ISSN: 5019 - 5228
Volume 11, Number 2, 2025
Journal of International Management and Financial Accounting

ETHICAL AUDITING AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION: A DUAL APPROACH TO FIGHTING FINANCIAL FRAUD IN NIGERIA

Dr. Amadi-Robert, Wofuru
[1]Department of Accountancy, Ignatius Ajuru University of Education,
[1]Mail:amwofuru@gmail.com, +234 806 314 0077

ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between ethical auditing and technological innovation as a dual strategy for combating financial fraud in Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive and correlational research design, utilizing primary data obtained from 140 auditors, accountants, and compliance officers across selected audit firms and financial institutions in Lagos and Abuja. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that auditors' integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence significantly influence technological innovation in audit practice. Among these dimensions, auditors' professional competence exerted the strongest effect, highlighting the importance of skill development and technological literacy in fraud detection and prevention. The study concludes that ethical auditing provides a foundation for the effective adoption of digital auditing tools such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, and data analytics. It recommends continuous ethics training, technological capacity building, and regulatory enforcement to enhance transparency, accountability, and innovation in the Nigerian auditing profession.

Keywords: Ethical Auditing, Technological Innovation, Auditors' Competence, Financial Fraud.

INTRODUCTION

Financial fraud remains one of the most pervasive challenges undermining corporate governance, financial reporting credibility, and investor confidence in Nigeria. Despite the establishment of various anti-fraud frameworks and regulatory reforms, financial irregularities such as asset misappropriation, falsification of accounts, and embezzlement continue to thrive across both public and private sectors. According to the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE, 2023), organizations lose approximately 5% of their annual revenue to fraudulent activities, a figure that is particularly alarming in developing economies like Nigeria where governance and audit structures remain relatively weak.

Ethical auditing and technological innovation have emerged as two crucial pillars for combating financial fraud in the 21st century. Ethical auditing emphasizes the moral conduct of auditors by ensuring integrity, objectivity, professional competence, and independence in the execution of audit duties (IFAC, 2020). It aims to uphold professional ethics and accountability, thereby reducing opportunities for unethical practices and manipulation of financial records. On the other hand, technological innovation through tools such as artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, big data analytics, and forensic audit software has revolutionized the way auditors detect, prevent, and investigate fraud (Appelbaum et al., 2017).

In Nigeria, however, the integration of ethical auditing principles and technological tools remains limited. Many auditors still rely on traditional, manual audit techniques, while some struggle with maintaining ethical independence due to client influence and organizational pressures. This has weakened audit quality and allowed fraudsters to exploit system loopholes. The interaction between ethical values and technological competence therefore becomes crucial to enhancing audit effectiveness and fraud prevention.

This study, therefore, seeks to examine how ethical auditing and technological innovation can jointly serve as a dual and complementary approach to fighting financial fraud in Nigeria. By exploring the relationship between auditors' ethical behavior specifically integrity, objectivity, competence, and

independence and the use of technological innovations in auditing, this research aims to provide empirical insights that could strengthen audit quality, transparency, and trust in financial reporting.

Statement of the Problem

Over the years, Nigeria has witnessed recurrent cases of financial fraud and corporate scandals that have eroded public trust in the auditing profession. Despite the presence of professional standards and ethical codes established by bodies such as the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) and the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRCN), unethical practices such as conflict of interest, manipulation of audit reports, and lack of auditor independence continue to undermine the integrity of financial statements.

Moreover, while global auditing is rapidly shifting toward digitalization, many Nigerian auditors and firms lag in adopting advanced technological tools like artificial intelligence, blockchain, and data analytics. This technological gap has weakened their ability to detect sophisticated forms of fraud that exploit digital platforms and automated financial systems. The coexistence of weak ethical practices and low technological adoption creates an environment conducive to financial misconduct. Previous studies have largely examined ethical auditing and technology adoption separately, with limited research investigating how their integration can jointly mitigate financial fraud. Consequently, there is a lack of empirical evidence explaining whether the ethical disposition of auditors enhances or moderates the impact of technological innovation on fraud prevention within the Nigerian context. This study, therefore, seeks to fill this gap by examining the relationship between ethical auditing dimensions integrity, objectivity, professional competence, and independence and technological innovation as a dual mechanism for combating financial fraud in Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between ethical auditing and technological innovation as a dual approach to fighting financial fraud in Nigeria.

i. To examine the relationship between auditors integrity and technological innovation of in Nigeria
ii. To examine the relationship between auditors objectivity and technological innovation of in Nigeria
iii. To examine the relationship between auditors competence and technological innovation of in Nigeria
iv. To examine the relationship between auditors independence and technological innovation of in Nigeria

Research Questions

Based on the purpose of the study, the following research questions are raised:

i. What is the relationship between auditors' integrity and technological innovation in Nigeria?
ii. What is the relationship between auditors' objectivity and technological innovation in Nigeria?
iii. What is the relationship between auditors' professional competence and technological innovation in Nigeria?
iv. What is the relationship between auditors' independence and technological innovation in Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are formulated and will be tested in the course of the study:

H_{01}: There is no significant relationship between auditors' integrity and technological innovation in Nigeria.

H_{02}: There is no significant relationship between auditors' objectivity and technological innovation in Nigeria.

H_{03}: There is no significant relationship between auditors' professional competence and technological innovation in Nigeria.
H_{04}: There is no significant relationship between auditors' independence and technological innovation in Nigeria.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in several ways:
To Auditors and Accounting Professionals: It provides insight into how ethical principles such as integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence can be strengthened through technological innovation to detect and prevent fraud.
To Audit Firms and Organizations: It highlights how the adoption of emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, and Data Analytics can enhance ethical auditing practices and improve fraud detection efficiency.
To Regulators and Professional Bodies (e.g., ICAN, ANAN, and FRCN): The findings will guide the development of policies that integrate ethical standards with technological tools to improve audit quality and transparency.
To Academia and Researchers: It contributes to existing literature on ethics, auditing, and innovation, providing a foundation for further studies on digital transformation in the accounting profession.
To Society: It promotes public confidence in financial reporting by showing how ethical and technological synergies can reduce financial crimes and improve corporate governance.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study covers the relationship between ethical auditing practices and technological innovation as mechanisms for combating financial fraud in Nigeria. The study focuses on selected auditing firms, financial institutions, and corporate organizations where audit and technology-based systems are implemented.
Geographically, the study will be limited to major commercial cities such as Lagos, Abuja, and Port Harcourt, where a significant concentration of audit firms and technology-driven organizations operate.
Thematically, the study is delimited to four dimensions of ethical auditing integrity, objectivity, professional competence, and independence and their relationship with technological innovations such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Big Data Analytics, and Forensic Audit Software in detecting and preventing financial fraud.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptual Review

Ethical Auditing

Ethical auditing refers to the systematic evaluation of an organization's adherence to ethical principles, professional standards, and regulatory frameworks in the conduct of audit activities. It involves assessing whether auditors act with honesty, fairness, accountability, and integrity in financial reporting and assurance functions (IFAC, 2020). According to Okolie and Oghoghomeh (2021), ethical auditing ensures that auditors' decisions are guided by moral reasoning and professional skepticism, reducing the likelihood of collusion or bias in audit outcomes. Ethical auditing serves as a moral compass that reinforces public trust, ensuring that audit opinions genuinely reflect an organization's financial condition. As highlighted by Ugochukwu and Amaka (2022), the effectiveness of auditing is not solely determined by technical proficiency but also by the ethical disposition of auditors in handling sensitive financial information. The ethical dimension of auditing enhances transparency, strengthens accountability, and deters fraudulent reporting practices. Furthermore, ethical auditing creates a culture of integrity and compliance that aligns with international standards such as those outlined by the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA). In an era characterized by corporate scandals and increasing stakeholder

scrutiny, ethical auditing provides a safeguard against manipulation of financial statements and fosters a responsible professional environment. Thus, it is a crucial determinant of audit credibility and public confidence in financial reporting, particularly within emerging economies like Nigeria where weak governance and ethical lapses remain major contributors to financial fraud (Owolabi & Dada, 2021).

Auditors' Integrity

Auditors' integrity is the foundation of professional ethics and a cornerstone of audit quality. It refers to the auditor's commitment to honesty, truthfulness, and moral uprightness in performing audit responsibilities, even in the face of pressure or personal gain (IFAC, 2020). Integrity ensures that auditors present findings objectively and avoid intentional misrepresentation of facts. According to Agbim and Olayinka (2021), an auditor with high integrity adheres strictly to auditing standards and resists unethical influences from management or clients. The presence of integrity minimizes fraud risk by ensuring that audit evidence is not compromised for personal or organizational interest. As noted by Eze and Nwosu (2022), a lack of integrity among auditors is often associated with audit failures and corporate collapses, as seen in several Nigerian financial scandals. Furthermore, auditors' integrity enhances the credibility of financial statements and strengthens stakeholders' confidence in audit reports. The International Federation of Accountants (2021) emphasizes that without integrity, other ethical principles lose their value, since honesty forms the basis for public trust in the auditing profession. Therefore, integrity not only reflects the auditor's personal values but also signifies professional reliability and consistency in ethical behavior. In essence, maintaining integrity in auditing contributes significantly to fraud prevention, strengthens ethical culture within audit firms, and promotes sustainable financial reporting practices, particularly in developing economies where corruption and weak oversight mechanisms threaten audit independence (Okolie & Oghoghomeh, 2021).

Auditors' Objectivity

Auditors' objectivity entails maintaining impartiality, neutrality, and freedom from bias throughout the audit process. It ensures that auditors' judgments and decisions are based on factual evidence rather than personal interests, relationships, or undue influence from management (IFAC, 2020). According to Adesina and Izedonmi (2022), objectivity is a vital ethical principle that allows auditors to evaluate financial information with professional skepticism, leading to more credible and accurate audit outcomes. When objectivity is compromised, auditors may overlook irregularities or intentionally misstate findings, thereby enabling financial fraud and misrepresentation. The study of Nwankwo and Ubesie (2020) found that auditors who demonstrate a high level of objectivity are less likely to engage in collusive behavior with clients and more likely to detect financial anomalies. Moreover, objectivity enhances transparency and independence of thought, which are crucial for audit credibility. In the Nigerian context, where client pressure and familiarity threats are common, maintaining objectivity requires strict adherence to ethical codes and internal audit regulations (Okolie & Oghoghomeh, 2021). As highlighted by Aseinimieyeofori (2022), objectivity also involves the ability to separate professional judgment from emotional or external influences, thus fostering fairness and accountability in financial reporting. Consequently, auditors' objectivity plays a critical role in strengthening ethical auditing practices and supports the effective use of technological tools that rely on unbiased human interpretation for fraud detection and prevention.

Auditors' Competence

Auditors' competence refers to the professional skill, knowledge, and expertise required to perform audit functions effectively in line with regulatory and ethical standards. It encompasses both technical proficiency and ethical awareness necessary to ensure audit quality and accuracy (IFAC, 2020). According to Nnenna and Ezeani (2022), competence involves continuous professional education, mastery of auditing techniques, and the ability to apply judgment in complex financial situations. The increasing complexity of modern business environments, driven by globalization and

technological advancement, requires auditors to possess strong analytical, digital, and ethical competencies. As Olayinka and Odu (2021) emphasized, auditors with high competence can effectively utilize technological innovations such as forensic tools, data analytics, and artificial intelligence to detect fraud and assess risk. Lack of competence often results in audit failures, misinterpretation of data, and undetected fraudulent activities. Moreover, professional competence is not static but evolves with changes in accounting standards and technological innovations. The International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB, 2021) stresses that auditors must demonstrate due care, professional judgment, and continuous improvement to maintain audit credibility. In Nigeria, the gap in professional competence remains a challenge due to limited technological exposure and inadequate training among audit professionals. Therefore, enhancing auditors' competence through ethics-based education and digital literacy is crucial in mitigating financial fraud and ensuring that ethical principles are effectively applied in a technologically advanced auditing environment.

Auditors' Independence

Auditors' independence refers to the ability of auditors to perform their duties objectively and free from any form of influence or interference that may compromise professional judgment. It includes both independence in fact (mental attitude) and independence in appearance (external perception) (IFAC, 2020). According to Enekwe and Agu (2018), independence is the cornerstone of audit credibility and a critical determinant of financial statement reliability. When auditors are financially or personally dependent on their clients, their objectivity and professional skepticism may be impaired, leading to biased audit opinions and potential concealment of fraud. Studies such as Okolie and Oghoghomeh (2021) observed that weak independence among auditors in Nigeria has contributed to audit failures and persistent cases of financial misreporting. Independence ensures that auditors are not influenced by management pressures, client relationships, or economic dependence. Furthermore, as highlighted by Onyekwelu (2015), independence enhances public confidence in the auditing process and reinforces accountability in corporate governance. Technological innovations such as automated audit systems and blockchain-based verification can further strengthen auditor independence by minimizing human bias and enhancing transparency in evidence gathering. However, the challenge remains ensuring that auditors maintain ethical detachment while embracing digital tools. Thus, auditors' independence remains a vital ethical pillar in modern auditing practice and an indispensable mechanism for combating financial fraud and improving the credibility of financial reporting in Nigeria.

Technological Innovation

Technological innovation in auditing refers to the application of advanced digital tools, systems, and processes to enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and reliability of audit activities. It encompasses the integration of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Big Data Analytics, Forensic Audit Software, and Cloud Computing into auditing practices to detect, prevent, and manage financial fraud (Appelbaum et al., 2017). According to Alles (2015), technological innovation has transformed traditional audit approaches by automating data analysis, reducing human error, and improving audit trail transparency. These innovations allow auditors to analyze large data volumes, identify anomalies, and strengthen risk assessment processes in real time. In Nigeria, however, the adoption of these technologies remains slow due to infrastructural constraints, limited digital literacy, and resistance to change (Owolabi & Dada, 2021). The use of blockchain technology, for instance, enables immutable and verifiable transaction records that significantly minimize the risk of data manipulation, while AI-driven systems can flag irregularities before they escalate into fraud. As Aggelopoulos et al. (2016) noted, technological innovation not only increases operational efficiency but also promotes accountability and transparency in financial reporting. Thus, integrating technology into auditing enhances ethical standards by promoting objectivity, reducing bias, and providing evidence-based insights. In essence, technological

innovation represents a transformative force that, when combined with ethical auditing, can strengthen fraud detection mechanisms and uphold public confidence in the Nigerian financial system.

Auditors' Integrity and Technological Innovation

Auditors' integrity and technological innovation are closely interrelated in promoting transparent and trustworthy auditing practices. Integrity remains a critical ethical foundation that influences how auditors utilize technological tools responsibly and ethically. According to IFAC (2020), auditors' integrity ensures that technology is applied objectively to enhance, rather than manipulate, audit outcomes. When auditors possess high moral standards, they are more likely to use technological innovations for genuine fraud detection and compliance rather than for concealing unethical acts. Appelbaum et al. (2017) observed that technological tools, such as AI and data analytics, depend heavily on the ethical intent of users; without integrity, even advanced systems can be exploited for deceptive purposes. In Nigeria, the effectiveness of audit technologies is often undermined by ethical compromises among practitioners, where personal interests or client pressure override professional ethics (Okolie & Oghoghomeh, 2021). Auditors with integrity use technology to promote transparency, maintain confidentiality, and provide accurate financial insights. Moreover, integrity ensures accountability in the digital audit process by discouraging data manipulation and cyber-fraud within audit systems. As Adesina and Izedonmi (2022) noted, ethical auditors who embrace technological innovation tend to deliver more reliable and fraud-resistant audit results. Therefore, the synergy between integrity and technology forms a dual framework for reducing fraud risks and reinforcing public trust in audit outcomes. This interaction underscores that technology alone cannot ensure ethical auditing unless guided by the auditor's moral integrity and professional accountability.

Auditors' Objectivity and Technological Innovation

Auditors' objectivity and technological innovation are mutually reinforcing in enhancing audit quality and fraud detection. Objectivity ensures that auditors remain unbiased and free from undue influence, while technological innovation provides the tools to obtain independent, data-driven audit evidence (IFAC, 2020). According to Nwankwo and Ubesie (2020), when auditors adopt technologies such as Blockchain and Artificial Intelligence, the reliance on subjective judgment decreases, thereby enhancing the credibility of audit conclusions. Objectivity in this context involves auditors' ability to apply technology without manipulation or selective data interpretation. As Appelbaum et al. (2017) explained, technology-based auditing promotes transparency by generating verifiable digital evidence, which minimizes human bias. However, objectivity must guide the ethical use of such tools, as misuse can lead to distorted results or data bias. In Nigeria, auditors' objectivity in using audit software is often challenged by inadequate training and overreliance on manual methods (Owolabi & Dada, 2021). The integration of objectivity with technological tools empowers auditors to identify anomalies and fraudulent patterns more effectively, thereby reducing opportunities for collusion. Studies such as Adesina and Izedonmi (2022) confirm that auditors who maintain objectivity are more likely to use technology ethically and transparently. Hence, the combination of objectivity and innovation serves as a strategic approach for promoting fairness, independence, and reliability in financial reporting. It ultimately strengthens the credibility of audit practices and contributes to combating financial fraud in Nigeria's evolving digital economy.

Auditors' Competence and Technological Innovation

Auditors' professional competence is a critical determinant of how effectively technological innovation can be deployed in auditing. Competence refers to the auditor's technical skill, experience, and ability to apply knowledge in a dynamic business environment (IFAC, 2020). As the auditing profession becomes increasingly digitized, competence now extends beyond traditional accounting expertise to include technological proficiency. According to Olayinka and Odu (2021),

auditors with strong technological competence can leverage tools such as data analytics, forensic software, and AI-based systems to detect fraud with greater accuracy. Conversely, auditors who lack these digital skills may fail to utilize innovations effectively, leaving organizations vulnerable to fraud. The International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB, 2021) emphasized that competence requires continuous professional development to align with evolving audit technologies. In Nigeria, however, many auditors face challenges related to inadequate training, limited technological infrastructure, and resistance to adopting new audit tools (Okolie & Oghoghomeh, 2021). Technological innovation enhances the auditor's analytical capacity and supports evidence-based decision-making, but it is competence that ensures proper application and interpretation of technological outputs. As Aggelopoulos et al. (2016) noted, the synergy between auditor competence and innovation leads to improved audit efficiency, fraud detection accuracy, and regulatory compliance. Therefore, strengthening auditors' technological competence is essential for modern auditing, as it bridges the gap between ethical intention and technological execution in combating financial fraud.

Auditors' Independence and Technological Innovation

Auditors' independence and technological innovation together serve as vital mechanisms for ensuring audit objectivity, transparency, and credibility. Independence enables auditors to perform their duties without bias or external influence, while technological innovation supports this autonomy by reducing reliance on manual processes and subjective judgment (IFAC, 2020). According to Enekwe and Agu (2018), auditor independence is often compromised in Nigeria due to close client relationships, economic pressures, and weak regulatory enforcement. However, digital audit tools such as blockchain and automated data analytics can strengthen independence by providing verifiable audit evidence that limits management interference. Appelbaum et al. (2017) observed that technology-driven audits reduce human involvement in data collection and analysis, thereby minimizing opportunities for bias and manipulation. Independence, in this context, also refers to auditors' capacity to adopt and use technology ethically without external pressure to alter outcomes. As Onyekwelu (2015) argued, the combination of technological innovation and professional independence enhances audit reliability and stakeholder trust. In the Nigerian setting, where the integrity of audit reports has often been questioned, the use of technology can reinforce auditors' independence by creating transparent audit trails and real-time reporting systems. Nevertheless, auditors must remain vigilant to avoid overdependence on technology, ensuring that human judgment and ethical principles guide digital audit processes. Thus, the integration of independence with technological innovation provides a dual safeguard that strengthens audit credibility and reduces financial fraud across organizations.

Auditors' Independence and Technological Innovation

Auditor independence is a fundamental principle that underpins the credibility and reliability of financial statements, serving as the cornerstone of professional auditing ethics and public confidence. Independence implies that auditors must perform their duties free from undue influence, bias, or conflict of interest, maintaining both independence in fact and in appearance (IFAC, 2020). However, in the digital era, the integration of technological innovation has redefined the boundaries of audit independence. The use of advanced audit technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain systems, and automated analytics tools has enhanced auditors' capacity to detect anomalies, reduce human error, and minimize the manipulation of financial data (Appelbaum et al., 2017; Yoon et al., 2015). These innovations strengthen independence by limiting excessive reliance on management-provided data and promoting evidence-based audit judgments. Nevertheless, the adoption of digital tools also introduces new challenges, including overreliance on automated systems, cybersecurity risks, and the potential for algorithmic bias, which may compromise auditor objectivity if not carefully managed (Kokina & Davenport, 2017). Furthermore, auditors' independence can be undermined when technology vendors or clients exert influence over

the configuration and interpretation of technological systems used in the audit process (Rozario & Thomas, 2019). Therefore, while technological innovation can reinforce independence through transparency and automation, it simultaneously demands heightened ethical vigilance and technical competence from auditors. Ensuring that technology complements rather than substitutes auditors' professional skepticism is crucial in maintaining true independence and sustaining the integrity of financial reporting in Nigeria's evolving digital audit environment.

Theoretical Review

Agency Theory (Jensen & Meckling, 1976)

The Agency Theory, propounded by Jensen and Meckling in 1976, provides one of the most relevant frameworks for understanding the relationship between ethical auditing, technological innovation, and financial fraud prevention. The theory explains the contractual relationship between principals (owners or shareholders) and agents (managers), where the agent is entrusted with decision-making authority on behalf of the principal. However, due to conflicting interests and information asymmetry, agents may engage in opportunistic behaviors such as fraud, misrepresentation, or unethical financial reporting (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Ethical auditing acts as a control mechanism to minimize agency costs by ensuring that auditors maintain independence, integrity, objectivity, and competence in evaluating management's financial decisions. The integration of technological innovation such as blockchain, data analytics, and artificial intelligence further strengthens this monitoring process by providing real-time verification, transparency, and data-driven insights that reduce the likelihood of fraud and manipulation (Appelbaum et al., 2017). Thus, the agency theory supports the role of both ethics and technology in bridging the trust gap between principals and agents. In the Nigerian context, where weak governance structures and corruption often exacerbate agency conflicts, combining ethical auditing with technological tools can enhance accountability and restore investor confidence. Therefore, the theory underpins the study's assumption that ethical behavior and technological competence among auditors can jointly mitigate agency problems and promote financial transparency in organizations.

Fraud Triangle Theory (Cressey, 1953)

The Fraud Triangle Theory, developed by Donald R. Cressey in 1953, provides an essential framework for understanding why individuals commit financial fraud. According to Cressey (1953), three key elements pressure, opportunity, and rationalization must coexist for fraud to occur. Pressure refers to personal or organizational motivations such as financial stress or performance targets; opportunity arises from weak internal controls or lack of oversight; and rationalization represents the mental justification fraudsters use to legitimize unethical behavior. Within the context of this study, ethical auditing directly addresses the rationalization and opportunity elements by fostering auditor integrity, objectivity, and independence, thereby limiting circumstances that enable fraud. Similarly, technological innovation mitigates the opportunity component by strengthening monitoring systems through data analytics, continuous auditing, and blockchain-based transparency (Kranacher et al., 2011). Together, ethical auditing and technology form a dual mechanism to prevent fraud before it occurs and detect it swiftly when it does. In Nigeria, where weak enforcement and poor ethical standards often create fertile ground for financial malfeasance, applying Cressey's theory highlights the importance of combining ethical and technological approaches in combating fraudulent activities. Hence, the Fraud Triangle Theory provides the theoretical foundation that explains how strengthening ethical values and leveraging technological innovation can collectively reduce the occurrence of financial fraud in organizations.

Empirical Review

Owolabi and Omoteso (2020) investigated the effect of ethical auditing practices on fraud detection among listed companies in Nigeria. Using a sample of 20 audit firms and data obtained through structured questionnaires and secondary sources, the study employed multiple regression analysis

to examine the link between auditor ethics and the detection of financial irregularities. The findings revealed that auditors' integrity, independence, and professional competence significantly enhance fraud detection and prevention, particularly in organizations with strong ethical codes. The study emphasized that ethical compliance fosters accountability and trust in financial reporting. However, the research noted that some audit firms in Nigeria still struggle with maintaining independence due to client pressure and financial incentives. The authors recommended that audit firms enforce stricter ethical standards and continuous ethics training to mitigate fraud risks. The study is relevant to the present research because it highlights the critical role of ethical auditing in improving transparency and corporate governance in Nigeria's financial system, thereby establishing a foundation for the integration of ethics with technological innovation to enhance fraud prevention effectiveness.

Appelbaum, Kogan, and Vasarhelyi (2017) examined the role of technological innovation, particularly big data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), in improving audit quality and detecting financial anomalies. Drawing data from audit firms across the United States, the study found that digital auditing tools significantly enhance accuracy, efficiency, and fraud detection capabilities. The researchers used an experimental design to analyze how AI and analytics influence auditors' judgment and decision-making. Results indicated that technological tools reduce human bias, improve pattern recognition, and enhance risk assessment in complex transactions. However, the study also cautioned that without adequate technical competence, auditors may misinterpret analytical results, leading to audit errors. The study's findings imply that integrating advanced technology requires ethical judgment and professional competence to ensure reliability. This study is crucial to the current research as it provides empirical evidence on how technological innovations can complement ethical auditing in combating financial fraud, particularly in developing economies such as Nigeria where digital audit adoption remains in its early stages. Adeyemi and Okpala (2019) assessed the relationship between auditor independence and corporate fraud prevention in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Using a sample of 50 firms listed on the Nigerian Exchange (NGX), the study employed correlation and regression analyses to determine how auditor independence influences fraud detection and prevention. The results showed a significant positive relationship between auditor independence and fraud mitigation, emphasizing that independent auditors are more likely to uncover fraudulent financial reporting. The study also found that regulatory interference, inadequate remuneration, and client influence undermine auditor independence in Nigeria. Furthermore, firms with external audits conducted by independent professionals recorded fewer cases of misstatement and irregularities. Adeyemi and Okpala recommended stricter enforcement of professional ethics and periodic auditor rotation to reduce familiarity threats. The study's findings directly support this research by linking auditor independence, a key ethical auditing dimension, with improved fraud detection outcomes, suggesting that maintaining independence combined with technological tools could strengthen financial integrity and reduce fraudulent practices within Nigeria's corporate sector.

Rozario and Thomas (2019) conducted a study on the application of blockchain and smart contracts in external auditing and their impact on fraud risk assessment. Using a qualitative and experimental research design, the authors demonstrated how blockchain technology enhances transparency, audit trail accuracy, and real-time monitoring of financial transactions. The study found that technology-driven auditing minimizes human intervention, thereby reducing manipulation opportunities and fraud concealment. Additionally, smart contracts enable automatic execution of audit verifications, improving efficiency and accountability. However, the researchers cautioned that technological adoption must be balanced with ethical oversight, as automation cannot entirely replace professional skepticism and moral judgment. The study concluded that auditors who combine ethical responsibility with technological competence are better equipped to detect and prevent fraud. This study aligns with the current research focus by showing that the synergy between ethical auditing and innovation strengthens the fight against financial fraud, particularly in

economies where audit transparency is critical to restoring investor confidence and financial stability.

Nwachukwu and Nwosu (2022) investigated the combined effect of ethical standards and technological innovation on fraud mitigation among Nigerian financial institutions. The study adopted a survey design using data from 150 audit professionals and financial managers across Lagos and Abuja. Employing regression analysis, the findings revealed that both ethical standards and technological innovation significantly reduce the incidence of financial fraud. Specifically, ethical factors such as integrity and independence were found to influence auditors' willingness to use technology effectively, while innovations such as data analytics and forensic software improved fraud detection accuracy. The study further noted that the lack of technological infrastructure and weak ethical culture hindered fraud control mechanisms in Nigeria's financial system. The authors concluded that ethical training and technological investment are complementary tools for combating fraud. This study supports the present research by empirically demonstrating how the integration of ethics and technology enhances audit effectiveness and reduces financial misconduct, reinforcing the dual approach proposed for the Nigerian context.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methods and procedures adopted in conducting the study. It outlines the research design, population, sample size, sampling techniques, method of data collection, validity and reliability of research instruments, method of data analysis, and model specification. The methodology provides the foundation for achieving the study's objectives and ensuring the credibility of its findings.

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive and correlational research design. The descriptive design was used to obtain accurate and systematic information on the current state of ethical auditing practices and technological innovation among audit professionals in Nigeria. The correlational design, on the other hand, examined the relationship between ethical auditing dimensions (integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence) and technological innovation as a combined approach to combating financial fraud. This design was suitable because it enabled the study to establish the nature and strength of the relationships among the variables without manipulating them, consistent with similar studies by Adeyemi and Okpala (2019) and Nwachukwu and Nwosu (2022).

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all professional auditors, forensic accountants, and internal control officers working in selected audit firms and financial institutions across Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria. These cities were chosen because they host the headquarters of major auditing and financial institutions, which actively engage in technological and ethical auditing practices. The estimated population was approximately 250 audit professionals, including partners, senior auditors, and IT audit specialists.

Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The study adopted the Yamane (1967) sample size determination formula to select a representative sample from the population of 250 audit professionals. Using a 5% margin of error, the calculated sample size was approximately 152 respondents. The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select participants who have direct involvement in auditing, fraud detection, or technology-driven financial monitoring. This approach ensured that only respondents with relevant experience and knowledge of ethical auditing and technological innovation were included in the sample.

Method of Data Collection

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire consisted of sections covering demographic information, ethical auditing dimensions (integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence), technological innovation practices, and financial fraud prevention mechanisms. The instruments were administered both physically and electronically (via Google Forms) to enhance response rates. The data collection process spanned four weeks, with follow-ups made through email and professional networks such as ICAN and ANAN member groups.

Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

To ensure content and construct validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts in accounting and auditing from recognized Nigerian universities and professional audit firms. Their feedback helped refine the instrument for clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness. The Cronbach's Alpha test was used to assess reliability, yielding coefficients above the 0.70 benchmark, indicating acceptable internal consistency (Pallant, 2020). Pilot testing was conducted with 20 respondents not included in the main study, and results confirmed that the instrument was reliable and suitable for data collection.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, and percentages were used to summarize responses and describe patterns. Inferential statistics, including Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis, were employed to test the relationships and hypotheses among the study variables. These analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0. The hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance ($p < 0.05$) to determine the strength and direction of associations between ethical auditing and technological innovation in mitigating financial fraud.

Model Specification

The econometric model was specified to test the relationship between ethical auditing dimensions and technological innovation as predictors of financial fraud prevention.

The functional relationship is expressed as:

FFP = f (EA,TI) Where:

FFP = Financial Fraud Prevention (Dependent Variable)

EA = Ethical Auditing (Independent Variable, represented by Integrity, Objectivity, Competence, Independence)

TI = Technological Innovation (Moderating Variable) The linear regression model is expressed as:

$FFP = \beta 0 + \beta 1INT + \beta OBJ + \beta 3COMP + \beta 4IND + \beta 5TI + \mu$

Where:

INT = Auditor's Integrity

OBJ = Auditor's Objectivity

COMP = Auditor's Competence

IND = Auditor's Independence TI = Technological Innovation β_0 = Constant term β_1–β_5 = Coefficients of the independent variables μ = Error term

This model will enable the researcher to determine the extent to which ethical auditing dimensions and technological innovation jointly influence financial fraud prevention in Nigeria.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents, analyzes, and discusses the data collected from the field in line with the objectives of the study. The analyses are based on responses obtained from auditors, accountants, and internal control officers in selected audit firms and financial institutions in Lagos and Abuja, Nigeria. The findings are presented using descriptive and inferential statistics to evaluate the relationship between ethical auditing and technological innovation as a dual approach to combating financial fraud.

Data Presentation

A total of 152 structured questionnaires were distributed to respondents across selected audit firms and financial institutions. Out of these, 140 questionnaires were properly completed and returned, representing a response rate of 92.1%, which was considered adequate for analysis. The presentation of data is organized into three key sections:
Demographic characteristics of respondents,
Descriptive analysis of variables, and
Inferential analysis (correlation and regression results).

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n=140)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	84	60
	Female	56	40
Age	21–30 years	34	24.3
	31–40 years	62	44.3
	41–50 years	33	23.6
	51 years and above	11	7.8
Educational Qualification	HND/B.Sc.	77	55
	M.Sc./MBA	46	32.9
	Ph.D./Professional (ICAN, ANAN)	17	12.1
Work Experience	1–5 years	29	20.7
	6–10 years	58	41.4
	11 years and above	53	37.9

The demographic results reveal that the majority of respondents were male (60%), aged between 31 and 40 years (44.3%), and held at least a Bachelor's degree (55%).
A significant proportion (79.3%) had more than 5 years of professional experience, implying that the respondents were well-positioned to provide reliable insights into ethical auditing practices and technological innovation in their organizations.

Descriptive Analysis of Study Variables

The descriptive statistics focused on the major dimensions of ethical auditing (integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence) and technological innovation. Respondents rated each construct on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1).

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Interpretation
Auditors' Integrity	4.28	0.64	High
Auditors' Objectivity	4.16	0.71	High

Auditors' Competence		4.34	0.58	Very High
Auditors' Independence		4.09	0.73	High
Technological Innovation		4.22	0.61	High
Financial Prevention	Fraud	4.31	0.57	Very High

The results show that respondents strongly agreed that ethical auditing practices and technological innovation were actively implemented in their organizations. Auditor competence recorded the highest mean score (4.34), indicating that technical and ethical skills play a major role in fraud prevention. Similarly, technological innovation had a mean of 4.22, confirming the growing reliance on digital tools for fraud detection and audit assurance.

Data Analysis

This section presents the statistical analysis conducted to examine the relationship between ethical auditing dimensions (auditors' integrity, objectivity, professional competence, and independence) and technological innovation in combating financial fraud in Nigeria. The data were analyzed using Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analysis with the aid of SPSS version 27.0. All hypotheses were tested at a 5% level of significance ($p < 0.05$).

Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation was used to examine the strength and direction of relationships between the variables. The results are summarized below.

Variables	Integrity	Objectivity	Competence	Independence	Technological Innovation
Auditors' Integrity	1				
Auditors' Objectivity	0.682**	1			
Auditors' Competence	0.721**	0.703**	1		
Auditors' Independence	0.655**	0.679**	0.707**	1	
Technological Innovation	0.612**	0.587**	0.639**	0.566**	1

Note: Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Interpretation:

The correlation results indicate that all dimensions of ethical auditing are positively and significantly related to technological innovation. Auditor competence ($r = 0.639$, $p < 0.01$) showed the strongest correlation with technological innovation, suggesting that skilled and knowledgeable auditors are more likely to adopt and effectively utilize technological tools in fraud detection. Auditors' integrity ($r = 0.612$, $p < 0.01$) and objectivity ($r = 0.587$, $p < 0.01$) also demonstrated strong positive correlations, confirming that ethical behavior supports innovation-driven audit practices.

Regression Analysis

A multiple regression analysis was performed to test the combined influence of auditors' integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence on technological innovation.

MODEL SUMMARY

Model Summary	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error of Estimate
Model	0.781	0.61	0.598	0.412

Interpretation:
The model summary shows an R^2 value of 0.610, indicating that approximately 61.0% of the variation in technological innovation can be explained by the combined effect of auditors' ethical attributes (integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence).
The remaining 39.0% could be attributed to other factors not captured in the model, such as organizational culture and external technological infrastructure.

ANOVA

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-Statistic	Sig. (pvalue)
Regression	32.014	4	8.004	47.216	0
Residual	20.499	135	0.152		
Total	52.513	139			

The ANOVA table reveals that the model is statistically significant ($F = 47.216$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that ethical auditing dimensions collectively have a significant effect on technological innovation in the Nigerian auditing environment.

Regression Coefficients

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	t-Statistic	Sig. (pvalue)
Constant	1.102	0.198	5.566	0
Auditors' Integrity	0.233	0.071	3.282	0.001
Auditors' Objectivity	0.181	0.065	2.785	0.006
Auditors' Competence	0.289	0.069	4.182	0
Auditors' Independence	0.162	0.073	2.219	0.028

The regression results indicate that all four ethical auditing dimensions have positive and significant effects on technological innovation ($p < 0.05$). Auditors' competence ($\beta = 0.289$, $p < 0.001$) exerted the strongest influence, followed by integrity ($\beta = 0.233$, $p = 0.001$), objectivity ($\beta = 0.181$, $p = 0.006$), and independence ($\beta = 0.162$, $p = 0.028$).
These findings suggest that as auditors demonstrate higher levels of professional competence, ethical integrity, and independence, their adoption and effective use of technological innovations in fraud prevention also increase.

Test of Hypotheses
The hypotheses formulated in Section 1.4 were tested using multiple regression analysis at a 5% level of significance ($p < 0.05$). The decision rule is as follows:
If p-value < 0.05, reject the null hypothesis (H_0).
If p-value ≥ 0.05, fail to reject the null hypothesis (H_0).
The results of the regression coefficients are summarized in the table below:

Hypotheses	Statement	β	tStatistic	Sig. (pvalue)	Decision
H_{01}	There is no significant relationship between auditors' integrity and technological innovation in Nigeria.	0.233	3.282	0.001	Rejected
H_{02}	There is no significant relationship between auditors' objectivity and technological innovation in Nigeria.	0.181	2.785	0.006	Rejected
H_{03}	There is no significant relationship between auditors' professional competence and technological innovation in Nigeria.	0.289	4.182	0	Rejected
H_{04}	There is no significant relationship between auditors' independence and technological innovation in Nigeria.	0.162	2.219	0.028	Rejected

The regression results show that all four hypotheses were rejected, implying that auditors' integrity, objectivity, professional competence, and independence significantly influence technological innovation in the Nigerian auditing sector. Among the predictors, professional competence had the highest standardized coefficient (β = 0.289), suggesting that auditors' technical skills and knowledge play the most crucial role in driving innovation adoption and fraud detection efficiency.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study provide empirical evidence that ethical auditing significantly enhances technological innovation within the Nigerian financial and corporate landscape. The results corroborate prior studies such as Adebawojo, Enyi, and Adebawo (2015) and Lubyanaya et al. (2016), which emphasized the critical link between ethical conduct and organizational performance outcomes.

The first hypothesis revealed that auditors' integrity has a significant positive effect on technological innovation (p = 0.001). This implies that auditors who adhere to honesty, fairness, and professional ethics are more inclined to adopt digital auditing tools, such as data analytics and AI-based fraud detection systems. This supports Anuar, Jais, and Tinggi (2021), who found that ethical values promote transparency and innovation adoption in corporate governance.

Similarly, auditors' objectivity was found to significantly influence technological innovation (p = 0.006). This suggests that when auditors maintain impartiality and avoid bias, they are better positioned to utilize technology for independent data verification and fraud detection. This finding aligns with Otley (2016) and Osei and Mensah (2021), who argued that unbiased decision-making fosters innovative thinking and reliability in audit judgments.

The third hypothesis demonstrated that auditors' professional competence exerts the strongest influence (p = 0.000). This shows that highly trained and technologically literate auditors are more efficient in integrating advanced tools like forensic accounting software, blockchain auditing, and predictive analytics into their audit processes. This result echoes Okobo, Ugwoke, and Akpan (2022), who emphasized that professional expertise enhances the efficient use of innovation-driven audit systems.

Finally, auditors' independence was found to have a significant positive impact on technological innovation ($p = 0.028$). This suggests that auditors who operate free from client influence are more likely to rely on objective, technology-supported methods rather than subjective judgment. The finding aligns with Porter and Kramer (2011), who noted that independence strengthens credibility and facilitates transparent audit innovations.

Overall, the study confirms that ethical auditing is a vital driver of technological advancement in Nigeria's audit profession. By fostering integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence, auditors not only uphold professional standards but also enhance innovation that combats financial fraud. This conclusion supports the position of Ashmarina and Zotova (2015), who emphasized that organizational readiness for change is deeply rooted in ethical and professional conduct.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study examined the relationship between ethical auditing and technological innovation as a dual approach to combating financial fraud in Nigeria. Data were obtained from 140 respondents across audit firms and financial institutions, analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The major findings are summarized as follows:

1. Auditors' integrity significantly enhances technological innovation in the Nigerian auditing profession. Auditors who demonstrate honesty, transparency, and adherence to ethical values are more likely to adopt and effectively apply technology-driven auditing tools in detecting and preventing fraud.
2. Auditors' objectivity positively influences technological innovation, implying that impartial and unbiased auditors are more willing to integrate data analytics and forensic software to improve audit quality and accuracy.
3. Auditors' professional competence has the strongest effect on technological innovation among all dimensions of ethical auditing. This suggests that continuous professional training and technological literacy are essential for effective fraud detection and prevention.
4. Auditors' independence significantly affects technological innovation, indicating that auditors who operate autonomously and without undue influence from clients tend to rely more on technology-based audit procedures to enhance accountability and reduce manipulation risks.

Overall, the results demonstrate that ethical auditing practices and technological innovation jointly serve as effective tools in combating financial fraud within Nigeria's corporate environment, reinforcing the need for ethics-based professional development and digital transformation in the auditing sector.

Conclusions

Based on the findings, the study concludes that ethical auditing is a critical enabler of technological innovation in Nigeria's auditing and financial sectors. The integration of ethical principles integrity, objectivity, competence, and independence creates an environment of transparency and trust that promotes the adoption of digital audit tools such as artificial intelligence, blockchain technology, and data analytics. Ethical auditors, driven by professionalism and accountability, are more inclined to embrace innovation as a means of enhancing audit efficiency, accuracy, and fraud prevention.

The study therefore affirms that a synergy between ethical auditing and technological innovation can significantly reduce the prevalence of financial fraud, strengthen public confidence in financial reporting, and improve the overall credibility of corporate governance systems in Nigeria. Consequently, fostering ethical standards alongside technological advancement should be seen as a strategic imperative for sustainable audit reform and institutional integrity.

Recommendations

In light of the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Strengthen Ethical Training and Awareness: Audit firms and professional bodies such as ICAN and ANAN should integrate continuous ethics training into professional development programs to reinforce integrity, objectivity, and independence among auditors.
2. Invest in Technological Capacity Building: Organizations should provide training in emerging technologies such as blockchain, data analytics, and AI-driven auditing tools to enhance auditors' technical competence and digital literacy.
3. Promote Independence through Regulatory Oversight: Regulatory agencies like the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRCN) and the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) should enforce policies that ensure auditor independence and minimize client influence.
4. Encourage Technological Collaboration: Firms should foster collaborations with technology providers and academic institutions to develop customized audit technologies suited to Nigeria's financial environment.
5. Adopt Ethics-Driven Innovation Frameworks: Audit firms should integrate ethical principles into innovation strategies, ensuring that technology serves as a tool for transparency, accountability, and fraud deterrence.
6. Policy and Legal Reforms: Government agencies should review existing audit and financial reporting laws to encourage the integration of technology and ethical practices in auditing standards.

REFERENCES

Adesina, K. A., & Izedonmi, F. O. I. (2022). Ethical orientation and audit quality among professional accountants in Nigeria. *Journal of Accounting and Financial Management, 8*(2), 45–59.

Adeyemi, S. B., & Okpala, O. P. (2019). Auditor independence and corporate fraud prevention in Nigeria. *Journal of Accounting and Financial Management*, 5(2), 15–29.

Agbim, K. C., & Olayinka, O. S. (2021). Auditors' ethical behaviour and professional integrity: Implications for audit quality in Nigeria. *International Journal of Accounting and Finance, 10*(3), 82–97.

Aggelopoulos, E., Georgopoulos, A., Eriotis, N., & Tsamis, A. (2016). R&D activity and operating performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs): The case of a small open economy. *Journal of Accounting and Taxation, 8*(4), 40–50.

Alles, M. G. (2015). Drivers of the use and facilitators and obstacles of the evolution of Big Data by the audit profession. *Accounting Horizons, 29*(2), 439–449. https://doi.org/10.2308/acch-51067

Appelbaum, D., Kogan, A., & Vasarhelyi, M. A. (2017). *Big data and advanced analytics in external audits. Accounting Horizons,* 31(3), 63–80.*

Aseinimieyeofori, P. A. (2022). Non-current assets investment and financial performance of listed insurance companies in Nigeria. *Advanced Journal of Accounting, Management and Marketing, 8*(2), 1–17.*

Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE). (2023). *Report to the nations: 2023 global study on occupational fraud and abuse.* Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. https://www.acfe.com

Cressey, D. R. (1953). *Other people's money*: A study in the social psychology of embezzlement. Free Press.

Enekwe, C. I., & Agu, C. I. (2018). *Basic fundamentals in accounting:* Volume one (2nd revised & English ed.). Mac 4 Printing & Publication Ltd.

Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria (FRCN). (2021). *Code of corporate governance for public and private companies in Nigeria.* FRCN Publications.

Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN). (2022). *ICAN professional code of conduct and ethics.* ICAN Publications.

International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB). (2021). *International standards on auditing (ISAs) and quality management standards.* International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). https://www.iaasb.org

International Federation of Accountants (IFAC). (2020). *International code of ethics for professional accountants (including International Independence Standards).* International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants (IESBA). https://www.ifac.org

Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. H. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs, and ownership structure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 3(4), 305–360.

Kokina, J., & Davenport, T. H. (2017). The emergence of artificial intelligence: How automation is changing auditing. *Journal of Emerging Technologies in Accounting, 14*(1), 115–122. https://doi.org/10.2308/jeta-51730

Kranacher, M. J., Riley, R. A., & Wells, J. T. (2011). *Forensic accounting and fraud examination*. John Wiley & Sons.

Nnenna, J. O., & Ezeani, N. S. (2022). Professional competence and audit effectiveness among external auditors in Nigeria. *African Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Finance, 12*(1), 112–128.

Nwachukwu, O., & Nwosu, F. (2022). Ethical standards, technological innovation, and fraud mitigation among financial institutions in Nigeria. *Nigerian Journal of Accounting Research*, 8(1), 85–102.

Nwankwo, S. I., & Ubesie, M. C. (2020). Ethical behaviour and audit independence in Nigeria's accounting profession. *Journal of Accounting and Auditing Research, 6*(2), 25–39.

Okolie, J. U., & Oghoghomeh, T. (2021). Ethical standards and audit quality in Nigeria: The moderating role of auditor independence. *Nigerian Journal of Accounting and Finance, 13*(1), 55–73.

Olayinka, A. O., & Odu, M. O. (2021). Auditors' professional competence and the use of forensic technology in Nigeria. *Journal of Financial Reporting and Auditing, 9*(1), 101–118.

Olayinka, A. O., & Odu, M. O. (2021). Auditors' professional competence and the use of forensic technology in Nigeria. *Journal of Financial Reporting and Auditing, 9*(1), 101–118.

Onyekwelu, U. L. (2015). *Firm foundation in accounting and finance research.* His Glory Publications.

Owolabi, A. S., & Omoteso, K. (2020). Ethical auditing and fraud detection in Nigeria: An empirical analysis. African Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Finance, 10(3), 221–240.

Rozario, A. M., & Thomas, C. (2019). Reengineering the audit with blockchain and smart contracts. Journal of Emerging Technologies in Accounting, 16(1), 21–35.

Ugochukwu, L. C., & Amaka, E. N. (2022). The role of ethical behaviour in promoting audit quality and transparency among Nigerian auditors. *Journal of Contemporary Accounting Research, 5*(2), 66–81.

Yoon, K., Hoogduin, L., & Zhang, L. (2015). Big Data as complementary audit evidence. *Accounting Horizons, 29*(2), 431–438. https://doi.org/10.2308/acch-51076