## EFFECT OF FORENSIC ACCOUNTING SKILLS ON FRAUD MANAGEMENT OF SELECTED FEDERAL MINISTRIES, DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES (MDAs) IN NIGERIA

**Abstract**

**Aim:** The growing level of fraud in Nigeria has created the need for the use of forensic accounting skills in fraud management. Many studies were necessitated for this study on the effect of forensic accounting skills on the fraud management of selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria.

**Methodology**: Forensic accounting skills are an independent variable, proxied by accounting and auditing skills and forensic investigation skills, while fraud management is a dependent variable. The study used primary sources of data, which were drawn from the four selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies with the help of five-point Likert scales and structured closed-ended questionnaire options. The study was underpinned by both profession theory and fraud pentagon theory. The SPSS version 25 software statistical package was used for the coding of the questionnaire and data analysis for running both descriptive statistics, correlation, and multiple regression.

**Results**: The regression results indicated that accounting and auditing skills (AAS) and forensic investigation skills (FIS) have a positive and significant effect on the fraud management of selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. This implies that any unit increase in both accounting and auditing skills and forensic investigation skills will also result in a unit increase in the fraud management of federal ministries, departments, and agencies in Nigeria.

**Recommendations:** The study recommended that the government should provide avenues for training forensic accounting experts. Through the effective performance of forensic accountants in the country, the Nigerian government can restore its integrity both locally and internationally.

**Keywords**: accounting skills, auditing skills, forensic investigation skills, forensic accounting, fraud management, and regressions.

**1. Introduction**

Fraud is a human desire to achieve personal interests and has been draining the economies of nations. The Enron Saga revealed that its officers had used creative accounting practices to conceal about $600 million in net losses over a period of three years (1997–2000), which led to a crisis of confidence in the United States stock market. WorldCom, another American giant, used creative accounting to reclassify and amortize revenue expenses amounting to $3.85 billion over a long period of time; consequently, the company went bankrupt. There are many corporate entities misadventures typified by such practices as using doubtful and questionable accounting practices to conceal huge losses, concealing extensive borrowing by keeping them off the balance sheet, and consequently overall fraudulent reporting (Moses, 2019). In Nigeria, the cases of Cadbury Nigeria Plc, Afribank Nigeria Plc, NAMPAK, Oceanic Bank Nigeria Plc, and African Petroleum Plc were relatively caused by massive fraud (Bello et al., 2022). The growing level of fraud in Nigeria creates the need for the use of forensic accounting skills in fraud management. There has also been an increase in financial misappropriation in government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDA) in Nigeria (Ahmed et al., 2020). The capacity of forensic accountants to carry out a forensic audit is viewed as a forensic investigative skill. In order to obtain audit evidence that will be used to support legal proceedings in court or other legal requirements, it is an audit action that combines the expertise of accounting, auditing, and legal regulations. A forensic audit is conducted to support the process of legal expertise for experts testifying in court (Sumartono et al., 2020). The daily operational activities of government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) are also evaluated, monitored, and measured in monetary terms (financial statements). This includes the recognition of personnel, production, capital, recurring, and overhead expenditures. Employees' fraudulent intentions to satisfy personal ambitions may cloud the recording of these transactions. As fraudsters use a variety of techniques to commit fraud, organizations are deploying anti-fraud techniques to detect these fraudulent patterns (Okoye et al., 2020).

In Nigeria, the public sector (particularly in the federal MDAs) drives economic growth because it is the primary source of capital formation (Okoye et al., 2013). Fraud causes reputational damage, which can affect any organization; virtually all sectors of the Nigerian government are vulnerable to it because they all rely on public funds to be profitable and solvent. The growing trend of personnel manipulating financial statements to conceal their pathways in order to protect their infamous activities for personal or managerial gain is cause for concern, necessitating the implementation of necessary mechanisms or controls to stop this cancerous behavior in the system, as they will always try to compromise the accounting system. These motives are frequently carried out through a variety of methods or schemes, whether in revenue recognition or expense classification or recognition (Okafor et al., 2020; Olaniyan et al., 2021; and Ewa et al., 2022). As a result of these criminal acts, Nigeria's corruption perception ranking has suffered, resulting in a drop in investment in Nigeria, which has a negative impact on economic growth (Okoye et al., 2013; Ewa, 2022). According to the 2022 corruption perception index by the Transparency International Corruption Index, Nigeria ranked 150th out of 180 countries listed. Several alarming and scandalous cases of fraud have occurred in Nigeria in the last ten years, including the 195 billion Maina pension scam, the $6 billion fuel subsidy, and the $20 billion missing from the NNPC and CBN accounts (Agbata et al., 2022).

Forensic evidence or documents to be used in court have been incorporated into accounting and finance due to the high level of financial crimes around the world. Once there is any suspicious fraud or fraud is perceived or detected, a professional set of people (the forensic accountants) are called upon to help discover the fraud and provide management with enough evidence for proper fraud management to be taken (Okafor et al., 2016; Olaniyan et al., 2021). As a result, exposing and addressing these dishonest and illegal financial flows necessitates the establishment of relevant and effective control mechanisms. Financial misappropriation, income leakages, budget padding, and money laundering are all components of fraud and other corrupt practices in government MDAs, necessitating the use of forensic accounting skills (Okafor et al., 2016; Olaniyan et al., 2021). Based on the foregoing, there is a need for more empirical work on Nigerian MDAs; thus, the current study will supplement existing empirical work with a focus on the effect of forensic accounting skills on the fraud management of selected Federal Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria.

**2. Literature Review**

**2.1 Conceptual Framework**

**2.1.1 Fraud Management**

Fraud management is a framework of coordinated actions put in place by organizations to improve fraud prevention, detection, and the time it takes to respond appropriately to fraud cases (Ewa et al., 2022). Fraud management includes fraud detection as a critical component. According to Bangura (2020), techniques for detecting fraud are actions and plans put in place to find actual or potential fraud in an organization. A company's anti-fraud strategy should include fraud detection in order to identify and stop fraud activity and its effects as soon as possible. This will help the organization's going concern as well as safeguard the interests of its stakeholders through an efficient fraud detection strategy. Both fraud prevention and detection have important roles to play, and it is unlikely that either one would be very effective on its own (Adebayo et al., 2022). Similar findings were made by KPMG (2014), who found that the best methods for spotting fraud are personnel reorganization, whistleblowing, and a surprise internal audit review. According to Hussaini et al. (2019), most fraud cases go undetected because employees are reluctant to report them to organizations. Therefore, fraud prevention strategies can guarantee an organization's continuity and stability.

#### **2.1.2 Forensic Accounting Skills**

According to Oyedokun (2017), forensic accounting is a scientific accounting method for uncovering, analyzing, resolving, and preventing fraud and white-collar crime matters in a way that generates admissible evidence that is capable of proving or disproving facts in issue suitable for a court of law. According to Asaolu et al. (2020), forensic accounting differs from other approaches, such as auditing, investigating, and inquiry. Finding hidden information that is crucial for a thorough investigation of economic crimes is one of forensic accounting's strengths, with the use of forensic technology to supplement traditional accounting tools like trend analysis, ratio analysis, fund flow analysis, and cash movement analysis. Similar to this, Sudhir & Sushama (2013) explained that modern forensic accountants have the technology to obtain, sort, and analyze data, as well as quantify and stratify results using computer audits and other techniques in cases involving significant amounts of data. Benford's law, the relative size factor, computer-assisted audit tools, data mining, and investigative techniques are a few of the forensic accounting methods used to look into fraud (Oyedokun, 2015).

##### **2.1.2.1 Accounting and Auditing Skills (AAS)**

According to Abdinasir (2017), the auditor's opinion improves the accuracy and legitimacy of financial statements and reports. As a result, auditors must conduct their work impartially and independently. Additionally, according to Alazzabi et al. (2020), auditors should conduct audits free from conflicts of interest and without regard to any competing or mutual interests. The examination and verification procedures make sure that financial reporting is accurate, accountable, and in compliance with current accounting and auditing laws. In order to improve performance, MDAs can reduce waste and increase efficiency with the help of effective forensic auditing's insightful recommendations (Demeke et al., 2020). Due to the independence of forensic auditors, MDAs are to create an environment where moral behavior, forthrightness, honesty, and accountability are valued through the use of auditing skills, which helps reduce fraud. According to Kosgey & Solomon (2022), fraud happens when an offender makes false statements in order to defraud a victim of money or other valuables. Evidently, the scandals, frauds, and failures have contributed to the users of financial statements losing faith in the ability of public accounting to provide workable solutions to financial problems and have increased demand for forensic accountants.

**2.1.2.2 Forensic Investigation Skills**

The act of conducting an investigation, carrying one out, or being investigated is known as investigation skills. According to Okoye et al. (2020), it is a thorough investigation used to gather facts, which is an essential component of the forensic accounting and auditing processes, but it is only used in cases where the event or transaction is murky. To determine who is accountable, the reason for the action, and the scope of any damage, it is done once a lapse has been identified, which could occur through thorough investigation and clarification of any questions you might have regarding a transaction or event. Finding the hidden, unusual, or complex facts pertaining to an event involves searching and examining its specifics. To determine if and why the keeping of the records resulted in a gap and the accountable party, a deliberate search and review of the records must be conducted in accordance with the established and agreed-upon policies (Oyedokun, 2015; Tapang and Ihendinihu, 2020; Madu-Chimau et al., 2020).

Forensic investigation is the use of specialized investigative techniques to carry out an inquiry in such a way that the results will be admissible in court. Accounting, medicine, engineering, or some other field of study is the foundation for forensic investigators (Oyedokun, 2015). The process of examining evidence to ascertain whether it complies with predetermined standards in a way that is acceptable to the court is known as forensic investigation. A forensic audit of sales records to ascertain the amount of rent due under a lease agreement that is the subject of litigation would serve as an example. When discussing the methodology to be used by forensic auditors and fraud investigators (Oyedokun, 2015), Madu-Chimau et al. (2020) suggest that the examination could be approached from both the angles of whether the fraud could have occurred and whether it could not have occurred.

**2.2       Theoretical Framework**

The study was underpinned by two theories, namely, profession theory and fraud pentagon theory.

**2.2.1 Profession Theory**

The concept of matching jobs to abilities, skills, and personalities was created by Frank Parsons, who explained that individuals work best in positions that best utilize their skills. The idea for career training, credited to its creator, Frank Parsons, was that a talent-matching strategy served as the foundation for the trait and factor theory of occupational choice, which was later refined by the idea of matching, which sits at the heart of Parsons' theory. According to Parsons, people make occupational decisions when they have an appropriate comprehension of their unique traits (cognitive skills, preferences, and personal attributes), knowledge of jobs and the labor market, and a rational and objective assessment of how their personal attributes and the labor market interact (Agbaje & Adeniran, 2017). Pollock & Amernic (1981) explain that profession theory offers an assessment model for comprehending the traits, features, and organizational elements of forensic accounting. Hence, the theory of profession is defined as the authority and credibility given by the community to the profession in terms of defending the public interest, where professionals learn a set of skills tied to the primary demands and principles of society and the accounting system. They added that professionals are supposed to put people's interests ahead of their own or their customers' interests when providing their services. Hence, they are obligated to go beyond their material motivations; financial specialists are seen as a device to preserve the public good. It offers an effective framework for describing the features and duties of forensic accounting that is in accordance with the standards and credentials needed to work in the field of forensic accounting (Kaoje et al., 2020).

**2.2.2 Fraud Pentagon Theory**

The current theory of fraud was propounded by Crowe Horwart in 2011 and is known as Crowe’s Fraud Pentagon Theory. But it was Jonathan T. Marks, a partner at Crowe Horwart, who argued there are two more elements of fraud, namely competence and arrogance. The competence element has the same meaning as capability, which was previously identified in the fraud diamond theory as ignoring internal control, developing a strategy to conceal fraudulent acts, and controlling the social situation for his or her benefit. Also, arrogance refers to the superiority attitude toward having special rights and the thought that an organization's internal control does not apply to them personally (Ewa, 2022). It contributes to the development of fraud management theory by trying to shed more light on the key factors that play a major role in whether fraud will actually occur and developing a model that will serve as a theoretical benchmark for all future reference.

**2.3       Empirical Review**

**2.3.1 Accounting and Auditing Skills (AAC)** **and Fraud Management (FMGT)**

Ewa (2022) looked into accounting ratios and trend analysis tools. The study used a survey research design. The adoption of forensic accounting tools (accounting ratios and trend analysis), according to the study using the multiple regression analysis technique (OLS), will significantly improve the ability to identify and/or prevent fraud in MDAs.

Olaniyan et al. (2021) evaluated the impact of financial accounting on fraud detection and prevention in Nigerian MDAs and specifically examined. The policeman theory, white collar theory, and fraud diamond theory are the underlying assumptions of this study, while a questionnaire of primary data was used for the period of 10 years from 2010 to 2010, both years inclusive. The survey design used a cross-sectional approach. Data collection from the Integrated Personnel Payroll Information System and the Office of the Accountant General of Federation staff involved the use of questionnaires. The sample size for the study was 75 questionnaires, which were used for the analyses of the mean and standard deviation, descriptive statistics, and regression analysis. Findings showed that financial accounting has a big impact on preventing and detecting fraud.

Ugbede et al. (2021) investigated the effectiveness of forensic accounting as a tool for fraud prevention. The goal of the study is to determine how well accounting expertise can catch money-deposit fraud. Secondary data were adopted, and the population of a few chosen employees of money deposit banks was used to determine the sample size, which came to 120. The sample sizes were chosen using the stratified sampling technique, and the primary method of gathering data was through questionnaires, which were then subjected to descriptive statistics analysis. The findings indicated that the use of forensic accounting mechanisms and services, which have been deemed the most effective methods, should be encouraged at all levels of money deposit bank activities.

Farah et al. (2021) investigated the connection between forensic accounting expertise and the detection of money laundering activities. The descriptive statistic shows that the analysts value auditing abilities highly. The multiple regression analysis of 134 data points obtained from the transaction monitoring analysts revealed a strong correlation between the ability to identify money laundering activities and auditing skills.

Sumartono et al. (2020) studied the effect of financial accounting knowledge and fraud in the public sector in Indonesia. Quantitative strategy and survey research design were used for data collection through the questionnaires from the Audit Board of the Republic of Indonesia (BPK RI) for this study. A descriptive survey can be considered appropriate because 44 respondents in total returned the questionnaires. The findings showed that forensic accountants' abilities to identify fraud in the public sector were significantly and negatively impacted by business skills, while they were significantly and positively impacted by investigative skills and business valuation, while their' abilities to identify fraud in the public sector were not significantly impacted by their proficiency in financial accounting.

**Ho1:** Accounting and Auditing Skills (AAS) have no significant effect on the fraud management (FMGT) of selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria.

**2.3.2 Forensic Investigation Skills (FIS) and Fraud Management (FMGT)**

Okoye & Ndah (2019) evaluated the relationship between forensic accounting techniques and the avoidance of fraud in Nigerian manufacturing companies. A total of fifty (50) structured questionnaires were distributed to the accounting staff of ten (10) manufacturing companies in order to gather data from primary sources. Using multiple regression analyses and the Ordinary Least Squares method, the collected data was examined. The study revealed an association between fraud investigation procedures and the suppression of fraud in manufacturing firms that is both favorable and statistically significant.

Tapang & Ihendinihu (2020) assessed the effect of forensic accounting fraud investigations on unethical practices in the Nigerian banking sector. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design in which information was gathered via questionnaires distributed among banks and then analyzed using the conventional least squares method. The outcome showed that mortgage fraud, credit card fraud, and check fraud are all significantly impacted by forensic accounting fraud investigations.

Bassey (2019) examined the role and effects of forensic accounting in reducing financial crimes (fraud) in microfinance institutions, with a focus on microfinance banks in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, using a survey research design. The ordinary least squares method was used to analyze the data that was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. The empirical analysis's interpretation of the regression results revealed that all of the estimated coefficients for the regression parameter have negative signs. The study further showed that each test of the independent variables was significant, demonstrating the importance of forensic accounting investigative skills in reducing fraud in Nigerian microfinance institutions.

**Ho2:** Forensic Investigation skills (FIS) have no significant effect on the fraud management (FMGT) of selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria.

**3. Methodology**

The study adopted both a cross-sectional research design and a quantitative research approach, while stratified sampling was used to choose the sample, which consisted solely of MDAs that had integrated fraud management strategies into their operations. The Economic and Financial Crime Commission, the Ministry of Finance, the Office of the Accountant General of the Federation, and the Office of the Auditor General of the Federation were the chosen MDAs. They were chosen in accordance with the standard that only those MDAs had implemented fraud management procedures (Olaniyan et al., 2021; Taiya et al., 2021; Ewa, 2022). The sample of 5,833 staff members was computed using Yaro Yamane's formula, and the population was obtained from four (4) chosen MDAs, which were then used to determine the sample size of 374 staff members from the total population of 5,833 staff members; only 349 staff questionnaires were returned and used in the study's analysis. Five-point Likert scale options using closed-ended questionnaires were employed for the study. In order to analyze the data, the coding system was adopted using SPSS version 23 to analyze descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation analysis, and multiple regression analysis for the study.

The model for the study was adapted from Siddik (2021) and Kosgey & Solomon (2022), with some modifications in order to suit the current study.

FMGT = f(AAS + FIS) …………………………….…………….. (i)

FMGT = α + β1AAS + β2AIS + μ……...........………..……...…… (ii)

Where: FMGT = Fraud Management; AAS= Accounting and Auditing Skills and FIS= Forensic Investigation Skills; f = functional dependency of the relationship; α = Intercept or constant; β1 to β2 = Coefficients of the explanatory variables and μ = Error term.

## Table 1: Population and Sample distribution of the study for the MDAs

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Ministries, Department and Agencies** | **Population** | **Sample size** |
| Ministry of Finance | 2,195/5,833 \* 374 | 141 |
| Office of the Accountant General of the Federation | 987/5,833\* 374 | 63 |
| Office of the Auditor General for the Federation | 1,154/5,833\* 374 | 74 |
| Economic and Financial Crime Commission | 1,497/5,833\* 374 | 96 |
| **Total** | **5,833** | **374** |

**Source:** Author’s computation (2024).

## Table 2: Variables Measurement and Source of the Study

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Variables | Proxies | Measurement | Source |
| Fraud Management  (FMGT) | The sum of responses for the seven (7) five items questionnaire testing the effect of forensic accounting skills on fraud management selected MDAs in Nigeria. | Five-Likert scale | Adebayo, et al (2022) |
| Accounting and Auditing Skills  (AAS) | The sum of responses for the five (5) five items questionnaire testing the effect of accounting and auditing skills on Fraud management of selected MDAs in Nigeria. | Five-Likert scale | Siddik, (2021) and Kosgey & Solomon,  (2022). |
| Forensic  Investigative  Skills (FIS) | The sum of responses for the five (5) five Four-Likert items questionnaire testing the effect of scaleforensic Investigative skills on Fraud management of selected MDAs in Nigeria. | Five-Likert scale | Okoye, et al.,  (2020). |

Source: Field work, 2024.

**4. Analyses and Results**

**4.1 Analysis**

## Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | N | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. Deviation | Skewness | | Kurtosis | |
| Statistic | Statistic | Statistic | Statistics | Statistics | Statistic | Std. Error | Statistics | Std. Error |
| AAS | 349 | 9.00 | 21.00 | 16.7880 | 2.08326 | -.182 | .131 | -.647 | .260 |
| FIS | 349 | 7.00 | 20.00 | 15.5530 | 2.90376 | -.795 | .131 | 1.120 | .260 |
| FMGT | 349 | 11.00 | 28.00 | 22.7450 | 2.97514 | -.643 | .131 | .955 | .260 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 349 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

Source**:** Author’s Output 2024, SPSS Version 23

The AAS (Accounting and Auditing Skills) has a minimum value of 9 and a maximum value of 21, with a mean of 16.7880 and a standard deviation of 2.08326. This suggests that the degree of dispersion is high. The disparities in the accounting and auditing skills (AAS) employed by various MDAs could be attributed to inadequate computer training provided to MDA personnel. In contrast, the Forensic Investigation Skills (FIS) exhibited a mean and standard deviation of 15.5530 and 2.90376, with a minimum and maximum of 7 and 20, respectively. This shows that there are significant differences in how the MDAs apply their forensic investigation talents. The application of accounting and auditing skills in the Nigerian public sector can vary depending on the kind of fraud, the scope, and the intricacy of the MDAs. The forensic investigative skills have the minimum and maximum figures of 7 and 20, a mean of 15.5530, and a standard deviation of 2.90376. There is a large disparity in forensic investigation capabilities since fraud management requires a variety of skills.

## Table 4: Correlations

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **FMGT** | **AAS** | **FIS** |
| **Pearson Rank Correlation** | **FMGT** | 1.000 |  |  |
|  | **AAS** | 0.792 | 1.000 |  |
|  | **FIS** | 0.446 | 0.241 | 1.000 |

Source**:** Author’s Output 2024, SPSS Version 23

The association between forensic investigative skills (FIS), accounting and auditing skills (AAS), and the fraud management (FMGT) of Nigeria's federal ministries, departments, and agencies is positive, as Table 4 above demonstrates. This suggests that the rate of fraud management will rise with each unit increase in forensic investigative skills (FIS) and accounting and auditing skills (AAS) at rates of 0.446 and 0.792, respectively.

## Table 5: Model Summary

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate | Change Statistics | | | | | Durbin-Watson |
| R Square Change | F Change | df1 | df2 | Sig. F Change |
| 1 | .959 | .920 | .919 | 0.845 | .920 | 1.337 | 4 | 344 | .000 | 2.255 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), AAS, FIS | | | | | | | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: FMGT | | | | | | | | | | |

Source**:** Author’s Output 2024, SPSS Version 23

Table 5 presents the model summary result, which indicates that 92% of the variances in fraud management (FMGT) among federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria were attributed to the degree of forensic investigation skills (FIS) and accounting and auditing skills (AAS), while the remaining 8% of the variances in FMGT were influenced by factors beyond the scope of our model. The forensic investigation skills (FIS) and accounting and auditing skills (AAS) were the primary determinants of fraud management (FMGT) in federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria, according to the modified R-squared, which shows a value greater than 50%. The F-statistic change is 1.337 at a p-value of 0.000 at the 1% level of significance, and the Durbin-Watson statistic is 2.255. The model's suitability for the study's data was also shown by this table, which shows that forensic investigation skills (FIS) and accounting and auditing skills (AAS) appear to have been jointly effective methods that improved the fraud management (FMGT) of federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria.

**4.2 Result**

## Table 6: Regression Coefficients

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model** | **B** | **Std. Error** | **Beta** | **T** | **Sig.** |
| **AAS** | 0.917 | 0.025 | 0.642 | 35.104 | 0.000 |
| **FIS** | 0.049 | 0.020 | 0.047 | 2.412 | 0.016 |

### Source**:** Author’s Output 2024, SPSS Version 23

**Ho1:** *Accounting and Auditing Skills (AAS) have no significant effect on the fraud management (FMGT) of selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria.*

The Accounting and Auditing Skills (AAS) t-calculated value is 35.104 greater than the critical value of 2.000 in the regression analysis table above, and the P-value indicates a value of 0.000 less than 5%, which is the threshold of significance. This implies that any increase in accounting and auditing skills will also result in an increase in fraud prevention, and vice versa. This suggests that accounting and auditing skills (AAS) have a positive and significant effect on fraud management (FMGT). Based on the result, the study rejects the null hypothesis (Ho) and accepts alternate hypothesis 1, which states that accounting and auditing skills (AAS) have a significant effect on the fraud management (FMGT) of selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. The findings of this study agreed with Sumartono et al. (2020), Ewa (2022), and Olaniyan et al. (2021), while Farah et al. (2021) and Ugbede et al. (2021) were not in agreement.

**Ho2:** *Forensic Investigation Skills (FIS) has no significant effect on the fraud management (FMGT) of selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria.*

The forensic investigation skills (FIS) t-calculated value is 2.412 greater than the critical value of 2.000 in the regression analysis table above, and the P-value indicates a value of 0.016 less than 5%, which is the threshold of significance. This suggests that forensic investigation skills (FIS) have a positive and significant effect on fraud management (FMGT). This implies that any increase in forensic investigation skills will also result in an increase in fraud management, and vice versa. The study rejects the null hypothesis (Ho) and accepts the alternate hypothesis of hypothesis two, which states that forensic investigation skills (FIS) have a significant effect on the fraud prevention (FPV) of selected federal ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) in Nigeria. The findings of this study agreed with Tapang & Ihendinihu (2020) and Okoye & Ndah (2019), while being in contrast with those studied by Bassey (2019).

### **5. Recommendations**

Based on the above findings, the study recommended, among others, that:

1. The government should provide avenues for training forensic accounting experts. Through the effective performance of forensic accountants in the country, the Nigerian government can restore its integrity both locally and internationally. The curriculum of all regulatory organizations' professional examinations should include forensic fraud expert witness techniques in order to expose them to the gathering of evidence through accounting and auditing. Skills, which could, in layman's terms, include records, data, documents, financial information, and files supporting the prosecution's case, will also be advantageous to the profession.

1. Government at all levels, including local, state, and federal, should consider the services of forensic accounting using forensic investigation skills, which have been perceived as the most effective method. Further, by strengthening the nation's legal, educational, and governmental structures to keep up with the global trend in fraud management, the government at these levels should create the favorable environment necessary for the forensic accounting profession to flourish in the nation.

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