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## Research Article

### From BSA to CPA: Accounting the Journey Towards Becoming Certified Public Accountants in the City of Koronadal

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#### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to describe the experiences and perceptions of Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) regarding their Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA) course, their careers as CPAs, and their sources of motivation. A total of five (5) CPAs residing in the City of Koronadal were interviewed using a Descriptive Qualitative Design. The participants were selected through purposive sampling based on inclusion criteria. Data collection involved researcher-made, open-ended interview guide questionnaires, and interviews were conducted online via Google Forms. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach, was used to analyze their responses. The results revealed that participants during their time as accountancy students perceived the said profession as prestigious and financially rewarding. However, they faced significant challenges, including the mental demands of coursework, social isolation due to academic pressures, and financial constraints that affect their studies. When they became CPAs, their motivations shifted as they now balance extrinsic factors such as financial stability and family support with intrinsic motivations like personal growth and career fulfillment. Despite this, they continue to encounter stress, time management difficulties, and the pressure of continuous learning to stay competitive in the field. This study unfolded that while the accounting profession is challenging, motivation helps students and CPAs overcome obstacles and find success. Aspiring CPAs should develop strong financial expertise and perseverance. Likewise, CPAs must pursue continuous learning and mentorship, educators and policymakers should enhance practical training and support systems, and future researchers are encouraged to expand their sample sizes for deeper analysis.

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## Background

The accounting profession plays a vital role in the world of business and finance, serving as the backbone of economic systems by ensuring accurate financial reporting. There are many unique experiences that influence how the CPAs view the accountancy profession, and these perceptions vary greatly. Understanding these factors is crucial to address the challenges and attract the individuals in the field of accounting. These unique experiences have a big impact on how the students view the accounting field, shaping their attitudes, motivations, and career trajectories within the profession.

As of October 2019, the passing rate for the CPALE (Certified Public Accountant Licensure Examination) in the Philippines is 14.32%. Although the passing rate is continuing to rise, 31.37% as of 2023, it is still quite devastating because months of studying resulted in failure for most. Compared to the bar exam, which has a slightly higher passing rate, which is 36.77%, the statistics just prove that it takes a lot to be a CPA.

Those statistics do not include the challenges a CPA faces after passing to consideration. Complying requirements can be time-consuming and draining for CPAs as they get an excessive amount of workload due to the shortage of human resources in the accounting field (Siddiqui, 2023). Additionally, the long workdays and strict deadlines associated with the profession can lead to stress and burnout, making work-life balance a struggle for many accountants.

Every profession has its secrets and hidden truths, and the accounting profession is not an exception. Beneath the success and fortune are the many sleepless nights and long working hours the accountants have to endure. The main aim of this study is to provide insights for aspiring CPAs and let them see through the lens of actual working CPAs. Hence, with this study describing their experiences, the readers get to understand and see how it is like to be a CPA. Understanding the difficulty of the course, as

well as knowing the compensation the CPAs receive can guide aspiring accountants and help them know if this really is the path they want to pursue.

The main reason the researchers conducted this study is that they wanted to lessen regret in the career choices of students. Taking accountancy is a big risk because of how hard the profession is. A lot of accountancy students do not stay, some shift to another course because the determination, passion, and perseverance the course requires cannot be endured by the students.

Hence, this study investigated the experiences of the selected CPAs in the City of Koronadal on their journey from being accountancy students to being a certified public accountant. Specifically, it sought to describe their perception of being accountancy students towards CPA as a profession, experiences in the BS Accountancy course, sources of motivation. Likewise, it also described their CPA career experiences and their sources of motivation.

## Methods

The researchers employed a Qualitative - Descriptive research design in order to maximize the information being presented in the study. This type of research approach provides a complete summary of events, uses data analysis methods, and provides straightforward descriptions of the perceptions and experiences of the participants (Sandelowski, 2010). Descriptive qualitative research is also used to address problems, which is why it is of good use to this research (Chafe, 2017).

The research was conducted in the City of Koronadal, Philippines. To gather data, the researchers used purposive sampling and selected participants based on the criteria set by the researchers. This included their attributes, expertise, and background related to the goals of the study. The inclusion criteria set for the participants encompassed: Accountants who graduated BSA (Bachelor of Science in Accountancy); They have adequate experience in the accountancy field, at least two (2) years; and

They must have already taken the CPA Licensure Exam and is now a CPA. The researchers guaranteed that the interviewees chosen for the study had the requisite knowledge to make a significant contribution. This method improved the calibre and depth of the research findings. A total of five (5) Certified Public Accountants participated in the research study.

In order to gather accurate data, the researchers utilized researcher-made interview guide questionnaires checked and validated by experts in the field. The formulated interview guide questions were related to the study and were developed in accordance with the study's objectives. Moreover, the researchers created an open-ended set of structured questionnaires delivered to the participants through an online Google Forms. Moreover, the researchers used the essay feature of Google Forms in order to best gather data. The researchers sent a letter to the school administration that granted permission to conduct the study.

Likewise, consent forms were sent out to the participants of the study. Upon retrieving consent, the researchers sent the Google Forms link via email and Facebook Messenger. Participants answered the study's open-ended questions and had the opportunity to share their perspectives and experiences in response to the researchers' inquiries. The raw data were then perused and checked and follow up questions were provided to the participants whose responses needed some clarifications and elucidation. The responses were then readied for the data analysis.

The researchers utilized Thematic Analysis on the responses of the participants. Thematic Analysis is a "method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In order to utilize this analysis method, the researchers laid down all of the raw data, made a code for data, identified themes, reviewed themes, defined each theme, and analysed and interpreted the data. The researchers made sure that the categorization of data and identification of themes were backed up with similar articles and sources. Additionally, thematic analysis is a form of data analysis used for qualitative data wherein the researcher seeks for patterns in the meaning of the participants' responses. This means that

the common themes among the responses of the participants had been objectively and critically evaluated by the researchers.

In terms of the study's limitations, although it provides in-depth qualitative insights, its limitations included a small sample size, which restricts generalizability, and reliance on self-reported experiences. Additionally, the use of online questionnaires might have limited the depth of responses compared to face-to-face interviews, potentially affecting the richness of the data. The study also focused on a specific geographic area, making its findings less applicable to CPAs in different areas with varying experiences. Furthermore, time constraints may have restricted follow-up interviews that could have provided more comprehensive insights.

In conducting this qualitative study, ethical considerations were carefully addressed in order to ensure the participants' integrity, protection, and well-being. The researchers required the participants of their informed consent before the actual data collection justifying the purpose and procedures of this study. Likewise, the participants were not coerced to participate and that the researchers ensured the participants' confidentiality, and anonymity which were maintained through the use of secured online platforms for data collection, which guaranteed avoidance of disclosure of any of their identifiable information. Moreover, participants were designed to be respectful and non-intrusive, which minimizes any potential discomfort or bias. Data analysis also ensured transparency and rigor ensuring an objective interview, substantiated by credible sources.

## Result and Discussion

This section presents the themes that were synthesized from the survey. This section also provides the study's insights, as well as its implications.

### 1.1 Perception of Being Accountancy Students towards CPA as a Profession

#### *CPA as an Honorable Profession with Promising Compensation*

Participants during their college years viewed the CPA profession as prestigious, high-paying, and full of opportunities. For example, Participant 2 specifically described account-

ancy as a career with the best and most abundant opportunities. Its complexity and high demand contribute to its esteemed reputation, as Participant 1 highlighted, "Being a CPA is a prestigious profession." This emphasizes that it is not for everyone and suggests that only those truly passionate about the field can endure its challenges, and some students may pursue a BSA degree for the respect associated with the profession.

This finding is substantiated by the Social Cognitive Career Theory which explains that external factors, such as perceived financial rewards and prestige, influence one's career choices. These perceptions likely motivated participants to pursue the BSA course and aim for becoming CPA. Moreover, this experience is supported by a study by Yudi, et al. (2020) who highlight extrinsic motivation which also suggests that accountancy students like the prestige and demand of the profession. This means that the participants' financial rewards and perceived prestige influence their decision to pursue accountancy which is driven by extrinsic motivation.

Furthermore, the finding of Cammayo and Gonzales (2024) supports the assumption that CPAs are compensated well, stating that licensed graduates easily secure jobs, highlighting the profession's abundant opportunities. Relatively similar, the North Carolina Associations of CPA (NCACPA) in the United States also recommends the profession for job stability, good pay, and respect. According to the organization, CPAs belong to an elite class of professionals, which contributes to their high pay. Essentially, accountants are important to business finance and are seen as leaders due to their expertise, ethics, and strong character, displaying diligence, honesty, and impartiality.

## 1.2 Accounting Students' Experiences in the BSA Course

### *Mentally Demanding*

When participants were asked about their experiences as BSA (Bachelor of Science in Accountancy) students, they shared that they perceived a challenge that is it was mentally demanding, as many students believed that only those who are smart could succeed. Due to its difficulty, accountancy students are often seen

as intellectually capable by their families and peers. They endure tough subjects and the pressure of maintaining high academic standards, leading to challenges like *"lower grades and absences"*, as noted by Participant 2. However, this perception of being "smart" comes with consequences, as students struggle to meet their own academic expectations.

Similarly, Participant 3 stated, *"Having doubts if I can graduate with this course/program... But having the feeling of 'feeling smart'."* This means that students with no prior accounting knowledge often find the course difficult, and background knowledge plays a significant role in success. This further means that although the course is perceived difficult, it still gives them a sense of intellectual growth and achievement.

This experience is supported by Mokhampanyane and Schlebusch (2021) who emphasized that prior experience is essential in pursuing accountancy. Family education and a student's learning abilities also influence academic performance (Ramos, 2015). Despite the challenges, some students, like Participant 4, formed lasting friendships during their journey, which provided support. Similarly, Participant 1 stated, *"I gain a lot of friends and families as well"*. This suggests that some students receive praise from family and friends, alongside the frustration and difficulty throughout their studies.

The CPA Licensure Examination (CPALE) further emphasizes the course's difficulty. In the Philippines, the CPALE requires an average score of at least 75%, with no subject score lower than 65% (Angel Cruz, 2019). Passing this exam is a testament to the high level of mastery required to become a CPA. CPAs must also maintain their license by completing eight (8) hours of education every two (2) years. The rigorous training and exams are what make accountants highly regarded in their field.

Likewise, Heller (2022) highlighted that accountants must complete demanding programs and exams to be considered experts in finance. This means that not all students can excel in every subject. A study by Calma (2020) showed that BSA students in Bulacan struggled with subjects like "Principles of Economics" and

"Computer Application," while excelling in others. Similarly, a study by Vergara (2015) found that BSA students often scored high in business law and taxation but struggled in accounting.

In addition to the mental demands of the course, accountancy students must also face the challenge of the CPALE. Known for its difficulty, the CPALE requires deep knowledge and extensive time to be spent studying across multiple subjects. According to Participant 1, studying for the CPALE was intense because it needed to study all the topics as provided in the syllabus. Likewise, other participants said that on average, it took them 8 to 18 hours per day to study.

The CPALE is one of the hardest licensure exams in the Philippines, with factors like the quality of education, student study habits, and teaching methods affecting the passing rate (Yap, 2023). In 2021, only 361 out of 2,367 applicants passed, resulting in a passing rate of just 15.25%. This low rate underscores the difficulty of the exam, which consists of 5-6 math-intensive subjects. As Gonzalez (2023) noted, the Board of Accountancy's belief that fewer passers preserve the profession's value further adds to the exam's difficulty.

### ***Socially Aloof***

BSA students admitted that they often struggled to enjoy their college years due to the heavy workload and the difficulty of their course. As Participant 5 stated, *"Sometimes you spend all of your time studying instead of having fun with your loved ones."* The intense demands of schoolwork hinder socialization, preventing students from bonding with friends and spending time with family.

While social activities can be a distraction, they also serve to alleviate stress from academic pressures (Tamayo, 2023). However, excessive homework can negatively impact family relationships. Kim (2020) noted that homework disrupts productive family time, with students finding it challenging to balance academics, family, and extracurricular activities. This leads to a weakened connection between parents and children (McNutt, 2020). This means

that homework may disrupt family bonding and balance in the participants' lives.

Additionally, according to Bidwell (2015), college freshmen are spending more time studying and engaging on social networks, leaving less time for face-to-face socializing. In 2014, 38.8% of students reported spending less than 5 hours a week bonding with friends, a stark contrast to the 16 hours a week spent socializing by students in 1987. This means that the shift towards digital engagement and academic demands has reduced face-to-face socializing among college freshmen which could impact their social skills as well as their well-being.

### ***Financially Challenging***

In addition to its complexity and being time consuming, the accounting course, as described by the participants, is financially demanding. Many BSA students face financial constraints that become significant obstacles in their studies, preventing them from taking exams or focusing on academics. Participant 4 shared, *"There was one time I did not take the exam because I didn't have an exam permit."* Students not only worry about passing exams but also about their ability to afford them.

High tuition fees, ranging from ₱60,000 to ₱100,000 per year for accountancy students, can be a heavy burden for some families. This financial stress can hinder students' focus and impact their academic performance, especially when schools do not allow students to sit for exams without fully paid tuition. Financial instability is a major issue for many students in the Philippines. The rising cost of education exacerbates this problem. Limited financial resources often force students to balance work and studies, leading to reduced study hours.

According to Daud et al. (2018), an imbalance between income and expenditure is a common challenge for many students. A study by Yusuf and Al-Majdhoub (2020) in Malaysia found a significant negative correlation between financial problems and academic performance. The study also highlighted that students often take on part-time jobs or multiple jobs to meet their financial needs, which further impacts their academic success.

### 1.3 Accounting Students' Sources of Motivation

#### *Filial Piety as a Source of Extrinsic Motivation*

Despite all of the hardships and difficulty in the course, the students are able to combat them through motivation. Everyone has different sources of motivation when pursuing their dreams. Today's youth work hard to build their future and repay their parents' sacrifices. As Participant 1 shared, *"Our poverty pushes me to pursue my journey... I knew there would be many opportunities for CPAs, so I strive harder, believing I can help my family get out of poverty."* Many people, especially students, are driven by the desire to escape poverty and provide for their families. While love and affection are important, they cannot pay bills or alleviate hunger.

Participant 3 also expressed a similar fear, saying, *"My uncle would say that if I stayed in BSBA, I'd end up working as a saleslady, so I have to prove I can be an accountant someday."* This experience proves how guidance and wisdom of family or relatives could influence and affect the decision or behavior of the participants. Moreover, the process of projecting the future career path as guided by family members drive participants to improve themselves.

For accountancy students, family is a key motivator. Financial struggles and the desire to help their families push them to endure the hardships of the BSA course. Family, alongside extracurricular activities, helps alleviate the stress caused by academics. As purported by Tamayo (2023), strong family relationships provide a sense of equilibrium, social reinforcement, and relaxation, which allow students to balance school and social life. Furthermore, Sanford's Difficulty and Support Theory emphasizes that difficulty and support go hand in hand, and without both, growth and improvement would not occur.

One powerful motivator for these participants is the fear of disappointing their families, who have sacrificed so much for them. As Perry (2022) noted, fear is a strong motivator that compels action, and it can foster perseverance. This perseverance, driven by fear, can lead to personal growth. The personality trait of neuroticism, which is linked to fear and anxiety,

also correlates with the fear of poverty. People who fear poverty often experience higher financial stress (Kacmarova et al., 2019). While fear can be a powerful motivator, it can also have negative effects, adding stress and anxiety to an individual's life.

#### *Personal or Self Development as Intrinsic Motivation*

Personal development is a lifelong process that requires self-awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses. As Participant 5 said, *"If you want to start something, you also have to see it through to the end."* This highlights the importance of effort, determination, passion, and patience in achieving goals.

The journey toward success not only makes a person stronger but also leads to personal and professional growth. Participant 4 expressed, *"I don't want to see myself in the same status as before."* This implies that becoming a CPA can be a means of personal and professional advancement, given the challenges of the journey.

This experience only proves that accountancy students are motivated by the desire for self-improvement. They work hard and make sacrifices in the hopes of seeing tangible results from their efforts. Internal motivation plays a critical role in their resilience. According to Phelps (2024), those who are intrinsically motivated are more driven and adaptable. When success is sought for personal growth rather than external validation, the drive to succeed is stronger. In a study by Yudi et al. (2020), students who have an internal drive for accounting are more likely to pursue the accounting course and succeed in it.

As Lenin (2022) stated, learning inevitably involves mistakes and setbacks, but these are opportunities for growth. This is the same as Jain (2020) who elucidated that CPAs find fulfilment in the various roles they play within businesses, which contributes to job satisfaction. Beisser (1970) Paradoxical Theory of Change suggests that true change comes from being authentic, rather than forcing oneself to become someone else. This supports the idea that intrinsic motivation is key to real, lasting change, reinforcing the notion that personal development must come from within.

#### 1.4. Certified Public Accountants' Description of Their Career

##### **Self-fulfilling Work**

The participants in the study described "working as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA)" as highly self-fulfilling. Becoming a CPA is seen as a blessing, offering not only financial stability but also a sense of personal achievement. For many, it is a step out of poverty. As Participant 1 expressed, it is their means of providing for their family, and afford things that were once out of reach. Participant 2 referred to the profession as *"great and promising"*, emphasizing the satisfaction it brings, both in fulfilling personal needs and in doing meaningful work.

As Brown (2024) emphasized, genuine happiness in a career is what matters most. Accountants, according to Ballard (2024), experience self-fulfilment through their work, driven by both external factors like financial rewards and internal satisfaction with their careers. This aligns with the Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), which suggests that both internal and external factors influence career satisfaction.

Moreover, Zaki (2023) reported that 95% of accounting professionals are satisfied with their careers, further supporting the idea that accountants are generally happy in their profession. The research also suggests that family and friends are one of the best motivators, but a study by Raharja (2020) contradicts this finding which stated that accounting students are not strongly influenced by parents, peers, career consultants, lecturers, the public, and media, when it comes to making career choices.

##### **Professionalism**

As Participant 5 stated, *"A CPA, in my opinion, embodies the greatest standards of work ethics."* This is because CPAs handle business finances, which require a high level of honesty and ethical behavior. When individuals become accountants, they take on the role of overseeing a company's finances, making them the "eyes and ears" of the business. This responsibility demands caution and precision, which is why CPAs are highly respected.

Moreover, Participant 1 emphasized, *"Being an accountant means you earned public*

*trust. There is a need for extra caution with actions to protect the profession."* This suggests CPAs are entrusted with public funds, particularly when working for the government, requiring them to uphold integrity, comply with financial laws, and maintain transparency.

As Jain (2023) explains, accountants rely on public trust and must adhere to ethical standards in all their actions. The American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) highlights the importance of honesty, fairness, and independence for CPAs, while the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) emphasizes the need for good time management to juggle the numerous responsibilities they have. This professional ethics and accountability contribute to the respect CPAs earn, especially given the complexity of the profession and its prestige.

CPAs are expected to perform a wide range of tasks, such as preparing financial reports, giving advice, auditing, and sometimes teaching or grading. Reflecting the versatility required in the profession, Participant 2 noted, *"Being an accountant is like being an owner of a conglomerate,"* Similarly, other participants mentioned that multitasking is essential, as accountants need to manage various responsibilities at once. The flexibility and wide-ranging expertise accountants develop make them well-suited for numerous opportunities.

As Akram (2024) explains, accountants often juggle tasks such as managing spreadsheets, reports, and emails. CPAs are trained to master specialized concepts in accounting, business, and finance. Jain (2020) further states that CPAs specialize in diverse fields, including auditing, business consulting, and international financial reporting.

According to Prajapati (2017), 90% of accounting jobs require multitasking, and 72% of financial services employees consider it essential. However, while multitasking is common, Campos (2021) argues that accounting tasks require intense focus and concentration, suggesting that high-quality work is best achieved when accountants focus on one task at a time.

##### **Maintaining Mental Health**

According to one of the participants, being an accountant can sometimes mean being "an

overthinker." The complex work and tight deadlines that come with the job can lead to overthinking, which often results in stress and anxiety. This can, in turn, affect productivity. As Participant 3 pointed out, the pressure of overseeing an organization's finances can be overwhelming: *"There's going to be pressure when you oversee an organization's finances. However, the strain and stress you experience can affect your mental health in general."*

The responsibility of ensuring financial accuracy and adhering to rules and regulations can cause stress, often leading to long working hours and difficult decisions. This continual pressure can take a toll on mental health, leading to burnout and anxiety. The American Institute of CPAs acknowledges the intense pressure and anxiety that many accountants feel, which can deteriorate their mental health. Practicing self-care and seeking support when needed are essential for CPAs to maintain their well-being and perform their jobs effectively.

In a study by Collaku (2023), it was concluded that heavy workload triggers job burnout for professionals working in accounting and auditing firms. The research also highlighted that the burnout experienced by the professionals takes a toll on their psychological wellbeing. This can also result in a change of profession. In support of this narrative, Villegas (2024) also highlighted the impact of workload on the employee's burnout and performance. Not only that, their well-being and productivity are also challenged by heavy workload.

### **Management of Time**

Time management is a significant challenge for CPAs due to the demanding nature of their profession. Accountants are often required to juggle multiple tasks and responsibilities, which makes it difficult to find time for rest or leisure activities. As Participant 2, who is also an accounting teacher, explained, managing time is a constant struggle because of the numerous roles that accountants must fulfill. This suggests how hard it is to balance work and personal well-being.

The versatility of the accounting profession, where CPAs are often required to manage multiple tasks like audits, financial planning, and

teaching, means they are frequently multitasking. This constant need to balance various responsibilities can prevent accountants from fully resting, which is essential for maintaining good mental health and productivity. As Participant 2 noted, *"Accountancy is one of the busiest professions, and the constant pressure to meet deadlines and fulfill duties can leave little time for personal relaxation"*.

This experience is substantiated by a study conducted by Patel and Lee (2024), which emphasizes the importance of effective time management for accountants. Good time management skills help accountants meet deadlines, prioritize tasks, and remain productive despite the heavy workload. However, time management does not only benefit productivity. It also plays a key role in achieving a healthy work-life balance.

Unfortunately, the demanding nature of accounting often leads to long working hours, leaving little time for rest or leisure activities (Siddiqui, 2023). The stress of constantly working beyond regular hours can contribute to burnout, which is why developing strong time management skills is crucial for CPAs to avoid exhaustion while maintaining the quality of their work. A study by Hussin et al. (2024) stated that artificial intelligence has had a big impact on the field of accounting, especially in lessening the time consumed by working in the profession. The study also highlighted the importance of artificial intelligence in the field of accounting, because without it, the workload would be bigger for the accountant.

### **Continual Professional Development**

Despite all the challenges face by accountants, they also experience good things inside the profession. Continual professional development (CPD) is crucial for accountants to stay current with rapidly changing industry standards and regulations. CPAs must adapt to new accounting practices to maintain professional integrity and remain competitive. As Participant 3 mentioned, CPAs need to be *"Abreast with the new innovations of the profession" to stay updated"*.

However, keeping up with evolving standards can be challenging. Participant 4, an



accounting teacher, pointed out the difficulty of not only staying updated but also teaching these changes to students, which can create tension. While demanding, these challenges offer growth opportunities.

Siddiqui (2023) noted that evolving accounting regulations require accountants to stay informed to avoid penalties. The time-consuming nature of this can be stressful. Crofton (2024) emphasized the need for lifelong learning to keep up with tax laws, auditing standards, and financial regulations. Staying updated not only ensures compliance but also provides a competitive edge. Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and Certification in Profession Education (CPE) help accountants enhance their knowledge, making them more attractive to employers and clients.

Therefore, CPD is important for accountants to stay informed, maintain expertise, and advance in their careers. Despite the challenges, it fosters personal and professional growth, ensuring compliance and competitiveness in the field. A study by Ditkaew (2022) suggested lean accounting for continuous improvement in accounting. Lean accounting is an accounting method that focuses on eliminating waste, which in result, improves efficiency.

### **1.5. The Motivation the Participants Use to Continue the Accounting Journey Family, Friends, and Financial Stability as Extrinsic Motivations**

Family, friends, and financial stability are key motivators for CPAs to overcome the challenges in their careers. Despite the demanding nature of the profession, extrinsic factors like the desire to provide for their families and the support from loved ones help accountants persist. For instance, Participant 4's motivation stems from *"my students, my family, my future family to build,"* highlighting the importance of family responsibility in their drive. Participant 2 also emphasized the profession's trust, showing how relationships influence perseverance.

Research supports the link between family support and job performance. A study by Ya-qoob et al. (2023) found out that familial motivation positively impacts job performance, which aligns with participants' experiences. Brune et al. (2019) also noted that peers play a

critical role in motivating individuals to succeed.

Financial stability is another major motivator. Participant 5, for example, explicitly stated *"MONEY!!! LOTS OF MONEY!!!"* Their monetary income or money serves as their source of motivation, reinforcing the significant role of financial rewards. This aligns with Frederick Taylor's Theory of Motivation (1911), which argues that monetary incentives enhance performance and efficiency. This further describes that money serve as a financial reward which drives the participants performance and efficiency.

The Social Cognitive Career Theory (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994) also emphasizes how external factors like family and peer support influence career decisions and motivation. For CPAs, a combination of family support, peer relationships, and financial incentives helps navigate the profession's challenges. According to Leonard et al. (2023), flexibility, improving society, teaching, autonomy, learning, and development opportunities, were among the greatest motivators for the accountants. All of which are intrinsic motivators.

In the same vein, a study by Forson et al. (2021) about employee motivation revealed that compensation packages, job design, and environment were good motivators to employees. In summary, CPAs are driven by extrinsic motivators such as family, peer support, and financial compensation. These factors play a significant role in shaping their career choices, performance, and ability to overcome the stresses of their profession.

### **Insights**

Success in the Bachelor of Science in Accountancy (BSA) program requires more than just interest. It actually demands a strong foundational understanding of accounting concepts and a strong commitment to mastering its difficulties. The discipline extends far beyond surface-level familiarity which requires deep analytical skills, precision, and persistence. With the accountancy program's rigorous demands, aspiring accountants must be ready to prioritize their studies over social engagements, which make important personal sacrifices. Effective time management is not only helpful but

it is also essential, as students will face intense academic pressures that leave little room for leisure and social activities. Importantly, excelling in BSA is not just about intelligence but about resilience, discipline, and the ability to cope with a challenging yet rewarding academic journey.

Moreover, accountancy as a profession commands deep respect, with CPAs being recognized as professionals whose expertise and ethical standards uphold financial integrity. However, the journey to becoming and remaining a CPA demands relentless dedication, lifelong learning, and the ability to manage challenges or constraints in terms of regulations and industry pressures. Beyond technical expertise, accountants balance high expectations with personal well-being, as the profession's demands can strain time management and mental health. Yet, it is this very challenge that defines CPAs, not just as experts in numbers, but as resilient stewards of financial trust and stability.

Aspiring BSA students are encouraged to engage in preparatory studies before officially taking on the course. Having a foundation of knowledge about accounting will make it easier to grasp the more complex concepts encountered throughout their education. Additionally, real-world experience is invaluable, and students should seek out opportunities to apply their learning in practical settings to reinforce their knowledge. Due to the intensity of the course, students should also be prepared to invest the majority of their time in academics, with limited opportunities for socializing.

Hence, both aspiring and experienced CPAs must understand that accounting requires hard work, continuous learning, and strong ethics. From studying to building a career, success comes from staying adaptable, committed, and balanced. Facing challenges with determination helps accountants grow professionally while maintaining their well-being.

## **Implications**

This research has heavy implications about the accountancy field. While CPAs benefit from promising compensation and fulfilment, they also face long hours, high stress, and impacts on their mental health and social life. To succeed

in the field, hard work, resilience, and perseverance is essential. The profession requires a deep commitment to providing for others and maintaining a high level of professionalism. For aspiring BSA students, preparation is necessary. Advanced knowledge and real-world experience are important to navigating the difficult and demanding nature of the course. Students must prioritize their studies, often sacrificing time for socializing, and be prepared for failure, which is common in the field. Motivation, both intrinsic (personal fulfilment) and extrinsic (financial stability, family support), is essential for overcoming challenges.

Ethicality and professionalism are fundamental in accounting, as CPAs are entrusted with overseeing financial operations. Lifelong learning is also necessary, as CPAs must stay updated with changing standards and maintain their certification. Lastly, the accountancy profession is not for everyone. Only those who are passionate, resilient, and willing to make sacrifices will succeed. Aspiring CPAs must approach the career with dedication, ethical standards, and a commitment to continuous growth.

Based from the findings of the study, it can be concluded that while the journey to becoming a CPA is challenging and demanding, it is also highly rewarding for those who are dedicated and well-prepared. Success in the field requires perseverance, time management, and motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. Despite the mental and academic pressures, the profession offers prestige, financial stability, and career growth which makes the effort worthwhile for those who commit to the path.

## **Conclusion**

This study described the facets of the accountancy profession, encompassing their perceptions towards the profession when they were still students, educational challenges, motivational factors, and their actual career experiences and motivations. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that accounting students often perceive the Certified Public Accountant (CPA) profession as honourable and financially rewarding, which serves as a significant motivator for pursuing this career path. However, their academic journey is frequently

characterized by mental challenges, social isolation, and financial burdens. Moreover, extrinsic motivations, such as familial expectations rooted in filial piety, serve a crucial role in their commitment to the field, while intrinsic motivations focus on personal growth and self-improvement. Practicing CPAs describe their careers as fulfilling, emphasizing professionalism, mental well-being, time management, and ongoing professional development. Likewise, external factors like support from family and friends, along with the pursuit of financial stability, serve as important motivators in their professional lives.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were formulated based on the findings and results of the study:

For future CPAs, the researchers recommend that students who are planning to take the Bachelor of Science in Accountancy course must master the complex financial and accounting concepts, including principles of taxation, auditing, financial reporting, and managerial accounting. This can be done through taking the ABM (Accountancy, Business and Management) strand in Senior High School. Developing analytical and critical thinking skills is essential to navigating the academic and professional challenges in the field.

Additionally, students must also prepare for demanding workloads and understand the sacrifices needed to be made, such as social activities and potential setbacks, when pursuing this course. Aspiring CPAs should prepare extensively for the CPA Licensure Exam (CPALE), which is known for its intensity and difficulty. Strong motivation, coupled with support from family, friends, and mentors, is crucial to sustaining their efforts. Proper time management and perseverance are critical for success in this field.

For Certified Public Accountants, they should remain committed to continuous professional development, focusing on ethics, leadership, and advanced skills to adapt to the evolving demands of the accounting profession. They should attend training, seminars, and workshops to keep themselves updated on the latest trends and standards in the field. They

should also actively seek opportunities to mentor aspiring CPAs, sharing their expertise and experiences to inspire and guide the next generation of professionals.

For educators and curriculum developers, it is recommended that they enhance their curriculum by integrating practical exercises and real-world applications to better prepare students for the challenges of the accountancy profession. Correspondingly, policymakers are encouraged to foster collaboration between the academe and the accounting industry to ensure that educational outcomes align with the demands of the professional field.

The researchers also recommend establishing support systems, such as mentorship programs and counselling services, to help students manage the rigorous nature of the accountancy program.

For future researchers, it should be noted that in some cases, researchers may not fully maximize the potential of the data they collect as limited number of respondents may restrict the depth of the analysis and limit the ability to draw broad conclusions. Hence, future researchers need to get more respondents, unlike this research which only surveyed five (5) respondents. The researchers also recommend future researchers to find better references that best back up their research.

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