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Sameera is a Ph.D. Candidate in Accounting at the Schulich School of Business, York University. Her work examines how investors use accounting information in their judgment and decisions. Her current focus is on Non-GAAP performance measures and their regulation, for which she uses experimental and qualitative approaches. In her spare time, she loves watching movies with her kids.

Abstract:

Experimental Examination of the IAS 1 Exposure Draft Recommending the Adoption of Management Performance Measures
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In this paper, we examine the effect of a change to International Accounting Standards IAS 1, where firms choosing to disclose adjusted income measures (non-GAAP financial measures) will now be required to report them in the Notes to the financial statements versus the Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A). We seek to provide ex-ante evidence on the effect of proposed changes on investors’ decisions, according to their level of expertise. Using a 2 x 2 experiment with Professionals (CPAs and CFAs) and Non-professionals recruited through Qualtrics Panel, we find that investor expertise strongly influences investor judgment and decision, where Professionals are more likely to invest, find NGFMs more useful and rely on NGFMs more than Nonprofessional. However, whether the NGFM is reported in the MD&A vs the Notes does not affect investor judgment and decisions. Interestingly, reliance on NGFMs differs when NGFMs are disclosed in the MD&A vs Notes depending on investor expertise. Professional Investors are more likely to rely on NGFMs when reported in the Notes, vs Nonprofessional investors rely on NGFMs more when written in the MD&A. This can be attributed to investors’ familiarity as Nonprofessional investors are more conversant with MD&A as a source of information. In contrast, Professionals are accustomed to looking at the Notes associated with the financial statements for their judgment and decision-making. This study’s findings are relevant to practitioners, regulators, standard setters, firms, and investors. Particularly, standard setters need to be cautious when requiring NGFMs to be reported in the Notes, as Nonprofessional investors might ignore and miss the NGFMs information altogether.
Abstract:

**Minority Whistleblowers: Evidence from the LGBTQ+ Community**

I examine how public attention affects whistleblowing activity by minorities, specifically the LGBTQ+ community. I find that whistleblowing increases by 4% during Pride Month (June) in counties that have low protection for LGBTQ+ employees, compared with counties that have high protection for LGBTQ+ employees. In addition, those whistleblowers are more likely to disclose their identity. To provide more direct evidence, I conduct a complementary survey experiment and find that LGBTQ+ respondents' willingness to report misconduct increases during Pride Month. The survey responses suggest that the increase in the willingness to report misconduct arises through reduced concerns about retaliation, reputational effects, and adverse responses from the general public. Overall, my analyses provide evidence that public attention on minorities can increase whistleblowing by reducing the expected cost. My findings are important because systematic under-reporting of misconduct in the workplace can have detrimental consequences for minority employees and exacerbate inequality in the labor market.

**Public Pensions and Firm Tax Avoidance: Evidence from U.S. Gubernatorial Elections**

Concern over environmental, social, and governance (ESG) metrics may lead public pensions to pressure investees to reduce tax avoidance. Numerous financial institutions, including CalPERS and other public pensions, are signatories to the United Nations Principles of Responsible Investment (UNPRI), which advocates for tax fairness and the reduction or elimination of “opportunities for corporate tax abuse (evasion and avoidance).” Using an ordinary least squares regression design, I fail to find evidence that public firms reduce firm-level tax avoidance following increased ownership by public pensions. I also find limited evidence of a reduction in tax avoidance using a difference-in-difference research design with gubernatorial elections serving as exogenous shocks to public pensions' political environment. In all, my study finds limited evidence that public pensions affect firm-level tax avoidance.
Abstract:

The Unintended Effects of Core Audit Team's Review of Shared Audit Center Team's Work

PCAOB findings indicate that auditors may insufficiently utilize firms' quality control mechanisms, such as standard audit methodologies. In response, audit firms recently created U.S.-based audit support groups that promote audit consistency and efficiency by following firm-wide methodologies and performing standard audits of non-complex accounting areas (e.g., accounts receivables) on several engagements simultaneously. These groups—hereafter called the shared audit center (SAC)—are able to conduct audits independently without core teams' oversight. However, following the completion of SACs' evaluations, core teams are required to review and finalize SAC audit results. In this dissertation, I examine if core audit teams' review of the procedures used by SACs, and audit clients' views about the support groups' evidence requests, influence core team reviewers' assessments of the groups' work. I predict that the perceived dissimilarities between the nature and extent of audit procedures utilized by core team reviewers in prior audits and those currently used by SACs will create an association effect such that reviewers will be more likely to scrutinize and disagree with SACs' audit conclusions. Audit clients may also complain that SACs' standard-based evidence requests are excessive. Due to core teams' desire to maintain client relations, such complaints may exacerbate the extent to which reviewers scrutinize and disagree with SACs' conclusions. I propose a 2 x 2 experiment, utilizing audit managers as participants, investigating how SACs' procedure similarity (similar vs. dissimilar) and clients' complaints about SACs (present vs. absent) influence core team reviewers' evaluations of the SAC team's recommendations. This dissertation contributes to the literature and profession by highlighting whether firms obtain their intended audit consistency and efficiency goals through the use of the newly designed SAC groups.