



Effect of Ethical Ideology on Auditors' Professional Judgment

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Abstract

Purpose: Auditor's professional judgment is among the main determinants of audit quality, which can be influenced by various factors. This study investigated the effect of auditors' ethical ideology on their professional judgment and professional commitment and also the impact of auditors' professional commitment on their professional judgment.

Design/Methodology/Approach: The research variables were analyzed using the data collected by distributing 360 questionnaires among auditors in 2022, out of which 270 eligible completed questionnaires were retrieved. The collected data were analyzed using the structural equation modeling (SEM) 1. Methodology in the LISREL software.

Findings: This data analysis showed that auditors' ethical ideology had no direct significant effect on their professional judgment, but it significantly affects professional judgment indirectly through professional commitment.

Originality/value: According to the authors, this study, according to the approach of moral ideology presented in the present article, no similar research has been found in Iran. This study provides empirical support from a theoretical perspective on the impact of professional commitment on the auditor's ethical ideology. The results may be of interest to auditors and managers seeking the quality of financial reporting.

Paper type: Research paper

Keywords: professional judgment, ethical ideology, professional commitment

1.Introduction

Given the impact of auditor's judgment on their decision-making and opinions, it is a matter of great importance for the users of audit reports. The importance of sound professional judgment is well acknowledged within the profession. For example, in the introduction of Handbook of International Quality Control, Auditing, Review, Other Assurance, and Related Services Pronouncements, it is stated that "the nature of the international (auditing and accounting) standards requires the professional accountant to exercise professional judgment in applying them". Auditors' judgment also plays a key role in their assessment of risk levels and whether they are significant or acceptable, which can greatly impact the quality of audit reviews. Indeed, professional behavior and ethics are of great importance for the accounting profession, as the services offered by auditors and accountants are meaningless unless they are utterly trusted by users. Trust in these services is a

function of trust in people who provide them, which itself is a function of professional integrity and adherence to ethical principles (Birjandi et al., 2019). Since audit judgments are often made in a climate of uncertainty and involve a degree of risk, the auditor's ability to manage conflicts tends to

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have a great impact on the outcome of these judgments. Thus, audit firms should invest in improving the professional knowledge and skills of their staff so as to enhance the quality of their professional judgments and decisions (Birjandi et al., 2019). In today's globalized economy, the use of integrated accounting and auditing standards is essential for creating efficient financial markets, improving resource allocation, and reducing transaction costs. Therefore, the international community should strive to develop and adopt consistent accounting and auditing standards. However, because of ethnic diversity, countries in different parts of the world may have different interpretations of accounting standards and this poses some challenges for the convergence of standards (Akbarpour et al., 2019). Considering the knowledge-based nature of the auditing profession and the constant conflict between auditors and individuals or entities that are being audited or use audit reports, this profession has used two strategies of developing general guidelines and endorsing reliance on individual judgment (principles-based approach) or developing complex sets of specific accounting standards (rules-based approach) to respond to externally imposed requirements (babajani and Tohidi Nejad, 2020). Considering the stressful work of certified public accountants and the importance of sound ethical judgment in this profession, it is necessary to adopt appropriate programs for enhancing the ethical ideology of these individuals (Baghoomian and Rajabdoory, 2020).

2. Literature review, theoretical background, and hypotheses

Professional judgment is the essence of auditing. In order to maintain their professional credibility, auditors need to maintain the quality of their audit reports, which cannot be done without sound professional judgment. Adherence to ethical principles and a good understanding of the factors that may influence it are also essential for the auditing profession, as these are basic requirements for gaining the trust of users of auditing services (bani et al., 2020). People with different personality traits may reach different decisions or judgments on the same subject. Auditors' judgment can also be influenced by their social characteristics, as their involvement with different social and political groups may have an impact on their mentality and judgment. Professional judgment is a general obligation for the auditing profession, meaning that all auditors are required to exercise professional judgment in applying auditing standards at all stages of audit planning and execution. It is also important for the determination of risk levels and their significance, which affect the quality of audit reports. In some studies, the gender of the auditor has been the most important determinant of the reporting of fraud and misconduct, which suggests that gender is an important factor for audit judgments and decisions. Thus, given the importance of ethical guidelines in the auditing profession, women should be more involved in the development of these guidelines, and auditing policymakers should make this possible(Daryaee et al., 2020b). At present, the potential impacts of auditors' personality traits and demographic and social characteristics on their professional judgment have not been discussed in any standard guideline and thus remain a matter of guesswork requiring further attention. Complex and multifaceted in nature, this professional judgment is influenced not only by the personal characteristics of auditors but also by the characteristics of the company, stakeholders, legal environment, and regulations (Shahbazi and Mehrani, 2020). The audit business itself also faces some ethical dilemmas such as the pressure to underreport audit time, i.e. the time it takes for audit to finish, which is a competitive advantage in this business. Thus, CEOs of audit





firms should measure the professional commitment and job satisfaction of their employees and consistently monitor the work of those with lower job satisfaction and commitment while also devising a solution to alleviate the situation (Mahdavi and Zamani, 2019). With the introduction of psychology to the field of accounting and auditing, various theories and schools of psychology have been used to explain the behavior of people in accounting and audit firms according to their personality and behavioral characteristics and their role within their employer organization. Therefore, it might also be beneficial to examine the effect of auditors' ethical ideology as a personal characteristic on their professional judgment using Forsyth's psychological theories and ethical classification.

The main purpose of independent auditors is to provide a professional opinion on the credibility and validity of the information provided. For this purpose, auditors are required to plan and implement their audits within the framework of auditing standards, which is recognized as the measure of the quality of their work, and are also required to observe professional ethics. These requirements can be summarized as the need to maintain professional commitment. The credibility and trustworthiness of the auditing profession depend on the intellectual and practical adherence of the members of this profession to its behavioral and ethical criteria. A better understanding of auditors' ethical ideology and its impact on their judgments and decisions can help facilitate the efforts to improve auditors' ethical and professional behavior. According to the above, auditors' ethical ideology could be a determinant of their professional commitment and judgment, and also auditors' professional commitment could be a determinant of their professional judgment. Therefore, in this study, we tried to determine whether auditors' ethical ideology affects their professional commitment and professional judgment and whether auditors' professional commitment affects their judgment, and identify the mechanisms involved in these effects in Iran.

2.1. Background and hypotheses

In a study by Moshashaei et al. (2018) titled "The Effect of Auditors' Individual Differences on Their Professional Commitment: The Mediation Effect of Ethical Climate", using the social cognitive theory as the reference, these researchers defined two criteria for auditors' individual differences: 1- internal locus of control and 2- self-efficacy. The results of this study showed that auditors' individual differences (internal locus of control and self-efficacy) have a significant positive effect on their professional commitment and that ethical climate mediates the relationship between auditors' individual differences and their professional commitment.

In another study, Herda and Lavelle (2015) investigated the effect of client identification and client commitment on audit objectivity. The results of this study showed that client identification damages the audit's objectivity. Conversely, client commitment improves the objectivity of audits, which means auditors' judgment can be enhanced by the methods that enhance client commitment.

In a study titled "The Effects of Client Identity Strength and Professional Identity Salience on Auditor Judgments", Bauer (2015) reported that professional identity salience mediates the relationship between client identity strength and auditor agreement with the client. This study also reported that professional identity salience can be easily increased, and auditors' judgment can be improved by further attention to professional identity salience.

Nafezi and Lashgari (2015) investigated the relationship of professional and organizational commitment with audit quality in accredited audit firms of the Tehran stock exchange. In this study,





organizational commitment was measured with three indicators of affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment, and professional commitment was measured with two indicators of absenteeism and job performance. The results of this study showed that audit quality has a significant direct relationship with affective commitment and continuance commitment, an inverse relationship with absenteeism, and a direct relationship with job performance.

In a study by Mousavi Shiri et al. (2015) titled "Investigating the Relationship of Professional Commitment and Organizational Commitment of Auditors with Inefficient Auditing Behavior", these researchers reported a significant relationship between inefficient auditing behavior and the component of professional commitment, namely affective commitment, normative commitment and continuance commitment, and also between inefficient auditing behavior and the component of organizational commitment, namely absenteeism and organizational performance.

Malekian et al. (2015) examined the relationship of professional commitment and ethical beliefs with the earnings management behavior among CFOs of companies listed on the Tehran Stock Exchange. These researchers observed a tangible relationship between managers' ethical beliefs and their decision-making and found that people with higher professional commitment were less likely to engage in earnings management. They also observed a relationship between managers' personal interest and their idealism, but not with their relativism and professional commitment. Based on these findings, the following hypotheses can be suggested:

H1. Idealism has a significant effect on auditors' professional commitment.

H2. Relativism has a significant effect on auditors' professional commitment.

In a study by Hakkak et al. (2017) titled "The Effect of Ethical Climate and Ethical Ideology on Developing Moral Judgment of Management Student", they investigated the mediating role of ethical ideology including idealism and relativism in the lagged effect of ethical climate on moral judgment. The findings of this study showed that in addition to a direct positive effect on moral judgment, ethical climate has an indirect positive effect on moral judgment through idealism, but not through relativism. They also found that ethical climate has a positive effect on idealism and a negative effect on relativism, which themselves have a positive and negative effect on moral judgment, respectively.

Heyrani et al. (2017) investigated the impact of professionalism on auditors' professional judgment. The results of this study showed that professionalism had a significant inverse effect on auditors' professional judgment, meaning that as auditors' professionalism increased, the level of professional judgment decreased. The results also showed that professional judgment affects the conflict between auditor and management and as professional judgment increases, so does the auditor-management conflict. But professional judgment is not a mediator for the impact of professionalism on the auditor-management conflict.

Setiawan and Iswari (2016)also studied the effects of professionalism on auditors' judgment. This study provided strong evidence that auditors' personality affects their judgment, in the sense that auditors with type-A personality tend to have better professional judgment. The results of this study also showed that job perception does significantly affect auditors' judgment.





In a study by (Little, 2016), they reviewed and expanded the evidence regarding the effect of auditor's gender and client's gender on auditors' judgment and also the effect of auditors' independence on their judgment. Ultimately, these researchers concluded that while previous studies provide inconclusive findings, client's gender tends to have a significant effect on the auditor's judgment, whereas auditor's gender has no such effect. Their findings also showed that auditors' independence does not adversely affect their judgment.

In a study by Yang et al. (2018) on the effect of emotional intelligence on auditor's judgment, they tried to determine whether emotional intelligence could be a key factor in auditor's emotions, ethics, and response to job pressures and how it may influence the said response and auditor's judgment. For this purpose, they studied the moderating effect of emotional intelligence on a third-person assessment of auditor's behaviors under internal and external pressures. The results of this study showed that the moderating influence of emotional intelligence can effectively reduce auditors' inefficiency and improve the quality of audits. Their analysis also showed that emotional intelligence is a core mechanism of the moderation of the effects of various types of pressure on auditors' judgment.

From these findings, the following hypotheses can be inferred:

H3. Idealism has a significant effect on auditors' professional judgment.

H4. Relativism has a significant effect on auditors' professional judgment.

In a study by Henrizi et al. (2021) on the moderating effects of auditors' judgment in Switzerland, they provided background on the heuristics and biases in audit decision-making in order to raise auditors' awareness about the moderating effects that may influence their professional judgment. The findings of this study provided evidence on the existence of moderating heuristics in auditors' judgments. They also determined the effect of audit firm size (four large firms vs. other firms), audit analysis, and auditor's knowledge of behavioral factors in relation to moderating factors on auditor's judgment.

In a study titled "Ethical Judgment and Ethical Ideology of Accounting Professionals and Accounting Students", Ismail (2017) investigated the differences between the ethical ideologies of accountants and accounting students and the differences between the ethical judgments of these two groups in general and in legal settings. The findings of this study showed that there is a significant difference between students' idealistic ethical ideology and that of accountants. The results also showed a significant difference between the ethical judgments of the two groups.

Based on these findings, the following hypothesis can be raised:

H5. Professional commitment has a significant effect on auditors' professional judgment.

3. Methodology and measurements

This study falls in the category of descriptive surveys in terms of methodology and was an applied research in nature. The theoretical framework and background were established inductively, and data collection for testing hypotheses was performed by questionnaire. Since this study was conducted in a real environment, i.e. audit firms that are members of the Iranian Association of Certified Public Accountants and Iran Auditing Organization, it classifies as field research. Part of the data constituting the basis of the research was collected by the library method from books, journals, articles, and magazines, and another part was collected by the field method with a questionnaire. Data collection procedures were note-taking from the contents of dissertations and books related





to the subject, and the online search of dissertations and scientific articles published in relation to the subject.

The target population of the study was the auditors working in the audit firms that are members of the Iranian Association of Certified Public Accountants or Iran Auditing Organization. Because of its diverse ethnicities, Iran is an ideal place for testing the impact of cultural diversity and motivational values of accountants. Since there are no official statistics on the number of auditors working in audit firms and the Iran Auditing Organization, the size of the statistical population was assumed to be unknown.

Since data analysis was performed using the structural equation modeling (SEM) methodology, which is very similar to multivariate regression in some aspects, the sample size was determined with the method used for multivariate regression.

Ultimately, 360 questionnaires were randomly distributed among the auditors of the statistical population. Out of 276 returned questionnaires, the data of 270 questionnaires that were eligible were analyzed.

3.1. Research model

The model developed in this study is illustrated below.



3.2. Variable definition and calculation

In this study, the dependent variable was "professional judgment", the independent variable was "ethical ideology", gender, job position, and employment sector were considered as control variables, and "professional commitment" was considered to be a mediating variable.

Professional judgment was measured by a questionnaire based on the auditor's assessment of the audit risk and risk significance. For this purpose, the auditor was given some information about the company and its general characteristics and was asked to assess the risk of misstatement and judge whether the risk is significant.

Ethical ideology and the level of idealism and relativism were assessed using Forsyth's Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ). This questionnaire consists of two sections, one for idealism and the other for relativism, and has been used in numerous studies. The mediator variable "professional commitment" was measured by the questionnaire of Zettler, Feriedrich, and Ehilbig (2010).

Control variables were measured in a section of the questionnaire that was dedicated to general questions as described below:

Gender: a nominal variable that is either 0 or 1, denoting male and female gender respectively.





Job position: an interval variable taking values from 1 to 5, with 1 denoting auditor and senior auditor, 2 denoting supervisor, 3 denoting senior supervisor, 4 denoting manager, and 5 denoting partner.

Employment sector: a variable taking values 1, 2, or 3, with 1 denoting employment in private audit firms, 2 denoting employment in public audit firms, 3 denoting employment in the government.

Level of education: an interval variable taking values from 1 to 4, with 1 denoting associate's or lower degree, 2 denoting bachelor's degree, 3 denoting master's degree, and 4 denoting doctorate.

3.3. Research tools

Ethics position questionnaire

Developed by Forsyth in 1980, Ethics Position Questionnaire (EPQ) consists of 20 items in two subscales of idealism (10 questions) and relativism (10 questions) that measure the person's idealistic and relativistic views towards ethics. This questionnaire is scored on a 9-point Likert scale with the answers "strongly disagree", "disagree", "almost disagree", "slightly disagree", "no opinion", "slightly agree", "almost agree", "agree and "strongly agree" given scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, respectively. In the first part of the questionnaire used in this study, questions 1 to 10 were dedicated to the measurement of idealism, and questions 11 to 20 were dedicated to the evaluation of relativism.

Professional commitment questionnaire

Developed by Clikeman and Henning (2000), the Professional Commitment Questionnaire consists of 15 items that measure the professional commitment of employees. This questionnaire is scored on a 5-point Likert scale with the answers "strongly disagree", "somewhat disagree", "neither agree nor disagree", "somewhat agree", and "strongly agree" given scores of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. In the second part of the questionnaire used in this study, questions 1 to 15 were dedicated to this topic.

Professional judgment questionnaire

Professional judgment was measured by a questionnaire based on the auditor's assessment of the audit risk and risk significance. For this purpose, the auditor was given some information about the company and its general characteristics and was asked to assess the risk of misstatement and judge whether the risk is significant. In the questionnaire of this study, 22 questions were used for this assessment. In the fourth part of the questionnaire, four cases were described to the respondent and then multiple questions were asked about the risk and its significance in each case.

4. Research findings

4.1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

The study used the data collected from 270 completed questionnaires to test its hypotheses. Demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of gender, age, education level, job position, work experience, and employment sector, are presented in the following statistical tables and graphs.

Frequency distribution of respondents by gender

In terms of gender, respondents were divided into three groups. The frequency distribution of respondents by gender is given in Table 1.





Table 1. Distribution of respondents by gender

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Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	203	75%
Female	63	24%
Not answered	4	1%
Total	270	100%

Frequency distribution of respondents by age

Respondents were divided into five groups based on age. The frequency distribution of respondents by age is provided in Table 2.

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 years	84	31%
30 to 40 years	133	49%
40 to 50 years	27	10%
Over 50 years	16	6%
Not answered	10	4%
Total	270	100%

Table 2. Distribution of respondents by age

Frequency distribution of respondents by education level

In terms of education level, respondents were divided into five groups. The frequency distribution of respondents by education level is presented in the following table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by education level

	-	-
Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's degree	110	41%
Master's degree	135	50%
Ph.D. student	20	7%
Ph.D.	3	1%
Not answered	2	1%
Total	270	100%

Frequency distribution of respondents by work experience

Respondents were divided into five groups in terms of work experience in the field of accounting and also work experience in other fields. The frequency distribution of respondents by work experience is shown in Tables 4 and 5.

Table 4. Distribution of respondents by work experience in the field of accounting

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	98	36%
Between 5 and 10 years	82	30%
Between 10 and 15 years	40	15%
Between 15 and 20 years	19	7%
Over 20 years	31	11%
Total	270	100%

Table 5. Distribution of respondents by work experience in fields other than accounting

Work experience	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 5 years	139	51%
Between 5 and 10 years	24	9%
Between 10 and 15 years	6	2%
Between 15 and 20 years	7	3%
Over 20 years	94	35%
Total	270	100%





Frequency distribution of respondents by job position

Respondents were divided into six groups in terms of job position. The frequency distribution of respondents by job position is presented in the following table 6.

1	ble 6. Distribution of respondents by job positio		
	Job position	Frequency	Percentage
	Auditor/Senior Auditor	169	63%
	Supervisor	42	16%
	Senior Supervisor	12	4%
	Manager	22	8%
	Partner	19	7%
	Not answered	6	2%
	Total	270	100%

Table 6. Distribution of respondents by job position

Frequency distribution of respondents by the rating of employer firm

Respondents were divided into four groups in terms of the rating of their employer. Table 7 show the frequency distribution of respondents in this respect.

Table 7. Distribution of respondents by the rating of employer firm

Rating of employer firm	Frequency	Percentage
А	227	85%
В	30	11%
No rating	4	1%
Not answered	9	3%
Total	270	100%

Frequency distribution of respondents by employment sector

Respondents were divided into four groups in terms of the employment sector. The frequency distribution of respondents by employment sector is presented in the following table 8.

Table 8. Distribution of respondents by employment sector

Employment sector	Frequency	Percentage
Private sector	223	87%
Government	20	7%
Public sector	11	4%
Not answered	6	2%
Total	270	100%





4.2. Inferential analysis

In the following, first, the abbreviations used for latent and observed variables are given in Table 9 and then the results obtained from the software are presented.

Table 9. Abbreviation	s used for	model	variables
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Abbreviation	Variable
IDE	Idealism
REL	Relativism
PCM	Professional commitment
PJD	Professional judgment

The structural equation modeling (SEM) method was used to test the research hypotheses. The results of SEM for the test of research hypotheses are presented in Figures 1 and 2.



Figure 1. Results of the test of research hypotheses (standard values)

Figure 2. Results of the test of research hypotheses (significance values)







As shown in Figures 4-5 and 4-6, idealism has a positive effect (0.38) on professional commitment. In other words, with each unit change in idealism, professional commitment changes by 0.38 units in the same direction. This effect is statistically significant as T-statistic is 3.57, which is greater than 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis that idealism affects professional commitment cannot be rejected. The results also show that relativism has a negative effect (-0.27) on professional commitment, which means with each unit change in relativism, professional commitment changes by 0.27 units in the opposite direction. This effect is also statistically significant because T-statistic (-0.07) is less than -1.96. Thus, the hypothesis that relativism affects professional commitment cannot be rejected.

As the figures show, idealism has a positive effect (0.01) on professional judgment. In other words, with each unit change in idealism, professional judgment changes by 0.01 units in the same direction. But this effect is not statistically significant because T-statistic is 0.10, which is less than 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis that idealism affects professional judgment is rejected.

Relativism also has a positive effect (0.11) on professional judgment, meaning that with each unit change in relativism, professional judgment changes by 0.11 units in the same direction. But this effect is also statistically insignificant because T-statistic (1.69) is less than 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis that relativism affects professional judgment is also rejected.

The results also show that professional commitment has a positive effect (0.69) on professional judgment. In other words, with each unit change in professional commitment, professional judgment changes by 0.69 units in the same direction. This effect is statistically significant because T-statistic (6.75) is greater than 1.96. Therefore, the hypothesis that professional commitment affects professional judgment cannot be rejected.

5. Conclusion

Effect of auditors' ethical ideology on their professional commitment

Professional commitment of an auditor is considered as a mediating variable, and the effect of moral ideology, including relativism and idealism, on it has been investigated. In definitions, idealism means pursuing true principles or goals regarding how to reach a desirable outcome. Relativism is defined as the relative influence of individual culture and the way of thinking and moral reasoning on a person's ethical behavior. Professional commitment was expressed as considering oneself obligated to do something. The results indicate that idealism has a positive effect on professional commitment. In other words, considering professional ideals, the focus is on maximizing ethical desirability in the profession. Given the social cognitive theory, the professional behavior of auditors is subject to modeling the behavior of other professional peers and the rules governing their work environment. Therefore, idealism leads to a greater commitment of auditors to professional rules and regulations. This effect is statistically significant, so the hypothesis of the effect of idealism on professional commitment cannot be rejected. Also, regarding relativism, it has a negative effect on professional commitment. In other words, considering the negative relationship between relativism and professional commitment regarding auditors, it can be concluded that the greater the gap in the ethical behavior of auditors resulting from the distance between individual cultures and the ethical interpretation of audit work procedures, the less commitment the auditor has to professional regulations. This effect is statistically significant, and the hypothesis of relativism on





professional commitment cannot be rejected. Therefore, the above results show that the auditor's moral ideology has a significant effect on his professional commitment. This result is consistent with the "Social cognition" theory.

Effect of auditors' ethical ideology on their professional judgment

The effect of moral ideology on the professional judgment of auditors has been tested. Idealism has a positive effect on the professional judgment of the auditor. In other words, with each unit of change in idealism, the professional judgment variable changes in the same direction as idealism, but this effect is not statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis of the effect of idealism on the professional judgment of the auditor is rejected. Also, relativism has a positive effect on professional judgment. In other words, with each unit of change in relativism, the professional judgment variable changes in the same direction as relativism. Therefore, the hypothesis of the effect of relativism on audit professional judgment is rejected. These results show that the auditor's moral ideology does not have a significant effect on the results and does not match previous expectations. The reason why the results of this research regarding the effect of moral ideology on the professional judgment of auditors are different from some past research and expectations, in addition to the limitations governing sample selection, may be the difference in the questionnaires distributed in previous research and the present research. Because in previous research, the ethical judgment of auditors has been investigated, while this research has investigated the effect of moral ideology on the professional judgment of auditors by evaluating risk and importance variables for various topics.

Effect of auditors' professional commitment on their professional judgment

Professional commitment has a significant positive effect on professional judgment. This effect is statistically significant, so the hypothesis of the effect of professional commitment on the professional judgment of the auditor cannot be rejected.

Success in the auditing profession requires distinct personal characteristics, the most important of which is the ability to make sound decisions. The main job of auditors as accounting professionals is to comment on the validity and credibility of financial statements, which requires them to be impartial in their decisions making. To make the best possible decisions without bias, auditors need to maintain their independence from clients (Valiyan et al., 2019). An auditor's judgment plays a key role in their decisions and comments on the financial statements, which in turn influences the users' decisions and subsequent financial gain and losses. The more professional, less biased, and less influenced the auditor's judgment is, the more reliable will be the auditor's comments and the more credible will be the financial statements they accredit. From the auditors' point of view, developing the ability to make sound decisions in real situations requires a coherent and multidimensional reasoning approach that should be taught to individuals (Valiyan et al., 2019). Professional commitment is one of the factors that may influence auditors' judgment. Establishing an appropriate organizational culture in audit firms can also be an effective mechanism for minimizing errors in the auditing profession (Daryaee et al., 2020a). To make sure that time-budget pressures and client pressures do not reduce the quality of audits, auditors have to consider the quality of





audits in their judgments (sadri and aliahmadi, 2019). However, audit firms compete in a free market and their profitability depends on the relationship between the audit fee and the cost of doing the work. The audit market has become highly competitive in recent decades, especially in the wake of recent economic crises. With increasing pressure on auditing clients, this competitive environment has enabled clients to put more pressure on auditors, pressures that manifest as more compromise in audit fees as well as increasing clients' power to influence auditors' judgment (Hasas Yaganeh and Amouzad, 2020).

6. Recommendations

- To increase the professional commitment of auditors, it is recommended to establish idealistic principles.

- To increase the professional commitment of auditors, it is recommended to adapt the ethical relativism of auditors by holding training sessions and intellectual discussions.

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