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THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTING FUNCTIONS IN CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

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ABSTRACT

Accounting profession provides indispensable support towards ensuring corporate sustainability through its numerous functions. This paper specifically looks at internal audit, and financial reporting and adequate disclosure as they provide support to corporate entities. The aim of the paper is to examine the role of these accounting functions in ensuring corporate sustainability. The study depends on existing literatures to determine possible relationship between accounting functions and business sustainability. Assessment of the existing empirical studies shows that identified accounting functions are positively related to, and drive corporate sustainability. However, effectiveness of internal audit function was flawed with failure to add value in some entities while frequency of financial reporting was also observed to reduce corporate investment decision. This suggests that internal audit should function beyond statutory demands cost-benefit trade-off should be sought on financial reporting function so as to support corporate sustainability.

KEY WORDS: *Corporate sustainability, Accounting function, Internal audit, Disclosure, Financial reporting*
JEL Classification: M41

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The role of accounting profession in ensuring business sustainability cannot be overemphasized. It spans from elementary record keeping to the production of periodic financial reports for users' consumption. Decision makers rely on the report for differ business plans. Analysts rely on the end product of all accounting functions in an organisation to make well-informed decisions that will assist their clients on the strength and weaknesses of an entity. These numerous functions of accounting profession are expected to be performed in accordance with relevant regulatory demands at both public and private entities although with different regulatory frameworks.

The term accounting has been popularly referred to as language of business. American Accounting Association – AAA (2012) puts accounting as the process of identifying, measuring and communicating economic information to permit informed judgements and decisions by users of the information. Drawing from these definitions, it could be established that accounting functions have prominent role in ensuring business sustainability. This is because, if at the end of an accounting period accounting data is not coded into informative information, it could lead to poor decision and judgement and hence, corporate failure.

Accounting functions are problem solving activities or responsibilities of accounting profession in an organisation which help to drive business entity towards attaining its goal (Baskerville, 2008). They are inbuilt accounting tasks that support corporate sustainability. Thus, accounting functions include, systematic keeping of transactions' records, safeguarding properties of the business (through internal audit), communicating the results to various parties (i.e. reporting) as well as meeting legal requirements (governance measures). Although objectives of accounting may differ from business to business, accounting functions help to meet general objectives of accounting in an organisation.

In a broad sense, CIMA (2013) describes sustainable business as a business that offers products and services in order to fulfil society's needs while placing an equal emphasis on people, planet and profit. For business entity to continue to enjoy efficient and effective going concern; especially in the face of global complex social and environmental issues, sustainable business practice must be highly incorporated. Since it is the expectation of corporate business owners that their investments continue to operate in perpetuity, efforts have to be geared towards sustainability. Business landscape is changing to include a greater emphasis on the broad definition of sustainability, including social and environmental considerations, rather than just economic sustainability (Chartered Global Management Accountants – CGMA, 2013). According to CGMA, business sustainability not only serves altruistic motives, but is also smart business because it can deliver higher profit – both in the short and the long term. Sustainable business practices are expected to ensure business sustainability. Thus, effective accounting functions are expected to be instrumental in attaining business sustainability.

Reasons for adopting sustainability may vary from company to company. However, most businesses have found out that emphasising sustainability improves their profitability, generates greater loyalty and commitment from employees, and cements relationships with customers and suppliers (CIMA, 2013; CGMA, 2013). It is pertinent to know that several factors are responsible for corporate sustainability (financial and non-financial; leadership and followership; organisation structure, context and management; reporting style, accountability and transparency etc). This study therefore strives to examine how internal audit, and financial reporting and adequate disclosure can engender corporate sustainability.

Gendron and Bedard (2006) noted that academic researchers have not accorded sufficient attention to study on internal audit unlike external audit in the past, minding its control function in business sustainability. Al-Twaijry, Brierley and Gwilliam (2003); Mihret and Yismaw, (2007); Ahmad, Othman, Othman and Jusoff (2009) also stress that internal audit effectiveness has not been extensively studied yet and they have recommended the need for more research on the internal audit effectiveness especially in developing countries, where the internal auditing might play an important role against both the fraud and corruption that may hamper business sustainability. Thus, Senal, Atilla and Ateş (2012) posit that internal auditor contributes to a number of corporate social reporting (CSR) and sustainability issues by keeping management updated on the aspects of operational and compliance issues, which is part of their core function. Also, on reporting and disclosure, Swarthout (n.d.) also establish that reporting and disclosure are among several best practices that foster business sustainability. These provide ground for considering these two accounting functions. It is envision that the outcome of this study will expand knowledge in this regard.

The overall objective of the study is to examine the role of accounting functions in ensuring business sustainability. The specific objectives include;

1. To examine the relationship between internal audit function and business Sustainability;
2. To examine the relationship between financial reporting and adequate disclosure, and business sustainability.

2.1THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The section presents theoretical background that underpin the study

2.1.1 Decision-Usefulness Theory:-

This is an approach usually adopted to satisfy the information needs of the primary users of the financial reports of a reporting entity (i.e. existing and potential investors and creditors). The theory is built on how relevantly and reliably disclosed accounting information will assist users in making well-informed decision. Since there is a link between firm value and information disclosure (Barlett, 2012), it can be submitted that financial reporting and adequate disclosure will significantly impact on the sustainable performance of corporate entities. That is, an economically, socially and environmentally complying entity, which also discloses such information properly in its reports, stands the chance of gaining more acceptability from all its stakeholders, thereby improving on it sustainable performances. Such properly disclosed and useful financial information will assist all users in making rightful decisions about the entity. This suggests the relevance of the theory to this study.

2.1.2 Public Interest Theory:-

This is a theory of regulation that has the aim of achieving a certain publicly desired results which, if left in the market or individual hands, may not be attained. According to public interest theory, government regulation is the instrument for overcoming the disadvantages of imperfect competition, unbalanced market operation, missing markets and undesirable market results (Hertog, 1999). Thus, regulatory body is considered to represent the interest of the society in which it operates rather than the private interest of the regulators (Posner, 1974). Public interest theory is relevant in capturing economic, social and environmental concerns among others. Thus, the theory becomes relevant to this study because it will provide theoretical background for explaining why financial reporting and adequate accounting information disclosure has to comply with established regulations which will engender business sustainability.

2.1.3 Agency Theory: -

This is a theory that is concerned with resolving problems that can exist in agency relationships; that is, between principals and their agents. Agency relationships occur when the principal hires the agent to perform a service on his behalf (Armour, Hansmann & Kraakman, 2009). However, agency theory seeks to solve two specific problems. That is, that the goal of the principal and agent are not in conflict and that both of them reconcile different tolerances for risk. According to Eisenhardt (1989), the assumptions behind the agency theory primarily relate to the separation of ownership and management, and motives and preferences behind human behaviour. Internal auditors are often employed by senior management, but at the same time, they are also agents of the board and audit committee who trust in the internal auditors' ability to evaluate senior management's works. If this unit does not compromise its quality and features, its function is foreseen to properly position an entity for sustainability practice which will enhance corporate sustainability.

2.1.4 Communication Theory:-

This is a theory built on effective communication and interpersonal relation. It is a field of information theory that studies the technical process of information and the process of human communication. The theory deals with the technology of the transmission of information between people and machines or machines and machines. There are evidence of studies that, effective communication and interpersonal relationships between managers and staff have a strong contribution to improve profitability, and productivity; which leads to higher quality of services and products, and reduction in costs (Clampitt & Downs, 1993). According to both Institute of Internal Audit (IIA) Standards and previous studies, the study of effective communication in internal auditing is necessary (Endaya, & Hanefah, 2013). Owning to this fact, effective communication between internal audit unit and management of an organisation should drive business sustainability. This suggests the essence of this theory.

2.2CONCEPT OF CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

Corporate sustainability (otherwise referred to as business sustainability) is the management and coordination of financial (economic), social (people) and environmental (planet) risk, obligation and opportunity of business so as to ensure responsible, ethical and perpetual business success. In a more robust way, business sustainability represents resiliency over time (i.e. business that can survive shocks because it is connected to healthy economic, social and environmental systems) (Swarthout, n.d.). Corporate sustainability evolved as a derivation of the concept of sustainable development, which was first introduced by the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) (Visser, 2007). According to Visser, sustainability development was defined as development that meets the needs of present generations without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Therefore, business sustainability requires firms to adhere to the principle of sustainability development. Thus, for industrial development to be sustainable, three pillars (measures) of business sustainability must be addressed.

Economic, social and environmental focuses of a business, otherwise called triple bottom line in corporate world are referred to as three pillar of sustainability (Swarthout, n.d). Elkington (2004) showcases these in the concept of triple bottom line which was introduced in 1994. The concept focuses not just corporate economic value added but also environmental and social values added or destroyed. This effort of Elkington extended financial and environmental dimensions of corporate performance to social impact issues that are rarely captured in the traditional financial bottom line (Visser, 2007). These three pillars are capable of positioning business for better future success. Thus, for corporate entities to ensure sustainable going-concern within the global business competitiveness, proper and prompt attention must be accorded these pillars.

Perera, Goncalves, Antunes and Imoniana (2012) posit that, modern vision of the administration of an entity towards sustainability of the organization is, ensuring that corporate entity survives by obtaining economic results that remunerate its shareholders, and simultaneously contribute to the achievement of social and environmental objectives through the integration of corporate social responsibility with strategic investment in its management tools and operations. Each of these pillars is hereby discussed as follow.

Economic (Profit): This is the traditional focus of business entity prior to the emergence of social and environmental aspects of business sustainability. It focuses on corporate profitability otherwise referred to as traditional bottom line. However, a sustainable business takes a long-term view of profitability by doing away with economic (or investment) decision that may increase profits at the expense of environmental failure and social set-back (Swarthout, n.d). That is, efforts are geared towards meeting investors' expectations but with full consideration for the environment and people around the entity.

Social (People): This aspect of business sustainability centres on special consideration for people around the corporate entity. It addresses concern for social well-being of employees, customers and other stakeholders of the business. Also, by learning from customers, employees and other members of the business's surroundings, finding their positions and involving them in joint decision-making, business sustainability can be assured. Thus, this measure ensures that, while the business is striving to meet the need of shareholders, it should not be achieved at the expense of the people.

Environmental (Planet): Environmental aspect addresses 'green' business model. It seeks to ensure that business is sustainable when the environs within which the entity is operating is made conducive and favourable for all while striving to meet shareholders' expectations.

Lusher (2012) investigates the accounting profession's role in accountability of economic, social, and environmental issues by examining the profession's perspective on sustainability. Lusher observed that reporting sustainability (performance) measures is now on the increase even though it was not supported with standard until 2005. This inform emergence of studies that have been conducted to see how sustainability practice has been impacting on corporate entities. Although several studies have attended to this using different approaches (Perera, Goncalves, Antunes & Imoniana, 2012; Ioannou & Serafeim, 2014; Malik & Nadeem, 2014; Cornetta, Erhemjamts & Tehranian, 2014), this study intends to find out the relationship that may subsist between accounting functions and corporate sustainability by reviewing related previous studies.

2.3 EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

This section presents studies related to the variables identified in this study to serve as basis for determining the relationship between accounting functions and corporate sustainability.

2.3.1 Accounting Functions:-

Since the role of accounting profession cannot be overlooked in business sustainability, accounting functions below have been raised for the purpose of this study and discussed with a view to determining how they can provide support for business sustainability through empirical review.

Internal Audit and Corporate Sustainability:-

IIA (2004) defines internal audit as an independent, objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve an organization's operations. It helps an organization accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic, disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes (Morariu, Mitea, Stoian & Crecana, 2009). As to whether internal audit function has a role to play in identifying matters relating to sustainability of an entity after 2008 financial crisis, Msiza (2011) posits that, more organisations in both public and private sectors are now expecting internal audit to think beyond financial control and compliance issues. Thus, this study considers the relationship between internal audit and corporate sustainability using new internal audit model that leverages existing activities to continuously monitor, manage and improve business performance based on four key principles: i.e. assurance, performance improvement, compliance and risk identification (Warren, James & Youngberg, 2011).

Ljubisavljević and Jovanović (2011) carry out an empirical research into large and medium-sized Serbian companies which aim at showing the degree of development of the internal audit and whether there is a connection between the enterprise size and legal form on one hand, and the organization and responsibilities of internal audit on the other. They concluded that internal audit makes a large contribution to the achievement of company goals, and the implementation of strategies for their achievement. However, the result of their study also posits that, level of internal audit in Republic of Serbia companies does not correspond with the achieved level of development of this profession in countries with developed market economies. This poses a strong concern for management of entities in less developed markets as to how internal audit can support corporate strategies implementation.

Senal, Atilla and Ateş (2012) study aim at investigating the system of sustainable internal audit which is the essential element for sustainable development in Turkey. They observe from their conceptual study that, internal audit function is the most important factor in creating sustainable value to improve the value of the company and firm performance is important to correct implementation and to be sustainable. The study therefore posits that, enterprises should assign enough importance to internal auditing and should pay attention to create a sustainable audit system that will support corporate sustainability. Also on performance improvement role of internal audit, Alwala and Biraori (2015) study looks at the relationship between internal audit independence and share performance of firms listed in the Nairobi Stock Exchange. They adopt descriptive research design, targeting 60 quoted companies to find out the existence of significantly positive correlation between internal audit independence and share performance. This shows that internal audit function supports business sustainability.

Odoyo, Omwono and Okinyi (2014) conduct a study on analysis of the role of internal audit in implementing risk management in Kenya's state corporations. The study examines the impact of involvement in Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) by internal auditors' willingness to report a breakdown in risk procedures. They found out from the cross-sectional survey of 99 respondents from nine state corporations that, internal audit function is the most important factor in creating sustainable value to improve the value of the company and firm performance. The study concludes that management of State Corporation needs to create an environment that will harness commitment and support to internal audit if it is to effectively perform its responsibility of giving assurance that organizational risks are managed effectively. Bariyima, (2012) carries out a study on internal auditing and performance of government enterprises in Nigerian with the aim of assessing the impact of internal auditing practices on the financial performance of Government-owned companies (GOCs) in Nigeria and to consider the effect of a contextual factor – Political influence – on this relationship. Using quantitative approach and Pearson's and stepwise regression methods to analyze the data, the finding shows that there is no strong association between internal auditing practices and financial performance of GOCs and that political influence do not significantly impact this relationship. Although this study confirms association between the variables, the association is not strong.

In a bid to examine the impact of the scope of risk management and ethical environment on internal audit activities and the quality of accounting control procedures (QACP), Rae, Surbramaniam and Sands (2008) depend on COSO's frameworks on internal controls and enterprise risk management and used data from a questionnaire survey of 64 Australian firms for the analyses, using a structural equation model. The result of their study confirms that internal audit activities have a significant intervening effect on the relationship between the scope of risk management and QACP which are expected to drive corporate sustainability. This provides additional evidence of link between internal audit risk management role and business sustainability.

In an effort to look at the effectiveness of internal audit in Tanzanian commercial banks, Ramachandran, Subramanian and Kisoka (2012) conduct a study with the aim of ascertaining whether the commercial banks have the internal audit function as a mere legal compliance or used as a value added function. The result of their survey research shows that, the risks management and corporate governance related activities of internal auditors are incorporated merely as statutory obligations and do not provide additional value to the stakeholders. This study actually confirms how internal audit support corporate sustainability through compliance with corporate governance only that, it was not properly positioned to add value; which may bring setback to corporate sustainability.

Morariu, Mitea, Stoian and Crecana (2009) conceptual study on internal audit and corporate governance: an added value for entities' management; carried out in Romania, posits that internal audit helps the management through the internal audit planning to discover the risk of business, the lacks of the internal control and the shortage of an inefficient management of the material, financial and human resources. This conceptual study was able to identify importance of internal audit in supporting corporate sustainability.

Soh and Martinov-Bennie (2015) study investigates the nature and extent of internal audit functions' involvement in environmental, social and governance assurance and consulting in Australia. Data was collected from 100 chief audit executives and internal audit service provider partners through a survey. The study finds that, governance issues are a key area of focus for respondents' assurance and consulting efforts, followed by social and environmental issues respectively. While governance issues are perceived to be of greatest current importance to internal audit functions, the study also shows that environmental issues expected to increase in importance over the next few years. Thus, except for the identified area where internal audit is observed to be functioning as just meeting statutory demands, drawing from above studies, it could be submitted that it has positive link with corporate sustainability.

Financial Reporting and Adequate Disclosure, and Corporate Sustainability:-

Another unique function of accounting profession in an organisation is to ensure that, accounting information presented shows the true position and performance of the entity is representing. Financial reporting and disclosure are considered for this study because Swarthout (n.d.), posits that reporting and disclosure and life cycle analysis are among several best practices that foster business sustainability. This provides reason for considering financial reporting and disclosure as one of accounting sustainable practices for this study.

Relevant and reliably disclosed financial report is foreseen as a formidable 'vehicle' through which vast accounting information users can relate with an entity. Capital market performance of a firm has been proved related to accounting information disclosed through its decision-usefulness objective (Scott, 2009). Decision-useful information makes it more likely that individuals and organizations will participate in economic transactions, deepening the liquidity of markets while incorporating such information in the decision making process of economic agents, yielding price signals that accurately reflect individual preferences (Eccless & Serafeim, 2014). Thus, this study considers quality and frequency for financial reporting as well as GRI disclosure index, level of opacity of disclosure, and reported social, economic and environmental information for adequate disclosure.

Using the transition of US firms from annual reporting to quarterly reporting over the period 1950-1970, Kraft, Vashishtha and Venkatachalam (2015) provide evidence on the effects of increased reporting frequency on firms' investment decisions. The study shows that increased reporting frequency is associated with an economically large decline in investments. Also, Yee (2004) study relates interim financial reporting frequency in a multi-period Kyle framework to securities prices, trading volume, market liquidity, and analysts' information acquisition expenditures. Yee observed that more frequent interim reporting improves the information content of securities prices, reduces reporting day price volatility and trading volume, and enhances market liquidity. All these variables have positive impact on corporate sustainability. Also, using hand-collected data on firms' interim reporting frequency from 1951 to 1973, Fu, Kraft and Zhang (2011) examine the impact of financial reporting frequency on information asymmetry and the cost of equity. Their results show that higher reporting frequency reduces information asymmetry and the cost of equity, and they are robust towards considerations of the endogenous nature of firms' reporting frequency choice.

As regard quality of financial reporting, Lin, Jiang, Tang and He (2015) study seeks to determine whether the effect of accounting role in a financial crisis is dependent on the quality of financial reporting. Examining the impact of the quality of financial reporting (as measured via earnings quality) on liquidity (measured by the bid-ask spread) in the equity market during the 2008–2009 global financial crisis in the United Kingdom, they found that market liquidity was much lower during the crisis than prior to the crisis such that, firms with high-quality financial reporting suffered fewer negative effects as a result of the financial crisis. The results were robust after controlling for other influences, such as return volatility, loss making, market value of equity, and other potential endogenetic problems. This result tends to support the notion that high-quality accounting information can reduce information asymmetry and hence enhance investor confidence during a financial crisis. Thus, financial reporting quality is an important aspect of the overall economic structure that supports corporate sustainability.

Furthermore, Lopes, Cerqueira and Brandão (2012) study analyzes whether financial reporting quality produces any impact on 17 European countries' firm performance using accounting data. Abnormal accruals methodology was used to evaluate accounting quality and ROA to determine firm performance. They confirm the perfunctory relationship between accruals and accounting measures of performance, which means decreasing accounting quality increase ROA and vice-versa. As to the consequences of financial reporting quality on corporate performance, Martinez-Ferrero (2014) evidence at the international level shows that, companies which report financial statements with better quality information (associated to better earnings quality, accounting conservatism and better accruals quality) enjoy a higher financial performance, measured by market measures which reflect the trust that stakeholders have not only in the company at present, but also in the past and future. Thus, we submit that high reporting quality is related to corporate sustainability while increase in reporting frequency also supporting but with reducing impact on corporate investment decision.

As touching adequacy of accounting information disclosure and corporate sustainability, Dempsey, Harrison, Luchtenberg and Seiler (2010) examine the capital market pricing implications of firm disclosure opacity due to US SEC concern that firms selectively manage the transparency of disclosures in order to hide adverse information. They observed that, their central hypothesis that the relationship between profitability and financial disclosure is impacted by the economic consequences of obfuscation is confirmed. They find that annual report opacity is significantly greater for poorer performing firms in terms of return on assets (ROA). Also, after controlling for other non-experimental factors that influence the readability of REIT financial statements, they find the residual opacity that remains has incremental explanatory power for returns.

Also, Najah and Jarboui (2013) carry out an empirical study that seeks to investigate the impact of voluntary disclosure of corporate social responsibility (CSR) on big French companies' financial performance. Using regression models to test the impact of social reporting on return on assets (ROA) and return on equity (ROE), over a period of 11 years from 2000 to 2010 for 201 big French companies, the results showed that there is no significant relation between CSR disclosure and financial performance for French companies, but a positive effect of time on this relation is discerned when there is a lag of one year for the observations. This study actually identified relationship but the relationship was affected by time-effect. Moses (2014) study examines the relationship that exists between firms' financial performance (FFP) and Corporate Social Responsibility Disclosures (CSRD) by using modified 25-theme Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) disclosure index and firms' Earnings Per Share (EPS) along with the Companies Annual Turnover (CAT). The study finds out that firms in Nigeria have a positive insignificant relationship between CSRD and CAT and their EPS. This finding is in consonance with that of Najah and Jarboui (2013). These studies confirm relationship between adequate disclosure and corporate sustainability only that it is not significant.

In an effort to extend literature on fragmented and competing relationship between company's sustainability performance (SP) and financial performance (FP), Husain (2015) analyzes this relationship using SP measures (Economic, Environmental, and Social) and FP. Obtaining data for all SP dimensions by applying manual content analysis technique on the sustainability reports of Global Fortune N100 firms from 2007 to 2011 and jointly considering sustainability disclosure (SD) and SP through a composite index, the results obtained from fixed effect regression models reveal that the economic performance information is not relevant, while the impact of environmental and social dimensions of sustainability remains relevant and significant across different measures of FP. This study also confirms how adequate disclosure is related to corporate sustainability only that the reverse in this study's finding might be due to the methodology used in terms of considering sustainability disclosure and SP jointly.

As to separate relationship between environmental accounting disclosure and financial performance of firms in Nigeria, Nosakhare, Che-Ahmad and Mgbame (2015) study utilizes a cross-sectional research design and content analysis to obtain environmental disclosure information from the audited annual reports. The result of OLS regression analysis reveals that there exists a significant relationship between environmental accounting disclosure and firm's financial performance when environmental accounting is moderated by firm-specific variables such as firm size, industry type and auditor firm type. Finding of the study is an extension of mixed finding on the effect of disclosure on corporate sustainability performance.

Further on environmental disclosure, Lu (2010) study consider relations among corporate environmental disclosure, environmental performance and financial performance in China by measuring environmental disclosure through a scoring system, environmental performance measured by the types of penalty for firm's over-emission, financial performance gauged by ROA. Using the average data of all of 68 Chinese listed firms in building material, paper and pulp industries from 2007-2009, Lu's study finds negative association between environmental disclosure and environmental performance, and no significant relation between financial performance and environmental disclosure. The study also finds that ISO14001 have significant and positive impact on environmental disclosure. This suggests inconclusive finding on disclosure and corporate sustainability.

In a nutshell, since decision usefulness of accounting information to firm value and market positioning of firms cannot be overemphasised, its measurement, relevance and reliable disclosure must not be questionable. That is, financial and non-financial information about the entity must be adequately disclosed. According to (IFRS Foundation, 2010), neither a faithful representation of an irrelevant phenomenon nor an unfaithful representation of a relevant phenomenon helps users make useful decisions. Although there have been mixed conclusions about the possibility of adequate disclosure in driving corporate sustainability, we posits that qualitative reporting and uncompromised disclosure is still capable of supporting business sustainability.

3.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Accounting functions are indispensable functions in ensuring organisation's sustainability. Internal audit department is very important in supporting firm's assurance, compliance, risk management and performance improvement. Mersereau and Mottis (2011) regard internal audit as the key element in the application of accounting systems. Drawing from the above literatures this study posits a strong relationship between internal audit function and corporate sustainability but that, internal auditors should appreciate complexity in corporate activities and development in the global market by positioning themselves to add better value to stakeholders, and operate beyond statutory demand which is conservative in nature (Ramachandran, Subramanian & Kisoka, 2012). Also, internal audit profession should be improved upon in less developed markets.

Adequate disclosure of accounting information has positive way of driving stakeholders' relationship with an organisation thereby fostering business performance through market stability. Reviewed literature confirms positive relationship that can reduce volatility of the firm market price between adequate disclosure and corporate sustainability. However, the outcome of this review shows inconclusive findings in this regards. Also, good quality financial report was confirmed to be strongly related to corporate sustainability but there is an evidence that high frequency of financial reporting can impede firm investment decision which implies drawback on business sustainability. This indicates that the result of the extent at which financial reporting can drive corporate sustainability is still inconclusive.

In overall, the study posits that positive relationship subsist between accounting functions and corporate sustainability. Thus, corporate entities' management should accord special attention to appropriately positioning of accounting functions towards ensuring corporate sustainability. Also internal audit functions should go beyond statutory compliance to adding value to stakeholders in this global competitive business environment so as to foster corporate entity sustainability.

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