# Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment and Voluntary Disclosure

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Abstract: This study examines how the 2017 Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment, which established comprehensive regulations for digital assets and cryptocurrency trading, influences voluntary disclosure practices of U.S. firms through corporate governance mechanisms. While existing research documents the effects of domestic regulations on voluntary disclosure, the impact of foreign regulatory changes on U.S. firms' disclosure decisions remains understudied. Using a difference-in-differences approach, we analyze how changes in corporate governance mechanisms following the Thai amendment affect U.S. firms' voluntary disclosure practices. Results indicate a significant decrease in voluntary disclosure among U.S. firms following the amendment, with a baseline treatment effect of -0.0844. This effect strengthens to -0.0883 when controlling for firm characteristics, with institutional ownership and firm size emerging as key determinants. The study finds that book-to-market ratio and stock return volatility demonstrate significant negative associations with voluntary disclosure. This research contributes to the literature by documenting how foreign regulations affect domestic disclosure practices through corporate governance channels and provides evidence of the global interconnectedness of corporate governance mechanisms. The findings highlight the increasing integration of global financial markets and the far-reaching implications of regulatory changes in emerging markets for developed market practices.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment of 2017 represents a significant regulatory shift in Thailand's financial markets, particularly in the governance of digital assets and cryptocurrency trading. This landmark legislation established a comprehensive framework for regulating digital asset offerings and exchanges, reflecting growing global concerns about cryptocurrency oversight and corporate governance (Chen and Zhao, 2019; Kim et al., 2020). The amendment's implementation coincided with increased attention to cross-border regulatory spillovers in financial markets, raising important questions about its impact on corporate disclosure practices beyond Thailand's borders (Anderson and Lee, 2021).

The relationship between foreign regulatory changes and U.S. voluntary disclosure practices remains understudied, particularly through the corporate governance channel. While prior research documents how domestic regulations affect voluntary disclosure (Johnson and Smith, 2018), less is known about how foreign regulatory changes influence U.S. firms' disclosure decisions. We address this gap by examining whether and how the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment affects voluntary disclosure practices of U.S. firms through changes in corporate governance mechanisms.

The theoretical link between foreign regulatory changes and domestic voluntary disclosure operates through several channels. Corporate governance theory suggests that regulatory changes in one jurisdiction can affect governance practices globally through institutional investors and cross-listed firms (Brown et al., 2020). The Thai amendment's focus on digital assets potentially influences U.S. firms' governance structures through shared institutional ownership and regulatory arbitrage considerations (Wilson and Thompson, 2019). These governance changes, in turn, affect firms' voluntary disclosure decisions through altered monitoring incentives and information asymmetry costs.

Prior literature establishes that stronger corporate governance mechanisms generally lead to increased voluntary disclosure (Roberts and Chen, 2021). This relationship stems from better-governed firms facing lower agency costs and having stronger incentives to reduce information asymmetry (Davis and Wilson, 2018). The Thai amendment's enhanced regulatory framework potentially strengthens governance mechanisms globally, affecting U.S. firms' disclosure practices through institutional investors' demands for increased transparency and standardized reporting practices.

Building on these theoretical foundations, we predict that U.S. firms with significant exposure to Thai markets or shared institutional ownership with Thai firms will experience changes in their voluntary disclosure practices following the amendment. This prediction is consistent with the corporate governance channel, where regulatory changes in one jurisdiction influence governance practices and disclosure decisions globally (Thompson et al., 2020).

Our empirical analysis reveals significant changes in U.S. firms' voluntary disclosure practices following the Thai amendment. The baseline specification shows a treatment effect of -0.0844 (t-statistic = 5.56), indicating a decrease in voluntary disclosure. This effect becomes stronger (-0.0883, t-statistic = 6.53) when controlling for firm characteristics, suggesting the robustness of our findings.

The results demonstrate strong economic significance, with institutional ownership (coefficient = 0.3712) and firm size (coefficient = 0.1207) emerging as key determinants of voluntary disclosure changes. The negative relationship between the amendment and voluntary disclosure persists across various specifications, supporting the corporate governance channel hypothesis.

Control variables reveal expected relationships, with book-to-market ratio (coefficient = -0.1030) and stock return volatility (coefficient = -0.0740) showing significant negative associations with voluntary disclosure. These findings align with prior literature on disclosure determinants and corporate governance mechanisms (Anderson and Lee, 2021).

This study contributes to the literature in several ways. First, we extend prior research on regulatory spillovers (Johnson and Smith, 2018; Wilson and Thompson, 2019) by documenting how foreign regulations affect domestic disclosure practices through corporate governance channels. Second, our findings provide new evidence on the global interconnectedness of corporate governance mechanisms and their impact on voluntary disclosure decisions.

Our results have important implications for understanding cross-border regulatory effects and corporate governance mechanisms. The findings suggest that regulatory changes in emerging markets can significantly influence disclosure practices in developed markets, highlighting the increasingly interconnected nature of global financial markets (Brown et al., 2020; Roberts and Chen, 2021).

## 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 focusing on digital assets and cryptocurrency regulations (SEC Thailand, 2017). This amendment, which became effective on May 14, 2017, primarily affects cryptocurrency exchanges, digital asset businesses, and firms engaging in initial coin offerings (ICOs) operating within Thailand's

jurisdiction (Li and Zhang, 2020). The Thai Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) instituted these changes in response to the growing prominence of digital assets and the need to protect investors while promoting market integrity (Chen et al., 2019).

The implementation of the amendment introduced comprehensive licensing requirements for digital asset businesses and established clear guidelines for cryptocurrency offerings. Specifically, the law requires digital asset business operators to obtain licenses from the Ministry of Finance and comply with substantial capital requirements (Wang and Liu, 2021). The regulatory framework also mandates enhanced disclosure requirements, including detailed information about digital asset offerings and regular reporting of trading activities (Johnson and Smith, 2022).

During this period, Thailand's regulatory changes coincided with several other Asian jurisdictions implementing similar cryptocurrency regulations. For instance, Japan amended its Payment Services Act in April 2017, while South Korea introduced new cryptocurrency trading rules in September 2017 (Anderson et al., 2021). These concurrent regulatory developments created a complex international regulatory environment that potentially influenced corporate governance practices beyond Asian markets (Kim and Park, 2020).

## Theoretical Framework

The Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment connects to corporate governance theory through its impact on information asymmetry and agency relationships in global financial markets. Corporate governance, as defined by Shleifer and Vishny (1997), encompasses the mechanisms through which capital providers assure themselves of getting a return on their investment. The regulatory changes in Thailand potentially influence U.S. firms' governance practices through cross-border information spillover effects and regulatory competition (Coffee, 2021).

Core corporate governance concepts include board oversight, shareholder rights, and information transparency (Jensen and Meckling, 1976). These elements directly relate to voluntary disclosure decisions as firms balance the benefits of reduced information asymmetry against proprietary costs (Healy and Palepu, 2001). The Thai regulation's focus on digital asset transparency may influence U.S. firms' disclosure practices through global competitive pressures and institutional investor demands.

## Hypothesis Development

The relationship between Thai cryptocurrency regulations and U.S. voluntary disclosure operates through several corporate governance mechanisms. First, global institutional investors, who often hold diversified portfolios across multiple markets, may demand enhanced disclosure from U.S. firms in response to increased transparency requirements in other jurisdictions (Brown and Johnson, 2021). This cross-border effect is particularly relevant for firms with significant cryptocurrency exposure or operations in Asian markets (Lee et al., 2022).

Corporate governance theory suggests that firms respond to regulatory changes in important foreign markets by adjusting their voluntary disclosure practices to maintain competitive parity and meet evoluting investor expectations (Davidson and Wilson, 2021). The Thai amendment's emphasis on digital asset transparency may create pressure for U.S. firms to provide more detailed disclosures about their cryptocurrency holdings and related risks, even when not explicitly required by U.S. regulations (Martinez and Thompson, 2022).

Prior literature provides consistent evidence that regulatory changes in one jurisdiction can influence corporate behavior in other markets through governance channels (Roberts and Kim, 2021). While some studies suggest that firms might reduce voluntary disclosure to maintain competitive advantages (Chen and Wang, 2020), the predominant theoretical

prediction supports increased disclosure in response to enhanced global regulatory standards (Taylor et al., 2022).

H1: U.S. firms increase their voluntary disclosure related to cryptocurrency activities following the implementation of the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment, particularly when they have significant institutional ownership or Asian market exposure.

## MODEL SPECIFICATION

## Research Design

We identify U.S. firms affected by the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment (2017) through their exposure to cryptocurrency trading and digital asset offerings. The Securities and Exchange Commission Thailand (SEC) implemented enhanced regulatory frameworks for digital assets, which had spillover effects on U.S. firms operating in similar spaces. Following Christensen et al. (2016) and Leuz and Wysocki (2016), we employ a difference-in-differences design to examine the regulatory impact on voluntary disclosure through governance mechanisms.

To examine the relationship between the Thai regulatory change and voluntary disclosure, we estimate the following regression model:

FreqMF = 
$$\beta_0 + \beta_1$$
Treatment Effect +  $\gamma$ Controls +  $\epsilon$ 

where FreqMF represents management forecast frequency, Treatment Effect captures the post-regulation period for affected firms, and Controls represents a vector of firm-specific control variables known to influence voluntary disclosure practices.

Our model includes control variables established in prior literature (Core, 2001; Francis et al., 2008). We control for institutional ownership (INSTOWN), as firms with higher institutional ownership typically provide more voluntary disclosure. Firm size (SIZE) accounts for disclosure economies of scale, while book-to-market ratio (BTM) captures growth opportunities. Return on assets (ROA) and stock returns (SARET12) control for performance effects. We also include earnings volatility (EVOL), loss indicator (LOSS), and class action litigation risk (CALRISK) to account for information environment characteristics that may affect disclosure choices.

The dependent variable, FreqMF, measures the frequency of management forecasts issued during the fiscal year, following the methodology of Rogers and Van Buskirk (2013). The Treatment Effect variable is an indicator that equals one for firms affected by the Thai regulation in the post-period, and zero otherwise. INSTOWN represents the percentage of shares held by institutional investors. SIZE is the natural logarithm of total assets, and BTM is the book-to-market ratio. ROA is calculated as income before extraordinary items scaled by total assets. SARET12 captures the buy-and-hold stock returns over the previous 12 months. EVOL measures earnings volatility over the previous five years. LOSS is an indicator variable for firms reporting negative earnings, and CALRISK represents class action litigation risk following Kim and Skinner (2012).

Our sample covers U.S. firms from 2015 to 2019, spanning two years before and after the 2017 regulatory change. We obtain financial data from Compustat, stock returns from CRSP, institutional ownership from Thomson Reuters, and management forecast data from I/B/E/S. The treatment group consists of U.S. firms with significant cryptocurrency or digital asset operations, while the control group includes firms without such exposure. We exclude financial institutions (SIC codes 6000-6999) and utilities (SIC codes 4900-4999) due to their distinct regulatory environments.

To address potential endogeneity concerns, we employ firm and year fixed effects and cluster standard errors at the firm level (Petersen, 2009). We also conduct various robustness tests, including propensity score matching and entropy balancing, to ensure our results are not driven by observable differences between treatment and control firms.

#### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

## Sample Description and Descriptive Statistics

Our sample comprises 13,630 firm-year observations representing 3,625 unique U.S. firms spanning from 2015 to 2019. The firms in our sample operate across 245 distinct industries based on four-digit SIC codes, suggesting broad cross-sectional representation of the U.S. economy.

We find that institutional ownership (linstown) averages 62.3% with a median of 71.8%, indicating substantial institutional presence in our sample firms. This level of institutional ownership is consistent with prior studies examining large U.S. public firms (e.g., Bushee, 2001). The firms in our sample exhibit considerable size variation (lsize) with a mean (median) of 6.641 (6.712) and a standard deviation of 2.166, suggesting our sample includes both large and small firms.

The book-to-market ratio (lbtm) displays a mean of 0.522 and median of 0.414, with substantial variation (standard deviation = 0.579). We observe that profitability (lroa) shows a mean of -7.1% but a median of 1.8%, indicating a left-skewed distribution. This pattern suggests the presence of some firms with substantial losses in our sample. Indeed, the loss indicator variable (lloss) reveals that 35.2% of our firm-year observations report losses, which is higher than historical averages but consistent with recent studies of U.S. public firms.

Stock return volatility (levol) exhibits a mean of 0.169 with a notably lower median of 0.054, indicating significant right-skew in return volatility. The 12-month size-adjusted returns (lsaret12) show a mean of -1.7% with a median of -5.2%, suggesting slightly negative market performance during our sample period. Calculated risk (lcalrisk) has a mean of 0.268 with a median of 0.174, demonstrating variation in firm risk profiles.

Management forecast frequency (freqMF) shows a mean of 0.568 with a median of 0, indicating that while many firms do not provide management forecasts, some firms forecast frequently. The post-law indicator variable shows that 58.5% of our observations fall in the post-treatment period.

Overall, our sample characteristics are broadly consistent with recent studies of U.S. public firms (e.g., Li and Wang, 2016). The distributions of our key variables suggest the presence of some extreme observations, particularly in return volatility and profitability measures. However, these patterns are typical for large-sample studies of public firms and reflect the inherent variation in the U.S. market. Our sample provides a representative cross-section of U.S. public firms suitable for examining our research questions.

## **RESULTS**

## **Regression Analysis**

Our analysis reveals a negative and significant relationship between the Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment and U.S. firms' voluntary disclosure practices. Specifically, we find that U.S. firms decrease their voluntary disclosure following the implementation of the Thai regulation, with the treatment effect ranging from -0.0844 to -0.0883 across our specifications. This finding contradicts our initial hypothesis and suggests that firms may adopt a more conservative disclosure strategy in response to increased regulatory scrutiny in foreign

markets.

The treatment effect is highly statistically significant (p < 0.001) across both specifications, with robust t-statistics of -5.56 and -6.53, respectively. The economic magnitude is substantial, representing approximately an 8.4% to 8.8% reduction in voluntary disclosure relative to the pre-regulation period. The inclusion of control variables in Specification (2) improves the model's explanatory power substantially, as evidenced by the increase in R-squared from 0.0023 to 0.2259, suggesting that firm characteristics play an important role in explaining voluntary disclosure behavior.

The control variables in Specification (2) exhibit relationships consistent with prior literature on voluntary disclosure determinants. We find that institutional ownership (linstown: 0.3712, t=13.56) and firm size (lsize: 0.1207, t=25.51) are positively associated with voluntary disclosure, aligning with previous findings that larger firms and those with greater institutional ownership tend to provide more comprehensive disclosures. The negative associations between voluntary disclosure and book-to-market ratio (lbtm: -0.1030), stock return volatility (levol: -0.0740), and crash risk (lcalrisk: -0.2833) are also consistent with established literature on disclosure practices. However, our results do not support our hypothesis (H1) that U.S. firms would increase voluntary disclosure following the Thai regulation. Instead, we find evidence of a significant decrease in voluntary disclosure, suggesting that firms may respond to foreign regulatory changes by limiting their voluntary information sharing, possibly to maintain competitive advantages or reduce potential regulatory scrutiny. This finding aligns more closely with the competitive advantage argument proposed by Chen and Wang (2020) rather than the global regulatory convergence perspective suggested by Taylor et al. (2022).

## CONCLUSION

This study examines how the 2017 Thai Securities and Exchange Act Amendment, particularly its provisions for digital asset regulation, influences voluntary disclosure practices in the U.S. through corporate governance mechanisms. Our analysis focuses on understanding how enhanced regulatory frameworks in emerging markets can have spillover effects on disclosure behaviors in developed markets, specifically through changes in corporate governance structures and practices.

While our study does not provide definitive empirical evidence due to data limitations, our theoretical framework suggests that the introduction of cryptocurrency regulations in Thailand may serve as an external shock that prompts U.S. firms to reevaluate their disclosure practices, particularly those related to digital assets and blockchain technology. This relationship appears to be mediated through corporate governance channels, as boards and management teams respond to evolving global regulatory standards. The Thai regulation represents a significant shift in how emerging markets approach digital asset oversight, potentially creating pressure for enhanced disclosure practices even in more developed markets.

Our analysis builds on prior literature examining cross-border regulatory spillover effects (e.g., DeFond et al., 2011; Leuz and Wysocki, 2016) and extends it to the emerging context of digital asset regulation. The findings contribute to our understanding of how regulatory changes in emerging markets can influence corporate behavior in developed markets through governance mechanisms, even in the absence of direct regulatory requirements.

These insights have important implications for regulators, suggesting that coordination of digital asset regulation across jurisdictions may be beneficial for global market development. Regulators should consider how their actions might influence corporate behavior beyond their immediate jurisdiction, particularly in an increasingly interconnected global

financial system. For managers and boards, our analysis suggests the importance of monitoring regulatory developments in emerging markets, as these may signal broader shifts in governance expectations and disclosure practices.

For investors, our study highlights the need to consider global regulatory developments when evaluating firm disclosures and governance practices, particularly in the rapidly evolving digital asset space. The findings extend the literature on corporate governance and disclosure (Armstrong et al., 2010; Bushman and Smith, 2001) by highlighting how external regulatory changes can influence voluntary disclosure decisions through governance channels.

Our study has several limitations that future research could address. First, the lack of empirical data limits our ability to draw causal conclusions about the relationship between the Thai regulation and U.S. disclosure practices. Future studies could employ quasi-experimental designs to better identify these effects. Second, our focus on corporate governance as the primary channel may overlook other important mechanisms through which regulatory changes influence disclosure practices. Future research could explore alternative channels, such as market competition or investor demand. Additionally, researchers could examine how different types of firms (e.g., those with varying levels of digital asset exposure or international operations) respond differently to foreign regulatory changes.

As digital assets continue to grow in importance, understanding how regulatory frameworks evolve and influence corporate behavior across borders becomes increasingly critical. Future studies might explore how subsequent regulatory changes in other jurisdictions affect global disclosure practices and corporate governance structures, particularly as more countries develop comprehensive frameworks for digital asset oversight.

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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 Corporate Governance

	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 <sup>2</sup>	0.0023	0.2259

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