Australian Accounting Review

REVIEW ARTICLE OPEN ACCESS

A Review of Corporate Reporting Transparency Quality: Current Status and Future Directions

Yashodha Madhavi Hewage | Arusha Cooray | Rafiuddin Ahmed

College of Business Law and Governance, James Cook University, Townsville, Australia

Correspondence: Yashodha Madhavi Hewage (yashodha.hewage@my.jcu.edu.au)

Received: 1 April 2025 | **Revised:** 4 March 2026 | **Accepted:** 14 March 2026

Keywords: comprehensive assessment of CRTQ | corporate reporting transparency quality (CRTQ) | formal corporate reporting | PRISMA model | systematic literature review

ABSTRACT

This paper critically assesses the current state of the literature and sets an agenda for future research on Corporate Reporting Transparency Quality (CRTQ) in formal corporate reporting. Employing a systematic literature review approach that follows the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) model and analysing a total of 70 papers, 65 from top-ranked journals and five from peer-reviewed journals published between May 2002 and May 2025, the analysis reveals the absence of a clear and universally accepted definition of CRTQ. This highlights the need to broaden the conceptual scope to encompass financial, governance, operational, social, environmental and risk dimensions. The findings further emphasise the importance of adopting multiple theoretical perspectives to capture the multifaceted nature of CRTQ. Existing studies predominantly rely on disclosure indices that measure the quantity over its quality of information, exposing a critical gap in the literature and demonstrating the need for a multidimensional framework for comprehensive CRTQ assessment. Through a systematic synthesis of existing knowledge and the identification of key theoretical, methodological and empirical gaps on CRTQ, this review offers valuable insights and directions for academics, practitioners and regulators committed to enhancing CRTQ.

1 | Introduction

Corporate reporting communicates firms' financial performance, strategic direction and accountability to stakeholders (Healy and Palepu 2001). Traditionally focused on financial disclosures, corporate reporting has expanded significantly to include non-financial dimensions, presented through annual reports, quarterly reports, restatements, earnings announcements and standalone reports, including sustainability, corporate social responsibility (CSR) and integrated reports (IR) (Michelon et al. 2020). Web-based reporting has widened disclosure outlets, offering timely and interactive engagement while introducing challenges related to accessibility, consistency and comparability (Hanafi et al. 2009; Lodhia and Stone 2017; Xiang et al. 2021; Probowulan and Ardianto 2024). Annual reports, IR, sustainability and CSR reports remain the most comprehensive form of formal corporate reporting, particularly in emerging markets (Bananuka et al. 2019; Cooray et al. 2020).

Over time, corporate reporting has evolved from a financially focused, fragmented approach to a holistic representation of firms' economic, social and environmental impacts (Carol and Whelan 2009). This shift, driven by changing stakeholder expectations and global sustainability imperatives, expands transparency from quantitative to a qualitative reflection (Adams 2015; Pistoni et al. 2018). Frameworks such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) and IR promote disclosures, encompassing broader performance and accountability dimensions. This evolution highlights the 'Corporate Reporting Transparency Quality' (CRTQ), which captures the depth, clarity, comparability and accessibility of disclosures. Reporting quality, therefore, extends beyond the mere presence of information to the transparent and reliable reflection of operations, risks and long-term value creation (Beest et al. 2009; Hassan and Marston 2019). Heightened interest in CRTQ has intensified following corporate failures such as Rex Airlines, Steinhoff International, Lehman Brothers, Enron, WorldCom and Parmalat (Kevin et al. 2003; Haat et al. 2008; Senaratne 2011; Haarburger et al. 2020; Cole et al. 2021; Mohamed and Hassan 2025), which exposed the risks of opaque reporting and reinforced the importance of transparent, credible corporate communication (Firth et al. 2015).

Several literature reviews have emerged in parallel, addressing disclosure indices (Marston and Shrives 1991), content analysis techniques for assessing corporate information (Jones and Shoemaker 1994), measuring voluntary disclosure (Healy and Palepu 2001), mandatory CSR and sustainability reporting (Christensen et al. 2021), accounting narratives (Beattie 2014), disclosure theories (Omran and El-Galfy 2014b), disclosure measurement (Leuz and Wysocki 2016; Hassan and Marston 2019), automated disclosure analysis methods (Chakraborty and Bhattacharjee 2020) and sustainability, CSR and IR (Minutiello and Tettamanzi 2022; Stuart et al. 2022; Afeltra et al. 2024; Adamo et al. 2025). While these reviews have advanced understanding of specific disclosure domains and methodologies, they lack a critical, systematic review capturing a holistic understanding of CRTQ.

This study makes several contributions. It offers a critical, systematic and theory-informed synthesis of CRTQ. Specifically, the current study consolidates and critically evaluates how CRTQ has been conceptualised, theorised and operationalised in extant research. Three major shortcomings in the literature have been identified in this study: the absence of a widely recognised operational definition of CRTQ, limited integration of theoretical perspectives, and the predominance of narrow or single-dimensional measurement approaches. Through systematically mapping CRTQ constructs to their underlying theoretical foundations and measurement choices, this review advances the literature beyond descriptive summaries and provides a theoretically informed and conceptually coherent framing of CRTQ.

At the conceptual level, this study contributes to our understanding of the multi-dimensional nature of CRTQ. Specifically, CRTQ is proposed to extend beyond financial and governance disclosures to encompass operational, social, environmental and risk-related disclosure dimensions. Our analysis reveals that existing studies frequently conflate disclosure quantity with quality, underscoring the need for a more integrative conceptualisation. In response, this study proposes an operational definition of CRTQ that resolves definitional ambiguity and reconciles competing assumptions regarding its purpose, intended audiences, qualitative attributes and evaluative criteria.

The study also advances theoretical and methodological understanding of CRTQ. The findings highlight the limitations of studies relying on single theoretical lenses or lacking explicit theoretical grounding, suggesting the need for an integrative, multi-theoretical framework capable of capturing CRTQ's complex and multifaceted nature. While a sizeable number of studies have focused on disclosure volume (Haat et al. 2008; Firth et al. 2015; Li et al. 2019, 2022; Liu et al. 2023; Ye et al. 2023; Ko et al. 2024), relatively fewer studies (Beattie et al. 2004; Beretta and Bozzolan 2008; Beest et al. 2009) have sought to assess the quality of narrative disclosures. Existing quality assessments remain fragmented and non-holistic, typically focusing on specific annual report sections, primarily financial and governance disclosures, or focusing exclusively on voluntary non-financial narratives, with limited consideration of users' decision-usefulness needs. In response, our review extends the literature by proposing a holistic CRTQ assessment that integrates financial and non-financial, as well as quantitative and qualitative, information within corporate reports and evaluates CRTQ against the qualitative characteristics of the Financial Accounting Standards Board's (FASB) Conceptual Framework, an approach not systematically operationalised in prior research.

Methodologically, the study contributes through a PRISMA-guided systematic review, ensuring transparency, consistency and reproducibility (Liberati et al. 2009; Moher et al. 2009; Page et al. 2021). The review encompasses 70 peer-reviewed papers published between May 2002 and May 2025, including 65 from top-ranked journals. Our analysis focuses exclusively on formal corporate reporting, examining CRTQ in annual reports, IR, CSR reports and sustainability reports, where transparency assessments are most meaningful due to regulatory oversight, external assurance and standardisation under frameworks including IFRS, GRI and IR, enhancing reliability, consistency and comparability (Kim et al. 2013; Haarburger et al. 2020). The exclusion of web-based disclosures that are mostly unregulated and inconsistent (Fisher et al. 2004; Al-Htaybat and von Alberti-Alhtaybat 2017), the study offers a robust and comparable evidence base, positioning CRTQ as a credible and decision-useful construct for all stakeholders.

The remainder of this paper is organised as follows. Section 2 details the systematic review methodology. Section 3 presents a classification of the reviewed literature, highlighting key themes. Section 4 critically analyses the conceptualisation and theorisation of CRTQ in prior literature. Section 5 evaluates empirical evidence concerning current CRTQ assessments. Section 6 discusses the findings, highlighting current gaps and future research avenues. Finally, Section 7 offers a summary and limitations.

2 | Methodology

2.1 | Systematic Literature Review Approach

We conducted a systematic literature review involving structured identification, evaluation and synthesis of relevant research (Zupic and Čater 2015; Snyder 2019). Unlike traditional reviews, this method enhances objectivity and transparency, yielding more reliable insights (Tranfield et al. 2003; Gough 2004). As Phillips and Barker (2021) emphasise, systematic reviews are particularly valuable for identifying patterns and gaps, especially where prior reviews are outdated, limited or methodologically inconsistent. While earlier reviews (see Table 1) have examined various CRTQ dimensions and its evolution, a systematic review critically examining its conceptualisation, theoretical foundations and assessment approaches remains absent. Addressing this gap,

TABLE 1 | Summary of previous review studies.

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Type	Scope
01.	Marston and Shrives (1991)	The use of disclosure indices in accounting research: a review article	The British Accounting Review	Traditional narrative	Critically analyse the disclosure index method in assessing mandatory and voluntary disclosures.
02.	Jones and Shoemaker (1994)	Accounting narratives: a review of empirical studies of content and readability	Journal of Accounting Literature	Critical review using thematic analysis	Critically analyse subsets of content analysis: thematic analysis, syntactic analysis, and readability of accounting narratives.
03.	Healy and Palepu (2001)	Information asymmetry, corporate disclosure and the capital markets: a review of the empirical disclosure literature	Journal of Accounting and Economics	Critical review	Examine the role of voluntary disclosure in capital markets, the regulation of disclosure and financial reporting, the role of auditors and intermediaries in the disclosure process, and capital market consequences of reporting and disclosure.
05.	Beattie (2014)	Accounting narratives and the narrative turn in accounting research: issues, theory, methodology, methods, and a research framework	The British Accounting Review	Critical review	Discuss the development of accounting narratives in external reporting practice and research, critically analyse the assessments of accounting narratives, and emphasising the use of mixed methods and theory triangulation for analysing accounting narratives.
06	Omran and El-Galfy (2014b)	Theoretical perspectives on corporate disclosure: a critical evaluation and literature survey	Asian Review of Accounting	Critical review	Review the application of theories such as agency, signalling and legitimacy theory to corporate disclosures.
07.	Leuz and Wysocki (2016)	The economics of disclosure and financial reporting regulation: evidence and suggestions for future research	Journal of Accounting Research	Critical review	Review the issues related to cost–benefit analysis, and identification, critically analyse the measurement of disclosure and reporting outcomes, and reviews empirical studies on major changes in disclosure regulation in the United States and internationally, as well as cross-country comparisons of disclosure regimes and directions for future research.

(Continues)

TABLE 1 | (Continued)

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Type	Scope
08.	Hassan and Marston (2019)	Corporate financial disclosure measurement in the empirical accounting literature: a review article	The International Journal of Accounting	Critical review	Critically analyse disclosure-based and non-disclosure-based approaches, focusing on different types (mandatory and voluntary), different vehicles (e.g., company reports, conference calls and press releases), different time orientations (e.g., historical data, concurrent data and forward-looking data), different dimensions (e.g., quality, quantity, tone and prominence) and different formats (e.g., numbers and texts) in assessing corporate disclosures and avenues for future research.
09.	Chakraborty and Bhat-tacharjee (2020)	A review of textual analysis of corporate disclosure according to the evolution of different automated methods	Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting	Bibliometric	Review and synthesis of automated textual analysis of corporate disclosure, highlighting how advancements in automated techniques have progressively improved the accuracy of measuring disclosure tone as demonstrated in prior studies.
10.	Christensen et al. (2021)	Mandatory CSR and sustainability reporting: economic analysis and literature review	Review of Accounting Studies	Narrative Review	Outline key features of CSR reporting and discuss and evaluate the potential economic consequences of a requirement for CSR and sustainability reporting for US firms, issues related to the implementation and enforcement of CSR and sustainability reporting standards, and avenues for future research.
11.	Minutiello and Tettamanzi (2022)	The quality of nonfinancial voluntary disclosure: a systematic literature network analysis on sustainability reporting and integrated reporting	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	Bibliographic network analysis	Review and synthesise the quality of sustainability reporting and IR considering voluntary disclosure.
12.	Stuart et al. (2022)	Defining CSR disclosure quality: a review and synthesis of the accounting literature	Journal of Accounting Literature	Systematic narrative review	Define CSR disclosure quality, examine how its measurement has evolved, explore its causes and effects, and highlight gaps in the literature with suggestions for future research.

(Continues)

TABLE 1 | (Continued)

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Type	Scope
12.	Afeltra et al. (2024)	The quality of voluntary and mandatory disclosures in company reports: a systematic literature network analysis	Accounting Forum	Bibliographic network analysis	Review the existing literature on the quality of company reports, defined as both voluntary and mandatory disclosures in financial and non-financial reports, based on the citation network analysis, co-occurrence network analysis, global citation score analysis and Kleinberg's burst detection algorithm.
14.	Adamo et al. (2025)	A literature analysis of sustainability reporting quality	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	Bibliographic network analysis	Review the quality of sustainability reporting, highlighting its factors and theories.

Source: Authors' work.

we conducted detailed content analysis aligned with research questions in Section 2.2.1.

2.2 | The PRISMA Model

We applied the PRISMA model to guide our search strategy and filtering process. The PRISMA framework enhances the transparency, consistency and reproducibility of systematic reviews and meta-analyses (Liberati et al. 2009; Moher et al. 2009; Page et al. 2021). The process comprised four sequential steps: (1) define research questions, (2) search for literature, (3) screen data and (4) apply exclusion and inclusion criteria.

2.2.1 | Define Research Questions

Systematic reviews are led by research questions defining the subject, object and scope (Booth et al. 2021). Accordingly, we identified the following research questions (RQ):

RQ1: What is CRTQ?
RQ2: What underlying theories in extant research informed CRTQ in formal reporting?
RQ3: What are the current approaches for assessing CRTQ in formal reporting, and what are their shortcomings and usefulness?
RQ4: What are the key gaps in CRTQ, and how can this inform future academic research and support practical improvements in formal reporting?

2.2.2 | Literature Search

Searches were conducted using Scopus and Web of Science for English-language articles published between May 2002 and May 2025 due to their comprehensive indexing and global research coverage. To enhance robustness and construct validity, Google Scholar was incorporated as a supplementary database for cross-checking completeness of search results and identifying additional relevant articles. We followed Linnenluecke and Griffiths (2013) to ensure screening process robustness. The primary author's work was independently reviewed by the second author to avoid selection bias. Discrepancies were resolved through discussion, with the third author consulted when necessary to reach consensus.

Internal and external validity were then checked to ensure finding accuracy (Massaro et al. 2016). First, for internal validity, we conducted a pilot test using a preliminary classification scheme and search criteria, consistent with Broadbent and Guthrie (2008), on a sample from one database. This helped refine inclusion parameters before the full analysis. Following previous review studies (Page et al. 2021; Galletta et al. 2024), we employed PRISMA methodology to systematically identify, screen and evaluate all included articles. Our review is the first in CRTQ literature to apply the PRISMA approach, highlighting its novelty and methodological rigour. Second, we conducted chronological sequence analysis of the selected sample to ensure internal consistency and trace the evolution of the research field, following prior studies emphasising the importance of carefully considering appropriate starting and ending points (Yin 2009; Massaro et al. 2016).

The review begins in 2002, a pivotal year marking a global response to high-profile corporate collapses that exposed serious weaknesses in financial reporting and governance. In response, the Sarbanes-Oxley Act (SOX) was enacted in the United States, introducing comprehensive measures to strengthen corporate accountability, internal controls and disclosure practices. Simultaneously, the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), established in 2001, gained momentum in harmonising global accounting standards. From 2003 onwards, many jurisdictions mandated IFRS adoption, with the European Union requiring IFRS compliance for listed companies by 2005. The review extended to May 2025 to capture the most recent developments in CRTQ. To ensure external validity, findings were compared with prior studies and explain empirical results (Massaro et al. 2016).

Our aim was to identify studies assessing the gap in CRTQ at the overall reporting level. To identify relevant studies, we broadened search terms and strategies based on keywords in the most cited papers. Search terms were modified and combined with Boolean operators as follows: 'corporate reporting transparency*' OR 'corporate reporting transparency quality*' OR 'corporate transparency quality*' OR 'information disclosure quality*' OR 'corporate reporting quality*' OR 'forward-looking disclosure quality*' OR 'voluntary reporting quality*' OR 'sustainability reporting quality*' OR 'corporate social responsibility reporting quality*' OR 'integrated reporting quality*' in article titles, abstracts and keywords. Reference lists of eligible articles were also manually searched. Document types were limited to articles in management-related disciplines.

2.2.3 | Screening and Eligibility Criteria

EndNote software managed the retrieved articles. All retrieved articles were read to screen for suitability. Our search identified 911 articles containing at least one search term. After removing 132 duplicates, 779 articles were screened based on titles, abstracts and keywords. During screening, 560 articles were excluded, and 219 articles were retained. Of these, 47 articles unrelated to CRTQ and 68 non-peer-reviewed and non-academic journal publications were excluded. Only 104 remained. Of these, 34 studies were excluded due to the unavailability of full text, leaving 70 articles for final assessment and analysis, as shown in Figure 1.

3 | Description and Classification of Literature

The 70 papers underwent performance analysis for a systematic literature review following Donthu et al. (2021). According to Cobo et al. (2011), performance analysis accounts for research element contributions to a given field. Performance analysis is commonly included in most reviews, even those not utilising science mapping. Donthu et al. (2021) argue that it is standard practice to highlight research contributor performance: authors, institutions, countries and journals within a given field. Accordingly, all 70 research papers are analysed and classified by publication and citation-related metrics. This classification reflects trends and issues in the literature relevant to CRTQ.

3.1 | Analysis by Year of Publication

As shown in Figure 2, approximately 50% of included papers were published after 2020. Results show an increase in published studies in the last six years, consistent with earlier reviews (Minutiello and Tettamanzi 2022; Afeltra et al. 2024), thereby reinforcing this study's validity. This trend suggests growing interest in the topic. However, despite this increase, overall research output specifically addressing CRTQ assessment remains relatively low.

3.2 | Analysis by Journal and Citation Scores of Publications

In examining journals publishing CRTQ research in Table 2, a substantial portion of the literature (65 articles) appears in top accounting journals. The Australian Business Deans Council (ABDC) ranking and Google Scholar Metrics ranking are presented in Table 2. Including the remaining five studies from non-ranked and non-peer-reviewed journals is justified for several reasons. The seminal work by Beest et al. (2009) is widely cited and introduces novel methodology for assessing CRTQ, making it foundational. The remaining four studies (Stiglbauer 2010; Cooray et al. 2020; Gani et al. 2021; Temiz 2021) are directly relevant, providing contextually rich insights enhancing the review's comprehensiveness and inclusivity. This aligns with established guidance for systematic reviews, which highlights that relying exclusively on international databases may overlook important regional research (Benzies et al. 2006; Hopewell et al. 2007; Gough et al. 2017). Many regional journals, particularly from emerging economies, are not indexed in ABDC or Scopus. Excluding non-indexed journals risks introducing geographic bias disproportionately favouring research from Western contexts, marginalising valuable knowledge from emerging economies. Including these five studies ensures the review captures a broader, more representative perspective of CRTQ research.

A noticeable concentration appears in higher-ranked journals, with 35 articles published in A* and A journals, 40 papers with over 100 citations and 26 papers in journals with h5-indices above 40. These papers highlight the scholarly engagement and contemporary relevance of CRTQ research.

3.3 | Analysis by Jurisdiction

Panels 1 and 2 of Table 3 present the jurisdictional distribution of CRTQ studies using World Bank regional and income classifications (World Bank 2021), revealing systematic geographical and economic concentration. Panel 1 indicates that East Asia and Pacific region accounts for the highest proportion (26%), followed by Europe and Central Asia (21%), while a substantial proportion of research adopts multi-region design (23%). In contrast, Latin America and the Caribbean (1%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (3%) remain markedly underrepresented, indicating persistent regional imbalances in CRTQ research. Panel 2

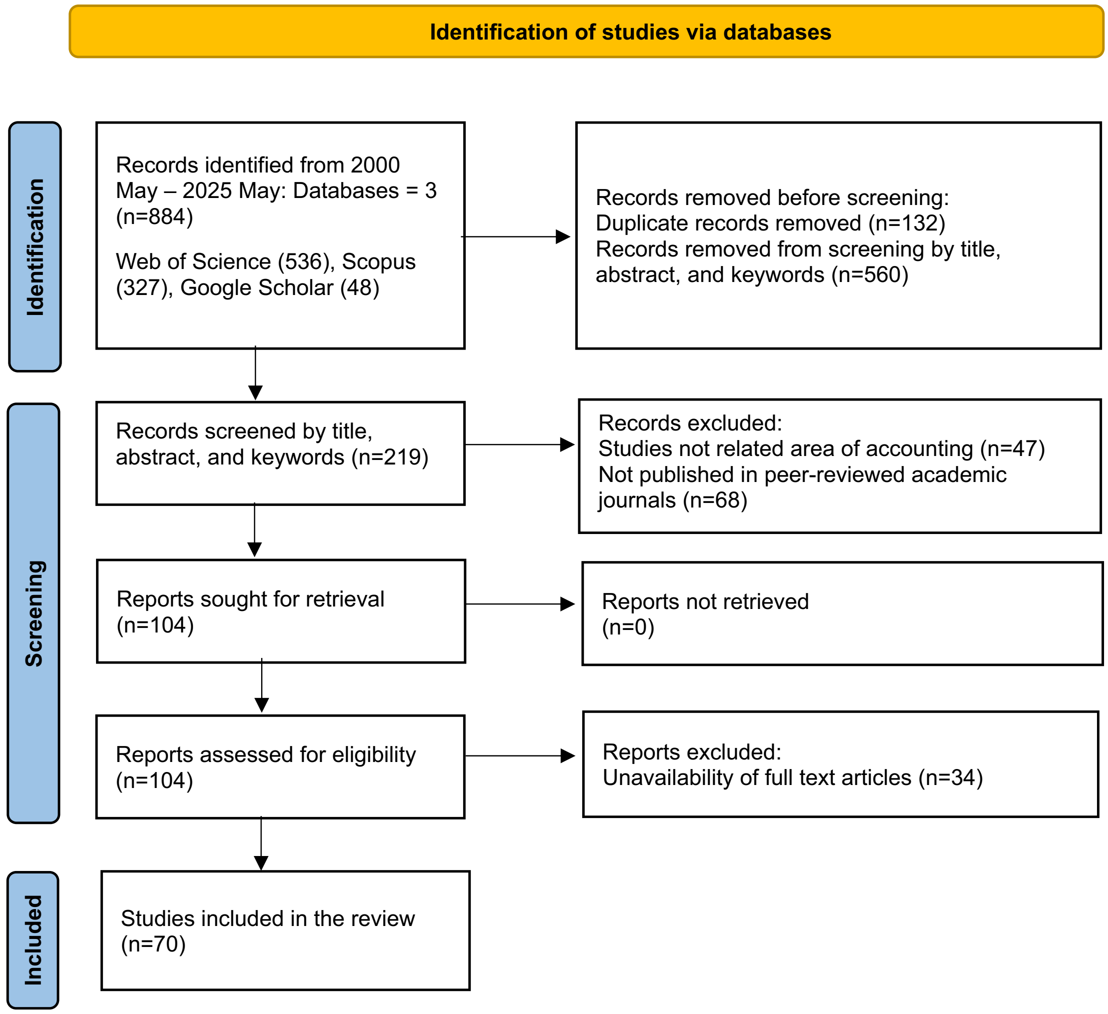

FIGURE 1 | Reporting items for the systematic review using PRISMA. *Source:* Page et al. (2021).

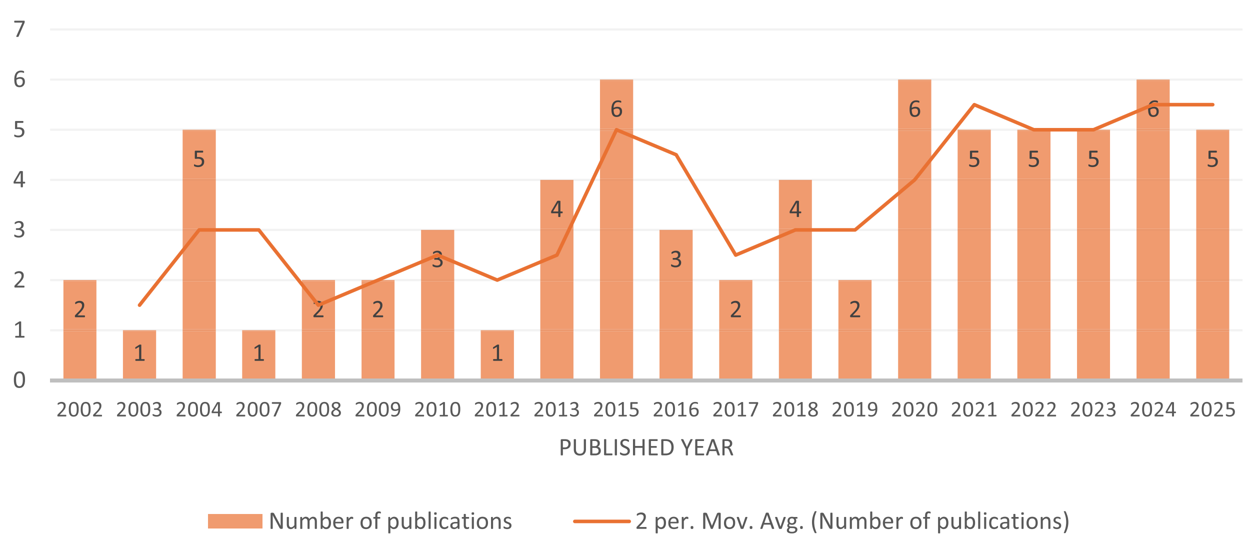

FIGURE 2 | Analysis by year of publication. *Source:* Authors' work.

TABLE 2 | Summary of published journal used for review.

Journal	ABDC Journal ranking	Google Scholar Metrics ranking (h5-index)	Number of publications
Accounting and Business Research	A	28	1
Accounting & Finance	A	52	1
Accounting Forum	B	27	3
Asia Pacific Journal of Financial Studies	C	19	1
Asian Journal of Finance and Accounting	C	12	1
Applied Economic	A	59	1
Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal	A*	64	2
Business Strategy and the Environment	A	136	3
Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	C	107	4
Critical Perspectives on Accounting	A	46	1
Emerging Markets Finance and Trade	B	63	1
European Accounting Review	A*	42	1
Finance Research Letters	A	136	1
Internet Research	A	64	1
International Journal of Accounting & Information Management	B	37	1
International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	B	41	1
International Review of Financial Analysis	A	89	1
Journal of Accounting and Public Policy	A	35	2
Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies	B	33	2
Journal of Accounting Research	A*	51	4
Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Finance	A	19	1
Journal of Applied Accounting Research	B	36	2
Journal of Asian Business and Economic Studies	B	NA	1
Journal of Asia Business Studies	C	40	1
Journal of Business Ethics	A	134	2
Journal of Cleaner Production	A	272	1
Journal of Contemporary Accounting & Economics	A	28	2
Journal of Financial reporting and Accounting	C	41	2
Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions and Money	A	53	2
Journal of Risk and Financial Management	B	76	1
Management Science	A*	123	1
Managerial Auditing Journal	A	41	1
Managerial Finance	B	38	1
Meditari Accountancy Research	A	50	2
North American Journal of Economics and Finance	B	61	1
Pacific Accounting Review	B	26	2
Review of Accounting Studies	A*	53	2
Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting	B	35	1
Spanish Journal of Finance and Accounting	B	18	1
Society and Business Review	B	25	1
Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal	B	48	1
The British Accounting Review	A*	44	2
Quality & quantity	B	48	1
Other (highly cited peer reviewed)	N/A		5
Total			70

Source: Authors' work.

TABLE 3 | Global Distribution of Studies by Region and Income Level.

Panel 1—Jurisdictions by region.			
Region	**Jurisdictions**	**Number of papers**	**Percentage**
East Asia and Pacific	China, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea, Australia	18	26%
Europe and Central Asia	United Kingdom, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Spain, Turkey	15	21%
Latin America & the Caribbean	Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Colombia, Panama	1	1%
Middle East and North Africa	Iran, Oman, Egypt	5	7%
North America	USA	7	10%
South Asia	India, Sri Lanka	6	9%
Sub-Saharan Africa	Ghana, East Africa	2	3%
Multiple Regions		16	23%
Total		70	100%

Panel 2—Jurisdictions by income.			
Income group	**Jurisdictions**	**Number of papers**	**Percentage**
Lower-middle-income	India, Sri Lanka, Ghana, Egypt, Nigeria, Kenya, Korea	9	13%
Upper-middle-income	Iran, Brazil, Mexico, South Africa, Colombia, Indonesia, Turkey, Malaysia,	8	11%
High-income economies	United States, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Australia, China Taiwan, Spain, Oman	38	54%
Multiple income groups		15	21%
Total		70	100%

Note: These classifications have been done according to World Bank (World Bank 2021).
Source: Authors' work.

demonstrates a pronounced income-level bias, with over half of the studies (54%) conducted in high-income economies, including the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and several EU countries, while lower-middle-income (13%) and upper-middle-income (11%) economies receive comparatively limited scholarly attention. These distributions highlight notable geographical and economic gaps, with scholarship disproportionately concentrated on high-income, East Asian and Western contexts. From an agency theoretic perspective, this concentration reflects the stronger role of capital markets, investor protection and external monitoring mechanisms in high-income contexts, where transparency is closely linked to mitigating information asymmetry and reducing the cost of capital. Access to structured databases such as Thomson Reuters, Bloomberg and Compustat further reinforces this research concentration by enabling systematic and large-sample analyses.

In addition, stakeholder and legitimacy pressures appear to be more institutionalised in high-income jurisdictions. For example, stock exchanges in China and Taiwan publicly disclose reporting quality assessments (Chao et al. 2010; Liu and Sun 2010; Lin et al. 2019; Liang et al. 2025), while advanced reporting frameworks, including Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG), and IR, and, within the European Union, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) have expanded the scope of transparency beyond traditional financial reporting (Belhouchet and Chouaibi 2024). According to institutional theory, these developments shape and influence how CRTQ is conceptualised and measured in prior studies.

In contrast, lower- and middle-income economies often lack these institutional infrastructures, regulatory maturity, lower legitimacy and data accessibility (Cooray et al. 2020), which may partly explain their underrepresentation in the CRTQ literature. However, this imbalance raises important concerns about the external validity and generalisability of existing findings, as transparency motivations, stakeholder pressures and reporting incentives differ substantially across institutional contexts. Although multi-region studies attempt to address cross-country variation, their reliance on harmonised measures may obscure country-specific regulatory, cultural and governance differences.

Overall, the evidence in Table 3 highlights a critical need for context-sensitive and theory-informed CRTQ research, particularly in emerging and developing economies. Expanding empirical analysis into these settings would enhance the representativeness and external validity of the existing literature, which remains heavily skewed towards high-income contexts. More importantly, investigating CRTQ across diverse and underexplored institutional, regulatory and socio-economic environments present significant opportunities to advance theoretical refinement and methodological innovation. Such research can offer deeper insights into the dynamics of CRTQ and how they operate across heterogeneous reporting landscapes.

4 | Results of the Review

4.1 | What Is 'CRTQ'?

No generally accepted definition exists for 'Corporate Reporting Transparency Quality' (CRTQ), although definitions exist for related constructs such as corporate transparency (CT) and corporate reporting quality. CT is defined as '…the availability of firm-specific information to those outside publicly traded firms, and … a measure of timeliness and appropriateness'. Francis et al. (2009) argue that 'corporate transparency should consider not only the quality of the financial reporting environment but also the intensity of private information acquisition and the effectiveness of information dissemination'. For corporate reporting quality, Michelon et al. (2020) define it as 'how useful information is for investors and lenders when making investment decisions'.

Beattie et al. (2004) state that the 'quality' of narrative accounting disclosures can be defined in various ways, indicating it is a complex and multi-dimensional concept. They view disclosure quality as a function of both the quantity and content richness of its content. Beretta and Bozzolan (2008) argue that disclosure quality provides a more accurate representation of disclosures than mere quantity, helping annual report users make rational decisions. They highlight that empirical studies often fail to clearly distinguish between disclosure quantity and quality and emphasise that forward-looking information is critical, requiring consideration of disclosure 'width' and 'depth' to capture its richness.

While quantity is often assumed to indicate quality and used as a proxy for quality, Botosan (2004) challenges this notion, proposing that quality should be assessed based on qualitative characteristics outlined by the FASB, such as understandability, relevance, reliability and comparability. This follows Jonas and Blanchet (2000), who stressed that information quality depends on meeting user needs through relevance, reliability and clarity. According to the FASB (2008), quality should align with financial reporting's objective: providing users with information useful for making investment, credit and similar decisions. Consequently, several studies (Beest et al. 2009; Haarburger et al. 2020) increasingly emphasised disclosure quality rooted in the FASB Conceptual Framework. Prior research lacks a commonly agreed-upon definition of CRTQ. While studies examine various attributes, dimensions and assessment methods (discussed later), none provide a clear definition of CRTQ highlighting the need for a comprehensive definition.

We propose a definition for CRTQ as the extent to which corporate reporting provides relevant, reliable, comparable and understandable information, both financial and non-financial to all stakeholders in timely and decision-useful manner. It should reflect not only information availability and accessibility but also the richness, depth and forward-looking nature of disclosures. CRTQ thus embodies both information's qualitative characteristics, as outlined in frameworks such as the FASB Conceptual Framework, and the effectiveness of communication in reducing information asymmetry.

4.2 | Theories of CRTQ

Researchers have applied different but related theories to examine CRTQ. Zaini et al. (2018) note that information disclosure is commonly examined under two theory groups: economic-based theories (i.e., agency theory, asymmetric information theory, voluntary disclosure theory and signalling theory) and socio-political theories (i.e., political economy theory, stakeholder theory, legitimacy theory and institutional theory). Their review of theories underpinning corporate voluntary disclosures reveals that agency theory is the most frequently utilised theory, appearing in 19.6% of papers, followed by legitimacy theory (15.7%), stakeholder theory (11.8%), institutional theory (5.9%) and political economy theory (1%). Adamo et al. (2025), reviewing papers on sustainability reporting quality, identified legitimacy theory as the dominant theoretical lens (27.9%), followed by stakeholder theory (14.8%), agency theory (8.2%) and both institutional and signalling theories (6.6% each).

Among these, agency theory (Ross 1973; Jensen and Meckling 1976; Eisenhardt 1989; Wanjau et al. 2018) is predominant (including in the current study), having given rise to the concept of corporate governance (CG). Subsequently, stakeholder, legitimacy, signalling and asymmetric information theories emerged to inform CRTQ research. The following subsections critically analyse the applicability of the most commonly used theories (agency theory, asymmetric information theory, voluntary disclosure theory, signalling theory, stakeholder theory, legitimacy theory and institutional theory) of CRTQ.

4.2.1 | Agency Theory

Agency theory (Mitnick 1973; Ross 1973; Jensen and Meckling 1976) explains CRTQ through the lens of conflicts of interest between owners and managers, arising from a lack of goal congruence. Managers may prioritise personal interests over those of owners, generating agency costs (Jensen and Meckling 1976; Fama 1980). As critical mechanisms for mitigating agency conflicts, financial transparency ensures the timely and accurate dissemination of financial information, while governance transparency encompasses disclosures that enable shareholders to hold executives accountable (Bushman et al. 2004). Beyond these traditional dimensions, agency theory also informs social transparency, particularly through sustainability and IR. Evidence shows that high-quality IR reduces information asymmetry and addresses agency conflicts (Pistoni et al. 2018; Vitolla et al. 2020; Raimo et al. 2022), while Belhouchet and Chouaibi (2024) find that governance mechanisms, such as audit committee independence, enhance the quality of IR. Collectively, these insights stress the value of IR quality in addressing agency costs and information asymmetry.

Despite its strengths, agency theory has faced criticisms for its narrow focus on owners and managers. Critics argue that this perspective neglects broader stakeholder relationships (Perrow 1986; Eisenhardt 1989; Wiseman and Gomez-Mejia 1998; Daily et al. 2003; Ekanayake et al. 2019). For example, Haat et al. (2008) find a negative relationship between disclosure levels, the timeliness of reporting, and firm performance. Similarly, studies by Siagian et al. (2013) and Temiz (2021) report negative associations between reporting quality and the firm value, suggesting that the assumptions underlying agency theory may not always hold in real-world contexts. Such findings highlight the need for insights from other theories to capture CRTQ and governance's complexity.

4.2.2 | Asymmetric Information Theory

Asymmetric information theory, introduced by George Akerlof in 1970, highlights a common feature of market interactions where one party has more or superior information than the other, resulting in market imbalances and potential failures. Verrecchia (1982) and Diamond (1985) show that greater public disclosure reduces investors' need for costly private information and provides forward-looking insights (Brown and Hillegeist 2007). CRTQ across multiple dimensions directly addresses these asymmetries. Governance transparency promotes corporate accountability (Bushman et al. 2004), operational transparency lowers transaction costs for customers and suppliers (Kim et al. 2013), and voluntary social and environmental transparency reduces information gaps and earnings management (Michelon et al. 2015; Salem et al. 2020). Despite its explanatory power, some studies question the universal applicability of this theory. Haat et al. (2008) find governance transparency does not significantly affect performance in Malaysia, while Mouselli et al. (2012) report a negative association between voluntary disclosure and information asymmetry. Despite such critiques, the underlying logic of asymmetric information theory aligns closely with voluntary disclosure theory, which posits that proactive transparency fosters trust and reduces information gaps.

4.2.3 | Voluntary Disclosure Theory

Voluntary disclosure theory (Verrecchia 1983; Dye 1985; Lang and Lundholm 1993) suggests that firms weigh the benefits of transparency against proprietary costs when disclosing information beyond regulatory requirements (Meek et al. 1995). While financial and governance information is often mandated, voluntary disclosures typically focus on environmental and social aspects. Empirical evidence using the Bloomberg ESG index indicates a positive relationship between voluntary disclosures and firm performance (Aboud and Diab 2018; Yu et al. 2018), enhancing governance and investor decision-making (Yu et al. 2018; Xie et al. 2019). With the advent of the voluntary disclosure, companies increasingly present sustainability and IR detailing the utilisation and impacts of the companies' actions on human, social relational and natural capital (Yu et al. 2018; Erin and Adegboye 2021; Rudyanto and Pirzada 2021). These practices allow firms to create value through higher-quality information and serve as signals that convey relevant insights, enabling stakeholders to make informed decisions and participate meaningfully in CG.

4.2.4 | Signalling Theory

Signalling theory (Spence 1973) posits that firms use financial and voluntary disclosures to reduce information asymmetry with investors. Disclosures on strategy, operations and CSR serve as market signals of managerial intent and organisational commitment, potentially enhancing reputation and performance (Bae et al. 2018; Iatridis et al. 2022). Empirical studies show that high-quality voluntary disclosures, including environmental reporting, signal superior performance, reduce earnings management and build stakeholder confidence (Kim et al. 2013; Salem et al. 2020; Wen et al. 2022; Ko et al. 2024). However, the effectiveness of signals depends on stakeholders' interpretation. Misinterpretation or manipulative disclosures can undermine trust, leading to short-term gains but long-term reputational damage (Connelly et al. 2011; Dinh et al. 2016). Thus, maintaining CRTQ ensures signals are credible and fosters lasting stakeholder trust.

4.2.5 | Stakeholder Theory

Stakeholder theory, advanced by Freeman (1984), emphasises organisational responsibility beyond shareholders to include customers, investors, communities and society at large (Clarkson et al. 1994; Hung 1998; Beattie and Smith 2010; Kim et al. 2013). Expanding on this, Kim et al. (2013) propose a multidimensional corporate transparency index encompassing financial, governance, operational and social aspects, finding positive relationships with firm value for most dimensions, except operational transparency. Similarly, studies using the Bloomberg ESG index highlight ESG transparency as a mechanism to strengthen CG (Aboud and Diab 2018; Yu et al. 2018; Wen et al. 2022). IR addresses the needs of both direct and indirect stakeholders, highlighting internal activities and external relationships in value creation (Vitolla et al. 2019a; Vitolla et al. 2019b; Pistoni et al. 2018; Erin and Adegboye 2021). However, some contexts remain shareholder-centric; for instance, Cooray et al. (2020) find limited evidence that governance transparency enhances stakeholder value in Sri Lanka. Stakeholder theory's complexity and limited attention to broader cultural and institutional factors are often cited as challenges (Key 1999; Ramoglou et al. 2023).

4.2.6 | Legitimacy Theory

Legitimacy theory conceptualises organisational legitimacy as a social contract between business and society (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975; Ashforth and Gibbs 1990; Deegan 2002). Firms maintain legitimacy by complying with societal expectations or strategically managing perceptions, often through corporate disclosures (Elsbach 1994; Woodward et al. 1996). Annual reports and voluntary social or environmental disclosures serve as legitimation strategies, aligning firms with societal norms (Suchman 1995; O'Donovan 2002). CSR and ESG reporting also serve as legitimation strategies, with evidence showing that Spanish firms complying with CNMV guidelines improve narrative disclosure quality (Melón-Izco et al. 2023), while multinational subsidiaries in Sri Lanka show quality improvements under strong institutional pressures (Beddewela and Herzig 2013). Failure to meet societal expectations may create a legitimacy gap, challenging the firm's social contract (Deegan 2019; Balluchi et al. 2020). Understanding these dynamics requires considering the institutional context that shapes legitimacy, as highlighted by institutional theory.

4.2.7 | Institutional Theory

Institutional theory explains how organisations are shaped by structures, rules, norms and stabilised by coercive, normative and mimetic pressures (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2005; Powell and DiMaggio 2012). Unlike legitimacy theory's strategic perspective, institutional theory situates legitimacy within broader social, regulatory and institutional contexts (Suchman 1995; Milne and Patten 2002). This perspective clarifies variations in CRTQ across context, emphasising that disclosures are not merely a managerial choice but a response to institutional pressures such as regulations, professional norms and societal expectations (Deephouse and Suchman 2008). For instance, in Sri Lanka, multinational subsidiaries' CSR engagement was limited in the absence of strong institutional pressures (Beddewela and Herzig 2013). In Malaysia, Amran and Susela Devi (2008) shows that government-led institutionalisation shaped CSR reporting, while in China, Zeng et al. (2012) identify peer influence and state ownership as key determinants of environmental disclosure. Conversely, excessive reporting demands in India's public sector impaired resource allocation and disclosure quality (Taneja et al. 2022). A summary of CRTQ-related theories discussed above, along with an analysis of their theoretical implications, is given in the Appendix 1.

Our review categorises papers according to the theories used to explain CRTQ, which are presented in Table 4. Agency theory is most frequently applied (20%), followed by signalling (9%), legitimacy (6%) and stakeholder theory (3%). Asymmetric information, voluntary disclosure and institutional theories are often combined with other frameworks, with 43% of studies applying multiple theories. Surprisingly, 16% of the papers use no explicit theory to underpin their research. These papers integrate a blend of concepts from business and economic perspectives.

However, the majority of studies are quantitative in nature, with qualitative research largely confined to assessing financial and non-financial reporting. Identifying qualitative studies proves particularly challenging. The summaries of selected articles for the review (i.e., five theoretical articles and 65 empirical articles) are given in the Appendices 2 and 3.

5 | Empirical Evidence on the Current Assessment of CRTQ: Strengths and Limitations

Our review distinguishes between two main approaches to assessing CRTQ: 'the narrow perspective' and 'the broad perspective'. The narrow perspective evaluates only one or two disclosure dimensions or restricts attention to either mandatory (financial/governance) or voluntary (CSR/ESG) aspects. By contrast, the broad perspective adopts a holistic approach, incorporating multiple dimensions such as financial, governance, operational, social, environmental and risk-related disclosures. This broad view has gained momentum, particularly after 2010, aligned with the rise of IR practices. Nevertheless, only a limited number of studies (Kim et al. 2013; Gani et al. 2021) fully embrace this holistic approach, despite CRTQ's increasing complexity and its relevance to diverse stakeholders.

Across both narrow and broad approaches, a common method for evaluating CRTQ is index construction (Ahmed and Courtis 1999; Hassan and Marston 2019), which facilitates structured assessment and comparison of disclosure practices. These assessments can be further classified into 'quantitative' and 'qualitative' assessments. Quantitative assessments measure disclosure volume using checklists or unweighted indices that capture the presence of specific disclosed items, but offer limited insight into the depth, clarity or relevance of the information. Indeed, most empirical studies rely on such binary or unweighted indices, reflecting an assumption that, 'disclosure quantity proxies its quality' (Beretta and Bozzolan (2008). In response to these limitations, qualitative frameworks have been developed to assess quality in greater depth, focusing on the width (breadth) and depth (detail and clarity) of information provided. However, existing qualitative frameworks still tend to assess only specific reporting dimensions and often lack comprehensive coverage of CRTQ's full scope.

Beyond the widely used quantitative and qualitative indices, a smaller body of research has employed alternative methodologies to assess CRTQ. The following sections will analyse these approaches in more detail, highlighting their contributions and limitations in advancing CRTQ research.

5.1 | Quantitative Assessments With Narrow Perspective

5.1.1 | Externally Developed Frameworks

The Association of Investment Management and Research (AIMR), formerly the Financial Analysts Federation (FAF), produced disclosure ratings that were subjective and employed in most USA studies (Bens and Monahan 2004; Dunn and Mayhew 2004; Brown and Hillegeist 2007). With AIMR rankings' discontinuation in 1997, Hussainey et al. (2003) developed a metric using text analysis software (QSR NUD*IST) designed to automate disclosure score generation for large-scale studies related to specific voluntary disclosure themes. Later, Mouselli et al. (2012) applied this approach to assess voluntary disclosures in UK firms, providing it is effective for larger samples. However, as the AIMR method relied mainly on the volume of disclosures rather than substance, it ultimately failed to capture CRTQ.

Beyond the United States, several externally developed models have been used to evaluate information transparency. The Information Disclosure and Transparency Ranking System (IDTRS) of Taiwan (Chao et al. 2010; Ho et al. 2022) and the Shenzhen Stock Exchange (SZSE) rating system are prominent in China and Taiwan. SZSE ratings have been used to investigate ownership structure (Liu and Sun 2010), CEO characteristics (Lin et al. 2019; Song and Zhu 2023), tax compliance effects (Ye et al. 2023) and cooperative relationships (Liang et al. 2025). Another influential tool is the Standard & Poor's Transparency & Disclosure Index (S&P T&D Index), introduced in 2002, which assesses transparency in financial reporting and governance (Aksu and Kosedag 2006; Wanjau et al. 2018; Temiz 2021).

The rise of ESG reporting has also influenced the landscape of CRTQ measurement. The Bloomberg ESG index has been increasingly used to assess the depth and breadth of ESG disclosures (Aboud and Diab 2018; Yu et al. 2018; Wen et al. 2022).

TABLE 4 | Categorisation of papers according to the theories used to explain CRTQ.

Theories used	Number of papers	Percentage of total
Agency theory	14	20%
Signalling	06	9%
Stakeholder theory	02	3%
Legitimacy theory	04	6%
Political cost theory	01	1%
Stewardship theory	01	1%
Institutional theory	01	1%
Agency and stakeholder theory	04	6%
Agency and voluntary disclosure theory	01	1%
Agency and resource dependency theory	01	1%
Agency and stewardship theory	01	1%
Legitimacy and stakeholder theory	05	7%
Legitimacy and institutional theory	01	1%
Legitimacy and signalling theory	01	1%
Stakeholder and signalling theory	02	3%
Agency, legitimacy and asymmetric information theory	04	6%
Agency, legitimacy theory and signalling theory	02	3%
Agency, stakeholder and legitimacy theory	02	3%
Agency, resource dependency, social capital cost theory	01	1%
Signalling, voluntary disclosure and political cost theory	03	4%
Stakeholder, legitimacy and voluntary disclosure theory	02	3%
No theories	11	16%
Total	70	100%

Source: Authors' work.

While the Bloomberg ESG score provides standardised, cross-industry data and captures the quantity and quality of voluntarily disclosed ESG-related information, it primarily focuses on ESG performance and does not encompass the full spectrum of corporate disclosures, including financial, governance, operational, social and environmental aspects. Moreover, its emphasis on large firms limits its applicability to smaller companies, particularly in emerging markets. Several alternative approaches have also emerged, including GRI guidelines, CSR report evaluations (Lu et al. 2015; Plumlee et al. 2015; Rezaee and Tuo 2019), and tools like the CSR-S Monitor developed by the Weissman Centre (Sethi et al. 2017), gaining prominence for evaluating CSR disclosure quality. As IR frameworks evolve, third-party databases have become widely adopted, including Thomson Reuters Asset4 for European IR quality (Al-Shaer 2020; Belhouchet and Chouaibi 2024). Other country-specific measures include Malaysia's Sustainability Reporting Index (Elaigwu et al. 2024), the Malaysian Transparency Index (Ko et al. 2024), and, in the Netherlands, disclosure scores provided by the Ministry of Economic Affairs (Gao et al. 2015).

Externally developed frameworks advance CRTQ research by offering standardised benchmarks that support large-sample, cross-country comparability, reducing subjective judgment and reflecting established reporting norms. However, many tools, such as S&P index or Bloomberg ESG scores, still emphasise disclosure quantity over quality, while region- or institution-specific indices (e.g., SZSE, IDTRS) limit international comparability. Moreover, reliance on third-party databases and ratings can limit flexibility for researchers in tailoring assessments to specific research questions. Thus, while externally developed methods are valuable for providing structure, efficiency, and credibility in CRTQ research, they often require adaptation to capture the multi-dimensional and contextual nature of CRTQ.

5.1.2 | Self-Constructed Frameworks

To address the limitations of externally developed methods, several researchers have designed their own indices tailored to specific research needs. Bushman et al. (2004), for example, propose a conceptual framework to assess financial and governance transparency across 46 countries by examining corporate reporting, private information acquisition and information dissemination. They show that governance transparency is largely shaped by legal and judicial systems, whereas financial transparency is more closely linked to political economy factors. Building on this, Francis et al. (2009) demonstrate that higher-quality financial transparency, measured through earnings opacity indicators, enhances resource allocation efficiency. Haat et al.

(2008) similarly developed a disclosure index to examine the influence of governance mechanisms on firm performance in Malaysia. Following these approaches, many scholars have developed self-constructed unweighted indices to measure financial and governance transparency in both developed and emerging markets (Cheung et al. 2010; Stiglbauer 2010; Bokpin 2013; Siagian et al. 2013; Chen et al. 2015; Firth et al. 2015; Edogbanya and Kamardin 2016; Byrne and O'Connor 2017; Liu et al. 2023). A key advantage of these self-constructed indices is their flexibility, enabling researchers to tailor the criteria to specific regional, industry or research contexts.

Beyond financial and governance reporting, scholars have developed disclosure indices for environmental and social transparency often drawing on sustainability frameworks, particularly the GRI, to evaluate voluntary non-financial disclosures (Michelon et al. 2015; Al-Shaer and Zaman 2016; Dissanayake et al. 2016; Rezaee et al. 2020; Koh et al. 2023; Soysa et al. 2024; Dungtripop et al. 2025; Singhania et al. 2025). With the increasing prominence of IR, scholars have proposed frameworks to assess IR structure and content quality. Pistoni et al. (2018), for instance, introduce a scorecard for evaluating IR quality, subsequently applied in several international studies (Vitolla et al. 2019a, 2019b, 2020; Raimo et al. 2022). In a similar effort, Erin and Adegboye (2021) develop a 38-indicator checklist, offering a systematic and comprehensive measure of IR quality.

5.2 | Qualitative Assessments With Narrow Perspective

5.2.1 | Self-Constructed Frameworks

Efforts to develop comprehensive quality frameworks for assessing CRTQ have been emerging, aiming to bridge existing gaps. Beattie et al. (2004) argue that existing studies often focus selectively on specific narrative sections of annual reports, rather than evaluating the completeness and quality of disclosure holistically. To overcome this limitation, they propose a multidimensional, computer-assisted disclosure qualitative profile (BMF framework), which analyses narrative disclosures across the entire annual reports. However, their approach excludes sections heavily regulated or standard in nature. This framework has been followed by several scholars (Salem et al. 2020; Al Lawati et al. 2021) when evaluating non-financial disclosure quality.

Beretta and Bozzolan (2008) refine and extend the BMF approach by adjusting industry and firm size and emphasising forward-looking information. They highlight that quality is not solely dependent on quantity but also on the comprehensive and balanced coverage. To better capture quality, they introduce additional attributes: (1) the time dimension (historical, forward-looking and non-time-specific information); (2) the financial dimension (financial vs. nonfinancial information) and (3) the type of measure (quantitative vs. qualitative information). These enhancements better reflect communicative intent and informational richness. Both approaches use NUD*IST software for automated content analysis, classified as machine-learning–based methods. While automation reduces subjectivity and processing time, human coders remain essential for algorithm training and validation, particularly for complex constructs like tone, sentiment or interpretive areas (Stemler 2015; Salem et al. 2020; van Atteveldt et al. 2021). Build on Beattie et al. (2004) and Beretta and Bozzolan (2004) to evaluate voluntary disclosure quantity and quality in commercial banks across the Middle East and North Africa. Incorporating qualitative characteristics into the usefulness dimension, they enhance the depth of assessment compared with previous frameworks. However, the model remains sector-specific, and the operationalisation of several indicators introduces subjectivity. Furthermore, environmental and social disclosures are assessed primarily in quantitative terms, limiting insights into CRTQ.

Broad perspectives on CRTQ also emphasise user-oriented assessment. Botosan (2004) argues that the frameworks for assessing disclosure quality cannot be created in a vacuum, those should be created for a target group, be content specific, and truly measure the degree of understandability by satisfying their user needs. He also emphasises the need to embed risk disclosures when measuring disclosure quality. He further argues that the notion of quality should be based on conceptual methods based on standard setters' conceptual frameworks, like the IASB or the FASB, since these frameworks represent generally accepted notions of quality. He also advocates for indices that consider qualitative characteristics introduced by the FASB, aligning with user needs.

Under the FASB model, Jonas and Blanchet (2000) develop a framework for assessing the quality of financial reporting covering characteristics such as relevance, predictive value, earnings persistence, feedback value, timeliness, verifiability, reliability, completeness, comparability, consistency and clarity, which is purely measuring financial reporting quality. Beest et al. (2009) later develop the Nijmegen Centre for Economics (NiCE) qualitative reporting index using a five-point scale to measure 21 indicators grounded in FASB (2008). The NiCE index is widely used in empirical studies (Abdullahi and Abubakar 2020; Haarburger et al. 2020; Oluwagbemiga 2021; Kabwe 2023), yet more than 80% of its indicators assess financial disclosures, limiting its applicability to broader CRTQ dimensions.

Expanding beyond financial aspects, more recently, Hameed et al. (2024) recently introduced a CSR Disclosure Quality Index, employing a 0–4 scale grounded in the qualitative characteristics of the 2018 revised Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting. This reflects an effort to apply established financial reporting principles to assess the quality of non-financial disclosures, particularly those related to CSR. In the context of IR, Cooray et al. (2020) develop an index that assesses IR quality in Sri Lankan annual reports, specifically focusing on the qualitative characteristics of the disclosures. This approach emphasises the need for disclosures to be transparent, understandable, relevant and reliable, aligning with global standards.

5.3 | Quantitative Assessments With Broad Perspective

5.3.1 | Self-Constructed Frameworks

Gani et al. (2021) developed self-constructed indices to assess transparency across financial, governance, social and risk dimensions, but these focus on the quantity of disclosures rather than their quality. Kim et al. (2013) propose a broader conceptualisation of CT for multiple stakeholders, designing a composite index integrating several established frameworks such as the Standard and Poor's model, the CLSA index, the KCGI, the Matrix of Ethical Management by the FKI and the indices of Cheung et al. (2008) and Khan et al. (2013) with 36 financial, 76 governance, 17 operational and 19 social indicators. While comprehensive in scope, it also emphasises volume over quality.

Self-constructed frameworks, whether narrow or broad in scope, offer flexibility, allowing researchers to tailor indices to specific objectives, industries and regions and explore emerging disclosures such as environmental and social (Hassan and Marston 2019). However, they face limitations: reduced comparability across studies, reliance on unweighted checklists and overemphasis on disclosure quantity. Even weighted indices often fail to fully capture the multi-dimensional nature of reporting, providing only a partial assessment of CRTQ.

5.4 | Other Alternative Methods

More recently, studies on CRTQ in reporting have employed alternative methodologies, such as word count analysis (Iatridis et al. 2022; Melón-Izco et al. 2023), discretionary accruals (Li et al. 2022), surveys (Habek et al. 2016) and interviews (Adams 2002; O'Donovan 2002; Hammond and Miles 2004; Beddewela and Herzig 2013; Taneja et al. 2022) to determine transparency quality. These approaches broaden the methodological toolkit by capturing different aspects of CRTQ, complementing traditional index-based methods through measures such as textual intensity (Iatridis et al. 2022), combined quantity and quality of information (Melón-Izco et al. 2023), and time-efficient analysis for large samples (Hassan and Marston 2019). They are particularly valuable when exploring emerging or less standardised forms of reporting, where established indices may not yet exist. Nonetheless, these methods have substantial limitations: word count analysis risks conflating volume with quality (Iatridis et al. 2022), visual analysis introduces bias (Melón-Izco et al. 2023), discretionary accruals capture mainly financial reporting quality (Hassan and Marston 2019), surveys are susceptible to subjectivity and limited comparability (Habek et al. 2016), and interviews are limited in scope and scalability (Hammond and Miles 2004). A summary of past studies' quality dimension, assessments and gaps in the current assessment is presented in Table 5.

6 | Discussions and Direction for Future Research

Based on the reviews in Sections 3–5, we propose the following research directions.

6.1 | Defining CRTQ

Our review reveals no universally accepted definition of CRTQ. While established definitions exist for CT (Bushman et al. 2004; Francis et al. 2009), corporate reporting quality (Michelon et al. 2020) and financial reporting quality (Jonas and Blanchet 2000; Beest et al. 2009), CRTQ remains conceptually fragmented. Existing studies (Beattie et al. 2004; Botosan 2004; Beretta and Bozzolan 2008; Beest et al. 2009) operationalise CRTQ through attributes, dimensions and assessment frameworks, yet lack a clearly articulated, integrated conceptual definition for CRTQ. This fragmentation is further compounded by the frequent conflation of disclosure quantity with quality (Beretta and Bozzolan 2008), which is theoretically problematic.

This conceptual ambiguity reflects competing assumptions across CRTQ theories. Agency theory conceptualises transparency primarily as a mechanism for reducing information asymmetry between managers and investors, implicitly privileging financially relevant, reliable and verifiable information. Signalling theory and voluntary disclosure theory similarly emphasise disclosure as a strategic tool through which high-quality firms voluntarily signal superior performance or governance to capital markets. In contrast, stakeholder and legitimacy theories broaden the scope of transparency to encompass social, environmental and governance disclosures aimed at maintaining organisational legitimacy and responding to diverse stakeholder expectations. Institutional theory views transparency as conformity to regulatory, normative and mimetic pressures, often irrespective of informational value. The absence of a unified CRTQ definition, therefore, mirrors unresolved theoretical tensions about the purpose of disclosure, the intended audience, clear attributes and the evaluative criteria used to assess CRTQ, resulting in divergent conceptualisations across the literature.

A well-defined CRTQ concept significantly advances the literature, particularly by addressing the existing gap related to understudied definitional elements. A clear, comprehensive definition ensures consistency in measurement, enabling comparability across studies. Moreover, it guides policymakers, regulators and organisations in developing effective transparency standards, enhancing accountability and trust. In response, we propose an operational definition of CRTQ as the extent to which corporate reports convey relevant, reliable, comparable and understandable information in both financial and non-financial forms to all stakeholders in a timely and decision-useful manner, effectively mitigating information asymmetry. This definition not only supports more informed decision-making among stakeholders but also strengthens empirical research and encourages improved reporting practices, advancing the field of CRTQ.

6.2 | Theories of CRTQ

Our review confirms that no single theory fully explains CRTQ, as information disclosure is influenced by diverse economic and social phenomena. Notably, 16% of reviewed studies lack an explicit theoretical grounding, reflecting a practitioner-oriented focus rather than theory-driven research. Although these studies provide useful practical insights, their contribution to conceptual development is limited.

There is no single universal theory that offers a one-size-fits-all explanation for CRTQ, with each theory offering a unique perspective that highlights the need for a multi-theoretic approach (Omran and El-Galfy 2014a; Zaini et al. 2018; Adamo et al. 2025). Consistently, 41 of 70 reviewed studies (59%) employed multi-theoretical lenses, reinforcing Gray et al. (1995) assertion that

TABLE 5 | Summary of existing assessments.

No.	Authors and year	Context	Assessment method	Externally developed/Self-constructed	Qualitative/ Quantitative, narrow/Broad	Dimensions measured and gaps
Panel 1- Index/framework-based assessments						
1	Hussainey et al. (2003)	United States	Developing a matrix using the QSR NUD*IST text-analysis software to automate disclosure scores	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited to counting number of words in voluntary disclosures in the annual reports
2	Beattie et al. (2004)	United Kingdom	Developing a quality index (BMF index): a multi-dimensional, holistic, computer-assisted disclosure profile analysing voluntary narrative disclosures using QSR NUD*IST software coding	Self-constructed	Qualitative, Narrow	Measures only the quality of voluntary narrative disclosures in annual reports, excluding financial and corporate sections
3	Dunn and Mayhew (2004)	United States	Annual report disclosures assess using Association of Investment Management and Research (AIMR) disclosure scores	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	AIMR is currently discontinued
4	Bens and Monahan (2004)	United States	Annual published information, quarterly and other published information using AIMR disclosure scores	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	AIMR is currently discontinued
5	Bushman et al. (2004)	46 Countries	Developing a conceptual and measurement scheme including corporate reporting, private information acquisition and communication, and information dissemination	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Focus only financial and governance transparency in annual reports
6	Brown and Hillegeist (2007)	United States	Annual reports, quarterly reports, and investor relations activities assessed using AIMR disclosure scores	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	AIMR is currently discontinued
7	Beretta and Bozzolan (2008)	Italy	Adjusted the BMF index to measure both quantity and quality of voluntary narrative disclosures in annual reports	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Only measures the quality of voluntary narrative disclosures and mainly focuses on forward-looking disclosure
8	Haat et al. (2008)	Malaysia	Annual reports disclosures by developing an index with 17 CG indicators	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Focus mainly on CG indicators
9	Beest et al. (2009)	United States, United Kingdom, and Netherlands	Using the Nijmegen Centre for Economics (NiCE) qualitative reporting index. Developing a 5-point Likert scale (points 1–5) to assess 21 items covering qualitative characteristics of the FASB (2018)	Self-constructed	Qualitative, Narrow	Limited disclosures in annual reports are covered. More than 80% of the quality indicators cover measurement of financial information
10	Francis et al. (2009)	37 Countries	Following Bushman et al. (2004) and three earnings opacity metrics used by Bhattacharya, Daouk, and Welker (2003)	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Mainly focus on investors, financial, and governance transparency and focus on the quantity

(Continues)

No.	Authors and year	Context	Assessment method	Externally developed/Self-constructed	Qualitative/Quantitative, narrow/Broad	Dimensions measured and gaps
Panel 1- Index/framework-based assessments						
11	Cheung et al. (2010)	China	Constructing an un-weighted transparency index with 56 questions	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Mainly focus of CG factors in annual reports, articles of association, memorandums of association, notices to call shareholders' meetings, annual general meeting minutes, company websites, analyst reports. Main focus on quantitative metrics
12	Stiglbauer (2010)	Germany	Using an un-weighted transparency and disclosure scorecard of Graf and Stiglbauer (2008b)	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Mainly focus of CG factors and focus on quantitative metrics in annual report and other governance reporting
13	Liu and Sun (2010)	China	Using the rating of corporate disclosure quality issued by the SZSE	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific, mainly on financial and governance disclosures in annual reports, and a checklist-based approach
14	Mouselli et al. (2012)	United Kingdom	Following the approach of Hussainey et al. (2003)	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Measures only specific voluntary disclosures in annual reports
15	Siagian et al. (2013)	Indonesia	Authors developed an unweighted reporting quality index with a total of 650 items	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Checklist-based approach and mainly focus on financial and governance aspects in annual report and website
16	Kim et al. (2013)	Korea	Authors developed an unweighted index including 149 indicators based on financial, governance, social and operational aspects	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Broad	Checklist-based approach, and less focus on quality of disclosures in annual reports
17	Bokpin (2013)	Ghana	Authors developed an unweighted corporate disclosure index covering financial disclosures, CG disclosures, and voluntary disclosures	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Checklist-based approach and mainly focus on the quantity of financial and governance disclosures in annual reports
18	Firth et al. (2015)	China	Measured using 4 sub-categories, namely, earnings management, quality of audit firms, opinions, and related-party transactions	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Mainly focus on the quantity of financial disclosures in annual reports
19	Michelon et al. (2015)	United Kingdom	Developing a disclosure framework including 10 environmental and 22 social information	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Checklist-based and focused on CSR disclosures in CSR reports and annual reports
20	Chen et al. (2015)	United States	Developing a measure that captures the level of disaggregation of accounting line items in firms' annual reports	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Mainly focus on financial disclosures in annual reports
21	Lu et al. (2015)	China	Using a total score of 121 GRI reporting items according to the reporting quality	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited to CSR quality

(Continues)

No.	Authors and year	Context	Assessment method	Externally developed/Self-constructed	Qualitative/ Quantitative, narrow/Broad	Dimensions measured and gaps
Panel 1- Index/framework-based assessments						
22	Gao et al. (2015)	Netherland	CSR disclosure scores provided by the Ministry of Economic Affairs in the Netherlands	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific, check list based and focused on CSR disclosures
23	Plumlee et al. (2015)	United States	Self-developed voluntary environmental disclosure index based on the Global Reporting Initiative framework	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited to voluntary environmental disclosures in annual reports, based on GRI guidelines
24	Al-Shaer and Zaman (2016)	United Kingdom	Using a 0–4 scale focusing on existence of sustainability report, sustainability assurance, and sustainability committee	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited to sustainability reports and a limited assessment of the depth of disclosure quality based on GRI guidelines
25	Dissanayake et al. (2016)	Sri Lanka	Using a 0–4 sustainability reporting scoring model based on the GRI guidelines	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Only 60 companies were examined, limited to sustainability disclosures in annual reports, sustainability reports and websites from 2011 and 2012, providing a limited assessment of the depth of disclosure quality
26	Byrne and O'Connor (2017)	28 Countries	CIFAR (1995) country-level disclosure index with 85 items and ranges from 0 to 100 with 100 being the highest standard	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Check list based and mainly focus on investors and creditors-oriented information in annual reports
27	Sethi et al. (2017)	Western Europe, North America and East Asia	Using The CSR-S Monitor and National CSR Index	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Focus only on CSR quality measurement in annual reports and standalone CSR reports
28	Aboud and Diab (2018)	Egypt	Using Bloomberg ESG Index	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	ESG index is focused on environmental, social and governance performance information, not on overall disclosure quality
29	Wanjau et al. (2018)	East Africa	S&P T&D Index	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	No qualitative assessment of disclosure quality while mainly focusing on financial and governance disclosures in annual reports
30	Yu et al. (2018)	47 Developed and emerging countries	Using Bloomberg ESG disclosure scores	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	ESG index is focused on environmental, social and governance performance information, not on disclosure quality

(Continues)

TABLE 5 | (Continued)

No.	Authors and year	Context	Assessment method	Externally developed/Self-constructed	Qualitative/Quantitative, narrow/Broad	Dimensions measured and gaps
Panel 1- Index/framework-based assessments						
31	Pistoni et al. (2018)	Europe, Asia, Africa South America Australasia North America	Developing a score card	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited measures and mainly focus on IR information in annual reports
32	Lin et al. (2019)	China	Disclosure quality assessment grade publicly disclosed by the SZSE	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific, mainly on financial and governance disclosures in annual reports, and checklist-based approach
33	Rezaee and Tuo (2019)	United States	Using GRI Sustainability Reporting Framework. Scoring using binary method	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	limited to sustainability reports and a limited assessment of the depth of disclosure quality
34	Vitolla et al. (2019b)	135 International companies	Using the scoreboard developed by Pistoni et al. (2018)	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Assessment is limited in assessing background, assurance and reliability, content, and form of integrated reports
35	Vitolla et al. (2019a)	145 International companies	Using the scoreboard developed by Pistoni et al. (2018)	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Assessment is limited in assessing background, assurance and reliability, content, and form of integrated reports
36	Al-Shaer (2020)	United Kingdom	Using Thomson Reuters Asset4, which provides data on the adoption and non-adoption of sustainability reporting practices	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited to sustainability reports and a limited assessment of the depth of disclosure quality
37	Cooray et al. (2020)	Sri Lanka	Developing an index measuring IR quality with the support of qualitative characteristics	Self-constructed	Qualitative, Narrow	Limited measures and mainly focus on IR aspects in annual reports
38	Mehrabanpour et al. (2020)	Iran	Disclosure scores and firm rankings obtained from the Tehran Stock Exchange based on the Administrative Instructions on Disclosure	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific, check list based and main focus on financial and governance information in financial statements
39	Rezaee et al. (2020)	Iran	A self-constructed index using GRI, and GR4 guidelines	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Main focus on environmental related disclosures in CSR reports
40	Salem et al. (2020)	Middle East and North Africa	Disclosure framework used by Beattie et al. (2004)	Self-constructed	Qualitative, Narrow	Measures only the quality of voluntary narrative disclosures in annual reports
41	Vitolla et al. (2020)	134 international firms	Using the scoreboard developed by Pistoni et al. (2018)	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Assessment is limited in assessing background, assurance and reliability, content, and form of integrated reports

(Continues)

TABLE 5 | (Continued)

No.	Authors and year	Context	Assessment method	Externally developed/Self-constructed	Qualitative/ Quantitative, narrow/Broad	Dimensions measured and gaps
Panel 1- Index/framework-based assessments						
42	Al Lawati et al. (2021)	Oman	Counting the number of sentences related to the future and following Beattie et al. (2004)	Self-constructed	Qualitative, Narrow	Measures mainly the quality of financial narrative disclosures in annual reports
43	Gani et al. (2021)	Oman	Developing un-weighted index covering information in annual reports based on financial transparency, governance transparency, and social transparency	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Broad	Check list based and limited scope
44	Temiz (2021)	Türkiye	S&P T&D Index	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	No qualitative assessment of disclosure quality while mainly focus on financial and governance disclosures in annual reports and website
45	Erin and Adegboye (2021)	South Africa	Developing a check list consisting of 38 indicators using international IR framework	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited to assessing integrated reports
46	Ho et al. (2022)	Taiwan	Using 109 items from the five dimensions included in the 12th IDTRS report	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific, check list based and focus on financial information in annual reports and website
47	Wen et al. (2022)	China, Denmark, South Africa, Malaysia, Brazil, Hong Kong and India	ESG disclosure performance score using CSR and ESG reports	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	ESG index is focused on environmental, social and governance performance information, not on overall disclosure quality
48	Raimo et al. (2022)	133 European firms	Using the score board designed by Pistoni et al. (2018)	Self- constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Assessment is limited in assessing background, assurance and reliability, content, and form of integrated reports
49	Koh et al. (2023)	United States	Using a scale of four proxies (Length, Similarity, Short Horizon, and Uncertainty)	Self- constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited to CSR quality
50	Liu et al. (2023)	China	Developing an index of corporate opacity including proxies: trading volume, bid-ask spread, analyst following, and analyst forecast errors	Self- constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Mainly focus on share market related information, less focus on overall quality measures
51	Ye et al. (2023)	China	Disclosure quality assessment grade publicly disclosed by the SZSE	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific, mainly on financial and governance disclosures in annual reports, and checklist-based approach

(Continues)

TABLE 5 | (Continued)

No.	Authors and year	Context	Assessment method	Externally developed/Self-constructed	Qualitative/ Quantitative, narrow/Broad	Dimensions measured and gaps
Panel 1- Index/framework-based assessments						
52	Song and Zhu (2023)	China	Disclosure quality assessment grade publicly disclosed by the SZSE	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific, mainly on financial and governance disclosures, and checklist-based approach
53	Ko et al. (2024)	Malaysia	The Malaysian Transparency Index	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific and mainly focusing on sustainability aspects
54	Elaigwu et al. (2024)	Malaysia	Using sustainability reporting index (checklist) of Ahmad (2017)	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Mainly focus on non-financial information in annual reports and check list-based approach
55	Belhouchet and Chouaibi (2024)	17 European Countries	Using the integration, vision, and strategy (CGVS) category from the Thomson Reuters Asset4 database, which ranges from 0 to 100	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific and less focus on overall disclosure quality measurement
56	Hu et al. (2024)	China	Using a score based on the KV index of disclosure quality	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Disclosure quality is assessed as a market-based measurement and no assessment of quality of reporting
57	Soysa et al. (2024)	Sri Lanka	Using a 1–5 self-constructed sustainability score index with the 17 sustainability development goals	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Small sample size, limited to sustainability reports and sustainability content in annual reports
58	Hameed et al. (2024)	N/A	Developing a self-constructed index using the conceptual framework for financial reporting (revised 2018) and the GRI	Self-constructed	Qualitative, Narrow	Focus on CSR disclosure quality
59	Dungtripop et al. (2025)	Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Argentina, Colombia and Panama	Using a self- developed index measured on a scale of 1–4 based on the type of report present by the company	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited assessment of the depth of disclosure quality
60	Singhania et al. (2025)	India	Using a self-developed scale based on the GRI Standards, CDP disclosure scoring, the Bloomberg ESG Disclosure Score and focus group discussions	Self-constructed	Quantitative, Narrow	Focus on sustainability reporting
61	Liang et al. (2025)	China	Chinese stock exchanges disclosure quality annual rating	Externally developed	Quantitative, Narrow	Only manufacturing companies, no assessment on quality of reporting and depth of disclosures
Panel 2—Alternative methodologies						
62	Adams (2002)	United Kingdom and Germany	Interviews	N/A	Narrow	Interview based and limited to CSR reporting
63	O'donovan (2002)	Australia	Interviews	N/A	Narrow	Interview based and limited to environmental reporting

(Continues)

TABLE 5 | (Continued)

Panel 2—Alternative methodologies						
64	Hammond and Miles (2004)	United Kingdom	Interviews	N/A	Narrow	Interview based and limited to CSR reporting
65	Taneja et al. (2022)	India	Interviews	N/A	Narrow	Interview based and limited to CSR reporting
66	Beddewela and Herzig (2013)	Sri Lanka	Interviews	N/A	Narrow	Interview based and limited to CSR reporting
67	Habek et al. (2016)	Selected EU member states	Via a questionnaire including CSR information	N/A	Quantitative, Narrow	Limited to separate CSR reports
68	Iatridis et al. (2022)	United Kingdom	Word count analysis. Annual report information was assessed using four-word count disclosure metrics: forward-looking, performance, causal and strategic, based on Corporate Financial Information Environment (CFIE) project	N/A	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific and limited scope
69	Li et al. (2022)	China	Using discretionary accruals, indicator variable of violations and the rating of disclosure quality issued by the SZSE	N/A	Quantitative, Narrow	Country specific, mainly on financial and governance disclosures, and checklist-based approach
70	Melón-Izco et al. (2023)	Spain	Computing the number of text and key words contained in each management report including annual reports and sustainability reports aiming investors and lenders	N/A	Qualitative, Narrow	Focus on quantity and quality of narrative disclosures only. Word counting is comparatively time-consuming approach

disclosure theories are complementary rather than competing. This review suggests that CRTQ is best understood through integrating complementary theories rather relying on a single theory. Thus, future researchers should embrace an integrative theoretical perspective, drawing on multiple lenses to enhance holistic understanding of CRTQ's dimensions and stakeholder impact, while improving explanatory power. This approach empowers researchers to challenge, refine or extend existing frameworks, contributing to theoretical development and knowledge expansion. Multiple theoretical lenses enable richer analysis of interactions between CRTQ dimensions (e.g., financial, governance, operational, social, environmental and risk). This provides more actionable insights to managers, regulators and policymakers, enabling tailored strategies to improve CRTQ by addressing specific challenges and opportunities identified through each lens.

Our review indicates the underutilisation of institutional theory, political cost theory and stewardship theory. These theories offer distinct perspectives on CRTQ motivations. Institutional theory offers critical insights into how institutional pressures shape CRTQ, particularly in jurisdictions where disclosure practices may reflect conformity rather than genuine transparency (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Scott 2005; Powell and DiMaggio 2012). Political cost theory offers insight into how firms, particularly larger or more visible organisations, manage disclosures to mitigate scrutiny and reputational risk (Watts and Zimmerman 1990). Stewardship theory emphasises the role of managerial commitment to long-term value and stakeholder alignment, helping distinguish reporting driven by ethical responsibility from mere regulatory compliance (Donaldson and Davis 1991; Muth and Donaldson 1998). Greater theoretical engagement with these perspectives would allow future CRTQ research to examine not only disclosure presence but also motivations, quality and stakeholder engagement, thereby strengthening both explanatory power and conceptual clarity.

6.3 | Evolution of CRTQ

Our review reveals a clear shift in CRTQ conceptualisations and measurement over the past two decades. Prior to the 1970s, reporting was largely limited to financial statements and governance disclosures align closely with agency-theoretic priorities (Guthrie and Parker 1989; Beattie 2000; Beretta and Bozzolan 2008). The emergence of CSR reporting in the 1970s–1990s corresponds with the growing influence of stakeholder and legitimacy theories, as firms responded to expanding societal expectations (Gray et al. 1995; Michelon et al. 2015). The rise of sustainability reporting, ESG frameworks and IR since the 2010s signals a paradigm shift towards multi-capital and long-term value perspectives, consistent with stewardship and institutional logics (Hahn et al. 2013; Bose 2020; Gokten et al. 2020). These developments reframe CRTQ as a dynamic, evolving construct rather than a static attribute of financial reporting, expanding its scope to encompass environmental, risk, social sustainability and strategic resilience dimensions, thereby enhancing its multi-dimensional nature (Rezaee et al. 2020; Vitolla et al. 2020; Wen et al. 2022; Hameed et al. 2024; Soysa et al. 2024).

Contemporary businesses face key challenges in measuring green investment impacts, disclosing reliable environmental performance data, and evaluating resource allocation efficiency, which have emerged as central issues in green finance and sustainability reporting (Liu and Wu 2023; Soysa et al. 2024). Recent standard-setting initiatives, including the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB)'s IFRS S1 (General Requirements for Disclosure of Sustainability-related Financial Information) and IFRS S2 (Climate-related Disclosures), have evolved to resolve these challenges. However, these standards primarily focus on investor-oriented disclosures, raising important theoretical questions about balancing agency-driven financial materiality with broader stakeholder accountability, particularly in jurisdictions with varying institutional capacities.

Further, with these new disclosure standards, firms face increasingly complex measurement challenges. Each requirement extends reporting beyond traditional financial and governance information to climate risk, carbon emissions, biodiversity and social sustainability. This intensifies the difficulty in ensuring reliability, comparability and relevance in reported information. For CRTQ, assessments can no longer rely on disclosure volume or a single reporting dimension. Instead, multi-dimensional assessments encompassing financial, governance, operational and social dimensions must capture both breadth and depth. Firms must contend with framework variations, standards and mandatory-voluntary disclosure mixes, while researchers must design holistic methodologies assessing both quality and quantity. Integrated assessment approaches must reflect evolving standards, align with stakeholder expectations, and acknowledge reporting dimension interconnectedness, ensuring CRTQ evaluations meaningfully capture transparency and accountability.

6.4 | Current Assessment of CRTQ

Our critical assessment reveals numerous disclosure frameworks developed by scholars and institutions for evaluating CRTQ. Despite theoretical advances, existing assessments remain largely misaligned with its conceptual complexity. While externally established ratings provide standardisation, facilitating cross-country and industry comparisons, guided by institutional and legitimacy theories their context-insensitivity and checklist-based design primarily captures the quantity rather than the substantive quality of disclosures. In institutional terms, such ratings may reflect coercive and mimetic pressures rather than the firm's genuine informational value, suggesting that disclosure quantity does not equate to CRTQ. To overcome these limitations, scholars have constructed their own CRTQ indices (Beattie et al. 2004; Botosan 2004; Beretta and Bozzolan 2008; Beest et al. 2009; Kim et al. 2013; Al-Shaer and Zaman 2016; Dissanayake et al. 2016; Pistoni et al. 2018; Cooray et al. 2020; Gani et al. 2021; Hameed et al. 2024). Grounded in agency, stakeholder and signalling theories, these indices seek to link CRTQ to informational relevance and managerial incentives. However, they remain limited in scope, typically focusing on either financial or non-financial dimensions or specific aspects of integrated reporting, thereby constraining holistic CRTQ assessment. Moreover, while human coding enhances construct validity by linking disclosures to conceptual bases, it introduces subjectivity and coder bias, undermining reliability (Beyer et al. 2010; Hassan and Marston 2019).

Helfaya (2012) critiques self-constructed approaches for assessing environmental reporting, highlighting gaps in quality conceptualisation and measurement. Environmental disclosure quality indices are typically researcher-defined, frequently fail to incorporate the perspectives of preparers and users, limiting the theoretical and practical relevance of measurement. In contrast, some scholars (Kim et al. 2013; Gani et al. 2021) have considered all dimensions, focusing on both financial and non-financial disclosures, providing valuable insights into financial, environmental, social and governance reporting. However, these remain predominantly checklist-based, insufficiently capturing the qualitative nuances, decision-usefulness and cognitive relevance, as advocated by stakeholder theory perspectives.

Several scholars have employed alternative approaches such as word count analysis, discretionary accruals, surveys and interviews to evaluate transparency quality. While attempting to address specific gaps, they face notable limitations: word counts measure quantity rather than substance, interviews and surveys suffer from subjectivity and comparability issues, and discretionary accruals primarily capture financial reporting quality. From a methodological and theoretical standpoint, these challenges highlight the limits of existing measurement in capturing the multi-dimensional richness of CRTQ.

Overall, current CRTQ assessment methods, whether externally developed or self-constructed, reveal that most indices focus on one or two dimensions, partially addressing user needs. Importantly, we found no qualitative assessments adopting a broad perspective encompassing all key CRTQ dimensions, including financial, governance, social, operational, environmental and risk-related disclosures. As Hassan and Marston (2019) highlight, a comprehensive list of necessary and sufficient disclosure dimensions is lacking, representing a gap for future research to address. Addressing this gap requires a holistic, multi-theoretic assessment framework capable of capturing both the richness and depth of disclosures, thereby advancing conceptual clarity, explanatory power, and a comprehensive, multi-dimensional evaluation of CRTQ.

6.5 | Future Research Directions for Academics and Practical Implications

We offer several suggestions for future research (Figure 3). First, future studies should develop a well-recognised, theory-driven definition for CRTQ capturing its integral dimensions, providing a unified conceptual foundation for theoretical development and empirical investigation. Second, CRTQ should be examined through multiple theoretical perspectives, including institutional theory, political cost theory and stewardship theory, to capture both decision-usefulness and strategic disclosure motivations. Adopting this multi-theoretical approach would enrich understanding and provide comprehensive, practically relevant insights into CRTQ across diverse organisational contexts

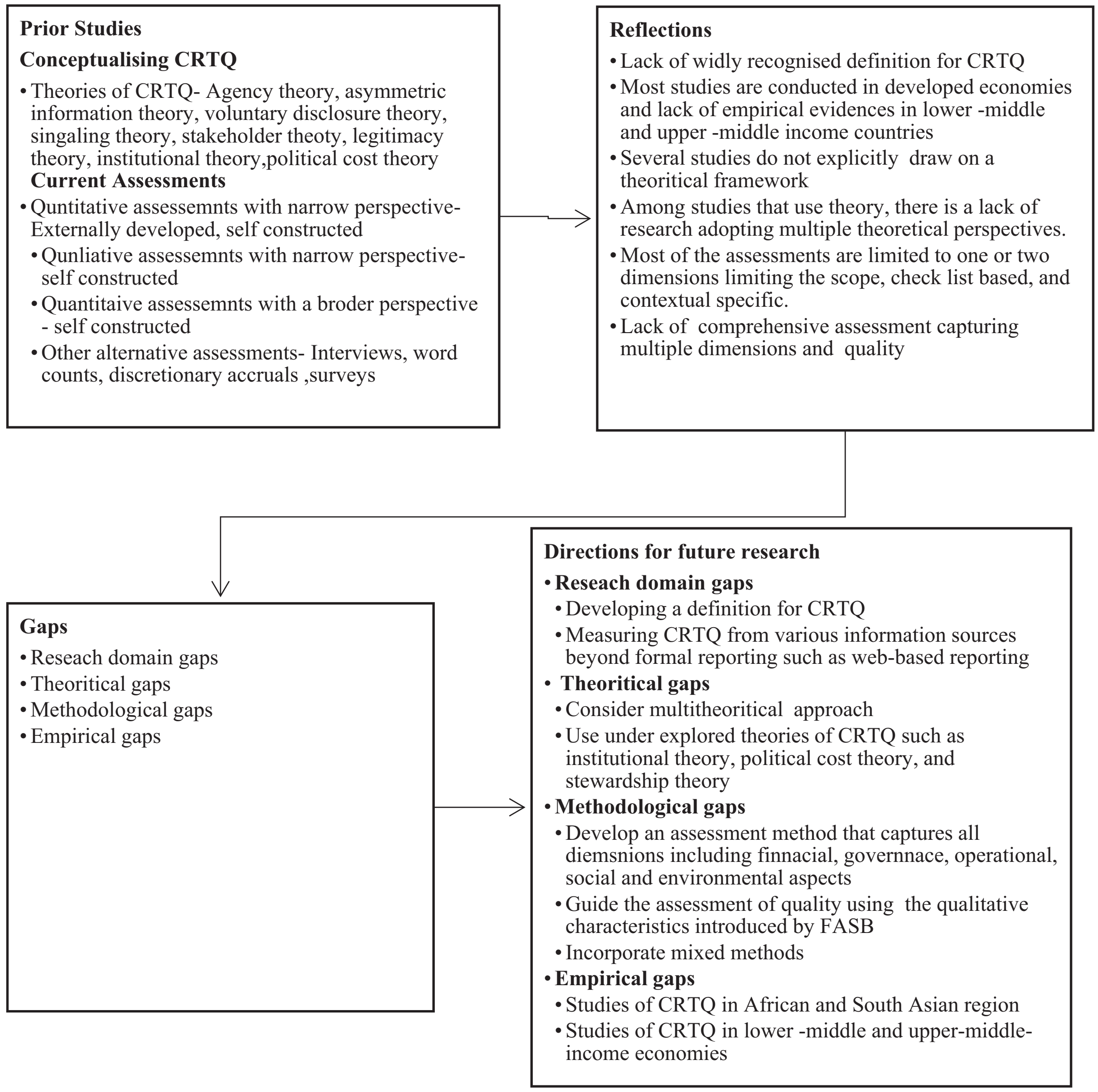

FIGURE 3 | Prior research, reflections, and future directions. *Source:* Authors' work.

Third, our review highlights the absence of externally developed, institutionally endorsed frameworks for holistically evaluating CRTQ. Current broad perspective methods are predominantly self-constructed, checklist-based and focus on isolated dimensions. This fragmented approach limits CRTQ assessment comparability and effectiveness. We identified no framework evaluating CRTQ across financial, governance, operational, social and environmental dimensions, adopting multiple theoretical perspectives. This gap highlights the need for a theoretically informed, comprehensive assessment that integrates multiple dimensions, thereby enhancing reliability, comparability, legitimacy and policy relevance while addressing stakeholder informational needs. This advance assessment can follow qualitative characteristics (i.e., relevance, faithful representation, understandability, timeliness and comparability) from the FASB Conceptual Framework.[1] Botosan (2004) argued that firms' risk disclosure quality should be evaluated based on these characteristics, essential for enhancing annual report information's decision usefulness. However, few studies (Beest et al. 2009; Al-Shaer and Zaman 2016; Hameed et al. 2024) have applied this approach, often restricted to financial or non-financial reporting. Integrating these qualitative characteristics with theoretical mechanisms such as agency, legitimacy and stakeholder pressures can advance CRTQ assessment frameworks, yielding more meaningful and decision-useful disclosures.

A robust CRTQ index carries significant theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, it provides scholars a structured, multi-dimensional tool to conceptualise and empirically test CRTQ, moving beyond mere quantity or one-dimensional measures to integrate diverse perspectives for understanding how transparency relates to firm performance in mitigating agency conflict, meeting stakeholders' expectations, reflecting legitimacy pressures, and signalling incentives in disclosure practices. Practically, such an index serves as a benchmark for regulators, policymakers and standard setters to evaluate disclosure effectiveness and global standards alignment. It also guides firms in improving disclosure credibility, comparability and decision usefulness, fostering corporate accountability and informed stakeholder engagement across institutional and market contexts.

Fourth, no studies have examined CRTQ using mixed methods approaches combining quantitative and qualitative assessments. As a novel direction for comprehensive investigations, mixed methods align with interpretive and positivist perspectives, enabling researchers to capture both measurable disclosure attributes and the contextual sensitivities of CRTQ. Fifth, most CRTQ research focuses on high-income economies (54%), where well-established scoring frameworks exist. Future research needs to explore CRTQ in diverse socio-economic contexts, integrating institutional, legitimacy and stakeholder perspectives to examine cross-country variability in reporting practices. Modern studies can utilise automated content analysis to examine disclosures, enabling analysis of complex quality aspects of newly developed indices. Finally, novel assessments could evaluate CRTQ using sources beyond formal reporting, such as web-based reporting, capturing the evolving digital landscape and its implications for CRTQ from a stakeholder and signalling perspectives.

7 | Conclusion

This review synthesises studies investigating CRTQ. To our knowledge, this is the first systematic literature review following the PRISMA method to critically analyse CRTQ's concept, theories, current assessment and future directions. Our study contributes to CRTQ literature in several ways.

We explore a definition for CRTQ and find that a comprehensive definition has yet to be developed. Secondly, we analyse and summarise theories supporting CRTQ, critically analysing seven theories: agency, asymmetric information, voluntary, signalling, stakeholder, legitimacy and institutional theories, each impacting CRTQ. For each theory, we discuss applications, critically analyse suitability and shortcomings, and link it to CRTQ. We emphasise that a single theory is insufficient for comprehensively explaining CRTQ. A multi-theoretic approach will enable researchers to challenge, refine and extend existing theoretical frameworks, as different perspectives offer different insights into CRTQ.

Thirdly, we review and critically analyse existing CRTQ assessment methods, highlighting similarities, differences, strengths and limitations. Discussing CRTQ evolution, the review underscores the need for a comprehensive quality assessment framework addressing complexities arising from new disclosure requirements. Finally, this paper sets a research agenda by identifying gaps in CRTQ domains, theories, methodologies and empirical settings. We provide guidance for addressing these gaps across four key areas, offering deeper insights into CRTQ. Considerable potential exists to expand understanding of both financial and non-financial reporting quality, and this paper identifies potential avenues for practitioners and researchers seeking to advance CRTQ.

Reflections from theoretical perspectives and current assessment practices highlight the need for policymakers and academics to adopt a multi-theoretical approach when developing comprehensive assessment frameworks integrating financial, governance, operational, social and environmental dimensions. Incorporating the FASB framework's qualitative characteristics offers a novel perspective, moving beyond checklist-based methods in evaluating financial and non-financial information quality. Analysing CRTQ through an integrated lens, encompassing financial, governance, operational and social (including environmental, community, intellectual and employee) dimensions, provides a more balanced, holistic understanding of CRTQ. These dimensions are equally important to stakeholders and should be assessed collectively. Finally, significant opportunities remain in underexplored contexts in emerging economies, where future research will generate valuable insights for CRTQ literature.

Our review has limitations. First, while we identify 10 key CRTQ elements in our search strings, we recognise that literature uses multiple terms to describe CRTQ. Our study is limited to formal reporting mechanisms; future research could extend to web-based reporting. We also include papers not explicitly referring to CRTQ research. Our search covered May 2002 to May 2025, prioritising English-language papers published in ABDC-ranked journal articles and only five additional peer-reviewed studies. Consequently, relevant articles in other languages and from lower-ranked journals, and non-peer-reviewed works may have been overlooked.

Acknowledgments

Open access publishing facilitated by James Cook University, as part of the Wiley - James Cook University agreement via the Council of Australasian University Librarians

Policy on Using ChatGPT and Similar AI Tools

All content, arguments, interpretations and conclusions are entirely the authors' own. The authors carefully reviewed and verified all AI-assisted edits to ensure accuracy, originality and compliance with the journal's ethical guidelines. An AI-based language tool, Sonet (version 4.5) via Clause AI was used solely for proofreading, stylistic refinement, and manuscript finalisation based on tracked change logs. The AI tool did not contribute to content generation, data analysis or interpretation.

The following prompt was used for the AI-assisted editing process:

'Edit the appended text, which forms part of a manuscript primarily intended for academic researchers. Please improve conciseness while preserving all key information and maintaining academic rigor. Remove redundancies and wordiness. Use bold font to indicate changes made, and provide a change log by page numbers, where possible'.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new datasets were generated or analysed during the current study. The literature review was conducted using published sources retrieved from Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar.

ENDNOTE

[1]As per FASB (2008), relevance ensures that the disclosed information can make a difference in decision making, while faithful representation ensures that the information accurately reflects the underlying economic phenomena. Understandability enhances the accessibility of information for a wide range of users, timeliness ensures that information is provided promptly to maintain its relevance, and comparability enables stakeholders to evaluate and contrast financial and non-financial performance across different entities and time periods.

References

Abdullahi, A., and M. Y. Abubakar. 2020. "International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and Reporting Quality in Nigeria: An Assessment of Selected Quoted Firms." *International Business and Accounting Research Journal* 4, no. 1: 11–22.

Aboud, A., and A. Diab. 2018. "The Impact of Social, Environmental and Corporate Governance Disclosures on Firm Value." *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies* 8, no. 4: 442–458.

Adamo, S., C. De Matteis, R. Fasiello, and F. Imperiale. 2025. "A Literature Analysis of Sustainability Reporting Quality." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 32, no. 3: 4194–4215.

Adams, C. A. 2002. "Internal Organisational Factors Influencing Corporate Social and Ethical Reporting: Beyond Current Theorising." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 15, no. 2: 223–250.

Adams, C. A. 2015. "The International Integrated Reporting Council: A Call to Action." *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 27: 23–28.

Afeltra, G., B. Korca, E. Costa, and P. Tettamanzi. 2024. "The Quality of Voluntary and Mandatory Disclosures in Company Reports: A Systematic Literature Network Analysis." *Accounting Forum* 48: 1–34.

Ahmad, N. B. J., A. Rashid, and J. Gow. 2017. 'Board independence and corporate social responsibility (CSR) reporting in Malaysia'.

Ahmed, K., and J. K. Courtis. 1999. "Associations Between Corporate Characteristics and Disclosure Levels in Annual Reports: A Meta-Analysis." *British Accounting Review* 31, no. 1: 35–61.

Akerlof, G. A. 1970. "The Market for "Lemons": Quality Uncertainty and the Market Mechanism." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 84, no. 3: 488–500.

Aksu, M., and A. Kosedag. 2006. "Transparency and Disclosure Scores and Their Determinants in the Istanbul Stock Exchange." *Corporate Governance: An International Review* 14, no. 4: 277–296.

Al-Htaybat, K., and L. von Alberti-Alhtaybat. 2017. "Big Data and Corporate Reporting: Impacts and Paradoxes." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 30, no. 4: 850–873.

Al Lawati, H., K. Hussainey, and R. Sagitova. 2021. "Disclosure Quality Vis-à-Vis Disclosure Quantity: Does Audit Committee Matter in Omani Financial Institutions?" *Review of Quantitative Finance and Accounting* 57, no. 2: 557–594.

Al-Shaer, H. 2020. "Sustainability Reporting Quality and Post-Audit Financial Reporting Quality: Empirical Evidence From the UK." *Business Strategy and the Environment* 29, no. 6: 2355–2373.

Al-Shaer, H., and M. Zaman. 2016. "Board Gender Diversity and Sustainability Reporting Quality." *Journal of Contemporary Accounting & Economics* 12, no. 3: 210–222.

Amran, A., and S. Susela Devi. 2008. "The Impact of Government and Foreign Affiliate Influence on Corporate Social Reporting: The Case of Malaysia." *Managerial Auditing Journal* 23, no. 4: 386–404.

Ashforth, B. E., and B. W. Gibbs. 1990. "The Double-Edge of Organizational Legitimation." *Organization Science* 1, no. 2: 177–194.

Bae, S. M., M. K. Masud, and J. D. Kim. 2018. "A Cross-Country Investigation of Corporate Governance and Corporate Sustainability Disclosure: A Signaling Theory Perspective." *Sustainability* 10, no. 8: 2611.

Balluchi, F., A. Lazzini, and R. Torelli. 2020. "CSR and Greenwashing: A Matter of Perception in the Search of Legitimacy." In *Accounting, Accountability and Society: Trends and Perspectives in Reporting, Management and Governance for Sustainability*. Springer International Publishing, 151–166.

Bananuka, J., Z. Tumwebaze, and L. Orobia. 2019. "The Adoption of Integrated Reporting: A Developing Country Perspective." *Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting* 17, no. 1: 2–23.

Beattie, V., and S. J. Smith. 2010. "Human Capital, Value Creation and Disclosure." *Journal of Human Resource Costing & Accounting* 14, no. 4: 262–285.

Beattie, V. 2000. "The Future of Corporate Reporting: A Review Article." *Irish Accounting Review* 7, no. 1: 1–36.

Beattie, V. 2014. "Accounting Narratives and the Narrative Turn in Accounting Research: Issues, Theory, Methodology, Methods and a Research Framework." *British Accounting Review* 46, no. 2: 111–134.

Beattie, V., B. Mcinnes, and S. Fearnley. 2004. "A Methodology for Analysing and Evaluating Narratives in Annual Reports: A Comprehensive Descriptive Profile and Metrics for Disclosure Quality Attributes." *Accounting Forum* 28, no. 3: 205–236.

Beddewela, E., and C. Herzig. 2013. "Corporate Social Reporting by MNCs' Subsidiaries in Sri Lanka." *Accounting Forum* 37: 135–149.

Beest, F. V., G. J. M. Braam, and S. Boelens. 2009. Quality of Financial Reporting: Measuring Qualitative Characteristics. Nijmegen Center for Economics (NiCE) Working Paper 09–108. Nijmegen: Radboud University.

Belhouchet, S., and J. Chouaibi. 2024. "The Impact of Audit Committee Attributes on Integrated Reporting Quality: Evidence From European Companies Listed on the STOXX Europe 600 Index." *Meditari Accountancy Research* 32, no. 4: 1375–1397.

Bens, D. A., and S. J. Monahan. 2004. "Disclosure Quality and the Excess Value of Diversification." *Journal of Accounting Research* 42, no. 4: 691–730.

Benzies, K. M., S. Premji, K. A. Hayden, and K. Serrett. 2006. "State-of-the-Evidence Reviews: Advantages and Challenges of Including Grey Literature." *Worldviews on Evidence-Based Nursing* 3, no. 2: 55–61.

Beretta, S., and S. Bozzolan. 2004. "A Framework for the Analysis of Firm Risk Communication." *International Journal of Accounting* 39, no. 3: 265–288.

Beretta, S., and S. Bozzolan. 2008. "Quality Versus Quantity: The Case of Forward-Looking Disclosure." *Journal of Accounting, Auditing & Finance* 23, no. 3: 333–376.

Beyer, A., D. A. Cohen, T. Z. Lys, and B. R. Walther. 2010. "The Financial Reporting Environment: Review of the Recent Literature." *Journal of Accounting and Economics* 50, no. 2-3: 296–343.

Bhattacharya, U., H. Daouk, and M. Welker. 2003. "The World Price of Earnings Opacity." *The Accounting Review* 78, no. 3: 641–678.

Bokpin, G. 2013. "Determinants and Value Relevance of Corporate Disclosure." *Journal of Applied Accounting Research* 14, no. 2: 127–146.

Booth, A., M.-S. James, M. Clowes, and A. Sutton. 2021. *Systematic Approaches to a Successful Literature Review*. Sage.

Bose, S. 2020. "Evolution of ESG Reporting Frameworks." In *Values at Work: Sustainable Investing and ESG Reporting*. Springer.

Botosan, C. A. 2004. "Discussion of a Framework for the Analysis of Firm Risk Communication." *International Journal of Accounting* 39, no. 3: 289–295.

Broadbent, J., and J. Guthrie. 2008. "Public Sector to Public Services: 20 Years of "Contextual" Accounting Research." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 21, no. 2: 129–169.

Brown, S., and S. A. Hillegeist. 2007. "How Disclosure Quality Affects the Level of Information Asymmetry." *Review of Accounting Studies* 12, no. 2-3: 443–477.

Bushman, R., J. D. Piotroski, and A. J. Smith. 2004. "What Determines Corporate Transparency?" *Journal of Accounting Research* 42, no. 2: 207–252.

Bushman, R. M., and A. J. Smith. 2003. "Transparency, Financial Accounting Information, and Corporate Governance." *Economic Policy Review* 9, no. 1: 65–87.

Byrne, J., and T. O'Connor. 2017. "How Do Creditors Respond to Disclosure Quality? Evidence From Corporate Dividend Payouts." *Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions and Money* 49: 154–172.

Carol, A., and G. Whelan. 2009. "Conceptualising Future Change in Corporate Sustainability Reporting." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 22, no. 1: 118–143.

Chakraborty, B., and T. Bhattacharjee. 2020. "A Review on Textual Analysis of Corporate Disclosure According to the Evolution of Different Automated Methods." *Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting* 18, no. 4: 757–777.

Chao, C. F., C. C. Hsu, and H. S. Yeh. 2010. "The Relationship Between Information Transparency and Firm Value: Evidence From Taiwan." *International Journal of Business Excellence* 3, no. 2: 125–141.

Chen, K. C. W., Z. C. Chen, and K. Wei. 2003. "Disclosure, Corporate Governance, and the Cost of Equity Capital: Evidence From Asia's Emerging Markets." *Corporate Governance, and the Cost of Equity Capital: Evidence from Asia's Emerging Markets*: 1-42.

Chen, S., B. I. N. Miao, and T. Shevlin. 2015. "A New Measure of Disclosure Quality: The Level of Disaggregation of Accounting Data in Annual Reports." *Journal of Accounting Research* 53, no. 5: 1017–1054.

Cheung, Y.-L., P. Jiang., and W. Tan. 2010. "A Transparency Disclosure Index Measuring Disclosures: Chinese Listed Companies." *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy* 29, no. 3: 259–280.

Cheung, Y.-L., P. Jiang, P. Limpaphayom, and L. Tong. 2008. "Does Corporate Governance Matter in China?" *China Economic Review* 19, no. 3: 460–479.

Christensen, H. B., L. Hail., and C. Leuz. 2021. "Mandatory CSR and Sustainability Reporting: Economic Analysis and Literature Review." *Review of Accounting Studies* 26, no. 3: 1176–1248.

Clarkson, M., M. Starik, P. Cochran, and T. M. Jones. 1994. "The Toronto Conference: Reflections on Stakeholder Theory." *Business and Society* 33, no. 1: 82.

Cobo, M. J., A. G. López-Herrera, E. Herrera-Viedma, and F. Herrera. 2011. "An Approach for Detecting, Quantifying, and Visualizing the Evolution of a Research Field: A Practical Application to the Fuzzy Sets Theory Field." *Journal of Informetrics* 5, no. 1: 146–166.

Cole, R., S. Johan, and D. Schweizer. 2021. "Corporate Failures: Declines, Collapses, and Scandals." *Journal of Corporate Finance* 67: 101872.

Connelly, B. L., S. T. Certo, R. D. Ireland, and C. R. Reutzel. 2011. "Signaling Theory: A Review and Assessment." *Journal of Management* 37, no. 1: 39–67.

Cooray, T., S. Senaratne, A. N. Gunarathne, R. Herath, and D. Samudrage. 2020. "Does Integrated Reporting Enhance the Value Relevance of Information? Evidence From Sri Lanka." *Sustainability* 12, no. 19: 8183.

Daily, C. M., D. R. Dalton, and N. Rajagopalan. 2003. "Governance Through Ownership: Centuries of Practice, Decades of Research." *Academy of Management Journal* 46, no. 2: 151–158.

Deegan, C. 2002. "Introduction: The Legitimising Effect of Social and Environmental Disclosures–A Theoretical Foundation." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 15, no. 3: 282–311.

Deegan, C. M. 2019. "Legitimacy Theory: Despite Its Enduring Popularity and Contribution, Time Is Right for a Necessary Makeover." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 32, no. 8: 2307–2329.

Deephouse, D. L., and M. Suchman. 2008. "Legitimacy in Organizational Institutionalism." In *The Sage Handbook of Organizational Institutionalism*. SAGE Publications, 49, 77.

Diamond, D. W. 1985. "Optimal Release of Information by Firms." *Journal of Finance* 40, no. 4: 1071–1094.

Dimaggio, P. J., and W. W. Powell. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields." *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 2: 147–160.

Dinh, T., H. Kang, and W. Schultze. 2016. "Capitalizing Research & Development: Signaling or Earnings Management?" *European Accounting Review* 25, no. 2: 373–401.

Dissanayake, D., C. Tilt, and M. Xydias-Lobo. 2016. "Sustainability Reporting by Publicly Listed Companies in Sri Lanka." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 129: 169–182.

Donaldson, L., and J. H. Davis. 1991. "Stewardship Theory or Agency Theory: CEO Governance and Shareholder Returns." *Australian Journal of Management* 16, no. 1: 49–64.

Donthu, N., S. Kumar, D. Mukherjee, N. Pandey, and W. M. Lim. 2021. "How to Conduct a Bibliometric Analysis: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 133: 285–296.

Dowling, J., and J. Pfeffer. 1975. "Organizational Legitimacy: Social Values and Organizational Behavior." *Pacific Sociological Review* 18, no. 1: 122–136.

Dungtripop, W., P. Lakkanawanit, T. Sawatdikun, M. Suttipun, and L. P. Surbakti. 2025. "The Impact of Corporate Reporting Quality on Sustainable Growth Through Integrated Reporting Lens in Thai Listed Companies." *Journal of Risk and Financial Management* 18, no. 5: 248.

Dunn, K. A., and B. W. Mayhew. 2004. "Audit Firm Industry Specialization and Client Disclosure Quality." *Review of Accounting Studies* 9, no. 1: 35–58.

Dye, R. A. 1985. "Disclosure of Nonproprietary Information." *Journal of Accounting Research* 23, no. 1: 123–145.

Edogbanya, A., and H. Kamardin. 2016. "Company Reporting Transparency and Firm Performance in Nigeria." *Asia Pacific Journal of Advanced Business and Social Studies* 2, no. 2: 346–356.

Eisenhardt, K. M. 1989. "Agency Theory: An Assessment and Review." *Academy of Management Review* 14, no. 1: 57–74.

Ekanayake, G., S. Senaratneb, and A. Azeez. 2019. "The Effect of Owner-Based and Lender-Based Governance Mechanisms on the Financial Performance of Listed Companies in Sri Lanka." *Colombo Business Journal* 10, no. 2: 103–133.

Elaigwu, M., S. O. Abdulmalik, A. Alghorbany, and A. Che-Ahmad. 2024. "Sustainability Reporting Quality in Malaysia: The Intricacy of Family Controlled and Politically Connected Firms." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 31, no. 5: 4190–4210.

Elsbach, K. D. 1994. "Managing Organizational Legitimacy in the California Cattle Industry: The Construction and Effectiveness of Verbal Accounts." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 39, no. 1: 57–88.

Erin, O., and A. Adegboye. 2021. "Do Corporate Attributes Impact Integrated Reporting Quality? An Empirical Evidence." *Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting* 20, no. 3/4: 416–445.

Fama, E. F. 1980. "Agency Problems and the Theory of the Firm." *Journal of Political Economy* 88, no. 2: 288–307.

Firth, M., K. Wang, and S. M. L. Wong. 2015. "Corporate Transparency and the Impact of Investor Sentiment on Stock Prices." *Management Science* 61, no. 7: 1630–1647.

Financial Accounting Standards Board. 2008. Statement of Financial Accounting Concepts No. 2: Qualitative Characteristics of Accounting Information. Norwalk, CT: Financial Accounting Standards Board. Available at. https://storage.fasb.org/con2.pdf.

Fisher, R., P. Oyelere, and F. Laswad. 2004. "Corporate Reporting on the Internet: Audit Issues and Content Analysis of Practices." *Managerial Auditing Journal* 19, no. 3: 412–439.

Francis, J. R., S. Huang, I. K. Khurana, and R. Pereira. 2009. "Does Corporate Transparency Contribute to Efficient Resource Allocation?" *Journal of Accounting Research* 47, no. 4: 943–989.

Freeman, R. E. 1984. *Strategic Management: A Stokcholder Approach*. Pitman.

Galletta, S., S. Mazzù, V. Naciti, and A. Paltrinieri. 2024. "A PRISMA Systematic Review of Greenwashing in the Banking Industry: A Call for Action." *Research in International Business and Finance* 69: 102262.

Gani, A. A. M. O., A. H. S. S. Al Rahbi, and E. R. Ahmed. 2021. "Empirical Analysis on Corporate Transparency, Competitive Advantage, and Performance: An Insight of Muscat Securities Market." *Journal of Governance and Integrity* 4, no. 2: 96–102.

Gao, F., Y. Dong, C. Ni, and R. Fu. 2015. "Determinants and Economic Consequences of Non-Financial Disclosure Quality." *European Accounting Review* 25, no. 2: 287–317.

Gokten, S., Y. Ozerhan, and P. Okan Gokten. 2020. "The Historical Development of Sustainability Reporting: A Periodic Approach." *Zeszyty Teoretyczne Rachunkowości* 107, no. 163: 99–117.

Gough, D. 2004. *Systematic Research Synthesis*. Open University Press.

Gough, D., J. Thomas, and S. Oliver. 2017. *An Introduction to Systematic Reviews*. Sage Publications Ltd, 1–352.

Graf, A., and M. Stiglbauer. 2008. "Measuring Corporate Governance in Germany: An Integrated Framework on Compliance and Transparency & Disclosure." *Corporate Ownership & Control* 6, no. 2-4: 456–466.

Gray, R., R. Kouhy, and S. Lavers. 1995. "Corporate Social and Environmental Reporting." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 8, no. 2: 47–77.

Guthrie, J., and L. D. Parker. 1989. "Corporate Social Reporting: A Rebuttal of Legitimacy Theory." *Accounting and Business Research* 19, no. 76: 343–352.

Haarburger, C., Y. Yasseen, I. Omarjee, and Z. Varachia. 2020. "Assessment of the Financial Reporting Quality of South African and Indian Listed Companies." *Southern African Business Review* 24, no. 24: 24.

Haat, M. H. C., R. A. Rahman, and S. Mahenthiran. 2008. "Corporate Governance, Transparency and Performance of Malaysian Companies." *Managerial Auditing Journal* 23, no. 8: 744–778.

Habek, P., R. Wolniak, P. Hąbek, and R. Wolniak. 2016. "Assessing the Quality of Corporate Social Responsibility Reports: The Case of Reporting Practices in Selected European Union Member States." *Quality & Quantity* 50, no. 1: 399–420.

Habib, A. 2008. "Corporate Transparency, Financial Development and the Allocation of Capital: Empirical Evidence." *Abacus-A Journal of Accounting Finance and Business Studies* 44, no. 1: 1–21.

Hahn, R., M. Kuehnen, R. Hahn., and M. Kühnen. 2013. "Determinants of Sustainability Reporting: A Review of Results, Trends, Theory, and Opportunities in an Expanding Field of Research." *Journal of Cleaner Production* 59: 5–21.

Hameed, F., T. Wilmshurst, C. Horner, F. Hameed, T. Wilmshurst., and C. Horner. 2024. "CSR Disclosure Quantity to CSR Disclosure Quality—In Pursuit of a Disclosure Quality Index." *Pacific Accounting Review* 36, no. 3/4: 433–467.

Hammond, K., and S. Miles. 2004. "Assessing Quality Assessment of Corporate Social Reporting: UK Perspectives." *Accounting Forum* 28: 61–79.

Hanafi, S. R. B. M., M. B. Kasim, M. K. B. Ibrahim, and D. R. Hancock. 2009. "Business Reporting on the Internet: Development of a Disclosure Quality Index." *International Journal of Business & Economics* 8, no. 1: 55–79.

Hassan, O. A., and C. Marston. 2019. "Corporate Financial Disclosure Measurement in the Empirical Accounting Literature: A Review Article." *International Journal of Accounting* 54, no. 02: 1950006.

Healy, P. M., and K. G. Palepu. 2001. "Information Asymmetry, Corporate Disclosure, and the Capital Markets: A Review of the Empirical Disclosure Literature." *Journal of Accounting and Economics* 31, no. 1-3: 405–440.

Helfaya, E., and A. Nasr. 2012. Assessing the measurement of quality of corporate environmental reporting (Doctoral dissertation, University of Aberdeen).

Ho, K.-C., S.-C Lee, and P.-W. Sun. 2022. "Disclosure Quality, Price Efficiency, and Expected Returns." *North American Journal of Economics and Finance* 59: 101573.

Hopewell, S., S. Mcdonald, M. J. Clarke, and M. Egger. 2007. "Grey Literature in Meta-Analyses of Randomized Trials of Health Care Interventions." *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* no. 2 1–15.

Hu, M., Y. Su, X. Yu, M. Hu, Y Su, and X. Yu. 2024. "Does Corporate Digitalization Improve Disclosure Quality?" *Internet Research* 35, no. 4: 1535–1553.

Hung, H. 1998. "A Typology of the Theories of the Roles of Governing Boards." *Corporate Governance* 6, no. 2: 101–111.

Hussainey, K., T. Schleicher, and M. Walker. 2003. "Undertaking Large-Scale Disclosure Studies When AIMR-FAF Ratings Are Not Available: The Case of Prices Leading Earnings." *Accounting and Business Research* 33, no. 4: 275–294.

Iatridis, G. E., K. Pappas, and M. Walker. 2022. "Narrative Disclosure Quality and the Timeliness of Goodwill Impairments." *British Accounting Review* 54, no. 2: 100978.

Jensen, M. C., and W. H. Meckling. 1976. "Theory of the Firm: Managerial Behavior, Agency Costs and Ownership Structure." *Journal of Financial Economics* 3, no. 4: 305–360.

Jonas, G. J., and J. Blanchet. 2000. "Assessing Quality of Financial Reporting." *Accounting Horizons* 14, no. 3: 353.

Jones, M. J., and P. A. Shoemaker. 1994. "Accounting Narratives: A Review of Empirical Studies of Content and Readability." *Journal of Accounting Literature* 13: 142.

Kabwe, M. 2023. "Assessment of Financial Reporting Quality in a Developing Country Using Nice Qualitative Characteristics Measurement." *International Journal of Finance and Accounting* 8, no. 1: 1–22.

Key, S. 1999. "Toward a New Theory of the Firm: A Critique of Stakeholder "Theory"." *Management Decision* 37, no. 4: 317–328.

Khan, I., P. V. Chand, and A. Patel. 2013. "The Impact of Ownership Structure on Voluntary Corporate Disclosure in Annual Reports: Evidence From Fiji." *Accounting & Taxation* 5, no. 1: 47–58.

Kim, Y., J. Lee, and T. Yang. 2013. "Corporate Transparency and Firm Performance: Evidence From Venture Firms Listed on the Korean Stock Market." *Asia-Pacific Journal of Financial Studies* 42, no. 4: 653–688.

Ko, Y., R. Subramaniam, and S. Devi. 2024. "Capital Market Effects of Corporate Transparency and Sustainability: Evidence From an Emerging Economy." *Journal of Asia Business Studies* 18, no. 3: 688–711.

Koh, K., H. Li, and Y. H. Tong. 2023. "Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Performance and Stakeholder Engagement: Evidence From the Quantity and Quality of CSR Disclosures." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 30, no. 2: 504–517.

Lang, M., and R. Lundholm. 1993. "Cross-Sectional Determinants of Analyst Ratings of Corporate Disclosures." *Journal of Accounting Research* 31, no. 2: 246–271.

Leuz, C., and P. D. Wysocki. 2016. "The Economics of Disclosure and Financial Reporting Regulation: Evidence and Suggestions for Future Research." *Journal of Accounting Research* 54, no. 2: 525–622.

Li, P., C. Song, J. J. Wang, and H. Zheng. 2022. "CFOs' Audit Experience and Corporate Disclosure Quality: Evidence From China." *Accounting & Finance* 62, no. 3: 4013–4039.

Li, Y., X. Miao, D. Zheng, and Y. Tang. 2019. "Corporate Public Transparency on Financial Performance: The Moderating Role of Political Embeddedness." *Sustainability* 11, no. 19: 5531.

Liang, Y., C. Hou, N. Bai, Y. Liang, C. Hou, and N. Bai. 2025. "The Effect of the Information Disclosure Quality on Enterprise Cooperation: Evidence From Chinese Manufacturing-Listed Companies." *Applied Economics*: 1–5.

Liberati, A., D. G. Altman, J. Tetzlaff, et al. 2009. "The PRISMA Statement for Reporting Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses of Studies That Evaluate Health Care Interventions: Explanation and Elaboration." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 151, no. 4: W–65–W–94.

Lin, P., B. Lin, and F. Lei. 2019. "Influence of CEO Characteristics on Accounting Information Disclosure Quality—Based on the Mediating Effect of Capital Structure." *Emerging Markets Finance and Trade* 56, no. 8: 1781–1803.

Linnenluecke, M. K., and A. Griffiths. 2013. "Firms and Sustainability: Mapping the Intellectual Origins and Structure of the Corporate Sustainability Field." *Global Environmental Change* 23, no. 1: 382–391.

Liu, C., and S. S. Wu. 2023. "Green Finance, Sustainability Disclosure and Economic Implications." *Fulbright Review of Economics and Policy* 3, no. 1: 1–24.

Liu, C., Q. Li, and Y.-E. Lin. 2023. "Corporate Transparency and Firm Value: Does Market Competition Play an External Governance Role?" *Journal of Contemporary Accounting & Economics* 19, no. 1: 100334.

Liu, G., and J. Sun. 2010. "Ultimate Ownership Structure and Corporate Disclosure Quality: Evidence From China." *Managerial Finance* 36, no. 5: 452–467.

Lodhia, S., and G. Stone. 2017. "Integrated Reporting in an Internet and Social Media Communication Environment: Conceptual Insights." *Australian Accounting Review* 27, no. 1: 17–33.

Lu, Y., I. Abeysekera, and C. Cortese. 2015. "Corporate Social Responsibility Reporting Quality, Board Characteristics and Corporate Social Reputation: Evidence From China." *Pacific Accounting Review* 27, no. 1: 95–118.

Marston, C. L., and P. J. Shrives. 1991. "The Use of Disclosure Indices in Accounting Research: A Review Article." *British Accounting Review* 23, no. 3: 195–210.

Massaro, M., J. Dumay, and J. Guthrie. 2016. "On the Shoulders of Giants: Undertaking a Structured Literature Review in Accounting." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 29, no. 5: 767–801.

Meek, G. K., C. B. Roberts, and S. J. Gray. 1995. "Factors Influencing Voluntary Annual Report Disclosures by US, UK and Continental European Multinational Corporations." *Journal of International Business Studies* 26: 555–572.

Mehrabanpour, M., O. Faraji, R. Sajadpour, and M. Alipour. 2020. "Financial Statement Comparability and Cash Holdings: The Mediating Role of Disclosure Quality and Financing Constraints." *Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting* 18, no. 3: 615–637.

Melón-Izco, Á., F. J. Ruiz-Cabestre, and C. Ruiz-Olalla. 2023. "The Quantity and Quality of Narrative Disclosures in Management Reports: CNMV Guide Effect." *Spanish Journal of Finance and Accounting/Revista Española de Financiación y Contabilidad* 53, no. 3: 355–393.

Meng, X., S. Zeng, J. J. Shi, G. Qi, and Z. Zhang. 2014. "The Relationship Between Corporate Environmental Performance and Environmental Disclosure: An Empirical Study in China." *Journal of Environmental Management* 145: 357–367.

Michelon, G., S. Pilonato, and F. Ricceri. 2015. "CSR Reporting Practices and the Quality of Disclosure: An Empirical Analysis." *Critical Perspectives on Accounting* 33: 59–78.

Michelon, G., R. Sealy, and G. Trojanowski. 2020. "Understanding Research Findings and Evidence on Corporate Reporting: An Independent Literature Review." *Financial Reporting Council*: 1-168.

Milne, M. J., and D. M. Patten. 2002. "Securing Organizational Legitimacy: An Experimental Decision Case Examining the Impact of Environmental Disclosures." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 15, no. 3: 372–405.

Minutiello, V, and P. Tettamanzi. 2022. "The Quality of Nonfinancial Voluntary Disclosure: A Systematic Literature Network Analysis on Sustainability Reporting and Integrated Reporting." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 29, no. 1: 1–18.

Mitnick, B. M. Year.Published. "Fiduciary Rationality and Public Policy: The Theory of Agency and Some Consequences." 1973 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, New Orleans, LA. In *Proceedings of the American Political Science Association*, 1973: 1–40.

Mohamed, A, and D. Hassan. 2025. "Integrated Reporting in Accounting Research From 2013 to 2022: A Systematic Literature Review and Future Research Directions." *Meditari Accountancy Research* 33, no. 1: 296 –334.

Moher, D., A. Liberati, J. Tetzlaff, D. G. Altman, and The PRISMA Group*. 2009. "Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses: The PRISMA Statement." *Annals of Internal Medicine* 151, no. 4: 264–269.

Mouselli, S., A. Jaafar, and K. Hussainey. 2012. "Accruals Quality Vis-à-Vis Disclosure Quality: Substitutes or Complements?" *British Accounting Review* 44, no. 1: 36–46.

Muth, M., and L. Donaldson. 1998. "Stewardship Theory and Board Structure: A Contingency Approach." *Corporate Governance: An International Review* 6, no. 1: 5–28.

O'Donovan, G. 2002. "Environmental Disclosures in the Annual Report: Extending the Applicability and Predictive Power of Legitimacy Theory." *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal* 15, no. 3: 344–371.

Oluwagbemiga, O. E. 2021. "The Influence of IFRS Adoption on the Quality of Financial Reporting in Nigerian Listed Companies." In *Advances in Pacific Basin Business, Economics and Finance*. Emerald Publishing Limited.

Omran, M., and A. El-Galfy. 2014a. "Theoretical Perspectives on Corporate Disclosure: A Critical Evaluation and Literature Survey." *Asian Review of Accounting* 22, no. 3: 257–286.

Omran, M. A., and A. M. El-Galfy. 2014b. "Theoretical Perspectives on Corporate Disclosure: A Critical Evaluation and Literature Survey." *Asian Review of Accounting* 22, no. 3: 257–286.

Page, M. J., J. E. Mckenzie, P. M. Bossuyt, et al. 2021. "The PRISMA 2020 Statement: An Updated Guideline for Reporting Systematic Reviews." *International Journal of Surgery* 88: 105906.

Patel, S. A., and G. S. Dallas. 2002. Transparency and Disclosure: Overview of Methodology and Study Results-United States. *Available at SSRN 422800*.

Perrow, C. 1986. *Complex organizations: A Critical Essay*. McGraw-Hill.

Phillips, V., and E. Barker. 2021. "Systematic Reviews: Structure, Form and Content." *Journal of Perioperative Practice* 31, no. 9: 349–353.

Pistoni, A., L. Songini, and F. Bavagnoli. 2018. "Integrated Reporting Quality: An Empirical Analysis." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 25, no. 4: 489–507.

Plumlee, M., D. Brown, R. M. Hayes, and R. S. Marshall. 2015. "Voluntary Environmental Disclosure Quality and Firm Value: Further Evidence." *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy* 34, no. 4: 336–361.

Powell, W. W., and P. J. Dimaggio. 2012. *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. University of Chicago Press.

Probowulan, D., and A. Ardianto. 2024. "Internet Financial Reporting Disclosure Index of E-Commerce Businesses on Social Media." *Intelligent*

Systems In Accounting, Finance And Management: International Journal 31, no. 2: 1–16.

Raimo, N., A. Caragnano, M. Mariani, et al. 2022. "Integrated Reporting Quality and Cost of Debt Financing." *Journal of Applied Accounting Research* 23, no. 1: 122–138.

Ramoglou, S., S. Zyglidopoulos, and F. Papadopoulou. 2023. "Is There Opportunity Without Stakeholders? A Stakeholder Theory Critique and Development of Opportunity-Actualization." *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice* 47, no. 1: 113–141.

Rezaee, Z., and L. Tuo. 2019. "Are the Quantity and Quality of Sustainability Disclosures Associated With the Innate and Discretionary Earnings Quality?" *Journal of Business Ethics* 155: 763–786.

Rezaee, Z., M. Alipour, O. Faraji, M. Ghanbari, and B. Jamshidinavid. 2020. "Environmental Disclosure Quality and Risk: The Moderating Effect of Corporate Governance." *Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal* 12, no. 4: 733–766.

Ross, S. A. 1973. "The Economic Theory of Agency: The Principal's Problem." *American Economic Review* 63, no. 2: 134–139.

Rudyanto, A., and K. Pirzada. 2021. "The Role of Sustainability Reporting in Shareholder Perception of Tax Avoidance." *Social Responsibility Journal* 17, no. 5: 669–685.

Salem, R. I. A., E. Ezeani, A. M. Gerged, M Usman, and R. M. Alqatamin. 2020. "Does the Quality of Voluntary Disclosure Constrain Earnings Management in Emerging Economies? Evidence From Middle Eastern and North African Banks." *International Journal of Accounting & Information Management* 29, no. 1: 91–126.

Scott, W. R. 2005. "Institutional Theory: Contributing to a Theoretical Research Program." In *Great Minds in Management: The Process of Theory Development*, 37, no. 2: 460–484.

Senaratne, S. 2011. "Corporate Governance Reforms in Sri Lanka." *Sri Lanka Journal of Advanced Social Studies* 1, no. 1: 1–25.

Sethi, S. P., T. F. Martell, and M. Demir. 2017. "An Evaluation of the Quality of Corporate Social Responsibility Reports by Some of the World's Largest Financial Institutions." *Journal of Business Ethics* 140: 787–805.

Siagian, F., S. V. Siregar, and Y. Rahadian. 2013. "Corporate Governance, Reporting Quality, and Firm Value: Evidence From Indonesia." *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies* 3, no. 1: 4–20.

Singhania, S., V. Sardana, N. Garg, and J. Singh. 2025. "Toward Transparency: Developing and Validating a Sustainability Disclosure Characteristics Scale." *Society and Business Review* 20, no. 4: 783–801.

Snyder, H. 2019. "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines." *Journal of Business Research* 104: 333–339.

Song, Y., and M. Zhu. 2023. "The Staggered Tenure of CEO and Board Secretary and Information Disclosure Quality." *Finance Research Letters* 58: 1–7.

Soysa, R. N. K., A. Pallegedara, A. S. Kumara, D. M. Jayasena, and M. K. S. M. Samaranayake. 2024. "Construction of a Sustainability Reporting Score Index Integrating Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Case of Sri Lankan Listed Firms." *Journal of Asian Business and Economic Studies* 31, no. 3: 190–202.

Spence, M. 1973. "Job Market Signalling." *Quarterly Journal of Economics* no. 87: 355–374.

Stemler, S. E. 2015. "Content Analysis." In *Emerging Trends in the Social and Behavioral Sciences: An Interdisciplinary, Searchable, and Linkable Resource*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc, 1–14.

Stiglbauer, M. 2010. "Transparency & Disclosure on Corporate Governance as a Key Factor of Companies' Success: A Simultaneous Equations Analysis for Germany." *Problems and Perspectives in Management* 8, no. 1: 161–173.

Stuart, A. C., S. H. Fuller, N. M. Heron, and T. J. Riley. 2022. "Defining CSR Disclosure Quality: A Review and Synthesis of the Accounting Literature." *Journal of Accounting Literature* 45, no. 1: 1–47.

Suchman, M. C. 1995. "Managing Legitimacy: Strategic and Institutional Approaches." *Academy of Management Review* 20, no. 3: 571–610.

Taneja, P., A. Jain, M. Joshi, et al. 2022. "Mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility in India: Reporting Reality, Issues and Way Forward." *Meditari Accountancy Research* 30, no. 3: 472–494.

Temiz, H. 2021. "The Effects of Corporate Disclosure on Firm Value and Firm Performance: Evidence From Turkey." *International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management* 14, no. 5: 1061–1080.

Tranfield, D., D. Denyer, and P. Smart. 2003. "Towards a Methodology for Developing Evidence-Informed Management Knowledge by Means of Systematic Review." *British Journal of Management* 14, no. 3: 207–222.

van Atteveldt, W., M. A. van der Velden, and M. Boukes. 2021. "The Validity of Sentiment Analysis: Comparing Manual Annotation, Crowd-Coding, Dictionary Approaches, and Machine Learning Algorithms." *Communication Methods and Measures* 15, no. 2: 121–140.

Verrecchia, R. E. 1982. "The Use of Mathematical Models in Financial Accounting." *Journal of Accounting Research* 20: 1–42.

Verrecchia, R. E. 1983. "Discretionary Disclosure." *Journal of Accounting and Economics* 5, no. 3: 179–194.

Vitolla, F., N. Raimo, M. Rubino, et al. 2019a. "How Pressure From Stakeholders Affects Integrated Reporting Quality." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 26, no. 6: 1591 –1606.

Vitolla, F., N. Raimo, M. Rubino, et al. 2019b. "The Impact of National Culture on Integrated Reporting Quality. A Stakeholder Theory Approach." *Business Strategy and the Environment* 28, no. 8: 1558–1571.

Vitolla, F., N. Raimo, M. Rubino, F. Vitolla, N. Raimo, and M. Rubino. 2020. "Board Characteristics and Integrated Reporting Quality: An Agency Theory Perspective." *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management* 27, no. 2: 1152–1163.

Wanjau, B. M., W. M. Muturi, and P. Ngumi. 2018. "Influence of Corporate Transparency Disclosures on Financial Performance of Listed Companies in East Africa." *Asian Journal of Finance & Accounting* 10, no. 1: 1–15.

Watts, R. L., and J. L. Zimmerman. 1990. "Positive Accounting Theory: A Ten Year Perspective." *Accounting Review* 65, no. 1: 131–156.

Wen, H., K. C. Ho, J. Gao, and L. Yu. 2022. "The Fundamental Effects of ESG Disclosure Quality in Boosting the Growth of ESG Investing." *Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions and Money* 81: 101655.

Wiseman, R. M., and L. R. Gomez-Mejia. 1998. "A Behavioral Agency Model of Managerial Risk Taking." *Academy of Management Review* 23, no. 1: 133–153.

Woodward, D. G., P. Edwards, and F. Birkin. 1996. "Organizational Legitimacy and Stakeholder Information Provision 1." *British Journal of Management* 7, no. 4: 329–347.

World Bank. 2021. *World Bank Country and Lending Groups* [Online]. Available. https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups. [Accessed June 30 2025].

Xiang, Y., J. L. Birt, Y. Xiang, and J. L. Birt. 2021. "Internet Reporting, Social Media Strategy and Firm Characteristics—An Australian Study." *Accounting Research Journal* 34, no. 1: 43–75.

Xie, J., W. Nozawa, M. Yagi, H. Fujii, and S. Managi. 2019. "Do Environmental, Social, and Governance Activities Improve Corporate Financial Performance?" *Business Strategy and the Environment* 28, no. 2: 286–300.

Ye, Y., L. Zeng, Y. Tao, and F. Yun. 2023. "Tax Authority Monitoring and Corporate Information Disclosure Quality in China." *International Review of Financial Analysis* 90: 102872.

Yin, R. K. 2009. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Sage.

Yu, E. P. Y., C. Q. Guo, and B. V. Luu. 2018. "Environmental, Social and Governance Transparency and Firm Value." *Business Strategy and the Environment* 27, no. 7: 987–1004.

Zaini, S. M., G. Samkin, U. Sharma, and H. Davey. 2018. "Voluntary Disclosure in Emerging Countries: A Literature Review." *Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies* 8, no. 1: 29–65.

Zeng, S., X. Xu, H. Yin, and C. M. Tam. 2012. "Factors That Drive Chinese Listed Companies in Voluntary Disclosure of Environmental Information." *Journal of Business Ethics* 109: 309–321.

Zupic, I., and T. Čater. 2015. "Bibliometric Methods in Management and Organization." *Organizational Research Methods* 18, no. 3: 429–472.

Appendix 1: SUMMARY OF THEORIES

Theory	Explanation	Implication for the current study	References
Agency Theory (Ross 1973; Jensen and Meckling 1976)	Companies are considered by separation of ownership, where management provides the opportunity for management (agents) to act in their own self-interest by maximising their own wealth and power at the expense of the owners (principals).	Corporate disclosures being a part of better CG practice will reduce the agency conflict by providing quality and useful information to the owners.	(Bushman and Smith 2003; Beattie et al. 2004; Bushman et al. 2004; Dunn and Mayhew 2004; Haat et al. 2008; Habib 2008; Cheung et al. 2010; Liu and Sun 2010; Stiglbauer 2010; Wanjau et al. 2018; Vitolla et al. 2020; Raimo et al. 2022; Liu et al. 2023; Ye et al. 2023; Belhouchet and Chouaibi 2024; Elaigwu et al. 2024)
Asymmetric Information Theory (Akerlof 1970)	Information asymmetry exists where one party has more or better information than the other, which may create an imbalance of power in the market.	Disclosure is a communication mechanism between the public and the firm; it offers benefits to the firm by reducing information asymmetry.	(Beattie et al. 2004; Bushman et al. 2004; Brown and Hillegeist 2007; Stiglbauer 2010; Mouselli et al. 2012; Kim et al. 2013; Salem et al. 2020; Liu et al. 2023)
Voluntary Disclosure Theory (Verrecchia 1983; Dye 1985; Lang and Lundholm 1993)	Voluntary disclosure is the provision of information by a company's management beyond legal requirements.	Adding voluntary disclosures in the annual reports provide more insightful information to investors on firms' efforts on non-financial aspects of the company. Hence, it can be used as one of the methods to improve a firm's CG practices.	(Bokpin 2013; Meng et al. 2014; Aboud and Diab 2018; Yu et al. 2018; Xie et al. 2019; Erin and Adegboye 2021)
Signaling Theory (Spence 1973)	Initially employed in the labour market. Since signalling is a general phenomenon, later it has been widely used in accounting studies where management may signal something about the firm which can be viewed as a signal by investors.	Better quality information disclosures may act as a positive signal to the market, and it will increase market performance of the companies and vice versa.	(Mouselli et al. 2012; Kim et al. 2013; Edogbanya and Kamardin 2016; Salem et al. 2020; Temiz 2021; Ho et al. 2022; Iatridis et al. 2022; Li et al. 2022; Wen et al. 2022; Liu et al. 2023; Ko et al. 2024)
Stakeholder Theory (Freeman 1984)	The task of management is to create the best possible value for different stakeholders of the entity without resorting to adjustments.	Being transparent with proper disclosures in the annual reports, a corporation can improve the attention of its stakeholders without damaging the interests of its wider stakeholders.	(Vitolla et al. 2019a; Vitolla et al. 2019b; Patel and Dallas 2002; Beretta and Bozzolan 2008; Haat et al. 2008; Cheung et al. 2010; Kim et al. 2013; Aboud and Diab 2018; Pistoni et al. 2018; Wanjau et al. 2018; Erin and Adegboye 2021; Wen et al. 2022; Liu et al. 2023; Ko et al. 2024)
Legitimacy Theory (Dowling and Pfeffer 1975)	Based on the idea that organisational legitimacy is a 'social contract' that exists between business and society.	Transparency is one way of being legitimate to society. Disclosures on financial, governance, operational and social activities of the entity can justify its existence to society while gaining and maintaining legitimacy.	(Patel and Dallas 2002; Beattie et al. 2004; Cheung et al. 2010; Michelon et al. 2015; Aboud and Diab 2018; Pistoni et al. 2018; Wanjau et al. 2018; Salem et al. 2020; Erin and Adegboye 2021; Liu et al. 2023; Melón-Izco et al. 2023)
Institutional Theory (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Powell and DiMaggio 2012)	Explain how organisations are dependent on structures, rules, norms and routines, explaining how these come to be stable and are subjected to change processes.	Reporting practices are not solely managerial decisions but also organisational responses to institutional pressures such as regulations, industry norms, professional standards and societal expectations.	(Amran and Susela Devi 2008; Zeng et al. 2012; Beddewela and Herzig 2013; Taneja et al. 2022)

Source: Authors' work.

Appendix 2: SUMMARY OF REVIEWED PAPERS—THEORETICAL

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Citation score	Methodology	Theoretical foundation
01.	Adams (2002)	Internal organisational factors influencing corporate social and ethical reporting: Beyond current theorising	Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal	1998	Interviews with seven large multinationals in United Kingdom and Germany	The study argues that various factors influence the quality of corporate social and ethical reporting, which are not fully captured by the existing theories of social reporting that focus primarily on why and how companies report. It identifies several corporate characteristics, as well as general and internal contextual factors, that affect the quality of such reporting.
02.	O'Donovan (2002)	Environmental disclosures in the annual report: Extending the applicability and predictive power of legitimacy theory	Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal	2780	Semi-structured interviews with Australian public companies	Legitimacy theory acts as an explanatory factor for environmental disclosure in annual reports. This study highlights how likely specific micro-legitimation tactics (small-scale strategies used to influence legitimacy) are to be used by companies when facing environmental issues or events that threaten their legitimacy. The choice of tactic depends on whether the company is trying to gain legitimacy, maintain existing legitimacy or repair lost legitimacy. The annual reports serve as public relations tools, used by management to present a favourable image of the corporation's social and environmental performance. It implies that environmental disclosures in annual reports tend to be broad and non-specific, unlike more detailed disclosures found in other formats (e.g., media releases or standalone environmental reports).

(Continues)

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Citation score	Methodology	Theoretical foundation
03.	Hammond and Miles (2004)	Assessing quality assessment of corporate social reporting: UK perspectives	Accounting Forum	230	Interviews with four UK-based assessment organisations and 60 corporate representatives	Corporations adopt fewer comprehensive definitions of quality than quality assessors that adopt more stringent definitions of quality than academics; methodological problems of quality assessment highlighted in the academic literature are experienced by quality assessors; and benchmarking and award schemes are important drivers of CSR.
04.	Taneja et al. (2022)	Mandatory corporate social responsibility in India: reporting reality, issues, and way forward	Meditari Accountancy Research	15	Interviews with 18 Central public sector enterprises and 32 regulators in India	The study extends the application of institutional theory by examining how reporting compliance in central public sector enterprises is influenced by coercive pressures and the decoupling of institutional processes. The establishment of a central regulatory body is expected to facilitate compliance with reporting requirements while mitigating excessive coercive pressures.
05.	Beddewela and Herzig (2013)	Corporate social reporting by MNCs' subsidiaries in Sri Lanka	Accounting Forum	160	In-depth interviews with 18 managers across 10 subsidiaries in Sri Lanka	The study combines institutional and legitimacy theory to explain how and why subsidiaries either engage in or avoid voluntary social reporting in a developing country. It reveals that multinational company subsidiaries are primarily motivated by the need to gain *internal legitimacy* by adhering to formal reporting processes mandated by their head offices. In contrast, *external legitimacy*, which is shaped by local stakeholder expectations and mimetic pressures in Sri Lanka, has a weaker influence due to the absence of strong regulatory and normative pressures.

Source: Authors' work.

Appendix 3: SUMMARY OF REVIEWED PAPERS—EMPIRICAL

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Citation score
1	Hussainey et al. (2003)	Undertaking large-scale disclosure studies when AIMR-FAF ratings are not available: the case of prices leading earnings	Accounting and Business Research	300
2	Beattie et al. (2004)	A methodology for analysing and evaluating narratives in annual reports: a comprehensive descriptive profile and metrics for disclosure quality attributes	Accounting Forum	1731
3	Dunn and Mayhew (2004)	Audit firm industry specialisation and client disclosure quality	Review of Accounting Studies	917
4	Bens and Monahan (2004)	Disclosure quality and the excess value of diversification	Journal of Accounting Research	295
5	Bushman et al. (2004)	What determines corporate transparency?	Journal of Accounting Research	3419
6	Brown and Hillegeist (2007)	How disclosure quality affects the level of information asymmetry	Review of Accounting Studies	1146
7	Beretta and Bozzolan (2008)	Quality versus quantity: the case of forward-looking disclosure	Journal of Accounting, Auditing and Finance	568
8	Haat et al. (2008)	Corporate governance, transparency, and performance of Malaysian companies	Managerial Auditing Journal	589
9	Beest et al. (2009)	Quality of financial reporting: measuring qualitative characteristics	Nijmegen Center for Economics (NiCE) Institute for Management Research repository	775
10	Francis et al. (2009)	Does corporate transparency contribute to efficient resource allocation?	Journal of Accounting Research	248
11	Cheung et al. (2010)	A transparency Disclosure Index measuring disclosures: Chinese listed companies	Journal of Accounting and Public Policy	375
12	Stiglbauer (2010)	Transparency & disclosure on corporate governance as a key factor of companies' success: a simultaneous equations analysis for Germany	Problems and Perspectives in Management	73
13	Liu and Sun (2010)	Ultimate ownership structure and corporate disclosure quality: evidence from China	Managerial Finance	49
14	Mouselli et al. (2012)	Accruals quality vis-à-vis disclosure quality: substitutes or complements?	British Accounting Review	117
15	Siagian et al. (2013)	Corporate governance, reporting quality and firm value: evidence from Indonesia	Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies	300
16	Kim et al. (2013)	Corporate transparency and firm performance: evidence from venture firms listed on the Korean stock market	Asia Pacific Journal of Financial Studies	47
17	Bokpin (2013)	Determinants and value relevance of corporate disclosure: evidence from the emerging capital market of Ghana	Journal of Applied Accounting Research	76

(Continues)

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Citation score
18	Firth et al. (2015)	Corporate transparency and the impact of investor sentiment on stock prices	Management Science	182
19	Michelon et al. (2015)	CSR reporting practices and the quality of disclosure: an empirical analysis	Critical Perspectives on Accounting	1405
20	Chen et al. (2015)	A new measure of disclosure quality: the level of disaggregation of accounting data in annual reports	Journal of Accounting Research	399
21	Lu et al. (2015)	Corporate social responsibility reporting quality, board characteristics and corporate social reputation: evidence from China	Pacific Accounting Review	166
22	Gao et al. (2015)	Determinants and economic consequences of non-financial disclosure quality	The European accounting review	321
23	Plumlee et al. (2015)	Voluntary environmental disclosure quality and firm value: further evidence	Journal of accounting and public policy	1328
24	Al-Shaer and Zaman (2016)	Board gender diversity and sustainability reporting quality	Journal of Contemporary Accounting & Economics	616
25	Dissanayake et al. (2016)	Sustainability reporting by publicly listed companies in Sri Lanka	Journal of Cleaner Production	269
26	Habek et al. (2016)	Assessing the quality of corporate social responsibility reports: the case of reporting practices in selected European Union member states	Quality & quantity	537
27	Byrne and O'Connor (2017)	How do creditors respond to disclosure quality? Evidence from corporate dividend payouts	Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions and Money	13
28	Sethi et al. (2017)	An evaluation of the quality of corporate social responsibility reports by some of the world's largest financial institutions	Journal of business ethics	179
29	Aboud and Diab (2018)	The impact of social, environmental, and corporate governance disclosures on firm value: evidence from Egypt	Journal of Accounting in Emerging Economies	545
30	Wanjau et al. (2018)	Influence of corporate transparency disclosures on financial performance of listed companies in East Africa	Asian Journal of Finance and Accounting	15

(Continues)

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Citation score
31	Yu et al. (2018)	Environmental, social and governance transparency and firm value	Business Strategy and the Environment	616
32	Pistoni et al. (2018)	Integrated reporting quality: an empirical analysis	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	415
33	Lin et al. (2019)	Influence of CEO characteristics on accounting information disclosure quality—based on the mediating effect of capital structure	Emerging Markets Finance and Trade	31
34	Rezaee and Tuo (2019)	Are the quantity and quality of sustainability disclosures associated with the innate and discretionary earnings quality?	Journal of Business Ethics	318
35	Vitolla et al. (2019b)	The impact of national culture on integrated reporting quality. A stakeholder theory approach	Business strategy and the environment	314
36	Vitolla et al. (2019a)	How pressure from stakeholders affects integrated reporting quality	Corporate social responsibility and environmental management	278
37	Al-Shaer (2020)	Sustainability reporting quality and post-audit financial reporting quality: empirical evidence from the UK	Business Strategy and the Environment	169
38	Cooray et al. (2020)	Does corporate governance affect the quality of integrated reporting?	Sustainability	159
39	Mehrabanpour et al. (2020)	Financial statement comparability and cash holdings: the mediating role of disclosure quality and financing constraints	Journal of Financial Reporting and Accounting	31
40	Rezaee et al. (2020)	Environmental disclosure quality and risk: the moderating effect of corporate governance	Sustainability Accounting, Management and Policy Journal	68
41	Salem et al. (2020)	Does the quality of voluntary disclosure constrain earnings management in emerging economies? Evidence from Middle Eastern and North African banks	International Journal of Accounting and Information Management	85
42	Vitolla et al. (2020)	Board characteristics and integrated reporting quality: an agency theory perspective	Corporate social responsibility and environmental management	595
43	Al Lawati et al. (2021)	Disclosure quality vis-à-vis disclosure quantity: does audit committee matter in Omani financial institutions?	Review of quantitative Finance and Accounting	102
44	Gani et al. (2021)	Empirical analysis on corporate transparency, competitive advantage, and performance: an insight of Muscat securities market	Journal of Governance and Integrity	103
45	Temiz (2021)	The effects of corporate disclosure on firm value and firm performance: evidence from Turkey	International Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Finance and Management	44
46	Erin and Adegboye (2021)	Do corporate attributes impact integrated reporting quality? An empirical evidence	Journal of Financial Reporting, and Accounting	66
47	Ho et al. (2022)	Disclosure quality, price efficiency, and expected returns	North American journal of economics and finance	13
48	Wen et al. (2022)	The fundamental effects of ESG disclosure quality in boosting the growth of ESG investing	Journal of International Financial Markets, Institutions, and Money	114

(Continues)

No.	Authors and year	Topic	Journal	Citation score
49	Iatridis et al. (2022)	Narrative disclosure quality and the timeliness of goodwill impairments	The British Accounting Review	31
50	Li et al. (2022)	CFOs' audit experience and corporate disclosure quality: evidence from China	Accounting and Finance	21
51	Raimo et al. (2022)	Integrated reporting quality and cost of debt financing	Journal of Applied Accounting Research	65
52	Koh et al. (2023)	Corporate social responsibility (CSR) performance and stakeholder engagement: evidence from the quantity and quality of CSR disclosures	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	96
53	Liu et al. (2023)	Corporate transparency and firm value: does market competition play an external governance role?	Journal of Contemporary Accounting and Economics	44
54	Ye et al. (2023)	Tax authority monitoring and corporate information disclosure quality in China	International Review of Financial Analysis	25
55	Song and Zhu (2023)	The staggered tenure of CEO and board secretary and information disclosure quality	Finance Research Letters	4
56	Melón-Izco et al. (2023)	The quantity and quality of narrative disclosures in management reports: CNMV guide effect	Spanish Journal of Finance and Accounting	0
57	Ko et al. (2024)	Capital market effects of corporate transparency and sustainability: evidence from an emerging economy	Journal of Asia Business Studies	3
58	Elaigwu et al. (2024)	Sustainability reporting quality in Malaysia: the intricacy of family controlled and politically connected firms	Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management	2
59	Belhouchet and Chouaibi (2024)	The impact of audit committee attributes on integrated reporting quality: evidence from European companies listed on the STOXX Europe 600 index	Meditari Accountancy Research	7
60	Hu et al. (2024)	Does corporate digitalisation improve disclosure quality?	Internet Research	5
61	Soysa et al. (2024)	Construction of a sustainability reporting score index integrating sustainable development goals (SDGs). The case of Sri Lankan listed firms	Journal of Asian Business and Economic Studies	7
62	Hameed et al. (2024)	CSR disclosure quantity to CSR disclosure quality—in pursuit of a disclosure quality index	Pacific Accounting Review	2
63	Dungtripop et al. (2025)	The impact of corporate reporting quality on sustainable growth through integrated reporting lens in Thai listed companies	Journal of Risk and Financial Management	0
64	Singhania et al. (2025)	Toward transparency: developing and validating a sustainability disclosure characteristics scale	Society and Business Review	1
65	Liang et al. (2025)	The effect of the information disclosure quality on enterprise cooperation: evidence from Chinese manufacturing-listed companies	Applied Economics	0

Source: Authors' work.