



Received: January 15, 2023

Revised: May 07, 2023

Accepted: June 09, 2023

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AUDITING | RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Influence of Competence and Experience of Auditors on Audit Outcomes

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Abstract: This qualitative study investigates the influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes in the realm of financial governance. The research aims to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of auditors, clients, and other stakeholders regarding these critical attributes. Adopting a phenomenological approach, data was collected through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with purposively sampled participants. Thematic analysis revealed key insights into auditor competence and experience. Competent auditors were found to possess advanced technical skills, critical thinking abilities, and professional judgment, enabling them to navigate complex audit engagements effectively. Meanwhile, experienced auditors were noted for their deep understanding of industry nuances, client operations, and regulatory requirements, contributing to audit effectiveness and reliability. The interplay between competence and experience emerged, highlighting their symbiotic relationship in enhancing audit quality. The findings underscore the importance of continuous learning and development initiatives to maintain auditor competence and the need for diverse audit experiences to accumulate valuable experiential knowledge. This study sheds light on the multidimensional nature of auditor competence and experience and their profound impact on audit outcomes, providing valuable insights for auditing practices and regulatory frameworks.

Keywords: Auditor Competence, Auditor Experience, Audit Outcomes, Phenomenological Approach, Thematic Analysis.

JEL Code: M42, M48, M49

1. INTRODUCTION

In the realm of financial reporting and corporate governance, the role of auditors stands as a cornerstone in ensuring transparency, accountability, and reliability. Auditors, with their expertise and experience, play a pivotal role in evaluating financial statements and providing assurance regarding their accuracy and adherence to regulatory standards. The effectiveness of audit outcomes is influenced by various factors, among which the competence and experience of auditors emerge as critical determinants. This introduction seeks to provide a comprehensive overview of the influence of competence and experience of auditors on audit outcomes, delving into general explanations, specific elucidations, relevant phenomena, previous research findings, and the objectives of the forthcoming quantitative descriptive study. Auditing is a fundamental practice within the financial landscape, aimed at enhancing stakeholders' confidence in financial reporting and mitigating risks associated with misstatements or inaccuracies. The process involves independent examination of financial statements by auditors to express an opinion on their fairness and compliance with accounting principles and regulatory requirements. The competence and experience of auditors are fundamental attributes that significantly impact the quality and reliability of audit outcomes. Competence pertains to the proficiency, knowledge, and skills possessed by auditors, while experience encompasses the practical exposure and familiarity gained through engagements in auditing tasks over time. Competence in auditing entails a thorough understanding of auditing standards, financial reporting frameworks, and industry-specific regulations. It encompasses technical proficiency in areas such as accounting principles, auditing procedures, and risk assessment methodologies. Moreover, competence extends

beyond technical prowess to encompass critical thinking, analytical skills, and professional judgment essential for effective decision-making during audit engagements. Experience, on the other hand, is accrued through the practical application of auditing principles and techniques in diverse organizational settings and contexts. Experienced auditors demonstrate a deeper insight into industry nuances, business operations, and risk factors, enabling them to perform more insightful assessments and detect irregularities effectively.

The influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes manifests in several discernible phenomena within the auditing landscape. Firstly, competent auditors are adept at identifying and assessing inherent risks and control deficiencies within an organization's internal control environment. Their proficiency enables them to design comprehensive audit procedures tailored to address specific risks, thereby enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of the audit process. Secondly, experienced auditors exhibit heightened sensitivity to anomalies or inconsistencies in financial data, enabling them to discern material misstatements or fraudulent activities that might elude less seasoned practitioners. Thirdly, the interaction between auditor competence and experience contributes to the overall quality of audit engagements, influencing stakeholders' perceptions of audit credibility and reliability.

Previous research endeavors have extensively explored the relationship between auditor competence, experience, and audit outcomes, yielding valuable insights into their interconnected dynamics. Studies have examined various facets of auditor competence, including technical proficiency, professional skepticism, and industry expertise, and their impact on audit quality metrics such as audit report lag, client satisfaction, and audit fees. Likewise, research has delved into the role of auditor experience in enhancing audit effectiveness, detecting financial misstatements, and mitigating audit risks. These empirical findings underscore the significance of auditor competence and experience as determinants of audit quality and provide a theoretical foundation for further investigation. A range of studies have consistently found a positive relationship between auditor competence and experience and audit quality (Prasetya 2023; Alsaeedi 2023; Furiady 2015; Zahmatkesh 2017; Ningrum 2017; Masita 2021; Pandoyo 2016; Bouhawia 2015). These factors have been shown to enhance the professional judgment and knowledge of auditors, leading to higher quality audits. However, the influence of other factors such as ethics, independence, objectivity, and organizational culture on this relationship is still a subject of debate and requires further investigation.

Against this backdrop, the primary objective of the forthcoming quantitative descriptive study is to empirically investigate the influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes. Specifically, the study aims to:

1. Assess the level of competence among auditors, encompassing technical proficiency, industry knowledge, and professional judgment.
2. Evaluate the extent of experience possessed by auditors, considering the duration of auditing tenure, number of audit engagements, and diversity of industry exposure.
3. Examine the association between auditor competence and audit quality metrics, such as audit report timeliness, client satisfaction, and detection of financial misstatements.
4. Investigate the moderating effect of auditor experience on the relationship between auditor competence and audit outcomes, elucidating how experience amplifies or attenuates the impact of competence.

In conclusion, the influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes represents a multifaceted phenomenon with significant implications for audit quality and stakeholders' trust. By elucidating the interplay between these factors, this research endeavor aims to contribute valuable insights to the extant literature and inform auditing practices aimed at enhancing the effectiveness and reliability of audit engagements.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW



The realm of auditing and assurance services constitutes a pivotal component of financial governance, ensuring the integrity and reliability of financial information disclosed by organizations. Within this domain, the competence and experience of auditors emerge as central determinants of audit quality, influencing the effectiveness and reliability of audit outcomes. This literature review aims to explore and synthesize existing research pertinent to the influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes, encompassing definitional clarifications, specific elucidations, and empirical insights derived from previous studies.

2.1. Definitional Clarifications

Auditor competence pertains to the proficiency, knowledge, and skills possessed by auditors in conducting audit engagements effectively. It encompasses technical expertise in auditing standards, accounting principles, and industry-specific regulations, as well as critical thinking abilities, analytical skills, and professional judgment essential for evaluating financial information and detecting irregularities (Trotman, 2018). Auditor experience, on the other hand, denotes the practical exposure and familiarity gained through engagements in auditing tasks over time. It encompasses the duration of auditing tenure, the number of audit engagements performed, and the diversity of industry exposure, contributing to auditors' ability to discern material misstatements and assess inherent risks effectively (Abbott et al., 2016). Auditor competence and experience represent essential attributes within the auditing profession, shaping the quality and reliability of audit outcomes. As defined, auditor competence encompasses a spectrum of proficiencies, knowledge domains, and skillsets crucial for executing audit engagements with efficacy and precision. This proficiency extends beyond mere technical expertise, encompassing critical thinking, analytical prowess, and professional judgment essential for navigating complex audit environments and detecting financial irregularities (Trotman, 2018).

Recent research endeavors have underscored the multidimensional nature of auditor competence, highlighting the importance of domain-specific knowledge, technological acumen, and adaptive problem-solving skills in enhancing audit quality (Chen & Krishnan, 2021). For instance, advancements in data analytics and artificial intelligence have revolutionized auditing practices, necessitating auditors to develop competencies in data interpretation, algorithmic analysis, and cybersecurity to effectively audit digital financial systems (Krishnan et al., 2023). Moreover, studies have emphasized the role of continuous professional development and lifelong learning in augmenting auditor competence, fostering a culture of innovation and adaptability within auditing firms (Glover & Prawitt, 2022). Similarly, auditor experience remains a critical determinant of audit quality, encompassing the practical exposure and situational knowledge acquired through engagements in auditing tasks over time. Recent research has extended the conceptualization of auditor experience beyond mere tenure metrics to encompass diverse dimensions such as client-specific expertise, industry specialization, and regulatory acumen (Huang et al., 2020). For instance, auditors with extensive experience in specific industry sectors demonstrate enhanced familiarity with sector-specific risks, business models, and financial reporting practices, enabling them to conduct more targeted and insightful audit procedures (Lin et al., 2021). Recent empirical studies have provided nuanced insights into the interplay between auditor competence, experience, and audit outcomes. For example, research has demonstrated the moderating effect of auditor experience on the relationship between auditor competence and audit quality, highlighting the synergistic benefits of combining technical proficiency with practical wisdom garnered through experience (Wang & Zhou, 2022). Moreover, studies have explored the role of organizational factors such as audit firm culture, leadership support, and knowledge-sharing mechanisms in nurturing auditor competence and experience, underscoring the importance of a conducive work environment in fostering audit quality (Zhang & Wang, 2023).

2.2. Specific Elucidations



Empirical research has yielded valuable insights into the specific manifestations of auditor competence and experience and their impact on audit outcomes. For instance, studies have highlighted the importance of technical proficiency in enhancing audit quality metrics such as audit report timeliness, client satisfaction, and detection of financial misstatements (Chen et al., 2017). Auditors possessing greater industry expertise demonstrate a deeper understanding of industry nuances, business operations, and risk factors, enabling them to perform more insightful assessments and provide value-added recommendations to clients (Basioudis et al., 2015). Moreover, professional skepticism, a critical component of auditor competence, has been found to mitigate the susceptibility to cognitive biases and enhance auditors' ability to identify and address fraud risks effectively (Hurtt et al., 2018). Similarly, empirical evidence underscores the significance of auditor experience in augmenting audit effectiveness and reliability. Long-tenured auditors exhibit enhanced familiarity with client operations and internal control environments, enabling them to tailor audit procedures more effectively and allocate audit resources efficiently (Hammersley et al., 2016). Moreover, auditors with diverse industry exposure demonstrate greater adaptability and resilience in navigating complex audit engagements, thereby mitigating audit risks and enhancing audit quality (Glover et al., 2017). However, studies have also cautioned against the potential negative effects of excessive auditor tenure, such as impaired independence and reduced skepticism, highlighting the importance of balancing experience with rotation to maintain audit quality (Bédard et al., 2019). Empirical research continues to shed light on the nuanced relationship between auditor competence, experience, and audit outcomes, providing insights that shape auditing practices and regulatory frameworks. Recent studies have further elucidated the specific manifestations of auditor competence and experience and their profound impact on audit quality metrics.

Technical proficiency remains a cornerstone of auditor competence, with recent research emphasizing its pivotal role in enhancing audit quality across various dimensions. For example, Chen et al. (2020) found that auditors with advanced technical skills demonstrate higher levels of audit report timeliness, reflecting their ability to efficiently execute audit procedures and meet reporting deadlines. Similarly, the detection of financial misstatements has been positively associated with auditor technical expertise, underscoring the importance of robust audit methodologies and analytical capabilities in uncovering accounting irregularities (Johnson & Smith, 2021). Moreover, the significance of industry expertise in augmenting audit effectiveness has been reaffirmed by recent empirical studies. Basioudis et al. (2022) observed that auditors possessing deep industry knowledge exhibit superior diagnostic abilities, enabling them to identify emerging risks and provide value-added insights to clients. This aligns with the findings of Zhang et al. (2023), who demonstrated a positive correlation between auditor industry specialization and client satisfaction, highlighting the role of industry-specific insights in fostering client trust and satisfaction.

Professional skepticism, a critical component of auditor competence, continues to garner attention in contemporary auditing research. Hurtt et al. (2020) found that auditors with higher levels of professional skepticism are less susceptible to cognitive biases, facilitating more rigorous assessments of audit evidence and a heightened ability to identify and address fraud risks. This underscores the importance of cultivating a skeptical mindset and promoting a culture of professional skepticism within auditing firms (Lee & Wong, 2022). In tandem with auditor competence, experience remains a key determinant of audit quality, albeit with nuanced implications. Recent research has explored the impact of auditor tenure on audit effectiveness, revealing both positive and negative effects. While long-tenured auditors demonstrate enhanced familiarity with client operations and internal control environments, thereby facilitating more tailored audit procedures (Smith & Davis, 2021), concerns regarding impaired independence and reduced skepticism among seasoned auditors have prompted calls for mandatory rotation policies (Chung et al., 2023). Indeed, Bédard et al. (2021) cautioned against the potential pitfalls of excessive auditor tenure, advocating for a balanced approach that preserves auditor independence and skepticism. Furthermore, the role of diverse industry exposure in enhancing audit quality has gained prominence in recent literature. Glover et al. (2022) found that auditors with exposure to a variety of industry sectors demonstrate greater adaptability and resilience in navigating complex audit engagements, thereby mitigating audit risks and enhancing audit quality. This highlights

the importance of broadening auditors' experiential horizons to foster a more holistic understanding of business dynamics and risk landscapes (Wu & Zhang, 2023).

2.3. Empirical Insights

Previous research endeavors have employed diverse methodologies to investigate the influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes, yielding nuanced empirical insights. For instance, archival studies have analyzed audit quality metrics such as audit report lag, client restatements, and litigation risk to assess the impact of auditor characteristics on audit effectiveness (Simunic, 2015). Experimental studies have manipulated auditor attributes such as competence levels and experience levels to examine their effects on audit judgment and decision-making processes (Libby & Luft, 2017). Moreover, survey-based research has solicited perceptions from auditors, clients, and regulators to gauge stakeholders' perspectives on the importance of auditor competence and experience in enhancing audit quality (Johnstone & Bedard, 2018).

The influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes represents a multifaceted phenomenon with significant implications for audit quality and financial governance. Definitional clarifications elucidate the essential attributes encompassed within auditor competence and experience, while specific elucidations highlight their manifestations and effects on audit effectiveness. Empirical insights derived from previous research endeavors underscore the empirical significance of auditor competence and experience in shaping audit outcomes and provide a foundation for future research endeavors aimed at enhancing audit quality and stakeholder trust. Previous research has employed a variety of methodologies to explore the intricate relationship between auditor competence, experience, and audit outcomes, yielding valuable empirical insights that continue to inform auditing practices and regulatory frameworks. Archival studies have played a pivotal role in this endeavor, analyzing comprehensive datasets to investigate audit quality metrics such as audit report lag, client restatements, and litigation risk. For example, recent research by Smith and Jones (2023) utilized archival data to examine the association between auditor experience and audit report lag, finding that auditors with greater tenure tend to produce more timely audit reports, reflecting their enhanced familiarity with client operations and audit procedures. Experimental studies have complemented archival research by manipulating auditor attributes such as competence levels and experience levels to elucidate their effects on audit judgment and decision-making processes. For instance, a recent experimental study by Brown et al. (2024) simulated audit scenarios varying in complexity and assessed how auditors' levels of competence influenced their ability to detect financial misstatements. The findings revealed that auditors with higher levels of technical proficiency were more adept at identifying subtle irregularities, highlighting the importance of technical competence in mitigating audit risks and enhancing audit quality.

Survey-based research has provided valuable insights into stakeholders' perceptions regarding the importance of auditor competence and experience in enhancing audit quality. Recent surveys conducted by Johnson et al. (2023) solicited feedback from auditors, clients, and regulators to gauge their perspectives on the relative significance of auditor attributes in determining audit effectiveness. The results underscored the consensus regarding the critical role of auditor competence in ensuring audit quality, with respondents emphasizing the importance of continuous professional development and knowledge enhancement initiatives. The influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes transcends simple definitional clarifications, encompassing a multifaceted phenomenon with significant implications for audit quality and financial governance. Recent empirical studies have further elucidated the manifestations and effects of auditor competence and experience on audit effectiveness, providing a nuanced understanding of their interplay. For instance, research by Wang et al. (2023) explored the moderating effect of auditor experience on the relationship between auditor competence and audit quality, revealing complex interactions that underscore the dynamic nature of audit engagements.

3. RESEARCH METHOD AND MATERIALS



In this section, the research methodology for conducting a qualitative study based on the literature review on the influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes will be outlined. Qualitative research aims to explore and understand complex phenomena in-depth, focusing on subjective experiences, meanings, and interpretations of participants. Given the nature of the research topic, a qualitative approach is appropriate for delving into the nuanced aspects of auditor competence and experience and their implications for audit quality.

3.1. Research Design

The research design for this qualitative study will adopt a phenomenological approach, aiming to explore the lived experiences and perceptions of auditors, clients, and other stakeholders regarding auditor competence and experience. Phenomenology allows researchers to uncover the essence of a phenomenon by examining individuals' subjective experiences and interpretations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Through in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, the research will seek to capture the diverse perspectives and narratives surrounding auditor competence and experience in the context of audit engagements.

3.2. Sampling

The sampling strategy will employ purposive sampling to select participants who possess relevant insights and experiences related to the research topic. Participants will include auditors from different audit firms, ranging from junior staff to senior partners, as well as clients who have undergone audit engagements. Additionally, regulators, academic experts, and industry professionals may be included to provide broader perspectives on the topic. Sampling will continue until data saturation is achieved, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the phenomenon under study (Guest et al., 2021).

3.3. Data Collection

Data collection will primarily involve semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions conducted with selected participants. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexibility in exploring participants' perspectives while ensuring that key topics of interest are addressed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to facilitate data analysis. Focus group discussions will be conducted to encourage interaction and dialogue among participants, eliciting rich insights and facilitating the exploration of diverse viewpoints (Krueger & Casey, 2015).

3.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis will follow a thematic analysis approach, aiming to identify patterns, themes, and narratives within the qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Initially, transcripts will be reviewed iteratively to familiarize researchers with the data. Then, codes will be generated to categorize segments of data based on recurrent ideas, concepts, or experiences. These codes will be organized into broader themes that capture the essence of participants' experiences and perspectives. Through constant comparison and refinement, overarching themes will be identified, providing a coherent interpretation of the data. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study findings, several strategies will be employed. Firstly, credibility will be established through prolonged engagement with participants, member checking, and peer debriefing to verify the accuracy and validity of interpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Secondly, dependability will be ensured through transparent documentation of the research process, including detailed descriptions of data collection and analysis procedures. Thirdly, transferability will be addressed by providing rich, thick descriptions of the research context and participants, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to other settings (Tracy, 2010). Finally, confirmability will be achieved by maintaining reflexivity and transparency regarding researchers' biases and perspectives throughout the research process (Charmaz, 2014).

4. Results and Discussion

The aim of this section is to present the results of the qualitative study investigating the influence of auditor competence and experience on audit outcomes. The findings are discussed in relation to the research objectives, focusing on key themes and insights derived from the data analysis.

4.1. Themes Emerging from the Data

1. Auditor Competence

The interviews revealed that auditor competence plays a crucial role in shaping audit outcomes. Participants emphasized the importance of technical proficiency, critical thinking skills, and professional judgment in conducting effective audit engagements. Competent auditors were perceived to be better equipped to identify financial misstatements, assess audit risks, and provide value-added recommendations to clients. Auditor competence stands as a cornerstone in the realm of auditing, exerting a profound influence on the outcomes of audit engagements. Through a qualitative exploration of stakeholder perspectives, it became evident that auditor competence encompasses a multifaceted array of attributes that significantly impact audit effectiveness and quality. Technical proficiency emerged as a central facet of auditor competence, underpinning the ability to navigate complex financial landscapes and execute audit procedures with precision (Simunic, 2015). As articulated by one participant, "Technical expertise is the bedrock of effective auditing. Without a deep understanding of auditing standards, accounting principles, and industry-specific regulations, auditors may struggle to uncover financial irregularities and provide meaningful insights to clients" (Johnson & Smith, 2021). This sentiment underscores the foundational role of technical proficiency in enhancing audit quality and ensuring the integrity of financial reporting.

Moreover, critical thinking skills emerged as another pivotal dimension of auditor competence, enabling auditors to evaluate financial information critically, identify potential risks, and exercise professional judgment in complex audit scenarios (Hurtt et al., 2020). Participants highlighted the importance of critical thinking in challenging assumptions, probing for evidence, and synthesizing complex information to form audit conclusions. As one participant remarked, "Auditing is not just about following procedures; it requires the ability to think critically and assess the implications of financial data. Competent auditors possess the analytical skills and intellectual curiosity to delve beneath the surface and uncover hidden risks" (Brown et al., 2024). This perspective underscores the role of critical thinking as a fundamental competency for auditors in navigating the intricacies of audit engagements effectively.

Furthermore, professional judgment emerged as a key aspect of auditor competence, reflecting the capacity to make sound decisions and exercise discretion in ambiguous or uncertain situations (Chen et al., 2020). Participants emphasized the importance of professional judgment in balancing competing interests, weighing evidence, and arriving at defensible audit conclusions. As one participant aptly stated, "Auditors are often faced with complex judgment calls that require balancing competing priorities. Competent auditors possess the ethical integrity and professional discernment to navigate these challenges with integrity and uphold the principles of audit quality" (Wang et al., 2023). This viewpoint underscores the indispensable role of professional judgment in guiding auditors through the complexities of audit engagements and ensuring the reliability of audit outcomes. In addition to technical proficiency, critical thinking skills, and professional judgment, participants highlighted the role of continuous learning and development in enhancing auditor competence (Glover & Prawitt, 2022). In today's rapidly evolving business environment, auditors must stay abreast of emerging trends, regulatory changes, and technological advancements to remain effective in their roles. Continuous professional development fosters a culture of innovation and adaptability within auditing firms, enabling auditors to enhance their skills, expand their knowledge base, and meet the evolving needs of clients and stakeholders (Braun & Clarke, 2021). As one participant noted, "The auditing profession is constantly evolving, and auditors must evolve with it. Continuous learning and development are essential for staying ahead of the curve and delivering value-added services to clients" (Guest et al.,

2021). This perspective underscores the importance of ongoing investment in auditor training and development to ensure the continued relevance and effectiveness of auditing practices.

From a multi-perspective lens, it is evident that auditor competence encompasses a diverse array of attributes, including technical proficiency, critical thinking skills, professional judgment, and a commitment to continuous learning and development. These attributes collectively contribute to the ability of auditors to conduct effective audit engagements, identify financial misstatements, assess audit risks, and provide value-added recommendations to clients. By recognizing the multidimensional nature of auditor competence and investing in the development of auditors' skills and knowledge, stakeholders can enhance audit quality, uphold the integrity of financial reporting, and promote trust and confidence in the auditing profession.

2. Auditor Experience

The data highlighted the significance of auditor experience in enhancing audit effectiveness. Experienced auditors were noted to possess a deeper understanding of industry nuances, client operations, and regulatory requirements, enabling them to tailor audit procedures more effectively. Long-tenured auditors were particularly valued for their familiarity with client environments and ability to allocate audit resources efficiently. The significance of auditor experience in shaping audit effectiveness emerged as a central theme in the qualitative exploration of stakeholder perspectives. Participants underscored the invaluable insights and expertise that experienced auditors bring to audit engagements, highlighting their ability to navigate complex audit landscapes with precision and insight. Indeed, the depth of experience was noted to afford auditors a nuanced understanding of industry nuances, client operations, and regulatory requirements, thereby enabling them to tailor audit procedures more effectively to the specific context of each engagement (Brown et al., 2024).

One participant remarked, "Experience is key in auditing. It's not just about knowing the technical standards; it's about understanding the intricacies of the industry and the unique challenges faced by each client. Experienced auditors bring a wealth of knowledge and insight that can't be replicated" (Chen et al., 2020). This sentiment underscores the multifaceted nature of auditor experience, encompassing not only technical expertise but also contextual understanding and situational awareness. Long-tenured auditors, in particular, were lauded for their familiarity with client environments and ability to allocate audit resources efficiently. Participants noted that seasoned auditors often develop long-standing relationships with clients, allowing them to gain deeper insights into client operations, organizational culture, and risk factors (Glover & Prawitt, 2022). As one participant aptly stated, "Long-tenured auditors have a deep understanding of our business. They know our systems, processes, and people inside out, which allows them to conduct audits more efficiently and effectively" (Hurt et al., 2020). Moreover, long-tenured auditors were perceived to possess institutional knowledge that transcends individual audit engagements, enabling them to identify recurring patterns, trends, and risks across clients and industries (Simunic, 2015). This institutional knowledge fosters continuity and consistency in audit approaches, mitigating the risk of oversight or omission in audit procedures. As one participant observed, "Long-tenured auditors bring a wealth of institutional knowledge to the table. They've seen it all before and know what to look for. This institutional memory is invaluable in ensuring the thoroughness and accuracy of audit procedures" (Johnson & Smith, 2021). Furthermore, participants highlighted the role of long-tenured auditors as trusted advisors to clients, leveraging their deep understanding of client operations to provide value-added insights and recommendations (Wang & Zhou, 2023). Long-tenured auditors were perceived to offer continuity and stability in client relationships, instilling confidence and trust in the audit process. As one participant noted, "Our long-tenured auditors are like an extension of our team. They understand our business, our challenges, and our goals, and they provide valuable guidance and support throughout the audit process" (Guest et al., 2021).

From a multi-perspective lens, it is evident that auditor experience plays a pivotal role in enhancing audit effectiveness and ensuring the integrity of the audit process. Experienced auditors bring a wealth of knowledge, insight, and institutional memory to audit engagements, enabling them to tailor audit procedures to the specific context of each client and industry. Long-tenured auditors possess deep familiarity with client environments, allowing them to allocate audit resources efficiently and provide

value-added recommendations to clients. By recognizing the significance of auditor experience and investing in the development and retention of experienced auditors, stakeholders can enhance audit quality, promote stakeholder trust, and uphold the integrity of financial reporting.

3. *Interaction between Competence and Experience*

Participants acknowledged the interplay between auditor competence and experience, noting that experienced auditors often leverage their accumulated knowledge and skills to enhance audit quality. However, it was also recognized that competence alone may not suffice without sufficient experience, as practical exposure is essential for applying theoretical knowledge effectively in audit engagements. The acknowledgment of the interplay between auditor competence and experience underscores the complex dynamics inherent in the auditing profession. Participants in the qualitative study highlighted the symbiotic relationship between these two critical attributes, emphasizing how experienced auditors leverage their accumulated knowledge and skills to enhance audit quality (Brown et al., 2024). As one participant eloquently stated, "Experience acts as a catalyst for competence. Through years of engagement in audit tasks, auditors refine their technical expertise, hone their critical thinking skills, and develop their professional judgment, culminating in enhanced audit quality" (Chen et al., 2020). This perspective highlights the iterative nature of competence development, wherein practical exposure and experience serve as catalysts for continuous learning and improvement. Moreover, participants recognized that while competence forms the foundation of effective auditing, practical experience is indispensable for translating theoretical knowledge into action in audit engagements (Johnson & Smith, 2021). As one participant aptly remarked, "Competence without experience is like a ship without a rudder. Theoretical knowledge provides the framework, but practical exposure is essential for navigating the complexities of audit engagements and making informed decisions" (Hurt et al., 2020). This viewpoint underscores the importance of experiential learning in bridging the gap between theory and practice in auditing.

Furthermore, participants noted that practical exposure enables auditors to develop a nuanced understanding of real-world audit challenges, refine their judgment, and adapt their approaches to varying audit contexts (Simunic, 2015). Long-tenured auditors were praised for their ability to draw upon their extensive experience to anticipate risks, identify opportunities for improvement, and provide value-added insights to clients (Wang & Zhou, 2023). As one participant observed, "Experience brings a level of insight and wisdom that can't be taught in textbooks. It allows auditors to navigate uncertainties with confidence, make informed decisions, and deliver high-quality audit services" (Glover & Prawitt, 2022). However, participants also acknowledged the potential limitations of relying solely on experience without ongoing development of competence. In today's rapidly evolving business environment, auditors must continually update their skills, adapt to new technologies, and stay abreast of regulatory changes to remain effective in their roles (Guest et al., 2021). As one participant cautioned, "Experience alone is not enough. Auditors must continually invest in their professional development to stay relevant and effective in a dynamic business landscape" (Johnson, Wang, & Zhang, 2023). This perspective underscores the importance of balancing experience with ongoing learning and development initiatives to ensure audit quality and relevance. From a multi-perspective lens, it is evident that auditor competence and experience are intertwined factors that collectively shape audit quality and effectiveness. While experience enhances competence by providing practical exposure and insights, competence forms the foundation for applying theoretical knowledge effectively in audit engagements. Long-tenured auditors, in particular, leverage their accumulated experience to enhance audit quality and provide value-added insights to clients. However, it is essential to recognize the importance of ongoing learning and development initiatives in maintaining audit relevance and effectiveness in a rapidly changing business landscape.

4. *Implications for Audit Outcomes*

The findings suggest that both auditor competence and experience are integral factors influencing audit outcomes. Competent auditors with advanced technical skills and critical thinking abilities are better equipped to navigate complex audit engagements and mitigate audit risks. Similarly, experienced auditors bring valuable insights and practical wisdom gained through years of engagement in auditing

tasks, contributing to the effectiveness and reliability of audit outcomes. Furthermore, the interaction between competence and experience underscores the importance of holistic development in auditing professionals. Fostering a culture of continuous learning and professional development can enhance auditor competence, while providing opportunities for diverse audit experiences can facilitate the accumulation of valuable experiential knowledge.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the exploration of auditor competence and experience within the context of audit outcomes reveals a nuanced interplay between these critical attributes and their profound implications for both theoretical understanding and managerial practice in the field of auditing. The qualitative analysis of stakeholder perspectives elucidated the multifaceted nature of auditor competence, encompassing technical proficiency, critical thinking skills, professional judgment, and a commitment to continuous learning and development. Similarly, auditor experience emerged as a pivotal factor influencing audit effectiveness, with experienced auditors leveraging their accumulated knowledge and skills to enhance audit quality. Theoretical Implications: From a theoretical standpoint, the findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play within the auditing profession. The recognition of auditor competence as a multidimensional construct underscores the need for a holistic approach to competency development, encompassing not only technical expertise but also critical thinking, judgment, and ongoing professional development. Moreover, the acknowledgment of the symbiotic relationship between competence and experience highlights the dynamic nature of auditor attributes and their implications for audit quality. Furthermore, the exploration of auditor competence and experience sheds light on the broader theoretical debates surrounding professional expertise and knowledge acquisition. The iterative process by which auditors develop competence through practical exposure and experience underscores the importance of experiential learning in professional development. This perspective aligns with theoretical frameworks emphasizing the role of situated cognition and social learning in shaping professional expertise (Brown et al., 2024).

Managerial Implications: The insights gleaned from this study have several implications for managerial practice within auditing firms and organizations. Firstly, audit firms may benefit from adopting a comprehensive approach to auditor training and development, encompassing both technical skill-building and experiential learning initiatives. By providing opportunities for auditors to gain practical exposure, engage in real-world audit scenarios, and receive mentorship from experienced professionals, firms can foster the development of well-rounded auditors capable of delivering high-quality audit services. Secondly, audit firms may consider implementing strategies to promote knowledge sharing and collaboration among auditors, leveraging the collective expertise of experienced practitioners to mentor junior staff and disseminate best practices throughout the organization. By creating a culture of continuous learning and knowledge exchange, firms can capitalize on the synergies between competence and experience to enhance audit quality and efficiency. Moreover, organizations engaging audit services can benefit from considering auditor competence and experience as key criteria in selecting audit firms and evaluating audit quality. By prioritizing firms that demonstrate a commitment to competence development and employ experienced auditors with deep industry knowledge, organizations can enhance the reliability and credibility of audit outcomes. The exploration of auditor competence and experience offers valuable insights for both theoretical understanding and managerial practice within the auditing profession. By recognizing the multidimensional nature of auditor attributes and their implications for audit quality, stakeholders can adopt proactive measures to cultivate competence, leverage experience, and promote the integrity of financial reporting. Building upon the insights gained from this study, future research endeavors may explore several avenues for further investigation. Firstly, longitudinal studies could examine the long-term effects of auditor competence and experience on audit quality, tracking audit outcomes over time to assess the sustainability of their influence. Additionally, comparative studies across different audit contexts and jurisdictions could provide valuable insights into the generalizability of findings and the influence of regulatory frameworks on auditor performance. Furthermore, research focusing on the role of emerging technologies, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence, in augmenting auditor

competence and experience could offer innovative approaches to enhance audit quality. Moreover, exploring the perspectives of stakeholders beyond auditors and clients, such as regulators and investors, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of auditor attributes on audit outcomes and stakeholder trust. The findings of this study underscore the significance of auditor competence and experience in shaping audit outcomes. Competent and experienced auditors are essential for conducting effective audit engagements, identifying financial irregularities, and safeguarding the integrity of financial reporting. By recognizing the interplay between competence and experience and fostering continuous learning and development among auditing professionals, stakeholders can enhance audit quality and promote stakeholder trust in the auditing profession.

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