BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION

FUCULTY OF COMMERCE

DEPARTMENT OF ACCOUNTANCY

THE IMPACT OF ACCOUNTING ETHICS ON BUSINESS OPERATIONS. A CASE STUDY OF WATTLE (PVT) LTD COMPANY.

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The dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelors of Commerce Accountancy Honors Degree at Bindura University of Science Education.

2022

DECLARATION FORM

I Wayne Munyaka declare that this research project herein is my own piece of work and has not been copied from any source without the acknowledgement of the source.

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APPROVAL FORM

The undersigned certify that they have supervised, read and recommend to Bindura University of science education for the acceptance of the research project entitled; A study of the impact of accounting ethics in business operations. A case study of The Wattle Pvt Ltd for the period ranging from January 2022 to December 2022 submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Accountancy honours degree.

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DEDICATION

To my family, I dedicate this research project as recognition of their unwavering support to all my endeavors and to my husband Derek who gave me strength of character and supported me throughout the entire course. Without them, the completion of this work would not have been possible.

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My gratitude and genuine appreciation goes to the Wattle Pvt Ltd and its staff for permitting me the opportunity to carry out the research and for provision of any material required for the research to be a success through professional responses from questionnaires.

Heartfelt gratitude extended to my parents for their support and inspiration in the course of my studies. Special thanks to my husband Derek for his unwavering support as well as to my friends Cleo and Vimbai for their motivation, love, support and inspiration in all my endeavours and they have been pillars of my strength during the period of this research.

ABSTRACT

The study's aims were to examine the influence of accounting ethics on company operations at Wattle Pvt Ltd. A descriptive study approach was adopted, and a sample size of 25 people (n=22) was chosen. A questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to collect primary data. The questionnaire had a Cronbach Alpha rating of.894 after being assessed for instrument variability and reliability. The data was analyzed with SPSS and descriptive statistics, and replies were ranked using mean values. According to the findings, the most common ethical accounting practices at Wattle Pvt Ltd are integrity, confidentiality, and professional behavior. Finally, the study discovered a substantial association between ethical accounting (p=0.00) and corporate operations. The researcher advised Wattle Pvt Ltd to create a good accounting system and to guarantee that an accounting code of ethics adheres to International Standards. It came to the conclusion that Wattle Company should embrace honesty, impartiality, fairness, and responsibility as a moral obligation in order to lower the degree of unethical accounting practices.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

The study on the influence of accounting ethics on business operations is introduced in this chapter. It is divided into sections such as the background of the study, the problem statement, the aims of the investigation, the research questions, the importance of the study, the constraints of the study, the delimitation of the study, the research assumptions, the definition of terminology, and the summary.

1.2 Background of the study

The failure of multiple corporations and high-profile scams in the recent decade have called into doubt the accounting profession's integrity. In an organization, ethics are extremely important in the accounting department. According to (Otusanya 2020), corporate accounting scandals have startled the international business community in recent years, reviving many people's interest in ethical accounting methods. A number of financial reporting scandals and unethical accounting practices have had a negative impact on corporate operations (Terry, 2012). Accounting fraud may harm a company's brand and undermine consumer trust. Unethical accounting procedures can lead to an organization's demise (Hegarty and Sims, 2012). From 1999 to 2004, Enron Corporation, Parmalat, Lehman Brothers Bank, Tyco International, WorldCom, and ImClone were some of the global instances of corporations that experienced corporate reputation harm or failed as a result of ethical accounting wrongdoing. Hippo Valley and Triangle estates were recently embroiled in the Tongaat affair in 2019, as were the Gupta brothers in S.A, the Toshiba accounting scandal, and the Patisserie Holdings case in 2018.

The acknowledgment of the obligation to act in the public good is a distinguishing feature of the accounting profession IFAC (2005). Independence, honesty, objectivity, competence, and judgment are key attributes that feature in professional organizations' codes of ethics. There are basic principles that directly or implicitly mention or imply all of these attributes, as well as others such as honesty, fair dealing, truthfulness, civility, skill, and diligence (Gowthorpe, 2005). However, Baucus and Near (2011) argued that accounting ethics is one of the most important but misunderstood concerns in today's business world, while Posner and Schmidt (2009) proposed that general theories of ethics can be used to explain and understand the professional conduct that accountants are expected to exhibit.

The nature of accountants' and auditors' work necessitates a high degree of ethics, and all stakeholders expect them to utilize them while generating financial statements for any given fiscal quarter. Stakeholders such as shareholders, employees, the competitors, creditors, government, as well as many other users of financial reports rely heavily on the work of accountants, assuming that the financial reports have been prepared ethically and in accordance with International Accounting Standards (IAS) and International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) (IFRS). These stakeholders rely on the accountant who created the financial statements and the auditors who validated them to provide an accurate and fair picture of the company's performance.

Defilement of ethical notions in the accounting and auditing profession is a worry not just in other nations, but also in Zimbabwe as a whole. As the Zimbabwean economy contracts, business scandals are on the rise. According to Makoshori (2013), Small Enterprises Development Corporation (SEDCO) was implicated in accounting scandals including fraud discovered in two audits, which cost the organizations. The aforementioned difficulties prompted the researcher to conduct research on the influence of accounting ethics on the quality of financial reports for The Wattle Company Pvt Ltd in Mutare..

1.3 Statement of the problem

Wattle Company Pvt Ltd has a gap in compliance with accounting ethics, which has impacted its company operations as they manufacture and sell timber. Professional ethical violations, which may be the cause of bad company operations, have resulted in the layoff of thousands of people, the closure of formerly thriving branches, and the eroding of investor faith in organizations. Management should devote more time and effort to the firm in order to increase its ethics, accountability, transparency, honesty, and professionalism in order to improve the smooth functioning of the organization. The purpose of this study is to look into the influence of accounting ethics on company operations at Wattle Company..

1.4 Research objectives

1. To identify accounting ethics that impact Wattle Company (Pvt) Ltd's business operations.

2. Determine Wattle Pvt Ltd's degree of ethical accounting procedures.

3. Identify the relationship between accounting ethics and company operations at Wattle Company (Pvt) Ltd.

4. To suggest methods for eliminating unethical conduct.

1.5 Research questions

1. What are the accounting ethics that impact Wattle Company (Pvt) Ltd's company operations?

2. How ethical are Wattle Pvt Ltd's accounting practices?

3. What measures may be taken to decrease unethical behavior?

Research hypothesis

H0: There is no link between accounting ethics and business operations at Wattle Pvt Ltd.

H1: There is a link between accounting ethics and business operations at Wattle Pvt Ltd.

1.6 Significance of the Study

To the researcher

The researcher gains knowledge and abilities in inquiry, investigation, and topic extents such as , Auditing, Corporate Governance and Financial Management. It allowed the researcher to obtain research skills and expertise in order to conduct future study and to blend academic ideas with practical processes. It is especially significant since it is required by Bindura University of Science Education as part of the bachelor of accounting degree.

To the University (Bindura University of Science Education)

The findings will add to a new level of understanding, so improving present accounting ethics knowledge, and will pave the path for future research for other students..

To The Wattle Company

The report goes a long way toward raising awareness within Wattle Company management on how accounting ethics affect business operations. This applies to all areas, including accounting, production, sales, marketing, and operations..

1.7 Assumptions

In carrying out this study, the following assumptions are made:

- Accounting ethics has an impact on The Wattle Company's company operations.

- Respondents with expert knowledge and relevant knowledge and experience in the production of timber will be used for the research purpose, allowing the research to be carried out effectively.

- The response rate on the questionnaires was so high that the researcher obtained complete, accurate, and relevant data, allowing him to draw valuable conclusions.

-Allocated research time will allow the researcher to complete the project.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The research investigated the influence of accounting ethics on corporate operations across all branches, focusing on employees, managers, and other stakeholders. The targeted pool of responders was limited to The wattle firm management's accounting department and auditors in 2020 and 2021.

1.9 Limitations

Time

There was insufficient time to perform the study since there were deadlines to meet; the research period was restricted to just one year, therefore the researcher did not manage to alternate in all segments to carry out the research as a participant observer.

Confidentiality

Some respondents were hesitant to provide their sincere and honest view because they were afraid of losing their employment. Because the investigation had to cover all corporate processes, several departments lacked the essential knowledge of accounting ethics and were simply unwilling to help the researcher in providing some of the information.

Finance

There were insufficient financial resources to compile materials such as questionnaire sheets, a visit to The Wattle Company in Mutare, and the printing of the completed document as required by the degree.

1.10 Definition of terms

Ethics- a standard of conduct in which one can use to recognize whether something is right or wrong.

Ethical accounting - this refers to the art of accountants complying with guidelines set by governing bodies in the preparation, presentation and disclosure of financial information.

Code of ethics-these are a set principles and rules that guide organizational decisions, programs and policies.

Business operations – these are activities that a business engage on a daily basis in order to generate revenue.

Financial reporting-this is the process of documenting and communicating financial activities and performance over specific time period.

IFAC- International Federation of Accountants.

1.11 Chapter Summary

The chapter emphasized the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, and research questions, assumption of the research, significance of the study and definition of terms. Delimitations and limitations of the study were also discussed. The following chapter will focus on the related literature.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher will thoroughly examine the claims made by various researchers and publications regarding the influence of accounting ethics on corporate operations. A literature review evaluates a variety of various sorts of sources related to the research (Dave Haris, 2019). The researcher will emphasize the theoretical literature review, empirical studies that show what previous researchers saw in relevant studies, and the study's conceptual framework.

2.1.1 Theoretical Framework

Accounting ethics derived their rationale and fundamental character from general philosophy of ethics. (Duska & Duska, 2005) alluded to several scholars for their philosophical perspectives on accounting ethics. Ethics was founded on the following fundamental ideas of ethical behavior: utilitarianism theory, egoism theory, and virtue and deontology approach.

2.1.2 Utilitarianism theory

This idea focuses on the effects of an activity on the people who are impacted by it. Utilitarianism is concerned with maximizing the greatest amount of good (i.e., utility) for the largest number of people. The term implies a connection to ethics, with an act regarded ethical if the majority of persons are pleased and obtaining a benefit. According to Burton and Goldsby (2009), if a behavior does not fulfill a justified ethical norm, it will have long-term negative effects for the stakeholders. This notion contradicts the moral standpoint of accounting. According to Peter Singer, the utilitarian theory was developed in the eighteenth century by Jeremy Bentham and later improved by John Stuart Mill (2017). Utilitarianism theory is a consequentialist perspective of teleological approach. According to J. E. Kertz (2006), utilitarian philosophers are traditionally split into two types: act utilitarianism and rule utilitarianism. It is not unexpected that the rule utilitarianism method is prominent in today's accounting practice. Act utilitarianism, on the other hand, is concerned with the rightness and wrongness of a single act. According to Ogbonna and Appah (2011), it is immoral for a professional accountant to do anything that serves his interests at the detriment of another. Nwachukwu (2007) stated that if anything is done to maximize one's satisfaction while also making others happy and leaving very few people unhappy, it is okay. This point of view is relevant to the study because, in most cases, this point of view is pertinent to the study because Wattle Pvt Ltd has generally been plagued by a number of financial scandals, the majority of which were connected to the management's declining ethical accounting practices, who have engaged in a variety of malpractices to maximize their happiness whereas making others unpleasant. In 2019, Herald News reported on a recent and related event at Hippo Valley Pvt Ltd, in which management inflated their sales only to receive a bonus. This means that, as accountants, we must assess our acts by adding up their costs and benefits. In this case, the theory added value to the topic under study because companies such as Wattle Pvt Ltd in Zimbabwe are only focused on unethical accounting systems, accentuated by greed-driven and rent-seeking inclinations to attach rather than focusing on providing services or goods to society with minimal harm.

2.1.3 Egoism theory

A morally correct action is one in which the decision maker freely chooses to pursue either their short-term or long-term goals. It is claimed in ethics that man should pursue his own good. John Nolt (2013) supports the notion by stating that everyone is best off pursuing his or her own self-interest. Mahdi and Mohsen (2011) backed up egoism ideas by stating that it is beneficial to follow one's own interests, emphasizing the importance of self-love, self-esteem, and the desirability of an individual's passionate pursuit of his or her goals and aspirations. This idea, however, does not evaluate what is fair to everyone, but rather what is in their best interests. As a result, it is explicitly stated that it is not acceptable in the accounting profession, since the code of ethics mandates the accountant's commitment to operate in the public good (Ogbonna and Appah, 2011). This belief emphasizes the theory's significance to the research since it reassures professional accountants to use principles such as fairness, responsibility, honest, respect, and consideration when doing their jobs and to prevent selfishness. There was a real desire at Wattle Pvt Ltd that the company increase ethics, professionalism, accountability, transparency and integrity in order to improve organizational performance and prevent egoism.

2.1.4 Virtue Based Moral Theory

This approach focuses on the type of person performing the activity rather than the outcomes of the deed. According to Dawn Church (2015), virtue ethics pertains to accountants since it emphasizes that they should be the best at what they do. They should be the greatest accountant they can be by telling the truth, not causing harm to others, following through on obligations, and having integrity. However, Zvavahera and Ndoda (2014) argue that the principal source of business crises in Zimbabwe is a combination of unethical accounting procedures by accountants who engage in insider deals, fraud, and lack integrity. As a result, the researcher was able to discover ethical implications that were absent at Wattle Pvt Ltd Company, which might be the cause of negative company operations.

2.1.5 Deontology theory

Deontological philosophy of ethics is sometimes known as non-consequentialist or principle-based theory. This viewpoint claims that qualities of actions determine whether or not they are proper. Immanuel Kant founded this ethical philosophy that stresses justice. According to (Mausio, 2014), individuals have rational natures, people should never be viewed as a means to an end for others, and each individual has the same moral value as everyone else. The actions that a person expects from others are referred to as rights. An accountant, for example, has the obligation to defend its client's interests, but the customer also has the right to the accountant's best work, which implies that the accountant should execute the client's work to the best of his abilities. Meyers (2015) proposed that when presented with moral quandaries, accountants should think rationally rather than emotionally. This underscores the theory's relevance to the research, because at Wattle Pvt Ltd, malpractices such window dressing, creative accounting, and fraud accusations were on the rise, indicating that management was failing to satisfy its moral obligation. Morality is established by whether or not actions violate moral norms, as well as the motivation for such acts (Nwagboso, 2008). A good action is one done out of a desire to do one's duty and obey the laws. Accountants must maintain a fair and consistent relationship with all of their clients to guarantee smooth business operations. Workers should not violate values since it is unpleasant, according to Ebitu (2012), although Gono (2004) affirmed the prevalence of imbalanced immoral accounting systems, aggravated by greed. Rent-seeking inclinations and a lack of integrity are now cancerous in the Zimbabwean economy, with numerous firms participating in different unethical behaviors while disregarding ethical rules in contradiction of deontological ideas).

2.2 Conceptual framework

Sharon M. Ravitch, (2016) defines conceptual framework as mechanism for positioning literature review that assists to direct and ground researchers as they work through common research challenges and concentrating on published studies on a range of topics as well as employing both quantitative and qualitative methods. It describes the connection between the main concepts of a study arranging it in a logical structure to aid establishment of a picture or visual display of how philosophies in a study relate to one another (Grant & Osanloo, 2014). In relation to accounting conceptual framework can be defined as a rational system of interconnected objectives and fundamentals that should lead to dependable standards that prescribe the nature, function and limits of financial accounting Lynch (2000).

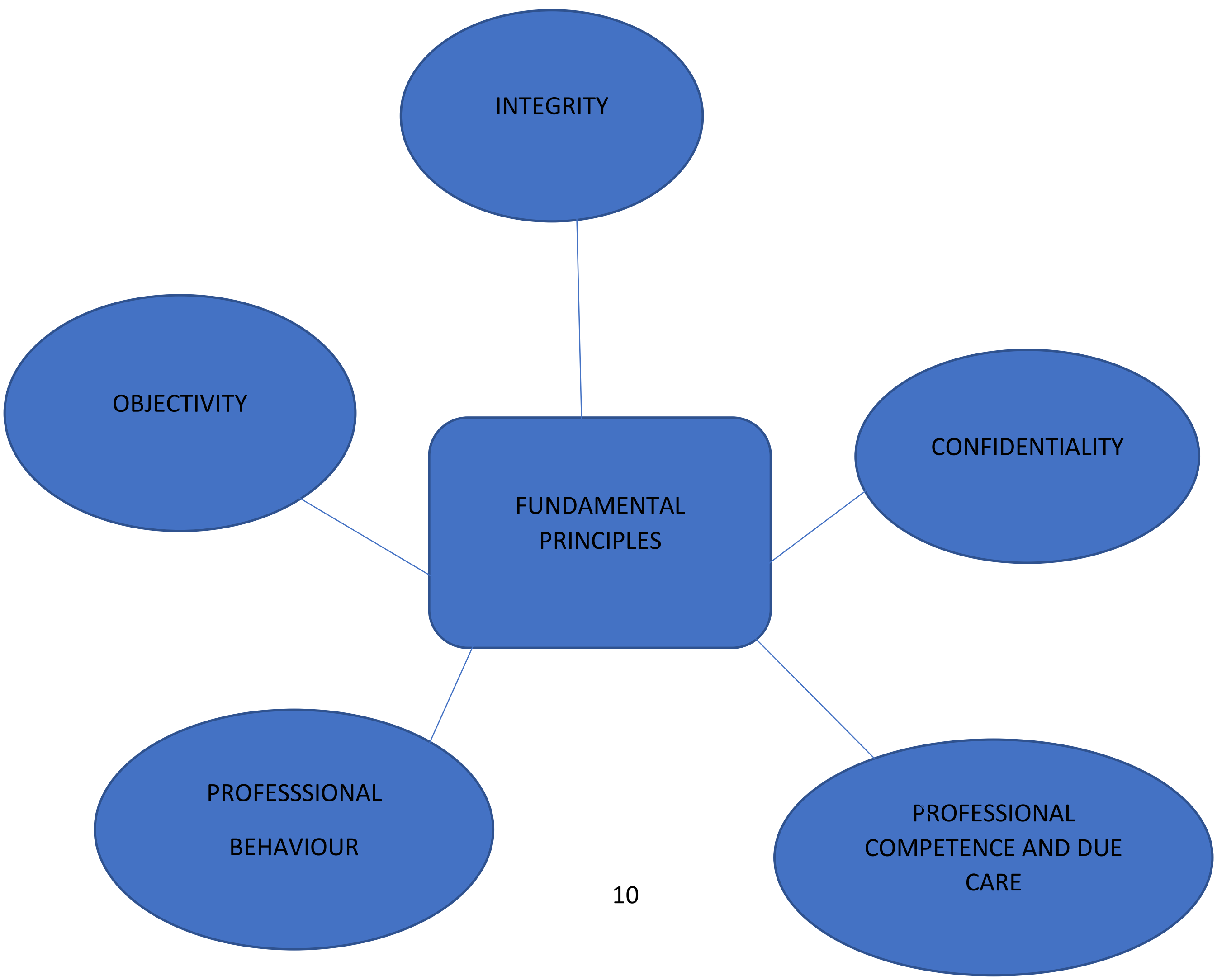
2.2.1 The concept of accounting ethics

Accounting ethics is primarily an applied ethics area that is a subset of business ethics and human ethics. It is the study of moral principles and judgments as they pertain to accounting and is an example of professional ethics (Eileen.Z. Taylor 2020). Similarly, Kalbers (2010) defines accounting ethics as a collection of specific rules that a company must follow in order to show accurate financial statements and avoid manipulating financial reports and statements as well as misusing management positions. He went on to say that the fundamental motivation for accounting ethics and ethical standards is to maintain professionalism and good practice on a global scale. The possibility for conflict of interest is the most serious ethical concern in the accounting profession in most firms across the world (Gomez, 2002). Breaking ethical principles in the practice of corporate financial reporting is not fair to users, and such behavior might jeopardize the primary goal of financial information (Gowthorpe and Amat, 2005). According to that within a positive setting, ethical behavior impacts ethical accountability in the corporate sector. One of the benefits of adhering to accounting ethics is that it fosters a better professional atmosphere by instilling in everyone the importance of upholding high ethical standards. However, making these ideals function in an organization needs some experience and understanding. Accounting ethics, according to John Black 2005, contain a set of ideals that every accountant is supposed to integrate. The international code below explains these values.

2.2.2 The Code of Accounting Ethics

The main goal of the International Federation of Accountants Code of Ethics (IFAC, 2018) was to acknowledge that the goals of the accounting profession are to adhere to the highest standards of professionalism in order to attain the best degree of performance and more broadly to fulfill the needs of the public interest. The code's aims include trustworthiness, professionalism, service quality, and confidence. According to Nwagboso (2008), because the accounting profession places a high priority on accountability and stewardship, all members are required to abide by set of ethical standards. The five main elements of the IFAC (2018) code of ethics are presented diagrammatically below on fig 2.1: honesty, objectivity, professional competence and due care, confidentiality, and professional behavior.

Figure 2.1



Source: World Essays J Vol., 1 (2014)

Integrity

- To be honest and forthright in all professional and corporate situations is to have integrity. Manson and Gray (2011). Puttick and Esch (2012) argue that integrity is primarily a mental attitude that points toward fair dealing and truthfulness. Integrity denotes honesty, morality, honesty, fair dealing, transparency, and fidelity. It requires all professional accountants to be transparent, fair in their dealings, and honest in professional and corporate interactions (IFAC) (2006). Elder, Beasley, and Arens (2010) agreed that in order to retain and extend public trust, members should carry out all professional missions and obligations with the utmost honesty. A professional accountant is said to have violated the code of integrity if he or she is associated with financial reports or any financial information that contains the following characteristics, as cited by IFAC (2018): • Contains materially false or misleading statements; • Contains statements or information furnished recklessly; and • Information contains material omissions.

Objectivity

- Objectivity is a state of mind in which all factors pertinent to the job at hand are prioritized over all others. Ronald F Duska (2018) defined objectivity as a principle that requires the four core demands of service quality, credibility, professionalism, and confidence. According to IFAC, professional accountants should make professional or commercial decisions without being influenced by: • prejudice • conflict of interest • undue influence of others to overrule professional judgements • undue dependence on persons, organizations, or any other variables

Due Care and Professional Competence

- A professional accountant is obligated to follow the code of professional competence and due care in order to provide professional services. The idea means that the professional accountant is unquestionably qualified to conduct the services (Nwagboso, 2008). It is stated that competence services need the application of good judgment and so include both the attainment and maintenance of professional competence. Puttick and colleagues (2012). Ethical competence is a critical differentiator between having skills and having a real sense of professionalism. According to IFAC (2021), professional competence and due care are to; - Maintain professional knowledge and skill, for example, Earnest and Young offers free training to its employees to advance in their accounting careers in order to have ethical professional accountants. - Act diligently in accordance with technical and professional standards.

Confidentiality

- According to Gray and Manson (2011), professional accountants must maintain the confidentiality of information obtained as a consequence of professional and business connections. They should not reveal any information unless instructed to do so. A professional accountant must maintain the confidentiality of information obtained while conducting professional services (Ogbonna and Appah, 2011). Consider an accountant who has two customers in the same business (Telecel and Econet). At that moment, one customer may seek information from the other, but as a professional accountant who adheres to ethics, you will be under no need to reveal anything. According to IFAC, the concept of confidentiality ensures that information obtained by the accountant is kept secret and respected in the course of duty. According to Aguolu (2006), the principle of confidentiality imposes an obligation on professional accountants to refrain from: • disclosing confidential information acquired as a result of professional and business relationships outside the firm or employing organization without proper and specific authority or unless there is a legal or professional right or duty to disclose
- • Using private information obtained via professional and business interactions for personal gain or the benefit of third parties.

Professional Conduct

- The notion of professional behavior required professional accountants to follow relevant rules and regulations and to avoid any activity that might bring their profession into disrepute (Nwagboso, 2008). For example, it is unethical to come across a professional accountant who is intoxicated on the streets, as this will result in his or her professional reputation being tarnished. According to Puttick et al. (2012), a professional accountant should comply with relevant rules and regulations, operate in a way compatible with the profession's good reputation, and refrain from any activity that may bring dishonor to the profession. According to IFAC (2021), the professional behavior concept is to: - Comply with appropriate rules and regulations - Act in a way compatible with the profession's obligation to act in the public interest in all professional activities and commercial connections
- - To avoid any conduct that the professional accountant is aware may bring the profession into disrepute..

2.2.3 Threats to fundamental Principles

Threats are variables and occurrences that may have an influence on an accountant's ability to follow the fundamental principles. Eileen Taylor (2020). The code defines ethics as "facts and circumstances," which include any professional actions, interests, or connections that may jeopardize conformity with the core principles. These risks might be caused by a variety of facts and conditions. Furthermore, the nature of activities and work assignments may change, resulting in the development of distinct sorts of risks. Many risks to basic principles compliance fall into one or more of the categories depicted in the figure below:

(a) Self-interest;

(b) Self-review;

(c) Advocacy;

(d) Familiarity; and

(e) Intimidation

Fig 2.2

Self-interest threat

According to Millichamp A.H. (2008), self-interest occurs when an accountant is improperly influenced by the financial or other interests of a professional accountant or an immediate or near family member. It has an effect on fundamental principles by improperly influencing an accountant's judgment or conduct (think integrity, professional behavior).

Self-review

The probability that a professional accountant may incorrectly assess the results of a past judgement or action taken by them or by any other person within their company or employing organizations on which they will rely while making a decision in connection with current activity. A.H. Millichamp (2008). It has an influence on basic principles because they may fail to apply enough due care or objectivity in appraising work completed.

Advocacy

Advocacy is the risk that a professional accountant would advocate a client's or employing organization's perspective to the degree that the accountant's neutrality is jeopardized. Puttick, G., and Van Esch [2006]. It occurs as a result of advocating or defending a client's stance. It has an influence on core principles by reducing objectivity when executing future work for the customer.

Familiarity

A professional accountant carries the risk of being unduly sympathetic to a client’s concerns or too lenient of their work as a result of long standing or close relationship. Guy DM and others (2004). Consider a member of the accounts team who has a close or personal familial tie with a corporate director or officer.

Intimidation

A professional accountant will be discouraged from operating honestly owing to actual or imagined pressures, including attempts to exert undue influence over the accountant, under this danger. Millychamp A.H It is caused by actual or imagined stresses. It has an influence on basic concepts objectivity by diminishing or failing to exercise appropriate care. Consider being threatened with litigation, dismissal, or replacement.

2.2.4 Significance of Accounting Ethics

Accountants and auditors perform work that requires a high level of ethics. According to (Love and Vincent 2009), shareholders, potential shareholders, and other users of financial statements rely greatly on a company's yearly financial statements since they allow them to make well-informed investment decisions. They contend that in order to present a true and fair image of the firm, they must depend on the judgment of the accountants who generated the accounts and the auditors who validated them. According to Cottel and Phillip (1990), understanding ethics can assist auditors and accountants to resolve ethical conundrums and choose a course of action that, while not advantageous to the organization will be advantageous to the stakeholders. Equally significant, Gowthorne, Catherine, and Black (1998) assert that it is far unusual for accountants to be moral in their actions due to the nature of their business. According to Gowthorne et al (1998), the nature of accountants' employment places them in a higher position of trust in regard to their customers, employers, and general publics, who rely on their professional judgment and direction in making choices. These outcomes have an impact on an economy's resource allocation process.

To be trustworthy and hence dependable, financial information must be devoid of material mistakes and fraud, as well as have certain secondary features (Allison 2006). These characteristics include:

Faithful representation entails correctly reflecting what it purports to give; for example, when the substance of a transaction differs from its legal form.

Material error-free - Information that contains a material error is unlikely to be dependable.

Neutral - The information should be neutral, which means it should not be biased in any way.

Complete - To the greatest degree feasible, the information they present should be complete.

Prudence is defined as "the inclusion of a degree of caution in the exercise of the judgements required in making the estimates required under conditions of uncertainty, such that gains and assets are not overstated and losses and liabilities are not underestimated" in the UK Accounting Standards Board's Statement of Principles for Financial Reporting. Smith and Murphy (2008) state that in order for the public to depend on the information presented, there must be a level of trust in accountants' knowledge and behavior. To avoid fraudulent acts and earn public trust, the accounting profession requires ethical behavior.

2.2.5 The level of ethical accounting practices

According to Okezie (2008), the potential for unethical behavior by people and organizations is boundless. Unfortunately, this promise is all too often fulfilled. According to Nwagboso (2008), unethical organizational behaviors are all too widespread in the workplace. Such actions as dumping contaminated chemical waste into rivers, bribery and corruption in all aspects of the business, sexual harassment and fake results, and test misconduct on college campuses are easily defined as unethical (Tae et al, 2011). Nonetheless, these and other unethical accounting practices are fairly normal in many firms. Stonewalling and willingly concealing crucial information is a prevalent behavior (Nwachukwu, 200). Observing the harsh treatment of numerous workers who are eager to blow the whistle and reveal unethical behavior, other employees who are opportune to disclose unethical behavior would undoubtedly withdraw. Flugrath and colleagues (2007). Goodrich Company, for example, compensated workers who fabricated data on quality airplane brakes in order to gain certification in 2011.

According to Singh (2006), it has been stated that Metropolitan Edison leadership pressured staff to keep knowledge about the Three Mile Island catastrophe from the press (Gray and Rosen, 2012). Both occurrences indicate instances in which the organization embraced and fostered counter-customs of privacy and fraud. Mookherjee et al. (2015), on the other hand, believe that there are several additional organizational counter norms that encourage moral and ethical activities. Because these actions are routinely rewarded and accepted, it implies that businesses may be operating in a world with its own set of recognized laws (Catacutan, 2006). Harrington (2010) showed in a recent examination of executive integrity that managers have changed several modes of thinking (of which they may be completely unaware) that favor unethical accounting behavior.

Furthermore, Ogbonna et al. (2011) said that unethical accounting techniques in corporate operations appear to be the norm in all civilizations. As a result, accountants, as experts responsible for financial report production, must follow ethical accounting standards in order to provide dependable, relevant, timely, accurate, intelligible, and thorough financial reports (Bucholz, 2013). Equally significant, Nzotta (2008) inflated the relevance of ethical accounting by claiming that financial reporting serves as the foundation for economic decision making. The various shareholders require financial reports in order to make investment and financial decisions for the firm.

In an effort to promote ethical accounting practices, the ICAEW published a Guide to Professional Ethics, which includes five fundamental principles that either expressly mention or clearly imply all of these qualities, as well as others such as diligence, fair-dealing, skill, courtesy, truthfulness, and honesty. According to Nwagboso (2008), the necessity for accountants to develop strong ethical standards began with the bursting of the technological bubble, which was followed by the fall of Enron, WorldCom, and Palamart, to name a few.

2.2.6 Relationship between ethical accounting practices and business operations

According to Okezie (2008), the potential for unethical behavior by people and organizations is boundless. Unfortunately, this promise is all too often fulfilled. According to Nwagboso (2008), unethical organizational behaviors are all too widespread in the workplace. Such actions as dumping contaminated chemical waste into rivers, bribery and corruption in all aspects of the business, sexual harassment and fake results, and test misconduct on college campuses are easily defined as unethical (Tae et al, 2011). Nonetheless, these and other unethical accounting practices are fairly normal in many firms. Stonewalling and willingly concealing crucial information is a prevalent behavior (Nwachukwu, 200). Observing the harsh treatment of numerous workers who are eager to blow the whistle and reveal unethical behavior, other employees who are opportune to disclose unethical behavior would undoubtedly withdraw. Flugrath and colleagues (2007). Goodrich Company, for example, compensated workers who fabricated data on quality airplane brakes in order to gain certification in 2011.

According to Singh (2006), it has been stated that Metropolitan Edison leadership pressured staff to keep knowledge about the Three Mile Island catastrophe from the press (Gray and Rosen, 2012). Both occurrences indicate instances in which the organization embraced and fostered counter-customs of privacy and fraud. Mookherjee et al. (2015), on the other hand, believe that there are several additional organizational counter norms that encourage moral and ethical activities. Because these actions are routinely rewarded and accepted, it implies that businesses may be operating in a world with its own set of recognized laws (Catacutan, 2006). Harrington (2010) showed in a recent examination of executive integrity that managers have changed several modes of thinking (of which they may be completely unaware) that favor unethical accounting behavior.

Furthermore, Ogbonna et al. (2011) said that unethical accounting techniques in corporate operations appear to be the norm in all civilizations. As a result, accountants, as experts responsible for financial report production, must follow ethical accounting standards in order to provide dependable, relevant, timely, accurate, intelligible, and thorough financial reports (Bucholz, 2013). Equally significant, Nzotta (2008) inflated the relevance of ethical accounting by claiming that financial reporting serves as the foundation for economic decision making. The various shareholders require financial reports in order to make investment and financial decisions for the firm.

In an effort to promote ethical accounting practices, the ICAEW published a Guide to Professional Ethics, which includes five fundamental principles that either expressly mention or clearly imply all of these qualities, as well as others such as honesty, fair-dealing, truthfulness, courtesy, skill, and diligence. According to Nwagboso (2008), the necessity for accountants to develop strong ethical standards began with the bursting of the technological bubble, which was followed by the fall of Enron, WorldCom, and Palamart, to name a few.

2.3 Empirical Evidence

An empirical review is a review that is based and measured phenomena that derives knowledge from actual experience rather than from theory or belief (Godwin 2005). In the same vein Godwin (2005) explained empirical review as a way of gaining knowledge by means of direct and indirect observation or simply the need on observable data to formulate and test theories and come to conclusions.

Corporate governance and ethical behaviour: the case study of the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation (ZBC) in Harare, Zimbabwe by Zvavahera and Ndoda (2014)

The purpose of this study was to analyze the influence of corporate governance and unethical behavior on the performance of Zimbabwean state-owned enterprises. As is generally known, there have been several instances of corruption in government parastatals, which is completely immoral. The Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation, the country's sole broadcaster, was utilized as a case study in this study. Data was gathered through questionnaires and face-to-face interviews with top government officials, commercial enterprises, journalists, and the general public. To help with data exploration, descriptive statistics such as tables were employed. The investigation discovered that high management and the board of directors were corrupt. Unethical practices included procuring products and services without following normal tender processes, depriving the firm and the government of millions of dollars. The CEO was fired after it was discovered that he was overpaying himself bonuses at the expense of employees who had gone three months without pay. According to the study, poor corporate governance and unethical behavior have serious consequences for both organizational and employee performance since they are driven by money. There was no efficiency or efficacy in service delivery since the firm lacked accountability and openness in how business was conducted. A proposal was made that boards of directors monitor parastatal operations to ensure that they work in the best interests of all stakeholders, that wages are performance-based, and that they adhere to best corporate practices that are consistent with the code of ethics.

Mutema Forget (2017): Impact of ethics on organisation performance at Boarder Timbers Pvt Ltd

The study's overarching goal was to investigate the influence of ethical accounting methods on organizational performance at Boarder Timbers. The study's populations include accountants, auditors, and managers from Boarder Timbers' three divisions: Charter Sawmill, Sheba Sawmill, and Paulington Divisions. The study employed a descriptive research approach and a census of 25 questions, with 22 respondents chosen. A questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to collect primary data. The questionnaire received a Cronbach Alpha rating of.974 after being assessed for inconsistency and consistency. SPSS and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data, and the replies were graded using the mean standard. According to the findings, the most common ethical accounting practices at Boarder Timbers are secrecy, honesty, and professional behavior. Finally, the study determined that there was a substantial association between ethical accounting and organizational success. The findings revealed that accountants' professional competency has an impact on financial statement disclosure. It was also said that interruptions in accounting ethics have an impact on the organization's dishonest disclosure of financial reports. The study suggested that Boarder Timbers engage in human capital development to increase the competence of its accountants and internal auditors. Furthermore, it should implement a strong accounting system in principle and effective procedures, as well as develop its own corporate governance code or adopt well-known rules such as the Cadbury Code or the Sarbanes Oxley Act. It was also determined that Boarder Timbers should embrace honesty, objectivity, fairness, and responsibility as moral obligations in order to limit the prevalence of unethical accounting methods.

The impact of unethical behaviour on the running of Premier Service Medical Aid Society: Mbanje (2014)

The study sought to assess the influence of unethical behavior on the functioning of Zimbabwe's Premier Service Medical Aid Society (PSMAS). To collect data from news reporters and existing workers, questionnaires and face-to-face interviews were employed. The study used a quantitative descriptive research approach to determine the link between unethical behavior and the operation of PSMAS. According to the findings of the study, top executives have been paid exorbitant wages. Unethical processes were being carried out, including the evading of ZIMRA taxes totaling US44 million in debt. Similarly, the medical assistance group was fighting to pay service providers who were now threatening to cease their services owing to indebtedness. PSMAS temporarily garnished bank accounts over tax arrears, according to news reports. Premier's seamless operation is currently being jeopardized since they are failing to deliver their services in accordance with the payments that have been made. It was suggested that the state continue to conduct inspections and audits to guarantee that PSMAS is working ethically, and that management should have integrity as well as professional behavior.

Impact of Accounting Ethics on the Practice of Accounting Profession in Nigeria: Bukola, Enofe and Augustine (2013)

This study was an experimental inquiry of the influence of ethical ideals on accounting practice in Nigeria. To meet the study's goal, research questions were posed, hypotheses were developed, and an evaluation of related literature was conducted. The primary goal of this study was to determine if accounting ethics have a significant impact on the practice of accounting in Nigeria, the factors that cause accountants to breach accounting regulations, and whether ethical codes of conduct address all of the concerns that restrict ethical practices. The study used a combination of descriptive and survey research methodologies. The questionnaire, which was constructed with a five-response option on a Likert scale, was the primary instrument used to collect primary data. Two hundred and fifty (250) questionnaires were distributed, with two hundred and nineteen (219) completed and returned. The data for this study were analyzed using mean scores, and the hypotheses were statistically evaluated using the z-test. Religion was shown to have no significant impact on the professional 41 behaviour of accountants, according to the findings. Accountants' professional behaviour was also influenced by the legal structure and societal value systems. It was advised, among other things, that the accountant in practice pay attention to excellent ethical conduct and strictly adhere to the ethical code of conduct.

Business ethics and the performance of service firms: A case study of Calabar, Cross river state, Nigeria by Tom and Biobele (2015)

The research was carried out in Nigeria's Cross River state. It investigated the significance of a code of ethics in administering organizational performance and investigated their level of compliance with the established code of ethics in the service sector. Profits and organizational stability were viewed as dependent variables versus the amount of ethical code compliance. A descriptive research design was employed to accomplish this. The target demographic of 176 respondents was collected from Calabar's selected banks and GSM enterprises. As a main research instrument, a survey questionnaire was developed. Tables were used to analyze data on the performance of the service industry as a dependent variable on codes of ethics. After analyzing the study's findings, respondents agreed that following the ethical code resulted in enhanced efficiency. It was also determined that respondent's organizational survival may be ensured by ethics. It was advised that the organization implement particular mechanisms to identify and address concerns of ethical misbehavior, and that organizations raise penalties for violators of ethical rules.

Kaveh, Khalili, Ghorbani and Soroush (2014); Professional Ethics in Accounting and Auditing. Iran

Ethics is a broad topic that encompasses all elements of human existence. As human and societal ties become more complicated, new demands emerge, resulting in the formation of numerous professions. As requirements and conditions change throughout time, these efforts gradually determine the evolution and development of the valley. Time and circumstances change, forming progress and the evolution of a state. Because of the requirement of division of labor and specialization of duties, the pros are gradually integrating and playing a part in illuminating the general well-being of communities. As a result of offering these services acquired, the survival occupation and its members are subject to the kind and quality of employment services that give dependability and guarantee. It is critical to protect a company's primary asset and maintain its reputation and trust. This would entail the primary purpose of every professional obligation and its members, as well as community service and personal interest in delivering these services framework to understand and follow. Some of the long professional accounting bodies are different in countries as they are international, but in order to defend the public interest and regulations, Professional Conduct Regulations and the Code of Conduct cannot solve the problems of the accounting profession that occur around the world. In this study, the following essential aspects and elements of ethics, ethical decision-making models, standing ethics and its role in advancement, professional growth and development, professional ethics, and ethical rules in accounting and auditing are examined.

Impact of unethical behaviour on accounting practices: a case study of COMSATS institute of information technology at Attock Campus in Pakistan by Aamir, Yasir, Shahzad, Ahmed, and Mehmood (2014)

The study sought to assess the influence of unethical behavior on accounting processes. Due to major organizational disasters and breakdowns in the business sector, the study focused on the role of accountants in adhering to ethical rules and effective corporate governance. This study employed a survey design and an open-ended questionnaire. The case study used a sample of 90 graduates to corroborate the controversy about whether accounting graduates were impacted by ethics courses. The acquired data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, with tables being the most commonly utilized format. According to the findings of the survey, professional accountants should value ethics and effective corporate governance. It was also said that, although being well compensated, accountants still phish and scam by presenting bogus information and disguised statistics in their financial reports, affecting the overall organizational performance. As a result, it was proposed that, in order to secure trust in accounting information, the government, regulators, or companies themselves make an effort to implement reforms and a code of accounting ethics, as well as ensure compliance with the code.

D.K.W Ssonko (2010); Ethics, Accountability, Transparency, Integrity and Professionalism in the Public Service: The case of Uganda

Scandals involving government leaders have frequently garnered global attention. The majority of these scandals are the consequence of public officials' deteriorating ethical behavior, who have engaged in a variety of misconducts. As a result, there is a legitimate desire for public sector institutions to strengthen ethics, integrity, openness, accountability, and professionalism in order to protect public resources and improve public sector performance. The article examined the concepts of ethics, accountability, openness, integrity, and professionalism in government. It goes on to explore several practices and behaviors that demoralize public workers' ethical behavior, with a specific emphasis on corruption, conflict of interest, and human resource management misconducts. The consequences of corruption impact the entire nation since they result in low living standards, a lack of sustainability, and a negative image of the country. It also outlines the processes that may be used to prevent malpractice. Specifically, the article examines the situation in Uganda in terms of ethics, accountability, openness, integrity, and professionalism in the country's public sector. The report notes that whilst the current government in Uganda has worked to implement a number of institutional measures to fight against corruption the success of these will largely depend on the rigorous implementation and execution mechanisms that the government must put in place.

Accounting ethics and the quality of financial reporting: A survey of some Selected Oil exploration and producing companies in Nigeria by Eginiwin and Dike (2014)

A research on the association between accounting ethics and financial reporting quality was undertaken in Nigeria. The primary goal of the study was to investigate the impact of accounting ethics on the financial reporting quality of the nominated Nigerian oil exploration businesses, with earnings per share (EPS), return on investments (ROE) and dividend per share (DPS) used as firm financial reporting variables. 133 questionnaires were circulated to a sample of 20 oil exploration and production businesses, and 118 engaged questionnaires were returned. Data was ranked using a five-point Likert scale and regressed using the E-view statistical program version 3.1. According to the study's findings, there was a favorable association between accounting ethics and the quality of financial reporting in terms of return on investment, earnings per share, and dividend per share. It was suggested that corporations follow accounting ethics in order to enhance financial reporting in terms of return on investment, earnings per share, and dividend per share. This is because the variables employed in the study are highly important in recruiting investors, thus the ratios must be in the acceptable range.

Determinants of business operations: The case study of Romania by Gavrea, Ilieş, and Stegerean (2011)

The study was conducted to discover the elements that influenced business operations in Romania. The study's main goal was to examine the variables of organizational or business operations that were essential in Romania's prevalent economic state and to enable the identification of elements that hampered business operations in manufacturing sectors. It was also required to assess the basic link between how corporations operated (with regard to ethical concerns) and how they presented themselves. The descriptive design (questionnaires) was employed to achieve the study's aims. 135

surveys were given, with 92 firms completing them. The data was analyzed using tables, scatter plots, and percentages. According to the study's findings, excellent corporate governance and ethical stanards were the most significant variables in improving organizations' financial outcomes and performance. It was suggested that corporations follow their ethical and corporate governance norms in order to boost their overall company operations..

Impact of corporate governance and ethical conduct on corporate financial performance: A case study of listed companies in India by Aggarwal (2013)

The study was conducted to investigate the link between financial perfomance, corporate governance, and ethical behavior. The study's main goal was to promote legal compliance and demonstrate ethical behavior in India. The S&P CNX Nifty 50 Index was used to build a sample of 20 publicly traded firms. The data was analyzed using inferential statistics. Over a two-year period, secondary data was used and confirmed using regression, correlation, t-test, and F-test. According to the study's findings, adherence to ethical and corporate governance norms had a favorable connection on the company's financial success. Companies should seek to improve their performance along indices of good governance and ethics such as independence, openness, stakeholder involvement, and compliance with ethical norms, according to the guidelines. As a result, accountants should endeavor to be ethical in order to improve business financial success.

2.3.1 Gap Analysis

Several studies on articles and journals have been conducted in industrialized nations and other parts of Africa to investigate the influence of ethical accounting procedures on company operations in both private and public enterprises (Okezie, 2008). According to the reviewed literature, relatively few studies have been on the influence of accounting ethics on organizations in their nations, focusing on the economy of their countries. Furthermore, the limited studies conducted in Zimbabwe focused mostly on public corporate organizations, rather than private institutions such as The Wattle Pvt Ltd Company. As a result, the research is investigating the influence of ethical accounting procedures on company operations at The Wattle Pvt Ltd Company.

2.4 Chapter Summary

The review of the literature has been completed in this chapter. It has concentrated on the conceptual framework, theoretical framework, and empirical data in regard to accounting ethics' influence on corporate operations. The next chapter delves into research techniq

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

3.0 INTRODUCTION

A scientific examination of how research is performed systematically and detailing the many processes used to explore the research subject is known as research methodology (Dr Shanti Mishra & Dr Shashi Alok 2011). Enunciating an issue, creating a hypothesis, gathering and analyzing facts or data, and obtaining a conclusion via solutions comprise research technique. Krishan Singh's (2022). Methodology describes how the research was carried out and how it satisfied the study's aims. The chapter focuses on the study design, demographic samples, research instruments, and the technique for presenting and analyzing acquired data, as well as ethical issues and the chapter summary.

3.1 Research design

According to Stefan Hunziker, research methodology is the use of suitable procedures and approaches for data gathering and analysis that strive to combine relevance to the study objective with economy and efficiency (2021). A research design is a precise blueprint that serves as the foundation for a research study to achieve its goals (Creswell, 2009). It focuses on transforming research questions into testing questions and addresses at least four issues: what topic to examine, what data are relevant, what data to gather, and how to analyze the findings. Zikmund (2003) classifies research designs into three types: exploratory, descriptive, and experimental. The researcher, on the other hand, used a descriptive research strategy in the form of a case study.

3.1.1 Descriptive Research Design

According to Robert Elliot (2021), a descriptive research design is an arrangement of circumstances for data collection and analysis that tries to integrate relevance with the study objective. Furthermore, a descriptive research design is one that is meant to give a researcher with an accurate description of the event. Descriptive research is appropriate for collecting quantitative data from study participants (Hair et al, 2007). This style was chosen because it is more specific and clear since it entails a well-organized explanation of occurrences. As a result, a descriptive survey was the best choice for the study since it allows for the collection of original data and the description of a wide population. Moreover, descriptive survey design allowed individuals to be observed in a perfectly natural and undisturbed situation, yielding rich data that led to critical recommendations.

3.2 Target Population

According to Paul J. Lavrakas (2020), the target population is the group of people for whom the survey data will be interpreted. Furthermore, Kumar (2003) defined a population as the collection of all objects that have some common set of features in relation to a study subject. All components or units under inquiry for a certain research are referred to as the population. If data on every member of the population is to be collected, the process of enumerating the whole population is known as a census. The Wattle Pvt Ltd Company's accountants, audit personnel, and middle and senior management were the study's target group. The desired population size was 30 people.

Targeted population size

Key respondents	**Population size**
Accountants	11
Audit staff	10
Senior management	9
Total	30

Source: Raw data

3.3 Census

A census was employed in this study. According to Dudley Poston (2019), a census is a count or survey of every element or everyone in a population. Furthermore, it is sometimes referred to as a comprehensive enumeration, which indicates a complete count. The researcher chose census since the universe was not large, with only 30 respondents considered.

3.3.1 Advantages of a census

By adopting census, the researcher managed to obtain data with high degree of accuracy. In addition, through census, complete information about the targeted population at Wattle Pvt Ltd Company was adequately provided.

3.4 Sources of Data

According to Kumar (2011), there are two types of data sources utilized in research: primary data and secondary data. The researcher conducted this study using both primary and secondary data.

3.4.1 Primary data

According to Kumar (2011), there are two types of data sources utilized in research: primary data and secondary data. The researcher conducted this study using both primary and secondary data..

3.4.1.1Advantages of primary data

The researcher had obtained first-hand information at The Wattle Pvt Ltd during data collection, which was deemed to be consistent, suitable, and up to date. Furthermore, the researcher was allowed to use judgmental skills on material provided by respondents that looked to be significant and relevant to the investigation.

3.4.2 Secondary data

According to Dr. N Gupta (2022), secondary data is a corpus of material that has already been prepared and analyzed by previous researchers. Secondary data sources are based on main data and are often studies that analyze, appraise, interpret, or criticize primary data. It aided the researcher in approaching with a historical backdrop of the work done by providing existing literature on the issue investigated. The researcher obtained secondary data from Wattle Pvt Ltd's prior and current financial filings, as well as published publications and journals..

3.4.2.1 Advantages of secondary data

Secondary data was inexpensive to get and supplied a wide range of information about the issue under investigation. Furthermore, the researcher found it quicker and more feasible to extract current data sets. Another advantage was that the process of locating secondary data saved time.

3.5 Research instruments

Questionnaires and interviews are the tools that the researcher used in this study.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

According to John Wiley, a questionnaire is a systematic series of questions used to collect data from various persons (2020). The questionnaire included construct items modified from prior studies, most notably (Bass and Avolio, 2014), as well as demographic questions. Each subject was informed that his or her anonymous replies would be kept private. The questionnaire used in this study included guided questions designed to take up less of the respondent's time.

Advantages of questionnaire

- They gave accurate and straight forward responses
- They were cost saving because no interviews were required and the researcher just distributed them to respondents at Wattle Pvt Ltd.
- It enabled easy comparison of information gathered.

On the other hand, by employing questionnaires, the researcher was restricted from eliciting further information from some respondents. There were also time delays while waiting for replies. As a result, in order to address the identified vulnerability, the researcher was able to remind respondents to pay attention to deadlines by connecting with them via phone calls and text messages..

3.5.2 Interiews

According to Felice Billups (2020), an interview is a dialogue in which two or more individuals exchange information through a sequence of questions and responses. As the researcher sought further information, interviews were performed with three financial managers from Wattle Pvt Ltd's three divisions: Charter Sawmill, Sheba Sawmill, and Paulington Division..

3.5.2.1 Advantages of Interviews

- They produced prompt responses with a higher response rate, they gave clarity to the study area by highlighting the areas that respondents were reluctant to discuss, they gave the researcher the chance to elicit further information from the respondents and they gave the researcher chance to build rapport with them during these conversations

However, time was a constraint during interviews because they demand a significant amount of time to sit and analyze the replies. Furthermore, certain appointments may conflict, necessitating a rescheduling for meetings with responses. When disagreements emerged, the researcher handled this by changing to the periods that were convenient to the respondents of high priority, such as management..

3.6 Data Collection Procedure and Administration

The data collecting method, according to Felice Billups (2020), specifies how primary and secondary data will be acquired. A few surveys were sent to participants, but the majority were delivered in person by the researcher. For questionnaires, the pick and drop approach was utilized..

3.6.1 Making appointments

The researcher made meetings via email and then followed up by cell phone and text messages. The researcher's techniques were less expensive, faster, and ensured a clear result.

3.6.2 Retrieval of instruments

Instrument retrieval was done both manually and electronically. The researcher employed a drop-and-pick questionnaire procedure, and an assistant assisted gather responses from the questionnaires.

3.6.3 Physical distribution

A few of the questionnaires were emailed to the participants while the most were distributed personally by the researcher. However, physical distribution made sure there were fewer delays.

3.7 Data reliability and validity

3.7.1 Reliability

The instrument itself has the attribute of dependability (Bell, 2013). Furthermore, dependability implies that the data is full, free of errors, and represents an accurate assessment of the ideas researched. A measure of dependability is when the same results are obtained repeatedly and under different conditions. The reliability of the questionnaire used in this study was assessed using the Crocbachs' Alpha value generated by SPSS.

3.7.2 Validity

Validity indicates that the data accurately represents the aspects that were measured. The data in this study was appropriately reported with no changes. The most important aspect in assessing the validity of a questionnaire is its reliability. There is no discussion of validity if the questionnaire's validity cannot be verified. The validity of a survey or questionnaire is established by whether it collects the required data (Bell, 2013). The researcher used the Kendal coefficient to examine the questionnaire's validity in order to ensure the data's reliability, correctness, and validity.

3.8 Data presentation and Data Analysis

3.8.1 Data presentation

The data received from the respondents was shown using tables, bar charts, graphs, and pie charts. A table is used to organize facts or information in a systematic way so that any reader may see differences or trends and make comparisons. A pie chart has been shown to be the ideal style of diagram to employ when highlighting frequent events and providing a clearer graphical representation of the data. The information provided enabled for inferences to be drawn, and these findings led to suggestions.

3.8.2 Data analysis

The researcher examined the surveys for completeness and finished editing, coding, and cleaning the data in general. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS Version 21.0) tool was used to analyze the data gathered. Because the study is descriptive in nature, descriptive analysis was done on the data. In descriptive analysis, the mean, mode, variance, and standard deviation were used to determine whether respondents agreed or disagreed with the statements for each variable. Statistical inference Pearson's correlation was used to analyze the relationship between the independent (accounting ethics) and dependent (business operations) variables.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

Ethics, according to Gabriel Flynn (2022), are moral value systems concerned with the extent to which research techniques correspond to professional, legal, and societal commitments. Moral standards and ideals exist in all workplaces. "To Philosophical viewpoints on ethics, 'good' behavior counts, it is simply desirable to do the 'correct' thing," (Mellahi, 2003) states. Permission was obtained from both the Wattle Pvt Ltd officials and the respondents for this study. All study participants were treated with respect, ethics, and dignity. Anonymity, confidentiality, and privacy were ensured for research participants by assuring them that their personal information would not be utilized to individually identify them.

3.10 Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the study design, target population, sampling methodology, sample size, research instruments, data gathering procedure, and data analysis. A discussion of the findings' reliability and validity, as well as ethical implications, was presented. The findings of the data collection will be analyzed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESANTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines, summarizes, and interprets data findings in light of the underlying hypothesis of the study. Interviews and a questionnaire were used to obtain answers to study questions. The study sought to investigate how accounting ethics affected corporate operations. Tables, bar charts, pie charts, and basic percentages were all used to show the data for the analysis. The findings were analyzed in order to obtain a reasonable conclusion about how accounting ethics at Wattle Pvt Ltd affected business operations.

4.1 Response from questionnaires

According to Edwards (2021), a response rate is the percentage of participants in a research study that responded to the researcher's request. The finished questionnaires were gathered from the intended respondents at the Wattle Pvt Ltd Company by the researcher. The researcher recorded a questionnaire response rate based on the verdicts, as shown in the table below:

Table 4.1 Questionnaire response rate

	Respondents	Questionnaires sent	Questionnaires returned	Response rate
1	Accountants	10	9	90%
2	Audit staff	8	7	88%
3	Junior management	7	6	86%
4	Senior management	5	3	60%
	Total	30	25	83%

Source: Primary data 2022

The table displayed the number of surveys submitted to targeted respondents at Wattle Pvt Ltd. 25 of the 30 delivered surveys were successful. Senior management had the lowest reported rate (60%) because they were in meetings the majority of the time. Accountants and auditors had the greatest response rate (90%) since they were frequently accessible at work. An average response rate of (81%) was found after calculating an average response rate..

Response rate = (90%+88%+86%+60%)/4

=83%

According to Paul J. Lavrakas (2020), a response rate of more than 70% should be regarded for analysis since the findings will reflect a true representation of the total population. According to Lavrakas, the average response rate was 83%, which falls in the category of excellent (2020). The high response rate indicates that the respondents were very interested in the contents of the issues presented in the questionnaire, as well as the researcher's persistent follow-up with the respondents.

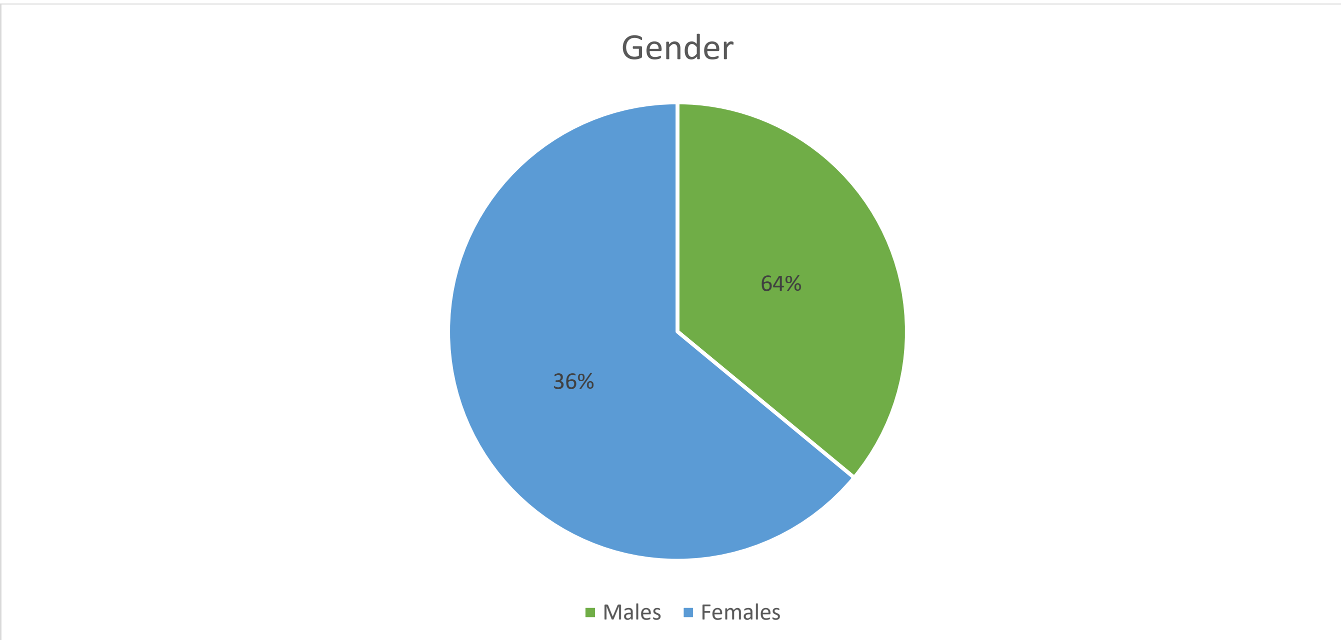
4.1.2 Interview response rate

A total of 12 structured interviews and 20 self-administered questionnaires were delivered to accountants and financial managers at Wattle Pvt Ltd, yielding an acceptable response rate of 100%. Relevant data for the study was acquired, as well as further insights on accounting ethics.

4.2 Demographic data

4.2.1 Gender

Fig 4.1 The illustration below shows response rate by gender



Source: Primary data

The gender of the respondents on the targeted population at Wattle Pvt Ltd is depicted in Figure 4.1 above. It was shown that 64% of the responders were males, whereas 36% were females. Gender influences how ethical judgments are made, according to Paoloni and Lombardi (2018), since women make more ethical decisions than males. Furthermore, Lavrakas (2020) suggested that workplace malpractices such as cheating and stealing are more prevalent in men than in women. Furthermore, males were more prone than females to make ethical decisions based on egoism beliefs (pursuing one's own interests at the expense of others).

4.2.2 Level of educational qualification

Table 4.2 level of qualification of respondents

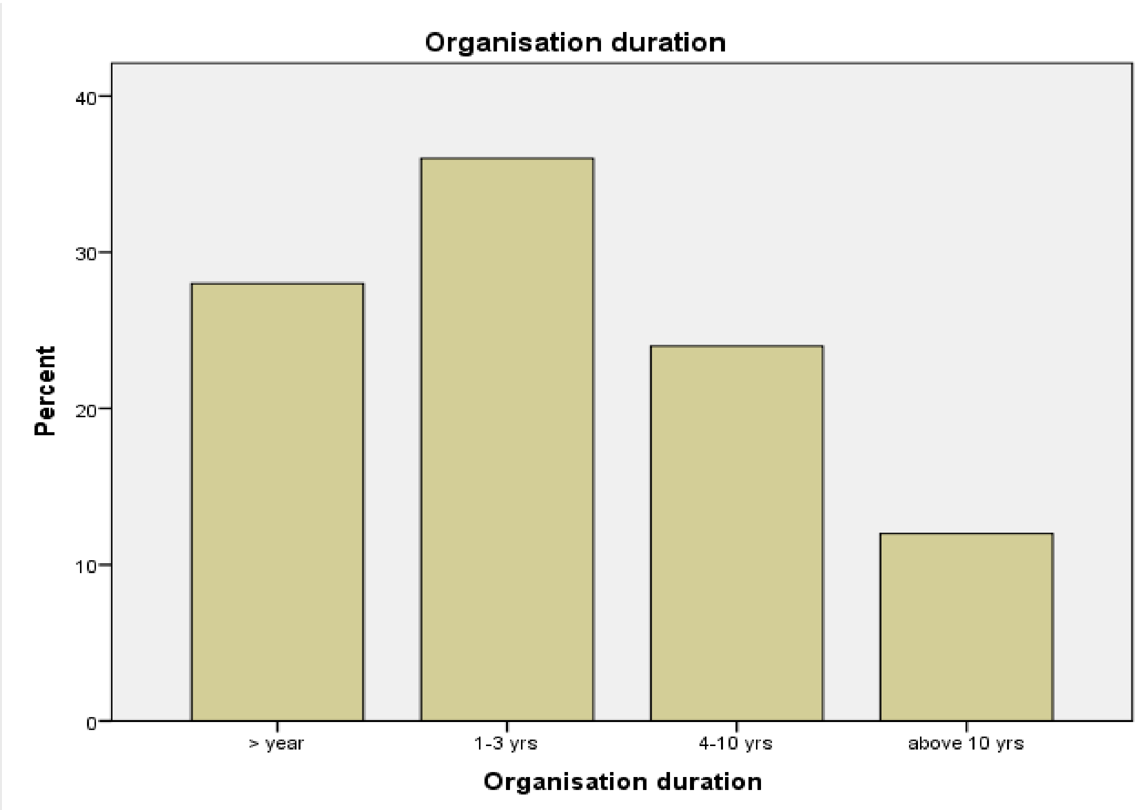
Level of qualification	Number of respondents	Percentage	Cumulative Frequency
Certificate	3	12%	12%
Diploma	6	24%	36%
Degree	10	40%	76%
Post graduate	4	16%	92%
Other	2	8%	8%
Total	**25**	**100**	**-**

Source: Primary data 2022

The results of the respondents, as shown in Table 4.2, suggested various divisions based on degree of education. 40% of those polled have a college degree or above. Diploma holders made up 24% of respondents, while postgraduates and other credentials made up 16% and 8%, respectively. In general, this suggests that the respondents were able to read, comprehend, and then answer the questionnaire's questions. These findings were reinforced by JC Barnes (2021), who proposed that greater levels of education helped employees to explore alternate perspectives or explaining circumstances rather than assessing complicated ethical concerns in limited terms. According to Swaidan, Vitell, and Rawwas (2003), one's degree of qualification also affects one's capacity to apply ethical principles in the workplace.

4.2.3 Working experience

Fig 4.2 Working experience of the respondents:

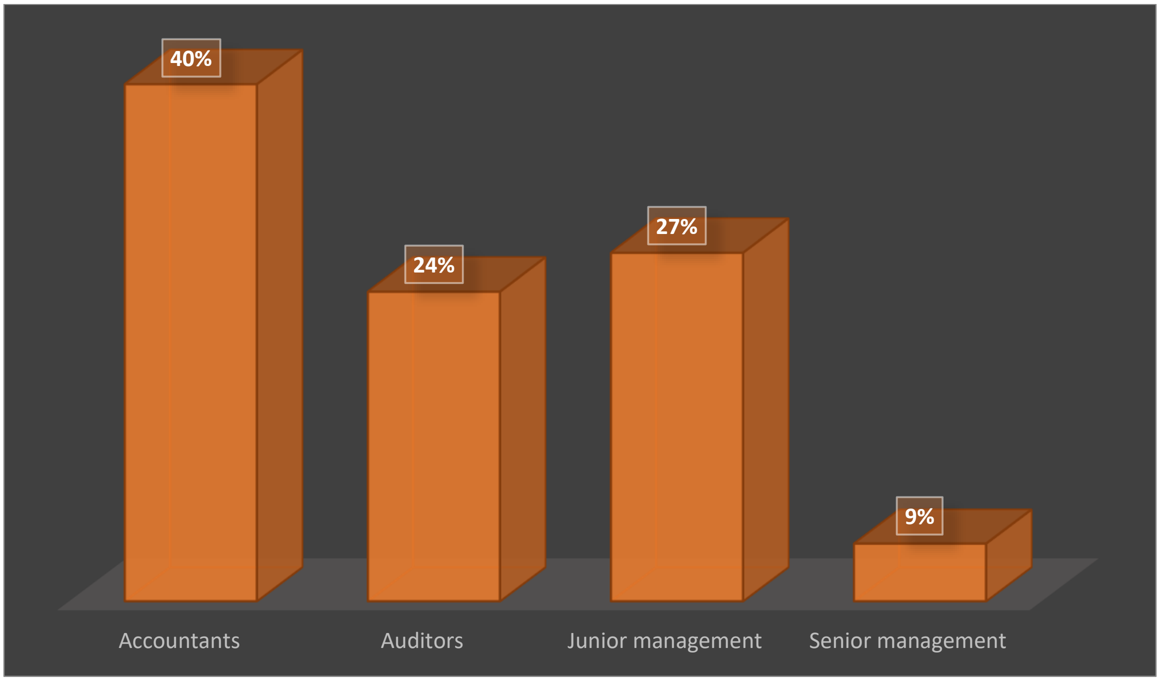


Source: Primary data 2022

Figure 4.2 shows that 36% of Wattle Pvt Ltd employees have worked there for one to three years. Furthermore, 24% and 12% represent individuals with four to ten years of experience or more, respectively. This implies that the duration of service was well balanced, with individuals with a wealth of experience, as evidenced by the study's findings. These findings agreed with those of Meacham etal (2020), who stated that work experience affects the application of codes of ethics in the sense that socialization (through long service) to workplace norms and an organization's fundamental code of ethics helps to boost workers' willingness to apply ethical standards in their work.

4.2.4 Job designation of the respondent

Fig 4.3 Job designation of the respondents



Source primary data

According to figure 4.3, accountants formed the biggest percentage (40%) of respondents, followed by junior management (27%), and auditors (24%). With 9%, senior management had the lowest proportion. This meant that the majority of the financial work was done by accountants, auditors, and junior management. Because these three key participants were the most active in implementing accounting ethics in their profession, their participation was more valid and practical.

4.3 Reliability of the instrument

The reliability of questions on the questionnaire was verified using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient.

Table 4.3 below shows results from the test:

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha[a]	N of Items
.894	25

After examining instrument reliability for all of the questionnaire's items, a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.974 was achieved, as shown in Table 4.4. Cronbach's alphas, the needed threshold level for satisfactory dependability, were exceeded with 0.894. The alpha coefficient spans from 0 to 1, with 0.60 being considered the lowest acceptable alpha value. Bernardo and Smith (2011) maintained that a reliability coefficient of 0.60 is adequate, however Joseph F Hair (2021) proposed that a minimal alpha value of 0.70 represents consistency reliability well.

4.4 Code of Accounting Ethics guiding Wattle Pvt Ltd

With the assistance of a 5-point Likert scale and calculations of the mean values of the responses, the research asked the participants about the ethical code at Wattle Pvt Ltd. The displayed outcomes are in the table 4.4 below.

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Confidentiality	25	4.96	.040	.200
Integrity	25	4.32	.095	.476
Professional behaviour	25	3.20	.183	.913
Professional competence and due care	25	2.52	.239	1.194

Objectivity	25	2.04	.303	1.513
Valid N (list wise)	25			

Source primary data 2022

According to the research findings from the table above, the most upheld ethical value at Wattle Pvt Ltd was secrecy, with a mean value of 4.96 and a standard deviation of 0.0 (SE=0.200). Integrity came in second (mean=4.3; SD=0.5; SE=0.9), followed by professional behavior with a mean score of 3.2 and a standard deviation of 0.913 (SE=0.183). Professionalism and prudence (mean=2.52; SD=1.19; SE=0.24). Finally, objectivity (mean=2.04; SD=0.303; SE=1.51) was at the bottom of the ranking.

The observations, however, contradicted Ronald F Duska, Kenneth W Kury, and others' (2018) argument that objectivity is the most important ethical virtue that companies must retain at all costs. In addition to the norms observed at The Wattle Pvt Ltd, Onuora and Okegbe (2015) identified independence and technical standards as additional ethical standards that should be in place to assist accountants in doing their duties. According to Namara (2012), there are six fundamental kinds of ethical ideals (codes): a) Loyalty, integrity, honesty, promise-keeping, and trustworthiness; b) Autonomy, dignity, privacy, courtesy, respect, and acceptance; c) Accountability, responsibility, and the pursuit of excellence; d) Loving, consideration, compassion, kindness, sharing, and caring; e) Consistency, impartiality, and fairness; and f) equity, justice, and due process.

4.5 The level of accounting ethics compliance at Wattle Pvt Ltd

The research analyzed Boarder Timbers' degree of ethical accounting practices in further depth using a 5-point Likert scale. The actions were divided into three essential categories: objectivity, integrity, and disclosure. The results are shown in the tables below..

4.5.1 Objectivity

The research investigated the level of objectivity practice at Wattle Pvt Ltd, as shown in table 4.5 below. According to the respondents, the highest degree of compliance under objectivity was on financial figures being presented in a way that completely complies with acknowledged norms (mean=3.8; SD=1.3). It was also said that the accounting code of ethics is based on the objectivity of financial reporting (mean =3.2; SD=1.1) and was ranked second. The respondents also demonstrated that financial statements are generated and presented in accordance with Wattle Company's ethical standards, with a mean value of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 0.74 ranking third. The value system of professional accountants determines the objective presentation of financial statements. (Mean=1.2; Standard Deviation=0.48; Standard Error=0.83)

Table 4.5

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Financial statements are presented in a way that fully complies with accepted standards	25	3.76	.260	1.300
In what extent do financial, statements are produced and presented in compliance with Wattle Company's ethical standards.	25	3.16	.214	1.068
Financial statements' objective presentation is determined by the professional accountants' value system	25	3.04	.147	.735
To what extent does the accounting code of ethics depend on the objectivity of financial reports	25	1.20	.082	.408
Valid N (list wise)	25			

Source: primary data 2022

According to Ronald F Duska and Kenneth W Kury (2018), the most essential ethical and professional accounting code is the compilation of financial statements with objectivity since it correctly reflects a company's financial picture to stakeholders and helps managers to make informed judgments. In contrast to the study's findings, Enofe, Edemenya, and Osunbor (2015) stressed the importance of ethical principles in the realistic presentation of financial accounts. They advised that financial statements be prepared in compliance with these recommendations. Moreover, Idris (2011) claimed that objectivity is required for any professional exercising professional judgment since it is likely to have an influence on the rights of the parties and their decision, and so it must be exercised at all costs.

4.6 Integrity

Table 4.6

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean		Std. Deviation
	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic
Wattle Pvt Ltd has an ethical accounting committee, which enhances the reliability of financial reports	25	5.00	.000	.000
Accountants who engage in insider trading frequently compromise the integrity of financial reports at Wattle Pvt Ltd.	25	3.72	.123	.614
The credibility of Wattle Pvt Ltd.'s financial reports is compromised by violations of ethical standards	25	2.64	.114	.569
Valid N (list wise)	25			

Source: Primary data 202

According to table 4.6 above, the presence of an ethical accounting committee in an organization positively enhances the integrity of financial reports (mean=5.0; SD=0.00), followed by accountants engaging in insider trading or dealings tend to compromise the integrity of financial reports at the Wattle (mean=3.72; SD=0.614). The violation of ethical rules damages the integrity of the organization's financial reporting (mean=2.64; SD=0.114 SE=0.569) was rated in the last position. According to Idris (2011), ethics in the field of organization business entail "common decency," which includes aspects like as integrity, honesty, and fairness. According to Charles Emenike Ezeagba (2018), a committee provides openness, promise keeping, independence, and honesty. Ethical committees have served as a cornerstone in limiting concerns such as conflict of interest, insider transactions, and the destruction of official records for financial gain, as well as other activities that violate moral principles and ethical norms.

4.7 Disclosure

Table 4.7

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Disclosure of items in the financial statement is affected by personal interest of the professional accountant	25	3.96	1.338
Quality of financial reports is affected by non-disclosure of material facts in the financial statements at Wattle Pvt Ltd.	24	3.71	1.083
Unfaithful disclosure of financial reports at the organization is influenced by violation of accounting ethics.	25	3.16	.850
Financial statement disclosure is affected by the professional capability of accountants.	25	2.24	1.363
Valid N (list wise)	24		

Source: primary data 2022

Compliance levels to financial statement disclosures are indicated in Table 4.7 above. Financial statement disclosure is influenced by accountants' professional competence (mean=2.24; SD=1.4) was evaluated at the bottom, indicating that Wattle Company mostly complies with disclosure through this practice. Unfaithful disclosure of financial reports at the organization is influenced by violations of accounting ethics (mean=3.16; SD=0.85) was ranked third, while disclosure of items in the financial statement is influenced by the professional accountant's personal interests (mean=3.71; SD=1.08) was ranked second. The first was that non-disclosure of key information in the organization's financial statements affects the quality of financial reports (mean=3.96; SD=1.334). The findings are similar with Rosa Lombardi's (2021) findings, which indicated that accountants' professional skill only had a little impact on financial statement disclosure. Businesses that are committed to more ethical accounting practices, according to Ogbonna (2010), have high levels of financial statement disclosure compliance and a solid reputation among clients.

4.8 The link between accounting ethics and business operations

4.8.1 Correlations

Table 4.8

Control Variables Compliance of ethical accounting codes and increase in profits		Integrity	Objectivity	Professional competence and due care	Confidentiality	Professional behavior
Integrity	Correlation	1.000	.158	.153	.098	.298
	Sig (2-tailed)	.134	.462	.477	.650	.157
Objectivity	Correlation	.158	1.000	.906	-.016	.728
	Sig (2-tailed)	.462	.	.000	.941	.000
Professional competence and due	Correlation	.153	.906	1.000	.096	.774
	Sig (2-tailed)	.477	.000	.	.654	.000
Confidentiality	Correlation	.098	-.016	.096	1.000	.414

	Sig(2-tailed)	.650	.941	.654	.	.044
	Correlation	.298	.728	.774	.414	1.000
Professional behaviour	Sig (2-tailed)	.157	.000	.000	.044	.
	df	22	22	22	22	0

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Source primary data 2022

The link between the key indicator of business operations (earnings) and the code of accounting ethics is depicted in the table above. The correlation between increased profitability and integrity (r=0.134; p=1.00>0.005) results demonstrated that the association between the two variables is positive but not statistically significant. The calculated objectivity r value was 0.463, with a significant value of 0.158. This implies a very strong positive and statistically significant association between increased earnings and objectivity. Furthermore, the offered confidentiality (r=0.981; p=0.650) and professional competence and appropriate care (r=0.153; p=0.047) have a good and statistically significant link with profit rise. By far the most important elements to an organization's better performance and financial success were found to be ethical standards and sound corporate governance (Duska and Duska, 2020). According to Tom and Biobele (2015), the existence of codes of ethics acts as a reference for how effectively service businesses run, and adherence to existing codes of ethics favorably improves a firm's performance and productivity level.

4.8.2 Regression analysis

Table 4.9

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.805[a]	.648	.556	.605

a. Predictors: (Constant), Professional behaviour, Confidentiality, Integrity, Objectivity, Professional competence and due care

b. Dependent Variable: Compliance of ethical accounting codes and increase in profits

Source: primary data 2022

The co-efficient of determination (R) value was determined to be 0.805 based on the findings of the linear regression analysis in table 4.9. This suggests that the dependent variable is strongly correlated with the independent variables (Integrity, Confidentiality, professional behavior, Objectivity and professional competence and due care) (increase in profits).

The relationship between the two variables was statistically significant, as indicated by the significance value of 0.02 in table 4.11. A value of R Square of 0.642 revealed that the independent variables of confidentiality, objectivity, professional competence and due care as well as honesty were responsible for 64.2% of the variation in business operations (growth in profits). The findings were confirmed by Idris (2011), who claimed that there was a correlation between accounting ethics and the quality of financial reporting with regard to return on investment, earnings per share, and dividend per share. According to Aggarwal (2013), abiding by moral and the financial performance of the company was significantly linked with corporate governance codes.

4.8.3 ANOVA

Table 4.10

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	Regression	9.813	5	2.563	7.008	.002[b]
1	Residual	2.947	19	.366		
	Total	12.760	24			

a. Dependent Variable: Compliance of ethical accounting codes and increase in profits

b. Predictors: (Constant), Professional behaviour, Confidentiality, Integrity, Objectivity, Professional competence and due care

Source primary data 2022

The ANOVA test was used to determine the relevance of ethical accounting's impact on corporate operations. P=0.002(0.05) indicated that professional conduct, secrecy, honesty, impartiality, professional competence, and due care all had a substantial impact on company operations. Table 4.10 was subjected to F-statistics to determine the overall strength of the model. The F-Statistic value of 7.008 (p=0.002) suggested that the model was significant. The study's findings agreed with those of Tom and Biobele (2015), who alluded that the presence of codes of ethics had a significant influence on corporate performance and efficiency.

4.8.4 Coefficient

Table 4.11

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.735	.452		1.678	.072
Integrity	.140	.326	.617	3.603	.026
Objectivity	.135	.243	.402	1.043	.484

Professional competence and due care	.434	.289	.968	2.501	.150
Confidentiality	.016	.016	.126	.801	.682
Professional behaviour	.155	.128	.438	1.643	.681

a. Dependent Variable: Compliance of ethical accounting codes and increase in profits

The computed Beta coefficients revealed that integrity produced 73.5% of the positive variance in earnings, and the t-value is not significant ($p=0.72>0.005$), indicating that there is a positive association between integrity and profit rise at Wattle, but it is not statistically significant. Objectivity ($t=1.04$; $p=0.484>0.005$), professional competence and due care ($t=2.5$; $p=0.15>0.005$), confidentiality ($t=0.801$; $p=0.682>0.005$), and professional behavior ($t=1.643$; $p=0.681>0.005$) were all connected to increased profitability but were not statistically significant. The findings contradicted Aggarwal's (2013) findings, which demonstrated a strong positive association between ethical code compliance and corporate financial performance. According to Zvavahera and Ndoda (2014), poor corporate governance and unethical behavior have had a negative impact on business operations.

4.8.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, data findings were analyzed, presented, and inferred in relation to the hypothesis that triggered the investigation. The research discovered a statistically substantial association between ethical accounting and corporate operations. The following chapter will discuss the conclusion and recommendations..

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter will highlight study findings from previous chapters about the influence of accounting ethics on corporate operations. The previous chapter discussed data analysis, which includes data display, interpretation, and analysis. The data given was analyzed with SPSS and presented in the form of tables, charts, and graphs. As a result, in accordance with the study's goals, we reach a conclusion and give recommendations based on the information provided and the literature research.

5.1 Summary of findings

The researcher conducted the study to examine the influence of accounting ethics on corporate operations. The study looked at the influence of due care and objectivity on corporate operations, as well as confidentiality, honesty, professional behavior, and professional competence. According to the research, the most often implemented accounting ethics principles at Wattle Pvt Ltd were secrecy, honesty, and professional behavior, whereas objectivity was the lowest ranked virtue. The research went on to investigate the amount of accounting ethics on business operations, and the conclusions were seen under each value. It was established that there was a statistically significant association between ethical accounting and company operations based on the core principles of integrity, disclosure, and objectivity.

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the findings enshrined in the gathered and analysed data that was focused on addressing research questions and objectives, the researcher draws a conclusion that accounting ethics has an impact on business operations. Nonetheless, objectivity, disclosure and integrity had to work hand in hand with the code of ethics to ensure smooth running of business operations.

5.3 Recommendations

- Wattle Pvt Ltd should put in place a strong accounting system that adheres to reasonable norms.
- Management should guarantee that a code of ethics in accordance with International Standards is developed. Wattle Pvt Ltd should engage in human capital development to increase the quality of accountants and internal auditors, as well as promote understanding on how morals effect company operations.
- The study suggests that accountants and auditors be aware of the implications of any transgression of accounting ethics, in order to enhance compliance with accounting ethics and reduce unethical behavior.
- Maintain transparency

5.4 Areas for further research

Areas of concern that required more investigation were identified as a result of other difficulties discovered throughout the course of the inquiry. The influence of accounting ethics on business operations should be studied on organizations comparable to Wattle (Pvt) Ltd and the results compared to those of this study. To acquire data, a number of sources must be used. More study is needed to identify the consequences of a company's breach of accounting ethics. Accounting ethics education for future ethical accountants is also examined. This subject of research has yet to be thoroughly investigated, necessitating a study of accounting ethics.

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APPENDIX 1

LETTER FOR REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Bindura University of Science Education

Faculty of Commerce

Department of Accountancy

P. Bag 1020

BINDURA

Zimbabwe

20 May 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

My name is Kudzai Wayne Munyaka. I am an undergraduate student at Bindura University of Science Education pursuing a Bachelor of Accountancy Honors Degree. I am required to carry out a research project in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree. As such the student is carrying out a research on “the impact of accounting ethics on business operations”. The researcher is kindly asking for your assistance as respondents to the research understudy by filling in the questionnaire. The responses you will provide will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used sorely for academic purposes. Your co-operation will be greatly appreciated.

Yours Sincerely

Cell: +263784034755

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Kindly answer all questions honestly
2. Kindly indicate your answers by ticking where appropriate in the boxes and writing in the spaces provided
3. Your name or identity is not required

SECTION A: BIOGRAFIC DATA

1. Gender

Are you male or female?

Male	
Female	

2. Age

How old are you?

20-30 years	
31-40 years	
41-50 years	

51 ears and above	

3. May you indicate your highest level of education?

Certificate	
Diploma	
Degree	
Post graduate	
Other	

4. What is your position in the organisation?

Accountant	
Auditor	
Junior management	
Senior management	

5. For how long have you been at Wattle Pvt ltd?

Less than a year	
1-3 years	
4-10 years	
Above 10years	

SECTION B: CODE OF ACCOUNTING ETHICS

Objective 1: What are the accounting ethics that affect business operations at your organisation?

Do you agree that the following principles affect your business operations?

1=strongly disagree 2=agree 3=uncertain 4 = agree 5= strongly agree

Principle	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

1. **Integrity**: A professional accountant should be straightforward and honest in all professional and business relationships					
2. **Objectivity:** Professional accountant should not allow bias, conflict of interest or undue influence of others to override professional or business judgments.					
3. **Professional competence and due care:** A professional accountant has a continuing duty to maintain professional knowledge and skill at the level required to ensure that a client or employer receives competent professional service based on current developments in practice, legislation and techniques.					
4. **Confidentiality:** Professional accountant should respect the confidentiality of information acquired as a result of professional and business relationships and not to disclose any information to third parties.					
5. **Professional behaviour:** A professional accountant should comply with relevant laws and regulations and should avoid any action that discredits the profession.					

Objective 2: What is the level of ethical accounting practices at your organisation?

Rate how the following levels of accounting ethics are practiced at your organisation?

1=Very great extent 2=Great extent 3=Moderate extent 4=little extent 5=No extent

OBJECTIVITY	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
6. Financial statements are presented in a way that fully complies with accepted standards**.**					
7. To what extent does the accounting code of ethics depend on the objectivity of financial reports					

8. In what extent do financial, statements are produced and presented in compliance with Wattle Company's ethical standards.					
9. Financial statements' objective presentation is determined by the professional accountants' value system.					

INTEGRITY	1	2	3	4	5
10. Accountants who engage in insider trading frequently compromise the integrity of financial reports at Wattle Pvt Ltd.					
11. Wattle Pvt Ltd has an ethical accounting committee, which enhances the reliability of financial reports.					
12. The integrity of Wattle Pvt Ltd's financial reports is compromised by violations of ethical standards.					

DISCLOSURE	1	2	3	4	5
13. Quality of financial reports is affected by non-disclosure of material facts in the financial statements at Wattle Pvt Ltd.					
14. Unfaithful disclosure of financial reports at the organization is influenced by violation of accounting ethics.					
15. Financial statement disclosure is affected by the professional capability of accountants.					
16. Disclosure of items in the financial statement is affected by personal interest of the professional accountant					

Objective 3: What is the link between accounting ethics and business operations at Wattle Company (Pvt) Ltd.

Kindly indicate the relationship between accounting ethics and business operations.

1= very poor 2=poor 3=fair 4=good 5=excellent

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17. Compliance of ethical accounting codes and increase in profits					
18. The organizational permanent existence and accounting ethics					
19. Relationship of accounting ethics to an increase in sales volume					
20. Relationship of accounting ethics to an increase in market share					
21. The ethical accounting practices impacts positively on shareholder's returns to what extent					

Objective 4: Which ways can be implemented to reduce unethical behaviour?

Approve how the following ways can be implemented to reduce unethical behaviour

1=Strongly disapprove 2=Disapprove 3=Neutral 4=Approve 5=Strongly approve

Create a code of ethics in line with that of International Standards	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
Ensure independence					
Perception of transparency					
Promote knowledge					

Thank you for your cooperation

APPENDIX Il

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1 What are the accounting codes of ethics that are practiced at your organization?

2 How are those codes you have mentioned above being applied at your organization?

3 What can you say about the level of ethical accounting practices at your organization?

4 What are the major causes of poor compliance to accounting codes of ethics in your Organization?

5 How far has the practices of ethical accounting influenced the financial performance of Boarder Timbers?

6 What other areas has improved or deteriorated due to accounting ethics prevailing in your Organization?