



**STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING TEACHING
QUALITY OF ACCOUNTING INSTRUCTORS AT A UNIVERSITY IN LIBYA**

By

ABDESALAM SALEM AB ELHATAB

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studie, Universiti Putar Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

December 2023

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Higher education has long been recognized as a catalyst for societal transformation and global progress. In line with this understanding, the Libyan government has been investing in sending its citizens abroad for higher education, aiming to harness their knowledge and skills to drive economic and social advancement within Libya. However, despite these efforts, higher education in Libya faces numerous challenges. These include low international rankings of Libyan universities, inadequate teaching quality, reliance on traditional teaching methods, and a mismatch between educational outcomes and the needs of the labor market, leading to Libya's exclusion from global quality indices.

To address these challenges, this study explored the issues within Libyan higher education through the lens of constructivist and behaviorist theories. The constructivist approach underscores the importance of faculty members' experiences, ongoing professional development, and exposure to international education in enhancing teaching quality. Similarly, behaviorism emphasizes the role of teaching styles in effective knowledge transfer, highlighting the significance of both teacher-centered and student-centered approaches.

The research aimed to investigate how various factors influenced the quality of accounting education from students' perspectives. It examined the impact of teaching experience, professional development activities, teaching styles, and the graduation place of faculty members on teaching quality. Data was collected through questionnaires from 281 accounting students at the University of Zawia in Libya and supplemented by interviews with instructors from selected classes. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS and the research hypotheses were tested using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) followed by as well as interviews were

conducted with instructors of 21 selected classes which was analyzed using thematic analysis.

The findings revealed that teaching experience, professional development activities, and teaching styles significantly influenced teaching quality. Interestingly, students perceived that faculty members who had studied abroad were less effective in teaching compared to those who studied locally, although student-centered teaching styles were more impactful when implemented by internationally educated faculty. Additionally, the frequency of experiential learning activities inversely affected the provision of professional development for faculty members, while enhancing the efficacy of student-centered teaching approaches.

Qualitative data further supported these findings, indicating a preference among students for teacher-centered teaching styles despite their limited relevance to labor market requirements. Nonetheless, participation in professional development activities was recognized as beneficial for enhancing teaching quality, especially in conjunction with experiential learning activities aimed at refining students' practical skills.

Based on these findings, the study recommends several interventions to improve higher education and accounting education in Libya. These include providing support and resources for faculty development, leveraging the experiences of internationally educated faculty to transition towards student-centered teaching, and increasing investment in professional development activities. Decision-makers are urged to prioritize these measures to enhance the quality and relevance of higher education in Libya, ultimately contributing to the country's socio-economic development.

Keywords: Teaching Experience, Continuing Professional Development, Teaching Styles, Graduation Place, Experiential Learning, Teaching Quality.

SDG: Goal 4: High-Quality Education

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PERSEPSI PELAJAR TERHADAP FAKTOR-FAKTOR YANG
MEMPENGARUHI KUALITI PENGAJARAN PENGAJAR PERAKAUNAN DI
SEBUAH UNIVERSITI DI LIBYA**

Oleh

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Pendidikan tinggi telah lama diiktiraf sebagai pemangkin transformasi masyarakat dan kemajuan global. Selaras dengan pemahaman ini, kerajaan Libya telah melabur dalam pendidikan tinggi dengan menghantar rakyatnya ke luar negara yang bertujuan untuk memanfaatkan pengetahuan dan kemahiran mereka dalam memacu kemajuan ekonomi dan sosial di Libya. Walau bagaimanapun, disebalik usaha ini, pendidikan tinggi di Libya tetap menghadapi pelbagai cabaran. Ini termasuk kedudukan ditangga universiti Libya yang rendah diperingkat antarabangsa, kualiti pengajaran yang tidak mencukupi, pergantungan kepada kaedah pengajaran tradisional, dan ketidakpadanan antara hasil pendidikan dan keperluan pasaran buruh, membawa kepada pengecualian Libya daripada indeks kualiti global.

Untuk menangani cabaran-cabaran ini, kajian ini meneroka isu-isu dalam pendidikan tinggi Libya melalui lensa teori konstruktivis dan tingkahlaku. Pendekatan konstruktivis menekankan kepentingan pengalaman ahli fakulti, pembangunan profesional yang berterusan, dan pendedahan kepada pendidikan antarabangsa dalam meningkatkan kualiti pengajaran. Begitu juga, teori tingkahlaku menekankan peranan gaya pengajaran dalam pemindahan pengetahuan yang berkesan, menonjolkan kepentingan kedua-dua pendekatan berpusatkan guru dan berpusatkan pelajar.

Penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat bagaimana pelbagai faktor mempengaruhi kualiti pendidikan perakaunan dari perspektif pelajar. Ia mengkaji kesan pengalaman mengajar, aktiviti pembangunan profesional, gaya pengajaran, dan tempat tamat pengajian ahli fakulti terhadap kualiti pengajaran. Data dikumpulkan melalui soal selidik dari 281 pelajar perakaunan di Universiti Zawia di Libya dan ditambah dengan wawancara dengan pengajar dari kelas terpilih. Data kuantitatif telah dianalisis menggunakan SPSS dan hipotesis penyelidikan telah diuji menggunakan Structural

Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) diikuti oleh serta temu bual telah dijalankan dengan pengajar 21 kelas terpilih yang dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik.

Penemuan menunjukkan bahawa pengalaman mengajar, aktiviti pembangunan profesional, dan gaya pengajaran sangat mempengaruhi kualiti pengajaran. Menariknya, pelajar merasakan bahawa ahli fakulti yang belajar di luar negara kurang berkesan dalam pengajaran berbanding mereka yang belajar di dalam negara, walaupun gaya pengajaran berpusatkan pelajar lebih berkesan apabila dilaksanakan oleh ahli fakulti yang berpendidikan antarabangsa. Di samping itu, kekerapan aktiviti pembelajaran pengalaman secara songsang mempengaruhi penyediaan pembangunan profesional untuk ahli fakulti, sambil meningkatkan keberkesanan pendekatan pengajaran berpusatkan pelajar.

Data kualitatif selanjutnya menyokong penemuan ini, menunjukkan keutamaan di kalangan pelajar untuk gaya pengajaran berpusatkan guru walaupun kaitannya terhad dengan keperluan pasaran buruh. Walau bagaimanapun, penyertaan dalam aktiviti pembangunan profesional telah diiktiraf sebagai bermanfaat untuk meningkatkan kualiti pengajaran, terutamanya bersempena dengan aktiviti pembelajaran berasaskan pengalaman yang bertujuan untuk memperbaiki kemahiran praktikal pelajar.

Berdasarkan penemuan ini, kajian ini mengesyorkan beberapa intervensi untuk meningkatkan pendidikan tinggi dan pendidikan perakaunan di Libya. Ini termasuk menyediakan sokongan dan sumber untuk pembangunan fakulti, memanfaatkan pengalaman fakulti berpendidikan antarabangsa untuk beralih ke arah pengajaran berpusatkan pelajar, dan meningkatkan pelaburan dalam aktiviti pembangunan profesional. Pembuat keputusan digesa untuk mengutamakan langkah-langkah ini untuk meningkatkan kualiti dan kaitan pendidikan tinggi di Libya, yang akhirnya menyumbang kepada pembangunan sosio-ekonomi negara.

Kata Kunci: Pengalaman Mengajar, Pembangunan Profesional Berterusan, Gaya Pengajaran, Tempat Pengijazahan, Pembelajaran Berpengalaman, Kualiti Pengajaran.

SDG: Matlamat 4: Pendidikan Berkualiti Tinggi

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of the Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HEL	Higher Education in Libya
HELs	Higher Education Institutions
AE	Accounting Education
TQ	Teaching Quality
TE	Teaching Experience
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
TS	Teaching Styles
TCS	Teacher-Centered Styles
SCS	Student-Centered Styles
GP	Graduation Place
EL	Experiential Learning
SEM	Structural Equation Modelling
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
PLS	Partial Least Squares
SEM-PLS	Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the overview of the study. The chapter consists of the study's background, research problem, research question, research objectives, significance, and scope, as well as the chapter summary.

1.2 Background of the Study

The role of higher education institutions in shaping a country's economic growth and human capital is widely acknowledged. Evaluation of teaching quality in higher education is gaining prominence, with factors such as teaching experience, professional development, and teaching styles being crucial. In the realm of accounting education, the evolving global business landscape has heightened the demand for accountants equipped with modern skills (Tri et al., 2021).

Several studies have explored the impact of teaching experiences on students' perceptions and outcomes. For instance, Liu et al. (2022) found that students are influenced by their teachers' beliefs, while Abdulkirim et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of international collaboration in enhancing teaching experiences and needs. However, conflicting results exist regarding the relationship between teaching experience and quality, underscoring the need for further investigation from a student perspective (Marsh, 2007; Sokoli & Koren, 2017; M. Liu et al., 2022).

Tomas et al. (2022), which focused on the factors influencing undergraduate students' evaluation of teaching effectiveness, reported a significant correlation between teaching quality factors and teaching effectiveness. Marsh (2007) adds that 'teaching effectiveness and quality with individual differences were also highly stable over time' (p.775).

Teaching experiences, professional development, and teaching styles significantly influence students' success and a country's development. Quality faculty members play a crucial role in student learning and a country's output. Professional development activities are essential for faculty members' growth, yet there's a need for more comprehensive training to enhance teaching quality.

Experiential learning has been proven effective in improving critical thinking and student engagement, but its success depends on the teaching style used. While student-centered learning is associated with higher levels of quality, both student-centered and teacher-centered approaches have their merits. These factors contribute to national development by fostering the skills needed for a knowledge-based economy.

Tewari and Ilesanmi (2020), the quality of faculty member substantially impacts the quality of university output. In the same regard, a study by Zajkowski et al. (2007) reported that professional development has an essential role among New Zealand and Australian accounting faculty member based on a good number of participants reported having a good perception of the part of professional development, through their responses to the study questionnaire.

The theory also describes learning as a process whereby experience creates knowledge (Healey & Jenkins, 2000). Theories such as behaviourism and constructivism shed light on teaching quality and the learning process, emphasizing the importance of teaching experience and professional development. This research aims to explore students' perceptions, along with the influence of faculty members' graduation place and experiential learning on teaching quality at Libyan universities.

Despite substantial government grants for overseas studies, Libyan universities struggle to attain global recognition due to factors like teaching quality. Weak teaching quality leads to deficiencies in students' knowledge and skills, impacting their academic and professional success and contributing to the decline in international rankings.

A deficiency in teaching quality significantly impacts students' knowledge and skills, hindering their success in both academic and professional endeavors (Khoja, 2016). Moreover, the subpar performance of university graduates contributes to the decline in international university rankings, where academic achievement serves as a critical criterion (Barbosa & Páramo, 2023). Alnamri and Balq (2022) attribute the low ranking of the University of Zawia to various factors, including inadequate teaching quality, weak educational curriculums, and infrastructure shortcomings. In conclusion, addressing teaching quality issues is vital for improving higher education outcomes and fostering national development. This research aims to uncover insights that can inform strategies to enhance teaching quality and uplift Libyan universities on the global stage.

1.2.1 Higher Education in Libya (HEL)

Before 1951, education was not available to all Libyans as the education system was limited to certain education stages, specifically the secondary school stage. The Arabic language since then serves as the official medium of instruction in the country's education (Shafter & Ruth, 2020). Benghazi University, established in 1955, was Libyan's first HEL. As per the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research's official website, there were 26 public universities located across the area of 1,800,000 square kilometres in Libya as of 2023 (Mhesrgovly, 2023). Tertiary education in Libya is free for all Libyans and its outputs have reached up to standard (Brima & Abdelaty, 2023). The opportunity for education has significantly increased the country's literacy rate. Despite this notable educational development, there is a shortage of qualified teachers and faculty member.

The Libyan Audit Bureau's report for the year 2020 indicated that the Libyan government spent huge funds on faculty and faculty member members to study abroad compared to the rest of the Libyan population and the academic updates and achievements received by the members. In short, the government spent more than five billion Libyan dinars (More than 3,600,000 US dollars) on sending faculty member members abroad from 2012 to 2020 (Libyan Audit Bureau, 2020). Despite the government funds to Libyan higher education institutions (HEL), HELs have experienced slow progress in their development at all levels of education beginning from primary to higher education (Vandewalle, 2019). Thus, the Libyan Audit Bureau's reports in the years 2020 and 2021 highlighted the need to understand and report on the actual Libyan government universities' situation in the years 2020 and 2021, particularly on the academic outcomes and teaching quality of faculty member members who returned from abroad. This was to evaluate whether their teaching quality would have contributed to the development of HEL (Libyan Audit Bureau, 2020; Libyan Audit Bureau, 2021). Therefore, the current study will provide empirical evidence of the impact of overseas and local education of the faculty member on the teaching quality among accounting faculty member as an example that may provide an overview of the faculty member in HEL.

1.2.2 Accounting Education in Libya (AE)

Accounting education (AE) in Libya traces back to the 1950s with the establishment of the first Libyan University in Benghazi in 1957 under the Faculty of Economics and Commerce (Masli, 2019). With the growth of Libyan universities, AE has become more widespread. Initially limited to undergraduate students, some universities began offering master's degrees in accounting since the late 1990s. Presently, all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have accounting departments, with many offering master's and doctoral programs in accounting, as outlined in Resolution No. 61 of 2022 by the Ministry of Higher Education of the Government of National Unity of Libya (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, n.d). Graduates with master's degrees from these universities often join the faculty (Al-Arbash & Al-Muqla, 2013).

Higher education is crucial for societal development, with its quality earning community trust. In accounting, AE aims to equip graduates with the skills to excel in their roles (Darwish, 2017). However, previous studies in Libya have highlighted shortcomings in meeting local and international labor market demands. These include inadequate teaching quality, leading to issues such as poorly developed faculty programs, curriculum misalignment with labor market needs, students' inability to leverage modern technology, weak academic and professional collaborations in accounting, deficient infrastructure in HEIs, irregular study plans, and a focus on theoretical rather than practical aspects of AE (Masli, 2019; Edali et al., 2023; Aboghaila et al., 2017; Eshkal & Al-Mmari, 2022; Ghawail et al., 2021; Ashmila & Al-Tarly, 2013; Al-Sharif, 2022).

Hence, this study aims to identify reasons for the weakness in Libyan AE outputs, considering factors like faculty members' graduation place (local or overseas), experiential learning, teaching experience, professional development, teaching styles, and quality. It evaluates the direct impact of teaching experience, participation in

continuing professional development activities, and teaching styles on accounting teaching quality. Additionally, it examines how the role of accounting faculty members from overseas or local HEIs affects teaching quality to enhance graduate academic performance. The study draws support from constructivism theory, which elucidates how individuals acquire knowledge and learn (Bada & Olusegun, 2015), to underpin AE.

1.3 Problem Statement

The interest in the quality of teaching has become a focal point in higher education studies (Sokoli & Koren, 2017, p. 445; Dongwe, 2018, p. 445). This interest arises from changes such as heightened international competition, the diverse geographical and social backgrounds of students, the introduction of information technology, and an increased demand for value for money (Sokoli & Koren, 2017, p. 445), which have left stakeholders somewhat perplexed.

At the core of higher education lies the belief in education's role in investing in human capital, ultimately leading to the advancement of a nation. This rapid advancement is evident in a country's growing pool of educated experts. Human capital encompasses the intellectual assets, competencies, and aptitudes individuals acquire through educational pursuits and training. These acquired knowledge, skills, and abilities enhance their productivity levels and have the potential to drive economic growth (Prasetyo & Kistanti, 2020). Furthermore, higher education should tailor its programs to meet the actual needs of the country in terms of required fields of study, specialization, and providing support in offering suggestions for governmental improvement.

One of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) underscores the importance of providing equal opportunities for tertiary education, including universities, to promote lifelong learning for all. Universities also play a crucial role in the SDGs by serving as catalysts for achieving all goals through their contribution to human development, knowledge generation, and fostering innovation (Chankselian & McCowan, 2021).

Faculty members play a significant role in upholding the professional skills of the faculties (Awal, 2022, p. 47). However, only qualified faculty members and specialists can effectively guide university students and graduates towards achieving their goals. Qualified faculty members are assumed to have rich teaching experience, remarkable teaching quality, a continuous focus on professional development, and up-to-date teaching experience. These qualifications can lead students and graduates to be prepared for the workplace, enabling them to contribute meaningfully and provide fundamental suggestions for governmental success.

Faculty members' cognition, opinions, and knowledge significantly influence the best techniques for each teaching situation (Suwaed, 2011). This means that the ability to apply teaching techniques may vary among faculty members depending on their qualifications. In other words, qualified faculty members are influenced by their academic cognition, which stems from a rich and improved educational background, extensive teaching experience, and participation in continuing professional development

activities. Similarly, the constructivism theory emphasizes the need to enhance faculty members' teaching experience, continuous development, and teaching skills to build and improve the teaching process through active learning. Teaching quality is a critical aspect that universities and other academic institutions must consider, as previous studies have highlighted the essential roles of delivery techniques, knowledge, and experiences in determining the quality of instruction by educators and faculty members (Ismail et al., 2017).

A study by Bietenbeck (2011) revealed that teaching experience and practice significantly impact students' and graduates' achievements. This finding is supported by Sokol and Koren (2017), who reported that the qualifications of faculty members are a major factor affecting teaching quality. In essence, faculty members' qualifications determine their teaching quality, thereby influencing their students' outcomes and achievements positively. Moreover, participation in continuing professional development activities also plays a crucial role in faculty members' teaching quality. In universities, students and graduates are prepared for the workplace through practical learning provided by qualified faculty members who are experts and have demonstrated their professional development by investing in and applying their knowledge into practice. Ochotorena (2020, p. 1) highlights that essential knowledge and skills acquired through CPD participation do not guarantee improved teaching performance and enhanced levels of competence if one lacks the ability to put that knowledge into practice.

Similarly, teaching style also plays a crucial role in teaching quality and educational outcomes, as evidenced by a comparative study between student-centered learning (SCL) and teacher-centered learning (TCL) at a university in Sarawak (Lau, 2020). The study identified significant differences between SCL and TCL in terms of students' learning, skill acquisition, and internalization of attributes, with SCL being more efficiently implemented for economic subjects. Moreover, the role of teachers and their teaching style influences learning. For instance, experiential learning activities involving simulations, role plays, business laboratory practices, and the use of real-life cases help students and graduates become 'career-ready' (Spanjaard et al., 2018; Obi et al., 2022).

However, factors related to faculty members' graduation place and experiential learning are still under investigation. Some studies have found that internationally educated graduates who furthered their studies overseas have benefited and made a long-term impact on their home country's economic, educational, and social development (Vanichakorn, 2005; Campbell, 2016). Unfortunately, this is not the case at Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Libya, despite the belief in the critical role of education and the academic field in improving Libyan education through investment in human capital. According to Rose (2015), funding faculty members to further their studies overseas is a method used to quickly strengthen HEIs. This has been the Libyan government's policy since the 1970s when it began funding full-time academic members to study abroad.

As mentioned earlier, the government spent more than five billion Libyan dinars (over 3,600,000 US dollars) on sending faculty members abroad from 2012 to 2020 (Libyan

Audit Bureau, 2020). Based on the review by Abushina (2017) and Shtewi (2019), the Libyan government has been funding and providing financial support for HEIs through various schemes such as supporting faculty members to further their studies overseas to explore and be exposed to diverse and high-quality international higher education systems, opening the opportunity for HEIs to have international cooperation with overseas universities, and supporting faculty members in connecting globally through local and international face-to-face and online workshops and conferences.

In institutions of higher education in Libya, the prevalent teaching style raises significant issues concerning the quality of education for several reasons. The traditional, lecture-based approach, which is widespread in these institutions, tends to emphasize rote memorization over critical thinking and practical application. This method can stifle student engagement and creativity, limiting opportunities for interactive learning and the development of essential problem-solving skills. The prevailing style, which relies heavily on traditional lectures where the teacher controls content delivery in a one-way direction, restricts effective interaction between students and their instructors (Abushina, 2017; Abdulnabi, 2021; Aljad, 2023). Consequently, this approach impedes the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills among students, both of which are crucial for their preparation for the job market.

Moreover, this style lacks diversity in teaching methods, such as cooperative learning and project-based learning, diminishing students' ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. As the job market increasingly demands a range of skills and practical knowledge, the continued reliance on this outdated teaching style creates a significant gap between what students learn in universities and what is required of them in their future careers. This gap results in graduates being inadequately prepared to meet market demands. Therefore, there is an urgent need for pedagogical reform, suggesting that improving teaching methodologies could be a crucial step towards enhancing overall educational outcomes in Libyan universities.

Nevertheless, HEIs face a significant challenge in which the quality of education does not meet standards. Based on a review of the related literature on HEIs, institutions face several challenges, such as a lack of qualified students and graduates due to poor teaching quality and the use of a teacher-centered approach, despite the government's financial support. Although the number of faculty members sent overseas to further their postgraduate studies has increased to expose them to improved teaching methods and personal attributes, the outputs of HEIs are not sufficient to reflect the graduate level, especially in Accounting Education (AE). The quality of AE graduates in Libya is very low in terms of alignment with the attributes required in the labor market. For example, graduates lack critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Masli, 2010; Aboghalia et al., 2017; Alfadhli et al., 2018; Gana, 2018; Al-Jazwi et al., 2019; Masli, 2019; Amarif & Zobi, 2021). Specifically, previous studies have shown that accounting education programs at Al-Zawiyah University are still insufficient in equipping students with the necessary knowledge and skills for the rapidly evolving and interconnected job market in the field of information technology (Al-Shabbi et al., 2015; Mami & Mira, 2013; Al-Sharif & Ahmed, 2020; El-Fetimi & Aldabbar2021; Al-Jandali, 2022).

Moreover, conventional teaching and learning methodologies persist as the predominant approach in higher education institutions (HEIs) (Al-Lasaqa & Şahin, 2022). Within the domain of accounting education at the University of Zawia, scholarly literature confirms a tendency towards traditional teaching practices, where instructors assume a central role in knowledge dissemination, rather than embracing student-centered pedagogies that foster active learning and critical thinking (Moftahat el, 2012; Rohouma & Suwaed, 2017; Ebtesam & Foster, 2019). Furthermore, the World Economic Forum's Davos Global Competitiveness Index, a benchmark for evaluating education quality across nations, consistently assigns low rankings to HEIs worldwide. The Webometrics ranking in 2023 placed HEIs between 3,868 to 32,059, with Al-Zawia University ranking at 5193 (Ranking WEB of Universities, 2023).

Moreover, the reason for choosing Libya as the research country, specifically in the field of accounting education, is due to a genuine problem raised by the Libyan Audit Bureau. The Bureau has explicitly requested the Ministry of Higher Education to undertake a package of reform measures to address the issue. From this perspective, the study aims to diagnose the problem to contribute to future reforms. Considering that the problem is faced by higher education in Libya in general, the focus was solely on Al-Zawia University to obtain accurate results and closely examine the problem by understanding the perspectives of key stakeholders (students and faculty members). For further clarification regarding the existence of the problem, the Audit Bureau's report for the year 2014 states that "the state spends significant amounts of money on sending students abroad without receiving the appropriate return on this expenditure. This requires the government to implement a package of reform measures and address the negative phenomena in this file so that the state can obtain competent national cadres intellectually and culturally and keep pace with the developed world."

Therefore, despite the government's attempt to provide solutions to develop HEIs, including AE, through increased government spending to qualify university faculty members and sending them abroad for further studies, university faculty members have not contributed to the improvement in the quality of education. These problematic situations in HEIs stem from several factors affecting teaching quality, such as a lack of teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, and faculty members' teaching styles.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

This section outlines the research objectives aimed at addressing the research questions.

The research seeks to investigate both the direct effects and interaction effects in the relationship between several independent variables (teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, and teaching styles) and the dependent variable (quality of accounting teaching). The objectives are as follows:

- 1) To examine the effect of teaching experience, continuing professional development activities, and teaching styles on the quality of accounting teaching.

- 2) To analyse the moderating effect of graduation place in the relationship between teaching experience, continuing professional development activities, teaching style, and the quality of accounting teaching.
- 3) To analyse the moderating effect of experiential learning in the relationship between teaching experience, continuing professional development activities, teaching style, and the quality of accounting teaching.

The direct effects investigated in this research pertain to the individual impacts of three specific independent variables on the quality of accounting teaching: teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, and teaching styles. The study meticulously examined how each of these factors independently influences the dependent variable, which is the quality of accounting teaching. By focusing on the direct relationships, the research aimed to elucidate the distinct contributions of each independent variable without factoring in any potential moderating variables. This approach allowed for a clear and unambiguous understanding of how variations in teaching experience, engagement in professional development, and the adoption of different teaching styles directly affect the quality of accounting education, providing valuable insights into the most influential elements in this educational context.

On the other hand, the interaction effects (moderating effects) refer to the influence of graduation place and experiential learning on the relationship between the independent variables (teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, teaching styles) and the quality of accounting teaching. These moderating variables can affect the strength or direction of the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. In other words, they can alter how the independent variables impact the dependent variable based on the levels or conditions of the moderating variables.

Through conducting a survey among accounting students, you will directly obtain insights into their perceptions and experiences regarding various factors, including teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, teaching styles, graduation place, experiential learning, and the quality of accounting teaching. This data collection method enables the analysis, examination, and exploration of the direct relationships between these variables within your research. Additionally, to complement the survey findings, interviews will be conducted with faculty members teaching in the classrooms where the data was gathered. These interviews will provide further context and support for the results obtained from the analysis of student survey data.

1.5 Research Questions

This section presents the research questions of this study.

The study's research questions were structured and refined based on the review of the related literature. The questions are as follows:

- Q1.** What is the effect of teaching experience, continuing professional development activities, and teaching styles on the quality of accounting teaching?
- Q2.** What is the moderating effect of the graduation place on the relationship between teaching experience, continuing professional development activities, teaching style, and the quality of accounting teaching?
- Q3.** What is the moderating effect of experiential learning on the relationship between teaching experience, continuing professional development activities, teaching style, and the quality of accounting teaching?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This sub-section reveals several contributions consisting of practical, literature and theoretical gaps, which are presented in the following paragraphs.

1.6.1 Theoretical Significance

This research makes significant contributions to the theoretical understanding of teaching quality in Accounting Education (AE) within the Libyan higher education context. By incorporating personal interviews with faculty members in addition to student questionnaires, the study provides a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing teaching quality in AE. The research examines the impact of teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, and teaching style on accounting teaching quality. It also explores the moderation effect of graduation place and experiential learning on the relationship between these variables and teaching quality.

By filling the gaps in existing literature, this research adds a new perspective to the debate on the quality of accounting teaching in higher education in Libya. The findings of this study contribute to the development of clear theories and a theoretical framework for assessing the teaching quality of accounting faculty members in Libya. The introduction of graduation place and experiential learning as moderating variables enriches the understanding of the relationship between teaching experience, professional development, teaching styles, and teaching quality. This theoretical contribution enhances the body of knowledge in the field and serves as a foundation for future research on teaching quality in AE.

In addition, the theoretical framework of this study is crucial in addressing the research gaps and contributing to the theoretical aspect of the subject matter. The results of this study contributed to the theoretical landscape by conceptualizing and suggesting clear theories that enhance our understanding of teaching quality and its determinants. By incorporating multiple theories such as constructivism (psychological and sociological), Kolb's experiential learning theory, and Skinner's behaviorism, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between variables and assess the teaching quality of accounting faculty members in Libya. The theoretical framework of the study incorporates constructivism theory, specifically psychological and sociological constructivism, along with Skinner's behaviorism. Psychological constructivism focuses on how students construct knowledge based on their prior experiences, while sociological constructivism emphasizes social interaction in the learning process. Kolb's constructivist experiential learning theory highlights the role of experiential learning in knowledge acquisition. Skinner's behaviorism theory underpins teacher-centered teaching styles. These theories provide a foundation for understanding the relationships between variables and assessing teaching quality based on student perceptions.

1.6.2 Practical Significance

This research has important implications for faculty members, accounting departments in higher education institutions, and the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education. By focusing on students' perceptions of teaching quality and incorporating faculty member interviews, the study provides valuable insights into the importance of improving teaching quality in the accounting department. The research instrument used in this study serves as an evaluation tool for accounting departments in Libyan universities to identify and address weaknesses among faculty members, leading to improvements in teaching quality.

The findings of this research can guide faculty members and accounting departments in enhancing teaching experience, participating in continuing professional development activities, and adopting effective teaching styles. By addressing these factors, the research contributes to the development of practical skills among graduates, better preparing them for employment opportunities in the job market. The study aligns with the demands of the industry and supports the production of qualified graduates who possess the necessary practical skills to meet employment standards.

Furthermore, this research also made contributions to support policies and decision-makers. This research provided new insights into the return of substantial Libyan government expenditures in abroad education.

According to the report of The Libyan Audit Bureau (2014, p. 91), the Bureau, the official institution in Libya, has explicitly and formally demanded a measure of the return on spending on scholarship programs for faculty members abroad. Therefore, the research would reveal whether abroad education had positively affected the quality of teaching, particularly in AE, among internationally educated faculty members. Moreover, the research also provided evidence that other factors, besides foreign

education, positively impact the quality of accounting teaching, namely teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, and teaching style. Therefore, the research results would contribute to the scholarship decision-making process by considering the scholarship policies and the government's efforts to ensure the quality of Libyans studying abroad. Specifically, this research would shed light on the effectiveness of accounting faculty members who acquired abroad education and its impact on their teaching performance.

In summary, this doctoral research fills theoretical gaps, contributes to the understanding of teaching quality in AE, supports policy-making and decision-making processes, and provides practical implications for faculty members, accounting departments, and the Libyan Ministry of Higher Education. By incorporating faculty member interviews, this research enhances the existing body of knowledge and offers valuable insights into improving teaching quality in the accounting department, ultimately benefiting higher education standards in Libya.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research was conducted on Libyan undergraduates. To achieve the objectives of this study, which was to investigate the impacts of teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, and teaching style (SCL/TCL) on accounting teaching quality, as well as the roles of graduation place and experiential learning as the mediators, at the University of Zawia in Libya.

Data was collected through a questionnaire and interviews administered to undergraduate accounting students and faculty members. The questionnaire covered several categories, including demographic information, teaching styles (SCL/TCL), experiential learning, and accounting teaching quality. Information about teaching experience, participation in continuing professional development activities, and place of graduation was obtained from the academic profiles of faculty members in the University of Zawia's Accounting Department.

Additionally, interviews were conducted with faculty members to support and enrich the questionnaire findings. A total of 281 students and 20 faculty members participated. Further details regarding the research methodology can be found in Chapter 3 of this study.

The choice of Libya as the research setting stems from several reasons. Firstly, Libya is a country with a unique socio-economic and cultural context that may influence the factors affecting teaching quality in the field of accounting. Understanding these factors within the Libyan context can contribute to the existing literature and provide insights that are specific to this region. Additionally, Libya has experienced significant political and social changes in recent years, which may have had an impact on the educational system and teaching practices. Exploring the factors affecting teaching quality in this context can help in understanding the challenges and opportunities that arise in post-conflict and transitional societies.

Furthermore, the University of Zawia was selected as the specific research site due to its significance as a prominent educational institution in Libya. The university offers a range of academic programs, including accounting, and attracts a diverse student body. By focusing on the University of Zawia, the study can provide insights into the factors affecting teaching quality in a specific institutional context and contribute to the understanding of accounting education in Libya.

1.8 Conceptual and Operational Definitions of Terms

This section provides the conceptual and operational definitions of the key terms used in the study. The conceptual definitions offer overarching explanations of the key terms within the context of the research. On the other hand, the operational definitions focus on how these key terms are specifically applied in the study, with a specific emphasis on the field of accounting education. A comprehensive presentation of both the conceptual and operational definitions of the key terms can be found in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 : Definitions of Key Terms

Terms	Conceptual definition	Operational definition
Teaching Quality (TQ)	Definitions of high-quality teaching range in their focus from the actions of the teacher, to the knowledge a teacher possesses, to the creativity of the teacher (Blanton et al., 2006). ‘The quality of teaching is defined as the degree of conformity and consistency of each of the main indicators and characteristics of teaching quality with the standards and desirable and superior characteristics that are mentioned in various theories’ (Delbari et al., 2023, p.90)	Teaching Quality refers to local and overseas faculty member graduate quality and their educational services they provide and manages explicitly consist of their teaching attributes, including knowledge, skills of knowledge transfer, and attitude towards students.
Teaching Experience (TE)	A term used to describe the number of years an individual has spent working in the teaching field, including the current year of teaching’ (Warren, 2018, p.15).	The years a faculty member in the accounting department at the faculty of economics at the University of Zawia has spent in their teaching profession.
Continuing Professional Development (CPD)	‘activities designed to advance the knowledge, skills, and understanding of teachers in ways that lead to changes in their thinking and classroom behaviour’ (Fenstermacher & Berliner, 1985, p.283).	Certain activities that accounting faculty members participate in to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes within the classroom to enhance their teaching process, including: industrial experience, professional certifications, memberships in professional bodies, and research activities (Meyer, 2007; Zajkowski et al., 2007; Mendoza, 2013).
Teaching Styles (TS)	Teaching style is ‘approach or medium that the teacher employs to achieve the goals of the teaching process which involves the delivery of information, skills and knowledge to students’ (Gafoor & Babu, 2012).	In this study, the teaching styles referred to two classifications. Consisted of faculty member-centred styles and student-centred styles (Grash,1996); 1. The teacher-centred style (TCS) holds that the teacher is the centred of the classroom environment, which means teachers with formal authority as experts among students by transmitting knowledge, and skills that students need (Grasha, 1994; McCoy, 2006). Thus, learning depends on the personal’s actions of the faculty member in the classroom (Ghanizadeh & Jahedizadeh, 2016) 2. The student-centred style (SCS) assumes that learners are proactive, self-directed, and possess innate motivation, with unlimited growth potential (McCoy, 2006). The

Table 1.1 : Continued

		role of the faculty member is that of a facilitator who strives to achieve students' needs (Wolk, 2010). Additionally, the faculty member acts as a delegator, aiming to cultivate the ability of students to work independently and with autonomy (Binali et al., 2021).
Graduation place (GP)	'Refer to the province or country of most recent qualification'(Cavalier et al., 1990, p2).	Refers to where a faculty member in the accounting department at the faculty of economics at the University of Zawia obtains the most recent academic qualification, whether a master's or a doctorate. Two options have been specifically identified for this place, either locally referring to within the country (Libya), or internationally referring to overseas education.
Experiential Learning (EL).	'a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984, p.38). That means 'Experiential learning means learning from experience or learning by doing' (Lewis & Williams, 1994, p.5).	refers to activities that inherently involve accounting students sharing their acquired knowledge and skills, either inside the classroom or outside of it, such as; internships, accounting field trips, and practical learning by accounting software and Excel (Butler et al., 2019; Noor et al., 2020).
Student	'Is a learner, or someone who attends an educational institution (Maganga, 2016, p.5).	Undergraduate student in accounting classes at the Department of Accounting in the Economics Faculty at the University of Zawia in Libya.
Faculty Member	'Academic members who are teaching classes at colleges or universities, including professors, instructors, faculty members, and lecturers' (Alenezi, 2012, p.10).	Academic members who are full-time teaching accounting classes at the Department of Accounting in the Faculty of Economics at the University of Zawia in Libya. or universities, including assistant lecturers, lecturers, assistant professors, associate professors, and professors, and hold master's or doctoral academic degrees in accounting.

1.9 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the overview of the study consisting of the background of the study, research problem, research question, research objectives, the significance and the scope of the study and the definition of keywords. This chapter served as an essential introduction to the more detailed discussions of the related literature, methods, results, and findings presented in the proceeding sections.



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