International Journal of Current Economics & Business Ventures, 5 (2) 2025, 373-387
International Journal of Current Economics & Business Ventures
https://scholarsnetwork.org/journal/index.php/ijeb

JOURNAL

THE INFLUENCE OF GENDER, MOTIVATION, AND LABOR MARKET CONSIDERATIONS ON ACCOUNTING STUDENTS' INTEREST IN PURSUING A CAREER AS PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS

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Abstract:
The Influence of Gender, Motivation, and Labor Market Considerations on Accounting Students' Interest in Pursuing a Career as Public Accountants. Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, 2025. This study investigates the influence of gender, motivation, and labor market considerations on accounting students' interest in pursuing careers as public accountants. A quantitative research approach was employed using primary data collected through questionnaires distributed to active students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta. A total of 159 valid responses were obtained and analyzed using SmartPLS 4 through the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique. The findings indicate that motivation and labor market considerations have a positive and statistically significant effect on students' interest in pursuing a public accounting career, whereas gender does not exert a significant influence.

Keywords:
Public Accounting Career, Gender, Motivation, Labor Market Considerations

BACKGROUND

Career selection is a crucial step for university students, particularly for accounting majors who face several career paths such as government accountants, corporate accountants, educators, and public accountants. Among these, the public accountant profession holds a strategic role in business due to its technical demands, ethical standards, and understanding of financial regulations (Nurhikmah & Sisdianto, 2024). This profession is also essential for supporting economic development through transparency and accountability.

Despite its importance, interest among accounting students to pursue a career as public accountants remains low. Many graduates opt for roles in corporations, banking, or government institutions, often citing better job stability, clearer career progression, and work-life balance (Kurniawati, 2022). Data from Indonesia's Ministry of Finance (PPP Kemenkeu) shows that the number of public accountants remains disproportionately low compared to approximately 105,000 accounting graduates annually between 2019–2023, with stagnant or declining growth in recent years.

As of early 2025, only about 1,646 licensed public accountants were registered in Indonesia, far below the demand, considering the number of companies required to undergo financial audits. Based on IAPI, compared to neighboring ASEAN countries, Indonesia has the lowest ratio of professional accountants to population, at 1:13,200.

Several factors are believed to influence students' interest in this career, including gender, motivation, and labor market considerations. Prior studies offer mixed findings. Some suggest that male students show more interest due to perceptions of challenge and prestige linked to masculine traits (Tyas et al., 2022; Setiawan et al., 2024), while others find higher interest among female students (Prianthara et al., 2023), or no gender-based differences at all due to increased perceptions of equality (Amirullah & Martadinata, 2022).

Motivation is another critical factor. It represents the internal drive influencing career preferences. While some studies confirm its significant role in shaping students' career interests (Mide, 2023), others argue that motivation, whether financial or familial, has little influence (Santi et al., 2021).

Labor market considerations also play a key role. Students are likely to pursue careers they perceive as promising and accessible. When job prospects are clear and positive, interest in public accounting increases (Fiorentina et al., 2024). However, if the job market is perceived as unstable or overly competitive, students may turn to other career options (Putra & Horri, 2025).

Given the inconsistent findings in previous research and the ongoing low student interest in public accounting despite its promising outlook, this study aims to re-examine the influence of gender, motivation, and labor market considerations on accounting students' interest in pursuing a career as public accountants.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Social Cognitive Career Theory

This study adopts the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT) developed by Lent, Brown, and Hackett (1994), an extension of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986), to explain the influence of gender, motivation, and labor market considerations on accounting students' interest in pursuing a career as public accountants. In (Hackett, 2002) journal, SCCT emphasizes the dynamic interaction between personal factors, environmental influences, and learning experiences in shaping career interests and decisions. The theory highlights three key constructs: (1) self-efficacy—an individual's belief in their ability to perform tasks; (2) outcome expectations—beliefs about the consequences of certain actions; and (3) personal goals—intentions to engage in specific activities or achieve career outcomes. In this context, gender influences self-efficacy through social experiences and professional stereotypes. Motivation reflects outcome expectations, representing internal drives shaped by anticipated career benefits. Labor market considerations relate to personal goals, as students set career objectives based on perceived opportunities and challenges. Together, these variables represent SCCT's cognitive mechanisms in shaping students' career interests.

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Career Interest in Public Accounting

Career interest refers to an individual's inclination toward certain professional activities that align with their psychological, physical, mental, and social comfort (Agustin & Rahmi, 2024). It plays a crucial role in shaping future career planning, particularly during adolescence when individuals begin to define their educational and professional paths. According to (Syafitri et al., 2024), strong career interest enables individuals to better understand their potential, explore opportunities, and align career choices with personal preferences and environmental conditions. It not only initiates career decision-making but also supports long-term adaptability and professional growth. (Stepanek & Paul, 2023) describe career interest as a relatively stable trait influenced by personality and cognitive development. It affects one's motivation, job satisfaction, and persistence, especially when there is a good fit between personal characteristics and the work environment (person-environment fit). In the context of public accounting, career interest is shaped by several factors:

1. Preference for structured and organized tasks.
2. Enjoyment of working with numbers and data.
3. Comfort in formal and professional environments.
4. Commitment to pursuing professional qualifications.
5. Perceived compatibility between personal traits and the accounting profession.

A strong interest in public accounting can enhance students' motivation and readiness to pursue it as a long-term career, while low interest may reflect uncertainty or lack of fit with the profession.

Gender

From sociological and anthropological perspectives, gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, and expectations assigned to men and women, shaped by cultural norms rather than biological factors (Azka, 2023; Kriger & Keyser-Verreault, 2022). These constructions influence how individuals are perceived and treated based on gender, including expectations related to career choices (Palffy et al., 2023). In modern society, gender roles often guide individuals toward certain professions, which may affect students' perceptions and interests in specific career paths. For example, public and analytical roles like accounting are often stereotypically associated with men, while women are directed toward more administrative or domestic roles. Among accounting students, these gender norms can act as barriers or motivators in choosing a career in public accounting. Female students may face tension between societal expectations and their aspirations for demanding professional roles, while male students may feel social pressure to pursue prestigious public careers. However, (Uribe-Bohorquez et al., 2023) found that when gender equity is promoted, students regardless of gender are more likely to consider public accounting as a viable career path. This highlights the importance of social fairness in reducing structural barriers in career

decision-making. In this study, gender is measured using a dummy variable, where male = 1 and female = 0, to examine potential differences in career interest and the role of gender equity within campus environments.

H1: Gender has a positive and significant influence on accounting students interest in pursuing a career as public accountants.

Motivation

The term motivation originates from the Latin word "movere," meaning "to move." According to the Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), motivation refers to a conscious or unconscious drive to take action toward a specific goal. (Krulj et al., 2024) define motivation as the process that explains the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual's efforts in achieving objectives, even in the face of obstacles. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Juwita, 2024) provides a foundational framework for understanding human motivation. It outlines five levels of needs that drive behavior:

1. Physiological Needs – Basic survival needs such as food, water, shelter, and rest.
2. Safety Needs – Protection, job stability, financial security, and personal safety.
3. Love and Belonging Needs – Social connection, friendship, and emotional bonds.
4. Esteem Needs – Self-respect and recognition from others, including status and achievement.
5. Self-Actualization Needs – Fulfillment of personal potential, creativity, and personal growth.

In the context of career interest, motivation reflects an individual's inner drive to pursue goals despite challenges, especially when aligned with personal values and needs across these hierarchical levels.

H2: Motivation has a positive and significant influence on accounting students interest in pursuing a career as public accountants.

Labor Market Considerations

According to (Fiorentina et al., 2024), labor market considerations refer to individuals' perceptions of job opportunities, career stability, advancement prospects, and expected financial rewards. For accounting students, these factors play a critical role in shaping post-graduation career decisions. Students are generally more interested in professions that are economically promising, aligned with industry demands, and offer clear career development paths. (Rachmawati et al., 2023) emphasize that labor market considerations help individuals make informed career decisions by offering realistic insights into job availability, competition levels, compensation, and benefits. In the context of public accounting, when students perceive a high demand for accountants and abundant job opportunities, their interest in

pursuing this profession tends to increase (Artati & Sinarwati, 2024). (Rofikah & Norsain, 2022) identify several key aspects of labor market considerations:

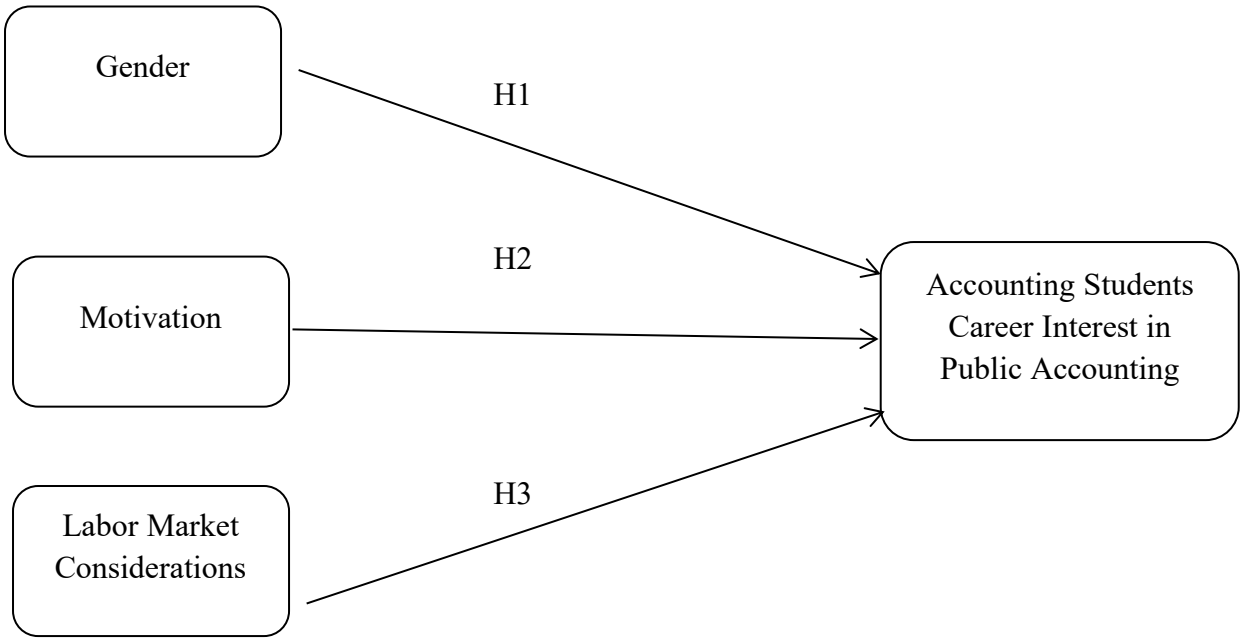
1. Job Availability – Ease of employment due to high demand for public accountants.
2. Job Security – Long-term employment stability with minimal risk of layoffs.
3. Career Flexibility – Opportunities for varied career paths and job mobility.
4. Promotion Opportunities – Clear prospects for advancement based on performance and experience.

These factors collectively influence students' perceptions and decisions regarding a career in public accounting.

H3: Labor market considerations has a positive and significant influence on accounting students interest in pursuing a career as public accountants.

Theoretical Framework

This study aims to analyze the influence of gender, motivation, and labor market considerations on accounting students' interest in pursuing a career as public accountants. Based on this objective, along with the theoretical foundation and findings from previous studies, the research hypotheses are developed and formulated accordingly. Thus, the conceptual framework of this study can be illustrated through the following scheme:



METHOD

This study adopts a quantitative research approach using primary data collected through purposive sampling. The target population comprises all accounting students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ) who have taken or are currently enrolled in the Public Accounting (Audit) course. Based on this population, a total of 159 respondents were selected as the sample.

The respondent selection criteria are as follows:

1. Active accounting students at UNJ,
2. Have taken or are currently taking the Public Accounting (Audit) course,

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire employing a four-point Likert scale to avoid neutral responses and reduce response bias. The responses were then analyzed using SmartPLS version 4.1.1.4, applying the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method. The analysis included outer model testing (convergent validity, discriminant validity, and reliability), as well as inner model testing (R-square, path coefficient, and hypothesis testing using bootstrapping). These procedures aimed to determine the direction and magnitude of the relationships among variables.

RESULT

Descriptive Statistic

This study aims to obtain empirical evidence regarding accounting students' interest in pursuing a career as public accountants. Primary data were collected from UNJ accounting students using a Google Form questionnaire. A pilot test was conducted with 33 respondents to assess validity and reliability, and all items met the required criteria. The final questionnaire was then distributed to 159 respondents, in accordance with the minimum sample size based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, through personal chat to request their participation in completing the Google Form. All respondents met the established criteria.

Keterangan	Jumlah	Presentasi
Jumlah Responden	159	100%
Responden yang Tidak Memenuhi Kriteria	0	0%
Jumlah Data Responden Diolah	159	100%

Gambaran Umum Responden		Jumlah	%
Jenis Kelamin	Perempuan	82	51.57%
	Laki-laki	77	48.43%
	Total	159	100%
Semester	8	79	49.69%
	6	79	49.69%
	4	1	0.63%
	Total	159	100%

Based on table, the respondents consist of 82 females (51.57%) and 77 males (48.43%) out of 159 participants, indicating a relatively balanced gender distribution, with a slight female majority. For the purpose of PLS-SEM analysis, gender is coded as a dummy variable (X1), where female = 0 and male = 1. Regarding academic level, most respondents are in their final semesters, with 79 students (49.69%) from both the 6th and 8th semesters. Only one respondent (0.63%) is from the 4th semester. All respondents met the research criteria and were included in the final data analysis.

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Data Quality Test

A. Outer Model

1. Validity Convergent Test

	Motivasi	Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja	Minat Mahasiswa Akuntansi Berkarir Sebagai Akuntan Publik	Keterangan
Motivasi 1	0.935			VALID
Motivasi 2	0.839			VALID
Motivasi 3	0.948			VALID
Motivasi 4	0.858			VALID
Motivasi 5	0.977			VALID
Motivasi 6	0.889			VALID
Motivasi 7	0.893			VALID
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 1		0.889		VALID
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 2		0.865		VALID
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 3		0.940		VALID
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 4		0.764		VALID
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 5		0.941		VALID
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 1			0.965	VALID
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 2			0.977	VALID
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 3			0.977	VALID
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 4			0.974	VALID
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 5			0.969	VALID

Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 6	0.966	VALID
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 7	0.982	VALID
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 8	0.972	VALID
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 9	0.966	VALID

The purpose of convergent validity testing is to assess how well the indicators within a construct consistently represent that construct. According to (Hair et al., 2017), an indicator is considered valid if it has an outer loading value of 0.70 or higher. This indicates a strong correlation between the indicator and its corresponding construct. Based on the results, all indicators showed outer loading values above 0.70, thus confirming their validity.

2. Validity Discriminant Test (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

	Motivasi	Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja	Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik
Motivasi	0.907		
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja	0.660	0.882	
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik	0.735	0.629	0.972

All constructs met the discriminant validity criteria based on the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, as the square root of the AVE for each construct was greater than its correlations with other constructs.

3. Validity Discriminant Test – Cross Loading

	Motivasi	Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja	Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik
Motivasi 1	0.944	0.680	0.698
Motivasi 2	0.978	0.676	0.753
Motivasi 3	0.960	0.699	0.692
Motivasi 4	0.958	0.626	0.697
Motivasi 5	0.967	0.693	0.744
Motivasi 6	0.975	0.717	0.778
Motivasi 7	0.977	0.701	0.758

	Motivasi	Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja	Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 1	0.597	0.883	0.466
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 2	0.629	0.912	0.604
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 3	0.669	0.932	0.654
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 4	0.656	0.932	0.667
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja 5	0.631	0.924	0.634
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 1	0.717	0.936	0.716
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 2	0.727	0.678	0.964
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 3	0.727	0.671	0.979
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 4	0.711	0.666	0.975
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 5	0.766	0.640	0.969
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 6	0.785	0.712	0.964
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 7	0.728	0.658	0.975
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 8	0.726	0.632	0.975
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik 9	0.705	0.660	0.980

All indicators showed the highest loading values on their respective constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that all constructs in this model meet the discriminant validity criteria based on the cross-loading test.

4. Validity Discriminant HTMT Test

	Motivasi	Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja	Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik
Motivasi			
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja	0.724		
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik	0.764	0.692	

Based on the analysis results, all HTMT values were below 0.90. Therefore, it can be concluded that each construct in the model satisfies the discriminant validity criteria.

5. Reliable Test (Cronbach's Alpha & Composite Reliability)

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Keterangan
Motivasi	0.988	0.989	0.990	Reliable
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja	0.964	0.971	0.971	Reliable

Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik	0.993	0.993	0.994	Reliable

The data processing results show that all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) values greater than 0.70. Based on these results, it can be concluded that all constructs in the model meet the reliability criteria and are suitable for further analysis.

B. Inner Model (R-Square test)

After the data was deemed suitable, the analysis proceeded to the next stage, namely the assessment of the R Square (R^2) value.

	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik	0.542	0.534

According to (Hair et al., 2017), an R-Square value is considered strong if it is 0.75 or higher, moderate if it is around 0.50, and weak if it is close to 0.25. Based on the results of the data analysis, the R-Square value for students' interest in pursuing a career as a public accountant is 0.542, which falls into the moderate category. This indicates that the exogenous constructs in the model moderately explain the variance in the endogenous construct.

C. Hypotesis Test

The hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping technique with SmartPLS software, which generates output in the form of path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. A significance level of 5% was applied, meaning a hypothesis is considered statistically significant if the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05. Additionally, the direction of the relationship between constructs was analyzed based on the path coefficient values found in the Original Sample (O) column. A positive coefficient indicates a direct (positive) relationship between two constructs, while a negative coefficient indicates an inverse (negative) relationship. Therefore, the hypothesis evaluation in this study considers both the statistical significance and the direction of influence among the variables.

	Original sample (O)	T-statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values	Keterangan
Gender -> Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik	-0.079	1.414	0.057	Hipotesis tidak diterima
Motivasi -> Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik	0.510	8.063	0.000	Hipotesis diterima
Pertimbangan Pasar Kerja -> Minat Sebagai Akuntan Publik	0.354	4.822	0.000	Hipotesis diterima

Based on the hypothesis testing results presented in the table above, several conclusions can be

drawn. The gender variable does not have a significant effect on accounting students' interest in pursuing a career as public accountants. However, both the motivation variable and the labor market considerations variable have a positive and significant influence on accounting students' interest in pursuing a career as public accountants.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Gender on Students' Interest in Pursuing a Career as Public Accountants

This study found that gender does not significantly influence accounting students' interest in becoming public accountants. Both male and female students showed similar levels of interest, with no consistent patterns based on gender alone. Factors such as personal interest, confidence, internship experiences, and career expectations appeared more influential than demographic characteristics. These findings contradict the SCCT perspective on the role of gender in shaping self-efficacy but align with the notion that internal factors and learning experiences are more critical in career decision-making. This result supports (Amirullah & Martadinata, 2022) but contrasts with (Prianthara et al., 2023; Tyas et al., 2022), who found gender to be a significant factor.

The Influence of Motivation on Students' Interest in Pursuing a Career as Public Accountants

The findings indicate that motivation has a positive and significant effect on students' interest in pursuing a public accounting career. Higher motivation both intrinsic and extrinsic correlates with stronger career interest. Students are driven by professional development opportunities, structured career paths, and fair compensation. These results are in line with SCCT, which emphasizes the role of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals in shaping career interest. This is consistent with (Mide, 2023), but differs from (Santi et al., 2021), who found motivation to be insignificant.

The Influence of Labor Market Considerations on Students' Interest in Pursuing a Career as Public Accountants

Labor market considerations were found to significantly and positively influence students' career interest. Students who perceive favorable job prospects and career stability in public accounting are more likely to pursue it. This aligns with the SCCT's outcome expectations dimension and confirms that external factors such as job opportunities and industry demand shape career interest. These findings support research by (Ariyanto & Indarti, 2023) and (Artati & Sinarwati, 2024), but contradict (Rofikah & Norsain, 2022), who emphasized internal factors over labor market perceptions.

CONCLUSION

This study found that motivation and labor market considerations have a significant and positive impact on accounting students' interest in becoming public accountants. Students with strong internal drive and positive perceptions of career prospects are more likely to choose this profession. Meanwhile, gender was found to have no significant influence, suggesting that career interest is more shaped by individual perceptions, personal goals, and expected outcomes rather than demographic factors. These results align with the Social Cognitive Career

Theory (SCCT), which emphasizes the importance of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goal setting in career decision-making.

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