

ASSESSING AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE OF FORENSIC ACCOUNTING AMONG THE LIBYAN ACCOUNTING EDUCATORS

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Abstract

Fraud and financial scandals have put accountants and auditors under intensive pressure to prevent and uncover wrongdoings. Forensic accounting has gained popularity in developed countries where the demand on its services adds more pressure on universities to gradually change their curriculum to produce capable accountants. Although, corruption is rife in different sectors in Libya, forensic accounting as control mechanism has been neither introduced nor its services applied in the country. The purpose of study is to assess the awareness and acceptance of the Libyan accounting educators about the significance of forensic accounting as new field of accounting and as corruption control mechanism. Data was collected through a questionnaire and 70 valid responses have been analyzed through SPSS. The results indicated that there is a high level of awareness regarding the significance of forensic accounting in the country. The study provides managerial and political implications with regard to offering a specialized forensic accounting program or some related courses and mandate the services of forensic accounting in the Libyan firms. The study suffers the small sample size limitation. However, the study found little research has been done regarding assessing the level of awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting in developing countries.

Keywords: Awareness, Acceptance, Forensic Accounting, Corruption, Libya

INTRODUCTION

Fraud and corruption has existed in both developed and developing countries. These two fraudulent acts have become a global problem (Seda & Kramer, 2008) and are expected to increase in the future (Abdou, Hussein, Delamaire, Linda, Pointon & John 2009). In order to face the challenge of wrongdoings which causes huge losses on the micro and macro level, developed countries have enacted new laws, stringent procedures, and funded education programs to produce competent accountants. The need for forensic accounting has grown in the US and in other developed countries (Özkul & Pamukçu, 2012) and forensic accountants have become crucial in serving various stakeholders in society through investigating financial scandals, handling legal claims, and solving pending financial cases through providing legal advice and constructive evidence to solve the cases.

Universities in developed countries have been facing continuous pressure from different stakeholders to produce capable accountants to prevent, detect, deter, and investigate wrongdoing where and when it exists (Seda & Kramer, 2008). Furthermore, academics and practitioners also have seen the need to provide more specialized training in the area of forensic accounting to help the traditional accountants and auditors investigating any wrongdoing (ibid). This is because forensic accounting encompasses a wide range of services which start from using techniques for investigating fraud and corrupt practices to litigation support, and ends acting as expert witnesses (Dryer, 2014). Hence, the role of forensic accountants is more likely to provide a wider spectrum of services to societies as well (Davis, Charles, Farrell, Ramona, Ogilby & Suzanne, 2010).

Forensic accounting has grown and developed over time (Özkul & Pamukçu, 2012) to minimize if not eliminate increasing cases of corrupt practices, which reduce productivity levels, waste potential investment opportunities, and negatively impact many economics (Kasum, 2009). Therefore, the role of the forensic accountant has become more important within organizations, especially internal auditors failed in different cases to prevent or detect unethical practices that have been going on for years in the workplace. Globalization and advancement of technology have contributed to dramatic increase in fraudulent financial practices on a global scale, with no individual, organization, and society could be immune from such wrongdoings. While the world has witnessed different well-publicized corporate scandals in developed countries .e.g. Enron, WorldCom, etc., developing countries were not an exception and some of them are still struggling to survive in the aftermath of the substantial damages caused by unethical acts.

Libya has been facing corruption in different sectors across the country for a long time. Furthermore, there are many different financial issues and cases still pending because of the

inadequacy of the auditors and accountants to conduct a deep investigation and provide strong evidence which is expected to benefit the financial and the legal systems as well as the economy of the country. Although, there is a need to have forensic accounting in Libya, its adoption and application does not appear to have been considered yet. Having a high level of awareness and acceptance among academics is important because it would reflect their intention and willingness to introduce and popularize forensic accounting where actualizing the procedure must happen through the universities. For instance, in order to introduce a new product, service, or program, there should be some level of awareness and acceptance of that new program. Therefore, the researchers believe that the level of awareness and acceptance among Libyan academics would be significant when introducing a new program or courses to the public. Furthermore, awareness of forensic accounting and its significance among the public is important, because it makes the implementation of forensic accounting much easier. This is particular true in Libya, which up to now has taken no specific action to introduce and popularize forensic accounting services. Therefore, the researchers believe that the level of awareness and acceptance among Libyan academics would be significant when it comes to offering forensic accounting education and providing the unique forensic accounting services. Forensic accountants can contribute to minimizing corruption and financial malpractices and provide the society with different services, which are not offered by auditors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Forensic Accounting

The concept of forensic accounting specifically was introduced in literature by Maurice E. Peloubet in 1946 (Dreyer, 2014). Subsequently, the concept has developed in the literature but to date, there has yet to be consensus on the definition of forensic accounting. DiGabriele, (2008) stated that forensic accountants should have a combination of skills supplemented with knowledge in areas like accounting, auditing, computer, law, and investigation techniques. Renzhou, (2011), argued that forensic accounting can be defined as the science of collecting, arranging, and presenting financial data in an acceptable form by a court of jurisprudence against perpetrators of economic crimes.

Forensic accounting is about finding evidence that starts with collecting information, preparing, analyzing, and reporting, therefore, investigating cases of corruption is among the top priorities of forensic accountants. According to Nigrini, (2011), forensic accounting is a process that involves data collection and analysis to reconstruct solid evidence to support an assertion. Furthermore, forensic accounting involves investigative techniques, litigation support, and expert witness. Litigation support means providing assistance to the client regarding legal

issues. It deals mainly with matters related to estimation to damages whereas investigative accounting is associated with the investigation of criminal issues. The Association of Certified Corruption Examiners, (2012) refers to this definition as “corruption examination.” Yet, the term of corruption investigation is a subset of forensic accounting.

Corruption

One of the big problems faced by organizations, societies, and the whole world in fact is corruption. Corruption is a complex social, political, and economic phenomenon that could adversely impact both the performance of organizations and the governmental bodies, which eventually erodes the productivity and hampers economic development (Kasum, 2009).

International Professional Practices Framework, (2014) defines corruption as any illegal act characterized by deceit, concealment, or violation of trust. These acts are not dependent upon the threat of violence or physical force. Corruptions are perpetrated by parties and organizations to obtain money, property, or services; to avoid payment or loss of services; or to secure personal or Business advantage.

Corruption is a major risk which causes damage to the economy, development, and social stability of a country. Furthermore, corruption is widely understood as the act that involves power of the higher position to influence others for personal gains, which clearly violates trust and the rule of law as well (Nguyen & Dijk, 2012). High position and key employee might be involved in corrupt action when there is a conflict of interest. For, instance, earning management where manipulation to financial figures is intended to influences decision makers, investors, etc. to take actions that would benefit the key employees in regard to their rewards, positions, etc. However, manipulating financial figures or misappropriating assets can happen when the quality of internal controls is not among the corporate governance bodies’ agenda. Lack of attention and support to internal control quality which, might be because of conflict of interest, can be one of the major causes for fraudulent activities and financial scandals to take place. Forensic accountants can be relied on to investigate issues in relation to conflict of interest, suspected wrongdoings, evaluate effectiveness of internal controls, and other issues. Nevertheless, having forensic accountant requires both education and training as well.

Empirical Studies

Rezaee and Burton (1997), Carnes and Gierlasinski (2001), Rezaee, Crumbley and Elmore (2003), Ramaswamy (2007), Seda and Kramer (2008) conducted their research on forensic accounting training and education and provided interesting insights. However, there seems to be no consensus on how to offer forensic accounting education. Carnes and Gierlasinski (2001)

study indicated that there was slow progress among universities regarding offering forensic accounting education to students despite the fact there were changing in the accounting environment demanding students to have fraud investigation and detection skills. Koh, (2009) examined the public acceptance towards occurrence of corruption and detection which plays a vital role in business growth where the study specifically focused on the public acceptance of corruption detection in Malaysia. The study revealed that new and inexperienced Malaysian companies had undetected loopholes which give opportunities for fraud to be committed. Kasum (2009) conducted a study aimed to explore whether forensic accountants are more needed in the private or government sector to combat the financial crimes experienced in developing countries. The study findings revealed that there is a greater need for forensic accountants in the public sector. The author suggested that universities should start offering forensic accounting programs to produce capable accountants that could minimize the incidence of corruption in the public sector.

Yücel, (2011) investigated the potential of forensic accounting development in Turkey where the study indicated that the present auditing system infrastructure must be supported by forensic accounting services. However, the country education system is inadequate to prepare forensic accountants. Therefore, the study suggested there should be some attention to the development of forensic accounting in the country. Furthermore, Akyel, (2012) analyzed forensic accounting status in Turkey to propose a training model that could fit the Turkish environment. In her study, Akyel used the USA and Canada forensic accounting systems and evaluated both of them through Turkish environmental lens suggesting that forensic accounting must be initiated in the country where it would be a good chance to start a necessary rehabilitation in the education system of the country. Kurt, (2013) also examined the scope and development of forensic accounting in Turkey. The study indicated that auditors can function as forensic accountants. Yet, one of the challenges to auditors is that they lack adequate education regarding forensic accounting. Although, forensic accounting education is multi-disciplinary, encompassing auditing, accounting, statistics, information technology (IT), legal rules, and human skills (Tiwari & Debnath, 2017). Thus, the multi-disciplinary nature of forensic accounting could raise difficulties for many universities to offer or integrate its topics and programs to students. Furthermore, forensic accounting in form is similar to auditing, but its essence is dissimilar (Tiwari & Debnath, 2017). Such similarities could create confusion among the public regarding the significance of forensic accounting in the society. Therefore, the awareness level regarding forensic accounting could be one of the possible factors to offer or implement forensic accounting in the Libyan context.

Seda and Kramer, (2014) suggested more studies should be done in different countries in order to provide useful insights regarding the availability of forensic accounting. Wang, Lee & Crumbley, (2016) found that there was a marginal increase in regard to the availability education of forensic accounting in Hong Kong and Mainland China. The study indicated that social culture coupled with bribery and corruption in Mainland China created an increased need for forensic accounting services in the society. Thus, it is clear that there was a greater awareness and acceptance of the significance of services provided by forensic accountants in regard to fraud and corruption which created an increasing demand for forensic accounting services, thereby, there was an increasing supply for FA in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

The increased incidences of corrupt practices and financial scandals have attracted the attention of various stakeholders raising a demand to find adequate means and establish education programs to minimize the consequence of financial malpractice. e.g., teaching ethics, human governance, and forensic accounting in business schools. Forensic accounting has gained a great amount of attention among academics and professionals worldwide to reduce the harm of unethical acts, which wastes the wealth of many countries while negatively, impact the sustainability. Although, corruption and embezzlement have been major problems across the globe, Libya is not an exception where different corporate businesses in the country are rife with such practices (Zakari & Menacere 2012). Interestingly, the Libyan governmental agencies still make efforts to fight corruption, but, the problem has been steadily growing over the years primarily because of the socio-economic, political, and administrative factors. Furthermore, the country's rank on corruption index is still high and is becoming worse every year, forensic accounting programs and topics have been neither introduced in Libyan universities nor its services has been practiced in the Libyan firms. Therefore, the main question of this research is, "What is the perception of the Libyan accounting educators regarding the importance of forensic accounting? Do Libyan academics accept it as anti-corruption mechanism? Therefore, this study attempts to address this issue aiming to contribute to knowledge through highlighting the level of awareness and acceptance among academics where the previous literature did not pay much attention to assess the level of awareness and acceptance of a multidisciplinary field among the academics. Additionally, the majority of the previous literature was conducted in the developed countries while less research was found in the developing countries. We further believe that assessing the awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting among the academics in the developing countries is the significant for developing an international model for forensic accounting education. Hence, the study attempts to fill the current void in literature, provide new insights from a different context regarding the status of forensic accounting in the developing countries, and extend forensic accounting literature as well.

Figure 1: Libya's Rank based on Corruption Perception Index



Source: Transparency International

The Research Objectives

This study aims at assessing the Libyan academics':

- I. Level of awareness regarding the significance of forensic accounting
- II. Level of acceptance to forensic accounting as a profession and as an anti-corruption measure to be taught in Libyan universities.

As explained earlier, forensic accounting aims to detect, deter, and control malpractices. The level of awareness and the acceptance of this multidisciplinary accounting major among academics is significant because it indicates their willingness to offer forensic accounting education through universities as the appropriate platform. Moreover, we believe that educators can play a major role in raising public awareness in society regarding corruption and the role of forensic accounting as a tool to minimize it. Also, we believe that accepting FA as a multidisciplinary field (Tiwari & Debnath, 2017) and its introduction requires academic cooperation from fields such as law, psychology, etc. to ensure the seamless integration of the multidisciplinary program (Yogi Prabowo, 2013).

RESEARCH METHOD

To achieve the objectives of this study, data were collected through a questionnaire which is closed-ended that was developed by the researchers based on previous literature. The instrument comprised 24 questions related to awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting including demographics such as job position, level of involvement in FA services, awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services such as legislation, regulations and governance. A five-point Likert scale of 1 to 5 was used in the study where (1_ strongly disagree, 2 _ disagree, 3 _ neutral, 4 _ agree, 5 _ strongly agree). The questionnaire validity

was evaluated by the experts from the academic and accounting profession. After that, a pilot survey was carried out on 10 academics in order to evaluate the wording suitability, clarity, and the questionnaire reliability. All the comments were reviewed again to reach the final form of the questionnaire. The target population was the academics in accounting field working in Aljabal Algharbi University, which is a major university, located in the Western part of the country. Random sampling was adopted to select the sample from the Libyan academics and the responses were collected directly and through online. The data for the present study was collected during June-July 2016 and all the data was coded and SPSS was utilized in order to analyze the response using descriptive statistics, such as mean, standard deviation, and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

120 questionnaires were emailed to Libyan academics. A total of 70 completed questionnaires were received giving a response rate of 58 per cent. The data was collected from lecturers, professors, and graduate students.

The sample description

Table 1 showed that the majority of the participants were males 40 (57.1 per cent) and 30 (42.9percent) were females. Most of the participants hold a lecturer position (58.6 per cent) while (18.6 per cent) graduate students. (51.4 per cent) have experience between 1-5 years whereas (20 per cent) have 6-10 years of work experience. Furthermore, the vast majority (64.3 per cent) were CPAs while independent forensic accountants were (2.9 per cent) and others were (32.9 per cent). Additionally, the (table 1) shows that level of involvement in forensic accounting services was very low where (7.1 per cent) of the participants involved in forensic accounting services. On the other hand, (91.4 per cent) were not at all involved in forensic accounting services and only 1 (1.4percent) were a forensic accountant.

Table 1: General Information about the Participants

Questions		N	Percentage
Job Position	Lecturer	41	58.60%
	Professor	8	11.40%
	Researcher	8	11.40%
	Graduate Student	13	18.60%
Gender:	Male	40	57.10%
	Female	30	42.90%

Table 1...			
Years of Experience	1-5 Years	36	51.40%
	6-10 Years	14	20%
	11-15 Years	9	12.90%
	More than 15 Years	11	15.70%
Professional Qualification	CPA	45	64.30%
	Forensic Accountant	2	2.90%
	Other	23	32.90%
Involvement in Forensic Accounting Services	I undertake services of forensic accountants	5	7.1%
	I consider myself a forensic accountant	1	1.4%
	I have no involvement	64	91.4%

Figure (2) shows the percentages of participants' opinions about the appropriate degree for a forensic accountant. 42.9 per cent agreed that auditing and fraud theory was the most appropriate degree for a forensic accountant, while (15.7 per cent) believed that a law degree would be the appropriate qualification for a forensic accountant. 10 per cent agreed that legal studies degree was the appropriate degree for a forensic accountant. While (2.9 per cent) agreed that economics was the appropriate degree, only (1.4 per cent) thought that ethics was an appropriate degree. The rest of participants (10 per cent) believed that the appropriate degree for forensic accountant was not on the offered in the instrument (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Appropriate Degree for a Forensic Accountant

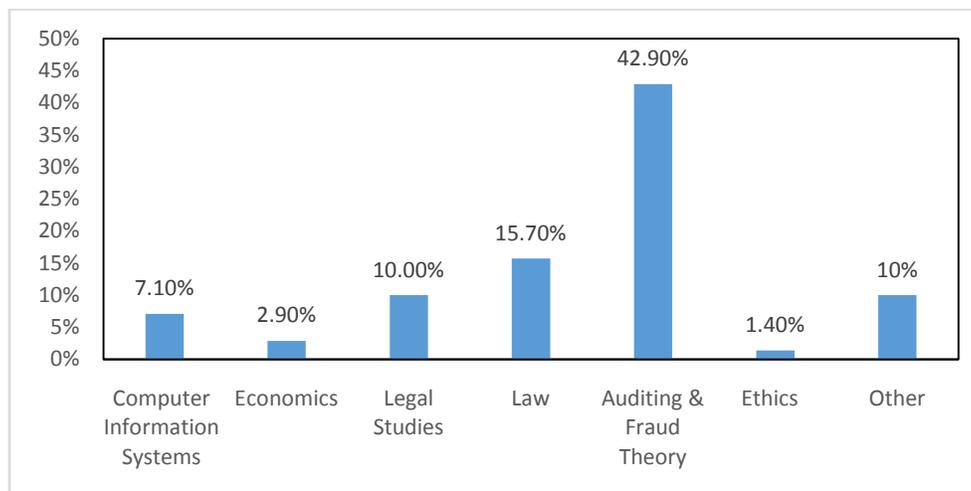


Table 2 shows that high percentage of participants perception was above 3, which indicates higher level of awareness. This indicates the participants recognized forensic accounting as

new area of enquiry and it is totally different from auditing profession. Additionally, the arithmetic means were (4.2) and (3.8) respectively while the standard deviation for items were (0.773) and (0.942) respectively indicating that forensic accounting was recognized as new area of enquiry and it is different from auditing. Hence, there is a high level of awareness among the participants.

Table 2: The Area of Forensic Accounting

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std.
1.Forensic accounting is a relatively new area of enquiry	34.3	57.1	4.3	2.9	1.4	4.2	0.773
2.The Forensic accounting is different from the traditional auditing	18.6	57.1	12.9	8.6	2.9	3.8	0.942

Table 3 indicated that high percentage of participants were above average (3) rating. Moreover, the participants agreed that the services provided by forensic accountants which, mainly focus on financial fraud control. The standard deviations for all questions were low indicating that there was no dispersion in responses and participants. The level of knowledge of majority of participants was generally acceptable in regard to financial fraud control service. The highest value of the arithmetic mean was (4.16) which, was about the ability of forensic accounting to be part of fraud detection program while the arithmetic mean (4.10) providing internal control evaluation. The level of awareness among the participants regarding satisfying the demand of the society through forensic accounting services was also acceptable ($m=3.79$), which is consistent with (Crumbley, Rezaee & Elmore, 2004).

However, there was a low level of awareness among the participants regarding the ability of forensic accountants in identifying misappropriated assets ($M=3.59$). This might be mostly because of the strong belief among the participants that is not an easy task for forensic accountant identify misappropriated assets. Interestingly, the perception of participants was higher in relation to improving financial statements credibility and making financial data more reliable the median (4.09) and (4.13) respectively while their perception was lower in relation to forensic accounting ability to locate and identify misappropriated assets the median (3.94) and (3.59) correspondingly.

Table 3: Financial Fraud Control Services

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std.
1.Forensic Accounting can be used in Fraud detection programs	28.6	57.1	12.9	0	0	4.16	0.633
2. Forensic accounting can be used to locate diverted assets	30	32.9	35.7	0	0	3.94	0.82
3. Forensic accounting can identify misappropriated assets	20	30	34.3	12.9	0	3.59	0.966
4. Improves financial statements' credibility	30	51.4	12.9	4.3	0	4.09	0.781
5. Satisfies society's demand	17.1	62.9	14.3	2.9	0	3.97	0.668
6. Makes financial data more reliable	32.9	50	11.4	4.3	0	4.13	0.784
7. Prepares a report about litigation support consulting	20	40	31.4	5.7	0	3.79	0.848
8.Evaluates Internal controls	27.1	54.3	17.1	0	0	4.10	0.667

Table 4 showed that the high percentage of participants were above average (3) rating, indicating that the participants were aware of services provided by forensic accountants in relation to legislation, regulations and governance. The standard deviations for all questions were low indicating no dispersion in responses and participants agreed the services provided by forensic accounting. The majority of participants recognized forensic accounting services in terms of ensuring compliance with laws and regulations which received the highest mean rating (4.14). However, forensic accountants' expertise in relation to divorce financial issues received the lowest mean rating (3.31) which, might be due to the participants' understanding that such a service can be provided by lawyers. Expert witness services has received high rating among the participants (M=3.93). Interestingly, business valuations and evaluating the firms' corporate governance system services have received same mean rating (3.74). Additionally, table shows indicated a range of mean rating from high to low (3.77, 3.61, and 3.43) in relation to experts in tax, writing effective reports, and estimating earning management respectively. Since the standard deviation for all statements were low indicating that there is no dispersion in responses

and participants agree on the area of forensic accounting in terms of legislation, regulations, and governance service, hence, there is a high level of awareness among the participants.

Table 4: Legislation, Regulations and Governance Services

Question	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Std.
9. Business valuations and cost estimates	12.9	48.6	32.9	2.9	0	3.74	0.725
10. Ensures compliance with laws and regulations	30	55.7	12.9	1.4	0	4.14	0.687
11. Estimates the earning management	10	37.1	38.6	11.4	1.4	3.43	0.882
12. Evaluates corporate governance system	7.1	65.7	22.9	2.9	1.4	3.74	0.695
13. Ability of writing effective reports	11.4	50	30	5.7	2.9	3.61	0.873
14. Financial Expert in Divorce Cases	4.3	44.3	37.1	7.1	7.1	3.31	0.941
15. Expert in Tax Issues	14.3	52.9	30	1.4	1.4	3.77	0.765
16. Attends court as expert witness	15.7	64.3	18.6	0	1.4	3.93	0.688

Since all the items were measured based on the 5 point Likert scale (1 to 5), the median of all items and also the mean of each scale were compared with the median of scale (3) using Mann Whitney and independent t test . The results (Table 5) showed that median of all items and also the mean each scale were significantly different from the median of scale as moderate level which indicated that the level of three domain including area of forensic accounting, financial fraud control services and legislation, regulations and governance services domain and related items were above the moderate level.

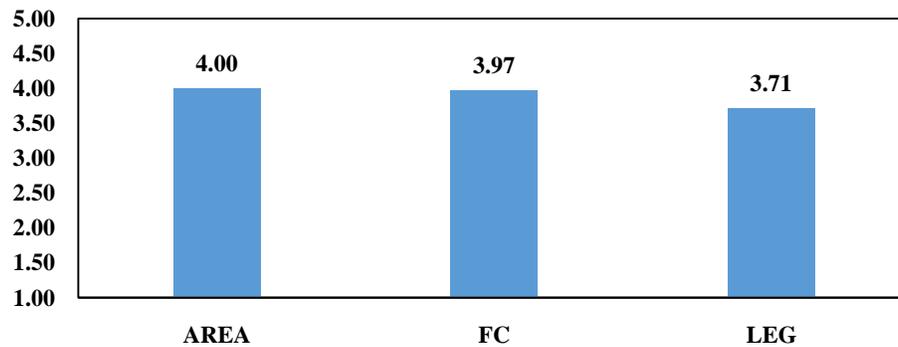
Table 5: Comparing the level of research variables with the median of scale

Domain	Item	Mean	Std.	Z	P value.
Area of Forensic Accounting	1.Forensic accounting is a relatively new area of enquiry	4.2	0.77	6.75	<0.01
	2.The Forensic accounting is different from the traditional auditing	3.8	0.94	5.3	<0.01
	Total	4	0.72	11.58	<0.01

Financial Fraud Control Services	1. Fraud detection programs	3.74	0.73	7.03	<0.01
	2. Forensic accounting can be used to locate diverted assets	4.14	0.69	5.96	<0.01
	3. Forensic accounting can identify misappropriated assets	3.43	0.88	4.34	<0.01
	4. Improves financial statements' credibility	3.74	0.7	6.55	<0.01
	5. Satisfies society's demand	3.61	0.87	6.69	<0.01
	6. Makes financial data more reliable	3.31	0.94	6.61	<0.01
	7. Prepares litigation support and consulting reports	3.77	0.77	5.43	<0.01
	8. Internal control evaluation	3.93	0.69	6.85	<0.01
	Total	3.97	0.45	18.32	<0.01
Legislation, Regulations and Governance Services	9. Business valuations and cost estimates	3.74	0.73	5.8	<0.01
	10. Ensures compliance with laws and regulations	4.14	0.69	6.92	<0.01
	11. Estimates earning management	3.43	0.88	3.66	<0.01
	12. Evaluates corporate governance system	3.74	0.7	6.07	<0.01
	13. Ability in writing effective report	3.61	0.87	4.71	<0.01
	14. Financial expert in divorce cases	3.31	0.94	2.51	0.02
	15. Expert in tax issues	3.77	0.77	5.81	<0.01
	16. Attends court as expert witness	3.93	0.69	6.57	<0.01
	Total	3.71	0.51	11.56	<0.01

Figure (3) shows that the highest level of awareness and acceptance belonged to (AREA) of forensic accounting, financial fraud control services (FC), and followed by (LEG) legislation and the lowest level was observed for regulations and governance services domain.

Figure 3: Level of awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services



Relationship of awareness and acceptance of FA services with background variables

One way ANOVA and independent t test was applied to compare the level of awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services among different levels of background variables including educational level, experience, professional qualification, and gender. Prior to data analysis data were subjected for normality test and results indicated that all variables were distributed normally. The level of all three domain of awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services were compared among different educational level and results (Table 6) indicated that the perception of participants of AREA of forensic accounting and LEG were not significantly different among educational levels. However, the perception of participants about FC indicated significant difference among educational level and the highest mean belonged to participants with master degree followed by doctorate degree.

Table 6: Comparing the level of awareness and acceptance of FA services based on educational level

	Bachelor Degree	Master Degree	Doctorate Degree	F	P value.
AREA	3.96±0.45	4.17±0.68	3.64±0.69	2.496	0.09
FC	3.76±0.3	4.09±0.4	3.91±0.76	4.442*	0.015
LEG	3.6±0.44	3.83±0.44	3.73±0.5	1.915	0.155

* Significant at 0.05 level

The level of all three domain of awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services were also compared at different years of experience and results (Table 7) indicated that the level of all three research variables including AREA of forensic accounting, FC fraud control

services and LEG legislation were not significantly different among different years of experience which means the participants awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services was not affected by their experience.

Table 7: Comparing the level of awareness and acceptance of FA services based on level of experience

	0-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-15 Years	More Than 15	F	p value
AREA	4.01±0.5	4.07±0.51	4.06±1.29	3.82±1.01	0.291	0.832
FC	4±0.41	4.05±0.43	3.82±0.6	3.94±0.46	0.54	0.657
LEG	3.72±0.47	3.87±0.48	3.71±0.32	3.49±0.77	1.117	0.349

The level of all three domain of awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services also were compared at different years of experience and results (Table 8) indicated that the level of all three research variables including area of forensic accounting, fraud control services, and legislation were not significantly different based on different professional qualifications meaning the participants' awareness and acceptance regarding forensic accounting services was not affected by professional qualifications.

Table 8: Comparing the level of awareness and acceptance of FA services bases on professional qualifications

	CPA	Independent Forensic Accountant	Other	F	p value
AREA	4.09±0.66	4.5±0.71	3.78±0.81	1.911	0.156
FC	4.01±0.46	4±0.53	3.89±0.42	0.548	0.581
LEG	3.77±0.4	3.44±0.62	3.61±0.68	1.009	0.37

The level of all three domain of awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services were compared between male and female and results (Table 9) indicated that the level of all three research variables including area of forensic accounting, fraud control services and legislation were not significantly different between male and female which, means the participants' awareness and acceptance of forensic accounting services was not affected by gender.

Table 9: Comparing the level of awareness and acceptance of FA services based on Gender

	Male	Female	t value	p value
AREA	4.11±0.77	3.85±0.63	1.519	0.133
FC	3.9±0.48	4.07±0.37	-1.616	0.111
LEG	3.63±0.57	3.82±0.41	-1.506	0.137

CONCLUSION

This study confirmed that participants were aware of forensic accounting as one of the anti-corruption tools. The results of the study indicated that participants perceive the significance of forensic accounting in business environment as an important means to combat corruption and increase confidence in financial reporting while their perception toward forensic accounting as an effective mean for locating misappropriated assets was lower. The results of the study contribute to the forensic accounting literature through providing new insights from the Libyan educators regarding their awareness and acceptance to the perceived benefits of forensic accounting field and wide range of its services. The study had implications for the universities' managements regarding the necessity of forensic accounting education. Universities might focus on introducing one subject or two in relation to forensic accounting. Moreover, universities might need managerial support and cooperate with anti-corruption governmental agencies in order to be able to produce a local forensic accounting education model that fits the Libyan society needs in terms of providing the country with specialized graduates capable of detecting and investigating corrupt practices as well as offering wide range of services to society. The Libyan government should also support the education of forensic accounting to enhance the awareness of the public regarding the significance of forensic accounting. Such governmental support is expected to speed up the application of the profession in the Libyan society which would result in improving the country's rank on the global corruption index and increasing investors trust.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the study contributes to knowledge, still there some limitations exist. The study was conducted in Libya with small sample size, which limits the findings generalization. Future research could investigate the factors that prevent universities in Libya from offering forensic accounting education since there is high awareness and acceptance among academics regarding forensic accounting as tool to combat fraud and corruption in the country. Furthermore, researchers might be willing to survey the perception of the Libyan practitioners in

relation to having forensic accountants to be part of corruption control mechanism while providing wide services to the Libyan society. Such an issue should be researched in order to provide useful insights about the supply and demand for forensic accountants in the Libyan context.

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APPENDICES

Correlations

		AREA	FC	LEG
AREA	Pearson Correlation	1	-.144	.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.235	.005
	N	70	70	70
FC	Pearson Correlation	-.144	1	.382**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.235		.001
	N	70	70	70
LEG	Pearson Correlation	.331**	.382**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.005	.001	
	N	70	70	70

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

One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
AREA	70	4.0000	.72232	.08633
FC	70	3.9745	.44512	.05320
LEG	70	3.7107	.51453	.06150

One-Sample Test

	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
AREA	11.583	69	.000	1.00000	.8278	1.1722
FC	18.317	69	.000	.97449	.8684	1.0806
LEG	11.557	69	.000	.71071	.5880	.8334