



Preparing Accounting Students to Face Professional Challenges: An Analysis of Initial Steps at STIE Ganesha

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Abstract. *The purpose of this study is to evaluate the deficiencies in the learning of accounting software at STIE Ganesha. This study will concentrate on factors that potentially hinder the integration of accounting software into the college curriculum. This research started in October 2024. Accounting students at STIE Ganesha are the research subjects. Qualitative research was conducted and data was collected through in-depth interviews. The results showed that learning accounting software has several problems. One of them is the lack of supporting resources and lack of technological infrastructure. In addition, students face difficulties in understanding and accessing accounting software required to meet the needs of the working world. To produce more efficient accounting software learning, this research emphasizes increasing resource capacity and improving supporting infrastructure. This research is expected to help STIE Ganesha develop methods to improve software-based accounting learning.*

Keywords : *Accounting Software Learning, STIE Ganesha, Constraint Evaluation, Curriculum Development*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving era of globalization, higher education in Indonesia, particularly in the field of accounting, faces increasing demands to provide students with the tools necessary to apply their knowledge in the professional world. Amidst the intense competition in the job market, universities must not only offer theoretical knowledge but also balance it with practical training and case study exercises to equip students for real-world challenges. Research by (Wijaya & Putri, 2023) highlights a significant gap in the accounting curriculum in Indonesia, where only a small number of universities provide adequate courses on sustainability. This points to the urgent need for more targeted and strategic actions to better prepare accounting students for the competitive job market (Pardian et al., 2024).

STIE Ganesha, as a higher education institution focused on developing students' competencies in accounting, bears a significant responsibility to ensure that its graduates are not only academically prepared but also equipped to navigate the ever-evolving dynamics of the accounting industry. Previous studies have shown that career preparation for final-year students is a critical element in achieving success in the dynamic professional world (Darmuh & Kadar, 2023). Thorough career preparation ensures that students can not only master theoretical knowledge but also apply it effectively in their professional lives.

This research aims to analyze the initial steps taken by STIE Ganesha in preparing accounting students for the professional world. The primary focus is on career preparation

programs provided to students, encompassing both the development of academic competencies and practical skills that enhance their readiness to face competition in the job market. These efforts are crucial in ensuring that students are capable of integrating themselves into society and excelling in their respective fields (Saefullah, Fadli, et al., 2023).

In this context, students are encouraged to further develop their potential and abilities. As noted by (Martaseli & Maragita, 2023), financial and accounting professionals are increasingly required to expand their expertise beyond the traditional boundaries of finance and accounting, enabling them to penetrate sectors such as business and information technology. This highlights the importance of comprehensive education and training programs that bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, ultimately empowering students to thrive in their professional careers (Arda et al., 2024).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Accounting competency is a fundamental skill that accounting students must master. According to (Kaslani et al., 2022), accounting competence is crucial in the business world, emphasizing that quality education must produce highly skilled graduates. Furthermore, Nabilah highlights that a strong understanding of accounting and information technology is essential for students' readiness to enter the workforce, especially in the era of Society 5.0 (Hendra et al., 2024). This underscores the need for students to be equipped with relevant and up-to-date knowledge to remain competitive in the job market.

Motivation as a Key Driver for Professional Education

Student motivation is another critical factor in determining their interest in pursuing professional accounting education. Hendra (2024) explains that leadership in student organizations can help students build strong networks, which, in turn, can create career opportunities. Similarly, (Harun & Utama, 2023) found that career and social motivations significantly influence students' interest in professional accounting education. Therefore, fostering this motivation should be a priority in the educational programs at STIE Ganesha.

Practical Experience as a Pathway to Readiness

Practical experience, such as internships, also plays a significant role in preparing accounting students for the professional world. (Hia et al., 2023) assert that internship programs provide additional benefits to students, including enhanced skills and improved job prospects. Similarly, fieldwork practice in accounting education has been shown to effectively increase students' understanding of accounting concepts (Universitas Sriwijaya et al., 2017). Hence,

STIE Ganesha must integrate internship programs into the curriculum to provide students with real-world experience.

The Impact of External Factors

External factors, such as the cost of education and program accreditation, also influence students' interest in pursuing professional education. (Kurniawan & Nugroho, 2021) argue that tuition fees and accreditation status significantly affect students' motivation to take certification exams. Therefore, STIE Ganesha should consider these aspects when designing attractive and affordable educational programs for students.

To adequately prepare accounting students for professional challenges, STIE Ganesha must focus on several key areas: the development of competencies, motivation, practical experience, and addressing external factors that influence students' interests. By implementing these steps, STIE Ganesha can better equip its students to succeed and remain competitive in the workforce.

Research on factors influencing students' career choices, particularly in accounting, has been widely conducted using various approaches. One frequently discussed topic is the importance of internship programs. According to (Windika et al., 2022), internships provide practical experience, boost students' confidence, and expand their professional networks. However, limited research has focused on identifying the most effective types of internships in influencing career choices, especially in the accounting field. Supporting this, Kalyani et al. highlight that practical experiences, such as internships, significantly impact students' readiness to enter the workforce (Papageorgiou, 2017). These experiences not only enhance students' technical skills but also help them build professional connections that can be valuable in their future careers. Thus, STIE Ganesha needs to integrate internship programs into its curriculum to provide students with real-world exposure.

Influence of Financial Rewards and Personality on Career Choices

The study also shows that financial rewards and personality play significant roles in career selection. (Ginanjari, 2020) found that financial compensation is a primary factor in choosing an accounting profession, while analytical personality traits influence career choices in this field. However, gaps remain in understanding specific personality dimensions and their deeper relevance to the accounting profession.

Importance of Professional Training

In terms of professional training, (Darmuh & Kadar, 2023) emphasize the significance of technical and digital skills. Despite this, there is still limited research exploring the most effective types of training for accounting professionals. Identifying and customizing these

training programs to meet the specific needs of accounting students remains an area requiring further exploration (Rita et al., 2025).

Work Environment and Professional Recognition

Work environment and professional recognition also influence career decisions. (Amalia et al., 2021) highlight the importance of a supportive work environment and professional recognition, such as certification. However, further research is needed to delve into the specific characteristics of an ideal work environment in the accounting field.

Career Readiness and Skill Requirements

In terms of career readiness, (Yulianti et al., 2021) found that accounting skills and digital literacy are critical. However, there is still a lack of detailed explanation regarding the specific skills needed to support a career in accounting and how to measure them effectively.

Although numerous studies have examined factors influencing students' career choices in accounting, several research gaps remain:

Internship Effectiveness: Research highlights the importance of internships in helping students understand the professional world and plan their careers. However, limited studies delve into the most effective types of internships and their connection to career choices in the accounting sector specifically.

Personality Dimensions: While studies suggest that financial rewards and personality influence accounting career choices, there is a need to identify specific personality dimensions and their relevance to the accounting profession.

Professional Training: Professional training is recognized as crucial in shaping students' early career success. However, further research is required to explore the most effective training methods and how they can be tailored to meet the needs of accounting students.

Skill Readiness and Technological Changes: While accounting skills and digital literacy are acknowledged as vital for career readiness, more research is needed to clarify the relationship between specific skills and career preparedness. Additionally, the impact of technological changes and the evolving competitive job market must be examined to identify additional influencing factors.

Although existing studies provide valuable insights into factors influencing career choices in accounting, gaps remain that require further investigation. Future research should aim to clarify the relationship between specific skills and career readiness in the accounting field, while also addressing other influencing factors such as technological advancements and the evolving nature of the job market. By addressing these gaps, institutions like STIE Ganesha can better prepare accounting students for professional challenges and success.

3. METHODS

This study employs a qualitative method to explore the experiences and perspectives of accounting students at STIE Ganesha in preparing for their careers. This approach was chosen as it provides an in-depth understanding of the factors influencing students' career readiness (Ardianuril, 2020). The research was conducted over a one-week period to allow sufficient time for data collection and analysis.

The focus of this study is on fifth-semester accounting students at STIE Ganesha who are in the process of preparing themselves to enter the workforce. The selection of this group aims to gain direct insights from individuals at the critical transition stage between education and the professional world. As noted by (Suriani et al., 2023), "Using participants who are relevant to the research context is key to obtaining valid and meaningful data."

The primary data collection technique used in this study is interviews. In-depth interviews will be conducted with five students to delve into their experiences and strategies in preparing for careers in accounting. This approach aims to uncover detailed and personal insights that can contribute to understanding the readiness and challenges faced by accounting students as they navigate their career preparation journey.

4. RESULTS

The interviews revealed several key insights into the readiness of STIE Ganesha accounting students to enter the professional world. One prominent finding is the lack of practical experience in technology and accounting software among students. Many respondents expressed that the institution has not provided adequate training on the use of accounting software, which is essential in the workforce. This gap highlights the need for more hands-on learning opportunities, such as internships that focus on applying technology and accounting software, as emphasized by studies like Papageorgiou (2017) and Windika et al. (2022).

Additionally, students acknowledged the importance of soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, and time management, in supporting their careers. They also recognized the value of public speaking and other interpersonal skills, which are vital for professional growth in accounting. This aligns with the findings of Darmuh & Kadar (2023) and Ginanjar (2020), who stress the importance of balancing technical knowledge with character and personality development to prepare students for professional challenges.

Another recurring concern among students was their limited proficiency in technology, particularly in the use of accounting software. Many students admitted feeling unprepared for the workforce due to these gaps in digital and technical skills. Nabilah et al. (2024) have also highlighted the importance of professional training in digital technology and accounting tools to enhance career readiness. Providing targeted training in this area can significantly improve students' confidence and competence in handling modern accounting practices.

Furthermore, students recognized the critical role of a supportive work environment and professional recognition in shaping their careers. Several respondents emphasized the need to prepare compelling resumes and build professional networks to enhance their employability, which reflects the findings of (Saefullah, Abas, et al., 2023). These insights underline the importance of career development programs that focus on practical job-seeking skills and networking opportunities.

Despite their foundational knowledge in accounting principles, many students admitted feeling unprepared to tackle the challenges of the professional world. This sentiment is largely due to their limited practical skills, particularly in accounting software, as highlighted by both the respondents and studies like (Wahdiniawati et al., 2024). These findings underscore the importance of bridging the gap between academic preparation and workplace demands through practical skill development.

In conclusion, the study revealed that various internal and external factors influence students' career readiness in the field of accounting. While some students feel equipped with theoretical knowledge, many emphasize the need for additional practical and soft skills to succeed in the professional world. To address these challenges, STIE Ganesha must prioritize practical training, soft skill development, internship opportunities, career support services, and enhanced technological training. By taking these measures, the institution can ensure its accounting graduates are well-prepared to meet the demands of the modern workforce and excel in their careers.

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that various internal and external factors influence accounting students' career choices. Internships play a significant role in providing practical skills and expanding professional networks. However, most students feel that STIE Ganesha has not sufficiently integrated the use of technology and accounting software into its curriculum, leaving them less prepared for industry demands. In addition to technical skills, soft skills such as communication, teamwork, and time management are crucial for career development.

Students express the need for more targeted training in accounting software to meet workplace expectations, along with certification programs to enhance their competence in the accounting field. To address these gaps, the study recommends that STIE Ganesha prioritize practical skill development and deepen its focus on technology integration. Enhancing the curriculum with hands-on training in relevant software, combined with soft skill development, will better prepare students to face the challenges of the modern workforce and succeed in their accounting careers. This holistic approach to learning will equip students not only with the technical expertise required for the industry but also with the interpersonal skills needed to thrive in professional environments. By aligning its programs with real-world demands, STIE Ganesha can ensure that its graduates are competitive and career-ready.

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