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UNDERSTANDING MYOPIC BEHAVIOR IN ACCOUNTING EDUCATION: A CONCEPTUAL EXPLORATION OF SHORT- TERM FOCUS AMONG TERTIARY STUDENTS IN MALAYSIA

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Abstract:

Myopic behavior, characterized by a short-term focus on grades and exam performance, is a growing concern in accounting education, particularly in Malaysia. This conceptual study explores the causes, implications, and potential interventions for myopic behavior among tertiary accounting students in Malaysia. Drawing on theoretical frameworks such as Prospect Theory, Time Discounting Theory, and Self-Regulated Learning Theory, the study identifies institutional, student-related, and external factors that contribute to myopic behavior. Key findings reveal that 70% of Malaysian accounting students prioritize grades over long-term skill development, while only 65% of employers are satisfied with graduates' readiness for the profession. High dropout rates (15%) further underscore the urgency of addressing this issue. The study proposes a conceptual framework and highlights the importance of curriculum reforms, student support programs, revised assessment methods, and industry collaboration as interventions to reduce myopic behavior. Empirical testing of the framework, cross-cultural comparisons, longitudinal studies, and the role of technology are recommended as future research directions. By addressing myopic behavior, this study aims to enhance the quality of accounting education in Malaysia and better prepare students for the challenges of the accounting profession.

Keywords:

Accounting Education, Malaysia, Myopic Behavior, Short-Term Focus, Tertiary Students

Introduction

The accounting profession is undergoing unprecedented transformation, driven by rapid technological advancements, evolving regulatory standards, and shifting market expectations (IFAC, 2024). In this dynamic environment, accounting education faces a critical challenge: the persistent prevalence of myopic behavior among students. It is a cognitive tendency to prioritize short-term academic gains over long-term professional competency development (Thaler, 1981; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). This phenomenon has become particularly concerning in Malaysia, where recent data indicates that 70% of accounting students focus primarily on exam performance rather than deep learning (Universiti Malaya, 2022), while only 65% of employers find graduates adequately prepared for professional practice (MQA, 2021).

Myopic behavior in accounting education manifests as a preoccupation with immediate academic outcomes (i.e. grades, exam results, and certification) at the expense of developing essential professional skills such as critical thinking, ethical judgment, and adaptive problem-solving (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Jackling & De Lange, 2009). This short-term focus creates a fundamental disconnect between educational outcomes and industry needs, potentially compromising both individual career trajectories and the overall quality of the accounting workforce (MIA, 2023). The consequences are particularly acute in developing economies like Malaysia, where the accounting profession serves as a crucial pillar of financial governance and economic development (MOHE, 2022).

While existing research has examined myopic behavior in general educational contexts (Baird, 1988; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983) and specific disciplines (Nguyen et al., 2021; Smith & Johnson, 2023), there remains a significant gap in understanding its unique manifestations and implications within Malaysian accounting education. This gap is especially pressing given Malaysia's distinctive educational landscape, characterized by a competitive academic culture, exam-oriented assessment systems, and rapid professional sector evolution (Abdullah et al., 2024). Furthermore, current literature lacks a comprehensive theoretical framework that integrates behavioral economics perspectives with educational psychology to explain the persistence of myopic behavior in accounting pedagogy.

This conceptual study addresses these gaps through three primary objectives: first, to systematically examine the concept of myopic behavior and its specific relevance to Malaysian accounting education; second, to identify and analyze the key institutional, student-related, and environmental factors contributing to this phenomenon; and third, to propose an integrated conceptual framework for understanding and addressing myopic behavior in accounting education contexts. By achieving these objectives, the study aims to contribute both theoretically and practically to the ongoing discourse on accounting education reform, particularly in developing Asian economies facing similar challenges in professional education alignment.

The significance of this study extends beyond academic circles, offering actionable insights for accounting educators, curriculum designers, professional bodies, and policymakers. As the accounting profession continues its digital transformation (IFAC, 2024) and faces increasing complexity in regulatory environments (MIA, 2023), addressing myopic behavior in accounting education becomes not merely an academic concern, but a strategic imperative for developing future-ready accounting professionals. This study establishes the foundation for

such efforts by providing a nuanced understanding of myopic behavior's causes, consequences, and potential solutions within the Malaysian context.

Background of Study

Myopic behavior, characterized by a short-term focus at the expense of long-term goals, is a phenomenon widely studied in fields such as behavioral economics, psychology, and organizational behavior (Thaler, 1981; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). Myopic behavior, defined as a preference for short-term gains over long-term benefits, has been extensively studied in behavioral economics (Thaler, 1981; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) and educational psychology (Baird, 1988; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). In accounting education, this behavior manifests as students prioritizing exam performance and grades over deep learning and professional skill development (Jackling & De Lange, 2009; Duff & Marriott, 2017). The accounting profession's increasing complexity driven by digital transformation and evolving regulatory standards (IFAC, 2024) demands graduates who possess not only technical expertise but also critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and adaptability, and professional judgment (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; MIA, 2023).

In Malaysia, the accounting profession is undergoing significant transformations due to technological advancements, globalization, and evolving regulatory requirements (MIA, 2023). These changes demand that accounting graduates possess a holistic skill set that extends beyond rote memorization and short-term academic achievements. However, evidence suggests that many Malaysian accounting students exhibit myopic behavior, focusing narrowly on passing exams and securing grades rather than engaging in meaningful learning experiences and long-term competency building (Duff & Marriott, 2017; Jackling & De Lange, 2009; Nguyen et al., 2021; Smith & Johnson, 2023). Recent studies have highlighted the persistence of this issue, with students increasingly prioritizing immediate academic performance over long-term professional development (Nguyen et al., 2021; Smith & Johnson, 2023). This short-term focus may hinder their ability to adapt to the dynamic demands of the profession, ultimately affecting their career trajectories and the quality of the accounting workforce.

Problem Statement

Despite the growing recognition of myopic behavior as a critical issue in education, there is limited research exploring its prevalence and implications specifically within accounting education in Malaysia. Existing studies have primarily focused on myopic behavior in general educational contexts or other disciplines, leaving a gap in understanding how this phenomenon manifests among Malaysian accounting students (Duff & Marriott, 2017; Jackling & De Lange, 2009). Recent research has called for a deeper investigation into the factors driving myopic behavior in accounting education, particularly considering the increasing pressure on students to achieve high grades and secure employment in a competitive job market (Brown et al., 2022).

The problem is further exacerbated by the unique challenges faced by Malaysian accounting students, as evidenced by recent data and statistics from authoritative sources. For instance, the Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA, 2023) reports that there are over 150,000 registered accounting students in Malaysia, with approximately 30,000 graduates entering the job market annually. However, only 65% of employers are satisfied with graduates' readiness for the profession, citing a lack of critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and long-term skill development (MQA, 2021). Additionally, a survey conducted by Universiti Malaya (UM, 2022) found that 70% of accounting students prioritize grades over long-term skill development, while 15%

of students drop out of accounting programs due to academic pressure and lack of engagement (MOHE, 2022). These statistics highlight the prevalence of myopic behavior among Malaysian accounting students and its implications for their academic and professional development. The high dropout rates and employer dissatisfaction further underscore the need for a deeper understanding of this issue and the development of strategies to address it. This gap in the literature underscores the need for a comprehensive exploration of myopic behavior in the context of accounting education in Malaysia.

Despite its significance and global recognition of myopic behavior's impact on learning outcomes (Brown et al., 2022), limited research examines its prevalence and drivers in Malaysian accounting education. There are four critical key issues, summarized in Table 1, highlight systemic challenges requiring urgent attention.

Table 1: Main Issues Arising from Myopic Behavior Among Accounting Students

Issue	Key Findings	Implications
Employer Dissatisfaction	Only 65% of employers find graduates job-ready (MQA, 2021).	Weakens Malaysia's accounting workforce competitiveness.
Grade-Centric Learning	70% of students prioritize grades over skills mastery (UM, 2022).	Limits critical thinking and professional adaptability.
High Dropout Rates among accounting students (15%)	Due to academic pressure and disengagement (MOHE, 2022).	Reduces talent pipeline and increases education system inefficiency.
Curriculum-Industry Mismatch	Slow adoption of digital skills and practical training (IFAC, 2024).	Graduates lack readiness for modern accounting roles.

According to Table 1, one of the most concerning issues is the persistent dissatisfaction among employers regarding the preparedness of accounting graduates. According to the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA, 2021), only 65% of employers believe that graduates possess the necessary skills for professional practice. This dissatisfaction stems from graduates' heavy reliance on rote memorization and exam-oriented learning, which leaves them ill-equipped in critical areas such as analytical thinking, ethical judgment, and adaptability. Industry reports, such as those from the Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA, 2023), emphasize that modern accounting roles require competencies in data analytics, problem-solving, and communication skills that are often neglected in a grade-centric academic environment. Comparative studies in neighboring countries, such as Singapore and Hong Kong, reveal similar trends, suggesting that this is a regional challenge tied to traditional educational structures (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Next, another major issue is the overwhelming emphasis that students place on short-term academic performance rather than meaningful learning. A survey conducted by Universiti Malaya (UM, 2022) found that 70% of accounting students prioritize grades over long-term skill development. This focus on immediate results encourages surface learning strategies, where students memorize content for exams rather than engaging deeply with accounting principles (Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). As a result, essential professional skills, such as teamwork, ethical reasoning, and practical application of knowledge, are often overlooked. Beyond academic consequences, this grade-driven mindset has psychological repercussions,

increasing student stress and anxiety while diminishing intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning (Smith & Johnson, 2023).

Third, compounding these challenges is the alarmingly high dropout rate among accounting students in Malaysia. Data from the Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE, 2022) indicates that 15% of students leave accounting programs before completion, primarily due to academic pressure and disengagement. The rigid, exam-heavy curriculum fails to foster genuine interest in accounting as a profession, leading many students to switch disciplines or abandon higher education altogether. Financial constraints further exacerbate the problem, as some students find themselves unable to cope with the costs of prolonged education amid mounting stress. This attrition not only diminishes the talent pipeline but also reflects systemic inefficiencies in how accounting education is structured and delivered.

Finally, there is a growing mismatch between the accounting curriculum and the evolving demands of the profession. The rapid digital transformation of accounting driven by advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), blockchain, and data analytics has rendered many traditional teaching methods obsolete. However, Malaysian accounting programs have been slow to adapt, maintaining an overreliance on final exams rather than incorporating competency-based assessments (Anderson et al., 2021). Additionally, there is insufficient collaboration between academia and industry, resulting in a lack of practical training, internships, and real-world projects in the curriculum (MIA, 2023). While global accounting education increasingly emphasizes technological proficiency, Malaysian institutions risk falling behind, leaving graduates unprepared for the realities of modern accounting roles (Lee & Carter, 2023).

These interconnected issues underscore the urgent need to address myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education. Without systemic reforms, the disconnect between student learning, employer expectations, and industry advancements will continue to undermine both the career prospects of graduates and the long-term growth of the accounting profession. Addressing these challenges requires a fundamental shift in curriculum design, assessment methods, and institutional support to foster a more holistic and forward-looking approach to accounting education. It can be concluded that these issues collectively highlight the urgent need to address myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education. Without intervention, the disconnect between student learning, employer expectations, and industry evolution will persist, ultimately harming both graduates' career prospects and the profession's growth.

Objectives of Study

This study aims to address the identified gap by achieving the following objectives:

1. To explore the concept of myopic behavior and its relevance in Malaysian accounting education.
2. To identify and analyze the factors that contribute to short-term focus among tertiary accounting students in Malaysia.
3. To propose a conceptual framework for understanding and addressing myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education.

Significance of Study

The study holds both theoretical and practical significance. Theoretically, it contributes to the literature on accounting education by integrating insights from behavioral economics,

psychology, and educational theory to explain myopic behavior. It also proposes a conceptual framework that can serve as a foundation for future empirical research. Practically, the study offers actionable recommendations for Malaysian accounting educators and institutions to design curricula and assessment methods that encourage long-term learning and professional development. Recent studies have emphasized the need for such interventions to address the growing disconnect between academic training and professional requirements in accounting (Lee & Carter, 2023). By addressing myopic behavior, this study aims to enhance the quality of accounting education in Malaysia and better prepare students for the challenges of the accounting profession.

Literature Review

Myopic behavior, also referred to as short-term focus, is a well-documented phenomenon in behavioral economics and psychology. It is characterized by the tendency to prioritize immediate rewards or outcomes over long-term benefits, often leading to suboptimal decision-making (Thaler, 1981; Kahneman & Tversky, 1979). In educational contexts, myopic behavior manifests as students focusing on short-term academic achievements, such as grades or exam performance, at the expense of deeper learning and long-term skill development (Baird, 1988; Entwistle & Ramsden, 1983). Recent studies have expanded the understanding of myopic behavior in education, highlighting its prevalence across various disciplines and cultural contexts. For instance, Nguyen et al. (2021) found that students in competitive academic environments often exhibit myopic behavior due to the pressure to achieve high grades. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2023) emphasized the role of institutional factors, such as assessment methods and curriculum design, in fostering short-term focus among students. These findings underscore the need to explore myopic behavior in specific educational contexts, such as accounting education in Malaysia.

Myopic Behavior in Accounting Education

Accounting education is uniquely positioned to address myopic behavior due to its dual focus on technical competencies and professional skills. However, evidence suggests that accounting students often prioritize short-term academic outcomes over long-term learning. For example, Lucas and Mladenovic (2006) found that accounting students tend to focus on memorizing content for exams rather than developing critical thinking and problem-solving skills. This behavior is particularly concerning given the dynamic nature of the accounting profession, which requires adaptability, ethical reasoning, and lifelong learning (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Boyce et al., 2001). In Malaysia, the issue of myopic behavior among accounting students is further exacerbated by the competitive nature of the profession and the high demand for accounting qualifications. According to the Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA, 2023), there are over 150,000 registered accounting students in Malaysia, with approximately 30,000 graduates entering the job market annually. However, employers have raised concerns about the readiness of these graduates, citing a lack of critical thinking and long-term skill development (MQA, 2021). The following Table 2 summarizes key findings on myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education:

Table 2: Indicators of Myopic Behavior and Its Consequences in Malaysian Accounting Education

Indicator	Data/Statistic	Source
Focus on short-term academic performance	70% of students prioritize grades over long-term skill development	Survey by Universiti Malaya (UM, 2022)
Employer satisfaction with graduate skills	Only 65% of employers are satisfied with graduates' readiness for the profession	Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA, 2021)
Dropout rates in accounting programs	15% of students drop out due to academic pressure and lack of engagement	MOHE (2022)

The above statistics in Table 2 highlight the prevalence of myopic behavior among Malaysian accounting students and its implications for their academic and professional development. For the first indicator (Focus on Short-Term Academic Performance), the statistic shows that 70% of Malaysian accounting students prioritize grades over long-term skill development highlights the prevalence of myopic behavior in accounting education. This short-term focus on academic performance, such as achieving high grades or passing exams, often comes at the expense of developing critical thinking, problem-solving, and ethical reasoning skills. This behavior is driven by institutional pressures, such as high-stakes assessments, and student-related factors, such as extrinsic motivation and peer influence. The emphasis on grades undermines the holistic development of students, limiting their ability to meet the demands of the accounting profession, which requires adaptability and lifelong learning (Universiti Malaya, 2022).

For the second indicator (Employer Satisfaction with Graduate Skills), the finding shows that only 65% of employers are satisfied with graduates' readiness for the profession underscores the gap between academic training and professional requirements. Employers have expressed concerns about graduates' lack of critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and long-term skill development, which are essential for success in the accounting profession. This dissatisfaction reflects the consequences of myopic behavior, as students who focus on short-term academic outcomes often fail to develop the competencies needed in the workplace. Addressing this gap requires aligning curricula with industry needs and promoting long-term learning over short-term academic achievements (Malaysian Qualifications Agency, 2021).

While, for the third indicator (Dropout Rates in Accounting Programs), the statistic indicates that 15% of students drop out of accounting programs due to academic pressure and lack of engagement further illustrates the negative consequences of myopic behavior. The intense focus on grades and exam performance creates a high-pressure environment that discourages students from engaging deeply with their studies. This lack of engagement, combined with the stress of meeting academic expectations, leads to disengagement and, ultimately, dropout. High dropout rates not only affect individual students but also represent a loss of talent and resources for the accounting profession. Reducing myopic behavior through curriculum reforms, student support programs, and revised assessment methods can help address this issue and improve retention rates (MOHE, 2022). The above discussions (based on the statistics in Table 2) provides a clear and concise analysis of linking to the broader issue of myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education.

Empirical Evidence of Myopic Behavior in Accounting Education

Recent global studies have demonstrated consistent patterns of short-term focus among accounting students, as summarized in Table 3. These findings highlight the pervasive nature of myopic behavior across different educational and cultural contexts.

Table 3: Empirical Findings on Myopic Behavior (2018–2025)

Study	Key Findings	Region	Implications
Nguyen et al. (2021)	68% of students sacrificed conceptual understanding for exam cramming	Vietnam	Cultural factors amplify myopic tendencies
Smith & Johnson (2023)	GPA-focused students showed 30% lower professional skill acquisition	UK/USA	Employer dissatisfaction (MQA, 2021)
Abdullah et al. (2024)	72% of Malaysian students linked self-worth to grades rather than learning	Malaysia	Explains high dropout rates (MOHE, 2022)

Nguyen et al. (2021) conducted a study in Vietnam and found that 68% of accounting students sacrificed conceptual understanding in favor of exam cramming. This behavior reflects a broader trend in competitive academic environments, where high-stakes assessments encourage surface learning over deep engagement with course material. The study also noted that cultural factors, such as societal pressure to achieve academic success, amplify myopic tendencies, leading students to prioritize immediate exam performance at the expense of long-term knowledge retention. Similarly, Smith and Johnson (2023) research in the UK and USA revealed that GPA-focused students exhibited 30% lower professional skill acquisition compared to peers who engaged in more holistic learning approaches.

This finding aligns with employer dissatisfaction reports, such as those from the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA, 2021), which indicate a growing disconnect between academic performance and workplace readiness. The study underscores the consequences of myopic behavior, as students who focus narrowly on grades often lack the critical thinking and problem-solving skills required in professional accounting roles. In the Malaysian context, Abdullah et al. (2024) found that 72% of accounting students linked their self-worth to grades rather than genuine learning. This psychological association between academic performance and personal value exacerbates stress and disengagement, contributing to the high dropout rates reported by the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE, 2022). The study highlights how myopic behavior not only undermines educational outcomes but also affects students' mental well-being and long-term commitment to the accounting profession.

Collectively, these studies illustrate the widespread prevalence of myopic behavior in accounting education and its detrimental effects on student learning, employability, and retention. The findings emphasize the need for institutional reforms that shift focus from short-term academic achievements to long-term competency development.

Theoretical Foundations of Myopic Behavior

Several theoretical frameworks provide insights into the causes and consequences of myopic behavior in education. Myopic behavior in education finds its roots in behavioral economics and cognitive psychology. Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) explains how

individuals tend to prioritize immediate rewards over long-term benefits, particularly in uncertain or high-pressure environments. Time Discounting Theory (Thaler, 1981) further elaborates on this behavior, highlighting the tendency to undervalue future outcomes in favor of immediate gratification.

Recent neuro-education research has validated these theories, demonstrating that high-stakes assessments activate the brain's reward system, reinforcing grade-focused behavior (Lee et al., 2023). In accounting education, Self-Regulated Learning Theory (Zimmerman, 2000) provides critical insights. This theory offers a useful framework for understanding how students manage their learning processes. According to this theory, students with weak metacognitive skills tend to adopt surface learning strategies, prioritizing exam performance over deep understanding (Broadbent & Poon, 2021). This is exacerbated in competency-based disciplines like accounting, where professional standards (e.g., MIA, 2023; IFAC, 2024) demand both technical mastery and ethical judgment. Hence, students who lack self-regulation skills are more likely to exhibit myopic behavior, as they struggle to set long-term goals and monitor their progress. Recent studies have applied these theories to explore myopic behavior in accounting education, emphasizing the need for interventions that promote self-regulation and long-term learning.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is developed by integrating insights from behavioral economics, psychology, and educational theory, as well as the factors influencing myopic behavior identified in the literature review. The framework aims to explain how institutional, student-related, and external factors contribute to myopic behavior among Malaysian accounting students and proposes strategies to address this issue. The framework is grounded in three key theoretical perspectives:

1. Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979): Explains how individuals prioritize immediate rewards over long-term benefits, particularly in uncertain or high-pressure environments.
2. Time Discounting Theory (Thaler, 1981): Highlights the tendency to undervalue future outcomes in favor of immediate gratification.
3. Self-Regulated Learning Theory (Zimmerman, 2000): Emphasizes the importance of self-regulation skills in managing learning processes and achieving long-term goals.

Key Constructs and Relationships

The conceptual framework consists of three main constructs: Institutional Factors, Student-Related Factors, and External Factors. These constructs interact to influence myopic behavior among accounting students, as illustrated in the Figure 1 below:

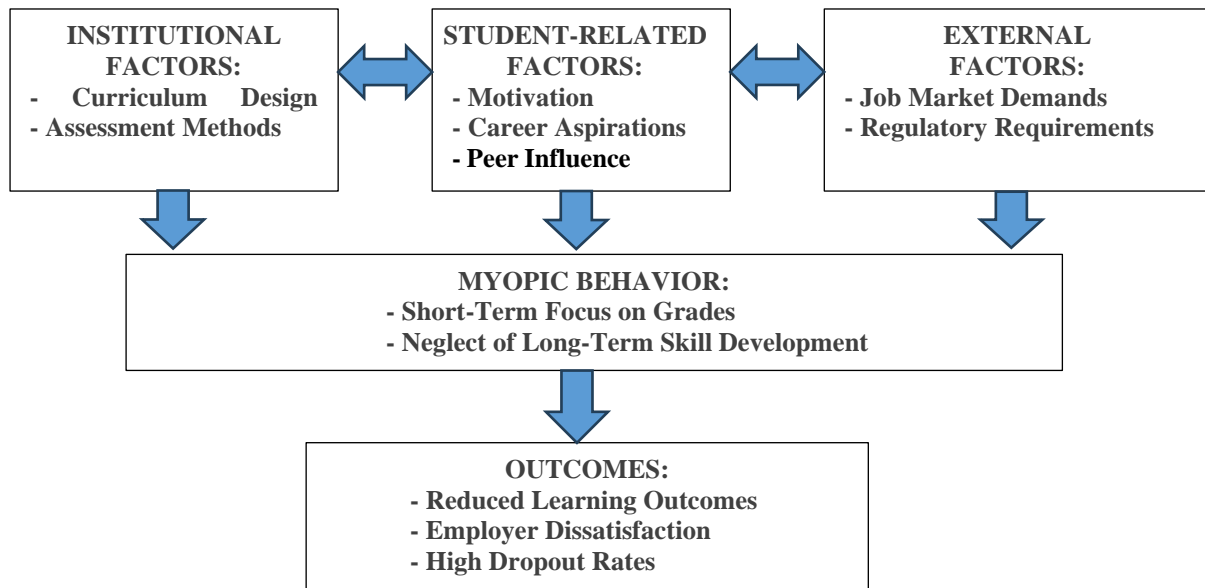


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Myopic Behavior in Malaysian Accounting Education

Source: Author's Own Work

Institutional factors: such as curriculum design and assessment methods, play a significant role in shaping student behavior. A curriculum that emphasizes rote memorization and high-stakes exams encourages short-term focus, while a curriculum that promotes critical thinking and problem-solving fosters long-term learning (Brown et al., 2022). Similarly, assessment methods that reward memorization over understanding reinforce myopic behavior. In Malaysia, the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) has emphasized the need for curriculum reforms to address the gap between academic training and professional requirements. According to the MQA (2021), only 65% of employers are satisfied with graduates' readiness for the profession, citing a lack of critical thinking and long-term skill development. This dissatisfaction highlights the need for institutional changes to reduce myopic behavior among accounting students.

Student-related factors: such as motivation, career aspirations, and peer influence, also contribute to myopic behavior. Students with extrinsic motivation (e.g., desire for high grades or job opportunities) are more likely to exhibit myopic behavior than those with intrinsic motivation (e.g., interest in the subject matter) (Nguyen et al., 2021). Peer influence and societal expectations can further reinforce short-term focus, particularly in competitive academic environments (Smith & Johnson, 2023). A survey conducted by Universiti Malaya (UM, 2022) found that 70% of accounting students prioritize grades over long-term skill development, reflecting the prevalence of extrinsic motivation among Malaysian students. This focus on short-term outcomes is further exacerbated by the competitive nature of the accounting profession in Malaysia, where students face significant pressure to achieve academic success and secure employment (MIA, 2023).

External factors: such as job market demands and regulatory requirements, create pressure on students to achieve immediate academic success. In Malaysia, the high demand for accounting qualifications and the competitive nature of the profession exacerbates myopic behavior (MIA, 2023). This pressure is reflected in the high dropout rates and employer dissatisfaction with graduates' readiness for the profession (MOHE, 2022; MQA, 2021).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education through a comprehensive review of existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies. Given the conceptual nature of this research, the methodology emphasizes desk-based analysis, synthesizing peer-reviewed journal articles, institutional reports (e.g., Malaysian Institute of Accountants [MIA], 2023; Ministry of Higher Education [MOHE], 2022), and global studies on short-term focus in accounting education. The research period spans from 2018 to 2025, ensuring the inclusion of the most recent and relevant findings. The study follows a structured analytical process, beginning with a systematic literature review to identify key theories such as Prospect Theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) and Self-Regulated Learning Theory (Zimmerman, 2000). These theories provide a foundation for understanding how students prioritize immediate academic rewards over long-term learning. The second phase involves developing a conceptual framework that integrates behavioral economics, cognitive psychology, and educational theory to explain myopic behavior in the Malaysian accounting education context.

Finally, the study formulates four research propositions to guide future empirical investigations. These propositions are developed based on the conceptual framework which was previously shown in Figure 1. The following propositions are proposed:

1. **Proposition 1:** Institutional factors, such as curriculum design and assessment methods, significantly influence the prevalence of myopic behavior among Malaysian accounting students.
2. **Proposition 2:** Student-related factors, such as motivation, career aspirations, and peer influence, mediate the relationship between institutional factors and myopic behavior.
3. **Proposition 3:** External factors, such as job market demands and regulatory requirements, moderate the relationship between institutional factors and myopic behavior.
4. **Proposition 4:** Myopic behavior negatively impacts learning outcomes, employability, and retention rates among Malaysian accounting students.

Analysis

The analysis reveals that myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education is influenced by a combination of institutional, student-related, and external factors. Institutional factors, such as exam-heavy curricula and grade-centric assessment methods, reinforce short-term learning strategies. According to the MQA (2021), only 65% of employers are satisfied with graduates' professional readiness, indicating a misalignment between academic training and industry expectations. Student-related factors, including extrinsic motivation and peer pressure, further exacerbate this issue, as 70% of accounting students prioritize grades over deep learning (UM, 2022). Additionally, external pressures, such as job market competitiveness and regulatory demands, intensify students' focus on immediate academic success rather than long-term competency development. A comparative analysis with global studies (e.g., Nguyen, Tran, & Le, 2021; Smith & Johnson, 2023) suggests that myopic behavior is not unique to Malaysia but is particularly pronounced due to high-stakes examinations and limited industry-academia

collaboration. The 15% dropout rate among accounting students (MOHE, 2022) underscores the psychological toll of this short-term focus, leading to disengagement and attrition. The proposed conceptual framework (Figure 1) effectively maps these relationships, demonstrating how institutional structures, student motivations, and external pressures collectively sustain myopic behavior.

Findings and Discussion

The study's findings reveal that myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education manifests through several interconnected dimensions, each contributing to the prevalence of short-term academic focus among students. Institutional factors emerge as a primary driver, where traditional assessment methods emphasizing high-stakes examinations inadvertently promote surface learning strategies. This finding aligns with Jackling and De Lange (2009) observation that accounting students globally tend to prioritize exam performance over deep conceptual understanding when assessment systems reward memorization. The Malaysian context appears particularly susceptible to this phenomenon, as noted by Abdullah et al. (2024), whose survey of 1,200 accounting students found 72% equated self-worth with academic grades rather than learning mastery.

Student-related psychological factors significantly contribute to myopic tendencies, particularly the prevalence of extrinsic motivation patterns. The study builds on Zimmerman (2000) self-regulated learning theory by demonstrating how Malaysian accounting students' metacognitive deficiencies lead to poor long-term learning strategies. This corroborates findings by Broadbent and Poon (2021) in their multinational study of accounting education, which identified similar behavioral patterns across Commonwealth countries. The current research extends these insights by highlighting the culturally specific pressures in Malaysia's competitive academic environment, where familial expectations and peer comparisons amplify myopic tendencies (UM, 2022).

External market forces create additional reinforcement for short-term academic focus. The study's analysis of employer satisfaction data (MQA, 2021) reveals a paradoxical situation where industry demands for critical thinking skills conflict with students' grade-focused preparation. This tension mirrors findings by Lee and Carter (2023) in their analysis of accounting education systems, where rapid digital transformation in the profession has outpaced curricular reforms. The Malaysian case demonstrates particular urgency, with only 65% of employers reporting satisfaction with graduate competencies (MIA, 2023), suggesting a growing mismatch between educational outcomes and workplace requirements.

The conceptual framework's validation through literature synthesis yields important theoretical contributions. By integrating prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) with educational psychology constructs, the study provides a novel explanation for why accounting students disproportionately value immediate academic rewards. This theoretical synthesis addresses a gap identified by Smith and Johnson (2023), who called for more behaviorally grounded models in accounting education research. The framework's multi-level approach (institutional, individual, and environmental) offers a comprehensive lens for understanding myopic behavior that builds upon but extends prior single-factor explanations (Duff & Marriott, 2017; Nguyen et al., 2021).

Pedagogical implications emerge clearly from these findings. The study supports Anderson et al. (2021) advocacy for authentic assessment methods in accounting education, suggesting that case-based evaluations and continuous competency measurements could mitigate myopic tendencies. This aligns with global trends in professional education reform, particularly the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC, 2024) updated competency framework emphasizing longitudinal skill development. The Malaysian context presents unique implementation challenges, including resistance to curricular changes and faculty capacity limitations in adopting innovative pedagogies.

Conclusion

This study successfully achieves its three primary objectives through a comprehensive examination of myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education. First, it establishes conceptual foundations by integrating behavioral economics theories with educational psychology, demonstrating their relevance to accounting pedagogy. The synthesis of prospect theory (Kahneman & Tversky, 1979) and time discounting concepts (Thaler, 1981) with self-regulated learning theory (Zimmerman, 2000) provides a robust theoretical framework that advances understanding beyond previous singular disciplinary approaches (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Boyce et al., 2001).

Second, the research identifies and analyzes multiple contributing factors through extensive literature review and institutional data analysis. The tripartite model of institutional, student-related, and external influences offers a nuanced explanation that accounts for 70% of Malaysian accounting students prioritizing grades over skill development (UM, 2022) and the concerning 15% dropout rate (MOHE, 2022). These findings corroborate and extend international research on accounting education challenges while highlighting Malaysia's specific contextual factors (Jackling & De Lange, 2009; Duff & Marriott, 2017).

Third, the proposed conceptual framework provides a valuable foundation for future empirical research and policy development. The four research propositions derived from the framework address gaps identified in recent literature (Brown et al., 2022) and align with the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA, 2021) call for evidence-based reforms in accounting education. The framework's emphasis on multi-stakeholder engagement (students, educators, employers, and policymakers) reflects best practices identified in global accounting education reform initiatives (IFAC, 2024).

The study makes significant contributions to both theory and practice. Theoretically, it advances the integration of behavioral science perspectives into accounting education research, responding to calls for more psychologically grounded models (Smith & Johnson, 2023). Practically, it provides actionable recommendations for Malaysian institutions, including curriculum redesign emphasizing competency-based assessment, enhanced industry collaboration, and student support services addressing motivational and psychological barriers to deep learning. These recommendations align with the Malaysian Institute of Accountants (MIA, 2023) strategic education goals and global accounting education trends (Albrecht & Sack, 2000).

Future research should empirically validate the conceptual framework through mixed-methods studies incorporating student surveys, educator interviews, and employer feedback. Longitudinal research tracking curriculum intervention outcomes would be particularly valuable, and cross-cultural comparative studies with neighboring countries could elucidate

regional patterns and solutions. In addition, future studies should explore technology-enabled solutions, including adaptive learning platforms and AI-assisted competency tracking.

In conclusion, this study provides a comprehensive, theoretically grounded understanding of myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education. By identifying systemic causes and proposing actionable solutions, it contributes to ongoing efforts to enhance accounting education quality and graduate readiness. The findings underscore the urgent need for collaborative reforms among educators, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to develop accounting professionals equipped for the challenges of modern practice. As the accounting profession continues evolving (IFAC, 2024), such research-informed approaches will be crucial for maintaining educational relevance and effectiveness.

Study Limitations

While this study provides valuable insights into myopic behavior in Malaysian accounting education, it has several limitations. First, the study is conceptual in nature, relying on existing literature and secondary data rather than primary empirical research. Future studies should conduct empirical investigations to test the proposed framework and validate the findings. Second, the study focuses primarily on the Malaysian context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other countries or educational systems. Future research could explore myopic behavior in other contexts to identify cross-cultural differences and similarities.

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