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Corporate Governance and Employee Commitment in Industrial Parks in Ethiopia: Evidence from Bole-Lemi and Hawassa Cities

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Abstract
The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between corporate governance and employee commitment in Bole-Lemi and Hawassa Industrial Parks, Ethiopia**.** To this end, the researcher adopted both descriptive and explanatory study designs with a quantitative research approach. For collection of the data, the survey questionnaires were administered to 384 randomly selected employee respondents who were currently working in Bole-Lemi and Hawassa Industrial parks. Before descriptive and inferential analyses, the reliability of the instruments and normality of data were established. In this regard, the instruments were confirmed to be reliable based on alpha Cronbach's coefficients greater than 7; and also the data were normal in distribution as of the results of kurtosis and Skewness. Among the data analysis methods, the researcher employed descriptive statistics such as mean, and standard deviation while using inferential statistics such as correlation, regression, and independent t-test. The results indicated that the perceived employee commitment is at a moderate level. The respondents also rated that corporate governance in their respective institutions is at a moderate level. The results of the mean comparison between female and male employees' commitment indicate that there is a statistically significant gender difference; and also assert that female employees' commitments are better than those of males. The results showed that corporate governance has a statistically significant effect on employee commitment in the study area. The study highlights the contribution of the results in such a way that by knowing their level of corporate governance leaders can improve their motivation and employee commitment. Secondly, the administration of the institution can take necessary measures to improve employee commitment. Thirdly, this may help the policymakers, institutional administrators, and the larger social endeavour. Lastly, this study suggests a longitudinal research design for exploring the relationship between corporate governance and employee commitment further.

Keywords: commitment, corporate governance, industrial-parks

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Industrial parks in Ethiopia face significant challenges in their paths to the development of a thriving manufacturing sector: a declining employee commitment in the sector (Weldesilassie et al., 2017). This decline is connected with corporate governance and internal motivation (Loor-Zambrano et al., 2022). Corporate governance in the Ethiopian manufacturing sector has continued to be a challenge that undermines good governance principles such as transparency and disclosure. Poor corporate governance can create a culture of complacency, lack of innovation, poor communication, and low morale among the employees (Mcgaw, 2018).

Corporate governance practices of Ethiopian share companies are not as expected in line with the varying landscape of the corporate business environment. This is due to a lack of awareness of corporate governance, up-to-date regulatory framework, absence of policy framework, and unstructured governance practices because of national principles and codes (Wondem & Batra, 2019). Instead of prioritizing competency and professionalism, political patronage and favouritism often take precedence, leading to a perception of corruption and biased decision-making (Getu & Nalwaya, 2022). This blatant disregard for merit discourages employee engagement and commitment.

Poor corporate governance, in turn, contributes to employee demotivation, hindering their ability to effectively deliver services and achieve corporate goals (Mwangangi, 2018). Bureaucratic bottlenecks, lack of transparency, and inadequate capacity to respond to employee needs become commonplace (Wondem & Batra, 2019). This lack of employee motivation makes employees take credit for the work of others, evade responsibility, fail to acknowledge mistakes, and lack accountability which leads to low employee commitment (Al-Nashash et al., 2018).

This decline in employee commitment has far-reaching consequences for Ethiopia's development aspirations. According to studies undertaken in Ethiopia, corporate governance problems obstruct the full potential of employees (Wondem & Batra, 2019). If these situations continue, the manufacturing sector in Ethiopia will be severely affected and unable to realize its objectives. In addition, it will hinder the nation's progress toward a more prosperous and equitable future.

Fostering employee commitment in Ethiopia's industrial parks demands a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that tackles the root causes. This requires an integrated effort to address corporate governance and foster employee commitment. Improving employees' commitment to industrial parks is paramount. This involves establishing principle-based corporate governance, ensuring employee job satisfaction, and equipping public servants with the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality services, motivation and compensation; and work-life balance (Panigrahi & Al-nashash, 2019). Employee commitment has a big impact on how well they perform (Osibanjo et al., 2015).
Mainly, an employee in well-functioning corporate governance can produce high-quality products consistently that help move the organization forward (Sapada et al., 2018); and produce consistently high-quality results (Remigio, 2022). Good corporate governance principles, such as transparency, accountability, and employee participation are essential for fostering commitment. Implementing robust corporate governance mechanisms is crucial for ensuring that corporate resources are used efficiently and effectively (Demeke, 2016). Strengthening oversight bodies that hold corporate governance accountable for their actions is equally vital (Sari, 2023). Furthermore, actively engaging employees in corporate decision-making processes, through mechanisms like employee engagement and participatory budgeting, can promote a sense of ownership and responsibility (Charles et al., 2021).
Creating open channels for communication between employees and governors is essential. This involves active listening to employees' concerns and addressing them effectively (Ramirez-Lozano et al., 2023). Building relationships based on trust and mutual respect is key to restoring employee commitment and motivation (Reina, 2009). Corporate leaders need to demonstrate transparency, accountability, and responsiveness to the needs of employees. This can be achieved through proactive communication, public forums, and accessible platforms for feedback and complaints (Madhani, 2020). Thus, the study examined the intertwined relationships of corporate governance, employee job satisfaction, and commitment in some selected industrial parks in Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The industrial parks in Ethiopia face a critical challenge: a decline in employee commitment, stemming from a complex interplay of corporate governance, employee job satisfaction, and a lack of accountability (Ferede et al., 2023). Corporate governance problems are critical, undermining the principles of meritocracy and accountability enshrined in the Ethiopian Constitution (Guteta & Worku, 2022). Political patronage and favouritism often supersede competency and professionalism, creating a perception of corruption and biased decision-making (Abegaz, 2015). This, in turn, contributes to the dissatisfaction of employees in their work, further demotivating employees. The lack of accountability and transparency within the bureaucratic system, coupled with inefficient corporate governance, exacerbates these challenges.
Previous research has explored aspects of this problem, such as the effects of corporate governance in eroding employee job satisfaction (Asgedom et al., 2019); and the implications of a lack of employee job satisfaction on commitment (Tsehay et al., 2023), none have comprehensively examined the interconnected nature of corporate governance and employee commitment.
This research gap is significant because it hinders a holistic understanding of the challenges facing the industrial sector in Ethiopia. Furthermore, existing research has relied on traditional methods, neglecting the potential of more advanced techniques like linear regression models to provide a deeper nuanced analysis of the relationships between these factors.
This research aims to bridge this gap by exploring the complex relationship between two factors, utilizing a robust methodological approach that incorporates inferential statistical methods such as t-tests and linear regression to provide a more nuanced understanding of those factors and their impacts on employee commitment in industrial parks of Ethiopian, Bole-Lemi, and Hawassa.

1.3. Research Questions

RQ1. How do employees in Bole-Lemi and Hawassa industrial parks perceive their commitment to the organization?
RQ2. How do the employees feel about the corporate governance in the industrial parks under study settings?
RQ3. Is there any difference in employee commitment based on their sex in Bole-Lemi and Hawassa industrial parks?
RQ4. What is the effect of corporate governance on employee commitment in Bole-Lemi and Hawassa industrial parks?

1.1. Objectives of the study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the relationship between corporate governance and employee commitment in Bole-Lemi and Hawassa industrial parks. The specific objectives are:

- To assess the commitment level of employees in Bole-Lemi and Hawassa industrial parks.
- To measure how employees feel about the corporate governance in the industrial parks under study settings.
- To examine the difference in commitment based on their sex in the industrial parks under study settings.
- To predict the effect of corporate governance on employee commitment in the industrial parks under study settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Review of Related Literature

The theoretical review of this study draws upon established theories from public administration, motivation, and organizational behavior to provide a robust foundation for understanding the complex relationship between corporate governance and employee commitment. This review investigates key theories that illuminate the mechanisms through which corporate governance can lead to employee demotivation, and, consequently, a decline in employee commitment in the manufacturing sector of Ethiopia. Key theories explored include:

2.1.1. Agency Theory

As the name suggests, in the agency theory, the owner of the company hires the agent, that is, the manager or director, to manage the affairs of the company in the best interest of the company and the owner. Agency theory considers the optimal form of contract to control relationships in which one 'principal' – an entity or an organization – delegates work to another, the 'agent' (Eisenhardt, 1985). This theory provides a foundational framework for understanding the potential for conflict between the interests of political principals (e.g., elected officials) and those of agents (e.g., public sector officials) tasked with implementing policy (Moe, 1990). Governance problems could arise when the delegates work for self-interest, want to secure their basic salary; and do not work to increase the profit and life of the company. In addition, they could make decisions to achieve objectives that may not align with organizational efficiency. This can lead to a misalignment of resources and disregarding employee motivation (Gauche et al., 2017).

Agency theory is the study of incentives provided to agents. In the basic agency model, a principal sets a salary and commission, and the agent chooses the effort to expend. The principal keeps the random output minus the salary and commission (Miller, 2005).

2.1.2. Stewardship Theory

This theory was introduced by Donaldson and Davis (1991). According to this theory, as a steward, when managers are given the power to work in the interest of the company, they work responsibly for the organizational success and balanced growth of all the stakeholders—they work in the interest of the shareholders to maximize their wealth. Stewardship theory is a framework that argues that people are intrinsically motivated to work for others or for organizations to accomplish the tasks and responsibilities with which they have been entrusted (Contrafatto, 2014). This theory posits that individuals, including corporate leaders and bureaucrats, act in their self-interest, even within the realm of public service (Buchanan & Tullock, 1965). Poor corporate governance can be viewed as a manifestation of self-interested behavior by leaders seeking to advance their interests, potentially at the expense of the interests of firms/shareholders (Marashdeh, 2014). This can result in inefficient and ineffective allocation of both human and material resources. Ineffective human resource allocation can dampen morale among employees, making employee management a bit of a challenge (Levine, 1984).

2.1.3. Resource Dependency Theory

Resource dependence theory is concerned with power relations. It analyses how managers deal with parties that have power over the company because they control the resources that the firm needs to operate (Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). In general, therefore, the resource-dependence theory supports the view that corporate governance can be a means to acquire, generate, or maintain resources which results in a competitive advantage for the firm (Udayasankar, 2008).

The humanistic perspective on corporate governance prioritizes the well-being and dignity of all stakeholders, recognizing that humans have multiple drives beyond self-interest (Novković, 2023). This perspective emphasizes the importance of people in organizations and focuses on employee motivation, satisfaction, and well-being. This approach assumes that directors are stewards who serve all stakeholders, rather than just agents focused on maximizing shareholder value (Pirson et al., 2016). However, some signs of poor corporate governance, such as corruption, lack of accountability and transparency, nepotism, and ineffective service delivery may appear and result in a lack of focus on employee motivation, satisfaction, and well-being (Singo, 2018).

2.1.4. Stakeholder Theory

The stakeholder theory, proposed by Freeman (2010), provides a broader overview of corporate governance than agency theory; hence it creates a better look at company performance from corporate governance. This theory focuses on corporate activity's effect on all its stakeholders rather than focusing only on shareholders. According to stakeholder theory, corporations are accountable to myriad groups and must try to mitigate or reduce conflicts between them. It holds that managers are the agents of shareholders (or owners) and in their capacity as agents, are obligated to act in the best financial interest of the shareholders of the corporation (Governance et al., 2004). Stoelhorst and Vishwanathan (2024) argue that this theory gives primacy to shareholders or any other group of stakeholders, and is criticized to be comparatively inefficient in providing solutions to governing the modern global and knowledge-driven corporation. Employees viewed as stakeholders are often more motivated to do good work, engage with colleagues and their company, and feel invested in the success of an organization (Mirvis, 2012). Poor corporate governance and lack of employee motivation may debilitate employee commitment because of prevailing delays in decision-making, inefficiencies, and a lack of accountability (Adamidis, 2016).

2.1.5. Employee commitment Model

A surge of studies has demonstrated that different scholars defined employee commitment differently. As conceptualized by Steers (1977) employee commitment is the strength of an employee's identification and involvement with an organization. Two years later, Mowday et al. (1979) defined it as a relative attitude that shows how well an individual identifies with organizational leadership. Others defined employee commitment as a stabilizing force that maintains behavioral direction even when a company doesn't meet expectations (Scholl, 1981); an emotional attachment to an organization that leads an employee to have characteristics of that organization (O'Reilly & Chatman, 1986); a force that stabilizes employee behavior when there are attempts to change it (Luthans et al., 1987); and a psychological condition that creates a personal attachment to an organization(Allen & Meyer, 1990).

For this study, the renowned model of Allen and Meyer (1990) with three dimensions was selected. The three types of employee commitment are:-

Affective commitment: How much an employee wants to stay at their organization because they are emotionally invested in it and like what they do. Employees with high affective commitment are strong ambassadors for the company and can positively impact performance.

Continuance commitment: How much an employee feels they need to stay at their organization because they fear the costs of leaving, such as financial losses, social costs, or losing seniority? Employees with high continuance commitment may stay with an organization for practical reasons, but they may not be happy there.

Normative commitment: How much an employee feels they should stay at their organization because they feel obligated to it or their manager? This type of commitment can arise when an employee feels a sense of reciprocity with their organization, such as when the company has invested in their development. Overall, Employee commitment is an emotional attachment to an organization that leads an employee to want to continue serving it and helping it achieve its goals. Committed employees are more productive, are more likely to stay with the organization, and have a positive impact on the organization's performance. Therefore, this study used this model to have a sound understanding of employee commitment in the context of Ethiopian institutions.

2.2. Empirical Review of Literature

The detrimental effects of corporate governance on employee commitment in the manufacturing sector are evident in the Ethiopian context. Empirical research consistently demonstrates a strong correlation between corporate governance and declining employee commitment. Patronage and corruption, often fuelled by self-serving interests, undermine human resource development (Abegaz, 2015; Shiferaw, 2021). When corporate governance decisions disregard employee motivation, employees perceive that they are not valued and not important to the organization; and demonstrate low commitment(Ying & Tikuye, 2021).

2.2.1. The Effect of Corporate Governance on Employee Commitment

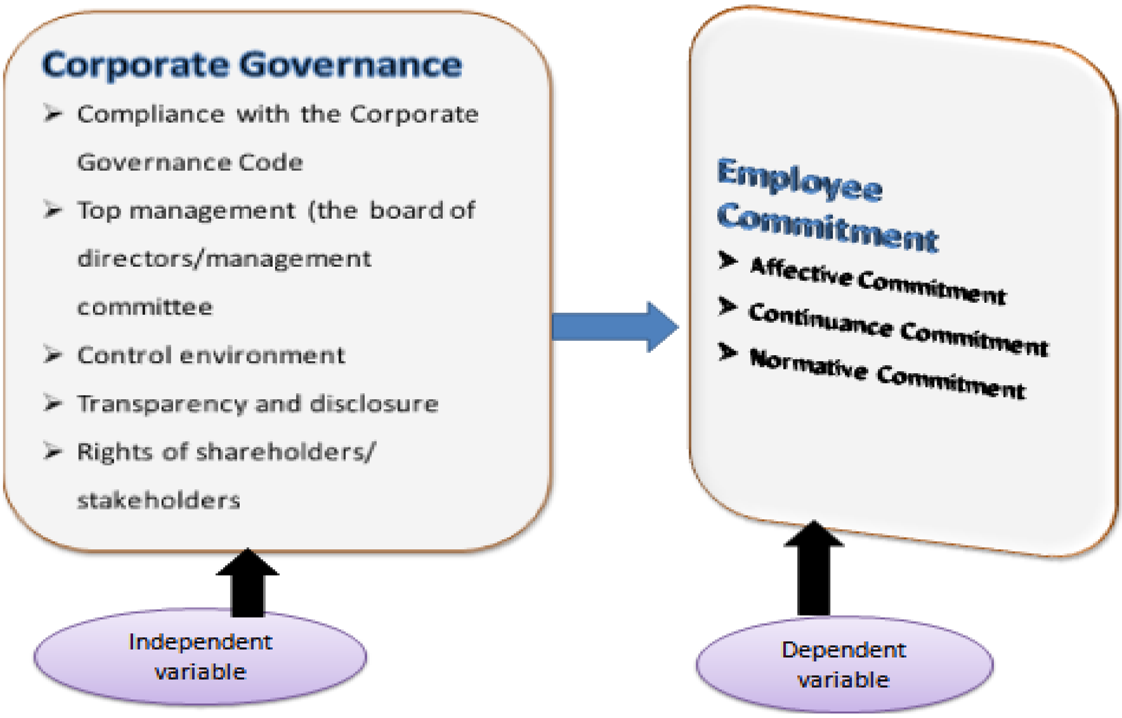
Literature has explained that employee commitment has proven to be of great influence on workplace performance and productivity (May et al., 2023). Previous studies have confirmed that good corporate governance has a positive impact on a company's reputation, and this positive corporate reputation in turn can affect the employees' behaviors and attitudes. Corporate governance also had a significant effect on organisation trust which in turn leads to employee commitment (May et al., 2023; Napitupulu et al., 2023).

Most analysts believe that the crisis in organizational performance and the decline of employee commitment are clear manifestations of poor corporate governance practices in various sectors (Napitupulu et al., 2023; Oghojafor et al., 2010).

The results show that good corporate governance principles positively affect *job* satisfaction and employee performance (Karyatun et al., 2023; Memon et al., 2023). *Job* satisfaction is linked to the ability to motivate, encourage, and coach *employees* (Zhang et al., 2023). Employees' day-to-day performance in firms is influenced by corporate governance systems. Internal controls are lacking, resulting in the leakage of organizational resources, which hurts the supply of inputs and supplies required by employees to accomplish their jobs. Employees become unproductive as a result of this (Osei et al., 2022).

In conclusion, poor corporate governance, characterized by patronage, corruption, a lack of accountability, and leakage of resources plays a significant role in debilitating employee commitment in Industrial parks in Ethiopia. The decline of employee commitment, coupled with a perception of unfair resource allocation and limited employee engagement, poses a significant challenge to the effectiveness and legitimacy of corporate governance in Ethiopia.

2.3. Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's Conceptualization (2024)

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHOD

3.1. Research Design

The research design employed for this study was descriptive and predictive elements to comprehensively examine the complex interrelation between corporate governance and employee commitment at industrial parks in Ethiopia. To capture the actual practices and experiences of corporate governance and employee commitment, a descriptive design was utilized (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). To investigate the causal relationships between corporate governance and employee commitment, a predictive research design was employed (Yin, 2018).

3.2. Research Approach

This study used a quantitative approach with rigorous inferential statistical analyses to gain a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between corporate governance and employee commitment, at industrial parks in Ethiopia. Quantitative methods, through surveys and statistical analysis, provided robust data on the prevalence and magnitude of corporate governance and employee commitment (Bryman, 2016).

3.3. Target Population and Sampling Techniques

The target population for this study comprised employees currently working in the two industrial parks selected purposively from Addis Ababa and Hawassa. Due to the lack of precise employee figures for each of the 2 industrial parks, an unknown population determination formula was used. The unknown sample size determination formula of Cochran's formula yielded a total sample size of 384 employees. To ensure the representation of the industrial parks, proportionate stratified sampling was used, allocating sample sizes to each selected industrial park based on its proportion within the target population (Saunders et al., 2019). Systematic random sampling was then implemented within each industrial park to select individual employees, ensuring a random selection process and minimizing bias (Creswell, 2014). This multi-stage sampling approach aimed to create a representative sample while accounting for the logistical challenges of accessing a precise employee count within the target population.

3.4. Instruments of Data Collections

To gather data, this study employed standardized survey questionnaires for both corporate governance and employee commitment. For measuring corporate governance, a construct with five dimensions, namely compliance with the corporate governance code, top management, control environment, transparency and disclosure, and rights of shareholders/ stakeholders was adopted from a previous study by Najm et al. (2022). Employees rated their corporate governance practices on a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6). Thus, a higher score implies stronger agreement.

For measuring employee commitment, the renowned organizational commitment model of Allen and Meyer (1990) with three dimensions was selected. The three dimensions include affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. Like with corporate governance, employees rated their perceived commitment level on a six-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (6).

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

Data analysis employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationships between corporate governance and employee commitment. Descriptive statistics, such as means, percentages, and standard deviations, were utilized to summarize and present the collected data, providing a clear overview of corporate governance and employee commitment (Bryman, 2016). To compare the average response of males and females, an Independent T-test was conducted (AKPAN & Clark, 2023). To examine the causal relationships between these variables, inferential statistics, specifically linear regression was employed (Nathans et al., 2012) This combined approach, leveraging both descriptive and inferential analyses, provided robust insights into the relationship between corporate governance and employee commitment at industrial parks in Ethiopian. The study employed SPSS V.23 as a tool for the analysis of both descriptive and inferential statistics. Before quantitative analysis, the data were classified and tabulated to enter into SPSS software. Preliminary analysis was done to confirm the normality of the data, validity, and reliability of the instrument before proceeding to the next analysis. In this regard, the data were confirmed to be normal as the result of kurtosis and Skewness indicated in Table 3. In addition, the instrument reliability was confirmed by the overall Cronbach alpha coefficient greater than 0.7 as indicated below in Table 4.

RESULTS

4.1. Response Rate

The corporate governance scale and organizational commitment scale were used to gather data from 384 employees of the selected two industrial parks. The study targeted 384 respondents and 384 questionnaires were distributed to them. The response rate was 100% and all questionnaires were returned. This very high response rate was achieved because the survey was administered face-to-face while the corporate employees were performing their tasks.

Table 1 Response Rate

Industry Park	Distributed Questionnaire	Returned Questionnaire	%
Bole-Lemi	192	192	100
Hawassa	192	192	100

Source: SPSS output, 2024

4.2. Socio-Demography of the Respondents

Sample descriptions are according to institution type, sex, and education. Out of 384 respondents, 47.9% were male and 52.2% were female. From the findings, it is apparent that the study seems female-dominant. Of the respondents, 50% were from Bole-Lemi industrial parks while the remaining 50% were from Hawassa Industrial Park. Regarding the education level of the respondents, 41.4% were holders of diplomas and below, 49.0% were holders of BA/BSc while the remaining 9.6% were MA/MSc holders.

Table 2 Frequency of Respondents Demography

Sex	Park	Educ	Counts	% of Total	Cumulative %
	Bole_Lemi	<_ Diploma	46	12.0 %	12.0 %
Female		BA/BSc	54	14.1 %	26.0 %
		MA/MSC	15	3.9 %	29.9 %
	Hawassa	<_ Diploma	34	8.9 %	38.8 %
		BA/BSc	43	11.2 %	50.0 %
		MA/MSC	8	2.1 %	52.1 %
	Bole_Lemi	<_ Diploma	40	10.4 %	62.5 %
		BA/BSc	33	8.6 %	71.1 %
Male		MA/MSC	4	1.0 %	72.1 %
	Hawassa	<_ Diploma	39	10.2 %	82.3 %
		BA/BSc	58	15.1 %	97.4 %
		MA/MSC	10	2.6 %	100.0 %

Source: Jamovi 2.3, 2024

4.3. Preliminary Test Results

4.3.1. Normality Test for the data

The table below presents the normality test results of two constructs, namely corporate governance and employee commitment. As indicated in the table both the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test and the Shapiro-Wilk Test results of the two construct are significant. As the Sig. values of both tests are greater the 0.05, the data is considered to be normal. If they were below 0.05 then the data significantly deviate from a normal distribution. In other words, the distribution of the data is normal because the distribution is skewed to neither the left nor the right; and there are no such extreme outliers from both the right and left-hand sides. This implies that most of the observations are around the mean value. Hence, it is relatively symmetrical and fit to be analyzed statistically.

Table 3 Tests of Normality

Items	**Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]**			**Shapiro-Wilk**		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Corporate Governance	.037	384	.200*	.995	384	.196
Employee Commitment	.037	384	.200*	.993	384	.074

*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.
a. Lilliefors Significance Correction
Source: SPSS output, 2024

To further see the nature of the distribution, the histogram was used and the Normal curve was drawn on each of the histograms. Hence as shown in figure 1 and figure 2, both data sets have a normal distribution.

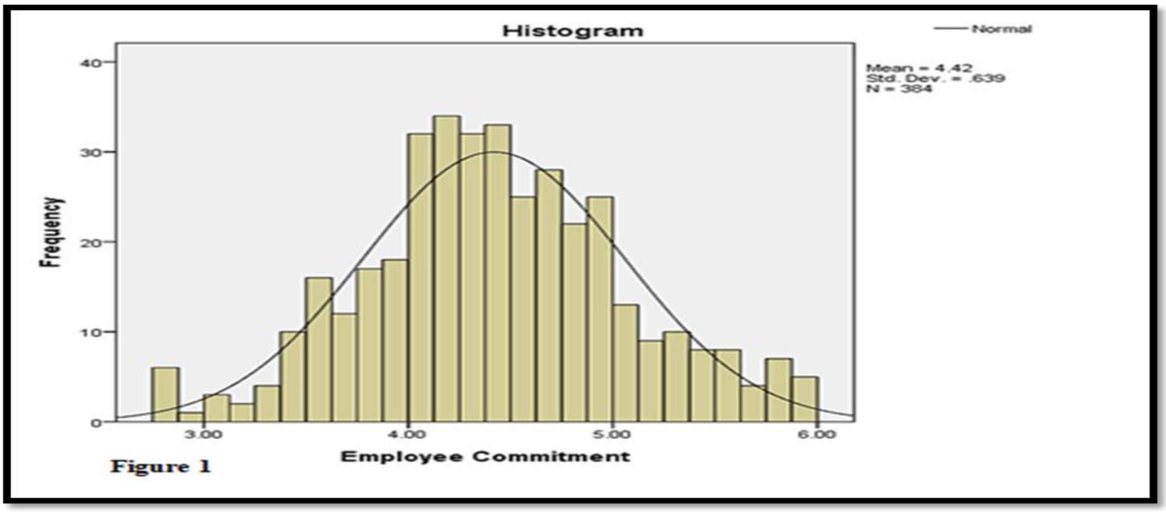


Figure 1

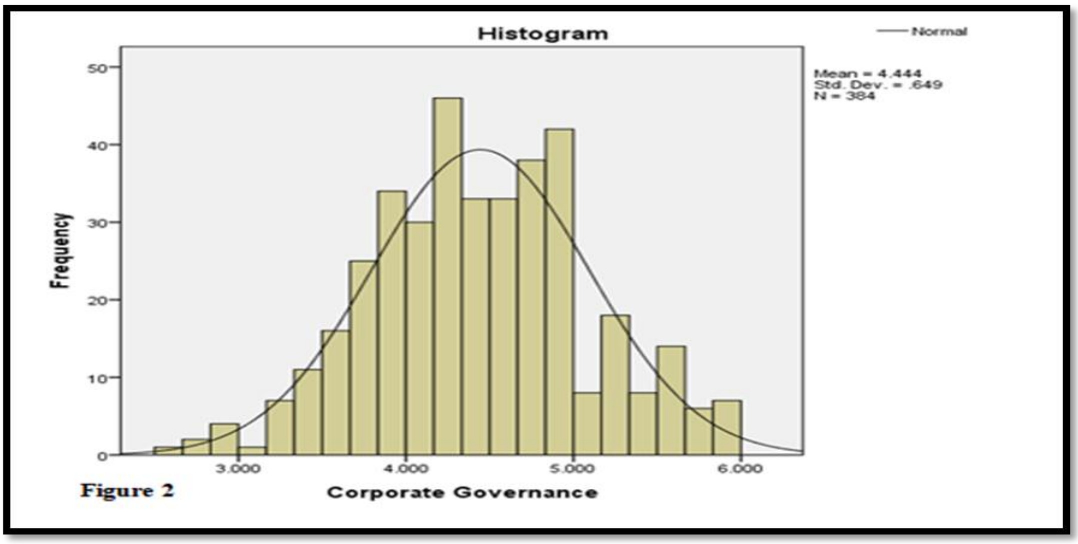


Figure 2

4.3.2. Reliability Tests

The reliability of the study constructs was tested using Cronbach's Alpha. The values of Cronbach's alpha for the construct corporate governance (0.973) and employee commitment (0.964) were calculated, Following the recommendations of Field (2013), Cronbach's Alpha (≥0.7), the analysis of internal homogeneity showed acceptable results and hence, all the scales are highly reliable (as indicated in the above table 4).

Table 4 Reliability Statistics

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Corporate Governance	**.973**	**26**
Employee Commitment	**.964**	**21**

Source: SPSS output, 2024

4.4. Corporate Governance (Objective one)

4.4.1. Mean Range and Interpretation

The interpretation of the mean was based on the calculated mean value, maximum and minimum values, and ranges indicated in Table 4.9. To determine the score ranges (SR) for qualitative interpretation, the formula SR= (Max value--Min value)/N; where N is the number of interpretation categories used (Pornel & Saldana, 2013). It is witnessed from the table that the range of the score is found to be 3.35, as the highest and lowest scores of the scale were 6 and 2.65 respectively. When the range is divided into three it gives the value which is 1.117. Adding up 1.117 on the lowest score (2.65), it gives 3.767. As indicated in the table the mean range of the low level becomes (2.65-3.767); the average level (is 3.768-4.885); and the value for the high level becomes above 4.885.

Table 5 Mean Interpretation

Construct	N	Mean	SD	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Corporate Governance	384	4.44	0.65	3.35	2.65	6.00
Interpretation	**Low Level**			**Moderate Level**		**High Level**
Mean Range	2.65—3.767			3.768—4.885		Above 4.885

Source: Author's computation based on Pornel and Saldana (2013)

4.4.2. Descriptive of Corporate Governance Dimensions

Table 6 shows the mean and standard deviation of five dimensions of the construct of corporate governance, namely compliance with the corporate governance code, top management, control environment, transparency and disclosure, and rights of shareholders/ stakeholders. The average score of the first dimension, compliance with the corporate governance code, was 4.46 with an SD of 0.687. As set in this study, the average score of this dimension falls under the range of 3.768- 4.885 which denotes that compliance with the corporate governance code in the study areas is at a moderate level. Moderate compliance with a corporate governance code means that an organization is partially compliant with the code's standards.

The second dimension is corporate top management (the board of directors/management committee) which deals with representation, responsibility, and frequency of meetings on issues related to corporate performance and employee status. The average score of this dimension was 4.53 with an SD of 0.920. As per the mean interpretation norm set for this study, the mean range of this dimension falls under the range of moderate level. The third dimension is related to the control environment that deals with corporate internal control systems and risk management mechanisms. The average score of this dimension was 4.49 with an SD of 0.859. The average score of these dimensions falls under the moderate range. This shows that the organizations have moderate strength in implementing internal control across all the functions and the internal communications qualities are moderately strong.

Disclosure and transparency is the fourth dimension of the construct of corporate governance. This dimension is concerned with the principle that demands to ensure that stakeholders are informed about the company's activities, what it plans to do in the future, and any risks involved in its business strategies. The average score of this dimension was 4.39 with an SD of 0.725. The average score of this dimension falls under the moderate range. The results show that their organizations are moderate at availing information to stakeholders about their performance and governance issues. When companies provide accurate and timely information about their performance, governance, and risks, they can build trust with stakeholders, shareholders, and potential investors.

The last dimension is the rights of shareholders/ stakeholders. This is related to the corporate governance system that allows shareholders to enjoy their rights, such as voting at shareholder meetings to approve the members of the board of directors, dividend distributions, or mergers. The average score of this dimension was 4.46 with an SD of 1.00. The average score of this dimension falls under the moderate range. This shows that the respondents don't agree that there is a good stakeholder relation management system.

The overall, mean of the five dimensions of corporate governance in the Industry parks under study settings is 4.67 with a standard deviation of 0.839. Statistically, the higher the mean score, the more that respondents agreed with, and vice-versa. However, the figures for standard deviation (SD) below 1.00 indicate the degree to which responses varied from each other as the lower the figure for SD, the slight variation in the responses. As per the standardized norms, the average value that falls between 3.768 and 4.885 indicates that the current corporate governance practice in the study areas needs much improvement though there is a slight variation in responses shown by a standard deviation of 0.839.

Table 6 Descriptive Statistics, Corporate Governance

Dimensions	N	Min	Max	Mean	STD
Compliance with the Corporate Governance Code	384	2.00	6.00	4.456	.68719
Top management	384	2.00	6.00	4.532	.92036
Control environment	384	1.00	6.00	4.493	.85960
Transparency and disclosure	384	1.00	6.00	4.386	.72485
Rights of shareholders/ stakeholders	384	1.00	6.00	4.464	1.00704
Corporate Governance (Construct)	**384**			**4.466**	**0.8398**

Source: SPSS output, 2024

4.5. Employee Commitment (Objective two)

4.5.1. Mean Interpretation

It is witnessed from the table that the range of the score is found to be 3.18, as the highest and lowest scores of the scale were 5.98 and 2.80 respectively. When the range is divided into three it gives the value which is 1.06. Adding up 1.06 on the lowest score (2.80), it gives 3.86. As indicated in the table the mean range of the low level becomes (2.80---3.860); the average level (3.861-----4.921); and the value for the high level becomes above 4.921.

Table 7 Mean Interpretation

Construct	N	Mean	SD	Range	Minimum	Maximum
Employee Commitment	384	4.42	0.638	3.18	2.80	5.98
Interpretation	**Low Level**				**Moderate Level**	**High Level**
Mean Range	2.80—3.860				3.861—4.921	Above 4.921

Source: SPSS output, 2024

4.5.2. Descriptive of Employee Commitment

For measuring employee commitment, a 21-itemed and three-dimensional scale of the "Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ)" developed by Allen and Meyer (1996) was used. The three dimensions include affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment. The table indicates the average response of respondents to three dimensions of employee commitment in the study areas. The first dimension, affective commitment, is an employee's emotional attachment to their organization and is characterized by a desire to stay with the company. The second dimension, continuance commitment, is the degree to which employees feel they need to stay with an organization. It is based on the idea that the costs of leaving outweigh the benefits of taking a new job. The third dimension, normative commitment, is the degree to which employees feel a moral obligation to stay with their organization.

Among the three dimensions of employee commitment, the normative commitment dimension was rated relatively high with (Mean=4.54; STD=0.907) followed by the dimension of affective commitment with (Mean=4.46; STD=1.028), and the dimension of continuance commitment was rated as the last with (Mean=4.43; STD=1.014). The overall average score of employee commitment (Mean=4.42; STD=0.638) falls under the range of 3.861---4.921 which denotes a moderate level of employee commitment as per the standardized norms. Therefore it can be said that the level of employee commitment is found moderate. This indicates that the current level of employee commitment in the study areas needs some improvements.

Table 8 Descriptive Statistics, Employee Commitment

Dimensions	N	Min	Max	Mean	STD
Affective commitment	384	1.14	6.00	4.4587	1.02824
Continuance commitment	384	1.00	6.00	4.4304	1.01439
Normative commitment	384	2.00	6.00	4.5387	.90715
Employee Commitment	384			4.4177	0.638

Source: SPSS output, 2024

4.6. Independent Sample t-test (Objective three)

The group statistics table shows that 184 respondents were male while 200 female respondents responded to the employee commitment questionnaire. The data in the table depicts that the mean value of male respondents is 4.25 with a standard deviation of 0.61. The mean value of female respondents is 4.56 with a standard deviation of 0.62. A far higher mean value for female respondents implies that females are more tilted to rate for a moderate scale for the variable of interest than males.

Table 9 Group Statistics

Construct	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Employee	Female	200	4.563	.6240	.0441
Commitment	Male	184	4.259	.6177	.0455

Source SPSS Output (2024)

To ensure whether this difference is significant or not, further analysis using an independent sample mean t-test was done (Table 10). Accordingly, a two-sample t-test was performed to compare the commitment level in females and males. There was a statistically significant difference in response to the commitment level between males (M=4.25, STD=0.61) and females (M=4.56, STD=0.62); t (379.9) = 30.42, p<0.01. This implies that there is a significant difference in the response towards the commitment level between the two groups.

Table 10 Independent T-test Results

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-t)	Mean D	SE Diff	95% CI L	U
EC	Equal variance assumed	**.51**	**.474**	**4.79**	**382**	**.000**	**.3042**	**.063**	**.179**	**.428**
	Equal variance is not assumed.			**4.79**	**379.9**	**.000**	**.3042**	**.063**	**.179**	**.428**

Source: SPSS output, 2024

4.7. The Effects of Corporate Governance on Employee Commitment (Objective Four)

4.7.1. Correlation Analysis

Before running multiple regression analysis, preconditions need to be fulfilled. One of the preconditions is correlation analysis which has been executed to check the association of an independent variable with a dependent variable. The other assumptions have been checked at the outset of data analysis (see section 4.3). To determine the effect of corporate governance on employee commitment an attempt was made to establish the relationship through Pearson product-moment correlation. In this regard the independent variable was correlated with the dependent variable and the results are presented as shown in the table below. The findings in this table indicate that there is a strong positive and significant correlation between corporate governance (r=0.889); and employee commitment. This implies that the independent variables are interrelated and can affect each other. The dependent variable, employee commitment is associated with corporate governance; and it implies that the improvements in those factors, compliance with the corporate governance code, top management, control environment, transparency and disclosure, and rights of shareholders/ stakeholders, the better employee commitments in the study areas. Mainly, it confirms the significance of measured variable to be investigated as determining factors for employee commitment in the industry parks under study settings.

Table 11 correlations

Constructs	Corporate Governance	Employee Commitment
Corporate Governance	1	
Employee Commitment	0.889	1

****. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**
Source: SPSS output, 2024

4.7.2. Regression Analysis

To evaluate the relationship between an independent variable and dependent variable, employee professional commitments, a standard simple linear regression was conducted using SPSS version 23. To perform the regression model, the R^2 value has been checked to see what proportion of the changes in the outcome variable is explained by the predictors included in the model. An r-squared of 0.791 reveals that 79.1% of the variability observed in the employee commitment is explained by the regression model (Table 12).
In addition, the F-value in the ANOVA table has been checked to confirm the adequacy of the model and ensure that the use of a linear regression model is adequate to predict the effects of a predictor on the outcome variable. In this case, the regression model is statistically significant, F (1, 382) = 1446.833, p < .0001. This indicates that, overall, the model applied can statistically significantly predict the dependent variable, employee commitment.

Table 12 ANOV Test Results

Source	**SS**	**df**	**MS**	**F(1, 382)**	**=**	**1446.833**
Model	123.588	1	123.588	Prob > F	=	0.0000
Residual	32.630	382	0.0854188	R-squared	=	0.791
Total	156.218	383	0.407879	Root MSE	=	0.032633

Source: SPSS Output (2024)

The coefficient table provides the necessary information to predict employee commitment to corporate governance and determine whether corporate governance contributes statistically significantly to the model (by looking at the "**Sig.**" column under Table 13). Unstandardized B (Constant) tells us the average value of the response variable when the predictor variable is zero. In this study, the average employee commitment score is 0.527 when the corporate governance score equals zero. The unstandardized B (corporate governance) tells us the average change in the response variable associated with a one-unit increase in the predictor variable. In this study, a one-unit increase in corporate governance results in a shift in employee commitment by 0.875 units. The p-value (p<0.001) associated with the test statistic for corporate governance is less than 0.05; and indicates that the predictor variable, corporate governance, is statistically significant.
The regression equation

Predicted employee commitment = 0.527+0.875 (corporate governance)

Table 13 Coefficients

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**		**Standardized Coefficients**			**Collinearity Statistics**	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	**Sig.**	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	.527	.103		5.102	.000		
Corporate Governance	.875	.023	.889	38.037	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Commitment
Source: SPSS Output (2024)

Discussions

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of corporate governance on employee commitment in the Industry Parks under study settings. The research analysis results are evaluated and interpreted in line with the relevant theories and finding of previous research studies. The mean value of the dependent and independent variables shows that the employees' evaluation about their commitment and the quality of corporate governance practices in the industries are moderate. It signals that the organization have to work further to establish well liked governance system and boost employees commitment. These results align with previous studies that highlighted the importance of establishing good corporate governance principles, such as transparency, accountability, and employee participation to foster employee commitment. Previous studies added that iimplementing robust corporate governance mechanisms is crucial for ensuring that corporate resources are used efficiently and effectively (Demeke, 2016).

Another important finding is that employee commitment level varies on the basis of gender. Comparing the commitment level of female and male employee has been done and notable differences were observed. Female respondents showed greater average commitment level implying that females are more tilted to rate for moderate scale for the variable of interest than males. In this regard, a 52.2% of study sample (female) demonstrated a higher level of professional commitment than 47.8% of the study sample (male). The observed mean variation is statistically significant and this result challenges the findings of Güzey andUğraş (2023) who asserted that corporate governance principles do not have a moderator effect on women's attitudes towards the quality of their work environment. However, Güzey andUğraş' (2023) findings highlighted that as the transparency and professionalization levels increase, women tend to prefer the organizations more. In addition, this same study conformed the institutionalization process can partially mediate women's attitudes toward the quality of their work environment. In this regard, the corporate governance in the study areas seems to be conducive to female employees. This implies that corporate governance has a major influence on the working circumstances for female employees in a labor market where patriarchal labor relations are common. While some researchers identified a significant difference between female and male, others expounded the insignificant differences. An alternative viewpoint could be that the diversified background of study population, study settings, and study methods might have influenced these varied results.

The results indicated that corporate governance has a significant positive relationship with employee commitment in Bole-Lemi and Hawassa Industrial Parks. The regression analysis shows that corporate governance has positive and significant impact on the employee commitment, 87.5% of the employee commitment is influenced by corporate governance mechanisms.

This finding indicates that corporate governance in both Industrial Parks has a great role in explaining commitment, which is an antecedent for employee commitment. Fundamentally, corporate leaders through their personal actions and interpersonal relationships, specifically using communication, reinforcement, and decision-making makings plays a critical role in motivating employees to exhibit higher dedication and commitment and demonstrate a higher level of professionalism (Enaifoghe et al., 2023). This finding is in line with similar research finding conducted by Syahnur and Elmi (2023).

Mainly, an employee in well-functioning corporate governance can produce high-quality products consistently that help move the organization forward (Sapada et al., 2018); and produce consistently high-quality results (Remigio, 2022). Good corporate governance principles, such as transparency, accountability, and employee participation are essential for fostering commitment. Implementing robust corporate governance mechanisms is crucial for ensuring that corporate resources are used efficiently and effectively (Demeke, 2016). Strengthening oversight bodies that hold corporate governance accountable for their actions is equally vital (Sari, 2023). Furthermore, actively engaging employees in corporate decision-making processes, through mechanisms like employee engagement and participatory budgeting, can promote a sense of ownership and responsibility (Charles et al., 2021).

Conclusions

The present study contributes to the management literature by integrating constructs such as corporate governance and employee commitment in corporate settings. The results of this study show that corporate governance is found to be a significant antecedent condition for employee commitment. The findings complement previous studies on corporate governance by explaining that corporate leadership contributes to the improvement of employees' workplace conditions, which in turn improves commitment (Chowdhury et al., 2020; Syahnur & Elmi, 2023). This study offers proof that corporate governance is necessary for any organization to establish and preserve an ethical culture. In work industry setting, leaders by preaching and practicing ethical standards can foster organizational culture; and in turn, instill employee commitment. This implies that the positive effect of corporate governance on employee commitment will be strongest when the Industry Parks establish a strong organizational culture.

**Availability of data and material

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the corresponding author upon reasonable request without undue reservation.

**Disclosure statement

I, the author, declare that there is no known financial conflict of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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