

Factors Influencing Firm Sustainability Report External Assurance and the Contingent Firm Choice of External Assurance Provider

Abstract

Our study undertakes a global analysis of data corresponding to firm sustainability reports generated by various organizational types including for profit and non-profit entities, listed and non-listed companies and small and large firms. We attempt to understand those factors reasonably expected to influence organizational decisions to assure firm sustainability reports externally and the contingent firm choice of assurance provider. Our research applies a sequential binomial logistical regression analysis to a sample of 4,504 sustainability reports generated in 2015 by organizations from 31 countries. We expect (and identify) several country, firm and report level factors to influence organizational decisions to assure firm sustainability reports externally and the contingent firm choice of external assurance provider. Our results contribute to the extant and inconclusive academic literature relating to external assurance of sustainability reports.

Keywords: Sustainability reports, external assurance, corporate social responsibility (CSR), choice of assurance provider, global reporting initiative