

The Players in the Accountancy Profession and Their Roles: The Case of Jordan

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Abstract

The accountancy profession in Jordan has been criticized for failing to achieve its goals to society, with the main players in the profession constantly exchanging accusations in this regard. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the roles and the relationships between the players in the accountancy profession in Jordan (regulators, academics and practitioners), and to provide recommendations in order to improve the quality of the accountancy profession. Results indicate that the regulators are to be blamed for the insufficient monitoring and control of the profession, as they have failed to oversee the auditors and to take disciplinary actions against the wrongdoers. Additionally, regulators jeopardized the profession by adopting IFRS as a sole framework for financial reporting for all companies. Academics have allegedly provided low quality education and inadequate teaching programs, as teaching focuses on theoretical issues with minimal consideration for the current business environment and new technicalities. Hence, graduates are not equipped with necessary skills. It is concluded that the academics have become increasingly detached from practice, instead focusing on conducting academic research at the expense of activities that may improve the quality of teaching. With regards to practitioners, findings suggest that they act on the ground of self-interest rather than public interest, in addition to not complying with quality control standards when performing their tasks.

Keywords: accountancy profession, accounting education, public interest, professional bodies

1. Introduction

Accounting is considered to be one of the most important professions that affect the economy and society. The professional accountants' performance leads to efficient allocation and management of resources in both the private and public sectors. Professional accountants prepare, and provide assurance on the financial statements which investors rely on in making resource allocation decisions. This sustains the proper functionality of the financial and capital markets, and eventually supports the production of goods and services. The efficiency of the accountancy profession depends upon the quality of the services provided by its members, and their ability to respond effectively and efficiently to the demands of the economy and society (International Federation of Accountants [IFAC], 2011).

Different players contribute and shape the accountancy profession in each jurisdiction; the regulators and accountancy institutions in the first place, followed by the academics and the practitioners.

Regulators seek to ensure that the appropriate quality is provided in the market for accountancy services. This includes ensuring the knowledge, skills, and attitude of those in the profession. Academics prepare the students to enter the profession and equip them with the necessary knowledge and skills in technical and professional topics. The role of practitioners is to objectively represent economic reality for decision makers. In achieving this task, practitioners may face different types of pressures and they need to exercise their judgments in a way that complies with ethical and technical standards. The purpose of this paper is to investigate the roles and the relationships between the players in the accountancy profession in Jordan. The emphasis will be mainly on the auditing profession as several laws have been issued to regulate the auditing profession, unlike the accounting profession. Interviews with key figures have been conducted to enrich the paper.

The paper proceeds as follows: section two demonstrates the legal framework for the profession. It shows the roles of the governmental units involved in the profession and the authorities that are delegated to the Jordanian

Association of Certified Public Accountants (JACPA). The adoption of the international standards (in accounting and auditing) is highlighted with an emphasis on the absence of a local standard setter's body and the failure of regulators to come up with local financial reporting framework for small companies. The section also discusses the challenges faced by local accountancy institutes in the accounting globalization era. Section three reviews the contribution of academics to the profession and their role in education and research. Difficulties that face the academics and suggested solutions are also discussed. Section four provides a description of the practitioners' community, pressures they face and the reasons for deviating from ethical and technical standards. The last section comments on the accountancy profession in Jordan and figures out the distortions embedded in the current structure of the profession.

2. Regulatory Framework and the Born of JACPA

The government was the sole regulator for the profession until 1987 as there was no official recognition for any professional bodies. Law No. 32 (1985) laid the foundation for the first professional auditing body in Jordan, JACPA. In 1987 JACPA By-Law No. 42 (1987) was issued in accordance with Article 18 of the Auditing Profession Law No. 32 (1985), and this was a significant step towards the development and regulation of the auditing profession (Al-Farah, Abbad, & AL-Shaar, 2015).

2.1 Current Statutory Framework

According to the latest accountancy regulations, the Accountancy Profession Law 73/2003, the accountancy profession is organized through two bodies: the "High Council for Accounting and Auditing" and the JACPA.

The High Council is headed by the Minister of Industries and Trade and would be mainly charged with the oversight of the auditing profession, and the approval of applicable accounting and auditing standards. It will not be responsible for monitoring and enforcement of accounting and auditing standards. JACPA is mainly responsible for developing the technical level of the association's members (Note 1), monitoring the professional code of ethics, encouraging and supporting scientific research in different fields of the auditing profession, and raising awareness of the rules and principles of accounting (Al-Farah et al., 2015).

It is worth mentioning that Jordan does not have an organization that promulgates and develops local accounting and auditing standards, but instead international standards are adopted. This is stipulated in the company law where the applicable financial reporting and auditing frameworks are stated. Besides, the company law determines the types of companies that are required to prepare audited financial statements.

The effective Jordanian Companies Law No. 22 of 1997 requires all public shareholding companies, limited liability companies, private shareholding companies, and foreign companies operating in Jordan to prepare annual audited financial statements in accordance with "internationally recognized accounting and auditing principles". Companies whose securities trade in a public market "public shareholding companies" are regulated by the Jordanian Securities Commission, which requires the adoption of full International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Similarly, financial institutions regulated by the Central Bank of Jordan and insurance companies regulated by the Jordanian Insurance Commission must use full IFRS. All other companies may use full IFRS or the IFRS for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs).

2.1.1 The Needs for International Standards

As stock markets became international in 1970s, the need for international standards became evident. Accordingly, the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) was established in order to develop international accounting standards. Currently, the board issued a set of international standards named as IFRS. It is argued that adopting IFRS will produce high quality, transparent and comparable information in financial statements (Landsman, Maydew, & Thornock, 2012; Lasmin, 2011). This may result in significant economic benefits such as a higher inflow of foreign direct investment and the ability of firms to obtain finance with reduced cost. Foreign investors with limited access to information, may rely on the information provided by financial statements prepared according to IFRS in making their investment decisions (Landsman et al., 2012; Amiram, 2012; Covrig, DeFond, & Hung, 2007). It is well recognized that adopting IFRS is associated with high foreign investment, and the ability of firms to obtain finance with reduced cost (Taylor, 2009).

In addition, other studies concluded that financial reporting regulators in developing countries might be obliged to adopt IFRS due to their limited ability to produce a legitimate set of standards. Furthermore, regulators might be pressured by international organizations to adopt legitimate, modern, and high quality accounting standards especially if these countries receive grants from the international organizations (Lasmin, 2011; Rodrigues & Craig, 2007).

2.1.2 Difficulties in Adopting IFRS

Despite the evident benefits from adopting IFRS, there are difficulties in applying these standards. Firms may need to incur more cost when applying IFRS. These costs include: the use of outside technical advice in areas of uncertainty such as independent valuers of the fair value of assets (Warrell, 1999), staff training costs such as costs of sending staff to workshops, acquiring and distribution IFRS training material or using consultants to provide in-house training (Macek, 2003; Haller & Eierle, 2004).

In addition, applying IFRS in developing countries may not achieve the expected economic benefits like a higher inflow of foreign investment or obtaining finance with low cost. Countries that have less developed capital markets and higher concentration of SMEs, like Jordan, may not be able to reap the benefits of adopting IFRS. Botswana, Malawi, Panama, Papua, New Guinea, Tajikistan, and Tanzania are among the countries that have substantially adopted IFRS but have not experienced significant growth in their foreign direct investment inflows and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth (Lasmin, 2011). This is because investors consider adopting IFRS less important than other factors like market capitalization, legal environment, tax policy, relative interest rates, economic growth, social system, and political system. Additionally, taking a decision to adopt IFRS does not guarantee automatically, high quality, transparent and comparable information in financial statements. IFRS as a set of accounting standards, is part of accounting systems which is affected by the accounting regulation, accounting education and research, culture, enterprise ownership and corporate governance (Lasmin, 2011).

2.2 JACPA Challenges

In the following two subsections the challenges that face JACPA are investigated. The first subsection deals with JACPA performance and its related obstacles on the national level, while the second subsection deals with challenges imposed due to accounting globalization.

2.2.1 The National Context

As a national accountancy institution, the JACPA purpose is to achieve the professionalization of accountancy and to protect the public interest. To achieve this mission, JACPA has specific criteria for membership eligibility including entry prerequisites, examination, continuous training and experience, disciplinary actions (Al-Farah et al., 2015). The purpose of these criteria is to enable the qualified professionals to practice public accountancy and to exclude unqualified individuals from providing public accountancy. Hence, professional accountants are perceived to have integrity, independence, personal responsibility, judgment, professional ethics and individual accountability to serve public interest.

However, JACPA is heavily criticized by different stakeholders claiming that JACPA has not fulfilled its role. Many individuals in Jordan perceive JACPA as an elite club or closed society of accounting and auditing professionals, with a mission to protect the interests of the members rather than the public. It is argued that JACPA has no effective measures to ensure that its members maintain current professional standards through continuous professional development. JACPA lacks a reliable quality assurance mechanism to ensure that its members are independent and comply with international standards. Moreover, the examination system at JACPA is another complicated issue. There is no clear syllabus for the exam, the passing rate is very low, and it appears that the exam does not meet the IFAC educational standards (ROSC, 2004).

This criticism is valid not only in Jordan, but also in many jurisdictions. Scholars suggest that accountants use the public interest argument continuously as a means of protecting their economic self-interest (Lee, 1995). This is inferred from several practices performed by the public accountants and the accountancy institutions such as: failure to punish accountants who have breached ethical standards, treating management as the client rather than the public, offering a wide range of non-accounting business services which may compromise independence, and lack of intellectual knowledge in accounting and auditing problems. In general, auditors have not been able to meet the public expectations of accounting and auditing performance. In some cases auditors failed to detect clear fraud committed by clients' management, and in extreme cases auditors participated in such fraud schemes.

2.2.2 The Accounting Globalization Era

Many jurisdictions have moved to adopt IFRS (Note 2) as a single set of global accounting standards. The IFRS Foundation has conducted a study of 140 jurisdictions, 116 of the 140 jurisdictions require IFRS for all or most listed companies and financial institutions, and another 14 require or permit IFRS for at least some companies (Pacter, 2015). This phenomena of moving towards IFRS has its implications on the accounting profession and the role of the national accounting institutions across countries. The capacity for the development of accounting and audit standards (standard-setting function) has now shifted from national accountancy institutions to international organizations, such as the IASB and the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board

(IAASB), as global rule-makers for the accountancy profession (Samsonova-Taddei & Humphrey, 2014).

Furthermore, the role of the international professional associations, such as IFAC, became more dominant. IFAC is comprised of over 175 Members and Associates in 130 countries and jurisdictions, representing approximately 2.8 million accountants in public practice, education, government service, industry, and commerce (IFAC, 2015).

Members of IFAC are required to adhere to membership obligations stated by IFAC. These obligations include, among others:

- The adoption of the International Education Standards (IESs) for Professional Accountants. These standards prescribe the requirements for
 - Entry to professional accounting education programs,
 - Initial professional development of aspiring professional accountants; and
 - Continuing professional development of professional accountants.
- The adoption of the IFRSs, ISAs, Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants
- Identify and undertake actions to have a just and effective investigative and disciplinary system in place. IFAC provides the members with guidance for this purpose.

JACPA complied with IFAC membership obligations in order to become a member at IFAC. Hence, JACPA policies and operations related to entry requirements, continuous training, code of ethics, and investigation and disciplinary system are affected by the international association (IFAC). In other words, accountancy profession globalization is not limited to spreading one set of accounting and auditing standards, but also includes the accounting regulations through countries.

Yet another player is present in the accountancy global arena: the global bodies for professional accountants. There is an obvious fierce competition nowadays between different professional institutions to gain global influence and to achieve the leadership of global accountancy profession (Samsonova-Taddei & Humphrey, 2014). For instance, the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA) which was established in 1908, doesn't limit itself to one specific geographical designation, but rather, it refers to itself as the global body for professional accountants, with 154,000 members and 432,000 students in over 170 countries. Its ambition now is to "be a global leader in the profession". The Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW) considers itself as a professional membership organization, supporting over 140,000 chartered accountants around the world, and striving to provide leadership to the global accountancy and finance profession through their technical knowledge, skills and expertise. Interestingly, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants (AICPA) started in 2011, and for the first time in history, to offer the uniform CPA examination in several countries and outside the borders of USA.

Due to the above, the national accountancy institutions in the developing countries, like JACPA, are under threat from their presumable counterparties. ACCA, ICAEW, AICPA and other institutions operating on a global basis. They provide an alternative qualification to those offered by national and regional bodies. This is resulting in a more competitive environment. In Jordan, the capable university graduates show little interest in taking the JACPA examination, and they prefer to go for internationally recognized certificates. Moreover, the accountancy institutes that work globally provide other services and projects for developing nations such as developing education and examination standards, and helping to build capacity. International donor agencies such as the World Bank support and fund these projects. For instance, in 2012 JACPA received a \$ 250,000 grant from the World Bank to fund a capacity building project. It is worth mentioning that the major part of the funded project was executed by ICAEW. Samsonova-Taddei and Humphrey (2014) argue that in addition to the formally specified aims of the capacity building projects like assisting local economic and professional development, capacity building projects implicitly provide means for the global professional bodies to become embedded in different national professional and regulatory circles and exercise their strategies of influence. Hence, some national bodies view this influence as a potential threat to their authority in their domestic jurisdictions, and argue that the accounting profession in the developing countries may be shaped in a way that imitates the developed countries.

3. Academics

Prior to the 1960s, it was difficult to distinguish between the accounting academics and the accounting practitioners. Many of the academics were simultaneously practicing accountants, and hence, taught what was practiced in the profession. Accounting practitioners were among the leading thinkers and writers. Conflicts between academic accountants and practitioners were rare.

Things changed in the early 1960s. Academics moved away from practical education to a more scientific research in order to become faculty member rather than accounting professionals. On the other hand, professionals focused mainly on how to attract clients, with less time to advance the profession. They developed new innovative services and generally had a successful business throughout the 1970s (Sundem, 1999).

By the mid-1980s, problems started to emerge. Changes in the regulatory environment, litigation against accountants, the expanding scope and complexity of accounting services, and advances in information technology required new accounting practices to adapt to changing circumstances. Some practitioners criticized the accounting education system, as the accounting graduates are not well prepared to adapt to changes. They also emphasized that the accounting educators must increase their understanding of business environments and accounting technical skills in order to prepare the students to enter the practice (Sundem, 1999).

Hence, two different communities in the accounting profession are recognized; academics and practitioners, with limited interactions occurring between them (Tucker & Lowe, 2014). These two communities had differences in terms of agendas, interests, career paths, values and ideologies, incentives, criteria for promotion, time horizons, knowledge and expertise, and even language. (Malmi & Granlund, 2009; van Helden & Northcott, 2010; Locke & Lowe, 2008; Tucker & Lowe, 2014). The Role of academics comprises two main functions: education (teaching) and research (Note 3).

3.1 Education

The purpose is to prepare students for the needs of the business environment (Note 4). It involves the preparation of accountants to encompass technical accounting knowledge, effective thinking and problem solving, professional practice skills, and a deep understanding of the accountant's public role (Albu, & Toader, 2012).

Major concerns were expressed by practitioners regarding the qualifications of the graduates. They argued that new graduates usually lack the real world practical experience, in addition to communication and social skills. Practitioners recommend that universities place more emphasis on the building of relationships between academics and practitioners so as to bridge the gap between the two groups. Several recommendations have been suggested to improve the quality of the accounting education, these include: (The pathways commission, 2012)

3.1.1 Enhancing the Value of Practitioner-Educator Exchanges

Creating bidirectional links to enable cross-collaboration is the responsibility of both the educational system and the practitioners, and a plan for the cooperation between academe and practice must be developed and maintained. Internship programs, whereby qualified and interested educators have an opportunity to work in the practice environment for a meaningful period of time, should be established. Establishing externship programs whereby experienced practitioners have an opportunity to spend a meaningful period of time on campus co-instructing classes and interacting with faculty, is also recommended.

This exchange between academe and practice in both directions is a mutual benefit between academe and business practice that will result in a win-win outcome.

3.1.2 Increasing Reward, Recognition, and Support for High-Quality Teaching

The current promotion system in universities does not assign a considerable weight for teaching quality. Instead, faculty performance evaluation depends mainly on research. Therefore, academics prefer to invest their time in conducting research rather than developing innovative curricula, prepare case studies, assign course work to students, or any other activities that may improve the quality of teaching. This is because the effort exerted by academics to improve teaching is not measured and "what gets measured, gets done." This resulted in deteriorating the quality of teaching and graduates preparation. Additionally, the academic freedom allows each individual faculty member to teach what they want to teach, the curriculum is viewed as a series of independent, not integrated, courses. This also affects the quality of teaching. It is recommended that universities should amend their evaluation and promotion criteria for academics in a way that allows more rewards, support, and recognition to be assigned to high-quality teaching.

3.2 Research

The role of accounting research is to challenge, criticize and make contributions to knowledge. The results of accounting research are published mainly in academic journals, and occasionally in professional journals or textbooks. The published research is used to rank universities and to promote researchers. For that reason, academics select research topics and methodologies according to the chances of publication rather than to solve problems of the practice. In other words, the aim of the game is to publish at all ends, not to disseminate knowledge or improve practice. Accordingly, accounting research has become insufficiently innovative and

increasingly detached from practice and society. Some authors argue that since 1970, accounting research has increasingly moved away from normative to positive methodology (Watts & Zimmerman, 1986). Normative accounting methodology is based on what the researcher believes should occur in particular circumstances. This methodology serves the practice, as it describes what financial accounting should be: what should be regarded as assets, liabilities, and so on, and how they should be valued. A normative theory is a goal-oriented theory that represents real world situations, not as they are, but as they should be.

On the other hand, positive accounting methodology focuses on explaining and predicting accounting practice. It is an empirical research answering questions like: what is the association between accounting earnings and stock returns, why do firms change accounting techniques, change auditors, and how have court regulations and rulings influenced accounting practice. It is worth mentioning that the positive methodology has dominated mainstream accounting research in Jordan. Scholars considered that empirical research does not serve the practice as the normative research.

Furthermore, the methodologies and language used by academics in their research enlarged the gap between the academics and practitioners. The sophisticated mathematical formulae and the language in which research results are presented are considered, by practitioners, to be too academic, or artificial and not practitioner-friendly. The existence of multiple tables within the article populated with huge statistical tests and figures may mitigate the readability and understandability by the practitioners. In addition, researchers tend to demonstrate the literature, many bracketed references in the text, and full references at the end, while the practitioners are too busy trying to increase profits, deal with customers and grapple with day-to-day-problems. It is suggested that the practitioners may read a research paper only if presented to them in a form which is interesting, readable, understandable, and written up with brevity and clarity. The academic agenda is to go on a journey. Practitioners are interested in the destination – and getting there fast (Tucker & Lowe, 2014).

From all the above, practitioners are not interested at all in research: they are reluctant to disclose data for research and do not get involved in challenges or debates. It is noticed that academics and practitioners are self-interest oriented groups: academics have career and promotion concerns, while practitioners are short-term and problem-solving oriented.

4. Practitioners

In theory, the role of the practitioners is to objectively represent economic reality for decision makers. The conceptual financial reporting framework states that the financial statements must achieve the faithful representations, e.g., neutral and free from error. However, academics argue that the reality represented in the practitioners work has been shaped by political, regulatory, social as well as economic forces and accordingly, there is no objective economic reality (Gaffikin, 2009). Practitioners' response is that academics haven't experienced the harsh world of economic reality with which they are involved, and consequently cannot develop accounting practices that encounter the economic reality.

Many stakeholders in Jordan have questioned the integrity and competence of some professional auditors. They feel that auditors may compromise their integrity and independence for the sake of their clients' needs, acting on the ground of self-interest rather than public interest. There is also a widespread view that the low-level skills with regard to practical IFRS and ISA application has contributed to noncompliance with the applicable accounting and auditing standards, and believe that there is a need to close the gap between the applicable standards and actual auditing practices (ROSC, 2004). It is well documented that many auditors in Jordan depart from ISAs requirements especially in areas like: auditor independence, communications between successor and predecessor auditors, related parties, frauds and errors, external confirmations, and relying heavily on management representation without making efforts to obtain corroborative evidence (ROSC, 2004). This leads the users of financial reporting to consider the audited financial statements as not being transparent and lack the ability to give the real financial conditions of the business enterprise concerned.

The above criticism is valid for the auditors of public shareholding companies (medium and big auditors). However, the situation is worse for small auditors. The auditors' community is segmented such that around 80% work as sole practitioner, while 20% of auditors work at medium and big audit firms with international affiliation in some cases. Sole practitioners usually depend on performing accounting and taxes services for small clients, and auditing is a byproduct service. There is a fierce price competition among small auditors which has negatively affected the income level of the auditors and the quality of services provided. In addition, small practitioners are less skilled and lack sufficient knowledge in professional standards due to resource constraints.

JACPA failed to maintain, control and monitor the quality of the auditors' work. It is obvious that the entry requirements and the continuous training don't work well. For example, one of JACPA entry requirements is that

the member should train for three years at an audit firm before he gets the membership, and it is assumed that auditors should know how to manage the audit engagement and how to prepare the working papers files while they train with an audit firm. Still, some auditors in practice don't know how to manage the audit engagement and they don't use working papers files to document their work. This is because JACPA does not have specifications for: training objectives, who are the qualified training provider from the audit firms, and what are the training provider duties towards the trainee, and JACPA does not monitor the training process in the field. This resulted in insufficient training for the members, especially one who trained with audit firms not part of an international accounting network. Additionally, JACPA lacks effective enforcement mechanisms to ensure compliance with professional standards.

5. Conclusion and Discussion

The paper attempts to portray the accountancy profession and its main players in Jordan. The first player that affects and shapes the profession is the regulator. Governmental units and JACPA are involved in regulation of the accountancy profession in Jordan, with the absence of any standard setters' bodies. The regulator put the profession in trouble in two areas: the adopted financial reporting framework, and the types of companies that are required to prepare annual audited financial statements. The company law recognizes the IFRS (Note 5) as a sole framework for financial reporting, and it seems that the difficulties in applying IFRS were overlooked. Small companies can't afford the implementation cost for IFRS, and the benefits from applying IFRS by small companies are not justified. Accordingly, IFRS is used in Jordan as a label but not in substance. In UK for example, the company law recognizes two financial reporting frameworks-IFRS and UK and Ireland GAAP (generally accepted accounting practice), publicly listed companies are required to apply IFRS and other entities have a free choice between the two frameworks. The more interesting issue is that the UK and Ireland GAAP is made up of five regimes like micro-entities regime, small entities regime and other regimes. For micro and small entities, the accounting standard has been developed around the legal framework with simplified requirement as only two primary statements are required; a balance sheet and profit and loss account (Financial Reporting Council [FRC], 2015).

Furthermore, the law in Jordan requires all limited liability companies and private shareholding companies to prepare annual audited financial statements. Most of these companies are small companies and don't affect the public interest as the stakeholders usually have access to the company's books and don't rely solely on the audited financial statement in making economic decisions (Note 6). As small companies can't identify the benefits from auditing, and have to audit as stated in the law, they hire the auditor who accepts the lower price regardless of the service quality. This leads to a price war among auditors and affects the audit quality.

Regulators have also failed to oversee the auditors and to take disciplinary actions against the wrongdoers. Apparently the governmental units that are responsible for regulating the profession delegated the disciplinary authority to JACPA. However, JACPA lacks resources and a quality assurance mechanism to ensure that its members comply with international standards (ROSC, 2004). Unfortunately, the governmental units involved in regulating the profession don't recognize the importance of the profession. For example, Amman Stock Exchange (ASE) hired one of the JACPA members as a consultant in order to deal with any financial reporting issue that may arise in regulating public shareholding companies, instead of having a specialized department for this purpose.

The other players in the accountancy profession are the academics and the petitioners. Academics play a significant role in enhancing the accounting profession. This is achieved through two means; teaching and research. The performance of the academics has been criticized by the practitioners as the academics have become more separated from the practice, and have their own goals.

With regards to education, the practitioners expressed their concerns regarding the qualifications of the graduates. They argued that the new graduates usually lack the real world practical experience and communication and social skills. This is because the academics have become increasingly detached from practice and society, combined with the fact that the current promotion systems in the universities don't place a major weight for quality of teaching as a criterion for performance evaluation and promotion. In order to overcome this issue, two recommendations have been provided, mainly for the practitioners and the universities. Practitioners should collaborate more with academics and give them the opportunities to join the practice through internship programs. Barriers that prevent academics from working in the industry should be removed. Universities also should amend their evaluation and promotion criteria for academics in a way that allows more rewards, support, and recognition to be assigned to high-quality teaching.

For research, there is a gap between the academic research and practice as the academic research is conducted

mainly through using empirical studies, which is a limited concern of practitioners. In addition, difficulties in understanding academic research papers may hinder research utilization by practitioners. Closer engagement between academics and practitioners could result in mutual value for both of them. Academics should present their research in a form which is interesting, readable, understandable, and written up with brevity and clarity.

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Notes

Note 1. All public practitioners should be members at JACPA, and currently JACPA has about 596 members. <http://jacpa.org/jo/en-us/aboutjacpa.aspx>

Note 2. IFRS is developed by IASB, which operates under the oversight of the IFRS Foundation. The goal of the IASB and the IFRS Foundation is to develop a single set of global financial reporting standards that bring transparency, accountability and efficiency to financial markets around the world. Those standards serve the public interest by fostering trust, growth, and long-term financial stability in the global economy.

Note 3. Besides other involvement in the profession like standard setting, training, assisting in professional accounting examination.

Note 4. Two different perspectives are noticed here; the practitioners' perspective where education should be in line with the expectations of current practice (to be an accountant), and the educators' perspective where the education should be in line with the future needs of the business environment (to become an accountant). In other words, accounting practice puts relatively more weight on technical ability and proficiency, whereas professors place emphasis on logic and reasoning.

In some countries, the practitioners asked the universities to place emphasis purely on technical competence and to disregard some topics like accounting theory (conceptual framework, ethics, social contexts, and globalization. (the differences between the two perspectives are beyond the scope of this paper).

Note 5. According to the law, full IFRS should be used for public shareholding companies, financial institutions, and insurance companies, while other companies may use full IFRS or they may use the IFRS for SMEs. In reality, IFRS for SMEs is not used in Jordan because there is no approved definition for SEMs of accounting purposes.

Note 6. In UK, most small private limited companies don't need an audit of their annual accounts. A company may qualify for an audit exemption if it has at least 2 of the following:

- An annual turnover of no more than £6.5 million;
- Assets worth no more than £3.26 million;
- 50 or fewer employees on average.

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