

The influence of environmental accounting disclosures on company performance: A meta-analytics review

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Abstract

Environmental accounting is an emerging subject of interest globally that links accounting with environmental management, protection, and preservation. Since then, environmental accounting has become a prominent topic of research around the globe. In recent years, many research studies have linked environmental accounting to company performance but there has been no consensus regarding the influence of environmental accounting on company performance. This study objectively and empirically bridges this research gap by summarizing and analyzing the existing integrated literature about the influence of environmental accounting on company performance using a meta-analysis approach. The study established a fifteen-step procedure for this particular meta-analytic study. This study employed purposive sampling through the help of the pre-established eligibility criteria, 45 primary studies were selected as samples; R Studio software was used to conduct subgroup analysis and meta-regression analysis to analyze the data gathered. This study discovers that environmental accounting disclosure has a relatively weak positive significant influence on company performance based on the population of studies included in the meta-analysis. Further, it was found that publication year, and sample size moderate the influence of environmental accounting disclosure on the company performance, while industry type or sector and the study location indicate an insignificant effect on the link as the results of all moderating variable under study.

Keywords: green accounting, environmental accounting disclosure, company performance, meta-analysis

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Introduction

In an era marked by growing awareness of some of the most serious environmental issues, such as climate change and global warming, and sustainable business practices, the function of corporations in addressing environmental concerns has come under careful scrutiny. Companies are now judged not only by their profitability but also by their overall impact on the environment. Environmental accounting is an emerging subject of interest globally that links accounting with environmental management, protection, and preservation. Since then, environmental accounting has become a prominent topic of research around the globe. In recent years, many research studies have linked environmental accounting to company performance since more and more companies from different sectors across the world are already implementing environmental accounting practices. However, among these studies, there has been no consensus regarding the influence of environmental accounting, also known as green accounting, on company performance. This is for the reason that the link between the two constructs is not yet well established as the existing empirical literature is infused with paradoxes and contradicting results. The inconsistent findings from the body of literature have given rise to a variety of, occasionally contradictory conclusions on environmental accounting and business performance. The inconclusive and lack of clarity in the current empirical literature research on the relationship between environmental accounting and performance of companies is what prompted this endeavor.

In light of this, the study wants to objectively and empirically bridge this research gap by summarizing and analyzing the existing integrated literature about the influence of environmental accounting on company performance across countries and sectors using a meta-analysis approach.

Methodology

The study employed meta-analysis, a quantitative research design, to rigorously examine and synthesize existing empirical evidence and provide a comprehensive and objective assessment of the quantitative data available in the literature. In addition, rather than selecting papers at random, this study employed purposive sampling through the help of the pre-established eligibility criteria; 45 primary studies were selected as samples. Generally speaking, the endeavor took a quantitative approach so that empirical data collected and

obtained could be carefully assessed. Besides that, statistical techniques such as metaregression analysis and subgroup analysis were used upon this meta-analytic study. R Studio software was used to conduct subgroup analysis and meta-regression analysis to analyze the data gathered.

The study established a fifteen-step procedure for this particular meta-analytic study: (1) eligibility criteria; (2) literature search; (3) study selection; (4) data extraction/collection; (5) coding procedure; (6) statistical data analysis; (7) effect size pooling; (8) effect size analysis; (9) heterogeneity assessment; (10) influence analysis; (11) forest plotting; (12) publication bias evaluation ; (13) subgroup analysis; (14) meta-regression analysis; and (15) interpretation and reporting.

Findings

Across the forty-five (45) primary studies, the meta-analysis through the randomeffects model analysis yielded a pooled effect size of 0.1551 with a total number of observations of 2,193. This analysis reveals and suggests a statistically significant average effect of environmental accounting disclosures (EAD) on company performance, as measured by the correlation (r = 0.155; p <.0001) across the studies included. However, Qstatistics demonstrates statistical significance (Q = 0.0078) indicating a substantial presence level of heterogeneity among the primary studies, suggesting notable differences in their findings on impact of EADs.

The studies were categorized based on their similarities in terms of the moderator variables. This grouping allowed for a more focused analysis of the moderating influences. The first group investigated how publication year could potentially influence the observed relationship between Environmental Accounting Disclosure (EAD) and company performance. Similar trends emerge with larger effect sizes in post-2019 studies (0.181) compared to smaller effect sizes in pre-2019 studies (0.121), which are respectively larger than and smaller than the global effect size. However, although post-2019 studies show a stronger relationship between EAD and company performance, the test for subgroup differences is non-significant (p = 0.394), suggesting the observed differences might be due to chance.

For the second group of studies, the type of industry also appears not to significantly influence the link between EAD and performance. The two industry sectors considered in

this study—environmentally sensitive (Mining and oil) and non-environmentally sensitive (others)—showed lower (0.113) and higher (0.171) effect sizes, respectively, compared to the overall effect size. Regarding the third group, study location as a moderator reveals that the developed and developing subgroups have larger effect sizes (0.222 and 0.156, respectively) than the overall effect size (0.155). However, the correlations between these study locations are also not statistically significant (p-value = 0.6150). The relationship between EAD and performance also appears unaffected by sample size in the last group. Studies with smaller sample sizes showed a slightly higher effect size (0.1881) compared to those with larger sample sizes (0.1507). However, the Q-statistic for between-group differences was not statistically significant (p-value = 0.6182).

The meta-regression analysis was then conducted to explore further the relationship between potential moderators and the effect sizes. Based on the main estimate for publication year (-0.1153), industry type (-0.0672), and study location (0.0281) with the p-value of (0.1143, 0.4879, 0.8487) respectively showed they are non-significant, means that the average impact of these factors appears similar across all groups. For the sample size (-0.1751; p-value = 0.0200), suggests that on average, larger sample sizes are associated with statistically significant but slightly lower outcome values. However, when interaction terms are taken into consideration, the random effects of the estimate exhibit substantial interaction with both sample size and publication year ($\beta = 0.6789$, 0.5804; p-value = 0.0064, 0.0175), respectively. This implies that the impact of the publication year and sample size on the outcome actually varies across different groups.

Conclusion

This study discovers that environmental accounting disclosure has a relatively weak positive significant influence on company performance based on the population of studies included in the meta-analysis. Further, it was found that publication year, and sample size moderate the influence of environmental accounting disclosure on the company performance, while industry type or sector and the study location indicate an insignificant effect on the link as the results of all moderating variables under study.

In this era of significant environmental activism, all companies, especially those in environmentally sensitive sectors, should prioritize environmental sustainability within the framework of green accounting initiatives. Companies should consider implementing comprehensive environmental accounting disclosure practices, such as sustainability reports, integrated reporting, and other forms of environmental disclosure. Furthermore, governments and policymakers should consider introducing mandatory environmental disclosure requirements for companies and mandate environmental reporting in annual reports through legislation. For further potential investigation in this field, exploring various potential variables to gain a much deeper understanding of the distinctions of the connection between Environmental Accounting Disclosure (EAD) and company performance is recommended. This can entail checking out added moderators like firm size, type of disclosures, specific EAD practices, measures of EAD as well as performance, corporate governance, and time horizon. Further study is also expected to deal with more samples to better explore, explain, and look into the EAD-company performance link a lot more accurately and precisely.

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