



Forensic Accounting Techniques and Creative Accounting: A Study of Money Deposit Banks in Anambra State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of forensic accounting techniques in curbing creative accounting in Anambra state, Nigeria. The study specifically examined the effect of forensic accounting on income smoothing, window dressing and credibility. The study is hinged on 'fraud triangle and theory of perceived pressure'. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design and focused on branch managers of the deposit money banks in Anambra State. The study used both descriptive and inferential statistics as methods of data analysis. The study found the use of forensic accounting techniques helpful in deterring income smoothing amongst money deposit banks. The findings of this study were crucial in formulating the conclusions of the study. The unique contribution of this paper is that it addresses effect of forensic accounting techniques on income smoothing practices which can be beneficial to shareholders, managers and professional bodies of money deposit banks in Anambra State, Nigeria

Keywords: *Forensic Accounting techniques, income smoothing, creative accounting, Fraud*

INTRODUCTION

Audit of financial statements is one of the most common forms of validating the financial statement. With an upsurge in creative accounting and earnings manipulations in the global stage, financial accounting fraud detection and prevention has become an emerging topic of great importance for academics, research and industries. Creative accounting according to Wikipedia (2005) is accounting practices that deviate from standard accounting practices in order to present the desired picture of the business. Creative accounting has led to a number of recent accounting standards and many proposals for accounting reform that centred on an updated analysis of capital and factors of production that would correctly reflect how value is added (Osisioma & Enahoro, 2006).

In this age of high technology, investigators of creative accounting can no longer be satisfied with just auditing or accounting skills, these investigators should be trained in assurance services and forensic accounting and this training should include an extensive knowledge of accounting information systems and robust forensic accounting techniques such as Data mining, Beneish model etc (Bressler, 2006; Manning, 2005; Ramaswamy, 2009). Indeed, creative accounting had been a big problem in many businesses in recent years and the integrity of the Nigerian Accounting profession had been under serious questions and criticisms as the reputation of many audit giants in Nigeria such as Akintola Williams & Deloitte, Pricewaterhouse Coopers etc., has been greatly undermined, considering their shocking involvement in incidence of fraudulent financial reporting in the country (Nwoye, Okoye & Oraka, 2013). The resultant effect of these negligence and unethical conducts has caused the witnessing of distressed state of some Nigerian banks such as AfriBank, Intercontinental Bank and the most recent Diamond Bank plc. The failure of internal and external auditing system of the organization in identifying the economic crimes and creative accounting therefore led to use of specialized procedures to detect financial and economic crimes known as forensic accounting (Kranacher & Stern, 2004). The forensic accountant to this end, draws conclusions, calculate values and identify irregular patterns or suspicion by critically analyzing the financial data that can be used in a court of law.

Studies had been carried out locally and globally on forensic accounting techniques (Herbert, 2014; Nwaiwu & Aaron, 2018) however, the majority of the literature focused on the relationship between forensic accounting and quality assurance and financial reporting (Herbert, 2014; ICPC, 2017 Nwaiwu & Aaron, 2018). Other studies such as (Zysman, 2004) focused on the demystification of forensic accounting techniques. These earlier studies by reason of research scope have ignored one important trajectory; forensic accounting techniques as an instrument in curbing creative accounting.

The purpose of this research is to examine whether the deployment of forensic accounting techniques amongst money deposit banks in Anambra State deters creative accounting.

The broad objective of this research is to ascertain the effects of forensic accounting techniques in curbing creative accounting amongst money deposit banks in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. To ascertain whether the deployment of forensic accounting techniques deters income smoothing.
- ii. To determine the extent to which the use of forensic accounting technique is relevant to uncovering window dressing.

Hypotheses

H₀₁: The use of forensic accounting techniques has not helped in deterring income smoothing.

H₀₂: The application of forensic accounting technique has not significantly uncovered window dressing in corporate organizations.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concept of Fraud

Frauds like creative accounting have imposed the need for deeper investigation of irregularities in the area of financial reporting. In connection to that, control institutions, legislative and professionals have it as their primary objective that the creation of fraud in financial reporting should be detected before things go out of proportion. However, after great financial scandal from a company like WorldCom in 2002 and the global financial crisis between mid-2007 and early 2009, there is a great need for forensic accounting. According to the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE) forensic accounting is a combination of investigative skills and accounting knowledge that gives litigation support in cases of fraud.

Frauds are acts of dishonest, deceit, falsification and manipulations perpetrated to gain either monetary or non-monetary benefits. Nwaze (2012) defined fraud as a predetermined as well as planned tricky process or device usually undertaken by a person or group of persons with the sole aim of cheating another person or organization to gain ill-gotten advantage which would not have accrued in the absence of such deceptive procedure.

Forensic Accounting

Zysman (2004) puts forensic accounting as the integration of accounting, auditing and investigative skills. Simply put, forensic accounting is accounting that is suitable for legal review offering the highest level of assurance and including the now generally accepted connotation of having been arrived at in a scientific fashion (Crumbley, 2006). Coenen (2008) stated that forensic accounting involves the application of accounting concepts and techniques. It demands reporting, where the accountability or the fraud is established and the report is considered as evidence in the court of law or in the administrative proceedings (Joshi, 2003). It provides an accounting analysis that is suitable to the court, which will form the basis of discussion, debate and ultimately dispute resolution (Zysman, 2004). This means that forensic accounting is a field of specialization that has to do with provision of information that is meant to be used as evidence especially for legal purposes.

According to Squires (2003) Forensic accountants must be very discreet when conducting their investigations because the reputation of individuals and companies are at stake. They must be independent and impartial, taking into account both financial records and the conduct of employees. Unlike other accountants, when forensic accountants conduct audits, they are actively looking for signs of fraud. In addition to examining financial statements to determine whether they are accurate and complete, they may seek out internal databases and court records. Because people committing fraud have hidden the evidence of their crimes, forensic accountants must look beyond the numbers and anticipate criminal actions.

Forensic accounting professionals are skilled at quantifying damages and determining the full extent of a loss. They are involved in four basic areas of forensic analytics: data collection, data preparation, data analysis and reporting. Specifically, forensic accountants perform tasks that include examining business records, analyzing historical statements, looking for irregularities in business practices, reviewing journal entries, analyzing trends, tracing the flow of funds, interviewing relevant parties, analyzing electronic data and performing an overall evaluation of the situation in question. Beyond this, they can serve as consultants or expert witnesses. When required, they also collaborate with other experts.

Creative Accounting

The term creative accounting also called corporate fraud can be defined in a number of ways. Ghosh (2010) defined creative accounting as the transformation of accounting figures from what they actually are to what perpetrators desire by taking advantage of the existing rules and/or ignoring some or all of such rules/guidelines.

Managers may engage in creative accounting to increase their bonuses, convince a lender to give the firm a loan, or increase its valuation in the event of a sale. Creative accounting can also be used to reduce reported profit levels, typically to avoid paying taxes.

Creative accounting puts one group in an advantageous position at the expense of others. According to Balaciu and Cosmina (2008), the managers are interested in paying less tax and dividends while the tax authorities would like to collect more tax and the shareholders are seeking to receive higher dividends. An organization may decide to reduce their profit so as to pay less tax to the tax authorities, thereby evading tax and which is a criminal offence.

Income Smoothing

As sourced from a webpage (Accounting Tools, 2017) Income smoothing or assumed increased earnings is the shifting of revenue and expenses among different reporting periods in order to present the false impression that a business has steady earnings. Management typically engages in income smoothing

to increase earnings in period that would otherwise have unusually low earnings. This practice is common in publicly held companies, where investors are most likely to bid up the price of shares in a company that presents a reliable and predictable earnings stream over time.

Companies also engage in income smoothing through pooling versus purchases methods of creative accounting. Pooling is the accounting for a merger of two companies where there is no goodwill created which increases future income because no amortization of good-will is needed. More so, all pre and post-acquisition reserves and earnings are distributed to the shareholders. These features make pooling of interest a useful tool for creative accounting in all forms of take overs (Akabom, 2011).

Window Dressing

This involves the adjustment of financial statements of a company to achieve the maximum effect on the financial position at a particular date. This adjustment could be on any item on the balance sheet or profit and loss account. Example, a company may decide to inflate its sales by selling to its related company. This provision usually cushions the impact of such item on the profit when it actually takes effect, example provision for bad debt (Akabom, 2011)

According to Eric Bank (2015) Corporations naturally want to look their best to shareholders and lenders. One way management project a good image of their organization is to window-dress their financial statements, which require taking certain actions that enhance financial results and ratios. The risk of window dressing is that what starts as white lies in one period might eventually corrode the ethical standards of a company's executives and spiral down into illegal practices, fraud and prison sentences.

Empirical Review

The review of empirical studies is necessary in order to identify areas that had been covered by prior studies and possibly detect gaps in literature that needs attention. The literatures reviewed are as follows:

Ezekwesili, (2021) conducted a study on the function of forensic auditors in detecting and preventing fraud, as well as their impact on corporate governance. The study was conducted using a survey research design. The study selected branches of eleven major Nigerian banks operating in Enugu State using a non-sampling technique. Questionnaires were provided to the respondents, and data was collected from them with the help of SPSS version 20.0, Pearson coefficient correlation was employed to evaluate the hypothesis at a 5% level of significance. The study found that the correlation coefficient between forensic auditor and corporate governance is significant at 0.01 levels, and the confidence level between the two is strong. As a result, the forensic auditor has a favourable impact on Nigerian banks' corporate governance.

Ali and Fathyah (2020) focused on combining related literature and empirical research in order to enhance the projected powers of forensic accounting on corporate governance maturity, particularly for publicly traded businesses. The two major responsibilities of forensic accounting were identified in this paper: preventative and detective roles. By combining agency theory, fraud triangle theory, and path dependence theory, this research indicated that fraud risk assessment plays a mediating function between forensic accounting and corporate governance maturity.

Abbas, Mezher, and Hamid (2019) conducted research to better understand the connection between forensic accounting and governance, as well as the role it plays in limiting creative accounting. The study's sample included 42 academics and auditors. The study found a significant connection between forensic accounting and governance.

Hammoudi and Saeed (2018) examined the effectiveness of forensic accounting strategies in limiting creative accounting practices, as well as to clarify the most essential methods and approaches employed in this area. It was discovered that there are numerous creative accounting methods that aim to influence financial accounts by selecting appropriate accounting standards. The findings revealed that judicial accountability plays a role in situations involving financial matters in the courts. It also revealed that courts should have a dedicated forensic accounting section as part of its capital structure.

Oseni, (2017) examined the effects of forensic accounting services on fraud and financial crime detection and prevention in Nigeria. The survey designed was used in the study with a sample size of 160 consisting of Auchi Polytechnic, Edo State Ministry of Finance, Audit Firms and Federal Inland Revenue Services. The simple random technique was used as the sampling technique, while the chi-square was employed in the data analysis. The tests of hypothesis were done using Microsoft Excel 2010 version. Tests were carried out at a significant level of 5% and three degree of freedom. The study concluded that financial crimes and fraud have serious negative effect on human capital and infrastructural development in developing economies, especially countries like Nigeria.

Dbouk, and Zaarour, (2017) examined the application of a layer of machine learning technique such as the Bayesian Naïve Classifier (BNC) to enhance the decision-making process in the framework of Earnings Manipulation Detection (EMD). It also evaluated and compares Manual Auditors' Methods versus a mathematical model in EMD such as the Beneish Model. The Data sets consist of fifty-three (53) Financial Statements acquired from largest corporations over four consecutive years. Using the Beneish model, they classified corporations between manipulators and non-manipulators to establish the training set. In testing for EMD under the mathematical model versus the audit methods, and to evaluate results, a new layer of Machine Learning technique was introduced such as the BNC. Their results show that mathematical models outperform auditors. They reveal a classification rate of (86.84 per cent) using the Beneish Model and (60.53 per cent) using Manual Auditors' Methods. Their findings indicate that Manual Auditors' Methods are difficult to detect Earnings Manipulation of Financial Statements.

Goel (2017) conducted a study on the impact of creative accounting on stock prices in the market. The results showed that companies use accruals for manipulating financial information, most often in periods when financial markets are uncertain about the prospects of the business of such companies in the future.

Nwonye, Ekesiobi, Obiora and Abiahu, (2016) examined the inclusive application of SAS No. 99 in the effective deterrence of fraudulent financial reporting in Nigeria. The exploratory research design was adopted. A total of 91 samples were judgmentally selected comprising practicing accountants in the industries, professional auditors and the accounting academics in Enugu and Anambra States respectively. The Two-way ANOVA statistical tool, using SPSS 17.0, was deployed in testing the two hypotheses formulated for this research work. Their findings showed that there exists no significant difference in the opinions of the selected accountants in Enugu and Anambra on how auditors primary objectives of forming opinion on the true and fair view and absence of material misstatement in companies' financial statement will be breached if SAS 99's core emphasis on fraud detection and deterrence is upheld in Nigeria as part of auditors' audit primary responsibilities. Bhasin, (2016) investigated whether the accounting standards provide enough room for use of Creative Accounting (CA) practices. As part of the study, a questionnaire-based survey methodology was used, 14 specific research questions were asked, and 120 questionnaires were distributed to the preparers' and users' of the company FS. Finally, 85 responses from the participants were collected and analyzed using the percentage and frequencies of respondents. The study revealed that the practice of CA is always a deliberate attempt to gain undue advantage for accountants, managers and companies.

In South Korea, Lee (2016) came to the conclusion that write-off management is the ideal item for manipulating accounting information because it is based on management's estimates. He found that Companies usually manipulate write-offs of receivables to avoid reporting losses, to maintain an equal level of earnings over the years, and to meet the analysts' forecasts.

Shahid and Ali (2016) evaluated the impact of creative accounting on financial reporting in Pakistan. Their result showed that creative accounting has a significant impact on fair and objective financial reporting.

Bhasin (2015) examined the India's Enron, Satyam Computers Creative Accounting scandal and underlying reasons for the prevalence of frauds in the banking industry. He suggested "the increasing rate of white-collar crimes demands stiff penalties, exemplary punishments, and effective enforcement of law with the right spirit."

Burghul (2015) studies how forensic accounting and corporate governance work together to reduce financial and administrative misconduct in Jordanian public shareholding businesses. It was discovered that forensic accounting gives forensic auditors the tools and resources they need to examine cases of corporate crime and contributes to the reduction of financial and administrative misconduct.

Fizza and Qaisar (2015) empirically examined the problem of creative accounting in financial reporting using descriptive and inferential statistics to simplify the results. The result of the findings indicated that creative accounting plays a negative role in financial reporting and that if more managers get involved in creative accounting, the value of information published for investors and other users will be poor.

Similarly, Sansusi and Izedonmi (2014) made an empirical investigation on the opinions of experienced staff of commercial banks on creative accounting practices in Nigerian commercial banks. They recommended that "creative accounting should be considered as a serious crime and as such accounting bodies, law courts and other regulatory authorities need to adopt strict measures to stop the practice."

Micah and Chinwe (2014) examined whether creative accounting and organizational effectiveness has any significant relationship. They employed survey data and financial reports on 14 manufacturing firms over 5-year period. The study found a significant relationship between creative accounting and organizational effectiveness.

Soral and Kamra (2013) explored the ethical and unethical aspects of creative accounting with the help of cases from India and abroad. They found that creative accounting exists due to lack of awareness and information level of investors. He highlighted the role of government and various agencies like SFIO and India Forensic for proper handling of the problem of creative accounting. Vladu, and Cuzdriorean, (2013) analyzed creative accounting limitation through ethical developments, focusing on features as. After assessing the areas approached, their goal was further to discuss a possible development of a theoretical framework comprising cognitive structures. Important aspects of decision-making process were approached and in correlation they discussed the implications that Machiavellian behaviour, moral action model and cognitive moral development theory have upon creative accounting measurement and behaviour. The findings of their study paper indicates that ethics as a solution used for limiting opportunistic behaviour in accounting can have an unlimited potential as long-term solution.

Nwonye, Okoye and Oraka, (2013) investigated the contribution made by SAS 99 towards improving the skills of Nigerian Auditors in the detection of fraud in Financial Statements of corporate organisations, while laying emphasis on the extent to which the Beneish Model could further strengthen Auditor's likelihood to detecting such manipulations in the Financial Statements. The research was descriptively and historically designed. 100 respondents comprising Auditors, Accountants in the Industries and the Accounting Academics in Anambra and Enugu State were infinitely determined using the Topman's formula. Data from secondary sources comprising Audited Annual Reports of the first five most capitalised manufacturing companies in Nigeria for the years 2002-2006 (in Cadbury, for model confirmatory test purpose) and 2006-2010 were used to complement this work. Inputs from the questionnaire distributed and the Annual Reports and Accounts were analyzed with the aid of SPSS software package using the two-way ANOVA statistical technique, and the Beneish Model. The analyses result showed that SAS 99 will significantly contribute to the deterrence and detection of fraud by Auditors in Nigeria, especially were complemented with the Beneish model.

Okoye and Gbegi (2013) examined forensic accounting as a tool for fraud detection and prevention in the public sector. A total of 370 questionnaires were administered to staff of selected ministries in Kogi state, Nigeria. The hypotheses were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Their findings were that the use of forensic accounting significantly reduces the occurrence of fraud cases in the public sector and also that there is a significant difference between professional forensic accountants and traditional external auditors.

Osazevbaru (2012) investigated the effect of creative accounting on firm value in Nigeria, and the findings of the study revealed that it can positively affect firm's value. Another study, which also focused on Nigeria, is by Idris et al. (2012). Using survey method, they investigated the practice of creative accounting, its nature, techniques, and prevention. They concluded that "one of the best ways to prevent the practice of creative accounting is to enforce both preventive as well as strong enough punitive measures on those that engage in the practice." Muthuamy, Quaddus and Evans (2010) examined organizational intention to use forensic accounting services for fraud detection and prevention by large Malaysian companies. The study used multi-phased mixed-method research design with quantitative data analysis using partial least square (PLS) from structural equation modeling. The study confirmed there is a significant positive influence of attitude, stakeholder pressure and perceived susceptibility to fraud on the organization's intention to use forensic accounting skills (FAS) for fraud detection.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The study focused on the branch managers of the 196 branches of Deposit Money Banks in Anambra state, of which 132 samples were determined using Taro Yamane formula for the determination of sample size.

The research made use of primary data for generating data. The data collected were analyzed statistically using mean scores and standard deviation. The decision rule is that any participants' response with the mean rating of 2.50 and above was considered as agreement with the statement and therefore accepted while any mean below 2.50 rating was considered as disagreement with the statement and therefore rejected. Considering the size of the sample being above 30 ($n > 30$), the hypotheses formulated to guide the study were therefore tested using one sample mean Z-test at .05 significance level. The one sample Z-test is given as thus:

$$Z = \frac{\bar{x} - \mu}{\sigma / \sqrt{n}} \quad \text{at } n-1 \text{ df}$$

Where:

Z = Z-test

x = sample mean

μ = Population means

σ = Population standard deviation

n = Sample size

df = Degree of freedom (usually $n-1$)

σ / \sqrt{n} = Population Standard error

DATA ANALYSIS

Table 4.1 Questionnaire Distribution according to senatorial districts

S/N	Respondents	No Distributed	No. Returned	No. Analysed
1	Anambra South	30(22.72)	24	24(18.18%)
2	Anambra North	79(59.85)	53	53(40.15%)
3	Anambra Central	23(17.42)	23	23(17.42%)
	Total (Percentage)	132(100%)	100	100(75.75%)

Source: Field Survey, (2022)

Research Question one:

To what degree has the deployment of forensic accounting techniques helped in deterring income smoothing?

Table 4.2: Range of Scores for forensic accounting techniques and income smoothing.

Range of Scores	N	Percentage	Remark
0-16	11	11.00	Poor Scores
17-32	89	89.0	Good Scores
Total	100	100 (%)	

Source: Field Survey (2022).

Research Question two:

To what extent is the relevance of forensic accounting technique in uncovering window dressing in corporate organizations?

Table 4.3: Range of Scores for forensic accounting technique and window dressing

Range of Scores	N	Percentage	Remark
0-16	3	3.0	Poor Scores
17-32	97	97.0	Good Scores
Total	100	100 (%)	

Source: Field Survey (2022).

Range of Scores for forensic accounting technique and credibility

Range of Scores	N	Percentage	Remark
0-16	3	3.02	Poor Scores
17-32	97	97.0	Good Scores
Total	100	100 (%)	

Source: Field Survey (2022).

Test of Hypotheses

Test of Hypotheses I

H₀: The use of forensic accounting techniques has not helped in deterring income smoothing.

H₁: The use of forensic accounting techniques has helped in deterring income smoothing.

Table 4.4: Summary statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
RQ1	100	27.94	4.923	.492	

Source: SPSS Ver. 23

Table 4.4

One Sample Z-test

z_statistic	p_value	cohens_d
-1.98425	.04123	-.19842

Number of cases read: 1 Number of cases listed: 1

Source: SPSS, Vers. 23

Discussion: Table 4.4 above shows a Z-test statistic value of -1.98425 which was tested at .05 significance level; the Probability value was .04123. Hence, ($p < .05$). Thus, the study finds evidence to refute the null hypothesis and accept the alternate.

Decision: The use of forensic accounting services has helped in curbing income smoothing.

Test of Hypotheses II

H₀: The application of forensic accounting technique has not significantly uncovered window dressing in corporate organizations.

H₁: The application of forensic accounting technique has significantly uncovered window dressing in corporate organizations.

Table 4.5: Summary statistics

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	
RQ2	100	29.55	3.273	.327	

Source: SPSS Ver. 23

Table 4.5

One Sample Z-test

z_statistic	p_value	cohens_d
-4.03226	.00006	-.40323

Number of cases read: 1 Number of cases listed: 1

Source: SPSS, Vers. 23

Discussion: Table 4.5 above shows a Z-test statistic value of -4.03226 which was tested at .05 significance level; the Probability value was .00006. Hence, ($p < .05$). Thus, the study finds evidence to refute the null hypothesis and accept the alternate.

Decision: The application of forensic accounting technique has significantly uncovered window dressing in corporate organizations.

From the test of hypotheses, the study found that the use of forensic accounting techniques has helped in deterring income smoothing. Studies in agreement with this finding include; Vladu, and Cuzdriorean, (2013); Nwoye, Ekesiobi, Obiora and Abiahu, (2016) and Dbouk, and Zaarour, (2017) and Osazevbaru (2012) who investigated the effect of creative accounting on firm value in Nigeria, and the findings of the study revealed that it can positively affect firm's value and concluded that "one of the best ways to prevent the practice of creative accounting is to enforce both preventive as well as strong enough punitive measures on those that engage in the practice." The current study also found that the application of forensic accounting skills has significantly uncovered window dressing in corporate organizations. A closely related finding is Mindak, Sen and Stephan, (2016) who investigated whether companies use creative accounting techniques to meet the analysts' forecasts and exceed last year's earnings and found that all the companies that have managed to beat the targets have used creative accounting methods to artificially increase earnings and have been rewarded by the market for doing so. Finally, the study found that the emergence of forensic accounting practice has enhanced the credibility of corporate financial reporting. Ezekwesili, (2021) upheld a similar finding in a study on the function of forensic auditors in detecting and preventing fraud, as well as their impact on corporate governance. The study found forensic auditor to have a favourable impact on Nigerian banks' corporate governance. Other studies with similar findings include, Abbas, Mezher, and Hamid (2019); Hammoudi and Saeed (2018) and Oseni, (2017) who examined the effects of forensic accounting services on fraud and financial crime detection and prevention in Nigeria and concluded that financial crimes and fraud have serious negative effect on human capital and infrastructural development in developing economies, especially countries like Nigeria.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study centered on examining the Effect of Forensic Accounting Techniques in curbing Creative Accounting. Standing on prior studies and authorities, the study sees Forensic accounting as the action of identifying, recording, settling, extracting, sorting, reporting and verifying past financial data or other accounting activities, for settling current or prospective legal disputes, or using such past financial data for projecting future financial data to settle legal disputes

Creative accounting was decomposed into three proxies, and each has evidence to justify its inclusion in attempts to explain forensic accounting and creative accounting. It is, of course, difficult for one proxy to claim to include all the considerations and factors that explains creative accounting. The study concluded generally that there is a significant effect of forensic accounting techniques on creative accounting of money deposit banks in Anambra state.

Recommendations

The study therefore makes the following recommendations:

- i. Forensic experts from professional accounting firms are highly advised to get involved with litigation support services in order to provide professional and technical supports to the court in reaching reasonable conclusions on issues such as income smoothing and other obscured crime that the court may ordinarily not have the knowledge to decide.
- ii. There is the need to review the strategic plans and strategies by banks and other organizations, sectors, ministries, departments and agencies in order to capture forensic accounting in a digitalized environment taking into consideration forensic software as an aid to speed up the investigation of fraudulent cases of window-dressing and other criminal offences.
- iii. More awareness on forensic accounting should be created to have more forensic accountants to engage them in handling creative accounting and more pronounced fraudulent cases thereby reducing economic crimes in Anambra and Nigeria. The money deposit banks in Anambra State should also ensure improvement of their internal control measures to check fraudulent practices by the perpetrators thereby improving the credibility of financial report.

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