Difficulties of Academic Achievement in Finance for Managers Course from the Student Perspective: Evidence from Gulf College Oman

Tarek Mami $^{(*)}$

Associate professor in Accounting, Zawia university Libya

Abstract

Many studies by researchers and accounting educators explore various factors associated with the success or failure of accounting majors in college level accounting courses. This paper identifies and summarizes the main difficulties associated with low student academic achievement in finance for managers in Gulf college in Oman. The research empirically investigates student perceptions of the difficulties of academic achievement in finance for managers courses. The research

(∗) Email: t.mami@zu.edu.ly

method was a survey that involved classifying students in business, marketing and business economic. Data was collected through a questionnaire with 23 items related to four primary groups: academic staff style, exams and quizzes, students, and accounting textbooks. This is result findings show that the major obstacles of learning and study finance for managers that Traditional pedagogical Techniques, Lack of English language proficiency.

Keywords*: academic achievement, learning difficulties, finance for managers, attitude, Gulf college.*

1 Introduction

An increase in the size of challenges in the world economy and trade was imposed by globalization on various countries around the world, including Oman. In addition, a severe economic crisis hit all countries worldwide. These events had consequences on the domestic economies of many countries worldwide. Efforts were, therefore, paid at all levels to reduce their effects. However, these events increase the responsibilities of the people involved in the accounting profession in general and the academic and educational institutions in particular to perform their duties in the preparation and graduation of personnel who are professional and competent in the various fields of accounting and finance such that the graduates will contribute to the implementation of development plans and meet the needs of the labor market for graduates.

The comprehensive economic development is now suffering either from a sharp shortage and scarcity of accounting information for the development or lack of the necessary information in a timely manner and for appropriate purposes in correct and accurate. This overshadows the ability of decision makers, whether in the private or public sector, to put

strategies and appropriate plans to take the right actions when making development decisions that live up to the event and the urgent challenges which the economy faces such as the drop in the oil prices and its impacts on state revenues and development projects. This lays a heavy responsibility on those bodies entrusted with the production of appropriate and correct accounting information like the departments of companies, government agencies, and different sectors. In consequence, these issues put responsibility on the governmental supervisory and control bodies (e.g., the accounting bureau, ministries of trade, and central banks) to make sure that this accounting information live up to the requirements of international accounting standards, laws, systems, and regulations, and the decisions made by these bodies and their various organs, particularly with regard to full disclosure, transparency, and bases of the government.

According to the policy of the Gulf College of Business management, Marketing and economics - where this study was conducted—all students must take Finance for managers during their level four. Students who intend to major in accounting have to pass other courses. These courses are required for a variety of majors except accounting. and all of the students who enrolled in this course has never studied accounting before. Lecturers noticed that this course students tend to have a negative attitude at the very beginning and assume that accounting is an extremely difficult subject. The College's instructors agreed that academic achievement in this basic accounting course was very low. Based on the author's experience as a lecturer at Gulf college, many students dropped or failed the course or had to repeat it to get a passing grade. The evaluation policy normally requires one exam and one assignment , one assignment during the semester and one final exam.

The final exam counts for 60% of the semester points, and 40% for assignment. This observation encouraged the researcher to explore student difficulties in academic achievements. This study, therefore, attempts to identify and summarize the main potential obstacles that may be associated with low student academic achievement in introductory courses in the Gulf College.

This paper consists of four sections. The study background has been presented. The relevant literature is reviewed in the next section, followed by elaboration on the research questions and methodology. The survey data analysis and concomitant results are then presented in the subsequent section. Afterwards, a conclusions section concludes the paper.

Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted to address various aspects of the introductory accounting course. Among other things, these studies have examined the determinants of student performance in the finance for managers courses (Ogilby, 2000, p. 4). Abraham (1987) was unable to identify any significant correlation between the use of the computer and student performance.

The effect of instructional media and materials techniques such as white board marker, overhead projector, and computer-projected software on the performance of students was investigated by Beets and Lobingier (2001) who found no evidence of overall differences in student learning using the three techniques mentioned above.

Some studies examined students' attitudes toward accounting (Weinstein, 1999, p. 2). Solomon (1975) found that the perception of introductory accounting toward accounting was improved by using the

case method although there was no lasting effect because of the discontinued method. This study did not examine the influence of student attitudes at the beginning of the course. Atieh (1997) showed that the Saudi Arabian students have a negative attitude toward accounting, considering it a difficult subject.

The length of a semester plays a role on student learning. Austin and Gustafson (2006) found that students who took intensive courses had higher grades than those who took traditional sixteen-week semester courses. They wondered whether this difference was due to student effort or because of the structure of summer courses. Likewise, the average number of credit hours has been analyzed by Sayel and Quraan (1994) who pointed out that performance in both Principles of Accounting 101 and 102 have been negatively affected by the number of credit hours in each course. This relationship -the number of credit hours and the performance - was significant in Accounting 101, but not in Accounting 102.

College accounting education must not only be in the form of practical education but has also to be a combination of sound practical education and relevant, up to date theoretical knowledge. This will enable the students to utilize modern accountancy methods in finding solutions to complex business problems. The need for students arose from the expansion and complexity of business enterprises and the desire for stewardship reporting, accountability, and reliable accounting information (Chua, 1986, p. 601).

Research aim

The research objective is to identify and list the negative perceptions of Gulf college students toward finance for managers courses in relation to academic performance.

Profile of the respondents

The main point of this study was the difficulties of academic achievement in finance for managers course from the student perspective. A survey questionnaire was prepared and distributed to students practitioners for non accounting major in Gulf college. A summary of the major demographic characteristics of the sample members is given in Table 1.

Table 1 Profile of respondents (N=920)

Characteristic	Item	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Specialization	Business management	780	85%	85%
	Marketing	120	13%	98%
	Business economics	20	2%	100%
Level	Four	520	56%	56%
	Five	400	43%	100%

Created the questionnaire measuring instrument to collect primary data specifically for this research project. This instrument included 23 statements divided into four groups: an instructor and his or her teaching style, exams and quizzes, the student, accounting textbooks and general groups. Survey participants for this study responded using a five-point scale, with items ranging from (5) strongly agree, (4) agree, (3)semi agree (2) disagree, to (1) strongly disagree. Because of the study's goal, we put

"agree" and "strongly agree" in the agreement set, and "disagree" and "strongly disagree" in the disagreement set.

After the survey was completed and tested, it was distributed to a random sample. The survey was conducted on the spring of 2019 for Business management, Marketing and business economics

Construct Validity

Almost all of the items used for the purpose of variable measurement in this study were obtained from the previous literature. They have been ascertained to be valid by the discriminant and convergent validity tests as indicated by Bianchi and Pike (2009). The literature shows that the majority of the studies on the difficulties of academic achievement in finance for managers and its antecedents were carried out in western countries, especially in the USA, UK, Netherlands, and Canada. However, it should be noted that the culture and environment of these countries are quite different from the culture and environment in Oman.

Aside from that, the past related studies used different samples (respondents) while the context of the present study and its population and sample differ. As such, these measures must be re-examined with respect to their validity and reliability. Accordingly, in order to ascertain that the items of the current instrument are relevant for the study and its population, i.e., they are measuring what they are designed to be measured, and are serving the purpose of this study, all the questionnaire items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis Cronbach's Alpha of all items for reliability analysis.

Table 2 Cronbach's Alpha analysis

Range	Cronbach's Alpha
Average statistical variables	0.84

Research model

The research model of this study consisted of Finance for mangers (FFM) and level four and five (LFF) as the independent variables, and The difficulties academic achievement (OAA) as the dependent variable (Figure 1).
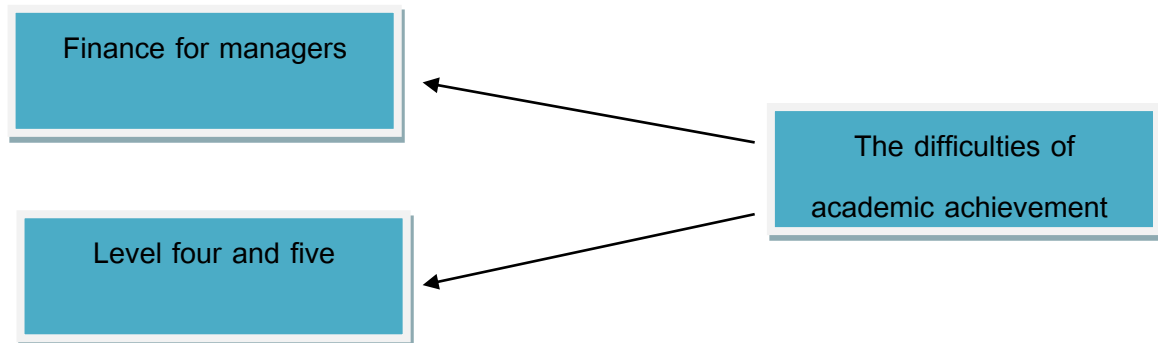

FIGURE I. Conceptual Model

Demographic variable analysis

The type of research method adopted in this study was a survey design. The target population was all students who enrolled in the spring 2019 academic year. Of the 920 total students enrolled at that time, A random sample of 45 students received the questionnaire, Of these, 35 were returned, 10 of which were invalid for analysis because of respondent error, as they were unwilling to participate in the research project.

Table 3 Demographic variable analysis

Items	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage(%)
Specialization	Business management	16	45%
	Marketing	12	34%
	Economic	7	20%
Level	4	20	57%
	5	15	42%

All specialization department except accounting should study finance for managers and both level four and who fail in this module should study this module in level five.

Descriptive study

Mean and standard deviation, and average mean value for every paragraph at all variables:

Table 4 provides of The section related to an instructor and his teaching style.

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Percentage %	Std. dev.	Deffiration
1	Lack of teaching assistants	4.06	81.14	0.802	19.78
2	Computerized practice set is not used	4.80	96.00	0.406	8.45
3	Traditional pedagogical Techniques	4.00	80.00	0.840	21.00
4	Limited Office hours	4.26	85.14	0.611	14.35
5	Complexity of accounting teaching	3.23	64.57	1.308	40.51
6	A non-objective evaluation	4.23	84.57	0.808	19.10
7	Collection the homework without an evaluation	4.57	91.43	0.502	10.98
Total mean for paragraph		4.16	83.27	0.388	9.31

The standard deviation and mean for each of the paragraphs of the of The section related to an instructor and his teaching style are 0.388 and 4.16 which that the highest paragraph Computerized practice set is not used (4.8 mean by 96%)and Collection the homework without an evaluation(4.57 mean by 91% average) this indicates that there are few or weak practices in computer and the homework without an evaluation.

Table 5 section related to the exams and Assignment

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Percentage%	Std. dev.	deffiration
8	Few Homework	2.11	42.29	0.583	27.56
9	Difficult exams	4.14	82.86	0.692	16.71
10	Difficult assignment	4.40	88.00	0.695	15.78
11	Few quizzes	4.23	84.57	0.690	16.31
12	some questions are not covered in a semester	4.29	85.71	0.710	16.57
13	A lot of multiple choices questions	4.43	88.57	0.698	15.76
14	Quizzes have not reward	4.03	80.57	0.747	18.54
Total mean for paragraph		3.95	78.94	0.532	13.49

Table 5 above provides the standard deviation and mean for each of the paragraphs of the table of the exams and Assignment, which states that the A lot of multiple choices questions the first arrangement by mean reached (4.43) by a percentage of (88%). This indicates that students need questions solved by numbers and equation and second paragraph of difficult assignment by average (88%) by mean (4.40).

Table 6 Section related to the student

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Percentage%	Std. dev.	deffiration
15	Lack of English language proficiency	4.17	83.43	1.014	24.31
16	Student's motivation to learn is not supported by instructor's learning style	3.54	70.86	1.379	38.93
17	Student devoted less time for solving accounting problems	3.14	62.86	1.458	46.39
18	Bad study's habits (study only in the night before the exam)	1.97	39.43	0.747	37.89
19	Student's effort into the course is not sufficient.	3.37	67.43	1.087	32.24
20	poor class attendance	2.23	44.57	1.285	57.68
21	Poor student education level at pre-university teaching stage	1.83	36.57	0.707	38.64
Total mean for paragraph		2.89	57.88	0.755	26.08

Table 6 above provides standard deviation and mean for each of the paragraphs of the tab of the related to the student that paragraph 15

which states that the Lack of English language proficiency occupied the first arrangement by mean reached (4.17) by a percentage of (83 %).

Table 7 Accounting Textbooks

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Percentage%	Std. dev.	deffiration
22	The material covered during the course is too lengthy.	3.40	68.00	1.288	37.88
23	irrelevant textbooks to the Oman environment	3.31	66.29	1.051	31.71
Total mean for paragraph		3.36	67.14	0.782	23.29

Table7 above that the ratio of arithmetic average and standard deviation for the group as a whole, and which related to the textbook of (3.36) and a rate (67 %) where the indicative textbook to help in the process of review and evaluation of students, and the textbooks of the Oman environment isn't suitable.

Findings and discussions :

Table no.(8) indicate conclusion for all independent variables:

Table 8 total paragraphs regarding obstacles influencing academic achievements

No.	Paragraph	Mean	Percentage %	Std. dev.	deffiration
1	an instructor and his teaching style	4.16	83.27	0.388	9.31
2	the exams and Assignment	3.95	78.94	0.532	13.49
3	Section related to the student	2.89	57.88	0.755	26.08
4	Accounting Textbooks	3.36	67.14	0.782	23.29
Total mean for paragraph		3.59	71.81	0.305	8.51

Table 8 above the results that variable about the an instructor and his teaching style has ranked first by (88%) and that the exam and

assignment, which is indicative average by (78 %) while in the Section related to the student ratio was weak. Overall indicate the percentage of a sample study (71%) of the existence of difficulties of academic achievements by means (3.59).

Conclusion

This research empirically investigated student perceptions of the difficulties of academic achievement in finance for managers courses in the Gulf College, Oman.

The results of this study indicate that the major obstacles to learning, and the source of negative perceptions students have toward finance for managers courses, are limited office hours, Collection the homework without an evaluation and

Traditional pedagogical Techniques, Difficult assignment, A lot of multiple choices questions, The material covered during the course is too lengthy and one of the biggest obstacles related to student effort is the lack of English language proficiency. It might be instructive to conduct the same, or similar, study in other business schools so that a universal set of solutions can be established to improve business education in Oman.

References

Abraham, E.C. (1987, Spring). Computerized practice set in introductory financial accounting. Issues in Accounting education, 2(1), 1-12.

Alanzi, K.A. (2015 March). Determinants of Students' Performance in Cost Accounting – Further Evidence from Kuwait. World Journal of Management, 6(1), 136-152

Al-Hanon, H. (2004). Reasons not to take advantage of the body of knowledge gained for the graduate (Master thesis, College of economic, Benghazi, Libya). (Arabic language).

Atieh, S. H. (1997). Student perceptions of the causes of low performance in principles of accounting: A case study in saudi Arabia. Journal of King Fahd University: Economics & Administration, 10, 35-50. http://dx.doi.org/10.4197/Eco.10-1.2

Austin, A. M., & Gustafson, L. (2006, Summer). Impact of course length on student learning. Journal of Economics and Finance Education, 5(1), 26-37. Retrieved from http://www.economics-finance.org/jefe/issues/vol5summer.pdf

Chua, W F 1986a, 'Radical developments in accounting thought', The Accounting Review, vol.61, no.4, pp601-632

Duve, M. (2016). Non-accounting students' academic performance and introductory financial accounting course: A case of Great Zimbabwe University. Journal of Business Administration and Education, 8(2), 36-62

Mohamed M. Tailab. (2013). Difficulties of Academic achievement in Principles of Accounting course from the Student Perspective: Evidence from Libya. Higher education Studies; Vol. 3, No. 5; ISSN 1925-4741

Ogilby, M. A. (2000). The first course in accounting: students' perceptions and their effect on the decision to major in accounting. Journal of Accounting education, 18(2), 63-78 http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0748-5751(00)00011-7

Sayel, R., & Quraan, A. (1994). Determinats of students' performance in introductory accounting courses. J. Knig Soud Univ, 6(2), 65-80.

Solomon, L. (1975). Improving student attitude in the beginning accounting course. The Accounting Review, 50(3), 601-605. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/245021

Tarek Mami, 2012, The reality of accounting education in Libya and prospects of its development, 13ᵗʰ international scientific and professional conference, Zagreb, Croatia.

Tarek Mami, (2019), "The factor that influence of expectations gap in accounting education at Sultan Qaboos University, The 4th MEC International conference, Big Data and Smart City (ICBDSC) 2019 Jan. 15-16,2019

Weinstein, L. P. (1999). Student performance in introductory accounting: A multi-sample, multi-model analysis. Accounting Educators' Journal, XI, 1-28. Retrieved from http://www.aejournal.com/ojs/index.php/aej/article/view/11