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Corporate Governance and Timeliness of Audited Reports of Quoted Companies in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The study investigates corporate governance and timeliness of audited reports of quoted companies in Nigeria. The population was all quoted companies listed at the Nigerian Stock Exchange, collected secondary data from published financial statements on the compliance issued by the Nigerian Stock Exchange as of March 31 2018. The hypotheses formulated for this study was tested using the regression model. The study found that board composition has a significant effect on the timeliness of the audited reports. The result indicates that late filers companies are likely to have boards with significantly lower numbers of independent Non Executive Directors, audit committee members with financial expertise than their early filers companies. The study finds that board independent non-executive director and audit committee financial expertise have a significant positive effect on the timeliness of audited reports of companies. Therefore, the study concludes that corporate governance has a significant and positive impact on timeliness of audited reports of companies listed in the Nigerian stock exchange. In the light of the above, the study recommended that the late filers firms should learn the various process for speeding up audit reports from the early filers firms that guarantee their timeliness in the audited report, there could be an accounting that needs to be learnt by the late filers firms to improve their financial activities and finally, the regulatory authorities should continue to intensify stiffer fines in the pursuit of timeliness of audit reports among the companies.*
*KEYWORDS**:** Timeliness, Audit Report, Audit committee composition and Board composition*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The increasing information needs of stakeholders who have operational interest in financial reporting have resulted in the pursued for timely and reliable financial reports. In keeping with the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB, 2008) timeliness of audited reports is the accessibility of information needed by investors and other users for decision making before it loses its value to influence decisions. In rising economies, the availability of timely information in organizational reports expect more prominent since other nonfinancial explanation sources, for example, media discharges, news meetings and money related investigators conjectures are not very much created, and the regulatory bodies do not seem to be as operative as in Western developed countries (Ahmed, 2003).

In Nigeria, the necessity for top quality and timely financial information has become significantly imperative, thus, the increasing exposure of Nigerian business organizations to international capital markets. The business organizations are being indebted to satisfy the information needs of foreign investors and to make available with timely information in the annual financial statement. The business increasing need for financial information made regulatory authorities in Nigeria to set statutory restrictions within which listed firms are required to make available their audited financial reports to stakeholders and also submit reports with relevant regulatory bodies (Iyoha, 2012). This is based on the fact that over time, accounting information becomes less relevant for decision making.

Corporate governance continues to receive highlighting in practice and academic research, the stress is in the association between weaknesses in governance and poor financial reporting quality, earnings manipulation, financial statement fraud and weak internal controls structures acknowledged by Beasley, Carcello, Hermanson and Lapides (2000); Carcello and Neal (2000); Krishnan (2001) and Klein (2002).

Micheal (2015) as cited in Cohen, Krishnamoorthy and Wright (2004) demonstrated that corporate governance has a vital function in ensuring quality and timeliness of financial reporting, furthermore, Habbash (2010) opined that functional governance comprises structures of a competent audit committee and a composed board. Cohen, Krishnamoorthy and Wright (2002) suggested one of the most vital functions that corporate governance can play in ensuring the process of quality of financial reporting. Appah and Emeh, (2003) posited that effective oversight of the financial reporting process by the abovementioned monitor structures is thought to improve the accuracy of reports to shareholders and investors.

Lately reports obtained from the Nation newspaper indicated that most companies listed on the floor of Nigerian stock exchange were unable to meet the deadline for the submission of yearly report with Gregorian calendar business year ended December 31, 2017, was March 31, 2018 for this problem has led to the Nigerian stock exchange placing sanction/fines of some companies over their audited reports. The failure of this companies to submit their report resulted in the fines of some companies such as First Bank of Nigeria #2.1 million, International Breweries #100,000, Meyer Plc #2.1 million, Sovereign Trust Insurance #2.1 million, Abbey Mortgage Bank #700,000, Lafarge Africa Plc, Fidelity Bank #2.7 million, Sterling Bank #2.1 million, Wema Bank #800,000, FCMB #100,000 e.t.c for the period of its delay resulting in loss of shareholder' s wealth.

This paper consists of five (5) sections, section one introductory and problem statement, section two discusses the literature review, while the third segment deals on the methodology, the fourth section focuses on the analysis and discussion of findings with the fifth section concluding the research paper.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study adopted agency theory to explain the relationship between corporate governance structures and timeliness of audited reports.

2.1.1 Agency Theory

Agency theory evolved by Berle and Means (1932) and expounded by Jensen and Meckling (1976) is primarily based at the idea that during contemporary organizations, there may be a separation of ownership and management, ensuing in agency cost related to resolving the struggle a number of owners and the agents which means that management can't be depended on, thereby calling for strict monitoring Board to protect shareholders' interest. The firms listed at the stock exchange normally have a structure wherein there's a sizable department of ownership and control among principals and agents in the connection between them, the principal needs the services of the agent to supervise the affairs of the firms in their best interests, compensating the latter for his or her efforts (talent and distinctiveness), normally in pecuniary form (e.g. income and bonuses) (Hart, 1995; Jensen and Meckling, 1976; Sappington, 1991). The conceivably risky connection among principals and agents has been conceptualized and investigated, making use of agency theory (Fama & Jensen, 1983; Jensen & Meckling, 1976).

Jensen and Meckling (1976) defined the significance of the principal-agent relationship and investigated the ownership structure of enterprises, mainly the role of equity ownership as a system to align the manager's interest with the owner. Besides, Fama and Jensen (1983) portrayed the job of the top managerial staff in observing the potential opportunism of managers in expansive organisations. Subsequently, agency theory is mostly concerned about the institutional arrangements (ownership structure and hierarchical structures) that influence organisation conflicts. It closely relates it to property rights, since the effects of the distribution of property rights are essential in the analysis of principal-agent relationships. The notable highlights of the principal-agent worldview are that it: (1) recommends clarifications and the answers for the various kinds of agency problems; and (2) gives both question avoidance approach by making motivating-alignments and compromise approach of making crafting governance systems.

2.2 Empirical Review

Arowoshegbe, Uniamikogbo, and Adeusi (2017) explored determinants that affect the timeliness of an audit report in Nigeria. A sample of forty-two (42) financial and non-financial companies quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE). The duration covered was 2012-2015. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design. Panel data technique was used for the econometric analysis, and the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression technique was used to analyse the data. Their findings revealed that audit firm type, size of the firm, and age of the company are factors that affect the timeliness of audit reporting in Nigeria. The study concluded that the audit firm type has a significant positive impact on audit report timeliness, the age and size of the company have a significant negative influence. Audit firm switch was revealed to have no significant influence on the timeliness of an audit report. It was recommended that firms should ensure that internal mechanisms are put in place to speed up audit report processes in Nigeria. Regulatory authorities should intensify the pursuit of timeliness of audit report among companies in Nigeria.

Efoba and Okougbo (2014) adopting the generalized least square (GLS) regression approach examined the factors that can have an effect on the timeliness of financial reporting in Nigeria, which span crossed 33 financial institutions (2005-2008). The result of the study indicated that the financial institutions used 122 days after the 12 months- for the release in their financial reports. The size, leverage and overall performance of the firms have a significant negative relationship with the correctness in their financial reports, while the age of the company has a positive impact effect. Finally, the study concluded that corporate governance performs a helping function with some of the explanatory variables to give an explanation for financial reporting timeliness in Nigeria.

Ozoanigbo, Orjinta and Ofor (2016) inquired into the effectiveness of audit committee on the financial reporting timeliness of companies using the Ex-Post factor design and longitudinal research design. The researchers focused on the pharmaceutical industry listed in the Nigeria stock exchange. The Descriptive statistics was adopted to analyze the data collected, correlation analysis and ordinary least square regression. The result revealed that the audit committee effectiveness has a positive and significant effect on the financial reporting timeliness of companies listed inside the pharmaceutical industry. Their study reveals that 64% of changes within the financial reporting timeliness could be attributable to the audit committee effectiveness.

Mbobo and Adebimpe (2016) explored the influence of audit committee attributes on the quality of financial reporting in Nigerian banks. The researcher extracted data from the audited annual reports of Ten (10) selected banks for the period 2006 to 2013. Inferential statistics and regression analyses were used in analysing the data and testing the hypotheses raised in the study. Their study concluded that unique audit committee attributes specifically; independence, meeting attendance, size and the existence of a written constitution exert significant impact at the QFR than other attributes.

Appah and Emeh (2013) explored the impact of corporate governance at the timeliness of financial statements of quoted companies in Nigeria using ex-post facto studies design analysed using the Granger causality and multiple regression models. Their study indicated that audit committee expertise (ACE) and audit committee independence (ACI) both have a significant relationship with the timeliness of audited reports. The audit committee size (ACS) and audit committee meeting (ACM) both have no significant relationship with the timeliness of financial reports. The researcher concluded based on their empirical result that the application of appropriate corporate governance factors will help foster the timeliness of financial reports and quality financial statements.

Dibia and Onwuchekwa (2013) examined the audit report lag of quoted companies for the period 2008 to 2011. The study examined 60 firms across industries quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange which cut across the Construction, Breweries, Oil & Gas, Health care, Packaging, Insurance, Publishing, Food Products, Automobiles, Hotel & Tourism, Real Estate, Mortgage, ICT, Agro-Allied, Building Materials, Conglomerates, Courier and Banking). The findings revealed that total asset and age of the company significantly impact on audit report lag in Nigeria. Conversely, the result confirmed that firm switch and firm size has no significant relationship with audit report lag in Nigerian companies.

Odit (2015) investigated the effect of corporate governance on the timeliness of financial reporting of firms listed at the Nairobi Securities Exchange. The study population was all companies quoted at the NSE and secondary data were collected from the published financial statements for five years (2009-2014). The study found that on average, the companies listed at the NSE take up to 107 days after the finish of the financial year to release financial statements to the public. The findings show that variations in the corporate governance mechanisms explained 12 per cent of variations in the timeliness of financial reporting. In particular, expanded board size builds the number of days before release which adversely influences the timeliness. The Audit committee and diversity of board reduce the number of days before the release which improves the timeliness of financial reporting.

Tina and Marko (2014) investigated audit delay determinants, of Croatian listed firms for the period of four (4) years covering 2008 to 2011 adopting a Pooled OLS regression analysis. Their findings indicated that leverage, profitability and audit committee existence as significant attributes of audit delay in Croatia.

Abdelrahman and Basheer (2016) examined the relationship between audit-firm tenure and audit report lag. The population was of 691 Jordanian firms which are quoted on Amman stock exchange for the period 2009-2013. The descriptive statistics, correlation and multiple regression had been adopted in for data analyses. This study found that significantly no relationship exists between audit tenure and audit reports lag.

Ishaq-Ahmed and Che-Ahmad (2016) examined corporate governance characteristics and its effects on audit report lag (ARL). The study used fourteen (14) Nigerian banks quoted on the Nigerian Stock Exchange, for a period of five (5) year from 2008 to 2012 using the Ordinary Least Square technique in the data analysis. The study findings showed that audit quality represented by the Big 4 firms significantly impact on audit report lag (ARL). The results also show that board size, board meetings, board gender and total assets had a significant positive relationship with audit report lag. Contrarily, no significant relationship linking risk, committee size, audit committee size, board expertise, and audit report lag.

Uwalomwa, Eluyela Uwuigbe, Obarakpo and Falola (2018) explored corporate governance on the timeliness of financial reports of listed banks in Nigeria using the descriptive statistics, correlation matrix and panel data regression to analyse the data. The study generated data from annual report of the listed banks on the Nigerian stock exchange for the period (2008-2015). The study found that board size had a non-significant negative linking with the timeliness of financial reports. The study pinpointed that board independence also had a non-significant negative linking with the timeliness of audited reports. Furthermore, the researchers pinpointed that foreign executives on the board had a significant positive relationship with the timeliness of financial reports.

Izilin, Famous and Okoeguale (2012), carried out an empirical analysis to establish relationship between corporate governance variables on timeliness in Nigeria. The researcher used a sample of 118 listed firms on the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE), The study employed the descriptive statistics and the Ordinary Least Square (OLS) regression analysis. The findings indicated no significant relationship among the corporate governance variables (board independence, board size, company size, leverage, profitability, audit firm size) used except for audit delay. Furthermore, it was observed that most of the companies on the NSE where not compliant with the Nigerian Stock Exchange stipulations deadlines and in the light of the above, the study recommended that the NSE, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Financial Reporting Council (FRC), the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN), and other regulatory bodies should put in place mechanisms to ensure strict compliance with the stipulated rules and regulations.

McGee and Yuan (2011) investigated the timeliness of financial reporting within the Republic of China, United States and the European Union. They observed also that companies' timeliness information based on an audit firm to decide whether firms audited with one of the big-4 firms are timelier in their financial reporting. The results indicated that Chinese organizations took a significantly longer time to file financial results than both the EU or US organizations. EU companies took a significantly longer time to report financial results than US companies. Firms that do not publish their report on time may find it more difficult to attract investors. Their corporate governance attributes are seen as been weak, which hurts a company' s reputation within the financial community. Finally, the Chinese firms that delayed in reporting their financial reports would suffer a negative penalty in raising funds and attracting investors.

Based on the above studies, we observed that the results on the impact of corporate governance and timeliness of audited report that none of the researchers carried out an observational studies using case-control design involving two existing groups (early filers and late filer) using the industry of the filers, its total assets and the Nigeria stock market where the companies are listed as the criterion to improve the quality of the matched pairs as the literature on the subject area in Nigeria. most of these studies were (Appah & Emeh, 2013; Uwalomwa, Eluyela, Felix, Ranti, Obarakpo & Falola, 2018; Ozoanigbo, Orjinta & Ofor, 2016; Ishaq-Ahmed & Che-Ahmed, 2016; Arowoshegbe, Unaimikogbo & Adeusi et al., 2017; Mbobo & Umoren 2016). This study thus seeks to add to the expanding body of knowledge in this area.

III. METHODOLOGY

The study employed the case control design. According to Forgues (2012), the case-control help us answer questions random sampling. The case control design is chosen as the appropriate strategy for this study since the aim of the study is to ascertain whether the timeliness of the audited reports is linked with any of the selected corporate governance attributes. The corporate governance mechanisms of early filer firms were compared with those of the late filers companies that are similar in size and industry. The criteria for selecting the control companies are explained in 3.1.1 & 3.1.2 below. The researcher gathered data from the published financial statements. The study population consisted of 326 all quoted companies in Nigeria as at March, 31 2018. The convenient sample would be used in this research, with this sampling procedures quoted companies were considered because they submitted their audited reports at stipulated deadline of March 31, 2018 which therefore enabled the researcher to pick the early and late filers companies.

3.1.1 Filer Sample

The filers firms have been identified through a review of the X-COMPLIANCE issued by using the Nigeria Stock Exchange (NSE), companies which are listed on the Exchange are required to stick to high disclosure standards which are prescribed within the Rulebook of the Exchange, 2015 (Issuers Rules). The X-COMPLIANCE incorporates cases of companies that submitted their reports on time, in addition to those who violated the NSE. The penalty for non-compliance with periodic financial disclosure responsibilities are spelt out inside the Rules for Filing of Account and Treatment of Default Filing, Rulebook of The Exchange (Issuers' Rules).

A company is deemed to have violated the NSE if it does not meet up with Rule 7.4 as stated below

Rule 7.4: Submission of Financial Reports to the Exchange

(a) Every Dealing Member intends to submit to The Nigeria Stock Exchange its year end audited reports, within ninety (90) days of the end of the fiscal year and its quarterly financial statements within forty-five (45) days of the end of the quarter; and any other periodic report within the period stipulated by the Exchange.

(b) The Financial statements must be prepared by the requirements of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) valid to the period covered in such financial statement(s).
(c) The Exchange shall interconnect the need for submission of any other periodic financial report to Dealing Members via its Circular to the Market.
(d) If a Dealing Member fails to adhere with this provision, it shall be liable to the penalties which are subject to review by Council and any change to it shall be made public by way of a Circular.

3.1.2 Matching Process

The study used the timeliness of audited reports, the industry of the filers, its size and the Nigerian stock exchange. The timeliness of audited reports taken into account to ensure that data collected for each pair is from the same period was considered to improve the quality of the matched pairs. The study adopted descriptive statistics, mainly the mean, was used to show the character of the data on a univariate basis. The regression model applied in this research is the logistic regression model since the dependent variable (timeliness of audited reports) is a dichotomous variable. The appropriateness of the logistic regression model for a matched case-control sample was justified by Maddala (1991). According to him, where the samples evolved from two disproportionate populations, for example, Early and Late company' s population, the appropriate procedure was to use logistic regression.

3.2 Model Specification

The study employed the logit regression model which captures five (5) variables used in the study. The model is expressed in functional relationship as:
$Y = \beta_0+b_1x_1+b_2x_2+b_3x_3+ b_4x_4+ b_5x_5 + \varepsilon$
Substituting the variable names into the model,
We have:
$TAR = a + \beta_1 bodsize + \beta_2 bned + \beta_3\ binned + \beta_4 acsize + \beta_5 acfe + \varepsilon$

Figure 1: Variable Description

Variable Acronym	Measurement
I	company 1 through 60;
Ɛ	The residual term
A	Constant
B	Coefficient
Dependent variable	
Timeliness of Audited Report	dummy variable equals 1 if the company had file audited report early and 0 otherwise;
Independent variables:	
Board Composition Variables	
Bodsize	total number of board directors;
Ned	total number of non-executive directors of board directors;
Inned	total number of independent non-executive directors on board;
Audit Committee Variables	
Acsize	the size of the audit committee defined as the number of members of the committee;
Acfe	dummy variable equals 1 if a member of audit committee has financial expertise; 0 otherwise;
Moderating Variables	
Bodmeet	number of boards meetings in the year;
Acmeet	number of the audit committee meeting in a year

IV. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This section deals with the analysis of data collected to examine corporate governance attributes and timeliness of audited reports. Statistical analysis was performed to provide empirical evidence to answer the following research hypothesis set out in the study.

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Table 4.1: Board Composition (Means)

Variables	No. of pairs	Late firm	Early firm	Mean difference
Bodsize	30	7.04	7.30	-0.26
Ned	30	4.96	5.59	-0.63

Inned	30	4.37	5.11	-0.74

Source: Author' s computation, 2019

From table 4.1 above, it can be seen that bodsize late filers have a mean of 7.04, while the early filer has a means of 7.30 resulting in a mean difference of -0.26.

Board Non-executive director of late filer has a mean of 4.96 while the early filer has a mean of 5.59 resulting in a difference of -0.63. Inned late filers have a mean of 4.37, while the early filer has a means of 5.11 resulting in a mean difference of -0.74.

Table 4.2: Audit Committee Composition (Means)

Variables	No. of pairs	Late firm	Early firm	Mean difference
Acsize	30	2.96	3.04	-0.08
Acfe	30	4.81	5.63	-0.82

Source: Author' s computation, 2019

Table 4.2 presents a summary of the univariate tests results comparing the mean values of variables that represent the audit committee composition between late filers firms and early filers firms. Acsize late filer has a mean of 2.96, while the early filer has a means of 3.04 resulting in a mean difference of -0.08. Acfe late filer has a mean of 4.81, while the early filer has a means of 5.63 resulting in a mean difference of -0.82.

4.2 Empirical Tests And Result

Table 4.3: Regression Results

Independent variables		Estimated coefficients (β)	Robust standard errors	z-statistic	P>|z|	Remark
Board of Directors Composition:						
Bodsize		-0.763793	.1966082	-0.39	0.698	Do not reject
Ned		-.0967199	.2339764	-0.41	0.679	Do not reject
Inned		1.099816	.4673977	2.35	0.019	Reject
Bodmeet		.2.137238	.2361586	0.91	0.365	
Audit Committee Composition:						
Acsize		-.0854807	.2597265	-0.33	0.742	Do not reject
Acfe		1.265954	.9309172	1.36	0.174	Reject
Acmeet		.4452477	.284644	1.56	0.118	
Wald chi^2 (12) =	23.81	prob.>chi^2 = 0.0081				
Pseudo R^2 =	0.2911	*,**,*** Statistically significant at less than the 0.10, 0.05 and 0.01				

level, based on two-tailed test

The data displayed in Table 4.3 below shows the logistic regression results from the 30-paired differences of early filers firms and their late filers' counterpart including the pseudo R^2 and the Wald chi^2. In logistic regression, the pseudo R^2 and Wald chi^2 are used to determine how well the logit model fits the data and whether the coefficient of each predictor variables is able to predict the outcome significantly (Field, 2005). The pseudo R^2 symbolizes the amount of variance in the result explained by the model. This study showed a pseudo R^2 of 0.2911 and Wald chi^2 of the models fit (chi^2 23.81) at 12 degrees of freedom is significant at $p < .0001$ level. The pseudo R^2 of 0.2911 indicates that 16 per cent of the variance of the probability of timeliness of audited reports was explained by the variations in the independent variables used in this model. The estimated coefficients (β) from the logit model revealed that the board size (bodsize), number of NEDs on the board (ned), and audit committee size (acsize), were negatively related on the timeliness of audited reports. However, only the number of independent NEDs on the board (binned) and audit committee financial expert were positively related on the timeliness of audited report

On the other hand, a number of independent non-executive directors (inned) were statistically significant at (p = 0.019).

V. 4.3 TEST OF HYPOTHESES

The hypotheses formulated was tested below:

Hypotheses One

H_{01}: Board size does not have significant impact on the timeliness of audited reports.

The results above show that board size (bodsize) has a p-value of 0.698, which is not statistically significant at 5%. The null hypothesis cannot, therefore, be rejected, meaning that board size does not have any significant effects on the timeliness of audit reports.

Hypotheses Two

H_{02}:Non-executive director does not have a significant impact on the timeliness of audited reports.

The result above show that board non-executive director (bned) has a p-value of 0.679, which is not statistically significant at 5%. The null hypothesis cannot, therefore, be rejected, meaning that board non-executive director (bned) does not have any significant effects on the timeliness of audit reports.

Hypotheses Three

H_{03}:Independent Non-executive director does not have a significant impact on the timeliness of audited reports.

The results above shows that board independent non-executive director (binned) has a p-value of 0.019, which is statistically significant at 5%. The null hypothesis can, therefore, be rejected, meaning that board independent non-executive director (binned) have significant effects on the timeliness of audit reports.

Hypotheses Four

H_{04}: Audit committee size does not have a significant impact on the timeliness of audited reports

The result above shows that audit committee size (acsize) has a p-value of 0.742, which is not statistically significant at 5%. The null hypothesis cannot, therefore, be rejected, meaning that audit committee size (acsize) does not have any significant effects on the timeliness of audit reports.

Hypotheses Five

H_{05}: Audit committee financial expert does not have a significant impact on the timeliness of audited reports.
The result shows that audit committee expert (acfe) has a positive relationship with timeliness and p-value of 0.174, which is not statistically significant at 5%.

VI. 4.4 DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Board Composition and Timeliness of Audited Reports

The coefficient from the model shows that the board size (bodsize), and number of NEDs on the board (ned) were negatively related to the timeliness of audited reports. The logistic regression results for board composition suggest that late filers companies' board are more dominated by NEDs that were not independent NEDs than the early filers companies. This study finding is consistent with those of Uwalomwa et al., (2018), and Shamsul-Nahar Abdullah (2007).

Audit Committee Composition and Timeliness of Audited Reports

On the audit committee composition, the study found a negative on audit committee size (acsize).
Conversely, the result suggests that the audit committee financial expert (acfe) increases the timeliness of audited reports. Consistent with the study of Vera-munoz (2005), an effective audit committee should have a qualified financially literate member and be highly independent in the process of decision making. A study carried out by Abdullah (2006) for the year of 1998 found that audit committee independence has a positive and significant relationship with timeliness. Siti and Nazhi (2011), were in the opinion that the presence of an expert on the audit committee might ensure timely reporting of a firm. Hence, Audit committees especially those with financial experts will play an integral part in the timeliness of financial report (Ozoanigbo et al.,2016). Prior studies like Klein (2002); Appah & Emeh (2013); Abbott et al., (2004) finds a significant positive relationship between the presences of a member of an audit committee with financial expertise improves the timeliness of financial reporting.

Izilin, Famous & Okoeguale (2012), said that audit committee size should be put into consideration. The results from previous studies showed that large audit size generally tend to lead to longer audit report delay, however, an accounting organization with large audit size also respond more swiftly to unexpected events. Prior studies like Hossain & Taylor (1998) conversely found a negative significant relationship while Ahmad & Kamarudin (2001); Leventis, Weetman & Caramanis (2005); CheAhmad & Abidin (2008); and Turel (2010) all reported a positive significant relationship with timeliness.

VII. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study examined the impact of corporate governance attributes on the timeliness of financial reports of quoted companies in Nigeria. The study reviewed literatures that provide strong evidences on the relationship between corporate governance and timeliness of audited reports. The logistic analysis provided a significant relationship between board independence and timeliness of audited reports; board size and timeliness of audited reports; audit committee expertise and knowledge and timeliness of audited reports. The result showed that the timeliness of the audited report could be attributable to the board composition and audit composition. The study finds that board independent non-executive director and audit committee financial expertise has a significant positive effect on the timeliness of audited reports of companies. The study, therefore, concludes that corporate governance has a significant and positive impact on the timeliness of audited reports of companies quoted on the Nigerian stock exchange. To this extent the study therefore recommends that:

1. The study recommends that the late filers companies directors should improve the composition of their audit committee, increase the number of audit committee member with the knowledge of accounting.
2. Top executives of the late filers must be deliberately selected to attain timeliness of financial report.
3. Late filers firms should learn the process for speeding up audit reports from the early filers that guarantee their timeliness in the audited report; there could be internal economies and accounting that need to be learned by the late filers firms to improve their activities.
4. Finally, the various regulatory authorities should strengthen the pursuit of timeliness of audited reports among companies.

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