

## Summary of Paper: [Starting Your Career at an Accounting Firm: The Role of Personality in Explaining Career Starts](#)

### **What is this Study About?**

The study examines how personality traits influence graduate business students' career choices, particularly their decisions to start their careers in the accounting profession and, if so, at a Big 4 or smaller accounting firm. Utilizing survey data from 348 students, the research explores the relationship between personality, as defined by "bright" and "dark" traits, and career preferences. It specifically looks at how traits like openness to experience and narcissism affect the likelihood of choosing a career in accounting or opting for a position at a Big 4 firm.

### **What are the major findings of the study?**

Students with lower levels of openness to experience are more likely to seek careers in accounting, the researchers found. Additionally, higher levels of narcissism correlate with a preference for starting careers at Big 4 firms. The study also found that narcissism's effect on choosing Big 4 careers is fully mediated by students' attitudes toward these firms. These attitudes encompass perceptions of salary, training opportunities, career prospects, and the prestige associated with Big 4 firms.

### **Why is the study important?**

It fills a critical gap in understanding the role of personality in early career decisions within accounting. Such insights are vital for firms' recruitment and retention strategies, especially in a competitive field like accounting. By identifying the personality traits that predispose individuals to certain career choices, accounting firms can tailor their recruitment efforts to attract candidates who are the best fit for their organizational culture and values. Furthermore, understanding these personality dynamics can help educators and career advisors provide more personalized guidance to students navigating their career paths in accounting.