

INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL REPORTING STANDARD AND PERFORMANCE OF INSURANCE COMPANIES: EVIDENCE FROM NIGERIA

Abstract

Quality financial reporting in terms of information disclosure pattern, transparency, auditing, reporting standards, regulatory control and flexibility, corporate governance, and financial scandals have influence on organizational performance. This study sought to investigate the influence of quality financial reporting on organizational performance with specific reference to Nigerian insurance industry. Purposive sampling method was used to select the accountants and auditors of twenty nine (29) insurance companies listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) market, totaling 58 respondents. The data collection instruments for the study were structured questionnaires that designed for the study. Data analysis was performed with the aid of descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages and mean, and inferential statistical tools such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method of estimation. The finding revealed that there is strong relationship between financial performance and quality financial reporting. The finding also indicated that quality financial reporting has significant influence on investment decision making. This connotes that adoption and implementation of IFRS is a veritable tool to financial performance of Nigerian insurance companies. Subsequently, the study recommended that management of insurance companies should embrace and implement IFRS with immediate so that the sector can attract both local and foreign investors. Also, insurance regulatory authority should sanction any insurance company fails to adopt and implement IFRS on or before year 2020.

Keywords: IFRS, Quality Financial Reporting, Information, Financial Performance, Insurance

Introduction

International financial reporting standard came to being as a result of inconsistency in reporting and poorly structured accounting standard which eventually led to dramatic collapse of big American corporate like Enron, WorldCom and Tyco. These scandals left the accounting profession in a “deep traces” in the history. This situation turned the attention of entire world on accounting firms, accounting practices and audit practices [1]. This menace make International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) to transit into the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) under the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) to ensure full

disclosure of matters concerning organizations operations so as to aid investors in making investment decisions and improve organizational performance. In line with this assertion, Anaja and Onoja [2] postulate that organizations owe a duty to fully disclose matters concerning their operations so as to aid investors in making investment decisions. Both large and small organizations in addition to satisfying the legislating requirement tend to retain existing investors and to attract potential ones through the publication of their financial reporting where the capital stock of a corporation is widely held and its affairs are of interest to general public relations. Wallace [3] sees financial reporting as the communication of financial information to various users of accounting information to make an investment decision, obtaining credit facilities, and other financing decisions.

Studies in both developed and developing nations have documented that financial reporting methods in terms of information disclosure pattern, transparency, auditing, reporting standards, regulatory control and flexibility, corporate governance, and financial scandals have influence on organizational performance [2, 4]. Having recognized the need for International financial reporting standards adoption in both public and private sector in Nigeria, Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) directs all companies that are quoted on the exchange to ensure they adopt the IFRSs (International Financial Reporting Standard) by December 2011 while the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) also directed financial institutions to adopt the IFRS by December 2010 [5]. In spite of this directive, most of quoted organizations especially insurance companies still evade this regulation through fraudulent mechanisms [4]. Information gathered by Financial Vanguard reveals that most insurance companies have not commenced implementation of IFRS. This implies that most insurance companies are still ignorant of the benefits of IFRS, thereby limiting their knowledge about their financial position and above all

their ability to use IFRS to make important investment decisions. As a current situation in the society of Nigeria, investment decisions in the insurance companies have been very slow due to non-implementation of international financial report standard (IFRS) and other important financial records. Consequently, the sector has been experiencing distressed syndrome, while some are thinking of mergers and acquisitions. This is evidenced by Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) that about 14 insurance companies now under threat of hostile take-over in the Nigerian Stock Exchange. No wonder why the sector could only contribute 0.7% toward Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is very low compared to other markets such as South Africa with penetration levels of around 12% [6].

Prior studies [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13] on quality financial reporting in both developed and developing countries focused on banks and manufacturing companies. It is observed that, none of research works dealt with effects of quality financial reporting on the performance of insurance companies in Africa especially in Nigeria. The omission of this in literature, therefore, will form major gap in this study.

Research Questions

The study, therefore, intends to answer the following fundamental questions: what is level of adoption and implementation of IFRS in Nigerian insurance companies? To what extent does quality financial reporting influence the performance of insurance companies? And does quality financial reporting has influence on investment decision making by insurance companies?

Research Objectives

The main objectives are;

- i. To determine the level of adoption and implementation of IFRS in Nigerian insurance companies.
- ii. To examine the influence of quality financial reporting on the performance of insurance companies.
- iii. To assess the influence of quality financial reporting on investment decision making by insurance companies.

Theoretical Framework

The introduction of quality financial reporting standards was initiated in 1973 when the international accounting standard committee (IASC) was formed by 16 professional bodies from different countries in Europe, America, Canada, Australia, and across the globe [14]. The process gained speed when the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO) endorsed the IASC standards for international listings in May 2000. It was further facilitated by a regulation approved in the European Union in 2002 required the preparation of consolidated (group) accounts of listed companies domiciled in the European Union in accordance with endorsed IFRS. In line with this quality financial reporting standards, Nigeria government through its agencies such as Central bank of Nigeria (CBN) and Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) directed all companies that are quoted on the exchange to ensure they adopt the IFRSs (International Financial Reporting Standard) by December 2011 while the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) also directed financial institutions to adopt the IFRS by December 2010.

According to Alistair [15], IFRS is a series of accounting pronouncements published by the International Accounting Standard Board (IASB) to help prepare financial statements throughout the world, to provide and present high quality, transparent and comparable financial information. Essien-Akpan [16] argues that the components of IFRS financial statements

includes fair representation, accounting policies, going concern, accrual basis of accounting, consistency, materiality, off-setting and comparatives. Fowokan [17] cited in Demaki [14] identifies the objectives of IFRS as follows: a) to work actively with the national setter to bring about convergence of national accounting standards, b) IFRSs are designed for adoption by profit oriented entities, c) IFRSs require that financial statements (FS) give a true and fair view of the financial health of entities, d) to develop a single set of high quality understandable and enforceable global accounting standard that requires transparent and comparable information in financial statements, e) and to help participants in various capital market across the globe to understand financial statements. Demaki [14] also argues that adoption and implementation of IFRS will position Nigerian companies in the global market place as well as ensure transparency, accountability and integrity in financial reporting in Nigeria which is a prerequisite for the attraction of investment that will promote economic development.

Empirical Review and Hypothesis Formulation

Relationship between quality financial reporting and organizational performance

Osioorenaya [4] determines the relationship between the quality of financial reporting and profit after tax, return on asset, and return on equity. Data collections were both from primary and secondary sources. The study adopted the survey research and cross sectional research design. A well-structured questionnaire were used to collect data from 350 respondents. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse the data. The findings show that there is a significant relationship between quality of financial reporting and organizational performance measured by profit after tax, return on asset and return on asset of the quoted companies in Nigeria. In a similar study, Badavar and Taghizadeh [18] evaluate the relation between the quality of auditing and efficiency of investment in companies registered at Tehran

Exchange market. 100 companies were selected as sample for the 2006-2011 period. The results show that generally there is a positive and significant relation between quality of auditing and organizational performance measured by investment efficiency.

Muhammadi [19] investigates the relationship between financial reporting quality and investment efficiency and the factors affecting the firms listed in Tehran Stock Exchange from 2009 to 2012. His results of statistical analyses on 93 firms in Tehran Stock Exchange showed that, the financial reporting quality had a significant positive correlation with the investment efficiency. He also found that, there was a direct link between firm size, growth opportunities and cash holdings as well as tangibility of assets with investment efficiency. Adeyemi and Asaolu [20] also examine financial reporting practices among post consolidation banks in Nigeria and the subsequent stability of the banks. The study relies on secondary data collected through in-depth content analysis of published annual reports and accounts of 13 out of the 21 banks quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange between 2005 and 2009. Reporting practices by the banks were predicated on scores obtained from a Composite Disclosure Index (CDI) computed from a checklist from SASs and Prudential Guidelines' requirements. The results indicate a high level of compliance with the mandatory disclosure requirements for banks by scoring high on the CDI (mean in excess of 90%). In addition, the regression results showed that disclosure has a positive and significant influence on banks stability (as defined by ROA and liquidity). In a study of Chen et al. [21] who evaluate the relation between quality of financial reporting and investment efficiency in privately-owned companies of developing markets. They analyze the data from 79 countries in 2002. The results show that quality of financial reporting for fiscal year of 2005 is positively correlated to efficiency of investment. Evasion. In the same vein, Bushman and Smith [22] and Lambert et al. [23] inspect the connection between financial

related reporting quality and investment and found that expansion in the financial reporting quality prompted increment in business proficiency.

However, the finding of Biddle, Hilary and Verdit [24] show a negative association between financial reporting quality and performance. In the same vein, Francis et al. [25] also find out that the relation between organizational performance measured by physical capital efficiency coefficient and quality of financial reporting is statistically insignificant. Also, the results of Verdi's studies [26] show that the index of quality of financial reporting that is named the quality of accruals has correlation to low investment and highly aggregated investment in negative ways. The study of Negash [27] also affirms that negative relationship exists between financial reporting and organizational performance.

In view of these conflicting and inconclusive results, it is therefore hypothesized that:

H₀₁: there is no significant influence of quality financial reporting on organizational performance.

Relationship between quality financial reporting and organizational performance

Bamidele, Ibrahim and Omole [7] investigate the effects of financial reporting quality on investment decision making by Deposit Money Banks in reference to Zenith Bank Plc, Nigeria. Data obtained from the audited annual reports of Zenith Bank Plc that covered period of 2009 – 2016. The study utilised both Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse the data. Results indicate that there is strong relationship between Financial Reporting Quality and investment decision. Kapellas et al [8] also summarized evidence on literature about the effect of financial reporting practices on investment decisions. They also affirm that there is strong relationship between Financial Reporting Quality and investment decision. In another study, Zayol et al [9] investigate the effect of financial information on investment decision of

shareholders of five selected banks in Nigeria from 2009 to 2015. Results reveal that, there is a positive relationship between financial information and investment decision of shareholders of banks in Nigeria. Mahmoud [11] also investigates the relevance of financial reporting quality reported by oil Listed firms in Nigeria covered (2011- 2016). Results indicate that financial reporting quality of listed oil firms in Nigeria has significant relevance to the users of the information.

Fariba and Mehran [13] examine the effect of financial reporting quality and investment opportunities and dividend based on decision making of Insurance companies in Iran. They found that, investment opportunities and quality of corporate financial reporting has a significant relationship with dividend policy and investment decisions. In same vein, Nwaobia, et al [28] explore financial reporting quality on investors' decisions using 10 selected manufacturing companies listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange Market covered period of 2010-2014. Correlation matrix, Vector auto regressive estimation and Pooled OLS model were employed for the analysis. They found that there was a positive association between investors' decision and financial reporting quality. Anaja and Onoja [2] also analyze the role of financial statements on investment decision making in reference to United Bank for Africa Plc in Nigeria covered the period of 10 years. They revealed that, the transparency of financial statements of the bank has significant influence on the investment decision making of the users of financial statements.

However, Keyvan and Parastoo [12] evaluate the relationship between the quality of reporting and efficiency of investment in companies registered at Tehran Stock Exchange Market during 2010-2014. The population consists of manufacturing firms registered at Tehran Stock Exchange and the statistical sample includes 126 companies. Results show that there is negative and significant relation between quality of financial reporting and investment decision. In a

similar study, Chan-jane , Tawei and Chao-jung [29] investigate the association between investment decisions and financial reporting quality in the context of family firms versus non-family firms using a sample of listed firms in Taiwan from 1996 to 2011. Their findings indicate that financial reporting quality is more negatively associated with family firms' under-investment behavior.

Based on the above empirical studies, it is therefore hypothesized that:

H₀₂: there is no significant influence of quality financial reporting on investment decision making.

Methodology

This study adopted survey descriptive research design which was concerned with determining the frequency with which something occurs or the relationship between variables. Purposive sampling method was used to select accountants and auditors of twenty nine (29) insurance companies listed on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) market, totaling 58 respondents. The total population was used as a sample size since all of them can be reached. The data collection instruments for the study were structured questionnaires that designed for the study. To ensure validity and reliability of the research instrument, the researcher ensured that the questions that are asked are in conformity with the research objectives of the study and a pilot test of the research instrument was conducted.

The research data was statistically analyzed by means of the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Data analysis was performed with the aid of descriptive statistical tools such as frequencies, percentages and mean, and inferential statistical tools such as Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method of estimation.

Results and Discussion

Level of Job Satisfaction among the Staff of Selected Manufacturing Companies

Table 1. Level of IFRS adoption and Implementation

| Level of IFRS adoption and Implementation | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Very high | 4 | 6.8 |
| High | 5 | 8.7 |
| Low | 20 | 34.5 |
| Very low | 29 | 50 |
| Total | 58 | 100 |
| Mean | 31.12 | |
| Standard Deviation | 7.98 | |

Source: Author's Computation

Table 1 reveals that twenty nine (50%) respondents agreed that the level of IFRS adoption and implementation in Nigerian insurance companies is very low. Twenty (34.5%) of respondents agreed that level of IFRS adoption and implementation in Nigerian insurance companies is low. Five (8.7%) of respondents agreed that the level of IFRS adoption and implementation in Nigerian insurance companies is high, while only four (6.8%) of respondents agreed that the level of IFRS adoption and implementation in Nigerian insurance companies is very high. The mean IFRS adoption and Implementation score of the respondents was 31.12 and standard deviation was 7.98. From this, it is clear that majority of Nigerian insurance companies did not adopt and implement IFRS. This implies that most insurance companies are still ignorant of the benefits of IFRS, thereby limiting their knowledge about their financial position and above all their ability to use IFRS to make important investment decisions. This may be the reason why the sector is not attracting both local and foreign investors. This is evidenced by EFiNA [30]

that Nigerian insurance industry is still underdeveloped and penetration of insurance is very low, with over 86.6 million Nigerians have no form of insurance.

Deduction to be made from this finding is that, for Nigerian insurance industry to attract both local and foreign investors, to achieve the vision to be the insurance industry of choice among emerging markets, noted for high market capacity, transparency, efficiency and safety, to attain the best position in insurance markets in the world by the year 2030, then they must adopt and implement IFRS.

Table: 2 Descriptive Statistics of financial reporting

| Statement | Observation | Mean | Ranked |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| The financial report of most insurance companies always complies with relevant professional, statutory and accounting standard. | 58 | 2.80 | 7 th |
| Most fraud in insurance companies is caused by lack of quality financial reporting. | 58 | 4.21 | 1 st |
| Financial report always ensure user of financial performance do not take wrong investment and economic decision. | 58 | 4.01 | 2 nd |
| Prepares of financial report often resolve to manipulate financial report because the accounting standards are too rigid. | 58 | 3.98 | 3 rd |
| Disciplinary action by most regulatory bodies has not been able to completely eliminate financial scandal in quoted insurance companies | 58 | 3.87 | 5 th |
| Falsification in financial report can cause liquidation of the company | 58 | 3.03 | 6 th |
| Financial report do not usually satisfy all class of shareholders | 58 | 3.89 | 4 th |

Table 2 depicts that most fraud in insurance companies is caused by lack of quality financial reporting which was first with highest mean value of 4.2, followed by Financial report always ensure user of financial performance do not take wrong investment and economic decision, Prepares of financial report often resolve to manipulate financial report because the accounting

standards are too rigid, Financial report do not usually satisfy all class of shareholders, and disciplinary action by most regulatory bodies has not been able to completely eliminate financial scandal in insurance companies with mean value of 4.01, 3.98, 3.89, 3.87 and 3.03 respectively. Falsification in financial report can cause liquidation of the company was ranked last with mean value of 2.80. This indicates that implementation of international financial reporting standard in insurance companies is only solution to the impediment facing the sector.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of perceived finance Performance

| Statement | Observation | Mean | Ranked |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| Quality financial reporting can help investors determine the return on asset of their investment in Nigerian insurance companies. | 58 | 4.31 | 1 st |
| Compliance with financial reporting standard and other professional auditing standard often guarantee profitability of the insurance companies | 58 | 2.96 | 7 th |
| Financial performance of Nigerian insurance companies has direct relationship with the implementation of IFRS. | 58 | 3.95 | 5 th |
| Auditor's report helps to enhance the financial performance and the value of return on asset. | 58 | 4.02 | 4 th |
| Quality financial reporting can lead to improvement in the return on equity | 58 | 4.24 | 2 nd |
| Most insurance companies often present financial statement that are understandable to all equity holders | 58 | 3.76 | 6 ^h |
| Presence of reliable accounting and internal control system can help to strengthen the value of return on equity. | 58 | 4.09 | 3 rd |

From table 3, quality financial reporting can help investors determine the return on asset of their investment in Nigerian insurance companies was ranked first among the respondents with highest mean value of 4.31. Respondents also affirm that quality financial reporting can lead to improvement in the return on asset with mean value of 4.24 which was ranked second, followed presence of reliable accounting and internal control system can help to strengthen the value of return on equity, auditor's report helps to enhance the financial performance and the value of

return on asset, financial performance of Nigerian insurance companies has direct relationship with the implementation of IFRS , most insurance companies often present financial statement that are understandable to all equity holders, and compliance with financial reporting standard and other professional auditing standard often guarantee profitability of the insurance companies with mean values of 4.09, 4.02, 3.95, 3.76 and 2.96 respectively. Deduction to be made from this finding is that adoption and implementation of IFRS is an alternative paradigm to Nigerian insurance performance.

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Investment Decision Making

| Statement | Observation | Mean | Ranked |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|------|-----------------|
| Quality financial reports reveal the competence of management of the company | 58 | 4.24 | 2 nd |
| Quality financial reports play a significant role in investment decision making | 58 | 4.31 | 1 st |
| It is appropriate to relay on the ability of quality financial reports in forecasting future performance | 58 | 3.95 | 4 th |
| Quality financial reports of companies predict the future financial stand of companies | 58 | 4.08 | 3 rd |
| Quality financial reports help users to know the state of affairs of the companies | 58 | 2.96 | 5 th |

Table 4 depicts that quality financial reports play a significant role in investment decision making was ranked highest with mean value of 4.3, followed by quality financial reports reveal the competence of management of the company, quality financial reports of companies predict the future financial stand of companies, it is appropriate to relay on the ability of quality financial reports in forecasting future performance and Quality financial reports help users to know the state of affairs of the companies with mean values of 4.24, 4.08, 3.95 and 2.96 respectively. This implies that effective and efficient investment decision making is a determinant of IFRS adoption and its implementation.

Testing of hypothesis

Hypothesis One

H01: There is no significant relationship between the quality of financial reporting and financial performance.

Table 5: Relationship between the quality of financial reporting and financial performance

| | | QFR | Performance |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|-------------|
| IFRS | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .900** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 59 | 59 |
| Financial performance | Pearson Correlation | .900** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 59 | 59 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

Table 5 indicates that quality financial reporting ($r = 0.90^{**}$; $p < .05$) has positive and significant correlation with financial performance. This indicates that implementation of IFRS has significant relationship with financial performance. The study corroborates [7], [8], [9], [10] and [29] findings, that quality of financial reporting has significant relationship with financial performance. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Hypothesis Two

H02: Quality of financial reporting has no influence on investment decision making.

Table 6: Influence of quality financial reporting on investment decision making

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|--------|-------------------|
| 1 | Regression | 2.787 | 1 | 2.787 | 13.673 | .000 ^b |
| | Residual | 11.620 | 57 | .204 | | |
| | Total | 14.407 | 58 | | | |
| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | T | Sig. |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|------------|-------|------|------|-------|------|
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.522 | .559 | | 4.513 | .000 |
| | QFR | .446 | .121 | .440 | 3.698 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Investment Decision

Table 6 depicts that quality financial reporting ($F = (1, 57) = 13.673$; $t = 3.698$; $P = 0.000$) has positive and significant influence on investment decision making. This implies that quality financial reporting is major determinant of investment decision making. The study is consistent with prior studies [7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 19] that quality financial reporting had a significant and positive correlation with investment decision making. Therefore, null hypothesis is rejected while the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study established that there is strong relationship between financial performance and quality financial reporting. This connotes that adoption and implementation of IFRS is a veritable tool to financial performance of Nigerian insurance companies. The study also confirmed that quality financial reporting has significant influence on investment decision making. The study finally concludes that adoption and implementation of IFRS is veritable tool for the performance of Nigerian insurance companies. Subsequently, the study recommended that management of insurance companies should embrace and implement IFRS with immediate so that the sector can attract both local and foreign investors. Also, insurance regulatory authority should sanction any insurance company fails to adopt and implement IFRS before year 2020.

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