

Accounting Practices: The Change I See

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In this paper, we explain change in accounting practices and organisations as a construction of the observer. My case study demonstrates how observers construct different static entities and observe change of those constructed entities, and why individuals perceive change differently. There are some key issues raised by past researchers of accounting change that require further examination and fuller explanation.

This study uses the concept of impermanence from Buddhist philosophy, which assumes that everything that one perceives as existing is a construction of the observer, owing to limitations in perceiving the continual process of emergence and decline of all things. Using this concept, we demonstrate that what we observe as change in accounting practices is the difference in the properties of the static entities constructed by individuals due to delays in observing or inability to observe all instantaneous changes of a given aspect. As individuals' constructions are subject to their personal knowledge, interests, and experiences, constructions differ from one observer to another. As individuals observe changes relative to the properties of their own constructions, they perceive change in accounting practices differently and act accordingly.

A longitudinal case study method is adopted as it supports the researcher's methodological assumptions. Empirical materials were gathered on change in a telecommunications organisation in Sri Lanka. Interviews and document review were used as the major methods of collecting empirical evidence to construct our knowledge about Sri Lanka Telecom, its context and accounting practices.

This study introduces a new perspective to the current literature in order to explain change in organisations and accounting practices. It answers questions that remained open in relation to change in accounting practices. We suggest that further research using the concepts introduced in this study would benefit the discipline, particularly in relation to implications of changing accounting practices in organizations.

Key words: *Accounting Change, Accounting Practices, Sri Lanka Telecom.*