Abstract

This document provides an academic approach to accounting and external accounting reports. It deals with characterising and understanding the role of accounting within organisations and within society. It thus synthesises the dominant economic vision and some social and institutional perspectives about accounting’s role and that of financial accounting information. It takes the following question as its starting point, "Does accounting contribute towards the purpose of organisational legitimacy with the environment?" The work is thus aimed at synthesising viewpoints explaining the role of external accounting reports and financial states, particularly from the dominant viewpoint and a neo-institutional perspective in accounting. The document takes a first case study which tries to provide the necessary empirical contrasting for understanding accounting’s role in Colombia. The view is adopted whereby (above all) accounting information plays an institutional role, as a mechanism for legitimising an organisation with its environment.

Keywords