

**BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICES AND LITIGATION SUPPORTS AS PREDICTORS
OF FRAUD RATE MANAGEMENT AMONG SELECTED COMMERCIAL
BANKS IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA.**

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed at examining business advisory services and litigation supports as predictors of fraud rate management among selected commercial Banks in Cross River State, Nigeria. Three objectives, research questions, and hypotheses were postulated to direct the study. The ex-post facto research design was used for the study with a population of 189 staff in 23 commercial banks. A purposive sampling technique was used to draw 178 respondents from the study with a researcher's developed instrument titled "Business Advisory Services, Litigation Supports and Fraud Rate Management Questionnaire (BASLS&FRMQ). The instrument was validated by experts in the field of study. The reliability was estimated with Cronbach and the coefficient ranged from .76-.88. Findings revealed that business advisory services, fraud investigation, and litigation support do significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria. It was recommended among others that Every bank should establish a code of conduct and that banks' officials should be made to declare their assets from time to time. Also, training on independence, transparency, accountability, and competence should be fostered to enhance the smooth operation of forensic accounting services.

Keywords: Business, advisory services, litigation supports, and fraud rate management

Study background

It is no gainsaying that in Nigeria and particularly Cross River State, the banking sector plays a very significant role in the development of any economy. Banks in most economies are the principal depositories of the public's monetary savings, the nerve center of the payment system, the vessel endowed with the ability to money creation and allocation of financial resources, and the conduit through which monetary and credit policies are implemented (Akindele, 2011). The success of the monetary policy, to a large extent, depends on the health of the banking institutions through which the policies are implemented (Adeyemo, 2012). Whatever problems militate against the proper functioning of the banking sector will invariably have multiplier effects on the other sectors of the economy. Fraud has been identified as a major threat to the growth and development of the banking sector, not only in Nigeria but globally. This is one of the reasons why it is essential to effectively manage the rate of fraud occurrence in banks to forestall its negative effect on the smooth functioning of the banking sector.

As Idowu (2009) rightly informed that fraud can be seen as the deliberate falsification, camouflage, or exclusion of the truth for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage and thereby causing financial damage to an individual or an organization. It is dishonesty or an act of cheating aimed at causing a person or business to give up possessions or some lawful right. The Association of Certified Fraud Examiners further defines fraud as the use of one's profession for personal enhancement through the conscious misuse, misapplication, or employment of organizational possessions or property. Also, Fadipe-Joseph and Titiloye (2012) looked at fraud as any action(s) by which one person intends to gain a deceitful advantage over another. In other words, fraud is an act

of commission that is planned to cause unlawful gain to one person and criminal loss to the other, either by way of concealment of information or otherwise.

Financial misappropriation and irregularities have been very big problems of concern all over the world. It is so common both in private and public sector organizations that almost every individual cannot wash his/her hand clean of it. This form of fraud is widely committed ranging from the presidency through the state government to the lowest which is local government. In a private company, it ranges from the managing directors of a company to the middle management cadre and as low as messengers. Individual perpetrates fraud and corrupt practices according to the capacity of the office. Accounting fraud is an act of knowingly falsifying accounting records, such as sales or cost records, to boost the net income or sales figure. The magnitude of public office fraud, together with the extent to which citizens are affected is a call for alarm. Accounting fraud is illegal and subjects the company and the executive involved to civil lawsuits, company officials may resort to accounting fraud to reverse loss or to ensure that they meet expectations from shareholders or the public. David (2005) states that fraud can be better prevented if decisions are made by a group and not an individual. Presently in Nigeria, the attempt by the government to fight fraud is being frustrated by fraud fighting back through the judicial system.

In 2008 the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), commissioned special examinations on all 24 banks in Nigeria. These examinations highlighted significant deficiencies in capital adequacy and liquidity requirements and illustrated major weaknesses in corporate governance and risk management practices. The examination showed clearly that 9 banks were in a 'grave Situation', i.e.: Oceanic Bank International Nigeria Plc, Union Bank of Nigeria Plc, Intercontinental Bank Plc, Bank PHB Plc, Afribank Nigeria Plc, Finbank Plc, Equitorial Trust Bank Ltd, Spring Bank Plc and Wema Bank Plc. The CBN commissioned accounting firms to prepare: (i) forensic reports to further look into the management and corporate governance of each bank, and (ii) diagnostic reports to

ascertain the true financial state of each bank. Both the forensic and diagnostic reports on each of the banks confirmed a pattern of bad corporate governance and a suspicion of fraudulent activity in the banks by the then Chief Executives.

The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) and the Honorable Attorney General of the Federation, upon review of the reports on these banks, were also of the firm view that what was disclosed pointed to serious economic crimes. Several persons in each of these banks were charged with a range of crimes; including theft, fraud, and money laundering, before the Federal High Court and the Lagos State High Court. The Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) also came to the same determination of major infractions of securities regulation, leading to actions at the Investment and Securities Tribunal. The challenges mirrored in the scenarios enumerated above gave rise to why this research is undertaken to ascertain whether the use of forensic accounting services could affect significantly fraud rate management.

For instance, studies by Okafor and Agbiogwu (2016) focused on the effect of forensic accounting skills based on expert consultancy services on the management fraud rate among selected banks in Nigeria. The study answered and tested five research questions and hypotheses. The research design was the ex-post facto research design using purposive and accidental sampling techniques to select the five (5) commercial Banks used as the population for the study. A sample of three (3) banks was used in the study. A well-validated instrument was used for data collection which was validated by experts with a reliability index that ranges from .85. the one way Analysis of variance was used for data collection and the findings of their study reveal that possession of basic experts consultancy services significantly reduces the occurrence of fraud cases in the banking sector and that there is a significant difference between services of forensic accountants and External auditors, and that the presence of forensic accountants in Banks can aid in reducing fraud cases.

Zachariah, Masoyi, Ernest, and Gabriel (2014) worked on the topic titled "application of experts consultancy services as an aspect of forensic auditing in reducing fraud cases in Nigeria money deposit Banks". The study analyzed the trend in fraud cases from 2001-2012, included are the amounts involved in fraud, the most frequent types of fraud, and the losses sustained by Banks. Two hypotheses were tested in the study and the design was descriptive survey type. A sample of 120 commercial bankers was drawn from a population of 1200. A researcher's developed instrument was used for data collection and the descriptive analysis revealed that there are up and down movements in fraud cases. Since Banks continually lose huge sums of money as a result of the inability of inculcating expert services on how to effectively manage fraud cases. The study suggested the need to devise different means of tackling fraud in Banks. According to the authors, Nigerian Banks over the past decades had suffered from the menace of fraud which resulted to distresses and liquidation which hamper the roles of Banks in the economy. The study, therefore, suggested the employment of forensic auditing in Nigerian Banks by amending the existing status, in such a way that forensic auditors are included in the audit team.

Another study by Onodi, Okafor, and Onyali (2015), examined expert investigation methods in corporate fraud rate deterrence and management in Nigerian Banks. This study adopted a survey research design and data from the primary source were collected through interviews and administration of questionnaires, while the secondary source consists of reports on fraud and forgery in the banking sector. Statistical tools used to analyze the data include percentages, mean scores, frequency tables, regression analysis, and Z-test. The result revealed that there is a significant relationship between forensic experts' consultancy investigative methods and corporate fraud rate deterrence. The finding revealed that expert services of forensic investigators are normally required in the prosecution of fraud, but the majority of the audit and accounting personnel in Nigeria are suffering from poor perception and knowledge of forensic investigative methods.

Njanike, Dube and Mashayanye (2009), worked on "the effectiveness of forensic auditing in detecting, investigating and preventing and management of Bank frauds". The study dwelt on the effectiveness of forensic experts' consultancy auditing in detecting, investigating, preventing and managing Bank frauds rate. The paper used questionnaires, personal interviews, and document reviews to gather data. Data for the research was gathered from forensic auditors from thirteen commercial banks, four building societies, and four audit firms in Harare, Zimbabwe. A sample of thirty forensic auditors was used from thirteen commercial Banks, four-building sectors/societies, and four audit firms in Zimbabwe. It was found that forensic accounting departments suffer from multiple challenges, amongst them being the lack of material resources, technical know-how, interference from management, and unclear recognition of the profession. The study concluded that forensic auditors must be capacitated materially and technically to improve their effectiveness. In addition, forensic auditors should create a constituted body that serves their interests and regulate their activities just like any other profession.

Okoye and Gbengi (2013), conducted research titled "forensic accounting and experts consultancy: a tool for fraud rate detection, prevention and management in the public sector of Kogi State". The population consists of 5 ministries with a total of 5,015 respondents of which 370 formed the sample size. The use of ANOVA was used in testing the hypotheses. It was discovered that forensic accounting significantly reduces the occurrence of fraud in the public sector.

Üyesi (2016) conducted a study on the effect of litigation support on fraud rate management. the study tested six hypotheses with a descriptive survey design. the study informed that the advent of rapid technological change and globalization has prominently decreased the ability of traditional methods to deal with financial information manipulation. Forensic accounting has brought a contemporary approach to the investigation of financial information manipulation. Financial market participants expect that future demand for forensic accountants will significantly increase in the business environment.

Cabole (2009) conducted a study on forensic accounting services and their impact on fraud control in India through a survey study, which was conducted in the National Capital Region of India during 2011-12, “if there are differences in the views of the relevant skills of FA’s among accounting practitioners, academics, and users of forensic accounting services.” Several questions were asked to practitioners, academics, and users of forensic accounting services that pertain to solicit their views of “what skills are deemed inherently important to FA. The findings show that potential practitioners and academics agree that critical thinking, unstructured problem-solving, investigative flexibility, analytical proficiency, and legal knowledge are more important skills of FA’s. Potential practitioners of forensic accounting services rated analysis more important than the academic staff. Both groups agreed with prospective users, who viewed deductive analysis as very important. The groups did not differ on oral communication, written communication, or composure rankings. Results show that some skills are relevant and important to the outcome of FA education. Educators can use these skills as a guide to direct academic curriculum with the proper learning outcome objectives.

Ogundana, Okere, Ogunleye, and Oladapo (2015) study examined the role of the forensic accountant in the prevention and detection of fraud in the Nigerian banking sector. The study adopted the Survey research design while the source of data is the primary data and the data sourced was gleaned from copies of the questionnaire administered to selected banks. Three (3) hypotheses were formulated and tested using Simple regression at a significant level of 5%, Independent T-test, and One-Way ANOVA. Findings revealed a negative significant relationship between IFRS adoption and foreign direct investment of Nigerian banks. Findings also revealed that forensic accounting has a significant impact on fraud prevention and detection. In addition, the findings of this study also revealed that there is a low level of awareness of forensic accounting in the Nigerian banking industry. Consequently, the study recommended that the Nigerian Government should provide the

enabling environment for the forensic accounting profession to thrive in the country by strengthening the legal, educational, and political framework in the country.

Degboro and Olofinsola's (2007) research work examines the role of the forensic accountant in fraud detection in Nigeria. A forensic accountant plays a significant role in Nigerian organizations whereby he investigates the use of technological equipment in its assignment. The researcher employs primary data (questionnaires and personal interviews) in its data collection. Hypotheses were analyzed with the use of z- test at a 5% level of significance and the result reveals that a good forensic accountant will assist in the growth and development of any organization in which he carried out his assignment.

Problem statement

The issue of financial fraud in the banking industry continues to occupy a central role in Nigeria. This has greatly affected the credibility of most banks in Nigeria these practices constitute money laundering by organized criminal, yahoo and yahoo plus activities in all the nook and crannies of the country. Most individuals have now resorted to saving their monies at home for fear of not being victims of fraud. The report also shows that the number of fraud related cases increased by 4,006 compared with 16,762 cases involving N5.52 billion and \$ 0.12 million in the corresponding period of 2017. It is generally believed that one of the major causative factors that led to the loss of shareholders' funds in nine Nigerian commercial banks in 2010 was the inadequate use of relevant forensic accounting services such as expert consultancy, business advisory services, fraud investigation, dispute resolution and litigation support services. The continued use of traditional auditing systems has not solved the problem of fraud as seen in the failure of statutory auditing to prevent and reduce such fraudulent activities in the past. The increase in crimes within banks has made it a compelling need for the management of such banks to employ the usage of forensic accounting services as a better way to manage such fraud. The problem of this study put in a sentence

is: how do business advisory services and litigation supports as predictors of fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Cross River State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to examine how business advisory services and litigation supports as predictors of fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. Examine how business advisory services predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria.
2. Determine how fraud investigation predicts fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria
3. Assess how litigation support predicts fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria.

Research Questions

For this purpose, this study, the following research questions were drawn:

4. How do business advisory services predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria?
5. How does fraud investigation predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria?
6. To what extent does litigation support predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and are to be tested at .05 alpha levels.

1. Business advisory services do not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria
2. Fraud investigation does not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria
3. Litigation support does not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted for this study is the ex-post facto research design with a population of 183 staff in 23 commercial banks. A purposive sampling technique was used to draw 178 respondents from the study with a researcher's developed instrument titled "Business Advisory Services, Litigation Supports and Fraud Rate Management Questionnaire (BASLS&FRMQ). In this case probabilistic sampling whose logic lies in selecting a truly random and representative sample that permits confident generalizations from the sample to a larger population is to be done (Cooper and Schindler, 2003). The instrument was validated by experts in the field of study. The reliability was estimated with Cronbach and the coefficient ranged from .76-.88. The data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 21 (SPSS 21). The completed questionnaire was edited for completeness and consistency. The questionnaire was coded to allow for statistical analysis. The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 12 was used to analyze and interpret the collected data where appropriate. The inferential statistical analysis was done with simple regression analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Presentation of results

The results of the data collected are presented hypothesis-by-hypothesis as shown below.

Hypothesis one

Business advisory services do not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria. The predictor variable in this hypothesis is business advisory services. While the dependent variable is fraud rate management. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was executed and the result obtained from the test statistical analysis are summarized and presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Regression of business advisory services on fraud rate management

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
	.157 ^a	.025	.019	5.15218		
Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	
Regression	108.768	1	108.768	4.098	.045*	
Residual	4326.832	163	26.545			
Total	4435.600	164				
Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value	
(Constant)	28.247	3.066		9.213	.000	
Business advisory services	.337	.167	.157	2.024	.045	

*p<.05

Table 1 revealed that an R-value of .157 was obtained, resulting in an R-squared value of .025 This means that the variation in business advisory services accounted for about 25.0% of the total variation in fraud rate management thus, the p-value (.000) associated with the computed F-value (4.098) is less than .05. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that business advisory services do not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria. To test the significance of the combination of both the regression constant (28.247) and the regression coefficient (28.247) making a significant contribution in the prediction model that is, prediction of fraud rate management (t=9.213& 2.024p=.000 <.05). The mathematical relationship (predict model) is depicted by the following equation $y=28.247+.337x$ where y= fraud rate management and x is business advisory services.

Hypothesis two

Fraud investigation does not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria. The predictor variable in this hypothesis is fraud investigation. While the dependent variable is fraud rate management. To test this hypothesis, a simple linear regression analysis was executed and the result obtained from the test statistical analysis are summarized and presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Regression of fraud investigation on fraud rate management

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
	.192 ^a	.037	.031	5.11932		
Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	
Regression	163.781	1	163.781	6.249	.013 [*]	
Residual	4271.819	163	26.207			
Total	4435.600	164				
Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value	
(Constant)	29.954	1.823		16.433	.000	
Fraud investigation	.272	.109	.192	2.500	.013	

*p<.05

Table 2 revealed that an R-value of .192 was obtained, resulting in an R-squared value of .037 This means that the variation in fraud investigation accounted for about 37.0% of the total variation in fraud rate management thus, the p-value (.013) associated with the computed F-value (6.249) is less than .05. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that fraud investigations do not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria. To test the significance of the combination of both the regression constant (29.954) and the regression coefficient (.272) making a significant contribution in the prediction model that is, prediction of fraud rate management (t=16.433& 2.500p=.000 <.05). The mathematical relationship (predict model) is depicted by the following equation $y=29.594+.272x$ where y= fraud rate management and x fraud investigation.

Hypothesis three

Litigation support does not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria. The predictor variable in this hypothesis is litigation support. While the dependent variable is fraud rate management. To test this hypothesis, a sample linear regression analysis was executed and the result obtained from the test statistical analysis are summarized and presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Regression of litigation supports and fraud rate management

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
	.167 ^a	.028	.022	5.14354		
Sources of variation		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value
Regression		123.274	1	123.274	4.660	.032 [*]
Residual		4312.326	163	26.456		
Total		4435.600	164			
Variables		B	Std. Error	Beta	t-value	p-value
(Constant)		36.978	1.259		29.361	.000
Litigation supports		-.185	.086	-.167	-2.159	.032

*p<.05

Table 2 revealed that an R-value of .167 was obtained, resulting in an R-squared value of .028 This means that the variation in litigation supports accounted for about 28% of the total variation in fraud rate management thus, the p-value (.032) associated with the computed F-value (4.660) is less than .05. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that Litigation support does not significantly predict fraud rate management among selected commercial banks in Nigeria. To test the significance of the combination of both the regression constant (36.978) and the regression coefficient (-.185) making a significant contribution in the prediction model that is, prediction of fraud rate management (t=29.361& -2.159 p=.000 <.05). The mathematical relationship (predict model) is depicted by the following equation $y=36.978+-.185x$ where y= fraud rate management and x is litigation supports.

Discussion of findings

The findings of the study are presented hypothesis by hypothesis as shown below:

Business advisory services and fraud rate management:

This research study has revealed that Business advisory services significantly predict fraud rate management. The purpose of Business advisory services is to support organizations identify strengths and overcome weaknesses in specific areas that require specialized advice, especially in areas such as capital formation, cash flow, internal control systems, and wealth management. This result is further reinforced by the work of Boritz., Kotchetova, and Robinson. (2008) which focused on the investigation of forensic accountants and auditors in terms of the relative merits of involving fraud specialists during the planning stage in assisting auditors by developing an audit plan that will effectively identify fraud. They found that involving the fraud specialists in the risk assessment process leads to better results than simply consulting with them by providing summary risk assessments and asking for input. Adebisi (2016) study revealed that business advisory services have a significant influence on fraud rate management in commercial banks in Nigeria. It recommended that there should be more forensic accountants' involvement in fraud detection to reduce the rate of financial crime in Nigeria. Also, Okafor and Agbigwu's (2016) findings revealed that possession of enhanced skills aids the forensic accountant in discharging his duties effectively. In the same

manner, Ibrahim, Mohammed, and Fatima (2014) findings revealed that fraud and forgeries are pervasive in the banking sector. The study recommended that the major players and regulatory authorities like the CBN, NDIC, and SEC should take responsibility for the prevention and management of fraud in the banking sector through the adoption of a set of qualitative techniques, quantitative models, and appropriate strategies. Again, Ebimobowei's (2011) result reveals that the application of well-structured business advisory services has a significant influence on fraud rate management. Similarly, Koh (2009) conducted to improve the understanding of detecting and reducing accounting fraud. The author thinks that it has been practiced by audit firms as one of the tools to investigate a company's financial statements for fraudulent activities as requested by certain parties.

Fraud investigation and fraud rate management:

The result of the study has shown that Fraud investigation has a significant prediction on fraud rate management. This result is obvious because when organizations employ the services of specialized fraud investigators to unmask the identity and methodology of the perpetrators, fraud occurrence will be reduced. Rose and Abi-Rched (2012) using a graphical representation of 15 fraud cases found preliminary evidence that fraud auditors who adopted the fraud specialist pattern of knowledge of organization improved their accuracy of risk assessment. The finding is in agreement with Sandu (2017) who conducted a study on fraud investigation and fraud rate management in Ethiopia. The finding showed that fraud occurrence and where fraud does occur, enable to detection of the fraud and the identification of those responsible for it. The fraud auditor reviews an internal control system to determine its strengths, weaknesses, and redundancies for internal control.

Litigation support and fraud rate management:

Litigation support has been found to have a significant effect on fraud rate management as depicted by the result of this research. Further corroboration of this position is provided by Enofe, Demudia, and Emmanuel (2015) in their study which examined forensic accounting as a panacea to fraud reduction in Nigerian firms. The study found that forensic accounting enhances financial fraud reduction in Nigerian firms through fraud prosecution and prescription of punishment for fraudsters. The findings agree with üyesi (2016) who found that financial market participants expect that future demand for forensic accountants will significantly increase in the business environment. Forensic accounting applications have grabbed significant attention in recent years due to their effectiveness in the investigation of financial information manipulation. The finding also concludes that forensic accounting includes a wide range of activities such as litigation support, expert witness, and fraud investigation. Past experiences have proved that forensic accounting practices play a pivotal role in the detection and deterrence of financial information manipulation.

Summary

On the various aspects of fraud rate management, the study found that most of the communication was done using circulars. Employees were also conversant with various elements of forensic accounting since every organization studied had a forensic accounting department and actively applies forensic accounting. The study revealed how litigation support affects fraud rate

management mainly through the analysis of the financial components of the initial complaint and the preparation of disclosure statements including expert reports. The study also revealed that fraud investigation affects fraud rate management through probing of suspect financial performance and looking into alleged fraud or illegal activity.

The study portrayed that business advisory services affect fraud rate management by assisting management in addressing strategic accounting and financial reporting challenges and providing practical business-focused advice to the bank. The study showed that dispute resolution had a positive effect on fraud rate management through the undertaking of risk-based processes, interest-based neutrals, and negotiations. The study depicts that expert consultation has a positive effect on fraud rate management mainly through evaluation of the merits of the case, advisory of the effective ways for presentation, determination of the validity of the claim, and verification of the amount claimed. The resultant relationship was $FRM = \text{Fraud investigation} + \text{Business advisory services} + \text{Dispute resolution} + \text{Expert consultant} + \text{Litigation support}$. The study also revealed that organizations enforced individual responsibility, lawsuits, internal controls, internal audit checks, training on emerging cyber fraud trends and policy changes, risk department, fraud audit department, and sharing of information with other banks as legal strategies to combat fraud. Cyber fraud and fraudulent expense claims as fraudulent activity occurred to a higher extent, while payroll fraud occurred to a lesser extent. The study found that forensic accounting had the highest application in enhancing the quality of financial reporting followed by an investigation of employee theft. Monitoring and evaluation of internal control systems had the least application.

Conclusion

From the discussion, the researcher concludes that commercial banks in Nigeria have adopted various forensic accounting practices which include litigation support, fraud investigation, business advisory services, dispute resolution, and expert consultancy services. The study further concludes that there is a positive effect of forensic accounting services on fraud rate management. A firm wishing to grow with reduced frauds must therefore put into place sufficient resources to be able to properly practice forensic accounting in its different departments. The study concludes that to sustain effective operations in the bank, cyber fraud and fraudulent expense claims by employees must be monitored since they were the most prevalent type of fraud which occurred in the banking sector. Theft of cash, physical assets, or confidential information was also affected to a greater extent. Payroll was affected the least. The study concludes that litigation support, fraud investigation, business advisory services, dispute resolution, and expert consultation mainly use analysis of the financial components of the initial complaint, probe suspect financial performance, providing practical business-focused advice to the bank, negotiations (including all efforts by individual disputants to resolve conflicts themselves) and evaluation of the merits of the case respectively. The study concludes that forensic accounting has the highest application in enhancing the quality of financial reporting while monitoring and evaluation of internal control systems had the least application.

The implication of the study to stakeholders in the banking industry

The study makes the following recommendations which are consistent with the literature review. The study recommends that it is important to review the Banks' organizational structure for better alignment with the workings of forensic accounting services. This is to allow for clear functionality of different departments without conflicting with each other.

The Banks also need to formulate clear policies to guide the practice of accounting in the banking sector. It was necessary that the internal control staff and management be educated and informed of the most common type of fraud and the department responsible so that unreasonable loss of money and fraudulent practices could be addressed. Such information could be communicated during meetings within banks and in annual general meetings as it could reduce the number of litigations against the auditors since such litigation services are costly and generally damage the reputation of the Banks.

It is also important for the Banks to use better accounting and auditing standards as per the International Accounting Standards Board and International Standards of Auditing. This is to ensure that forensic accountants and auditors undertake objective financial reporting and the increased accuracy of the prepared financial statements. Appropriate action must be applied when fraud is detected. Proper forensic procedures should be followed during investigations in matters of prosecution by professional forensic accountants and disciplinary action is to be taken in cases of fraud.

Every bank should establish a code of conduct and bank officials should be made to declare their assets from time to time. Training on independence, transparency, accountability, and competence should be fostered to enhance the smooth operation of forensic accounting services.

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