

Quantitative Analysis and Evaluation of Economic Factors That Lead Professionals to Commit Fraud: A Cross-Regional Study from Baku and Izmir

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Abstract

In order to ensure the correct economic order, it is important that the data and information produced are accurate and complete. In order to ensure this order, the information used in accounting should be accurately reflected to the owners and employees of the enterprises, the persons / organizations that invest and lend to the enterprise and the public. However, in some cases, accounting information is reflected incorrectly to users due to intentional and in some cases unintentional errors. The factors that lead employees to fraud can be classified under 3 headings: finding a suitable target, lack of control, and having employees who are inclined to fraud. In particular, errors and fraud in financial statements have undermined the trust in the accounting profession, reduced transparency, misled those concerned with the business and caused erroneous decisions, and most importantly, caused accounting scandals by creating an obstacle to economic development. In recent years, many practices have been introduced to prevent accounting scandals that have emerged in the world. As in the whole world, accounting frauds are encountered in Azerbaijan and Turkey, and many sanctions and practices are made to prevent them.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to examine accounting errors and fraud from a theoretical point of view, to investigate the reasons for the tendency to commit errors and fraud, to examine the economic factors that push employees to commit such crimes, to compare the data by conducting a survey through a questionnaire to professional members operating in Baku and Izmir, to test and interpret the data with various statistical methods.

Methodology: The study was conducted through a digital questionnaire among accounting professionals and audit experts. A total of 376 people were reached, 182 professional members from Izmir and 194 professional members from Baku. The survey results were analyzed and interpreted with SPSS program.

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Originality: This article reviews many different types of studies at the international level and concludes that fraud is one of the main factors causing significant economic problems at the international level.

Findings: In both cities, the percentage of respondents who have encountered cheating is over 60%. In both cities, the tendency towards cheating is assumed to be a frequent occurrence.

Keywords: Error, Fraud, Corruption, Fraud Triangle, Fraud Pentagon, Economic factors

I. Theoretical Framework

According to the definition made by the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners, fraud is the concealment of a fact to cause material harm to another person. Accounting fraud is the illegal alteration of a company's financial statements in order to manipulate the apparent health of the company and to conceal its profits or losses. According to another definition, fraud is the intentional and knowing deception of the victim by misrepresenting, concealing, or omitting facts about promised goods, services, or other benefits and outcomes that do not exist, are unnecessary, were never intended to be provided, or are deliberately distorted for monetary gain-(Beals et al., 2015). According to another definition, cheating is the deliberate use of false or misleading information to unlawfully deprive another person or organization of money, property, or legal rights (Turker, 2022). Fraud is often a subdivision of criminology, referred to as white collar crime or corporate crime of the powerful, and is also difficult to study because it poses litigation and reporting constraints (Manning, 2018).

Fraud is different from corruption and error. The main features that make fraud different from error are that it involves intent and prioritizes personal interests instead of the interests of the business. On the contrary, the individual who makes a mistake performs this action without realizing it (Yazici, 2018). Fraud is the abuse of entrusted power for private gain and includes all kinds of fraudulent acts such as bribery, favoritism, nepotism, artificial pricing. According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) definition, corruption is the abuse of power by public officials for financial or other gain (Kingsly, 2015). While fraud implies the involvement of third parties, fraud does not necessarily imply the involvement of third parties. In the case of corruption, employees abuse their position by accepting a bribe offered by a third party, in the case of fraud this third party involvement is absent, making it more difficult to detect and consequently a different approach is required to detect and combat fraud. In organizations, fraud can be defined as intentional deception by concealing or misrepresenting information that harms the financial interests of others and benefits the financial interests of the perpetrator.

Fraud is a worldwide problem that affects various economies and businesses and causes significant negative consequences for the entire economy. In particular, the scandals of large enterprises such as Enron, WorldCom, Adelphia, Parmalat, etc.

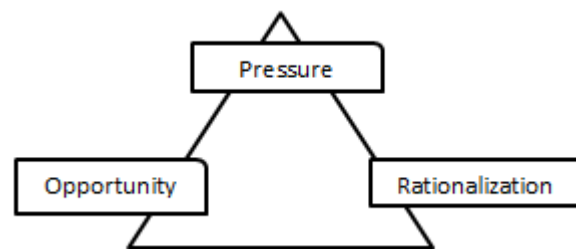
Each type of fraud has its own characteristics and there are numerous factors that trigger them. For this reason, there are many studies on fraud in order to identify the causes of fraud, to reveal the causes of financial losses to economies and the welfare of the masses, and to analyze the consequences of these factors. The findings obtained as a result of the researches are that cheating is the main problem affecting the economy and that deficiencies in ethical values cause fraud. According to the research conducted by ACFE, the types of fraud are discussed under 3 headings: corruption,

fraudulent financial reporting and misappropriation of assets. According to the result obtained from this research, although the percentage of tendency to fraudulent financial reporting is the lowest, it is the type of fraud that causes the highest losses in the economy (Kaya et al., 2018). KPMG, one of the international auditing firms, categorized the types of fraud under 7 headings as employee, consumer, seller, computer, insurance, financial reporting fraud and bad behavior as a result of its research on fraud in 2009 (Ozcelik et al., 2017).

1. Theories of Cheating

1.1. The Cheating Triangle Theory

In 1950, Donald Cressey argued that there is a reason behind people's actions and he set out to find the factors that lead people to cheat. According to the research result, Donald Cressey concluded that 3 factors such as pressure, opportunity and justification must be present for a crime to occur (Mansor et al., 2015). Joseph T. Wells, the founder of ACFE, used these 3 factors as "Fraud Triangle".



Graphic 1: Fraud Triangle

Source: Mansor, N., & Abdullahi, R., 2015

Element of pressure: It arises from pressures on employees or the need to meet their requires. Motives are also one of the reasons why these people commit fraud. These can include various financial pressures, financial problems, gambling problems, lifestyle problems, revenge against the organization they work for because they feel they have been wronged, emotional problems and so on. Motive can be addressed through measures such as employee support programs, open door policies and fair treatment and compensation of employees. Lister states that pressure or incentive to cheat is a key factor and categorizes these pressures as personal, job stress and external pressures (Abdullahi et al., 2018).

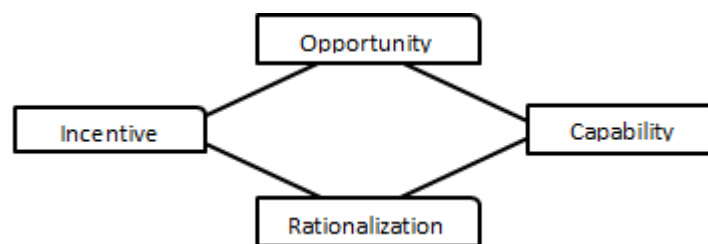
Element of Opportunity: These are the conditions that enable employees to commit fraud at the most opportune time within the organization when there is no possibility of being caught and when they realize the lack of internal control. That is, if the entity has a weak internal control environment, this may provide opportunities to engage in fraudulent financial reporting. Ensuring internal controls over financial reporting is the most important element for the management and owners of the business (Huang et al., 2017). Eliminating perceived opportunity has proven to be the most effective way to reduce fraud and corruption.

Element of Justification: This is the justification for the act of fraud or corruption and the perpetrator often knows it is wrong, but thinks that the act is justified for one reason or another. These may include the idea that no one is really going to get hurt, that they are just taking what they have, that everyone does it, that it is for a good cause or that the money is just "borrowed". Actions such as anti-fraud and corruption training, regular performance appraisals and simply treating employees

fairly can go some way to addressing this problem. The perpetrator tries to justify himself by using excuses such as "They don't pay me enough", "It's for a good cause", "Everyone else is doing the same", "It's only a small amount", "It's the cost of my work" and "Rules are meant to be broken" (Türker, 2022).

1.2. Diamond Theory

The Fraud Diamond theory is a more transitional version of the fraud triangle and was created by Wolfe and Hermanson in 2004. This theory was created with the addition of the "ability" variable. According to this theory, the party committing fraud is the person who has the ability to commit fraud, and factors such as opportunities, pressures, and a sense of self-righteousness push them towards fraud. People who have the ability to commit fraud try to turn this situation into an opportunity for themselves by evaluating this opportunity again (Sorunke, 2016).



Graphic 2: Fraud Diamond
Source: Sorunke, O. A., 2016

1.3. The Pentagon Theory of Cheating

Since the business environment is complex, more comprehensive theories were needed for analysis. In 2004, Wolfe & Hermanson added the "skill component" to the fraud diamond theory, and then in 2011 Horwath added the "arrogance component" and developed a new theory called the Cheating Pentagon. The skill component indicates the ability of those who want to fraud by detecting the lack of control at the most appropriate time. The arrogance component is the greedy behavior of the cheater who has a tendency to cheat, due to the fact that the cheater sees himself as the rightful owner. The addition of these 2 elements is believed to have a great impact (Fuad et al., 2020).



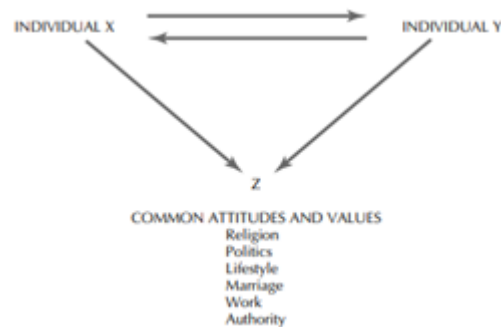
Graphic 3: Crowe's Fraud Pentagon
Source: Fuad, K., Lestari, A. B., & Handayani, R. T., 2020

2. Orientation to Accounting Fraud and Fraud Groups

Members of the accounting profession are required to show professional care by taking into account the need for social responsibilities and professional ethics. However, this is often violated and the consequences of these violations cause economic problems. According to the research conducted by ACFE, it was observed that 36.6% of employees, 42% of managers and 17% of senior managers committed fraud. According to other findings, 69% of the people who cheat are men and 31% are

women, while the age range with the most tendency to cheat is the 36-45 group age range. Another finding is that 20% of those who cheat is undergraduate and 13.2% are postgraduates. According to the research finding, 88% of the cheaters are those who have not been sentenced before, 5.5% are those who have been tried but not convicted and 5% are those who have been sentenced before (Ataman, 2017). In 2010, ACFE study found that the majority of people who cheat are married people, intelligent people, university graduates, risk takers, people under pressure to succeed, and people who have problems with employers (Dogan et al., 2018).

It is observed that the higher level of authority of the employees within the organization, the more damage they cause. There are 2 options for individuals who commit acts of cheating: reward/gain and punishment/loss. These individuals are included in work groups by making friends and most of the time their mistakes are covered up by the group and the management is prevented from getting information about this issue. As a result, this leads to bigger frauds. According to Theodore Newcomb's Balance Theory, in some cases, individuals may give up defending their values in order not to be excluded from the group. In some cases, group managers make members a partner in their own cheating act and minimize the risk of being caught. As seen from the equilibrium theory, individuals X and Y maintain a symmetrical balance by interacting on issues such as religion, politics, lifestyle, marriage, work, and authority. In case this equilibrium is disturbed, they try to restore the equilibrium level (Luthans, 2011).



Graphic 4: Balance Theory
Source: Luthans, F., 2011

2.1 Cheating groups

Employee fraud includes payroll fraud; falsifying revenue figures; false or inflated invoicing; false expense claims; cash sourcing; theft of inventory services; customer identity theft; theft of intellectual property (Gill et al., 2013). Vendor fraud includes selling low quality products, issuing invoices for goods that have not been shipped, and missing deliveries. Customer fraud includes situations such as not paying for the purchased goods or being told that the goods have been paid even though the payment has not been made (Doğan et al., 2017). Management fraud includes situations such as manipulation of financial statements made by the managers of the enterprise, actions taken for their interests, embezzlement, tax evasion, low profit distribution, false information declaration, bribery, etc (Yıldırım et al., 2016). In the case of investment fraud, those who carry out the fraud act enable people to invest by hiding the facts in order to gain unfair profit (Mengi et al., 2013).

Type of Cheat	Affected Party	Influencer Party	Interpretation
Employee Cheat	Employer	Worker	Case of fraud committed by employees in the business against their employers
Seller Trick	Buyers of Goods/service	Sellers of goods/services	Seller not delivering on time or asking for too much money
Customer Cheating	Sellers of goods/services	Customer	Situation where customers ask for things that do not belong to them or demand low pricing
Management Trick	Financial statement user	Senior management	Situation where senior management makes misleading presentations in financial statements
Investor Trick	Investor	Individual	A situation where individuals deceive investors into making fraudulent investments.
Other cheat	Variable	Variable	Cheating by gaining the other party's trust

Graphic 5: Cheat Groups
Source: Doğan, S., & Kayakıran, D., 2017

II. Academic Research on Cheating in Azerbaijan and Turkey

1. Academic Research on Cheating in Azerbaijan

In 2009, Tomáš Prouza, Shaun Mundy and Juan C. Izaguirre's action plan for strengthening financial services in Azerbaijan stated that in order to prevent fraud and corruption, comprehensive financial education should be included in the school curriculum and financial capability programs should be developed, including in rural areas, through the media, financial capability website and other communications. In addition, the action plan suggested that in order to prevent fraud, a common database containing all information should be developed and monitored by the competent authority such as the Ministry of Finance (MOF) (Prouza et al., 2009).

In 2011, according to the results of the CESD (Center for Economic and Social Development) Anti-Corruption Strategy for the Republic of Azerbaijan, Azerbaijan ranked 134th out of 178 countries in the world in the 2010 Corruption Perception Index according to Transparency International. According to the research, one of the most important reasons for the tendency to fraud is social needs (Bayramov et al., 2011). According to the results of the international transparency against corruption in 2022, Azerbaijan ranked 157th out of 180 countries in the Corruption Perception Index (transparency.org, 2022).

In the OECD Anti-Corruption Network's 2016 survey, the education sector was addressed in the context of Azerbaijan's national anti-corruption policy documents. The National Anti-Corruption Plan 2012-2015 set out specific actions to improve the education management system and raise awareness, such as improving the education management system and anti-corruption education (Martina, 2016).

In 2019, Ravan Jafarli conducted a research in the form of interviews and concluded that the lack of experts with CIA, CFE certificates who have sufficient knowledge about fraud in Azerbaijani companies poses a significant problem. Namely, most organizations do not carry out fraud risk assessment and are slow to take measures against fraud because they perceive these risks as general risks. According to the research, managers avoid the cost of fraud risk mitigating controls because they are costly. As a result, being aware of the risk of fraud reduces the risk of fraud, so it is not enough to have only written rules in businesses, employees should be trained on these issues (Jafarli, 2019).

In 2020, according to a study conducted by Ingilab Shahbazov and Zaur Afandiyev, participants were given some scenarios and asked to classify them according to the seriousness of the

crime, and as a result of the research, tax evasion, fraud and corruption or bribery were the most common crimes in Azerbaijan. According to the data of the State Statistics Committee in 2017, the number of registered economic crimes, which is one of the white-collar crimes, has fluctuated greatly over the years. In 1995, the number was 2,136; in 2005, it dropped sharply to 491, and in 2017, it rose to 2,553. In 2017, almost half (46.9%) of these crimes were tax evasion and 35.3% were smuggling of illegal goods. In political terms, according to the Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index, the level of democracy in Azerbaijan is significantly lower than in most of the countries where fear of crime was analyzed. However, in 2019, Azerbaijan ranked 126th out of 180 countries in terms of transparency and corruption (Shahbazov et al., 2020).

According to a 2020 study, Azerbaijan has developed economically since independence in 1991. In Azerbaijan, after 2004, the decrees "Measures to Strengthen the Fight against Criminality, Strengthening Legality and Legal Order" and "Strengthening the Fight against Corruption in the Republic of Azerbaijan" were signed, and in 2012, the ASAN service state institution began to operate (Isler et al., 2020).

In 2023, according to the joint research conducted in Azerbaijan under the heading of problems related to the development of the audit system, the number of economic frauds and crimes in Azerbaijan was higher in 2014-2015. This is associated with the fall in the price of oil in the world markets, increased pressure on the financial and credit system in the country, insufficient level of transparency in the tax and customs systems. According to the results of the research, it is necessary to enact the Competition Law in Azerbaijan in order to maintain financial discipline, to ensure the integrity of accounting and financial reporting, to combat fraud and corruption and to activate auditing (Agamamed et al., 2023).

2. Academic Research on Fraud in Turkey

Based on a 2007 study, Turkey signed the United Nations Convention against Corruption in 2003, the Council of Europe Convention on Criminal Law on Corruption in 2004, and adopted the civil and criminal law convention on anti-corruption and enacted the Right to Information Law No. 4982 (Bayraktar, 2007).

According to the 2008 Mikail Erol study, the way to fight corruption depends on the effectiveness of corporate governance and the financial system that has been disrupted after the corporate scandals should be reorganized, with honest and adequately informed auditors (Mikail, 2008).

In 2010, as a result of Nergis Nalan Altıntaş's research on errors and frauds in auditing, it was revealed that inadequate and unclear guidance in independent external audit and professional law, inadequate education level is a situation that prevents auditing. As a solution, she emphasized the necessity of both ACFE and European Fraud Conference to carry out studies in Turkey (Altıntaş et al., 2010).

According to a 2016 study by Umut Tolga and Hatice Gogebakan, the main reasons for the deterioration of accounting ethics are accounting tricks and mistakes made to pay less tax. These actions include self-interest, customer pressure, balance sheet masking to get more credit, profit minimization to distribute less profit, and the use of unrealistic documents. According to the survey results of the study, the deviations caused by these frauds are not only caused by accountants, but also by many factors such as taxpayers, government policies, tax practices, professional organization and social structure. In this study, accountants attribute cheating to taxpayer demands, such as 62% of the participants stated that there is a demand to overstate profits and 59% of the participants stated that

there is a demand to understate expenses or revenues. In addition, 40% of the accountants responded that they resort to fraud due to high tax rates and inflation. Due to the lack of financial auditing in Turkey, accountants are faced with a dilemma between public and taxpayer interest. For this reason, 92% of the participants want the establishment of a professional ethics organization (Gumush et al., 2016).

According to a 2018 study conducted by Cigdem Kurucay and Murat Sercemeli, most of the articles on fraud between 2008-2017 were analyzed under the title "Definition and causes of fraud". According to the results of the study, most of the academicians who conducted the research focused on the impact of fraud on the economic system (Kurucay, 2018). Another research conducted with 53 accounting professionals in 2018 was conducted by Zeki Dogan, Kadir Gulcin and Elif Nazli. According to the results of this research, people who tend to cheat are those who are not satisfied with what they have, like secrecy, emotional and touchy, want only high-level tasks, are interested in luxury, like to take risks, are quick-tempered, and want to achieve their ideal goals. Another issue mentioned in the article is related to the ACFE research, namely, according to the 2018 ACFE report, the most frequent cheaters are those with postgraduate education, those in senior management, and those over the age of 50. The age range of 36-45 years old is accepted as the age range that repeats the act of cheating continuously, and the reason for this is accepted as the excess of personal debts (Dogan et al., 2018). According to the 2018 research result of Burcu İshguden Kılıc and Zafer Anadolu, the web-based accounting and auditing processes increase the reliability and transparency of information, and information technology provides accurate and fast information flow inside and outside the enterprise by introducing digital accounting (Kılıc et al., 2018).

According to 2021 research by Lale Aslan, data on fraud in Turkey is not published. However, according to the figures compiled by the author from the 2020 ACFE Report, the number of cases since 2014 has been around 13-15, but no other information on fraud cases has been made public. According to the results of the analysis, it was found that brokerage houses are more prone to fraud, top management is more interested in making profit, and inadequate internal control is one of the main reasons for the increase in the number of frauds (Aslan, 2021).

In 2022, Zekeriya Demir stated in his research that accounting frauds in different countries are also present in publicly traded companies in Turkey, but the penalties applied against fraud are low in Turkey compared to other countries. He stated that the frauds between 2011 and 2020 are generally committed by the same companies, but legal and administrative sanctions are insufficient. In order to prevent this, he emphasized that information about these companies should be clearly disclosed in the press, necessary sanctions should be imposed, and models to detect fraud should be developed (Demir, 2022).

In 2023, İsmail Tuna conducted research titled "Content analysis of financial cheating in Turkey" using EBSCO and YOK (Council of Higher Education) thesis databases. Between 2003 and 2023, according to the results obtained from EBSCO Business Source Complete, the most research on fraud is in 2015 with a rate of 14.74%. The most used method in the researches is theoretical studies with 38.95%. With the development of technology and software, the ability to reveal frauds increases with the application of artificial intelligence. According to the results of the YOK (Council of Higher Education) thesis database analysis, it was found that the number of theses on the subject of cheating has increased since 2013 and the highest number was found in 2019. In 2019, 73.53% of the master's and 12.75% of the doctoral theses are in the field of business administration / economics. It is assumed that the fact that the universities with the highest concentration on cheating are in Istanbul is related

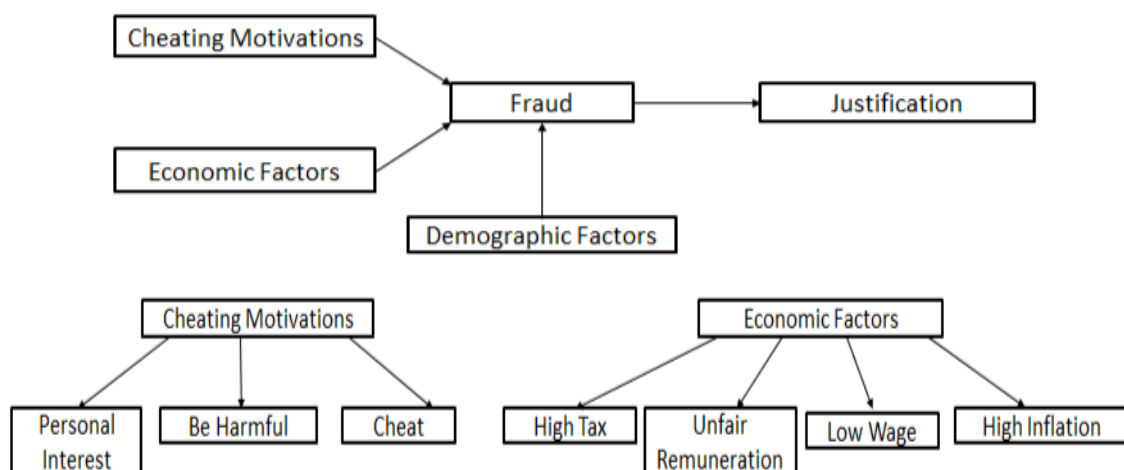
to the fact that the level of encounter with cheating is more intense in this city (Tuna, 2023). In a study conducted by Kıymaz Kıvraklar and Reyhan Ersoy Can in 2023, they examined the current reports of ACFE, KPMG and PwC at the time of combating cheating and compiled the tricks made by employees in a red flag and the elements that make up this flag are motivation, opportunity, rationalization, competence. In this study, valid data compiled from the reports of international organizations were collected to effectively combat fraud (Kıvraklar et al.,2023).

III. Research Model and Operational Variables

The research is descriptive and in an uncontrolled environment. In the model, economic factors and cheating motivations are independent variables and accounting professional cheating is the dependent variable. The moderator includes demographic factors such as age, gender, education, lifestyle, job, working time, income, title, marriage, religion, politics. As an intermediate variable of the model, the aspiration factor, which is the desire of accounting professionals to achieve their dreams, is considered.

Fraud often results in high levels of losses. In particular, the results of fraudulent transactions in financial statements may have a negative impact on the development of the economy and harm investors due to misleading information. For these reasons, frauds committed by accounting professionals can have a negative impact on the taxation system. High tax rates, unfair remuneration, low wages, and high inflation can be argued as economic factors that affect the occurrence of fraud. These issues can also be seen as reasons for employees to be motivated to fraud. People who are motivated to cheat provide justifications by claiming that there is a reason for their actions. In the literature, the titles of rationalizing cheating are based on excuses such as "I am underpaid", "I did it for a good cause", "Everyone is already doing the same thing", "I only did a small amount", "This is what I was actually paid for my work" and "Rules are there to be broken". The people who justify this also try to justify themselves by displaying different tendencies according to demographic characteristics such as marital status and age.

1. Model of the Research

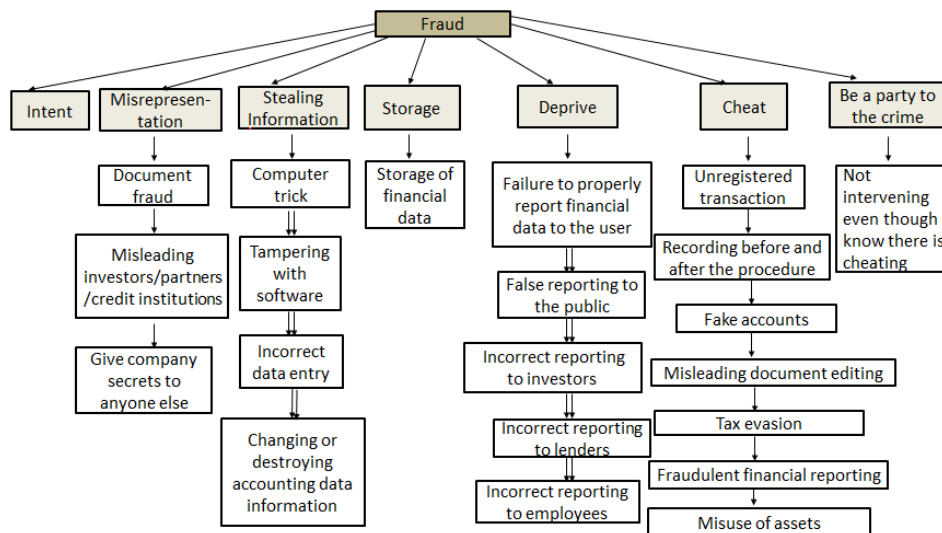


In some cases, due to the high tax rate, taxpayers may ask professionals to understate their profits in order to pay less tax. If this request is rejected, professionals may face some economic and psychological problems as they do not want to lose customers. Unfair remuneration between

taxpayers and accountants may put accountants in a difficult economic situation. Even among the employees, if the remuneration is not done correctly and especially if it is low, competition and internal conflicts arise and this leads to fraudulent acts. Employees who have to work with low salaries may be under pressure from taxpayers and may cause corruption (Iliman et al., 2016).

High inflation leads to a decline in macroeconomic performance and a solvency imbalance. Economists argue that inflation is undesirable and should be avoided altogether, as it has been repeatedly confirmed that inflation has a negative impact on economic growth. This is because high inflation leads to uncertainty in prices, which in turn reduces purchasing power through the inflation effect. For this reason, high inflation creates the ground for fraud (Sarel, 1996).

2. Operationalization Table



Intentional deception is one of the main elements of fraud. As a means of this, either unrecorded transactions are carried out or misleading records are made by issuing false documents. Another situation is the recording of these activities before or after the transaction, in which case the lender, investor, shareholder may be misled due to deliberately untimely records. Falsifying accounts is also one of the methods of fraud. Thus, those concerned may aim to evade taxes by showing the revenue as unrealistic (Cekmen, 2022). Forged documents are the reflection of commercial activities and transactions in a different way than they are. Failure to make financial payments in the form of loss to the state in tax evasion leads to disruption of public order. As such, a high tax rate is undesirable for taxpayers and puts pressure on employees to pay less tax. In addition, fraud risk assessment addresses the risks of fraudulent financial reporting, fraudulent non-financial reporting, misappropriation of assets and corruption (coso.org, 2023). In fraudulent financial reporting, income items in financial reports are manipulated by overstating or understating income. Misrepresented information as a result of fraudulent transactions (such as fictitious sales, fraudulent records, incorrect asset valuation, etc.) can also hinder the growth of the economy by misleading shareholders, credit institutions and investors and reducing transparency. Misappropriation of assets is a common type of fraud. These are situations such as using stocks for purposes other than the main purpose or for personal purposes, embezzlement, stealing business assets (Bekcioglu et al., 2013).

IV. Research Methodology

1. Research Problem

The research problem is to determine the effects of the fraud on the economy of professional accountants under the influence of economic factors and to examine the evaluations of professional accountants regarding their tendency to commit fraud.

2. Research Questions

In our research, participants' opinions were asked about the following issues and the application of our study was created within this context.

- What is the difference between fraud and error?
- What is the difference between fraud and corruption?
- What are the factors that lead accounting professionals (such as accountants, financial advisors, managers) to commit fraud in the organization or department they work in?
- What are the problems created in the workplace by situations where members of the profession steal from the organization, lie to management, or benefit unfairly from the organization?
- How often is it possible to encounter and become aware of a tendency to fraud?
- Is there a relationship between tendency to fraud and economic factors?
- Is there a relationship between tendency to fraud and demographic factors?
- Is there a relationship between tendency to fraud and manager attitudes and behaviors?
- Is there a relationship between tendency to fraud and the professional experience levels of professional accountants?
- What is the economic importance of fraud auditing?
- What are the negative economic consequences of fraud?
- What are the perspectives of professionals living in Baku and Izmir on fraud?
- What are the differences between professionals living in Baku and Izmir in terms of their perspectives on fraud?
- What are the studies on fraud in Azerbaijan and Turkey?

3. Scope of the Study

The main population of the research is accounting professionals. The sample of the research is the accounting professionals operating in Izmir and Baku. The accountants included in the sample are organized for Azerbaijan and Turkey in accordance with each country's accountant title category. For Izmir, this category is categorized as CPA, CPA Trainee, Accounting employee and other. For Baku, this category is classified as Financial Manager, Lead Accountant, Senior Accountant, Junior accountant, Accountant, Accounting Intern and other.

The data collection method of the research is questionnaire and 194 professional members were reached from Baku and 182 professional members were reached from Izmir. The data obtained from the questionnaire answered by 376 people in total were analyzed and interpreted with various statistical methods in SPSS program.

Table 1: Demographic Variables	
Izmir	Baku
42.9% are women, 57.1% are men,	41.2% are women, 58.8% are men,
51.6% are single, 45.6% are married,	55.2% are single, 44.8% are married,
55.7% have a bachelor's degree, 34.4% have a master's degree, and 6% have a doctorate degree.	38.7% have a bachelor's degree, 37.6% have a master's degree, 7.2% have a doctorate degree, and 15.5% have a high school degree.

As can be seen in Table 1, when we compare Izmir and Baku in terms of demographic characteristics, there is a very similar situation in terms of gender and marital status.

Table 2: Monthly Earnings of Accountants Participating in the Research	
İzmir	Baku
1891 Euro and above is 9.28%	1070 Euro and above is % 2.06
Between 1620 Euro – 1890 Euro is 10.92%	Between 891 Euro – 1069 Euro is % 6.70
Between 1350 Euro - 1619 Euro is % 24.04	Between 713 Euro – 890 Euro is % 22.16
Between 1080 Euro – 1349 Euro is % 23.49	Between 535 Euro – 712 Euro is % 28.86
Between 810 Euro – 1079 Euro is % 19.12	Between 357 Euro -534 Euro is % 24.74
Between 540 Euro – 719 Euro is % 6.01	Between 179 Euro – 356 Euro is % 8.76
Up to 539 Euro is 7.01%	Up to 178 Euro is % 6.70

According to Table 2, when we look at the earnings levels, it would not be wrong to say that although they vary according to the economic levels of the countries, there is a general similarity in the earnings levels.

According to the summary of earnings distribution obtained from Baku as a result of the analysis, the professions with the lowest level of earnings are junior accountants, accounting trainees and other professions. Those with the highest level of earnings are financial managers, senior accountants and lead accountants.

According to the summary of earnings distribution obtained from Izmir as a result of the analysis, the professionals with the lowest level of earnings are accounting employees and accounting trainees, while those with the highest level of earnings are those with the title of CPA.

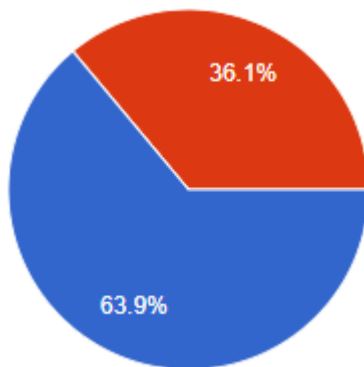
Table 3: Title Distribution of Accountants Participating in the Research	
İzmir	Baku
SMMM %51,37	Lead accountant %27.83
Accountant %43.72	Senior accountant %22.17
SMMM intern %4.91	Accountant %15.46
	Junior accountant %12.90
	Accounting intern %7.21
	Financial manager % 6.70
	Other category %7.73

Accounting profession distribution categories differ in each country. Employees included in the other category include those who have worked in the accounting department temporarily, people who have worked in this field even though they are not currently working, and employees such as audit experts. As can be seen in Table 3, while the percentage of people responding in the other category is not found in Izmir, this rate is equal to 7.73% in Baku. Those who participated in both studies were mostly those with high titles.

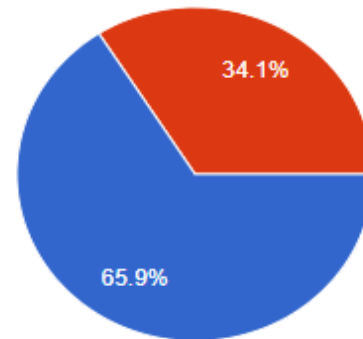
V. Comparative Analysis Result

In this part of the study, the results of the questionnaire presented to the accounting professionals in both cities are analyzed and compared and interpreted within the scope of SPSS program.

The responses to the first question asked in the questionnaire and the main subject of the research, have you encountered fraud in the past or recently, are as shown in the graph below:



Percentage of responses in Baku



Percentage of responses in Izmir

If the responses are compared and interpreted according to the graphs, the rate of cheating in both cities is above 60%. This leads to the conclusion that fraud is generally experienced in both countries. While 63.9% of the respondents in Baku stated that they were aware of fraud, 65.9% of the respondents in Izmir stated that they had encountered fraud. There is no significant difference between the answers given in terms of gender in both Izmir and Baku.

According to the results of the survey conducted in Izmir, the agreement with the statement "People who have received accounting education are more likely to cheat" is significant at 95% confidence level ($p=0.004$), but according to the results of the survey analysis conducted in Baku, it is not significant ($p=0.006$). On the other hand, in Baku, the respondents' opinions on the statement "If a person cannot justify his/her actions, he/she is unlikely to cheat" are not different from the undecided point at 95% confidence level ($t=1.278$, $sd=193$, $p=0.203$), but in Izmir, they are undecided to agree with this statement at 95% confidence level ($t=-6.661$, $sd=182$, $p=0.000$).

The relationship between cheating and sanctions was analyzed. Although the respondents in Baku agreed more with the view that the main reason for cheating is inadequate penalties at 95% confidence level ($p=0.001$), the respondents in Izmir were undecided about sanctions ($p=0.214$).

Managers;

- They think that their fraud cannot be detected,
- That they cheat because of their intelligence, experience and creativity,
- The pressure for effectiveness and efficiency expected of them or to achieve whatever success is expected of them

When the opinion that they resort to fraud is analyzed, no significant relationship is found for these reasons at 95% confidence level for both Izmir and Baku respondents. According to these results, whether the managers are experienced or overconfident or whether the pressure to achieve success or not has no effect on the tendency to fraud.

However, when analyzing whether managers resort to cheating to protect their positions, the participants in Baku believed that managers resort to fraud to protect their positions ($p=0.016$), while the participants in Izmir were undecided on this issue ($p=0.088$).

According to our research, at 95% confidence level, participants in both Izmir and Baku have the same opinion on the following issues and a significant relationship was found:

- Fraud is a planned and deliberate behavior that prioritizes self-interest ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.000$)
- There is a significant tendency to engage in fraud in financial reporting transactions ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.010$)
- Employees may resort to cheating to achieve a higher standard of living ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.000$)
- The level of poverty and deprivation in a country has an impact on employee fraud ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.000$)
- The culture in which the countries are located is effective in directing people to fraud ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.010$).
- Tax policies of countries are one of the factors that lead employees to fraud ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.039$)
- Salary injustice and not being paid what they deserve have an effect on employee fraud ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.000$).
- Managerial attitudes and behaviors ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.000$) and negative motivation have an effect on employee fraud ($p = 0.000$ and $p = 0.037$).

Colleagues in both countries were asked about the factors that influence fraud. Respondents in Baku think that businesses cheat because of high tax rates in the country (56.7%) and because they want to distribute less or more profit (49%). The respondents in Izmir, on the other hand, think that businesses fraud because of high tax rates in the country (73.6%) and to benefit from loans and incentives (43.4%). According to these results, colleagues in both countries jointly argued that the most influential factor for cheating is the high tax rate.

Izmir and Baku respondents jointly think that businesses resort to cheating due to high inflation, high tax rate, unfair remuneration and low wage levels.

According to the results of the independent sample t-test analysis, the agreement of male and female participants in Baku with the statement " Fraud is a planned and deliberate behavior that prioritizes personal interests" is significantly different at 95% confidence level ($t=-2,878$ $sd=189,383$ $p=0,004$). However, no significant difference was found in Izmir ($t=-0,289$ $sd=181$ $p=0,773$). Accordingly, while women in Baku agree more with the view that personal interests are at the forefront in the act of fraud compared to men, there is no significant difference ($t=-0,289$ $sd=181$ $p=0,773$) between female and male participants in Izmir at 95% confidence level.

According to the research, while participants aged 40 and over in Izmir think that fraud involves intent, participants under the age of 40 are undecided about whether fraud involves intent. In Baku, fraud is perceived as intent in all age groups except the 24-28 age group.

In Izmir, respondents aged 18-20 and those aged 60 and over think that the cultural structure of the country is an effective factor in the tendency to fraud, while other age groups remain undecided on this issue. In Baku, only the respondents aged 38 and above think that culture is an effective factor in the tendency to fraud.

In Izmir, only respondents between the ages of 18-30 think that there is an inclination towards fraud due to salary injustice, while in Baku, all age groups think that salary injustice leads to fraud. Accordingly, it is thought that the tendency to cheat will be effective due to the low income obtained at the beginning of the accounting profession in Izmir. Generally, people in the 25-50 age group consider the level of poverty in the country, the desire to reach a high standard of living, and negative motivation as effective factors for fraud.

According to the results of the Izmir survey, people with a doctorate level think that culture and managerial attitudes have no effect on the tendency to cheat, while people with a master's degree and university graduates see culture as an effective factor in fraud. In Baku, on the other hand, PhD graduates stated that culture has an effect on fraud. Again in Izmir, while doctorate level individuals are undecided about the effect of salary injustice on fraud, master's degree graduates consider salary injustice as an effective factor. In Baku, the respondents with master's and doctorate degrees think that salary injustice is an influential factor on fraud, but the respondents with bachelor's degree are undecided.

In Izmir, PhD graduates do not think that the frauds are caused by lack of auditing, while master's degree graduates remain undecided on this issue. It was concluded that those who received accounting education are more prone to cheating and they are undecided as a common opinion. PhD graduates in Izmir disagreed that managers cheat by using their intelligence and creativity, while PhD, MA and BA graduates in Izmir and PhD, MA and BA graduates in Baku were undecided on this issue. While accounting professionals with doctoral degrees in Baku say that management attitude and behavior is a factor affecting fraud, accounting professionals with doctoral degrees in Izmir disagree. Educated people in Baku and Izmir are of the opinion that poverty in the country leads to fraud.

According to the results of the Izmir survey, people with an income between EUR 1080 and EUR 1349 think that fraud is intentional, while those with a salary of EUR 1620 and above are undecided on this issue. In Baku, people with salaries between 178 -534 Euro are undecided on this issue, while people with an income level of 714 Euro and above see cheating as intentional. In Izmir, regardless of the income group, they are undecided about the effect of the culture on the tendency to fraud, and those who earn more than 714 Euros in Baku are of the opinion that culture is influential. In Izmir, those earning up to 1350 Euros think that managerial attitudes are effective on the tendency to fraud, while those earning 1350 Euros and above are undecided on this issue. In Baku, those earning between 179-891 Euros are undecided about the effect of managers' attitudes on fraud, while those earning 891 Euros and above agree on this issue. In Baku, those earning less than 891 Euros are undecided about the effect of tax level on fraud, while those earning 891 Euros and above consider tax level as an effective factor in fraud.

V. Conclusion

Fraud is the deliberate deception of the victim by misrepresenting the facts and is different from fraud and error. While fraud differs from error in that it involves intent, it differs from corruption in that it does not necessarily involve the participation of third parties. According to the research conducted by ACFE, types of fraud are categorized under 3 headings: corruption, fraudulent financial

reporting and misappropriation of assets. Donald Cressey came to the conclusion that 3 factors such as pressure, opportunity and justification must be present for a crime to occur. According to the theory created by Wolfe and Hermanson, the addition of the "ability" variable is also important in this respect. In 2011, Horwath developed a new theory adding the component of arrogance and it was called the pentagon of deception.

After scandals such as Enron, Worldcom, Adelphia, Parmalat, etc., there has been an increase in research on how fraud can cause crisis situations in economies. Although techniques have been developed in the last two decades for businesses to combat fraud, the techniques used by fraudsters have developed equally. According to Uzun et al. 's research suggests that the number of independent outside directors on the audit committee should be increased to counter fraud.

The effects of fraud on the economy have also become a major problem in developing countries. In this article, the perspectives of accounting professionals in Turkey and Azerbaijan on the economic factors that lead to fraud are analyzed. Azerbaijan has developed economically after becoming independent in 1991. Decrees "Measures to Strengthen the Fight against Criminality, Strengthening Legality and Legal Order" and "Strengthening the Fight against Corruption in the Republic of Azerbaijan" were signed in Azerbaijan and the ASAN service state institution started its activities. In Turkey, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the Council of Europe Convention on Criminal Law on Corruption were signed, corruption investigation committees were established, the Convention on the fight against corruption in civil and criminal law was adopted, the Law No. 4982 on the right to information was enacted. In the research, determination of the impact on the economy as a result of the fraud committed by accounting professionals under the influence of economic factors, the level of orientation to fraud in Azerbaijan and Turkey and the perspectives of the respondents from both countries in response to it were discussed.

In both cities, respondents agreed that factors such as intentional behavior, the desire for a high standard of living, financial reporting fraud, the existence of low and unfair wages in the countries, tax policy, and managerial attitudes are effective in the tendency to fraud. Again, in both countries, they think that businesses resort to fraud for high inflation level, high tax rate, unfair remuneration and low wage level. In the case of Baku, these factors were listed as high inflation level, low wages, high tax rate and unfair remuneration.

In general, respondents in both cities agreed that low economic conditions at the country level are the most influential factor for fraud. Although the necessary laws and regulations are tried to be provided against fraudulent acts in both countries, the rate of respondents encountering fraud is over 60%, which is assumed to be the situation in which the level of tendency to fraudulent acts is frequently compared in both cities. This shows that the level of importance of internal and external audit is high for both countries.

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