

Skills And Abilities Acquired By Accounting Professionals During The Training Period In A University In Colombia

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Abstract

The objective of this work is to know the skills and abilities acquired by public accounting professionals in their academic training process. To this end, a research was carried out with a quantitative approach, with a descriptive field design; The sample corresponds to 149 accounting professionals. The main result obtained is the following: in general, on average of every 10 professionals, 8 consider having acquired the skills and abilities necessary to carry out their professional activities, this under an ethical and social responsibility approach. Therefore, it was concluded that the education provided to these professionals is relevant.

Keyword : Skills and abilities ; accounting professionals ; university in Colombia

Introduction

Theodore Schultz (1961), argues that much of the prosperity of countries can be explained by human capital. The question is how to add this variable, that is, what component of the human being can explain growth? The answer seems simple, since most theoretical and empirical researchers accept that education plays a fundamental role in explaining the increase in the well-being of the territories. What has not been relatively simple is to know what is the measure of education that best represents human capital. In initial studies, it was believed that educational coverage and the average number of years of schooling were those that transmitted the abilities and skills; the studies of Assaf Razin (1977) Krueger and Lindahl (2001) Cohen and Soto (2007) obtained in most cases a significant effect. In

view of the above, with the aim of increasing the well-being, mainly of people in backward territories, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) focused on compulsory education and universal education at the primary level.

However, other empirical studies show that it is the quality of education or cognitive skills (what students learn) that determines the effect of human capital on increasing well-being, including the work of Hanushek and Kimko (2000) and Breton (2015). Which, reveal that the measures embodied in the MDGs, in terms of educational policy, were insufficient to generate well-being, since it focused more on the quantity of education than on its quality. In response, for the year 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established,

where an important role is given to the quality of education.

In the present work, this second approach is taken, that is, the skills and abilities that accounting professionals learned in their training process; which are the support to carry out their activities.

To this end, the present study is structured as follows: in the following section (2) a review of the literature on the work that has been done on human capital; in section 3, details are given on the sample and the type of methodology used; section 4 shows the results obtained; and finally, In section 5 are the conclusions.

Background

The formation of people in any society is essential for achieving economic growth and development, for at least two reasons. First, formal education has increasing returns for the people who possess it, that is, a person with higher qualifications will have a higher salary (Mincer, 1974). On the other hand, the social returns of education are even greater, since it is society in general that ends up benefiting; for example, a person who has acquired knowledge in agronomy can go to the field and multiply this without needing people from that territory to go to an institution of higher education, is what could be described as a method of imitation or empiricism; the previous one will improve the well-being of the people of that territory, since they will learn new techniques or knowledge that will allow them to obtain greater productivity.

However, throughout history it has been sought that people acquire the necessary knowledge to transform and promote the growth and development of each territory. As mentioned so far, education is central to achieving this; in the words of Nelson and

Phelps (1966) education is important for the appropriation of new technological developments and innovation, because it gives workers the ability to receive, decode and understand information, in other words, processing and interpretation is important to perform or learn to perform many jobs.

In principle, it was believed that it was the years of schooling that increased people's skills, so it was decided to increase educational coverage. The conception was simple, the territories with the highest average years of schooling, would be increasingly productive and consequently increasingly rich. Given the above, in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), universal primary education was integrated as a fundamental goal. However, due to the above, studies such as those of Razin (1977), Hage, Garnier and Fuller (1988), Barro R. (1991), Krueger and Lindahl (2001) and Cohen and Soto (2007) confirmed that the enrollment rate or average years of schooling were the determinants of a country's prosperity. Given this, the vast majority of territories substantially increased educational coverage.

With the passage of time, new doubts began to arise, given that most territories had chosen to carry out a predatory policy in terms of educational coverage, but without positive results, in other words, their population had increased the average years of schooling, but their well-being did not increase. Faced with this situation, the explanation given by Hanushek and Kimko (2000) is that it does not matter the number of years of schooling, what really matters is the quality; that is, it does not matter how many average years of schooling a person has, what really matters is what he has learned in passing through education formally.

This gave way to a new era of studies based on the quality of education as a determinant of a

country's prosperity, the works of Barro (2001), Hanushek and Woessmann, (2008), Hanushek and Woessmann (2012a), Hanushek and Woessmann (2012b), Hanushek (2013), Altinok and Aldemir (2017) and Breton (2015), find that the quality of education has a consistent and significantly greater effect than mere years of schooling. Therefore, from 2015 the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were established and in them it was reflected as a goal in its objective 4, to provide quality education.

Theoretical Referent

In view of the above, to develop this work, the skills and abilities acquired by accounting professionals in their training process will be taken into account.

Human capital theory: Shultz (1961) was one of the first to address the concept of human capital, since the welfare of countries is increased in part by the composition of their labor force. Humancapital can be thought of as the skills that people acquire through formal education or through experience (empiricism). Nelson & Phelps (1966) describe the importance of education for the appropriation of new technological developments and innovation; since education gives workers the ability to receive, decode and understand information. Human capital is of paramount importance, seen from the perspective of Hanushek and Kimko (2000), as it incorporates cognitive skills that enable people to be more productive. In the case of Accounting professionals, they will acquire skills and abilities in their area of knowledge to offer in the labor market.

Theory of wages: this theory was developed by Mincer (1974) which seeks to find the determinants of a person's salary, for this it makes use of inferential statistics. As

explanatory variables it takes the years of schooling, experience and experience squared, in other words, the salary depends on each of these variables. Studies such as those of Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2004), Suqin (2013), Ordaz (2007), García (2019), Sánchez (2022) prove the validity of this theory; since their findings show that one year of schooling increases a person's salary.

Methodology

The type of research that was used for the development of the study is a field research, with a quantitative approach and with a descriptive research design. Bernal (2010) argues that the quantitative method or traditional method "is used to measure the characteristics of social phenomena, which derives from a conceptual framework relevant to the problem analyzed, a series of postulates that express relationships between the variables studied deductively. This method tends to generalize and normalize the results (p.60)." Hernández, S. (2018) asserts that quantitative research allows to establish exactly the patterns of behavior of a society (p.10). On the other hand, Hueso and Cascant (2012) express that this is based on statistical techniques to know the characteristics of the object of study.

The sample is non-probabilistic, according to López, P. (2004) the sample is a representative part of the study population; The sample size is 149 accounting professionals. The instrument used to collect the information was the survey, which was applied to professionals who had already completed their university education cycle, through a questionnaire; This in order to know the socio-economic characteristics, and the skills and abilities acquired during their stay at the university.

The data obtained were organized and tabulated for the calculation of the descriptive analysis. Next, the answers were organized, for this the answers with greater relevance for

the respective analysis and interpretation of the data were taken into account.

Results

Descriptive analysis

Table 1
Socio-demographic characteristics

Age	Percentage	Gender	Percentage	Marital status	Percentage	Children	Percentage
19-25	57%	Male	28%	Bachelor	76%	No	71%
26-35	37%	Female	72%	Married	13%	1	19%
36-45				Common-law		2	
	3%			marriage	8%		8%
But of 45	3%			Separate	3%	3	2%

Note:

Table 1 shows the main socio-demographic characteristics of the subjects of the study sample. In it, it can be seen that more than half of the sample (57%) are in a range of 19 to 25 years of age; followed by those between 26 and 35 years with 37%. On the other hand, it is observed that 72% of the sample are women; in turn, that three quarters are single (76%),

and that 71% do not have children, followed by those who have one, two and three, this with 19%, 8% and 2% respectively. In a general way, it can be said that it is a young sample, which is mainly composed of women, in which most are single and do not have children.

Table 2
Economic characteristics

Estratificación	Percentage	Source of Income	Percentage	Revenue	Percentage
Low-Low	27%	Employee	50%	Less than 1 SMMLV	40%
Low	48%	Family	28%	1 to less than 2 SMMLV	52%
Low-Medium	21%	Miscellaneous trades	7%	2 to less than 3 SMMLV	4%
Middle	3%	Employer	1%	No Income	3%
Medium High	1%	Self-Employed	15%		

Note:

On the other hand, Table 2 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the study sample. In this, it can be seen that almost half (48%) are classified in a B-garlic stratification, followed by those in the Low-Low range (27%) and by those who consider themselves to be in a Low-Middle stratum (21%). On the other hand, income is mainly obtained from income from work (employed), since half of the sample claimed to obtain it from employment; followed by those who derive their income from their relatives (27%), and by those who obtain their income independently. In turn, it can be seen that more than half receive between one and less than

two minimum wages (52%), followed by those who receive less than one minimum wage (40%); and those who earn between two and three minimum wages 4% and those who do not have any type of income 3%. Given the above, it can be affirmed that the subjects of the sample are mostly of Low stratum, who receive income thanks to their employment, which ranges between one and less than two minimum wages.

However, then, Table 3 and 4 present the skills and abilities acquired in the educational process by accounting professionals.

Table 3
Skills and abilities acquired in vocational education

Dexterity or Ability	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Almost never	Never
Identifies the epistemology and accounting theory in the work of the accounting discipline.	36%	44%	20%	0%	0%
It relates epistemology and accounting theory in professional work to the reality of public and private organizations and the community in general.	30%	50%	20%	0%	0%
Acts with transformational leadership in professional work with a human and ethical sense generating value in organizations.	38%	52%	9%	1%	0%
Solves problems of discipline, profession and society through research, with critical, reflective and analytical thinking, for the benefit of the community and organizations.	38%	48%	13%	1%	0%

It integrates ethical principles and values in the exercise of the work of the accounting discipline with competence and professional judgment.	50%	41%	9%	0%	0%
Demonstrates understanding of information and business systems adjusted to the challenges and opportunities of the accounting discipline in the face of new regulatory frameworks	33%	52%	13%	1%	1%

Table 3 shows part of the skills and abilities that accounting professionals acquired in their university education process. In general, it can be seen that most of the answers were always and almost always. Starting from the above, and making an interpretation of descending form; it is evident that professionals identify the epistemology and the theory in which to make professional in front of the reality of public organizations, private and the community in general, since 30% always claim to do so, while 50% almost always do. This shows that the theory acquired in the training process is relevant to the accounting reality of the companies of the territory. In this same order, it is observed that the majority of professionals act with transformational leadership in professional work with a human and ethical sense generating value in organizations, given that 38% always said they do so and 52% almost always.

On the other hand, it can be evidenced that 38% of professionals in the sample always solve problems of the discipline, the profession and society, through research with critical, reflective and analytical thinking, for the benefit of the community and organizations, while 48% almost always do. This reflects that in its training process the resolution of problems based on research was integrated, in other words, objectively. In turn, half of the professionals always integrate into their work the principles and ethical values of the accounting discipline, with competence and professional judgment; To the above, 41% also claim almost always to do so. Finally, it is evident that the accounting professionals in the sample understand the regulatory changes, understanding that these bring opportunities and challenges; since 33% always say they do so and 52% almost always. Given this, it can be deduced that accounting professionals are mostly to face the changes in their environment.

Table 4

Skills and abilities acquired in vocational education

Dexterity or Ability	Always	Almost always	Sometimes	Almost never	Never
Proposes strategies for financial and managerial decision making.	36%	46%	16%	1%	0%
Act with social responsibility protecting the public interest.	48%	37%	14%	0%	1%
It creates companies and generates employment.	30%	31%	22%	9%	9%
It responds to the challenges and needs of the profession contributing to the solution of problems at regional, national and international levels.	31%	47%	18%	3%	1%
It contributes to the organizational development and good governance of public and private entities.	31%	46%	17%	3%	2%
Evaluates the business management of public and private organizations with social responsibility.	31%	50%	14%	3%	2%

In Table 4, it can be seen that accounting professionals in their training process learned the ability to propose strategies for financial and managerial decision making, given that 36% affirm that they always do so and 46% almost always. In turn, 48% always act with social responsibility protecting the public interest, followed by 3-7% who almost always do. Now, in terms of the skill or ability to create companies and be a generator of employment, it can be evidenced that approximately a third to part consider that acquired that skill, while another third part considers that almost always; It is noteworthy that for this item it was obtained that 18% of the sample consider

that almost never or never acquired. They laughed at those skills.

In this vein, 31% of professionals always respond to the challenges and needs of the profession, contributing to the solution of problems at regional, national and international level; In turn, 47% consider that it almost always does and 18% that sometimes. In the same way, it is evident that professionals consider that they contribute to the organizational development and good governance of public and private entities; given that 31% always say they do so and 46% consider that they almost always do so.

Finally, 30% affirm that they always value the business management of public and private organizations with social responsibility, while half of the sample almost always considers doing so. This reflects that accounting professionals act responsibly and ethically when performing their tasks.

Conclusions

Education is of paramount importance for the prosperity of a territory, since through it individuals acquire the necessary knowledge to transform their lives and environment; when their qualifications increase, their salary also increases, and in turn, by carrying out what they have learned ethically, they can transform the lives of the people around them (Weil, 2006, p.61)

It was obtained that the majority of professionals integrate ethical principles and values in the exercise of the work of the accounting discipline with competence and professional judgment, given that 50% always do, added to the above, 41% almost always do; which demonstrates in part the ethical principles formally acquired. The above, in line with what was stated by Angulo and Garvey (2009) where the importance of ethics in the training of accounting professionals is highlighted.

On the other hand, it can be evidenced that professionals consider that they do not create a company or generate employment, given that approximately 60% (the sum among those who responded always and almost always) consider being able to carry out this activity.

However, in general it can be seen that accounting professionals have acquired skills and abilities in their training process, since on average of every 10, 8 answered that they always or almost always develop their activities with what they have learned. The

above shows that the education provided in the training process is learned by professionals; this according to Hanushek and Kimko (2001), where it matters what is really learned in the training process.

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