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The Head,
Department of Accounting and Finance,
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elfarouk105@gmail.com
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FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT
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A.A. Mustapha
Department of Accounting
ABU Business School
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
+2348051027286, ademustapha234@gmail.com

Suleiman Salami PhD
Department of Accounting
ABU Business School
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria
+2348127247501, suleimanbinsalam@gmail.com

Prof. M.S. Tijjani
Department of Accounting
ABU Business School
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria.
+2348035881159, tijjanims@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the effect of firm attributes on shareholders’ wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. This paper examined the effect of firm attributes on the shareholders’ wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. The study population consists of Fifteen (15) listed deposit money banks in Nigeria as at 31st December 2022, filtered to 13 Listed Deposit Money Banks whose data were extracted and studied between 2010 to 2022. Multiple regression techniques using robust ordinary least square (OLS) due to the pooled nature of the data used, and estimation was employed in analyzing the data obtained from the audited annual reports and accounts of sampled firms. The study found that all the independent variables, namely, capital adequacy ratio, credit risk, return on equity, and cost efficiency, have a positive significant effect on the share prices of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. In view of the findings, this study recommend that management and other stakeholders in Nigerian Banking should ensure that the optimum level of capital adequacy is maintained, maintain an optimal level of credit risk while avoiding excessive risk-taking, maximize the bank’s profitability and cost efficiency, to enable deposit money bank continue to discharge their function effectively to the society while protecting the interest of, and maximizing the wealth of the shareholders at the same time. I certified. This paper is my work and the combination of variables used is not copied from any source.

Keywords: Capital Adequacy, Cost Efficiency, Credit Risk, Profitability and Shareholders wealth
1. Introduction
Shareholders’ wealth is the level of investment and returns on equity stakeholders’ stake in a firm. Shareholders’ wealth is most companies' foundational and formational funding source. This makes it to be critical to the existence of limited liability companies. Many scholars have argued the importance of maximizing shareholders’ wealth. It was asserted by Booth, 1998, that, without prejudice to the fact that certain other stakeholders have claims on the company, shareholder value is the goal of a company; it is critical to investigate value-based management in order to support the concepts of value creation properly and therefore address issues that are essential to business owners (Jackson, 1998). Shareholders’ wealth and its maximization depend on many factors termed firm attributes or characteristics. Some are internal to the firm, while some are external. Academic studies have varied perspectives on the meaning and components of corporate business characteristics. Typical examples include liquidity, Firm size, growth, interest coverage ratio, profitability, risk, tangibility, and investment opportunity (Suhaila, et al., 2008). Other factors could be the firm's size, age, cash flow, leverage, dividend, internal governance systems, and operational expenditures (Abdullahi, 2016). This suggests that firm attributes have a bearing on maximizing shareholders' wealth.

Firm attributes studied in this work include capital adequacy, credit risk, profitability, and cost efficiency, and their effect on shareholders' wealth being the proxy for shareholder wealth adopted in this study. The importance of maximizing the shareholders’ wealth owing to their critical role in the formation and effective running of limited liability companies cannot be overemphasized, especially given that they are the major risk takers in the company's affairs. Scholars have argued on the critical position the equity stockholder hold in any company: they are the foundation members of the company, they partake in the making the memorandum article of association of the company, they partake in the company’s annual general meetings, they provide funds for the running of the company, they serve as directors of the companies as well as in the various committees of the company, amongst others. So, maximizing their interest through shareholders’ wealth is desirable. Other forms of shareholders and stakeholders equally exist in a company this study focuses mainly on the equity shareholders and the maximization of their wealth in view of the critical position they occupy in a company. The generation of value for business owners is viewed as the ultimate purpose of management in this school of thought; the well-being of other stakeholders is seen as of secondary importance (Ezzamel et al., 2008).
Further listed deposit banks are selected as the domain of this study because of the critical role of deposit money banks in any economy worldwide. Banks are for-profit companies that act as intermediaries between borrowers and lenders. Deposit money banks mobilize resources from enterprises, people, and other customers and make these resources available to those needing financial assistance in the form of loans (Drigă, 2012; Uwuigbe, 2013). The study contributes to the existing body of literature on shareholders’ wealth in Nigeria, owing to the fact that there is a dearth of studies that assess the impact of firm attributes on shareholders' wealth in Nigeria, most especially in the financial sector.

Several studies have been done on the Nigerian banking sector but centered mostly on banking consolidation and corporate governance issues (Somoye, 2008; Uwuigbe, 2012, 2013). A significant number of academics focused solely on banking features, while some included financial structure and macroeconomic aspects in their coverage area. Contributions were made in these researches to establish the elements that influence bank profitability. Some studies differentiate between managerial (internal) and environmental (external) elements influencing bank profitability. According to the literature, the major external driver of bank profitability is financial market structure and entry obstacles (Ani et al., 2012). Other example of such studies includes Muange, et al (2018) in Kenya, Al-Sabbah (2004) in Jordan, Perera and Morawakage (2016) in Sri Lanka, (Arif et al., 2012) in Pakistan, Li and Sandeep (2007) in Hong Kong, Domikowsky, et al, (2014) in Germany. Due to different institutional and legal frameworks applicable to different countries, findings in other economies might not be wholly applicable in the Nigerian context, though some Nigerian studies like that of Uwuighe, 2012, there is a compelling need for studies like this in investigating the effect of firm attributes on the shareholder wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria.

Previous studies in this area in Nigeria include Garba (2017), the study looked at the influence of company characteristics on the value of Nigeria’s publicly traded Healthcare Companies, studied “The effects of mergers and acquisitions on shareholders’ wealth of Nigerian banks, Onikoyi, et al. (2014), Kolapo et al., (2012) looked at the quantitative influence of credit risk on the performance of Nigeria’s commercial banks between 2000 and 2010, Agbeja (2014) employed Econometrics methodologies to assess the key causes and relative contributions of changes in capital base to deposit money bank efficiency (1992 -2007). The studies mentioned above were not up to 2022, and different metrics were used to measure the variables, resulting in mixed results. This study is to address the aforementioned
gaps and enrich the accounting and finance literature on the effect of firm attributes on the shareholder's wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria.

The scope of this study is a period of 13 years, between 2010 and 2022, with a total of 13 listed deposit Money banks on the Nigerian exchange group as at 31st December 2022; this research will be relevant to the regulatory authorities, the management, Investors, customers and all the stakeholders of Nigeria’s Deposit money banks because it will bring to fore some firm attributes and the trend of movement in them, that will affect shareholders wealth and by implication the health status and going concern Status of such institution to prompt timely regulatory intervention, managements. Corrective measure and appraisal of investment decisions, amongst others. This study will assist the board of directors in detecting and checking the excess risk-taking activities of some managers it will assist the customers to know where they can keep their deposits safely. This study will assist investors, in knowing where their funds can be placed profitably and safely, amongst others. The remaining part of this paper is structured as follows: Section 2 reviews relevant literature and theoretical framework related to the study. Section 3 discusses the methodology adopted for the paper. Section 4 deals with the results of data analysis, and finally, section 5 brings up conclusions of the study, highlighting the findings after which appropriate recommendations were made.

2. Literature Review
2.1 Capital base and shareholder’s wealth
The assets possessed by the corporation are represented by the firm value. The worth of a firm is seen as important since it reflects the financial well-being of its owner. Shareholders are basically interested in having their share price appreciate and an increase in the return on equity. Increase or appreciation of the capital base of a firm will enable the managers of the firm to take advantages of profitable opportunities in the market and also deploy appropriate resources to securing the company’s assets, this is highly likely to lead to increase in shareholders wealth.

Several research argued differently about the role of capital base on the shareholder’s wealth; capital base being the quantum of funds available to a company to pursue opportunities in the marketplace and mitigate risks, is generally believed to have a positive impact on shareholders’ wealth, but this will happen only if the companies fund are profitably and safely invested. Otherwise, the converse might be the case, especially if agency conflict exists in the company where the managers pursue their selfish, narrow, and short-term interests, which might not benefit the equity stockholders. The assertion that an increased and
adequate capital base has a positive impact on shareholders’ wealth is confirmed by Muange, et al (2018); they studied Kenyan Firms after mergers and acquisitions (M&A), Kenyan firms’ performance in terms of shareholder wealth, the research found that increasing the capital base would result in a large rise in the wealth of owners. According to the study’s conclusions, an increase in capital base will result in a corresponding increase in return on capital, and the rise in return on capital following the increase in capital base will also increase shareholder’s wealth.

Perera, et al (2013), in their study’s empirical findings, submitted that adequate capital positively influences bank profitability. The result of a study from Jordan backs this up; in the same vein, Al-Sabbah (2004) found capital sufficiency to be the highest driver and a positive indicator of bank performance. Yudistira (2003) points out that bank capital and deposits have a very strong absolute relationship. However, Osuka and Richard (2013) found no link between asset quality and the capital base of Nigerian banks in their study. In a fifteen-year study, Agbeja (2014) employed Econometrics methodologies to assess the key causes and relative contributions of changes in capital base to deposit money bank efficiency (1992 - 2007). The findings revealed that capital base requirements were ineffective in reducing bank distress. This study adopts total equity divided by total asset as a proxy for capital adequacy as used in the works of Doğan (2013) in his study titled, “Comparison of Financial Performances of Domestic and Foreign Banks: The Case of Turkey”, same metric was used in the works of Perera and Morawakage (2016), Credit Risk Management and Shareholder Value Creation.

2.2 Credit Risk and Shareholders’ Wealth
Credit risk, as defined by Hosna et al. (2009) is the risk of loss arising from a borrower's failure to meet a debt repayment obligation in the conditions stated in loan or other lines of credit and advances. Credit risk arises mostly from loans given out to customers for banking businesses. Basically, Credit risk is the most significant risk faced by financial intermediaries and banks. Scholars generally believe that credit risk usually has an adverse effect on the shareholders’ wealth of business especially deposit money banks; it is critical for banks, the economy, and investors to accurately assess the level of risk to be accepted in order to maximize value (Cheng & Nasir, 2010). Credit risk is the most sensitive risk affecting the growth of investment value in commercial banks (Kargi, 2011). The account of the assertion in the literature is discussed below:

Perera and Morawakage (2016) in “Credit Risk Management and Shareholder Value Creation with emphasis on Sri Lanka’s Listed Commercial Banks”, Return
on shares was used to assess shareholder value while capital adequacy ratios, loans to deposits ratios, and non-performing ratios were utilized as indications of the banks' credit risk management. Regression models were employed in the empirical study, focusing on the descriptions of the SPSS output. The result revealed that the management of Credit risk substantially influenced shareholder wealth in the eight banks that were evaluated, according to the study. NPLR has the greatest impact on the returns on shares of the three adopted credit risk management indices. Aghababaei et al. (2013), in a study covering 2005 to 2010, evaluated the impact of credit risk indicators on the shareholder wealth of six publicly traded commercial banks operating in Iran. This research relied on yearly, audited financial statements. The researchers employed return on equity (net profit before taxes to equity) as a shareholder value metric for hypothesis testing and data analysis in the study's multiple linear regression models. According to the findings, the significance level obtained from the regression model is significant, indicating a link between the independent variable on the dependent variable, and this is significant at the 99 percent level. The main premise was then validated, and indicators of credit risk affect shareholders' equity (ROE). Salas and Saurina, (2002) in their study found that GDP growth, increase in the level of credit availment, capital ratio, and bank size had a substantial impact on non-performing loans, which in turn had an impact on credit risk.

In their research, Hosna et al. (2009) concluded that credit risk had a large beneficial impact on commercial bank profitability in Sweden. According to Kithinji (2010), the amount of credit was high in the early years of the implementation Basle II in Kenya, but it materially reduced in value in 2007 and 2008.Isaac, Willy, and Anthony (2017) in their study for the period 2006-2015 in Kenya, estimating the influence of credit risk on stock performance, a purposive sample of 9 listed banks was used. The GLS model was used to regress predictor factors on stock returns: loan loss reserves, bank size and non-performing loans. Asset Management Corporation of Nigeria (AMCON) has assisted in partly addressing sustainability issues in Deposit money banks by providing a platform for deposit money banks to sell off non-performing loans to them, thus complementing Bank recapitalization and assisting in sustaining the credit culture in Nigeria’s deposit money banks.

The study's findings revealed that all variables had a considerable influence on stock returns, resulting in the overall conclusion that that credit risk had a significant impact on stock returns based on the outcome of the study. Credit risk is measured for the study as loan impairment provision divided by total loan and advances. However, (Arif et al., 2012) looked at the impact of credit risk on
Pakistan’s banking system's return on equity. The period covered by the study was between 2004 and 2009; they utilized three indicators and data from 20 recognized banks on the Karachi stock market. The effect of credit risk on return on equity in Pakistan's banking sector is negligible, according to their findings.

2.3 Profitability and Shareholders’ Wealth
The difference between a business organization’s earnings and related expenditures over a period, generally a year, is called profit if this difference is positive; otherwise, it is called a loss. ‘Income, margin, and Earnings' are terms that have comparable meanings. 'Profit is the drive or motive that serves as the engine, propelling commercial operations,’ as asserted by Lord Keynes. Companies should make enough income to stay in business and operate for an appreciable period. As a result, profit is a crucial indicator of a company's ability to stay in operation; there is a general view by scholars that the profitability of a business has a direct relationship with the shareholder’s wealth. Furthermore, in his study, Mullineaux (1978) established a positive relationship between bank size, profitability and efficiency. The return on equity ratio (ROE), is a profitability metric that measures a company's capacity to profit from the investment by its shareholders. It refers to the contribution of a company's shareholders' investment to its net income (Mullineaux (1978); Kwast & Rose (1982). According to Liadaki and Gaganis (2010), profit efficiency may boost stock performance. These results are backed by Chu and Lim's study (1998). According to Fiordelisi and Molyneux (2010), efficiency is a determinant factor of shareholder value generation and may boost shareholder value. Aftab et al. (2011) conducted a study on banks listed on the Karachi Stock Exchange and discovered that bank efficiency affects the performance of shares. In their research on bank mergers, Onikoyi and Awolusi (2014) stated that a favourable association exist between revenue efficiency and shareholder value; they discovered that improvements in efficiency are mirrored in changes in stock prices. According to (Nurafni et al.) (2014). Patrick &Mukanzi (2015) in their study on the assessment of organizational characteristics on shareholders’ wealth in listed banks in Kenya, submits that profitability influences the amount of shareholders’ value created by a firm Positively “A highly efficient bank will enhance its performance, which will be reflected in share prices, while rising share prices will increase shareholder wealth”. This study measures Profitability with return on equity (ROE) calculated as, profit after tax divided by the total number of issued share capital.
2.4 Cost Efficiency and Shareholders’ Wealth

Cost efficiency connotes having commensurable value for all costs incurred in running a firm’s business. Efficiency, according to previous studies, influences stock performance. Nurafni Etal (2014) investigated the impact of cost efficiency on the performance of stocks of listed banks in Indonesia. Each bank's cost efficiency was measured using Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA), a nonparametric method used to calculate efficiency levels. DEA and the influence of cost efficiency on stock performance were investigated using linear regression. As a proxy for stock performance, abnormal return was employed.

Onikoyi, et al. (2014), in their study on “The effects of mergers and acquisitions on shareholders’ wealth of Nigerian banks,” posited that the result of the two-tail test shows that the link between shareholders’ wealth and cost savings of the Nigerian merged banks is significant, having passed the statistical test at 5% level of significance. According to the existing literature reviewed on the influence of cost efficiency on shareholder’s wealth, the result is mixed as shown by the submission of earlier writers on this subject.

Cost efficiency and non-performing loans have inverse Granger-causality, according to Berger and DeYoung (1997). However, among highly efficient banks, cost-cutting tends to be accompanied by a rise in non-performing loans, suggesting a short-term cost-cutting strategy at the expense of long-term credit quality. Efficiency has been proven to have an influence on stock performance by previous research. A positive link between inefficiency and risk, accounting for both credit and interest risk, was found by Kwan and Eisenbeis, (1997). Flamini, et al, (2009) and Hager and Wael (2011) discovered a favourable relationship between the cost-income ratio and profitability in their study. On the other hand, research by Syafri (2012), Zeitun (2012), and Almazari (2013) revealed that the cost-income ratio has a negative influence on profitability.

As an intermediation institution, banking plays a critical role in the country's economy; hence, it is critical to perform well. Efficiency, which may be improved via cost reduction in the business model, is an essential part of banking performance monitoring. This study therefore attempts to contribute to the literature in this regard by widening and extending the period covered by studies in this area up to 2022 and looking specifically on the impact of cost efficiency on shareholder wealth as available evidence in the empirical literature on this variable looks scanty. This study measures cost efficiency as operating revenue divided by operating cost.
This study adopts signaling theory as a theoretical framework for the dependent variable of the study, share price; it responds to signals sent by the market based on the metric of the firm’s attributes as disclosed in the financial statement of the company, a bank in this instance. Based on the postulations of Spence (1973), Agency theory as its theoretical framework, the independent variables in this study, namely, Capital adequacy, Credit risk, profitability, and cost efficiency, as the actions and inactions of the managers of the institution, a bank, in this case, will have a bearing on own the individual variables fares if agency conflict exists materially, it will affect the individual firm attributes adversely with a possible eventual negative effect on shareholders wealth.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**

As depicted in the figure above. The study related shareholders’ wealth as a dependent variable to the following independent variables, capital adequacy, credit risk, profitability and cost efficiency.

**3. Methods and Models**

The study adopted an ex post facto research approach. Panel data used for the study is derived from secondary data in the form of publicly available yearly audited financial statements of the study's listed deposit money institutions. The population of the study is census, except for removing some banks that do not have the data for the requisite period covered by the study (2010 to 2022) 13 years. The study population is 15 listed deposit banks on the Nigeria Exchange Group, two were filtered out due to incomplete data resulting in a sample population of 13 Listed deposit banks.

The data for the study are the ratio derived from the financial statements used to derive the firm attributes while, the dependent variable (share price) will be derived from the published daily share prices of equities on the Nigeria exchange group, specifically, that of last day of the first quarter after the date to which the financial
statement relates (31st of March). These will be subjected to panel regression using STATA statistical software. This approach will allow the study to account for both time and cross-sectional impacts in data that couldn’t be accounted for with only time series or cross-sectional data.

\[ SP_{it} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CAR_{it} + \beta_2 CR_{it} + \beta_3 EPS_{it} + \beta_4 CE_{it} + \varepsilon_{it} \]

Where:
- \( SP_{it} \) = Share price at the end of first quarter after year of financial statement, a proxy for shareholders wealth.
- \( \beta_0 \) is the intercept.
- \( \beta_1 \)– \( \beta_4 \) are parameters estimate or coefficients of the explanatory variables
- \( it \) represents firm i, time t.
- \( CAR_{it} \) = Capital adequacy ratio, Proxy for Capital base
- \( CR_{it} \) = Credit Risk
- \( EPS_{it} \) = Earnings Per Share
- \( CE_{it} \) = Cost efficiency
- \( \varepsilon_{it} \) = Error term

**Table 1: Variable Measurement**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Notation</th>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent Variable</td>
<td>Shareholders wealth</td>
<td>SP</td>
<td>Closing share price at end of 1st quarter after financial statement date.</td>
<td>NGX Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
<td>Capital Adequacy</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>Total Equity/ Total Asset</td>
<td>Mesut Doğan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
<td>Profitability</td>
<td>ROE</td>
<td>Net profit after tax/Total number of ordinary shares</td>
<td>Mesut Doğan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
<td>Cost Efficiency</td>
<td>CE</td>
<td>Operating Revenue/ Operating Expenses</td>
<td>Chen and Pan, 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent Variables</td>
<td>Credit risk</td>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Loan loss                  Provision/Total loans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Compilation by the Researcher (2023)
4. Results and Discussions

Descriptive Statistics

The descriptive statistics is presented in Table 2. It presents the calculated mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum, skewness and kurtosis of the data.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Obs</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Dev.</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SP</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>9.794477</td>
<td>10.29802</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0.1057722</td>
<td>0.1775017</td>
<td>-1.5475</td>
<td>0.3283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>0.062169</td>
<td>0.1775017</td>
<td>-0.0135</td>
<td>4.9402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPS</td>
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<td>1.622792</td>
<td>2.076934</td>
<td>-1.27</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>169</td>
<td>1.419203</td>
<td>0.4223383</td>
<td>-0.40194</td>
<td>2.769159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: STATA Output (2023)

From Table 2 above, the minimum, maximum, skewness, and kurtosis of the study, share price has a lowest and highest price of N0.47 and N48.5 respectively, and a mean of N9.79, with a standard deviation of 10.29802 for the listed deposit money banks in Nigeria for the period studied. This implied that Share prices of Nigeria’s Deposit Money Banks varies greatly. Higher share prices suggest stronger shareholder returns and a positive signal of more shareholder wealth, lower share prices indicate that shareholders are not better off, relatively high standard deviation implies that the data (share price) has a wide variation from the mean, showing that the banks' share values vary significantly.

The mean capital adequacy ratio of 0.10577, and standard deviation of 0.1775 indicates that the capital adequacy ratio of the sample deposit money institutions also varies greatly. The minimum and maximum capital adequacy ratio of -1.5475 and 0.3283, shows a 1.8758 spread implying significant variations. This implied that the level of capitalization of Nigeria’s deposit money Banks relative to their level of operation varies greatly with those with low capital adequacy viewed to be overtrading. credit risk average of 0.06217, the implied average riskiness of a bank's credit asset is 6% over the time covered, this is low for the banking sector; this might be related to the base used in this study. The standard deviation of credit risk is 0.38683, suggesting that credit risk dispersion among banks is significant. This implied that the banks are were exposed to the varying degree of risk. The minimum and maximum for credit risk are -0.0135 and 4.9402 showing a high disparity in credit risk by the banks. This being positively related to the dependent variable shows that listed deposit money banks new to assume some modest level of credit risk to increase the share value but this should not exceed some level. This study suggests maximum of 6% based on the study’s results.
Profitability As measured by Earning per share, has minimum and maximum values of -1.27 and 8.3, respectively, indicating that the highest profitability of banks as measured by EPS is N8.3 per ordinary share. In contrast, some banks made losses of up to N1.27 per ordinary share during the period being reviewed. A mean EPS of N1.62 shows an average profitability of N1.62 per ordinary share and a relatively high standard deviation of 2.07693 shows that profitability is widely dispersed in the period under review. This show that some deposit money Bank shows relatively his profitability and other are not very profitable. Cost efficiency has the lowest and highest values of -0.4019 and 2.76916, respectively, implying that the cost efficiency is widely dispersed among listed deposit money banks with 3.17106 basis points. The cost efficiency Mean of N1.42 implies that Nigerian deposit money banks spend N70.42 out of every N100 earned. Because of the risk profile of the banking industry, the expense ratio is deemed quite high. Some deposit money banks exhibit better cost efficiency compared to others. The standard deviation of 0.4223 shows that the cost-efficiency ratio of Nigerian deposit money institutions is not widely scattered or dispersed, as shown in the lowest and highest numbers above.

Correlation Matrix
Table 3 presents the correlation matrix which shows the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, and the association among the independent variables themselves over the period of the study.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SP</th>
<th>CAR</th>
<th>CR</th>
<th>EPS</th>
<th>CE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>SP</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAR</td>
<td>0.1837*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>-0.0846</td>
<td>-0.707*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPS</td>
<td>0.7828*</td>
<td>0.1368</td>
<td>-0.141</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CE</td>
<td>0.6872*</td>
<td>0.2536*</td>
<td>-0.205*</td>
<td>0.7019*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: STATA Output.

Table 3 presents the correlation coefficient result, revealing that the relationship among the variables is minimal except that the return on equity stood at 0.78. Where the correlation among the variables is 0.9 or larger, suggesting that harmful multicollinearity could arise, according to Gujarati (2003). From the table, it can be deduced that there is a positive relationship between the independent and the dependent variables. Except between share price and credit risk Going by this, an increase in capital adequacy ratio, return on equity, and cost efficiency will cause
an increase in Share price while an increase in credit risk will lead to a fall in shareholders wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria.

**Test of Validity and Reliability**

In order to ascertain the validity and reliability of all statistical inferences drawn from this study, validity and robustness tests were carried out and presented in this section. These tests include multicollinearity test, heteroscedasticity test, and Breusch and Pagan lagrangian Multiplier test for Random Effects.

Multicollinearity test was conducted to ascertain the existence of high correlation (which may be detrimental to the inferences drawn from the study) between the independent and dependent variables and among the variables themselves. The two advanced measures of multicollinearity are tolerance values and VIF which shows the fitness of the model for the study. From the correlation matrix results presented in table 3 above, the relationship among the independent and dependent variable were observed to be insignificant; this is further confirmed by VIF correlation diagnostic test carried out revealed tolerance values of less than 1 and VIF of 2.03 on the average, all within normal range.

Breusch-Pagan/Cook-n Weisberg is used to test the null hypothesis that the error variances are all equal versus the alternative that the error variances are a multiplicative function of one or more variables. The alternative hypothesis states that the error variances increase or decrease as the predicted values of Y increase. That is, the bigger the predicted value of Y, the bigger the error variance will be. A large chi-square would indicate that heteroscedasticity was present. The results of the heteroscedasticity test revealed a chi-square of 42.16.3 with a p-value of 0.000, implying the presence of heteroscedasticity.

The combined and overall effect of the independent variables, which include capital adequacy, credit risk, profitability and cost efficiency, on the share price of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria, is shown on the model summary of the regression results. The F-statistics which shows the overall level significance of the model, is 262.99 showing the adequacy and fitness of the study model and is significant at (0.0000) level. The coefficient of determination represented by $R^2$ stood at 66.37%, indicating changes in the explained variable caused by the explanatory variables as used in the research, while the remaining 33.63% of the changes are caused by external factors to the model.
The regression result from Table 4 shows that Capital adequacy ratio (CAR) has a beta coefficient of 8.53 (p-value 0.001) is significant and positively affecting share price of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria at 5% significance level. This means that for every one percent increase in the capital adequacy ratio of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria, share price is increased by 852 kobo. The implication of this finding is that the higher capital adequacy ratio, the higher the share price of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria and vice-versa. Therefore, based on the foregoing, the null hypothesis of the study which states that Capital adequacy has no significant impact on shareholders' wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria is hereby rejected. The findings of the research corroborated with that of Noor and Rosyid (2018), Onikoyi et al, (2014), while it contradicts the study of Perera and Morawakage (2016), Agbeja (2014), Hosna et al., (2009), Modigliani and Miller,(1958), Olalekan and Adeyinka (2013).

In addition, credit risk (CR) has a beta coefficient of 4.20 (p-value 0.0000) is positive and has a significant effect on Shareholders' wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria at 1% significance level. This implies that, for every one percent increase in the credit risk of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria, share price is increased by 419 kobo. The implication of this finding is that the higher the value of credit risk, the higher shareholder wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria and vice-versa. The trend is subject to a maximum credit risk level of 6% being the mean credit risk in this study after which the trend might change. Thus, based on the foregoing, the null hypothesis of the study which states that credit risk has no significant impact on shareholders’ wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria, is hereby rejected. The findings of the study is in line with the study of Aghababaei et al., (2013), Ahmed Arif et al (2012), Mwaurah, et al, (2017),
Furthermore, the model revealed Earning per share (EPS) with a beta coefficient of 2.99 (p-values 0.000) is positive and significantly affects the share price of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria at 1% significance level. This implies that, for every one percent increase in the returns on equity in listed deposit money banks in Nigeria, the share price is equally increased by N2.99kobo. The implication of this finding could be logically explained by the fact that an increase in profitability will naturally lead to an increase in shareholders’ wealth. In line with this result, the research rejects the third null hypothesis of the study, which states that profitability has no significant effect on shareholders wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. The finding of the study is in tandem with the work of Patrick & Mukanzi (2015), Liadaki and Gaganis (2010), Fiordelisi and Molyneux (2010).

Finally, the model revealed Cost efficiency (CE) with a beta coefficient of 6.31 (p-values 0.000) is positive and significantly affects shareholders’ wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria at 1% significance level. This implies that, for every one percent increase in the cost efficiency in listed deposit money banks in Nigeria, the share price is equally increased by N6.31kobo. The implication of this finding could be logically explained by the fact that cost efficiency implies cost savings, and more value for money will ordinarily lead to an appreciation in shareholders’ wealth. In line with this result, the research rejects the fourth null hypothesis of the study, which states that cost efficiency has no significant effect on shareholders’ wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. The finding of the study is in tandem with the work of Onikoyi et al., (2014), Fiordelisi and Molyneux (2010a). However, this is contrary to the studies of Ikpefan, 2012 and Nurafni et al. (2014).

5. Conclusions and Recommendations
This study investigated the effect of firm attributes on the shareholders’ wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. The study established that firm attributes, namely, capital adequacy, credit risk, profitability, and cost efficiency, have a significant and positive relationship with shareholders’ wealth of listed deposit money banks in Nigeria. The findings of the research further revealed that the significantly positive relationship of credit risk to shareholders’ wealth is subject to a maximum of 6% credit risk. The findings of the research further revealed that the significantly positive relationship of credit risk to shareholders’ wealth is subject to a maximum of 6% credit risk. The study recommends that the management...
regulators and other stakeholders of the banking industry should pay a close attention to the firm attributes and their respective values as this study has established that they have a significant effect on shareholders’ wealth. The mean capital adequacy ratio derived by this study is 0.1057722 we recommend that capital adequacy ratio of bank for optimal performance should not fall below 0.1057722 or 10.57% as this variable has a significantly positive correlation with the maximization of shareholders wealth and by implication the sustainability of the banks.

This study recommends that banks should operate profitably such that Earning per share is maximized. this is due to the fact that of all the independent variables used in this study profitability as represented by Earnings per Share has the highest positive and significant relationship with shareholders wealth with a value of 0.78 or 78% in positively influencing share price, though its co-efficient in this study’s regression equation is 2.99 , this study also recommend a minimum of N1.62 per share being mean EPS derived by this study .Finally, among the independent variables adopted for this study, cost efficiency has the second highest significantly positive effect on share price with a value 0.6872 implying that it has a 68.72% significantly positive explanatory effect on shareholders wealth , its co-efficient as stated in the regression equation is 6.310181 , the second highest variable co-efficient, this study recommend a minimum cost efficiency ratio of 1.419203 or maximum expense to income of 70k expenses for every N1.00 earned. Lack of attention to these can result in banking crises with dire and negative consequences on the industry and the economy in general. The health and sustainability listed deposit money banks in Nigeria have a multiplier effect on Nigeria’s economy.

References
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