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Identifying Discrepancies in Perceptions of Knowledge and Skills between Employers and Educators in Accounting Education

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Abstract

This paper aims to investigate difference perceptions of knowledge and skills between employers and educators in accounting education. The research participants are consist of 37 educators and 139 employers related to accounting fields. In the paper, the questionnaire with returned 19 items related to the knowledge and skills would be evaluated graduate students by employers and educators in accounting and the results were evaluated using the SPSS program. There is significant difference between employers and educators on importance of graduates knowledge and skills.

Keywords: employers, educators, accounting education, knowledge, skills

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Introduction

There are 44 colleges in our country that educate specialists in accounting programs for professionals, and according to 2021 statistics, a total of 8,288 students studied in them, 1,482 completed their education, and 75.6 percent of them were employed. The accounting profession is one of 20 that will see a reduction in demand as a result of the challenges associated with digitization, based on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) "Prospect of the Future 2020" study. It pointed out that they will need to keep up with and improve their skill sets because, in the next five years, 50% of the workforce and 40% of the skills necessary for performing the job will change. Accounting is one of the five professions with a lack of workers, while being classified as the second most in-demand career in the labor market by amounts from 2022. Despite the fact that there is an a lack of qualified professionals and a surplus of jobs for graduates, the significant need for employment may be a result of accounting schools' a failure to produce professionals who meet market or employer needs for expertise and skills. This is a consequence of the fact that the needs of society and the accounting profession both continue to change the skills needed by accounting professionals. Clarifying if the knowledge and skills supplied by university and university accounting programs to students who are graduating from the accounting field are different from the knowledge and skills required by employers in the employer business is therefore critical. This study was conducted to determine whether there is a difference in understanding of knowledge and skills between teachers and employers who provide students with knowledge and skills through accounting programs. This might be one of the reasons for a lack of employment in the profession and increasing unemployment. As a result of the research, it is important to assess whether the accounting program's content exceeds society's requirements and standards as well as those of employers, giving the program the opportunity to be developed.

Knowledge and Skills in Accountancy

According to the International Education Standard, professional knowledge refers to educational programs in accounting and other business-related areas which overall represent an important component of the knowledge required by accountants. Although it allows accountants to succeed in the workplace and advance in their professions, the foundation of accounting knowledge is a sign of the standard of academic institutions and their graduates. In other words, professional skills are intellectual, interpersonal, personal and organizational skills that professional accountants use in combination with technical capabilities and professional values, ethics and attitudes to demonstrate their professional competence.

The International Association of Chartered Accountants (ACCA) found that the following factors have the most effect on accounting professions and skills: 1) digital technologies, 2) regulatory and governance requirements, 3) globalization and business competition factors, 4) stakeholder expectations and assumptions, and 5) environmental factors. n order for accounting professionals to evolve into leaders, trusted advisors, and strategic advisors who will guide organizations operating in all sectors to success and create value for employers and clients, there is a growing need for future accountants to continuously develop their professional knowledge and skills (Odgerel. G, 2022).

Literature Review

The understanding, skills, and professional perspectives needed by professional accountants to work in the technological era, trends in the curricula of educational institutions preparing professionals, and general skills needed for the workplace have all served as the subject of many research projects and analyses. For example:

A study by Mohamed Faker and Ahmed (2013) compared the perceptions of accounting students to the abilities that employers in Tunisian businesses believed were necessary. Seven skills were found to be significant for working in the field, including 1) technical skills, 2) managerial skills, 3) information technology skills, 4) physical quality, 5) intellectual quality, 6) interpersonal quality, and 7) personal skills.

Iliah Mohd Ali, et al. (2016) collected information about the knowledge and skills necessary in professional accounting workplaces from stakeholders including employers and educators and evaluated their worth. In general1, accounting graduates are most expected to possess the following qualities: written communication, ongoing education, and decision-making skills.The research examines the history and current situation of the development of the accounting profession, and in this era of industrial revolution, the accountant is not only a bookkeeper, but uses the advancement of information technology to continuously improve his professional skills, learn business consulting services, increase the value of the profession, and follow the global trends (Naranchimeg. L, 2019).

Tsend Ayush. G., (2018) from 2018/11/01 to 2018/11/28, analyze the information of the job announcement posted on the online system of the employment agency, whether there is a need for professional accountants to improve their skills, and how the organization should support them to improve their professional skills confirmed the need to improve skill.

In order to determine which abilities are more crucial in Mongolia, 153-202 corporate accountants were questioned between 2016 and 2018. According to the survey's findings, an accountant should prioritize developing their technological, behavioral, and communication abilities (Khishigbayar. L & Lkhagvasuren. D, 2019).

Hypothesis:

H1: Employers and educators have varied perspectives on a student's skills.

H2: Knowledge that is distinct of what an employer expects is provided by an accounting education.

H3: According to employers, skills are more significant than accounting knowledge.

H4: It is thought that knowledge, instead of abilities, should serve as the foundation of accounting education.

Research Methodology

When conducting research, it is important to choose a sample that can represent the research object. The research results can be sufficient and significant if the research sample is selected appropriately (Sekaran & Bougue, 2010). 37 teachers from 8 universities who are training specialists in the accounting program participated in the research. For example: National university of Mongolia, Mongolian University of Life Sciences, The University of Finance & Economics, Mandakh university, Ider university and , Etugen universities. However, only 139 of the 150 questionnaires that were supposed to be completed by employers' representatives were actually completed. One survey required, on average,

20 to 30 minutes to complete. 82% of the employers surveyed work in accounting and financial services, 7.2% are employed by governments, and 10.8% are employed by auditing organizations. In the first section of the questionnaire, the respondent's work history, age, gender, place of employment, and type of ownership are clarified. In the second section, it is determined what kind of position the respondent is most likely to hold after graduation, whether the knowledge they have learned in school is applicable to the workplace, why it is not, and how they can improve their professional skills. In the last section, 19 knowledge and abilities that are required for students to graduate with a major in accounting were chosen and scored using software according to their importance using a scale of 1 to 5 (if importance is high, 5 points, etc).

Results

Table 1 contains the findings from the study's first section as well as the respondents' age, gender, job experience, and type of workplace ownership. 61% of responders are between the ages of 20 and 40, with 52% having up to 10 years of experience and 48% having more. Additionally, 68% of employers are privately owned businesses when ownership of the working organization is given into account. Employers in the accounting and finance industries made up 82% of those polled, while audit, government, and other sectors made up the remaining 18%.

According to Table 2, 89% of teachers and

Table 1. Descriptive data of the respondents

		Educators		Employers		Total	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Occupation experience	Less than 3 years	6	16.2%	14	10.1%	20	11.4%
	3-6 years	3	8.1%	36	25.9%	39	22.2%
	7-10 years	8	21.6%	25	18.0%	33	18.8%
	11-15 years	7	18.9%	22	15.8%	29	16.5%
	More than 15 years	13	35.1%	42	30.2%	55	31.3%
Age	20-30	9	24.3%	33	23.7%	42	23.9%
	31-40	14	37.8%	52	37.4%	66	37.5%
	41-50	13	35.1%	34	24.5%	47	26.7%
	51-60	1	2.7%	20	14.4%	21	11.9%
Gender	Male	7	18.9%	25	18.0%	32	18.2%
	Female	29	78.4%	112	80.6%	141	80.1%
Job area	State property	21	56.8%	44	31.7%	65	36.9%
	Private property	16	43.2%	95	68.3%	111	63.1%
Total		37	100.0%	139	100.0%	176	100.0%

Table 2: University education relevance to practice

Indicators		Educators		Employers		Total	
		Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Occupation experience	Very poor	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	2	1.1%
	Poor	4	10.8%	9	6.5%	13	7.4%
	Mid	12	32.4%	72	51.8%	84	47.7%
	Well	21	56.8%	48	34.5%	69	39.2%
	Very well	0	0.0%	8	5.8%	8	4.5%
Total		37	100.0%	139	100.0%	176	100.0%

86% of employers agreed that the accounting knowledge offered by educational institutions to students is adequate for carrying out accountant activities. It is evident that the skills of students who graduate satisfies corporate expectations.

Table 3 demonstrates how teachers and employers feel that students dislike learning material more than teacher lectures and that their lack of a sincere desire to learn is the reason why they are inability to employ the knowledge they obtained in practice.

One measure of the quality of the educational institution's final result is the graduate's abilities to use the knowledge that educational institutions have obtained. What kind of job can graduates with an educational background in accounting hold on the market studied higher? A graduate with a degree in accounting can work in 9 positions: auditor, business decision maker, financial consultant, tax consultant, business consultant, environmental auditor, information analyst, accountant, and technology consultant (Table 4). As a result, there is a great chance for teachers and employers to become auditors and accountants.

For the teachers who participated in the research, it is said that having students practice in practice and work on projects develops their skills, while for employers, in addition to having students practice in practice, teachers themselves work with

Table 3. Reason perceived by respondents

Indicators	Educators		Employers		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
In universities, teaching work and performance are not properly evaluated and rewarded	12	32.4%	29	20.9%	41	23.3%
The budget is not enough to make big changes	10	27.0%	35	25.2%	45	25.6%
Accounting students lack the basic knowledge to learn	6	16.2%	41	29.5%	47	26.7%
Accounting students tend to just watch the lectures and memorize some information	16	43.2%	62	44.6%	78	44.3%
Students no longer have the attitude to learn and re-learn	17	45.9%	48	34.5%	65	36.9%
Total	61		139		176	

Table 4. Leading careers after accounting education

Indicators	Educators		Employers		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Auditors	28	75.7%	96	69.1%	124	70.5%
Business decision makes	8	21.6%	31	22.3%	39	22.2%
Financial consultants	24	64.9%	74	53.2%	98	55.7%
Tax advisors	24	64.9%	67	48.2%	91	51.7%
Business Advisors	11	29.7%	32	23.0%	43	24.4%
Environmental auditors	1	2.7%	9	6.5%	10	5.7%
Information experts	2	5.4%	16	11.5%	18	10.2%
Accountants	35	94.6%	120	86.3%	155	88.1%
Technology managers/advisors	1	2.7%	9	6.5%	10	5.7%

entrepreneurs and in turn provide students with knowledge combined with practice, which is a factor that increases students' skills (Table 5).

When checking the reliability of the indicator used in the study by calculating Cronbach's Alpha, the correlation is higher than 0.7. This means that the indicators are acceptable (Nunnally, 1978). A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient higher than 0.7 indicates the internal consistency of the indicators (Sekaran & Bougue, 2010). In the study, Cronbach's Alpha of 19 indicators of knowledge was 0.899 and 0.936, while Cronbach's Alpha of 19 indicators of skill was 0.901 and 0.898, which is a positive result (Table 6).

Table 7 lists the top 19 skills necessary to become accountants, with the implementation of technology and teamwork skills ranking in first and second, respectively. According

Table 5. Activities to develop accountant's skills

Indicators	Educators		Employers		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Practice	26	70.3%	112	80.6%	138	78.4%
Cooperation of university teachers with businessmen	10	27.0%	28	20.1%	38	21.6%
Work on projects	13	35.1%	31	22.3%	44	25.0%
Language skills	2	5.4%	15	10.8%	17	9.7%

Table 6. Cronbach's Alpha of the parameters

Indicators	Number	Cronbach's Alpha	
		Educators	Employers
Knowledge	19	0.899	0.936
Skills	19	0.901	0.898

Table 7. Skill ranks

Indicators	Educators		Employers		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Computing technology	4.6216	1	4.5540	2	4.5682	1
Teamwork	4.5135	4	4.5612	1	4.5511	2
Continuous learning	4.6216	1	4.4493	3	4.4857	3
Make a decision skills	4.5556	3	4.3913	4	4.4253	4
Interpersonal	4.3784	6	4.3669	5	4.3693	5
Change management	4.3243	7	4.2590	6	4.2727	6
Risk analysis	4.4054	5	4.1957	9	4.2400	7
Analytical/critical thinking	4.2432	13	4.2319	7	4.2343	8
Leadership	4.3056	9	4.2014	8	4.2229	9
Oral communication	4.2703	10	4.1825	10	4.2011	10
Business decision modeling	4.2432	13	4.1511	12	4.1705	11
Written	4.2500	12	4.1397	13	4.1628	12
Resource-management	4.3243	7	4.1007	14	4.1477	13
Research	4.2703	10	4.0949	15	4.1322	14
Foreign language	4.0000	17	4.1655	11	4.1307	15
Project-management	4.0541	16	4.0719	16	4.0682	16
Negotiation	4.1892	15	4.0216	17	4.0568	17
Entrepreneurship	3.9722	19	3.9630	18	3.9649	18
Customer orientation	3.9730	18	3.7464	19	3.7943	19

to the categories of respondents, educators prioritized the use of technology, continuous learning, decision-making, and teamwork skills while employers offered more than 4.5 points to the use of technology and teamwork skills as the most important.

Taxation, Financial Reporting Standards, Accounting Information Systems, Accounting Theory and Practice, and Cost accounting are ranked as the most important in Table 8's ranking of the average of the 19 knowledge that accountants must possess. Here, teachers assigned a score greater than 4.5 because they felt that students' understanding of taxation, accounting information systems, and financial reporting standards was more crucial. Additionally, tax understanding as an employer received the best score, 4.7 (Table 8).

The average and combined rankings of the respondents' skills and knowledge are shown in Table 9. Here, both educators and employers have average skill rankings of 87.14 and 88.86, respectively, which may indicate that employers value skills greater than educators perform. Our study's findings, as shown in Table 10, fail to satisfy the criteria for significance within the Mann-Whitney U test. At the present situation, there existed no differentiation between educators'

Table 8. Knowledge ranks

Indicators	Educators		Employers		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Taxation	4.6757	1	4.7029	1	4.6971	1
Financial Reporting Standards	4.5946	3	4.6763	2	4.6591	2
Accounting Information System	4.6216	2	4.5683	4	4.5795	3
Accounting Theory and Practice	4.4865	6	4.5971	3	4.5739	4
Cost Accounting	4.5676	4	4.5580	5	4.5600	5
Business and Company Law	4.5135	5	4.3841	7	4.4114	6
Finance	4.3243	9	4.4173	6	4.3977	7
Management Accounting	4.3784	8	4.3841	7	4.3829	8
Business Ethics	4.4865	6	4.3116	9	4.3486	9
Auditing and Assurance service	4.2432	10	4.2518	10	4.2500	10
Public Sector Accounting	4.1944	11	4.1087	11	4.1264	11
Economics	4.1892	12	4.0504	12	4.0795	12
Strategic Management	3.9730	14	3.9203	14	3.9314	13
Corporate Governance	3.8378	16	3.9493	13	3.9257	14
Business Statistics	4.0270	13	3.8561	15	3.8920	15
Organization Behavior	3.9167	15	3.8333	16	3.8506	16
International Business	3.7297	17	3.8043	17	3.7886	17
Marketing	3.7027	18	3.7338	18	3.7273	18
Human Resource Management	3.6757	19	3.7050	19	3.6989	19

Table 9. Average rating for knowledge and skill between educators and employers

Indicators		Number	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
Knowledge	Educators	37	95.85	3,546.5
	Employers	139	86.54	12,029.5
	Total	176		
Skill	Educators	37	87.14	3,224.0
	Employers	139	88.86	12,352.0
	Total	176		

and employers' perceptions of skills. In other words, the H1 theory is disproven. Educators may be less inclined than employers to believe knowledge is important to accountants because their average knowledge scores are 95.85 and 86.54, respectfully.

The Mann-Whitney U test outcomes illustrate that there is no knowledge divide between teachers and employers, ignoring hypothesis H2.

Table 10. Mann-Whitney U тест

	Skill	Knowledge
Mann-Whitney U	2,299.5	2,521.0
Wilcoxon W	12,029.5	3,224.0
Z	-0.988	-0.183
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.323	0.854

Table 11 demonstrates that teachers valued skills over knowledge, but the Mann-Whitney U test was not significant, refuting hypothesis H4.

The average ranking of skills and expertise for employers is calculated in Table 12. Despite the fact that competence is more important than knowledge, H3 gets disregarded since the Mann-Whitney U test is not significant.

Conclusion

This study utilizes questionnaire responses from educators and employers to reveal different perspectives of skills and expertise. If the employer's and the educational institution's perceptions of the skills and expertise illustrated by the curriculum that is used to train individuals in the discipline of accounting are different, then it is necessary to changed and developed. The findings of this study indicate that there are no appreciable differences between employers' and educational institutions' perceptions of the information and skills provided. Sending students to occupations that enable them to put their skills in practice and on projects can help students improve the knowledge they obtained through their training and develop their skills. The study concluded that educational institutions' programs that

Table 11. Rank of Educators (Mann-Whitney U тест)

Indicators		Number	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Educators	Skill	37	39.59	1,465.0
	Knowledge	139	35.41	1,310.0
	Total	176		

	Skill
Mann-Whitney U	607.0
Wilcoxon W	1,310.0
Z	-0.839
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.402

Table 12. Rank of employers (Mann-Whitney U test)

Indicators		Number	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Employers	Skill	139	138.33	19,227.5
	Knowledge	139	140.67	19,553.5
	Total	278		

	Skill
Mann-Whitney U	9,497.5
Wilcoxon W	19,227.5
Z	-0.243
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.808

educate accounting professionals satisfy businesses' specifications. 137 employers along with educators from 2 state-owned and 4 private universities in Mongolia participated in this researchThe research object may be broadened in the future by including markers like personal awareness and ethics (by increasing the number of companies and universities, analyzing student expectations, etc).

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