

Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment and Voluntary Disclosure

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February 1, 2025

Abstract: This study examines how the 2017 Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment, which established comprehensive cryptocurrency market regulations, affects voluntary disclosure practices of U.S. firms through information asymmetry channels. While existing literature documents that regulatory changes can have international spillover effects, the mechanisms through which these effects propagate remain unclear, particularly in digital asset markets. Using a difference-in-differences design, we investigate whether enhanced cryptocurrency market transparency in Thailand influences U.S. firms' voluntary disclosure decisions, focusing on companies with significant digital asset exposure or Thai market connections. Our analysis reveals that affected U.S. firms significantly reduced their voluntary disclosure following the regulatory change, with a treatment effect of -0.0844 (t-statistic = 5.56), representing approximately 8.8% of the sample mean disclosure level. This effect strengthens to -0.0883 (t-statistic = 6.53) when controlling for firm characteristics. These findings challenge conventional theories about information asymmetry and voluntary disclosure, suggesting that the relationship between market transparency and voluntary disclosure is more complex in digital asset markets. The study contributes to the literature by providing the first evidence of how cryptocurrency market regulation affects voluntary disclosure practices across borders through the information asymmetry channel, advancing our

understanding of regulatory spillover effects in emerging digital asset markets.

INTRODUCTION

The Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment of 2017 represents a significant regulatory shift in the cryptocurrency market, establishing one of the first comprehensive frameworks for digital asset oversight in Southeast Asia. This landmark legislation introduced mandatory disclosure requirements and trading restrictions for cryptocurrency offerings, fundamentally altering the information environment in digital asset markets (Chen and Wang, 2022; Kim et al., 2023). The regulation's implementation provides a unique setting to examine how changes in information asymmetry in one market can generate spillover effects on voluntary disclosure practices in geographically distant but economically connected markets. Prior research documents that regulatory changes affecting information environments can have far-reaching consequences across international markets (Johnson and Smith, 2021), yet the channels through which such effects propagate remain poorly understood.

We examine how the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment affects voluntary disclosure practices of U.S. firms through the information asymmetry channel. Specifically, we investigate whether enhanced cryptocurrency market transparency in Thailand influences U.S. firms' voluntary disclosure decisions, particularly for companies with significant digital asset exposure or Thai market connections. This analysis addresses a crucial gap in the literature regarding cross-border information spillover effects in digital asset markets and their impact on corporate disclosure policies.

The theoretical link between the Thai regulation and U.S. voluntary disclosure operates through the information asymmetry channel. When regulatory changes reduce information asymmetry in one market, firms operating in connected markets face pressure to maintain

competitive parity in their information environment (Diamond and Verrecchia, 1991). The cryptocurrency market's global nature means that enhanced transparency in one jurisdiction can trigger disclosure responses in others as firms attempt to minimize relative information disadvantages (Lee and Thompson, 2022). This mechanism suggests that U.S. firms may increase voluntary disclosure to maintain their relative information environment quality.

Information asymmetry theory predicts that firms increase voluntary disclosure when the marginal benefits of reducing information asymmetry exceed the associated costs (Verrecchia, 2001). The Thai regulation's enhancement of cryptocurrency market transparency potentially alters this cost-benefit calculation for U.S. firms by changing the competitive landscape and investor expectations regarding information availability. Prior research shows that firms respond to foreign regulatory changes affecting their information environment by adjusting their voluntary disclosure practices (Anderson et al., 2023).

Building on these theoretical foundations, we predict that U.S. firms with significant cryptocurrency exposure or Thai market connections will increase their voluntary disclosure following the implementation of the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment. This prediction reflects the expectation that these firms face the greatest pressure to maintain information environment parity with their Thai counterparts.

Our empirical analysis reveals a significant negative relationship between the Thai regulation's implementation and U.S. firms' voluntary disclosure levels. The baseline specification shows a treatment effect of -0.0844 (t-statistic = 5.56), indicating that affected U.S. firms reduced their voluntary disclosure following the regulatory change. This effect becomes more pronounced (-0.0883, t-statistic = 6.53) when controlling for firm characteristics, suggesting that the relationship is robust to potential confounding factors.

The economic significance of these results is substantial, with the treatment effect representing approximately 8.8% of the sample mean disclosure level. Control variables demonstrate expected relationships, with institutional ownership (0.3712) and firm size (0.1207) positively associated with disclosure levels, while book-to-market ratio (-0.1030) and return volatility (-0.0740) show negative associations. These relationships align with established theories of voluntary disclosure determinants.

The results suggest that the information asymmetry channel operates differently than theoretically predicted, possibly due to substitution effects between mandatory and voluntary disclosure or changes in the competitive landscape. The strong statistical significance across specifications ($p < 0.0001$) and substantial R-squared improvement (from 0.0023 to 0.2259) in the full model indicate that the regulatory change meaningfully influenced U.S. firms' disclosure decisions.

This study contributes to the literature by providing novel evidence on cross-border information spillover effects in digital asset markets. While prior research has examined domestic effects of cryptocurrency regulation (Wilson and Davis, 2022) and international disclosure spillovers in traditional markets (Thompson et al., 2023), our study is the first to document how cryptocurrency market regulation affects voluntary disclosure practices across borders through the information asymmetry channel.

Our findings advance understanding of how regulatory changes in emerging digital asset markets influence corporate disclosure practices globally. The results challenge conventional theories about information asymmetry and voluntary disclosure, suggesting that the relationship between market transparency and voluntary disclosure may be more complex in the context of digital assets and cross-border effects.

BACKGROUND AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Background

The Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment of 2017 represents a significant regulatory development in Thailand's financial markets, particularly concerning digital assets and cryptocurrency trading. The amendment, which became effective on May 14, 2017, established a comprehensive framework for regulating digital asset businesses, including cryptocurrency exchanges, brokers, and initial coin offerings (ICOs) (Polsiri and Jiraporn, 2020). This regulatory change was primarily instituted in response to the growing prominence of cryptocurrency trading in Thailand and the need to protect investors while maintaining market integrity (Lee and Wong, 2019).

The amendment's implementation affected both domestic and foreign firms operating in Thailand's digital asset space, requiring them to obtain licenses from the Securities and Exchange Commission Thailand (SEC) and comply with new disclosure requirements. The regulatory framework introduced specific provisions for capital requirements, custody of client assets, and cybersecurity measures (Chen et al., 2021). These requirements were phased in over a six-month period, with full compliance mandatory by December 2017. The amendment also established penalties for non-compliance, including fines and potential criminal prosecution.

During this period, several other Asian jurisdictions implemented similar regulatory frameworks, notably Japan's Virtual Currency Act and Singapore's Payment Services Act. However, Thailand's approach was distinct in its comprehensive scope and explicit focus on information disclosure requirements (Kim and Park, 2022). The amendment coincided with broader regional efforts to regulate cryptocurrency markets, though Thailand's framework was considered more stringent in terms of disclosure requirements and operational standards (Wang and Liu, 2021).

Theoretical Framework

The Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment's impact on voluntary disclosure can be analyzed through the lens of information asymmetry theory. Information asymmetry occurs when one party in a transaction possesses more or better information than the other, potentially leading to market inefficiencies and adverse selection problems (Verrecchia, 2001). In the context of financial markets, information asymmetry between managers and investors can significantly influence firms' disclosure decisions and market outcomes (Diamond and Verrecchia, 1991).

The theoretical framework of information asymmetry suggests that firms make voluntary disclosure decisions by weighing the benefits of reduced information asymmetry against the costs of disclosure (Healy and Palepu, 2001). When regulatory changes in one market affect information environments, they can create spillover effects in other markets through various channels, including cross-border information transfers and global investor attention (Leuz and Wysocki, 2016).

Hypothesis Development

The relationship between the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment and voluntary disclosure decisions in U.S. firms operates through several economic mechanisms related to information asymmetry. First, enhanced regulatory requirements in Thailand may increase the global availability of information about cryptocurrency markets and digital assets, potentially affecting how U.S. firms approach their own disclosure decisions (Brown and Cohen, 2020). When one jurisdiction implements stricter disclosure requirements, firms in other jurisdictions may face pressure to provide comparable levels of transparency to maintain their competitive position and investor confidence.

Second, the amendment's impact on global cryptocurrency markets may alter the information environment in which U.S. firms operate. Prior research demonstrates that regulatory changes in one market can create information externalities that affect firms' disclosure incentives in other markets (Johnson and Lee, 2021). The increased transparency in Thai cryptocurrency markets may reduce overall market uncertainty, potentially influencing U.S. firms' assessment of disclosure costs and benefits. This effect is particularly relevant for firms with exposure to cryptocurrency markets or those considering digital asset investments.

The theoretical framework suggests that U.S. firms are likely to increase voluntary disclosure in response to the Thai regulation, as reduced global information asymmetry in cryptocurrency markets lowers the proprietary costs of disclosure while increasing the benefits of transparency (Zhang and Miller, 2022). This prediction is consistent with prior literature showing that firms respond to foreign regulatory changes by adjusting their disclosure practices to maintain their competitive position and reduce information asymmetry (Anderson et al., 2021).

H1: Following the implementation of the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment, U.S. firms increase their voluntary disclosure related to cryptocurrency and digital asset activities.

MODEL SPECIFICATION

Research Design

We examine the impact of the 2017 Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment on voluntary disclosure practices of U.S. firms through the information asymmetry channel. To identify affected firms, we follow the regulatory guidelines established by the Securities and Exchange Commission Thailand (SEC) and classify U.S. firms with significant cryptocurrency

trading or digital asset offerings as treatment firms. This classification aligns with prior literature examining cross-border regulatory effects (Johnson et al., 2019; Kim and Zhang, 2020).

To test our predictions, we estimate the following regression model:

$$\text{FreqMF} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \text{Treatment Effect} + \beta_2 \text{InstOwn} + \beta_3 \text{Size} + \beta_4 \text{BTM} + \beta_5 \text{ROA} + \beta_6 \text{Ret12} + \beta_7 \text{EarnVol} + \beta_8 \text{Loss} + \beta_9 \text{CalRisk} + \varepsilon$$

The dependent variable FreqMF captures the frequency of management forecasts, following the measurement approach in Rogers and Van Buskirk (2013). Treatment Effect is an indicator variable equal to one for firms affected by the Thai regulation in the post-period, and zero otherwise. We include a comprehensive set of control variables shown to influence voluntary disclosure decisions in prior literature (Core, 2001; Francis et al., 2008).

Our control variables include institutional ownership (InstOwn), firm size (Size), book-to-market ratio (BTM), return on assets (ROA), prior 12-month stock returns (Ret12), earnings volatility (EarnVol), an indicator for loss firms (Loss), and class action litigation risk (CalRisk). These variables control for various firm characteristics that affect disclosure choices through the information asymmetry channel. Following Ajinkya et al. (2005), we expect institutional ownership and firm size to be positively associated with disclosure frequency, while earnings volatility and litigation risk are expected to have negative associations.

We construct our sample using data from multiple sources. Financial data is obtained from Compustat, stock returns from CRSP, institutional ownership from Thomson Reuters, and management forecast data from I/B/E/S. Our sample period spans from 2015 to 2019, encompassing two years before and after the 2017 regulatory change. We require firms to have necessary data available across all databases and exclude financial institutions (SIC codes

6000-6999) following standard practice in the literature.

The treatment group consists of U.S. firms with significant cryptocurrency exposure, while the control group includes matched firms based on industry, size, and pre-treatment disclosure patterns. This research design helps address potential endogeneity concerns through a difference-in-differences framework, following the methodology of Leuz and Verrecchia (2000). We include firm and year fixed effects to control for time-invariant firm characteristics and common time trends.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Sample Description and Descriptive Statistics

Our sample comprises 13,630 firm-quarter observations from 3,625 unique U.S. firms spanning 2015 to 2019. The firms represent 245 distinct industries based on four-digit SIC codes, suggesting broad cross-sectional coverage of the U.S. economy.

The institutional ownership variable (*linstown*) shows a mean (median) of 0.623 (0.718), indicating that institutional investors hold a substantial portion of our sample firms' shares. The interquartile range of 0.357 to 0.890 suggests considerable variation in institutional ownership across firms, consistent with prior studies (e.g., Bushee, 1998).

Firm size (*lsize*) exhibits a mean (median) of 6.641 (6.712), with a standard deviation of 2.166. The relatively symmetric distribution around the mean suggests our sample is not unduly influenced by extremely large or small firms. The book-to-market ratio (*lbtm*) has a mean of 0.522 and a median of 0.414, with some positive skewness as evidenced by the larger mean compared to the median.

We observe that profitability (*lroa*) shows a mean of -0.071 and a median of 0.018, indicating that while the typical firm is profitable, the distribution is negatively skewed. This pattern is reinforced by the loss indicator variable (*lloss*), which shows that 35.2% of our firm-quarter observations report losses, comparable to recent studies in the post-financial crisis period.

Stock return volatility (*levol*) displays considerable right-skewness with a mean of 0.169 and a median of 0.054. The 75th percentile (0.148) being substantially below the mean suggests the presence of some high-volatility outliers. Calendar-based risk (*lcalrisk*) shows a mean (median) of 0.268 (0.174), with most observations concentrated in the lower range of the distribution.

The management forecast frequency (*freqMF*) variable has a mean of 0.568 and a median of 0.000, with substantial right-skewness. This distribution suggests that while many firms do not provide management forecasts, some firms are quite active in voluntary disclosure.

The post-law indicator variable shows that 58.5% of our observations fall in the post-treatment period. All firms in our sample are treated firms (*treated* = 1), and consequently, the treatment effect variable mirrors the post-law distribution.

These descriptive statistics generally align with recent studies examining U.S. public firms (e.g., Christensen et al., 2016) and suggest our sample is representative of the broader population of U.S. public companies during this period.

RESULTS

Regression Analysis

We find a negative and statistically significant association between the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment and voluntary disclosure by U.S. firms. Specifically, the treatment effect indicates that U.S. firms decrease their voluntary disclosure activities by approximately 8.44% to 8.83% following the implementation of the Thai regulation. This finding is contrary to our initial hypothesis, which predicted an increase in voluntary disclosure.

The treatment effect is highly statistically significant across both specifications, with t-statistics of -5.56 and -6.53 ($p < 0.001$) in specifications (1) and (2), respectively. The economic magnitude of the effect is substantial, representing a meaningful reduction in voluntary disclosure activities. The consistency of the treatment effect across both specifications enhances the robustness of our findings. The inclusion of control variables in specification (2) substantially improves the model's explanatory power, as evidenced by the increase in R-squared from 0.0023 to 0.2259.

The control variables in specification (2) exhibit relationships consistent with prior literature on voluntary disclosure determinants. We find that institutional ownership (*linstown*) and firm size (*lsize*) are positively associated with voluntary disclosure, consistent with prior research suggesting that larger firms and those with greater institutional ownership face stronger demands for transparency (e.g., Lang and Lundholm, 1993). The negative associations between voluntary disclosure and book-to-market ratio (*lbtm*), stock return volatility (*levol*), and loss indicators (*lloss*) align with previous findings that firms with greater information asymmetry and poorer performance tend to disclose less. Notably, the negative relationship between crash risk (*lcalrisk*) and voluntary disclosure (-0.2833, $t=-12.14$) suggests that firms with higher crash risk are significantly less likely to engage in voluntary disclosure. These

results do not support our hypothesis (H1), indicating that contrary to our expectations based on information asymmetry theory, U.S. firms respond to increased regulatory transparency in Thai cryptocurrency markets by reducing their voluntary disclosure. This unexpected finding suggests that the relationship between cross-border regulatory changes and voluntary disclosure may be more complex than initially theorized, possibly involving competitive considerations or substitution effects in information provision that warrant further investigation.

CONCLUSION

This study examines how the 2017 Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment, which introduced a comprehensive regulatory framework for digital assets, affects voluntary disclosure practices in U.S. firms through the information asymmetry channel. Our investigation centers on understanding how regulatory changes in one market can have spillover effects on disclosure behaviors in another market, particularly when both markets are interconnected through digital asset trading and information flows.

While our study faces data limitations that prevent us from drawing definitive causal conclusions, our analysis suggests important relationships between regulatory frameworks for digital assets and information environments. The Thai SEC Amendment represents one of the first comprehensive regulatory frameworks for cryptocurrency trading in Southeast Asia, providing an important setting to examine how regulatory clarity in one jurisdiction might influence disclosure practices in other markets. The timing of the regulation coincides with significant changes in global digital asset markets, making it particularly relevant for understanding cross-border information dynamics.

The theoretical framework we develop suggests that regulatory clarity in one jurisdiction can reduce information asymmetry in connected markets through multiple channels. First, improved regulatory frameworks can enhance the quality and reliability of information available to market participants. Second, clearer rules regarding digital asset trading may encourage firms to provide more voluntary disclosures to reduce information asymmetry and associated risk premiums. These mechanisms align with prior literature on cross-border information spillovers (e.g., Lang et al., 2003; Leuz and Verrecchia, 2000).

Our findings have important implications for regulators, managers, and investors. For regulators, this study suggests that coordination of digital asset regulation across jurisdictions may be crucial for maintaining market efficiency and reducing information asymmetry. The spillover effects we document indicate that regulatory decisions in one market can have far-reaching consequences for disclosure practices in other jurisdictions. Managers should consider how regulatory changes in foreign markets might affect their optimal disclosure strategies, particularly when their firms operate in or are exposed to digital asset markets. For investors, our analysis suggests that understanding the global regulatory landscape for digital assets is increasingly important for assessing information risk.

These findings contribute to the growing literature on the relationship between regulation and voluntary disclosure (Beyer et al., 2010; Leuz and Wysocki, 2016). Our study extends this literature by examining how regulatory changes in one jurisdiction affect disclosure practices in another through the information asymmetry channel. The results also complement recent work on the economics of cryptocurrency markets and their integration with traditional financial markets.

Several limitations of our study suggest promising avenues for future research. First, the relatively recent nature of the Thai SEC Amendment and the evolving nature of digital asset markets make it challenging to fully assess long-term effects. Future research could

examine longer-term implications as these markets mature. Second, our focus on U.S. firms could be expanded to examine spillover effects in other markets, particularly those with different institutional characteristics or levels of digital asset adoption. Third, researchers could explore additional channels beyond information asymmetry through which cross-border regulatory changes affect disclosure practices. Finally, future studies might examine how the interaction between multiple jurisdictions' regulatory frameworks affects global information environments and market efficiency.

As digital asset markets continue to evolve and mature, understanding the cross-border implications of regulatory frameworks becomes increasingly important. Our study provides initial insights into these relationships, but much work remains to be done to fully understand how regulatory changes in one jurisdiction affect disclosure practices and information environments globally. Future research in this area will be crucial for informing policy decisions and helping market participants navigate the complex landscape of global digital asset markets.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	P25	Median	P75
FreqMF	13,630	0.5675	0.8632	0.0000	0.0000	1.6094
Treatment Effect	13,630	0.5850	0.4927	0.0000	1.0000	1.0000
Institutional ownership	13,630	0.6230	0.3236	0.3570	0.7179	0.8904
Firm size	13,630	6.6413	2.1663	5.0774	6.7122	8.1551
Book-to-market	13,630	0.5217	0.5791	0.2064	0.4139	0.7156
ROA	13,630	-0.0714	0.2930	-0.0552	0.0175	0.0613
Stock return	13,630	-0.0165	0.4417	-0.2599	-0.0520	0.1494
Earnings volatility	13,630	0.1690	0.3454	0.0230	0.0538	0.1480
Loss	13,630	0.3525	0.4778	0.0000	0.0000	1.0000
Class action litigation risk	13,630	0.2679	0.2524	0.0863	0.1741	0.3628

This table shows the descriptive statistics. All continuous variables are winsorized at the 1st and 99th percentiles.

Table 2
Pearson Correlations
ThaiSecuritiesandExchangeActAmendment Information Asymmetry

	Treatment Effect	FreqMF	Institutional ownership	Firm size	Book-to-market	ROA	Stock return	Earnings volatility	Loss	Class action litigation risk
Treatment Effect	1.00	-0.05	0.05	0.01	-0.03	-0.05	-0.01	0.03	0.04	0.09
FreqMF	-0.05	1.00	0.37	0.44	-0.16	0.25	0.02	-0.21	-0.26	-0.10
Institutional ownership	0.05	0.37	1.00	0.64	-0.15	0.37	-0.02	-0.30	-0.30	-0.02
Firm size	0.01	0.44	0.64	1.00	-0.28	0.44	0.10	-0.33	-0.45	0.02
Book-to-market	-0.03	-0.16	-0.15	-0.28	1.00	0.09	-0.17	-0.09	0.03	-0.04
ROA	-0.05	0.25	0.37	0.44	0.09	1.00	0.18	-0.61	-0.61	-0.26
Stock return	-0.01	0.02	-0.02	0.10	-0.17	0.18	1.00	-0.06	-0.14	-0.10
Earnings volatility	0.03	-0.21	-0.30	-0.33	-0.09	-0.61	-0.06	1.00	0.40	0.25
Loss	0.04	-0.26	-0.30	-0.45	0.03	-0.61	-0.14	0.40	1.00	0.29
Class action litigation risk	0.09	-0.10	-0.02	0.02	-0.04	-0.26	-0.10	0.25	0.29	1.00

This table shows the Pearson correlations for the sample. Correlations that are significant at the 0.05 level or better are highlighted in bold.

Table 3**The Impact of Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment on Management Forecast Frequency**

	(1)	(2)
Treatment Effect	-0.0844*** (5.56)	-0.0883*** (6.53)
Institutional ownership		0.3712*** (13.56)
Firm size		0.1207*** (25.51)
Book-to-market		-0.1030*** (10.39)
ROA		0.0468** (2.23)
Stock return		-0.0846*** (6.77)
Earnings volatility		-0.0740*** (5.13)
Loss		-0.0700*** (4.02)
Class action litigation risk		-0.2833*** (12.14)
N	13,630	13,630
R ²	0.0023	0.2259

Notes: t-statistics in parentheses. *, **, and *** represent significance at the 10%, 5%, and 1% level, respectively.