

RESEARCH PAPER

The Role of Forensic Accounting in Enhancing Financial Transparency and Minimizing Fraud in Jordanian Institutions

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of forensic accounting in enhancing financial transparency and reducing fraud in Jordanian institutions. Using a mixed-method approach, data were collected from 150 respondents including chartered accountants, auditors, financial managers, through a structured questionnaire. The findings reveal that forensic accounting significantly contributes to fraud prevention by supporting government investigations, providing courtroom testimony, and developing financial management systems. Additionally, forensic accountants play a crucial role in preparing key reports for government activities. The correlation analysis shows strong interdependencies between forensic accounting's roles in arbitration and fraud detection. While most hypotheses were confirmed, challenges were noted in applying forensic accounting within the public sector. The study concludes by recommending that policymakers strengthen the integration of forensic accounting into Jordan's financial regulatory framework to enhance its effectiveness, particularly in the public sector. This research highlights the vital role of forensic accounting in maintaining financial integrity and provides a foundation for future studies.

KEYWORDS: *Forensic accounting; Financial transparency; Fraud prevention; Fraud detection; Internal controls.*

1. Introduction

The conventional system of accounting regulations is becoming less capable of satisfying the government's demands and expectations about the accuracy of financial statements in light of the new, ever-changing business climate brought about by globalization. Accounting method failures and the bankruptcy of prominent corporations like Enron, WorldCom, and Lehman Brothers also weakened accounting standards [1]. Financial statements indicate a company's profitability and value by recording its financial activity over a given period. Financial statements show how events and transactions affect the entity's finances [2].

Forensic accounting is popular as stakeholders seek fraud prevention methods. It has been regarded by academics and intellectuals worldwide since its launch as a fraud detection

tool. To support legal cases, forensic accounting uses accounting, auditing, and investigation. Specialist experts study economic transactions and financial records for administrative accountability or asset valuation. It involves accounting, auditing, and investigative skills to achieve a goal [3].

Financial statements are the main product of accounting activities and the main way to present financial information to managers, shareholders, regulatory bodies, government entities, and prospective investors. The statements' importance depends on qualitative data that meets quality standards. This will boost shareholder trust because the statements will correctly and properly depict the corporation's reality and activities. Financial fraud in firms and managers' drive to improve their organizations' reputation among stakeholders have caused worldwide crises and the

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downfall of large corporations like Enron. Arthur Andersen, the financial statement auditor, has also been accused of contributing to the collapse and employing deceptive accounting methods. Auditors have also used accounting loopholes to favor themselves over others. Financial crime and fraud have increased despite International Auditing Standards and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Legal auditor negligence or complicity caused this. Audit and internal audit committees sometimes lack the competence and experience to discover fraud. Certified Public Accountants do not investigate financial statement fraud. The goal is to evaluate the Company's management-prepared financial report in line with IFRS and International Auditing Standards [4].

In the meantime, the obligations, duties, and anticipated outcomes of accountants and auditors have gained greater clarity. Proficiency in accounting, auditing, law, and modern technology may be necessary to resolve disputes that arise in both personal and professional contexts. This requirement arises in the specific areas where law and accounting intersect, particularly in the field of fraud auditing. As a result of this situation, forensic accountancy/forensic auditorship has emerged as a distinct and recognized field of expertise [5].

To detect financial fraud, identify financial irregularities, and support legal procedures, forensic accounting combines accounting, auditing, and investigation skills. Financial records and transactions are examined in forensic accounting to resolve legal disputes, regulatory investigations, and internal corporate investigations. This checks financial data for irregularities and unethical activity. Assisted by law enforcement, legal professionals, and corporations, forensic accountants investigate financial crimes such as fraud, embezzlement, and money laundering. They examine financial transactions, hidden assets, financial losses, and fraud. Forensic accountants can explain complex financial issues in court. Insurance claims, bankruptcy, civil litigation, and regulatory compliance are their specialties. Accountants, financial analysts, auditors, and lawyers need expertise [6].

1.1. Objectives of the study

This study will examine the following categories to understand better how forensic accounting might help Jordanian institutions boost financial transparency and reduce fraud:

1. **Assess Financial Arbitration Efficiency:** Examine how forensic accounting enhances financial arbitration efficiency in Jordanian instances involving related parties.
2. **Evaluate Fraud Detection and Prevention:** Evaluate forensic accounting's role in avoiding fraud in Jordanian enterprises.
3. **Assess Financial Damages and Compensation:** Evaluate forensic accounting's ability to assess financial damages and compensation in Jordan effectively.
4. **Support Government Investigations:** Assess the role of forensic accounting in detecting and investigating fraud in Jordanian government sectors.
5. **Improve Financial Reporting Quality:** Discover how forensic accounting enhances the accuracy and quality of financial reports for Jordanian institutions.
6. **Raise Awareness and Knowledge:** Assess how forensic accounting helps Jordanian stakeholders understand and avoid financial wrongdoing.

1.2. Importance of the study

This study addresses the following concerns and can have a large influence in theoretical and practical areas:

1. **Combating Financial Fraud:** This study sheds light on how forensic accounting helps detect and prevent financial crime in Jordanian institutions.
2. **Enhancing Financial Transparency:** The study underlines the relevance of forensic accounting in improving financial reporting openness and accuracy, which increases stakeholder trust, including investors, regulators, and the public.
3. **Supporting Legal and Judicial Processes:** Financial arbitration and litigation are more efficient and fair thanks to forensic accounting's expert witness and verifiable financial proof.
4. **Strengthening Corporate Governance:** Forensic accounting improves business governance, which is crucial to long-term success, by identifying internal control system deficiencies and suggesting solutions.
5. **Guiding Policy and Regulation:** This study can help Jordanian politicians and regulators understand forensic accounting and create stronger financial fraud and corruption laws.
6. **Educational and Professional Development:** Forensic accounting should be included in academic and professional training programs to prepare future accountants and auditors to

detect financial crime, according to this study.

7. Sustainability and Growth: Jordan's economy stabilizes and grows because forensic accounting reduces financial fraud and increases transparency, making firms safer and more reliable.

1.3. Hypotheses of the study

This research tests the following assumptions to determine how forensic accounting can help Jordanian organizations increase financial transparency and prevent fraud:

1.3.1. Main hypothesis

H0: Jordanian institutions do not benefit from forensic accounting's financial transparency or fraud reduction.

H1: Financial transparency and fraud reduction in Jordanian institutions are improved by forensic accounting.

1.3.2. Sub-hypotheses

1.3.2.1. First Sub-hypothesis

H0: In Jordanian related-party situations, forensic accounting does not affect financial arbitration.

H1: Forensic accounting improves financial arbitration in Jordanian related-party cases.

1.3.2.2. Second sub-hypothesis:

H0: Forensic accounting does not help Jordanian companies discover and prevent fraud.

H1: Forensic accounting helps Jordanian businesses detect and avoid fraud.

1.3.2.3. Third sub-hypothesis:

H0: Forensic accounting does not improve financial damages and compensation calculations in Jordan.

H1: Financial damages and compensations in Jordan can be more appropriately evaluated with forensic accounting.

1.3.2.4. Fourth sub-hypothesis:

H0: Jordan rarely investigates and detects public sector fraud with forensic accounting.

H1: A primary function of Jordan's public sector forensic accounting is fraud identification and investigation.

1.4. Problem of the study

The complexity and frequency of financial fraud in Jordanian institutions require forensic accounting to eliminate it. Corruption and fake financial statements hinder Jordan's corporate and

public sectors. These issues cause financial instability, stakeholder distrust, and economic harm. The study's main question, given the importance of accurate and open financial reporting, is:

How can forensic accounting help institutions in Jordan be more transparent with their finances and reduce the prevalence of fraud in this area?

This research aims to delve deeper into this issue by addressing the following sub-questions:

3. In financial arbitration cases involving related parties in Jordan, how can forensic accounting help make the process more efficient?
4. What is the role of forensic accounting in detecting and preventing fraudulent activities within Jordanian companies?
5. How does forensic accounting enhance the accuracy in determining incurred or potential financial damages and the corresponding compensations in Jordan?
6. What is the role of forensic accounting in uncovering and investigating fraud in the Jordanian governmental sector?

The study will answer questions to provide comprehensive insights into Jordan's forensic accounting practices and propose recommendations for improving financial transparency and reducing fraud in various institutions.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Forensic accounting definition

A forensic accounting theory explains forensic accounting methods. Past and contemporary accounting crises in financial and non-firms have revealed that forensic accounting competence is needed to uncover accounting or financial reporting fraud. The evolving innovations in financial fraud schemes and the frequent changes in accounting methods and policies by firms in the preparation of financial reports have made fraud detection complicated so that a successful forensic investigator will need skill, knowledge, experience, and "attention-to-details" [7].

2.2. Role of forensic accounting in reducing financial fraud techniques

Incorrect and fraudulent financial transactions are rising worldwide. Companies risk unethical and dishonest practices. Due to increased business scandals worldwide, forensic accounting is in demand. Financial fraud is becoming the world's biggest economic threat, requiring forensic accountants and auditors.

The global collapse has increased the need for forensic auditors and accountants to develop fraud

detection, prevention, and handling solutions. In 2018 and 2019, 28% of global economic transactions involved accounting or financial fraud. Fraud cost US\$42 billion between 2018 and 2019 [8].

2.3. Previous studies

This study examined how forensic accounting moderates the relationship between corporate governance and accounting information quality in Jordanian public shareholding companies using a random sample and all external certified accountants. For (217) certified public accountants to complete surveys [9]. After assessing research data with various hierarchical regression equations. Jordanian corporate governance and accounting information quality were statistically significantly affected by forensic accounting. This was based on shareholder rights, equitable treatment, disclosure, and board responsibility. Forensic accounting changed governance rules and the quality of accounting information in Jordan. Firm boards of directors must promote excellent governance and stringent compliance, the writers stressed. Certified forensic accountants needed training, too.

Also they examined Jordan's forensic accounting fraud prevention issues. The difficulties were grouped from fraud crime forensic accounting literature. Four hurdles were forensic accounting, fraud crime distribution, specialized technology, and stakeholder participation. Data was collected via questionnaires. The study found various obstacles to forensic accounting implementation. After technological availability, experience ranks fraud extent, stakeholder cooperation, and fraud difficulty. [10]

The researcher sought stakeholders' input on a framework for forensic accounting education and services, adding to its previously significant contribution. Unlike other "academics and practitioners" investigations, this one goes further [11]. Stakeholder theory was used to identify participants to represent Jordan's different forensic accounting education and services stakeholders. Forty Jordanians were questioned to examine forensic accounting education and practice. These included accounting professors and practitioners, Jordanian public and private sector decision-makers, attorneys, legal experts, and Islamic theologians. Thematic analysis was also used to evaluate Jordanian government and oversight agency papers, websites, publications, and scholarly literature.

This study examined whether the Audit Bureau and Jordanian Certified Public Accountants

(CPAs) have the forensic accounting application factors they need. The study also found that these application elements improve auditor efficiency due to their dual duties as financial specialists supporting the judiciary in financial issues and their heightened duty in the face of numerous fraud cases. Since it was appropriate, the researchers used descriptive analysis to achieve their goals. The survey included 433 Jordanian CPAs and 520 Audit Bureau auditors, 426 of whom were randomly selected. Data was acquired by questionnaire, analyzed, and hypothesis tested using SPSS. The study found a statistical difference between the two study samples' responses and made recommendations to help Jordanian legislators improve the forensic accounting profession. [12]

Forensic accounting has revealed income smoothing in Jordanian commercial banks, according to [13]. The survey covered all 13 Amman Stock Exchange-listed commercial banks from 2017 to 2021. The researcher used E-Views to analyze published financial data from these banks to get these results. The equation of the multiple regression model applied to the study's variables showed that the proportions analysis technique, as shown by the return on assets ratio, cash and cash equivalent ratio, credit facilities ratio, and fixed assets ratio, revealed income smoothing practices in Jordanian commercial banks. In addition to preparing a study, applying it to Islamic banks, and comparing the results, one of the most essential proposals was to analyze ratios on more financial statement items. Jordanian commercial banks' income smoothing techniques should likewise be publicized.

The researcher examined Jordanian five-star hotels to explore whether forensic accounting may reduce cloud-based accounting hazards. The survey included all Jordanian five-star hotel accountants. The author focused on five-star hotel accountants in Amman, the capital. There were 170 accountants. At random, 118 accountants were selected. The author circulated 118 surveys and gathered 96. The study indicated that Jordanian five-star hotels reduced cloud-based accounting risks using forensic accounting methods like FPDDS (Fraud prevention, detection and deterrence skills), FAIS (Forensic audit, investigation, and interviewing skills), LMAS (Litigation, mediation and arbitration skills), and CARDR (Computer Assisted Reviews and Document Reviews). Even as cybercrime becomes more complex, cloud investigative methods must vary. New technology requires periodic evaluations and revisions to computer

crime laws and codifications. [14] Further, they were investigated VAT evasion and forensic accounting, detection probabilities, penalties, government expenditure, tax fairness, and tax ethics. They employed partial least squares-structural equation modeling to examine tax ethics, justice, government spending on VAT evasion, probability of discovery, and tax sanctions in 248 Jordanian retail industry responses. Also negatively correlated were tax fines, discovery probability, tax justice, forensic accounting, government expense, and VAT evasion efficiency. Tax ethics, detection likelihood, government tax equality, and tax authority were important in public spending and forensic accounting. Authorities should also use the information to enact new VAT evasion laws and strategies. Increased detection, tax ethics and justice, forensic accounting, and government spending can help the government and tax authorities stop small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) from dodging taxes. Tax evasion, ethics, justice, forensic accounting, fines, detection, and individual income taxes are well-studied. This inquiry added to the minimal retail VAT avoidance evidence. Also innovative are forensic accounting and government spending in retail VAT evasion. [15]

This study was examined forensic accounting services (FAS) and litigation risk in Amman Stock Exchange-listed industrial businesses using resource-based theory. 250 2017–2021 firm-year observations were taken from fifty firms' annual reports. The connection was analyzed using logistic regression. FAS-using businesses were sued more often. This means more inspections, making these companies riskier [16]. The analysis controlled for age, size, profitability, and working capital. Notable were FAS and litigation risk. The findings urged FAS practitioners to be careful. They thoroughly evaluate, yet security vulnerabilities may lead to litigation. Businesses must weigh the pros and cons of FAS monitoring to benefit without legal risk. The majority of FAS studies have focused on fraud, therefore they studied how forensic accounting affects lawsuit risks. Their research also explained how company

characteristics increase litigation risk.

The researchers explored how regulation affects financial fraud detection and prevention in Amman Stock Exchange-listed commercial banks. Internal audit and finance input affected their study's dependent and independent variable questions. The results show that integrity and ethics, efficiency-led ideology, management and development procedures, organizational structure and board members, and audit committee effectiveness prevent and identify financial fraud. Fourth, distributing responsibilities and influence hurts fraud detection and prevention. The fourth factor, role segregation, was suggested to control financial fraud in Jordan. [17]

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research design

This descriptive-analytical study examines how forensic accounting increases financial transparency and lowers fraud in Jordanian institutions. The descriptive component gathers accounting professionals' views on forensic accounting, while the analytical component examines how forensic accounting variables affect fraud detection and prevention.

3.2. Data collection sources

Data for this study came from primary and secondary sources:

Primary Sources, a systematic 150-responder questionnaire produced primary data. The poll examined forensic accounting's role in fraud detection, judicial proceedings, and financial management. Secondary Sources, came from forensic accounting, financial fraud, and transparency books and papers. This review contextualizes and analyzes primary evidence using theory.

3.3. Sample and sampling technique

A purposeful sample of 150 people was taken. This approach targeted accounting and forensic professionals. Jordanian forensic accountants, auditors, financial managers, and stakeholders were sampled.

Tab. 1. Study sample description

| Description | Male | Female | Less than 30 | 30 to 45 | Percentage (%) |
|-------------|------|--------|--------------|----------|------------------------------------|
| Gender | 41 | 10 | - | - | 80.4% Male, 19.6% Female |
| Age | - | - | 16 | 23 | 31.4% Less than 30, 45.1% 30 to 45 |

3.4. Questionnaire design

The questionnaire has three main sections:

1. Section 1: Introduction: A letter explained the study's goal, secured confidentiality, and

stressed the necessity of responders' involvement.

2. Section 2: Demographic Information: Gender, age, academic credentials, and accounting experience were collected in this section.
3. Section 3: Study Hypotheses: The 17 questionnaire items assessed the study's hypotheses on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). These questions examined respondents' perspectives on forensic accounting's abilities to detect and prevent fraud, manage funds, and aid courts.

3.5. Statistical methods

The data was analyzed using many statistical methods:

1. Descriptive Statistics: To describe response central trends and variability, means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages were determined. This showed participants' views on forensic accounting in their institutions.
2. Normality Test: Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests verified whether the data followed a normal distribution, an essential assumption for many parametric statistical approaches.

Tab. 2. Normality test

| Hypothesis | Z value | Sig value |
|------------|---------|-----------|
| First | 1.341 | 0.816 |
| Second | 1.510 | 0.816 |
| Third | 1.570 | - |
| Fourth | 1.012 | - |

3. Correlation Analysis: The associations between variables were examined using Pearson's correlation coefficient. This investigation determined the strength and

direction of connections between variables, such as forensic accounting's arbitration role and fraud detection effectiveness.

Tab. 3. Correlation matrix between study hypotheses

| Hypothesis | First | Second | Third | Fourth |
|------------|-------|--------|-------|--------|
| First | 1 | 0.456 | 0.419 | 0.578 |
| Second | 0.456 | 1 | 0.275 | 0.458 |
| Third | 0.419 | 0.275 | 1 | 0.275 |
| Fourth | 0.578 | 0.458 | 0.275 | 1 |

4. Hypothesis Testing (t-tests): The study's hypotheses were tested by one-sample t-tests. This statistical test determined if the sample mean significantly deviated from a hypothesized population mean, assessing respondents' perspectives on forensic accounting's impact.

the t-test formula was:

$$t = \frac{\bar{X} - \mu}{\frac{s}{\sqrt{n}}} \quad \dots\dots(1)$$

Where:

- \bar{X} = sample mean
- μ = hypothesized population mean
- s = sample standard deviation
- n = sample size

Mathematical Expression: For each hypothesis,

Tab. 4. Main hypotheses test results

| Hypothesis | T value | SIG T | Result |
|------------|---------|-------|----------|
| First | 2.345 | 0.021 | Accepted |
| Second | 2.214 | 0.027 | Accepted |
| Third | 3.987 | 0.000 | Accepted |
| Fourth | 1.876 | 0.061 | Rejected |

3.6. Reliability and validity of the questionnaire

- Reliability: Cronbach's alpha measured the internal consistency of the questionnaire. A Cronbach's alpha value above 0.70 suggested that the questionnaire items consistently measured the target constructs.
- Validity: A careful assessment by forensic accounting and financial crime professionals established content validity, while factor analysis ensured construct validity by ensuring the questionnaire adequately reflected the theoretical constructs.

Equation for Cronbach's Alpha:

$$\alpha = \frac{k-1}{k - \frac{\sum \sigma_i^2}{\sigma_{total}^2}}$$

Where:

- k = number of items
- σ_i^2 = variance of each item
- σ_{total}^2 = total variance of the sum of all items

The reliability and validity tests showed that the questionnaire was reliable and valid for gathering Jordanian forensic accounting data.

3.7. Ethical considerations

The study followed human research ethics. All respondents gave informed consent and participated voluntarily, and confidentiality was protected. The data were utilized only for research, protecting participant privacy and rights.

4. Results and Discussion

The study sheds light on how forensic accounting improves financial openness and reduces fraud in Jordanian institutions. This section analyzes the findings, their consequences, and their relevance to contemporary field literature.

4.1. Role of forensic accountants in government investigations

Government financial fraud investigations require forensic accountants, as evidenced by a mean score of 3.784 (SD = 0.923). This supports [18], who advocated forensic accounting in criminal investigations for financial guidance. According to [19], forensic accountants diminish financial and administrative corruption, confirming this study.

4.2. Testimony and evidence presentation in court

The statistics significantly supported forensic accountants testifying and presenting evidence in court (mean = 3.686). This study urged for forensic accounting regulation due to its importance in legal decision-making [20]. The research found that forensic accountants are increasingly used as expert witnesses in financial crime trials. [21]

4.3. Development of financial management systems and fraud detection

The study indicated that forensic accountants build financial management systems and detect fraud, scoring 3.549. According to [9], forensic accounting improves accounting information and fosters corporate governance. In creating fraud-prevention internal controls and monitoring systems, [8] underlined the necessity of forensic accountants.

4.4. Role in preparing key reports for government activities

The mean score of 3.333 highlighted forensic accountants' involvement in generating key government reports. The research found that forensic accounting reports reduce cloud-based accounting hazards [14]. [17] stressed the relevance of these reports in Jordanian commercial banks' regulatory compliance.

4.5. Correlation analysis: interdependence of hypotheses

The study's hypotheses, including forensic accounting's financial arbitration and fraud detection performance, were strongly correlated. The substantial link between these two parameters (correlation coefficient = 0.578) suggests that forensic accounting's role in arbitration is closely tied to fraud detection and prevention. According to [12], forensic accounting enhances auditors' performance by providing detailed and precise financial analysis, which is necessary for financial dispute arbitration.

This is supported by [3] Nigerian bank research. According to [3], forensic accountants may resolve financial conflicts and prevent legal issues from fraud. This highlights how interconnected forensic accounting's obligations are, showing that success in one area (arbitration) can increase performance in another (fraud detection).

4.6. Hypotheses testing: significance and implications

Forensic accounting promotes financial transparency, financial arbitration efficiency, and Jordanian institution fraud detection and prevention, as shown by the t-test. These findings support [18] and [8] emphasis on forensic accounting in financial fraud prevention.

The fourth hypothesis, which is that forensic accounting detects and probes Jordanian public sector wrongdoing, failed. Forensic accounting is important in other settings, but the public sector brings unique challenges. [10] noted the lack of specialized technologies, stakeholder participation, and public-sector forensic accountant training. This suggests greater research and targeted efforts to improve government forensic accounting.

4.7. Integration with previous studies and future

5. Conclusion

This study illuminates how forensic accounting improves financial openness and reduces fraud in Jordanian institutions. The findings reveal that forensic accounting significantly contributes to fraud prevention by supporting government investigations (mean score: 3.784, SD: 0.923), providing courtroom testimony (mean score: 3.686, SD: 1.029), and developing financial management systems (mean score: 3.549, SD: 0.642). Additionally, forensic accountants play a crucial role in preparing key reports for government activities (mean score: 3.333, SD: 0.554). The correlation analysis shows strong interdependencies between forensic accounting's roles in arbitration and fraud detection (correlation coefficient: 0.578). Also, the findings show that forensic accountants aid criminal investigations, judicial proceedings, and financial management systems. These jobs are important in both the commercial and public sectors, but the study identifies public sector difficulties that need more study.

The study demonstrates that Jordanian enterprises and governments need forensic accounting to enlighten policymakers and regulators. The findings imply public-sector forensic accounting might considerably improve fraud detection and prevention. The study improves Middle Eastern forensic accounting knowledge, particularly in Jordan. By showing forensic accounting's value in financial transparency and fraud prevention, this study advances the field.

6. Recommendations

Although sufficient, the sample size may restrict generalizability. To accurately represent Jordanian accountants, future studies should use larger, more diverse samples. Denial, the fourth hypothesis, claims public-sector forensic accounting is hard. Future research should address these issues to improve government forensic accounting. This could involve investigating how technology, training, and interagency collaboration can overcome difficulties. Explore advanced forensic accounting methods as financial fraud evolves. Data analytics and AI detect and prevent fraud. Keeping up with these advancements helps forensic accounting battle worldwide financial crime.

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