

Tillämpning av redovisningsnormer Intäkter och avsättningar

Pernilla Lundqvist

Akademisk Avhandling

för avläggande av ekonomie doktorsexamen i företagsekonomi som med tillstånd av
Handelshögskolans fakultetsstyrelse vid Göteborgs universitet framlägges för
offentlig granskning fredagen den 7 november 2014, klockan 13.15 i CG-salen,
Handelshögskolan, Vasagatan 1, Göteborg.



GÖTEBORGS UNIVERSITET
HANDELSHÖGSKOLAN

Application of financial reporting standards Revenue and provisions

Harmonization of financial reporting standards is a goal shared by many countries around the world, with the aim of making companies' financial information comparable. The view is that comparability between companies' financial reports will result in greater transparency and more efficient capital markets and will improve the quality of the financial reports. A major step in this harmonization work is that more than 120 countries now follow International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

The fact that many countries today follow the same set of accounting standards means that harmonization has taken place at a *de jure* level, but it is unclear whether harmonized standards have also led to harmonization in practice (*de facto* harmonization). The aim of comparable financial information will be achieved only when the standards are applied consistently.

The study investigates the factors that influence how individuals apply financial reporting standards in practice and whether conceptions of financial reporting vary between individuals. The investigation consists of a study of annual reports from the years 1930 to 2012, as well as interviews with a number of individuals responsible for financial reporting within the Volvo Group. The interviews were then analyzed using the phenomenographic research method with a view to identifying the different qualitative conceptions of financial reporting. The areas of financial reporting that were the focus of the study are revenue and provisions.

In addition to factors identified in prior literature, a finding of the study is that a significant factor in the application of the standards is individuals' conceptions of financial reporting. For example, this includes views on who is the primary user of financial information, the fundamental principles that form the basis for financial reporting, how standards have been designed and how individual transactions are to be reflected in the financial reporting. Five qualitatively different ways of looking at financial reporting are identified, indicating that conceptions of financial reporting have not developed in harmony with the standards. Older approaches to financial reporting exist in parallel with new influences from global standards.

Diversity in conceptions of financial reporting leads to a risk that there will be differences in the application of standards (inconsistent application), which in turn complicates comparability. This indicates a great need for education if harmonization is to be achieved in practice.

Key words: comparability, conception, consistent application, contingent liability, *de jure* harmonization, *de facto* harmonization, IFRS, provisions, phenomenography, revenue