

**AKENTEN APPIAH-MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT (AAMUSTED)**

**A STUDY OF ACCOUNTANTS' CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE FACTORS
INFLUENCING AUDITORS' ETHICAL BEHAVIOR IN GHANA.**

COLLINS APPAU

MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (ACCOUNTING)

2023

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**Dissertation submitted to the Department of Accounting Studies Education,
Faculty of Business Education, School of Graduate Studies, Akenten Appiah-
Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development, Kumasi,
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Business
Administration (Accounting).**

SEPTEMBER, 2023

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, **COLLINS APPAU**, declare that this dissertation, except for quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my original work and that it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised by the guidelines on supervision of a dissertation as laid down by the Akenten Appiah-Menka University of Skills Training and Entrepreneurial Development.

NAME: **MR. ERIC EFFAH SARKODIE**

SIGNATURE:.....

DATE:

DEDICATION

This long essay is dedicated to my family, especially my mother, Obaapain Agnes Akosua Akoma, and my only sisters Rita Achiaa and Agatha Obeng for their consistent love and support in making this long essay see the light of success.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to the almighty God for His guidance and protection through this long essay. This work would not have been possible without His grace and mercy. My profound gratitude also goes to my entire family, I will forever be indebted to you for your constant prayers and moral support. Thanks go to Mr. Eric Effah Sarkodie, my supervisor, for his guidance. It would not have been easy to develop this study without your help. This work would not have been successful without the help of my wonderful friends such as Fredrick Amankwa, Emmanuel Kutulam, and Emmanuella Edna Boye-Doe. May the good Lord bless you all. I am also grateful to Mr. Collins Amankwaa, Finance Officer of Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, Ms. Dina Fosua, Assistant Internal Auditor of Audit of Kumasi Technical University, and the entire staff of the Audit Directorate of Kumasi Technical University for their immense support.

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ABSTRACT

The research examines the conscious factors of professional accountants without professional qualifications in Ghana on the factors affecting the ethical behavior of auditors in Ghana. The study focuses on four major cities in Ghana. The cities are Kumasi, Western, and Ahafo. Data was gathered from 200 accountants, which included 51 professional accountants and 149 accountants using a well-organized questionnaire. The data obtained was analyzed with Wilcoxon rank sum as well as the Mann-Whitney test to examine whether the differences exist between professional accountants and other professional qualifications on the individual factors consciousness to influence auditors in behaving ethically. From the findings of the study, the identified personal factors (gender, age, conscience, personal values, religion, fear of sanction, and upbringing) affect auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana. Also, the opinions of professional accountants and other professional qualifications on the factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior were significantly not different. The study recommends that institutions pay more attention to personal factors such as the auditor's gender, age, and religious affiliation, when creating appropriate ethical standards and also when recruiting people to work as auditors. Institutions should also establish appropriate ethics training for staff members and all auditors emphasizing personal factors.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter covers the background and problem Statement: objectives, Research Questions, Significance of the Study, and Organization of the Study.

1.1 Background

Every organization, including its shareholders and directors, makes critical decisions that greatly impact the future success of the business (Dai, Baruch & Song. In many cases, directors take ethical considerations into account when addressing business challenges. However, successful ethical decision-making is not limited to certain positions within an organization (Stenmark & Kreitler, 2017; Zeni et al., 2016; Buckley, Mumford, & Griffith, 2016).

Ethics form the foundation of responsible communities and serve as the bedrock for sustainable and accelerated development (Leopold 2017, & Obafemi 2020). Societal progress and professionalism are rooted in well-established ethical principles and constructs, which are fundamental for fostering growth and development (Zhou, Chen, Berry, Reed, Zhang, & Savage, 2020). The ongoing erosion of ethical standards in institutions and communities has prompted individuals, societies, and organizations to increase awareness and education on ethics within our communities (Putnam, 2015, Oboh, & Obafemi, 2020).

The necessity of ethics in both business and professional practice gained prominence in 2002 following the Enron accounting scandal (Arfaoui et al., 2016; Oboh, Ajibolade, & Otusanya, 2020). Reports of unethical business practices and accounting scandals are not new phenomena in the global business environment (Abed, Hussin, Ali, Haddad, Shehadeh, & Hasan, (2022). These issues have been present since the 1970s, with notable examples like the Lockheed scandal in 1976, the Nugan scandal in 1980, and the Northguard Acceptance scandal in 1980, occurring in the United States, Australia, and Canada, respectively (Koumbiadis, 2014; Ferrell, Fraedrich, & Ferrell, 2015).

Ghana has also experienced its share of ethical scandals, such as the collapse of Capital Bank and Unique Trust Bank in 2017. This led to banking sector reforms by the Bank of Ghana, resulting in the subsequent collapse of five other banks in 2018: Biege Capital, Royal Bank, Unibank Ltd, Construction Bank, and Sovereign Bank. The causes of these bank collapse range from extravagant compensation schemes to executive board members not aligning with the banks' performance, non-executive directors accepting gifts from the bank, compromising their independence, and non-executive board members assuming roles as consultants for the bank, creating conflicts of interest (Tetteh & Boachie, 2020; Torqu & Laryea, 2021; Aboagye, 2020). Ghana's Auditor General has long been reporting numerous financial irregularities in the audit of the Republic of Ghana's accounts. The 2021 auditors report on Ministries, Departments, and Agencies highlighted infractions such as failure to present payment vouchers for audit, accountants forging signature of the Entity's Head to withdraw funds, payment of unearned salaries, and various other irregularities (Auditor General's Report, 2022), demonstrating that Ghana is not exempt from global ethical scandals.

Global accounting and business scandals have frequently implicated auditors and accountants, tarnishing the image of the profession (Jones & Stanton 2021, & Otusanya, 2020). Despite the proliferation of laws, regulations, ethical codes of conduct, and whistleblower mechanisms, there has been a concerning increase in unethical behavior among accountants and auditors (Elbæk, & Mitkidis, 2023; Adekele, Oboh, & Obafemi, 2020; Ethics Resource Center, 2014). This worrisome trend has sparked discussions among professionals, academicians, and others (Craft, 2013; Lehnert, Park, & Singh, 2014; Alberto, Magarida, & Mariana, 2016) and has led to calls for the integration of ethics education into curricula and professional training. This is intended to enhance the ethical decision-making skills and behavior of professionals (Lehnert, Park, & Singh, 2014).

In contemporary times, ethics education is readily available and widely used in higher academic institutions. The inclusion of ethics in educational curricula has become more common due to its practicality and convenience. Many universities, including Kumasi Technical University (KsTU) in Ghana, are investing in ethics education to promote ethical practices and safeguard the future of Ghanaian businesses. KsTU's commitment to fostering good ethical behavior is driven by the need to mitigate various factors influencing auditors' ethical conduct. It is economically sound to ensure that auditors' ethical behaviors effectively contribute to good governance.

1.2 Problem Statement

Numerous research endeavors have delved into the realm of ethics and ethical behavior, driven by mounting concerns surrounding unethical practices on a global scale (He, & Harris 2020). Remisova, Lasakova and Kirchmayer (2018), for instance, investigated the impact of formal ethical programs on the ethical conduct of organizational

managers. Their findings suggested that the implementation of structured ethical programs within workplaces catalyzes cultivating ethical behavior, ultimately becoming an integral part of an organization's culture. In a similar vein, Fitcher (2016) explored the experiences of employees involved in decision-making processes guided by ethical considerations within high-stakes financial settings. This study identified eight key drivers influencing ethical decision-making: challenging authority, valuing positive emotions, fostering open discourse, dedicating time for reflection, recognizing and rewarding ethical behavior, fostering a culture of continuous learning, and fortifying escalation mechanisms.

Within the context of Ghana, there exists a pressing issue concerning the consciousness of accountants regarding factors that influence auditors' ethical behavior. This concern is a problem by a backdrop of ethical scandals, notably the collapse of Capital Bank and Unique Trust Bank in 2017, which prompted significant banking sector reforms in 2018, encompassing the further collapse of five additional banks: Biege Capital, Royal Bank, Unibank Ltd, Construction Bank, and Sovereign Bank (Tetteh & Boachie, 2020; Torqu & Laryea, 2021; Aboagye, 2020). The causative factors behind these bank failures vary, including excessive compensation schemes, the incongruity between executive board members' performance and their positions, non-executive directors accepting gifts from the banks, leading to a compromise in their independence, and non-executive board members assuming dual roles as consultants for the banks, thus creating conflicts of interest (Graphic Online, 2017; Aboagye, 2020).

Despite a plethora of regulations and financial acts aimed at addressing this issue, preliminary investigations preceding this study indicate that the situation remains largely unchanged in 2021 and 2022. Consequently, this research endeavors to

investigate the extent of awareness among accountants concerning the factors that influence auditors' ethical behavior, specifically focusing on the context of Kumasi Technical University.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the consciousness of accountants' factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior and whether self-service, integrity, and accountability factors are the key drivers of auditors' ethical behavior.

To achieve this, the following objectives have been derived.

1. To examine the factors accountants in Ghana perceive to influence auditors' ethical behavior.
2. To ascertain whether self-service factors are key influencers of auditors' ethical behavior.
3. To investigate how integrity factors influence auditors' ethical behavior.

1.4 Research Questions

Based on the above-stated statement problem and objectives, the following research questions are enlisted for the study.

1. What factors are accountants in Ghana aware of influencing auditors' ethical behavior?
2. Are self-service factors key influencers of auditor's ethical behavior?
3. How do integrity factors influence an auditor's ethical behavior?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The ability to add to scholarly research and literature in any field of discipline, and improve policy and practice is noted as the significance of research (Creswell, 2014). According to Creswell (2014), it specifies a solid justification for the importance of the study. The essence of this study was to determine accounting professionals' consciousness factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior at Kumasi Technical University in Ghana. The study brought to light some facets of self-service or integrity and accountability factors as key drivers of auditors' ethical behavior. This is because the audit staff in Ghana are bedeviled with the conception of insufficient remuneration. Hence, Ghana is confronted with corruption and weak institutions. In this regard, this researcher adds to the current studies on factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior in public institutions in Ghana. This study anticipates placing public institutions in a better position to respond professionally by exhibiting ethical standards in their line of work, thereby eliminating corrupt practices. The outcomes from this study could aid in predicting the ethical behaviors of auditors when confronted with making ethical decisions. Again, professional bodies that regulate the practice of accounting could use the outcomes of the study to help develop ethical codes of conduct to regulate the accounting practice in Ghana.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation of the Study

This study focused on factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior as conscious by accountants at Kumasi Technical University in Ghana and ascertained the extent to which these factors influence their behavior when confronted with ethical dilemmas. The study was designed in a case-study format. The available time was limited and restricted to Kumasi Technical University accountants because the researcher allocated

enough time to respondents to allow them to answer the questionnaires of their own free will. The major frustrating encounter was at the point of waiting for participants to give feedback. It took a lot of time to come out with the design, implementation, and administration of questionnaires because there was the need to consider a lot of things concerning participants' busy schedules. Not all participants who agreed to participate were guaranteed to respond.

1.7 Organization of the Study

This study is organized into five major sections.

- **Chapter one** introduces the research and sets the tone of the research. It is concerned with the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, the scope of the study, a summary of the methodology, limitations of the study, and organization of the study.
- **Chapter two** reviews the existing literature about the study. This would encompass conceptual literature, theoretical literature, and empirical literature.
- **Chapter three** outlines the methodology and the approaches employed in conducting the study. This includes the research design, population of the study, sample size and sampling technique, data collection tools, model specification, and ethical considerations.
- **Chapter four** states the results of the study and examines any similarities and contrasts of past examinations in the writing.
- The last chapter, **chapter five** enumerates the various findings, summary, conclusion, and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at pertinent studies on factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior. The relevant literature comprises articles, journals, books, and publications on ethical behavior. In this, the chapter provides a broad discussion and a review of the meaning of various terminologies relating to ethics and empirical evidence by prior researchers regarding the objectives of the study. In sum, this chapter considers the academic theories and the various views expressed by scholars on the topic.

2.1 Definition of Terms

Ethics is the study of how we make decisions; the word "ethos" comes from Greek and means "character" (Lines, 2018). In situations where there is no right or wrong solution, such as when presented with an ethical dilemma, ethical decision-making aids us in making tough decisions. While values are common sense, often taken for granted, beliefs about right and wrong that direct us in our everyday lives, the ethics discipline of ideology is concerned with formal academic reasoning about right and wrong (Smith 2010). For example, imagine yourself at a workplace where you must decide whether to take action against a manager whom you are aware of influencing the expenditures (Enchil, 2019).

A written code of ethics is a laid down guideline that an organization issues to employees and management to guide the behavior in line with the core values and ethical standards. When someone joins a group, you are required to abide by the group's rules of conduct (Enchil, 2019). The IFAC Code of Ethics is a global business that sets ethical standards for the accounting profession. The ICAG represents the mission of

Ghana through their core values of the Code of Ethics for Accountants being Integrity, Objectivity, Confidentiality, Due Care, and Professional Ethics (IFAC, 2010). Experts in public practice, industry, academia, and government are subject to the code of ethics (Allen & Bunting, 2008). Ogbonna and Ebinobowei (2011) state that accountants will enhance the quality of financial reports and good performance of any organization if they adhere to professional ethics of honesty, among other things.

IFAC (2013) believes that decisions and choices made in business have a direct impact on how our customers, the industry, companies, and regulators regard us and how we see ourselves. Members' behavior is guided and shaped by these codes of ethics, which also give them the ability to settle disputed or ambiguous ethical matters (Crebert, et al., 2011; Adekele, Oboh, & Obafemi, 2020).

2.2 Ethical Behavior

Ethical behavior is a concept that has been debated and discussed by philosophers, scholars, and individuals throughout history. It refers to the principles and values that guide our actions and decisions, ensuring they are morally right and just. Ethical behavior encompasses honesty, integrity, fairness, respect for others, and responsibility. Obeying the rights, variety, and dignity of both individuals and groups of people is a hallmark of ethical behavior (Mintz & Morris, 2008). Ethical behavior refers to the set of principles and values that guide individuals in making morally right decisions. It involves acting in a manner that is fair, honest, and respectful towards others. Ethical behavior is not only important for personal growth but also for the well-being of society as a whole.

One key aspect of ethical behavior is honesty. Being truthful and sincere in our interactions with others builds trust and fosters healthy relationships. Honesty also promotes transparency, which is crucial in maintaining accountability and integrity. Another important element of ethical behavior is fairness. Treating all individuals equally, without any bias or discrimination, ensures justice prevails in our actions. Fairness promotes equality and prevents exploitation or harm to vulnerable groups.

Respect for others' rights and dignity is another fundamental principle of ethical behavior. Respecting diversity, cultural differences, and individual autonomy allows for a harmonious coexistence within society. Furthermore, ethical behavior entails taking responsibility for one's actions. This means being accountable for the consequences of our choices and actively seeking to rectify any harm caused. Ethical behavior encompasses honesty, fairness, respect, and accountability. It serves as a moral compass that guides individuals toward making decisions that are beneficial not only to themselves but also to society at large. By adhering to these principles consistently, we contribute to creating a more just and compassionate world where everyone can thrive.

2.3 An Overview of the Auditing Profession in Ghana

The body of auditing in Ghana refers to the regulatory and professional framework that governs the practice of auditing in the country. Auditing is a critical function in ensuring transparency, accountability, and good governance in both public and private sector organizations. In Ghana, the body responsible for regulating and overseeing auditing is the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICA) Ghana.

The ICA Ghana is a professional body established by an Act of Parliament to regulate the accountancy profession in the country. It sets standards for auditing practices, conducts examinations for aspiring auditors, and grants membership to qualified professionals. The ICA Ghana also has disciplinary powers to ensure compliance with ethical standards and investigate any misconduct by its members. In addition to the ICA Ghana, there are other bodies involved in auditing oversight in Ghana. The Audit Service is responsible for conducting audits of public sector entities, including government ministries, departments, and agencies. It ensures that public funds are used efficiently and effectively. Furthermore, there are international bodies such as the International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) that provide global standards and guidelines for auditing practices. These standards help ensure consistency and quality across different countries' audit processes.

Overall, the body of auditing in Ghana comprises various institutions working together to promote professionalism, integrity, and accountability in financial reporting. Through their efforts, they contribute to enhancing investor confidence and fostering economic growth in the country. Auditing in Ghana is primarily governed by the Auditing Profession Act of 2008 also established by the ICAG. One of the key components of the body of auditing is the Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS). These standards provide a framework for auditors to plan and perform their audits. They cover areas such as audit planning, evidence gathering, risk assessment, and reporting. By adhering to GAAS, auditors can ensure that their work is consistent and reliable. The auditing profession in Ghana is dominated by large international audit firms such as Price Water House Coopers (PwC), Deloitte, KPMG, and Ernst & Young. These firms provide a wide range of services including external audits, internal audits,

forensic audits, and risk management. One of the key challenges facing auditors in Ghana is the lack of public trust in financial reporting. This is mainly due to high-profile corporate scandals that have rocked the country in recent years. To address this issue, auditors are now required to provide more detailed reports on their findings and recommendations.

Another challenge faced by auditors in Ghana is limited resources and capacity constraints. Many small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) do not have access to qualified auditors or cannot afford their services. This has led to calls for increased investment in training programs and capacity-building initiatives for auditors. The auditing profession in Ghana has made significant strides toward enhancing transparency and accountability in financial reporting. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to further strengthen the profession's role in promoting good governance practices across all sectors of the economy.

2.4 Business Ethical Consciousness

Ethics in business is a topic of great importance in today's society. As businesses continue to grow and expand, the need for ethical consciousness becomes even more crucial. Business ethical consciousness refers to the awareness and consideration of moral principles and values in all aspects of business operations. One key aspect of business ethical consciousness is the treatment of employees. Businesses need to prioritize fair wages, safe working conditions, and equal opportunities for all employees. This not only promotes a positive work environment but also contributes to the overall success and reputation of the company.

Another important aspect is environmental responsibility. Businesses must be conscious of their impact on the environment and take steps to minimize any negative effects. This includes implementing sustainable practices, reducing waste, and using eco-friendly materials whenever possible. Furthermore, honesty and transparency are vital components of business ethical consciousness. Companies should strive to be truthful in their advertising, pricing, and communication with customers. By building trust with consumers, businesses can establish long-lasting relationships that benefit both parties.

In conclusion, business ethical consciousness plays a significant role in shaping successful companies that contribute positively to society. By prioritizing employee well-being, environmental responsibility, and honesty in all dealings, businesses can create a strong foundation built on ethics. Businesses need to recognize their social responsibilities and act accordingly for long-term success.

2.5 Code of Ethics

Accountants play a crucial role in maintaining the integrity and transparency of financial information. To ensure professional conduct, accountants adhere to a set of codes of ethics. These codes provide guidelines for ethical behavior, ensuring that accountants uphold their responsibilities to clients, employers, and the public.

One key aspect of the code is confidentiality. Accountants are entrusted with sensitive financial information and must maintain strict confidentiality to protect their clients' interests. This includes not disclosing any confidential information without proper authorization or using it for personal gain. Another important principle is objectivity.

Accountants must remain impartial and independent when providing services to clients or employers. They should avoid conflicts of interest that may compromise their professional judgment or create bias in financial reporting. Integrity is also a fundamental value for accountants. They are expected to be honest and truthful in all professional matters, avoiding any actions that could damage their reputation or that of the accounting profession as a whole. Professional competence is another essential element. Accountants should continually develop their knowledge and skills to ensure they provide accurate and reliable financial information. They must also comply with relevant laws, regulations, and accounting standards. In conclusion, codes of ethics serve as a moral compass for accountants by setting standards for ethical behavior in their profession. By adhering to these principles, accountants can maintain trust with clients, employers, and the public while upholding the integrity and transparency of financial information.

2.6 Individual Factor

Ethical behavior is a fundamental aspect of human conduct that shapes our interactions with others and the world around us. While ethical behavior is influenced by various external factors such as societal norms and cultural values, it is also deeply rooted in individual characteristics and personal beliefs. One crucial individual factor that influences ethical behavior is moral development. Moral development refers to the process through which individuals acquire their understanding of right and wrong. This development occurs over time, influenced by experiences, education, and personal reflection. Individuals who have reached higher stages of moral development are more likely to exhibit ethical behavior as they possess a greater sense of empathy, justice, and responsibility towards others.

Another important individual factor is personal values. Our values act as guiding principles that shape our decisions and actions. Individuals with strong moral values are more likely to engage in ethical behavior as they prioritize honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect for others. Furthermore, self-awareness plays a significant role in ethical behavior. Individuals who possess a high level of self-awareness are more conscious of their thoughts, emotions, and actions. This self-reflection enables them to recognize potential ethical dilemmas and make informed choices based on their principles.

In conclusion, individual factors such as moral development, personal values, and self-awareness greatly influence ethical behavior. By nurturing these factors within ourselves through continuous learning and introspection, we can strive to become individuals who consistently demonstrate integrity and contribute positively to society.

- **Gender**

The role of gender in the decision-making process of accountants has been a topic of interest and debate for many years. While some argue that gender does not have a significant impact on decision-making, others believe that it plays a crucial role in shaping the choices made by accountants. One argument against the influence of gender is that decision-making is primarily based on rationality and objectivity, rather than personal characteristics such as gender. According to this perspective, accountants are trained to analyze data and make decisions based on facts and figures, regardless of their gender. In this view, any differences in decision-making between male and female accountants can be attributed to individual variations rather than gender-related factors. However, proponents of the idea that gender affects decision-making argue that societal norms and expectations can shape the way individuals approach their work. Women

may face unique challenges in male-dominated industries like accounting, which could influence their decision-making processes. For example, studies have shown that women tend to be more risk-averse than men when making financial decisions. This could potentially impact how female accountants approach risk assessment and management.

In conclusion, while there is ongoing debate about the extent to which gender impacts the decision-making process of accountants, it is clear that community factors can be a center for shaping individual choices. Further studies are needed to fully understand how gender influences decisions within the accounting profession.

- **Age**

The level of age has long been a topic of discussion when it comes to decision-making processes in various professions. Accountants, being responsible for financial management and analysis, are no exception. The question arises: does age have an impact on the decisions of accountants?

Age can influence decision-making in several ways. Firstly, experience plays a crucial role in shaping one's decision-making abilities. Older accountants may have accumulated years of experience and knowledge, allowing them to make more informed decisions based on past successes and failures. Additionally, older accountants may possess a deeper understanding of industry trends and regulations due to their extensive exposure over time.

On the other hand, younger accountants bring fresh perspectives and innovative ideas to the table. They may be more open to adopting new technologies and approaches that can enhance efficiency in decision-making processes. Their ability to adapt quickly to changing market dynamics can be advantageous for organizations seeking agility.

However, it is important not to generalize based solely on age. Individual differences in skills, education, and personal attributes also significantly impact decision-making abilities among accountants.

In conclusion, while age can influence the decision-making process of accountants by providing experience or fresh perspectives depending on their stage in life, it should not be considered the sole determinant. A diverse mix of ages within accounting teams can foster collaboration and yield optimal results by combining wisdom with innovation.

- **Religion**

Religion has long been a significant aspect of human life, influencing various spheres, including decision-making processes. The question of whether the level of religion impacts the decision-making process of accountants is an intriguing one. While some argue that religion plays a crucial role in shaping ethical considerations and values, others believe that professional ethics should be separate from religious beliefs. Those who support the idea that religion affects accountants' decision-making process emphasize the moral framework provided by religious teachings. Religion often promotes honesty, integrity, and fairness, which are essential qualities for accountants when making decisions. For instance, religious principles may discourage fraudulent practices or unethical behavior such as misrepresenting financial statements.

On the other hand, critics argue that professional ethics should be based on secular principles rather than religious beliefs. They contend that relying on personal faith may lead to bias or discrimination in decision-making processes. Furthermore, they suggest that ethical standards should be universally applicable and not dependent on individual

religious affiliations. In conclusion, while religion can undoubtedly shape an individual's moral compass and influence their decision-making process in various aspects of life, its impact on accountants' decisions remains a subject of debate. Striking a balance between personal religious beliefs and professional ethics is crucial to ensure unbiased and fair decision-making within the accounting profession. Ultimately, it is up to each accountant to navigate this complex relationship between their faith and their role as professionals responsibly.

- **Education**

Is there any impact on education on the decision-making of accountants? The level of schooling undoubtedly plays a crucial role in shaping the decision-making process of accountants. Accountants are responsible for analyzing financial data, interpreting complex regulations, and providing accurate information to stakeholders. A higher level of education equips accountants with the necessary knowledge and skills to make informed decisions.

Deshpande (1997) states that accountants often view themselves as mere record-keepers rather than active decision-makers. This perception can limit their ability to critically analyze financial information and contribute to strategic decision-making processes. Furthermore, it may lead to a lack of accountability for the consequences of their actions. Abriskie argues that education should not be limited to the mere transmission of knowledge but should also focus on fostering critical thinking skills and nurturing individual creativity. He emphasizes the importance of dialogue and open communication in the learning process, asserting that students must be encouraged to express their thoughts freely without fear of judgment or ridicule. recently more unethical. Again, Zabriskie's (1983) study which used a sample of 154 industrial

demands came out to showed that the respondents with less schooling are less unethical than those with more schooling in terms of taking something and favors In the article "Hills and Stevens (1997) Study Education on Accountants," the authors delve into the importance of education in shaping successful accountants. The study conducted by Hills and Stevens aims to explore the relationship between educational background and job performance among accountants.

The authors argue that a strong educational foundation is crucial for accountants to excel in their profession. They assert that individuals with higher levels of education possess a broader knowledge base, which enables them to handle complex financial tasks more efficiently. Moreover, they suggest that advanced degrees, such as a master's in accounting or finance, provide professionals with specialized skills that are highly valued in the industry.

To support their claims, Hills and Stevens surveyed practicing accountants from various firms. The results revealed a positive correlation between higher levels of education and job performance. Accountants with advanced degrees were found to be more adept at problem-solving, critical thinking, and decision-making compared to those with only undergraduate qualifications. Furthermore, the study highlights how continuous learning plays an essential role in career advancement for accountants. Hills and Stevens emphasize that staying updated with industry trends through professional development programs enhances an accountant's ability to adapt to changing regulations and technological advancements.

In conclusion, Hills and Stevens' study underscores the significance of education in shaping successful accountants. It emphasizes how higher levels of education contribute to improved job performance by equipping professionals with specialized skills and knowledge. The findings also highlight the importance of ongoing learning throughout an accountant's career journey. Kohlberg (1981) In conclusion, Kohlberg's study sheds light on the importance of considering moral development in the education of accountants. By promoting higher levels of ethical reasoning through innovative teaching methods, we can cultivate a generation of professionals who prioritize integrity and make sound ethical decisions in their practice. However positive relationships between education and ethical judgment have been shown by many researchers in which empirical authentication does not appear to support this aspect. Similarly, several studies do not seem to find a connection between education and ethical judgments (Swaidan et al., 2003), while others report negative relationships (Chiu, 2003). Although the empirical results should seem to differ from Kohlberg's conjunction, they may support it. (Nikoomaram et al., 2013).

2.7 Individual Values

In this study, four individual values play a crucial role in shaping the working environment and society as a whole. When individuals uphold their values consistently, they inspire others to do the same. This ripple effect creates communities built on trust, respect, and empathy which are:

- Integrity: integrity is paramount for accountants as it guarantees accurate financial reporting, maintains public trust, and upholds ethical standards within the profession. Accountants must prioritize this value in their work to ensure they fulfill their responsibilities effectively and contribute positively to society's

economic stability Objectivity: accountants should not promote favoritisms, show conflicts of interest, or undue influence of others to override professional or business judgments.

- Self–Control: Self-control is a crucial trait for accountants to possess. As professionals responsible for managing financial records and ensuring accuracy, accountants must exercise self-control in various aspects of their work
- Honesty: honesty is an essential quality that accountants must possess. Their role as guardians of financial information demands unwavering integrity and transparency. By upholding these principles, accountants not only fulfill their professional responsibilities but also contribute to building a trustworthy business environment where accurate financial reporting prevails

In the field of psychology, researchers have long been interested in understanding the factors that influence various aspects of human behavior. A study conducted by Costa et al. (2016) delved into the relationship between gender, age, work experience, and their impact on individuals' performance in the workplace. The study aimed to investigate whether these factors had any significant effect on job satisfaction and overall job performance. The researchers collected data from a diverse sample of employees across different industries and analyzed it using statistical methods.

Interestingly, the findings revealed that gender did not play a significant role in determining job satisfaction or performance. Both male and female participants reported similar levels of satisfaction and performed equally well in their respective roles. On the other hand, age was found to be a crucial factor influencing job satisfaction. Younger employees tended to report higher levels of job satisfaction

compared to older workers. This could be attributed to various reasons such as career growth opportunities or personal fulfillment derived from work. Work experience also emerged as an influential factor affecting both job satisfaction and performance. Employees with more years of experience reported higher levels of job satisfaction and demonstrated better performance compared to those with less experience.

Overall, this study shed light on the complex interplay between gender, age, work experience, and their impact on individuals' experiences in the workplace. It emphasized that while gender may not significantly affect job outcomes, age, and work experience are crucial determinants of both job satisfaction and performance. These findings have important implications for organizations aiming to create inclusive workplaces that cater to employees' diverse needs at different stages of their careers.

2.8 Review Other Samiliar Studies

Several studies have been conducted on accountant consciousness influencing auditors ethical behavior (Koumbiadis, 2016). In another related study by Costa et al., (2016) on “Ethical Consciousness of Accounting Students in a Portuguese University: The Influence of Individual Factors and Personal Traits”, it was revealed that the ethical consciousness of individuals compared to their peers was, in most cases, divided. When they were not divided, the majority often had a negative consciousness of their peers. Thus, individual factors do have an influence on accountants' decision-making process once presented with an ethical dilemma.

Odar et al., (2017) looked at “Accountants' ethical consciousness from several consciousnesses: evidence from Slovenia”, the study was about finding the ethical differences between internal accountants and other professionals and their leniency

towards ethically sensitive scenarios. A sample of 451 accountants was used for the research and it showed that statistically, there were differences in the level of ethics between the internal accountants and other professionals which were significant. It was also found that 60% of the results showed that internal accountants assessed more ethically sensitive scenarios as an ethical practice than other professionals since their helping hand was based on agreement. Their result also showed that accountants from small firms were more lenient in ethically sensitive scenarios.

In a study by Keller et al., (2007), they set out to answer the question “Do Gender, Educational Level, Religiosity, and Work Experience Affect the Ethical Decision-Making of U.S.A. accountants” This research discloses some beliefs as the strongest influence on ethical decision-making for both genders. The results did not agree with the idea that gender is related to ethical decision-making which counters some previous studies. Work experience and graduate education seem to have some effects on ethical decision-making. Esa and Zahari's (2005) studies on ethics during education shed light on the importance of ethical considerations in the educational system. The authors argue that ethics should be an integral part of the curriculum, as it helps students develop moral reasoning skills and make ethical decisions. This ethics subject contributes to the development of moral and ethical principles in future auditors, accountants, and accounting staff.

Ahiful and Addo in 2017 study, delve into the realm of accounting ethics, a topic that has gained significant attention in recent years. The authors aim to shed light on the ethical challenges faced by accountants and explore potential solutions to mitigate these issues. The study begins by providing an overview of the importance of ethics in

accounting. Accountants play a crucial role in ensuring financial transparency and maintaining public trust. However, unethical practices such as fraud and misrepresentation can undermine this trust and have severe consequences for both individuals and organizations.

Ahiful and Addo then examine various ethical dilemmas faced by accountants, including conflicts of interest, pressure from superiors to manipulate financial data, and the temptation to engage in fraudulent activities. They argue that these challenges arise due to a lack of proper ethical training within the profession. To address these issues, the authors propose several strategies. Firstly, they emphasize the need for comprehensive ethics education for aspiring accountants. This would include courses on professional conduct, integrity, and moral reasoning. Additionally, they suggest implementing stricter regulations and penalties for unethical behavior within the industry.

Overall, Ahiful and Addo's study highlights the significance of accounting ethics in maintaining public trust. By addressing ethical challenges through education and regulation, accountants can uphold their professional responsibilities while contributing to a more transparent financial landscape.

2.9 Other Theories of Accounting Ethics

2.9.1 Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development

Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development is a psychological theory proposed by Lawrence Kohlberg in the 1950s. This theory focuses on how individuals develop their moral reasoning and understanding of right and wrong throughout their lives. Kohlberg identified six stages of moral development, which are divided into three levels: pre-

conventional, conventional, and post-conventional. At the pre-conventional level, individuals make decisions based on self-interest and obedience to authority. They follow the rules to avoid punishment or gain rewards. The conventional level is characterized by conformity to societal norms and expectations. Individuals at this stage seek approval from others and maintain social order.

The final stage, post-conventional, is reached by only a small percentage of individuals. At this level, people develop their moral principles based on universal ethical values such as justice and equality. They are willing to challenge societal norms if they conflict with these principles. Kohlberg's theory has been widely influential in the field of psychology as it provides a framework for understanding how morality develops over time. However, it has also faced criticism for its cultural bias and lack of consideration for situational factors that may influence moral decision-making.

Overall, Kohlberg's Theory of Moral Development offers valuable insights into how individuals progress through different stages of moral reasoning. It highlights the importance of socialization and cognitive development in shaping ethical beliefs and behaviors.

2.9.2 Teleological Theories of Ethics

Teleological theories of ethics revolve around the concept of purpose or end goal. These theories argue that the morality of an action is determined by its consequences or outcomes. In other words, the rightness or wrongness of an action is judged based on whether it leads to a desirable outcome.

One prominent teleological theory is consequentialism, which asserts that the morality of an action depends solely on its consequences. According to consequentialism, if an action produces more good than harm, it is morally right. This theory places great emphasis on maximizing overall happiness or well-being. Another teleological theory is utilitarianism, a specific form of consequentialism developed by philosophers such as Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Utilitarianism holds that actions should be judged based on their ability to maximize happiness for the greatest number of people. Teleological theories provide a clear framework for making ethical decisions because they focus on achieving positive outcomes. However, critics argue that these theories neglect important moral considerations such as individual rights and justice. They claim that focusing solely on consequences can lead to morally questionable actions if they produce overall happiness but violate fundamental principles.

In conclusion, teleological theories emphasize the importance of outcomes in determining ethical value. While they provide a straightforward approach to decision-making, they may overlook other crucial aspects of morality. Therefore, it is essential to consider both consequences and principles when evaluating the ethics and meaning behind our actions. are:

Ethical Egoism: - is a philosophical theory that asserts individuals should always act in their self-interest. It posits that every person has a moral obligation to prioritize their well-being above all else. This theory suggests that individuals should make decisions based on what will benefit them the most, without considering the impact on others and which are:

Ethical Elitism: - is a concept that refers to the belief that certain individuals possess a superior moral understanding and are therefore entitled to make decisions on behalf of others. This notion suggests that there exists a select few who have the knowledge

and wisdom to determine what is right and wrong, and their judgments should be followed by society as a whole.

Ethical Parochialism: - refers to the tendency of individuals or groups to prioritize their values, beliefs, and interests over those of others. It is a concept deeply rooted in human nature and has been observed throughout history in various forms.

Ethical Universalism: - Ethical Universalism presents an important perspective on morality by asserting the existence of universal ethical principles applicable to all individuals. While it has its limitations in accounting for cultural diversity, this theory provides a framework for promoting fairness, justice, and human rights globally.

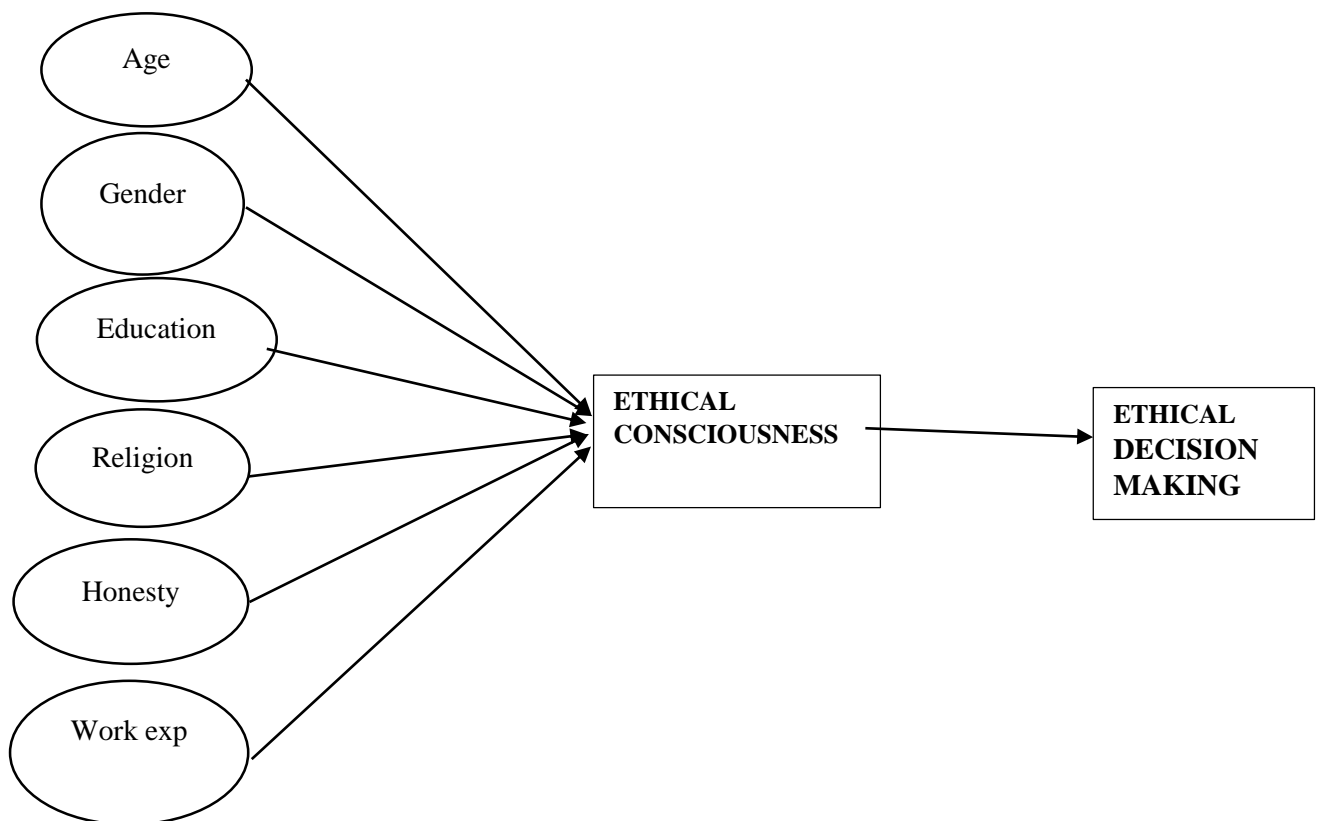
2.10 Conceptual Framework

Ethics is a fundamental aspect of human existence, guiding our thoughts, actions, and decisions. It encompasses the principles and values that shape our behavior towards others and the world around us. Ethical consciousness refers to an individual's awareness and understanding of these ethical principles. The conceptual framework of ethical consciousness provides a structure for examining the development and application of ethical principles in various contexts. It explores the factors that influence ethical decision-making, such as personal values, cultural norms, and societal expectations. This framework also highlights the importance of self-reflection and critical thinking in cultivating ethical consciousness. At its core, ethical consciousness involves recognizing the inherent worth and dignity of all individuals, promoting fairness and justice, and acting with integrity. It requires individuals to consider the consequences of their actions on others and to strive for moral excellence.

Furthermore, this framework emphasizes the need for continuous learning and growth in ethical consciousness. As society evolves, new challenges arise that require individuals to adapt their ethical perspectives accordingly. By engaging in ongoing dialogue and reflection on ethics, individuals can refine their understanding of right conduct.

In conclusion, the conceptual framework of ethical consciousness serves as a guide for individuals seeking to navigate complex moral dilemmas. By cultivating awareness of ethical principles through self-reflection and critical thinking, individuals can make informed decisions that promote fairness, justice, integrity, and respect for all beings.

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework



2.11 Conclusion

This study is to foster critical thinking skills, it encourages individuals to question assumptions, analyze data objectively, and draw logical conclusions based on evidence. This ability is essential not only for researchers but also for individuals in various professions who need to make informed decisions based on reliable information. In conclusion, research is a fundamental aspect of human progress. It expands our knowledge base, solves problems, and enhances critical thinking skills. As we continue to invest in research endeavors across different disciplines, we pave the way for a better future with improved understanding and innovative solutions to complex challenges.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The study's methodology, which will define the data sources, response variables, and best predictor variables that will present the model approach to be used for this study, will be considered in this chapter. This chapter also considers the research design, research approach, research strategy, sampling technique, and ethical concerns for the research.

3.1 Research Design

To analyze data and meet its objectives, the study used a quantitative approach to research design. Studies of this kind are more exploratory, and as suggested by Creswell and Plano (2011) and Krueger and Casey (2014), they therefore, explain a previously observed fact. The study employs a survey strategy to gather the perceptions of accountants on factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana.

3.2 Population of the Study

Whenever a target group of people is referred to as a population, it means that they share one or more traits that the researcher found interesting and from which they can conclude (Krueger & Casey, 2014). Accountants in Ghana make up the study's complete sample population.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

In most cases, it is impossible to investigate the entire population being taken into account. Researchers are free to select a representative sample to solve the problem. A smaller population or subgroup is referred to as the sample size (Saunders & Lewis , 2007). The population is thus represented by a collection of units that were selected from a bigger population. The suitability of the sample size and the method of choosing it will consequently determine the assurance in the analysis of data and the extent to which one may simplify (De Vaus, 2002). Since it would be impossible to survey all accountants in Ghana because of the large number and the constraint of time, a sample size of two hundred (200) accountants was used. This sample size represents accountants selected at random for their responses. The sampling was done in such a way that accountants from various sectors were selected for the survey. The 200 accountants were chosen using the probability sampling method. The type of sampling known as probability sampling implies that each person in the population has an equal chance of being chosen. Because it is based on probability, this sampling method lacks bias and individual interference. During the administration of the surveys, this sampling technique was employed to choose accountants at random. Additionally, interviews with thirty accountants were conducted to get their opinions and knowledge on the subject. A purposive or arbitrary sampling technique known as "purposeful sampling" is defined as an intentional attempt to get representative samples by including groups or typical areas. To pick individuals from the sample group, the researcher uses judgment (Saunders & Lewis , 2007).

3.4 Data and Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered through the use of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Investigating the quality of information and data is done using the qualitative method (Saunders & Lewis, 2007). Interviews and questionnaires will be used to gather opinions from the public. The numerical population is taken into account, and the responses are examined and quantified using percentages according to the quantitative technique. Data was gathered via primary sources. The primary data are the direct observations made on the questionnaires that were given to the respondents. Using questionnaires given to Ghanaian accountants, the main sources of data for this study were acquired.

3.5 Variables Description and Measurement

Religion is defined as a set of practices and convictions centered on anything that is deemed to have holy significance and transformative power. This variable measures how auditors' convictions of anything deemed to have holy significance affect their ethical behavior. Upbringing is how a person is brought up; the attention and instruction their parents or other adults provide them. This variable explains whether grooming of auditors has a role to play in the ethical behavior of auditors. Conscience is the moral sense that directs a person's thoughts and behavior. This variable explains whether auditors' sense of moral judgment affects their ethical behavior. Age is the length of time someone has been alive (Andersen & Howard, 2011). This variable explains whether the length of the auditor's life influences his ethical behavior. A sanction is a penalty or other coercive action that is used to punish and prevent improper or illegal behavior. It is often applied by a recognized authority. This variable explains whether the fear of punishment by an authority influences an auditor's ethical behavior. Personal

values are core principles and tenets that direct your behavior. These ideas affect how you act and who you are. This variable explains whether the core principles and tenets of auditors affect their ethical behavior (Andersen & Howard, 2011).

3.6 Data Collection Instrument

The research mainly made use of primary information gathered from a field of chosen Ghanaian businesses. To understand the demographic traits and ethical perspectives of these chosen accountants, which are perceived to influence auditors' ethical behavior, a well-structured questionnaire was developed. The study employed both online and conventional questionnaires. Because they are regarded as being more affordable, quicker, and reliable than traditional surveys, online questionnaires have an edge over them. Questionnaires were distributed utilizing a variety of social media sites due to the convenience it offer both the respondent and the researcher.

For the conventional questionnaire, a drop-and-pick method was employed. To guarantee consistency, validity, and reliability, the questionnaires were pre-tested. A questionnaire is a popular and effective tool for gathering survey data since it offers organized, commonly numerical data, can be delivered without the researcher present, and is very simple to analyze (Cohen, Pant, & Sharp, 2001).

3.7 Analysis of Data

Statistical software such as SPSS and Smart PLS of the Structural Equation Modeling were used to analyze the data (SEM). In numerous studies including quantitative research, this program has been employed. This led to multivariate data analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling with Smart PLS being

used in the analysis. A statistical procedure known as structural equation modeling (SEM) examines the measurement, task, and predictive (Bagozi 2012). Data provided in tables, graphs, percentages, and frequencies were summarized using descriptive statistics.

A non-parametric test specifically, the Mann-Whitney test and the Wilcoxon rank-sum test were performed to test for significant differences in the perception of chartered and non-chartered accountants of the factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior. A t-test known as the Wilcoxon rank-sum test is founded on three key tenets: independent sampling, normality, and equal variances. Using a t-test is fairly accurate when the requirements of normality and equal variances are violated but the sample sizes are big (Bo Tong, 2012). The idea that the two samples were drawn from the same distribution takes the role of the normality assumption. The population need not have a normal distribution for it to work (Bo Tong, 2012). When a continuous dependent variable that doesn't normally share the needs to be compared to the two independent groups, the Mann-Whitney U test is utilized. Many people consider the Mann-Whitney U test to be the nonparametric version of the student's t-test. The Mann-Whitney Test does not require a normal distribution of the data from the sample, which is the main distinction between it and the student's t-test.

3.8 Validity and Reliability of Constructs

The researcher checked each questionnaire individually to ensure that responses obtained from respondents addressed the study objectives to obtain accurate and reliable data that would be a depiction of the research that was conducted. Through a random selection process, ten (10) accountants pre-tested the questionnaire to confirm

its strengths and limitations. Observed deficiencies discovered during pre-testing were correctly corrected to eventually increase the instrument's dependability and usability.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

The research was carried out according to the procedures for conducting research at Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology. To guarantee the secrecy of the information they provided, the respondents were instructed to affirm that they would not disclose any information about them by any means. Similarly, before giving the members the surveys, the purpose and rationale for the review were conveyed to them. All respondents who took part in the review were promised anonymity. Before presenting the members with the surveys, the researcher obtained their full consent. Everyone who responded to the survey received enough information and assurance regarding taking the test. This was done to ensure that the members were aware of the potential consequences of involvement and that they made an informed decision about whether to participate in the review after giving it careful thought.

3.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has outlined the underlying methodological assumptions upon which the research is based, discussed the basis and rationale for the selection of participants described the data collection and analysis techniques used in this study, ethical issues, and concluded the chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter comprises the analysis as well as the discussion of the data gathered from selected accountants Ahafo, Kumasi, and Western. The demographic makeup and demographics of the accountants were evaluated using descriptive analysis. The demographic traits and personal values of accountants are examined in this chapter along with their influence on auditors' process of making ethical decisions. This chapter is organized into 4 main sections namely: introduction, analysis of results, discussion, and summary.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Respondent's personal information

		Frequency	%
Gender	Female	106	53.0
	Male	94	47.0
	Total	200	100.0
Religion	Christianity	155	77.5
	Islam	33	16.5
	Others	10	5.0
	Traditionalist	2	1.0
	Total	200	100.0
Area of specialization	Auditing	41	20.5
	Financial Accounting	65	32.5
	Forensic Accounting	19	9.5
	Management Accounting	43	21.5
	Others	10	5.0
	Taxation	22	11.0
	Total	200	100.0
Educational Qualification	B.Sc.	86	43.0
	HND	18	9.0
	MBA/M.Sc.	78	39.0
	Others	10	5.0
	Ph.D.	8	4.0
	Total	200	100.0
Respondent's professional status	Accountant	51	25.5
	other professionals	149	74.5
	Total	200	100.0

Source: Researchers Field Survey, Adjei (2023)

Conscious ethical behavior of auditors.

Table 2: Cross-tabulation analysis of conscious ethical behavior of auditors

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Average	Very Poor	Total
Accountant	19	24	7	1	0	51
Other professionals	52	72	17	7	1	149
Total	71	96	24	8	1	200

Source: Researchers Field survey, Adjei (2023)

From Table 2, participants were required to rank the ethical behavior of a typical Ghanaian auditor on a scale of 1 to 6 (6 being excellent to 1 being very poor). From the findings, 71 of the respondents (19 accountants and 52 other professionals) believe that the ethical behavior of the typical Ghanaian auditor is "excellent." 96 of the respondents (24 accountants and 72 other professionals) are of the view that the ethical behavior of a Ghanaian auditor is "very good" while 24 of the respondents (7 accountants and 17 other professionals) consider the ethical behavior of a Ghanaian auditor to be "good". Meanwhile, 8 respondents (1 accountant and 7 other professionals) believe the ethical behavior of a Ghanaian auditor is "average" whereas the remaining respondent who is a non-chartered accountant views the ethical behavior of a Ghanaian auditor to be "very poor". The overall response of the respondents suggests that the ethical behavior of a Ghanaian auditor is deemed to be "very good".

Factors conscious to influence auditors' ethical behavior.

Table 3: Cross-tabulation analysis of the conscious influence of personal factors on auditors' ethical behavior

Influence of religion on ethical behavior						
	Overwhelming influence	A lot of influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Total
Accountant	8	21	12	7	3	51
Other professionals	22	73	33	16	5	149
Total	30	94	45	23	8	200

Influence of upbringing on ethical behavior						
	Overwhelming influence	A lot of influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Total
Accountant	9	23	11	7	1	51
Other professionals	31	63	39	13	3	149
Total	40	86	50	20	4	200

Influence of consciousness on ethical behavior						
	Overwhelming influence	A lot of influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Total
Accountant	13	17	16	4	1	51
Other professionals	21	66	41	16	5	149
Total	34	83	57	20	6	200

Influence of gender on ethical behavior						
	Overwhelming influence	A lot of influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Total
Accountant	9	21	9	8	4	51
Other professionals	16	59	41	26	7	149
Total	25	80	50	34	11	200

Influence of age on ethical behavior						
	Overwhelming influence	A lot of influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Total
Accountant	5	18	21	4	3	51
Other professionals	17	72	39	17	4	149
Total	22	90	60	21	7	200

Influence of fear of sanction on ethical behavior						
	Overwhelming influence	A lot of influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Total
Accountant	13	21	14	2	1	51
Other professionals	46	62	29	9	3	149
Total	59	83	43	11	4	200

Influence of personal values on ethical behavior						
	Overwhelming influence	A lot of influence	Some influence	Little influence	No influence	Total
Accountant	8	22	11	9	1	51
Other professionals	29	62	42	10	6	149
Total	37	84	53	19	7	200

Source: Researchers Field survey, Adjei (2023)

4.2 Influence of Religion on Ethical Behavior

This study also looked at the extent to which perceived personal characteristics affect auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana. The responses that were given by respondents to each factor were examined using a cross-tabulation technique. The findings of this analysis are shown in Table 2.

The findings show that both sets of accountants of 30 respondents (8 accountants and 22 other professionals) suggested that religion had an “overwhelming influence” on the ethical actions of auditors. A total of 94 accountants (21 accountants and 73 other professionals) were convinced that religion had a “lot of influence” on auditors' ethical behavior, whereas 45 respondents (12 accountants and 33 other professionals) believed that religion had “some influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. A total of 23 accountants (7 accountants and 16 other professionals) believed that religion had “little influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. 8 accountants (3 accountants and 5 other professionals) held that religion had “no influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior.

4.3 Influence of Upbringing on Auditors’ Ethical Behavior

The findings show that both sets of accountants of 40 respondents (9 accountants and 31 other professionals) suggested that upbringing had an “overwhelming influence” on the ethical actions of auditors. A total of 86 accountants (23 accountants and 63 other professionals) were convinced that upbringing had a “lot of influence” on auditors' ethical behavior, whereas 50 respondents (11 accountants and 39 other professionals) believed that upbringing had “some influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. A total of 20 accountants (7 accountants and 13 other professionals) believed that upbringing had “little influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. 4 accountants (1 accountant and 3 other professionals) held that upbringing had “no influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior.

4.4 Influence of Consciousness on Auditors’ Ethical Behaviors

The findings show that both sets of accountants of 34 respondents (13 accountants and 21 other professionals) suggested that consciousness had an “overwhelming influence” on the ethical actions of auditors. A total of 83 accountants (17 accountants and 66 other

professionals) were convinced that conscience had a “lot of influence” on auditors' ethical behavior, whereas 57 respondents (16 accountants and 41 other professionals) believed that conscience had “some influence” on auditors' ethical behaviors. A total of 20 accountants (4 accountants and 16 other professionals) believed that conscience had “little influence” on auditors' ethical behavior. 6 accountants (1 accountant and 5 other professionals) held that upbringing had “no influence” on auditors' ethical behaviors.

4.5 Influence of Gender on Auditors' Ethical Behavior

The findings show that both sets of accountants of 25 respondents (9 accountants and 16 other professionals) suggested that gender had an “overwhelming influence” on the ethical actions of auditors. A total of 80 accountants (21 accountants and 59 other professionals) were convinced that gender had a “lot of influence” on auditors' ethical behavior, whereas 50 respondents (9 accountants and 41 other professionals) believed that gender had “some influence” on auditors' ethical behavior. A total of 34 accountants (8 accountants and 26 other professionals) believed that gender had “little influence” on auditors' ethical behavior. 11 accountants (4 accountants and 7 other professionals) held that gender had “no influence” on auditors' ethical behavior.

4.6 Influence of Age on Auditors' Ethical Behavior

The findings show that both sets of accountants of 22 respondents (5 accountants and 17 other professionals) suggested that age had an “overwhelming influence” on the ethical actions of auditors. A total of 90 accountants (18 accountants and 72 other professionals) were convinced that age had a “lot of influence” on auditors' ethical behavior, whereas 60 respondents (21 and 39 other professionals) believed that age had

“some influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. A total of 21 accountants (4 chartered accountants and 17 other professionals) believed that age had “little influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. 7 accountants (3 accountants and 4 other professionals) held that age had “no influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior.

4.7 Influence of Fear of Sanction on Auditors’ Ethical Behavior

The findings show that both sets of accountants of 59 respondents (13 accountants and 46 other professionals) suggested that fear of sanction had an “overwhelming influence” on the ethical actions of auditors. A total of 83 accountants (21 accountants and 62 other professionals) were convinced that fear of sanction had a “lot of influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior, whereas 43 respondents (14 Accountants and 29 other professionals) believed that fear of sanction had “some influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. A total of 11 accountants (2 accountants and 9 other professionals) believed that fear of sanction had “little influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. 4 accountants (1 accountant and 3 other professionals) held that fear of sanction had “no influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior.

4.8 Influence of Personal Values on Auditors’ Ethical Behavior

The findings show that both sets of accountants of 37 respondents (8 accountants and 29 other professionals) suggested that personal values had an “overwhelming influence” on the ethical actions of auditors. A total of 84 accountants (22 accountants and 62 other professionals) were convinced that personal values had a “lot of influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior, whereas 53 respondents (11 chartered and 42 other professionals) believed that personal values had “some influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. A total of 19 accountants (9 accountants and 10 other professionals) believed

that personal values had “little influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior. 7 accountants (1 accountant held that personal values had “no influence” on auditors’ ethical behavior.

Table 4: Individual factors and auditors’ ethical behavior

Test Statistics							
	Religion	Upbringing	conscious	Gender	Age	Fear of sanction	Personal values
Mann-Whitney U	3553	3650	3465	3501	3337	3538	3543
Wilcoxon W	14728.000	14824.500	4791.000	4827.000	14512.000	14712.500	14718.000
Z	-.737	-.444	-.989	-.875	-1.382	-.777	-.758
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.461	.657	.323	.381	.167	.437	.449

A. Grouping variable: professional status, * $p < .05$.

Source: Researchers Field survey, Adjei (2023)

4.9 Whether chartered accountants and non-chartered accountants have different consciousnesses of the factors influencing auditors’ ethical behavior.

According to the descriptive statistics, both accountants and other professionals believed that the personal factors highlighted had a substantial impact on the ethical behavior of auditors. The Wilcoxon rank-sum test and Mann-Whitney test were used to evaluate the hypotheses of the study with the aid of SPSS to draw conclusions and make generalizations about the results of the descriptive analysis. The independent samples t-test has a non-parametric equivalent in these tests (Field, 2009). Table 4 displays the test outcomes.

The p-values for religion ($.461 > .05$), upbringing ($.657 > .05$), conscience ($.323 > .05$), gender ($.381 > .05$), age ($.167 > .05$), fear of sanction ($.437 > .05$) and personal values ($.449 > .05$) shows that no major difference exists in the perceptions of the identified

factors that influence auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana. In other words, the stakeholders all agree that these personal factors have an impact on auditors' ethical behavior.

4.10 Discussions

The findings showed that fear of sanction, religion, upbringing, consciousness, gender, and personal values are perceived by accountants as influencing an auditor's ethical behavior in a mostly similar way. This convergence of thought implies that each of these characteristics fundamentally shapes the type of accountant an audit firm employs and, as a result, determines his behavior, particularly when carrying out his duties. Auditors will be significantly discouraged from acting unethically by the realization that there are consequences for such behavior.

Additionally, despite all of its difficulties, religion may be useful in fostering moral behavior in future people. The same idea applies to upbringing, which refers to how a person was brought up by their parents or other responsible adults. The results show that there is no significant difference in the aware factors that affect auditors' ethical behavior between accountants. This finding differs slightly from the result of the research by Adeleke et al. (2020) which showed both accountants and other professionals have different consciousness of age influencing auditors' ethical behavior. The issues from this research are in harmony with the research by Enchill (2019) showed that age and religion influence the ethical behavior of auditors. While acknowledging the impact of age on ethical behavior, Kohlberg (1973) was of the view that as people age, they advance from one stage of morality to another in the six-stage level of morality.

Scholars have previously argued that a strong foundation of ethical values should serve as the cornerstone of any economy's development. That is, compliance to and observance of strong ethical norms must be strictly adhered to if a community, organization, or profession is to succeed. Therefore, the study will add to the call for a high level of ethical standards among accounting professionals in Ghana.

Additionally, the mission of including ethics courses in the University accounting curriculum will be brought to light to promote ethical principles among Ghanaian accounting professionals. To aid in the development of strong personal and professional ethical values, undergraduate and graduate accounting students ought to be frequently given access to seminars and conferences on ethical challenges in the field.

4.11 Summary

The chapter analyzed the demographic characteristics of respondents and highlighted the ethical consciousness of the factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana. From the analysis, it was observed that the identified factors influence auditors' ethical behavior. Again, the study showed that there was a consensus between accountants and other professionals on the factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presented summary, conclusions, and recommendations where the summary, and conclusion are rooted in the research key findings, and the recommendations are on the research key issues for policy direction.

5.1 Summary of Finding

This research is rooted in accountants in four major cities in the country (Ghana) that is Ahafo, Kumasi, Western, and Tamale. The goals of the text were; to examine factors the accountants in Ghana are aware of influence auditors' ethical behavior and examine whether the consciousness of accountants and other professionals of the individual factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior is significantly different (i.e religion, upbringing, conscience, gender, age, fear of sanction and personal values). The study adopted the use of a well-organized questionnaire with 200 respondents in four major cities across Ghana. Data was analyzed using SPSS.

The study used descriptive statistics to analyze the demographic data of respondents to present summary findings on the consciousness of the factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana. Inferential statistics was used to analyze the data collected at a 0.05 level of significance. Wilcoxon rank-sum test and Mann-Whitney test were employed to test whether significant differences exist between the consciousness of accountants and other professionals.

A total of 200 responses were sampled of which 94 represented 47% were males and 106 represented 53% were females. About 43 % of respondents were first-degree holders and 39% were master's degree holders.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings gathered, this study concludes that an auditor's behavior when reviewing a client's accounts and providing assurance depends greatly on personal characteristics. Therefore, how auditors behave on the job as a whole is heavily influenced by their personal values, consciousness, religion, upbringing, age, gender, and fear of sanction.

5.3 Policy Implication and Recommendations

It is recommended that institutions pay more attention to personal factors such as auditors' gender, age, and religious affiliation, when creating appropriate ethical standards and also when recruiting people to work as auditors. To increase compliance with ethical standards at workplaces, it is advised that accounting bodies and firms give these personal values greater consideration. They should also establish appropriate ethics training for their staff members and all auditors emphasizing personal factors.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The sample drawn is from four cities in Ghana and therefore suggested that country-wide studies would give a better perspective of the conclusions reached. It is again suggested that further studies should be conducted to examine the degree to which these identified factors influence auditors' ethical behavior using structural equation modeling.

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APPENDIX
QUESTIONNAIRE

**AKENTEN APPIAH -MENKA UNIVERSITY OF SKILLS TRAINING AND
ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT**

This questionnaire is designed to collect data on the topic "**Accountants' consciousness of the factors influencing auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana**". Please answer all the questions to the best of your ability. You are assured that all your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality and be used for research purposes only. **Please mark only one.**

Section A- Respondents' personal information.

- | | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. Gender | Male
<input type="checkbox"/> | Female
<input type="checkbox"/> | | | | |
| 2. What is your religion? | Christianity
<input type="checkbox"/> | Islam
<input type="checkbox"/> | Traditionalist
<input type="checkbox"/> | Others
<input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 3. What is your area of specialization? | Financial Accounting
<input type="checkbox"/> | Taxation
<input type="checkbox"/> | Management Accounting
<input type="checkbox"/> | Auditing
<input type="checkbox"/> | Forensic Accounting
<input type="checkbox"/> | Others
<input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. What is your work experience? | 1 but less than 5
<input type="checkbox"/> | 6 but less than 10
<input type="checkbox"/> | 11 but less than 15
<input type="checkbox"/> | 16 but less than 20
<input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 5. What is your educational qualification? | HND
<input type="checkbox"/> | B.Sc.
<input type="checkbox"/> | MBA/ M.Sc.
<input type="checkbox"/> | Ph.D.
<input type="checkbox"/> | Others
<input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 6. What is your professional status? | Chartered Accountant <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | |

Section B- Ethical Behavior of Auditors in Ghana

On a scale of 1 to 6 with 1 signifying "Excellent", 2 signifying "Very Good", 3 signifying "Good", 4 signifying "Average", 5 signifying "Poor" and 6 signifying "Very Poor" Please rate the ethical behavior of an average auditor in Ghana. **Please mark only one.**

- | | | | | | | | |
|----|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 7. | What is the ethical behavior of an average auditor in Ghana? | Excellent | Very Good | Good | Average | Poor | Very Poor |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Section C- Perceived Factors Which Influence Auditors' Ethical Behavior

On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 signifying "Overwhelming Influence", 2 signifying "Lot of Influence", 3 signifying "Some Influence", 4 signifying "Little Influence", and 5 signifying "No Influence". Please rate the following factors which are perceived to influence auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana. **Please mark only one.**

- | | Overwhelming
Influence | Lot of
Influence | Some Influence | Little
Influence | No
Influence |
|----|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 8. | What is the level of influence religion has on auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. | What is the level of influence upbringing has on auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

10. What level of influence does conscience have on auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana?
11. What level of influence does gender have on auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana?
12. What level of influence does age have on auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana?
13. What level of influence does fear of sanction have on auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana?
14. What level of influence do personal values have on auditors' ethical behavior in Ghana?