**Responses to Reviewers’ Comments**

**#337 - Gender and Other Determinants of CPA Exam Success: A Survival Analysis**

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| **Comment #** | **Reviewers’ Comments** | **Authors’ Responses** |
| **Editor** |  |  |
| EA1 | I think it is an interesting paper and look forward to seeing your modifications. | Thank you very much. |
| **Reviewer A** |  |  |
| RA1 | You state in the manuscript, and show in Table 2, that the number of individuals passing the exam (each part) is three times larger than those failing. I went to the AICPA website and looked up passing rates from 2006 to 2012 (roughly your time periods). In general pass rates are 50% or lower. Why are you rates so much higher (i.e., a 75% pass rate for each part)? Shouldn’t your data set be consistent with AICPA results? | We agree that this appears to be incorrect and we should have included a footnote in the paper to make this clear. We have now included the following footnote (Footnote 2) on page 13: “Analysis of the pass rates in Table 2 indicate a possible disparity between the tested samples and the actual pass rates from NASBA. This disparity does not actually exist. The original data was obtained from NASBA and included scores for every sitting per section of the exam during the respective period, thus having the actual pass rates presented by the AICPA and NASBA. In the tested datasets, each candidate is only in the datasets one time for each section of the exam that they took and in the “complete” dataset if they took all four sections of the exam, with their number of sittings for a respective section included as an independent variable. The candidates were classified as “Passing” if they ultimately passed the respective section, which is not an indication of their performance on any individual sitting, as they may have taken a given section multiple times.” |
| RA2 | You state in the manuscript that “Analyzing age across gender (see Table 3 (actually Table 2) Panel C) shows that female candidates are significantly older than male candidates.” When I compute the age difference provide in Table 2, Panel C I get a difference of approximately 4.2 months. It may be statistically significant but I don’t believe it is “practically” significant. | We altered the given sentence to include that the difference in age is not practically different. The sentence now reads as follows: “Analyzing age across gender (see Table 3: Panel C) shows that female candidates are significantly (albeit not practically) older than male candidates.” |
| RA3 | You state that “ for males, for every year increase in Age they are 2.4% more likely to pass the BEC section than are females.” BEC is the only section with a statistically significant difference. How did you arrive at the 2.4% increase with this interactive variable? | This calculation and, therefore, the meaning of the sentence were incorrect. We are sorry that we allowed this mistake into the paper. The sentence now reads as follows: “Thus, while candidates of neither *Gender* (p = 0.16) are more or less likely to pass the BEC section than the other gender, for males, for every year increase in *Age* they are 4.7% less likely to pass the BEC section than are females. Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.” |
| RA4 | You state that “Candidates who received a degree from a college or university with the college of business accredited by the AACSB were 11.7% - 16.1% more likely to pass any or all of the CPA exam than candidates that received degrees from colleges or universities that had no AACSB accreditation. Candidates educated in separately AACSB accredited accounting departments were 21.0% - 26.9% more likely to pass any or all of the exam.” My interpretation of Table 4 would put the percentage as between 11.08% and 14.9% for college of business accreditation and 19.1% to 23.83% for separate department accreditation. Am I missing something? | Again, we apologize for our error. I (the person who actually made the mistakes) must have been looking at a previous version of the table; either way, my mistake not my coauthors. Please know that I don’t normally make these types of errors.  The numbers are now correctly stated in the paper. |
| RA5 | I have the same concern about the information in the text not being consistent with information in Table 4 for “Private University.” | Again, we apologize for our mistakes. I (the person who actually made the mistakes) must have been looking at a previous version of the table; either way, my mistake not my coauthors. Please know that I don’t normally make these types of errors.  The numbers are now correctly stated in the paper. |
| RA6 | When you test for the 150 Hour Rule, you only test whether the jurisdiction requires 150 hours to take the exam, not if they student/candidate has 150 hours. The latter is the more important issue. | Based upon the data provided by NASBA, it was only possible to test based upon the requirements of the jurisdiction. It would have been nice to have had the data on the students actual hours completed, but we were unable to obtain that data. We added this as a limitation and area for future research. |
| RA7 | I failed to understand why this information is important. Young males are more likely to pass the CPA exam. Does that mean we should not allow old females to take it? I surmise that we should encourage people to go to private universities that have both college and departmental accreditation. Private universities can be a proxy for ability, economic standing, support mechanisms, and so forth. | We do not understand if this comment requires a response. We believe that the research idea put forth is interesting and important and so does NASBA, as they funded the research through a sizeable grant. We believe that we made the case for the research in the introduction. |
| **Reviewer B** |  |  |
| RB1 | Given the current discussions surrounding CPA exam content as well as the 150-requirement, the focus of this paper should be of current interest to readers. I personally found the introduction very interesting, which may me want to continue to read the paper.  The background/literature review and hypothesis section was well-developed. Nicely done. | Thank you so much. |
| RB2 | Many variables are controlled but I’d like to see an assessment of whether a review course impacted this – and which one? The author alludes to this in mentioning that if male candidates are employed by larger firms, they may receive better support. Personally, I believe this support structure plays a key role – with active CPA review course participation playing a large role in pass rates. Along these lines, this support structure may be correlated with accreditation – as those schools with separate accounting accreditation (which the author claims to be evidence of higher quality programs) may be more likely to push coordinated review courses for their students. Empirically, any association has to be examined to determine the effect, if any. While not necessary for this paper, perhaps a suggestion for future research. | Whether or not the candidates took a review course was not collected by NASBA and therefore not provided in the dataset. It would be great to have the data and future research should analyze that information. We added this as a limitation and area for future research. |
| RB3 | Why limit hypothesis 5 to public vs private? If the construct the authors are trying to measure is based on larger class sizes/funding – can you survey these institutions (e.g., accounting department heads) to determine average class size? Not all private programs have smaller class sizes. Similarly, some public institutions may be well funded – e.g., the accounting department may have a surplus of funds from other sources such as direct support for CPA firms that hire students or support from on-line/distance programs used to supplement on-campus resources. Again, I don't think this is a critical flaw but something that may be improved in a future study. | This is an interesting idea. We added this as an area for future research. |