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CONTENTS

Sr. No.	TITLE & NAME OF THE AUTHOR (S)	Page No.
1.	AN INQUIRY INTO THE PRODUCTIVITY OF INDIAN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY: APPLICATION OF DATA ENVELOPMENT ANALYSIS <i>UMANG GUPTA & ROHIT KAPOOR</i>	1
2.	GLOBALIZATION AND GROWTH OF INDIAN LIFE INSURANCE INDUSTRY <i>SUSHIL KUMAR, NIRAJ MISHRA & SEEMA VARSHNEY</i>	7
3.	ASSESSMENT OF THE LEVEL AND FACTORS INFLUENCING ADMITTED CUSTOMERS' SATISFACTION WITH HEALTH CARE SERVICE IN UNIVERSITY OF GONDAR TEACHING HOSPITAL, NORTH WEST ETHIOPIA <i>DIGISIE MEQUANINT & DR. ASSEGID DEMISIE</i>	10
4.	STOCK MARKET CRISIS AND VALUE RELEVANCE OF ACCOUNTING INFORMATION: IMPACT ON QUOTED CEMENT MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN NIGERIA <i>SAMAILA THOMPSON & ABUH ADAH</i>	16
5.	SERVANT LEADERSHIP: A NEW PARADIGM OF LEADERSHIP IN BANGLADESH <i>MD. SAJJAD HOSSAIN & ULLAH S M EBRAHIM</i>	20
6.	PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS OF INTERNALLY GENERATED REVENUE MOBILISATION IN ABURA-ASEBU-KWAMANKESE DISTRICT ASSEMBLY, GHANA <i>CHRISTOPHER DICK-SAGOE</i>	26
7.	AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS FACED BY PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP (PPP) IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO UTTAR PRADESH <i>DR. ZEESHAN AMIR & ANIS UR REHMAN</i>	32
8.	PERFORMANCE OF INDIAN BANK WITH REFERENCE TO NON PERFORMING ASSETS – AN OVERVIEW <i>B. SELVARAJAN, DR. G. VADIVALAGAN & DR. M. CHANDRASEKAR</i>	38
9.	RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY AMONG PASSENGER CAR USERS (AN EMPIRICAL STUDY CONDUCTED IN BANGALORE CITY AMONG SMALL PASSENGER CAR USERS) <i>SRI.R.SRIVATS & DR. R. K. GOPAL</i>	47
10.	INFLUENCE OF QUALITY CIRCLES ON ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>DR. D. S. CHAUBEY, RANI RAMASWAMY & NIDHI MAITHEL</i>	53
11.	PERFORMANCE OF TAX SAVING FUNDS OF SELECTED ASSET MANAGEMENT COMPANIES: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS <i>DR. K. V. S. N. JAWAHAR BABU & DR. M.S. VASU</i>	60
12.	IMPACT OF MICRO - CREDIT TO WOMEN SHGS – A STUDY WITH REFERENCE TO NAGAPATTINAM DISTRICT, TAMIL NADU <i>K. MUTHU. & DR. K. RAMAKRISHNAN.</i>	70
13.	MANAGERIAL EFFECTIVENESS AND COUNTERPRODUCTIVE WORK BEHAVIOUR: A COMPARISON AT DIFFERENT MANAGERIAL LEVEL <i>DR. RISHIPAL</i>	74
14.	A STUDY ON HEALTH INSURANCE PRODUCT PERFORMANCE AT HDFC, BANGALORE <i>V. CHANDRAMOHAN & DR. K. RAMACHANDRA</i>	79
15.	A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT IN BANKING SECTOR IN INDIA (INDUSTRIAL CREDIT AND INVESTMENT CORPORATION OF INDIA AND STATE BANK OF INDIA) <i>DR. PONDURI.S.B. & V. SAILAJA</i>	89
16.	WORK ETHICS AND ITS IMPACT ON JOB SATISFACTION OF INDIAN MANAGEMENT TEACHERS - AN EMPIRICAL STUDY <i>DR. RAJESHWARI NARENDRAN & PREETI MEHTA</i>	98
17.	AN APPRAISAL OF QUALITY OF SERVICES IN URBAN HOSPITALS (A STUDY ON THREE URBAN HOSPITALS IN GUNTUR DISTRICT, ANDHRA PRADESH) <i>DR. T. SREENIVAS & NETHI SURESH BABU</i>	103
18.	PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF SOME SELECT EQUITY FUNDS FLOATED BY PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS <i>B. RAJA MANNAR & DR. B. RAMACHANDRA REDDY</i>	113
19.	ANALYSING THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY WITH THE HELP OF MARKET VALUE ADDED APPROACH <i>E. LAVANYA & DR. B. RAMACHANDRA REDDY</i>	117
20.	ACHIEVING CUSTOMER LIFETIME VALUE THROUGH CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT <i>SHAKEEL-UL-REHMAN & DR. M. SELVARAJ</i>	120
21.	COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF CAPITAL STRUCTURE OF BANKING COMPANIES WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO STATE BANK OF INDIA AND ICICI BANK <i>DR. ANURAG B. SINGH & PRIYANKA TANDON</i>	124
22.	MANAGING BRAND EXTENSION <i>DR. C. MUTHUVELAYUTHAM & T. PRABHU.</i>	132
23.	BEHAVIOURAL ISSUES IN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT <i>NISHI TRIPATHI & RICHA SINHA</i>	135
24.	STATUTORY DISCLOSURE BY INDIAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANIES <i>GAGANDEEP KAUR & RAJINDER KAUR</i>	139
25.	PRODUCT LINE STRATEGY ADOPTED BY SMALL SCALE MOTOR AND PUMP INDUSTRY <i>DR. J. SUGANTHI</i>	144
26.	FACTORS OF CRM (A STUDY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO BANKS) <i>DR. S. GAYATHRY</i>	149
27.	IMPACT OF GRIEVANCES AND REDRESSAL OF EMPLOYEES IN TEXTILE MILLS, COIMBATORE <i>P. DEEPA ANANDA PRIYA & DIVYA.S</i>	156
28.	A STUDY OF EMPLOYEE COMPETENCY MAPPING STRATEGIES AT SELECT ORGANISATIONS OF BANGALORE <i>DR. Y. NAGARAJU & V. SATHYANARAYANA GOWDA</i>	176
29.	COMPARATIVE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE STRESS AMONG EMPLOYEES: PUBLIC VS PRIVATE BANKS IN INDIA <i>SHADMA PARVEEN</i>	182
30.	AN EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF NONWORK DOMAIN ON EMPLOYEE TURNOVER <i>L.R.K. KRISHNAN</i>	189
	REQUEST FOR FEEDBACK	201

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STOCK MARKET CRISIS AND VALUE RELEVANCE OF ACCOUNTING INFORMATION: IMPACT ON QUOTED CEMENT MANUFACTURING FIRMS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Studies in value relevance research have examined the relationship between stock market prices and accounting information contained in financial statements; and several of these studies from different countries have shown contradictory results partly because accounting regulations differ between countries. In this respect, little is also known about the value relevance of accounting information and market share prices of listed cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria especially during the stock market crisis. Most studies in this area had been undertaken in relation to the value relevance of accounting numbers, and their fluctuations in the Nigerian stock market. This study however examined the value relevance of accounting information of quoted cement manufacturing firms during the stock market crisis. The study used secondary data obtained from the Nigerian Stock Exchange Factbooks, and Cashcraft Management Limited. It adopted and modified the Ohlson Residual Income Model to regress the relationship between earnings per share, book value per share, and market share prices of the quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria during the stock market crisis. The study found that a significant positive relationship exists between earnings per share, book value per share and market share prices of cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria during the stock market crisis. The study recommended that quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria should recapitalize through mergers and acquisitions to enhance their capacity to absorb the stock crisis. These measures are anticipated would increase investors' confidence in accounting information of these quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

KEYWORDS

Book Value Per Share, Clean Surplus Relation, Earnings Per Share, Value Relevance.

INTRODUCTION

Accounting information is a necessity for the functioning of capital markets, and it is important to recognize that financial statements provide the most widely available data on a firm's economic activities (Vazquez, Valdes and Herrera, 2007) as such, active stock investors turn to financial statement analysis to ascertain the fundamental value of firms, and they also rely on these statements to assess the firm's plans and performances; so, financial information is a pre-requisite for a well functioning capital market; as it is assumed that one function of accounting information is to reflect economic income (returns), and this is represented by market prices. Financial reports assist investors in equity valuation; hence for accounting information to be value relevant, it must be related to current firm value. Where there is no association between accounting information and firm value, accounting information cannot be value relevant, which implies that financial reports are unable to fulfill one of its primary objectives.

Beaver (2002) believes that less and less of stock prices seems to be explained by accounting information, which he attributed to a gray zone where other factors are at play. Various value relevance studies have examined whether there has been a change in the value relevance of accounting information due to, for example, decreased timeliness of financial statement information, increased reporting of losses and increased importance of unreported intangible assets (Amir and Lev, 1996; Lev and Zarowin, 1999; Francis and Schipper, 1999; Nilsson, 2003 as referenced in Svensson and Larsson, 2009). Accordingly, Lev (1989), concludes that there are several reasons why the value relevance of earnings is weak. He refers to manipulation by management, investor irrationality, and biases induced by accounting measurement and valuation principles. He also notes that information other than earnings has an impact on stock prices.

In the light of the above, during the stock market crisis of the mid-2000's, most Nigerian firms were valued at billions of naira as shown in their financial statements, yet not declaring any profits. The question of value relevance of the financial statement information becomes even more important. Can investors' trust the accounting information contained in these financial statements for purposes of investment decisions?

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Value relevance literature that examined the association between accounting information and prices or returns extends back at least 40 years (Miller and Modigliani, 1966). However, Amir, Harris, and Veuti (1993) were about the first in their study to use the term value relevance. In defining value relevance, Barth, Beaver and Landsman (2001) simply state that value relevance research examines the association between accounting amounts and equity market values. Market value relevance shows that there is a statistical relationship between financial information and share prices, and that accounting based measures explain market prices sufficiently, given that under the efficient market assumption prices reflect available information (Francis and Schipper, 1999). Investors believe that relevant information is that information which contributes to their equity investments decisions; as such one objective of financial reporting, is to assist investors in equity valuation. So, for financial information to be value relevant, accounting numbers must be related to current firm value (Beisland, 2009).

The benchmark for assessing the characteristics of accounting information is the amount implicitly assessed by investors, because equity market values lead accounting amounts in reflecting value relevant information (Beaver, Lambert and Morse, 1980; Beaver, Lambert, and Ryan, 1987), thus, using equity market values as a benchmark for assessing value relevance of accounting information is consistent with SFAC No. 1 which states that an objective of financial statements is to aid investors in estimating the amount and timing of future cash flows.

The relevance of accounting information in determining the value of the firm is influenced by the market's perception of the reliability of that information. When the reliability of earnings declines, the market may place less reliance on earnings and look for other sources of information, such as book value. However, as book value is only one of a number of alternate sources of information, the decline in the value relevance of earnings may not be exactly offset by the increase in the value relevance of book value. Earnings and book value are expected to have a positive association with market value reflecting the value-relevance of these accounting measures

The value-relevance of earnings is demonstrated in the early works of Ball and Brown (1968), Beaver and Dukes (1972) and Patell and Kaplan (1977), but the study by Dechow (1994) was one of the first to investigate the relative superiority. Therefore, the permanence of earnings influences the value relevance of earnings, with the market assigning greater weight to permanent earnings than to those that are perceived as transitory (Kormendi and Lipe 1987; Collins and Kothari 1989; Lipe 1990; Ali and Zarowin 1992; Cheng, Lui and Schaefer 1996; Sloan 1996 as referenced in Nilsson, 2003).

The potential lack of reliability of the earnings figure has led investors to look to book value as measure of value. Collins, Maydew and Weiss (1997) investigated the causes of the shift in focus from earnings to book value, and these include the increasing magnitude and frequency of abnormal and extraordinary items; the increasing occurrence of reported losses; the decline in firm size, and the increase in the incidence of intangibles. These factors, which are linked to a reduction in the value-relevance of earnings, have also been shown to be associated with an increase in the value relevance of book value (Berger, Ofeck and Swary 1996; Burgstahler and Dichev 1997; Collins, Maydew and Weiss 1997; Barth, Beaver and Landsman 1998, as referenced in Van Cauwenberge, 2007).

The relative value relevance of earnings and book value has also been examined in the context of return on equity (Burgstahler and Dichev 1997; Penman 1998). Burgstahler and Dichev (1997) develop an option-style valuation model in which market value is a convex non-additive function of earnings and book value; a high return on equity (ROE) suggests that the firm is using its assets efficiently and will therefore continue to employ the assets in the same manner. Therefore, future earnings are expected to be similar to current earnings. This perception of permanence may result in value relevant earnings. Conversely, if ROE is low, the firm will look for a better way to employ its assets. This would result in the need to revise the expectation of earnings and thus book value becomes more relevant as the predictability of earnings declines. A similar result was found by Penman and Sougiannis (1998) who combined earnings and book value multipliers in a valuation model. Weights were calculated for capitalized earnings and book value dependent on the relative size of each measure. It was found that the weights varied non-linearly with respect to the difference between the measures.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Studies by Adeyemi and Ogundele (2003) was limited to communications in accounting, problems and solutions; Kantudu (2005) on the other hand studied the relevance of financial statement to stakeholders’ investment decisions; while Babatunde and Mokuolu (2005) studied the stock market development and economic growth in Nigeria; so far, there are no any significant existing empirical studies that has investigated the value relevance of accounting information and market share prices of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria during the stock market crisis.

OBJECTIVES

This study investigates the value relevance of accounting information of quoted cement manufacturing firms during the stock market crisis in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of the study are to;

- (i) Examine the relationship between earnings per share and market price per share of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria.
- (ii) Assess the relationship between book value per share and market share price of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

HYPOTHESES

H₀₁. There is no significant relationship between earnings per share and market price per share of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria during the stock crisis.

H₀₂. There is no significant relationship between book value per share and market price per share of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria during the stock crisis.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ohlson (1995) developed a formal model relating firm value to accounting variables. This study follows this model in accordance with the methodology used by Collins, Maydew, and Weiss (1997) to analyze its implications with data of quoted Nigerian cement manufacturing firms. Ohlson (1995) started with a dividend discounting model under the residual income valuation assumptions. The original assumption of the Ohlson model imposes a time-series structure on the abnormal earnings process that affects value. Also, the present value relation of the dividend discount model stipulates that the market value of a firms equity (*p_t*) equals the present value of its expected future dividends (*E_t[d_t]*) discounted at the risk-free interest rate (*R_f*). Applying the risk-free interest rate (*R_f*) as a discount factor reflects the assumption of risk-neutral investors, as it is also assumed to be constant.

The Clean Surplus Relation (CSR) ties up accounting data so all flows pass through the income statement. CSR ensures that all changes in the book value of equity (*BV_t*) are reported as either accounting earnings (*E_t*) or dividends (*d_t*). Another assumption of the Ohlson model approximates the time series behavior of abnormal earnings as linear and stationary, which Ohlson denominated as the Linear Information Dynamics (LIDOM) relation, where abnormal earnings are defined by the Abnormal Earnings Relation (AER) as the difference between accounting earnings (*E_t*) and normal earnings. Normal earnings represent a firm’s normal earnings return on the capital invested at the beginning of the period, which is the net book value of equity multiplied by the interest rate.

Ohlson’s (1995) book value-abnormal earnings model can be expressed as a function of current earnings and lagged book value. According to Collins, Pincus, and Xie’s (1999), the preliminaries of the Ohlson model are based on the CSR which is;

$$P_t = BV_{t-1} + E_t - d_t \tag{1}$$

where *BV_t* = book value of equity at time *t*, *E_t* = earnings for period *t*, and *d_t* = dividend in period *t*. The definition of abnormal earnings is;

$$Ex_t^a = E_t - (R_f - 1)BV_{t-1} \tag{2}$$

where *R_f* is one plus the risk-free rate. The stochastic process assumption for abnormal earnings (where *ε_t* is other non-accounting value-relevant information) is:

$$E_{t-1}^a = \omega E_t^a + \varepsilon_{t+1} \tag{3}$$

Given that Ohlson’s (1995) initial book value-abnormal earnings valuation model is;

$$P_t = BV_t + \sum R_f^{-T} (E_{t+1}^a) \tag{4}$$

where *p_t* is the firm’s stock price at time *t*. Ohlson (1995) shows that with the standard assumptions underlying the dividend discount model together with equation (1) and (2), his equation can be rewritten as;

$$P_t = BV_t + a_1 E_t^a + a_2 E_t \tag{5}$$

By substituting the definition of abnormal earnings (*E_t^a*) from above into equation (5), Ohlson (1995) shows that price can be expressed as a function of current period earnings, book value at time *t*, and other information. Ohlson notes that in this form, the valuation function shows how earnings and book values operate as the primary value indicators. Collins, Maydew, and Weiss (1997) and Collins, Pincus, and Xie (1999) complied with the empirical methodology of the Ohlson (1995) model that specify;

$$P_{it} = a_0 + a_1 BV_{it} + a_2 E_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \tag{6}$$

where;

P_{it} - Price of firm *i* share at the date on which annual report is issued.

BV_{it} - Book value per share of firm *i* at the end of year *t*.

E_{it} - Earnings per share of firm *i* during year *t*.

ε_{it} - Other non – accounting value-relevant information

a₀ -Coefficient for each independent variable

t -Time dimension

i -Individual firm.

The functional relationship between market share price and the independent variables is regressed from our data as;

$$MPS_{it} = a_0 + a_1 BV_{it} + a_2 EPS_{it} + a_3 SMC_{it} + \varepsilon_{it}$$

Where; MPS_{it} is the dependent variable, a_0, a_1, a_2, a_3 are regression coefficients with unknown values. BVS, EPS and SMC are the independent variables. ϵ is the other non- accounting value-relevant information.

FINDINGS

This section of the study is devoted to presentation of the results of the analysis performed on the data collected to enable the test of the propositions of the study.

TABLE - 1: VARIABLES AND VALUES FOR EQUATION PARAMETERS

FIRMS	YEARS	VARIABLES			
		MPS	BVS	EPS	SMC
Ashaka Cement	2009	11.55	13.20	47.00	1
	2008	17.01	17.49	121.00	1
	2007	53.12	16.81	110.00	1
	2006	55.00	17.21	231.00	1
	2005	34.20	16.53	303.00	0
	2004	22.50	17.22	385.30	0
	2003	17.75	15.13	242.00	0
	2002	13.99	13.66	173.50	0
	2001	20.89	17.09	316.40	0
Lafarge Wapco Cement	2009	30.00	29.13	168.00	1
	2008	25.50	26.96	375.00	1
	2007	79.80	21.86	356.00	1
	2006	53.99	17.02	365.00	1
	2005	17.30	10.33	101.00	0
	2004	11.30	27.24	-198.00	0
	2003	18.51	21.92	-185.00	0
	2002	14.15	24.71	-81.00	0
	2001	21.84	30.88	86.00	0
Cement Company Northern Nigeria	2009	12.46	6.71	184.00	1
	2008	5.33	6.33	134.00	1
	2007	23.00	5.01	11.00	1
	2006	21.59	2.85	-3.20	1
	2005	7.95	2.97	20.70	0
	2004	6.63	3.43	85.12	0
	2003	3.83	2.05	-14.70	0
	2002	3.07	3.18	-93.20	0
	2001	4.55	1.35	-146.60	0

Source: NSE Fact Books; Cashcraft Management Limited

Where: MPS - Market Price per Share; BVS - Book Value per Share; EPS - Earning Per Share; SMC - Stock Market Crisis

Note: SMC Figures of "0" indicate the periods without stock market crisis, and "1" indicate the Periods with stock market crisis. The computation results obtained are presented in table 2 below and subsequently interpreted.

TABLE-2: STATISTICAL RESULTS

VARIABLES	MPS	BVS	EPS	SMC
Beta	N/A	0.303	0.372	0.349
Standard Error	5.454	0.308	0.017	5.634
t-values	0.619	2.004	2.336	2.258
T significance	0.542	0.057	0.029	0.034
Tolerance	N/A	0.935	0.844	0.894
VIF	N/A	1.070	1.185	1.113
R	.712			
R Square	0.507			
Adjusted R square	0.443			
Std. Error of Estimates	13.78673			
F. Statistics	7.883			
Sig. F change	0.001			
Durbin Watson	1.573			

Source: SPSS Regression Results

N/A= Not Applicable

The statistical results in table 2 indicate a significant positive correlation between MPS and BVS, EPS and SMC . 50.7% of the variations in the MPS of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria are explained by BVS, EPS and SMC ; this means that BVS, EPS and SMC have a significant influence on the market share price of these firms. It further reveals the overall fitness of the adjusted Ohlson Regression Model with the adjusted coefficients of determination (R^2) of 0.507. Additionally, the adjusted R -Square value showed a positive 0.443.

In order to assess the multicollinearity and autocorrelation of the variables, the Tolerance, VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) and Durbin-Watson (DW) values are used. Whereas the Tolerance and VIF values assess the multicollinearity of values, DW is used to assess autocorrelation of the values. From table 2 above, the Tolerance values of the variables are consistently smaller than 1.0, which shows a complete absence of multicollinearity (Tobachnick and Fidell, 1996; Musa, 2005 as referenced in Abubakar, 2010). As suggested by Neter, Kutner, Nachtsheim and Wasserman (1996), Cassey and Anderson (1999) and Musa (2005), the VIF values which are consistently lower than ten (10) reaffirm the complete absence of multicollinearity among the variables considered. As for autocorrelation of the values, the DW value 1.573 falls within the range of 1.5 – 3.5 and this signifies a complete absence of autocorrelation.

The regression equation as stated earlier is;

$$MPS_{it} = a_0 + a_1BVS_{it} + a_2EPS_{it} + a_3SMC_{it} + \epsilon_{it} \dots\dots\dots(1)$$

Substituting the computed beta values of the variables in the above equation, we have;

$$MPS_{it} = 3.378 + 0.303BVS + 0.372EPS + 0.349SMC + 13.78673 \dots\dots\dots(2)$$

From equation (2) *BVS*, *EPS* and *SMC* all have a positive beta coefficients and can influence a positive change in the market share price when there is an increment in them. This indicates that whenever there is *N1* increment in *BVS* and *EPS*, the market share price will increase by 30.3% and 37.2% respectively. The calculated t-value of *BVS*, *EPS* and *SMC* gives 2.004, 2.336 and 2.258, which are less than the table critical t-value of 3.078, in each case at 1% levels of significance. The t-significance values for *BVS*, *EPS* and *SMC* indicate that there is a significant relationship between the three variables and the *MPS* at 1% level of significance. The F-statistics gives a positive value of 7.883 which indicates a strong positive significant relationship. These results provide evidence that the regression model is well fitted and that accounting information published in financial statements of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria during the stock market crisis is value relevant.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Several studies have shown that earnings and book value are found to correlate with stock prices, and investors are able to take advantage of this kind of information and this is reflected in market share prices. While we have not assessed the total contributions of value relevance studies to valuation, because of the different valuation models and the set of variables used in these analysis; we however have studied the links between accounting information and market share prices of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria during the stock market crisis. The Ohlson model (1995) was used to empirically measure the value relevance of accounting information of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigerian. The study found that there is a significant positive relationship between earnings per share, book value per share and market price per share of these quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria during the stock market crisis. The study therefore concludes that there is a significant relationship between stock market crisis and the market share prices of cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria. Following the findings of this study, we recommend that quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria should recapitalize through mergers and acquisitions as obtained in the Nigerian banking sector; this will enhance the capacity of these quoted cement manufacturing firms to absorb the shock of the stock crisis. This measure is anticipated would increase investors' confidence in the accounting information of quoted cement manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

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