

Generational approach to the factors influencing career choice in Accounting

Jony Hsiao

Universidade de São Paulo

Abstract

The aim of this research was to understand which factors influence generation Y to choose accountancy as their career. Significant decline in the number of candidates willing to follow a career as accountants has been observed abroad - United States, Australia and Japan. However, in some other countries - Brazil, Singapore and Hong Kong - the opposite has been observed. Another problem is the decline in education quality of those pursuing an accounting career, contributing for many talented students to change their choice of career. This can be explained because people generally tend to believe accountancy is an exact science, full of calculations, boring and not creative enough, bringing an unbalance between the traits a person should have according to the job market and the ones perceived by the society. In order to give a contribution to literature concerning the factors that influence generation Y in their career choice, one of the aims of this research was to carry out an exploratory study, in which some hypothesis were formulated to support the discussion. For this, we used Mannheim's generational theory and the literature concerning career choice. Data collection was done using a questionnaire elaborated from a *focus group* interview, the Portrait Value Questionnaire by Schwartz, and the Student Choice Task Inventory, by Germeijs and Verschueren. The population involved subjects who visited USP Careers Fair on 2012. Data was collected completely online and the sample involved 665 subjects. Analysis was carried ANOVA, t-Student, Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney tests. Results showed for people who choose Accountancy as their career: the influence of factors such as creativity, independence, challenging, dynamic environment, job security, making money, job availability, Other significant such as friends and professors; and non influence of social factors, like working with people and making contributions to society and family.

Key-words: accounting, professional choice, generations, social influences

I believe that procrastination might be a characteristic of the generation I belong and this fact doesn't have to be seen as something negative. I believe that I, like the majority of my friends, are more interested in enjoying the walk than to arrive at somewhere pre-established. And along this walk we lost ourselves and find ourselves, without knowing for sure where to go, but with the certainty and desire to just enjoy the walk.

Fernando Crepaldi (sophomore in Accounting, FEA-USP/2012)

Introduction

Increase in school time and defer of this phase of school life, called by Pimenta (2007) as “post-adolescence”, is observed not only by increase in longevity, but also associated with other factors such as postponing of the entering in work life by waiting and probing possible professions and the stay in the family of origin and delay of marriage. This increase in school time can be explained by characteristics of the modern society, sudden social and capitalism changes, in which the actual society seems that the adult is never prepared to work life, because it is expected of him/her to go after knowledge and specialize himself/herself (Oliveira and Melo-Silva, 2010).

This new generation – Gen Y (Eisner, 2005) – that are entering the labour market or that will do so in the next few years possess traits that differentiate them from previous generations. Gen Y (Stein, 2013) are young eager to consume new technologies, looking for immediate results and rewards, they yearn for autonomy and balance between their personal and work life, adept to multitasking, oriented to life and civic duties, although there are controversies in relation to these traits in the literature, as can be observed in the work of Dejoux and Wechtler (2011) in which they present myths related to this generation, such as a generation that are less efficient due to their predilection to multitasking.

International academic research and discussions on the theme of generations are in an advanced stage. Authors like Ahmed, Alam and Alam (1997), Albrecht and Sack (2000), Auyeung e Sands (1997), Chen, Jones e McIntyre (2008), Lindquist (2008), Mauldin, Crain e Mounce (2000), Milliron (2008), Sugahara, Boland e Cilloni (2008) e Tan and Laswad (2006) are concerned with issues of recruiting, training, selection, attraction and retention of these young in organizations. In Brazil, research on these theme has been gaining ground recently with works from authors such as Cavazotte, Lemos and Viana (2012); Oliveira, Piccinini and Bitencourt (2012); Scharf, Rosa and Oliveira (2012); Vasconcelos, Merhi, Goulart and Silva (2010).

Regarding career choice we find in the literature works that try to apprehend career choice process as well as the factors that influence it (e.g. Nepomuceno and Witter, 2010; Barreto and Aiello-Vaisberg, 2007; Ojeda, Creutzberg, Feoli, Melo and Corbellini, 2009). There are some instruments developed to assess career choice such as the *Study Choice Task Inventory* (Germeijs and Verschueren, 2006), *Career Maturity Inventory*, *Career Development Inventory* and *My Vocational Situation Scale* utilized by Hirschi e Läge (2007) and the *Career Decision Difficulties Questionnaire* (Gati, Krauz and Osipow, 1996). These studies attempt to understand what factors would lead students to choose a career in accounting, since there is a concern in the decline and quality of individuals who opt to pursue this career (Sugahara, et al., 2008; Chen, et al., 2008; Sugahara, Kurihara and Boland, 2006).

Therefore, considering (1) that Gen Y is the next generation that in the coming years will be holding managerial positions in organizations, (2) the growing demand for high qualified professionals for the new businesses models and (3) the decline in number of

accounting professionals which has been perceived by market and academic professionals, this research aims to identify which factors influence career choice in accounting for Gen Y.

Capitalism and the Spirits of Capitalism

The concept of capitalism has been developing over centuries of year, probably before how we know it today. Gras (1942) suggests that this concept exists for about 170 years, but the system existed way before it. He works with five views in relation to capitalism: a) technological concept – machines as capital to produce goods and services; b) ethical concept of socialists and communist – capitalism as a form to explore the worker; c) capitalism as private capital – capitalism contrary to common property; d) system of production in which capital prevails – capital as the prevailing form in the system; e) system of capital management – primary objective is production and accumulation of capital surplus generated. These ideas are not complete *per se*, but it is possible to perceive evolution of the term, how the system has been behaving and adapting to new social dynamics.

Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) characterize and define the capitalism as the accumulation of capital by extraction of profit, which is reinvested to generate more profit and this way it makes possible the constant increase and accumulation of capital. This constant transformation of capital into currency, and this into new investments, allows enrichment, which is given by balance difference in two periods.

Spirits of Capitalism

Capitalism works through two principal actors, the great capitalist, who holds the means of production, and the little capitalist, that has to subordinate himself/herself to the first. In this logic, there has to be aspects that motivate those actors to engage in this process of capital accumulation and to keep it going. This motivation, which moves them to keep this machine functioning, is denominated spirit of capitalism (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2009).

The ideology that sustains, justify and make individuals to engage in capitalist activities are those that motivates them to commit themselves in organizations, which are general and individual justifications. These can have different origins: religious, from his/her socialization process and shaping of his/her professional identity, cultural, social and economics aspects. In short, the spirit of capitalism is “ a set of beliefs related to the capitalist order that contributes to justify and sustaining this order, legitimizing modes of action and the provisions consistent to it” (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2009).

Without it to sustain and keep the capitalist engagement, capitalism probably would not have endured until today. During this period this spirit changes, adapting to the new economic and social environment, to the new business models and enterprise management.

Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) identify two previous states of the spirit of the capitalism. The first occurs around the end of the nineteenth century. Its characteristics that justified engagement of employers and employees constituted of elements that guaranteed their safety in the system, in the economic aspects through rationalization of aspects of everyday life and the family tradition, with great importance given to family and paternalistic characteristics represented in their relations with their employees. The second occurs between 1930 and 1960. It is characterized by capital accumulation induced by mass production, economies of scale and standardization of products pursuing massification of desires from the consumption society (Boltanski and Chiapello, 2009). In this form of capitalism, guarantees and securities are offered to leaders and their young graduate employees are the possibilities to attain higher positions, positions of power and satisfying their highest desires.

Currently a third phase of modernity, called hypermodernity, can be defined as “a liberal society, characterized by movement, fluidity, flexibility; indifferent like never before to the great structuring principles of modernity, that needs to adapt to the hypermodernity rhythm to not disappear” (Lipovetsky, 2011).

Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) characterize the new spirit of capitalism where networking formation and proliferation are valued. A world formed by connexions, networking, responds to the desires that were demanded by capitalist critics: freedom to use creativity, autonomy in the workplace (flexible hours, autonomy to make decisions, work in her own way). The new spirit of capitalism does not only sell products, but also sells feelings (Hickel and Khan, 2012). A new configuration of the work world that diminished workers guarantees in exchange for autonomy, flexibility and creativity.

Generations

The concept of generations has been problematic despite the efforts to come to a consensus in the 60s and 70s. This concept has been used since antiquity to explain process of social changes (Laufer and Bengston, 1974).

Mannheim (1952) presents two approaches: positivist and historical-romantic. The first one attempts to understand it and define a law that explain the developing historical rhythm, based on man's period of life, in which overlapping of older generations starts to disappear, being substituted by the upcoming generations. This vision is linked to the rate of biological growth. Improvement and social changes would be determined by the lifetime of individuals. The second goes against the idea that generation succession is a linear process in the development of a society history, but that it is related to an interior time, which can't be measured quantitatively, can only be experienced qualitatively. So, considering generations as a temporal unit from intellectual history makes it possible to discard units of measure such as hours, minutes, years, days, etc. Substitution of the temporal unit would allow us to assess intellectual movements.

A first concept Mannheim (1952) uses to understand the phenomena of generation is that of a concrete group with specific inter-relations among individuals that form a generation. Furthermore, to belong to a generation or age group it makes their members to share the same locale in the historic and social process, limiting them to a range of experiences, and predisposing them to certain characteristics and modes of thinking, feeling and behaving. Pinder, cited by Mannheim (1952), presented the concept of entelechy, which is a further way to experience life and the world, a term coined by Aristotle to designate the reality fully realized in opposition to potentiality (Mirador International, 1977).

In order to better define and conceptualize generations, the author presented the concept of generation as reality and generational unity. Generation as reality will exist when individuals of a generational community form more concrete bonds, are exposed to the same dynamic social, intellectual and historical processes in social environment change (Mannheim, 1952). Generational unit are variations inside a cohort (Bengtson et al., 1983). It is thinking similarity that characterizes consciousness of its members (Mannheim, 1952). Laufer and Bengtson (1974) point that generational units respond to the same questions with in their experience on the impacts o social change.

The generation units represent a much more concrete bond than the actual generation as such. Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the

material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generation units. (Mannheim, 1952, pp. 304)

Career Choice

Career choice is a process and not a time specific event that occurs in a certain point of life of an adolescent. Gati and Saka (2001), Barreto and Aiello-Vaisberg (2007) and Nepomuceno and Witter (2010) point that career choice is one of the most important decisions of a individual and it occurs typically during adolescence and may bring consequences to his whole life, because it will determine his/her destiny, lifestyle, education and people who he/she will be in familiar terms in society and in his/her work environment.

Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) highlight that the process of career choice is complex and if it is not optimized can lead to an increase risk of dropping the course and, therefore, causing greater evasion from higher education.

Career choice is one of the most outstanding transitions in adolescence, considered decisive in life because of family influence and social pressure. Choice of a profession takes part of the process of defining to oneself and occupational identity (Dubar, 2005), adolescents way of seeing the world that will guide their future choices, characterized as a phase of conflicts and internal crises that reflects, mainly, in family environment (Santos, 2005).

Supported by the works of Erikson, Almeida and Pinho (2008) we could affirm that the most important task in adolescence is the resolution of the identity crisis. It is a moment to form a sense of identity to oneself, create projects to adulthood. In this period he/she goes through a moment of choices, which implies to give up other options, configuring losses, as the renounce of other options (Santos, 2005; Almeida and Pinho, 2008)

Oliveira e Melo-Silva (2010) approach the subject of career choice from the perspective of economic and cultural variables, supported by the Theory of Cultural Reproduction of Bordieu, discussing issues related to symbolic violence in which career choices are inserted.

Family can facilitate or complicate the process of career choice, since the former is direct or indirect affected in it, because the family put in their children their dreams and it becomes a way to try to relive and conquer what couldn't be possible for themselves to realize, configuring the process of career choice in a cultural reproduction (Nepomuceno and Witter, 2010; Almeida and Pinho, 2008; Ojeda et al., 2009).

Pereira and Garcia (2007) argue that the role of friends in the process of career choice was identified as a source of emotional support and family as an instrumental support. Their results pointed out to great participation from friends in professional choice, but low perception from the adolescents of the influence of these friends in their choice.

The literature review allowed an overall perception of the economic and social setting in which career choice is inserted. How capitalism system and its ideology have changed through time, impacting on how different generations and generations' units perceive and experience this changes. Also, it was discussed the process of career choice and factors that influence it, as family, friends, their background and their socialization processes.

Methodology

From the literature review and three *focus groups* performed with high school students, juniors in business careers and undergraduates from health sciences, exact sciences and business, six hypotheses were formulated and tested:

H1: Individuals from Gen Y perceive the social institution family as less influential for career choice in accounting.

H2: Intrinsic factors of accounting profession such as creativity, autonomy, challenging and dynamic are perceived as less influential for decision in pursuing career in accounting.

H3: Extrinsic factors such as work security, make money, work availability influence more individuals from Gen Y to pursue a career in accounting.

H4: Individuals from Gen Y perceive the Significant Others – friends and teachers – as not influencing in their decision to pursue a career in accounting.

H5: Individuals from Gen Y do not perceive career in accounting as of prestige and, therefore, is not a factor influencing their decision for this career.

H6: Social factors – work with people, contribute to society – are less influential for Gen Y individuals in their decision to pursue a career in accounting.

The sample for this study was comprised primarily of high school students who visited the “6th Feira de Profissões da USP (6th USP Professions Fair) held on August 2nd, 3rd and 4th of 2012. The fair is organized by the Pró-Reitoria de Cultura e Extensão Universitária (Pro-Rectorate of Culture and Outreach - PRCEU), a body that promotes actions in culture and outreach and serves as a means of communication and relationship between the university and society. The fair’s objective is to provide information and activities for students, with the participation of their families and teachers, in order to help them decide on a career. The event offers vocational counseling, informal group meetings with professors from different areas of expertise, a tour around the campus and a “Physics Show”, presenting experiments.

Sample Description

Students and/or schools interested in participating the fair needed to pre-register. That means, the student who wishes to participate can either have his/her school register and therefore be eligible for the visit, or can register individually. A request to access the database of the participants was made to those responsible for the PRCEU fair.

Individual registrations revealed a total of 10,580 students’ registrations. Out of the original 10,580 individuals registered in database, 9,303 received invitations for this study. The reason for the lower number of invitations was that some participants did not register an email address, registered invalid emails or duplicated registrations.

Data Collection and Analysis

To elaborate the questionnaire, three focus groups were conducted to assess what factors of influence in career choice would appear in the participants’ speeches. Review of literature on factor influencing career choice was used to support our questionnaire items and adapted questions from the SCTI from Germeijs and Verschueren (2006) were also used.

Data from the individual registration were gathered through an online survey using SurveyMonkey software. An email with the link to the survey was sent to all individuals in that database. It was explained and made clear in the invitations sent to the participants that their participation in the study was voluntary, that they could withdraw from the study anytime without any sanction, and that the data would be treated in aggregate form, with no reference to any particular participant. As a way of motivating participation, an Ipad 3rd generation was raffled among those who completed the questionnaire.

Data was gathered from December 6th through December 27th, 2012. A total of 954 responses were obtained, but only 665 questionnaires was analysed because some of them were incomplete and thus discarded.

Preliminary analysis showed that from the sample (S1), we had 480 female respondents and 185 male respondents. To control bias due to gender, a sub-sample (S2) was created by choosing 185 females from the 480 from the original sample. Selection was done with Excel's function "Randbetween". Also, respondents were segregated in five groups – applied social sciences (ASS), exact sciences (ES), health sciences (HeS), humanities sciences (HS) and others (O) accordingly to their first career option and a comparative analysis among groups was performed.

Multivariate analysis was performed with SPSS20. Tests of internal consistency of the questionnaire, normality and homoscedasticity were performed in order to assess which test was the better fit for data.

Results and Discussion

Cronbach- α indicates if a set of items of a test is adequately elaborated to assure interpretability on individual's differences, that in a homogeneous test, the items measure the same object, presenting substantial internal consistency and is psychologically interpretable (Cronbach, 1951). Cronbach's α indicated consistency of the questionnaire.

Influence of Family and Pairs

For factors family and pairs Kruskal-Wallis (K-S) and Mann Whitney (M-W) were performed. Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test of normality accused non-normality. K-S was performed to compare the five groups and M-W to compare gender difference.

Table 1.
Kruskal-Wallis and Mann-Whitney – Influence of family and pairs

Factors	S1			S2		
	Kruskal-Wallis			Kruskal-Wallis		
	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Friend	9,146	4	,058	3,159	4	,532
Teacher	9,002	4	,061	4,92	4	,296
Mother	9,572	4	,048	8,056	4	,090
Father	8,271	4	,082	4,157	4	,385
Family	4,240	4	,375	3,122	4	,538
Factors	Mann-Whitney		Mann-Whitney			
	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		
	U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		
Friend	38901,000	,013	15047,500	,044		
Teacher	40070,500	,051	14739,000	,021		
Mother	40003,000	,047	14639,500	,016		
Father	42739,500	,454	17090,000	,983		
Family	38428,000	,007	14244,500	,005		

Source: Authors.

Results indicated that factors *father* and *family* (other members such as uncles, cousins and grandfather/grandmother) did not presented as source of information and discussion on the issue of career choice for the five categories. The factor *mother* indicated influence for categories ASS, HeS and O, not being influent for HS and ES. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim

(2002) argue that in the individualization process, family institution has been taking different forms of organization among individuals' relationships, changing values and social roles inside family, enabling emergence of a new family culture, less paternalistic, as was characteristic of the second spirit of capitalism. Therefore, *H1: Individuals from Gen Y perceive the social institution family as less influent for career choice in Accounting* was not rejected, since only for two categories factor *mother* appeared as influent in career choice, not appearing for factors *family* and *father*.

Hypothesis 4 is rejected: *Individuals from Gen Y perceive the Significant Others – friends and teachers – as not influencing in their decision to pursue a career in Accounting*. When analysing and comparing answers among categories, it was observed that for factor *friends*, majority of individuals affirmed to look for information and/or discuss with *friends* about their professional interests. It was also observed that they look for information and/or discuss with *teachers* their professional interests. Comparison between genders indicated that for S1, female respondents look for more information with their *mothers* and less with their *friends* in comparison with male respondents; whereas in relation to teachers we observed the opposite. Analysis of S2 indicates that female respondents look for more information with their mothers and *family* and less with *friends* and *teachers*, in comparison male respondents.

Factor of Career Choice

Comparison among the five categories was done by K-W test (see Table 2), due to non-normality of data. Only for factor *prestige* in S2 was observed normality. Thus, comparison was done using ANOVA test. No statistical differences were found for factors *experience* and *indecision* in both groups S1 and S2. To all other factors statistical difference was observed.

Table 2
Kruskall-Wallis – Career Choice Factors

Factors	S1			S2		
	Kruskall-Wallis			Kruskall-Wallis		
	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.	Chi-Square	df	Asymp. Sig.
Prestige	14,515	4	,006	-	-	-
Social	157,418	4	,000	80,698	4	,000
Power	30,288	4	,000	10,31	4	,036
Intrinsic	19,45	4	,001	16,176	4	,003
Extrinsic	103,528	4	,000	65,433	4	,000
Experience	5,009	4	,286	0,954	4	,917
Family	24,418	4	,000	12,305	4	,015
Indecision	2,95	4	,566	6,754	4	,149

Source: Authors.

ANOVA results for *prestige* for the five categories (see Table 3) showed statistical difference regarding influence of this factor on career choice. In order to identify where this difference occurred, Tukey post-hoc test was performed (see Table 4).

Table 3
ANOVA for Career Choice Factor - Prestige

		S2				
		Sum of		Mean		
		Squares	df	Square	F	Sig
Prestige	Between Groups	48,836	4	11,620	2,147	,039
	Within Groups	1658,446	365	4,544		
	Total	1704,925	369			

Source: Authors.

 Table 4
Tukey test for Difference Among 5 Categories

Variable	Group (I)	Group (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Standard Error	Sig.	Confidence Interval (95%)	
						Inferior	Superior
Prestige	ASS	HS	,64275	,32761	,287	-,2554	1,5409
	ASS	ES	-,40035	,28050	,610	-1,1693	,3686
	ASS	HeS	-,00368	,35861	1,000	-,9868	,9794
	ASS	O	-,12065	,50584	,999	-1,5074	1,2661
	HS	ES	-1,04310*	,32709	,013	-1,9398	-,1464
	HS	HeS	-,64643	,39612	,478	-1,7324	,4395
	HS	O	-,76340	,53309	,607	-2,2248	,6980
	ES	HeS	,39668	,35814	,803	-,5851	1,3785
	ES	O	,27970	,50551	,981	-1,1061	1,6655
	HeS	O	-,11697	,55268	1,000	-1,6321	1,3982

Note. ASS = Applied Social Science; HS = Humanities Science; ES = Exact Sciences; HeS = Health Sciences; O = Others

Source: Authors.

Tukey test showed that for factor *prestige*, difference observed in ANOVA occurred between categories HS and ES. Therefore, statistically, difference in perception for this factor as influent in career decision happened between these two categories. Analysis of the average response from these two categories indicates that HS had lower average on their answers, thus individuals from this category tend to perceive career prestige as less influent to make a career decision in comparison to other categories.

Normality test for gender difference indicated that for S1 and S2 normality was not violated for *power* and *prestige* factors. Analysis for these two factors was done with t-Student test and all other factors with Mann-Whitney test.

Table 5 presents results for Mann-Whitney test in order to identify statistical differences in the answers between genders. Results indicate difference for factors social [U(N = 665) = 35739,500, p < 0,05], intrinsic [U(N = 665) = 39011,500, p < 0,05] in S1 and for S2 factor social [U(N = 370) = 14273,000, p < 0,05] em S2.

Table 5
Mann-Whitney for Gender Difference - Career Choice Factors

Factors	S1		S2	
	Mann-Whitney		Mann-Whitney	
	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Mann-Whitney U	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)
Social	35739,500	,000	14273,000	,006
Intrinsic	39011,500	,015	15591,000	,139
Extrinsic	42513,000	,395	15919,500	,246
Experience	43464,000	,673	16710,500	,696
Family	40473,000	,077	15540,500	,126
Indecision	43166,000	,578	16062,500	,307

Source: Authors.

 Table 6
Test t-Student for Equality of Means – Career Choice Factors

Factors		S1						
		t-Student						
		t	df	Sig. (bicaudal)	Mean difference	Standard Error	Confidence Interval (95%) Inferior Superior	
Prestige	Equal variance assumed	-,425	663	,671	-,07809	,18385	-,43909 ,28291	
	Unequal variance assumed	-,433	347,605	,665	-,07809	,18034	-,43279 ,27662	
Power	Equal variance assumed	,144	663	,886	,02138	,14875	-,27069 ,31345	
	Unequal variance assumed	,141	320,422	,888	,02138	,15193	-,27752 ,32028	
Prestige		S2						
		Equal variance assumed	-,566	368	,572	-,12659	,22370	-,56649 ,31330
		Unequal variance assumed	-,566	365,370	,572	-,12659	,22370	-,56650 ,31331
Power		Equal variance assumed	-,280	368	,780	-,05092	,18200	-,40880 ,30697
		Unequal variance assumed	-,280	367,622	,780	-,05092	,18200	-,40881 ,30697

Source : Author

Table 6 presents the results for t-Student test for mean differences in individuals' answers between gender. Gender related differences for *power* and *prestige* were not observed for both S1 and S2.

Results indicates that hypothesis *H2: Intrinsic factors of Accounting profession such as creativity, autonomy, challenging and dynamic are perceived as less influent for decision in pursuing career in Accounting* is rejected. Rejection of this hypothesis contradicts what have been seen in literature in studies like Chen et al., (2008) and Ahmed et al. (1997), in which the authors point ou that intrinsic factors are not influent for career choice decision in accounting. Results seem to contradict analysis of generational characteristics, in which they show that this generation appraise values such as openness to change and appraise less values such as conservation and tradition. For category ASS results are as expected accordingly to the generational characteristics analysed, since intrinsic factors are related to openness to change.

Hypothesis *H3: Extrinsic factors such as work security, make money, work availability influence more individuals from Gen Y to pursue a career in accounting* is not rejected, corroborating studies from Chen et al., (2008) and Ahmed et al. (1997) where they demonstrated that market factors influence career choice of Gen Y individuals. It was true to all five categories.

Hypothesis *H5: Individuals from Gen Y do not perceive career in accounting as of prestige and, therefore, is not a factor influencing their decision for this career* is rejected. Results indicates that individuals from Gen Y perceive the *prestige* of a career as influent in their decision to pursue a career in accounting and it does not corroborate findings from Azevedo (2010) and from what was inferred from *focus group* interview. *Power*, was also considered influent for career choice decision for accounting, being related to *prestige* of a profession.

Hypothesis *H6: Social factors – work with people, contribute to society – are less influent for Gen Y individuals in their decision to pursue a career in accounting* are not rejected. Sutherland and Hoover (2007) points that a trait of this generation is conventionalism. They indicate studies in which approximately 75% of these young declare similar values as their parents'. The authors state that from time to time, these young tend to come together to save the universe, demonstrating concern with social aspects and justice. Therefore, reivindications pointed ou by Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) concerning the work environment seem to not satisfy anymore their expectations, though in this study H6 was not rejected, indicating that for category ASS social factors were not indicated as an influent factor for career choice decision.

Concluding Remarks

This study aimed to explore what factors and how socializing institutions influence Gen Y on career choice in Accounting. Theoretical framework for this paper based on Generational Theory by Mannheim, on literature of Career Choice and discussions on the actual environment from Boltanski and Chiapello (2009) concerning the new spirit of capitalism.

Discussion on media and academic environment on young from this generation have been focused to issues related to work and how their peculiar characteristics affect work environment in its organization form, recruiting and retention of them. It is a generation that grew up in a period of economic and technology growth, experiencing new forms of relation

with the world, making businesses to adopt new forms of organization that lives up to their expectations and claim.

This new configuration affects us all from all generations. Relative to Gen y and career in Accounting, it was observed that intrinsic factors to the profession – creativity, autonomy, challenging and dynamic environment – appeared as influent in the moment of career choice decision, not corroborating previous studies in which only extrinsic factors presented themselves as influent for a choice in Accounting. Questionnaire elaborated was proposed to assess career choice in general, not being specific in its content to the career in Accounting.

Also associated to intrinsic factors, social factors – work with people and contribute to society – did not appeared as influent for career choice decision in the sample of this study. This result might have been disguised because in the 5 categories of analysis, in each one of them, they were composed by more than 1 career, which could have biased the results, for example, if in the category ASS there were more candidates for career A than Accounting, results and interpretation might be biased towards this group. Mannheim's Generational Theory and the formation of generational units in which they possess the same entelechy and, therefore, would share a similar mentality justified these groupings. Results indicates that these individuals, although share a similar mentality, they experience the same stimuli in distinct ways and, maybe, they do not belong to the same generational unit. It is a possibility, because, other factors must be taken into account, such as individual cultural capital and socialization processes by which one of them experienced. Thus, there is a possibility that the grouping of individuals in its categories have not been effective, those factors aforementioned being underestimated.

This study also indicated less influence of family in career choice decision, which was not observed in other studies. New forms of family structures could explain this less influence, a fragile relationships among the members, though individually, some member can exercise some influence (e.g. father, mother).

Study Limitations

There are limitations to this study that must be considered. The first is the fact that the sample is limited to São Paulo metropolitan area. Although data was collected on an open event, most of the visitors came from São Paulo area, with some participants from other cities inside São Paulo State, not enabling a generalization of the results.

A second limitation relates to the few individuals that had Accounting as their career first option, not allowing an analysis of this group alone, being analysed in the ASS, not guaranteeing that all individuals from this category have more similar perception and experience the events similarly.

The third limitation refers to the statistical analysis. Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric test doesn't allow us to identify differences between groups, no being possible to identify among which categories the difference occurred, contrary to the ANOVA test, in which was possible to identify in which category the difference occurred.

The present study proposed to verify if the factors, seeing in literature and from the analysis of the *focus group*, would be influents for a career choice in Accounting before entering higher education. For future research, it is suggested a comparison of candidates expectations right starting the Accounting course and after, right before finishing it. Doing it, it could be possible to perceive if there would be a change of their expectation and perception

between this two moments. It could open doors to new discussions. Would this stereotyped perception of the Accounting profession as an Exact Science and methodical practice attract individuals with traits the profession is not looking for?

A stereotyped perception of the Accountant by individuals and that after enrolled in the Accounting course see that their expectations are not being met can lead to a greater evasion from Accounting courses or graduating unmotivated professionals without qualities market expects. This negative stereotype can occur due to the formation Accounting courses offer to their graduates, a rigid curricula, methodical and without possibilities of innovation and creativity and imagination, coercing them to adapt themselves to education inflexibility of the curricula proposed, perpetuating an negative image of the accountant through means of symbolic violence in their years of formation, signing on their chests the scarlet letter, stigmatizing them and turning them into a Hester Prynne of Accounting.

References

- Ahmed, K., Alam, K. F., Alam M. (1997). An empirical study of factors affecting accounting student's career choice in New Zealand. *Accounting Education*, 6 (4), 325-335.
- Albrecht, W. S., Sack, R. J. (2000). Accounting Education: Charting the Course through a Perilous Future. *Accounting Education Series*, 16, 1-72.
- Almeida, M. E. G. G. de., Pinho, L. V. de. (2008). Adolescência, família e escolhas: implicações na orientação profissional. *Psicologia Clínica*, 20 (2), 173-184.
- Auyeung, P., Sands, J. (1997). Factors influencing accounting students' career choice: a cross cultural validation study. *Accounting Education*, 6 (1), 13-23.
- Barreto, M. A., Aiello-Vaisberg, T. (2007). Escolha profissional e dramática do viver adolescente. *Psicologia & Sociedade*, 19 (1), 107-114.
- Beck, U., Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization – institutionalized individualism and its social and political consequences* (Patrick Camiller, Trad.). (1ª ed.). London, England: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Boltanski, L., Chiapello, È. (2009). *O novo espírito do capitalismo* (Ivone C. Benedetti, Trad.). (1ª ed.). São Paulo, Brasil: WMF Martins Fontes.
- Cavazotte, F. S. C. N., Lemos, A. H. C., Viana, M. D. A. (2012). Novas gerações no mercado de trabalho: expectativas renovadas ou antigos ideais? *Cadernos EBAPE.BR*, 10 (1), 162-180.
- Chen, C., Jones, K. T., McIntyre, D. D. (2008). Analyzing the factors relevant to student's estimations of the benefits and costs of pursuing an accounting career. *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 17 (3), 313-326.
- Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coeficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika*, 16 (3), 297-334.
- Dejoux, C., Wechtler, H. (2011). Diversité générationnelle: implications, principes et outils de management. *Revue Management & Avenir*, 3 (43), 227-238.
- Dubar, C. (2005). *A socialização – construção das identidades sociais e profissionais* (Andréa Stahel M. da Silva Trad.). (1ª ed.). São Paulo, Brasil: Martins Fontes.
- Eisner, S.P. (2005). Managing generation Y. *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 70, 4-12.

- Gras, N.S.B. (1942). Capitalism – concepts and history. *Bulletin of the Business Historical Society*, 16 (2), 21-42.
- Gati, I., Krausz, M., Osipow, S. H. (1996). A taxonomy of difficulties in career decision making. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 43 (4), 510-526.
- Germeijs, V., Verschueren, K. (2006). High school students' career decision-making process: development and validation of the Study Choice Task Inventory. *Journal of Career Assessment*, 14 (4), 449-471.
- Hickel, J., Khan, A. (2012). The culture of capitalism and the crisis of critique. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 85 (1), 203-228.
- Hirschi, A., Läge, D. (2007). The relation of secondary student's career-choice readiness to a six-phase mode of career decision making. *Journal of Career Development*, 34 (2), 164-191.
- Laufer, R. S., Bengston, V. L. (1974). Generations, aging, and social stratification: on the development of generational units. *Journal of Social Issues*, 30 (3), 181-205.
- Lindquist, T. M. (2008, Agosto). Recruiting the millennium generation: the new CPA. The CPA Journal. Disponível em <http://business.uni.edu/lindquist/Klagenfurt/PDFs/June%202013%20Afternoon/lindquist%20cpa%20generation%20paper.pdf>
- Lipovetsky, G. (2011). *Os tempos hipermodernos*. (Mário Vilela, Trad.). (4ª Reimpressão.). São Paulo, Brasil: Barcarolla.
- Mannheim, K. (1952). *The problem of generations*. In *Essays On The Sociology Of Knowledge* (pp. 297-312). (1ª ed.). New York, United States: Oxford University Press Inc., 1952.
- Mauldin, S., Crain, J. L., Mounce, P. H. (2000). The Accounting principles instructor's influence on student's decision to major in accounting. *Journal of Education for Business*, 75 (3), 142-148.
- Milliron, V. C. (2008). Exploring millennial student values and societal trends: accounting course selection preferences. *Issues in Accounting Education*, 23 (3), 405-419.
- Nepomuceno, R. F., Witter, G. P. (2010). Influência da família na decisão profissional: opinião de adolescentes. *Revista Semestral da Associação Brasileira de Psicologia Escolar e Educacional*, 14 (1), 15-22.
- Ojeda, B. S., Creutzberg, M., Feoli, A. M. P., Melo, D. S., Corbellini, V. L. (2009). Acadêmicos de enfermagem, nutrição e fisioterapia: a escolha profissional. *Revista Latino-Americana de Enfermagem*, 17 (3), 396-402.
- Oliveira, M. D. A., Melo-Silva, L. L. (2010). Estudantes universitários: a influência das variáveis socioeconômicas e culturais na carreira. *Revista Semestral da Associação Brasileira de Psicologia Escolar e Educacional*, 14 (1), 23-34.
- Oliveira, S. R., Piccinini, V. C., Bitencourt, B. M. (2012). Juventude, gerações e trabalho: é possível falar em geração Y no Brasil? *Organizações & Sociedade*, 19 (62), 551-558.
- Pereira, F. N., Garcia, A. (2007). Amizade e escolha profissional: influência ou cooperação? *Revista Brasileira de Orientação Profissional*, 8 (1), 71-86.

- Pimenta, M. M. (2007). “*Ser jovem*” e “*ser adulto*”: *identidades, representações e trajetórias*. (Tese de Doutorado Faculdade de Filosofia, Letras e Ciências Humanas da Universidade de São Paulo) Disponível em <http://www.teses.usp.br/teses/disponiveis/8/8132/tde-15052007-111215/pt-br.php>.
- Scharf, E. R., Rosa, C. P., Oliveira, D. (2012). Os hábitos de consumo das gerações Y e Z: a dimensão ambiental nos contextos familiar e escolar. *Revista Contemporânea de Economia e Gestão*, 10 (1), 48-60.
- Stein, J. (2013, Maio) The new greatest generation – why millennials will save us all. *Time Magazine*, 30-35.
- Sugahara, S., Boland, G., Cilloni, A. (2008). Factors influencing students’ choice of an accounting major in Australia. *Accounting Education: an international journal*, 17 37-54.
- Sutherland, T., Hoover, G. (2007). The millennials: Who are these students staring back at you in the classroom? *Accounting Education News*, 35 (3), 5-6.
- Tan, L. M., Laswad, F. (2006). Student’s beliefs, attitudes and intentions to major in *Accounting*. *Accounting Education: An International Journal*, 15 (2), 167-187.
- Vasconcelos, K. C. A., Merhi, D. Q., Goulart, V. M., Silva, A. R. L. (2010). A geração Y e suas âncoras de carreira. *Revista Eletrônica de Gestão Organizacional*, 8 (2), 226-244.