

# A Blueprint for Minimizing Audit Anticipation Gap in a Developing Country: Stakeholders Perceptions

Dina Ahmed Mohamed Ghandour<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Business Administration, University of Medical Sciences and Technology, Khartoum, Sudan

Correspondence: Dr. Dina Ahmed Mohamed Ghandour, Assistant Professor, Department of Accounting and Finance, Faculty of Business Administration, University of Medical Sciences and Technology, P.O. Box 12810, Khartoum, Sudan.

Received: March 19, 2021

Accepted: April 20, 2021

Online Published: February 4, 2023

doi:10.5430/ijba.v14n1p20

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5430/ijba.v14n1p20>

## Abstract

**Purpose:** This paper provides a blueprint for minimizing Audit Anticipation Gap (AAG) in a developing country. The focus was on exploring the occurrence, causes, and consequent effects of the Audit Anticipation Gap in Sudan, by identifying the possible factors that contribute to that gap. This was achieved by surveying the opinions of practicing external auditors, key users of financial statements, and accounting educators.

**Research Design/Methodology/Approach:** A qualitative research approach was adopted through a cross-sectional survey, using in-depth face-to-face structured personal interviews. Furthermore, purposive/judgmental sampling was utilized to select interviewees. Twenty-nine interviews were carried out, and their responses were analyzed using thematic content analysis.

**Major Findings:** The findings did indicate that an Audit Anticipation Gap exists in Sudan due to a weak and undeveloped accounting and auditing profession in the country, ambiguity concerning auditor's independence, lack of external auditor rotation in the majority of the financial sectors, rendering both audit and non-audit services, absence of rules and regulations that govern external audit practices. Furthermore, major contributing factors included misunderstanding the objectives of auditing, the audit process, and the auditor's roles and responsibilities by key users of financial statements.

**Practical Implications:** The study provided a wide range of findings that have significant implications for policy making geared toward minimizing the Audit Anticipation Gap in the country, so that accounting will play its proper role in its sustainable economic development.

**Originality/Value:** This study contributes to the existing literature by providing detailed and comprehensive findings from a region that has gained little focus on the subject matter. Specifically, it has shed light on the weaknesses of the accounting and auditing profession in Sudan, with a particular emphasis on the Audit Anticipation Gap. Thus, by surveying the viewpoints of the key stakeholders, the study provided prescriptions for turning around the accounting profession in the country to a potential world-class status.

**Keywords:** blueprint, Audit Anticipation Gap, occurrence, causes, consequent effects, stakeholders, accounting and auditing profession

## 1. Introduction

It is not surprising that the reliability of external auditors is regularly questioned in many countries around the world including Sudan (Taslina, 2020). This has been demonstrated by the extensive blames and claims leveled towards auditors, as a result of an increase in the failure of reputable corporations beside various financial scandals in immediate past (Safiyanu Sule, 2019). In turn, this has raised public debate toward the auditing profession focusing on a gap between what users of financial reports anticipate external auditor's roles and duties are, and what the auditing profession revealed as the concrete roles and accountability of those independent auditors (Yuqi He, 2021). Consequently, such a gap refers to as the Audit Anticipation Gap (AAG).

The term was first described in the auditing profession by Liggio in 1974 and was known as the Audit Anticipation Gap, since then it has been widely researched by several scholars over the years. Specifically, the relevant literature has witnessed a remarkable evolution of the concept during the 1980s, due to the expanding concerns of the general

public over the reliability of professional accountants (Taslina, 2020). Consequently, more comprehensive discussions on the issue were found in 1990s. In this context, the term Audit Anticipation Gap has substantial adverse effects on the accounting profession, as it can jeopardize the standing of a legitimate audit in the public eye (Aminu, 2022). Furthermore, it has been well documented in the literature that the occurrence of this gap can possibly damage public trust towards the work of professional accountants, and the integrity of the financial reporting process in any given nation (Taslina, 2020). Thus, this study provides a blueprint for minimizing Audit Anticipation Gap in a developing country i.e. Sudan. With special focus on assessing its occurrence, causes and consequent effects.

## 2. Literature Review

The writings of accountants and external auditors frequently report the occurrence of the Audit Anticipation Gap in both developed and emerging economies (e.g. Aminu, 2022, Lazarus et, al., 2022, Yuqi He 2021, Begona, 2021, Nurul, 2021, Stephany et al, 2021, Taslima,2020; El Nashar, et, al, 2020; Paul et, al 2020; Goddard, 2020; Safiyanu Sule,2019; Nadhim, 2018; Mohamed et, al., 2017; J.S. Kumari, 2017; Najeb, 2017). In view of that, Aminu, et.al. (2022), examined the effect of decision usefulness factors on Audit Anticipation Gap in listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. The study used a sample of 385 respondents which was selected using Cochran Sample size formula from the target population group which comprise of lenders, investors/shareholders and other creditors. The research questionnaire was drawn on a five-point Likert Scale, and the collected data was analyzed using multiple regression analysis. The Study found that decision usefulness components collectively have statistically significant positive impact on Audit Anticipation Gap in Nigeria. Thus, it recommends that users of financial statements should be enlightened/educated on the roles and responsibilities of an auditor by the respective banks, Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC).On the other hand, Lazarus et, al., (2022), examined how a paradigm shift from traditional to digital audits could affect the Audit Anticipation Gap. It uncovers possible new areas of the anticipation gap and the threats resulting from this paradigm shift. The findings suggest that audit digitalization will result in the audit profession transitioning from the defensive approach of educating users on auditors' duties, to a constructive approach of using digital tools to perform some of the duties that users expect of auditors. Furthermore, Yuqi He (2021), conducted a study that focus on the Audit Anticipation Gap and the audit market in UK. Such a study was carried out after the collapse of Carillion Plc in the UK, and the huge criticisms received by the big four audit firms. The outcomes of the study show that external auditors' are the responsible for the fall of Carillion, and that an Audit Anticipation Gap exist. This gap is the difference between what the auditors did, and what the public expect the auditors to do. Thus, to reduce the gap and increase public trust, the study suggested that breaking up the big four is a useful way to increase the competition in the audit market. Due to the fact that, the big four monopolize the audit market, and uses their monopoly power to get high profits. Thus, by breaking up the big four, the competition in the audit market could increase, as well as the quality of audit services.

On the other hand, Begona et al. (2021), demonstrated that the European Union has formulated a general principle of auditors' independence, in conjunction with a preventive and sanctioning framework of safeguards and prohibitions. The Directive provides a new framework to harmonize and protect auditor independence in the EU. Thus, this study has covered a gap in relation to the effects of new auditing regulations within the EU affecting the ethical problem of auditor independence, and its connection to the Audit Anticipation Gap. The study followed a quantitative research approach, and was addressed to a sample of 192 auditors. Structural Equation Modelling methodology (PLS-SEM) was used for the analysis. The results of the study proved that there is a relationship between the Audit Anticipation Gap and auditor independence. Furthermore, the results show a mediating effect of new auditor safeguards and quality controls, and a sanctioning system to protect independence when an Audit Anticipation Gap exists. The results also show that the more restrictive auditor prohibitions considered in the latest European reform, the more this would result in a positive effect on the protection of auditor independence.

Conversely, Goddard (2020), conducted an empirical survey research in Germany to examine the expectation gap between auditors and board members. With special focus in identifying the attributes which influence client's auditors choice. Thus, research findings articulated that board members consider low audit fees, as well as a good relationship with audit partners, to be less important than audit partners and managers expect. Furthermore, the study revealed that the attributes of audit quality are considered very important for board members than audit partners and managers. Similarly, 'Taslina' (2020), carried out an empirical research in Bangladesh in order to examine the existence of Audit Anticipation Gap, and its effect on stakeholders' confidence. This was moderated by the role of financial reporting council in the country. The study targeted 174 auditors, investors, investment and credit analyst, in addition to regulators. It employed Partial Least Square- Structural Equation Modeling to analyze the data. The results showed that there is a negative relationship between the gap, and stakeholder confidence.

As the gap increase, stakeholder confidence decreases. Furthermore, it insisted on the moderating role of the council to ensure auditors perceived independence.

Conversely, El Nashar, et. al. (2020), used a decision tree model and probability approach, to study the effect of internal auditing on Audit Anticipation Gap. The results of the study indicated that audited entities should strength their internal audit system, in a way to detect and prevent fraud. All of which to narrow the gap and help external auditors, investors, and users of financial statements to carry out their duties effectively. Moreover, Safiyanu Sule (2019), studied the perception of users towards auditor's responsibility for fraud prevention and detection, as well as the Audit Anticipation Gap in Nigeria. It has utilized a survey research design with the aid of questionnaires, which were administered to academics, accountants, investors, stockbrokers and bankers in Kano and Jigawa States of Nigeria. The outcomes of the study revealed that an expectation gap exists in Nigeria. Specifically, it occurs in the area of fraud prevention and detection. Thus, strict actions should be taken to narrow the gap.

In spite of endeavors made to narrow the Audit Anticipation Gap through improving the principles of auditing, implementing an effective corporate governance framework, in addition to providing adequate and comprehensive audit education to various users of audit reports and the society at large, still the gap exists and is widening and requires further research studies (Aminu, 2022, Lena, 2021, M. C. Okafor, 2020, Goddard, 2020, Fedaa, 2017, Hasen, 2017). More studies are needed to explore stakeholders' perceptions about the causes and consequent effects of such a gap in developing economies, like Sudan. In this context, the existing literature of the audit expectation gap in Sudan is very scarce (e.g., Kamal et al, 2016; Omer et al, 2015). These studies are limited to provide proof to the occurrence of the gap, and finding ways to narrow such a gap. However, they did not explore stakeholders' perceptions about the actual causes and adverse effects of Audit Anticipation Gap. Furthermore, such studies have assessed the perceptions of certain target groups i.e. either key users of financial reports or practicing external auditors.

Moreover, a limited number of researches have assessed the subsequent effects of such a gap on key users' decision-making. The current practical proof of how the presence of the audit anticipation gap may unfavorably influence audit quality as well as the decisions of key users of financial statements, is crucial for implementing rules or actions to reduce the gap (Aminu, et.al, 2021; Goddard, 2020).

Furthermore, the existing literature lack studies that explore the influence of Multi-Responsibility Auditor, Standard External Audit Process, Accounting and Auditing Regulations in a Developing Country, like Sudan, Auditor Independence in Fact and Appearance, External Audit Rotation and Rendering of Non-Audit Services on audit anticipation gap in the context of a developing country. Moreover, the existing literature lack studies that evaluate the influence of accounting knowledge and experience on the audit report, and the consequent effects of accounting knowledge and experience on decision usefulness.

Thus, this study focused mainly on exploring stakeholders' perceptions about the occurrence, causes and consequent effects of audit anticipation gap in a developing country. Specifically, it assessed the effects of the stated variables on the Audit Anticipation Gap. Furthermore, the study determined the influence of accounting knowledge and experience on the audit report, and explored its consequent effects on decision usefulness. As a result, the study provided a blue print for minimizing the Audit Anticipation Gap (AAG) in a developing country.

## *2.1 Theoretical Framework*

Among the theories that underpin "Audit Expectation Gap", and related to this study are:

### *2.1.1 Theory of Inspired Confidence*

Limperg (1932) published a series of articles that were recognized as "Theory of Inspired Confidence". Such a theory focuses on a user's needs for audit services that reflect the demand side, along with the services that professional accountants provide to their clients that indicate the supply side. Furthermore, he claimed that auditors infer their overall duties for the general public from the need for a professional and independent opinion as a result of conducting an audit. In this regard, the auditor's duty is embedded in the self-confidence that the general public sets on the viability of the audit, together with the reliance on the opinion of the external auditors. Therefore, this confidence is based on the presence of that duty. Whenever there is no confidence, the duty is impaired since it ends up as pointless.

### *2.1.2 Contingency Theory*

It is an organizational theory that is hypothesized by "Woodward (1985)". It postulates that the most desirable structure of a firm is contingent upon various aspects such as; the way people conduct their work in the company, the type of technology used in the business and marketplace circumstances (Nasrallah & Qaisme, 2009).

However, for the last few years, considerations were devoted through the usage of contingency theory in different fields, including auditing

(Badara & Saidin, 2013). Under this theory, the word “contingency” indicates that something is solely true under certain situations. Where contingency also refers to the impact of one thing over another (Muaz, 2017). In this context, it has been widely used in the auditing literature in different ways, for example; some scientists used Contingency Theory to identify the factors that audit success is dependent on, and others revealed the contingent effect of audit committees in the association between internal and external auditors (Muaz, 2017)...etc. Therefore, whenever this theory is used in the audit literature, it reflects the contingent effect of one variable over the other.

### 2.1.3 Role Conflict Theory

This theory offers a hypothetical interpretation for the occurrence of ‘Audit Anticipation Gap’. It is theorized by ‘Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman’ in (1970). Role Conflict Theory is mainly based on the following assumption: “The auditor is required to check client’s financial statements, and the public expects the auditor to faithfully carry out that role” (Koo and Sim, 1999). The auditor is in a struggle, due to the fact in which he or she should first follow professional guidance and policies governing the auditor’s autonomy. Then, this needs to be well-adjusted compared to his or her position as a “watchdog”, who has to be serving the welfare of key users of financial reports, in addition to fulfilling their own self – interest (Philmore et al, 2006). Furthermore, key users of financial reports may hold varying expectations of the auditor, and these expectations may change from time to time depending on the specification of their own role requirements, and the interaction of other forces in society. Hence, the auditors are placed in multi-role and multi expectation situations.

### 2.1.4 Attribution Theory

The attribution theory is conceptualized by Kelley (1973), who explained why the auditor is blamed when an accounting fraud occurred related to his/her work. According to this theory, users of the audit report (as an evaluator), become naïve scientists as they attempt to assign causation by observing traits of consistency, distinctiveness, and consensus (Kelley, 1973). Fiske & Taylor (1991), indicated that “This theory deals with how users use information to arrive at causal explanations for events. As it examines what information is gathered, and how it is combined to form a causal judgment and subsequently make a decision” .For example, Creditors, especially corporate lenders often use the audited financial statements for credit granting. Lenders must understand the contents of the audit report, in order to improve their ability of assessing credit risk (Rien, 2014). The differences of perception in understanding the content of audit reports between lenders and auditors, will increase the risk of going concern of the creditors themselves, as a result of an improper decision making (Rien, 2014).

### 2.1.5 Principle-Agent Theory

The Principle-agent theory is conceptualized by Jensen and Meckling (1976), it analyses the relationship between two parties: investors and managers. The agent (that is, managers) undertakes to perform certain duties for the principal (that is, investors) and the principal undertakes to reward the agent. However, it is argued under this theory that “Managers may not behave in ways that match investor’s interests. The degree of uncertainty about whether the agent will pursue self-interest rather than comply with the requirements of the contract, represents a conflict of interest between the two parties” (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). This theory has been extensively used in the ‘Audit Anticipation Gap’ literature, with regard to the self-regulation process of the auditing profession and auditor’s independence.

### 2.1.6 Readers Response Theory

The reader response theory is based on an assumption which articulates that “There is no one correct reading of a text, readers are active interpreters of messages and can infer variable meanings in a text based on their own psychology, content, or motives” (Wright, 2012). Another assumption used in this theory states that “Reader’s background, knowledge and experiences impact his/her interpretation of a text” (Wright, 2012). Consequently, users of financial reports with different backgrounds, knowledge and experience may misinterpret and misunderstand the content of audit reports. In turn, this may cause the existence of an anticipation gap in auditing.

## 3. Materials & Methods

### 3.1 Research Design

A ‘cross-sectional survey’ was carried out to collect ‘qualitative’ data. Such research design is most frequently used in the ‘Audit Anticipation Gap’ literature to describe, compare, or explain specific issues related to the studied subject matter (Najeb, 2017). Thus, this study has followed a similar research design.

### 3.2 Target Population

The target population of this study is divided into a number of groups. The majority of these groups are located in Khartoum, Capital of Sudan, in which they perform all their operations and financial transactions. Thus, the study targeted practicing external auditors, key users of financial reports, i.e., Banks, Brokerage firms in Khartoum (Capital of Sudan). Furthermore, the study also targeted accounting educators in Sudanese universities.

### 3.3 Data Collection Instrument

Structured in-depth face-to-face interviews with open-ended questions was undertaken to collect the qualitative data.

#### 3.3.1 Structured In-depth Face-to-face Interviews

Sekaran (2016, p.95), observed that data could be collected through conducting in-depth interviews with participants, to attain information on issues of interest. In view of that, 'Structured In-depth face- to- face interviews' were utilized based on the recommendations by 'Iss & Wells' (1994). They noted that this type of interview is more robust for validating outcomes than others. Similarly, Saunders et al. (2007), expressed that "Structured in-depth face-to-face interviews are generally utilized to find out answers for the 'what' and 'how' questions, and place more emphasis on exploring the why".

Furthermore, such a tool has been widely used in the "Audit Anticipation Gap" literature (i.e. Stephany, 2021, Kukreja, 2018, Onulaka, 2017). Therefore, major practicing external auditors, key users of financial reports, and accounting educators were interviewed. In this context, purposive/judgmental sampling was used to choose respondents who have participated in the interview. Where, 'Uma Sekaran (2016, p.95) defined such a sampling technique as a "Method in which the desired information is obtained from specific individuals or specific groups, on some rational basis".

Hence, judgment was considered in selecting interviewees depending on their experience, along with their level of education in order to ensure that different participants were chosen. Moreover, open ended questions with phrases like "Why", "How", "Tell me" were used to extract as much information as possible concerning the occurrence, causes and consequent effects of Audit Anticipation Gap in Sudan. Hence, the broad themes and sub-themes, which were addressed in the interviews of the practicing external auditors, key users of financial reports, and accounting educators are shown respectively in the following tables.

Table 1. Themes Associated with Practicing External Auditor's Interview

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>External Auditors Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Auditor's roles and responsibilities.</li> </ul>
<b>Standard External Audit Process</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The four-phases of the audit process.</li> <li>▪ The relation between standard external audit processes and audit anticipation gap.</li> <li>▪ Audit quality in Sudan.</li> </ul>
<b>Audit Regulations in Auditing Profession</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify the self-regulation policy of accounting profession.</li> </ul>
<b>Accounting &amp; Auditing Regulations in a Developing Country</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Origins of the accounting and auditing profession in Sudan.</li> <li>▪ Challenges and barriers facing the profession, and the possible ways to address them.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Code of Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The impact of auditor's compliance with professional code of ethics on the audit anticipation gap.</li> </ul>
<b>Audit Anticipation Gap</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Causes of audit anticipation gap in Sudan.</li> </ul>

Source: Author

Table 2. Themes Associated with Key Users of Financial Statements Interview

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>External Auditors Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assess users' understanding of auditor's roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Explore their perception about auditor's performance in Sudan.</li> </ul>
<b>Auditor Autonomous in Fact &amp; Appearance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The view of users concerning auditor's independence in Sudan.</li> <li>▪ The relationship between auditor impartiality and anticipation gap in Sudan.</li> </ul>
<b>External Audit Rotation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audit rotation in terms of audit partner rotation, and audit firm rotation.</li> </ul>
<b>Provision of Other than audit services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Users view about rendering audit and other than audit services at the same time.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Code of Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The relation between auditor's compliance with professional code of ethics and audit anticipation gap.</li> </ul>
<b>Users knowledge &amp; Experience</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The nature of auditing process.</li> </ul>
<b>Audit Report &amp; Decision Usefulness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Users view about the current structure of the audit report, and its subsequent effect on their decisions.</li> </ul>
<b>Audit Anticipation Gap</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ User's perception about the causes of anticipation gap in Sudan.</li> </ul>

Source: Author

Table 3. Themes Associated with Accounting Educators Interview

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>External Auditors Responsibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Awareness of accounting educators about auditor's roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Their perception about auditor's performance in Sudan.</li> </ul>
<b>Accounting &amp; Auditing Regulations in a Developing Country</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Accounting curricula in Sudanese Universities.</li> <li>▪ Challenges facing the accounting and auditing education in Sudan, and the possible ways to address them.</li> </ul>
<b>Auditor Impartiality in Fact &amp; Appearance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The views of accounting educators about external auditor's independence in Sudan.</li> <li>▪ The relationship between auditor impartiality and anticipation gap.</li> </ul>
<b>External Audit Rotation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Audit rotation in terms of audit partner rotation, and audit firm rotation.</li> </ul>
<b>Provision of Other than Audit Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Views of accounting educators about rendering of audit and non-audit services at the same time.</li> </ul>
<b>Professional Code of Ethics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The impact of auditor's compliance with professional code of ethics on audit anticipation gap.</li> </ul>
<b>Audit Expectation Gap</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The factors that can cause an audit anticipation gap in Sudan.</li> </ul>

Source: Author

### 3.4 Qualitative Data Analysis Technique

Thematic content analysis was applied in order to analyze the qualitative data obtained from targeted respondent interviews. On this basis, Braun et. al. (2012), defined this technique as "A method for systematically identifying, organizing, and offering insight into patterns of meaning, themes, across a dataset". Moreover, it identified six-phases for a successful thematic analysis of the qualitative dataset (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Such phases consist of: (1) “Read the transcripts”, (2) “Annotate the Transcripts”, (3) “Conceptualize the Data”, (4) “Segment the Data”, (5) “Analyze the Segments”, (6) “Write the Results”.

#### 4. Interviews Qualitative Results

As purposive/judgmental sampling was utilized to select interviewees, various factors were taken into consideration in the selection process. In particular, the academic background and level of work experience of auditors, users of financial reports and accounting educators were considered. The professional standing of the audit firms was also taken into account in the selection of the chartered accountants interviewed. All of this is for ensuring that some of the well-known chartered accountants have been reached, in order to get a comprehensive/clear overview of the accounting and auditing profession in Sudan. Special care was also taken into account in selecting the users interviewed. As the emphasis was on selecting key personnel in banks and brokerage firms i.e., Head of banks credit departments, general managers of the brokerage firm...etc. Likewise, accounting educators were chosen based on their teaching interest, with especial stress on those who teach auditing. In addition, the heads of accounting and finance departments for a number of universities were interviewed.

This resulted in 29 interviews with the different target groups. It involved 13 well-known external auditors in Sudan. Furthermore, 7 interviews were conducted with key individuals from brokerage firms, 5 with banks and 4 with accounting educators. The data for the 29 interviews were collected through recording and transcript of the interviews. Specifically, notes were taken during the interviews, along with audio recording. All of this is for facilitating the future referral to the information as well as for more analysis that is precise. Furthermore, the collected data were analyzed in view of the six phases identified in the thematic content analysis. Starting with transcript reading and ending with the presentation of the final results.

Accordingly, the profile of interviewed practicing external auditors, brokerage firms, banks and accounting educators are displayed below respectively;

Table 4. Profile of Practicing External Auditors

Target Respondent	No. of Interviews Conducted	Respondents years of Experience	Respondents Position & Qualification
Practicing External Auditors	13	25	Chartered Accountant (PhD, SCCA, ACCA)
		8	Chartered Accountant) ACCA)
		12	Chartered Accountant (ACCA/CIA)
		50+	Chartered Accountant (ACCA)
		14	Chartered Accountant )ACCA, CISA)
		10+	Chartered Accountant (ACCA)
		25	Chartered Accountant (SCCA, ACCA)
		23	Audit Manager (ACCA & SCCA Second Level)
		14	Chartered Accountant (SCCA)
		20	Chartered Accountant (ACCA)
		19	Chartered Accountant (SCCA)
		8	Chartered Accountant (Audit Partner)
		6	Chartered Accountant (CPA)

Source: Survey

*Note:* As shown in Table 4 above, practicing external auditors who participated in this study have various qualifications i.e., PhD: Chartered accountants hold a Doctor of Philosophy; and some are members of SCCA: Sudan Council of Certified Accountants; ACCA: Association of Chartered Certified Accountants; CIA: Certified Internal Auditor; CISA: Certified Information System Auditor, and CPA: Certified Public Accountant. Furthermore, the majority of participants own the largest audit offices in Khartoum, and audit the accounts of various companies.

Table 5. Profile of Interviewees-Brokerage Firms

Target Respondent	No. of Interviews Conducted	Respondents years of Experience	Respondents Position
Brokerage Firms	7	25	Administrative Manager
		25	General Manager
		18	General Manager
		14	General Manager
		5	Stock Broker
		3	Stock Broker
		25	General Manager

Source: Survey

*Note:* The above table indicates that the interviewees have different experiences. Moreover, some of them are stock brokers, while others are general managers, and administrative managers at the brokerage firm.

Table 6. Profile of Interviewees-Banks

Target Respondent	No. of Interviews Conducted	Respondents years of Experience	Respondents Position
Banks	5		Acting CEO
		25	Bank Loan Officer
		15	Bank Loan Officer
		15	Employee on the Investment Department
		16	Head of Investment Department

Source: Survey

*Note:* The above table shows that bank loan officers vary in their level experience and current position.

Legend: CEO; A Chief Executive Officer.

Table 7. Profile of Interviewees-Accounting Educators

Target Respondent	No. of Interviews Conducted	Respondents years of Experience	Respondents Position
Accounting Educators	4	16	Assistant Professor
		12	Assistant Professor
		7	Associate Professor
		12	Associate Professor

Source: Survey

*Note:* It's clear from the above table that accounting educators who participated in this study, have different years of experience and academic ranks.

## 5. Discussion

The existing literature of audit auditicipation gap lack studies that explore stakeholders' perceptions about the effect of accounting and auditing regulations in a developing country, specifically Sudan, and audit anticipation gap. According to Samuel (2016), "Developing countries, including Sudan, generally don't have a well-established



accounting and auditing profession. They often lack a strong professional accounting body. Furthermore, in those nations, there are no legal requirements to follow the International Standards of Auditing (ISA) between audit firms in conducting audit". In view of that, this study has explored such an effect by asking interviewees about the origin and challenges facing Accounting and Auditing Profession in Sudan. All interviewees were aware about the origin of the profession and have demonstrated the following:

The accounting profession in Sudan is very old. As it is derived from the United Kingdom, even the Companies Law is modeled after the British law. All of these were enacted following the earlier colonial rule during the period 1890s-1953. The Sudan Accounting and Auditing Profession Organization Council (SAAPOC) was established in 2004 as an independent body to organize the accounting and auditing practices in the country. From the period 2004 up to 2005, lots of conflicts occurred inside the council between professionally qualified auditors, and the academicians who hold PhDs.

Such conflicts occurred due to licenses approval. The chartered accountants were against providing licenses to academicians to practice the profession, i.e., they perceive that only professionally qualified individuals should be able to provide audit services. Thus, in 2005 the government intervened and controlled the profession. They set the council under the authority of the Ministry of the Council of Ministers. By this way, it has not been independent at all and the profession faced many shortfalls in terms of:

- Being controlled by non-professionally qualified individuals.
- Non-availability of a quality assurance board to assure audit quality among audit offices.
- No supervision or monitoring is set in place to control audit practices.

Consequently, these adverse effects have resulted in the dissatisfaction of various target groups, and they recognize them as the main contributors to Audit Anticipation Gap (AAG) in Sudan. On this basis, practicing external auditors perceive that one of the main contributors to the Audit Anticipation Gap in Sudan, is absence of a well-developed accounting and auditing profession. Besides that, SAAPOC has created its own regulations, which are not recognized by the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC), and resulted in losing its membership in IFAC. Consequently, a rules and regulations gap existed in the country.

Based on Principle-Agent theory (1976), this study articulates that the governmental bodies are the agent, while the Accounting and Audit Profession (Org) Council (AAPOC) in Sudan, as well as practicing external auditors are the principle. A conflict of interest arise, when the government played the role of self-regulatory body. As they set rules and regulations that over protect their own interest, without considering the self-regulatory policy of auditing profession worldwide. Thus, absence of a self-regulatory framework of auditing profession has been at the expense of various stakeholders.

Furthermore, all target groups perceived that one of the most severe issues is present in the licenses granting process. As Sudan's Accounting & Audit Profession Org Council (SAAPOC) classify practicing external auditors into three categories:

1. **Chartered Accountants** have a professional certificate, and sometimes PhD in accounting with approximately 15+ years of work experience.
2. **Certified Auditors** are those who hold B.Sc. in accounting, and have about 10 years work experience in accounting and auditing.
3. **Auditors with Specific/Limited Permission** have a diploma in accounting, and about 10+ year's work experience.

Based on the above classifications, the council grants practicing external auditors the licenses. However, all practicing external auditors are against these procedures due to the fact that, the council may give licenses to everyone, without taking into consideration their capabilities and level of work experience. Thus, external auditors consider this as a main contributor to variations in audit practices, and results in an Audit Anticipation Gap (AAG). Furthermore, practicing external auditors perceived that granting licenses to everyone in the country creates a performance gap.

On the other hand, interviews outcomes showed that there are significant differences among respondents in the following themes.

### *5.1 Roles & Responsibilities of Practicing External Auditors*

Previous studies have examined the effect of auditor responsibility on audit anticipation gap in a general way, without identifying the various anticipations of users towards external auditors, which may place them in a multi-responsibility situation (e.g. Aminu, 2022, Stephany, 2021, Hassan, 2017).

Thus, this study explored the effect of multi-responsibility external auditor on the audit anticipation gap. In view of that, the interviewees indicated that the roles and responsibilities of practicing external auditors are not as clear to key users of financial statements (stockbrokers & bank loan offices) as they are to the auditors and accounting educators. Due to the fact that, stockbrokers think that the roles and responsibilities of practicing external auditors is to prepare the financial statements, interpret them, and prevent fraud and errors in an audited company.

However, management is mainly responsible to prepare the financial statements, after which they are audited by the external auditor. Moreover, external auditors discover, not prevent, and report fraud and errors within the limits of the selected sample. As they consider that fraud detection and prevention is management responsibility. Furthermore, they articulated that the responsibilities of external auditors consist of: going concern warning, full examination in audit proceed, and provide an absolute assurance that the financial statements are not materially misstated. However, the external auditors take a sample, as appropriate, and not conduct full examination in audit proceeds, as well as provides a reasonable and not complete assurance that the financial statements are not materially misstated. Whereas, the majority of bank loan officers identified some of the secondary roles of external auditors i.e., assessing the soundness of the internal control system of an audited entity. Similar to stockbrokers, they are not aware about the primary role of practicing external auditors.

In turn, all these place external auditors in a multi-responsibility situation and results in a huge audit anticipation gap between practicing external auditors, key users of financial statements, and accounting educators. This is revealed by role conflict theory which stated that “A role conflict may arise when the auditor is unable to satisfy all the responsibilities anticipated by users” (Lirtzman, 1970).

### *5.2 Users Knowledge and Experience*

Among the various causes of “Audit AnticipationGap” which is most commonly studied is accounting knowledge and experience. However, many studies have provided empirical evidence that knowledge and experience of users of financial reports are the main determinants of the “Audit AnticipationGap”. Thus, this study explored such an issue by postulating that accounting education, accounting-related work experience can mitigate the negative anticipations of users of financial reports towards the auditing profession.

In view of that, interviewees’ responses indicated that key users of financial statements lack the necessary knowledge and experience in accounting and auditing, in comparison to practicing external auditors. In turn, this magnifies their anticipations, and contributes to an audit anticipation gap. Whereas, stockbrokers have a general idea about the audit process, but they are unaware about its implementation. While the majority of bankers were not even able to identify the objectives of auditing and the audit process. According to the attribution theory “Users rely on their knowledge and experience to explain an event and form a causal judgment”. This study revealed that users accounting qualification and accounting related work experience influence their perception about auditing profession. i.e. The more knowledgeable and educated users about the duties and responsibilities of the auditor, the more they will make proper judgments in any event related to accounting and auditing. In this way, unreasonable expectations from the public is reduced.

### *5.3 Standard External Audit Process*

The existing literature on Audit AnticipationGap consist of few studies which have assessed the link between structured audit methodologies and Audit AnticipationGap (Begona, 2021, Charles 2013, Boritz et al, 1987, Purvis, 1989). These studies suggest the existence of a strong link between lack of structured audit methodologies and low Audit AnticipationGap. However, such studies are too narrow, as they didn’t clarify the phases of structured audit methodology that should be followed by audit firms. Even though, there is a dearth of studies on evaluating the effect of using a standard external audit process, between audit firms and audit anticipation gap. Which could lead to a successful and effective external audit and improve audit quality. On this basis, the IAASB revealed that “Audit quality encompasses the key elements i.e. Applying a rigorous standard external audit process, that create an environment which maximizes the likelihood that quality audits are performed on a consistent basis”. Consequently, the prescribed relationship is revealed in this study based on the adaption of standard external audit process identified by International Standards of Auditing (e.g. ISA 300, ISA700). On this basis, the study found that all practicing external auditors are aware about the audit process. As the majority of audit offices in Sudan, follow the International

Standards of Auditing which are known worldwide. Therefore, external auditors perceive that following a “Standard External Audit Process” is not a contributor to the gap in Sudan. While, lack of “Users knowledge and Experience” about the objectives of auditing and the audit process, leads to an audit anticipation gap in the country.

5.4 Various Challenges of Accounting and Auditing Profession in the Country

Stockbrokers view the performance of external auditors as quite good. Whereas, all interviewed bankers and accounting educators indicated that auditor’s performance is very weak, which creates an anticipation gap between them and the external auditor. In this regard, bankers demonstrated that the majority of practicing external auditors, are not aware about the complexity of banks operations. All of which result in a deficiency in their performance, as well as the observations they provide to the banks. Furthermore, both bankers and stock brokers indicated that the majority of audit office staff, lack auditing experience and they are not well trained. This is reflected in the audit team, which consist of fresh graduates at all times. In turn, this creates a deficiency in their performance, and the resulting audit process.

On the other hand, stock brokers indicated that lack of well-trained and sufficient qualified auditors at audit offices, contributes to the accounting profession weaknesses. Hence, a qualification gap exists. Whereas, accounting educators demonstrated that there are variations in accounting curriculum among the universities in Sudan, as well as few universities have an accounting software that complement their courses. Thus, the majority of accounting graduates miss the practical side. In turn, this contributes to the profession weaknesses. Thus, an Educational/practical gap exist. After taking into consideration the views of the various groups’ about the weaknesses of the profession, it is clear that communication gaps exist between them. Thus, figure 1 below, presents the gaps that were identified in this study.

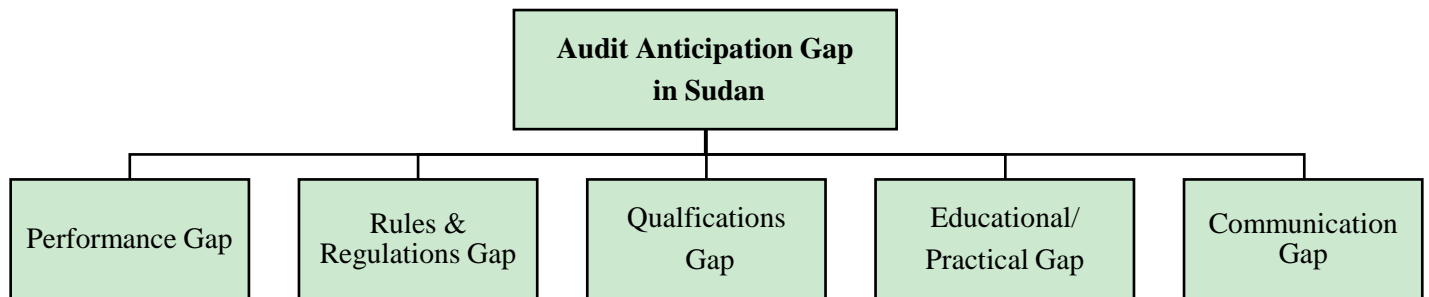


Figure 1. Contributors of AAG in Sudan

Source: Prepared by Author

The above figure summaries Sudan’s accounting and auditing profession shortfalls, which were identified by the interviewees of this study.

5.5 Rendering of Non-Audit Services

The existing literature of the effect of non-audit services on “Audit Anticipation Gap” is scarce. Therefore, this study explored the influence of rendering non-audit services on such a gap. In this regard, the study found that practicing external auditors in Sudan render various non-audit services:

- Taxation services.
- Various consultation services.
- Capital restructuring.
- Risk management, financial advice...etc.

Furthermore, practicing external auditors, bankers and accounting educators agreed that the provision of non-audit services besides audit services, results in an audit anticipation gap in the country. Due to the fact that, the provision of these services may require special relationships, which may affect auditor's independence in carrying out his task and undermine audit quality. According to role conflict theory (1970), “The auditors are placed in a multi-role and multi expectation situations, which must be balanced against professional regulations that governs auditor

independence”. Hence, a role conflict may arise. Conversely, stockbrokers perceive the opposite. They think that rendering both services at the same time, will not lead to the gap.

#### *5.6 Auditor Independence in Fact & Appearance*

The continuous doubt about the independence of practicing external auditors, has captured public interest on understanding how it affects “Audit Anticipation Gap” (Begona, 2021, Fedaa, 2017). Thus, the ISA (210) requires the external auditor to confirm the degree of auditor independence, before accepting any engagements. Therefore, he/she is professionally required to work independently from his/her client to make a proper judgment on the books of accounts. In this context, previous studies have revealed the effect of auditor independence on “Audit Anticipation Gap” (Begona, 2021, Fedaa, 2017, Judit, 2017, Klaus et al. 2014, Ramon, 2014). Such studies are too broad in examining such an effect. As they didn’t explore the specific influence of external auditor independence in fact and appearance on Audit Anticipation Gap. Thus, this study has explored such an effect.

In this regard, all interviewed target groups (practicing external auditors, brokers & bankers, and accounting educators) have the same point of view with regard to auditor’s independence. They perceive that auditor’s independence in fact and in appearance leads to an “Audit Anticipation Gap” in Sudan, because key users of financial statements considered that practicing external auditors vary in their level of independence. According to the theory of inspired confidence (Limperg, 1932), “The auditor derives his general function in society from the need for an expert and an independent opinion based on that examination”. Thus, this study argues that, the external auditor should be independent in fact and appearance, to act as a confidential agent for the society.

#### *5.7 External Audit Rotation*

The existing literature of “Audit Anticipation Gap” lack studies which evaluate the effect of external audit rotation on such a gap. Based on the principal-agent theory (1976), this study articulated that auditor independence reduces the probability of his collaborating with management against the company's target group, by having his impartiality compromised, thus filing unfounded reports. Hence, reducing the conflict of interest that may arise between auditors and users of financial reports.

In this regard, the study found that external audit rotation is mandated every three years in Sudan’s banking sector, insurance companies and public companies. The most widely applied method is audit partner rotation. Furthermore, all target groups consider that absence of audit rotation in the other business sectors leads to an AAG.

#### *5.8 Audit Report*

Several studies have investigated the influence of audit report on the “Audit Anticipation Gap” (Yuqi, 2021 Hasan et al., 2018, George et al., 2016). These studies stated that audit anticipation gap could be reduced through the introduction of “long form” audit report, with the aim of educating users about the function of audit, and provide details about auditor’s role and responsibility. In this regard, a new standard which is ISA (701) “Communicating Key Audit Matters in the Independent Auditor's Report” was established to indicate the necessity of communicating the key audit matters (KAM) in auditor’s report. Where Key audit matters could be defined as, “Those matters that, in the auditor’s judgment were of most significance in the audit of the current-period financial statements” (IAASB, 2015).

Therefore, this study has explored the new audit report, with regard to communicating the key audit matters and its effect on closing the anticipation gap. In view of that, interview results revealed that most of key users are unaware about the new developments in the audit report. However, they consider the general structure of the report as good. Moreover, interviewees revealed that non-accountants or anyone who does not have an accounting background may not understand its contents. On this basis, all interviewees view that misunderstanding the report, has a substantial impact on decision making usefulness.

#### *5.9 Main Factors That Contribute to Audit Anticipation Gap (AAG) in Sudan*

Following all what has been discussed in the interviews, respondents were asked to give their views about the factors that cause Audit Anticipation Gap in Sudan. The responses of interviewees were as follows:

- Absence of a regulatory body and laws, which govern the profession.
- Lack of public awareness about the roles and responsibilities of external auditors. As most people think that an auditor is like a policeman.
- Owners of companies have very weak knowledge on accounting and auditing, which raises their expectations towards auditor’s performance.

- Scarcity of qualified accountants and auditors in Sudan.
- Absence of continuous training and professional development.
- Lack of supervision, and most importantly weak and undeveloped Accounting and Auditing Organization Council.
- The financial culture of Sudan is very weak in accordance with the basics of accounting and auditing, which in turn increases the gap.
- Non-uniformity of accounting standards among audit offices.
- Non-compliance and implementation of corporate governance.
- Political and Economic factors affect the gap.
- Ineffective connection between audited entity internal auditor, and the external auditor.
- Deficiency in published financial reports.
- Absence of mandatory financial disclosure, among the various economic sectors is a main contributor to the gap.

## 6. Conclusions & General Prescriptions

This study has examined the occurrence, causes, and consequent effects of audit anticipation gap in Sudan. In this regard, research findings provided sufficient evidence about its occurrence, the different factors that contributed to the gap, and their resultant effects in key user's decision usefulness.

The following are prescriptions derived from the analysis of the research findings:

- Sudan's Accounting and Auditing Profession Organization Council (SAAPOC), should maintain its independence from external parties with conflicting interests. On this basis, it must be regulated and monitored by professionally qualified auditors.
- Proper rules and regulations must be set in place, in order to govern audit practices in the country.
- Policy makers and practicing external auditors should take serious actions towards regulating the auditing profession, and bringing it at par with international accounting and auditing practices.
- Besides that, they should identify the possible ways to regain professional recognition from the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC).
- Steps should be taken towards setting a quality assurance board, in order to assure audit quality among audit offices in Sudan.
- Practicing external auditors must exert extra efforts to understand community needs meeting their anticipations, and continuous development of the auditing profession.
- External audit rotation must be forced in all sectors, in order to avoid familiarity threat, enhance auditor's independence, and decrease the resulting anticipation gap.
- Sudan's Accounting and Auditing Profession Organization Council (SAAPOC) should take steps to enhance external auditor's independence through stringent standards.
- Accounting educators should work towards enhancing accounting and auditing education in Sudanese universities, by complementing its curriculum with practice-oriented modules to enhance the graduates' practical performance.
- Regulatory bodies should consider alternative ways to educate users of financial statements about the objective of auditing, roles and responsibilities of auditors, and the audit process.
- Audit offices should continuously provide training to their team, in order to enhance their performance and update them with professional developments.
- Activate or create a new code of professional ethics in order to meet Sudanese needs. Furthermore, all laws and regulations related to oversight over the auditing profession in Sudan, should be evaluated and updated in order to bring the profession to a world-class status.

On the other hand, the results obtained from the current study indicate the need for future research. Thus, the following are the possible areas to be explored by future research:

First, assess the perceptions of practicing external auditors, preparers of financial statements, and private investors about audit anticipation gap in Sudan. Second, evaluate the existence of an anticipation gap between practicing external auditors, and taxation authority. Third, investigate the effects of audit quality upon the audit anticipation gap. Fourth, a comparative study can be conducted comparing current study results, with similar studies in other developing countries. Fifth, more studies can be conducted with a focus on the new audit report about the inclusion of key audit matters in the report, and their effect on narrowing the audit anticipation gap.

## References

- Akther, T., *et al.* (2020). Existence of the audit expectation gap and its impact on stakeholders' confidence: The moderating role of the Financial Reporting Council. *International Journal of Financial Studies*, 8(1), 4. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijfs8010004>
- Aminu, *et al.* (2021). Reliability Factors and Audit Expectation Gap in Listed Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. *Journal of Management Sciences*, 10(2), 29-38. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/354061518>
- Aminu, *et al.* (2022). Decision Usefulness Factors as a Determinant of Audit Expectation Gap in Listed Deposit Money Banks in Nigeria. *International Journal of Innovative Research in Accounting and Sustainability*, 6(2), 66-83. Retrieved from <https://ijiras.org>
- Badara, M. S., *et al.* (2013). The journey so far on internal audit effectiveness: A calling for expansion. *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting, Finance and Management Sciences*, 3(3), 240-351. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v3-i3/225>
- Begoña *et al.* (2021). The audit expectation gap and strengthened independence standards in the European Union: measuring the effects of the new EU Directive. *Accounting Forum*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01559982.2021.1954359>
- Boritz, J. E., *et al.* (1987). An Experimental Study of Review of Preliminary Audit Strategies by External Auditors. *Canadian Academic Accounting Association*, Canada. Retrieved from <https://search.library.utoronto.ca/details?987010&uuid=30ea2ca1-416f-43c4-be99-14022c0f93db>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2012). Thematic analysis. In Cooper, H. M. (Ed.), *APA handbook of research methods in psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 57-71). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/13620-004>
- Braun, V., *et al.* (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77-101. Retrieved from <http://eprints.uwe.ac.uk/11735>
- Davidson, L. (1975). The role and responsibilities of the auditor: perspective, expectations and analysis: A research paper for the commission on auditors' responsibilities. Responsibility Rhetoric. *Journal of Business Ethics*, Spring.
- Dewi, *et al.* (2021). Banking sector lack detection: Expectation gap between auditors and bankers. *Accounting*, 7(6), 1353-1362. <https://doi.org/10.5267/j.ac.2021.4.002>
- El Nashar, *et al.* (2020). Internal Audit Expectation Gap and Auditing around the Computer. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3528088>
- Elad Fotoh, L., & Lorentzon, J. I. (2022). Audit digitalization and its consequences on the audit expectation gap: A critical perspective. *Accounting Horizons*.
- Fedaa Abed Almajid. (2017). The Role and Impact of Corporate Governance on Narrowing the Expectations Gap between the External Auditor and the Financial Community (A Practical Study of a Sample of External Audit Offices and Companies Invested in Iraq) (Case Study in Iraq). *American Scientific Research Journal for Engineering, Technology, & Sciences*, 33(1), 305-327. Retrieved from [http://asrjetsjournal.org/index.php/American\\_Scientific\\_Journal/article/viewFile/3183/1198](http://asrjetsjournal.org/index.php/American_Scientific_Journal/article/viewFile/3183/1198)
- Fiske, S. T., *et al.* (1991). *Social cognition* (2nd ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley. Retrieved from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/work/18680805>
- Füredi-Fülöp, J. (2017). Factors Leading to Audit Expectation Gap: An Empirical Study in a Hungarian Context. *'Club of Economics in Miskolc' TMP*, 13(2), 13-23. <https://doi.org/10.18096/TMP.2017.02.02>
- George, *et al.* (2016). Is Audit Education also accountable for the Audit Expectation Gap? Results from University students. Retrieved from [events.unifr.ch/eufin16/Papers/Paper\\_9.pdf](https://events.unifr.ch/eufin16/Papers/Paper_9.pdf)

- Goddard, F., et al.. (2020). Attributes Influencing Clients' Auditor Choices: The Expectation Gaps between Auditors and Board Members. *Current Issues in Auditing*, 30(8), 1-22, <https://doi.org/10.2308/ciia-19-026>
- Hasan, et al.. (2018). How to Bridge the Audit Expectation Gap?. *Journal of Social Sciences (COES&RJ-JSS)*, 7(2), 61-73. <https://doi.org/10.25255/jss.2018.7.2.61.73>
- Hasen Mohamed. A. Albeksh. (2017). The Role of Auditing Quality in Narrowing the Expectations Gap in Auditing Profession. *International Journal of Advanced Research*, 5(1), 1585-1597. <https://doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/2924>
- He, Y.-Q. (2021). The Report of the Audit Expectation Gap and Audit Market. *Universe Scientific Publishing*, 3(1), 1353-1362, <https://doi.org/10.18686/aat.v3i1.1371>
- Jabbar, N. S. (2018). The Implications of Internal and External Auditing Integration on the Auditing Performance and its Impact on the Expectation Gap: An Exploratory Study in the Iraqi Environment. *Academy of Accounting and Financial Studies Journal*, 22(3), 1-15. Retrieved from <https://www.abacademies.org/articles/1528-2635-22-3-223.pdf>
- Jensen, M. C., & Meckling, W. (1976). Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure. *J. Finance. Econ.*, 3, 305-360. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405X\(76\)90026-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405X(76)90026-X)
- Kamal, et al.. (2016). The effect of the non-complying of the external auditor with the rules and ethics and conduct of the audit profession to narrow the expectations gap in the audit. *Academic Journal of Elemam AL Mahdi University*, 12(8), 83-109. Retrieved from [http://mmacpanel.mahdi.edu.sd/includes/magazines/pdf/1\\_8\\_4.pdf](http://mmacpanel.mahdi.edu.sd/includes/magazines/pdf/1_8_4.pdf)
- Kelley, H. H. (1973). The processes of causal attribution. *American Psychologist*, 28(2), 107-128. Retrieved from <http://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1037/h0034225>
- Klaus, et al.. (2014). The audit expectation gap: existence, causes, and the impact of changes. *Accounting and Business Research*, 2(7), 10-30. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00014788.2014.929519>
- Koo, C. M., et al.. (1999). On The Role Conflict of Auditors in Korea. *Accounting, Auditing and Accountability Journal*, 12(2), 206-219. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513579910270110>
- Kukreja, G. (2018). The Determinants of Audit Expectation Gap: An Empirical Study from Kingdom of Bahrain. *Accounting and Finance Research*. <https://doi.org/10.5430/afr.v7n3p54>
- Kumari, J. S., et al.. (2017). The Audit Expectations Gap and the Role of Audit Education: Evidence from Sri Lanka. *Vidyodaya Journal of Management*, 3(1), 1-26. Retrieved from <http://mgt.sjp.ac.lk/vjm/wp-content/uploads>
- Limperg, T. (1932). The social Responsibility of the Auditor. The New Zealand: Limperg Institute. Retrieved from [http://www.ikiu.ac.ir/public-files/profiles/items/090ad\\_1424503223.pdf](http://www.ikiu.ac.ir/public-files/profiles/items/090ad_1424503223.pdf)
- Mills, S., et al.. (2012). Ritual and conflict in the audit profession. *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, 3(2), 185-200. [https://doi.org/10.1016/1045-2354\(92\)90010-O](https://doi.org/10.1016/1045-2354(92)90010-O)
- Mohamed, et al.. (2017). The Audit Expectation Gap: Does Accountability Matter?. *Proceedings of ISERD International Conference*, Stockholm, Sweden, 6th-7th July 2017, pp. 7-16. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328886496\\_THE\\_AUDIT\\_EXPECTATION\\_GAP\\_DOES\\_ACCOUNTABILITY\\_MATTER](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328886496_THE_AUDIT_EXPECTATION_GAP_DOES_ACCOUNTABILITY_MATTER)
- Muazu Saidu Badara. (2017). The Relevant of Contingency Theory and Stewardship Theory on the Internal Audit Research. *Journal of World Economic Research*, 6(2), 17-22. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.jwer.20170602.11>
- Najeb Masoud. (2017). An Empirical Study of Audit Expectation-Performance Gap: The Case of Libya. *Research in International Business and Finance*, 3(4), 112-118. Retrieved from <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0275531916301088>
- Nasrallah, W. F., et al.. (2009). Comparing multi-dimensional contingency fit to financial performance of organizations. *European Journal of Operational Research*, 194(3), 911-921. Retrieved from <http://hdl.handle.net/10938/14715>
- Olojede, P., et al.. (2020). Audit expectation gap: an empirical analysis. *Future Business Journal*, 6, 1-12. Retrieved from <https://fbj.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s43093-020-00016-x>
- Omer, et al.. (2015). Analytical Study for the Relationship Between Audit Committee and Narrowing the Audit Expectation Gap in Auditing Environment in Sudan. *Egypt. J. of Appl. Sci*, 30(8), 345-368. Retrieved from [www.aam-web.com/.../70134](http://www.aam-web.com/.../70134)

- Omodero, & Okafor, M. C. (2020). Audit Education as an Effective Tool for Narrowing Audit Expectation Gap: Evidence from Literature Review. *Journal of Educational and Social Research*, 10(5), 240-240.
- Onulaka, P. N., & Samy, M. (2017). Influence of Self-Regulatory Policy of Auditing Profession on Audit Expectation Gap: A Qualitative Methodological Approach. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(1), 96-104. <https://doi.org/10.5901/mjss.2017.v8n1p96>
- Philmore Alvin Alleyne, *et al.*. (2006). Perceptions of auditor independence in Barbados. *Managerial Auditing Journal*, 21(6), 621-635. <https://doi.org/10.1108/02686900610674898>
- Purvis, C. (1989). The effect of audit documentation format on data collection. *Accounting, Organizations and society*, 14(5-6), 551-563. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682\(89\)90018-4](https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682(89)90018-4)
- Ramlugun, V. G. (2014). Audit Expectation Gap: Evidence from Mauritius. *Res. J. Econ. Bus. Stud.*, 3(5), 18-28. Retrieved from [http://www.worldbank.org/ifa/rosc\\_aa\\_mauritius2011.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/ifa/rosc_aa_mauritius2011.pdf)
- Rien, A. F. (2014). Audit Expectation Gap and its Implication on Credit Decision Making. *International Journal of Scientific & Technology Research*, 3(2), 250-257. <http://www.ijstr.org/final-print/feb2014/Audit-Expectation-Gap-And-Its-Implication-On-Credit-Decision-Making.pdf>
- Rizzo, J. R., *et al.*. (1970). Role Conflict and Ambiguity in Complex Organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 15(2), 150-163. Retrieved from <https://www.jstor.org/stable/2391486>
- Safiyanu Sule, *et al.*. (2019). Users' Perceptions on Auditors' Responsibilities for Fraud Prevention, Detection and Audit Expectation GAP in Nigeria. *Asian Journal of Economics, Business and Accounting* 10(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.9734/AJEBA/2019/46832>
- Samuel. (2016). Accounting for a Developing World: A look at International Standards on Developing Countries. University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects. Retrieved from [https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk\\_chanhonoproj/1986](https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/1986)
- Saunders, M., *et al.*. (2007). *Research methods for business students* (4th ed.). London: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Uma Sekaran, *et al.*. (2016). *Research methods for business*. John Wiley & Sons, Printer Trento Srl., 7(9781119165552), 1-447. Retrieved from <http://lccn.loc.gov/2015051045>
- Wass, V. J., *et al.*. (1994). *Principles and practice in business and management research*. UK: Dartmouth, Brookfield.
- Woodward, J. (1958). *Contingency Theory, Management and Technology*. London: HM Stationery Off. Retrieved from [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contingency\\_theory](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Contingency_theory)
- Zelli, S. F. *et al.*. (2021). Bridging Management and Financial Accounting Discourses of Auditing Expectation Gap in Brazil. *Manag Econ Res J*, 7(1), 22017. <https://doi.org/10.18639/MERJ.2021.9900038>

### Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).