

**The impact of joint audits on reducing earnings management
(A case study of Al Rajhi Bank for the year 2025) practices
أثر المراجعة المشتركة في الحد من ممارسات إدارة الأرباح (دراسة حالة
مصرف الراجحي لسنة 2025م)**

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المُلخَص :

هدفت الدراسة للتعرف بمفهوم المراجعة المشتركة وممارسات إدارة الأرباح، وبيان مدى تأثير المراجعة المشتركة في الحد من ممارسات إدارة الأرباح. تمثلت مشكلة الدراسة في لجوء كثير من إدارات الشركات إلى تجميل البيانات المالية سعياً منها لتحسين الوضع المالي لتحقيق أهداف ذاتية، مستقلة تنوع البدائل المحاسبية التي يمكن الاعتماد عليها في إعداد القوائم المالية مما يؤثر سلباً على مصداقية تلك القوائم. اتبعت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي والاستدلالي والاستنباطي والتاريخي. من أهم نتائج الدراسة تعمل معظم دول العالم علي تنظيم المراجعة المشتركة وفقاً للقوانين، عدا دول فرنسا، الهند، سنغافورة، فهي البلدان الوحيدة التي أصدرت معايير خاصة بتطبيق المراجعة المشتركة، تقوم أغلب دول العالم بتطبيق مدخل المراجعة المشتركة وفقاً للمدخل الاختياري، يجمع الباحثون علي إن هنالك دافعان لممارسات إدارة الأرباح يتعلق الأول بتحقيق منافع ذاتية للإدارة، والثاني يتعلق بالتأثير علي مستخدمي المعلومات المحاسبية. أوصت الدراسة بعدد من التوصيات منها تفعيل المراجعة المشتركة وتشريع القوانين واللوائح التي تتيح العمل بها، إصدار تشريعات تلزم الإدارة التقيد بأخلاق المهنة وتحقيق عقوبات رادعة بحقها في حالة ممارستها لإدارة الأرباح، تدعيم آليات لجان المراجعة وحوكمة الشركات لدورها الفاعل في الرقابة الداخلية والخارجية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المراجعة المشتركة، ممارسات إدارة الأرباح.

**Abstract The impact of joint audits on reducing earnings
A case study of Al Rajhi Bank for the) management practices
(year 2025**

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**The impact of joint audits on reducing earnings management practices (A case study
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This study aimed to define the concept of joint auditing and earnings management practices, and to demonstrate the extent to which joint auditing can mitigate earnings management practices. The study's problem lies in the tendency of many company managements to embellish financial data in an effort to improve their financial position and achieve self-serving objectives. This occurs despite the diversity of accounting alternatives available for preparing financial statements, which negatively impacts the credibility of these statements. The study employed a descriptive, analytical, inferential, deductive, and historical methodology. Among the most important findings is that most countries worldwide regulate joint auditing according to regulations and laws, with the exception of France, India, and Singapore, which are the only countries that have issued specific standards for its application. Most countries apply the joint audit approach on a voluntary basis. Researchers agree that there are two main motivations for earnings management practices: the first relates to achieving self-serving benefits for management, and the second relates to influencing users of accounting information. The study recommended several measures, including activating joint auditing and enacting laws and regulations that enable its implementation; issuing legislation that obligates management to adhere to professional ethics and imposes deterrent penalties for earnings management practices; and strengthening audit committee mechanisms and corporate governance to enhance their effectiveness in internal and external oversight. Keywords: Joint auditing, earnings management practices.

Introduction:

A joint audit involves two auditors (i.e., two audit firms) reviewing the accounts of the same entity and issuing a joint audit report, which they both sign, sharing responsibility for it. They often jointly plan the audit process and divide the fieldwork tasks. Earnings management practices are deliberate actions by management to adjust and report profits to reflect management's desires and interests rather than the company's true economic performance. In other words, earnings management is the deliberate interference in the financial reporting process to obtain special benefits. It

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can also be said that earnings management is the beneficial manipulation of accounting results to create a different perception of the company's true performance.

The existence of joint audits is often a means of reducing negative practices and manipulation of financial reports in institutions, which contributes to improving the quality of financial reports. Its presence contributes to obtaining more accurate audit evidence, and thus to a higher level of audit performance. Furthermore, the overall quality of the audit affects the quality of financial reports and profits.

Problem of the Study:

Many company managements resort to embellishing financial data in an attempt to improve the financial position to achieve The independent, subjective objectives of the diverse accounting alternatives available for preparing financial statements negatively impact the credibility of those statements.

Study Objectives:

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:

- 1- To define the concept of joint auditing and earnings management practices.
- 2- To demonstrate the extent to which joint auditing reduces earnings management practices.

Study Significance:

The study's significance lies in both its scientific and practical aspects:

Scientific Aspect: By attempting to address the gap in Arabic research and studies related to joint auditing and its role in earnings management practices, this study is one of the few that address the topic of joint auditing.

Practical Aspect: The study can provide decision-makers with important information about joint auditing, which will help them take appropriate measures to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these institutions.

Study Hypotheses:

- 1- There is a statistically significant relationship between the principles of joint auditing and the reduction of earnings management practices.
- 2- There is a statistically significant relationship between the objectives of joint auditing and the reduction of earnings management practices.

- 3- There is a statistically significant relationship between joint auditing standards and the reduction of earnings management practices.

Methodology:

This study employs a descriptive-analytical approach and a deductive approach. And the historical.

he Concept of Joint Auditing:

A joint audit is defined as two auditors (i.e., two audit firms) reviewing the accounts of the same entity and issuing a joint audit report, which they both sign and for which they share responsibility. They often jointly plan the audit process and divide the tasks. In essence, it is an audit of the financial statements by two separate and independent audit firms, where both firms share the effort, sign a single audit report, and jointly bear responsibility for the opinion expressed in that report (Hamed, 2018).

Joint auditing is conducted by two separate and independent audit firms, where both firms contribute their efforts, sign a single audit report, and jointly bear responsibility for the opinion expressed in that report (Hamed, 2018).

Joint auditing has also been defined as a systematic process of collecting and objectively evaluating evidence related to management's assertions about economic events and activities. The purpose is to determine the degree of conformity between these assertions and objective standards and to communicate the results to the relevant parties. This process is conducted by two or more auditors who agree on the allocation and distribution of audit tasks. Each auditor has the right to review the work and conclusions of the other auditors. Finally, all auditors submit a unified report. In case of disagreement, the report must clarify the points of contention and each auditor's perspective. Once the report is issued, all auditors become jointly responsible for its accuracy (Abdul Hamid, 2014).

Here, the researcher concludes, based on the two preceding definitions, that joint auditing clarifies or documents the credibility of what has been presented in the financial statements by management to the users of those statements. This is confirmed by two or more external auditors, who are jointly legally responsible, by issuing a single audit report expressing an impartial professional opinion. A joint audit is also defined as two auditors

representing two different audit firms reviewing an entity's accounts and issuing a joint audit report, which they both sign. They share responsibility for this report and often jointly plan the audit process, dividing fieldwork tasks between them. A joint audit also refers to two or more separate and independent audit firms reviewing a client's financial statements. The audit process is planned jointly, and the audit procedures and tasks are divided between them to avoid duplication. A single audit report is issued, signed by all auditors, who jointly bear responsibility for the opinion expressed in the report. Thus, a joint audit represents a type of interaction and harmony among auditors, based on a fair division of labor that allows each auditor to fulfill their duties effectively. It also contributes to the benefit of diverse perspectives for stakeholders, including auditors, users, or clients, and fosters a mutual understanding of the duties and responsibilities of each party involved in the audit process (Mutawalli, 2013).

Here, the researcher notes a near-consensus among researchers on the concept of joint auditing. Joint auditing is a process in which two or more auditors from different audit firms are engaged. The auditors collaborate in planning the audit process, the effort exerted during its execution, and the interpretation of the findings. This culminates in the issuance of a unified audit report signed by all auditors, who bear joint responsibility for the report.

The Importance of Joint Auditing:

The importance of the joint external audit approach lies in its advantages and benefits. These include the integration of expertise among two or more auditors and the fostering of dialogue between them, leading to better solutions for the problems requiring reporting. Most countries worldwide face numerous financial crises, which can escalate and persist for extended periods without fundamental solutions, eventually transforming into economic problems. Finding appropriate solutions to these crises becomes a primary objective of economic policies. Therefore, joint auditing is considered a crucial tool for supporting the independence of the external auditor and the quality of financial reports, which in turn enhances the accuracy of the external auditor's report (Mohammed, 2008). The researcher believes that the importance of joint auditing can be summarized as follows:

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it increases the efficiency and effectiveness of the audit process in detecting errors, fraud, and manipulation in financial statements, and thus improves the audit process by increasing the ability to reduce audit risks resulting from the application of individual auditing .

Objectives of a Joint Audit:

The objectives of a joint audit can be summarized as follows:

1. To increase the effectiveness of obtaining reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misrepresentation, whether through deception or error.
2. To increase the effectiveness of coordination, cooperation, and planning for the audit process among audit firms, with one of them being one of the Big Four firms. This leads to increased effectiveness of mutual quality control mechanisms and the issuance of a single, strong audit opinion.
3. To utilize the specific strengths and expertise of team members (economists or industry experts) from different departments to enhance the effectiveness of the joint audit.
4. To strengthen the independence of the external auditor and achieve a high level of audit performance by improving the services provided to the audited company.
5. To produce a joint audit report through a joint effort and shared responsibility.
6. To implement better audit procedures by drawing on shared expertise and relying on generally accepted auditing standards (Al-Assi, 2016).

Advantages of a Joint Audit:

1. A joint audit balances the workload between the two auditors involved in preparing the audit plan, gathering audit evidence, and preparing the audit report, provided the division of labor is genuine.
2. It improves audit quality by combining the expertise of the auditors involved, particularly those from different countries and geographic regions, thus increasing the reliability of the financial statements and reducing market concentration.

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3. It overcomes challenges and difficulties by avoiding joint legal liability due to in-depth discussions of substantive matters between the two audit firms involved in the joint audit.
4. It avoids bottlenecks caused by time constraints during peak audit periods because the audit workload is not fully duplicated.
5. It reduces the need for restating financial statements and improves the quality of the financial report while increasing the accuracy of the audit report and the speed of response to revised opinions. A joint audit increases the likelihood of detecting material errors, such as misclassification of financial statements, due to the presence of another auditor. It also enhances the auditor's ability to detect errors and influences their reporting intent. • Increased legal and ethical responsibility of joint external audits for the audit results before the entity's management, investors, and financial and economic experts.
6. •Enhanced leverage for the external auditor, which significantly boosts the reputation of audit firms conducting joint audits in the audit market (Mandour, 2016).

The researcher argues that joint audits offer several advantages. A unified opinion may act as a buffer against individual criticism of the external auditor's opinion. Furthermore, joint audits enhance auditor independence, as the participating auditors can express their views more effectively to the entity's management than a single auditor. The researcher also suggests that the resulting report may be more robust, as it stems from the combined expertise and skills of the participants.

Obstacles and practical challenges to implementing joint auditing:

There are some obstacles or challenges when applying it in practice. The most important of these obstacles are:

First: Balanced division of tasks and work of joint auditing: A balanced division of joint audit work is one of the most important challenges facing its application in practice. Perhaps the interesting question here is: Does applying the joint audit approach lead to its actual practice? The lack of a balanced distribution of audit tasks among auditors, and the dominance of one auditor over the audit process, is one of the obstacles to the joint audit approach. In the early years of implementing this approach in France,

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several cases emerged of auditors lacking independence in joint audits. Therefore, the French authorities considered such cases to be "sham" joint audits, which led them to ban these firms under the 1993 amendment to the Code of Professional Conduct for Auditors. The legal amendments also required that audit work be shared (in terms of quantity and quality) in a balanced manner among auditors. These amendments were primarily intended to stop sham joint audits and, in turn, led to a redistribution of auditor appointments in favor of smaller firms and stimulated competition in the audit market. The European Commission (EC 2011) proposed appointing one of the Big Four audit firms, along with one non-Big Four audit firm, to reduce market concentration and give smaller audit firms the opportunity to strengthen their positions, demonstrate their capabilities, and build a long-term reputation, thus becoming genuine competitors to the Big Four in both size and experience (EC2011 b.182). However, this may initially lead to further imbalance. Due to the difference in capabilities and qualifications between the two firms (Amira, 2018).

Second: Auditor Rotation and Turnover Period: A quality audit requires the external auditor to have in-depth knowledge of the nature of the client's business and the variables affecting it. Therefore, a longer engagement with the client puts the auditor in a better position in terms of their understanding of the client's business and the factors influencing it, thus shortening the audit time, improving performance efficiency, and maximizing audit fees. On the other hand, mandatory rotation allows auditors to gain a fresh perspective on the client's risks, problems, and engagement issues, which is seen as increasing audit independence, even if it comes at the cost of losing institutional knowledge related to client-specific matters .

Third: The Movement and Dynamics of the Audit Market: The participation of more than one auditor in performing audit tasks and work may affect the movement and dynamics of the audit market. Perhaps the most significant impact that may result from applying the joint audit approach to the audit market is that this market may become difficult and undesirable for clients of companies under audit. This is because the number of audit firms available to choose from for joint audits becomes limited, thus making it difficult to audit the list of companies listed in a country. This can lead to

the development of excessively dynamic joint audit relationships. A negative dynamic may occur if joint auditing turns into informal agreements between audit firms, communication, or even collusion between them. When two audit firms work together to audit a large number of clients, they become familiar with each other through the joint audit. This familiarity may lead to the audit procedures becoming routine, which in turn affects the audit standards of each firm and the objectivity of the audit judgments. In practice, large companies are known to avoid appointing the auditor who has audited their main competitor. Under the requirement to appoint more than one auditor to audit these companies, the restrictions on the selection of auditors may increase. Based on the above, The extent to which the audit market's dynamics respond to the joint audit approach may pose a practical challenge for audited companies. It restricts their options in appointing auditors, but at the same time, it may open the door for medium and small audit firms to gain a larger market share. However, it may not be desirable for large audit firms due to the potential impact on their market share and revenue. This matter remains unclear and requires further studies on the audit market's dynamics in countries that implement joint auditing, as well as surveying the opinions of various stakeholders in the audit process. This will help clarify the picture of this approach compared to other external audit methods, and consequently, inform the appropriate decision regarding its adoption as one of the external audit methods. Ultimately, it will determine whether to rely on it as a means of addressing criticisms directed at the accounting and auditing profession and supporting and enhancing its performance with high quality that is acceptable to stakeholders. Fourth: Conflicting viewpoints among stakeholders regarding joint auditing: The opinions of those involved in the audit process (stakeholders) differed regarding joint auditing, with some supporting it and others opposing it. An analysis of the responses and comments made by audit firms—both the Big Four and smaller firms—regarding the European Commission's Green Paper proposals revealed divergent views, falling into two categories: The first category: The Big Four were largely opposed to joint auditing, primarily due to the cost and fees involved.

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The second category: Small and medium-sized audit firms supported the joint audit proposal, mainly due to concerns about quality. Each group seeks to protect its own interests. On the other hand, some companies subject to audit, which represent one of the stakeholders, prefer joint audits. This is to signal to the market that they have a higher level of audit quality and, consequently, higher-quality financial reports. Some companies even state, "To ensure a high degree of auditor independence and to achieve a high-quality audit process, the company's annual report will be reviewed by two certified auditors." Conversely, other companies do not support joint audits for fear of incurring higher costs. Therefore, the positions of other stakeholders varied in their responses to the green paper. Many investors, corporate associations, and financial report preparers do not support joint audits in principle because they are not concerned about increased audit costs, the benefits are unclear, and there are no clear lines of responsibility between the joint auditors (Moussa, 2010).

Here the researcher concludes that the challenges and obstacles to joint auditing can be summarized as having high fees and a lack of coordination between auditors. The researcher sees here the importance of audit committees and other control mechanisms within the company and their role in guiding the two audit offices when performing their tasks, supervising implementation, ensuring the existence of a program that defines the nature of the tasks assigned to each office, the clarity of the nature of what is required of each audit office, performance evaluation, and the method of communication between them.

Concept of earnings management practices:

The focus on earnings management practices stems from management's influence and desire to achieve a specific summary measurement of the organization's performance. Earnings management practices are viewed as a deliberate intervention in the external accounting process to achieve a specific gain. The diverse range of receivables permitted and available under Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and the ease with which these receivables can be manipulated, allow managers to adjust and manage earnings to achieve an ideal level each year. It has become clear that earnings management practices are motivated by management's desire to

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increase the annual income of the company and to influence disputes by proxy and potential foreign trade regulations. Earnings management practices can be divided into two types according to the ethical approach to accounting: acceptable and unacceptable. The first type is called the informational perspective of earnings management practices, while the second refers to opportunistic earnings management practices. In this latter type, the financial statements can be manipulated to their fullest extent, making them distorted and misleading to users. Earnings management practices have been defined in multiple ways; there is no single definition. One definition describes them as management's use of its personal judgment in financial statements to manipulate these statements, either to mislead stakeholders about the company's economic performance or to influence contracts based on the reported accounting figures (Al-Abdullah & Al-Hanawi, 2003).

These diverse receivables are easily defined and manipulated by management to achieve an ideal level each year. Earnings management practices are defined as external actions that may affect profits, ranging from operational processes, investments, and financing to bookkeeping, which only affect the accounting measurements of profits (Reda, 2010).

Earnings management practices refer to the deliberate distortion of profits, which in turn leads to accounting figures that differ fundamentally from what they would be without such intervention. This occurs when management makes decisions not based on strategic considerations but simply to manipulate profits (Khalil, 2013).

Some view it as a deliberate intervention in the preparation of external financial statements to obtain certain gains through fictitious transactions that constitute actual deception of parties lacking a complete understanding of the company's economics (Ali & Moussa, 2009).

Profit management has also been defined as the deliberate manipulation of external financial reporting processes to obtain private benefits. If broadened, this includes actual profit management, which is practiced by altering financial reports to modify reported profits or some of their components (Marai, 2002).

Others have defined it as management's use of its personal judgment regarding financial reports and operational structures to modify these reports, either to mislead stakeholders about the company's economic performance or to influence contracts based on reported accounting figures. It also involves using various methods of deception or trickery to distort the true picture of financial performance in order to achieve desired results. Furthermore, it has been defined as the beneficial manipulation of accounting results to create a different perception of the company's true performance (Al-Hilali, 2002).

The researcher believes that earnings management practices are the use of accounting techniques in dealing with economic events in light of the application of accounting standards with the intention of reaching financial data that expresses the good performance of the establishment during the financial period in a way that serves the goal of management and improves the strength of this establishment in the market. Therefore, it is creativity from management in using one of the accounting methods, and this creativity is seen by some as falling under the term creative accounting. From the above, we note that following earnings management methods is available to management and is a fact that cannot be left out of accounting literature .

Methods and Techniques for Earnings Management:

It is clear from the above that there are many motives that drive management to manage its earnings in order to improve relationships with creditors, investors, and employees, as well as to reduce the negative effects of income fluctuations over successive periods. Therefore, management adopts from among the accounting alternatives that maximize its benefit, taking advantage of the flexibility allowed in the application of accounting standards, which affect earnings in one way or another. Among these methods and techniques are the following:

1. **Methods of Earnings Management through Real Operations:** Management can influence earnings by making real decisions related to specific activities to control the timing of revenues and expenses. Some of these decisions relate to real operational activities such as sales management, discretionary expense management, production cost

management, and managing stock returns to meet the expectations of financial analysts (Jahmani, 2014).

2. Accounting Methods for Earnings Management: Management can influence reported earnings by exploiting the flexibility offered by Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) in selecting or changing accounting policies and estimates. Earnings management methods, within the accounting approach, can be categorized into three types:

- Using accrual accounting
- Changing accounting methods and policies
- Managing accounting disclosure. Although companies can use earnings management methods or actual operations to achieve specific profitability targets, there are numerous differences between the two approaches that may lead managers to prefer one method over the other based on the surrounding circumstances (Huwaidi, 2000).

Here, the researcher argues that earnings management means the deliberate manipulation of earnings, increasing or decreasing them according to the strategy aimed at influencing users of financial statements.

Risks of Earnings Management:

It is well known that users and analysts of financial statements focus on net income as an indicator of a company's earning capacity. A higher net income leads to increased earnings capacity and higher share prices (Al-Baroudi, 2002). Therefore, management aims to maximize net income, which is reflected in dividend distributions to shareholders, attracting new shareholders and driving up the company's share price. Consequently, management resorts to various practices to increase net income on the income statement. However, these practices do not generate any operating cash flows, either in or out of the net income. While management's approach to earnings management aims to achieve short-term benefits for the company, the methods used, such as discretionary accruals, accounting estimates, and alternative discretionary accounting changes, are ethically unacceptable. The deliberate nature of these practices, when used to manipulate financial statement figures, misleads users of these statements, and, in the long run, leads to serious problems, the most significant of which are:

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1. Damaging the company's economic efficiency: This leads to a decrease in the company's value, as delaying the recognition of expenses or Delaying certain procedures, such as research and development expenditures or maintenance, leads to decreased production performance and a loss of market share. Furthermore, rushing to generate revenue may prevent the company from effectively selling its products.
2. Concealing operational management problems: When management resorts to earnings management to gain additional advantages, secure promotions, and avoid criticism, it leaves errors uncorrected and postpones problems for extended periods.
3. Exposure to severe economic penalties: For example, the US Stock Exchange imposed strict penalties on companies that practiced earnings management, including W.R. Grance. The company was fined \$1 million and required to recalculate and clearly disclose its earnings between 1990 and 1992 because it had underreported its reported profits and recorded reserves of \$55 million, then reinstated those reserves to profits between 1993 and 1995.
4. Erosion of ethical standards: The ethical status of earnings management is a matter of debate, depending on whether its practice is morally justifiable and whether management... Is the intention behind this a substantial improvement in certain aspects of its future strategy, or is it for the purpose of deliberately misleading stakeholders? In the latter case, the element of intent employed by management through the use of certain accounting methods and variables primarily aims to influence the user of financial statements (Adel, 2003).

The researcher believes that earnings management practices are often questionable and conflict with ethical performance standards. They send a message to employees that the truth is being concealed and others are being misled, creating an unethical work environment that allows employees to engage in unacceptable activities, ultimately leading to material discrepancies in the financial statements.

Field Study:

Study Population and Sample:

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The study population refers to the total group of individuals to whom the researcher seeks to generalize the results related to the studied problem. The research sample was selected from employees of Al Rajhi Bank in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (150) questionnaires were distributed to the study population, and (120) valid questionnaires were returned and used in the analysis, representing a return rate of (80%).

Table (1) Frequency Distribution of Sample Members According to Age Variable

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 years	5	4.2%
30 and 40	43	35.8%
40 and 50	26	21.7%
5050 and over	46	38.4%
Total	120	100%

The table shows that the majority of the sample are aged 50 years and over (38.4%), followed by those aged 30 to under 40 years (35.8%), and then those aged 40 to under 50 years (21.7%). The smallest group is under 30 years old (4.2%). This indicates that the largest percentage of the study sample is 30 years and over, and this high percentage suggests the quality of the sample and the ability of its members to understand and answer the questionnaire items.

Table (2) Frequency distribution of the study sample according to the .educational level variable

Academic Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
Bachelor's	75	62.5%
Higher Diploma	8	6.7%
Master's	25	20.8%
PhD	6	5%
Other	6	5%
Total	120	100%

The table shows that the majority of the sample (62.5%) holds a university degree, while 27.5% hold postgraduate degrees (higher diploma, master's, doctorate). The remaining 5% of the sample have other educational levels.

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This indicates that the majority of the sample holds university or postgraduate degrees, demonstrating the high quality of their academic qualifications and their ability to understand and accurately answer the questionnaire items.

Table (3) Frequency distribution of the study sample according to the scientific specialization variable

Academic Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Accounting	86	71.7%
Statistics Business	2	1.7%
Administration	12	10%
Information Systems	2	1.6%
Economics	7	5.8%
Banking and Finance	11	15%
Other	86	71.7%
Total	120	100%

The table shows that the study sample consisted of individuals from the accounting and accounting information systems specialization, as their percentage reached (73.3%), while the percentage of individuals from the statistics and business administration specialization reached (11.7%), while the percentage of individuals from the economics and banking and financial studies specialization reached (20.8%).

Table (4) Frequency distribution of the study sample according to the job title variable

Job	Frequency	Percentage
Department Manager	32	26.7%
Head of Audit Team	21	17.5%
Legal Auditor	6	5%
Certified Auditor	2	1.7%
Financial Manager	1	0.8%
Certified Public Accountant	5	4.2%
Assistant Auditor	16	13.3%
Senior Auditor	18	15%
Secondary Auditor	6	5%
Total	120	100%

The table shows that the majority of the study sample consisted of department managers and heads of audit teams, as their percentage reached (44.2%), while the percentage of the sample members who were auditors

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(legal auditor, certified auditor, assistant auditor, senior auditor, second auditor) reached (50.8%), while the sample members who were financial managers and certified public accountants reached (5)%.

Analysis of variables:

Joint audit:

Table (5): Descriptive statistical analysis of the items of joint audit implementation according to generally accepted auditing standards

Paragraphs	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative Weight %	Response Level
Academic and practical qualifications enhance confidence in joint audit work.	4.65	5600.	93%	Very high
Joint auditing aims to improve the independence of auditors.	4.26	7610.	85.2%	Very high
Joint auditors work harmoniously when conducting audits.	4.23	7420.	84.7%	Very high
Internal control systems facilitate the work of joint auditors within the organization.	4.20	7400.	84	Very high
Evidence is an effective tool in curbing earnings management practices.	4.33	6240.	86.5	Very high

The table reveals the following:

1. The arithmetic mean of all items after the implementation of joint audit work according to generally accepted auditing standards is greater than the hypothetical mean of the study (3) and greater than the relative weight (60%). This result indicates the sample's agreement with the implementation of joint audit work according to generally accepted auditing standards in the study population, with a very high level of response. All statements achieved an overall mean of (4.33), a standard deviation of (0.685), and a relative importance of (86.7%).
2. It is noted from the table that the statement "Scientific and practical qualifications increase confidence in joint audit work" ranked first in terms

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of relative importance, with the sample's average response to the statement being (4.65), a standard deviation of (0.560), and a relative importance of (93%).

3. The statement "The internal control system facilitates the work of joint auditors within the organization" ranked last, with an average of (4.20), a standard deviation of (0.740), and a relative importance of (84%).

جدول (7) التحليل الإحصائي الوصفي لفقرات معالجة الاختلاف في الرأي بين المراجعين

Paragraphs	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative Weight %	Response Level
Joint auditors establish policies and procedures for addressing any disagreements that may arise.	4.13	7620.	82.5%	Very high
Joint auditors adhere to local legislation and international standards in their audit work.	4.23	8070.	84.7%	Very high
In the event of a disagreement on any significant aspect of the report, each auditor prepares a separate report.	3.33	1403.	66.5%	Very high
Modern planning techniques are employed for joint audits to ensure consistency of opinion.	4.08	8220.	81.5%	Very high
Management is notified of any disagreements among joint auditors before the final report is prepared.	3.96	7893.	80.7%	Very high

The table reveals the following:

1. The arithmetic mean of all items after addressing differences of opinion among auditors is greater than the study's hypothetical mean (3) and greater than the relative weight (60%). This result indicates the sample's agreement on addressing differences of opinion among auditors in the study population, with a high level of response. All statements achieved

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an overall mean of (3.96), a standard deviation of (0.856), and a relative importance of (79.2%).

2. The table shows that the statement "Participating auditors adhere to local legislation and international standards in their audit work" ranked first in terms of relative importance, with an average response of (4.23) from the sample, a standard deviation of (0.807), and a relative importance of (84.7%).
3. The statement "In the event of a disagreement on any important aspect covered by the report, each auditor prepares a separate report" ranked last, with an average of (3.33), a standard deviation of (1.014), and a relative importance of (0.10) (66.5.%)

Earnings Management Practices:

Table (9): Descriptive Statistical Analysis of the Items in the Earnings Management Practices Axis

Paragraphs	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative Weight %	Response Level
Management employs a range of procedures to control and manipulate sales and discretionary expenses.	4.02	8700.	80.3%	Very high
Management selects accounting policies to influence the current period's results.	3.91	8790.	78.2%	Very high
The accrual basis of accounting is one approach to earnings management.	4.20	8050.	84%	Very high
Management sometimes modifies policies and estimates according to accounting principles to present	3.78	9390.	75.5%	Very high

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a specific income level.				
Management controls production volume to achieve the desired profit figure.	3.93	8620.	78.5%	Very high
The concept of materiality is one of management's most important tools for earnings management.	4.07	7750.	81.3%	Very high
Management manipulates accounting disclosures to conceal certain facts related to the company's financial position.	3.54	1092	70.7%	Very high
Management manipulates financial data to obtain bonuses and hide poor performance.	3.53	1076.	70.7%	Very high

The table reveals the following:

1. The arithmetic mean for all items in the Earnings Management Practices axis is greater than the study's hypothetical mean (3) and greater than the relative weight (60%). This result indicates the high level of agreement among the sample members in the study population, as all statements achieved an overall mean of (3.87), a standard deviation of (0.912), and a relative importance of (77.4%).

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2. The table shows that the statement "The accrual basis represents one of the approaches to earnings management" ranked first in terms of relative importance, with the average response of the sample members to this statement being (4.20), a standard deviation of (0.805), and a relative importance of (84%).
3. The statement "Management manipulates financial data to obtain rewards and conceal poor performance" ranked last, with an average of (3.53), a standard deviation of (1.076), and a relative importance of (70.7%).

Conclusions:

1. Most countries worldwide regulate joint auditing according to regulations and laws, with the exception of France, India, and Singapore, which, to the researcher's knowledge, are the only countries that have issued specific standards for its implementation.
2. Most countries apply the joint audit approach on a voluntary basis.
3. Researchers agree that there are two main motivations for earnings management practices: the first is to achieve self-interest for management, and the second is to influence users of accounting information.
4. There is near-unanimous agreement among the study participants that academic and practical qualifications increase confidence in joint audit work.
5. The field study reveals that the accrual basis is one of the most important management approaches to earnings management practices.
6. Based on the analysis results, a statistically significant relationship exists between joint auditing and earnings management practices.

Recommendations:

1. Activate joint auditing and enact laws and regulations that enable its implementation.
2. Enact legislation that obligates management to adhere to professional ethics and imposes deterrent penalties for those who engage in earnings management practices.

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3. Working to improve the reliability of financial statements by requiring companies to prepare them in accordance with generally accepted accounting standards and legal requirements.
4. Strengthening the mechanisms of audit committees and corporate governance to enhance their active role in internal and external oversight.
5. Specialized professional organizations conducting training courses for auditors to properly understand joint auditing, its advantages, and how to overcome the problems and obstacles that hinder its implementation.

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