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## RESEARCH ARTICLE – ACCOUNTING

### The Effect of the Source of Commitment and Ethical Style of Auditors on Independent Auditors' Whistle-blowing

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Article Info.	Abstract
<p><i>Article history:</i></p> <p>Received 02MAY 2024</p> <p>Accepted 01 JUNE 2024</p> <p>Publishing 30 JUNE 2024</p>	<p><b>Purpose:</b> The present study was conducted with the aim of investigating the effect of the source of commitment and ethical style of auditors on disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.</p> <p><b>Method:</b> The current study was carried out utilizing a descriptive correlational methodology. The statistical population of the present study was made up of 248 independent auditors. The instrument used in the present study was the standard questionnaire of Maragno and Cordero (2022) (includes disclosure of auditors with 11 items, source of commitment with 24 items, and ethical style with 34 items) whose face validity was confirmed by a number of respondents and reliability. They were also estimated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for auditors' expressiveness of 0.888, ethical style of 0.915 and source of commitment of 0.848. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze the research data.</p> <p><b>Research findings:</b> The results of the research hypotheses test showed that the source of commitment to the organization (emotional commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment) has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors. Also, the results showed that auditors' ethical style (honesty and correctness of the auditor, competence of the auditor, and impartiality of the auditor) has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Source of Commitment, Ethical Style, Auditors' Whistle-blowing</p>	

## 1. Introduction

Wrongdoing disclosure in the audit profession is a voluntary act based on which an auditor is able to report behaviours that are contrary to the professional ethics of his colleagues to any institution (internal or external) regardless of existing legal standards and requirements, so these behaviours should be corrected. Disclosure of wrongdoing is one of the most significant monitoring devices for preventing financial violations and scandals in organizations. According to the laws, in most organizations, especially audit institutions, this disclosure should be considered an important part of the organizational culture of those institutions. The Administrative Health Law (AHL) obliges auditors, inspectors, official experts, auditors, accountants, supervisors, and other people who are responsible for registering or handling documents, offices, and activities of real and legal people to report the matter to the supervisory authority if they observe any kind of corruption or declare a competent court [1].

Is it possible to report violations to discover financial scandals? In order to prevent many financial frauds, disclosure of the auditing profession has been proposed as a strong oversight mechanism that can have many benefits to members of the organization and other stakeholders in society.[2]. Bearing this in mind, there have been studies on whistle-blower intent as observed among accounting professionals [3]. In between, there is a gap in understanding the whistle-blower's intention when it exists in other fields, for example, in auditing [4]. Because the auditor's neglect to report the violations of his peers can create opportunities for accounting manipulation and fraud [5]. Although limited research is available, findings suggest that auditors are reluctant to speak out against their peers [6, 7]

[6] discovered that 48% of professionals either viewed or participated in the manipulation of personal benefits paid by the company in financial reports, while 46% of professionals either engaged in misconduct or refused to report peers. Individual elements like the auditor's standing with peers or the client (e.g., source of commitment) [7], individual position on moral matters (such as morality) [8], age [9], gender [10] and work experience [9] affect the decision to report a violation [11].

Employee identification and participation in the organization, their level of commitment to its goals, values, and beliefs, and their readiness to put in more work on behalf of the organization are all factors that directly affect the source of commitment. [12]. The degree to which one feels that they are assisting others in trying circumstances and the source of commitment and solidarity with coworkers—both of which are represented in sentiments of personal loyalty or responsibility—have a comparable relationship. [12] characterized the source of commitment as the course that workers take when presented with a decision that puts the organization's interests against those of their peers. Employees in these circumstances have three options for action: Stepping down from the company, (2) reporting the incident, or (3) remaining silent [13]. Nevertheless, [12] elucidate that the decision to report fraud or other unethical activity must be weighed against the possible harm to the company or peers by the whistleblower. Their study's empirical results demonstrate that employees who are more devoted to the company are more inclined than their peers to divulge information. Therefore, it makes sense that audit professionals are more likely to report misconduct when they feel a stronger bond with the audit firm as a result of training, alignment with the ultimate goal of actual delivery, and the firm's reputation. Thus, it stands to reason that the source of an independent auditor's commitment to the company would positively impact their disclosure (whistle-blowing). [11].

A person's ability to assess moral quandaries and ethical issues is referred to as their ethical style. According to the literature, morality influences one's ability to make decisions because a stronger sense of right and wrong aids in one's ability to make independent decisions. This pertains to the sharing of details regarding the ethical concern of whistleblowing. [8, 14]

[15] categorizes moral behavior as judgmental or compassionate. While judgmental people approach ethical dilemmas with the intention of lessening the harm or pain caused by the situation in question, compassionate people approach them with the goal of following rules, being objective, and being consistent. This increases the likelihood that the violation will be reported. [8] provided empirical data demonstrating a favorable correlation between a sample of 122 American audit professionals' ethical style and their inclination to come forward with information. Furthermore, [16] clarified that moral assessments of matters like misconduct can encourage people to report unethical activity with a more positive outlook. Consequently, auditors with an ethical judgmental style—that is, auditors who view a particular situation as unethical—are more likely to report possible instances of unethical behavior than auditors with a care goal orientation. It follows that the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors should benefit from the ethical style of auditors. [11].

### Nomenclature & Symbols

AHL	The administrative Health Law
AIA	The A association of auditors in side
SEO	Stock exchange
GOF	The value of goodness of fit index

## 2. Research methodology:

### 1.2 Research problem:

Do the source of commitment and ethical style of auditors affect the disclosure (whistleblowing) of independent auditors?

### 2.2 Research Hypothesis:

1- The first main hypothesis: The source of the organization's commitment has positive effects represented in the disclosure (reporting of violations) by independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 1: Affective commitment has positive effects when disclosing (whistleblowing) to independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 2: Continuing commitment has positive effects on disclosure (whistleblowing) to independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 3: Normative compliance has positive effects on disclosure (whistleblowing) to independent auditors.

2- The second main hypothesis: The ethical style of auditors has a positive impact on disclosure (reporting violations) to independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 1: The honesty and validity of the auditor has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistleblowing) of independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 2: Auditor competence has positive effects when disclosing (whistleblowing) to independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 3: Auditor impartiality has positive effects when disclosing (whistleblowing) to independent auditors.

### 2.3 Research Importance

1- This study makes multiple contributions to the body of literature

2- A deeper understanding of the concept of disclosure in independent audit addresses a wide-ranging ethical dilemma that is considered necessary for the goals that the profession seeks to achieve.

3- This study adds to the expanding body of knowledge about Iraq, especially in light of its assessment of the ethical standards and sources of commitment of those working in this field in the country.

4- The results of the study strengthen the "whistleblower theory" by influencing the reporting choices that are made based on the individual characteristics of whistleblowers.

5- According to the researcher's information, this study is considered new and innovative if no research has been conducted with this title in Iraq yet, which is to study the impact of the ethical method of auditors and the source of the obligation to disclose (reporting violations) to independent auditors.

### 2.4 Research population and sample:

The research population was selected from independent auditors in Iraq, while the research sample was randomly selected and amounted to 248 independent auditors.

### 3. Theoretical Framework

Disclosure of violations is generally understood to mean disclosing to people or organizations that have the power to influence such activities that current or former members of the organization have engaged in unlawful, unethical, or illegitimate activities [17]. Sometimes, whistleblowing is acknowledged as an organizational trait apart from proactive, moral, and social conduct [18]. The fear of possible retaliation makes many employees reluctant to report misconduct by their colleagues. Consequently, companies miss out on the chance to make amends, and staff members might tell third parties, which could harm the company's reputation and result in legal fees, among other consequences [19]. Given these situations, whistle-blowing is an essential issue in the management of organizational ethics, an issue related to why employees are willing or unwilling to blow the whistle on violations and how to induce that behavior [20]. The quality of audit work and its oversight have become necessary for those audit companies and offices who want to maintain clients, especially distinguished ones who expect good quality from auditors' work. In addition to adopting policies and procedures to control the quality of audit work, it improves long-term profitability and advances the profession, by improving society's perception of it and the services it provides, so that it reflects positively on all members of the profession. Quality control policies and procedures also contribute to avoiding professional penalties and penalties to which audit companies and offices are exposed. As a result of its commitment to professional auditing standards of which the quality control standard is one of them.

Otherwise, audit companies and offices will be subject to penalties and punishments decided by professional bodies or responsible regulatory authorities, as the main goal of applying audit quality control is to provide the minimum required for the company, audit offices, and their employees to comply with professional standards and legal requirements nationally and internationally. And the approved regulatory standards, in addition to providing a guarantee of the quality of the audit The researcher believes that leadership responsibilities for the quality of audit operations require setting policies and procedures that recognize that quality is one of the basic requirements that senior management or the executive officer of audit companies and offices must strive to bear full responsibility for spreading the culture of quality internally and strengthening it among auditors by adopting all ways and means that enable auditors to Perform the work assigned to them in compliance with recognized professional standards and regulatory requirements, while complying with the requirements for disruptive conduct established by professional and regulatory organizations that are safeguards for dealing with risks and relationships that threaten independence and taking appropriate action thereon. In addition to the technology of the process of accepting a new customer or continuing with the case, it is built on the basis of its ability to implement the process and the qualifications available to its auditors to perform it with high quality in accordance with the requirements of ethical behavior, while clarifying matters related to the customer in terms of financial status, integrity, and reputation in the market, while giving great attention to the human resources it has, whether In terms of the availability of a sufficient number of auditors to perform audit operations or the qualifications and capabilities they possess, with emphasis on monitoring and documenting all requirements of the audit process, which enables obtaining the required quality.

In addition to the technology of the process of accepting a new customer or continuing with the case, it is built on the basis of its ability to implement the process and the qualifications available to its auditors to perform it with high quality in accordance with the requirements of ethical behavior, while clarifying matters related to the customer in terms of financial status, integrity, and reputation in the market, while giving great attention to the human resources it has, whether In terms of the availability of a sufficient number of auditors to perform audit operations or the qualifications and capabilities they possess, with emphasis on monitoring and documenting all requirements of the audit process, which enables obtaining the required quality. In addition to the technology of the process of accepting a new customer or continuing with the case, it is built on the basis of its ability to implement the process and the qualifications available to its auditors to perform it with high quality in accordance with the requirements of ethical behavior, while clarifying matters related to the customer in terms of financial status, integrity, and reputation in the market, while giving great attention to the human resources it has, whether In terms of the availability of a sufficient number of auditors to perform audit operations or the qualifications and capabilities they possess, with emphasis on monitoring and documenting all requirements of the audit process, which enables obtaining the required quality. [39].

Wrongdoing disclosure is one of the most important monitoring tools for preventing financial violations and scandals in organizations. According to the laws, in most organizations, especially audit institutions, this disclosure should be considered an important part of the organizational culture of those institutions [1]. Of course, the importance of warning becomes more apparent when there is collusion between the employer's managers supervisors, and audit partners (source of commitment). As in the case of Enron Company, the audit staff did not warn despite having information about the business activity and financial affairs and obligations of the employer. Employees of audit institutions should have a moral obligation to protect the public interest when faced with legal violations that they observe. The independent auditor promotes the view that corporate managers are the guardians of the public interest. However, some believe that since audit institutions are looking for profit; In practice, auditors are willing to destroy many social interests in order to satisfy the employer [12]. In addition, companies may pressure audit staff in terms of their time budget and force them to adopt illegal audit procedures or write false information on audit worksheets [21]. The empirical findings of the [12] study show that people with a stronger commitment to the company demonstrate a stronger tendency to disclose information than their peers.

Whistle-blowing expresses the fact that organizational wrongdoing involves both stakeholders outside the organization (such as shareholders, creditors, etc.) and stakeholders inside the organization (such as employees, managers, etc.) [22]. Among the important studies that have been done in the field of whistle-blowing, we can refer to the "Model of Discretionary Reporting" [23] and "Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior" (1991), [24] in the field of predicting whistle-blowing motives [22]. Previous researches have tested the effect of a large number of individual characteristics on whistle-blowing. For example, it is possible to point out to [22] age [13]; gender [25]; job position [13]; culture [26]; locus of control [14] and self-efficacy [27]. Other research that has been conducted in the field of whistle-blowing, tests the effect of intuitive variables such as organizational justice [28]; mental state [23]; supervisor policies and support [25]; organizational size [29]; tendency to commit wrongdoing [30]; source of commitment [12] and ethical style [8] have been discussed [22].

In research, [11] presented that the ethical style of judgment reports more about the events in the audit environment than the care type. Hence, the judgment profile supports the key functions of the audit role, supporting objectivity and professional skepticism in accordance with

applicable professional standards. This finding is related to the results of [31] research, which stated that the continuous use of independence in daily auditing requires that employees be objective and impartial in their actions and evaluations. In a study [32], concluded that there are significant relationships between almost all individual characteristics (attitudes, perceived behavioral control, commitment, independence, individual accountability for reporting, personal reporting expenses, and disclosure goals. Additionally, they discovered a strong correlation between disclosure intentions and ethical style. [33] examined how moral reasoning affected the way that work relationships and incentive plans affected disclosure. The study's findings demonstrated that moral reasoning plus positive working relationships greatly increase an employee's propensity to report misconduct. Considering the suggested foundation, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

**The first main hypothesis:** The source of commitment to the organization has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 1: Emotional commitment has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 2: Continuous commitment has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 3: Normative commitment has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

**The second main hypothesis:** The ethical style of auditors has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 1: The honesty and correctness of the auditor has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 2: Competence of the auditor has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

Sub-hypothesis 3: The neutrality of the auditor has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

Therefore, based on the assumptions, the research model is as follows: (Fig.1)

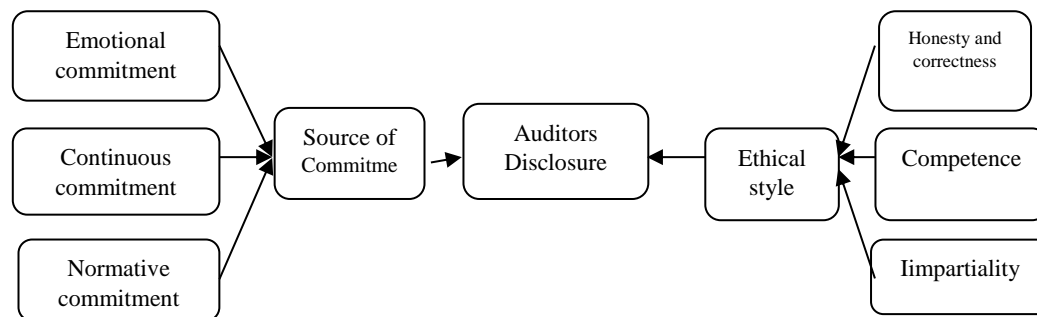


Fig. 1 Research conceptual model

**4. The practical side of research:**

The method of this research is descriptive correlation. This research is considered a type of descriptive research in the branch of survey research. The aim of this study is to look into how independent auditors' disclosures, or whistleblowing, are impacted by their ethical standards and source of commitment, and it describes what exists and describes the existing conditions, considering that the research data was collected with the help of a questionnaire. It is derived and not particularly concerned with the characteristics of people but deals with general statistics, it is considered survey research.

The statistical population of this research is composed of independent auditors. Considering that the number of community members in this research is equal to 645 people, as a result, 248 people have been selected as the research sample. The sampling method used in this research was the simple random method.

In this research, the methods of collecting data are library and field methods. The tool used in the field section was a questionnaire (Table 1).

Table 1. Research questionnaire

Measurement	The object of measurement	References
Auditors Disclosure	I consider it my personal responsibility to report fraudulent practices to higher management.	[11]
	I believe that there should be disciplinary action against fraudulent actions in the organization.	
	Fraudulent actions should be dealt with seriously in the organization.	
	Fraudulent reporting is useful in controlling unethical behavior in the organization.	
	Disclosure of fraudulent practices increases public interest.	
	Reporting fraudulent practices in the workplace is a way for employees to do their duty.	
	Disclosure of fraudulent practices is an ethical task.	
	Disclosure helps prevent serious damage to the audit firm.	
	Disclosure helps reduce personal costs for employees.	
	Disclosure increases the public's interest.	
Disclosure reduces the damage caused by fraudulent practices.		
Ethical style	The auditor must follow the rules and regulations without supervision or control.	[11]

	Auditors increase or decrease the facts according to the working conditions.	
	The auditor does not accept all the facts, even if they are not correct.	
	The auditor should not change his mental attitude because of the threat of others.	
	The auditor's judgment is based on the cases that he has examined and dealt with.	
	The auditor must have high self-confidence.	
	The auditor must solve the audit problems carefully.	
	The auditor must consider the interests of the government in the audit.	
	The auditor does not consider the conditions of a person or an organization that are against the laws and regulations.	
	Auditors should not be influenced by people's judgments or criticism.	
	After completing the audit, the auditor provides solutions to correct and improve the conditions.	
	The auditor must be interested in his work.	
	The auditor acts according to the principles and rules.	
	The auditor provides solutions and methods according to the laws and regulations.	
	Audit plans should be prepared separately from management plans.	
	The choice of audit methods in the audit program should be free of management interference.	
	The instructions related to the procedure in the audit program should be free of any interference from others.	
	The auditor must have knowledge of the business environment of the entrepreneur.	
	The management should cooperate with the auditor in the implementation of the audit and audit tests.	
	The audit should be away from personal interests and other interests of individuals.	
	In the audit report, all the facts must be disclosed so that they are not influenced by other people.	
	The audit report includes the auditor's opinion prepared with his interpretation and judgment.	
	The confirmations received from third parties for audit tests affect the audit report.	
	The auditor must be independent at all stages of the audit.	
	The auditor must maintain correctness and honesty in his profession in all stages of the audit.	
	In order to evaluate the audit methods, the auditor needs to review the management.	
	The auditor reports the results of the audits away from the pressures and demands of certain individuals.	
	In his audits, the auditor should not interact or cooperate with the entities under investigation.	
	The auditor should not favor anyone in his audits.	
	The auditor must be reliable.	
	The auditor should not be influenced by the words of others and pay attention to them.	
	The purpose of the auditor's audit should be to discover errors and mistakes.	
	The auditor maintains his policies and rules during the audit.	
	The auditor must use a logical and reasoning mind in conducting the audit.	
Source of commitment	I will be very happy to spend the rest of my service period in this organization.	[11]
	I enjoy talking about my workplace organization with people outside the organization.	
	I really feel that the problems of this organization are my own problems.	
	I think I simply cannot get attached to another organization as much as I am interested in this one.	
	I feel like a member of the family in my workplace.	
	I have a lot of emotional interest in this organization.	
	This organization means a lot to me personally.	
	I feel a great sense of belonging to my workplace organization.	
	I fear the consequences of leaving my current job without access to another one.	
	It is difficult for me to leave work now.	
	If I decide to leave my work organization now, my life will be severely disrupted.	
	It may be very costly and harmful for me to leave the organization now.	
	Currently, staying with my workplace is as much a matter of necessity as it is of personal desire.	
	I feel that the chances of finding another job are so low that I would not consider leaving this organization.	
	One of the serious consequences of leaving this organization is the lack of other available jobs.	
	One of the main reasons for continuing to work in this organization is to leave it; It requires considerable self-sacrifice. because it is possible that the other organization has all the benefits that exist here; not provide	

	I think nowadays people change their organization or workplace too much.	
	I do not believe that a person should always remain loyal to his workplace.	
	In my opinion, changing the organization of the workplace is not immoral at all.	
	One of the main reasons I continue to work with this organization is that I believe loyalty is important. Therefore, I consider myself obliged to remain in this organization.	
	If I am offered a better job elsewhere, I consider it appropriate to leave my workplace.	
	I was taught to believe in the moral value of staying loyal to an organization.	
	A time when people stayed in one organization for most of their working life; The situation was better.	
	It is no longer reasonable for a person to want to be known as a propagandist of the organization.	

In order to measure the validity of the questionnaire, content validity and face validity were used, additionally, the reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. In table 2 shows the reliability of the initial sample of 30 questionnaires.

Table 2. Reliability of the prototype

Research variables	Reliability (n=30)
Disclosure of auditors	0/888
Ethical style	0/915
Source of commitment	0/848

All the data collected from the questionnaires were categorized and will be entered into the Excel software, then the data analysis will be done using Spss or PLS software and the following statistical methods and tests (descriptive and inferential) will be taken. Descriptive statistics will be used to calculate mean, standard deviation, and frequency tables, and structural equation tests will be used in PLS software to test the hypotheses of this research.

**5. Research Findings**

**5.1. Demographic characteristics of the respondents**

The analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents is shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Demographic findings

Demographic characteristics	Levels	Percentage	Redundancy
Education level	Diploma and below	2/8	7
	Associate Degree	15/3	38
	Bachelor's degree	61/7	153
	Master's degree	11/3	28
	P.H. D	8/9	22
Age	Less than 30 years	5/2	13
	30 to 40 years	39/9	99
	40 to 50 years	50/4	125
	More than 50 years	24/2	11
Gender	Female	27/4	68
	Man	72/6	180
Years of service	Less than 5 years	35/1	87
	5 to 10 years	27/8	69
	10 to 15 years	16/1	40
	More than 15 years	21	52

As shown in Table (3), the highest percentage of male respondents are 40 to 50 years old, with a bachelor's education level and less than 5 years of service experience.

**5.2. Descriptive Statistics Of Research Variables**

The results of descriptive statistics of research variables are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of research variables

Scale	Standard deviation	Mean
Source of commitment	0/59	3/92
Ethical style	0/58	3/92
Disclosure of auditors	0/69	3/93

The mean, which represents the distribution's equilibrium point and center of gravity and is a useful indicator for demonstrating the centrality of the data, is the primary centrality index. For example, the average value among the main variables for the auditors' disclosure variable is equal to 3.93, which shows that most of the data are concentrated around this point.

Dispersion parameters are, in general, a way to quantify how dispersed something is relative to the average or how dispersed it is from one another. The standard deviation is one of the key dispersion metrics. Among the main variables, disclosure of auditors has the highest amount of dispersion.

**5.3. Reliability (Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability coefficient) and validity test (convergent and divergent)**

Composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha coefficient are used to ensure questionnaire compatibility. The reliability of the questionnaire is deemed acceptable if both the Cronbach's alpha coefficient and the combined reliability value obtained exceed 0.7.

Table 5. Composite reliability table, Cronbach's alpha and convergent validity

	Convergent validity (AVE)	Composite reliability	Cronbach's alpha
Disclosure of auditors	0/574	0/908	0/888
Ethical style	0/855	0/946	0/915
Impartiality	0/588	0/834	0/773
Competence	0/505	0/889	0/863
Honesty and correctness	0/542	0/879	0/851
Source of commitment	0/767	0/908	0/848
Normative	0/506	0/845	0/790
Continuous commitment	0/542	0/864	0/820
Emotional commitment	0/526	0/898	0/869

Table (5) shows that all variables have values for composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha that are greater than 0.7 and 0.5, respectively, for convergent validity, therefore the reliability of the model is in a favourable condition.

Table 6. Fornell Larcker values of research components

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Disclosure of auditors	0/689								
2	impartiality	0/624	0/623							
3	Emotional commitment	0/632	0/571	0/725						
4	Continuous commitment	0/639	0/536	0/660	0/665					
5	Normative	0/627	0/616	0/606	0/610	0/637				
6	Ethical style	0/653	0/565	0/627	0/662	0/596	0/924			
7	Competence	0/627	0/594	0/631	0/635	0/600	0/623	0/636		
8	Honesty and correctness	0/652	0/594	0/716	0/645	0/551	0/719	0/615	0/785	
9	source of commitment	0/635	0/604	0/656	0/602	0/577	0/866	0/620	0/577	0/876

According to the values obtained in Tables (6), it can be seen that the root values of AVE on the main diameter of the matrix are higher than the underlying values of each cell, and therefore the validity model has a relatively acceptable variance.

**5.4. Fit the conceptual model of the research**

The value of goodness of fit index (GOF) for the main model is equal to 0.537 and more than 0.4, as a result, according to table (7), the overall fit of the models is confirmed.

Table 7. GOF Validity Index (General Research Model)

Variable name	Criterion R <sup>2</sup>	Common values	GOF
Disclosure of auditors	0/701	0/329	0/537
impartiality	0/844	0/346	
Emotional commitment	0/733	0/277	
Continuous commitment	0/814	0/294	
Normative commitment	0/768	0/731	
Competence	0/855	0/255	
Honesty and correctness	0/882	0/294	

5.5. Research model test

The output results of SmartPLS software for estimating the causal model of the research are shown in Fig. 2.

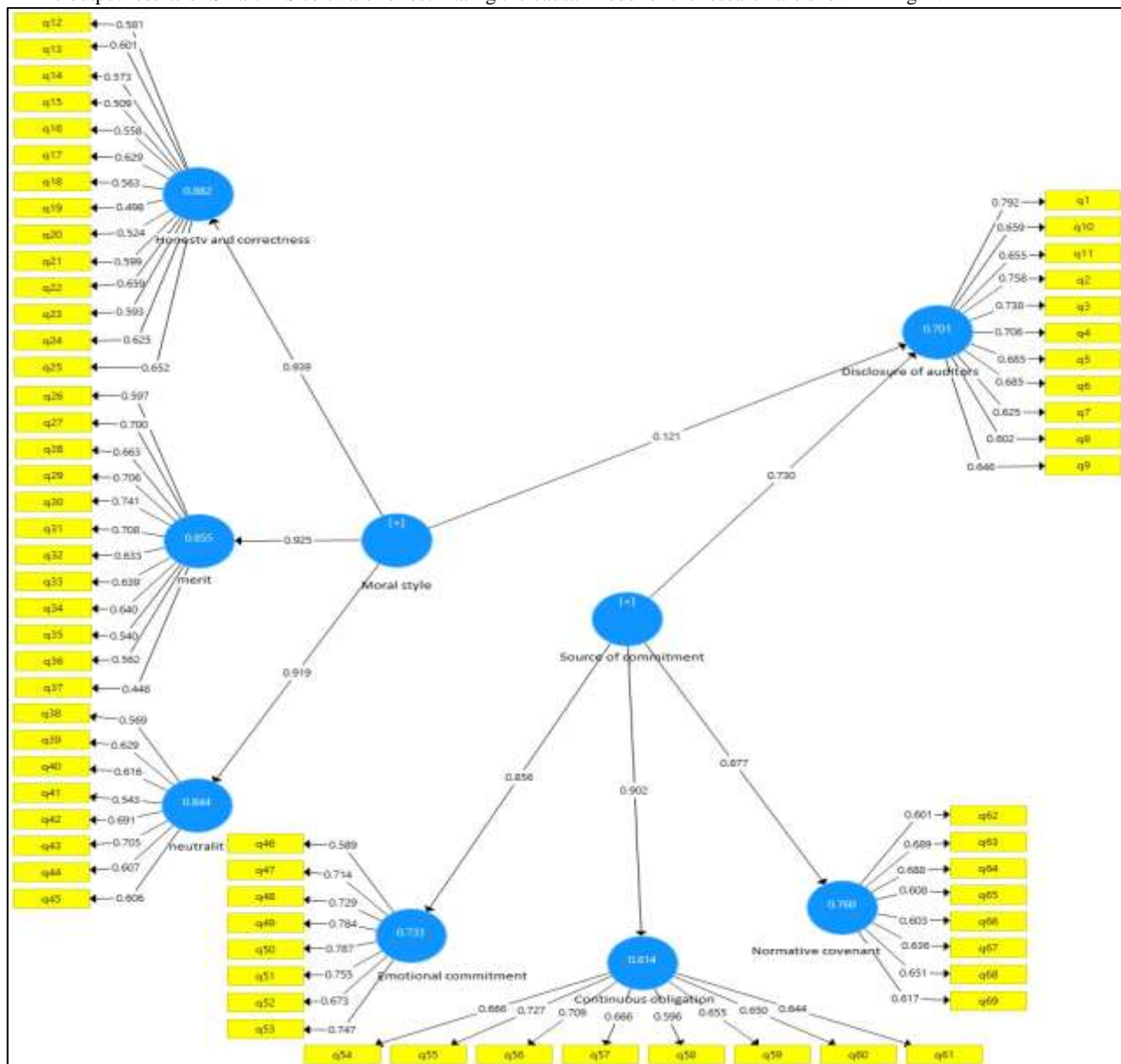


Fig. 2. Coefficients of factor loadings of research components

As can be seen in figure (2), the coefficients of factor loadings are higher than 0.3, so the measurement model has acceptable reliability.



5.6. The results of research hypotheses

Table 8. The result of the first main hypothesis

predictor variable	source of commitment	Statistical index				
Criterion variable	Disclosure of independent auditors	Fixed coefficient	The square of the impact factor	T	Significance level	Result
		0/730	0/533	8/020	0/001	Confirmation

The findings of table (8) show that the correlation coefficient between the source of commitment on auditors' disclosure is significant. That is, the source of commitment to the disclosure of auditors ( $\beta=0.730$ ) is significant. Based on the coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ), 53.3% of the variance of the commitment source was shared with the auditors' disclosure. Therefore, the first main hypothesis that the source of commitment to the organization has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors is confirmed.

Table 9. The result of the sub-hypotheses of the first main hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statistical index			
	Significance level	The square of the impact factor	Fixed coefficient	Result
Emotional commitment → Disclosure of independent auditors	0/001	0/682	0/826	Confirmation
Continuous commitment → Disclosure of independent auditors	0/001	0/536	0/732	Confirmation
Normative commitment → Disclosure of independent auditors	0/001	0/386	0/621	Confirmation

The findings of table (9) show that all sub-hypotheses of the first main hypothesis were confirmed.

Table 10. The result of the second main hypothesis

predictor variable	Auditors' Ethical style	Statistical index				
Criterion variable	Disclosure of independent auditors	Fixed coefficient	The square of the impact factor	T	Significance level	Result
		0/121	0/015	1/991	0/049	Confirmation

The findings of table (10) show that the correlation coefficient between auditors' ethical style and auditors' disclosure is significant. That is, auditors' ethical style is significant on auditors' disclosure ( $\beta=0.121$ ). Based on the coefficient of determination, 1.5% of the variance of auditors' ethical style was shared with auditors' disclosure. Therefore, the second main hypothesis that auditors' ethical style has a positive effect on independent auditors' disclosure (whistle-blowing) is confirmed.

Table 11. The result of the sub-hypotheses of the second main hypothesis

Hypothesis	Statistical index			
	Significance level	The square of the impact factor	Fixed coefficient	Result
Honesty and correctness → Disclosure of independent auditors	0/001	0/542	0/736	Confirmation
Competence of the auditor → Disclosure of independent auditors	0/001	0/523	0/723	Confirmation
The impartiality of the auditor → Disclosure of independent auditors	0/001	0/387	0/622	Confirmation

The findings of table (11) show that all sub-hypotheses of the second main hypothesis were confirmed.

The results of the research hypotheses test showed that the source of commitment to the organization (emotional commitment, continuous commitment and normative commitment) has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors. Also, the results showed that auditors' ethical style (honesty and correctness of the auditor, competence of the auditor and impartiality of the auditor) has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

The manner of professional conduct requires that auditors complete their work completely and flawlessly and report any errors that actually happened or are suspected, but the recent financial scandals have questioned the validity of the professional regulations in preventing such scandals in order to protect public interests. Although the guidelines of professional audit conduct have considered the need for united and trustworthy audit members to report wrongdoing, the recent scandals of large companies show the reliability of these guidelines in preventing this scandal and protecting the public interests of society has been questioned. This great failure of audit institutions in fair reporting and protection of public interests can be caused by the reluctance of their auditors to report violations and illegal actions. The current research seeks to clarify this issue, does the source of commitment and ethical style of auditors influence the disclosure (whistle-blowing) of independent auditors? Six sub-hypotheses and two main hypotheses have been developed for this study to examine this relationship.

One of the research's primary hypotheses was that independent auditors' disclosures, or whistleblowing, are positively impacted by their level of commitment to the organization. The first major hypothesis of the study is validated by the results, which show that the degree of commitment that independent auditors have to the organization has a positive influence on the disclosures they make, or whistleblowing. This study's results are in line with those of [11, 34]].

- The research's first sub-hypothesis states that emotional commitment influences independent auditors' disclosure, or whistleblowing, in a positive way. The results validate the first sub-hypothesis of the study, according to which emotional commitment enhanced the disclosures—also known as whistleblowing—made by independent auditors. The results of this study are in line with those of [11, 34].
- The second sub-hypothesis of the research states that continuous commitment improves independent auditors' disclosure, also known as whistleblowing. The study's second sub-hypothesis is supported by the results, which demonstrated that continuous commitment positively affects independent, auditors' disclosures, or whistleblowing. The investigation's findings are in line with [11, 34].

The research's second main hypothesis was that independent auditors' disclosures, or whistleblowing, are positively impacted by auditors' ethical standards. The second main hypothesis of the research is confirmed by the results, which demonstrated that the ethical style of auditors has a positive effect on the disclosure (whistleblowing) of independent auditors. The findings of this study are consistent with those of [11, 35–37].

## 6. Conclusions and recommendations:

### Conclusions:

In light of the theoretical and practical study, the following results were reached:

- 1- The source of commitment to the organization - emotional commitment, ongoing commitment, and normative commitment - has a positive impact on disclosure of violations to independent auditors.
- 2- The ethical style of the auditors (the auditor's honesty and integrity, the auditor's competence and impartiality) has a positive impact on the disclosure of whistleblowing by independent auditors.

### Recommendations:

Based on the results mentioned, some suggestions can be made:

- 1- The researcher suggests that the supervisory and monitoring bodies of the auditing profession hold training courses and workshops on auditing standards and professional work.
- 2- Improve the evaluation of control activities and update them periodically to improve the quality of auditing.
- 3- Do more work on the controversial aspects of auditing, such as honesty, integrity, efficiency, and impartiality in order to report violations.
- 4- The necessity of providing modern systems and techniques to develop the auditor's work to increase the efficiency of work by discovering violations according to modern methods.

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