

Role of Proactive Forensic Audit in Safeguarding Assets of an Organisation

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the role of proactive forensic audit in safeguarding assets of an organisation. Specifically, the study aimed to investigate the existence of qualified forensic auditors who safeguard assets, examine the existence of an automated proactive search for fraud indicators as a tool of safeguarding assets and to evaluate the integrity of the forensic auditors in Tanzania Revenue Authority, Kariakoo offices. The study collected data using questionnaires which were distributed to 144 respondents; among them were tax management officers, human resource officers, legal councils, ICT officers, accountants and auditors. The data were organized and analysed in SPSS. The study applied case study research design with qualitative and quantitative approaches. Findings of the study indicate that there is a shortage of qualified forensic auditors in TRA Kariakoo offices. The process of implementing the automated proactive search for fraud indicator is average. TRA Kariakoo examines its employees' integrity on a regular basis. This study suggests to TRA Kariakoo to facilitate training to its employee in forensic audit skills. To tackle the challenge of automated search for proactive fraud indicators, TRA Kariakoo could adopt and make improvements in forensic audit tools, adopt new ones, create awareness to employees on these tools and to have continuous assessments of all employees.

Keywords: Proactive forensic audit, Safeguarding assets

INTRODUCTION

Globally, the majority of organisations experience the impact of fraudulent incidents. Numerous instances of fraudulent activities have been observed, exerting a profound impact on the overall coherence and stability of organisations (Cooper et al 2013) reported that fraud takes place in accounting, organizations and society at large. There is a significant prevalence of fraudulent activities recorded globally (Albrecht et al, 2015). Instances of fraudulent activity are occasionally recorded by auditors, even within the context of Tanzania (CAG Annual Report, 2019). Despite the presence of organisational management responsible for safeguarding assets and auditors tasked with monitoring their performance, instances of fraudulent activity persist at a significant scale (Maulid, 2019). In the contemporary era characterized by intricate interconnections and inter dependencies, forensic investigations assume a pivotal function in the process of unearthing evidentiary material, resolving fraud criminal cases, and upholding the principles of justice. Historically, forensic investigations have typically been characterized by a reactive approach, wherein they were launched after the occurrence of an incident (Singleton & Singleton, 2010). Nevertheless, there has been a notable shift towards a proactive methodology in the field of forensic investigations.

This strategy has been shown to be transformative, enabling both enterprises and law enforcement entities to identify and mitigate possible dangers prior to their escalation (Rasmi & Al Qerem, 2015; Crumbley, 2007).

An asset is a resource of value that an individual, organization or entity owns or controls with the expectation that it will provide future economic benefits (IPSAS Board 2000). Assets can be classified into two key categories; tangible and intangible. Tangible assets have physical substance such as Property, Plant and Equipment (IPSAS Board 2000). Natural resources including mineral, timber and gas reserve (IASB 2000) falls in this category as well on another hand, intangible assets do not have physical presence, example includes intellectual property such as copyrights and trademarks (IASC, 1998; IPSAS Board, 2006). Conversely assets can be categorized based on their liquidity and expected usage within organization (IASC 1997). Moreover, financial assets include stocks, bonds and cash and cash equivalents are classified according to their intended use (IPSAS Board, 2018). Asset, which represent valuable resources owned by both organizations and individuals frequently become attractive target for fraud perpetrators who seeks to exploit weakness within internal control systems, thereby posing significant to financial stability and integrity of organization involved (Dilla et al, 2013)

Fraud is deliberate and deceptive act involving intentional misrepresentation, concealment or manipulation of facts, informational or assets for personal gain resulting in harm or loss to others. (Albrecht et al 2006) highlight that fraud entails intentional deception which undermines ethical standards and trust. Additionally, (Wells 2017) underscores the essence of preventive measures in combating fraudulent activities. It includes violations of laws, regulation policies and market expectations of ethical business conduct (Gee, 2015). Fraud is dangerous to the nation because it undermines corporate integrity, public trust, business goodwill, and stakeholder wealth. The effects of fraud can be very bad for businesses, individuals and society at large. It can cause financial loss, resulting in an emotional impact where the victim feels betrayed. Fraudsters might face legal actions such as imprisonment and fines. Fraud ruins an organization's reputation towards its shareholders, customers and the public. It impacts productivity because management spends them in litigation matters. At large, it has an economic effect (Lang & Ricciardela, 2012). Fraud can manifest in various forms, including consumer fraud, insurance fraud, financial fraud and cyber fraud each posing challenges to individuals, organizations and society at large. (Dorris, 2022) With all that being noticed, the necessity to tackle fraud becomes evident.

The increase in accounting scandals such as Enron in 2001, which fooled regulators with fake holdings and off-the-books accounting practices, used special purpose entities to hide large debt and toxic assets from investors and creditors. The price of Enron's shares went from \$90 at its peak to less than 1 per share at the end of 2001, as a result shareholders lost approximately \$11 billion (Li, 2010). Another fraud scandal involves Granite construction which came to light in August 2021. The Company engaged in fraudulent activities by inflating its financial performance specifically, Granite Construction over casted its revenue by approximately \$ 31 million in 2017 and 2018 as revealed through restatements of its financial statement. Additionally, the company manipulated its financial records by under casting its revenue by about \$62 million in 2019. As a result of these fraudulent practice Granite Construction faced fine of \$12 million for this misconduct (Appeal 2022)

In Tanzania, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in his annual general report of 2020/21 commented, "*I conducted 37 special audits in 36 Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and noted that a total amount of TZS 19.72 billion was collected from different sources by 36 LGAs were not banked, of which TZS 10.13 billion (51%) was related to Dar es Salaam City Council (formerly Ilala Municipal Council). Out of TZS 10.13 billion, TZS 4.64 billion and TZS 5.49 billion were not banked by 20 collection agents and 19 staff, respectively.*" Such scandals have caused an increase in the demand for forensic audits (CAG Annual Report, 2021).

Forensic audit is a special field that involves investigating financial transactions and information to identify fraud, irregularities, and financial mismanagement. It aims to obtain evidence that can be used in legal proceedings. Forensic auditing originated in ancient Egypt, where evidence of scribes was used by pharaoh to determine values of gold and grain. The Scribes worked in pairs, but each recorded transaction occurred independently. They documented various transactions, including taxes, payments and purchases of goods. When there were discrepancies, suspicions of financial misconduct, specialized scribes were hired to investigate and reconcile accounts (Yelland, 2020).

Forensic accounting evolved over time, with a marked increase in the mid-1990s in response to regulations that made Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) responsible, in part, for antifraud measures in the financial markets. Asset misappropriation, another class of occupational fraud, also came within the analysis of specialists, promoted in particular by the ascendancy of the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) in 1987 (Retchman, 2020). Forensic audits are divided into two branches: proactive and reactive (Caruana et al 2020). This study has concentrate on the first part, which is proactive forensic auditing. Reactive forensic auditing investigates any suspicion of fraud to prove or disapprove accusation if suspicion is confirmed, the person engaged is identified, and evidence is presented for disciplinary measures or criminal proceedings (Grima et al, 2020). Proactive forensic auditing is the examination of a system of accounts to determine the likelihood that existing systems will lead to fraud (Riley, 2010), It actually meant for prevention of fraud from occurring (Singleton & Singleton 2010). Proactive forensic audits aim to prevent fraud rather than act after fraudulent events. Proactive forensic audits involve precautions to ensure that fraud is mitigated to a tolerable level if not eliminated. Examination for opportunity for fraud should be carried out. with an inquisitive mind

Proactive forensic auditing enhances fraud detection at its early stages and prevents future asset misconduct. Proactive forensic audits involve the aggregation of knowledge, skills and tools to be applied to prevent fraud. They comprise robust internal controls, data analytic capabilities and monitoring of working systems and processes (Nigrini, 2020; Tarun 2021). Proactive forensic audits seek mistakes and unusual transactions before they grow to fraud. According to Njanike, Dube and Mashayange (2009), the proactive approach searches for indicators of fraud or red flags and uses philosophy that catches the fraud before it happens. A forensic auditor is part a cop, part an accountant, part a lawyer and part a psychologist (Levi, 2001). Proactive means the act of controlling or creating a situation before it happens rather than just responding to it after it happens (Mvunabandi et al, 2022). This goes with the wise quotation says, “Prevention is better than cure”. Being proactive means preparing oneself for a situation before it happens. It’s the act of staying in close examination of something before it is affected (Grant, 2000).

The Tanzania Revenue Authority is an organization with a large amount of assets, including non current assets, current assets, and intangible assets (TRA, 2022). The intention behind acquiring and placing assets in the organization is to deliberately facilitate the collection of government revenue (Monczka et al, 2005). Hence, it is crucial for Tanzania Revenue Authority to implement or strengthen the proactive forensic audit as a way to safeguard its assets. In this study, proactive forensic audit was measured in terms of the academic qualifications of employees relating to forensic audits (Rezae et al, 2003; Lync,2006), working procedures, transaction and technology (Aiken, 2016) and employees’ integrity (Felson et al. 1998; Casey, 2010; Crane & Matten, 2007). When business is set, stakeholders expect the business to grow, generate sufficient profit, provide dividends, expand market share, generate assets and keep the existing assets. However, that is not always the case.

The proactive forensic audit is a specialized audit approach that concentrates on preventing and detecting fraudulent activities and financial mismanagement because they cause significant losses to a business (Witten et al 2016). Proactive forensic Auditors are forward looking, aiming to identify potential risks and weaknesses; they use analytical techniques and investigation skills to access an organization’s financial

systems, operations and internal controls (Vona, 2016; Aghili, 2019). Traditional audits are retrospective and compliance oriented. Statutory audits are conducted annually, as they are compulsory, and their objective is giving reasonable assurance that financial statements are free from material misstatements. A fraud audit is only performed as a special assignment when there are indicators of fraud (Pedneault 2009).

There is an enormous increase in fraudulent events in the world currently as well as in many organizations in Tanzania (Mshimba, 2013). Among other things, fraud makes businesses lose assets. Business implements control systems to safeguard assets, but that has not been enough.

Fraud is not eliminated and not even mitigated, so the study insinuates that more is to be done to reduce fraud. The number of fraud cases is increasing worldwide in addition to advancements in technology and skills (Dove, 2020). Fraud instances, claims, and suspicions have been documented even within the context of Tanzania. The CAG annual general report for Local Government Authorities of 2021, as presented by the CAG, highlighted instances of fraud perpetrated against the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA). According to the report, there were instances when payments totalling TZS 6.07 billion were made without the issuance of an Electronic Fiscal Device (EFD) receipt. Additionally, there were payments amounting to TZS 376.48 million that were made using fake EFD receipts (CAG Annual Report, 2021). This implies a significant loss of tax revenue resulting from two scenarios: the use of counterfeit electronic fiscal device (EFD) receipts and the failure to issue any EFD receipts. This study establishes a correlation between the protection of assets and the prevention of fraud, given that a significant portion of fraudulent activities occur within the context of asset misappropriation.

This highlights the need of using proactive forensic auditing measures. Forensic audits are conducted in many organisations around the globe, primarily serving as evidentiary support in legal proceedings following the occurrence of criminal activities, with the aim of upholding the rule of law (Okoye & Ndidika, 2009). Most studies have pointed out the importance of forensic audits in detecting fraud and obtaining evidence for court proceedings (Oyedokun, 2015; Ndalahwa & Mitti, 2020). There is a concentration on the reactive but proactive part of the forensic audit is left out. Evidence from the reviewed literature suggests that very little has been done on proactive audit not only in Tanzania but also in most parts of the world. Therefore, this study aimed to investigate the role of proactive forensic audits in safeguarding assets in the Tanzania Revenue Authority, Kariakoo offices. The need for proactive forensic audits is not only for the day-to-day operations as a measure merely to detect but also to prevent fraud and therefore to safeguard assets.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Definition of term

Assets are resources controlled by entity as a result of past event from which future economic benefit or service potential are expected to flow to the entity (IPSAS Board 1998) Non-current assets on the other hand represents a long-term investment that are not easily converted to cash or are not expected to become cash within accounting year. These assets are typically held for long term support operations of the business. Current assets are cash and others which are expected to be converted to cash or consumed either in a year or in the operating cycle (whichever is longer), without disturbing the normal operations of a business. These assets are continually turned over in the course of a business during normal business activity. There are 5 major items included in current assets: Namely Cash and cash equivalent, Accounts Receivables, Inventory, Prepaid expenses, Accrued Revenue (Kieso et al 2019) Intangible assets are monetary assets which are without physical substance. Examples of intangible assets are; brand, goodwill, knowledge, trademarks, franchises licence and patents (IPSAS Board 2006). Corruption is the act of wrongfully using influence in business to obtain benefits for oneself or another contrary to organization policy. Corruption is

the abuse of entrusted stewardship for personal gain. It is executed in bribery, dishonesty, fraud, nepotism, money laundering, abuse of public office and extortion. (Graycar 2015)

Theoretical Literature Review

Fraud Triangle

The fraud triangle from Donald Cressey's (1950) hypothesis states that "trusted persons become trust violators when they conceive of themselves as having a financial problem which is non-sharable, are aware this problem can be secretly resolved by violation of the position of financial trust, and are able to apply to their own". Cressey talks about three elements of fraud: pressure, rationalization, and opportunity.



Figure 1: Fraud triangle by Donald Cressey

Pressure

In the context of the fraud triangle, pressure refers to the underlying motivation or incentive that drives individuals to engage in fraudulent activities. Pressure, also known as financial pressure or perceived need, represents the personal circumstance or external factors that create a sense of urgency or desperation for an individual to commit fraud. Some examples of pressures that individuals could be facing could be like; Financial difficulties where Individuals facing significant financial problems, such as overwhelming debt, enormous living expenses, bankruptcy, and expectation to lose a job, may push people to commit fraud to relieve their financial burden. It is the effect on personal morality making individuals fraudsters just to make the ends meet. It also has roots on low integrity, dishonesty and untrustworthiness. Some may be pushed by their desire to achieve being rich, to live a high-standard life just to meet some social expectations, which could also lead a person to commit fraud. Besides it caused by job dissatisfaction and demotivation, as when an employee is dissatisfied, there is a chance for him to involve himself in fraudulent activities. He may see fraud as a means to secure financial stability.

Opportunity

A person who commits fraud sees an internal control weakness and believing no one notices, the amount will usually grow larger (Cressey, 1950). In any organization, the risk of fraud can be reduced. Internal control procedures can particularly diminish the "opportunity" point of the fraud triangle. It is the access to a state where fraud is committed, such as weaknesses in internal controls, necessities of an operating environment, management styles and corporate culture.

Opportunity is a crucial factor in fraud. Because even if people have pressure and motivation. They need a right set of situations to execute it. Some elements that give opportunity to fraud perpetration; are for

instance; when the internal control of an organization is poor, it opens doors to fraudulent occurrences. This includes poor segregation of duties. Inadequate supervision, too little monitoring of processes, and absence of audit trails. Uncontrolled access to assets and sensitive information like financial systems even information such as bank balances and cash in hand without proper segregation of duties facilitate fraudsters to get involved in fraud. Where there is low opacity and complexity financial reports lack transparency, with complexity in processes, it opens the opportunity to fraud through manipulating reports. If reports are not accessible to the required user, loopholes in creative accounting are made easier. Another area that could be exploited by fraudsters is absence of ethical culture: because where ethical culture is not emphasized, it nurtures an environment for fraud opportunity.

Rationalization

Rationalization is one of the components in the fraud triangle. Rationalization means a cognitive process by which individuals justify or excuse their fraudulent activities to others and themselves. It is normal that when people do something wrong, they experience inner as well as external conflict about their actions compared to their expected personal value and defined ethical standards. Rationalization helps them to ease this conflict by justifying their deeds to make them look acceptable and just. Rationalization is a strong psychological mechanism that individuals could use to excuse fraudulent behaviour. Here is some rational justification by some fraudsters: Balancing the scale: Some fraudsters may believe that they are merely taking what belongs to them. They see it as a way to correct the wrongs done to them by an organization.

Fraudsters may blame others by urging that they were forced to engage in fraud by their superiors, undue influence, and a bad environment. Individuals may rationalize that they had to commit fraud in order to survive, that life hardships and desperation has caused them like they did not have another way. The theory does not include some aspects, such as moral, criminal, psychological, and scientific aspects, needed to tackle the fraud problem.

Fraud Scale by Albretch 1984

The theory was further developed by (Albretch 1984), who modified it by renaming it the “Fraud scale”. Albretch replaced it with personal integrity rather than rationalization. The theory stipulates that fraud occurs where pressure and opportunity to commit fraud is high and personal integrity is low. In contrast, if situational pressure and opportunity to commit fraud are high but personal integrity is high, the possibility for fraud to occur is low.

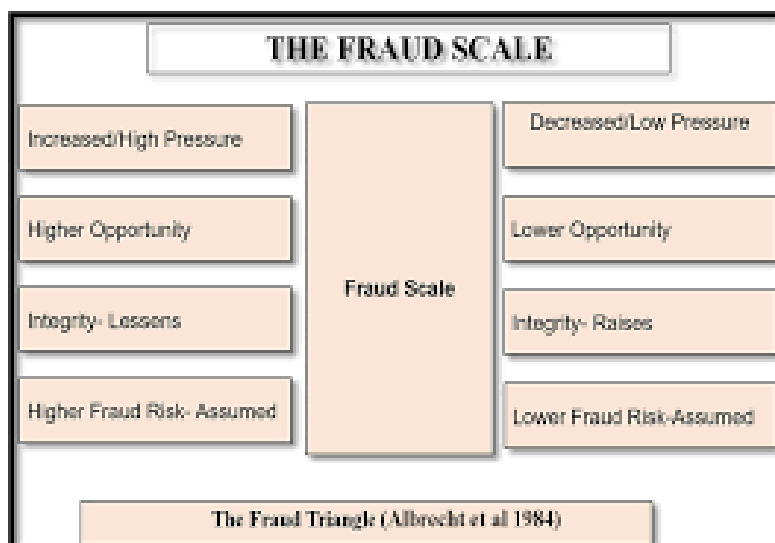


Figure 2: Fraud Scale by Albretch 1984

Fraud Diamond by Wolf and Hermanson (2004)

Fraud theory was modified again by Wolfe and Hermanson (2004) by renaming it the “Fraud diamond”, where on top of pressure, opportunity and rationalization, they added the term capability, which in them meant the capability to realize the presence of opportunity to commit fraud.



Figure 3: Fraud Diamond by Wolf and Hermanson (2004)

Fraud triangle theory illustrates the traits of offenders and their environment: With all the strength of the fraud theory and its modification and development, the theory doesn't consider factors such as a lack of patriotism and egotism. The study has employed this theory because it has relation with specific objectives of the study. It is connected with the first of objective; To investigate the existence of qualified forensic auditors to safeguard the assets of Tanzania Revenue Authority Kariakoo. Qualified forensic Auditor is capable to uncover pressure that leads, which is one element of fraud triangle. Where implementation of automated proactive search for fraud indicator tools which is the second specific objective enhances identification of opportunity in a working system and potential fraud schemes before they are executed. Rationalisations which is a fraud triangle component is linked with the third specific objective that is to evaluate examination of employees' integrity. Examination of employees' integrity potential rationalization that employees might use to justify fraudulent acts. The modified theory by (Albert, 1984) has led this study in connection with the third objective. Where integrity is low a person is likely to commit fraud, this stresses the essence of examining employees' integrity. Capability being a component of fraud diamond is related with this study in the first specific objective because qualified is capable of identify red flags in workings systems. capability is also nourished by automated proactive search for fraud indicators installed.

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Policeman Theory

This study was also grounded on Policeman theory propounded by Limperg (1920). This theory assumes that the auditor is a policeman whose primary concern is the detection and prevention of fraud to reduce overall cases of reported fraud. The study will adopt this theory because for the sake of this study, a forensic auditor is viewed as someone whose role is to detect and prevent fraud before it is executed. Like a policeman, the auditor has to possess detective skills and use professional scepticisms in all his audit exercise. However, much this theory is fine; it does not specify other roles of the auditor, which is why many have failed to understand its practice. Moreover, it does not consider that a policeman is someone who undertakes a detective course of military training and laws, while it is not mandatory for the auditor to go for military training. In the researcher's opinion, the word "policeman" is misused; he should rather put it "like a policeman", not simply a policeman. The theory was a road map of this study based on the specific objectives because qualified forensic auditor is impacted with detective skills. Automated proactive search for fraud indicator is a methodology used by auditor with high integrity. The theory was a road map of this study based on the specific objectives because qualified forensic auditor is impacted with detective skills. Automated proactive search for fraud indicator is a methodology used by auditor with high integrity hence safeguarding assets.

Routine Activity Theory

Another theory to be applied in this study is Routine activity theory (Felson & Clarke, 1998). This theory assumes that for fraud to occur in business, there must be a unison of time and space, fraudster, suitable target, and absence of capable guardian. Consequently, the theory assumes the existence of fraudsters and sees the need for a preventive mechanism. This theory is relevant to this study because it will help the researcher investigate these mentioned factors and, if they truly have an impact on fraud, then to suggest a control mechanism. Apart from positive part of theory the author has left out important part which is ethics and moral, He talks about offender but has not explained what pushes offender to commit fraud. This theory was incorporated as a guide in this study by backing up the specific objectives of qualified forensic accountant when we look at it on the element of capable guardian who monitors transactions trails and detect and prevent fraudulent activities. The existence of automated proactive search for fraud makes it difficult for fraudster to find suitable targets. Motivated offenders are identified in the process of examining employees' integrity. Since this theory successfully supported the specific objectives of the study, therefore it helps readers to gain insight on how they contribute in the main objective of the role of proactive forensic audit in safeguarding assets of an organisation.

Empirical Literature Review

Academic Qualifications of Forensic Auditors and Safeguarding Assets

In his study (Khersiat 2018), on The Role of Forensic Accountant in Detection of Tax Fraud in Financial Statements; his intention is to emphasize the need for a forensic accountant to detect the manipulation of financial statements and combat tax fraud and to identify the tax fraud-detecting means used by the forensic accountant in Jordan. Khersiat outlines forensic accountants' main task as detecting financial fraud in financial statements to develop an easier way to detect fraud in financial statements. The forensics accountant applies tax man knowledge to reveal concealed information be it revenue, inventory or any material figure in financial statement. By reviewing the financial information, the forensic accountant comes up with an authentic figure of taxable income. In his study, he sees that the independence of forensic accountants is essential. They concluded that forensic accountants have a role and capability to detect fraud in financial statements. He goes on to comment that forensic accountants have the qualifications, skills and knowledge to detect tax fraud in financial statements as well as detect the manipulation of financial

statement figures. He suggests the presence of forensic auditors in the Jordanian Tax Department. He urges that awareness of forensic accountancy is essential in Arab countries, particularly Jordan. The study used questionnaire involving a sample of financial managers, auditors, accountants, and audit managers. He used SPSS to analyse and test the hypotheses. Khersiat's study is valid because he has touched on a very important aspect: financial statement. However, again, a large part of the financial statement needs to be investigated. Khersiat is concentrated in Tax. Additionally, he stated that the forensic auditor's role is to detect fraud and not prevent it from happening. In their study (Ismail et al 2019), about Forensic Accountant Skills; results indicated that auditing courses have no significant relationship towards forensic accountant skills consequently they propose that developing countries should issue Accounting circular for students to be equipped with knowledge and techniques on fraud examination techniques. Similarly, the study on *Effectiveness of Forensic Auditors in the Insurance Process* by (Caruana et al 2020), found that Forensic auditors are need in insurance processes. They further concluded that forensic auditors' engagement added benefit to society

Automated Proactive Search for Fraud Indicators and Safeguarding Assets

In their study titled "Towards Computer Proactive Systems", Bradford et al. (2004) used both qualitative and quantitative approaches. They suggest using the Neyman Pearson Lemma to proactively build online forensic tests with the best possible critical regions for hypothesis testing. The second objective was to use classical stopping rules for sequential hypothesis testing to determine which users deviate from standard usage behaviour and should be the focus of more investigative resources. They argue that classical forensics are practically reactive after an offence is perpetrated or after a suspect of crime has occurred. In their study, they suggest the adjustment of security resources. They describe that most computer crimes are perpetrated by computer professionals. Beyond everything, they are the ones who know inside out of the computer. According to them, proactive forensics fundamentally establish systems so that evidence will be maximized if an unfortunate offence occurs. They have investigated the possibility of security breaches by employees or stakeholders. They measure that using event logs of program execution. In their study, they suggest that fupid systems attack all users. Although fupid is designed to detect and intrude, it could be useful for proactive forensics. Bradford et al. have done a good study; nonetheless, in their suggestion, the researcher sees the necessity for system administrators to be audited as well. Additionally, (Josyula, 2023) recommend Regulatory Technology (RegTech) for fraud detection, emphasizing that RegTech is more transformative tool for managing compliance requirements. The researcher urged that its crucial to stay updated with latest technologies in fraud detection, in order to stay ahead of sophisticated fraudsters. In this study Implementation of Automated of proactive search for fraud indicator is considered as another factor of Proactive Forensic Audit which aims to safeguard assets. (Alzahrani & Aljabri, 2023) study on *AI based Techniques for Ad Click Fraud Detection and Prevention*. Where they found that Machine learning, deep learning and artificial learning are effective in analysing large volume of data.

Employees Integrity and Safeguarding Assets

In their research, "*The mediating effect of fraud awareness on the relationship between risk management and integrity system*" (Shambling et al 2023). The study was performed in Indonesia. They aim to examine the mediating effect of fraud awareness on the relationship between risk management and the integrity system. They see the necessity of fraud awareness to

improve integrity in organizations. They comment that "*encouraging integrity is an important element in the innovation process of government in almost all countries in the world.*" They categorize integrity into integrity violation and integrity risk. The former means action by members of the organization that impairs the ability to act in a way that is consistent with the organization's goal. The latter indicates the condition and behaviour that increases an organization's vulnerability to integrity violation. Their findings show that fraud awareness has a positive effect on the integrity of the system. The methodology used was a

quantitative approach, population, including government ministries and agencies officials. This study has explored (Shambling, 2023) et al study because integrity is one factor that contributes to Proactive Forensic Audit and Safeguard Assets. This study has also scrutinized the study of (Eyis & Ezuwore, 2014), which to provide insight on integrity matters, the emphasise the expectation for forensic auditors to show high integrity.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework serves to illustrate the plan, structure, and objectives of the research. The diagram below aids readers in comprehending this study by visually representing relationships among independent variable, factors and dependent variable,

The presence of qualified forensic auditors, automated tools for searching for fraud indicators and examination of employees’ integrity signify the implementation of proactive forensic audit. Therefore, they lead to safeguarding assets of organizations.

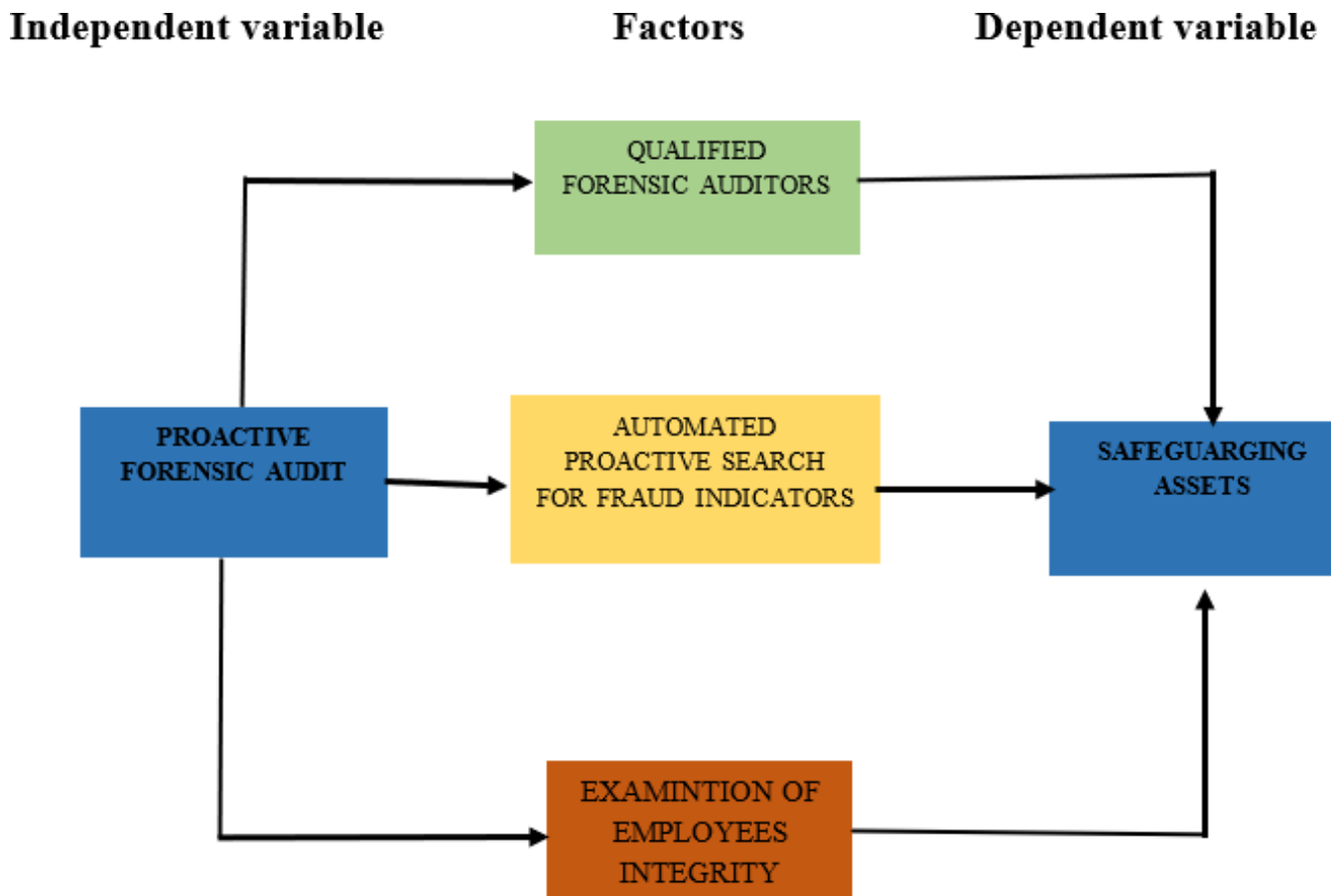


Figure 4: Conceptual framework of the study designed by authors (2023)

Operationalization of the Study Variables

Qualified Forensic Auditors

Forensic Accountant has skills, abilities and knowledge related to fraud matters, forensic auditor should be able to identify fraud with minimal initial information, should possess interviewing skills, equipped with presentation skills and legal knowledge (Singleton & Singleton 2010). The presence of a qualified forensic auditor is one indicator of a proactive forensic audit. Qualified forensic auditors will be able to review

transactions, working procedures and environments and come up with suggestions to prevent assets from being stolen or misused. The study insinuates the connection of qualified forensic auditors with proactive forensic audits, which eventually enhances safeguarding assets.

Implementation of automated proactive search for fraud indicators

According to the book *Forensic Accounting and Fraud Examination* by (Kranacher & Riley 2019), “computer software using a targeted risk assessment can be utilized to scan the database information for several different types of information, resulting in output that highlights red flags”. Besides the study on *Analysing Proactive Fraud Detection Software Tools and the Push for Quicker Solutions*, (Aiken 2016) suggests that while companies should still complete routine audits, they should also implement proactive fraud detection software programs and tools to oversee company practices and procedures.

Regular examination and employees

The researchers view regular examination of employees’ integrity as another factor of proactive forensic auditing. Employees’ behaviour and perception are subject to change based on situation, culture and opportunities, as the fraud triangle suggests. The study contends that organizations can safeguard their assets effectively by recruiting individuals characterized by trustworthiness, integrity and professionalism. Examination of employees’ integrity is essential before hiring them, even on-the-job examinations, to ensure that organizations have the right people. In their study (Majid et al, 2016), they write about the essence of upholding integrity in organizations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a case study design, known for its deep examination of specific research problem. Case studies are implied in narrowing down broad research fields to easily manageable topics and testing theories or models in real- world context. They provide a detailed understanding of subject under research and enable comprehensive description within their contexts. By Focusing on Tanzania Revenue Authority Kariakoo, the study scrutinized proactive audits and their role in safeguarding assets. The case study method involves qualitative analysis emphasising careful observation and detailed scrutiny of specific cases. While findings may be context specific and not broadly generalizable, they generate variable understanding to policy makers and regulators in Financial Accounting Industry.

Additionally, this research utilized a mixed approach, merging qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative aspect considered on subjective assessment to capture situations beyond numerical data, engaging interviews, observations and focused groups and questionnaires. Interviews were dialogues between researcher and respondents nevertheless questionnaire responses were through structured questions. Three types of questionnaires were designed to suit specific objectives. Furthermore, the study adopted a quantitative approach, calculating frequencies and percentage. The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods allows for a comprehensive understanding of the study findings. The study initially targeted a population of 151 employees but distributed questionnaires to 144 individuals, of whom 120 responded. The sample included, 2 ICT officers 2 legal officers 2 human resources officers, 112 tax officers and 2 accountants. The sample The sample comprised 144 employees out of a total population of 151, representing 95% of the whole. As suggested by Kothari (2004), the sample size should be optimal, neither too large nor too small. Out of 144 questionnaires distributed, 120 individuals responded. Sampling techniques included convenience, judgemental and probability to ensure relevance and representativeness.

While probability sampling minimizes systematic errors and bias. Judgemental sampling enhanced relevance by selecting respondents meeting specific criteria, applied in focused groups and observations. Both judgemental and probability were used in interviews, with respondents selected based on their

profession and position. Convenient sampling was used to select sample size. Primary data were on interviews and questionnaire from 120 respondents. Similarly, secondary from various sources such as articles, books, files and databases were used during analysis stage to come up with results. Collected sample underwent processing, including sorting, recording, coding and classification to make them ready for analysis. Data entry and analysis were performed using SPSS with results presented in charts and tables. Descriptive statistics such as frequency and percentage were calculated. Quantitative data are visualized in charts and tables to enable readers in comprehending the content of the study, conversely qualitative data, comprising interview responses were analysed utilizing thematic analysis and presented in quotation form. This combination of mixed approaches was selected purposely to align with research objectives with the intention to enhance clarity and insight. In this study, ethical considerations were focused to protect participants' rights and wellbeing, and to uphold integrity of the research process. The researcher obtained necessary permission and adhered to ethical and moral standards throughout the research process. Participants were guaranteed informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality and anonymity. Validity and reliability test were conducted to be certain of data quality throughout the research process. This was observed through designing research title, formulating research proposal, verifying and approving questionnaires, obtaining permission to conduct the research, and obtaining research report approval. Composition of these steps amount to data verification and quality assurance process.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Findings reveal that there is a scarcity of qualified forensic auditors in TRA Kariakoo offices. On the other hand, the offices facilitate trainings in other specializations. It is a call to management to plan and implement training on forensic audits, as it is an effective measure to enhance the skills of employees to tackle fraud and henceforth safeguard the assets of the TRA Kariakoo. This finding concurs with the findings of Khersiat (2018).

Table 4.1 for the question "Do you have academic or professional qualifications in Forensic Accounting/Auditing?"

Forensic Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
YES	0	0
NO	120	100
TOTAL	120	100

Table 4.1 forensics insinuate the scarcity of forensic auditors in the TRA Offices

No respondent answered YES, which is 0% of the selected sample, and the remaining 120, which is 100% of the respondent, answered NO.

Table 4.1 insinuate the scarcity of forensic auditors/accountants in the region. The findings show that none of the respondents possess academic or professional qualifications in forensic accounting/auditing. The lack of qualifications in this area has impacts on the role of proactive forensic auditing in safeguarding assets. Forensic Audit requires special training and skills in investigating financial systems and detecting process frauds. The absence of qualified forensic auditors indicates that the majority need to be informed of the significance of this field. Management and professions need to recognize the importance of arranging training on forensic audits for staff members. Management should consider that having qualified forensic auditors can enhance the capacity to identify potential risk, implement proactive measures and eventually safeguard assets.

In the interview with focused group, basing on their profession, using probability sampling, about their

awareness of the Proactive Forensic Audit and the necessity of Forensic Audit qualification, here is the respondents' reaction:

“Oh yes I know about it, it is used to gather evidence of fraud and take them to court. It is meant to provide litigation.” Qualifications are important, as we are operating in an environment attracted to fraud. However, few institutions are offering that part of education. In addition, in Tanzania, apart from CFE, am not sure if we have Forensic Audit as it is in Tanzania.” Another respondent stated, “Of course, there is a unit of forensic audit in TRA HQ.” Moreover, some participants speculated that Proactive Forensic Audit serves similar to reactive Forensic Audit, that is, it is only meant for litigation purposes.

With regard to automated proactive search, the study found that TRA Kariakoo has implemented some automated proactive search for fraud indicators tools. However, there is a need to adopt various tools to suit the requirements of users and protect them by using more robust password systems to safeguard organizational assets. These findings correspond with the findings of the Dong et al. (2009) which recommended usage of data mining as one way to combat online auction Fraud. Findings of this study that there is average implementation of automated search for fraud indicators tools, also conforms with the study of Rasmi and Al Qerem (2015) who found that networks play a crucial role in investigating cyber crimes.

Chart 4.1 for question of “What technology tool or system applied within TRA Kariakoo to detect fraud indicators. Chart 4.1 shows that there were only 2 respondents selected from 144, based on their position and expertise in the area of this question. On the determination of usage of specific Proactive forensic audit tool. One respondent reported using artificial intelligence in their working processes, which is 50%, and another 50% of the respondents admitted using a continuous monitoring system. None of the respondents reported using Fraud Detection Algorithms, Data Analytic Software, Forensic Imaging and Data Recovery. Blockchain Technology, Data Visualization Tools and Electronic Document Analysis Tool. The results from the above table provide an understanding of the current adoption of proactive forensic audit tools in the TRA Kariakoo. The findings reveal reluctance in adoptions of various technologies that assist in mitigating fraud. The results also show the presence of technology (artificial intelligence and continuous monitoring systems). This is a benefit because ICT tools such as artificial intelligence can help in pattern recognition, data analysis and identification of anomalies. The absence of respondents on other technologies suggests the need for improvement. The adoption of more ICT tools could give the TRA Kariakoo real-time insights into the combination of processes with a focus on safeguarding its assets. The findings in chart 4.1 have several implications: there is a need to create awareness among management and employees of TRA Kariakoo about the potential benefits of using more technologies that could deter fraud and uncover financial irregularities before they are completed. This implies that the TRA should procure these programs and train its staff on the use of these technologies. By incorporating the right ICT tools, they can streamline audits that facilitate processes, identify risks more and strengthen internal controls. The TRA may think about collaborating with external experts on technologies to seek professional advice on what to adopt with the purpose of safeguarding organization assets.

The study found also that TRA Kariakoo offices examines integrity of its staff on a regular basis, but again because not all employees undergo integrity assessments because of using sampling to present a whole population. However, TRA has achieved assessing the integrity of staff in the annual performance appraisal. The presence of regional integrity committees, code of ethics and training sessions on ethics and moral matters suggests the presence of staff integrity examination.

Additionally, the participants recognize the impact of employees' integrity assessment, although there are some who perceive it in a negative way. These findings of align with Sihombin (2013) who reveals that fraud awareness has a positive effect on the integrity of the system. The study also contrasts with the findings of the study of Buttons and Brooks (2009).

The results for chart 4.3 imply that the respondents see that examining employee integrity has an impact on promoting integrity, trustworthiness and accountability, which are core values of TRA. The very positive impact and positive impact both scored 50% of the marks. Both “Very positive” and “positive” are good signs that employees recognize the worth of examining employees’ integrity. The fact that there were no “limited” and “no impact” responses reveals that integrity examinations are well viewed by the sampled employees. The awesome positive perception of the impact of the examination of employees’ integrity expresses that employees consider it a very important and effective tool to nurture trust, integrity, impartiality and accountability among employees.

On interview conducted using probability method, where every fortieth individual was selected from population of 144. On the effect of staff integrity assessments, one interviewee answered, “*Knowing someone is continuously watching and examining my behaviour helps to keep me in line with the organization’s expected standards.*”

In contrast, another respondent said, “*It makes me nervous knowing someone is examining my every step. It makes me uncomfortable; I would feel not trusted when examined to that extent.*”

Table 4.2 Feedback Table to the question “Do you have a defined code of ethics in your organization?”

DO YOU HAVE CODE OF ETHICS	FREQUENCIES	PERCENTAGE
YES	2	100
NO	0	0
TOTAL	120	100

Table 4.2 shows the availability of code of ethics in the organization. All two respondents, acknowledge the presence of a Code of ethics. This type of questionnaire was distributed two only two individual considering their position in the organization. The results indicate the presence of a code of ethics in the organization, revealing that the TRA takes integrity matters seriously. A defined code of ethics serves accepted ethical standards and expected behaviours that all employees must be observed to adhere to. Having a code of ethics can help prevent misconduct and unethical behaviour, as employees are clear about the expected standards and consequences of violating them.

In the interview session, based of judgemental sampling, on the question;” Do you have a code of conduct in your organization?” The respondents answered “*The name is not Code of Conducts, rather “Code of Ethics”* When interviewing them on the contents of the Code of Ethics a respondent answered; “*The Code of Ethics encompasses Core Values of TRA, Statement from CG, Staff core values, i.e., integrity, accountability, professionalism, trustworthy and their sub divisions.*”

A code of ethics is a set of guidelines that outline the expected standard or conduct for individuals within an organization. It ensures that employees are held to the same ethical expectations regardless of their role or level in the organization. Knowing the importance of integrity, the study had to determine the availability of this Code of Ethics in TRA Kariakoo.

Response Table to question “Do you have Ethics and moral sessions for all employees in your organization

Chart 4.3 alludes to the fact that TRA Kariakoo has ethics and moral sessions. One hundred percent of respondents to this question agreed on the availability of training sessions on ethics and morals. Out of two respondents, two state that TRA Kariakoo has ethics and moral sessions in the office. The absence of a “No” response suggests that Ethics and Moral sessions are considered crucial in maintaining the integrity of

employees. The overwhelmingly positive response on availability of Ethics and Moral Sessions provides that TRA Kariakoo conducts ethics and moral sessions with its staff members. These sessions act as proactive tools to help employees internalize and understand organizational ethical values.

Additionally, this awareness training reinforces a culture of integrity in the work environment, both internally and externally. Having regular ethical and moral training continually reminds employees of their expected behaviour.

In responding to interview questions, one participant commented, *“Trainings on Ethics and Moral are arranged from time to time to remind staff of the importance of adhering to the agreed-upon organization’s standards. The trainings are often facilitated by the Internal Affairs Department from TRA HQ. Another respondent clarified, “To recognize the importance of this ethics and moral training, most times, the organization hires external experts from organizations such as PCCB to conduct trainings.”*

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

From the preceding discussion and summary, the following conclusions were drawn from the study, in line with the research objectives. Proactive forensic auditing has a role in safeguarding assets in TRA Kariakoo. Based on specific objectives, there is a shortage of qualified forensic auditors in TRA Kariakoo. The process of implementing the automated proactive for fraud indicator is average. TRA Kariakoo has made an effort to examine its employees’ integrity on a regular basis.

Recommendations

The study recommends that TRA Kariakoo train its staff members in forensic auditing. There are short courses and even long ones abroad with which employees could be equipped. Training employees in forensic auditing is an important investment in safeguarding assets. This training furnishes employees with auditing, accounting, ICT, legal psychology, moral, ethical and detective knowledge and skills. Qualified forensic auditors will be able to detect and prevent fraud before it is executed. Employees will be provided with extensive comprehension of internal control and their part in mitigating and eventually eliminating fraud. They will learn about various types of fraud. A qualified forensic auditor will help the organization comply with laws and regulations. Ascertaining the significance and the need for qualified forensic auditors, the study recommends that higher learning education introduce the forensic audit course in universities to safeguard the assets of our nation. The researcher advises Academicians to incorporate forensic audits into their training programs and curriculum. Regulators could require organization to have qualified forensic auditors. The study urges policy makers and scholars to work together to address the issue of qualified forensic auditor, with the intention of strengthening professional scepticism and in the end safeguarding assets.

The study recommends that TRA Kariakoo improve the Proactive forensic tool that identifies Fraud Indicators. TRA should have brainstorming groups about the strengths and weaknesses of operating systems. Ideas and contributions should be taken for further improvement of systems. The study recommends that TRA Kariakoo adopt the typical implementation of proactive forensic audit practice to enhance safeguarding assets of the organization. TRA Kariakoo needs to conduct an absolute risk assessment to identify the areas of highest fraud risk, and it ought to evaluate the internal control environment, critical business processes and potential fraud scheme specific to TRA. Then, the process of developing the Proactive Forensic Audit plan is in line with specified risks. TRA should analyse its data to discern anomalies and red flags. TRA

Kariakoo has a duty to consider protecting its system users by inventing logins by using fingerprints instead of written passwords, which can easily be imitated.

Although this study finds TRA is examining its employees' integrity on regular basis, the study also acknowledges that since human beings are dynamic creatures, there is a need for continuous assessment of staff integrity. The researcher calls TRA to assess every employee's integrity to promote ethical behaviour and ultimately safeguard TRA Kariakoo Assets. TRA might establish a whistle blower protection policy by facilitating a confidential reporting mechanism, and could promptly conduct investigations on the matter and come with results in a reasonable time.

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