Forensic Accounting and Financial Crimes: An Empirical Evidence from Operatives and Trainers of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Academy, Nigeria

Joseph Ogwiji, PhD, FCIA, CSA, CNA

Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Academy, Karu, Abuja.

ABSTRACT: *Financial crimes in the public sector continue to be on the increase despite the effort of the Nigerian government in preventing the incidence of fraud and corruption through measures, such as establishing and strengthening organs of accountability and promoting the global best corporate practices. In view of this challenges, it become necessary to examines the effect of attributes of forensic accountants– Investigation of financial Crime and Corruption Skill (ICC), Knowledge and Expertise (KE), Litigation Support Services (LSS) on the financial crime (FC) in Nigerian public sector. The study employed cross-sectional design and a survey method. of the 110 questionnaires distributed, 53 questionnaires were returned valid and analysed. The study used PLS-SEM (SmartPLS 3.0) and IBM SPSS ver. 20.0 as the primary statistical analysis tools. The results of the study confirm that Knowledge and Expertise and Support Services of a forensic accountant has a significant positive effect on Financial Crime and it shows that investigation of crime and corruption has an insignificant negative effect on financial crime. Thus, the findings revealed that the forensic accountant attributes have significantly higher levels of KE, LSS on FC concerning fraud prevention, detection, management and response. Also, investigation of corruption discourages financial crime though not on high. The implication of this study might result in the overall reduction of fraud and fraudulent acts, promote institutional, regulatory and legal framework, and create awareness amongst the accounting and auditing institutions in the Nigerian public sector.*

KEYWORDS: knowledge and expertise, litigation support services and financial crimes

INTRODUCTION

Financial crimes and fraudulent activities have been one of the most popular challenges to the global economy. It has been a subject of continuous debate in society as the cause of retardation in developing economies like Africa, Latin America, and Asia as seen today (Dada & Jimoh, 2020). Financial crimes and scams in modern organizations are perennial and have affected diverse organizations, irrespective of their sizes, natures and types. Gupta and Vij (2021) documented that financial crimes include manipulation of records or accounts, theft and

embezzlement, diversion of funds, bribery and corruption. Thus, an increase in these frauds made the traditional accounting and auditing systems inefficient and ineffective in the detection and prevention of fraud in any society.

Financial crime is seen as the act or the course of dishonesty, which is intentionally practiced by an individual in an organization in order to enhance illegal or unfair benefits to themselves (Ali et al., 2020). In this regard, financial crime can be classified as an act perpetrated in an organization such as fictitious accounts, unauthorized lending, unofficial borrowing, manipulating of vouchers, over-invoicing and fake payment. Dada and Jimoh (2020) reported that financial crimes include oil bunkering, embezzlement, bribery, looting, money laundering, fraud, tax evasion and foreign exchange malpractice.

Financial crimes have been manifested globally, such as the scandal of Enron, WorldCom, and Cadbury (Chepngeno & Fred, 2020). However, the case of Nigeria where financial crimes are consistently reported and duly investigated by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and yet these criminal activities have continued to increase, raise concern about the situation of fraudulent acts in the Nigeria's ecosystem and, therefore, beg for a cursory look at other indices of arrest (Bello, 2020).Therefore, the increasing activities of financial crimes requires prompt engagement of forensic accounting in order to carry out any successful and discreet investigation, as well as the presentation of a probative evidential facts of the individuals associated with the criminal activities before the law court.

Forensic accounting is targeted toward detecting and preventing an individual or corporate institution from conducting an act of questionable character or integrity. More so, forensic accounting is important in reducing fraud, fraudulent activities and corruption capable of destroying the national image and economic growth (Abdulrahman, 2019). In Nigeria, fraudulent practices have become much endemic and systemic, particularly in the public sector. However, Nigeria's case is unique, because both the magnitude and the frequency of occurrence of the menace continue to be on the increase.

Forensic accounting is the tripartite practice of utilizing accounting, auditing and investigative skills to assist in legal matters. It is a specialized field of accounting that describes engagements resulting from actual or anticipated disputes or litigation(E. I. Okoye et al., 2019). It can, therefore, be seen as an aspect of accounting that is suitable for legal review and offers the highest level of assurance. Ehioghiren and Atu (2016) opined that forensic accounting encompasses three major areas, investigation, dispute resolution and litigation support. Forensic accounting has been identified as a tool for detecting and implementing of white-collar Investigations (Hansen, 2009).

However, the alarming increase in the cases of financial crimes and other fraudulent activities in Nigeria requires the visibility of forensic accounting services. More so, the recent happening in the audit of Nigeria's oil sector, where the government of President Mohammed Buhari directed another forensic audit exercise, even after a Nigerian audit firm presented a report to the government authority suggest a further scientific approach and modifications to the conventional audit. Recently, several studies have centered on the detective role of forensic

accounting in fraud management in Nigeria, especially in commercial banks, insurance firms and microfinance banks. It is on this note, that this study takes an exploratory look at forensic accounting and its influence on fraud prevention, detection and management in Nigeria, from the experience of financial crime agencies like EFCC.

Financial Crime has become a reoccurring trend in Nigeria. FBI (2018) report shows that Nigeria is among the top 5 hubs of fraudsters as most perpetrators come from the country. Nigeria Deposit Insurance Commission audited account of (2019) and (2020) reported a high amount of N204.65 billion and N120.79 billion respectively, of monies lost by banks to fraud annually and the Central Bank of Nigeria (2022) reported that N2.73 trillion out of the N3.23 trillion currency in circulation, was outside the vaults of commercial banks across the country, the various reports painfully attest to the high rate of fraud in Nigeria and this necessitated the CBN to collaborate with the Nigeria Intelligence Unit (NFIU) and the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission on money laundry on an illicit financial transaction. More so, Bawa (2021) Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission reported that big companies in Nigeria and influential individuals have continued to fall victim to fraudsters, losing a large number of monies in the process. In recent times, a number of fraudulent acts have been committed both in the public sector and private sector of the economy. These in no doubt are perpetrated under the supervision of the accountant and internal auditors of the organization.

Therefore, forensic accounting has evolved as a means of checking fraud since the traditional accounting system and auditing have failed in various areas in the conduct of curbing these governmental and private leakages and fraudulent injections. Forensic accounting is seen as taking a more advanced role in fraud prevention, detection, and management. However, the application of Forensic accounting role and effectiveness have raised serious concerns as it has been argued that it is used mainly aftermath of the fraud to find the perpetrators and carried out in order to avoid future occurrences. As a tool mainly for legal purposes, the sophistication of fraud perpetrators and the role of insiders who know how to bypass the system and not get caught have also questioned the effectiveness and need for forensic accounting. In addition, there has not been an adequate emphasis, especially on survey evidence on how forensic accounting can help curtail financial and economic crimes beyond the several unreliable views that abound. In view of the challenges, it become very necessary to conduct this study, in this regard, does forensic accounting practice affect financial fraud in Nigeria? Hence, this study seeks to examine the effect of forensic accounting practice on financial fraud with empirical materials and surveys gathered from operatives and trainers of Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Academy, Nigeria. The specific objectives are to:

i. examines the effect of a forensic accountant and investigating crimes on financial crime.
ii. examine the effect of the forensic accountant's role in litigation support services on financial crime.
iii. examine the effect of forensic accountant Knowledge and expertise on financial crime

Research Hypotheses
The following research hypotheses have been constructed and are presented in their null form.
Ho₁: Forensic accountants and investigating crime has no significant effect on financial crime.

Ho$_2$: Forensic accountant's role in litigation support services has no significant effect on financial crime.

Ho$_3$: Forensic accountant knowledge and expertise have no significant effect on financial crime

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Crime

The term "crime" is referred to a deliberate act by one or more persons among employees, management, those charged with governance, or third parties connecting the use of the fraudulent acts to obtain an unjust or unlawful benefit (ISA 240). According to Sule et al. (2019), the word fraud usually consists of actions such as partaking in stealing, collusion, money laundering, dishonesty, bribery, extortion, abuse of office, insider trading and misappropriation of assets. Fraud is defined by EFCC (2004:46) as the non-violent criminal and illicit activity committed with the objective of earning wealth illegally, either individually or in a group or organized manner, thereby violating existing legislation governing the economic activities of government and its administration.

Crime is the 'abuse of position, or false representation, or prejudicing someone's rights for personal gain'. Fraud can be seen as the intentional misrepresentation, concealment, or omission of the truth for deception/manipulation to the financial detriment of an individual or an organization which also includes embezzlement, theft, or any attempt to steal or unlawfully obtain, misuse or harm the asset of the bank(Okoye et al., 2019). The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (2010) defined crime as the use of one's occupation for personal enrichment through the deliberate misuse or misapplication of the employing organization's resources or assets. It is therefore any act of misappropriation, theft, or embezzlement of corporate assets in a particular economic environment. Therefore, it becomes necessary for every organization to have a master plan for preventing fraud than allowing fraud to be committed and later on put strong mechanisms for detecting fraud. Thus, preventing fraud is much easier than recovering losses from the committed fraud.

Concept of Forensic Accounting

Forensic accounting is the integration of accounting, auditing, and investigative skills. According to Orsaa and Ezekiel (2017), forensic accounting is the application of accounting concepts and techniques to legal problems. It demands reporting, where accountability of the fraud is established and the report is considered as evidence in a court of law or administrative proceedings. Silverstone et al. (2012) documented that forensic accounting is the action of identifying, recording, settling, extracting, sorting, reporting, and verifying past financial data or other accounting activities for settling current or prospective legal disputes or using such past financial data for projecting future financial data to settle legal disputes.

According to Jafaru (2011), forensic and investigative accounting should be seen as the application of financial skills and investigative mentality conducted within the context of the rules of evidence to resolve unresolved issues. Jacob (2021)described forensic accounting as the application of criminalist methods, and integration of accounting investigative activities and law procedures to detect and investigate financial crimes and related accounting misdeeds.

Forensic accounting is widely considered a specialty practice of accounting, an auditing practice where investigative skills are needed to analyses information that is suitable to be used in a court of law (Aigienohuwa et al., 2017). In support of this, Popoola et al. (2016) consider forensic accounting as a process of using accounting skills and knowledge to research fraud or misappropriation of funds and to research the financial information to be used in legal proceedings .Ejike (2018) stated that forensic accounting provides an accounting analysis that is suitable for the court and will form the basis for discussion, debate and ultimate dispute resolution. Howard and Sheetz (2006) defined forensic accounting as the process of interpreting, summarizing and presenting complex financial issues clearly, succinctly and factually often in a court of law as an expert witness.

Empirical Review

Jacob (2021)examined the effect of forensic accounting on financial fraud management in Nigeria's public sector. The study employed primary data and was collected using a well-structured questionnaire administered to two hundred and fifty respondents from EFFC, ICPC, Office of the Accountant General, Office of the Auditor General and other practicing accountants in the country. The data gathered through the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed that forensic accounting practices have a positive effect on fraud management. Also, the study found that forensic accounting has a significant influence on fraud detection and prevention and that forensic litigation has a significant positive effect on the recovery of funds lost to fraud.

Gupta and Vij (2021)examined the effect of forensic accounting on the detection and prevention of financial fraud in the Indian Corporate Sector. The study utilizes diverse techniques viz. Benford's Law, Theory of Relative Size Factor, and data mining in the detection and prevention of financial frauds. Responses from 100 accounting professionals were collected through snowball and judgment sampling. The study found that forensic accounting practices have a positive and significant effect on fraud detection and prevention in the Indian Corporate sector.

Bello (2020) examines the effect of forensic accounting technology on fraud detection in Nigeria. The study used a qualitative approach by administering questionnaires with both structured and semi-structured questions. A total of 38 Investigators from the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) were used as a sample for the study. The study revealed a significant relationship between forensic accounting technological tools and fraud detection in Nigeria. The study established that forensic accounting is solving fraud issues and using technology to aid fraud detection in Nigeria.

Chepngeno and Fred (2020) analyses the effects of litigation support services on fraud mitigation in firms listed at the Nairobi Securities Exchange (NSE). The study population comprised all firms listed at the NSE. The study employed a non-probability sampling (purposive sampling) technique to select the sample frame. Primary data were collected from purposively selected staff working with the aforesaid firms. The data collected were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 and Statistics data (STATA) version 13 analytical tools. The results

of the study revealed that litigation support services have significant correlations with fraud mitigation.

Eyo and Ebahi (2020) examine the effect of forensic accounting and litigation support services on fraud detection in Nigerian companies. The study data were sourced from the primary sources and with the help of structured questionnaires of two segments administered to the employees of Zenith Bank Nigeria Plc. and Union Bank Nigeria Plc. in Calabar, Cross River State. The data collected were presented with the help of tables and interpreted with the help of inferential statistics using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The study revealed that forensic accounting and litigation support do not have a significant effect on fraud detection in Nigerian companies.

Okoye and Mbanugo (2020) assess the effect of forensic Accounting on fraud cases in tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The population of the study comprised 470 account staff in 7 public tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria along with interviews conducted with those ministries out of which 350 were filled and returned. The Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used as a statistical tool to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that forensic accounting significantly reduces the occurrence of fraud cases in the tertiary institutions in South East Nigeria and that there is a significant difference between Professional Forensic Accountants and Traditional External Auditors, and therefore, the use of Forensic Accountants can help better in detecting and preventing fraud cases in the tertiary institution's sector.

Ali et al., (2020) examine the impact of forensic accounting on fraud detection in the UAE banking sector: a study on Islamic and conventional banks. The study utilized cross-sectional survey research. The descriptive research design was employed for the study. The study used both qualitative and quantitative data. The study sampling technique for the research is purposive sampling. 200 employees have used as a sample size and a non-probability sampling technique was used in the study. A questionnaire was employed as an instrument used to gather data from a chosen sample and a five Likert scale was adopted in constructing the questionnaires. SPSS version 23 and SMART PLS were used to analyse the extracted data from the respondents. The findings of this research study show that there is a significant impact of forensic accounting on the detection of fraud within the Banking Industry in the UAE.

Dada and Jimoh (2020) investigated the effect of forensic accounting on financial crimes in the Nigerian public sector. Forensic accounting was proxy by litigation support service on the reduction of financial crime in the Nigerian public sector. The study adopted a survey research design and a linear regression technique was used to analyse the empirical data collected through questionnaires and oral interviews and the hypothesis formulated was also tested. The findings of the study revealed that litigation support services had a significant but negative effect (reduction) on financial crimes in the Nigerian public sector.

Abdulrahman (2019)examines the effect of forensic accounting on fraud prevention in the Nigerian public sector. The study focused on how forensic accounting prevents fraud in Nigeria's Public Sector and to determine whether forensic accounting prevents fraud in

Nigeria's Public Sector. The study data were collected from secondary sources or Content Analysis. Based on the analysis of the study, it established that forensic accounting has a significant positive influence on fraud prevention.

Samuel (2019) investigated the effect of forensic accounting on the detection of fraud risk indicators in public enterprises in Ondo state, Nigeria. The study population comprised the entire staff of the public enterprises in Ondo State with a sampled population of 238 purposively targeted two groups of respondents. The study sourced primary data through the use of a questionnaire, while secondary sources were textbooks, published materials like journals and internet facilities. The study made use of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS 21) software to analyse the collected data. The z–test research techniques were used to analyse and interpret collected data concerning the stated hypotheses. The study results revealed that forensic accounting does have a significant effect with regard to the detection of fraud risk indicators in Public Enterprises. That is, effective use of forensic accounting could help in the detection of fraud risk indicators that often leads to the continuous perpetration of fraud in the Public Enterprises in Ondo State.

Akani and Ogbeide (2017)examine the effect of forensic accounting on fraudulent practices in the Nigerian public sector. The study employed the survey descriptive research design. The study population consisted of all public institutions in Edo State, Nigeria. The study sample ten (10) government establishments, both Federal and State-owned and were randomly selected. The study used a Structured four-scale Likert-type questionnaire to collect data from the respondents who were mainly internal auditors, chief accountants, executive directors and directors of the selected institutions. The study data were analysed using frequency counts and simple percentages methods. Findings from the study indicated that forensic accounting had a significant influence on the reduction of fraudulent practices in the Nigerian public sector.

METHODOLOGY

A cross-sectional design and a survey method are used in this study to generate the data for analysis. The study population consisted of 110, which consist of Trainers and Operatives in the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission, Academy, Karu, Abuja. Fifty-three (53) consist of the sample size of the study. Snowball Sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. Also, snowball sampling was used by the researcher as one person refers another to fill the questionnaire. After collecting the data, various statistical tests like t-test were applied to the data to decide whether forensic accounting has a significant impact on financial fraud detection and prevention. The study is made up of twelve (12) close-ended questions on the variables with five (5) point Likert scale responses [strongly disagreed (1), disagreed (2), Neutral (3), agreed (4), and strongly agreed (5)]. The data was then analysed with the aid of Smart-PLS. The measurement model is used to help assess the reliability and validity of the construct. The results of the structural equation model are used to establish the effect of forensic accounting onfinancial fraud preventionin Nigeria.

A mathematical model was used for this study. This wasexpressed below:

Financial Fraud Prevention = f (Investigation of Crime & Corruption, Litigation Support Services, Forensic Accounting Knowledge) ……………… . . . (1)

It is stated econometrically as; $FF = bo + b_1 ICC + b_2 LSS + b_3 FAK + Ut$ ……….…… (2)

Where bo= Constant term, b1 and b2= Coefficients of the independent's variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Results of the Reflective Measurement Model
The construct validity and reliability are discussed in table 1, it helps to the reliability and validity of the data of the study.

Table 1
Summary of the Convergent Validity and Reliability and Discriminant Validity

	AVE	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	Discriminant Validity
FF	0.621	0.819	0.697	Yes
ICC	0.871	0.953	0.928	Yes
KE	0.505	0.752	0.519	Yes
LSS	0.733	0.893	0.833	Yes

SmartPLS3

The study tested for the convergent validity and composite reliability of the study, which is on the four constructs of ICC, LSS, FAK and FF. As an evaluation criterion, convergent validity builds on the Average variance extracted (AVE). In the study, the AVE values of ICC (0.871), LSS (0.733), KE (0.505) and FF (0.601) are well above the minimum level of 0.50. It shows that the four constructs of AVE values of ICC, LSS, KE and FF, have a high degree of convergent validity.

As a standard, the Composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (α) vary between 0 and 1with higher values indicating higher levels of reliability. In this study, the coefficient reliability (consistency) values of ICC (CR 0.95, α 0.92), KE (CR 0.75, α 0.52), LSS (CR 0.89, α 0.83), and FF (CR 0.81, α 0.70) are within the values considered as satisfactory. Any value that is definitely ≥ 0.96 is recognized as unsatisfactory according to the criterion (Hair et al., 2014). Hence, all four constructs: ICC, KE, LSS, and FF have higher levels of internal consistency reliability within the acceptable criterion as represented in Table 1. Furthermore, the positive evaluation of the discriminant validity in Table 1, shows that the construct is unique and captures phenomena not represented by other constructs in the reflective model. Figure 1 presents the assessment of the measurement model results that determines the data supported empirically by the concept, and the concept has been confirmed empirically.
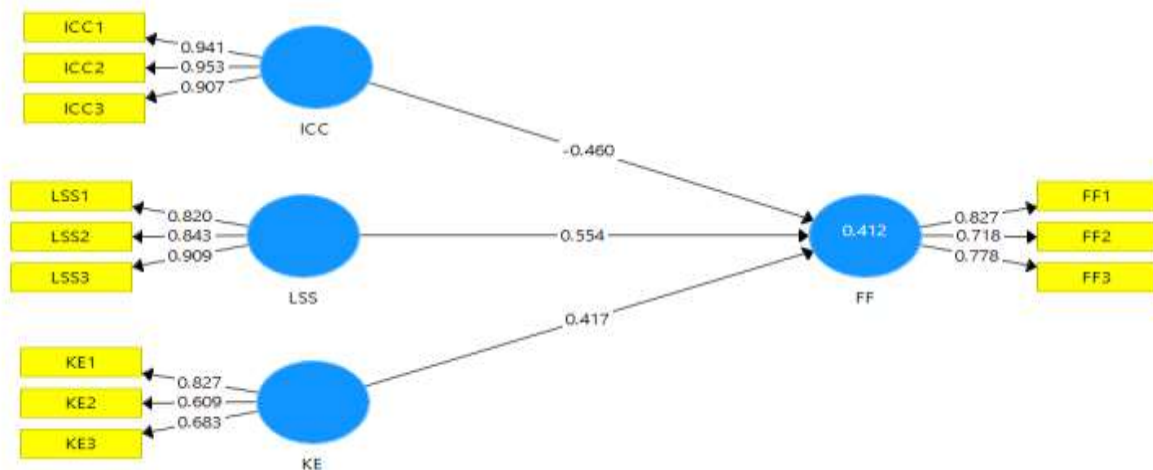
Figure 1: Algorithm Reflective Measurement Model

Results of the Reflective Structural Model

Direct Relationships of the Hypothesized Model
Table 2 and Figure 2 depict the direct relationships between ICC, KE, and LSS on FF, which portends three scenarios:
Table 2
Summary of Direct relationship of forensic accountant attributes to financial fraud

Variable	Path Coeff.	Std Error	T-value	P-value	Decision
ICC→FF	-0.494	0.260	1.903	0.058	Not Support
KE→FF	0.370	0.147	2.580	0.010	Support
LSS→FF	0.578	0.198	2.917	0.004	Support

SmartPLS3

Table 2 shows that ICC as an attribute (investigation of crime and corruption) maintained a negative and insignificant relationship with FF (financial fraud). Thus, FF in the Nigerian public sector requires special investigation of a forensic accountant to reduce fraud (beta = -0.494; t = 1.869; p = .0062). It is evident from the results that forensic accountants conduct an in-depth investigation about fraud detection which reduce financial fraud.

Secondly, forensic accountant knowledge and expertise (KE) reveal a positive and significant relationship with financial fraud (FF) (beta = -0.379; t = 2.459; p = 0.014). It is evident from the findings of the study that as a forensic accountant obtains extra knowledge and skills about fraud detection and prevention, the individual level of financial fraud continues to increase. Finally, the litigation support and services (LSS) provided by a forensic accountant is found to have a positive and significant relationship with financial fraud (FF) (beta = -0.578; t = 3.359; p = 0.001). This proved that forensic accountant knowledge and expertise acquired have a strong significance to deter financial fraud.

Figure 2 presents the assessment of the structural model results that determine the data empirically supported the concept, and the concept has also been confirmed empirically.
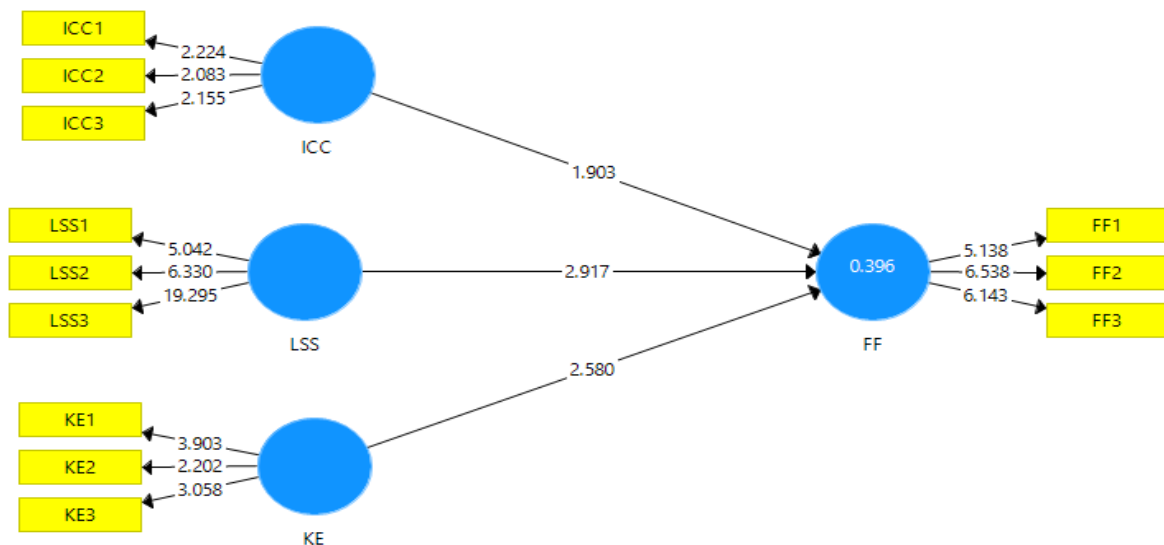

Figure 2: Results of the Bootstrapping Structural Model

Assessing the R^2 Effect Size of the Model and the f^2 Effect Size of the Model
R^2 typifies the amount of explained variance of the endogenous construct, FF. In Figure 2, the model delivers the medium R^2 value of 0.396. The minimum acceptable baseline criteria (Chin, 2010) for interpreting R^2 values of the target construct is 0.25. therefore, the effect of the three constructs (ICC, LSS, and KE on FF) is 40% which is substantial to explain that the forensic accountant attribute has a significant effect on financial fraud.

Table 3
***Summary of* R^2 Effect Size and f^2 Effect Size of the Model**

Variable	$R^2 f^2$
ICC, KE, LSS→FF	0.396
ICC→FF	0.280
KE→FF	0.367
LSS→FF	0.179

SmartPLS3

The f^2 effect size is meant to capture the contribution of each exogenous variable (ICC, KE and LSS) to the R^2 value of the endogenous variable (FF). Table 3 demonstrates the f^2 effect size of the study. By adopting the Cohen (1988) criterion, the contribution of ICC (0.280), KE (0.367) and LSS (0.179) to the endogenous variable FF represents large and medium effect sizes respectively. The Cohen (1988) baseline criterion for assessing f^2 is 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35

respectively, which denote small, medium, and large effect sizes. In essence, the two exogenous variables of ICC and KE made large and while LSS made a medium contribution to FF and by extension supported the model of the study.

Implications of the Study

Theoretical Implications

Considering the different constructs enunciated in this study, the current findings have contributed to literature and theory development in major ways, which include increasing FF literature within the organizational context in a developing nation, establishing the positive significant influence of KE and LSS on FF, and establishing forensic accountant attributes differences in terms of their levels of ICC KE, LSS and FF.

Methodological Implications

Previous studies on ICC, KE and LSS (forensic accountant attributes) and FF have used statistical analysis tools such as SPSS to produce their findings. However, this study explored a relatively robust statistical analysis tool, Smart PLS-SEM that consists of a PLS-SEM Algorithm and PLS- SEM Bootstrapping tools. PLS-SEM is a multivariate technique that combines features of factor analysis and regression. It thus enables the simultaneous examination of the relationships among measured variables and latent variables as well as between latent variables. Therefore, the use of this robust analytical tool is an important methodological contribution as this is the first time its deployment to the best of the author's knowledge.

Practical Implications

The results emanating from this study contribute to practice in many ways, namely: revealing the value of ICC, KE and LSS (forensic accountant) as a significant capability requirement in the workplace; revealing the importance of ICC, KE and LSS and FF as a significant attribute in the working environment.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationship between ICC, KE and LSS (forensic accountant attributes) and FF beyond the ordinary scope of developed countries. Two attributes (KE and LSS) were found to significantly associate with FF (financial fraud) in the Nigerian public sector, while ICC was established to insignificantly relate with FF. The study drew the attention of users of public sector forensic accountants such as the regulatory and enforcement institutions, courts, ministries, departments and agencies to the fact that understanding the mechanisms of fraud schemes and the ability to prevent, detect and respond to fraud require a holistic approach by adopting the forensic accounting knowledge and expertise and skills of litigating support service.

In the same vein, the findings of the study confirmed that the forensic accountant has significantly higher levels of KE, LSS and FF than the ICC in the Nigerian environment. In conclusion, by testing all the hypothesised relationships to a developing country, Nigeria, this

study assisted to create an all-inclusive global picture of KE, LSS and ICC (forensic accountant attributes) on FF. This study has provided a verifiable starting point in the examination of KE, LSS and ICC (forensic accountant attributes) on FF in non-western countries. Despite adding new information to the literature of FF in the specialized area of fraud prevention, and detection, the results were predicted to assist the public sector accounting management to deal with fraud and related crimes effectively. This study asserted that no nation is immune from fraud, and fraud, though, costly, can be reduced by engaging the services of forensic accounting professionals in the public sector, notwithstanding the deployment of sophisticated technology and litigation support services rendered by the professionals.

REFERENCES

Abdulrahman, S. (2019). Forensic accounting and fraud prevention in Nigerian public sector : A Conceptual Paper. *International Journal of Accounting & Finance Review*, *4*(2), 13–21.

Aigienohuwa, O. O., Okoye, E. I., & Uniamikogbo, E. (2017). Forensic accounting and fraud mitigation in the Nigerian banking industry Nigerian banking industry. *International Accounting and Taxation Research Group, Faculty of Management Sciences*, *1*, 177–195.

Akani, F. N., & Ogbeide, S. O. (2017). Forensic accounting and fraudulent practices in the Nigerian public sector. *International Journal of Arts and Humanities (IJAH) Bahir Dar-Ethiopia*, *6*(21), 171–181.

Ali, A. M. H., Yajid, M. S. A., Khatibi, A., & Azam, S. M. F. (2020). The impact of forensic accounting on fraud detection in the UAE banking sector : a study on Islamic and conventional banks. *European Journal of Economic and Financial Research*, *3*(6), 150–175. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.3714186

Bello, U. (2020). The Effects of forensic accounting technology on fraud detection in Nigeria. *Nile Journal of Business and Economics*, *15*, 16–26.

Chepngeno, K. F., & Fred, S. (2020). Effect of Litigation Support Services on Fraud Mitigation in Firms Listed At the Nairobi Securities Exchange , Kenya. *IOSR Journal of Economics and Finance*, *11*(4), 43–51. https://doi.org/10.9790/5933-1104044351

Dada, O. S., & Jimoh, B. F. (2020). Forensic accounting and financial crimes in Nigerian public sector. *Journal of Accounting and Taxation*, *12*(4), 118–125. https://doi.org/10.5897/JAT2020.0417

Ejike, S. I. (2018). The relevance of forensic accounting : issues in accounting and auditing practice in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science*, *23*(7), 17–24. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-2307061724

Eyo, B., & Ebahi, O. (2020). Effect of forensic accounting and litigation support on fraud detection of banks in Nigeria. *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, *19*(6), 56–60. https://doi.org/10.9790/487X-1906055660

Gupta, R., & Vij, S. (2021). Financial frauds and forensic accounting: empirical evidence from Indian corporate sector. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT) Www.Ijcrt.Org*, *9*(2), 1611–1619.

Jacob, F. O. (2021). The effect of forensic accounting on financial fraud management in Nigeria's public sector. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Advanced*

Studies, *8*(7), 27–34.

Okoye, E. I., Segun, A. I., & N, J. O. (2019). Effect of forensic accounting on fraud management on selected effect of forensic accounting on fraud management on selected firms in Nigeria . *International Journal of Economics, Business and Management Research Vol.*, *3*(12), 149–168.

Okoye, K. R. ., & Mbanugo, C. I. (2020). Forensic accounting a tool for fraud detection and prevention in the public tertiary. *European Journal of Education Studies*, *7*(6), 323–334. https://doi.org/10.46827/ejes.v7i6.3148

Orsaa, D. G., & Ezekiel, H. (2017). Effect of forensic accounting evidence on litigation services in the Nigerian judicial system. *Nigerian Journal of Management Sciences*, *6*(1), 104–113.

Samuel, A. (2019). Effect of forensic accounting on the detection of fraud risk indicators in public enterprises in Ondo state , Nigeria. *Research Journal of Finance and Accounting*, *10*(14), 52–67. https://doi.org/10.7176/RJFA

Silverstone, H., Pedneault, S., Rudewicz, M., & Frank, S. (2012). Forensic accounting and fraud investigation. In *CPE Edition Distributed by The CPE Store www.cpestore.com 1-800-910-2755*.

Sule, S., Ibrahim, S. S., Sani, A., Sule, S., Ibrahim, S. S., & Sani, A. (2019). The effect of forensic accounting investigation in detecting financial fraud : A Study in Nigeria. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *9*(2), 545–553. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v9-i2/5590