ANALYSIS OF FACTORS AFFECTING THE INTEREST OF STUDENTS OF ACCOUNTING SCIENCES IN THE AREA OF ACCOUNTING MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to analyze the interest of Accounting undergraduate students in the field of Accounting Management as well as the main factors that influence this interest. The understanding of the interest and main factors can contribute to the development of accounting education in the area of managerial accounting. A descriptive research with a quantitative approach was done, collecting the data from survey with a questionnaire. The sample consists of 149 Accounting students from four colleges located in Uberlândia-MG/Brazil. To evaluate the results, we opted for exploratory factor analysis. It was found that the factors that motivate students' interest in the area of Management Accounting demonstrate five different characterizations: Expertise on Managerial Accounting; Interest in a career in this field; personal interest in the area of Management Accounting, Quality of teachers form students view of point and Theory vs Practice Relevance. These five identified factors explain 63.93% of the variations of the original measurements, which indicates a good level of data representation. The results of this study contribute to higher education institutions, as these colleges can evaluate the inclusion of management accounting subjects in the curriculum of Accounting undergraduate courses, as well as analyze the students' interest in this area.

Keywords: Managerial Accounting, Career, Accounting Students

1 INTRODUCTION

Managerial accounting has as its purpose assisting in the measurement, analysis and dissemination of relevant and useful information in order to contribute to the managers in the decision making process that involves operations, planning and control of organizational activities (Horngren, Sundem & Stratton, 2004). All the information is oriented to the future, being comprised of budgets, schedules and estimates (Garrison & Noreen, 2001; Atkinson et al., 2008).

In this context, the teaching of management accounting has the influence of market requirements, ie, it requires the interaction between academia and business needs (Souza et al., 2008). The study by Tan, Flower and Hawkes (2004) showed differences between the requirements of the market for professionals who work in managerial accounting and the academic proposal.
Studies were developed nationally, to analyze the integration of the disciplines of management accounting in the Accounting course as well as the main contents declared on the amendments of these disciplines (Souza et al., 2012).

This study aims to answer the following research problem: What factors influence the interests of Accounting undergraduate students in the field of Management Accounting? Thus, this study aims to examine the factors that influence the interest of Accounting undergraduates for the area of Management Accounting.

Other similar studies have been performed in order to analyze students' interest in various areas such as finance, marketing, human resources, production and operations and logistics (Azevedo et al., 2012; Costa; Andrade & Lima, 2008; Costa, Pinto & Oliveira, 2011; Costa et al., 2009; Costa & Oliveira, 2009). However, no studies that addressed the area of management accounting as a subject were located. For academic delimitation in the area of management accounting, we chose to highlight the main subjects offered in this area, namely: Cost Accounting, Financial Management, Budgeting, Strategic Planning, Controlling and Analysis of Financial Statements.

This study involved accounting students of four educational institutions located in Uberlândia-MG/Brazil, one of them being public and the three others private. The study sample was made of 149 students enrolled in the final year of the course. For data analysis, we used a quantitative approach with the application of the statistical technique called exploratory factor analysis.

The structure of this work includes this introduction followed by the literature review that was organized from the presentation of the concepts and characteristics of management accounting, the related studies on the teaching of management accounting and the characterization of the variables. Subsequently, we describe the methodological procedures and analysis of results. Finally, we present the concluding remarks of the study.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Managerial Accounting: Concepts and Features

Management accounting is considered by Necyk (2008) as an element of the organizational structure, and must assume different characteristics depending on the requirements of management information for each stage of the life cycle of the organization. The author points out that, as the organization grows, management accounting needs to change to keep up with its changing needs.

Hansen and Mowen (2001, p. 23) define managerial accounting as "the process to identify, collect, measure, classify and report information that is useful to managers in the planning, control and decision-making process". Frezatti et al. (2007) add that management accounting provides
information for process control, coordination and planning of an organization in order to subsidize its managers through its information system, and provide data regarding the ways in which the organization is applying its resources and the evaluation of the results.

Barros (2005, p. 109) argues that management accounting must meet not only the vision of accounting science, but also the economic vision, meeting the needs of internal users. In this sense, management accounting is identified by the following objectives: to generate accurate and timely information and seek more refined forms of asset valuation under the economic aspect, without being restricted to the financial aspects.

Thus, it appears that the objectives of management accounting noted by different authors, are convergent with respect to providing relevant and reliable information that will help many users in making decisions. Importantly, this information should serve internal users of the organization, so it is essential to improve the way of communication of such information so that it is clear and understandable.

Lozeckyi and Miotto (2008) indicate the main tools used by management accounting in organizations, are namely: cash flow, budget, analysis of financial statements; techniques of investment analysis; tax planning, inventory control, accounts payable control; accounts receivable control, and fixed assets control.

It is observed that management accounting has several functions in the organization, one of them being operational control that, in turn, aims to provide information on the performance and quality of the performed tasks (Atkinson et al., 2008).

In the next section we present the characterization of the variables that were investigated in this study.

2.2 Characterization of the Study Variables

The studies related to students' interest for certain areas of activity were based on surveys of Camey and Williams (2004), McIntyre, Webb and Hite (2005), Farrell (2006) and Robinson Jr. (2006). Thus, the selected variables for this research will be based on the studies cited, and also on national studies of Costa, Andrade and Lima (2008), Costa, Pinto e Oliveira (2011), Costa and Oliveira (2009), Costa et al. (2009) and Azevedo et al. (2012).

To evaluate the factors that influence Accounting students' interest in the area of Managerial Accounting, we analyzed six variables related to personal interest in the area of managerial accounting, personal interest in a career in management accounting, theory and practice relevance in the area, technical knowledge about management accounting, interdisciplinary relevance of the area and academic quality from the student perspective.
The personal interest of the student for the area of Management Accounting was analyzed considering the importance attached by students to courses in the area and their personal willingness to develop studies related to management subjects in accounting. A similar survey was conducted by Camey and Williams (2004), which assessed the personal interest of the students for marketing.

The related studies in the area of Logistics and Human Resources (Costa & Oliveira, 2009; Costa, Pinto & Oliveira, 2011) also assessed students' interest in the area and by means of averages, highlighted the level of relevance of personal interest in the area searched. In the study by Costa, Andrade and Lima (2008) in the area of production and operations, the authors reported an intermediate degree of interest in the area.

Personal interest in a career in managerial accounting was based on the study of Bodie and Merton (2002). Whereas area implies post-graduation activities, interest in the career area is quite distinct from the personal interest of the student for the subject. The option for a separate verification comes from the assumption that a student may have a high interest in the subject, however, may not have any interest in pursuing a career in the field.

Costa and Oliveira (2009, p. 7) analyzed students' interest in the area of logistics management and concluded that business students have little interest in pursuing a career in logistics. However, Costa Andrade and Lima (2008) analyzed the interest of Business Administration graduates in the Human Resources area, and pointed out that Administration students have a good interest in pursuing a career in Human Resources.

Regarding the theoretical and practical relevance of the area, there were aspects proposed by McIntyre, Webb and Hite (2005), called impacts for students regarding service learning (in the aforementioned study, for students of Marketing). In these terms, it was decided to adjust some of the aspects related to the subject of services to the subjects of management accounting.

The technical knowledge of management accounting assumes that there are variations in the field of management accounting techniques and that it is possible that this instrumental domain generates impact on the assessment that the student makes of the course. These assumptions were based on the procedure adopted by Farrell (2006), who developed a scale to assess self-efficacy in the use of knowledge and marketing tools for students of this subject.

Cardoso, Mendonça Neto and Oyadomari (2010, p. 103) identified the competencies of the management accountant and rated the availability of skills to be prioritized. The authors found that the technical expertise of the management accountant "brings together those related to specific knowledge of the accounting and control area, particularly those related to technical aspects, such as accounting, budgeting, planning, costs and internal controls".
The study by Azevedo et al. (2012, p.187) in finances found that "prior knowledge of the students in fluencies very little in shaping their own interest in the area". The authors indicated that the students may pursue specific knowledge of the area, with the purpose of better placement in the labor market.

**The interdisciplinary relevance of the area** was based on the study of Mcintyre, Webb and Hite (2005), who performed a similar evaluation for services in Marketing, as well as the analysis of Robinson Jr. (2006) on the attitude of students regarding technology.

Finally, **teacher quality from the student perspective** was examined in a study by Azevedo et al. (2012), who evaluated the interest of undergraduates in the area of financial management, and proposed that the interest of the student for the area is positively influenced by his or her evaluation in relation to the teacher of the subject.

Azevedo et al. (2012) reported that there was the assumption of a great influence of teacher quality on student interest in the subjects of finance, but in our sample, the results showed little relevance of teacher quality. It is worth mentioning that the teacher-student relationship is critical to the improvement of the teaching and learning process, since the manner and personality of the teacher collaborates to adequate student learning (Masetto, 2003).

Miranda, Casa Nova and Carnachione (2012) evaluated the knowledge of the reference teachers according to the Accounting students' perceptions, noting that the main reasons for the choice of the reference teachers were: didactics or teaching methodology, attitudes and personal qualities of the teacher, which enhances the process of bonding and affection with teachers. In the next section, we present the methodological procedures used in this study.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This research is classified as descriptive as it aims to describe the features that will be analyzed, classified and interpreted. Andrade (2007, p. 124) mentions that "in this kind of research, the facts are observed, recorded, analyzed, classified and interpreted without the researcher interfering in them. This means that the phenomena in the physical and human world are studied, but not manipulated by the researcher".

The approach chosen for the research is quantitative, because statistical tools will be used in data processing. For Beuren (2008, p.36), "The quantitative approach is characterized by the use of statistical tools, both in the collection and in the treatment of data".

The procedure adopted was the survey that, according to Gil (2002, p. 30), is characterized "by direct interrogation of individuals whose behavior you want to know".
The research scope is students who were attending the last year of the Accounting course in four higher education institutions located in the city of Uberlândia-MG/Brazil, being one public, and the other three private. The choice of students enrolled in the final year of the degree course is due to the fact that they have already attended most subjects related to managerial accounting offered in the course, which is the focus of this study. Table 1 shows the number of students enrolled in the final year of the four educational institutions studied, ie, enrolled in the last two semesters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HEI</th>
<th>No. of enrolled students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D**</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Public Institution

The study sample consists of 149 Accounting students who responded to the survey instrument. The sample was not probabilistic and thus to generalize the results, one should take caution and care.

To collect data, we used a questionnaire, with a pretest of the instrument applied to 10 Accounting students to assess whether the questions were understandable and objective. Following the suggestions collected from the pretest, the instrument was adjusted to collect data.

Data collection was conducted between January and February 2013, with the questionnaire directly to students, with the collaboration of teachers and coordinators of each HEI.

To collect data, we used a questionnaire based on the study by Azevedo et al. (2012), which was structured in four parts: the first relates to the characterization of the respondents. The second consists of questions that indicate the students' technical knowledge of management accounting (7 questions). The third is composed of 22 questions, in order to analyze the students' opinion regarding their personal interest in the area of management accounting, involving the variables studied previously presented, namely, interest in a career in the field, theoretical and practical relevance of the area, interdisciplinary relevance of the area teacher quality from the student point of view. The questions were measured by an ordinal five point Likert scale, where 1 represents 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 'Strongly Agree'. The fourth and last block of the questionnaire consists of questions addressing demographic and socioeconomic themes of the respondents. The full questionnaire is presented in Appendix A of this paper.

For data analysis, we used the statistical test called Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA), with the aid of statistical software. According to Favero et al. (2009, p. 235), "the factor analysis or
common factor analysis is a interdependent multivariate technique that seeks to synthesize the relationships observed among a set of inter-related variables in order to identify common factors".

The choice of factor analysis is justified by the fact that this method allows us to identify a relatively small number of common factors that can be used to represent relationships between a large number of interrelated variables (FAVERO et al., 2009). In the next section, we present the analysis and discussion of results.

4 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

4.1 Characterization of the respondents

Table 2 presents the socioeconomic and demographic information of the respondents in relation to Gender, Marital Status, Age, Family Income and Nature of the Education Institution.

Table 2: Socioeconomic and demographic information of the respondents (in%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>MARITAL STATUS</th>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>FAMILY INCOME</th>
<th>NATURE OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Feminine 68.74%</td>
<td>Single 68.96%</td>
<td>Up to 22 years old 18.25%</td>
<td>Up to $ 1.000 7.50%</td>
<td>Public 33.60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Masculine 31.26%</td>
<td>Married 26.93%</td>
<td>Between 22 and 24 years old 25.00%</td>
<td>Between $ 1.000 and $ 2000 24.52%</td>
<td>Private 66.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Other 4.11%</td>
<td>Between 24 and 26 years old 17.54%</td>
<td>Between $ 2.000 and $ 3.000 27.15%</td>
<td>Source: Research data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Between 26 and 28 years old 13.50%</td>
<td>Between $ 3.000 and $ 4.000 19.76%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Over 28 years old 25.71%</td>
<td>Over $ 4.000 21.07%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The percentage of 68.74% of female students should be highlighted, taking into account that according to the Federal Accounting Council, currently, 41% of Brazilian accounting professionals are female, a total of 198,802 professionals representing the class across the country.

It was found that 66.40% of students are enrolled in private institutions, while 33.60% of the students are from public institutions. This fact is justified by the greater number of private institutions participating in the study.
We asked the graduates about their current work and experience in management accounting. In the valid responses, 71.61% of the students reported that they do not work or never worked in an area associated to managerial accounting activities. Of the total of respondents (28.39%) who claim to work or have worked in the area of management accounting, 63.49% associated this experience to their work activities; 5.33% associated it to college projects; and 31.18% chose the option “others”.

Students also answered questions about their functional occupation. In this respect, the responses indicate that: 8.87% of respondents are not working due to unemployment, leave of absence or to dedicate full time to their studies. 13.06% are working or interning part-time, and 78.06% are working or interning full time. It is worth mentioning that the number of students who are unemployed (8.87%) is considered low, which can be compared to unemployment in Brazil, which showed an average unemployment rate of only 5.7% in the first semester, indicating a good situation of employability for students in the Accounting course.

About the future intentions of students towards work, we have: more than half of the students (55.45%), when finishing the course, want to get/remain in a public job; 16.41% plan to get/remain in a private job, 21.91% intend to work for their own business or start a business; 0.71% intend to work in family businesses, and 5.50% chose the option “others”. The large percentage of more than half of the students who intend to get a government job can be justified by higher wages, more stability and future security.

In relation to the continuity of studies after the end of the course, 44.48% of respondents plan to do a post-graduate (masters and/or PhD), 29.48% have the intention of doing a specialization course, 10.91% plan to get another undergraduate degree and 15.10% plan to stop studying for a period or permanently. It was found that a relevant number of students wish to get a masters and/or doctoral degree. These results were convergent with the results of the study by Leite Filho and Rodriguez (2006) that aimed to understand the attitudes and motivations of Accounting students at a public university in relation to attending graduate school and concluded that it is evident that there is a very clear perception by students of the importance of graduate courses, and a stated intention to continue their studies after graduation. Bellow are the results obtained with the application of Exploratory Factor Analysis.

4.2 Results of Exploratory Factor Analysis

To test the applicability of factor analysis, it is necessary to analyze the correlation matrix and check if there are significant values that justify the use of the method. We applied the KMO test (Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin), which assesses the adequacy of the sample according to the degree of
correlation, ie, it confronts the simple correlations with partial correlations, with values close to 1 indicating that partial correlation coefficients are small, ie, one can perform the factor analysis (Favero et al., 2009). In this study, the KMO test resulted in a value of 0.916, indicating that the method of factor analysis is appropriate.

We also applied Bartlett's sphericity test, which showed a significance of 0.000, a value less than 0.05. The purpose of this test is to check the possibility of the correlation matrix being the identity matrix, and its results can validate the data processing by means of factor analysis (Favero et al., 2009).

To minimize the number of variables, ie, grouping the factors that influence personal interest in the area of managerial accounting and simplify the interpretation of the factors, we used the Varimax rotation method with extraction using principal components. According to Hair et al. (2005, p.106), the Varimax method "maximizes the sum of variances of the factorial matrix required loads" in order to simplify the columns of the factor matrix, indicating a more evident division of factors, as shown in Table 3:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items / Indicators</th>
<th>Factors / Dimensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1: Knowing the methods of applied costs for planning, control and decision</td>
<td>0, 786</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2: Knowing the process of planning, preparation, evaluation and use of the cash budget</td>
<td>0, 815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3: Applying management tools linked to the Controllship</td>
<td>0, 733</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4: Understanding the relationship between debt and financial leverage</td>
<td>0, 726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5: Analyzing the profitability, liquidity, capital structure and efficiency of a company by means of financial indexes</td>
<td>0, 754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6: Knowing the steps in tax planning</td>
<td>0, 594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.7: Knowing the processes of financial planning, including long-term (strategic) and short term (operational) financial plans</td>
<td>0, 811</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3 - A career in this area is a good option for me</td>
<td>0, 692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5 - A career in the field is desirable for me</td>
<td>0, 845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6 - A career in this area arouses my interest</td>
<td>0, 813</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.7 - What I learn in the subjects of this area will be important for my professional training</td>
<td>0, 585</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10 - Learning from the courses of this area can be considered of great relevance to my professional training</td>
<td>0, 615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.21 - The content learned in the subjects of Management Accounting will be useful in my day to day</td>
<td>0, 562</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1 - The subjects of the area are of great importance to me</td>
<td>0, 586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2 - The companies expect my School to encourage the training of its students in this area</td>
<td>0, 612</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.8 - The subjects of management accounting are very interesting</td>
<td>0, 541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.10 - I understand that all students (Accounting Course) must complete the courses in this area</td>
<td>0, 469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.13 - The content of this area complements well the subjects of other courses</td>
<td>0, 621</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.16 - The learning generated in the area develops critical thinking in students</td>
<td>0, 643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4 - I consider the teachers I had in managerial accounting as polite people</td>
<td>0, 690</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
9:9 I like the instruction of teachers I have had in subjects of Management Accounting 0, 661
9:11 I do not mind spending extra time devoting myself to the activities of the subjects of this area 0, 408
9:20 The contents of the subjects of the management area should also be covered in all disciplines of the course. 0, 629
9:22 I mirror myself professionally in the teachers I had in disciplines related to Accounting Management 0, 577

9:15 Learning managerial skills of the area helps students to solve practical problems 0, 714
9:17 The subjects of Management Accounting lead students to combine theory and practice 0, 717
9:18 I would take the subjects of Management Accounting, even if not mandatory 0, 443
9:19 The subjects of Management Accounting are quite challenging 0, 589

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Eigenvalue</th>
<th>% Explained variance</th>
<th>% Cumulative variance</th>
<th>Cronbach's alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10,760</td>
<td>3,294</td>
<td>1,613</td>
<td>1,049</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0,885</td>
<td>0,888</td>
<td>0,812</td>
<td>0,812</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| After identifying the factors, we applied the statistical test of Cronbach's alpha for the factors in order to analyze the consistency of the correlations between the items of the scale. According to Hair et al. (2005), the closer to 1 (one) the values of alpha are, the greater the reliability of the scales. In this study, the factors presented an alpha above 80%, indicating a very good strength of association.

4.3 Characterization of Factors

Exploratory factor analysis allowed the identification of five factors explaining 63.93% of the variations of the original measurements, which indicates a good level of data representation. The factors were interpreted based on previous studies (Costa, Andrade & Lima, 2008; Costa, Pinto & Oliveira, 2011; Costa & Oliveira, 2009; Costa et al., 2009; Azevedo et al., 2011), which indicated the variables that enable analyzing personal interest in the area of managerial accounting.

Factor 1 was characterized as "Technical Knowledge about Management Accounting" and refers to skills directly related to the functional knowledge of the management area. This factor evaluates the confidence of students in performing activities related to the area of management accounting. It groups the variables included in the technical skills involved in knowing the process of planning, preparation, evaluation and use of the cash budget, the process of financial planning, including strategic long-term and operational short-term financial plans; costs methods applied to planning, control and decision-making, use of management tools linked to the Comptroller; analysis of liquidity, profitability, capital structure and efficiency of a company by means of financial indexes, and tax planning.

Factor 2 was called "Interest in a career in the field". This factor explained 14.83%, grouping the items that condition the student to work in the area. In these items, students
demonstrated interest in the career of management accounting and pointed, in the items with the highest factor load, that they wanted a career in this area (0.845%) and also showed that a career in this area arouses a lot of interest (0.813%).

Factor 3 was characterized as "Personal interest in the area of Management Accounting". This factor analyzed the importance attached by the student to the area of managerial accounting as well as his or her personal willingness to develop activities of the subjects of that area. Variables that indicate the content of the area and complement the other subjects of the course were grouped: learning generated in the area develops in students the critical thinking, the subjects of management accounting are very interesting, and all students of the course should attend the courses in this area.

Regarding Factor 4, which was called "Teaching Quality from the student’s perspective", it encompassed items where students rated teachers they had in the subjects of management accounting in relation to teaching, relationship and content taught.

Factor 5, characterized as 'Theoretical/Practical relevance in the area', is related to the student’s interest in reconciling aspects of the theory learned in the classroom with practice in the area of management accounting, ie the learning of managerial skills of the area helps students to solve practical problems and subjects of Management Accounting lead students to combine theory and practice. Besides these aspects, there are the questions: students would enroll in the disciplines of management accounting, even if not mandatory, and these disciplines are quite challenging.

Internationally, Tan, Flower and Hawkes (2004) found that the perception of professionals working in the area about the issues related to management accounting is divergent from the content emphasized in academia. The authors showed that the main issues highlighted by the professionals in the business environment are: operating budget, cash flow management, capital budgeting, performance evaluation and analysis of cost variations. However, in the academia, performance evaluation, behavioral implications, activity based costing, product costing and operating budget are the topics considered.

It is worth noting that the variable characterized as 'Interdisciplinary relevance of the area', did not group sufficient factors, demonstrating the insignificance in the case of this study.

The findings of the study indicated the main factors influencing the interest of undergraduate Accounting students in the field of Accounting Management ie, the five factors identified in the exploratory factor analysis.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS
The main objective of this study was to analyze the factors that influence the interest of accounting undergraduates in the area of Management Accounting. Understanding these factors can contribute to the development of accounting education in the area of managerial accounting.

The main result of the study after the application of exploratory factor analysis was the identification of five factors, which were characterized: "Technical Knowledge about Management Accounting"; "Interest in a career in the field"; "Personal interest in the area of Management Accounting", "Teaching Quality from the student’s perspective" and "Theoretical/Practical relevance in the area".

Factors influencing students' interest in the area of management accounting, in many respects, converged with previous studies in other areas of knowledge such as marketing, human resources, production and operations, logistics and finance (Costa, Andrade & Lima 2008, Costa, Pinto & Oliveira, 2011; Costa & Oliveira, 2009; Costa et al., 2009; Azevedo et al., 2012).

As regards the technical knowledge in managerial accounting, we found that the variables grouped are convergent with those organized in the study of Cardoso, Mendonça Neto and Oyadomari (2010), which identified the competencies required for the management accounting professional in three factors: technical competencies, behavioral competencies and posture competencies.

It was found that accounting students' perceptions of teacher quality influences the interest in the area of management accounting, which emphasizes the role of teachers in the teaching-learning process. Attitudes, personal qualities, and teaching methodologies adopted by the teacher can enhance the process of attachment and affection with students (Miranda, Casa Nova & Cornachione, 2012).

The results of this study may contribute for HEIs to assess the inclusion of subjects in the area of managerial accounting in the curriculum of undergraduate courses in accounting, including subjects that demonstrate the theoretical and practical application in the field. This procedure may assist in the qualification of the management accounting professional for the labor market.

Limitations of this study are related to non-probabilistic and intentional sample, which does not allow the generalization of the results. Still, it contributes to the analysis of the factors influencing the interest of undergraduate accounting students in the field of Management Accounting, which may be compared with other areas of the accounting professional. Thus, it is suggested for future studies to investigate the factors that influence accounting students' interest in other areas such as corporate, tax, auditing and expertise accounting. We propose to further expand this research to other regions of the country, in order to compare the results.

REFERENCES


