

## An Empirical Investigation of the Relevant Forensic Accounting Skills Exposure to the Post- Period of Undergraduate Accounting Practical Students

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**Abstract:** The demand for forensic accounting has drawn some attention due to the increases of fraud cases around the globe. The emerging and enhanced fraud activities involving the financial irregularities have made the forensic accounting investigation become important to the business and the public where it can be relied to solve problems, deter new problems, and contribute to new, tougher standards of corporate behavior and reported information. Thus, it is deemed important to have enough forensic accounting investigators equipped with the necessary skills related to their profession. This study is conducted to investigate whether the post-period undergraduate accounting practical students will consider the need for exposure of relevant forensic accounting skills to students. The respondents used for this study consist of 25 undergraduate students who have experiences during the practical training in audit, tax, and accounting firms. The findings revealed that most respondents are agreed with the forensic accounting skills needed as an exposure to the post-period undergraduate accounting practical students. This study also intended to open the mind of students about the importance of forensic accounting and its relevant skills in the future. This is depicted by more than half of the respondents stated their interest to be forensic accountant. It is expected that, by having an earlier exposure to the relevant accounting skill adopted in the universities, it can be a stepping stone to prepare a high competence forensic accounting investigators in the future.

**Keywords:** accounting, forensic, skills, undergraduate

### 1. Introduction

The accounting professionals today have faced several changes in terms of their skills and practices in order to cope with the current demand and suits with the ever changing global environment. The incidents of financial scandals, fraud, money laundering and any other financial related crimes has heightened concerns on the necessity to further define the auditors and accountant's responsibility for detecting fraud in an organization (West Virginia University, 2007). The most popular accounting scandal or fraud case such as Enron and WorldCom enlighten the academic and professional views on the importance of forensic skill need in future accountant and auditor. Enron and WorldCom are known to be the best audit and account firm finally collapsed because of fraud and improper earnings management caused by unfulfilled duty of the auditor.

Fraud activities involved misstated documentation like overvaluation of inventory and improper capitalization of expenses, misuse of company assets, bribery, conspiracy, money laundering and so on (Bhasin, 2013; Digabriele; 2008). Unfortunately, all these fraud activities are difficult to trace due to complex financial transaction involved. While, there are cases which hard to be discovered but some are intentionally unreported as the company refuses to receive negative publicity (Bashin, 2013). Here, the expertise and well experienced auditor is needed to

reveal/disclose and investigate the manipulated document and complex transaction. Fraud has been reported to cause a huge number of losses, including the capital, assets, and even the life.

In relation to that, the American Institute of Certified Public Accountant suggests the use of forensic accounting procedure to detect financial reporting fraud and more forensic specialist is needed to be retained in an audit team (AICPA, 2004). Thus, the forensic accounting skills offer something beyond compared to accounting knowledge (Van Akkeren et al, 2013). Nowadays, forensic accounting curriculum has been introduced in many universities worldwide in United States of America, Australia, India, and also in Malaysia just to ensure the high level skilled white collar worker could be produced by the universities. A preliminary step can be taken to expose the accounting students with the forensic accounting skills so that it can nurture the forensic abilities and increase their interest to explore the area of fraud and forensic accounting in the future. As forensic skill is identified to be a crucial by potential employer therefore it is important to ensure the skill is fully utilized. However, there is a contradiction between theory and application.

The students who undergo the practical training at accounting department wonder the reason of differences between the practices and theories while preparing the documents for clients such as financial statements, tax related documents and other records. Here, the forensic skill is needed in case something fishy happen in the financial documentation. It also may guide them to be ethical in doing their tasks. Besides, forensic skill offers added value to the student as expected by the potential employer. Moreover, the forensic skill may help the student to be employed once they have finished their practical training period. Therefore, it generalized the need of forensic skills to be included in the syllabus and be experienced during practical training. Thus, this study is conducted to achieve 2 main objectives, first to investigate the skills of forensic accounting that post-practical student must acquire. Next, this research will determine whether the students who have experienced in practical training, interested in the forensic accounting knowledge and exposure.

## 2. Literature Review

Forensic accounting has come to glare of attention due to increases of fraud cases and white collar crimes. The existing of these crimes required more concern and specific expertise to circumvent the event. Moreover, this crime involves financial abuse and the reported cases often engages well established companies such as Enron, WorldCom, Adelphia, Pharmalat and others have causes billions of financial losses. According to Kasum (n.d.), fraud and corruption nowadays is seen as normal way of life and is endemic though people know that this action is illicit and against the law. Therefore, the forensic accounting is established mainly to prevent and detect the fraud activities. According to Barney (2007) and Zysman (2001), forensic accounting is a specialized field embraces multiple disciplines including auditing techniques, accounting skills and investigative procedures. On the other hand, Joshi (2003) cited in Kasum (n.d.) define forensic accounting as the application of specialized knowledge and specific skills to wield on the evidence of the economic transactions. Kranacher et al. (2011) stated that forensic accounting consist of two primary functions which is the litigation advisory services and investigative services. The litigation advisory services classify the role of forensic professionals as an expert or consultant, while the investigative service will require forensic professionals to use their skills and may or may not lead to courtroom testimony by undertaking proactive actions to examine and gathering facts and evidence (Kranacher et al, 2011).

With the emerging of fraud and financial irregularities, forensic accounting investigation become important to the business and the public where it can be relied to solve problems, deter new problems, and contribute to new, tougher standards of corporate behavior and reported information (Golden et al, 2006). The forensic accountant who is the individual practiced the forensic accounting is a members of a broad group of professionals that includes those who perform financial investigations which is 'trained and have experienced in

investigating and resolving suspicions or allegations of fraud through document analysis to include both financial and nonfinancial information, interviewing, and third-party inquiries, including commercial databases' (Golden et al, 2006). According to Ozkul and Pamukcu (2012), forensic accountants provides an account analysis to deliver the facts necessary for to resolve any dispute before certain financial crime cases brought to the court for litigation process. Forensic accountants are trained to have capability to make look beyond numbers and deal with the businesses realities of the situation, thus they must possess the skills such as analyzing, interpretation, summarisation and the presentation of complex financial and business related issues (Bhasin, 2007).

Since the cases such as management fraud, money laundering, tax fraud, bankruptcy fraud, securities fraud, and other types of fraud continue to be prevalent and are increasing, thus forensic accounting field is deemed very essential to act as a medium to counterpart this activity. As such, Okoye and Gbegi (2013) researched on examining forensic accounting as a tool for fraud detection and prevention. It was found that the uses of forensic accounting do significantly reduce the cases of fraud in organization and help to control the incidence of fraud in the state. Moreover there is a significant difference in the skills and technique used to prevent and detect fraud employed between the professional forensic accountants and the traditional external auditors (Okoye and Gbegi, 2013). For instance, auditors generally concern with deterrence only on the extent that lack of those deterrence would encourage the possibility of fraud, meanwhile the forensic accountant go further by involving investigation and applies the accounting, statistical, research, economic concepts and techniques to legal problems or potential legal problems when there is suspicion of fraud or fraud have been detected (Golden et al, 2006). In other word, auditors' role is to provide reasonable assurance that material misstatement does not exist and detect them if it really exists. However, the forensic accountant have narrow boundaries on development of detailed factual information, assessment of loss or damage and provide recommendations for deterrence in the future (Gangolly, n.d.). It is also differs with the role of an ordinary accountants that only concerns on the approaches in the discipline of recording, analysing, measuring, reporting, forecasting and giving advice in support of financial, management and strategic decisions (International Federation of Accountants, 2005).

Many prior researches have taken the attempts to outline the skills and techniques that a forensic accountant should have. For example, the West Virginia University (2007) suggest that the prerequisite knowledge and skills that a forensic account must have includes basic accounting concepts; basic auditing concepts; transaction processing cycles and control environment; business law concepts; general business communications skills and business ethics; and a basic computer skills. Meanwhile Davis et al. (n.d.) conduct surveys on attorneys, certified public accountants and academicians to identify their opinion about the characteristics and skills for the forensic accountants. From the survey, they found that being analytical, detailed-oriented and ethical are among the characteristics and behaviour that should be possessed by a forensic accounting. However, the study by Bhasin (2013) discovered that relying on core skills is not enough for the requirements to be forensic accountant. His study found that, being a professional forensic accountant, they should have a sixth sense and should possess some other special skills to counter all the ingenuity of the white collar criminals. On the other hand, the study by Digabriele et al. (2008) investigates the opinion from forensic accounting practitioners, accounting academics, and users of forensic accounting services. They revealed both academic and practitioners agree that the important skills should have by forensic accountants are critical thinking, unstructured problem solving, investigative flexibility, analytical proficiency and legal knowledge.

In the context of early exposure to earn the skills and knowledge for a forensic accountant, an individual must have the effort to gain and develop these skills at untimely level. The academic institution such as college or universities has their important role to nurture and give exposure about the requirement of skills and knowledge to those who are interested to become the forensic accountant. For example, the West Virginia University (2007) initiated the

Technical Working Group to examine the fraud and forensic accounting issues primarily to develop model curriculum guidelines. Among the content of the curriculum is to provide students with an introduction to fraud or forensic accounting through the exposure by courses or training module. Since the fraud activities is a type of white collar crime and it has become global phenomenon, thus recruiting a future professional forensic accounting are crucial. This is supported by Mitric et al. (2012) stated that it is important to develop forensic accounting in education and practice as a lesson from the past fraud cases and it still continually exist becoming the plague that could bring the losses in economic, social, political and surround the world.

The increasing demand for a forensic accountant indicates that more effort should be directed toward providing insight and training on the requisite characteristics, core and enhanced skills needed to qualify an individual as a forensic accountant (Davis et al, n.d.). This includes the effort to train students for a forensic skills and knowledge for their preparation to enter the professional forensic accounting field in the future. The knowledge about forensic accounting and its techniques will certainly makes some positive impacts in the effort to fight fraud and corruptions (Efiong, 2012). Most academic institution has develop internship programs for their students in order to expose them in the industry, however a great concern is that what is learn in class is not symmetrical to the reality. This is asserted by Mitric et al. (2012) recognize that there is a gap between the education and practice this raising the conflicts and to be worst, it possibly can elevate the confusion and uncertainty. Therefore, academic institution should have take a proactive steps to find a possible mechanism that can integrate what is being thought in theoretical aspects in classroom is align with the needs and situation incurred in real world. At least, preliminary effort can be done to make the students realize and understand if there is any cause that creates the gap between the theories in practice.

### 3. Research Methodology

The questionnaire items were designed for this study. The item for section A and B were designed as suggested by Digabriele (2008) to measure the forensic skill which believed to be important to every accounting student. All the measurement is based on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Meanwhile, the item in part C were used to get respondents' personal information and some basic feedback regarding the forensic skill needed as accounting students.

The data used in this study were drawn from a sample of accounting students in their last year of study in Degree of Accountancy in UiTM Pahang. The respondents had practical training during their semester break with auditing or accounting firms. The rationale for the respondents were taken as sample because it was expected the students to have some experience on how auditing task has been conducted in the real business. Therefore, the group of students is believed to be competent and reliable as the respondent. The respondent comes from 2 groups; AC220 8A and AC220 8B consist of 30 students. The questionnaire was completed by the students during the class period on the date the survey was circulated. Out of 30 sets of questionnaire distributed to the respondents, 25 (83.3%) sets are useable for statistical analysis. Next, the data from the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences, version 21.0. Descriptive measures such as the mean and frequency were used to examine the importance of forensic skills and the perceptions in forensic accounting among respondents.

### 4. Findings

This part comprises a few sections of analysis which is demographic of respondents, forensic accounting skills and important skills in forensic accounting to the post-period of

undergraduate accounting practical students, and others relevant questions which are suitable to achieve the objectives of this research from respondent’s perspectives. The tables and charts are used to aid the presentation of results from the study.

**4.1 Demographic of respondent**

Demographic data were gathered from a total of 25 researched participants as part of the data collection process. The demographic table (Table 2) summarizes the gender, age, and marital status. Based on the table, there were 9 male respondents and 16 female respondents. There were 16 respondents aged between 19 to 25 years old and 5 respondents were aged between 26 to 30 years old. Only one respondent married while another 24 respondents are single.

**Table 1.** Demographic result

Demographic category		N	Percent %
Gender	Male	9	36.0
	Female	16	64.0
Age	19 years – 25 years	20	80.0
	26 years – 30 years	5	20.0
	31 years and above	0	0.0
Marital status	Single	24	96.0
	Married	1	4.0

**4.2 Forensic Accounting Core Skills**

**Table 2.** Forensic accounting core skills that must be acquired by the post-period of undergraduate accounting practical students

Forensic accounting core skills	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
<i>Auditing skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	20	80.0	5	20.0	<b>4.20</b>
<i>Critical/strategic thinker skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	20	80.0	5	20.0	<b>4.20</b>
<i>Effective oral communication skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.0	17	68.0	6	24.0	<b>4.16</b>
<i>Effective written communication skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.0	15	60.0	9	36.0	<b>4.32</b>
<i>Identify key issues skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	12.0	16	64.0	6	24.0	<b>4.12</b>
<i>Investigative ability skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	20.0	16	64.0	4	16.0	<b>3.96</b>
<i>Investigative intuitiveness skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	24.0	17	68.0	2	8.0	<b>3.84</b>
<i>Organize an unstructured situation skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	16.0	17	68.0	4	16.0	<b>4.00</b>
<i>Research Skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.0	22	88.0	2	8.0	<b>4.04</b>
<i>Legal skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	24.0	16	64.0	3	12.0	<b>3.88</b>
<i>Simply the information skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	20.0	16	64.0	4	16.0	<b>3.96</b>
<i>Solve structured problems</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.0	20	80.0	3	12.0	<b>4.04</b>

<i>skills</i>												
<i>Solve unstructured problems skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.0	22	88.0	2	8.0	<b>4.04</b>	
<i>Synthesize results of discovery and analysis skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.0	21	84.0	3	12.0	<b>4.08</b>	
<i>Tell the story skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	16.0	20	80.0	1	4.0	<b>3.88</b>	
<i>Think like the wrongdoer</i>	0	0.0	1	4.0	3	12.0	18	72.0	3	12.0	<b>3.92</b>	
<i>Understand the goals of a case</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	21	84.0	4	16.0	<b>4.16</b>	
<i>Others: Psychology skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.0	17	68.0	6	24.0	<b>4.16</b>	
<i>Others: Sociology skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.0	18	72.0	6	24.0	<b>4.20</b>	
<i>Computer Skills</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.0	15	60.0	8	32.0	<b>4.24</b>	

F Frequency, % Percentage

Table 2 listed out the forensic accounting core skills that an undergraduate accounting practical students should have. Majority respondents chose the answer for agree and strongly agree for the given forensic accounting skills, while a few of them chose neutral. There are no respondents stated their answer as strongly disagree for all the listed forensic accounting skills, but only one (4%) respondent are disagreed with the skill that require forensic accounting to think like a wrongdoer. However it recorded 72% respondents stated agreed and 12% are strongly agreed to this skill. There are some skills recorded in high percentage such as “research skill” (88% agree, 8% strongly agree), “solving unstructured problem skill” (88% agree, 8% strongly agree), “synthesize results of discovery and analysis skill” (84% agree, 12% strongly agree), “understand the goal of a case” (84% agree, 16% strongly agree), “auditing skill” (80% agree, 20% strongly agree), “critical/strategic thinker skill” (80% agree, 20% strongly agree), “solve structured problem skills” (80% agree, 12% strongly agree) and “tell the story skill” (80% agree, 4% strongly agree).

Thus, the findings were different from the past study conducted by Davis et al. who executed the survey to the three groups of respondents which is the academicians, attorneys and the certified public accountants. Their findings implies that effective oral communication and effective written communication receive the highest ranking followed by the ability to simplify the information, critical/strategic thinker, auditing skills and investigative ability. Meanwhile, the “sociology skills” received 72% agreed from respondents and 24% strongly agree, while the “psychology skills” recorded 68% agreed and 24% strongly agreed. The remaining skills such as “effective oral communication skills”, “investigative intuitiveness”, and “organized an unstructured situation” shows 68% stated agreed to all these skills. In the meantime, for “identify key issues”, “investigative ability”, “legal skills”, and “simplify the information” recorded 64% respondents agreed to all these skills. There are 60% respondents stated agreed to the “effective written communication skills” and “computer skills”.

### 4.3 Essential Competencies in Forensic Accounting

**Table 3.** Essential competencies in forensic accounting to the post-period of undergraduate accounting practical students

Importance of forensic accounting competency	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Mean
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
<i>Deductive analysis</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	8	32.0	16	64.0	1	4.0	<b>3.72</b>
<i>Critical thinking</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.0	18	72.0	5	20.0	<b>4.12</b>

<i>Unstructured problem solving</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	4.0	21	84.0	3	12.0	<b>4.08</b>
<i>Investigative flexibility</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	12.0	17	68.0	5	20.0	<b>4.08</b>
<i>Analytical proficiency</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	5	20.0	16	64.0	4	16.0	<b>3.96</b>
<i>Oral communication</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.0	18	72.0	5	20.0	<b>4.12</b>
<i>Written communication</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	8.0	19	76.0	4	16.0	<b>4.08</b>
<i>Specific legal knowledge</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	16.0	18	72.0	3	12.0	<b>3.96</b>
<i>Composure</i>	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	12.0	18	72.0	4	16.0	<b>4.04</b>

F Frequency, % Percentage

Table 3 shows the results of students’ perception of essential competencies in forensic accounting to the post-period of undergraduate practical students. It can be seen that none of the students chose strongly disagree nor disagree to the given statements. The table revealed that a high percentage were recorded by 84% respondents agreed that “unstructured problem solving” are the important forensic accounting skills, meanwhile 12% are strongly agree and 4% stated neutral. The “unstructured problem solving” is the ability to approach each situation and be prepared to solve problems with various approach. The skill for “written communication” which is the ability to effectively communicate in writing via reports, charts, graphs, and schedules with the bases of opinion recorded 76% agree, 16% strongly agree and 8% are neutral. For the “critical thinking ability” and “oral communication” skills, it shows similar results where 72% respondents are agreed, 20% strongly agreed while 8% are neutral. Other than that, the “specific legal knowledge” that require a forensic accountants to understand basic legal processes and legal issues including the rules of evidence also recorded 72% respondents stated agreed, 12% are strongly agreed and another 16% are neutral. To integrate this findings with previous literatures, it would be best to refer Mitric et al. (2012), in their study, suggested that it is essential for a forensic accountant to have substantial knowledge of accounting and auditing, oral and written communication skills, strong detail-spotting skills and a good use of information and communication technology. Next, for the “composure” ability which is the ability to maintain a calm attitude in pressured situations shows 72% agree, 16% strongly agree and 12% respondents states as neutral. On the other hand, the “investigative flexibility” shows 68% respondents are agreed, 20% are strongly agreed while 12% are neutral. Meanwhile for the “analytical proficiency” skill, there are 64% respondents agree, 16% strongly agree and 20% are neutral. The skill of “deductive analysis” which is the ability to take aim at financial contradictions that do not fit in the normal pattern of an assignment shows only 64% respondents agree, 4% are strongly agreed and 32% are neutral.

#### 4.4 Student’s Perceptions on Forensic Accounting

**Table 4.** Student’s Perceptions on Forensic Accounting

<b>Student’s Perceptions on Forensic Accounting</b>		<b>N</b>	<b>Percent (%)</b>
<i>Highest level of education needed to be a successful Forensic Accountant</i>	<i>Undergraduate degree</i>	17	68.0
	<i>Masters degree</i>	7	28.0
	<i>Other degree</i>	1	4.0
<i>Demand for forensic accountants in the next 5 years</i>	<i>Increase</i>	24	96.0
	<i>Decrease</i>	1	4.0
<i>Will there be enough forensic accountants available to meet the demand in the next 5 years</i>	<i>Yes</i>	14	56.0
	<i>No</i>	5	20.0
	<i>Not Sure</i>	6	24.0
<i>Important of forensic accounting knowledge and</i>	<i>Important</i>	16	64.0

<i>exposure to post-period practical students after returning</i>	<i>Extremely important</i>	9	36.0
	<i>Unimportant</i>	0	0.0
	<i>Extremely unimportant</i>	0	0.0
<i>Interested to be a forensic accountant</i>	<i>Yes</i>	14	56.0
	<i>No</i>	5	20.0
	<i>Not Sure</i>	6	24.0
<i>Do you think that forensic accounting knowledge and exposure should be done before practical training through the seminar, practical workshop and etc.</i>	<i>Yes</i>	18	72.0
	<i>No</i>	2	8.0
	<i>Not Sure</i>	5	20.0
<i>Do you think that forensic accounting knowledge and exposure should be done after practical training through the seminar, practical workshop and etc.</i>	<i>Yes</i>	11	44.0
	<i>No</i>	8	32.0
	<i>Not Sure</i>	6	24.0
<i>Any experiences where the theory that you learned in the university contradicted or opposed with the practices during your practical training</i>	<i>Yes</i>	14	56.0
	<i>No</i>	7	28.0
	<i>Not Sure</i>	4	16.0
<i>Intention to further study in the forensic accounting programme</i>	<i>Yes</i>	11	44.0
	<i>No</i>	1	4.0
	<i>Not Sure</i>	13	52.0

In general, this research intended to identify the student's perceptions about forensic accounting as described in Table 4. In terms of needed education level, 68% respondents chose "Undergraduate degree", 28% chose "Master degree" and 4% chose "Other degree" that is needed to be a successful forensic accountant. There are 96% respondents felt that the demand for forensic accountants will be increase in the next five years and only 4% stated as decrease. For the question that asks whether there will be enough forensic accountants available to meet the demand in the next five years, 56% of them chose "yes", 20% chose "no" and 24% students are not sure with this statement. The respondents also required to rate the importance of forensic accounting knowledge and exposure to post-period practical students after returning from the internship program. The result revealed that 64% rated as "important" and 36% rated as "extremely important". None of the respondents rate this statement as "unimportant" or "extremely unimportant". This result somehow depicts that the respondents are aware about a necessity to have forensic accounting skills endowed to the post-period practical students.

More than half of the respondents stated that they are interested to be a forensic accountant as represented by 56% of them chose "yes" with this statement, while 20% of them are not interested and 24% are "not sure". Majority respondents (72%) claimed that forensic accounting knowledge and exposure should be done before practical training through the seminar, practical workshop and others. The remaining 8% respondents chose "no" and 20% of them are "not sure" with this statement. Conversely, when they were asked if it should be done after the practical training, 44% respondents claimed as "yes", 32% chose "no" and 24% opined as "not sure". The next question asks the respondents' experiences in practical training whether there is any contradiction between the theories learned in class with the real environment in practical training. Surprisingly, more than half of the respondents represented by 56% stated their answers as "yes", 20% are not experiencing any contradiction, while 28% respondents are not sure with the statement. Additionally, the survey finds that, 44% respondents have the intention to further study in the forensic accounting field, 4% respondents said "no", and 52% respondents are not sure if they intended to further study in this programme.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation



The study was carried out to identify the critical skills on forensic accounting the students should possess and bridging the gap on the knowledge and theories of forensic accounting they have learnt with the practices done in accounting and auditing firms. Therefore, questionnaires were distributed to the undergraduate students who have undergone their practical training in accounting and auditing firms. Based on the analysis, it was found that the core skills of forensic accounting such as research, problem-solving and analyzing skills were ranked as most important skills should be acquired to become a good forensic accountant. Next, the students were assessed the competencies should be acquired by students on forensic accounting. Interestingly, almost majority of the undergraduate students believed the research and unstructured problem solving skills are important in forensic accounting because they think these skills are critical after their post-training period. Definitely, different problems encounter different solving techniques or approaches. Therefore, the forensic accounting skills and competencies should be acquired by students in forensic accounting field.

Next findings are pertaining to second objective to determine the interest of students who undergone the practical training regarding forensic accounting knowledge and exposure. The findings revealed that majority of students thought that the forensic accounting should be exposed since undergraduate level as more than 90% believed that the demand in forensic accounting will increase in future. It is most outrageous that all students stated that forensic accounting is important after they have done their practical training period. Nevertheless, the results also showed that more than half agreed that there are differences between theories they have learnt and practiced done by the firm. Moreover, majority of students implied that they were interested in becoming the forensic accountant and nearly half of the students stated their intention to further their study in forensic accounting course.

In conclusion, practical students should possess adequate forensic accounting skills and competencies for employment in future. The skills like research and unstructured problem-solving ability are crucial because as they are dealing with accounting works they need to make wise decisions on every actions or paths they decide to choose as each decision taken followed by its consequences. Notably, in classrooms they were only exposed to stories or theories written in the books. Forensic accounting knowledge is not only to pass the exam and the knowledge is needed to nurture ethics and ensure they were in the right track when dealing with financial information, internal control procedures and safeguarding the assets. As matter of that, the practices done create gap between practices and theories learnt in classrooms and books. Importantly, the end does not justify the mean. Therefore, it is suggested that the forensic accounting knowledge should be exposed earlier, perhaps during undergraduate level as the students will have forensic accounting knowledge in order to born a good accountant and also a good citizen to understand and to whistle blow any fishy information for the sake of the world. It is recommended that series of short training could be conducted to undergraduates and accountants regarding the forensic accounting pertaining to new issues and challenges.

This study has its limitations. The survey was done from a small sample which may bias the generalization for the whole populations. Furthermore, this study is a cross sectional study which the result obtained upon the study carried out may differ if the study is carried out in different time and to different respondents. It is suggested that for further study the relationship between genders and the interest on forensic accounting could be conducted. It is also recommended that the findings from employers on exposing forensic accounting knowledge earlier to students should be carried out in future.

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