

FORENSIC ACCOUNTING AND FINANCIAL REPORTING QUALITY IN SELECTED DEPOSIT MONEY BANKS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the effect of forensic accounting on financial reporting quality of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. Specifically, the study assessed the effect of Litigation Support (LITS), Investigative Skills (INS) and Expert Witness (EXTW) respectively on financial reporting quality of selected Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) in Asaba, Delta State. The dependent variable of the study was financial reporting quality, and forensic accounting the independent variable. Survey design was used with a population of 138 employees of 9 selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State using structured questionnaires with Likert scale style. The response rate was eighty-six (86%) using data analysis by simple tables and percentages. Data was analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics while a regression model was applied in determining the extent of the effect exerted on financial reporting quality by this forensic accounting. Findings revealed that LITS, INS and EXTW have a positive and significant effect on financial reporting quality. The findings imply that a change in financial reporting quality is attributable to changes in LITS, INS and EXTW of selected deposit money banks in Nigeria. It was concluded that change in forensic accounting enhances financial reporting quality. The study therefore recommends among others that banks should employ experienced staff with required skill-sets, as well as organize regular training in forensic accounting for deposit money banks' Accountants and other Management Staff to be able to unravel issues that mitigate quality assurance in financial reports.

Keywords: Forensic Accounting, Litigation Support, Expert Witness, Quality Assurance, Corporate Governance

Introduction

The sudden collapse of high performing firms despite the publication of fantastic financial results have generated a series of questions from several stakeholders. This anomaly has necessitated tightening regulations, standards and modification of corporate governance mechanisms (Umobong and Ibanichuka, 2017). Otekunrin, Fagboro, Nwanji, Asamu, Ajiboye and Falaye (2019) averred that the Nigerian banking system is highly evident with poor liquidity management. This was the core reason

why the Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) undertook a recapitalization process which raised the minimum capital base of banks from N2 billion to N25 billion about two decades ago. This reform compelled banks to partake in mergers or amalgamation in order to obtain the needed equity and acquire sound liquidity in 2005. According to the former CBN Governor, Sanusi (2010), the issues were mainly blamed on poor corporate governance which saw some insider abuses with leading banks having negative balance in their shareholders' funds.

Following this, the CBN conducted a forensic audit which confirmed that the Chief Executives of the affected banks have filled very misleading financial reports to the CBN and other regulators. Their reports saw misstatements and misrepresentation of key financial reporting variables, concealment of actual figures which constituted bad loans and advances. Thus, the financial industry has sought to preserve the public interest through instituting effective corporate governance, given to the industry's position in the mobilization of money, the distribution and allocation of credit to the demand-driven sector of the economy, the payment and settlement of system and the execution of monetary policies, hence the significance remain paramount (Nwaiwu and Aaron, 2018).

Forensic accountants research and analyze financial crime evidence; develop computer programs, such as software, to aid in the analysis and presentation of financial crime evidence; and produce and distribute reports detailing the findings. In addition to assisting with legal proceedings, a forensic accountant may testify in court, serve as an expert witness, and provide visual aids to support trial evidence. Accordingly, they are trained to look beyond the numbers and adapt to the shifting corporate environment. Forensic accountants rely heavily on information derived from a company's financial reporting. Forensic accounting tools are very crucial in mitigating the rate of fraudulent cases in Nigerian banks. It is an essential instrument that will help Nigerian banks in fraud detection, reporting and prevention of likely fraudulent cases. They include litigation support, investigative skills, expert witness, analytical skill and communication skill.

On the other hand, financial reporting quality has become a center of focus for researchers and stakeholders due to accounting standards convergence, accounting standards harmonization, economic crises, growth in disclosure requirements, and mainly because of the various accounting scandals, among others (Herath and Albarqi, 2017). A sound financial system drives economies all over the world,

plays a financial intermediation role between the surplus sector and the deficit sector of an economy, especially in emerging economies like Nigeria. In the recent past, deposit money banks in Nigeria have undergone restructuring which has resulted in the takeovers and mergers of some of the deposit money banks. Hasan, Kassim and Hamid (2020) has it that a financial report is relevant, transparent and dependable when prepared in compliance with accounting standards and the opinions are formed on them in compliance with audit principles. Companies' annual reports are not expected to mislead stakeholders but rather provide information that is relevant and supported by footnotes to assist its clarification.

Bamidele, Ibrahim and Omole (2018) affirm that the quality of financial reporting is the standardization of preparation and presentation of both financial and non-financial information for effective planning and reliable decision which its primary objective is to provide high-quality financial reporting information concerning economic entities, primarily financial in nature, useful for economic entities to achieve useful economic decision making as well as evaluate management effectiveness in utilizing resources under its control to satisfy users' needs. Bhasin, (2016) stated that financial statements are the mediums by which both the internal and external stakeholders gain an understanding about the financial condition and operating performance of corporations. The accuracy and reliability of them are very crucial for all the stakeholders of a corporation in order to make appropriate decisions. Market participants also have to make a decision about investing in a company on the basis of information contained in the financial reports.

The place of forensic accounting in entrenchment of quality financial reporting cannot be overemphasized. The issue of quality is very critical to the usefulness that financial reports could serve and forensic accounting which looks beyond mere adherence of financial reports to policies and principles but goes further to verify the underlying facts that could be tendered as evidence even in the courts has

been veritable in the strengthening of quality of reports being issued by accountants.

Studies have been conducted though on fixed findings like Onyekwelu, Ugwu and Nnamani, (2016) discovered that financial reporting quality has significant effects on forensic accounting of selected deposit money banks while Oyedokun, Enyi and Dada (2018), and Okeke, Ezeilo, Nwobodo and Ofor (2021) established that forensic accounting is associated with financial statement credibility but with emphasis on audit time lag and value relevance. Few examined boards' impact toward financial reporting quality without considering other components of corporate governance. Hence this research addresses this gap to explore the impact of litigation support, investigative skills and expert witness as forensic accounting techniques on financial reporting quality of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State.

A number of reasons made this study very imperative. First, the collapse and failure of countless numbers of blue-chip companies both in Nigeria and around the world owing to wide scale corporate fraud, financial and Board Governance irregularities especially in the last few decades have put the Accounting Profession on the spotlight. In the very words of Singleton and Singleton (2007), "with the recent spate of financial scandals, many have asked: Why don't financial auditors detect more fraud? Although the general public does not realize it, financial audits are actually not very effective at detecting fraud. There is need to do something very different: a fraud audit because lately the credibility of the true and fair opinion of the statutory auditor has come under serious pressure".

Second, the report of the Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), in 2012 posit that Deposit Money Banks (DMBs) reported a total of 3,380 cases of attempted fraud and forgeries involving #18.04 billion to the Corporation, a total loss of #4.5 billion was recorded during the year under review (that is, 2012). This represents a 43.7% rise compared to 2,352 cases in 2011. Subsequently, in the first

quarter of 2013, 983 cases of attempted fraud involving #7.80 billion was reported, while actual loss for the quarter was #2.05 billion. Ibrahim said Cyber-related fraud instances accounted for 341 cases resulting in an actual loss of #75 million in the first quarter of 2013. Statistics and cases from around the globe go on to buttress the damaging effect of corporate fraud on firm's performance and sustainability. For example, it is reported that \$3.5 trillion which is about 5% of global economic production are lost per annum to fraudulent practices and also individual Businesses lose about \$1million to fraud and forgeries annually. As a result of the above and other instances there is dire need to overhaul the Accounting Profession with new skill sets that will enable it to expeditiously tackle the present fraud dynamics within the corporate sector especially as it has to do with the Nigerian deposit money banks. This study specifically seeks to x-ray the potency of forensic accounting in entrenching qualitative financial reporting of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. Therefore, the general objective of this study is to determine the effect of forensic accounting on financial reporting quality with particular reference to deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State.

The study through its findings will be of immense benefits to Government regulatory bodies like Nigerian Deposit Insurance Corporation (NDIC), Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) etc. as they will find the outcome of this study helpful in safeguarding investors, depositors and the general public against the menace of bank failures caused primarily by corporate frauds emanating from deposit money banks in Nigeria. The study is also significant as it will draw the attention of Accounting Bodies like the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Nigeria (ICAN) and the Association of National Accountants of Nigeria (ANAN) on the need to integrate forensic accounting as an emerging field of accounting whose importance and use in combating corporate frauds has become unavoidable.

Deposit money banks shareholders in Nigeria would also find the results of this study helpful in order to ensure that their investments continue

as going concerns and the bottom line of sustainable profitability is achieved. The findings of the study would also be useful to the Academia. This is because forensic accounting is a new field of accounting, and more or less a child of necessity. Hence, this study will help in the buildup of knowledge on the subject matter and also serve as a basis for future research works. The rest of the paper is structured as follows; review of literature and hypothesis development, methodology, results, and conclusion

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF FORENSIC ACCOUNTING

Onah and Ugwu (2022) described forensic accounting as that branch of accounting that deals with the organization of data that is meant to be used as evidence, most often for legal purposes. Owolabi, Dada, and Olaoye (2013) stated that forensic accounting provides an accounting analysis that is suitable to the court which will bring the basis for discussion, debate and ultimately prosecution. Also, Crumbley, Heitger and Smith (2019) defined forensic accounting as the art of identifying, recording, setting, extracting, sorting, reporting and verifying past financial data or other accounting activities for settling current or prospective legal disputes or using past financial data for projecting future financial data to settle legal disputes. It therefore follows that forensic accounting involves litigation support, expert witnessing and investigative accounting beyond the statutory audit function. It is usually deployed in investigating, preventing and resolution of financial and corporate fraud issues either potential or existing.

Litigation Support

This is an aspect of forensic accounting that provides assistance on accounting nature in a matter involving existing or pending litigation. It deals primarily with issues related to the quantification of economic damages and it requires appearance in the court of competence to testify validated facts and documentary evidence. According to Bassey, Ahonkhai and

Ohimai (2017) litigation support takes into cognizance the interpretation and representation of problems that are connected to helping current and imminent litigation. It is the provision of accounting assistance in a case where there is already or will be litigation, it focuses primarily on difficulties involving the quantification of economic damages. It entails assessing the economic loss or harm caused by a violation of contract. It includes appraisals, asset tracing, revenue recovery, accounting reconstruction and financial analysis.

Ho 1: There is no significant effect of litigation support on financial reporting quality of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State.

Investigative Skills

This involves examining what happened, developing hypotheses about what happened and explaining these hypotheses in a written report that usually assesses damages to an affected party. Investigative skill is the ability to gather data and generate conclusions to reveal important facts. It helps in examining issues closely and to discover items of importance that may not have been clearly apparent to those who lack the skill.

Ho 2: There is no relationship between investigative skills and financial reporting quality of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State.

Expert witness

An expert witness is one whose opinion a court or other tribunal is prepared to admit as evidence for the purpose of assisting in the resolution of a dispute or in arriving at the truth and whose opinion is based on the application of particularly expertise and knowledge to the relevant facts. An expert witness job is to assist the judge in discovering the truth. It is due to their financial knowledge and experience that they are valuable in financial litigation.

Ho 3: Expert witness has no effect on financial reporting quality of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State.

Empirical Links Between Forensic Accounting and Financial Reporting Quality

Okeke, Ezeilo, Nwobodo and Azuka (2022) examined the impact of forensic accounting on financial reporting. Panel data was utilized to extract secondary data from the Nigerian Exchange Group fact-book and the CBN Annual Bulletin record spanning from 2004 to 2020 from ten (10) top-performing banks in Nigeria. Panel data analysis was applied and Hausman test specifies that analysis should be done with fixed-effect regression model. Correlation Analysis from the study shows that while some forensic accounting instruments are positively related to financial reporting, others were negatively related. The findings of the study reveal that the fixed-effect regression model was statistically significant and this implies that there is a significant relationship between forensic accounting and financial reporting. It also shows that forensic accounting has a positive significant impact on financial reporting. The study, therefore, recommends that adequate use of forensic accounting should be practiced by all the banks in Nigeria for the detection and prevention of fraudulent practices.

Ojo-Agbodu, Abiola and Ndubuisi (2022) ascertained the effect of forensic accounting on fraud detection and prevention in selected quoted DMBs in Nigeria. A survey was used on the study with a sample size of 115 respondents. Structured questionnaire were administered to resident Internal Control Officers, Branch Operations Managers and Cash Officers/Head Tellers from Access Bank, First Bank of Nigeria, Guarantee Trust Bank, Union Bank, and Zenith Bank; using proportionate and simple random sampling technique. Results from the study show that there is a significant relationship between forensic accounting and fraud detection while forensic accounting has no effect on fraud prevention in the quoted deposit money banks. The study concluded that forensic accounting has not been able to prevent fraud occurrence in the branch operations of DMBs in Nigeria. The study, therefore, recommends that CBN and Chartered Institute of Bankers of Nigeria should review their operational manuals in order to institutionalize the application of forensic accounting principles

and methods to tackle fraud and irregularities in DMBs in Nigeria.

Nwaiwu, Ejimofor and Perekume (2021) examined the effect of forensic accounting on quality of financial reporting of quoted banks in Nigeria. Cross sectional data were sourced from audited financial reports of quoted banks spanning from 2009-2018. Ordinary least square method were used to determine the extent to which forensic accounting affects quality of financial reporting of quoted banks in Nigeria. After cross examination of the validity of the pooled effect, fixed effect and the random effect, the study accepts the fixed effect model. In both models, the independent variables explain 61.6 percent and 59.2 percent of variations on value relevance and audit time lag.

Okafor and Agbiogwu (2016) examined the effect of Forensic Accounting skills on management of bank fraud in Nigeria. Primary data was used for the study: one hundred and forty (140) questionnaires were distributed to the staffers of five (5) selected banks in Imo State used for the study. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the relationship existing among the variables. The non-probability sampling Technique was used to select the five (5) commercial banks used for the study namely: First Bank of Nigeria; Union Bank Plc, United Bank for Africa, Zenith Bank Plc and Diamond Bank Plc. The study revealed amongst other things that possession of enhanced skills aid the forensic accountant in the discharge of his duties. The study therefore, concludes that the management of banks should make use of forensic accounting skills.

Onyekwelu, Ugwu and Nnamani (2016) examined the effectiveness of Forensic Accounting in engendering qualitative financial reporting in Nigeria using the banking sector as a reference. The research adopted empirical, survey and descriptive approach. Secondary data for this study were sourced from the annual reports of the chosen banks. Simple five scale binomial ranging from 0-4 were used to analyse the secondary data (financial reporting quality) of the selected banks. Primary data were also sourced to elicit information from accountants using structured questionnaire based on Likert 5-Scale with each containing fifteen questions. Five-scale Likert structured questionnaires were

administered to a sample size of 250 respondents. Respondents were chosen by simple stratification. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient statistical tool was used to analyze the primary data. The study reveals that the fundamental qualitative characteristics (relevance and faithful representation) and the enhancing qualitative characteristics (understandability) can be significantly enhanced through Forensic Accounting. The researcher recommends that relevant regulators of accounting practice in Nigeria such as the Financial Reporting Council of Nigeria and other relevant accounting bodies should ensure that forensic accounting be deeply entrenched to enhance the quality of financial statements and indeed the financial reporting system in Nigeria.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF FORENSIC ACCOUNTING

This study was theoretically underpinned with stakeholders' theory which was propounded by Dr. F. Edward Freeman in the year 1984. Stakeholders' theory is a theory of organizational management and business ethics that accounts for multiple constituencies impacted by business entities like employees, suppliers, local communities, creditors and others. Stakeholders' theory suggests that stakeholders' need should be put at the beginning of any action and that organizations will respond to the concerns and expectations of powerful stakeholders and some of the responses will be in the form of strategic disclosures. It is based on the assumption that business can only be considered successful when they deliver value to the majority of their stakeholders. To Phillips (2003) claims that the stakeholder theory is a theory of organizational management and ethics and it is distinct because it addresses morals and values explicitly as a central feature of managing organizations. Thus, it is relevant to this work as it can improve the banks' relationship with investors and other stakeholders in line with stakeholders' demand for transparency and accountability especially in the preparation and presentation of financial statements. It is in the best interest of the firm

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where:

to properly disclose their reports. By doing this, the stakeholders can conveniently assess the impact of firms' operations on the entire stakeholders; acknowledging the fact that those firms operate in a system of stakeholders who they cannot do without. More so, through quality financial reporting the bond between firms and stakeholders will be strengthened and they will have more confidence in the firm.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study made use of survey design. This type of research design is used when variables such as knowledge, orientation or people's perception is needed to be measured from a large population.

Description of Study Area

The study was carried out in nine (9) deposit money banks located in Asaba, Delta State. They are: Access Bank, Fidelity Bank, First Bank Plc, Guarantee Trust Bank, Polaris Bank, Union Bank, United Bank for Africa, Wema bank and Zenith Bank.

Source of Data

Basically, the data was collected from primary source with the aid of structured questionnaire administered to respondents in the selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. The questionnaire was designed on a five Likert scale to elicit the appropriate responses.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of 138 employees of the 9 selected deposit money banks excluding security personnel, drivers and attendants. This number (138) was those staff considered to be knowledgeable, experienced and skilled on the subject matter. Hence, they are the actual elements of the population.

Determinant of Sample Size

The sample size which represents the number of questionnaires distributed was determined using Taro Yamane's formula:

n = Sample size

N = Population = 138

e = Error margin = 0.05

I = constant

$$\therefore n = \frac{138}{1 + 138(0.05)^2} = 102.6 = \mathbf{103}$$

Therefore, Sample size (n) = **103**

Sampling Techniques

Simple random and purposive technique was used to select the deposit money banks and their staff who are knowledgeable, experienced and skilled on the subject matter owing to their primary assignments. Since the researcher applied Taro Yamane's formular to determine the sample size (103) which represents the number of questionnaires distributed. The researcher also applied Bowley's Allocation Technique formular to determine the number of questionnaires allocated to each bank. This is expressed as follows:

$$n = \frac{nN_h}{N}$$

Where:

nh = Number of questionnaires allocated to each bank.

Nh = Population size of each bank

n = Sample size = 103

N = Total Population = 138

INS = Investigative Skill

EXTW = Expert Witness

et = Error term

Instrument for Data Collection

Structured questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The instrument was divided into two parts. The first part was on forensic accounting and financial reporting quality; while the second part was on demographic attributes of the respondents. The questionnaire were structured in a close-ended form using 5 point Likert scale rating of Strong Agree (S), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

Validity of Instrument

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution

S/N	Bank	No of Employee	Sample Size
	Access Bank	11	8
	Fidelity Bank	18	13
	First Bank	19	14
	Guarantee Trust Bank	15	13
	Polaris Bank	13	11
	Union Bank	13	10
	United Bank for Africa	17	16
	Wema Bank	11	8
	Zenith Bank	21	10
	Total	138	103

Source: Researcher's Field study, 2023

Model Specification

The study adopted multiple linear regression model anchored on ordinary least square technique to estimate the impact of forensic accounting on financial reporting quality of deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. The model is expressed as follows:

$$Y = a + {}_1X_1 + {}_2X_2 + {}_3X_3 + et$$

The above model was modified to suit the present study which was expressed as shown below: FRQ

$$= a + {}_1LITS + {}_2INS + {}_3EXTW + et$$

Where"

FRQ = Financial Reporting Quality

a = constants

₁₋₃ = Slopes of coefficient

LITS = Litigation support

The supervisor being part of this study validated the instrument through his suggestions and amendments which were incorporated into the instrument before distributing them to the targeted respondents.

Reliability of Instrument

The ability of a research instrument to prove consistency in a repeated application is known as its reliability. This was achieved with the use of Cronbach Alpha Test which showed an overall statistical value of 0.88 or 88%.

Method of Data Analysis

The data for the study which was basically obtained from primary source was analyzed using descriptive statistics to ascertain the characteristics of the model variables. However, before the test of hypotheses was performed, the data were validated using validity and reliability tests to ensure a reliable regression result. Multiple linear regression model anchored on OLS was employed to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rules were anchored on the probability value associated with the results of the regression analysis. In technical terms, the rules are expressed as follows:

If P-value < 0.05 (Accept H_1 and Reject H_0)

But If P-value > 0.05 (Accept H_0 and Reject H_1)

RESULTS

This section presents the analysis of the primary data obtained from the staff of the deposit money banks studied.

Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 2: Demographic information of Respondents

Factors	Option	Counts	Percentage (%)
Age	18 – 39	31	24

Presentation of Data

Table 3: Analysis of Administered Questionnaire

Banks	No. of Administered Questionnaire	%	No. of Valid Questionnaire	%	No. of Invalid Questionnaire	%
Access Bank	14	13.59	14	13.59	-	-
Fidelity Bank	10	9.71	9	8.74	1	0.97
First Bank	13	12.62	9	8.74	4	3.88
Guarantee Trust Bank	11	10.68	10	9.71	1	0.97
Polaris Bank	8	7.77	8	7.77	-	-
Union Bank	10	9.71	7	6.80	3	2.91
United Bank for Africa	13	12.62	11	10.68	2	1.94
Wema Bank	8	7.77	8	7.77	-	-
Zenith Bank	16	15.53	13	12.62	3	2.91
Total	103	100	89	86	14	14

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2023

The above table indicated that the researcher distributed a total of 103 questionnaires to the targeted respondents in the 9 deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. The table also

	40 & above	58	76
Gender	Total	89	100
	Male	32	36
	Female	57	64
Qualification	Total	89	100
	OND/NCE	24	27
	HND/B.Sc	56	63
	Others	9	10
	Total	89	100

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2023

The demographic profile of the participants indicated that a total of 89 copies of questionnaire were returned for analysis of the study. The frequency of those within the ages of 18 to 39 is 31 representing 24% of the participants. This was followed by those within the ages of 40 and above whose frequency was 58 representing 76% of the respondents. In terms of gender distribution, male population counts 32 representing 36% of the participants while female is 57 indicating 64% of the respondents. The educational background of the respondents indicated that majority of them are holders of HND/B.SC whose frequency was 56 representing 63%; while those holding OND/NCE was 24 in number representing 27%. Participants who are holders of other qualifications were 9 in number representing 10%.

showed that 89 copies of the questionnaire distributed were successfully returned for analyses which represent 86% of the 103 questionnaires distributed. However, 14 copies

of questionnaire were either withheld or invalid which represent approximately 14 of the entire questionnaires administered.

Descriptive Test

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N Stat.	MINI Stat.	Maxi. Stat	Mean Stat	Std. Dev. Stat	Skewness Stat.	Std Erro. Stat.	Kurtosis Stat	Std Error
Sum –Litigation support	89	5.6092	8.4618	3.6480	1.6340	0.9248	0.8190	0.4660	0.9120
Sum –Investigative Skill	89	5.8802	9.3180	3.0480	0.3486	0.4146	0.8190	0.8046	0.9120
Sum-Expert Witness	89	3.4664	7.2286	2.9888	0.9280	0.8904	0.8190	0.3440	0.9120
Sum-Fin. Report Quality	89	6.2608	8.4682	3.7647	0.8259	0.4023	0.8190	0.4218	0.9120
Valid N (Listwise)	89								

Source: Extracted from SPSS, 2023

Table 3 showed the descriptive analysis results of litigation support (LITS), investigative skill (INS), expert witness (EXTW) and Financial Reporting Quality (FRQ). The results showed that the mean values of LITS, INS, EXTW and FRQ were 3.6480, 3.0480, 2.9888 and 3.7647 respectively. The maximum values of LITS, INS, EXTW and FRQ were 8.4618, 9.3180, 7.2286 and 8.4682 respectively. These maximum values fluctuated to minimum values of 5.6092, 5.8802, 3.4664 and 6.2608 for LITS, INS, EXTW and FRQ respectively. The standard deviation values of 1.6340, 0.3486, 0.9280 and 0.8259 revealed the extent to which LITS, INS, EXTW and FRQ deviated from their expected values. The table also indicated that the values of standard error were low. The implication is that the population is effectively represented by the sample size.

Reliability Test

Reliability of the research instrument was measured using Cronbach's Alpha Test. In line with the rules of Thumb for Cronbach's Alpha Test according to George and Mallery (2003); > 0.9 is excellent; > 0.8 is good; 0.7 is acceptable; > 0.6 is questionable; > 0.5 is poor while < 0.5 is unacceptable. Hence, the minimum threshold that must be achieved to establish reliability with Cronbach's Alpha Test is 50%. A total of 16 indicators covering the major variables of the study were tested for reliability which showed an

overall Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.88. This indicated that both the dependent and independent variables are highly reliable.

Test of Hypotheses

Table 4: Regression Results

Variable		Std Error	Beta coefficient	t-stat	Prob
Constant	16.0484	0.0275	-	32.2218	0.0000
Sum –Litigation support	0.6843	0.0388	0.4806	5.8278	0.0067
Sum –Investigative Skill	0.3769	0.0944	0.4622	8.5640	0.0110
Sum-Expert Witness	0.4992	0.0989	0.6520	2.5396	0.0442

Source: SPSS Start (Version 20.0), 2023

Diagnostic Analysis

Table 5: Diagnostic Summary

Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Sum –Litigation support	0.037	34.724
Sum –Investigative skill	0.013	51.309
Sum-Expert witness	0.115	68.151
R-square	0.792	-
Durbin Weston	1.493	-

Decision Rules

If P-value < 0.05 (Accept H_1 and Reject H_0)

But If P-value > 0.05 (Reject H_1 and Accept H_0)

The regression results in table 4 showed that the p-values of litigation support (LITS), investigation skill (INS) and expert witness

(EXTW) were 0.0067, 0.0110 and 0.0442 respectively. Based on the decision rules guiding the study, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis (H_0) and concluded that forensic accounting measured by LITS, INS and EXTW had positive significant impact on financial reporting quality of the deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. The statistical value for R-square was 0.792, meaning that about 79% changes in financial reporting quality of the banks is attributed to changes in litigation support, investigative skill and expert witness; while about 21% is due to other factors not captured by the model, but which are capable of affecting financial reporting quality of the banks. Durbin Waston statistical value is 1.493, which implies that there is no presence of autocorrelation as its value is approximately 2.

Conclusion

The study using nine (9) DMBs based in Asaba, Delta State as case study examined the impact of forensic accounting on financial quality reporting. It was observed that financial reporting quality was influenced by litigation support. This exerted a significant and positive influence on financial reporting quality. Its implication is that a unit change will exert a corresponding change on financial reporting quality of the DMBs in Asaba, Delta State. It was also observed that financial reporting quality was influenced by investigative skills. The extent of the influence exerted on financial reporting quality by investigative skills is positive and significant. This implies that a unit change in application of investigative skill will enhance financial reporting quality of the DMBs in Asaba, Delta State.

The study also revealed that financial reporting quality was positively and significantly influenced by expert witness. This equally implies that a change in financial reporting quality is attributed to expert witness of DMBs in Nigeria.

The study appraises the impact of forensic accounting on financial reporting quality of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. It specifically examined the effect of litigation support, investigative skills and expert witness respectively on financial reporting quality of selected money deposit banks in Asaba, Delta State. These forensic accounting

components incorporate all significant and relevant mechanism for sound and strategic financial reporting quality which invariable will enhance decision making purposes of shareholders in deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. The literatures reviewed by the researcher indicated that the development and operation of deposit money banks such as Access banks, Fidelity bank, First Bank of Nigeria, Guaranty Trust Bank, Polaris Bank, United Bank of Africa, Union Bank, Wema Bank and Zenith bank have their financial reporting quality affected by litigation support, investigative skills and expert witness. The empirical results showed a clear and strongly expressed impact of forensic accounting on financial reporting quality as explanatory variables showed a relationship on financial reporting quality of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. The researcher therefore concludes that forensic accounting enhances financial reporting quality of selected deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State.

The study therefore, recommends that shareholders of deposit money banks should appoint board members with diverse background that will promote financial reporting quality. Likewise, more experienced staff with required skill-sets should be appointed so as to strengthen the quality and influence the robustness of financial reports. In addition, there should be regular training in forensic accounting for deposit money banks' accountants to enable them be in a position to unravel issues that mitigates quality assurance of financial reports.

Limitations and Areas for Further Studies

The study covered all twenty-one (21) deposit money banks listed on the floors of the Nigerian Exchange Group, out of which nine (9) deposit money banks based in Asaba, Delta State were sampled. These deposit money banks are Access bank, Fidelity Bank, First Bank of Nigeria, Guaranty Trust Bank, Polaris United Bank for Africa, Union Bank, Wema Bank and Zenith Bank. The study was limited to nine (9) deposit money banks in Asaba, Delta State. The study is also limited by the selection of litigation support, expert witness and investigative skills as proxy for Forensic Accounting which is the independent variable for the study, future studies

should increase the number of banks and/or include other industrial sectors to enhance the scope.

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