

# Integrated reporting and sustainability reporting: An exploratory study of high performance companies

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## Abstract

Copyright © 2016 by Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Purpose - Prior research shows that companies that achieve high performance excel at certain financial objectives. This chapter addresses the question: Do companies that excel at these financial performance objectives also excel in integrated reporting and sustainability reporting? Methodology/approach - We compare a sample of high performance companies (HPC) with a sample of companies that purport to support integrated reporting, and a sample that purport to support sustainability reporting. Our hypotheses are that HPC will equal or exceed the integrated reporting and sustainability reporting practices shown by International Integrated Reporting Committee (IIRC) and Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) companies and US companies will be less at these practices than non-US companies. Findings - Our findings indicate that IIRC companies and GRI companies generally do not meet the high financial performance measures of the HPC. Based on an integrated reporting and sustainability reporting matrix, we show that HPC exhibit equal performance on the practices of sustainability and integrated reporting compared to GRI companies, but both HPC and GRI are lower on these practices than IIRC companies. Also, US companies disclose less information in sustainability reports and integrated reports as compared to non-US companies. Overall, all three groups fall short of full compliance with standards of integrated reporting and sustainability reporting. Originality/value - This chapter provides evidence as to the financial performance and the current state of integrated reporting and sustainability reporting among HPC, GRI, and IIRC companies. This chapter highlights the global need for a generally accepted set of standards for sustainability and integrated reporting practices.

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## Keywords

Financial ratios, Integrated reporting, Performance measurement, Reporting matrix, Sustainability reporting