Corporate Attributes and Shareholder Value of Listed Manufacturing Companies in Nigeria

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doi: https://doi.org/10.37745/ijbmr.2013/vol14n7114 Published August 16, 2026

Citation: Akpakah A.M., Emenyi E.O., Okpo S.A., Frank U.U., Akpanowo R.E., Akpandem H.I. (2026) Corporate Attributes and Shareholder Value of Listed Manufacturing Companies in Nigeria, *International Journal of Business and Management Review*, 14(7),1-14

Abstract: *The challenge of maximizing shareholder value remains a persistent concern for companies, particularly in volatile markets where economic pressures adversely affect business performance. This challenge underscores the need to identify the corporate attributes that drive shareholder value. Consequently, this study examined the effect of corporate attributes on the shareholder value of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was ex post facto, and the population consisted of 53 manufacturing companies out of which the sample size of 45 companies was purposively selected. The data source was secondary, method of data analysis used was panel least square regression analysis and the statistical package employed was STATA 17. The findings of the study revealed that firm size (Coef. 0.000[0.985]) has nonsignificant effect on total shareholders' returns; firm age (Coef. -0.357[0.296]) has nonsignificant effect on total shareholders' returns; and free cash flow (Coef. 0.091[0.009]) has significant positive effect on total shareholders' returns of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria. It was concluded that the creation of shareholder wealth in the Nigerian manufacturing sector is primarily driven by sustainable revenue growth, effective dividend policy, and prudent cash flow management. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that the management of manufacturing firms should integrate cash flow planning into corporate strategy to ensure efficient allocation to high-value initiatives, thereby enhancing investors' confidence and promoting sustainable wealth creation.*
Keywords: Corporate attributes, firm age, firm size, free cash flow, shareholder value, shareholder total return

INTRODUCTION

Shareholder value maximisation remains a fundamental objective of corporate organizations and a central concern of investors, regulators, and other stakeholders. In modern corporate finance, shareholder value reflects the extent to which managerial decisions translate into wealth creation for equity holders, commonly measured through indicators such as share price appreciation, dividends, and total shareholders' return. According to Widiatami et al. (2023) firms that can deliver sustainable growth and profitability tend to outperform their peers, ultimately enhancing shareholder value. This approach, while beneficial to investors, has sparked debates on whether it undermines other stakeholders, such as employees, customers, and the environment. The concept continues to evolve as businesses balance profit maximisation with social responsibility (Morrison & Williamson, 2022). The fiduciary duty which devolves upon the management of the firm requires that management should have a thorough understanding of the dynamics of underlying factors which may create or destroy value for owners, Consequently, creating sustainable shareholder value constitutes one of the primary fiduciary responsibilities of management and remains central to effective corporate governance (Madan, 2023).

Corporate attributes are the unique characteristics, features and qualities that make a firm distinct from others (Okpo, 2026). These characteristics encompass the foundational components that define how a firm is structured, managed, and designed to achieve its goals efficiently and effectively (Adebanjo & Bello, 2024). Shareholders' return represents the worth that shareholders receive from their investment in a company. Therefore, corporate attributes have emerged as critical determinants of shareholders' value. Corporate attributes such as firm size, firm age, and free cash flow reflect key managerial decisions and firm characteristics that influence performance, risk, and market perception. Firm size and firm age further shape the shareholders' value dynamics in the Nigerian manufacturing sector. Larger and older firms often benefit from economies of scale, established brands, and long-standing relationships with suppliers and financial institutions, which may enhance stability and reduce perceived risk. Such firms are often viewed as safer investments by shareholders. However, they may also suffer from bureaucratic inefficiencies and slower adaptation to changing market conditions, potentially limiting value creation (Okeke & Nworie, 2025). Smaller or younger firms, while more agile, may face higher risk and uncertainty, which can negatively affect shareholders' value.

Free cash flow is another key corporate attribute with significant implications for shareholders' value. Given the high cost and limited availability of external financing, internally generated cash flows are crucial for funding operations, servicing debt, and paying dividends. Chanua et al. (2025) noted that firms with strong free cash flow positions are better able to meet shareholders' expectations and sustain long-term value creation. However, excess free cash flow may also increase the risk of managerial opportunism if not effectively monitored, thereby undermining shareholders' wealth.

Furthermore, firm-specific characteristics such as firm size and firm age are expected to provide competitive advantages through economies of scale, accumulated experience, and improved access to financial resources. Nevertheless, large or mature firms do not necessarily create greater value for shareholders if these advantages are not translated into operational efficiency and improved financial performance. Likewise, free cash flow represents an important source of internally generated funds for investment, expansion, and dividend payments. However, inefficient utilization of free cash flow may encourage managerial inefficiency, excessive discretionary spending, and sub-optimal investment decisions, thereby limiting shareholders' wealth creation. Given the persistent inability of many listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria to consistently create value for shareholders, there is a need for a comprehensive investigation into the extent to which revenue growth, dividend policy, financial leverage, cost efficiency, firm size, firm age, and free cash flow influence shareholders' value. It is against this background that this study examined the effect of corporate attributes on shareholders' value of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Corporate attributes

Corporate attributes are the unique characteristics, features and qualities that makes a firm distinct from others, it refers to the fundamental elements that shape the organization and operation of a business entity. These characteristics encompass the foundational components that define how a firm is structured, managed, and designed to achieve its goals efficiently and effectively. Naser et al. (2016) noted that corporate attributes refer to identities, qualities and features which relate to that organization. According to Nawaiseh, 2022). firm attributes can be defined as the wide varieties of information disclosed in the financial statement of business entities that serve as the predictors of the firm's quality of accounting information and performance. According to Obamoyegun et al. (2024), corporate attributes are the various types of information presented in financial statements of business organizations that serve as predictors of the firms' accounting information quality and performance.

According to Raimi et al. (2024), corporate attributes are usually grouped into the structural attributes, financial attributes, governance attributes, operational attributes and reputational attributes. Structural attributes describe the size and organizational structure of the firm, such as firm size, firm age, ownership structure and business complexity. Financial attributes reflects firm's financial condition and risk profile, including, leverage, liquidity, profitability and capital structure. Accrding to Okpo (2026), governance attributes relate to how the firm is directed and controlled and include board size, board independence, gender diversity, audit committee characteristics and CEO duality. Operational attributes capture efficiency and operational capacity and this include asset utilization, cost efficiency, management efficiency, inventory management and revenue growth. While reputational attributes reflect long-term positioning and stakeholder perception and this include corporate reputation, ESG and sustainability practices, innovation capability, market competitiveness (Raimi et al., 2024).

Shareholders' value

Different scholars have offered varied definitions of shareholder value, reflecting the evolving nature of the concept. Okon (2022) defined shareholder value as the value delivered to shareholders as a result of management's ability to increase sales, earnings, and free cash flow over time, contributing to higher stock prices and dividend payouts. It focuses on the financial metrics that directly influence share prices, such as return on investment (ROI), profit margins, and cash flow. On the other hand, Akbar (2025) expands this definition, suggesting that shareholder value encompasses not just financial performance but also the effective governance of resources to ensure long-term growth and sustainability. For Akbar (2025), the emphasis is on aligning corporate goals with shareholders' long-term wealth maximization, avoiding short-termism that may undermine future performance. Shareholder value is created by generating future returns for equity investors which exceed the returns that those investors could expect to earn elsewhere. The assumption is that these excess returns will be reflected within the share price of the company (Abogun et al., 2024). Shareholder value is seen as the value delivered to shareholders because of management's ability to grow earnings, dividends and share price. In other words, shareholder value is the sum of all strategic decisions that affect the firm's ability to efficiently increase the amount of free cash flow over time (Miller & Harris, 2023).

Bhagat and Bolton (2019), firms that align executive compensation with shareholder returns tend to outperform those that do not. This alignment ensures that management decisions focus on increasing shareholders' wealth, which is reflected in higher stock prices and better financial performance. In contrast, firms that prioritize short-term earnings often see a decline in their long-term profitability and shareholder value. Bhagat and Bolton's study reinforces the importance of corporate governance practices in enhancing shareholder value. Hillman and Keim (2020) emphasizes that firms that balance shareholder interests with those of other stakeholders, such as employees and customers, achieve better financial performance over time. The authors found that companies with sustainable business models tend to generate higher returns for shareholders in the long run. This aligns with the stakeholder theory, which argues that businesses should focus not only on maximizing shareholder wealth but also on creating value for all stakeholders, as this leads to long-term financial benefits. The concept of shareholder value implies that the ultimate measure of the success of a company is shareholders enrichment (Buertey, 2023). Creating value for shareholders leads to growing interest in the fields of management science in recent researches (Salih & Abdessatar, 2022).

Firm size and shareholders value

Firm size plays a significant role in shaping shareholders' value through economies of scale, market power, reduced information asymmetry, and risk diversification. While larger firm size is often associated with higher shareholders' wealth, excessive size may introduce inefficiencies and agency problems that diminish value. Firm size typically refers to the scale of a firm's operations and is commonly measured using total assets, total sales, or market capitalization. According to Tyolumun et al. (2025), larger firms are often able to spread fixed costs over higher levels of output, leading to lower average costs and improved operating efficiency. Firm size is also associated with market power and competitive advantage, which can enhance shareholders' value (Wulandari & Candradewi, 2025). Larger firms often possess stronger bargaining power with suppliers and customers, greater brand recognition, and wider distribution networks. These advantages allow them to sustain revenues and margins more effectively than smaller firms, particularly during periods of economic uncertainty. Such stability reduces business risk and may lower the firm's cost of capital, thereby increasing market valuation and shareholders' wealth (Maulana & Sihombing, 2024).

Empirical evidence on the relationship between firm size and shareholders' value is generally mixed. Frances and Nworie (2025) found that firm size has a positive and significant effect on shareholder wealth maximisation among listed agricultural firms in Nigeria. Akpan et al. (2024) examined the effects of corporate attributes on risk management disclosures of listed insurance firms in Nigeria from 2013 to 2022. They found that firm size, firm profitability and firm leverage have significant effect on risk management disclosure of listed insurance firms in Nigeria Tyolumun et al. (2025) found that firm size has significant and positive on share price of listed consumer goods companies. On the contrary, Wulandari and Candradewi (2025) found no association between firm size and shareholders' wealth. Nasuha et al. (2024) also found no relationship between firm size and firm value. Ismail et al. (2023) found that firm size does not have a statistically significant effect on ROA. Setyorini (2022) also found no relationship between firm size and firm value. Thus, this study hypothesized that;

Ho1:Firm size has no significant effect on shareholders value of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Firm age and shareholders value

Firm age generally refers to the number of years a firm has operated since incorporation or listing, and it is often used as a proxy for organizational maturity, learning, and stability. The age of a firm can therefore influence how value is created and distributed to shareholders over time. Firm age affects shareholders' value through organizational learning and experience effects. According to Ismail et al. (2023), older firms are assumed to accumulate knowledge, managerial expertise, and operational routines that enhance efficiency and reduce uncertainty. Through learning-by-doing, such firms may achieve more stable cash flows and improved profitability, which positively influence firm valuation and shareholders' wealth (Aluko, 2022). In discounted cash flow models, stability and predictability of future earnings reduce perceived risk, leading to higher intrinsic value and improved market performance.

As noted by Adeyemi et al. (2022), firm age is also associated with reputation and legitimacy, which can enhance shareholders' value. Established firms often enjoy stronger brand recognition, long-standing relationships with customers, suppliers, and financial institutions, and greater credibility in capital markets. These reputational advantages reduce information asymmetry between managers and investors and can lower the firm's cost of capital. As a result, older firms may command valuation premiums and deliver more stable returns to shareholders.However, Sarakiri (2022) argues that younger firms are typically characterized by high growth opportunities, innovation, and risk, which may lead to higher expected future returns and market valuations despite lower current earnings. In contrast, older firms may experience slower growth, organizational inertia, and reduced innovation, which can limit value creation and dampen shareholders' wealth over time. Empirical evidence on the relationship between firm age and shareholders' value is mixed. Simamora and Hidayat (2025) found association between frim age and financial performance. Tyolumun et al. (2025) found firm age has a significant and positive effect, firm size revealed significant and positive on share price of listed consumer goods companies. Ismail et al. (2023) found that age of the companies (AGE) have significant positive relationship with ROA. Raimi et al. (2024) found that firm age have a strong relationship with firm value. Steno (2023) documented that firm age had a positive and significant impact on dividend payout. On the contrary, Aluko (2022) found that firm age negatively impacted shareholder value, particularly in firms with high production costs. Sarakiri (2022) also found firm age has no significant effect on market value per share. Thus, this study hypothesized that;

Ho2:Firm age has no significant effect on shareholders value of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Free cash flows and shareholders' value

Free cash flows are a fundamental determinant of shareholders' value, as they underpin firm valuation, dividend capacity, and financial flexibility. While higher free cash flows generally enhance shareholders' wealth, their ultimate effect depends on how effectively managers allocate and distribute these resources. According to Aprilia et al. (2023) free cash flow is a direct driver of shareholders' value. Higher and more sustainable free cash flows increase the firm's intrinsic value, which is reflected in higher market valuation and enhanced shareholders' wealth. Unlike accounting earnings, free cash flow is less affected by accounting choices and therefore provides a clearer signal of a firm's economic performance and value-generating ability. As pointed out by Fredo (2023), free cash flows influence shareholders' value through dividend payments and share repurchases. Firms with strong free cash flow positions are better able to pay dividends consistently and engage in stock buybacks without compromising operational or investment needs. These distributions provide direct returns to shareholders and often lead to positive market reactions, thereby increasing shareholders' value. In markets where investors place a premium on cash returns, the availability of free cash flow is particularly important for sustaining shareholder wealth. Empirical evidence on the relationship between free cash flows and shareholders' value is generally supportive of a positive association, particularly when free cash flows are efficiently managed. Amanda et al. (2025) revealed a positive association between free cash flows and financial performance. Armayau et al. (2023) found that firms with excess free cash flows and weak governance structures often exhibit lower market valuations because investors fear value-destroying decisions. Fredo (2023) found that free cash flows (FCF) had a positive and significant impact on dividend payout. Buertey (2023) noted that FCF enhances shareholder value when firms have strong investment opportunities or when raising external capital is costly. Thus, this study hypothesized that,

Ho_3: Free cash flow has no significant effect on shareholders value of listed manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Theoretical framework

This study is supported by shareholders' theory and positive accounting theory. These theories jointly provide a robust foundation for understanding how firm-level characteristics influence investors' perceptions, managerial behavior, and ultimately total shareholders' return. Shareholder theory, popularized by Milton Friedman in the 1970s, posits that the primary objective of a firm is to maximize shareholder wealth. This theory asserts that corporate managers, as agents of the shareholders, have a fiduciary duty to act in the best interest of the shareholders, focusing primarily on profit maximization and increasing the firm's stock value (Friedman, 1970; Etim et al., 2023) In other words, all managerial decisions and corporate strategies should therefore be evaluated based on their contribution to shareholders' value.

In contrast to stakeholder theory, which emphasizes balancing the interests of various parties, shareholder theory advocates that firms should prioritize shareholders since they are the owners of the business (Friedman,1970). In agreement, Okpo (2026) extended this perspective, noting that the firm's sole purpose should be maximizing the wealth of its shareholders, which can also lead to overall economic efficiency. This theory is the anchor theory for this study as it supports the general hypothesis that corporate attributes significantly influence shareholders' value and justifies the use of total shareholders' return as a comprehensive measure of shareholders' wealth.

On the other hand, positive accounting theory (PAT), as developed by Watts and Zimmerman (1978), explains corporate behavior by focusing on managers' incentives to choose accounting methods and financial strategies that maximize their own utility, subject to contractual constraints and political costs. The theory emphasizes how firm characteristics influence managerial choices and, by extension, firm performance and market valuation. According to Watts and Zimmerman (1978), the PAT is a result of the choices of accounting policies and responses made by a firm's management. These choices are a direct result of the management's desire to maximize their own utility. In exercising a choice of accounting policies, this theory posits that firms will choose those that best maximize benefits for the organization as a whole and not merely for shareholders (Li & Kim, 2022).

In this study firm size, and free cash flow were particularly relevant within the positive accounting theory framework. According to Etim et al. (2023), firm size exposes firms to greater political and regulatory scrutiny, influencing managerial behavior and financial reporting choices that affect investors' assessment of firm value. Free cash flow creates discretion for managers, which may either enhance or reduce shareholders' value depending on how efficiently it is managed (Dabboussi, 2024).

METHODOLOGY

The research design adopted in this study was ex post factor design. The ex post facto research design was considered suitable for this study because the data used were historical. The population of this study consisted of 53 listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria, while the sample size of 45 was determined using Cochran formula.The source of data employed in this study was secondary. Given the time-series and cross-sectional nature of the data, panel data regression technique was used. The data were analyzed using STATA version 17 statistical package, and the outcome was used to test the hypotheses formulated for the study after conducting necessary tests.

Model specification

The econometric model used in this study was adapted from the work of Korankye (2022) and modified to suit this study. This is presented below;

Shareholders' value = f(corporate attributes) (i)
Total shareholders' return = f(firm size, firm age and free cash flows) (ii)

$$TOSR = \beta_0 + \beta_1 REVG_{it} + \beta_2 DIVP_{it} + \beta_3 FINL_{it} + \beta_4 COSE_{it} + \beta_5 FIMZ_{it} + \beta_6 FAGE_{it} + \beta_7 FCAF_{it} + \beta_8 PROF_{it} + \mu_{it} \quad (iii)$$

Where:

TOSR	=	Total shareholders' return
FIMZ	=	firm size
FAGE	=	firm age
FCAF	=	free cash flows
PROF	=	Profitability (ROA, control variable)
β_0	=	Model intercept
β_1-β_4	=	Coefficient to be estimated, where $_{1-8} > 0$
it	=	Cross section of listed manufacturing companies with time variant
μ	=	Stochastic error term

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of the effect of corporate attributes on shareholder value of listed manufacturing companies

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Tosr	450	.329	.976	-.882	8.363
Fimz	450	16.738	2.206	6.932	23.607
Fage	450	1.656	.206	1	2.004
Fcaf	443	6.203	1.295	3.183	10.226
Prof	450	.109	5.422	-57.734	62.608

Source: Author's computation (2026)

Table 4.1 presents the descriptive statistics of all the variables employed in this study. Total shareholders' return (TOSR) recorded an average of 0.329 with a standard deviation of 0.976. This indicates that, on average, firms generated positive returns for shareholders, although the relatively high standard deviation suggests considerable variability in returns across firms. Firm age (FAGE) showed an average of 1.656 with a standard deviation of 0.206. The minimum and maximum values of 1 and 2.004 respectively indicate that most firms in the sample were relatively similar in terms of age, with low variability. This suggests that the firms had comparable levels of experience and maturity in their operations. Free cash flow (FCAF) recorded a mean of 6.203 with a standard deviation of 1.295. The minimum and maximum values of 3.183 and 10.226 respectively indicate moderate variation in the liquidity position of firms. Lastly, profitability (PROF), measured by return on assets, had an average of 0.109 with a standard deviation of 5.422. The minimum value of -57.734 and maximum of 62.608 indicate extreme variations in profitability levels across firms, with some firms experiencing significant losses while others recorded high returns.

Table 4.2: Shapiro Wilk W test for normal data

Variable	Obs	W	V	z	Prob>z
tosr	450	0.583	127.742	11.603	0.000
fimz	450	0.989	3.405	2.931	0.002
fage	450	0.920	24.621	7.664	0.000
fcaf	443	0.992	2.407	2.099	0.018
prof	450	0.129	266.450	13.362	0.000

Source: Stata 17 output (2026)

Table 4.2 presents the result of the Shapiro-Wilk test for normality for all the variables utilized in this study. From the result, it was observed that none of the variables followed a normal distribution at the 5% level of significance. This conclusion was based on the probability (Prob>z) values associated with each variable. This suggests the presence of skewness, outliers, or extreme values in the dataset. Despite this, the data can still be used for further analysis, especially given that large sample sizes tend to rely on the central limit theorem, although caution should be exercised in the interpretation of results.

Table 4.3: Spearman coefficients and probabilities

Variable	tosr	fimz	fage	fcaf	prof
tosr	1.0000				
fimz	0.1465 (0.0020)	1.0000			
fage	-0.0282 (0.5540)	-0.0016 (0.9724)	1.0000		
fcaf	0.1131 (0.0172)	0.7681 (0.0000)	-0.0483 (0.3102)	1.0000	
prof	0.3359 (0.0000)	0.1786 (0.0002)	-0.1450 (0.0022)	0.1080 (0.0230)	1.0000

Source: Author's computation (2026)

Table 4.3 presents the Spearman's rank correlation coefficients for the variables in the study. From the output, firm size (FIMZ) has a weak positive correlation with total shareholders' return (0.1465, p = 0.0020), indicating that larger firms tend to generate slightly higher returns. Firm age (FAGE), however, shows a very weak and insignificant negative relationship with total shareholders' return (-0.0282, p = 0.5540), suggesting that the number of years of existence does not significantly influence shareholders' return. Free cash flow (FCAF) exhibits a weak positive and significant correlation with total shareholders' return (0.1131, p = 0.0172), implying that firms with higher free cash flows tend to enhance shareholders' value. Lastly, profitability (PROF) shows a moderate positive correlation with total shareholders' return (0.3359, p = 0.0000), indicating that more profitable firms are more likely to deliver higher returns to shareholders.

Table 4.4: Regression results

	(1) ols tosr	(2) Random effects tosr	(3) Fixed effects tosr	(4) Robust fixed effects tosr
fimz	0.025 (0.407)	0.004 (0.894)	0.000 (0.989)	0.000 (0.985)
fage	-0.130 (0.550)	-0.326 (0.112)	-0.357* (0.083)	-0.357 (0.296)
fcaf	-0.005 (0.918)	0.000 (0.992)	0.001 (0.977)	0.091 (0.009)
prof	0.014 (0.106)	0.012 (0.119)	0.012 (0.127)	0.019 (0.040)
Constant	0.176	0.834	0.940*	0.940

	(0.735)	(0.101)	(0.060)	(0.187)
r^2	0.119		0.149	0.389
N	443.000	443.000	443.000	443.000
F	7.310		9.296	2657.246
P	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Hettero	0.60(0.440)			
lagrange		170.59(0.000)		
Vif	1.35			
hausman			19.66(0.012)	

p-values in parentheses
* $p < 0.10$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$
Source: Author's computation (2026)

The result obtained from the multivariate regression analyses is presented in the table above. The fixed effects regression model with robust standard errors shows an F-statistic of 2657.246 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the model is statistically significant and suitable for inference. This implies that, collectively, the corporate attributes included in the model significantly explain variations in shareholder value of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The model further produced an R-squared value of 0.149, which indicates that approximately 38.9% of the variations in total shareholders' return are explained by the explanatory variables included in the model. The remaining 61.1% is attributable to other factors not captured in the model but reflected in the error term.

The homoscedasticity assumption of the pooled ordinary least squares (OLS) model was tested using the Breusch-Pagan heteroscedasticity test using Hettest command test in Stata 17. Table 4.4 indicated that the assumption of homoscedasticity was not violated, as evidenced by the p-value of 0.440 associated with the heteroscedasticity test statistic (Hettest = 0.60), which is greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This implies that the null hypothesis of homoscedasticity cannot be rejected, suggesting that the error terms are homoscedastic. Despite this, the study proceeded with the fixed effects regression model with robust standard errors. There was no multicollinearity between the independent variables as evidenced by Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of 1.35. The VIF should be less than 10 for this assumption to hold. From the mean VIF presented in table 4.5 above (1.35), it is safe to say that there was no multicollinearity evident in the dataset.

Lagrange multiplier LM test
This test is applied to test between the random-effect GLS and pooled OLS which one is suitable for the data (Breusch & Pagan, 1980). The null hypothesis is that there are no random effects; thus, the variation across entities is zero, and OLS is sufficient; and is to be accepted or rejected in line with the probability value (greater than 0.05) or rejected (less than 0.05). The Lagrange multiplier LM test shows a statistic of 170.59 with a corresponding p-value of 0.000; which indicating the rejection of null hypothesis. This implies that the pooled OLS was not sufficient, and random effect model was introduced. The p-value of the Hausman test{19.66(0.012)} implies a significance at 5% level of significance (that means p<0.05). This shows that the study should adopt the fixed effect panel regression results in drawing the conclusion and recommendations.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Firm size and total shareholders' return

The regression results from the robust fixed effects model indicate that firm size has a positive but statistically nonsignificant effect on total shareholders' returns (TSR) of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria, with a coefficient of 0.000 and a p-value of 0.985. This suggests that variations in firm size within the sampled firms do not significantly affect shareholders' returns, indicating that scale alone may not be a key driver of value creation in this context. Empirical studies, however, present mixed evidence regarding the impact of firm size on shareholder wealth. Some studies found a positive and significant effect: Frances and Nworie (2025) reported that firm size positively influenced shareholder wealth maximization among listed agricultural firms in Nigeria, while Tyolumun et al. (2025) observed similar effects for consumer goods companies. In contrast, several studies found no statistically significant relationship between firm size and firm value or returns, including Wulandari and Candradewi (2025), Nasuha et al. (2024), Ismail et al. (2023), and Setyorini (2022).

Secondly, table 4 revealed that firm age has a negative and statistically nonsignificant effect on total shareholders' returns (TSR) of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria, with a coefficient of -0.357 and a p-value of 0.296. This suggests that variations in the age of firms do not significantly affect shareholders' returns within the sampled firms. Generally, firm age can influence shareholder wealth in both positive and negative ways. Older firms are generally assumed to accumulate managerial experience, operational routines, and organizational knowledge that improve efficiency, reduce uncertainty, and stabilize cash flows (Ismail et al., 2023; Aluko, 2022). These stability and learning effects may enhance intrinsic firm value, leading to higher share prices and more predictable returns to shareholders under discounted cash flow models. Empirical evidence on the effect of firm age on shareholder value is mixed. Some studies report positive effects, suggesting that older firms generate stable returns and enjoy market credibility (Tyolumun et al., 2025; Ismail et al., 2023; Raimi et al., 2024; Steno, 2023). Other studies highlight negative or insignificant relationships, reflecting limitations of maturity in driving shareholder value, particularly where older firms face high production costs or reduced innovation (Aluko, 2022; Sarakiri, 2022).

Finally, table 4revealed that free cash flow has a positive and statistically significant effect on total shareholders' returns (TSR) of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria, with a coefficient of 0.091 and a p-value of 0.009. This suggests that firms with higher and more sustainable free cash flows are better positioned to enhance shareholder wealth through dividend payments, share repurchases, and reinvestment in profitable projects. Free cash flow is a critical determinant of shareholders' value because it reflects a firm's capacity to generate real economic value beyond accounting profits (Aprilia et al., 2023). Unlike net income, which can be affected by accounting policies, free cash flow provides a clearer signal of a firm's financial health and value-generating potential. Firms with strong free cash flows can distribute cash to shareholders via dividends and stock buybacks without compromising operational needs or investment opportunities, thereby directly enhancing shareholders' wealth (Fredo, 2023; Salih et al., 2024). Empirical evidence supports the positive role of free cash flow in enhancing shareholder returns. Amanda et al. (2025) reported a positive association between free cash flow and financial performance, while Fredo (2023) found that free cash flow significantly improves dividend payouts. Buertey (2023) noted that free cash flow strengthens shareholder value particularly when external financing is expensive or investment opportunities are strong. Similarly, Salih et al. (2024)

argued that free cash flow enhances dividend capacity and investor confidence, improving market perceptions of firm stability.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study provided an empirical assessment of the effect of corporate attributes on shareholders value of listed manufacturing companies in Nigeria. The evidence demonstrates that specific financial and operational strategies significantly influence shareholder wealth, while others appear less impactful within the Nigerian manufacturing companies sector. Thus, it was concluded that the creation of shareholder wealth in the Nigerian manufacturing sector is primarily driven by prudent cash flow management, while factors such as firm size, and firm age have no significant effect on total shareholders' returns. Thus, it was recommended that the management of manufacturing firms should pursue cost efficiency strategically, focusing on operational optimization, process reengineering, and technology-driven productivity improvements rather than short-term cost-cutting. Firms should implement rigorous cash flow management strategies to maximize free cash flow for dividends, share repurchases, and strategic investments.

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