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## DOES THE QUALITY OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AFFECT THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE IN INDIAN IT SECTOR? AN INSIGHT

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### ABSTRACT

Nowadays, Corporate Governance has become a major issue as scandals and meltdown of famous organisations create unstableness in the economy in many countries. The strong Corporate Governance frameworks are regarded as a mechanism to encourage flexibility and innovation and it also contributes to sustainable development of companies. The evolution of the information technology function has become important in recent years and it is one of the most significant growth contributors for the Indian economy. The Information Technology (IT), and its management plays an extremely important role in the creation and maintenance of the well governed company and is one of the major drivers of the current economic environment. Considering the importance of corporate governance in IT companies, the aim of the paper is to study the impact of corporate governance on financial performance of Indian IT companies listed on NSE Sectoral Index i.e., CNX IT Index. For this purpose, the data are being taken from companies listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) for the financial year 2012-13. The sample of the study constitutes all the 20 companies of CNX IT Index. The Secondary data has been collected for the financial year 2012-13 in the form of Annual Reports of Companies, research papers, articles and various websites. Four corporate governance variables were selected namely: Board Size, Board Independence, CEO Duality, and Audit Committee which served as the independent variables in the study. Moreover, the firm's financial performance as measured by Return on Equity (ROE) is considered as dependent variable. The results of regression analysis reveals that overall corporate governance mechanisms has a positive impact on the financial performance of IT companies in India.

### KEYWORDS

Board Size, Board Independence, CEO Duality, Audit Committee, ROE.

### INTRODUCTION

In India, the question of Corporate Governance has assumed importance mainly in the wake of economic liberalization, deregulation of industry and businesses, as also the demand for a new corporate ethos and stricter compliance with the legislation. The new economic policy adopted by the Government of India since 1991 has necessitated the demand for the introduction and implementation of a proper corporate governance policy in the management of companies not only in the interest of their stakeholders but also for the development of the economy. (Das, 2008) The importance of corporate governance disclosure increased in the last decade because of various corporate scandals and collapses, such as Enron, WorldCom, Satyam, etc. which involved unethical business practices and shook the interests of investors very badly. The reason behind these was the poor governance system which alarmed the authorities to come up with strict and in depth policy frameworks so as to protect the rights of minority shareholders, creditors and other stakeholders. The strong Corporate Governance frameworks is regarded as a mechanism to encourage flexibility and innovation and it also contributes to sustainable development of companies.

Different authors have different meaning regarding the term corporate governance. The area of corporate governance has acquired heightened attention and has become an issue of global significance. The improvement of corporate governance practices is widely recognized as one of the essential elements in strengthening the foundation for the long-term economic performance of countries and corporations (Ibrahim et al, 2010). The concept of corporate governance has been defined as "dealing with the ways in which suppliers of finance to corporations assures themselves of getting a return on their investment". It deals precisely with problems of conflict of interest, design ways to prevent corporate misconduct and aligns the interests of stakeholders using incentive mechanism (Shleifer and Vishny, 1997).

The strong Corporate Governance frameworks are regarded as a mechanism to encourage flexibility and innovation and it also contributes to sustainable development of companies. The evolution of the information technology function has become important in recent years and it is one of the most significant growth contributors for the Indian economy. The Information Technology (IT), and its management plays an extremely important role in the creation and maintenance of the well governed company and is one of the major drivers of the current economic environment. Researchers and business managers consider IT a key player and enabler of many corporate objectives including healthy governance to enhance overall performance of the organization.

Considering the importance of corporate governance in IT companies, the aim of the paper is to study the impact of corporate governance on financial performance of Indian IT companies listed on NSE Sectoral Index i.e., CNX IT Index.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Board Size and Financial Performance

The number of directors constituting the board can influence the firm's performance positively or negatively. The relationship between board size and firm performance remains inconclusive. Empirical evidence on the relationship between board size and firm performance provided mixed results. Adekunle and Aghedo (2014) found that there is positive and significant relationship of board size on financial performance and Gull et al (2013) also found a positive significant relationship of Board Size with firm performance as measured by ROE. According to a study undertaken by Chugh et al. (2011) a larger Board Size creates more opportunities and resources for better financial performance.

Contrary to this, a negative relationship between firm performance and board size are evident from the studies undertaken by Yermack (1996), Eisenberg et al. (1998), Denis and McConnell (2003), Andres et al. (2005), and Garg (2007). Further, Ahmadu et al. (2005), Chan and Li (2008), and Mustafa (2009) found that larger boards are associated with poorer performance. Beiner et al. (2004), Bhagat and Black (2002) and Limpaphayom and Connelly (2006) found that there is no significant association between board size and firm performance.

#### Board Independence and Financial Performance

Board independence has been regarded as one of the important determinants of the ability of boards to protect investors' interests (Fama and Jensen, 1983). There is mixed evidence that independent directors add value and improve the performance of the firm (Garg, 2007). Choi et al. (2007) found the positive effect on the firm performance as a result of having independent directors on the company board. Similarly, Abor and Adjasi (2007) revealed that the presence of outside independent directors on boards enhanced corporate competitiveness and provided new strategic outlooks for the firms. Chan and Li (2008) suggested a favorable link between independent directors and financial performance. Krivogorsky (2006) also supported the positive association between the proportion of independent directors to board size and profitability ratios in European firms.

On the other side, Yermack (1996) and Klein (1998) finds that a high percentage of outside directors has a negative effect on firm performance. Gull et al (2013) in their study found that Non-Executive Directors have unfavourable relationship with firm performance. Hermalin and Weisbach (1991) have found that a high proportion of independent directors does not predict a better future accounting performance. Using accounting measures, Agrawal and Knoeber (1996) found a



negative relationship between board independence and firm's performance. Lack of training to function as independent directors and ignorance of the procedures, tasks, and responsibilities expected of them could be reasons for the independent directors' non-performance (Garg, 2007).

#### **CEO Duality and Financial Performance**

Similar to previous researches on the relationship between the aforementioned two sets of board characteristics and firm performance, the impact of the separation of chief executive officer (CEO) and chairperson of the board (Chairperson) on firm performance measures have yielded conflicting results, according to the literature.

Research which argues against dual roles as they impact negatively on a firm's financial performance, include Fama and Jensen (1983), Rechner and Dalton (1991), Jensen (1993), Daily and Dalton (1994), Bai et al. (2004), Ahmadu, et al. (2005), Bhagat and Bolton (2008), Coles et al. (2001), Feng, et al. (2005), Judge, et al. (2003), Kyereboah et al. (2005) and Mustafa (2009). Further, Ehikioya (2009), Gull et al (2013) and Ujunwa (2013) also found that CEO Duality has negative association with firm's performance.

In Contrast, Some studies provide evidence of a positive relationship between duality of roles and firm performance. Harjoto and Hoje (2008), Kajola (2008) and Adekunle and Aghedo (2014) found a positive and statistically significant relationship between performance and separation of board chairman and CEO.

However, studies by Chaganti et al. (1985); Rechner and Dalton (1989); Daily and Dalton (1992, 1993, 1997); Baliga et al. (1996); and Brickley et al. (1997), Carapeto et al. (2005), Schmid and Zimmermann (2008) and Wan and Ong (2005) found no significant difference in the performance of companies with or without role duality.

#### **Size of Audit Committee and Financial Performance**

The establishment of Audit committees has been mandatory in many countries including India. The Cadbury Report (1992) emphasized the importance of audit committee's structure and membership to effectively accomplish its role. The report stressed that the membership should be of minimum three members. A significant number of studies mainly took place in Western countries focusing on various dimensions of audit committees. In India, less attention has been given to this dimension of corporate governance which also influences the firm's performance.

It is argued that a larger committee has greater organizational status and authority (Kalbers and Fogarty, 1993; Braiotta, 2000) and a wider knowledge base. Pincus et al. (1989) show that firms with larger audit committees are expected to devote greater resources to monitor the process of "reporting" accounting and finance. Similarly, Anderson et al. (2004) found that large size audit committees can protect and control the process of accounting and finance with respect to small committees by introducing greater transparency with respect to shareholders and creditors which has a positive impact on the financial performance of the company.

Bouaziz (2012) in their study tried to capture the effect of the characteristics of the audit committee on financial performance as measured by Return on Assets (ROA) and Return on Equity (ROE). The results show that the size of the audit committee has a positive and significant impact on financial performance measured by ROA and ROE.

Many researches have been conducted to study the relationship of corporate governance on firm's performance in developed countries as compared to developing countries. By going through the existing review of literature, it is observed that very less research has been done on the impact of corporate governance mechanisms on financial performance of IT Companies especially in context to India. Given this lack of empirical studies, this study fills the gap and provides empirical evidence on the impact of corporate governance mechanisms on financial performance of Indian IT Companies by taking into consideration the variables related to corporate governance.

### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objective of the study is to examine the relationship between Corporate Governance and financial Performance of IT Companies in India. Specifically, the aim of the study is:

1. To examine the relationship between Board Size and firm's financial performance.
2. To ascertain the influence of composition of board members on firm's financial performance.
3. To find out whether or not the CEO Status has an effect on firm's financial performance.
4. To determine whether the Size of the Audit Committee has an influence on firm's financial performance.

### **HYPOTHESES**

Based on the objectives of the Study and the review of existing literature, the following hypotheses have been framed for testing:

1. H<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant impact of Board Size on Return of Equity of IT companies.
2. H<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant impact of Board Independence on Return of Equity of IT companies.
3. H<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant impact of CEO Duality on Return of Equity of IT companies.
4. H<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant impact of Size of Audit Committee on Return of Equity of IT companies.

### **METHODOLOGY**

**Research Design and Sample:** This study focuses on evaluating the empirical relationship between Corporate Governance and financial Performance of IT Companies listed on CNX IT Index of NSE. The data used for this study is taken from the companies listed on the National Stock Exchange (NSE) for the financial year 2012-13. The sample of the study constitutes all the 20 companies of CNX IT Index (Annexure). The Secondary data has been collected for the financial year 2012-13 in the form of Annual Reports of Companies, research papers, articles and various websites.

**Model Specification:** Multiple Regression analysis is used to analyze the impact of corporate governance variables on financial performance of IT companies. For this purpose, an econometric model is devised to test the relationship of firm's financial performance and the corporate governance variables. The SPSS Software is used in carrying out the necessary computations. The four Independent variables are Board size, Board Independence, CEO Duality, and Audit Committee and the firm's financial performance is measured by Return on Equity (ROE) which is a dependent variable. The measurement of the selected variables are summarized in Table 1.

**TABLE 1: OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF VARIABLES**

Name of Variables	Abbreviations	Measurement
Board Size	BSIZE	Total number of directors on board
Board Independence	BIND	Ratio of independent directors to total number of directors on board.
CEO Duality	CEO	Value one (1) for CEO/Chairman duality and zero (0) if CEO and Chairman are different head.
Audit Committee	AUDCOM	Size of members on Audit Committee
Return on Equity	ROE	<u>Profit After Taxes</u> Total Shareholder's Equity

The following econometric equation have been formulated for the analysis:

$$ROE = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BSIZE + \beta_2 BIND + \beta_3 CEO + \beta_4 AUDCOM + \epsilon$$

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The regression analysis provides the following results:

TABLE 2: MODEL SUMMARY					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.714	.510	.380	12.89776	2.107

Source: Calculated through SPSS Software

From the above Table 2, it can be seen that when explanatory variables (independent variables), viz. Board Size, Board Independence, CEO Duality and Audit Committee were regressed on Return on Equity (ROE) an  $R^2$  value of 0.510 is noticed. Given the value of Adjusted  $R^2$  of 0.380 indicates that the independent variables (Board Size, Board Composition, CEO Status and Audit Committee) explain 38% of the systematic variation in the dependent variable (ROE).

TABLE 3: ANOVA <sup>b</sup>					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2600.767	4	650.192	3.909	.023 <sup>a</sup>
Residual	2495.284	15	166.352		
Total	5096.051	19			

a. Predictors: (Constant), AUDCOMP, BIND, BSIZE, CEO

b. Dependent Variable: ROE

Source: Calculated through SPSS

The table 3 shows that the value of F is 3.909, with a p value of .023, which is significant at 0.05. This shows that model is significant as p value is less than 0.05. This means that there is a significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables as a group.

TABLE 4: COEFFICIENTS <sup>a</sup>					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-13.561	21.653		-.626	.541
BSIZE	-1.551	1.327	-.223	-1.169	.261
BIND	52.900	24.016	.425	2.203	.044
CEO	-27.314	7.853	-.684	-3.478	.003
AUDCOMP	5.200	3.448	.275	1.508	.152

a. Dependent Variable: ROE

Source: Calculated through SPSS Software

The regression coefficients of independent variables provides the magnitude and the direction of the relationships with dependent variables. The regression results reveal that only Board Independence has a positive and significant impact on ROE whereas CEO Duality has negative impact on financial performance. Thus, Hypothesis  $H_2$  and  $H_3$  are rejected. However, Board Size and Audit Composition do not have significant impact on ROE as P values are greater than 5%. Hence  $H_1$  and  $H_4$  is accepted.

## CONCLUSION

The study examined the empirical relationship between Corporate Governance and financial Performance of IT Companies listed on CNX IT Index of NSE. The sample size comprises all the 20 companies of CNX IT Index and financial year 2012-13 is considered for the study. The impact of corporate governance variables namely Board Size, Board Independence, CEO Duality, and Audit Committee is studied on firm's financial performance as measured by Return on Equity (ROE). The finding that the board independence has a positive significant impact on firm's financial performance is congruous to Krivogorsky (2006) and Chan and Li (2008). Empirical findings regarding CEO Duality are similar to prior studies conducted by Ehikioya (2009), Gull et al (2013) and Ujunwa (2013), unveiling a negative significant impact on firm's performance. Board Size and Audit Composition do not have significant impact on financial performance of companies. Significantly, it can be inferred from regression results that overall corporate governance mechanisms has a positive impact on the financial performance of IT companies in India.

## LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is subject to certain limitations such as small sample size which consists of only listed IT companies of CNX IT Index. Only four corporate governance variables is considered in the study and the financial performance is measured through only one measure i.e. ROE. Another limitation is that the time period considered is very short, only financial year 2012-13 is considered.

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**ANNEXURE****COMPANIES OF CNX IT INDEX**

S. No.	Companies	Symbol
1	CMC Ltd.	CMC
2	Hexaware Technologies Ltd.	HEXAWARE
3	NIIT Technologies Limited	NIITTECH
4	Polaris Financial Technology Ltd.	POLARIS
5	Rolta India Ltd.	ROLTA
6	Info Edge (India) Limited	NAUKRI
7	MindTree Ltd.	MINDTREE
8	Mphasis Ltd.	MPHASIS
9	Oracle Financial Services Software Limited	OFSS
10	Tata Consultancy Services Limited	TCS
11	Tech Mahindra Limited	TECHM
12	Vakangee Limited	VAKRANGEE
13	Infosys Limited	INFY
14	HCL Technologies Limited	HCLTECH
15	Wipro Limited	WIPRO
16	Cyient Ltd.	CYIENT
17	Just Dial Limited	JUSTDIAL
18	KPIT Technologies Limited	KPIT
19	Persistent Systems Limited	PERSISTENT
20	eClerx Services Limited	ECLERX

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