

A REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF BEHAVIORAL ACCOUNTING RESEARCH IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR

Linda A. Kidwell
University of Wyoming

Suzanne Lowensohn
Colorado State University

ABSTRACT

Prior literature reviews of governmental accounting research have noted a paucity of behavioral accounting research in the public sector. This void is surprising given the magnitude of federal, state and local funding that is handled by legislators, accountants, budget managers, bureaucrats, auditors and other individuals annually on behalf of citizens and interest groups. We identify academic papers focused on governmental accounting which utilize behavioral research models and evaluate their relation to Cheng's 1994 politico-economic model of government accounting policy choice. Preliminary observations indicate that, while some actors in Cheng's model have been studied, several parties have been neglected in extant research, resulting in opportunities for future research. We also find that behavioral research in governmental accounting and auditing seems to be shifting from the accounting literature to the public administration literature, and we suggest reasons that may be so.