JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES, SOCIAL & MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

VOL.1, NO.1, DECEMBER 2020

A PUBLICATION OF THE FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, SOCIAL AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCE EDWIN CLARK UNIVERSITY, KIAGBODO

ISSN: 1597 0396

Designed and Printed by:
All-Stars Publishers,
89 Akpakpava by Dawson Junction,
Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria.
+2348037365921, +2348030969981
Alstarsng@Gmail.Com, Allstarsgroup01@gmail.com www.alstarsng.blogspot.com

LIST OF CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS AND THEIR INSTITUTIONAL AFFILIATIONS

1. Professor Juliana I. Okoh
   Professor of Theatre Arts, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

2. Professor E.V. Clark
   Professor of Political Science, Delta State University, Abraka

3. Professor Amadasun Okungbowa
   Federal University, Wukari, Taraba State

4 Dr. Moses Mudiagan Adagbabiri
   Associate Professor of Political Science, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

5 Dr. Michael Akpovbera Onodje, PhD
   Senior Lecturer, Economics Department, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

6 Anthony Ojarikre, PhD
   Department of Languages, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

7 Dr. Chinyere Eucharia Ihedioha
   Department of Sociology, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

8 Odionye, Chinwe Mirian, PhD
   Department of Mass Communication, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

9 Omoshue, Joe Okpako, PhD
   Department of Mass Communication, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

10 Yare, Matthew Danjuma
   Faculty of Arts, Department of Mass Communication, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

11 Ekiyor, Alare Esther
   Department of Mass Communication, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

12 Ebenezer Okorodudu, PhD
   Department of Political Science, Delta State University, Abraka

13 Faith Eriuma Onyebuenyi
   Department of Financial Studies, Faculty of Management Sciences, National Open University of Nigeria

14 Abdulrasheed Abdulyakeen,
   Department of Political Science, Al-Qalam University, Katsina State

15 Nnamdi Okonkwo, PhD
Admiralty University of Nigeria, Ibusa, Delta State

16 Innocent Ocholi
Admiralty University of Nigeria, Ibusa, Delta State

17 Anaele, Rosemary
Department of Political Science, Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo

18 Mary Esiri, PhD
Senior Lecturer, Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka

19 Tumbo Hippo Brodrick, PhD
Department of Political Science, Novena University, Ogume, Delta State

20 Oriakhi Marian Omosivie, PhD
Institute of Public Administration and Extension Services, University of Benin, Benin City

21 Bonga Francis, Eniekedou
Department of Non-formal Education, College of Education, Warri

22 Ebegh, Shadrack
Department of Social Studies, College of Education, Warri

23 Reuben Daniel, PhD
Department of Social Studies, College of Education, Warri

24 Ojighoro Reuben Edaferene, PhD
Department of Religious Studies, College of Education, Warri

25 Fada Doupere Paul
Department of Political Science, Federal University Of Otuoke, Bayelsa State

26 Michael Gunn
Department of English, University Of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa-Ibom State

27 Yusuf Tsojou Ishaya
Department of English and Literary Studies, Federal University, Wukari, Taraba State

28 Dr. Victor Abiele Okosun, PhD
Chief Lecturer, College of Education, Ekiadolor, Benin City

29 Francis, Monkap Matiki , PhD
Federal College Of Education, Obudu, Cross River State

30 Dr. Kenneth. Y. Irhue, PhD
Department of Political Science
Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

31 Dr. Olawale Akenride
Department of Political Science
Osun State University, Osogbo, Nigeria

32 Abdullahi. A. Osuwa
Department of Political Science
Kogi State University, Anyigba, Nigeria

33 David Babalola
Nigerian Defence Academy,
Kaduna, Nigeria.

34 James Kodilichukwu Anekwe
Federal University, Otuoke.

EDITORIAL

The Chief Editor on behalf of the Editorial Board, has great pleasure in presenting the maiden edition Vol 1 No 1 of the Journal of the Faculty of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences (JFHSMS) Edwin Clark University, Kiagbodo to the research community and the world at large. JFHSMS aims to create a platform between the researchers and authors who seek to publish their work and the people who wish to keep up with the latest findings in the areas of Humanities, Social and Management Sciences. The journal provides opportunities to the researchers, academics and professionals to publish their research papers around the world. The quick review process, quality Editorial Board and quality articles guarantees this Journal as unique.

The Chief Editor is very grateful to the members of the faculty research committee and Editorial Board for their prompt and kind response towards the establishment of this Journal. Their contributions, no doubt is highly commendable and their efforts both human and material cannot be over-emphasized.

We seek the blessings and support of all in the success journey of the Journal.

Prof. (Mrs) Juliana O. Okoh

The Editor-in-Chief

CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND EARNINGS MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA;THE MODERATING ROLE OF AUDIT COMMITTEE GENDER DIVERSITY

BY

FAITH ERINMA ONYEBUENYI
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCIAL STUDIES
FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES
NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA
fnnanna@noun.edu.ng; erifaithonyebuenyi@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study examined the moderating effect of audit committee gender diversity on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and earnings management of quoted consumer goods companies in Nigeria. Based on Ex-post facto research design, panel data set was collected from sixteen (16) quoted consumer goods companies within a fourteen (14) year period spanning from 2006 to 2019 financial year. The hypothesis was formulated with the dependent variable as earnings management and the independent variable as corporate social responsibility.Furthermore, the study employed a moderator variable of audit committee gender diversity together with a control variable of firm leverage. The robust least square regression analyses revealed that inclusion of more female folks into audit committee teams will significantly restrain managers from engaging in earnings management practices via corporate social responsibility activities and disclosure of same. In the light of the result obtained, we advocate that ***board of directors of various quoted consumer goods companies in Nigeria should consider amidst other policy options, corporate governance monitoring policies that will drive more female representation in audit committee teams***
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Keywords: Corporate Social Responsibility, Earnings Management, Moderating Effect Consumer Goods Manufacturing Companies

INTRODUCTION

The importance of corporate social responsibility (hereafter CSR) reporting to corporations and their stakeholders is growing. Information obtained from the study of Abdelhalim and Eldin (2019) attributes this growing trend to the rise in globalization and international trade. In an ever-interconnected world, the environmental and social footprint of transnational corporations is going beyond employees to influence the livelihood of consumers and communities. As a result, policy makers are enforcing more responsible and transparent corporate behavior that considers the environmental, social and economic concerns of their constituencies. In addition to countries such as France that have done so for some time, several other major European Union (EU) countries, among them, Germany and Italy, have increasingly engaged in mandating CSR reporting in recent years (Mion&Adaui, 2019). Even though CSR reporting involves complex and hard to quantify issues such as the environment, human resources and local community relations, it is generally seen as a positive endeavor for companies themselves. With greater CSR practices and reporting, studies documents that, a firm can expect to achieve lower cost of capital, increased market share, good reputation with stakeholders and so forth (Buertey et al., 2019; Suyono and Farooque, 2018). According to Suyono and Farooque (2018), it is because of these benefits a considerable number of companies make yearly disclosures voluntarily.

However, despite the benefit of CSR to both corporations and their stakeholders, there is a concern that they are sometimes being used for more sinister goals, hiding earnings management being one. Earnings management is the practice of manipulating financial reports by managers to fit a specific and predetermined goal. It is generally seen as harmful since the resulting financial information about the company fails to capture the company's true worth (Al-Haddad & Whittington, 2019). According to Ijeoma and Aronu (2013) earnings management is a term used to refer to the aggressive use of choices available under accounting rules, to present the most fattening view of a company in its financial statement. It involves the pushing of accounting principles to the limit of their flexibility or even beyond so as to improve their annual statements. The concern is that some studies are finding more earnings management practices to be positively linked to CSR reporting. This suggests that managers are using the good reputation they get from being involved in CSR reporting to hide their less-than-acceptable financial reporting practices (Liu & Lee, 2019). Studies in two dozen countries by Prior et al. (2008) for instance suggeststhat managers use CSR as a tool to protect their own careers. They employ CSR reporting as a shield to hide earnings management (Mohmed et al., 2020). This tactical move by managers which results in a positive link between CSR reporting and the practices of earnings management is usually explained with the agency theory.

To forestall corporate disclosure fraud crisis (earnings management), organizations take a wide range of actions which include setting up committees whose roles include watching closely the contents of the corporate disclosure from compilation to publication and beyond (Al-Shaer, Salama& Toms, 2017). One of such committees is the audit committee which according to Eyenubo, Mudzamir and Ali (2017) consists of a selection of members of an organization saddled with the duty of oversight of the company's accounting and financial reporting as a good corporate governance tool which enhances the integrity of corporate disclosure.As it relates to audit committee characteristic, the influence of audit committee gender diversity on earnings management have been given serious attention. As males and females are socialized differently based on the behavior that is accepted and acceptable, they stuck with what is called “gender identity” (Eagly&Karau, 1991). For example, females are raised and told to be a mother, wife, and daughter, while males are raised in a more competitive habitat (Dick &Nadin, 2006). Thereby, both personalities are entirely different, where females tend to be more people-oriented, and males tend to be more dominant and ambitious (Eagley&Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). These personality differences are then brought to the working context supported by real-life organizational practices which later show the differences among the two. According to Krishnan & Parsons (2008), women tend to be better in dealing with ethical issues. Women are more focused on relationships and helping people, while men are more concerned about competition and making money for the organization. Accordingly, Ittonen et al. (2013) found that female partner in an auditing firm show more constraint in earnings management. It indicates that firms audited by female engagement partners are associated with smaller abnormal accruals.As a member of the audit committee, the presence of females has an impact since they show better communication abilities and meeting preparations (Stewart & Munro, 2007). Gender diversity in the audit committee will lower the audit fee because female representation reduces the inherent risk of misstatements (Ittonen et al., 2010). More than that, prior studies have shown that females are more conservative and unbiased than males in making ethical decisions (Thiruvadi&Huang, 2011). As female's conservatism level is higher than those of males, females tend to avoid exaggerating the good news. Hence, having more female in the audit committee will influence the CSR reporting style by more conservative. Conservative CSR reporting style can be interpreted as "avoiding misleading financial statement user, delaying the good news, and tends to disclose the bad news or avoid the exaggeration of CSR disclosure".

However, even with the existence of such monitoring committees'corporate scandals have continued to soar (Suyono, 2012). For example, the collapse of Enron and World Com. earlier in the 1980's and 1990's, global giants such as John Mathews Bank (JMB), Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI), Barring Brothers, Nomura Securities, Brex and Long-Term Capital Management (LTCM) all failed as a result of earnings management related factors (Okaro&Okafor, 2013). Nigeria is not spared either from incidences of earnings management. For instance, the case of five banks that failed the CBN stress test in 2009, Afri-bank, Fin Bank, Union Bank, Intercontinental Bank and Oceanic bank. These banks had one thing in common as they were certified distressed by the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) barely few months after their auditors had given them a clean bill of health. Perhaps, the greatest audit failure in Nigeria has been associated with Cadbury (Nig.) Plc accounting scandal which came to the fore in 2006. This scandal has since been euphemistically dubbed Nigeria's Enron equivalent (Okaro&Okafor, 2013). The tragic collapse and scandals of these giants were as a result of fraudulent practices of the board of directors and the intentional misconduct of managers (Musa, Jide& Victor, 2013).

This study contributes to the growing earnings management literature by recognizing that prior related studies often ignore the use of audit committee gender diversity as a mitigator of earnings management arising from CSR activities and its corresponding disclosure. Such studies can be traced to those of: **Fali, Aminu, Macauley&Yahaya, 2019;**Adagye **2019; Isa & Farouk, 2018;ThankGod&Onukogu, 2018.**Moreover, Suyono and Farooque (2018) argue that managing earnings is more pronounced in manufacturing firms which, when compared to other similarly-sized firms in other sectors, tend to have more complex financial transactions and high volatility in cash flows (Marschinski& Martinez, 2019). Hence, from the foregoing, this study is poised to ascertain the moderating effect of audit committee gender diversity on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and earnings management of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria.The rest of the article is organized as follows: Section Two discusses the literature review and hypothesis development; Section Three describes the data, variables, and econometric models; Section Four provides the empirical analysis and discussion; Section five presents conclusion and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Earnings Management

Earnings refer to net income. It can be described as the paramount measure of a firm's value as seen by the stock market which prizes both fasts as well as stable earnings growth (**Agbo, Angahar, Ivungu&Anongo, 2020)**. However, Nwoye, Anichebe and Osegbue (2020) document that earnings management is a multifaceted and difficult trend happening in corporate organization. In spite of the numerous definitions of earnings managementfrom various writers, there is no consensus on the most excellent definition as well as explanation of the concept. For example; **Ubesie, Ogbu and Mbah (2019) see** earnings management as a strategy used by the management of a company to deliberately manipulate the company's earnings so that the figures match a predetermined target for the purpose of income smoothing. **Obigbemi, Omolehinwa, Mukoro, Ben-Caleb and Olusanmi (2016) define** earnings management as an act of maximizing the loopholes in the financial reporting laws, to maximize personal, group, or organizational objectives at the detriment of another group of individuals who may be directly or indirectly affected by such decisions. **These loopholes maybe in** the form of creative accounting such as recording anticipated sales in the books as turnover for the present year, as well as the reduction in the cost of research and development". **Obigbemi, et al (2016) affirmed that** earnings management could also involve the use of discretionary accruals, the accumulation of accrued expenses in the bid to give a different picture of the financial well-being of the company.Furthermore, Farouk and Isa (2018) defined earnings management as the deliberate dampening of fluctuations about some level of earnings considered being normal for the firm.The term is understood to refer to systematic misrepresentation of the true income and assets of corporations or other organizations" (Omoye&Eriki, 2014) or innovative ways of characterizing income, assets and liabilities (Donaldson &Werhane, 2009).ButNwaobia, Kwarbai and Fregene (2019) noted that earnings management is an accounting practice carried out by management with the intension to influence or misrepresent reported earnings through the use of accounting methods or accelerating expense or under-accruing expense or untimely recognition or deferment of revenue transactions (depending on target objective) or using other methods crafted to influence earnings.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Just like the concept of earnings management, the definition of corporate social responsibility lacks universality, and different interpretations have been given to it. It is a multifarious concept that lends itself to multiplicity of meanings. However, in this study, corporate social responsibility is described as a collection of activities which are of direct benefit to society which a firm voluntarily or discretionally undertakes. These activities form part of the overall corporate duties that the firm owes its stakeholders and the natural environment within its scope of operations (Duke &Kankpang, 2013). Likewise, Uwuigbe and Egbide (2012) describe corporate social responsibility as *disclosures relating to the interaction between an organization and its physical and social environment inclusive of disclosures relating to human resources, community involvement, the natural environment, energy, and product safety.*Nwanne (2016) define corporate social responsibility as the act of taking care of ones' immediate community which could be through provision of electricity, pipe bore water, building of good roads and ensuring security in the society or environment where the organization is operating. According to **Ohiokha, Odion and Akhalumeh (2016), t**he concept of corporate social responsibility requires that companies should map out and give effect to specific programmes in accordance with a well-defined social policy. But in the views of Lin & Amin, (2016), the concept of corporate social responsibility refers to activities of the organization which focus on society beyond making profit. Corporate social responsibility means that a corporation should be accountable for any of its actions that affect people, their communities, and their environment (Haryono&Iskandar, 2016). However,Development Research Center of the State Council(2013) and the World Bank defined CSR as the commitment of businesses to contribute to sustainable economic development by working with employees, the local community and the society at large to improve their lives in ways that are good for business and for development.

Audit Committee Gender Diversity

An audit committee plays significant roles in financial reporting as to ensure compliance with the regulatory requirements and auditing standards. Audit committees are formed to provide critical oversight of companies' financial reporting process. Particularly, the primary purpose of their formation is to enhance the credibility of audited financial statements. The committees are expected to act independently to resolve conflicts between the management and external auditors (Klien, 2002). In particular, the audit committees can act as an arbiter between management and the auditors by providing a formal communication channel between the board, management and the external auditor (Cohen et al, 2008, Turley &Zaman, 2004). Prior related literature suggest that audit committee characteristics are significant factors that may positively influence their effectiveness by lowering earnings management practices (Song &Windram, 2004; Klein, 2002;Bedard et al., 2004;Gul et al 2007 and Sun et al 2011).

CSR and Earnings Management. The Nexus

As it relates to financial reporting, accounting literature provides us with two broad reasons why firms are involved in CSR-related practices (Gerged et al., 2020). On the one hand, firms may disclose CSR reports to signal that they are a responsible member of the society. In those firms, CSR reporting is expected to be negatively related to manipulative financial reporting (Suyono&Farooque, 2018). This stems from the argument that having good relationships with various stakeholders is important for socially responsible firms, and as a result those firms are less likely to engage in aggressive earnings management that threatens their long-term reputation. This argument is supported by the stakeholder theory (Mohmed et al., 2020) and have also be confirmed in empirical studies conducted by Kim et al. (2012), and Pyo and Lee (2013). On the other hand, CSR activities may not however be wholly motivated by a firm's social standing – managers may report CSR in pursuit of their self-interest (Mohmed et al. 2020). For instance, a study from 24 countries carried out by Prior et al. (2008) suggests that managers use CSR as a tool to protect their own careers. One way of achieving this is to use CSR reporting as a shield to hide earnings management (Mohmed et al., 2020). This tactical move by managers which results in a positive link between CSR reporting and the practice of earnings management has been explained by the agency theory. Similarly, Hemingway and Maclagan (2004); and Martínez-Ferrero et al. (2016) show that CSR reporting is an act of self-interest by managers and find a positive relationship between CSR disclosures and earnings management indicating that CSR reporting is indeed used to shield discretionary accounting practices. In this case, being just a managerial tool of self-preservation, CSR reporting ends up hurting stakeholders.

Moderating Effect of Audit Committee Gender Diversity

Prior literature in psychology, sociology and management reports that women are more conservative and risk averse than men (Byrnes et al., 1999). Throughout the years it has been confirmed by various authors that women present a more ethical view than men and theyseem to be more capable in identifying unethical behaviors (Ruegger& King, 1992; Eweje&Brunton, 2010). In the same view, several other studies show that female directors are more risk averse in decision making and conservative than men (Byrnes et al., 1999; Man & Wong, 2013; Eckel& Grossman, 2008). Both risk aversion and conservatism, may influence the integrity of the financial reporting process. As supported by Hemingway (2007), earnings management is associated with risk and since women present more conservative behaviors than men,he concluded that it is more possible for men to manipulate financial statements than women. The study of Krishnan and Parsons (2008) accentuates this view and documents that earnings management is lower and earnings quality is higher when there is at least one female director in the audit committee. Grosvold et al. (2007) stated that increasing female representation will greatly benefitthe 'companies, stockholders and customers. In summary, these studies presented above provide evidence to support the fact that gender diversity affect conservatism, decision-making, and risk preference of the management within the company. Overall, it becomes substantial to believe that the presence of women in audit committees will improve firm's reporting discipline and increase investor confidence in financial statement as they could impact positively on the accuracy of financial information (Siridhi et al. ,2011; Clatworthy and Peel, 2013).

Hypotheses: B*ased on prior related studies, i hypothesize that the presence of women in audit committees reinforces the external governance of the firm which leads to reduced earnings managementthat may arise from CSR disclosure*

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpin for this study is the agency theory which is based on the relationship between the principal (owners) and the agent managers). The separation of ownership from management in modern corporations provides thecontext for the function of agency theory. Atu, Atu, Enegbe and Atu (2016) buttressesthe fact that "modern organizations have widely dispersed ownership, inthe form of shareholders, who are not normally involved in the management of their companies". Inthis instance an agent is appointed to manage the daily operations of the company. This distinctionbetween ownership and control creates the potential for conflicts of interest between agents andprincipals, which result in some costs associated with resolving these conflicts (Jensen &Meckling, 1976and Eisenhardt, 1989).The most important basis for agency theory is that the managers are usually motivated bytheir own personal gains hence work to exploit their own personal interests rather than consideringshareholders' interests and maximizing shareholder value. Consequently, management has anincentive to manage the company's financial report process in order to meet or beat earning targetsand, thus, receive any bonuses that may be tied to the company's earnings (performance-relatedpay). This creates an information asymmetry in that managers can exercise the discretion they haveon accruals, which in turn reduces the relevance and reliability of reported earnings, and the wholefinancial statements. However, the key predicament indicated by agency theory is ensuring thatmanagers pursue the interests of shareholders and not only their own interests". In order toeffectively limit agency costs caused by the separation of ownership and control, Fama and Jensen(1983) propose that firms need a system that can separate decision management from decisioncontrol noting that this would limit agency costs by controlling the power of management and ensuring theproper consideration of shareholders' interest.

Empirical Literature Review

In South Korea, Buertey, Sun, Lee and Hang, (2019), investigates the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) and earnings management (EM) and examines whether corporate governance (CG) mechanisms can moderate the CSR–EM relation. Fixed-effect regression is used to estimate the coefficients of the variables. The independent variable of the study is corporate social responsibility score by provided by CSRHub. The dependent variable of the study is earnings management via discretionary accrualsmeasurement. Board Size, Board independence, Institutional ownership and block ownership were taken as the mediating variables. The authors find a significant positive relation between CSR and EM. The authors confirmed managerial opportunistic use of CSR explained within the agency theoretical framework.

ThankGod and Onukogu (2018)*investigates the impact of audit committee expertise and earnings management practices of quoted food & beverages manufacturing firms in Nigeria for the period 2006 to 2016. Secondary data were collected from annual reports of 15 sampled firms using convenience sampling method dictated by data availability. The study period covered 2006 to 2016. Earnings management was measured by discretionary accruals, using modified Jones (1991) model. Ordinary Least Square regression technique was applied on the cross-sectional estimates of the discretionary accruals, taking cross-section of audit committee quality dimensions (i.e., committee expertise, committee size and meeting frequency) as independent variables while firm size was used as the contextual variable. It was found that, meeting frequency failed the test of statistical significance at 5% level, while the relationship between committee expertise and earnings management was not significant at 5% level. The authors concluded that audit committee expertisecan restrain earnings management practices of quoted food & beverages manufacturing firms in Nigeria.*

In Nigeria, Uyagu and Dabor, (2017) conducted a studied to find out the influence of corporate social responsibility on earnings management. Secondary data set employed in the study were extracted from the annual reports and accounts of selected fifty-two (52) manufacturing companies in Nigeria covering a period of 15 years (2001 – 2015). Discretional accrual was used to measure the dependent variable of earnings management, while Corporate social responsibility score index was used to measure corporate social responsibility as the independent variable. The model was control by firm size and leverage and the results from the ordinary least square regression techniques show that there is a positive relationship between CSR and earnings management. The authors concluded that statutory bodies should put a ceiling on the amount to be expended on CSR which must be exceeded by any firm.

Mishra and Malhotra (2016) examine the effectiveness of audit committees in constraining earnings management among Indian quoted companies. Secondary data was collected for a sample of 130 companies for a three-year period 2013-2015. Univariate correlations, multivariate linear regression, and logistic regression models were employed to analyses the dataof which evidence suggests significant impact of audit committee size, multiple directorships of audit committee members and frequency of audit committee meetings on earnings quality. Other audit committee characteristics were not found to have significant impact on the level of earnings management. The authors recommended that regulators and company boards should evaluate the efficacy of board audit committees and implement additional governance measures to help preserve the integrity of financial statements.

Gras-Gil, Manzano and Fernández (2016) investigate the relationship between corporate social responsibility and earnings management. The study used discretionary accruals to measure the extent of earnings management as the dependent variable and employed MERCO index to measure the extent of CSR as the independent variable. Using multivariate regression analysis technique for a sample of Spanish non-financial companies for the period 2005 to 2012, they find a negative impact of corporate social responsibility practices on earnings management. The authors noted that the results show some increase of accruals for companies with a medium-high profile of CSR activities, and suggested that it may be due to a potential non-linear relationship (maybe quadratic) between CSR and earnings management.

Muttakin and Arifur Khan (2015) examines the relationship between corporate social responsibility (CSR) disclosures and earnings quality proxied by earnings accruals. The independent variable corporate social responsibility is proxied by community, environment, employee, product and service and value-added information. Controlling for leverage and firm age effects, Ordinary Least Square regression technique reveal that managers in an emerging economy manage earnings when they provide CSR disclosures. Such earnings management is achieved through income increasing discretionary accruals. Furthermore, companies from export-oriented industries dominated by powerful stakeholders (international buyers) disclosing more CSR activities, provide transparent financial reports through constraining earnings management. The authors suggested that policymakers need to be cautious about opportunistic behavior of managers and enhance monitoring mechanism to enforce social compliance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Specifically, in this study, *ex-post facto* research design is employed. Kerlinger (1970) notes that *ex post facto* research is one in which inference is drawn from events that has already occurred. The population is made up of all consumer goods firms that are listed on the floor of the Nigerian stock exchange market for the period between 2006 and 2019. As at 31st December, 2019 the total number of listed consumer goods manufacturing companies were eighteen (18) (NSE Factbook, 2019).

Variables

This section defines the dependent, independent, moderator as well as the control variables of interest. Earnings management is the dependent variable with independent variableas corporate social responsibility. In this study, the moderator variable is audit committee gender diversity together with a control variable of firm leverage.

Dependent Variable

In this study we employ discretionary accruals method which is computed as the sum of total accruals and nondiscretionary (Kothari et al. 2005)

Independent Variable

Corporate social responsibility score of a company as provided by MachameRatios in the website CSR database. This CSR score is the weighted average of the scores on five dimensions. Companies obtain a score on their social performance between 0 and 100 with a higher score indicating better performance. The combined value of the five dimensions is denoted in this study as CSR score following the study of Cui et al. (2018).

Moderator Variable

The moderator variable in this study is audit committee gender diversity computed as the ratio offemale audit committee members to total audit committee members within a given year.

Control Variable

Firm Leverage is employed as a control variable following the study of Mohmed et al., (2020)and computed as total debt divided by total asset

Method of Data Analyses

In testing the moderating effect of audit committee gender diversity on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and earnings management in Nigeria, first, we conducted some pre-regression analysis which included descriptive and correlation analyses.

Next, we estimated the moderated regression model. The moderation model tests whether the prediction of a dependent variable, Y, from an independent variable, X, differs across levels of a third variable, Z. Moderator variables affect the strength and/or direction of the relationship between a predictor and an outcome: enhancing, reducing, or changing the influence of the predictor (Aiken & West, 1991). Hence, in this study we test whether the moderator variable of audit committee gender diversity affects the and/or direction of the relationship between CSR and earnings management in Nigeria. Furthermore, Gujarati (2003) suggests some critical assumptions that must be met in validating the least square regression estimates. Particularly, some regression diagnostic test which include; test for heteroscedasticity (P = 0.000), test for model specification (P = 0.556) and test for appropriate functional form (P = 0.338) were conducted to improve the credibility of the resulting coefficients. Robust Panel Least Squareregression estimator was employed to test the hypotheses of the study since the diagnostic test revealed that the initial model (Panel Ordinary Least Square POLS)estimator exhibitedsignificant traces of heteroscedasticity. Indicator of the model goodness of fit (F_ Statistics)was examined with the indicator of parameter significance: probability values (White, 1980). The study specifies the econometric model to reveal the moderating effect of audit committee gender diversity on the relationship between corporate social responsibility and earnings management.

Econometric Model

$$emgt_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 csrsocre_{it} + csrscore_{it} * acgendiv + \beta_3 fin\_lev_{it} + e_{it}$$

Where:

emgt	=	Earnings Management
csr_score	=	CSR score
acgendiv	=	Audit Committee Gender Diversity
Fin_lev	=	Financial leverage
"{i}"	=	Cross Section (Sample Companies)
"t"	=	Time Frame (2006 to 2019)
e_{it}	=	Stochastic error Term

Descriptive Statistics

The table below presents the descriptive statistics for this study. From the table, it is observed that on average the variable of earnings management (acc_earn) for the firms under consideration is -0.067 with a standard deviation of 0.204. Also, the table show that corporate social responsibility performance (csrscore) during the period is 0.65 which indicates that about 65% of the firms in our sample engaged in corporate social responsibility disclosure. Furthermore, the table suggest that women representation in audit committee team (acgendiv) make up only about 13% which imply that audit committee teams of quoted consumer goods firms in Nigeria are male dominated. For the control variable, we find that firm leverage (fin_lev) reveal an average value of 61.010 with a standard deviation of 27.013 during the period under investigation.

Table 1 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
acc_earn	158	-.0672595	.2037452	-.985	.698
csrscore	159	.6540843	.2533476	0	1
acgendiv	159	12.7866	15.48389	0	60
fin_lev	160	61.09987	27.01257	-17.15667	224.11

Authors' Computation (2021)

Specifically, the table below reveal that the correlation between the variable of corporate social responsibility disclosure and earnings management is positive (0.1040 or 10%). A closer look at the table also reveals that the association between audit committee gender diversity and earnings management (-0.0583 or -6%). This negative sign is also reflected in the association between the control variable of firm leverage and earnings management (-0.1644 or 16%) during the period under study. Overall, the table show that the correlation coefficients among the variables of interest are less than 0.8, or 80% which is the limit or cut off correlation point commonly suggested by prior studies after which the consequences of multicollinearity is suspected (Gujarati 2003).

Table 2 Correlation Matrix Analysis

Key
rho
Number of obs
Sig. level

	acc_earn	csrscore	acgendiv	fin_lev
acc_earn	1.0000			
	157			
csrscore	0.1040	1.0000		
	157	157		
	0.1949			
acgendiv	-0.0583	0.3435	1.0000	
	157	157	157	
	0.4681	0.0000		
fin_lev	-0.1644	0.0982	0.0353	1.0000
	157	157	157	157
	0.0396	0.2210	0.6603	

Authors' Computation 2021

Regression Analysis and Discussion

The table below presents the results from ordinary least square estimation techniques and robust standard estimator. The robust standard estimator is adopted after the assumption of homoscedastic in panel least square regression was violated. Furthermore, following the null (Ho) hypothesis of 'no model specification error' (P-value: 0.556) there is an assurance to carry out further analysis.

Table 3Panel Ordinary Least Square & Robust Standard Error Estimations

	CSR	Audit Committee Gender Diversity	Financial Leverage
POLS Estimator			
Coefficient **t_ Statistics** **Probability_t**	0.1567 (2.20) {0.030) **	-0.0007 (-0.54) {0.593}	-0.0014 (-2.05) {0.042} **
Robust SE Estimator			
Coefficient **t_ Statistics** **Probability_t**	0.1567 (2.14) {0.034) **	-0.0747 (--2.65) {0.004}	-0.0014 (-1.87) {0.063} *

No. of Obs = 157 F-Statistics (3, 153) = 2.79; Prob.>F = 0.0425

Note: t-statistic and probability statistics are represented in () and {} respectively
Where: * represents 10% & ** represents 5% level of statistical significance
Source: Authors' Computations, 2021

The panel robust standard error estimator is relied upon for interpretation and policy recommendation since it corrects for heteroskedastic assumption which was violated under the ordinary least square estimator(Gujarati, 2003). From the regression results in the table above, the probability of the F statistic (0.0425), is statistically significant at 5% level hence the overall model can be considered as good. Hence the entire model is accepted indicating that the regression model has some explanatory power. The table presents the combined models of unmoderated and moderated variables. The result provided in the table above indicates that the variable of CSR before its moderation had a coefficient of 0.1567, t-statistics of 2.14 and Probability of t = 0.034. This implies a positive statistically significant effect on earnings management at 1% level.This finding is in line with the agency theory Hemingway and Maclagan (2004); Martínez-Ferrero et al. (2016)Mohmed et al. (2020) However, the introduction of the moderating variable of audit committee gender diversity reveals a coefficient of -0.0747, t-statistics of -2.65 and probability of t = 0.004. This implies that audit committee gender diversity significantly moderates the relationship between corporate social responsibility performance and earnings management during the period under investigation.The negative and significant moderating effect of audit committee gender diversity on the relationship between earnings management and corporate social responsibility as obtained in this study is consistent with the view thatfemale audit committee representative are tougher monitorsand they tend to align more with shareholders' interests (Siridhi et al. ,2011; Clatworthy & Peel, 2013: Eweje & Brunton, 2010: Halpern, 2000).Hence, the author reinterates that it becomes substantial to believe that the presence of women in audit committees will improve firm's reporting discipline and increase investor confidence in financial statement as they could impact positively on the accuracy of financial information.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The foremost motivation for this study is the fact that so many similar studies carried out in Nigeria have focused on the platonic relationship that exist between corporate social responsibility and earnings management with no similar study taking cognizance of the possible moderating effect of audit committee characteristics; (gender diversity). **According** to Prior et al. (2008), managers who are engaged in earnings management practices may resort to corporate social responsibility activities to divert the attention of stakeholders from monitoring their opportunistic behaviour, thereby protecting their positions. In this study the author document that more gender diversified audit committee team does infact weaken the opportunistic behavoiurs of such managers. Therefore the author carefully recommend that board of directors of various quoted consumer goods companies in Nigeria should consider admist others corporate governance monitoring policy that will drive more female representationin audit committee team.This policy is capable of unmasking sharp practices (earnings management) been perpetuated by managers. The findings have significant implication for both policy makers, firm managers, and other stakeholders. Insights from the study will help develop policies and when implementedthese policies will strengthen corporate governance structures, especially in underdeveloped markets (such as in Nigeria) protect the interest of shareholders and improve market confidence.

Limitation of Study

No study is without its limitations. I restricted the sample to only consumer goods listed firms in Nigeriawhile other non-financial firms were excluded. Firms operate within the context of society and culture, so it would be interesting for future research to explore the international context. Future related studies may consider how country-specific culture could impact the relationship between CSR and earnings management. More control variables such as firm size and firm growth may be considered as it has shown that firm visibility can incentivise managers oportunistic tendencies.

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