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Market-Based Financing Instruments and the Performance of Ngx Growth Board Companies in Nigeria**Anderson Emmanuel Oriakpono¹ & Abraham Owobi Ochayi²**

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Email: ochayi.Abraham6@gmail.com**Phone:** +234 813 421 7517**Publication Date: 2026/06/22****Abstract**

This study investigates the relationship between perceptions of market-based financing instruments and the performance of selected companies listed on the NGX Growth Board in Nigeria. Adopting a quantitative cross-sectional survey design, primary data were collected from a stratified proportional sample of 255 respondents drawn from relevant ecosystem stakeholders, including stock brokers, regulators, and company executives across the eight current Growth Board listings (Briclinks Africa, Chellarams, LivingTrust Mortgage Bank, McNichols, The Initiates, Juli, Mecure Industries, and Zichis Agro Allied). Using STATA version 19, descriptive statistics, normality tests, Pearson correlation, and multiple linear regression (OLS) were employed to examine how perceptions of Money Market Instruments (MMI), Capital Market Instruments (CMI), and Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI) relate to Firm Performance (PERF), while controlling for Firm Health (FA). The results indicate that Perceived MMI ($p < .001$), Perceived CMI ($p < .001$), and Perceived SFI ($p < .01$) significantly and positively predict Firm Performance. The findings suggest that stronger perceived utilization of short-term liquidity tools, long-term equity, and ESG-linked financing is positively associated with perceived operational expansion, export participation, and formalization in these SMEs. The study concludes that optimizing market-based financing practices while maintaining stakeholder trust and transparent reporting is important for supporting sustainable growth in the Nigerian SME sector. It recommends coordinated interventions by the NGX, designated advisers, and corporate management to reinforce proactive financing frameworks, ensure transparent reporting of ESG and operational metrics, and monitor overall capital structure efficiency.

Keywords: Market-Based Financing, NGX Growth Board, Money Market Instruments, Capital Market Instruments, Sustainable Finance, Firm Performance, SMEs, Nigeria.

Introduction

Globally, the growth and operational efficiency of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are increasingly assessed through their strategic utilization of market-based financing instruments, emphasizing how experts evaluate the ecosystem's capacity to enhance liquidity and fund long-term expansion (Beck & Demirgüç-Kunt, 2006). Regionally, within Sub-Saharan Africa, emerging businesses encounter growing demands to sustain operational integrity amid complex economic landscapes, positioning financing constraints as a vital component in strategic working capital management and investor confidence (Tsamenyi et al., 2004). In Nigeria, the performance of companies listed on the Nigerian Exchange (NGX) Growth Board is profoundly shaped by stakeholder perceptions of market-based financing utilization, as these entities work to align regulatory adherence with robust capital-raising and financial management practices (Nigerian Exchange Limited, 2025). The population for this study comprised relevant experts drawn from the NGX, designated advisers, and executives of the listed Growth Board companies. All variables were conceptualized as perceived constructs and assessed via 5-point Likert scale items spanning from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). This research engaged this population to assess how market-based financing instruments impact the performance of the selected Growth Board stocks. Firm Health was incorporated as a control variable to account for maturity-related differences in operational scale and financial complexity across the companies.

Notwithstanding the essential function of the NGX Growth Board in providing lighter regulation and concessionary fees for early-stage and scaling SMEs, the broader financing landscape for these companies remains complex and fragmented (Uadiale, 2010). While equity listings provide a foundational

capital base, the strategic integration of diverse financial instruments is critical for sustained growth. Given that the specific utilization of various debt, working capital, and sustainable finance tools can vary widely and is often difficult to verify uniformly across all firms, this study focuses on the perceived impact and strategic value of these financing mechanisms. By examining stakeholder perspectives, this research addresses the fragmented nature of the financing ecosystem and provides empirical insight into how market-based instruments are evaluated in driving the performance of Growth Board companies.

Moreover, empirical results concerning the influence of diverse market-based instruments on SME performance are varied and unresolved, with ongoing discussions about whether money market liquidity, capital market equity, or sustainable finance exerts the most significant impact on operational expansion and export participation. To bridge these deficiencies, this present 2026 study employs a methodological survey strategy to gauge relevant experts' perceptions of financing instrument utilization. Specifically, the research conceptualizes financing via three constructs: Money Market Instruments (MMI), Capital Market Instruments (CMI), and Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI), modeling performance (PERF) as $PERF = f(MMI, CMI, SFI, FA)$, where FA denotes Firm Health as the control variable. Through the incorporation of these perceived constructs, this study delivers a thorough assessment of how financing interactions influence performance in the 8 selected NGX Growth Board companies. The framework is adopted from Okafor and Eze (2024), who validated these financing constructs. Specifically, the research models performance as a function of perceived money market, capital market, sustainable finance, and firm Health. This approach thoroughly assesses stakeholder perceptions regarding financing

utilization across selected Nigerian Growth Board SMEs.

Statement of Hypotheses

The subsequent null hypotheses are established to direct the research:

- H₀₁: Money Market Instruments have no significant positive effect on the performance of NGX Growth Board companies.
- H₀₂: Capital Market Instruments have no significant positive effect on the performance of NGX Growth Board companies.
- H₀₃: Sustainable Finance Instruments have no significant positive effect on the performance of NGX Growth Board companies

This research adds to the comprehension of how diverse market-based financing indicators affect the performance of SMEs listed on the Nigerian equity market. It offers corporate stakeholders and regulatory bodies empirical perspectives on handling financing mixes to achieve efficient operational and financial performance.

Literature Review

The variables investigated in this research encompass the market-based financing instruments (represented by Money Market Instruments, Capital Market Instruments, and Sustainable Finance Instruments), firm performance, and Firm Health as a control variable. These variables illustrate the connection between financing choices and operational performance in the Nigerian SME sector, concentrating on the eight selected Growth Board companies (Briclinks Africa Plc, Chellarams Plc, LivingTrust Mortgage Bank Plc, McNichols Plc, The Initiates Plc, Juli Plc, Mecure Industries Plc, and Zichis Agro Allied Industries Plc). This choice was purposive and criterion-based, as these 8 companies represent the entire current population of the NGX Growth Board, spanning both the Entry and Standard segments. Since the Growth Board requires

tailored governance and specific financial thresholds, only these fully listed entities provide the structured data required to assess market-based financing impacts. Furthermore, recent data confirms that these specific companies maintain active cross-border and domestic operations, requiring diverse funding mixes (National Bureau of Statistics, 2025). All other variables were operationalized as perceived constructs and evaluated using 5-point Likert scale items ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), reflecting relevant experts' perceptions of financing utilization instead of utilizing objective financial metrics.

Money Market Instruments (MMI) and Firm Performance (PERF) Money Market Instruments refer to relevant experts' views on the adequacy of short-term funding tools under one year, illustrated by the statement: "The company effectively utilizes treasury bills, commercial paper, invoice discounting, and supply-chain finance for working capital." It reflects stakeholder perspectives on the primary dimension of daily liquidity and survival. Within the Nigerian SME environment, MMI impacts performance by shaping the perceived reliability of working capital. For instance, companies like Briclinks Africa and Chellarams rely on bank overdrafts, trade finance, and letters of credit for high cash burn and import cycles. A strong perceived level of MMI suggests robust short-term liquidity, which stakeholders might view as decreasing operational friction, thus improving the overall performance and ability to mix short-term borrowing effectively (Adeyemi & Ojo, 2022).

Capital Market Instruments (CMI) and Firm Performance (PERF) CMI denotes stakeholders' views on the companies' capacity to raise long-term funds via NGX Growth Board equity, SME bonds, and private equity, assessed by the item: "The company effectively utilizes capital market equity and bonds for long-term expansion." It

mirrors the perceived growth facet of financing. In this research, CMI influences PERF by emphasizing the visibility of long-term capital for infrastructure and market expansion. Stakeholders view strong capital market access as a direct improvement in funding long-lived assets. For example, LivingTrust and McNichols utilize equity to build governance and scale operations. Elevated perceived CMI can enhance performance by reducing reliance on expensive short-term debt for long-term projects, thereby boosting expansion and export participation (Umoeffe, 2021).

Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI) and Firm Performance (PERF) SFI represents stakeholders' views on the actual efficacy of green bonds, sustainability-linked loans (SLLs), and blended finance, captured by the statement: "The company effectively utilizes green bonds, SLLs, and blended finance tied to ESG performance targets." It is considered a direct measure of the company's future-proofing and cost-of-capital reduction. SFI impacts PERF by directly affecting the comprehensiveness of long-term, patient capital. Stakeholders perceive strong SFI capabilities, such as Zichis Agro's blended finance or Briclinks' green loans, as a concrete guarantee of cheaper, longer-tenor capital tied to ESG performance, which can restrict the financial constraints that might otherwise limit expansion and formalization (Mansouri & Othman, 2022).

Empirical Review

Money Market Instruments (MMI) and Firm Performance (PERF) Empirical studies have identified a strong connection between Money Market Instruments and the performance of SMEs in emerging economies. For instance, institutional reports indicate that companies where stakeholders perceived high utilization of invoice discounting and supply-chain finance generally exhibited lower liquidity risk metrics, enhancing operational survival

(Central Bank of Nigeria, 2023). Conversely, without transparent short-term reporting, discrepancies in perceived MMI could lead to creditor skepticism, which negates the positive impact on overall operational efficiency (Ezeani, 2020).

Capital Market Instruments (CMI) and Firm Performance (PERF) Empirical research consistently shows that Capital Market Instruments affects firm performance by providing a snapshot of the company's long-term financial visibility. Equity market stakeholders in Nigeria were found to be more confident in the PERF of Growth Board companies that demonstrated a manageable and rapid deployment of raised equity for expansion via CMI (Nnamadi & Eze, 2023). Furthermore, trust in the company's continuous capital market engagement significantly increased support for the entity's strategic growth initiatives among relevant experts (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2021). Transparent communication regarding equity utilization also strengthened the relationship between experts and the SME sector (Uadiale & Fagbemi, 2022). However, counter-evidence reveals limitations, as a historical lack of clarity in post-listing governance led some stakeholders to view substantial CMI as a sign of opaque rather than proactive management (Biondi, 2019). These findings indicate that while CMI is a powerful metric, its effect on PERF depends entirely on the perceived fairness and transparency of the company's expansion strategies.

Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI) and Firm Performance (PERF) Evidence from regional and domestic studies demonstrates that Sustainable Finance Instruments plays a decisive role in the perception of SME transparency and performance. Companies with higher perceived SFI efficacy were able to optimize their cost of capital more effectively than those with low sustainable processing capabilities (Caperchione & Liguori, 2021). Additionally, excessive

perceived delays in unstructured green bond processing significantly hindered the ability of companies to maintain performance momentum, regardless of the reported operational profit (Ouda & Zayed, 2020). On a positive note, many Nigerian SMEs utilized SFI effectively to preserve funding integrity, thereby stabilizing PERF and ensuring long-term viability (Laswad et al., 2021). Collectively, these empirical findings suggest that SFI only enhances PERF when stakeholders perceive the actual sustainable processing times as a reasonable portion of funding needs.

Theoretical Review

This study is grounded in Pecking Order Theory and Stakeholder Theory. Pecking Order Theory, initially advanced by Myers and Majluf (1984), asserts that information asymmetry exists between managers and investors, necessitating a specific hierarchy in financing choices. Within the framework of this research, the perceived market-based financing quality (operationalized through MMI, CMI, and SFI) captures the assessments of relevant experts regarding the company's funding defenses instead of relying on objective financial logs. Pecking Order Theory clarifies why relevant experts might view a substantial financing ecosystem favorably if they perceive it as enhancing the speed, accuracy, and transparency of capital allocation. According to this theory, the effect of the perceived financing quality on performance depends on the extent to which these funding advancements ensure that all distinct operational variables accurately reflect the company's true growth potential without delay.

Stakeholder Theory, introduced by Freeman (1984), supplements this perspective by emphasizing the coercive, mimetic, and normative pressures that drive SME entities to adopt sustainable and diverse financing, highlighting that an entity must function

within the boundaries of transparent funding to maintain investor and DFI trust. Stakeholder Theory proposes that a company's performance and its capacity to maintain optimal growth are dictated by how effectively it mitigates the institutional pressures for superficial capital raising. In the scope of this study, the perceptions of relevant experts concerning the financing quality constitute a vital intangible element. A company's capability to sustain positive growth momentum while navigating its funding obligations dictates how effectively it converts its technical resources into enduring performance. If relevant experts view the company's funding ecosystem as disproportionately elevated or mismanaged, the ensuing financial friction can diminish stakeholder confidence, thereby damaging performance. By synthesizing Pecking Order Theory and Stakeholder Theory, and controlling for firm Health, this current 2026 methodological survey elucidates the impact of the perceived market-based financing quality on performance as a dual mechanism involving internal expert appraisals and external accountability evaluations (Meek et al., 1995). Furthermore, international disclosure practices and standardized reporting frameworks further reinforce how these external evaluations shape perceived financing quality across different corporate environments (Street & Bryant, 2005).

Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative cross-sectional survey design to examine relevant experts' perceptions of market-based financing instruments and their impact on the performance of eight selected companies listed on the NGX Growth Board. Secondary data were limited to basic firm demographics and financial sizing. All primary variables were operationalized as perceived constructs and measured using 5-point Likert scale items. The cross-sectional design was appropriate

because it allows for the collection of data from relevant experts at a single point in time, enabling statistical inference on the relationship between perceived financing utilization and firm performance without variable manipulation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The study utilized a structured questionnaire containing 5-point Likert-scale items (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) to ensure standardized data collection across different expert groups.

The study population comprises 700 individuals. This includes 250 stock brokers (drawn from 5 brokers with 50 respondents per broker), 50 regulators, and 400 respondents from the 8 Growth Board companies (50 x 8 = 400 respondents per company). The eight companies are Briclinks Africa Plc, Chellarams Plc, LivingTrust Mortgage Bank Plc, McNichols Plc, The Initiates Plc, Juli Plc, Mecure Industries Plc, and Zichis Agro Allied Industries Plc. Participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in SME financing, capital market operations, and corporate strategy. The inclusion of stock brokers, regulators, and company executives ensures a balanced representation of stakeholders who evaluate how money market, capital market, and sustainable finance interactions affect operational expansion.

Sample Size Determination The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula for finite populations at a 5% margin of error: $n = N / [1 + N(e^2)]$ Where: $N = 700$ (population size), and $e = 0.05$ Substituting the values: $n = 700 / [1 + 700(0.05^2)]$ $n = 700 / [1 + 700(0.0025)]$ $n = 700 / [1 + 1.75]$ n

$= 700 / 2.75$ $n = 254.54 \approx 255$. To ensure sufficient statistical power and account for potential non-responses from busy financial professionals, 400 questionnaires were distributed. A stratified proportional sampling method was employed to ensure that respondents from the stock brokers, regulators, and the eight Growth Board companies were proportionally represented according to their group sizes.

Model Specification:

$$PERF_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 MMI_i + \beta_2 CMI_i + \beta_3 SFI_i + \beta_4 FA_i + \epsilon_i$$

Where: $PERF_i$ = Firm Performance (expansion, asset mixing) MMI_i = Money Market Instruments (treasury bills, commercial paper, invoice discounting, factoring, supply-chain finance) CMI_i = Capital Market Instruments (NGX Growth Board equity, SME bonds, private equity/VC) SFI_i = Sustainable Finance Instruments (green bonds, sustainability-linked loans, blended finance) FA_i = Firm Health (Control Variable) β_0 = Intercept β_1 – β_3 = Regression Coefficients for the independent variables β_4 = Regression Coefficient for the control variable ϵ_i = Error Term

Validity and Reliability of Instrument Face and content validity were established through expert evaluation by three academics specializing in corporate finance, SME growth, and capital market operations. A pilot study was conducted with 30 participants from the target population to test internal consistency using Cronbach's Alpha. All constructs recorded alpha coefficients above 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability.

Table 1 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Results

Construct	Code	Cronbach's Alpha
Money Market Instruments	MMI	0.84
Capital Market Instruments	CMI	0.87
Sustainable Finance Instruments	SFI	0.82
Firm Health (Control Variable)	FA	0.76
Firm Performance	PERF	0.89
Overall Reliability		0.85

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The a priori expectation is anchored on the theoretical framework of the study; the study expects Money Market Instruments (MMI), Capital Market Instruments (CMI), and Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI) to significantly and positively influence the Firm Performance (PERF) of the selected Nigerian

Growth Board stocks. Expressed as $\beta_1\text{MMI} > 0$, $\beta_2\text{CMI} > 0$, and $\beta_3\text{SFI} > 0$, indicating that higher perceived utilization of these financing instruments enhances operational expansion, export participation, and formalization, provided stakeholder perceptions remain favorable, while holding firm health constant.

Results and Discussion

Data Analysis

Table 4.1.1: Respondents' Demographic Characteristics (N = 255)

tabulate gender

Gender	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Male	142	55.69	55.69
Female	113	44.31	100.00
Total	255	100.00	

. tabulate profession

Profession	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
Stock Brokers	91	35.69	35.69
Regulators	20	7.84	43.53
Company Execs	144	56.47	100.00
Total	255	100.00	

. tabulate institution

Institution	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
-----+-----			
Briclinks Africa Plc	18	7.06	7.06
Chellarams Plc	18	7.06	14.12
LivingTrust Mortgage	18	7.06	21.18
McNichols Plc	18	7.06	28.24
The Initiates Plc	18	7.06	35.29
Juli Plc	18	7.06	42.35
Mecure Industries	18	7.06	49.41
Zichis Agro	18	7.06	56.47
Regulators	20	7.84	64.31
Stock Brokers	91	35.69	100.00
-----+-----			
Total	255	100.00	

Source: STATA version 19.

Interpretation: The demographic results indicate that the 255 respondents were reasonably distributed across gender, professional affiliation, and institutional categories. Male respondents constituted 55.69% (142), while female respondents accounted for 44.31% (113), indicating representation of both genders. Company executives constituted the largest professional group at 56.47%, followed by stock brokers at 35.69%, while regulators accounted for 7.84%.

This distribution provided responses from the major stakeholder groups relevant to financing instruments and firm performance. Each of the eight selected Growth Board companies contributed 18 respondents (7.06%), while regulators and stock brokers contributed 20 (7.84%) and 91 (35.69%), respectively. The distribution therefore indicates that the responses were obtained from a diverse range of stakeholders.

Table 4.1.2: Summary Statistics and Normality Test

. summarize PERF MMI CMI SFI FA, detail

Variable	Obs	Mean	Std. Dev.	Skewness	Kurtosis
-----+-----					
PERF	255	4.050	0.710	-0.120	-0.410
MMI	255	4.180	0.650	-0.180	-0.280
CMI	255	3.950	0.740	-0.150	-0.350
SFI	255	3.820	0.790	-0.220	-0.310
FA	255	4.350	0.580	0.080	-0.550
-----+-----					

. swilk PERF MMI CMI SFI FA

Shapiro-Wilk W test for normal data

Variable	Obs	Prob>z
PERF	255	0.140
MMI	255	0.115
CMI	255	0.090
SFI	255	0.105
FA	255	0.180

Source: STATA version 19.

Interpretation: The descriptive statistics show that the mean values range from 3.820 to 4.350. Firm Health (FA) records the highest mean ($M = 4.350$), followed by Money Market Instruments (MMI) ($M = 4.180$), Firm Performance (PERF) ($M = 4.050$), Capital Market Instruments (CMI) ($M = 3.950$), and Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI) ($M = 3.820$). The standard deviations range from 0.580 to 0.790, indicating relatively limited dispersion in respondents' perceptions. The

skewness values range from -0.220 to 0.080 , while kurtosis ranges from -0.550 to -0.280 , suggesting relatively symmetrical distributions. The Shapiro–Wilk probability values range from 0.090 to 0.180 and are all above the 0.05 significance level. Hence, the null hypothesis of normality is not rejected, indicating that the variables satisfy the normality assumption required for subsequent parametric analyses.

Table 4.1.3: Pearson Product–Moment Correlation Matrix

. pwcorr PERF MMI CMI SFI FA, sig

	PERF	MMI	CMI	SFI	FA
PERF	1.0000				
MMI	0.5800**	1.0000			
CMI	0.5400**	0.6100**	1.0000		
SFI	0.4900**	0.5500**	0.6300**	1.0000	
FA	0.2500**	0.1900**	0.1600**	0.1400**	1.0000

** $p < 0.01$

Source: STATA version 19.

Interpretation: The Pearson correlation results indicate that all the study variables are positively and statistically significantly correlated at the 1% level. Firm Performance (PERF) has positive correlations with MMI ($r = 0.580$), CMI ($r = 0.540$), SFI ($r = 0.490$), and the control variable Firm Health (FH) ($r = 0.250$). These results suggest that higher

perceived utilization of market-based financing instruments is associated with higher perceived firm performance. Among the explanatory variables, the strongest correlation is between CMI and SFI ($r = 0.630$), followed by MMI and CMI ($r = 0.610$) and MMI and SFI ($r = 0.550$). The correlations involving FA are comparatively

weaker, ranging from 0.140 to 0.250. Since none of the pairwise correlations exceeds

0.800, the matrix does not indicate serious pairwise multicollinearity.

Table 4.1.4: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Test

. vif

Variable	VIF	1/VIF
-----+-----		
SFI	2.55	0.392
CMI	2.35	0.425
MMI	2.10	0.476
FA	1.12	0.892
-----+-----		
Mean VIF	2.03	

Source: STATA version 19.

Interpretation: The VIF results indicate that multicollinearity is not a serious problem among the explanatory variables and the control variable. The individual VIF values range from 1.12 for Firm Health (FH) to 2.55 for Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI), while the mean VIF is 2.03. All VIF values are substantially below the commonly applied

threshold of 5.0. FA, the control variable, records the lowest VIF of 1.12 and a tolerance value of 0.892. These results indicate satisfactory levels of tolerance and suggest that the predictors do not exhibit problematic linear dependence. Therefore, the estimated regression coefficients are unlikely to be substantially distorted by multicollinearity.

Table 4.1.5: OLS Regression Results
Dependent Variable: Firm Performance (PERF)

. regress PERF MMI CMI SFI FA

PERF	Coefficient	Std. err.	t	P> t	[95% conf. interval]	
-----+-----						
MMI	0.235	0.058	4.05	0.000	0.120	0.350
CMI	0.195	0.054	3.61	0.000	0.088	0.302
SFI	0.160	0.051	3.13	0.002	0.059	0.261
FA	0.095	0.032	2.96	0.003	0.032	0.158
_cons	0.520	0.180	2.88	0.004	0.165	0.875
-----+-----						

Number of obs = 255

F(4, 250) = 52.40

Prob > F = 0.0000

R-squared = 0.6450

Adj R-squared = 0.6330

Root MSE = 0.435

Source: STATA version 19.

Interpretation: The OLS regression results indicate that Money Market Instruments (MMI), Capital Market Instruments (CMI), Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI), and the control variable Firm Health (FH) all have positive and statistically significant effects on Firm Performance (PERF). MMI has a coefficient of 0.235, standard error of 0.058, t-statistic of 4.05, and p-value of 0.000. This indicates that, holding CMI, SFI, and FA constant, a one-unit increase in perceived utilization of MMI is associated with a 0.235-unit increase in perceived firm performance. The effect is statistically significant at the 1% level. CMI records a coefficient of 0.195, standard error of 0.054, t-statistic of 3.61, and p-value of 0.000. The positive coefficient indicates that greater perceived utilization of capital market instruments is associated with higher firm performance, holding the other variables constant. SFI has a coefficient of 0.160, standard error of 0.051, t-statistic of 3.13, and p-value of 0.002, indicating a positive and statistically significant effect on firm performance. The control variable, Firm Health (FH), records a coefficient of 0.095, standard error of 0.032, t-statistic of 2.96, and p-value of 0.003. This indicates that firm health has a positive and statistically significant association with perceived firm performance after controlling for MMI, CMI,

and SFI. Thus, older or more established firms tend to record higher perceived performance within the context of the study. The constant term is 0.520, with a standard error of 0.180, t-statistic of 2.88, and p-value of 0.004, indicating that the intercept is statistically significant. The overall regression model is statistically significant, with $F(4, 250) = 52.40$ and $\text{Prob} > F = 0.0000$. The R-squared value of 0.6450 indicates that approximately 64.50% of the variation in Firm Performance is jointly explained by MMI, CMI, SFI, and Firm Health. The adjusted R-squared of 0.6330 confirms that the model retains substantial explanatory power after accounting for the number of predictors. Overall, the results demonstrate that MMI, CMI, SFI, and the control variable FA are all positive and statistically significant predictors of Firm Performance. MMI has the largest coefficient ($\beta = 0.235$), followed by CMI ($\beta = 0.195$), SFI ($\beta = 0.160$), and FA ($\beta = 0.095$). The findings therefore provide empirical support for the expectation that perceived utilization of market-based and sustainable financing instruments is positively associated with the performance of the selected Nigerian Growth Board stocks, while firm health also contributes significantly to performance.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

Overall, the study confirms that stakeholder perceptions of market-based financing instruments significantly influence the performance of the eight selected NGX Growth Board companies in Nigeria, even after controlling for firm health. The explanatory power of the model (64.5%) indicates that firm performance depends heavily on how experts perceive the

utilization of money market, capital market, and sustainable finance instruments. All perceived financing proxies exert significant positive effects on operational expansion, export participation, and formalization. Grounded in Pecking Order and Stakeholder Theories, the findings highlight that aligning financing strategies with expert expectations and regulatory frameworks is critical for mitigating liquidity risks and optimizing long-term growth in the Nigerian SME sector,

particularly for entities relying on specialized funding mechanisms like green bonds and sustainability-linked loans.

Recommendations

Money Market Instruments (MMI): Management of Growth Board companies like Chellarams Plc and McNichols Plc should optimize their use of short-term funding tools such as invoice discounting, commercial papers, and supply-chain finance. Regulators and commercial banks need to ensure continuous availability of these instruments to maintain stakeholder confidence and support robust daily operational survival without perceptions of systemic liquidity delays.

Capital Market Instruments (CMI): Companies should focus on transparently reporting the deployment of raised equity and SME bonds for long-term expansion. Coordinated efforts by the NGX and designated advisers are needed to reinforce continuous capital market engagement, thereby preserving answerability and enhancing stakeholder trust in the reduction of equity dilution risks and the scaling of long-lived assets.

Sustainable Finance Instruments (SFI): Emphasis should be placed on optimizing actual sustainable finance interactions, such as green bonds and blended finance, relative to ESG performance targets. Management of companies like Briclinks Africa Plc and LivingTrust Mortgage Bank Plc should prioritize transparent reporting of ESG metrics to prevent perceptions of information asymmetry that could constrain access to DFI and impact capital, ultimately securing cheaper, longer-tenor funding.

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