

Paper#: K174

Managerial Views on Sustainability Reporting and Lack thereof

Prabanga Thoradeniya

Monash University

Prabanga.thoradeniya@monash.edu

Janet Lee

Australian National University

Janet.lee@anu.edu.au

Rebecca Tan

Australian National University

Rebecca.tan@anu.edu.au

Aldónio Ferreira

Monash University

Aldonio.ferreira@monash.edu.au

ABSTRACT

This study examines managerial views on sustainability reporting (SR) and the barriers that hinder SR by corporations in Sri Lanka. Current research attention has largely been directed at approaches to SR in developed countries. This study aims to broaden the SR literature from developing country perspective. Drawing on the concepts of attitudes, intention and actual behavioural control within the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), this study seeks to understand the extent to which actual behavioural control may provide insights into the progress of SR in Sri Lanka. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with top and middle level managers of listed and non-listed companies in Sri Lanka. The findings indicate that even though managers have intention to engage in SR, the lack of SR may be attributed to managers' loss of actual control over SR behaviour and a lack of stakeholder pressure for SR. The interviews revealed that factors such as the lack of support and commitment from top management due to low levels of understanding of the concept of SR, a lack of understanding of how to report, a lack of knowledge, resources and support from employees, the limitations of the Global Reporting Initiative's SR guideline and lack of stakeholder pressure, are barriers to corporate SR behaviour. The study provides empirical evidence supporting the role of actual behaviour control in linking intention and behaviour, and finds stakeholder pressure as an additional factor. It also highlights practical implication for Sri Lankan companies to devise more effective strategies towards providing a sufficient degree of actual control to managers over the SR process in order to enhance SR.

Keywords: Sustainability reporting, Sri Lanka, Theory of planned behaviour