Bridging Sustainability and Strategy: The Role of Integrated Reporting in Corporate Communication

MASATO IDEI, University of Twente, The Netherlands

This research explores the role of Integrated Reporting as a strategic communication tool linking corporate sustainability to long-term value creation. While IR is anticipated to enhance transparency, strategic relevance, and stakeholder inclusiveness, its practical application often varies and can be somewhat symbolic. Employing a systematic literature review alongside a manual assessment of the IR practices of Nestlé, Toyota, and Sasol, this study examines the alignment between the theoretical aspirations of IR and its practical outcomes. The analysis identifies four key themes (strategic alignment, stakeholder articulation, assurance legitimacy, and contextual contingencies), that highlight both the opportunities and challenges associated with IR in facilitating substantial sustainability integration. The findings indicate that factors such as institutional context, industry dynamics, and internal governance significantly influence IR practices.

Additional Key Words and Phrases: Integrated Reporting, Sustainability, Corporate Strategy, Stakeholder Engagement, Non-Financial Capital

1 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, sustainability has emerged as a critical priority for investors, industry leaders, and society at large [8]. The escalating challenges associated with environmental degradation, social injustice, and ecological grievances have intensified calls for ethical leadership. There is an increasing expectation that companies will act responsibly and invest systematically in the long-term well-being of society [38]. Consequently, the traditional focus on immediate financial performance is no longer adequate for evaluating corporate success. [50]. Stakeholders and the broader public are increasingly calling for transparency about how organizations manage their Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) responsibilities [33], aligning these activities with overarching strategic goals [32].

This shift in expectations has prompted a transformation in corporate reporting practices. To address these more comprehensive communication needs and to reduce communication costs [19], firms have progressively turned to voluntary reporting initiatives such as sustainability reports [47] and, more recently, Integrated Reporting (IR) [58]. IR represents a novel approach to corporate communication, striving to integrate financial data into a cohesive narrative that illustrates how a firm generates, sustains, or defines its value creation over time [24]. The purpose of IR is to enhance accountability and to promote strategic considerations that recognize the interdependence of various factors, including financial, human, social, intellectual, and natural assets [43] [21].

Since the International Integrated Reporting Council (IIRC) introduced the concept in its first framework [22], IR has garnered global attention and is positioned as a mechanism to bridge traditional financial and sustainability reporting [55]. By fostering "*Integrated Thinking*", IR encourages companies to transcend conventional perspectives, taking into account diverse stakeholder interests and varying time horizons [13]. Thus, IR aims not only to enhance transparency but also to influence how companies perceive and manage their value-adding activities [50].

However, despite its appeal, IR is not without limitations. Concerns persist regarding the interpretation of IR [37], particularly in terms of non-financial reliability and the meaningful integration of sustainability into core operations [5], as opposed to merely using IR as a symbolic gesture [43]. Additionally, some critics argue that the current form of IR is predominantly investor-focused, potentially neglecting broader stakeholder interests [31].

In response to these dynamics, academic interest in IR has rapidly expanded, evolving from conceptual frameworks to empirical investigations. Recent studies have sought to assess the extent of IR adoption within organizations [8] [29], categorizing these assessments into bibliometric, survey-based, and census-based studies. These inquiries examine factors such as the quality and reliability of integrated disclosures [20] and the effectiveness of IR in achieving stakeholder inclusivity [15]. This trend is expected to continue as the IR movement develops and as the rigor of management and governance innovations increases.

2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

Despite the fact that IR is widely used as a means of balancing sustainability with business strategy [58] and enhancing stakeholder communication [46], it is still not clear how successful this alignment is manifested in real-world reporting practices. The widespread adoption of IR frameworks is evidence of increasing corporate appetite for innovative business strategies that align with sustainability initiatives [13]. However, the extent to which these reports reflect real strategic integration of sustainability is still unknown.

While much of the work in the literature focuses on the theory and promise of IR, often based on interviews or surveys to investigate the intent of management or the perception of stakeholders, there has been a lack of focus on the content of the reports themselves as primary sources. This creates a gap in understanding how IR is being used as a practical communication tool, particularly in terms of articulating long-term value creation and addressing stakeholder-oriented concerns.

To address this, the present study systematically evaluates published IRs and synthesizes existing empirical evidence to examine how IR reflects sustainability integration and transparency. In doing so, it seeks to answer the following research questions:

(1) *How is sustainability integrated into the broader corporate strategy through integrated reporting?*
(2) *What role does integrated reporting play in shaping external perceptions of a company's long-term value creation?*

TScIT 43, July 4, 2025, Enschede, The Netherlands
© 2025 University of Twente, Faculty of Electrical Engineering, Mathematics and Computer Science.
Permission to make digital or hard copies of all or part of this work for personal or classroom use is granted without fee provided that copies are not made or distributed for profit or commercial advantage and that copies bear this notice and the full citation on the first page. To copy otherwise, or republish, to post on servers or to redistribute to lists, requires prior specific permission and/or a fee.

(3) *What gaps can be identified between the intended strategic use of integrated reporting for sustainability and its practical application in published reports?*

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. Section 3 presents a review of key academic literature and recent developments in sustainability disclosure and IR, establishing the conceptual and practical context for the study. Section 4 outlines the methodological approach, including data selection and the analytical framework used to address the research questions. Section 5 synthesizes the main thematic findings from the literature review, while Section 6 complements this by offering additional insights derived from a manual evaluation of selected IRs. Section 7 discusses the findings in relation to the research questions posed in the problem statement and provides the concluding reflections of the study. Any supplementary material is included in Section 8, which contains the appendices.

3 BACKGROUND

IR has been regarded as a sophisticated method for enhancing corporate transparency related to sustainability [55], aiming to integrate financial data with a comprehensive set of structured and unstructured information [24]. It was developed to reflect how organizations generate value not just financially, but in broader environmental, social, and governance dimensions [33]. The core of this model is the International Integrated Reporting Framework (IIRF) [22], which encourages organizations to articulate how their strategies, governance, performance, and external context collectively contribute to the creation of short-, medium-, and long-term value [17]. This approach marks a shift from traditional reporting models by focusing on multiple forms of capital [62]: financial, manufactured, intellectual, human, social, relational, and natural. These “six capitals” serve as the basis for a holistic understanding of the impact on the business [43].

The IIRF emphasizes principles such as materiality, stakeholder engagement, conciseness, and connectivity of information [27]. Rather than offering prescriptive standards, the framework is based on guiding principles and content elements [21], making its adoption more adaptable but also more subjective [52]. Companies have found it challenging to fully embed the multicapital approach in their reporting practices [13], often due to limitations in data integration and internal structures [54]. Despite these challenges, IR continues to be promoted as a means to align organizational decision making with sustainable development goals [45], offering a more comprehensive alternative to financially focused reporting frameworks [13].

Although the original vision of IR was to support both financial market participants and a wider range of stakeholders [4], in practice, the framework has often leaned heavily toward serving investor interests [55]. This trend was further reinforced following institutional changes, such as the merger between the IIRC and SASB, which consolidated a more capital markets-focused approach to SR [16] [3]. Recent initiatives like the formation of the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) reflect ongoing attempts to reconcile investor-oriented and stakeholder-oriented perspectives [10]. However, questions remain about how well IR accommodates the needs of diverse stakeholder groups [36], especially given the competing demands of short-term financial reporting and long-term sustainability [49].

With the deepening IR debate, scholars and practitioners have attempted to assess the practical application and theoretical basis of IR [15]. Though earlier foci were on articulating its principles and raising awareness, a turn to empirical investigations examining its everyday effects has been noticeable. This evolution has brought tensions over the inclusion of stakeholders in IR to the fore as well [57]. While often billed as a forum for sustainable and stakeholder-engaged dialogue [48], criticism continues that adoption in practice falls short of these promises [36].

Stakeholder Theory (ST) has emerged as one of the most relevant conceptual lenses through which to understand IR [60] [9]. It moves away from the traditional view that focuses solely on maximizing shareholder value and emphasizes the importance of considering the interests of all stakeholders impacted by corporate decisions. Within the framework of IR, ST suggests that companies must recognize their place within a network of relationships that includes employees, communities, suppliers, and regulators, in addition to investors [59]. This perspective encourages organizations to take into account the diverse interests of various stakeholders and to view sustainability as a critical element of long-term success [38]. Consequently, IR should not only serve as a platform for communication but also act as a catalyst for accountability and ethical consideration [51].

However, critics argue that IR has not fully realized the inclusive vision proposed by ST [15]. Instead of providing an opportunity to engage all stakeholders in a comprehensive and balanced manner, IR tends to favor the interests of investors [31], manifested especially where reporting is voluntary [40]. Dominance of financial narratives and absence of social and environmental aspects in most IRs hint at a disconnect between theory and practice [23]. This has given rise to questions about whether IR is genuinely supportive of transformative sustainability practices or merely a symbol to maintain legitimacy and to respond to regulatory expectations [1].

Moreover, while IR and SR have some common aims, such as transparency, stakeholder confidence, and trust [37], they are not interchangeable. SRs report on social and environmental performance in even more complete detail and usually according to benchmarks such as those from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) [38]. IR, however, tends to focus more on strategic and financial topics, including when addressing ESG [29]. Despite their common goals of improving corporate accountability [7], IR is frequently criticized for its narrow scope of organizational communication with stakeholders [46] and for its restricted understanding of "*Value Creation*", in IIRC’s terms [24].

4 METHODOLOGY

This research adopts a qualitative methodological approach, combining a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) [39] [28] with a manual evaluation of selected IRs. These methods are selected to provide both theoretical insights and practical evidence regarding the role of IR in sustainability communication. The SLR will allow for a structured examination of peer-reviewed academic studies and conceptual frameworks on IR and sustainability. In parallel, a manual content analysis of real-world IRs will provide a grounded understanding of how these reports are constructed and perceived in practice.

4.1 Systematic Literature Review

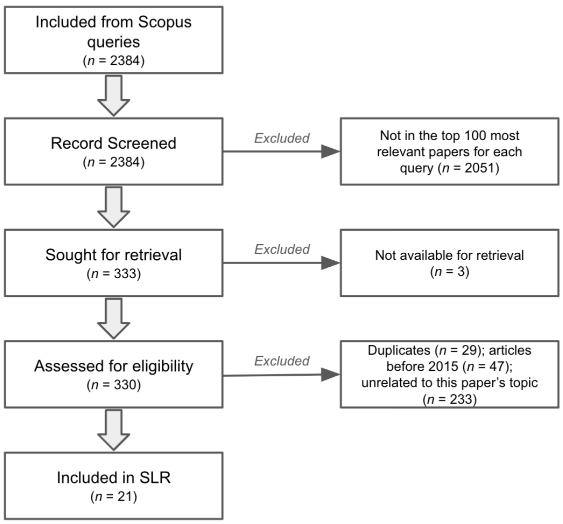

Fig. 1. Phases of Conducting an SLR

This paper employs an SLR approach to investigate the relationship between IR and firm strategy within the context of sustainability communication. The choice to incorporate an SLR is substantiated by its rigorous methodological framework, transparency, and relevance to intricate and evolving areas of literature. The SLR utilizes a meticulously defined protocol and a staged review process to provide a comprehensive and objective assessment of the accumulated research, while still allowing for analytical flexibility in the identification and exploration of emerging themes.

4.1.1 Research Design and Protocol.

Following the "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses" (PRISMA) guidelines [34], this review was designed to combine structure with evaluative depth. A review protocol was developed to establish inclusion and exclusion criteria, data sources, and a search and selection process. Unlike fully automated bibliometric screening approaches, this review prioritized manual relevance assessment, allowing for a more targeted and interpretive evaluation of the literature.

Inclusion criteria were based on topical relevance to the key topics of this study, such as *IR*, *sustainability*, and *stakeholder engagement*. Only peer-reviewed journal articles published in English were considered. Empirical studies (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods) were included, encompassing approaches such as case studies, interviews, content analysis, and surveys. To maintain focus on contemporary IR practices, only studies published from 2015 onwards were retained. Earlier studies were excluded to reflect the period of rapid development in the field, especially following the increased global diffusion of the IR framework.

Importantly, no articles were filtered based on journal ranking; instead, selection was driven by topical relevance. Articles were manually reviewed at the title and abstract level, and full texts were assessed where necessary to confirm their focus on IR. Publications that only mentioned IR in passing or focused exclusively on other disclosure models, such as stand-alone CSR, ESG, or SRs, were excluded unless IR was a primary focus of analysis.

4.1.2 Data Collection and Search Strategy.

All literature was sourced exclusively from the *Scopus* database, which provides extensive coverage across academic disciplines relevant to this research. Scopus was selected as the sole source for its reliability, consistency, and extensive indexing of high-quality, peer-reviewed journals. Notably, Scopus indexes a larger number of journals than other databases for articles published after the year 2015, which aligns with the temporal scope of this review. Therefore, no other databases were used.

Search queries were constructed manually using combinations of relevant keywords such as "*integrated reporting*", "*IIRC*", "*corporate strategy*", and "*sustainability*" (Section 8.2). These search terms were applied to titles, abstracts, and keywords within Scopus to retrieve studies that explicitly engaged with IR themes.

In cases where individual search queries returned more than 100 results, only the first 100 most relevant were kept for further screening. This limitation was necessary due to the manual nature of the relevance evaluation in the following phases. Retaining a manageable and focused sample allowed for a more thorough and meaningful assessment of the selected studies, especially during the content analysis stage. Ultimately, this search strategy provided a high-quality and tightly scoped set of articles that directly addressed the research questions (Section 8.3).

4.1.3 Analytical Approach.

The final pool of selected articles was subjected to thematic analysis. Inductive content evaluation was applied to identify and structure the literature into four primary categories: *"IR Quality and Strategic Integration"*, *"Stakeholder Communication and Value Perception"*, *"Assurance and Report Credibility"*, and *"IR Adoption and Contextual Influences"*. These themes align with the broader logic of "antecedents–practices–outcomes", allowing for a coherent examination of how and why IR is implemented, how it is operationalized, and what impacts it generates both internally and externally.

4.2 IR Manual Evaluation

To complement the insights obtained from the SLR, a compact manual evaluation was conducted on selected IRs. While the SLR offered a broad understanding of academic perspectives on IR practices, certain aspects, particularly the practical application of materiality, assurance mechanisms, and stakeholder responsiveness, remained underexplored due to the limitations of empirical coverage in the literature. This manual review seeks to bridge that gap by offering a focused, practice-based assessment of recent IR disclosures.

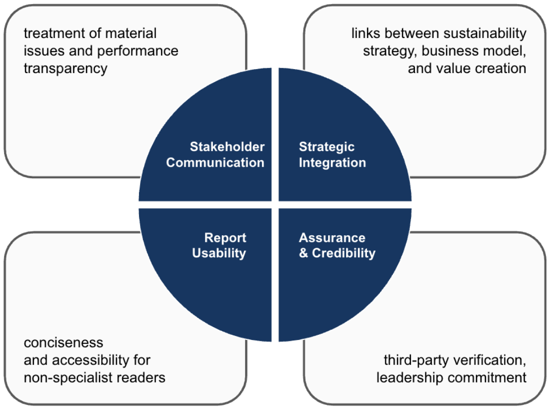

Fig. 2. Four Core Assessment Dimensions

Dimension	Key Focus Area	Guiding Questions
Strategic Integration	Strategy & Value Creation	Does the report clearly link sustainability strategy with value creation using multi-capital logic?
	Business Model	Is the business model explained in a way that shows how the organization creates value over time?
Stakeholder Communication	Stakeholder Focus & Materiality	Does the report address stakeholder concerns and describe how material issues were identified?
	Performance Transparency	Are both positive and negative sustainability outcomes disclosed?
Credibility and Assurance	Assurance & Verification	Is there any evidence of internal audit, third-party verification, or external assurance of non-financial data?
	CEO Vision & Governance Commitment	Is there a clear statement from leadership reflecting integrated thinking and sustainability commitment?
Report Usability	Conciseness & Accessibility	Is the report concise, easy to navigate, and understandable for stakeholders beyond financial analysts?

Fig. 3. A Compact Assessment Matrix

The evaluation was guided by a compact assessment matrix (see Fig. 3) designed by adapting key elements from an established IR scoreboard framework [44], with refinements to align with the research questions of this study. The matrix centers on dimensions that are directly related to the strategic use of IR (RQ1), its role in communicating value to stakeholders (RQ2), and the credibility of its practical implementation (RQ3).

Each report was assessed across four core dimensions:

(1) *Strategic Integration* (e.g., links between sustainability strategy, business model, and value creation)
(2) *Stakeholder Communication* (e.g., treatment of material issues and performance transparency)
(3) *Assurance and Credibility* (e.g., third-party verification, leadership commitment)
(4) *Report Usability* (e.g., conciseness and accessibility for non-specialist readers)

Each criterion within these dimensions was scored, and qualitative comments were also recorded to capture nuances in reporting style or emphasis.

This manual evaluation does not aim to produce generalizable results but rather to provide illustrative, real-world support to the themes and findings identified through the literature review. It serves as a complementary method to examine the degree of alignment between the aspirations of IR frameworks and their observable implementation in practice.

5 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF IR LITERATURES

Following the background discussion of IR and the development of the IIRF in the section 3, this section presents a thematic review of the literature analyzed in this study. The goal is to systematically examine how IR is applied and interpreted across various organizational contexts, and how it responds to the challenges and aspirations associated with sustainability integration, value creation, and transparency.

To address the research questions (namely, *how sustainability is embedded into corporate strategy through IR*, *how IR influences external perceptions of corporate value*, and *what gaps exist between intended and actual IR practices*), four key themes have been identified. These themes emerged from the recurring patterns and insights observed in the reviewed literature and serve as lenses through which the role and impact of IR can be critically evaluated.

Together, these themes provide a comprehensive picture of the current state of IR and reveal both its potential and its limitations in achieving meaningful integration of sustainability into corporate reporting.

5.1 IR Quality and Strategic Integration

IR aims to offer a comprehensive view of a company's strategy, governance, performance, and prospects by integrating both financial and non-financial information [36] [11]. At the core of this ambition lies the quality of the report, which is largely measured by how effectively it aligns with the IIRF [11] and how well it integrates sustainability into strategic planning and corporate disclosures [5]. Despite its conceptual strength, the literature reveals that IR quality often varies significantly in practice [30] [61] and faces multiple challenges that limit its potential to drive strategic integration [41] [5].

5.1.1 Conceptual Strength vs Practical Reality.

A high-quality IR should reflect a deep connection between sustainability initiatives and the company's broader strategic goals [24]. It should adequately address all six capitals [43] [2] and demonstrate how the organization creates value over time [56]. However, multiple studies suggest that companies frequently struggle with this level of depth and integration [41] [5]. Reports often lack forward-looking information and present only superficial references to sustainability performance [53]. This issue is exacerbated by a tendency to prioritize narrative descriptions of actions over concrete performance metrics [12], particularly when actual sustainability achievements are weak [53].

5.1.2 *Strategic Disclosure Challenges.*

Several explanations have been proposed for this underperformance. A prominent one is the reluctance of companies to disclose sensitive strategic information that could potentially compromise competitive advantage or expose poor sustainability performance [53]. This has led to a situation where companies are more willing to share generalized commitments rather than measurable outcomes or future-oriented strategies [21]. As a result, IR often fails to meet its goal of being a truly strategic document that informs both internal and external stakeholders.

Moreover, the concept of *Integrated Thinking*, which implies a cohesive and long-term approach to decision-making that takes into account various types of capital [42] [14], is not always reflected in the quality of IRs [52]. While a number of firms may have adopted the IR framework, they often do so without fully embedding integrated thinking into their strategic and operational processes [26]. This disconnect undermines the transformative potential of IR [61] and relegates it to a compliance exercise rather than a tool for strategic integration [5].

Another recurring theme in the literature is the inconsistency in the application of the IIRF principles across companies and sectors [43]. Although the framework is principle-based [52], which allows flexibility, it also leads to a wide disparity in reporting quality [36]. For instance, while some companies excel in governance and performance disclosures, they falter when it comes to articulating business models or future outlooks in relation to the six capitals. Materiality assessments are also frequently underdeveloped [5], lacking clear explanation of how key issues were identified and prioritized [42].

5.1.3 *Internal Benefits of the IR Process.*

Interestingly, some studies suggest that IR can improve internal processes, such as risk assessment and cross-functional collaboration, even if the resulting reports are not always of high quality [25] [52]. This indicates a partial internalization of integrated thinking, suggesting that the process of preparing an IR may hold intrinsic value irrespective of the report's external impact [12].

5.2 Stakeholder Communication and Value Perception

One of the central goals of IR is to enhance stakeholder communication [56] and reshape how companies convey their value creation processes [43]. While traditional financial reports primarily target investors [24] [5], IR aims to provide a more holistic view that considers a broader range of stakeholders [25]. However, the literature reveals that while IR has contributed to improving communication in some respects [26], it still faces limitations in achieving its full potential as a stakeholder-oriented tool [36].

IR encourages companies to disclose how they create value over time through the interaction of various types of capital [5] [43], including human, social, and natural. This multidimensional perspective aligns with the growing demand from stakeholders for greater transparency around ESG issues [21]. Despite this, many reports continue to focus disproportionately on financial capital [42] and provide insufficient information about how companies are managing and leveraging non-financial capital [5].

5.2.1 *Investor-Centric Focus.*

One reason for this shortfall is IR's implicit prioritization of financial capital providers. Although the IIRF includes stakeholders as a guiding principle [53], in practice, many reports are structured to satisfy the expectations of investors and analysts rather than those of broader stakeholder groups [5]. As a result, disclosures often emphasize financial implications of sustainability rather than social or environmental outcomes themselves [11]. This compromises the stakeholder communication function of IR and limits its capacity to foster mutual understanding and trust [61].

Nonetheless, there is evidence that IR has improved certain aspects of communication. For instance, firms adopting IR tend to offer more narrative-driven, context-rich reports that provide insights into strategic direction, governance, and risk management [26] [21]. Such content helps readers, particularly investors, understand the company's long-term prospects and strategic positioning [36]. Some studies have also found that IR adoption leads to increased stock liquidity [26] and improved analyst forecast accuracy [52] [24], suggesting that IR enhances the information environment in capital markets.

5.2.2 *IR's Limited Value for Broader Stakeholders.*

However, for non-investor stakeholders such as employees, communities, and NGOs, the value of IR remains limited. These groups often seek specific [36], actionable information on social and environmental performance, which IR reports frequently underdeliver. Compared to SRs based on frameworks like the GRI [5], IRs are often less comprehensive in addressing stakeholder-specific concerns [42].

An important dimension of stakeholder communication is the extent to which companies engage stakeholders in the reporting process. Materiality assessments are meant to reflect stakeholder input [61] [35], yet in many cases, they are carried out internally with little transparency [43] or external validation [36]. This reduces the credibility of the report [42] and its relevance to stakeholder groups beyond shareholders [36]. When stakeholder voices are not genuinely reflected in the report content, the document risks becoming a tool of impression management rather than a platform for accountability [43].

5.2.3 *Readability and Format Concerns.*

Another issue is the complexity and length of some IRs. Especially in voluntary reporting regimes, companies tend to produce lengthy documents filled with strategic content [52], which can overwhelm readers and dilute the key messages. Conversely, in regulated environments such as South Africa, reports are generally shorter and more focused, which improves clarity and accessibility.

5.3 Assurance and Report Credibility

Assurance and credibility are critical dimensions of IR that predetermine if stakeholders can rely on the information disclosed [24]. While IR aspires to promote transparency, accountability, and stakeholder trust through its multi-capital and principle-based approach [43], many studies highlight that these goals are often undermined by the absence of effective assurance mechanisms [30] and governance structures [5]. This theme explores the role of internal and external controls, assurance practices, and board involvement in enhancing or compromising the credibility of integrated reports.

A significant issue in IR is that assurance practices are still inadequately developed and lack consistency. Unlike financial reporting, which is governed by standardized audit procedures, IRs seldom undergo external verification. Where assurance is present, it is often limited to certain sections, typically the financial components, leaving ESG and other non-financial disclosures unverified [5] [11]. This fragmented approach raises concerns about the overall integrity of the report [25], especially since stakeholders increasingly rely on ESG data to assess long-term value and risk [21] [61].

Some studies suggest that the principle-based nature of the IIRF contributes to this problem. The flexibility afforded to companies in how they implement the framework means there is no universally accepted method for assuring IRs [43]. As a result, companies often interpret assurance requirements loosely or avoid them altogether [21]. This lack of standardization diminishes the perceived reliability of IR [36], particularly for external stakeholders such as investors and NGOs [42].

5.3.1 *Governance and Internal Accountability.*

Governance structures, such as sustainability committees and diverse boards, have been identified as factors that can improve the credibility of IRs [24]. Firms with robust governance mechanisms are more likely to produce high-quality, transparent reports [43]. Board involvement in materiality assessments, stakeholder engagement, and ESG strategy development enhances internal accountability and signals a genuine commitment to integrated thinking [61] [35]. However, such practices are not yet widespread, and many organizations lack the internal capacity [21] [18] or motivation to invest in strong assurance systems [26].

There is also a gap in how companies address future-oriented information. Since IR is meant to inform stakeholders about long-term value creation, it includes forward-looking statements that are inherently uncertain [11] [42]. Auditors and assurance providers often hesitate to verify these predictions due to legal and practical risks [5]. This issue further weakens the credibility of IR, as users may perceive forward-looking disclosures as aspirational rather than evidence-based [21].

5.3.2 *Data Infrastructure and Integration Gaps.*

Another aspect is the role of internal control systems and data infrastructure. Effective IR requires that companies consolidate financial and non-financial data from various departments, which can be a complex and resource-intensive process [11]. Inconsistent data sources, poor integration of information systems, and lack of internal audit mechanisms lead to reports that are either incomplete or selectively biased [43]. Improving data governance and developing integrated systems are therefore essential steps toward more credible reporting [61] [26].

Some scholars propose that assurance could evolve through the inclusion of context-based metrics and multi-capital scorecards, which provide more structured and comparable data across the six capitals [21] [2]. These tools could help standardize assurance practices and give stakeholders a clearer picture of a company's sustainability performance [42] [52]. However, widespread adoption remains limited, partly due to the additional costs and expertise required [41].

5.4 IR Adoption and Contextual Influences

The adoption and implementation of IR are deeply influenced by a range of contextual factors, including regulatory environments, cultural norms, industry characteristics, and firm-level capabilities. This theme questions how these external and internal factors influence the quality, orientation, and impact of IR in varying contexts.

One of the most significant contextual factors is the regulatory environment. In jurisdictions where IR is mandatory, such as South Africa, reports tend to be more concise, focused, and standardized [52]. The presence of legal mandates reduces variation in format and content, increases comparability, and improves the clarity of disclosures [43]. Conversely, in countries where IR is voluntary, companies often produce lengthy, complex reports that vary significantly in structure and depth [5]. This inconsistency can confuse stakeholders and reduce the usefulness of IR as a strategic communication tool [14].

5.4.1 *Cultural and Institutional Drivers.*

Cultural and institutional factors also play a key role. For example, companies in countries with strong corporate governance traditions and stakeholder-oriented cultures are more likely to adopt IR practices that emphasize transparency and multi-capital integration [24] [36] [6]. On the other hand, in regions with a narrow focus on shareholder value or weaker regulatory oversight, IR is often used symbolically, to signal legitimacy, rather than to foster genuine integrated thinking [61]. These differences underscore the importance of tailoring IR implementation to local contexts while promoting global harmonization.

At the firm level, size, profitability, and governance capacity significantly affect IR adoption [18]. Larger and more profitable firms are more likely to adopt IR due to their greater resources and exposure to stakeholder scrutiny [25]. They are also better positioned to invest in the infrastructure needed for IR, such as data management systems and cross-departmental collaboration [61]. Firms with sustainability committees or diverse boards are also more likely to produce higher-quality IRs, reflecting a deeper organizational commitment to ESG integration [24].

Industry characteristics matter as well. Companies in environmentally sensitive sectors, such as energy or mining, often face greater pressure from regulators, investors, and civil society to disclose their sustainability impacts [43]. As a result, they tend to have more developed IR practices, though these may sometimes be motivated more by risk management than genuine transparency [36] [5]. Meanwhile, firms in less scrutinized sectors may adopt IR at a slower pace or focus primarily on financial disclosures [30].

5.4.2 *IR as a Tool for Internal Transformation.*

Despite these variations, there is growing consensus that IR can serve as a catalyst for internal transformation, regardless of context. The process of preparing an IR often prompts firms to rethink their strategies, improve data integration, and engage in more meaningful stakeholder dialogue [24] [61]. However, without adequate external incentives or internal motivation, the depth and effectiveness of these changes remain limited [5] [25].

6 IR MANUAL EVALUATION

As a complementary exercise to the SLR, a manual evaluation was conducted on the IR practices of three companies: Nestlé (Switzerland), Toyota (Japan), and Sasol (South Africa). These companies were deliberately selected to reflect variation in sector, geography, and reporting environments.

6.1 Case Company Selection and Rationale

Nestlé was chosen as a global consumer goods company operating in a voluntary reporting context, with a reputation for embedding sustainability within brand narratives but without publishing a standalone IR. Toyota represented a non-Western, industrial sector company with strong adherence to the IIRF and mature internal governance mechanisms. Sasol, operating in a high-impact industry within a mandatory IR jurisdiction (South Africa), provided a case of regulated compliance and sector-driven disclosure. Together, the three cases illustrate different interpretations and applications of IR across regulatory and cultural settings.

6.2 Comparative Findings Across Cases

The analysis indicated significant differentiation in the application of IR principles among the included companies, which mirrors variances in regulatory regime, organizational ethos, and industry pressures. Notably, both Toyota and Sasol demonstrate a structured application of the IIRF, with clear linkages between business strategy, sustainability objectives, and value creation processes. These reports provided detailed narratives, well-articulated business models, and explicit stakeholder engagement mechanisms. Toyota's report, in particular, stood out for its integrated presentation of product segmentation, supply chain dynamics, and long-term strategic planning. Sasol's report followed a similar structure and aligned closely with the expectations of the South African reporting environment, where IR is mandated and reinforced by the King IV governance code.

In contrast, Nestlé's report followed a more traditional annual reporting format. While it incorporated non-financial data, the integration of forward-looking sustainability considerations was limited. Most disclosures were retrospective and focused on financial performance. Although the company provided detailed descriptions of value creation within product categories, these remained largely confined to market performance and brand-related narratives, with limited connection to environmental or social outcomes.

6.2.1 Stakeholder Engagement and Materiality.

Stakeholder engagement practices also varied significantly. Toyota and Sasol included dedicated sections addressing stakeholder expectations and material issues, which were used to structure parts of their disclosures. These sections demonstrated a more dialogue-based form of reporting, consistent with the stakeholder-based philosophy of IR. In contrast, Nestlé's approach to materiality was more difficult to assess. While financial risks and compliance concerns were addressed, likely targeting investor audiences, there was no transparent mapping of stakeholder engagement processes or clearly defined material topics from non-financial stakeholders' perspectives. This observation corroborates criticisms in the literature that IR continues to favor capital market audiences at the expense of a wider array of stakeholders.

6.2.2 Performance Transparency and Disclosure Balance.

In terms of performance transparency, both Toyota and Sasol included a mix of positive and negative performance disclosures, contributing to a more balanced narrative. Toyota, for example, acknowledged specific risks and provided candid discussions around areas for improvement. Sasol disclosed both operational achievements and environmental challenges, consistent with the IIRF's call for "warts and all" reporting. Nestlé, by contrast, was less forthcoming with negative performance on non-financial indicators. Although the company recognized financial and operational risk, it had a lack of ESG-related adverse impacts or trade-offs at the sector or company level.

6.2.3 Assurance Structures and Report Credibility.

Assurance and credibility mechanisms further distinguished the reports. Toyota and Sasol offered clear descriptions of internal assurance structures, including the involvement of audit or supervisory committees. These elements supported the reliability of both financial and non-financial disclosures and enhanced overall report credibility. Nestlé's report, though it referenced a third-party review, lacked detail on the scope and rigor of such verification. The absence of explicit leadership commentary, particularly from the CEO or board, also weakened the sense of governance commitment behind the report's contents.

6.2.4 Design, Structure, and Readability.

Finally, across all three cases, the reports were generally well-organized, accessible, and visually coherent. Toyota and Sasol excelled in integrating multiple components of their reporting across linked documents and digital formats, making them easy to navigate and understand. Nestlé's report, while readable and professionally presented, appeared less integrated in structure, reinforcing the impression that sustainability and financial elements were still somewhat compartmentalized.

7 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article aimed to explore the stakeholders' perceived value and its creation, the relationship between sustainability and corporate strategy, and the gaps between the intended and actual reporting practices within the context of IR. This work offers a systematic understanding of the theory and practice of IR by combining SLR and manual review.

The reviews of the literature revealed that IR holds the potential for strategic alignment and the engagement of stakeholders; however, its realization is context-bound and subject to variation. Several reports continued to include no forward-looking information or inadequate integration of non-financial elements. A manual review of selected companies' reports gave a practical understanding of these results. Toyota and Sasol both produced reports of a similar quality as the IIRF, as seen by clear strategies, stakeholder engagement, and independent assurance. Nestlé, on the other hand, adhered to a more traditional annual reporting style with a mere veneer of sustainability integration and limited responsiveness to stakeholders.

One pattern constantly found in both datasets is the role of context. Jurisdictional influences, whether IR is mandatory or voluntary, and particular industry pressures and nuances of organizational culture have a significant impact on both the intent and practice of IR. Sasol, which operates in a regulated environment, demonstrated robust levels of compliance with the reporting requirements. In contrast, Nestlé, in a voluntary system, shared greater investor-focused content. This is consistent with what has been found in the literature, for the companies do make changes to their IR practices due to perceived external expectations and not because of the meaning of integrated thinking.

Stakeholder communication remains one of the most hotly debated features of IR. Despite the aims of the framework for exhaustiveness, the reality often skews towards catering to capital market audiences such as investors. This is best exemplified in the relatively low engagement with non-financial stakeholders in the case of Nestlé. Toyota and Sasol, meanwhile, have so far achieved better by including stakeholder views and anticipating that IR could provide a springboard for better stakeholder engagement. This effectiveness, however, relies on internal activities like materiality assessments and governance engagement, as these can vary widely from one company to another.

The issue of credibility and assurance also stands out. The literature notes the lack of standardized auditing methodologies for non-financial information, an inadequacy echoed by the manual evaluation. Only Toyota and Sasol provided meaningful insight into their assurance and oversight structures, while Nestlé's approach was less transparent. More robust accountability mechanisms around sustainability information are needed to realize both the credibility and change potential of IR.

7.1 Limitations and Future Research

Some limitations need to be acknowledged in this study. First, the SLR scope was limited by the keyword choice, the language selection, and the access to peer-reviewed sources, which could have led us to miss relevant insights from potential literature or industry reports. Also, the review was concerned primarily with scholarly discourse, which often conceives of IR in reified fashions that foster myopic accounting.

Three companies, Nestlé, Toyota, and Sasol, were evaluated for the purposes of this research. The firms relative were chosen because of differences in the industry and geography, and also relevance to the research priority. Although this choice enabled a rich qualitative comparison, the size of the sample limits the ability to generalise findings to other industries or geographical locations. In addition, since the assessment was based on one year of publicly reported data, it may also not capture longer-term changes or strategic changes.

The subjective nature of manual assessment has deterred neutral interpretation. While the matrix was informed by a structured framework derived from previous research, the analysis was ultimately contingent upon qualitative judgment. Weaknesses also include the lack of triangulation with other stakeholder views or interviews, which would provide further depth on why or how internal reporting was used.

Accordingly, there are some considerations for future research through the constraints mentioned above. A more extensive, cross-industry or cross-country study with a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods might lead to an even stronger generalization. Future research could also investigate the longitudinal change of IR among companies and determine how reporting maturity and integrated thinking develop over time.

More generally, future research could explore the assurance of IR in more detail as well as how assurance practices for non-financial information might be standardized and/or enhanced. Similarly, empirical exploration of how internal stakeholders of the IIRC, such as CFOs, sustainability officers, and board members, interpret and adopt the IR frameworks would contribute to a richer context. Finally, going beyond the academic communities, the inclusion of underrepresented territories, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and public sector organisations would further make IR scholarship more inclusive and relevant as a part of sustainability debates.

By drawing on both theoretical and practice-oriented approaches, subsequent studies can contribute to establishing greater credibility, comparability, and strategic relevance of IR in the service of sustainability transitions.

REFERENCES

[1] Rania AbuRaya. 2024. The role of institutional and stakeholder interaction in integrated reporting policy development. *Critical Perspectives on International Business* 20, 1 (2024), 121–152.

[2] Maria Aluchna and Maria Roszkowska-Menkes. 2019. Early Adopters of Integrated Reporting: The Practical Evidence from Warsaw Stock Exchange Companies. *Integrated Reporting: Antecedents and Perspectives for Organizations and Stakeholders* (2019), 319–340.

[3] Cristiano Busco, Costanza Consolandi, Robert G Eccles, and Elena Sofra. 2020. A preliminary analysis of SASB reporting: Disclosure topics, financial relevance, and the financial intensity of ESG materiality. *Journal of Applied Corporate Finance* 32, 2 (2020), 117–125.

[4] Anca Băndoi, Claudiu George Bocean, Mara Del Baldo, Lucian Mandache, Leonardo Geo Mănescu, and Cătălina Soriana Sitnikov. 2021. Including sustainable reporting practices in corporate management reports: Assessing the impact of transparency on economic performance. *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 13, 2 (2021), 1 – 20. https://doi.org/10.3390/su13020940

[5] Mark Anthony Camilleri. 2018. Theoretical insights on integrated reporting: The inclusion of non-financial capitals in corporate disclosures. *Corporate Communications* 23, 4 (2018), 567 – 581. https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-01-2018-0016

[6] Federica Casonato, Federica Farneti, and John Dumay. 2019. From sustainability to integrated reporting: how the IIRC framework affected disclosures by a financial institution in Australia. *Integrated Reporting: Antecedents and Perspectives for Organizations and Stakeholders* (2019), 125–140.

[7] Alexandra F Clayton, Jayne M Rogerson, and Isaac Rampedi. 2015. Integrated reporting vs. sustainability reporting for corporate responsibility in South Africa. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic series* 29 (2015), 7–17.

[8] Antonio Corvino, Federica Doni, and Silvio Bianchi Martini. 2020. Corporate governance, integrated reporting and environmental disclosure: Evidence from the South African context. *Sustainability (Switzerland)* 12, 12 (2020). https://doi.org/10.3390/SU12124820

[9] Renata Paola Dameri and Pier Maria Ferrando. 2022. Value creation disclosure: the international integrated reporting framework revisited in the light of stakeholder theory. *Meditari Accountancy Research* 30, 3 (2022), 739–761.

[10] Charl De Villiers and Ruth Dimes. 2023. Will the formation of the international sustainability standards board result in the death of integrated reporting? *Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change* 19, 2 (2023), 279–295.

[11] Martin Esch, Mike Schulze, and Andreas Wald. 2019. The dynamics of financial information and non-financial environmental, social and governance information in the strategic decision-making process. *Journal of Strategy and Management* 12, 3 (2019), 314 – 329. https://doi.org/10.1108/JSMA-05-2018-0043

[12] Federica Farneti, Federica Casonato, Monica Montecalvo, and Charl de Villiers. 2019. The influence of integrated reporting and stakeholder information needs on the disclosure of social information in a state-owned enterprise. *Meditari Accountancy Research* 27, 4 (2019), 556 – 579. https://doi.org/10.1108/MEDAR-01-2019-0436

[13] Tianyuan Feng, Lorne Cummings, and Dale Tweedie. 2017. Exploring integrated thinking in integrated reporting – an exploratory study in Australia. *Journal of Intellectual Capital* 18, 2 (2017), 330 – 353. https://doi.org/10.1108/JIC-06-2016-0068

[14] Isabel-María García-Sánchez and Ligia Noguera-Gámez. 2017. Integrated reporting and stakeholder engagement: The effect on information asymmetry. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 24, 5 (2017), 395–413.

[15] Isabel-María García-Sánchez and Ligia Noguera-Gámez. 2017. Integrated Reporting and Stakeholder Engagement: The Effect on Information Asymmetry. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 24, 5 (2017), 395 – 413. https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1415

[16] Kuntal Goswami, Mohammed Kazi Saidul Islam, and Winton Evers. 2023. A case study on the blended reporting phenomenon: A Comparative analysis of Voluntary Reporting Frameworks and Standards—GRI, IR, SASB, and CDP. *The International Journal of Sustainability Policy and Practice* 19, 2 (2023), 35.

[17] Nuwan Gunarathne, Mayuri Wijayasundara, Samanthi Senaratne, P D Kumara Kanchana, and Thilini Cooray. 2021. Uncovering corporate disclosure for a circular economy: An analysis of sustainability and integrated reporting by Sri Lankan companies. *Sustainable Production and Consumption* 27 (2021), 787 – 801. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.spc.2021.02.003

[18] Nuwan Gunarathne, Mayuri Wijayasundara, Samanthi Senaratne, PD Kumara Kanchana, and Thilini Cooray. 2021. Uncovering corporate disclosure for a circular economy: An analysis of sustainability and integrated reporting by Sri Lankan companies. *Sustainable Production and Consumption* 27 (2021), 787–801.

[19] Salaheldin Hamad, Fong-Woon Lai, Muhammad Kashif Shad, Zdeňka Konečná, Feybi Ariani Goni, Abdoulmohammad Gholamzadeh Chofreh, and Jiří Jaromír Klemeš. 2022. Corporate governance code and voluntary disclosure of integrated reporting: Evidence from an emerging economy. *Sustainable Development* 30, 6 (2022), 1497 – 1510. https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2323

[20] Abir Hichri. 2023. Audit quality, value relevance, integrated reporting and the moderating role of business ethics: evidence from European ESG firms. *Review of Accounting and Finance* 22, 5 (2023), 663 – 681. https://doi.org/10.1108/RAF-03-2023-0073

[21] Thinh Hoang. 2018. The role of the integrated reporting in raising awareness of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) performance. *Developments in Corporate Governance and Responsibility* 24 (2018), 47 – 69. https://doi.org/10.1108/S2043-052320180000014003

[22] International Integrated Reporting Council. 2013. The International <IR> Framework. https://www.integratedreporting.org/internationalframework-downloads/.

[23] Dragu Ioana and Tiron-Tudor Adriana. 2014. Research agenda on integrated reporting: new emergent theory and practice. *Procedia Economics and Finance* 15 (2014), 221–227.

[24] Teresa Izzo, Antonella Russo, and Gianluca Risaliti. 2025. Integrated Reporting, Stakeholders' Perspective and Sustainable Disclosure: Systematic Insights From Empirical Research. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* (2025). https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.3212

[25] Linda Kannenberg and Philipp Schreck. 2019. Integrated reporting: boon or bane? A review of empirical research on its determinants and implications. *Journal of Business Economics* 89, 5 (2019), 515 – 567. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11573-018-0922-8

[26] Kristin Köhler and Christian Pieter Hoffmann. 2017. *Integrated Reporting: Bridging Investor Relations and Strategic Management.* 209 – 219 pages. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119240822.ch19

[27] AMI Lakshan, Mary Low, and Charl de Villiers. 2022. Challenges of, and techniques for, materiality determination of non-financial information used by integrated report preparers. *Meditari Accountancy Research* 30, 3 (2022), 626–660.

[28] Guillaume Lame. 2019. Systematic literature reviews: An introduction. In *Proceedings of the design society: international conference on engineering design*, Vol. 1. Cambridge University Press, 1633–1642.

[29] Hugo A. Macias and Angelica Farfan-Lievano. 2017. Integrated reporting as a strategy for firm growth: Multiple case study in Colombia. *Meditari Accountancy Research* 25, 4 (2017), 605 – 628. https://doi.org/10.1108/MEDAR-11-2016-0099

[30] Janine Maniora. 2017. Is Integrated Reporting Really the Superior Mechanism for the Integration of Ethics into the Core Business Model? An Empirical Analysis. *Journal of Business Ethics* 140, 4 (2017), 755 – 786. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-015-2874-z

[31] Nadia Mans-Kemp and Cornelis T. van der Lugt. 2020. Linking integrated reporting quality with sustainability performance and financial performance in South Africa. *South African Journal of Economic and Management Sciences* 23, 1 (2020), 1 – 11. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajems.v23i1.3572

[32] Mary-Anne Mcnally, Dannielle Cerbone, and Warren Maroun. 2017. Exploring the challenges of preparing an integrated report. *Meditari Accountancy Research* 25, 4 (2017), 481 – 504. https://doi.org/10.1108/MEDAR-10-2016-0085

[33] Laura Mervelskemper and Daniel Streit. 2017. Enhancing Market Valuation of ESG Performance: Is Integrated Reporting Keeping its Promise? *Business Strategy and the Environment* 26, 4 (2017), 536 – 549. https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.1935

[34] David Moher, Alessandro Liberati, Jennifer Tetzlaff, and Douglas G. Altman. 2010. Preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses: The PRISMA statement. *International Journal of Surgery* 8, 5 (2010), 336–341. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijsu.2010.02.007

[35] Monica Montecalvo, Federica Farneti, and Charl De Villiers. 2018. The potential of integrated reporting to enhance sustainability reporting in the public sector. *Public Money & Management* 38, 5 (2018), 365–374.

[36] Jordi Morros. 2016. The integrated reporting: A presentation of the current state of art and aspects of integrated reporting that need further development. *Intangible Capital* 12, 1 (2016), 336 – 356. https://doi.org/10.3926/ic.700

[37] Belverd E. Needles, Mark L. Frigo, Marian Powers, and Anton Shigaev. 2016. Integrated reporting and sustainability reporting: An exploratory study of high performance companies. *Studies in Managerial and Financial Accounting* 31 (2016), 41 – 81. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-351220160000031019

[38] Belverd E. Needles, Marian Powers, Mark L. Frigo, and Anton Shigaev. 2018. Integrated reporting and sustainability reporting: A global assessment. *Studies in Managerial and Financial Accounting* 33 (2018), 93 – 120. https://doi.org/10.1108/S1479-351220180000033006

[39] Alison Nightingale. 2009. A guide to systematic literature reviews. *Surgery (Oxford)* 27, 9 (2009), 381–384.

[40] Victoria A Obeng, Kamran Ahmed, and Steven F Cahan. 2021. Integrated reporting and agency costs: International evidence from voluntary adopters. *European Accounting Review* 30, 4 (2021), 645–674.

[41] Paolo Perego, Steve Kennedy, and Gail Whiteman. 2016. A lot of icing but little cake? Taking integrated reporting forward. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 136 (2016), 53 – 64. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.01.106

[42] Ika Permatasari and I Made Narsa. 2022. Sustainability reporting or integrated reporting: which one is valuable for investors? *Journal of Accounting and Organizational Change* 18, 5 (2022), 666 – 684. https://doi.org/10.1108/JAOC-12-2020-0204

[43] Giacomo Pigatto, Lino Cinquini, Andrea Tenucci, and John Dumay. 2023. Disclosing value creation in integrated reports according to the six capitals: a holistic approach for a holistic instrument. *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal* 14, 7 (2023), 90 – 123. https://doi.org/10.1108/SAMPJ-11-2021-0493

[44] Anna Pistoni, Lucrezia Songini, and Francesco Bavagnoli. 2018. Integrated Reporting Quality: An Empirical Analysis. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 25, 4 (2018), 489–507. https://doi.org/10.1002/csr.1474 arXiv:https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/csr.1474

[45] Abdullah Jihad Rabaya and Norman Mohd Saleh. 2022. The moderating effect of IR framework adoption on the relationship between environmental, social, and governance (ESG) disclosure and a firm's competitive advantage. *Environment, Development and Sustainability* 24, 2 (2022), 2037 – 2055. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10668-021-01519-5

[46] Pablo Rodríguez-Gutiérrez. 2021. *Corporate Communication and Integrated Reporting: The Materiality Determination Process and Stakeholder Engagement in Spain.* 175 – 195 pages. https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-80071-264-520211011

[47] Silvia Romero, Silvia Ruiz, and Belen Fernandez-Feijoo. 2019. Sustainability reporting and stakeholder engagement in spain: Different instruments, different quality. *Business Strategy and the Environment* 28, 1 (2019), 221 – 232. https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2251

[48] Nick Sciulli and Desi Adhariani. 2023. The use of integrated reports to enhance stakeholder engagement. *Journal of Accounting & Organizational Change* 19, 3 (2023), 447–473.

[49] Kao-Yi Shen. 2017. Compromise between short-and long-term financial sustainability: A hybrid model for supporting R&D decisions. *Sustainability* 9, 3 (2017), 375.

[50] Antonella Silvestri, Stefania Veltri, Andrea Venturelli, and Saverio Petruzzelli. 2017. A research template to evaluate the degree of accountability of integrated reporting: A case study. *Meditari Accountancy Research* 25, 4 (2017), 675 – 704. https://doi.org/10.1108/MEDAR-11-2016-0098

[51] Antonella Silvestri, Stefania Veltri, Andrea Venturelli, and Saverio Petruzzelli. 2017. A research template to evaluate the degree of accountability of integrated reporting: a case study. *Meditari Accountancy Research* 25, 4 (2017), 675–704.

[52] Elisabeth Sinnewe, Troy Yao, and Mahbub Zaman. 2021. Informing or obfuscating stakeholders: Integrated reporting and the information environment. *Business Strategy and the Environment* 30, 8 (2021), 3893 – 3906. https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2847

[53] Riccardo Stacchezzini, Gaia Melloni, and Alessandro Lai. 2016. Sustainability management and reporting: the role of integrated reporting for communicating corporate sustainability management. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 136 (2016), 102 – 110. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2016.01.109
[54] Wendy Stubbs and Colin Higgins. 2014. Integrated reporting and internal mechanisms of change. *Accounting, auditing & accountability journal* 27, 7 (2014), 1068–1089.
[55] Yanqi Sun. 2024. The real effect of innovation in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) disclosures on ESG performance: An integrated reporting perspective. *Journal of Cleaner Production* 460 (2024). https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jclepro.2024.142592
[56] Gulbaira B. Usmanalieva, Marina V. Safronchuk, and Natalia A. Brovko. 2023. Integrated Reporting as an Implementation Tool of ESG Strategies and Anti-inflationary Effect. *Springer Climate* Part F1853 (2023), 275 – 283. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-45830-9_31
[57] Patrick Velte and Martin Stawinoga. 2017. Integrated reporting: The current state of empirical research, limitations and future research implications. *Journal of Management Control* 28 (2017), 275–320.
[58] Stefania Veltri and Antonella Silvestri. 2020. The value relevance of corporate financial and nonfinancial information provided by the integrated report: A systematic review. *Business Strategy and the Environment* 29, 8 (2020), 3038 – 3054. https://doi.org/10.1002/bse.2556
[59] Filippo Vitolla, Nicola Raimo, Michele Rubino, and Antonello Garzoni. 2019. How pressure from stakeholders affects integrated reporting quality. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 26, 6 (2019), 1591–1606.
[60] Filippo Vitolla, Nicola Raimo, Michele Rubino, and Antonello Garzoni. 2019. The impact of national culture on integrated reporting quality. A stakeholder theory approach. *Business strategy and the environment* 28, 8 (2019), 1558–1571.
[61] Judith Wylie and Anne Marie Ward. 2025. The role of stakeholder communication in developing integrated reporting: a longitudinal public sector case study. *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal* (2025). https://doi.org/10.1108/SAMPJ-07-2023-0533
[62] Bengu Yardimci and Aylin Caliskan. 2023. Analysis of Value Creation Disclosures in Logistics Industry: Evidence From Integrated Reports. *Iranian journal of Management Studies* 16, 3 (2023), 725 – 739. https://doi.org/10.22059/ijms.2022.330700.674758

8 APPENDIX

8.1 AI Notice

During the preparation of this work, the author used:
- Grammarly in order to fix spelling mistakes and sentence formation
After using this tool/service, the author reviewed and edited the content as needed and takes full responsibility for the content of the work.

8.2 SLR Queries

No.	Search Query	Results
1	[("integrated reporting" OR "IR" OR "IIRC") AND ("sustainability" OR "ESG")]	[2142]
2	[("integrated reporting" OR "IR" OR "IIRC") AND ("corporate strategy" OR "business strategy")]	[83]
3	[("integrated reporting" OR "IR" OR "IIRC") AND ("corporate communication" OR "stakeholder communication" OR "strategic communication" OR "stakeholder engagement")]	[109]
4	[("integrated reporting" OR "IR" OR “IIRC”) AND ("strategic communication" OR "corporate communication") AND ("corporate strategy" OR "business strategy")]	[2]
5	[("ESG" OR "environmental social governance") AND ("corporate reporting" OR "non-financial disclosure") AND ("strategy" OR "strategic integration")]	[35]
6	[("stakeholder engagement" OR "stakeholder communication") AND ("integrated reporting" OR "IR" OR “IIRC”) AND ("corporate strategy" OR "business strategy")]	[8]
7	[("integrated reporting" OR "IR" OR “IIRC”) AND ("strategic decision-making" OR "corporate decision-making") AND ("sustainability" OR "ESG")]	[5]

8.3 Final Selection of Reviewed Literature

Ref. No.	Title of Article
2	[Early Adopters of Integrated Reporting: The Practical Evidence from Warsaw Stock Exchange Companies]
5	[Theoretical insights on integrated reporting: The inclusion of non-financial capitals in corporate disclosures]
6	[From Sustainability to Integrated Reporting: How the IIRC Framework Affected Disclosures by a Financial Institution in Australia]
11	[The dynamics of financial information and non-financial environmental, social and governance information in the strategic decision-making process]
12	[The influence of integrated reporting and stakeholder information needs on the disclosure of social information in a state-owned enterprise]
14	[Integrated Reporting and Stakeholder Engagement: The Effect on Information Asymmetry]
17	[Uncovering corporate disclosure for a circular economy: An analysis of sustainability and integrated reporting by Sri Lankan companies]
21	[The role of the integrated reporting in raising awareness of environmental, social and corporate governance (ESG) performance]
24	[Integrated Reporting, Stakeholders' Perspective and Sustainable Disclosure: Systematic Insights From Empirical Research]
25	[Integrated reporting: boon or bane? A review of empirical research on its determinants and implications]
26	[Integrated Reporting: Bridging Investor Relations and Strategic Management]
30	[Is Integrated Reporting Really the Superior Mechanism for the Integration of Ethics into the Core Business Model? An Empirical Analysis]
35	[The potential of integrated reporting to enhance sustainability reporting in the public sector]
36	[The integrated reporting: A presentation of the current state of art and aspects of integrated reporting that need further development]
41	[A lot of icing but little cake? Taking integrated reporting forward]
42	[Sustainability reporting or integrated reporting: which one is valuable for investors?]
43	[Disclosing value creation in integrated reports according to the six capitals: a holistic approach for a holistic instrument]
52	[Informing or obfuscating stakeholders: Integrated reporting and the information environment]
53	[Sustainability management and reporting: the role of integrated reporting for communicating corporate sustainability management]
56	[Integrated Reporting as an Implementation Tool of ESG Strategies and Anti-inflationary Effect]
61	[The role of stakeholder communication in developing integrated reporting: a longitudinal public sector case study]