

# The Impact of Partnership and Discipline Factors in Corporate Governance on Investment Attractiveness in the Sports Sector: An Analytical Study Based on Gender and Age Demographics of Employees

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**Abstract:** The aim of this research is to analyze the impact of partnership and discipline dimensions within corporate governance on the attractiveness of investment in the sports sector with an eye on possible differences in this impact on the demographic characteristics of employees (gender and age). The descriptive analytical approach was taken up in this study whereby a questionnaire was handed out to a sample of staff at official and private sports institutions. Data analysis was carried out using a combination of statistical methods, such as correlation coefficient, variation analysis (ANOVA), and multiple regression. The study found that both partnership and discipline have a significant impact on the attractiveness of investment. The results also revealed inferentially supported differences in staff perceptions of this effect due to gender and age variables. The research put forward recommendations that would operationalize corporate governance as a strategic approach in order to bring about the investment environment in sports.

**Key words:** corporate governance, partnership, discipline, investment attraction, sports sector, demographic variables.



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## 1. Introduction:

The sports sector is going through qualitative shifts towards institutional empowerment inasmuch as it builds up partnerships and draws in private and public investment. This comes amid aspirations to set up a sustainable sports industry, especially in recent years. In the midst of these transformations, corporate governance has come forward as a strategic tool to bring about transparency, account for transparency and effectiveness, with partnership and discipline dimensions standing out among its most important pillars in the sports sector.

### 1.1 Research Problem:

Many sports institutions, particularly in developing countries, suffer from weaknesses in the application of management dimensions. This has had its repercussions on investor confidence and the attractiveness of the investment environment.

- To what extent do the dimensions of partnership and discipline in corporate governance affect the attractiveness of investment in the sports sector?
- How does this impact vary with the gender and age of workers in this sector?

### 1.2 Research Significance:

The importance of research in addressing the scientific and practical gap stems from looking into the relationship between corporate governance and its investment attractiveness in sports, especially in the dearth of studies that bring together the organizational and demographic dimensions of employees. The current study also puts forward tools for measurement and analysis that can effectively contribute to the development of managerial performance in sports institutions and build up investor confidence.

### 1.3 Research Objectives:

The research aims to:

- Assess the impact of the partnership dimension in corporate governance on the attractiveness of investment in the sports sector.
- Assess the impact of corporate governance discipline on the attractiveness of investment.
- Determine the extent of differences in staff perceptions of the impact of management dimensions according to gender and age variables.
- Put forward recommendations to enhance the sports investment environment through effective management.

### 1.4 Research Hypotheses:

- Hypothesis 1 (H1): There is a inferentially supported impact of the partnership dimension in corporate governance on the attractiveness of investment in the sports sector.
- Hypothesis 2 (H2): There is a inferentially supported impact of the discipline dimension in corporate governance on the attractiveness of investment in the sports sector.
- Hypothesis 3 (H-3): There is a inferentially supported common impact of partnership and discipline dimensions in corporate governance on the attractiveness of investment in the sports sector.
- Hypothesis 4 (H.4): There are inferentially supported differences in staff perceptions vis-à-vis the impact of corporate governance (partnership and discipline dimensions) on the attractiveness of investment attributable to gender.
- Hypothesis 5 (H5): There are inferentially supported differences in employees' perceptions of the impact of corporate governance (partnership and discipline dimensions) on the attractiveness of investment attributable to age.

## 2. Theoretical Framework:

### 2.1 The concept of governance:

The English term "Governance" has been translated to "الحكومة" (Al-Hakimah), with numerous attempts by the Arabic Language Academy to find alternative terms that express it, such as: "الحكم" (Al-Hakm), "الحاكمية" (Al-Hakimiya), "الحكم الصالح أو الجيد" (Effective or Good Governance), "الراشد" (Good Governance), "الحكم الصالح أو الجيد" (Effective or Good Governance), "الحاكمية" (Al-Hakimiya).

)Rulership), " الحوكمة" (Governance), and " الإدارة الرشيدة" (Sound Management). Consequently, the term "Corporate Governance" has been translated to as " حوكمة الشركات" (Company Governance). The definitions of governance vary as they echo the perspectives of those who adopt them. The International Finance Corporation (IFC) defines governance as a system that controls the operations and management of companies (Saad, 2021). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) defines it as a set of relationships between the company's management, board of directors, shareholders, and stakeholders. This includes the structure that outlines the company's objectives, the means to achieve them, and the monitoring of performance in a fair manner (Tareq, 2007). There are four main elements that significantly influence and are influenced by the correct and sound application of corporate governance principles. These delineate the extent of an institution's success or failure in implementing these elements, which are (Al-Aiyashi, 2010):

1. Shareholders: Those who provide capital to the company through their ownership of shares, and they aim to make the most of the financial value of the company in the long term.
2. Board of Directors: Represents the shareholders in the company and other parties, such as: business stakeholders, and is in charge of selecting the executive managers to whom daily management authority of the company's operations is delegated, setting general policies, protecting the rights of shareholders, and monitoring performance.
3. Management: Responsible for the actual management of the company, providing all reports related to effective performance to the Board of Directors, and is accountable for upping the company's profits and increasing its value.
4. Stakeholders: A group of parties that have common interests within the company, such as: suppliers, creditors, employees, and workers, and the interests of these parties may sometimes be conflicting and different.

The Importance of governance lies in the fact that it (Yusuf, 2007): i) creates a sound work environment that seeks to achieve optimal performance with the presence of good management. ii) aims to protect investments from losses resulting from the misuse of power not in the best interest of investors. iii) nurture strong and lasting relationships between the management of the institution and its employees, suppliers, creditors, and others.

## 2.2 Partnership in Institutional Governance:

Partnership is a fundamental pillar for achieving the principles of modern institutional governance, as it is at the heart of the matter in the interactive and coordinating relationships among various stakeholders within the organization, including shareholders, management, beneficiaries, the community, and investors, with the aim of striking a balance between economic, social, and organizational objectives. According to reports from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), successful partnerships within governance systems shed light on transparency and accountability, and set the stage for an attractive regulatory environment for investment, particularly in sensitive sectors such as the sports sector. This fundamentally goes hand in hand with cooperation between official entities, independent bodies, and the private sector (OECD, 2023).

(1) Effective partnership in the sports context:

Partnership in the sports context has many forms, most notably:

- a. Public-private partnership in infrastructure construction.
- b. Cooperation between clubs, sports federations and the local community.
- c. Transparency in decision-making between the participating parties.

d. Equitable distribution of roles and powers.

Researchers have driven home the importance of involving all actors in sports governance to ensure managerial stability and investment confidence (Bayle & Madella, 2020).

(2) Partnership in enhancing investment attractiveness:

The partnership plays a key role in setting up a safe and sustainable investment environment, by cutting down administrative and regulatory risks, building up trust between investors and sports management, as well as stepping up sources of financing and investment, as well as achieving common goals among various actors.

A recent study showed that the application of partnership in the governance of sports institutions contributed to driving up the efficiency of public spending and the attractiveness of private investment in countries such as Qatar and Australia (Moe, 2022; Al-Thani & Walters, 2021).

Despite the fact that modern governance literature consistently calls for setting up coordinating units to institutionalize partnerships within sports entities (Henry & Lee, 2020), there are challenges in putting forward partnership within sports governance against this backdrop of increasing significance of the partnership concept. Many sports institutions come up against difficulties in its implementation on the grounds that a weak participatory organizational culture, administrative centralization, and the absence of power distribution exist, in addition to the lack of legal and regulatory frameworks that back up institutional partnerships.

From the outset, disciplinary mechanisms represent a set of rules and procedures within institutional governance that lay down the behavior of management, employees, and stakeholders, ensuring that everyone lives up to general objectives and institutional values, thus warding off the misuse of power or deviation of administrative decisions from the proper course. They can act as preventive and oversight mechanisms to bring about effective institutional performance, build up an environment that encourages organizational commitment, and cut down administrative corruption, thereby playing up the institution's attractiveness to investors (Tricker, 2019).

The concept of discipline in the sports sector is manifested through the existence of clear policies for accountability and transparency in performance, sticking to the laws and regulations of sports federations, the presence of a clear system for penalties and rewards, regular financial and administrative oversight, and the independence of oversight committees. Experts have pointed out that sports systems with high institutional discipline are more stable and trusted by investors and partners. Institutional discipline plays a pivotal role in pulling in investment by ensuring transparency in financial and administrative processes; this brings down the risks of corruption and mismanagement on the one hand, and reassures investors with the existence of clear regulatory mechanisms on the other hand. This also helps step up the credibility of the institution before donors and funding agencies. Studies have shown that the absence of institutional discipline lies at the heart of the matter when it comes to obstacles to investment in sports in developing countries, as it pushes up levels of risk and wears away trust.

Sports organizations come up against multiple challenges in carrying out institutional discipline, such as the weak organizational independence of oversight committees, political or factional interference in the operations of sports institutions, the absence of written governance rules or adherence to their implementation, in addition to the weak administrative structure qualified to follow through on oversight principles. To overcome these challenges, international organization reports have recommended the rolling out of systems that are in line with internal oversight and the application of international standards for sports accountability (Play the Game, 2022).

The term Investment Attractiveness is often described as the extent to which the economic and regulatory environment can draw in both domestic and foreign investments, by laying out factors such as confidence, stability, expected returns, and transparency. In the sports sector, investment

attractiveness refers to the willingness of sports institutions to come up with a suitable and stimulating environment for investors, whether at the level of clubs, federations, or sports projects and infrastructure (Nauright & Ramfjord, 2019). Recent studies have pointed out that the carrying out of good governance in sports institutions lies at the heart of stepping up investment attractiveness (Ratten, 2022). By and large, investment attractiveness in the sports context takes in several dimensions, including:

The attractiveness of investment in the sports context includes several dimensions, namely:

1. Transparency and governance: through the clarity of laws and regulations, and the presence of oversight and accountability systems.
2. Economic feasibility: representing the potential returns from sports investment.
3. Institutional and administrative stability: through the existence of a professional and stable administrative structure.
4. Marketing opportunities: with a large audience, commercial sponsorship, and broadcasting rights.
5. Government and legislative support: through tax incentives and partnerships with the public sector.

Research has pointed to a strong positive correlation between the carrying out of corporate governance principles (such as partnership and accountability) and the stepping up of investor confidence in the sports sector. Effective governance lays out support for a cutting down in administrative corruption, clarity in objectives, and better returns on investment. Investors prefer to get involved in a transparent and organized sports environment, based on long-term partnerships and adherence to professional regulations, especially in sensitive areas such as club management, infrastructure, and sponsorship of events.

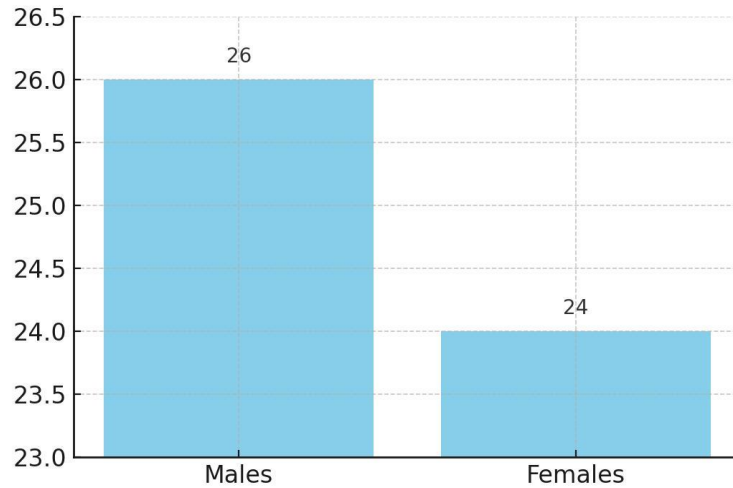
Numerous researchers have called for the necessity of setting up the sports investment environment through administrative and structural reforms that zero in on governance and building up partnerships with the private sector. Nevertheless, there are challenges to the pulling in of investment in the sports sector, the most prominent of which include: the absence of legislation, weak professional sports management, a lack of governance culture in some countries and institutions, as well as a lack of transparency in contracts and licensing.

### **3. Practical Aspect:**

#### **3.1 Research Sample:**

A questionnaire form was distributed to a sample consisting of (50) individuals working in the sports sector, whose backgrounds varied between the public and private sectors. The sample included different age groups and various professional levels. The sample was selected using a simple random method to ensure a fair representation of the research community.

The gender distribution results showed 26 males, which accounted for 52%, while there were 24 females who accounted for 48%, as can be seen in the following figure:

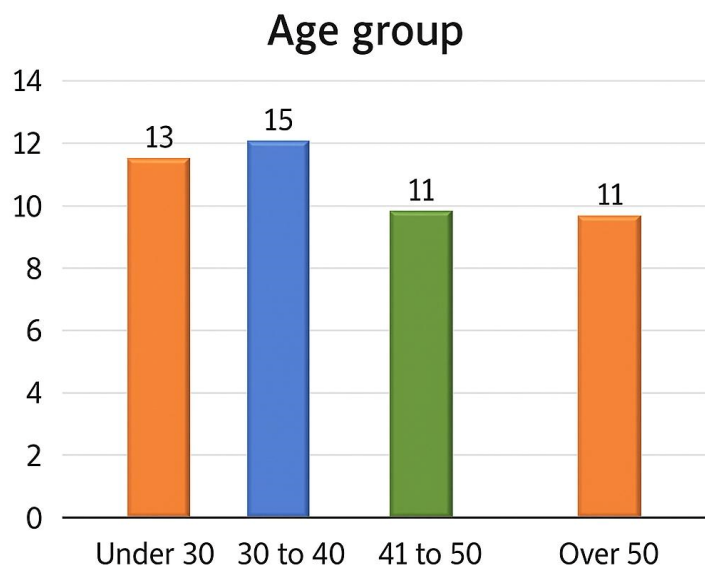


**Figure (1):** Distribution by Gender

As for the age group of the research sample, it was as shown in Table (1) and Figure (2):

**Table (1):** Age group

Age Group	Count	Percentage
Under 30 years old	13	26%
30 to 40 years old	15	30%
From 41 to 50 years old	11	22%
More than 50 years	11	22%
Total	50	100%



**Figure (2):** Age group

**Figure (2):**Age group

### 3.2 Research Tool:

The questionnaire form was designed according to a five-point Likert scale, encompassing three axes: partnership, discipline, and investment attractiveness as the dependent variable. Each axis included (5) items.

### 3.3 Statistical Methods:

The data were analyzed using SPSS software, according to the following methods:

1. Pearson correlation analysis to gauge the relationship between governance and investment attractiveness.
2. T-test to indicate if there are differences between males and females.
3. One-way ANOVA to test differences based on age groups.

### 3.4 Analysis Results:

1. Correlation Analysis Between Variables: The results of the Pearson correlation coefficient analysis were presented as shown in Table (2).

**Table (2): Correlation coefficient**

Significance Level (Sig.)	Correlation coefficient	Relationship
Partnership ← Investment Attractiveness	-0.031	0.826
Discipline ← Investment attractiveness	-0.094	0.517

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis are indicative of a very weak negative relationship between the dimension of partnership and investment attractiveness, which clocked up a correlation value of -0.031, which is close to negligible. This testifies to the absence of a significant linear relationship. What's more, the associated level of statistical significance (Sig. = 0.826) exceeds the generally accepted threshold of 0.05. This tells us that this relationship is not significant in statistical terms and cannot be generalized to the study population. Similarly, the dimension of discipline is also emblematic of a very weak negative relationship with investment attractiveness, with a correlation value of -0.094 and a significance level of 0.517, which is also above 0.05, thus the relationship is non-significant. Overall, the results speak to the absence of an inferentially supported relationship between the variables of partnership and discipline and investment attractiveness, based on responses from the research sample.

From the outset, these results bear out a reality of immature management within the sports institutions included in the study. Although partnership and discipline are expected to be central to attracting investors (in terms of building trust, distributing roles, and controlling processes), employees in these institutions either do not recognize or do not perceive a tangible impact of these two dimensions on improving the investment environment. Moreover, the weak negative correlations may suggest that partnership and disciplinary practices are carried out in a formal or bureaucratic manner without producing tangible results in bolstering the investment environment, or that investors do not find sufficient reasons for trust or entering long-term partnerships based on these practices. From the employees' perspective, the sports institutions fall short of implementing a genuine governance system capable of attracting investment, as evidenced by the absence of a significant relationship in the statistical analysis.

## 2. Gender Differences Test (T-test):

The results of the gender differences test (T-test) are presented in Table 3.

**Table (3): T-test**

Variable	T-value	Significance Level (Sig.)
Investment attractiveness among males and females	-0.406	0.686

The results of the table above for the T-test shed light on the t-value for measuring the differences in the average investment attractiveness ratings between males and females, which is (-0.406), a very small value approaching zero. This tells us that the difference between the two means is not significant. Furthermore, the level of statistical significance (Sig) stands at (0.686), which is over and above the statistically acceptable threshold of (0.05). This implies that the difference between the responses of males and females is not inferentially supported. In light of this, the statistical conclusion is that there are no notable differences between the evaluations of males and females as regards the level of investment attractiveness in the sports sector, and thus no differences in opinions can be ascribed to gender.

From an investment perspective, this result points to the fact that the perceptions of male and female employees in the sports sector are very similar regarding the attractiveness of their institutions for investment. This brings to the fore one of two possibilities:

- A general consensus among the surveyed employees of both genders on the weakness or limitation of the investment environment. This means that everyone, regardless of gender, see that their institutions do not actually afford an attractive environment for investors.
- The factors influencing investment attractiveness are not related to gender differences but may come into play through other factors such as institutional culture, leadership, or investment infrastructure. Given that, it is essential to bring about change in the investment environment itself, rather than taking into account only the perceptions of specific categories such as gender, as the deficiencies in investment attractiveness for the most part seem to be general and shared among all.

## 3. Analysis of Differences by Age Group (ANOVA):

The results of the ANOVA analysis, as shown in Table (4), revealed the following.

**Table (4): (ANOVA) Analysis**

Variable	F-value	Significance Level (Sig.)
Investment attractiveness by age group	0.359	0.783

It is evident from the table that the F-value stood at (0.35), which is a very low value, lending support to the idea that the differences between the average responses of the four age groups regarding the attractiveness of investment are very weak and unclear. The level of statistical significance (Sig.) was (0.783), which is above the accepted significance threshold of (0.05). This tells us that there are no notable differences among the age groups in their assessment of the attractiveness of investment. It can be concluded that the opinions of workers in the sports sector

regarding the attractiveness of their institutions for investment do not vary with age group, and thus age is not considered an influential variable on this perception.

These results, from the outset, shed light on the fact that the weakness in investment attractiveness is perceived by all workers regardless of their ages, whether they are at the beginning of their careers or have extensive experience. This can tell us that:

- There is a general institutional shortcoming in bringing about an attractive investment environment, which cuts both ways, depriving sports organizations of the ability to build positive perceptions among employees of various age groups.
- There is a lack of noticeable time-bound development in the investment environment; had there been gradual improvements, their effects would have been observed among older or more experienced groups. However, the results point to the reality that the investment environment is perceived as static and weak by everyone.
- It is possible that the appeal of investment is not clearly prioritized or cultivated within the organization. This gives rise to a lack of awareness among employees, regardless of their ages, about differences in this regard.

Given that, sports organizations must take into account the need to step up and spell out their investment programs in a tangible and effective way so as to set the stage for a real difference that is recognized by all.

### **3.5 Discussion of results:**

Despite theoretical expectations of a relationship between governance dimensions (partnership and discipline) and investment attractiveness, the results of the quantitative analysis shed light on a weak relationship and the absence of significant statistical differences. This can be attributed to:

1. A deficiency in the application of actual governance concepts, in spite of their theoretical presence in sports institutions.
2. A lack of awareness among investors or stakeholders with respect to the impact of partnership and discipline as factors of investment attraction.
3. The small sample size of the research, which cuts both ways by undermining statistical power.
4. The weakness in the overall sports investment environment, setting the stage for the effects of governance to not be visibly apparent.

In light of this, we suggest in the future to scale up the sample to encompass diverse segments across provinces and sports federations, carry out qualitative studies to look into the administrative and cultural barriers associated with governance implementation, and test mediating variables such as institutional trust, transparency culture, or governmental intervention, to lend support to a deeper understanding of partnership and discipline and their role in investment attractiveness in the sports sector.

## **4. Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **4.1 Conclusions**

1. The weak relationship between partnership in institutional governance and the attractiveness of investment in the sports sector is notable in statistical terms. What this points to is that partnership concepts are either not effectively applied or are not taken into account as a genuine attractive element in the current sports environment.
2. The results of the disciplinary analysis did not yield a significant impact on investment attractiveness, bringing to light the possibility that regulatory or behavioral measures may be weak or unclear in the eyes of investors or practitioners.

3. The perception of employees regarding the relationship between governance and investment attractiveness does not vary by gender or age group. This tells us a relatively close perception among all demographics.
4. The absence of effective perception among employees in the sports sector regarding the importance of governance in its two dimensions (partnership and discipline) as supporting elements for investment sheds light on the urge to develop organizational culture.
5. Sports institutions are still not fully well positioned to attract investments in view of the lack of an actual attractive environment in terms of trust, transparency, and openness to partnerships.

#### **4.2 Recommendations:**

1. Bringing forward the concept of institutional partnership within the sports sector in that clear regulatory frameworks should be laid down in order to put into practice the principle of partnership between the public and private sectors, while scaling up the role of non-governmental parties (the private sector, sports associations, investors) in decision-making.
2. Driving forward discipline through governance mechanisms by bringing oversight committees back into operation within sports institutions, and rolling out evaluation, accountability, and administrative discipline systems as elements to draw in investors.
3. Launching training programs to roll out the culture of governance in building institutional awareness among workers in the sports sector about modern governance concepts, through training workshops and awareness about the role of partnership and discipline in attracting investment.
4. Overhauling the regulatory environment for sports institutions, and going over the laws and regulations pertaining to sports institutions to give a boost to transparency and kick-start an investment environment in sports based on governance.
5. It is advisable to carry out further studies of larger samples that cover different governorates and institutions, while bringing in new variables such as institutional trust, financial independence, and participatory leadership.
6. Building on international experiences, it is advisable to look into the experiences of countries that have successfully attracted sports investment through the activation of governance, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Qatar, and to tailor them to fit the local context.

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