740 | -.778 | .437 |
| | Members | 171 | 4.57 | 1.534 | | |
| My employer would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Foundation candidates | 144 | 4.95 | 1.912 | - | .008 |
| | Members | 172 | 5.45 | 1.281 | 2.687 | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer think I should do | Foundation candidates | 145 | 4.15 | 1.905 | - | .094 |
| | Members | 173 | 4.49 | 1.583 | 1.679 | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------------|
| My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Foundation candidates | 145 | 4.57 | 1.747 | - | .200 |
| | Members | 172 | 4.80 | 1.532 | 1.286 | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do | Foundation candidates | 145 | 3.56 | 1.818 | - | .210 |
| | Members | 173 | 3.81 | 1.737 | 1.255 | |
| My family would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Foundation candidates | 144 | 4.20 | 1.827 | - | .005 |
| | Members | 173 | 4.77 | 1.750 | 2.818 | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my family think I should do | Foundation candidates | 145 | 3.79 | 1.807 | - | .124 |
| | Members | 173 | 4.10 | 1.787 | 1.543 | |
| My friends would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Foundation candidates | 144 | 4.27 | 1.665 | - | .115 |
| | Members | 173 | 4.57 | 1.650 | 1.582 | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my friends think I should do | Foundation candidates | 145 | 3.63 | 1.771 | - | .169 |
| | Members | 173 | 3.91 | 1.820 | 1.377 | |

APPENDIX IV - Intenders/Non-intenders difference on modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factor importance

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std dev | t | p |
|--|---------------|-----|------|---------|--------|-------------|
| Importance of Assessment fee | Intenders | 184 | 4.32 | 1.564 | -1.993 | .047 |
| | Non-intenders | 88 | 4.72 | 1.523 | | |
| Importance of On-going membership fees | Intenders | 189 | 4.86 | 1.388 | -1.155 | .249 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.07 | 1.363 | | |
| Importance of Program/tuition fees | Intenders | 188 | 5.56 | 1.189 | -.322 | .748. |
| | Non-intenders | 87 | 5.61 | 1.270 | | |
| Importance of Quality of professional education programs | Intenders | 189 | 6.39 | .822 | -.016 | .987 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 6.39 | .912 | | |
| Importance of reputation of the professional body | Intenders | 190 | 6.28 | .830 | 2.127 | .034 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 6.03 | 1.027 | | |
| Importance of flexibility of the program | Intenders | 190 | 6.04 | .936 | 1.014 | .311 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.92 | .907 | | |
| Importance of career and networking opportunities | Intenders | 189 | 6.47 | .816 | 2.025 | .045 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 6.21 | 1.060 | | |
| Importance of reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies | Intenders | 190 | 5.77 | .968 | 1.956 | .051 |
| | Non-intenders | 88 | 5.52 | 1.050 | | |
| Importance of international recognition | Intenders | 190 | 6.17 | .8687 | 2.395 | .018 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.84 | 1.1372 | | |
| Importance of professional status | Intenders | 189 | 6.02 | .922 | 2.703 | .007 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.70 | .958 | | |
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-------|-------------|
| Importance of international mobility opportunities | Intenders | 186 | 6.02 | .989 | 2.484 | .014 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.63 | 1.300 | | |
| Importance of perceived expertise of the members | Intenders | 187 | 5.86 | 1.033 | 2.865 | .005 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.44 | 1.196 | | |
| Importance of salary of the members | Intenders | 188 | 6.04 | 1.033 | 1.187 | .237 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.87 | 1.217 | | |
| Importance of entry requirements (including practical experience) | Intenders | 189 | 5.60 | 1.184 | 1.311 | .191 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.39 | 1.276 | | |
| Importance of employer paying membership fees | Intenders | 187 | 5.20 | 1.269 | .042 | .966 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.19 | 1.214 | | |
| Importance of employer paying program fees (professional level) | Intenders | 186 | 5.46 | 1.222 | 1.061 | .290 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.29 | 1.170 | | |
| Importance of Continuing professional development/education | Intenders | 188 | 5.83 | .829 | 2.858 | .005 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.47 | 1.035 | | |
| Importance of access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | Intenders | 187 | 5.50 | 1.079 | .342 | .551 |
| | Non-intenders | 87 | 5.45 | 1.159 | | |
| Importance of access to professional indemnity insurance | Intenders | 183 | 5.49 | 1.143 | 1.585 | .114 |
| | Non-intenders | 87 | 5.24 | 1.276 | | |
| Importance of access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | Intenders | 188 | 5.71 | .988 | 1.826 | .069 |
| | Non-intenders | 87 | 5.47 | 1.087 | | |
| Importance of access to discussion groups | Intenders | 190 | 5.41 | 1.084 | 1.081 | .281 |
| | Non-intenders | 86 | 5.26 | 1.140 | | |
| Importance of receiving magazines/Journals | Intenders | 188 | 5.16 | 1.128 | 2.581 | .012 |
| | Non-intenders | 86 | 4.78 | 1.192 | | |
| Importance of receiving professional updates (via emails etc) | Intenders | 188 | 5.59 | 1.023 | 1.507 | .118 |
| | Non-intenders | 89 | 5.37 | 1.142 | | |
| | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---------------|-----|------|-------|-------|------|
| Importance of difficulty of the program | Intenders | 188 | 5.65 | 1.005 | .991 | .334 |
| | Non-intenders | 87 | 5.52 | 1.066 | | |
| Importance of time available for study | Intenders | 190 | 5.93 | .923 | 1.140 | .244 |
| | Non-intenders | 88 | 5.78 | .988 | | |
| Importance of exam mode | Intenders | 189 | 5.84 | 1.101 | 1.956 | .051 |
| | Non-intenders | 88 | 5.57 | .968 | | |

APPENDIX V - Single vs. Multiple membership difference on outcome evaluation, normative pressure, motivation to comply and modal outcomes and facilitating/inhibiting factors importance

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std deviation | t | P |
|--|---------------------|-----|------|---------------|--------|------|
| the assessment fee is high | Single membership | 118 | 5.03 | 1.684 | -.188 | .851 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.98 | 1.716 | | |
| The on-going membership fees are high | Single membership | 117 | 5.60 | 1.300 | -.336 | .737 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.53 | 1.274 | | |
| The program/tuition fees are high | Single membership | 118 | 5.98 | 1.274 | -1.454 | .148 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.67 | 1.375 | | |
| The professional education programs are of high quality | Single membership | 118 | 6.12 | .989 | .530 | .597 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 6.20 | .826 | | |
| This professional accounting body has a good reputation | Single membership | 118 | 6.43 | .779 | -.258 | .797 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 6.40 | .735 | | |
| The membership benefits and privileges are good | Single membership | 118 | 5.64 | 1.152 | .666 | .506 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 5.76 | 1.080 | | |
| The CPA program (including exam mode) is flexible | Single membership | 118 | 5.98 | 1.191 | -1.139 | .256 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.76 | 1.154 | | |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my career and networking opportunities | Single membership | 118 | 6.25 | .857 | -.597 | .551 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 6.16 | .811 | | |
| Reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies are facilitated | Single membership | 118 | 5.80 | 1.042 | -.194 | .846 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.76 | 1.036 | | |

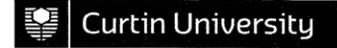
| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std deviation | t | P |
|---|---------------------|-----|------|---------------|--------|------|
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my professional status | Single membership | 118 | 6.18 | .823 | .029 | .977 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 6.18 | .796 | | |
| Its international recognition is high | Single membership | 118 | 6.03 | .901 | -.173 | .863 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 6.00 | .903 | | |
| Affiliating with this professional accounting body will enhance my international mobility opportunities | Single membership | 118 | 5.81 | 1.004 | .347 | .729 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.87 | 1.123 | | |
| The members of this professional accounting body are recognised as experts | Single membership | 118 | 5.70 | 1.096 | -.071 | .943 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.69 | 1.016 | | |
| The salary of the members of the accounting body are high | Single membership | 118 | 5.19 | 1.191 | -.215 | .830 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.15 | 1.113 | | |
| The CPA program is difficult | Single membership | 117 | 5.23 | 1.329 | -1.653 | .100 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 4.87 | 1.318 | | |
| Work commitments limit my ability to study | Single membership | 115 | 4.99 | 1.614 | .237 | .813 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.05 | 1.649 | | |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the membership fee | Single membership | 117 | 5.96 | 1.453 | -.441 | .660 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.85 | 1.367 | | |
| I am more likely to affiliate with a professional accounting body if my employer covers the program fee (professional | Single membership | 117 | 6.06 | 1.464 | -.341 | .734 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.98 | 1.254 | | |
| It is easy to become a member | Single membership | 117 | 4.39 | 1.661 | -.240 | .810 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.33 | 1.711 | | |
| It is easy to remain a member | Single membership | 117 | 4.49 | 1.478 | 1.005 | .316 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 4.74 | 1.650 | | |
| My employer would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Single membership | 117 | 5.40 | 1.239 | .772 | .441 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.56 | 1.371 | | |

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std deviation | t | P |
|---|---------------------|-----|------|---------------|--------|-------------|
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my employer think I should do | Single membership | 118 | 4.37 | 1.589 | 1.374 | .171 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.73 | 1.557 | | |
| My co-workers would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Single membership | 118 | 4.69 | 1.447 | 1.363 | .175 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 5.04 | 1.693 | | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my co-workers think I should do | Single membership | 118 | 3.64 | 1.652 | 1.942 | .054 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.18 | 1.867 | | |
| My family would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Single membership | 118 | 4.69 | 1.702 | .812 | .418 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.93 | 1.854 | | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my family think I should do | Single membership | 118 | 3.89 | 1.748 | 2.274 | .024 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.55 | 1.803 | | |
| My friends would think that I should affiliate with a professional accounting body | Single membership | 118 | 4.47 | 1.578 | 1.073 | .285 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.76 | 1.795 | | |
| Generally speaking, I want to do what my friends think I should do | Single membership | 118 | 3.81 | 1.770 | 1.147 | .253 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.15 | 1.919 | | |
| Importance of Assessment fee | Single membership | 112 | 4.35 | 1.393 | -.171 | .865 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 4.31 | 1.386 | | |
| Importance of On-going membership fees | Single membership | 115 | 5.28 | 1.159 | -2.105 | .037 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 4.85 | 1.365 | | |
| Importance of Program/tuition fees | Single membership | 114 | 5.65 | 1.190 | -1.195 | .234 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.42 | 1.151 | | |
| Importance of Quality of professional education programs | Single membership | 118 | 6.22 | .797 | -.656 | .513 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 6.13 | .933 | | |
| Importance of reputation of the professional body | Single membership | 118 | 6.34 | .754 | -.042 | .966 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 6.33 | .932 | | |

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std deviation | t | P |
|--|---------------------|-----|-------|---------------|-------|------|
| Importance of flexibility of the program | Single membership | 116 | 5.86 | .822 | .448 | .654 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 5.93 | .949 | | |
| Importance of career and networking opportunities | Single membership | 118 | 6.27 | .864 | -.328 | .744 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 6.22 | 1.003 | | |
| Importance of reciprocal membership agreements with local and international professional accounting bodies | Single membership | 118 | 5.59 | .870 | .926 | .356 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.74 | 1.059 | | |
| Importance of international recognition | Single membership | 118 | 6.161 | .7393 | .771 | .442 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 6.259 | .8509 | | |
| Importance of professional status | Single membership | 118 | 6.17 | .755 | .027 | .979 |
| | Multiple membership | 52 | 6.17 | .901 | | |
| Importance of international mobility opportunities | Single membership | 118 | 5.84 | .952 | -.816 | .416 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 5.70 | 1.127 | | |
| Importance of perceived expertise of the members | Single membership | 118 | 5.96 | .871 | .031 | .975 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.96 | .980 | | |
| Importance of salary of the members | Single membership | 117 | 5.80 | 1.069 | .481 | .631 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.89 | .993 | | |
| Importance of entry requirements (including practical experience) | Single membership | 117 | 5.50 | .877 | .411 | .681 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.57 | .971 | | |
| Importance of employer paying membership fees | Single membership | 118 | 5.29 | 1.328 | .204 | .839 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 5.33 | 1.401 | | |
| Importance of employer paying program fees (professional level) | Single membership | 114 | 5.39 | 1.273 | .510 | .610 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 5.50 | 1.194 | | |
| Importance of Continuing professional development/education | Single membership | 118 | 5.74 | .721 | 1.080 | .282 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.87 | .862 | | |

| Item | Sample group | N | Mean | Std deviation | t | P |
|---|---------------------|-----|------|---------------|-------|------|
| Importance of access to study support from Registered Tuition Providers | Single membership | 112 | 5.00 | 1.273 | 1.519 | .131 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.32 | 1.252 | | |
| Importance of access to professional indemnity insurance | Single membership | 111 | 5.11 | 1.216 | .289 | .773 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.17 | 1.397 | | |
| Importance of access to online research facilities e.g. Library, webinars | Single membership | 117 | 5.52 | .970 | 1.133 | .259 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.71 | 1.100 | | |
| Importance of access to discussion groups | Single membership | 118 | 5.08 | 1.001 | .471 | .638 |
| | Multiple membership | 54 | 5.17 | 1.178 | | |
| Importance of receiving magazines/Journals | Single membership | 118 | 4.90 | .890 | .699 | .487 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.04 | 1.333 | | |
| Importance of receiving professional updates (via emails etc) | Single membership | 118 | 5.28 | .960 | .453 | .651 |
| | Multiple membership | 55 | 5.36 | 1.207 | | |
| Importance of difficulty of the program | Single membership | 117 | 5.40 | .891 | -.029 | .977 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.40 | 1.214 | | |
| Importance of time available for study | Single membership | 118 | 5.75 | .989 | -.058 | .954 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.74 | 1.146 | | |
| Importance of exam mode | Single membership | 116 | 5.74 | .924 | -.271 | .787 |
| | Multiple membership | 53 | 5.70 | 1.049 | | |

APPENDIX VI – Curtin Human Research Ethics approval



Memorandum

| | |
|----------------|--|
| To | Professor Paul de Lange, CBS Teaching and Learning |
| From | Professor Peter O’Leary, Chair Human Research Ethics Committee |
| Subject | Protocol Approval HR 121/2014 |
| Date | 24 June 2014 |
| Copy | |

Office of Research and Development
Human Research Ethics Committee

TELEPHONE 9266 2784
FACSIMILE 9266 3793
EMAIL hrec@curtin.edu.au

Thank you for your application submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for the project titled "*Professional Accounting Body Affiliation: Understanding the Drivers of Membership Recruitment and Retention in Vietnam*". The Committee notes the prior approval by RMIT HREC (15777) and has reviewed your application consistent with Chapter 5.3 of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*.

- You have ethics clearance to undertake the research as stated in your proposal.
- The approval number for your project is **HR 121/2014**. Please quote this number in any future correspondence.
- Approval of this project is for a period of four years **24-06-2014 to 24-06-2018**.
- Annual progress reports on the project must be submitted to the Ethics Office.
- If you are a Higher Degree by Research student, data collection must not begin before your Application for Candidacy is approved by your Faculty Graduate Studies Committee.
- The following standard statement **must be** included in the information sheet to participants:
This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of (RMIT HREC) and Curtin University 121/2014.

Applicants should note the following:

It is the policy of the HREC to conduct random audits on a percentage of approved projects. These audits may be conducted at any time after the project starts. In cases where the HREC considers that there may be a risk of adverse events, or where participants may be especially vulnerable, the HREC may request the chief investigator to provide an outcomes report, including information on follow-up of participants.

The attached **Progress Report** should be completed and returned to the Secretary, HREC, C/- Office of Research & Development annually.

Our website https://research.curtin.edu.au/guides/ethics/non_low_risk_hrec_forms.cfm contains all other relevant forms including:

- Completion Report (to be completed when a project has ceased)
- Amendment Request (to be completed at any time changes/amendments occur)
- Adverse Event Notification Form (If a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs)

Yours sincerely

Professor Peter O’Leary
Chair Human Research Ethics Committee