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Audit Quality Dynamics in the Mauritian Private Sector: Unraveling Influential Factors through Quantitative Analysis

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Abstract- This research delves into the factors influencing the quality of external audits for private companies in Mauritius. Given the expanding volume of financial information and the subsequent need for rigorous audit processes, evaluating audit quality has become a contemporary concern. Drawing from prior research, key indicators such as audit complexity, time budget pressure, audit tenure, auditor's experience, audit fees, auditor's independence, professional skepticism, audit risks, and auditor rotation are recognized as pivotal elements affecting external audit quality. Utilizing a quantitative survey method, data is gathered from professionals, including licensed auditors, audit staff, audit managers, and audit partners in Mauritius through random sampling techniques. Demographic factors such as age, gender, and education are scrutinized to enhance the understanding of the topic. The Mann Whitney U test, One-way Anova test, and Chi-square test are employed to test the hypotheses developed in the research. The study's findings indicate that time budget pressure, auditor's experience, auditor's independence, audit risks, and auditor rotation predominantly influence the external audit quality of private companies in Mauritius. Recommendations are provided to enhance external audit quality, emphasizing the need for audit firms in Mauritius to invest in audit software and ensure adequate training for employees. Additionally, the study suggests revisiting the audit partner rotation requirement, advocating for a criterion of less than 5 years, to foster increased independence between external auditors and clients. The study concludes by acknowledging certain limitations that have been discussed.

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I. Introduction

Auditing is the procedure of reviewing the financial data along with non-financial data included in a financial statement whether they portray a reasonable view of economical operations by complying together with the International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB). The audit quality performs a crucial function in the handling of the financial reports through the prospective investors on top as well as other users who need reliable and credible financial information. According to Alsmairat et al. (2018), in emerging nations, audit quality is among the factors which impact firm value. In reporting, information gap may occur resulting from dissimilar interests amongst management along with handlers of the financial statements in private companies. As such, the role of third parties is crucial to scrutinize the financial reports to diminish information asymmetry that occurs between users and managers.

Several people mystify auditors with individuals who detect fraud, but auditors have nothing to do with fraud detection entirely. Kronenberger and Pietzsch (2017) believed auditors are a vocation which runs based on independence, trust, along with professionalism. Auditors just intend to make sure that organization's financial statements have valid and fair representation of its actual position in accord with the financial reporting framework and appropriate regulations.

Behn et al. (2008) asserted that high-level audit quality might enhance the consistency of financial report data, besides this is helpful to aid stockholders and investors in establishing the corporation's projected value beyond accurately. Inadequate audit quality is expected to delude operators of accounting information as well as cause incorrect decision making. Hence, it is crucial to acquire knowledgeable grasps into those crucial factors that might affect quality of external auditing.

In Mauritius, auditing is stipulated in the Companies Act 2001 and audited accounts are required by the Registrar of Companies in Mauritius if the annual turnover of the company is above MUR 100 million recently as per new budget 2022-2023 of Mauritius, before the new budget the limit was above MUR 50 million when a company was liable to auditing. The auditing ought to be done in accord with International Standards on Auditing (ISA) as announced by the IAASB. To be a qualified external auditor in Mauritius as per Financial Reporting Act (FRA) 2004, a candidate must be registered as a Public Accountant with Mauritius Institute of Professional Accountants (MIPA) and hold a practising certificate from Financial Reporting Council (FRC). Regulatory bodies like MIPA and FRC supervise and regulate auditors so as they are in line with all regulations they are required to follow in such a way that they maintain a high standard in their audit works. In Mauritius, the existing partner rotation criteria for audit firms are modified by a five-year audit firm rotation requirement.

Due to the pressure of litigation as well as several corporate missteps, the most significant issue confronting the auditing profession currently is the quality of external audits. Iskandar et al. (2010) established compromise on how external audit quality must be evaluated but has not been accomplished. Audit scandals such as poor service quality, and high audit fees, discourage firms to appoint external auditors. It is therefore essential to acquire well-informed insights that influence the audit quality. Auditee whether they are private owned or government, all need a high standard audit quality.

Findings on external audit quality remain resolute in established economies and only some findings have been conducted in emerging economies. Akin findings are scant in tiny island economies alike Mauritius. This research attempts to ease this aperture.

The Objectives of the Research are to:

1. Assess the Influence of Auditor Educational Background and Experience on the Quality of External Audits for Private Companies in Mauritius.
2. Examine Professionals' Perspectives on Factors Affecting External Audit Quality in the Mauritian Context.
3. Propose Measures to Enhance External Audit Quality and Practices in Mauritius.

The significance of audit quality confidence may lead to useful motives such as upgrading trust and confidence of shareowners and the public in the audited financial reports according to Hussein and Hanefah (2013) and Hosseinniakani et al. (2014). This analysis might encourage auditors to provide clients with audit reporting of the highest quality. This will benefit different users of financial information alike as potential investors, shareholders, as well as other stakeholders of organizations. They will gain an understanding of how external auditing is affected by some factors in private companies of Mauritius.

II. Review of Literature

a) Agency Theory

The agency theory is a well-founded economic theory of accountability, which facilitates explanation on the development of audit quality. Additionally, scholars like Jensen and Meckling (1976), Watts and Zimmerman (1986) consider the demand for external auditing is at the heart of the agency relationship and scrutinise this recourse to external auditing as a means of constraining the possibilities of accounting manipulation by managers. As a retort to the agency problem, the requirement for external auditors has intensified, to certify accountability and lessen the possibility of fraud, error, material misstatement, as well as management manipulation (Chandler et al., 1993). External auditors who oversee the audit system are expected to perform independently and should be forbidden from take up sides with any of the parties, specifically the principal or agent. The evidence held in the external auditor's audit account will be utilized through the principal in establishing the base for evaluations of brief and deep-rooted concerns upon possession of the organisation.

b) Stakeholder Theory

According to Freeman (1984), stakeholder theory is a principle which reveals numerous parties that are the focus of corporate obligation in relative to their endeavours. If company management has interested that struggle with the interests of investors as firm stakeholders, it is required to come up with an autonomous party named an external auditor who acts as a tierce party to conquer as well as synchronize conflicts which ensue among the dual events. Stakeholders' theory as well purveys with audit quality. External auditors ought to sustain audit quality to retain upstanding, independence and objectivity in revealing firm data to comprehend the value of audit statements as the accountability of investors. The audit report comprises an external auditor's opinion as well that aid stakeholders in having an insight on the quality of the organization's value.

c) Empirical Review

i. *Factors Affecting the External Audit Quality*

The existing frame suggests a vast range of components which affect the external audit quality, taking into deliberation perspectives from every set implicated in the position of external auditing such as:

1. Audit Complexity

Task complexity is expressed as a perception of an entity of a mission which is triggered by an individual's opinion of a mission owing to narrow capacities and reminiscence, alike as the skill to mingle difficulties that decision makers incur (Jamilah et al., 2007). In line with Jiambalvo (1982), 'Audit complexity relies on insights of the problem of the audit task. Certain audit assignments are deemed a project with elevated complexity and difficulty, while others suppose it a straightforward task. Putri et al. (2021) proved that audit quality is influenced by audit complexity. However, according to Susanto et al. (2020), task complexity has certainly no significant effect on audit quality. Audit complexity is a gauge of whether transactions are intricate, or else the dimension of firm records conducted for auditing (Mulyadi 2014).

H1: Audit complexity affects the external audit quality.

2. Time Budget Pressure

The factor affecting audit quality is time budget pressure that is the extent of time accessible for auditors to conduct out audit appointments (Margheim and Pattison, 2005). Time budget pressure might be a portion of the proposal employed by assessors who would determine regulations in hours for every portion of the audit. Fleming (1980) asserts the time budget

pressure gauge comprises of creating plans and time efficiency. According to Rusyanti (2010), auditors who get very minimal assignment time can cause harm to their users, where auditors will act by not applying applicable standards and codes of ethics thus audit quality will degenerate. As per Sososutikno (2003), 'time budget pressure could be a condition that shows auditors are required to form efficiency with the time budget that has been prepared or shape a discussion of time budgets which is very tight and rigid' was set or there are stint limitations during an actual constricted budget. Time budget pressure has optimistic impact on the audit quality as per Dwimilten and Riduwan (2015).

H2: Time budget pressure affects the external audit quality.

3. Audit Tenure

The tenure of an external audit firm in a corporate can have a sway on the precision of its audit as Flint (1988) considers that while auditors work in an organization for a lengthy time, auditors may set up a particular relationship with people in the organization and mislay their autonomy. A long-term relationship among external auditors and its clients possibly generates vicinity amongst the firm's colleagues and clients, which might hinder auditor independence then diminish audit quality (AlThuneibat et al., 2011). Nugrahanti and Darsono, (2014) asserted in their research that within a brief tenure in which an auditor has just contracted with a current client, additional time is required for the auditor to be ready to recognize the client and therefore the business environment. Monroe and Hossain (2013) imply the audit's lengthy tenure is certainly associated to the further excellent quality of audit. Audit failures are apt to be elevated within the preliminary times of the auditor-client association since the recent auditor develops newly awareness of the client's processes (Arel et al., 2005). Conversely, there might be optimum point of audit tenure as an alternative of a straightforward decrease or increase result (Fitriany et al., 2016).

H3: Audit tenure affects the external audit quality.

4. Auditor's Experience

Experience over time alters the vast 'reminiscence edifices' certainly, and outcomes in a superior degree of decision and conviction skills (Cahan & Sun, 2015). Ye et al. (2004) demonstrate lengthier experience of auditors are fewer prone to get audit failures. The ability to obtain information and knowledge are relevant to auditing so that the audit can be carried out completely, correctly, and accurately is known as an auditor's professional expertise (Carolita &Rahardjo, 2012). The higher the audit quality, the greater the proficiency level (Sukriah et al., 2009). Variables of experience along with abilities are assumed to correspond to the ability variable, have a dismissive connection with the length of the implementation and achievement of auditing procedures (Rafiee et al., 2013). O'Keefe et al. (1994) put forward the close relationship between knowledge and capabilities with compliance with GAAPs. The experience of auditors in prominent audits of financial reports comes from the time allotment and the extent of tasks that have been finished by the auditors (Nurjanah &Kartika, 2016). Ningrum and Wedari's (2017) assert the experience of auditors has a positive and significant effect on audit quality. The level of experience of the auditor has a substantial constructive impact on audit quality as per Hanjani, A. (2014).

H4: Auditor's experience affects the external audit quality.

5. Audit Fees

Al-Matarinah (2003) points out the amounts the auditor alleges while carrying out an audit of a firm's accounts are related to the auditor's fees. Kinney and Libby, (2002) urged the menace to auditor autonomy might be as robust as the audit cost is huge. Hay (2017) stated one of the extremely critical factors affecting the quality of the audit remains the auditor's fees if the charges are extremely minimal this might be intimidating the particular interest on qualified competency along with the required support. Hallak & Silva (2012) claim audit fees given to external auditors in lieu of their carrying out their audit tasks serve to measure the scope of the auditing process. Increased fees can cause audit staff to work twice as hard to increase the audit quality (Dechow & Dichev, 2002). Rohman and Kurniasih (2014) identified that the audit fee has a positive effect on audit quality. There is an insignificant relationship between audit quality and audit fees stickiness (Salehi et al., 2019).

H5: Audit fees affects the external audit quality.

6. Auditor's Independence

The financial communal desires to be persuaded on the external auditor's independence, the actual presence of the auditing profession differs on this belief, if there is hesitation on the independence of external auditors, the opinions would not have worth, plus the subsequent are not desired for the facilities of auditors, besides to the financial communal sureness in the independence of auditors, they should evade altogether dealings and situations that demand hooked on enquiry the independence (Nazmi & Alazab, 2012). Currently, IFAC (2016) necessitates an auditor to be independent in relation to its customer equally in fact as well as in appearance. Hastuti, et al. (2017) uncovered that independence had considerable and preferential impact on the audit quality. Independence is a tendency where a fair-minded auditor must consistently be kept up with. The fair-mindedness revealed by the auditor once doing his obligations implies that the auditor is straightforward and enlightened from any impact, so the audit report could be reliable (Zam & Rahayu, 2015).

H6: Independence affects the external audit quality.

7. Professional Scepticism

Suardani et al., (2019) indicated professionalism as a factor that affects the quality of the audit including executing the duties through each thoroughness subsequent professional guidelines and recognized professionalism while delivering professional services. Professional scepticism is extremely associated with audit quality (Chen et al., 2009). Professional scepticism is merely defined as the means to reject the viewpoint of client and their concerned credentials; as a substitute, putting one's professional judgment to assess as well as comprehend the concealed truth behind slightly doubtful transactions and activities likewise (Johnson, 2016). Professional expertise is one crucial input element which affects audit quality (Mednick, 1990). Still, professionalism has no relation to audit quality according to Futri and Juliarsa (2014).

H7: Professional scepticism affects the external audit quality.

8. Audit Risks

Cindori (2018) clarified the audit risks such as "the possibility of expressing an incorrect opinion on the financial statements scrutinized, because of the auditor's failure to discover the material errors which may exist in those statements where he expresses his opinion". The audit risks were expounded as the external auditor's articulating a suitable judgment on the financial reports of the firm, besides these financial reports are essentially warped, or providing an inapt belief when the financial reports are free of material distortion (Muir, 2018). The risk in auditing implies the auditor receives a certain degree of uncertainty in the conduct of the audit (Mulyadi, 2002). Commerford et al. (2018) specifies the threat of an audit is that 'the auditor provides an inaccurate opinion' while the financial reports comprise serious inaccuracies, and the audit risk could be perceived as of two distinct viewpoints (Kesimli, 2019).

H8: Audit risks affect the external audit quality.

9. Auditor Rotation

Auditor rotation is essential to make sure that client conforms to the law along with sustain warm tactics to the audit procedure (Teh et al., 2016). Dopuch et al. (2001) perform an experimentation and presume that auditors are less inclined to publish biased reports beneath rotation requirements, consequently compulsory audit firm rotation boosts auditor autonomy. Stefaniak et al. (2009) argue previous research gets not enough proof that compulsory audit firm rotation boosts audit quality. Jennings et al., (2006) assets that judges experience improved apparent autonomy owing to compulsory audit firm rotation, along with much greater comparative to only an audit partner cycle. Kurniasih and Rohman (2014) uncover auditor rotation can impact audit quality. With obligatory audit firm rotation, the auditors will much less collaborate in mediation tactics and hence the results are more beneficial for the auditor than the client (Wang and Tuttle, 2009).

H9: Auditor rotation affects the external audit quality.

10. Educational background of external auditor affecting audit quality

Human assets signify a professional's particular attributes, comprising of skills, knowledge, education, along with experience (Beck et al., 2018). The educational environment indicates whether a person achieved systematic and troublesolving skills (Beck et al., 2018). Declarative knowledge is obtained through conventional education. Both financiers and audit professionals concur that training, experience and education perform an essential part in audit operation (Christensen et al., 2016). Also, Ye et al. (2004) provide a more individualized proxy for the academic backdrop, bearing in mind not only the educational level but also whether the auditor graduated from a prestigious university with a major in accounting. Though, Burke et al. (2018) asserts the education backdrop of audit partner does not influence the audit quality. D'Aveni (1996) contends that the educational backdrop does rise its recognition and significance over the years. The auditor's educational backdrop is appropriate to an audit organisation (Bröcheler et al., 2004). Subhan (2012) contends educational background has significant effect on work quality delivered.

Hypothesis 10: Educational background affects the external audit quality.

III. Research Methodology

Data was gathered using a quantitative technique. Self-completed surveys are suitable for learning how professionals evaluate external audit quality because they allow respondents to offer responses freely and anonymously that represent their expectations and opinions.

The target respondents for the survey are users who have experience in auditing; they may include the licensed auditors, audit staffs, audit supervisor, audit managers and the ones in accounting field from different type and size of private organizations in Mauritius where these professionals are required to be employed. The professional of dissimilar educational background, experience and gender were targeted.

A simple random sampling method has been utilized for the intent of this research as it is impractical to include every individual in such a short length of time. Straightforward random sampling is a kind of probability sampling in which the researcher randomly picks a subset of participants from a populace, and it is one of the simplest form of data collection. Each member of the populace has an equivalent opportunity of being selected. It is supposed to be an unbiased

representation of the population, and this is crucial for drawing assumptions on a study even though sample selection bias can occur. As a result, it was perfect to choose a sample of people in audit field to fill out my questionnaire, even if they are not typical of the total population but are readily available.

An essential part of any empirical investigation requiring assumptions about a population built on a sample is the computation of sample size. In essence, sample sizes are used to represent portions of a population that have been selected for a survey. Henceforward, grounded on a confidence level of 95%, a margin of error of 5%, a populace quotient of 50% besides a populace of around 111 audit firms as per FRC and 220 licensed auditors registered with FRC in Mauritius, a sample size of 179 responses from professionals should be achieved as shown in table 1 below. Approximately 331 questionnaires will be sent to concern respondents such as the licensed auditors, audit managers, audit supervisors, audit staffs of the audit firms sampled in Mauritius. The sample size was analysed using an available sample size calculator by Raosoft, Inc.

Table 1: Sampling Size

Margin of error	5%
Confidence level	95%
Population size	331
Response distribution	50%
Recommended Sample Size	179

Data collection is a critical aspect of any kind of research analysis. This research is centred on a crucial data collection where raw records are compiled precisely from the respondents. Primary data is data which is collected using methods such as surveys, interviews, or experiments. This sort of data gathering tool is cost effective and can be broadly dispatch to huge quantity of respondents at comparable point.

The tool utilized for this study is an online survey given that the study is a quantitative data collection technique. A questionnaire is a survey process containing a collection of questions for the intent of assembling information from respondents. Indeed, the online questionnaire will be used to carry out the research among the target population. The online questionnaire was done in Google form, and it was shared through email address contacts of the professionals in auditing and social media such as WhatsApp via a link. This was done to reach the maximum number of professionals and to collect data more rapidly. Constructs and questions of the survey questionnaire is from existing literature of auditing and audit quality.

The survey comprises of closed-ended and open-ended questions. The questionnaire entails of an aggregate of 24 questions and was split into three parts explicitly part A, B and C:

- Part A contained 6 questions and refers to the demographic attributes of the respondents such as gender, age, education, experience, along with job position. Both a nominal and ordinal scale are used to evaluate these questions.
- Part B encompasses of 6 questions which investigated at the general knowledge of auditing and audit quality. Questions regarding type of expertise in auditing, audit quality based on audit sampling, the audit firm rotation criteria and if they are to be amended are put out. These questions partake a nominal scale measurement. In supplement, there were certain questions that demand to be responded by those who have experience in auditing.
- For the part C, the outstanding 12 questions looked at the factors affecting the external audit quality which is the primary intent of the study. A list of details concerning the factors are provided and they have a scale depth of a 5-point weighted Likert scale ranging from (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree and lastly, (5) strongly agree. The majority of these ten questions have an ordinal scale dimension. The last two questions are open-ended questions on other factors which may affect the external audit quality in Mauritius as well as recommendations to improve the external audit quality in Mauritius.

For the research intention the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) was utilized to code the information and to analyse the data efficiently and effectively. The data was consequently organised and managed to obtain the significant results. The presentation of the result has been illustrated in cross tabulation, pie chart, and bar charts to summarise and clarify the features.

Ten questionnaires were allocated to the multi-level participants consisting of some licensed auditors and audit professionals in different organisations to do the testing. Feedbacks collected from the respondents were taken into concern such as minor errors in phrasings. After making a few changes to the survey, it was authenticated before the concluding questionnaire was distributed to the survey's participants.

The Cronbach Alpha is utilized to discover out the consistency of the 36 constructs for advance test. According to the table beneath, variable usually must have a highlevel validity of more than 0.7 and have a coefficient of 0.5 and near 0.6. The value of the Cronbach's Alpha is 0.662 as displayed in the table 1 below and thus, it demonstrates an acceptable internal consistency.

Table 2: Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	No. of items
0.662	36

High ethical standards are necessary when conducting survey. The responses and identity of the participants will be maintained in full confidentiality and will be treated anonymously. The entire survey will be performed in an environment of mutual and voluntary participation. All the collected data will be used for the academic purpose of this project only.

As an e-survey was performed, the main restraint was the aimed populace may not be fascinated or do not get enough time to complete the form. This could influence the outcome of the study. Bias responses may possibly be realized as the random sampling was utilized. Given that the sample size was 179, it was chaotic to upkeep a trail of the responses. The sample mass may not replicate the whole targeted population and not everyone may approve to fill-in the surveys, so the sample size might decline, leading to less accurate data finding.

IV. Data Finding and Discussions

While analysing the study, it was crucial to identify the response rate of the analysis. Google Form was used to conduct the survey online. The targeted and calculated sample size of the study was 179 individuals from different organisation. While the overall response rate was 192 on 331 questionnaires sent representing a percentage of 58% which is acceptable for further analysis.

The first part of the perusal process starts with the respondent profile and having an insight of their background.

Table 3: Demographic Profile

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	87	45.3%
Female	105	54.7%
Total	192	100.0%
Age Group		
18 - 25	58	30.2%
26 - 35	77	40.1%
36 - 55	39	20.3%
Above 55 years	18	9.4%
Total	192	100.0%

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Education level		
Higher School Certificate	27	14.1%
Bachelor's Degree	94	49.0%
Master's Degree	18	9.4%
Other	53	27.6%
Total	192	100.0%
Experience in auditing practice		
Have experience	178	92.7%
Have no experience	14	7.3%
Total	192	100.0%
Years of experience in auditing practice		
Less than 5 years	84	43.8%
5 – 10 years	41	21.4%
11 – 20 years	34	17.7%
21 – 35 years	15	7.8%
Above 35 years	5	2.6%
Total	179	93.2%
Missing	13	6.8%
Total	192	100.0%
Job position in current organisation		
Junior Auditor	34	17.7%
Auditor	41	21.4%
Senior Auditor	25	13.0%
Audit Manager	14	7.3%
Accountant / Assistant Accountant	15	7.8%
Other	31	16.1%
Audit/Assistant Associate	10	5.2%
Audit Partner	22	11.5%
Total	192	100.0%

- *Gender*

Drew on the 192 responses received, 54.7% were females and 45.3% were males as indicated in the table 1.

- *Age Group*

Majority of respondents representing 40.1% are in group age 26-35, followed by 30.2% for group 18-25. Likewise, 20.3% belong to the group age 36-55. Only 9.4% of the respondents were people above 55 years old.

- *Education Level*

Mass of the respondents representing a percentage of 49.0% have bachelor's degrees while 27.6% have pursued other studies such as ACCA. 14.1% of the respondents hold a high school certificate while the remaining 9.4% hold a master's degree. This

implies that most of the respondents in the survey have pursued tertiary education.

- *Experience in Auditing Practice*

As per above table, it can be assumed that 92.7% of the respondents have experience in auditing practice while the remaining 7.3% have no experience in auditing.

- *Years of Experience in Auditing Practice*

Most of the respondents have fewer than five years of practice in auditing, representing a percentage of 43.8% while 21.4% have 5 to 10 years of experience and 17.7% have 11 to 20 years of experience. 7.8% have 21 to 35 years of experience and lastly the remaining 2.6% are the ones who have above 35 years of experience.

- *Job Position in Current Organisation*

Majority of the respondents are employed as Auditors in their current organisation, representing 21.4%, while 17.7% are Junior Auditors, 16.1% have other positions in their current organisation. 13.0% are Senior Auditors, 11.5% are Audit Partners, 7.8% are Accountants/Assistant Accountant, 7.3% are Audit Managers and the remaining 5.2% are Audit/Assistant Associates.

The second section of the survey is basically on general information that respondents gave about auditing and audit quality.

Table 4: General information on auditing and audit quality

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Type of audit		
Internal	28	14.6%
External	125	65.1%
Other	17	8.9%
Both Internal and External audit	22	11.5%
Total	192	100.0%
Top 5 firm reduce fraudulent practices		
Agree	121	63.0%
Disagree	71	37.0%
Total	192	100.0%
Audit sampling reduce audit quality		
Agree	145	75.5%
Disagree	47	24.5%
Total	192	100.0%
Audit firm rotation improve audit quality		
Agree	182	94.8%
Disagree	10	5.2%
Total	192	100.0%
Audit partner rotation criteria to change		
Yes	151	78.6%
No	41	21.4%
Total	192	100.0%
Years of Audit partner rotation criteria		
Less than 5 years	123	64.1%
5 to 10 years	28	14.6%
More than 10 years	0	0%
Missing	41	21.4%
Total	192	100.0%

- *Type of Audit Expertise*

Majority of the respondents have expertise in external auditing representing 65.1%, 14.6% are expertise in internal audit only while 11.5% are expertise in both internal and external auditing and the remaining 8.9% are expertise in different type of audit.

- *Reduction in Fraudulent Practices by Top 5 Audit Firms*

63.0% of the respondents agree that an audit firm in the top 5 performing the external audit of any private companies may lead to reduction in fraudulent practices while the remaining respondents representing 37.0% disagree on this.

- *Audit Sampling*

Most of the respondents representing 75.5%, concur that external auditing based on audit sampling lowers audit quality. The remaining 24.5%, however, do not share this opinion.

- *Audit Firm Rotation*

94.8% of the respondents concur that audit firm rotation enhances the audit quality while 5.2% disagree on same.

- *Audit Partner Rotation Criteria*

Utmost of the respondents representing 78.6% agree that the audit partner rotation criteria which is set for five years in Mauritius must be changed, though the outstanding 21.4% who differ with the idea of changing the audit partner rotation criteria.

Out of the 78.6% of the respondents who agreed the audit partner rotation criteria which is set for five years in Mauritius must be changed, 64.1% of them chose the new criteria to be less than 5 years while 14.6% chose 5 to 10 years as shown below in figure 2.

Cross-tabulation of perceived factors affecting the external audit quality.

Table 5: Cross-tabulation of the perceived factors affecting external audit quality and experience in auditing.

Perceived factors affecting external audit quality	Responses	Experience in Auditing		
		Yes	No	Total
Audit Complexity	Not selected	83	6	89
	Selected	95	8	103
Time Budget Pressure	Not selected	75	8	83
	Selected	103	6	109
Audit Tenure	Not selected	106	14	120
	Selected	72	0	72
Auditor's Experience	Not selected	32	6	38
	Selected	146	8	154
Audit Fees	Not selected	74	10	84
	Selected	104	4	108
Auditor's Independence	Not selected	44	7	51
	Selected	134	7	141
Professional Skepticism	Not selected	49	13	62
	Selected	129	1	130
Audit Risks	Not selected	100	6	106
	Selected	78	8	86
Audit Rotation	Not selected	77	10	87
	Selected	101	4	105

Respondents who have experience in auditing shall be well versed with the perceived factors which affect the external audit quality, that is why from the above cross tabulation both the perceived factors affecting the external audit quality and the respondents who have experience in auditing have been analysed. The utmost selected factors are auditor's experience, out of the 192 respondents, 154 selected the auditor's experience, followed by auditor's independence, professional skepticism, time budget pressure, audit fees, audit rotation, audit complexity, audit risks and lastly audit tenure. The outcomes of this evaluation are in line with the result of study performed by Nurjanah & Kartika (2016) who asserted that auditor experience impacted audit quality. As a result, the experience of the auditor is a crucial factor that could impact the quality of the external audit.

Factor Analysis of perceived factors affecting the external audit quality.

Table 6: KMO and Bartlett's Test

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.574
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	238.271
	df	36
	Sig.	.000

It is assumed when Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value is above 0.5 the sample is sufficient and an implication level for the Bartlett's test below 0.5 indicate there is substantial correlation in the data. In table 6, it can be seen that KMO value for all the nine factors is 0.574 which indicates that the sample is sufficient and we can proceed with all the factors analysis and the significance value of Bartletts' test is 0.000, hence, factor analysis is valid.

The communality value which is more than 0.5 should be considered for further analysis. It can be assummed as per table below all factors have communalities above 0.5. The factors having the highest extraction is time budget pressure (0.839), followed by audit experience (0.758), audit fees (0.699) and audit tenure (0.682).

Table 7: Communalites of factors affecting external audit quality

Communalities		
	Initial	Extraction
audit complexity	1.000	.673
time budget pressure	1.000	.839
audit tenure	1.000	.682
audit experience	1.000	.758
audit fees	1.000	.699
auditors' independence	1.000	.675
professional skepticism	1.000	.583
audit risks	1.000	.649
audit rotation	1.000	.546

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

The factors stated by high eigenvalues of more than 1 are likely to represent real underlying factors. The four components with high eigenvalues have a cumulative percentage of 67.8%.

a) Mean Scores of Likert Scale Questions

Table 8: Mean Scores

	Mean	Standard Deviation (SD)
Audit Complexity		
A highly complex company requires more time and resources being allocated to risk areas during audit to improve the quality.	4.16	.773
Audit quality ensures a true and fair view of the firm financial position and performance.	3.88	.819
Overall	4.02	.796
Time Budget Pressure		
The time frame allotted during audit planning for undertaking an external audit may affect the audit quality.	4.16	.745
Audit Tenure		
Short audit tenure strengthens auditor's independence, thus enhancing audit quality.	3.59	.961
Auditor's Experience		
The quality of the external audit is not dependent on the size of an audit firm, even if auditors have the same experience and technology.	3.85	.786
The external auditors must be technically competent to do an audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing	4.53	.560
Overall	4.19	.673

Audit Fees		
The audit fees have an impact on the quality of an external audit.	3.91	.975
Auditor's Independence		
The more independent an external auditor is, the higher the audit quality will be.	4.07	.802
Any auditor accepting any gifts presented to him by a client will affect his independence and the quality of his performance of the audit.	3.88	1.010
Overall	3.97	.906
Professional Skepticism		
Professional scepticism plays a high role in the quality of an audit.	4.16	.773
The external auditor is forthright in dealing with difficult situations in a professional way.	3.88	.819
Overall	4.02	.796
Audit Risks		
The materiality used during the external audit improve the audit quality.	3.95	.811
The more control and measure taken by a company like an audit risk committee has an impact on the quality of the external audit.	3.91	.922
The higher the audit quality of external audit, the less risk of material misstatement are included in the financial statement of a company.	4.03	.712
Overall	3.96	.815
Auditor Rotation		
The same external auditor for various years may impact the quality of audit.	4.44	.749

➢ Audit Complexity

The respondents have greatly agreed as in contrast to the subsequent statement, the initial statement has an overall mean of 4.16 and a standard deviation of 0.773. The aggregate mean score is 3.88 along with a SD of 0.819, affirming there is elevated degree of agreement that audit quality confirms a real and reasonable aspect of the company financial point and operation. The overall score is 4.02 and SD 0.796 which shows that audit complexity affects external audit quality as per Putri et al. (2021).

- *Time Budget Pressure*

Here most of the respondents agree on the time frame allotted during the audit planning for undertaking an external audit may affect the audit quality having a mean of 4.16 with SD of 0.745 as shown in below figure. Time budget pressure has an impact on the audit quality (Dwimilten and Riduwan, 2015).

- *Audit Tenure*

The statement which states that short audit tenure strengthens auditor's independence thus enhancing audit quality, having a mild level of consistency as it holds the least mean score of 3.59 and SD 0.961 which implies there is broad array of responses of which some can be disputes.

- *Auditor's Experience*

Most of the respondents strongly agree on external auditors must be technically competent to do an audit as the second statement has a mean of 4.53 with SD of 0.560. The second statement has a mean of 3.85 with SD 0.786 which shows not all respondents agree that the external audit quality is not subject of the extent of an audit firm. The overall score is 4.19 and SD 0.673 which shows auditor's experience do impacts the external audit quality according to Ningrum and Wedari (2017).

- *Audit Fees*

The statement on the audit fees has an impression on the quality of an external audit has a mean of 3.91 with a SD 0.975 specifying there is a particular impact on the external audit quality according to Abdul Rohman (2014).

- *Auditor's Independence*

Statement 1 has the top mean of 4.07 with SD 0.802 contrasted to the second statement having a mean of 3.88 with SD 1.010. The overall score is 3.97 with SD 0.906, meaning that there is some impact of the factor auditor's independence on external audit quality according to Hastuti et al. (2017).

- *Professional Skepticism*

Professional skepticism do performs a high position in the quality of an audit as this statement has the greatest mean of 4.16 with SD 0.773 linked to the second statement having a mean of 3.88 with SD 0.819. The overall score is 4.02 with SD 0.796 indicating the factor professional skepticism do have an impact on external audit quality in accord with Mednick (1990).

- *Audit Risks*

The respondents highly agree the third statement which is on the higher the audit quality of external audit, the less possibility of material misstatement are included in the financial reports of a company as it has the greatest mean of 4.03 with SD 0.712 contrasted to the other two statements. The first statement has a mean of 3.95 with SD 0.811, lastly the second statement has a mean of 3.91 with SD 0.922. The overall score is 3.96 with SD 0.815 indicating that the factor audit risks do affect the external audit quality as well according to Mulyadi (2002).

- *Auditor Rotation*

The targeted professionals have an elevated strong acceptance as shown in below figure having a mean of 4.44 and SD 0.749 specifying the auditor rotation may impact the quality of audit as per Kurniasih and Rohman (2014).

b) Inferential Analysis

i. *Normality Test*

To regulate the statistical analysis to execute upon the variables, a normality test is described. A normality test is performed on the Likert scale elements, the demographic factors along with the factor affecting external audit quality the greatest. The ShapiroWilk is utilized to ascertain the p-value and the significance level is at 0.05. The outcome shows for wholly Likert scale items, demographic factors along with factors affecting the external audit quality, the p-value is fewer than 0.05. Hence, this suggests the data point among all the assertions along with factors affecting the external audit quality. Similar relates for the information point of the demographic factors. Consequently, a non-parametric test including the Chi-square test, One-way Anova test along with the Mann Whitney U-test are executed.

ii. *Mann Whitney U-Test*

Given that the facts are not dispersed normally, the Mann Whitney U-Test is accepted to execute the hypothesis analysis besides verifying if there are any substantial variations amongst experienced and inexperienced person in auditing in relative to the opinions on every factor. The p-value is defined by the Asymptotic Significance level of 0.05 for each of the tests.

1. *Mann-Whitney Test for Audit Complexity Factor*

H1: Audit complexity affects the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this component is as follows:

H_0 = Audit complexity does not affect the external audit quality.

H_1 = Audit complexity affects the external audit quality.

The test for both statements reveal that audit complexity does not affect the external audit quality as the p-value is more than 0.05, which is, 0.650 and 0.289, indicating that the null hypothesis is accepted being insignificant. The mean rank of experienced for both statements is higher than inexperienced however the variations are not that huge. Hence, the H0 is accepted, revealing that audit complexity does not affect the external audit quality. The finding is linked up with Susanto et al. (2020) who revealed that task complexity had no substantial effect on audit quality.

Table 9: Mann-Whitney Test of Audit Complexity factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
A highly complex company requires more time and resources being allocated to risk areas during audit to improve the quality.	Experienced	98.40	908.0	-1.846 / 0.650
	Inexperienced	72.36		
Audit quality ensures a true and fair view of the firm financial position and performance.	Experienced	97.60	1050.0	-1.060 / 0.289
	Inexperienced	82.50		

2. *Mann-Whitney Test for Time Budget Pressure*

H2: Time Budget Pressure affects the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this factor is as follows:

H_0 = Time budget pressure does not affect the external audit quality

H_1 = Time budget pressure affects the external audit quality.

The test reveals that time budget pressure affects the external audit as shown below; the test is significant at 0.05 and the p-value for the statement is 0.000. As a result, H0 is disregarded. The mean ranks expose significant variations between the experienced and inexperienced people in auditing on the statement of the factor time budget pressure. Hence, the H1 is accepted, revealing that time budget pressure affects the external audit quality. The discovery is related to Dwimilten and Riduwan's (2015) who demonstrated that time budget pressure has a favorable effect on audit quality.

Table 10: Mann-Whitney Test of Time Budget Pressure factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
The time frame allotted during audit planning for undertaking an external audit may affect the audit quality.	Experienced	100.63	510.5	-4.214 / 0.000
	Inexperienced	43.96		

3. *Mann-Whitney Test for Audit Tenure*

H3: Audit Tenure affects the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this factor is as follows:

H_0 = Audit Tenure does not affect the external audit quality

H_1 = Audit Tenure affects the external audit quality.

The test for the statement on audit tenure shows that audit tenure does not affect the external audit quality as shown below, the p-value is superior to 0.05 that is 0.263 which is an insignificant value, implying the null hypothesis is acknowledged. The mean rankings disclose major differences between the experienced and inexperienced people in auditing on the statement of the factor audit tenure. Hence, the H0 is agreed, revealing that audit tenure does not affect the external audit quality. The finding is related to Fitriany et al. (2016), there is an optimum point of audit tenure as a substitute of a straightforward decrease or increase result.

Table 11: Mann-Whitney Test of Audit Tenure factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
Short audit tenure strengthens auditor's independence, thus enhancing audit quality.	Experienced	97.68	1036.5	-1.120 / 0.263
	Inexperienced	81.54		

4. *Mann-Whitney Test for Auditor's Experience factor*

H4: Auditor's experience affects the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this factor is as follows:

H_0 = Auditor's experience does not affect the external audit quality.

H_1 = Auditor's experience affects the external audit quality.

The test for both statements reveal that auditor's experience affects the external audit quality as the null hypothesis is accepted for statement 2 but rejected for statement 1 because the p-value for the second statement is greater than 0.05 that is 0.747, making it insignificant, whereas the p-value for the first statement is equivalent to 0.05, making it significant. The mean rankings show significant variations on both statements of the factor auditor's experience as the mean ranking of the experienced is higher for statement 1 than statement 2. Hence, the H1 is accepted, revealing that auditor's experience affects the external audit quality. The finding is linked up with Hanjani, A. (2014) who asserts the experience of an auditor has a substantial positive impact on audit quality.

Table 12: Mann-Whitney Test of Auditor's Experience factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
The quality of the external audit is not dependent of the size of an audit firm, even if auditors have the same experience and technology.	Experienced	99.20	765.5	-2.776 / 0.050
	Inexperienced	62.18		
The external auditors must be technically competent to do an audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing.	Experienced	96.81	1190.0	-3.230 / 0.747
	Inexperienced	92.50		

5. *Mann-Whitney Test for Audit Fees*

H5: Audit Fees affect the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this factor is as follows:

H_0 = Audit Fees do not affect the external audit quality

H_1 = Audit Fees affect the external audit quality.

The test for the statement on audit fees shows that audit fees do not affect the external audit quality as shown below, the p-value is better than 0.05, that is, 0.740 being insignificant, implying that the nil hypothesis is recognized. Hence, the H0 is accepted, revealing that audit fees do not affect the external audit quality. The finding is related up with Salehi et al. (2019) indicates no substantial relationship amongst audit quality and audit fees stickiness.

Table 13: Mann-Whitney Test of Audit Fees factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
The audit fees have an impact on the quality of an external audit.	Experienced	98.40	907	-1.788 / 0.740
	Inexperienced	72.29		

6. *Mann-Whitney Test for Auditor's Independence factor*

H6: Auditor's Independence affects the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this factor is as follows:

H_0 = Auditor's independence does not affect the external audit quality.

H1 = Auditor's independence affects the external audit quality.

The test for both statements reveal that auditor's independence impacts the external audit quality since the p-value is superior to 0.05 for the second statement being 0.745 whereas for the first statement the p-value is equal to 0.00 when the test reveals to be substantial at 0.05. The null hypothesis is accepted for the second statement but is rejected for the first statement which implies that H0 is rejected. As the mean ranking of the experienced is higher for statement 1 than statement 2 but the differences are not that huge. Hence, the H1 is accepted, realizing auditor's independence affects the external audit quality. The finding is associated up with Hastuti, et al. (2017) who revealed that independence had substantial and partial influence on the audit quality.

Table 14: Mann-Whitney Test of Auditor's Independence factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
The more independent an external auditor is, the higher the audit quality will be.	Experienced	100.30	569.5	-3.676 / 0.000
	Inexperienced	48.18		
Any auditor accepting any gifts presented to him by a client will affect his independence and the quality of his performance of the audit.	Experienced	96.16	1185.0	-3.250/ 0.745
	Inexperienced	100.86		

7. Mann-Whitney Test for Professional Skepticism factor

H7: Professional Skepticism affects the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this factor is as follows:

H_0 = Professional Skepticism does not affect the external audit quality.

H_1 = Professional Skepticism affects the external audit quality.

The test for both statements 1 and 2 discloses that professional skepticism does not affect the external audit quality because the p-value is more than 0.05, at 0.650 and 0.289 they are both insignificant, indicating the void hypothesis is accepted. The mean rank of experienced for both statements is higher than inexperienced for the factor of professional skepticism. But the differences are not that huge. Hence, the H0 is accepted, revealing that professional skepticism does not affect the external audit quality. The finding is associated up with Futri and Juliarsa (2014) indicates that professionalism has no relation to audit quality.

Table 15: Mann-Whitney Test of Professional Skepticism factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
Professional scepticism plays a high role in the quality of an audit.	Experienced	98.40	908.0	-1.846 / 0.650
	Inexperienced	72.36		
The external auditor is forthright in dealing with difficult situations in a professional way.	Experienced	97.60	1050.0	-1.060 / 0.289
	Inexperienced	82.50		

8. *Mann-Whitney Test for Audit Risks factor*

H8: Audit Risks affect the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this factor is as follows:

H_0 = Audit risks do not affect the external audit quality.

H_1 = Audit risks affect the external audit quality.

The p-value for statements 1 and 2 is 0.366 and 0.055 correspondingly, so greater than the p-value 0.05 and not significant. But, for statement 3, it is 0.025, lower than the pvalue 0.05 and is significant. The void hypothesis for statement 1 and 2 is recognized but is rebuffed for statement 3 as the mean rank of experienced for statement 3 is higher than statement 1 and 2 but the differences are not that huge. Thus, the H1 is accepted, revealing audit risks affect the external audit quality. The finding is linked up with Mulyadi (2002) who asserts the risk in auditing implies that the auditor receives a certain degree of uncertainty in the conduct of the audit.

Table 16: Mann-Whitney Test of Audit Risks factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
The materiality used during the external audit improve the audit quality.	Experienced	97.40	1085.0	-0.903 / 0.366
	Inexperienced	85.00		
The more control and measure taken by a company like an audit risk committee has an impact on the quality of the external audit.	Experienced	94.45	881.0	-1.921 / 0.055
	Inexperienced	122.57		
The higher the audit quality of external audit, the less risk of material misstatement are included in the financial statement of a company.	Experienced	98.76	843.5	-2.238 / 0.025
	Inexperienced	67.75		

9. *Mann-Whitney Test for Auditor Rotation*

H9: Auditor Rotation affects the external audit quality.

The hypothesis for this factor is as follows:

H_0 = Auditor rotation does not affect the external audit quality

H_1 = Auditor rotation affects the external audit quality.

The test for the statement on auditor rotation is 0.007 which is below the p-value at 0.05 being significant. This concludes the null hypothesis is denied, and the mean ranks disclose significant variations among the experienced and inexperienced persons in auditing on the statement of the factor auditor rotation. Hence, the H1 is accepted, revealing that auditor rotation affects the external audit quality. This finding is conforming to Kurniasih and Rohman (2014) who uncover that auditor rotation can impact audit quality.

Table 17: Mann-Whitney Test of Auditor's Rotation factor

Perceived factor affecting external audit quality	Audit Experience	Mean Ranks	Mann Whitney U Test	Z-Value / SIG
The same external auditor for various years may impact the quality of audit.	Experienced	99.18	769	-2.696 / 0.007
	Inexperienced	62.43		

10. *One-way Anova Test for Gender*

The One-way Anova test will tell in case there is a considerable variation between the means of two or other levels of a variable if p-value is less than 0.05 for the test.

H10: Gender affects external audit quality.

To test the relationship, the following hypothesis have been established:

H_0 = Gender does not affect the external audit quality.

H_1 = Gender affects the external audit quality.

As per Table 16 below, the P-value (sig.) is 0.001 and this implies that the results are extremely substantial as p-value is fewer than 0.05 and are thus quite unlikely to have happened by coincidence, hence the null hypothesis is denied of the One-way Anova test. It is revealed gender and external audit quality have a link, meaning gender affects external audit quality. This finding is in accord with Ittonen and Peni (2009) who advocate the idea that auditor gender may be systematically related with audit quality.

Table 18: One-way Anova Test for Gender

ANOVA

Experience in audit practice

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.672	1	.672	10.382	.001
Within Groups	12.307	190	.065		
Total	12.979	191			

11. *Chi-Square Test*

The established hypotheses cited in the literature review are tested using Chi-square, which is used to examine the relationship between demographic factors and the quality of external audits. For the analysis to be considered significant, a p-value of 0.05 is used as the asymptotic significance.

Chi-Square Test for Age

H11: Age affects external audit quality.

To ascertain whether age may be correlated to audit quality, the following hypothesis is established:

H_0 = There is no relationship between age and external audit quality.

H_1 = There is a relationship between age and external audit quality.

The Pearson Chi-Square value is 8.138, and the p-value is 0.430, as shown in the table below. P-value is greater than 0.05, which indicates an insignificant value. The void hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it is assumed there is no relationship which prevails among age and the external audit quality which is being delivered. Rhodes (1983) initiates evidence that rising age does not diminish the job performance, inferring there is no relationship between age and audit quality.

Table 19: Chi-Square Test of Age

		External Auditing Experience	
		Experienced	Inexperienced
Age group	18 - 25	28.09%	57.14%
	26 - 35	39.89%	42.86%
	36 - 55	21.91%	0%
	Above 55 years	10.11%	0%
Total		100%	100%
Pearson Chi-square Value = 8.138 Asymp. SIG (2 sided) = 0.430			

12. *Chi-Square Test for Education*

H12: Education affects external audit quality.

To test the relationship, the subsequent hypothesis has been used:

H_0 = Education does not affect external audit quality.

H_1 = Education affects external audit quality

The Pearson Chi-Square value is 3.944, and the p-value is 0.268, as shown in the table below. P-value is greater than 0.05, which indicates that it is not significant. The void hypothesis is appropriate. Hence, it can be assumed that there is no link which prevails among education and external audit quality. The finding of this study is in line with Burke et al. (2018) who asserts the education background knowledge of particular audit partner have no effect on the audit quality.

Table 20: Chi-Square Test of Education and external audit quality

		External Auditing Experience	
		Experienced	Inexperienced
Education Level	High School Certificate	14.05%	14.29%
	Bachelor's Degree	47.19%	71.42%
	Master's Degree	10.11%	0%
	Other	28.65%	14.29%
Total		100%	100%
Pearson Chi-square Value = 3.944 Asymp. SIG (2 sided) = 0.268			

H13: Education affects type of auditing expertise.

The above analysis on education and relationship with external audit quality turned out to be insignificant that is why the following hypothesis have been built to find out whether the results might be significant for education and type of auditing expertise:

H_0 = There is no relationship between education and type of auditing expertise.

H_1 = There is a relationship between education and type of auditing expertise.

The Pearson Chi-Square value is 61.383, and the p-value is 0.000 as shown in the table below, p-value is significant being below the 0.05 level of significance. Consequently, the last hypothesis H1is approved. It can be determined that there is a link which prevails among education and type of auditing expertise. The finding of this analysis is in line with Bröcheler et al. (2004) who acknowledged education has a definite effect on audit firm accomplishment since more educated auditors are more competent and accomplish well.

Table 21: Chi-Square Test of Education and type of auditing expertise

		Type of Audit Expertise			
		Internal audit	External audit	Both internal and external audit	Other
Education Level	High School Certificate	7.14%	20%	0%	0%
	Bachelor's Degree	67.86%	48%	0%	88.23%
	Master's Degree	0%	11.2%	18.18%	0%
	Other	25%	20.8%	81.82%	11.77%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%
Pearson Chi-square Value = 61.383 Asymp. SIG (2 sided) = 0.000					

V. Discussions of Findings

Built on the test performed, it is observed that gender affects the external audit quality and education has a relationship with the type of auditing expertise of the professionals. Even though most of the respondents have done their tertiary education as per Table 20, the result show education does not affect the external audit quality. From Table 19, it can be stated that age does not have any impact on the audit quality.

Furthermore, it can be implicit that time budget pressure, audit experience, auditor's independence, audit risks and auditor rotation are the factors which affect the external audit quality as they have significant p-values while audit complexity, audit tenure, audit fees, professional skepticism have insignificant results

revealing that these factors do not affect the external audit quality. Gender also affects the external audit quality having significant p-values, whereas age and education do no affect the external audit quality as they have insignificant p-values. As the result between education and external audit quality has turned out to be insignificant, the relationship between education and type of auditing expertise was tested and the result turned out to be significant with a p-value of 0.000. Work expertise may strengthen the relationship between educational level and job performance. This opinion is directly proportional to the results of Subhan (2012) who revealed the educational background has significant effect on work quality delivered.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

This research aims to ascertain the factors that affect the external audit quality of private companies in Mauritius. It investigated the factors such as audit complexity, time budget pressure, audit tenure, auditor's experience, audit fees, auditor's independence, professional skepticism, audit risks and auditor rotation. Even gender, age, education level was tested to know whether they affect the external audit quality of private companies in Mauritius. According to this conclusion, there are significantly more experienced (178) than non-experienced (14) auditing respondents out of a total of 192 respondents. The Mann-Whitney U-test, One-way Anova test, and Chi-square test attained all the objectives and research questions of this analysis.

Objective 1 – To identify if the auditor's educational background and experience might affect the quality of external audit of private companies in Mauritius.

The analyse revealed that level of education does not affect the external audit quality of private companies in Mauritius while the level of education does have an impact on the type of auditing expertise of the professionals. The Chi-square test's p-value of 0.000 signifies that there is a significant relationship amongst education and the type of auditing expertise. This implies that a person can specialise himself in a specific audit type whether external or internal audit or even both upon pursuing further education (or training), this demonstrates education has a direct impact on auditing expertise.

The quality of the external audit is prompted by the auditor's experience; the extra exposure an auditor has, the better the quality of the ensuing audit. The experience shall continue to improve along with the additional audits they carry out. An auditor ought to have adequate work experience, and this must be in accord with general standards and professional standards which clarify that auditors are expected to have adequate work experience in the profession they are involved in. It is deduced that experience of the auditor affects the external audit quality work being delivered while education have an impact on the type of auditing expertise the professionals are in.

Objective 2 - To determine the factors that professionals believe might affect the external audit quality in Mauritius.

The empirical results revealed that time budget pressure, audit experience, auditor's independence, audit risks and auditor rotation are the most influential factors which affect the external audit quality while audit complexity, audit tenure, audit fees, professional skepticism are those factors which do not affect the external audit quality in private companies in Mauritius. Each of the hypotheses from H1 to H9 have been established by the Mann-Whitney U Test. Hypothesis H10 has been proved by Oneway Anova Test that gender does affect the external audit quality. The opinions of the experienced and inexperienced on the elements affecting the quality of the external audit varied significantly. Hypotheses from H11 to H12 have been tested using Chisquare test and it is asserted they do not have a relationship with external audit quality while education and the type of auditing expertise (H13) have a relationship. It is revealed that there are various further factors which affect the external audit quality as per the respondents such as time pressure, working conditions, technology, mentoring, and competence.

Objective 3 - Recommending certain steps that can improve external audit quality and its practices in Mauritius.

Most of the respondents have provided their recommendations to enhance the quality of external audit in Mauritius. It can be ascertained most of the respondents hinted the audit system can be enhanced by providing extra training to the auditors for them to keep updated with new standards. Establishing mechanisms must be placed by authorities in relation to all the other recommendations of the respondents for improvement of the external audit system in Mauritius.

a) Recommendations

Established on the findings and the challenges debated in the initial chapter and the utmost suggestions provided by the respondents, the following recommendations to improve quality of external audits are made.

- Regulatory bodies in Mauritius such as FRC should conduct efficient quality evaluations of audits being conducted out by the external audit firms frequently.
- Medium and big sized external audit firms in Mauritius should consider investing in smart and intuitive audit platform for better efficiency alike the company KPMG (Klynveld Peat Marwick Goerdeler) who recently adapted the smart audit platform Clara to automate its audits.
- Proper trainings on audit software should be given to the employees as with the rapid growth in technology nowadays external auditors should stay

ahead of these changes to offer appropriate advice and support services to improve the efficiency and efficacy of external auditing.

- The existing audit partner rotation requirements in Mauritius which is for 5 years should be replaced by 3 to 5 years criteria to increase independence between external auditors and clients.
- The auditee committee of private firms in Mauritius should request to rotate the external auditing staffs on a regular basis to avoid any familiarity threat.
- Continuous coaching should be given to employees to help them comply with new auditing standards and maintain high ethical standards.
- More use of expert in complex or technical audit to identify goods or value of assets which have high materiality impact.

b) Limitation of the Study and Further Research

The usage of the random sampling has not been that effective since roughly 58% of responses were attained which is not adequate for the study. Furthermore, the outcomes had been biased to certain degree. To enhance the opinions on the factors affecting the external audit quality, additional concepts and statistical tests have not yet been developed in this study. A larger range of information could have been obtained if data collection strategies such as interviews or paper-wise questionnaires were used instead of online surveys but due to time constraints this was not possible. Supplementary sorts of sampling methods could be employed like stratified sampling in forthcoming exploration. Supplementary research can be done to ascertain how other factors such as motivation or technology could affect the external audit quality in Mauritius.

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