Firm Characteristics and Non-financial information Disclosures of Elite issuers firms in Nigeria Exchange Group

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Abstract: The study examined the effect of firms' characteristics on non-financial information disclosures of Elite issuers in Nigeria Exchange Group. It used eight (8) Elite Issuers firms as classified by the Nigeria Exchange group for 2021 financial period, spanning a period of ten (10) years (2012-2021), utilizing annual reports obtained from the firms in Nigerian Exchange Group. Panel least square regression model was used to test the perceived effect. The study used simple regression model and employed longitudinal survey research design. Hausman and Heteroskedasticity tests were respectively employed to determine appropriate effect of each variable as well as to ensure the reliability of results. Fixed panel estimator and Panel least regression analysis was employed to examine effect of firms' characteristics on non-financial information disclosures of the studied firms. The findings revealed that: Elite Firms' size has negative significant effect on non-financial information disclosures at 5% level of significance, and that firms' age has positive and significant effect on non- disclosures. The study recommended among others that: Large firms should give reasonable attention to non-financial information disclosures in order to avoid negative spillover and reputational effects associated with inconsistency of non-financial information disclosures, as nondisclosure of nonbinding information poses a risk and speaks loudly against such firms. Therefore, all listed firms in Nigeria Exchange Group are encouraged to engage sincerely in non-financial information disclosures to maximize the antecedent benefits that are linked with non-financial information disclosures practices.

Keywords: Firms' size; Firms' age; and non-financial information Disclosures; Antecedents benefits

1. Introduction

There has been a growing concern for listed firms in Nigeria on the issues of voluntary non-financial information disclosures as it relates to global disclosure practices on nonbinding reporting requirements for non-European Union (EU) member countries like Nigeria. Therefore Nigerian listed firms' disclosure practices need constant review in line with United Nations guiding principles (UNGP; 2017/2019; Rosati, & Faria, 2019; Drilling, 2020) in order to attain global proposed

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sustainable development goals. Consequently, this study examines the effects of firms' characteristics on voluntary non-financial information disclosures (NFIDs) of listed firms in Nigeria.

Non-financial information have been variously defined to include environmental reporting, and intellectual capital reporting as well as integrated reporting, transparency, accountability, consciousness and corporate reputations. (UNGP, 2018, 2019; Margrata & Daniela, 2020). Voluntary non-financial disclosures appear to be helpful to listed firms where engaged consistently. (Unuagbon & Oziegbe, 2016; Bebbington & Unerman, 2020). Therefore, NFIDs are disclosures reforms that can fully describe firms' activity profiles which tend to reflect notable efforts by government around the world, in promoting sustainable reporting as desired. It is also viewed as disclosure practice whereby entities ceremoniously reveal certain information that are non-financial affairs, like voluntary information on human rights ,risk management, corporate relationships, environmental impacts, plans and strategies, listed firms non-financial weakness, policies and intellectual capital governance, employees, communities and customers which can stimulate and trigger financial fortune or misfortune of listed firms as the case may be; as well as boost information needs of shareholders and related groups (Maj, 2018; Belenesi, Bogdan & Popa, 2021; Ramalan, Kurfi, Bello & Saiffulahi, 2021; Erin, Bamigboye & Oyewo, 2022).

David, Jugu, and Ezekiel (2021) further defined it as "valuable legitimating instrument which can mitigate social concerns and mediating effect in convincing stakeholders and other related groups of their operations. Previous studies noted that NFIDs is still at its crawling stages here in Nigeria, therefore implying that global regulatory frame work are not duly followed by the Nigerian listed firms even though it is not a binding requirement. Thus, implying that NFIDs have not been fully given its deserved attention by Nigerian firms (Ewelina, 2021; Egbunike & Okerekeoti, 2018; Unuagbon & Oziegbe, 2016; Ramalan, et. al, 2021).

Some studies from developing and developed world have noted the antecedent benefits of disclosing NFIDs in line with global regulatory requirements, which enhance transparency, accountability and increases value creation as well as listed firms' reputations. For instance, in Tanzania listed firms at Dar Es Salaam stock Exchange found that disclosure of NFIDs has the tendency to attract more investors which turns out to increase firms performances. Also, it revealed that there is a positive link between NFIDs and firms return on assets (ROA) (Mwenda, Ndiege & Pastory, 2021; Ntui, Mzenzi & Chalu, 2021; Thailand, Jullobol & Smartmool, 2015; Sri Lanka, Abeywarda & Panditharatha, 2016; India, Aggarwal, 2019; Egypt, Mostafa, 2017; as well as Southern Vietnam by Nguyen, Nguyen& Nguyen (2020); more in Indonesia, Aduitrix, 2022).

Firm characteristics (FCs) are described as those firms' attributes that can enhance and sustain firms' performance which include: Firm size, Age, Profitability, Leverage, Liquidity, Sales growth, Asset growth and Turnover (Foyeke, Iyoha & Ojeka, 2015; Lang & Lundholm, 2016). It can also be perceived as predictors of the Structure of accounting information and performance. Wiklund and Shepherd (2017) viewed FCs as ability to align firm's attributes with the environment. Therefore implying that FCs might have a relationship with NFIDs which will need to be investigated in the Nigeria context thus, being a motivation for the study.

A number of studies and related articles have proven that conventional financial reporting is not sufficient to carter for the recent increase information need of shareholder as well as other stakeholders due to global changes in business environment (Maj, 2018; Margrata & Daniela, 2020; David, et. al, 2021).

Other studies have dealt on effect of firms' characteristics as it relates to NFIDs and have had mixed results (Nwankwe, 20I8; Onuagbon & Oziegbe, 2016). Thus this study intends to investigate the above to see if it will reveal similar or different results hence, the need for further enquiry. Some studies from developing and developed world have noted the antecedent benefits of disclosing NFIDs in listed firms in line with global regulatory requirements, which enhance transparency, accountability and increase in value creation as well as listed firms' reputations. Therefore, calling for more disclosures on an entity's activities.

Some empirical literature noted that voluntary non-financial information disclosures in the Nigerian firms appear to be uncertain at present (Theophilus & Ademola, 2020; Emeka-Nwokeji, Ekwueme & Okeke, 2019) hence, the need for further enquiry in this direction. The study provides answers to the questions on how firms' characteristics affect non-financialinformation disclosures of Elite Issuers firms in the NGX.

The broad objective is to examine effect of firms' characteritics on non-financialinformation disclosures with focus on the Eight (8) Elite Issuers firms for 2021 financial period considering 2012-2021 as study period (10 years period). Firms'characteristics is adpoted as independent variable while nonfiancial information is adopted as dependent varialble.

To guide the study, the following null hypotheses are tested:

Ho$_1$:   Firms' Size has no effect on non-financial information disclosures of Issuers firms in Nigerian Exchange Group;

Ho$_2$:   Firms' age has no effect on non-financial information disclosures of Elite Issuers firms in Nigerian Exchange Group.

2. Literature Review

Wiklund and Shepherd (2017) viewed Firms' characteristics as ability to align firm's attributes with the environment and thus can be decomposed as: Firm age, firms' size. Firms' liquidity, firms' leverage, volume of capital, firms' growth, tangible assets (Egbuike, 2018).

Firms' Size: Firms' size can be assessed as the total assets, total sales, market value and equity as well as their natural logarithm terms. (Onguka, Iraya & Nyamute, 2021). Using Rbin and R size class inter-changeably, the average firm size in each size bin is calculated by dividing the number of employees by number of firms (Robert & Rabih, 2018). Firms' size means the scale or volume of operation turned out by a single firm. The study of firm's size is important since it affects its efficiency and its profitability (Edunote, 2022). Quite a number of empirical literatures have been conducted using firms' size.

Dang Frank and Yang (2017) in a study measuring firm size in empirical corporate finance stated that firm size is commonly used as a crucial fundamental firms' attribute. Some studies used firms' size as a control variable while some used it as a predictor variable. However, this study decomposes firms' size as one of the independent variables.

Firms' Age: Firms' Age can be assessed as the period from the time the firm was initially created to its present existence. It can also be measured as "the time between going to public and its present time, in years (Robert & Robih, 2018; Lang & Lundholm, 2016). Firms' age as one of the firms' characteristics seems to be maintaining reasonable attraction in today's topical issues by the existing

empirical evidence by some scholars which is often describe as gradual changes in focus of time, structure of industry and industry life cycle.

Thus listed firms define firms' age as number of years plus one year of the initial public offer (Alexander, Jacub, Jackie & Francesco, 2018). Coad, Holm, Krafft and Quatraro (2018) in a study of firm's age and performance noted that firms' age has been a topic of interest recently by many scholars overtime. Firms' Age will also be adopted as one of the independent variables in this study.

Behaviours towards the community of their host which is capable of renewing and shoring up community trust on the firms in their value creations as long as there is an alignment between community expectations and firms responses. Legitimacy theory appears to have the theoretical posture that predicts firms' behaviours towards managing and maintaining shareholders and other related groups' perspectives as regards to core value creations, which tends to legitimize behaviours of these groups, it also highlights on the gap between corporate social responsibility, environmental disclosures, community expectations as well as their display of appreciations in response to firms' kind gestures alongside with the International Global Initiative recommendations (GIR 3.1a, 2021; Pizzi, Baldo, Caputo & Venturelli 2022; Ordonez-Castano, Herrera-Rodriguez, Ricaurte & Mejia, 2021).This study as a consequence is anchored on legitimacy theory.

2.1. Empirical Review

Theoretical Framework

Agency theory: Agency theory was propounded by Stephen Rose and Barry Mitnick, in 1973. Agency theory relates to the study firms' on disclosure of non-financial information that can stimulate and trigger financial fortune or misfortune of enterprises as the case may be. It addresses the information need of the shareholders and other related groups, in order to reposition them for better informed decisions, thereby, reducing insiders' trading and information asymmetry (Susanto, Pradipta & Handojo, 2019).

Legitimacy Theory

Legitimacy theory was propounded by Dowling and Pfeffer in 1975. This theory affirms that the Legitimacy of a business entity's successful operations is tied to its contracts and relationship with the environment as well as the society at large. Firms' operations can be distorted by mere under minding its responsibility to the expectations of noble society. This theory advocates that firms operating within a community should ensure to respond to environmental influences disclosures of non-financial information in their annual reports, which makes them gain corresponding legality to operate in its host's community, this enables the community to be updated on listed firms "behaviours, towards the community of their host which is capable of renewing and shoring up community trust on the firms in their value creations, as long as there is an alignment between community expectations and firms responses. Legitimacy theory appears to have the theoretical posture that predicts firms" behaviours towards managing and maintaining shareholders and other related groups' perspectives as regards to core value creations, this tends to legitimize behaviours of these groups, it also highlights on the gap between corporate social responsibility, environmental disclosures, community expectations as well as their display of appreciations in response to firms' kind gestures alongside with the International Global Initiative recommendations (GIR 3.1a, 2021; Pizzi et. al, 2022; Ordonez-Castano et. al. &

Mejia, 2021). This study is underpinned on legitimacy theory since it has better theoretical disposition that supports and explains the relationship between the dependent and independent variables.

Eneh & Okoye (2020) explored on company attributes and non-financial information disclosure of listed consumer and industrial goods in Nigeria for the period of 6 years (2012-2017) using Binomial logistic regression for its analysis assumption, the study results showed an insignificant relationship for firm size, while industrial type and leverage showed mixed results. The study suggests improvement in non-financial disclosure requirements for Nigerian firms.

Ikpor, Bracci, Kanu, Levoli, Okezie, Milanga and Ogbaekirigwe (2022) examined drivers of sustainability accounting and reporting in emerging Economies, using 50 large firms in Nigeria Exchange Group for the period of 6 years. The study adopted a fixed effect panel regression model. The findings revealed that firms' size, ownership structure, age, leverage, auditor type, and profitability have influence on sustainability reporting.

Also, Jullobol and Sartmool (2015), studied the effect of firms' performance on voluntary disclosure in annual reports on technology industry in the stock Exchange of Thailand for a period of 5ears (2009-2013) using 34 firms out of 155. It employed Random effect, Tobit Q model. Finding showed a statistical significant effect of non-financial information disclosure with firms' performance.

Again, Abubakar, Ahmed, Abba & Buhari (2021) researched on firm attributes and corporate voluntary information disclosure by listed industrial goods firms in Nigeria Exchange group for a period of 10 years (2010-2019). The study employed multiple regression analysis using firm size, profitability, leverage, firm age and auditor type as variables for the study. Results of the findings showed that firm size, leverage, and profitability have positive and significant effect on corporate voluntary disclosures while liquidity and asset have positive but insignificant effect on corporate voluntary disclosures. Likewise, Thinh (2021) examined the impact of firm characteristics on the voluntary disclosure on the top 50 listed firms of Forbes Vietnam using least squared of time series data regression. The variables include firm size, growth rate of market share value to book value and audit type. Findings proved that all variables have strong influence on voluntary disclosures. In the same vein, Nguyen, Nguyen and Nguyen (2020), explored factors affecting voluntary information disclosure on annual reports: Listed companies in HO Chi Minh City Stock Exchange using 122 firms for the period of 4 years (2014-2018). The study employed descriptive statistics, regression method and multi-linear regression. The findings showed that profitability, and organizational ownership affects voluntary information disclosure on annual reports of these Vietnam firms. Monday and Nancy (2016), investigated determinants of voluntary disclosure quality in emerging economies: evidence from firms listed in Nigeria Exchange Group for a period of 5 years (2000-2014) period, using un-weighted voluntary index, ex-post factor research method on 793 firms. It adopted regression technique using: Firms' size, profitability, board composition and gearing. Results indicates that firms' size and Board composition have significant and positive relationship with voluntary disclosures quality, while profitability and gearing were found to be significantly negatively related to voluntary disclosures.

Chinwe and Ogiedu, (2019) explored on firm characteristics on financial performance in listed Nigerian firms, it used 91 samples for the period of 2011-2015 using judgmental sample and quartile regression technique however, and its study show positive effect on firm age and negative effect on leverage. Adedapo and Olawele (2019) adopted Shapiro-cluster sampling method, Will tests and random model regression via STATA 11.1, the study results discovered that firms' size has positive

effect. Eneh and Okoye (2020), dealt on company attributes and non-financial information disclosures and it used annual reports spanning from 2012-2017 but adopted Binomial logistic regression in its analysis, Prot, Mzenzi and Chalu (2021), studied Firm Characteristics and environmental disclosure in an extractive industry in Tazania stock Exchange, it used 18 firms as sample and carried its investigations from 2004-2018 using random effect general least squared method. Sahore and Verma (2021), examined corporate disclosure and firm characteristics employing emerging market listed companies as well as annual reports from 2011-2015.

Other studies like: Thinh, (2021) findings proved that all variables have strong influence on voluntary disclosures, Dioha, Mohammed & Okpanach, (2018) found no significant effect on firms' age, return on sales and liquidity it also revealed significant effect on leverage and profitability; Monday and Nancy (2016) discovered significant and positive relationship on firms' size, and board composition but found significant and negative relationship on profitability and gearing; Ezekesili and Ejiofor (2022) indicated no significant effect on firms size, profitability but; annual; Ikpor et. al. (2019) findings found positive and significant relationship across all the variables used in the study, such as firms' size, leverage, profitability and board composition. Some other studies examined firms' characteristics and related topics in listed firms using different periods of study as well as methodologies, and these studies results indicated mixed findings as depicted above.

From the foregoing literature review, and to the best of the researchers' knowledge, Firms' characteristics and non-financial information disclosures with reference to eight (8) Elite Issuer firms (Classified) in Nigerian Exchange Group for 2021 have rarely been studied. This current study therefore employed the use of panel data from these eight Elite capitalized listed companies, otherwise known as elite issuers companies for 2021 financial year, in the Nigerian Exchange Group (NGX) for the period spanning 2012-2021 to investigate the perceived effect of Firms' Characteristics on non-financial information disclosures from Elites issuers firms in Nigeria Exchange Group (NGX).

3. Methodology

The study adopts the longitudinal survey research design for a period of 10 years (2012-2021). A total number of eight (8) Elite Issuers firms were used as classified, from the total population of 157 listed firms in NGX was used as sample size. The choice of this design is also hinged on the attributes of the data that were collected for this research, from annual reports of listed firms in NGX. ISO 26000 was adopted as a check list, which has seven (7) core subjects of thirty-seven (37) items representing areas that constitute non-financial information disclosures as contained in the standard. The choice of this source is because annual reports are audited public documents that have been filed for regulatory purpose; hence, the data derived from them can be relied upon Chakroun, Salhi, Amar & Jarboui, (2020). The average non-financial disclosure index was calculated by dividing the sum of the compliance value by the maximum value of expected disclosures. The scores for non-financial disclosure is expected to vary between zero and one for non-compliance and compliance respectively. This study adapted Arif and Tuhin (2013) model; and employed longitudinal survey research design. Hausman test and Heteroskedasticity test were respectively employed to determine the appropriate effect as well as to ensure the reliability of results. In order to make suitable for this study, panel least squared regression technique was employed to test and analyze effect of firms' characteristics on non-financial information disclosures of Elite Issuers firms , with E-view version 10 software as well as ISO 26000.

3.1. Dependent, Independent, and Control Variables

The dependent variable is non-financial information disclosure while the independent variables are firms' size, firms' age, firms'. The study controls variables includes that which may affect non-financial information disclosures, but do not form part of the variables of interests.

Table 3.1. Measurement of variables

Variables	Type	Code	Measurement	Source of previous empirical work
Non-financial information disclosure	Dependent	NFID	Disclosure index score ranging between 0 and 1	Chakroun et al. (2020 Chakroun et al. (2020 (2021)
Firm size	Independent	FSIZE	Log of total asset	Dang and Frank (2015), Deye et al. (2021)
Firm age	Independent	FAGE	Number of years since incorporation	Akinola (2020), Ilaboya and Ohiokha (2016)
Board Independence	Control	BIND	Ratio of independent directors to total of directors	Alqatameen et al (2020)
Board size	Control	BSIZE	Number of directors	Nguyen et al.(2020)
Profitability	Control	LPAT	Log of profit after tax	Abubakar et al .(2021); Arif and Tuhin (2013)

Source: Researcher's compilation 2023

3.5. Model Specification

This study employs Simple Linear Regression model propounded by Sir Francis Galton (1996) investigated the sustainability disclosure of Elite issuers firms in the Nigerian Exchange Group.

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_i + \mathcal{E} \tag{1}$$

Y_i= Dependent variable, while;

X_i= Independent variable

β_0 = Population Intercept

β_1 = Population Slope Coefficient

$\mathcal{E}_i$ = Random error term

Applying this model to suit the objectives of this study, the variable in equation (1), we obtain equation (2)

$$Y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \mathcal{E} \tag{2}$$

Where (X_1) is Size, (X_2) is Age, (X_3) is Board independence, (X_4) is board size and (X_5) is profitability

Thus, the model for this study is presented in equation three (3)

$$SRD_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 FA_{it} + \beta_2 FS_{it} + \beta_3 BIND_{it} + \beta_4 BSIZE_{it} + \beta_5 LPAT_{it +} , \mathcal{E} \tag{3}$$

Where: $Y = SRD_{it}$ = Sustainability reporting disclosure of 'i' firm in year 't'

X_1 = FS_{it} = Size of 'i' firm in year 't'

X_2 =FA$_{it}$ = Age of 'i' firm in year 't'

X_3 =BIND$_{it}$ =Board independence of 'i' firm in year 't'

X_4 =BSIZE$_{it}$ =Board size of 'i' firm in year 't'

X_5 =FPAT$_{it}$ = Profitability of 'i' firm in year 't'

β_0 = Intercept

$\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3, \beta_4, \beta_5,$ = Coefficients

ε = Error term

A-priori Expectation: $\beta_1 > 0, \beta_2 > 0, \beta_3 > 0, \beta_4 > 0, \beta_5 > 0,$

4. Data Presentation

4.1. Univariate Analysis

Table 4.1. Descriptive statistics

Panel A				
	Mean	Min	Max	Std. Dev.
OG	0.975	0.000	1.000	0.157
HR	0.580	0.000	1.000	0.371
LP	0.958	0.800	1.000	0.082
TE	0.772	0.000	1.000	0.290
FOP	0.878	0.400	1.000	0.161
CI	0.864	0.429	1.000	0.209
CID	0.859	0.429	1.000	0.172
NFID	0.809	0.459	1.000	0.168
FSIZE	10.519	8.601	13.069	1.384
FAGE	44	3	128	35

OG = Organizational governance disclosure; HR= Human rights disclosure; LP = Labour practices disclosure; TE= Environment related disclosure; FOP= Fair operating practices disclosure; CI= Consumer issues disclosure; CID= Community involvement and development disclosure; NFID = Non-financial information disclosure; FSIZE = Firm size; FAGE= Firm age; BIND=Board independence; BSIZE=Board size; FPAT=Profitability

Source: Researcher's compilation (2022)

The study employed descriptive statistics and correlation analysis as preliminary analyses. The descriptive statistics helps to describe the features of the data while the correlation analysis reveals the unit-directional association between the variables. The descriptive statistics are presented in Table 4.1. Panel A contains the statistics for the dependent variable in subcategories (OG, HR, LP, TE, FOP, CI, and CID) and holistic category (NFID) while panel B contains the statistics relating to the explanatory variables. From panel A, it was observed that the disclosure for organisational governance (M= 0.975, SD= 0.157) is the highest while disclosure relating to the human rights (M= 0.580, SD= 0.371) was the lowest. Furthermore, disclosure for labour practice had the least variation among the companies (M= 0.958, SD= 0.082) while the disclosure for human rights (M= 0.580, SD= 0.371) had the largest disparity among the companies. On the overall, the statistics for NFID (M= 0.809, SD= 0.168) revealed that the level of non-financial disclosure is commendable and stood at about 80%.

From panel B, the statistics for FAGE (Min= 3, Max= 128) show that the youngest company as at the beginning of the scope of the study was 3 years post incorporation while the oldest as at the end of the

period was 128 years post in corporation. The statistics for BIND (M=0.562, SD=0.254) show that the average independence level is less than 60% having a dispersion revolving around 35% and 95. Conclusively, the Board of director of the sampled firms is fairly independent. BSIZE (M=14.1575, SD=3.599) revealed that on the average, the Board of directors of the sample firms are large. However, based on the value of the standard deviation, this level is equally dispersed among the firms.

Table 4.2. Correlation Analysis

Correlation	NFID	FSIZE	FAGE	BIND	BSIZE	FPAT	*VIF*
NFID	1.000						
FSIZE	-0.050	1.000					*1.358*
FAGE	0.389	0.027	1.000				*1.278*
BIND	0.117	-0.252	-0.016	1.000			*1.167*
BSIZE	0.345	0.159	0.169	-0.018	1.000		*1.080*
FPAT	-0.057	0.377	-0.088	-0.059	-0.055	1.000	*1.228*

Source: Researcher's compilation (2022)

From Table 4.2, it was observed that FAGE (r= 0.389) and BSIZE (r= 0.345) had fairly strong association with NFID while the other variables had weak associations. Further, while FSIZE, and FPAT were inversely associated with NFID, BIND, and BSIZE were positively associated with NFID. The inter-correlations among the variables are not a cause for worrying as the highest association is between FPAT→FSIZE (r = 0.377). This is further confirmed by the VIFs as none of them is above the benchmark of 10.

4.2.2. Diagnostic Tests

To ensure the reliability of the results from the estimation, some post estimation tests were carried out. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Serial and Heteroskedasticity Tests

Breusch-Godfrey Serial Correlation LM Test:			
F-statistic	11.76932	Prob. F(2,70)	0.0000
Obs*R-squared	20.13169	Prob. Chi-Square(2)	0.0000
Heteroskedasticity Test: Breusch-Pagan-Godfrey			
F-statistic	4.879085	Prob. F(7,72)	0.0002
Obs*R-squared	25.73900	Prob. Chi-Square(7)	0.0006
Scaled explained SS	17.85696	Prob. Chi-Square(7)	0.0126
Ramsey RESET Test: Specification: NFID FSIZE FAGE FLEV FLIQ C			

4.3. Data Analysis and Interpretation of Results

The result of the fixed effect panel FGLS estimation is presented in Table 4.5. The weighted adjusted R-squared stood at 0.9751 indicating that about 97% the systematic variation in NFID is explained by FSIZE, FAGE, BIND, BSIZE, and FPAT while the remainder is captured in the error term. This implies that these variables greatly contribute in explaining the changes in NFID. When juxtaposed with the F-statistics (F = 222.488, $p < 0.05$), it is observed that the joint predictive power of the model is significant and sound since the p-value of the F-statistics is less than 0.05. This also reveals that the results can be relied on for policy decision. The T-statistics and associated p-values provide information on the predictive power of the individual variables on NFID. Placing emphasis on just the explanatory variables, the statistics of FSIZE (Coef. = -5.1218, $p < 0.05$) indicate that FSIZE has a

significant inverse effect on NFID at the 5% significance level. FAGE has statistics (Coef. = 22.329, p < 0.05) indicating a positive and significant effect on NFID at 5% level of significance. Conclusively, FSIZE has significant negative effects on NFID while FAGE has significant positive effects on NFID. The results in Table 4.5 also show that all the control variables have significant effect on NFID.

4.4. Discussion of Findings

This study found that firm size has a significant effect on disclosure of non-financial information although the direction of the relationship is negative. The finding implies that a higher level of non-financial disclosure of information is associated with small firms. A likely reason for this may be that small firms do not have sufficient resources to contend with the challenges associated with nondisclosure of non-financial information; hence, they are constrained to voluntarily disclose. Further, in line with the political power theory, large firms have the resources to influence policies and connections to lobby. Therefore, they are well equipped to insure themselves against nondisclosure of non-financial information via influence and lobby to mitigate associated negative effects. The finding on the significance of firm size agrees with the finding of Ikpor et. al. (2019); Albitar, (2015); Ilaboya and Ohoikha (2016); Abdullahi et. al. (2019); Kabiru (2020); Sahore and Veerma, (2021), which opined that the size of a firm contributes significantly in shaping the disclosure of non-financial information in Nigeria. However, it contradicts in terms of direction, the finding of Arif and Tuhin (2013), that investigated disclosure of non-financial information in listed banks in Bangladesh and found a significant positive association between size and the level of disclosure. In addition, the overall finding on firm size negates the findings of Thinh (2021) in Vietnam, Nurudeen, Ahnda & Shalli (2018) in Nigeria and Alqatameen, Alhaleen & Dabaghia (2020) in Amman, Jordan.

Adedapo and Olawalo, in Nigeria, Abubakar et. Al. (2021) in Nigeria, Eneh, Emengini, Nnam & Nwekwos (2021) in Nigreia, Prot et. al. (2021) in Tanzania, Ramalan et. al. in Nigeria (2021), Ezekwesili and Ezejiofor, (2022) in Nigeria who observed that firm size plays a positive and significant role in the disclosure practices of non-financial information in listed companies in Vietnam, Nigeria, and Jordan respectively but aligns with the finding of the Nigeria-based study of Monday and Nancy (2016) in Nigeria.

The second finding of this study indicates that the age of a firm has a significant and positive effect on disclosure of non-financial information, which aligns with Nigerian studies like: Ilaboya and Ohiokha (2016); Abdullahi et. al. (2019); Chinwe and Ogiedu, (2019); Kabiru, (2020); Prot et. al. (2021); Ramalan, (2021) and in Tanzania The finding implies that as a firm continues in existence, the level of its disclosure on non-financial information increases. Our literature confirms that newer firms suffer stiff competition at their entry level as such; the urge to reduce the information that may be assessed by competitors would make them not significantly engage in voluntary disclosures of non-financial information. Also, disclosure of non-financial information is expensive and requires expertise which newly formed companies may lack at the initial stage. Our finding on a significant and positive association between age and disclosure of non-financial information supports the position of extant studies such as Nguyen et. al. (2020) in Vietnam and Abubakar et al. (2021) in Nigeria, but disaffirms the finding of Jullobol and Sartmool (2015) in Thailand and Arif and Tuhin (2013) in Bangladesh who found a significant but negative effect of age on disclosure of non-financial information, as well as the study of Dioha et al (2018) in Nigeria who observed insignificant effect on firms' age for the listed

consumer goods studies. Contradicting evidence using data from Nigerian and Vietnamese companies respectively.

5. Summary of Findings

This study revealed that Firms' size has significant and negative effect on non-financial information disclosure of Elite Issuer firms in Nigerian Exchange Group. In addition to this, Firms' age has significant and positive effects on the level of non-financial information disclosure of Elite Issuer firms in Nigerian Exchange Group. Furthermore, there is significant and significant and negative effect on non-financial information disclosure of Elite Issuer firms in Nigerian Exchange Group occasioned by.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Findings from the study revealed that all the variables examined (size, age, leverage, and liquidity) with respect to Elite issuer firms had significant effects but on the level of non-financial information disclosure.

Therefore, the study concludes that firm attributes with emphasis on firm size, age, has significant effect on the level of non-financial information disclosure of Elite issuer firms listed in NGX. However, firms' size has significant adverse effect.

6.1. Recommendation

In view of the fact that Firms' size is significant but inversely affects non-financial information disclosures, other firms in Nigeria Exchange Group are encouraged to improve on NFID to avoid experiencing negative spillover and reputation effects associated with nondisclosure.

Again, since firms' age significantly and positively affects non-financial information disclosure, companies are encouraged to engage in NFIDs to exploit the benefits associated with such disclosures.

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