

## **BOARD PROFESSIONALISM AND GENDER ON SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING OF LISTED CONSUMER GOOD FIRMS IN NIGERIA.**

**Isyaku Abdullahi**

Department of Accounting, Federal University Kashere, Gombe.  
[ijarmaessmoh@gmail.com](mailto:ijarmaessmoh@gmail.com) +234(0)8032151333

**Anas Yushau Ango**

Department of Social Sciences and Administration, Bayero University, Kano  
[Ango.anas@yahoo.com](mailto:Ango.anas@yahoo.com) +234(0)7039032095

**Junaidu Muhammad Kurawa, PhD**

Department of Accounting, Bayero University, Kano  
+234(0)8037040596

### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper examined the impact of board professionalism and gender on sustainability reporting of listed consumer good firms in Nigeria over a period of twelve years from 2009-2020. This paper explored board professionalism and gender on sustainability reporting index GRI 2016. The study outsourced data from the annual financial reports of the sampled listed Consumer Good Firms in Nigeria and analyzed using descriptive, correlation and multiple regression. The research uses ex-post factor research design. The study found a positive and significant impact between gender and sustainability reporting while board professionalism has a negative and significant impact on sustainability reporting. This means an increase in number of women on board will lead to an increase in sustainability reporting of listed consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Companies should be encouraged to include or increase the number of women on board to enable them enhance the level of their sustainability reporting. Women are more sensitive to the environment thus their push for more sustainability reporting and also the stock exchange regulator (SEC) should create a policy that will regulate and monitor companies in Nigeria to ensure that they fully implement the disclosure requirements of the corporate governance code and sustainability reporting guidelines.*

**Key word:** Board professionalism, gender, sustainability reporting, GRI.

### **1 Introduction**

Organizations are generally established with an objective to maximize shareholders' welfare while remaining profitable. More often than not, activities carried on by these organizations tell on the immediate environment in which they are located as well as the environment at large. In recent times, sustainability has become an issue of major concern around the globe. As defined by Brundtland (1987) "sustainability entails meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". Investors have also continued to increase demand for non-financial information one of which is a company's sustainability reporting. As a result, sustainability reporting as part of corporate reporting is fast gaining momentum especially with the adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) which emphasizes a lot on disclosures.

Companies account for their sustainability performance by voluntarily producing sustainability reports. In such reports, they should inform their stakeholders about the environmental and social impacts of their activities, which should diminish

informational asymmetries between the firm and its stakeholders (Brammer and Pavelin, 2006). Although these reports present by firms on sustainability performances shows fair view of their sustainability activities, firms trying to protect their social legitimacy often publish misleading sustainability information. Since companies can produce sustainability reports voluntarily, they may have incentives to only disclose “good news” (Gray and Milner, 2002). The voluntary nature of sustainability reporting implies that there is room for managers to behave opportunistically by not reporting “bad” sustainability information. Consequently, stakeholders’ access to information about environmental and social activities is often limited to the “good news” companies decide to disclose (Unerman, 2007). But, recent efforts such as the guidelines issued by the Nigerian Stock Exchange (NSE) in 2018 try to regulate how companies reports sustainability performance.

However, in order to produce sustainability reports of high quality, the “bad news” are included as well. To decrease the possibility of opportunistic behavior and thereby increase the quality of the reports, corporate governance mechanisms are used. Although sustainability reporting is (still) voluntary, internal and external corporate governance pressures may urge companies to become more responsible for their sustainability performance and to disclose high-quality sustainability information. Higher levels of corporate governance (CG) pressure are thus argued to be positively associated with sustainability disclosure quality (SDQ) and the underlying corporate sustainability performance (CSP).

Organizations have increasingly embraced sustainability reporting. According to Global Reporting Initiative (2011), thousands of organizations worldwide now produce sustainability reports. KPMG International Survey of 2011 which covers 34 countries including Nigeria shows that 95 percent of the 250 largest global companies now report on their sustainability activities. This is in response to the increased demand by stakeholders for organizations to be more transparent in how they treat their economic, social and environmental activities. It has been agreed by world business leaders and through academic research that sustainability tells on a firm’s corporate responsibility, therefore any company that does not produce sustainability report could be seen as working towards unsustainable development.

Consumer goods companies had experience a significant recovery from 2016, benefitting from an all-round improvement in the state of the economy comparable from the previous years and organizations doing business in the consumer goods industry in 2018 have developed newer and bolder strategies to improve their economy. Also consumer goods firms are a category of companies that relate to items purchased by individuals rather than by manufacturers and industries. This major sector encompasses goods that are consumed rather than used in production of other goods and include both durable and non-durable consumables. Included in this sector are manufacturers of auto-mobiles, household durable goods, textiles and apparel as well as manufacturers of food beverages and tobacco products. These companies have a direct relationship with our immediate environment, social and the economy at large, thus, this sector will be suitable for testing impact of board characteristics on sustainability reporting. Therefore this study would examine the impact of board characteristics on sustainability reporting of listed consumer good firms in Nigeria.

The developments in businesses worldwide particularly in relation to sustainable activity indicate the importance for companies to integrate sustainability aspects into their corporate reporting mechanism. The accountability side of companies is not complete without the reporting mechanism, hence the release of sustainability reports

and inclusion of sustainability disclosures in corporate annual reports. The contents of sustainability reports either published as stand-alone reports or integrated into corporate annual reports in Nigerian companies have received some attention in recent years. Beck *et al.* (2010) observe that sustainability reporting is voluntarily practiced by multinational oil and gas companies in Nigeria; reporting was deficient as companies were not guided by any legislation on what to report.

The accountability that financial results of companies communicate is an important aspect of their transparency that cannot be ignored: but financial results alone cannot communicate a company's social and environmental impacts. These impacts are redefining the meaning of business value. Therefore, in order to improve the content of sustainability reports, external pressures and organizational context like board characteristics have roles to play in the transformation process. Sustainability reporting is still voluntary as such there are no legislations regulating how businesses report sustainability activities; thus, the decision on what to report and how to report sustainability activities fall on the shoulders of the board of directors. As such, the composition of a competent board is expected to impact the attitude of the business towards sustainability reporting.

Considering the role of corporate governance is indeed important at this junction, against the backdrop of the pertinent governance issues erupting in the corporate world. A key internal factor that determines the success of any organization is the structure, nature and organization of its internal governance mechanisms existing within the organization. Thus, the different corporate governance mechanisms, such as boards of directors, audit committees, and auditors are responsible for monitoring and controlling managers' decisions and firms' activities which affect all stakeholders including society (Islam *et al.*, 2010; Suprianto *et al.*, 2017). Sustainability reporting could also be influenced by the organizational context or process depicted by attitudes of key decision makers, board of directors' committee on sustainability issues, stakeholder engagement, sustainability framework and assurance. Another issue is whether the organizational context leads to more or less sustainability reporting, or, whether they lead to situations where business organizations report on sustainability without improving on their internal processes.

Another board attribute that is seen to impact sustainability reporting is gender, female directors are deemed to be sensitive to the environment and are expected to support more disclosure of the impact of the business activities on the environment. The expertise of board members also is seen to allow members to appreciate the need for sustainability reporting and as such is expected to positively impact the decision of the board to provide sustainable reports.

This kind of situation creates a decoupling between sustainability reporting and internal processes, and could result in less accountability from sustainability reporting and disclosures. The nature of these pressures may differ across different geographical and corporate contexts. So, it is necessary to examine the external and internal contexts and how the pressures located there influence a company to engage in sustainability reporting given that business organizations operate in different organizational fields. Researchers advocate that there is need to approach the research on sustainability reporting or any of its variants by engaging with business organizations' board characteristics. This research approach could reveal the

attitudes and internal contexts of reporting as well as how key decision makers view the external pressures influencing what consumer firms report. There is an additional need to decipher how the organizational field influences what companies report.

Previous studies on sustainability reporting have mainly focused on countries such as United Kingdom, United States, Australia, China and Canada, and, to a lesser degree, developing countries such as Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Egypt which focuses mainly on internal organizational determinants of sustainability reporting rather than a mix of factors that can contribute to sustainability reporting from the internal and external organizational field. Evidence of research into sustainability reporting in Nigeria is rare, with studies such as Owolabi (2001) and Uwuigbe (2011) focusing on aspects of indicators sustainability reporting such as environmental disclosures. However to the best of the researchers' knowledge, similar studies covering all the indicators of sustainability reporting are limited in the consumer goods industry. As such, this research is aimed at filling this gap that exists.

The study cover twelve years 2007-2020 and is of significant to management, regulatory agencies as well as future researchers as sustainability reporting is a useful medium for firms to report their sustainability activities to the immediate environment. The aim of this study is to examine the impact of The specific objectives of the study are to examine the relationship between board characteristics structure and sustainability reporting of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. The specific objectives are: to examine the impact of

- a. Non-executive directors on sustainability reporting of listed consumer good firms in Nigeria.
- b. Board size on sustainability reporting of listed consumer good firms in Nigeria.
- c. Foreign directors on sustainability reporting of listed consumer good firms in Nigeria.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Concept of Sustainability Reporting**

The Boston college centre for corporate citizenship defined Sustainability reporting as “the discloser and communication of environmental, social and governance ESG goals as well as companies progress towards them” According to Deegan and Rankin (2016), externalities caused by a business organization cannot be accurately measured, neither are they entirely recognized in financial accounting; also the likelihood of scarcity caused by resources used in the production process do not reflect in market prices of such resources. Consequently, financial accounting alone is inadequate to portray a holistic picture of organizational performance, except it takes cognizance of sustainability reporting. Also, Lozano (2015) proffers an integrational view of sustainability; and argues that business organizations should consider social and environmental implications alongside economic impacts. This view has led to an evolving form of corporate reporting known as sustainability reporting. Another perspective of sustainability is the notion of intergenerational-equity, which is a core principle required for the sustainable development of any company. The study does not intend to measure corporate sustainability from an integrational and/or inter-generational perspective, rather it measures sustainability reporting by observing the economic, environmental, social and governance indicators in annual reports.

Although at the time of the Brundtland report, 'sustainability' was a concept used within the domain of environmentalists and ecologists, the recent discourse on 'sustainability' has long left this realm because of its multi-disciplinary approach. Since the term 'sustainability' is often used in several disciplines, it is crucial to indicate that this study situates 'sustainability' in accounting and by extension corporate reporting, hence the term 'corporate sustainability reporting' (relating to companies). Sustainability reporting transcends environmental reporting because it includes reporting of social and economic impacts as well as governance approaches to managing the impacts. It provides a better platform for a communication with a wide range of business stakeholders. The MOU signed by International Federation of Accountants (IFAC) and International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) in October 2012 was to promote cooperation towards the enhancement of corporate reporting. According to Humphrey, O'Dwyer and Unerman (2014), this was the first MOU between the IIRC and any other institution pertaining to expanding frontiers in corporate reporting.

## **2.2 Board Characteristics**

Considering the role of corporate governance is indeed important at this junction, against the backdrop of the pertinent governance issues erupting in the corporate world. A key internal factor that determines the success of any organization is the structure, nature and organization of its internal governance mechanisms existing within the organization. Thus, the different corporate governance mechanisms, such as boards of directors, audit committees, and auditors are responsible for monitoring and controlling managers' decisions and firms' activities which affect all stakeholders including society (Islam et al., 2010; Suprianto et al., 2017).

To understand the role of the board, it should be recognized that boards consists of a team of individuals, who combine their competencies and capabilities that collectively represent the pool of social capital for their firm that is contributed towards executing the governance function. Companies are run by Boards of Directors on behalf of the shareholders. Management of these companies reports to these Boards. Boards adopt unique qualities that that they believe will help them achieve the best performance. These qualities are, for the purpose of this study, referred to as Board Characteristics. Board characteristics therefore are the various unique features that a certain board of directors identifies with. It refers to the mix of attributes that suit each board.

There are several attributes of board characteristics; these include BOD diversity, Audit Committee, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) duality, BOD independence, BOD size, BOD compensation and many others (Finegold et al. 2007). Given this, it is important to identify the board characteristics that make one board more effective from the other. Therefore, this study is set to identify the Impact of Board Characteristics on Sustainability Disclosure of Listed Conglomerates Companies in Nigeria. These characteristics are executive directors, board knowledge and professionalism, board size, Independent Executive Directors and foreign directors.

## **2.3 Review of Empirical Studies**

### **2.3.1 Board Characteristics and Sustainability Reporting**

Isa (2014) assessed sustainable reporting among food and beverage firms in Nigeria. The findings of the study show that firms exhibited some level of sustainability

reporting though not significant because it only comprised of approximately two percent of the annual reports total disclosures. Shamil, Junaid M, poh-ling, & Krishnan, (2014) the researcher investigate the influence of board characteristics on sustainability disclosure. The study documents that board size and dual leadership are positively associated with sustainability reporting and boards with female directors are negatively associated with sustainability reporting. Also Bouaziz (2014) studies the relationship between corporate governance and voluntary financial disclosure of Canadian listed firms for the years 2013. Samples of 84 companies across 14 industries listed in the Canadian Stock Exchange were studied. The findings showed that CEO duality and board size had a negative association with the level of firms' voluntary disclosure, while ownership structure was not a determinant of the level of voluntary financial disclosure in Canada.

Similarly, Tamoi, Faizah, Mustaffa Mohamed, & and Yussri, (2014) examine the influence of good corporate governance specifically board characteristics on sustainability reporting. The findings indicate that board size, professionalism, and board designation had a significant impact on sustainability disclosure. However, board independence and board ownership were not significant in motivating sustainability reporting.

Also Halil Emre, Akbas. (2016) examine the relationship between board characteristics and environmental disclosure; evidence from Turkish listed companies, using a sample of 62 non-financial firms at the end 2011. Content analysis was employed, four board characteristics namely board size, board independence, board gender diversity and audit committee independence are considered as independent variables while dependent variable is the environmental disclosure. The result shows that only board size has a significant and positive relationship with the extent of environmental disclosure, the result also implies that firm with a larger board disclose more environmental information than firms with smaller board. On the other hand, the rest of the independent variable are found to be unrelated to the extent of environmental disclosure.

Onuorah, Egbunike and Gunardi (2018) examine the influence of corporate board attributes on voluntary social disclosure of selected quoted manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study found a significant positive influence of proportion of non-executive directors, a significant positive influence of proportion of women in the board and a significant positive influence of board size with voluntary disclosure. Chidiebele and Tochukwu, (2019) investigated the impact of foreign directors on the economic, social, and governance disclosure of listed consumer goods firms in Nigeria. The results show a significant influence of foreign directors on the economic, social, and governance disclosure of listed consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Umukoro, Uwuigbe, Uwuigbe, Adegboye, Ajetunmobi, and Nwaze (2019) investigates the influence of environmentally sensitive, certified or educated board members on the disclosure of sustainability report. The study adopted static panel data regression. Sustainability report forms the dependent variable while independent variables representing the level of the directorship expertise relating to environmental issues, the level of directors' experience in environmental sustainability and both the experience of executive and non-executive directors in sustainability. The study revealed that highly educated directors have an altogether constructive influence on the sustainability report disclosure while controlling for corporate administration and firm-level qualities. In addition, the study found that the executive and non-executive directors have low experience in environmental issues

resulting in an insignificant effect on the disclosure of sustainability reporting. They are 15 banks listed as the population of the study but the researcher used only three banks across 3 year.

Sheikh Abu Bakar, Binti Mohd and Binti Ahmad (2019) focused on the gender, age and ethnic diversity to examine the impact of board diversity elements on the extent and quality of sustainability reporting (SR) among the top 100 Malaysian listed companies. The study found that the average proportion of women directors out of the total number of board members is 17% and the average age of the board members is 61 years old, which is above the minimum retirement age. In addition, it was also found that having women board members has a significant impact on a company's SR

Khairredine, Salhi and AnisJarboui, (2020) investigated how board characteristics impact the governance, environmental and ethics disclosure on SBF 120 index. Board characteristics such as board size, gender diversity, board independence, CEO/chair duality and board meeting are included as independent variables. Board independence, board gender diversity and board meetings have a positive and significant impact on governance, environmental and ethics disclosure. Board size is positively and significantly associated only with corporate environmental disclosure.

Gold, Aifuwa, Usman, Subair, Osazevaru And Oloyede (2021) tested the impact of board members' education, diversity and sustainability reporting in listed consumer goods firms in Nigeria. Descriptive and inferential statistics are used to summarize the data and to draw an inference on the population studied. Board members' education level and background were used to proxy education diversity in the boardroom. Results from the panel least squares regression revealed that board educational background and diversity positively and significantly affects the sustainability reporting of consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

From the above, board characteristics significantly influences sustainability disclosure of companies. This research tends to follow suit and adopt legitimacy theory as the best theory that explains the research work suggesting a positive significant impact of board characteristics on sustainability reporting

### **3 Methodology**

The study employed ex post-factor research design through collection of data from annual reports and accounts of the sampled companies for the period of the study. The data of the study is panel in nature as it comprises of many companies for the period of ten years from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2009 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021. The population of the study comprises of all the twenty-one (21) consumer goods firms that are listed on the Nigeria Stock Exchange as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

For a company to qualify as sample for the study the company must be listed throughout the period covered by the study i.e. 2009 to 2020 and secondly, a company must have the required data for the study. As a result of these criteria only fifteen (15) companies qualified and therefore selected as sample of the study. The data of the study was collected from the annual reports and accounts of the sampled consumer good firms and analyzed using regression. There are three sets of variables covered by this study. These are the dependent, independent and the control variables. Table 3.1 shows the variables of our study

**Table 3.1 Variables Measurement**

Variables		Measurement	Source
Sustainability reporting	Dependent variable	Actual number of disclosed items to the total items to be disclosed	Mohamad m, Junaid M, poh-ling, & Krishnan., (2014), Abdul-manaf, Baba, & Bahrain, (2017).
Board professionalism	Independent variable	The total number of board member with Accounting qualifications.	Tamoi, Faizah, Mustaffa Mohamed, & and Yussri, (2014),
Gender	Independent variable	The number of female directors on the board	Odudu, James, & james (2016)
Firm size	Control variable	Natural logarithm of total asset	Isa & Muhammad (2015)
Firm age	Control variable	Number of years since listed	Mohamad et al. (2014)

**Source:** Developed from the Review of Related literature, 2020

In determining the presence of sustainability reporting, the disclosure occurrence method of content analysis technique was applied to the information in corporate reports and sustainability reports. According to Joseph and Taplin (2011), there are two ways of applying content analysis technique. These mechanisms are disclosure occurrence and disclosure abundance method. These methods are used to ascertain the content of corporate disclosures. The disclosure abundance method entails counting pages, words, or sentences on a checklist of disclosure items. The demerit of this method is that it can lead to double counting when a particular item on the checklist of disclosure items is counted twice or more because it occurs more than once in the actual report. The disclosure occurrence method recognizes the presence of disclosure in the corporate report as '1' and the absence of disclosure as '0'; after which the total disclosure is determined. It can also result in a more predictable measurement of sustainability reporting. Based on the review of literature, varying indicators have been used to measure sustainability reporting. This research uses the disclosure occurrence method.

The following is the regression model that was used in this study:

$$SR_{it} = \beta_{0it} + \beta_{1it}BC + \beta_{3it}BP + \beta_{6it}GEN + \beta_{6it}FSIZE + \beta_{6it}AGE + \epsilon_{it}(1)$$

Where: SR= is sustainability reporting

BC = Board characteristics

BP = board professionalism

GEN = gender

FSIZE= firm size

AGE = firm age

#### 4 Results

Below is the result of descriptive statistics presented in table 4.1

**Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics**

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
<b>Sreport</b>	180	0.5742222	0.1686819	0.16	0.88
<b>Bprof</b>	180	2.827778	1.289539	1	6
<b>Gender</b>	180	1.388889	1.178906	0	4

<b>Age</b>	180	32.9	10.99218	2	55
<b>Fsize</b>	180	7.388281	0.9219521	4.8355	8.6836

Source: Generated using Stata version 12, based on the study data

Table 4.1 shows the descriptive statistics of the variables of the study. The result indicates that sustainability reporting among consumer goods industry has a mean value of 0.574222 suggesting firms in the consumer goods industry report 57% of their sustainability activity with a standard deviation of 0.1686819. The minimum sustainability reporting by such firms is 0.16 which is as a result of a few companies only providing standalone accounts.

Board professionalism has a mean value of 2.83 showing that on the average, the board of directors has approximately three members with accounting qualification. The notion here is the presence of members with accounting qualification would encourage sustainability reporting. The minimum figure of 1 show that there is at least a member of the board with accounting qualification among consumer goods firms in Nigeria.

Gender has a mean figure of 1.388889 which suggests that on the average listed consumer goods have a female member in their board. Female members of the board are expected to be more sensitive to sustainability reporting as such their presence in the board is seen as an element that would encourage sustainability reporting. A mean figure of 0 shows that there are companies that don't have any female member in them.

Age has a mean value of 32.9 with a standard deviation of 10.99218. This shows that an average firm in the sampled has 33 years since listing. The minimum value of 2 shows that all the companies are listed during the study period.

Finally, the size of the firm is measured by taking the total assets. The size of the firm signals the perception investors have in the firm, investors prefer to invest money in institutions with a very huge amount of total assets. The size of the banks has a mean of 87008753.07, a minimum of 68477 and a maximum of 482603257.

### **Correlation**

The correlation between the dependent and explanatory variables is presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Correlation Result of the Dependent and Independent Variables**

Variables	Sreport	Bprof	Gender	Age	Fsize	VIF
Sreport	1.0000					
Bprof	0.4222	1.0000				1.26
Gender	0.6069	0.6069	1.0000			1.40
Age	0.4422	0.4422	0.2613	1.0000		1.21
Fsize	0.7544	0.3465	0.5124	0.2935	1.0000	1.33

Source: Generated using Stata version 12, based on the study data

Table 4.2 shows the correlation coefficients of the dependent variables and the explanatory variables. Sustainability reporting has a positive and weak association with board professionalism with a correlation coefficient of 0.4222, Gender on the other hand has a positive and strong correlation with sustainability reporting. Age has a positive but weak association with sustainability reporting with a correlation coefficient of 0.4422. finally, firm size has a positive and strong association with sustainability reporting with a correlation coefficient of 0.7544.

To ascertain the presence of collinearity problem, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) test was carried out to test for multicollinearity. The result of the VIF test indicates a range of 1.21 to 1.40. Barde (2009) as cited in Samaila (2014) point that a VIF of 10.00 can still be a proof of absence of collinearity. As such, the predictive ability of the independent variables is not adversely affected by the association.

Regression

**Table 4.3** Linear regression, correlated panels corrected standard errors

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Coef</b>	<b>Std. Error.</b>	<b>T</b>	<b>P-values</b>
<b>CONSTANT</b>	-0.3304733***	0.0563245	-5.87	0.000
<b>BProf</b>	0.0118105***	0.0052578	1.98	0.048
<b>Gender</b>	0.0365519***	0.0052573	6.95	0.000
<b>AGE</b>	0.0028318***	0.0008317	3.40	0.001
<b>Fsize</b>	0.0984484 ***	0.0062246	15.82	0.000
<b>R-SQUARE</b>	0.6807			

Source: Generated using STATA version 12, based on the study data \*, \*\* and \*\*\* indicate 10%, 5% and 1% level of significance respectively.

From table 4.3, the result shows  $R^2$  of 0.6807, this is the coefficient of determination which indicates the proportion of variance in the dependent variable (sustainability reporting) that is predicted by all explanatory variables. As such, 68% variations in sustainability reporting is explained by the explanatory variables used in the model while the remaining 32% variation on sustainability reporting is explained by factors not included in the model.

Board professionalism has a positive and significant impact on sustainability reporting of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. The number of members of the board with accounting knowledge has a positive and significant impact on a firm's decision on how it reports its sustainability at 5% level of significance. This suggests that an increase in the number of members with accounting qualifications will lead to an increase in sustainability reporting, this increase is significant. This finding is in line with the works of Tamoi et al (2014) and Okon & Afza (2014). Thus the study null hypothesis is rejected.

Gender has a positive and significant impact on sustainability reporting of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. The number of female directors in the board has a positive and significant impact on sustainability reporting at 1% level of significance. This result is in line with the works of Isa and Muhammad (2014), The finding is in line with the legitimacy theory which supports positive significance between board characteristics and sustainability reporting. Thus the study null hypothesis is rejected. Junaid & Krishna (2014), Halil (2016) and Victor And Musa (2012) found gender has a negative and insignificant on sustainability reporting.

In the same vein, Age has a positive and significant impact on sustainability reporting in listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. Age measured by number of listed years has a positive and significant impact on sustainability reporting at 1% level of significance. This suggest that the older the firm the more likely it provide for sustainability reporting. This finding is in line with Junaid and Karishna (2014) and Rabiun & Mahmuda (2017) who both found age has a positive and significant impact on sustainability report. The finding is in line with the legitimacy theory which supports positive significance between board characteristics and sustainability reporting. Thus the study null hypothesis is rejected.

Finally, Firm Size has a positive and significant impact on sustainability reporting of listed consumer goods companies in Nigeria. Size measured by the natural log of total asset has a positively significant impact on sustainability reporting at 1% level of significance. This shows the higher the total assets of a firm the more it reports on sustainability. This result is in line with the works of Victor & Musa (2012), Junaid & Krishnan (2014). The finding is in line with the legitimacy theory which supports positive significance between board characteristics and sustainability reporting. Thus the study null hypothesis is rejected.

## **5 Conclusions**

In conclusion, the number of members that have accounting qualifications is a strong indicator of sustainability reporting in the listed consumer goods firms in Nigeria. This shows that an increase in the number of members with accounting qualifications will not lead to more sustainability reporting. Gender also plays a significant role in corporate sustainability reporting of listed consumer good firms in Nigeria. This means that if there is an increase in the number of female directors on the board they will be an increase in sustainability reporting.

Thus, from the aforementioned conclusions, Companies should be encouraged to include or increase the number of women on board to enable them enhance the level of their sustainability reporting. Women are more sensitive to the environment thus their push for more sustainability reporting. Finally, consumer goods firms in Nigeria should include accounting professionals in their board as that would encourage better sustainability reporting by such firm.

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