

Determinants of Student Performance in Foundation Accounting Courses: The Role of Prior Qualification, Social Influence, and Career Perception

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ABSTRACT

Foundation accounting serves as an essential building block for students pursuing accounting education, as it develops the fundamental knowledge and skills required for advanced accounting courses and future professional practice. However, students' performance in introductory accounting courses remains a concern among higher education institutions, with difficulties arising from differences in academic preparation, social support, motivation, and perceptions of the accounting profession. This concept paper proposes a conceptual framework to examine the factors influencing students' performance in foundation accounting courses. Specifically, the study focuses on four independent variables: prior academic qualification, parental influence, peer influence, and perception of future accounting career prospects. The proposed framework is grounded in the premise that both individual and environmental factors contribute to students' academic outcomes. A quantitative research design is proposed, whereby data will be collected through a structured questionnaire and analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis. The study is expected to identify the relative contribution of each factor to students' performance and provide empirical evidence on the determinants of success in foundation accounting education. The proposed findings are expected to assist higher education institutions in developing targeted academic interventions, including bridging programmes, peer-assisted learning, mentoring initiatives, career exposure, and student support strategies. Ultimately, the study aims to contribute to accounting education literature by providing a more comprehensive understanding of the factors associated with students' performance in foundation accounting courses.

Keywords: Accounting education, Academic Performance, Foundation Accounting, Career Perception, Social Influence

INTRODUCTION

Foundation accounting is the introductory course that introduces students to fundamental accounting principles such as double-entry systems, financial statements, and accounting concepts. Mastery of this subject is essential because it forms the basis for advanced accounting courses including financial reporting, auditing, and taxation.

As the business landscape becomes increasingly complex, the demand for highly skilled accounting professionals continues to grow. This surging demands for accountants have resulted in an increased number of students enrolling in the accounting courses particularly in Malaysian universities (Hassan et. al, 2020) but still there are shortages of accountants to fulfil the industry demands (Lofton, 2025). The journey to meeting this industry demand begins in the university classroom, specifically within foundation accounting courses. Yet, a significant gap exists between enrolment in these programs and successful completion, with many students struggling to grasp core accounting concepts (Deng, 2025). This academic hurdle suggests that success in early accounting education requires more than just raw cognitive ability; it is significantly shaped by a student's prior academic background, the social influence of their peers and parents, and their own belief in their future career.

Furthermore, despite its importance, many students face difficulties understanding accounting concepts. Accounting subjects require analytical thinking, logical reasoning, and strong numerical ability, which may

challenge students who lack adequate preparation or motivation. Studies have shown that academic performance in accounting is influenced by several internal and external factors such as prior knowledge, motivation, and social environment (Khalid & Rauf, 2023).

Understanding the determinants of student performance is important because universities and professional bodies require a steady supply of competent accounting graduates. Identifying factors that motivate or hinder students' performance in foundation accounting courses can help educators implement early interventions to improve learning outcomes.

Foundation accounting is a crucial subject in accounting programmes because it establishes the conceptual foundation necessary for advanced accounting courses. However, many universities report that a significant number of students fail or perform poorly in this subject despite its introductory nature (Papageorgiou & Carpenter, 2019; Bosua, 2015). Additional barriers arise from extended graduation timelines, as the high number of required credit hours often forces students to complete an extra year of coursework (Lofton, 2025).

Previous studies suggest that several factors may influence students' academic performance in accounting, including prior accounting knowledge, interest in accounting, and academic anxiety (Khalid & Rauf, 2023). Studies also indicate that students with prior exposure to accounting at secondary school level tend to perform better in introductory accounting courses (Papageorgiou & Carpenter, 2019).

In addition, social influences such as parents and peers may shape students' motivation and career aspirations. Early exposure and students' interest in accounting have also been found to significantly influence academic performance in accounting subjects (Fadzillah et al., 2020).

Despite existing research, there is still limited understanding of how prior qualification, parental influence, peer influence, and perception of accounting career prospects simultaneously influence students' performance in foundation accounting courses. This gap is important to address because understanding these factors could help higher education institutions develop strategies to improve student performance and reduce failure rates.

Hence, this study aims to examine the key factors that motivate or hinder students' performance in foundation accounting courses including to investigate the relationship between prior academic qualification, influence of parental encouragement, influence of peer support, and students' perception of future accounting careers towards their performance in accounting foundation.

The findings of this study offer significant practical contributions to multiple stakeholders within the accounting education ecosystem. For higher education institutions, the research will provide the empirical insights needed to proactively identify students who are at a high risk of failing foundation accounting courses. Consequently, these insights will empower accounting educators to shift toward proactive support by designing targeted academic interventions, such as specialized bridging courses and structured mentoring programs and intervention programs. Furthermore, the outcomes hold valuable implications for faculty administrators and policymakers, as the data can be utilized to refine and strengthen admission criteria for undergraduate accounting programmes. Ultimately, on an individual level, equipping students with a clearer understanding of the specific factors that influence their performance will enable them to adopt more effective learning strategies, thereby improving their academic outcomes and overall retention in the field.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Student Performance in Accounting Education

Academic performance in accounting education is influenced by both cognitive and non-cognitive factors. Cognitive factors include prior knowledge, analytical ability, and learning strategies, while non-cognitive factors include motivation, interest, and social support. Identifying these determinants is essential to improve teaching strategies and student outcomes in accounting education (Khalid & Rauf, 2023).

Prior Academic Qualification

Prior knowledge of accounting plays an important role in student success in introductory accounting courses. Students who studied accounting at secondary school level are more familiar with accounting terminology and concepts, which makes it easier for them to understand advanced topics (Khalid & Rauf, 2023; Papageorgiou & Carpenter, 2019).

Research also shows that early exposure to accounting subjects improves student interest and performance in higher education accounting courses (Fadzillah et al., 2020). Moreover, given the highly quantitative nature of the discipline, mathematical proficiency also plays a critical role in predicting academic success in accounting courses (Almunais & Alfraih, 2014). Furthermore, Martí-Ballester (2016) observed that secondary school exposure to foundational accounting serves as a significant predictor of strong academic performance for all students, regardless of gender.

Parental Influence

Parents can influence students' educational decisions and motivation through expectations, guidance, and financial support. Parental involvement has been shown to positively influence academic achievement by encouraging discipline, study habits, and career aspirations (Silalahi et. al, 2020; Adetayo & Kiadese, 2011). Silahi et. al (2020) analyzed various determinants and established a statistically significant relationship between parenting styles and the academic performance of among students in Indonesia. Specifically, the data indicates that students raised in supportive yet structured environments consistently achieve better academic outcomes.

However, some studies suggest that parental influence may not directly affect academic performance but may shape students' interest and attitudes toward the subject (Fadzillah et al., 2020).

Peer Influence

Peers are an important component of the social learning environment (Almunais & Alfraih, 2014). Peer relationships can influence students' study habits, attitudes toward learning, and academic motivation. Positive peer influence such as collaborative learning and group discussion may improve students' understanding of complex accounting concepts (Baanu et. al, 2025; Olulowo et. al, 2020; Sudhakar et. al, 2016). The study suggests, when students surround themselves with academically driven peers, they are more likely to participate in collaborative problem-solving and knowledge sharing. These group interactions deepen their comprehension of fundamental accounting tasks, from posting journal entries and ledgers to preparing trial balances and analyzing financial statements. Consequently, this positive social influence sharpens both their computational precision and conceptual understanding. Additionally, peer-assisted learning acts as a vital informal support structure that supplements formal lectures. Furthermore, formalizing peer influence through structured mentoring programs significantly enhances students' academic performance (Fox et al., 2025).

Career Perception and Motivation

Ferreira and Santoso (2008) emphasize that perception plays a crucial role in determining academic success, noting a direct correlation where positive perceptions yield favorable outcomes and negative perceptions lead to poor performance. Thus, students' perception of career opportunities in accounting may influence their academic motivation (Deng, 2025). If students perceive accounting as a prestigious and rewarding career, they may be more motivated to perform well in accounting courses. Consequently, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation have been shown to significantly influence students' intention to pursue professional accounting qualifications (Lai et al., 2022).

Conceptual Framework

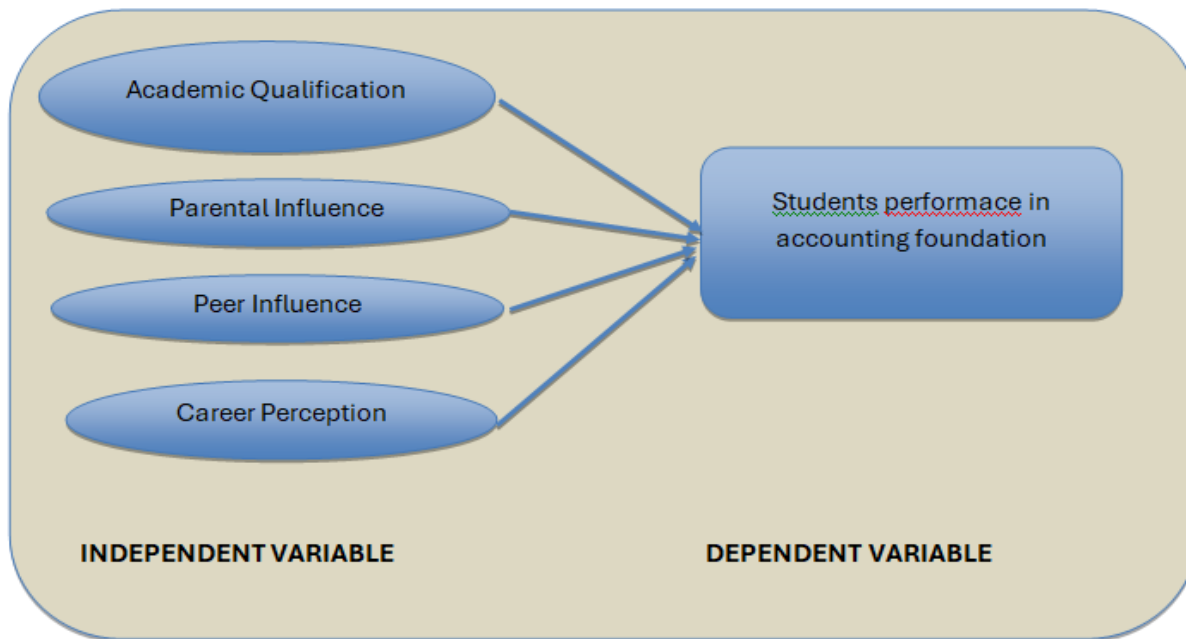


Figure 1: Proposed Conceptual Framework for factors contributing to students' performance in foundation of accounting programme.

The conceptual framework for this study is designed to examine the factors influencing student success in core accounting subjects. As illustrated in Figure 1, the framework identifies four independent variables: prior academic qualification, parental influence, peer influence, and career perception. The dependent variable is student performance in the foundation accounting course. The framework posits that these four independent factors directly impact a student's academic performance. By analyzing these relationships using multiple regression, the study seeks to determine which of these internal (career perception, prior qualifications) and external (parental and peer) factors are the most significant predictors of academic success.

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The proposed study anticipates that a combination of internal psychological factors and external social environments significantly dictates student success in foundation accounting. For instance, high self-efficacy and positive career perceptions are expected to drive intrinsic motivation, equipping students with the resilience needed to grasp complex accounting principles. Conversely, external variables such as peer and parental influence will likely highlight the critical role of social support systems or the detrimental impact of social pressure on academic persistence. By analyzing these five independent variables concurrently, the study expects to reveal whether a student's internal drive outweighs their prior academic background and external pressures in determining their final performance.

Based on the expected outcomes of this conceptual framework, the study proposes several actionable recommendations for educational stakeholders. First, universities should use prior qualification data to mandate early-semester foundational bridging programs for students who lack prior exposure to business subjects. Additionally, educators should formalize peer-assisted learning and mentoring initiatives, actively leveraging positive peer influence to support at-risk students through collaborative study environments. Furthermore, institutions should embed industry exposure and career talks directly into the foundation syllabus to enhance career perception and validate the students' academic efforts. Finally, academic advisors must provide confidence-building interventions, such as workshops focused on resilience and study skills, to directly boost students' self-efficacy before they face critical midterm assessments.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the persistently high failure rates in foundation accounting present a critical challenge for higher education institutions. This concept paper proposes a comprehensive, five-variable framework to investigate

how prior qualifications, social influences, and personal mindsets collectively impact academic performance. By employing a quantitative survey design and multiple regression analysis, the forthcoming study will provide essential empirical evidence to clarify student struggles. Ultimately, the findings will empower educators and policymakers to shift from reactive grading to proactive academic support, ensuring more students successfully transition into advanced accounting courses and future professional careers.

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