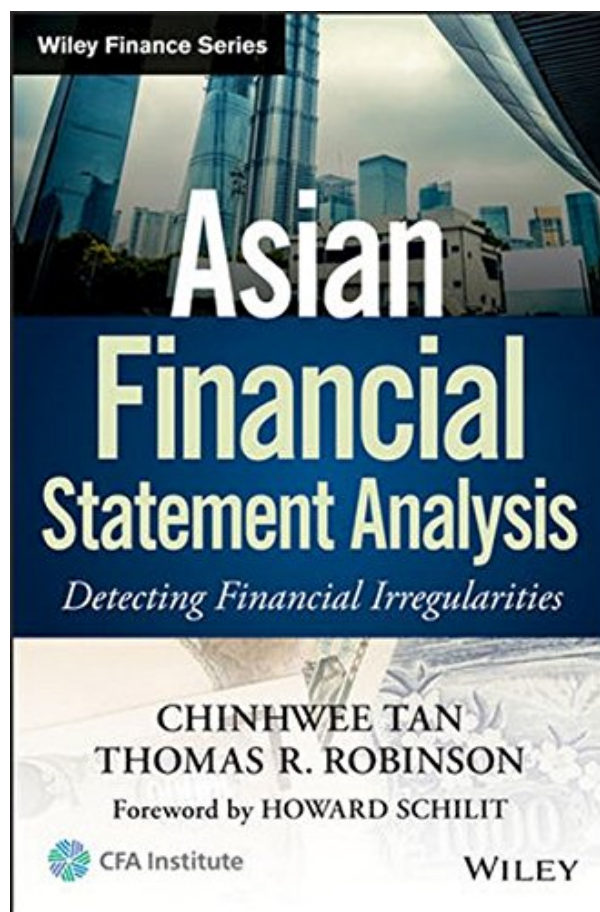


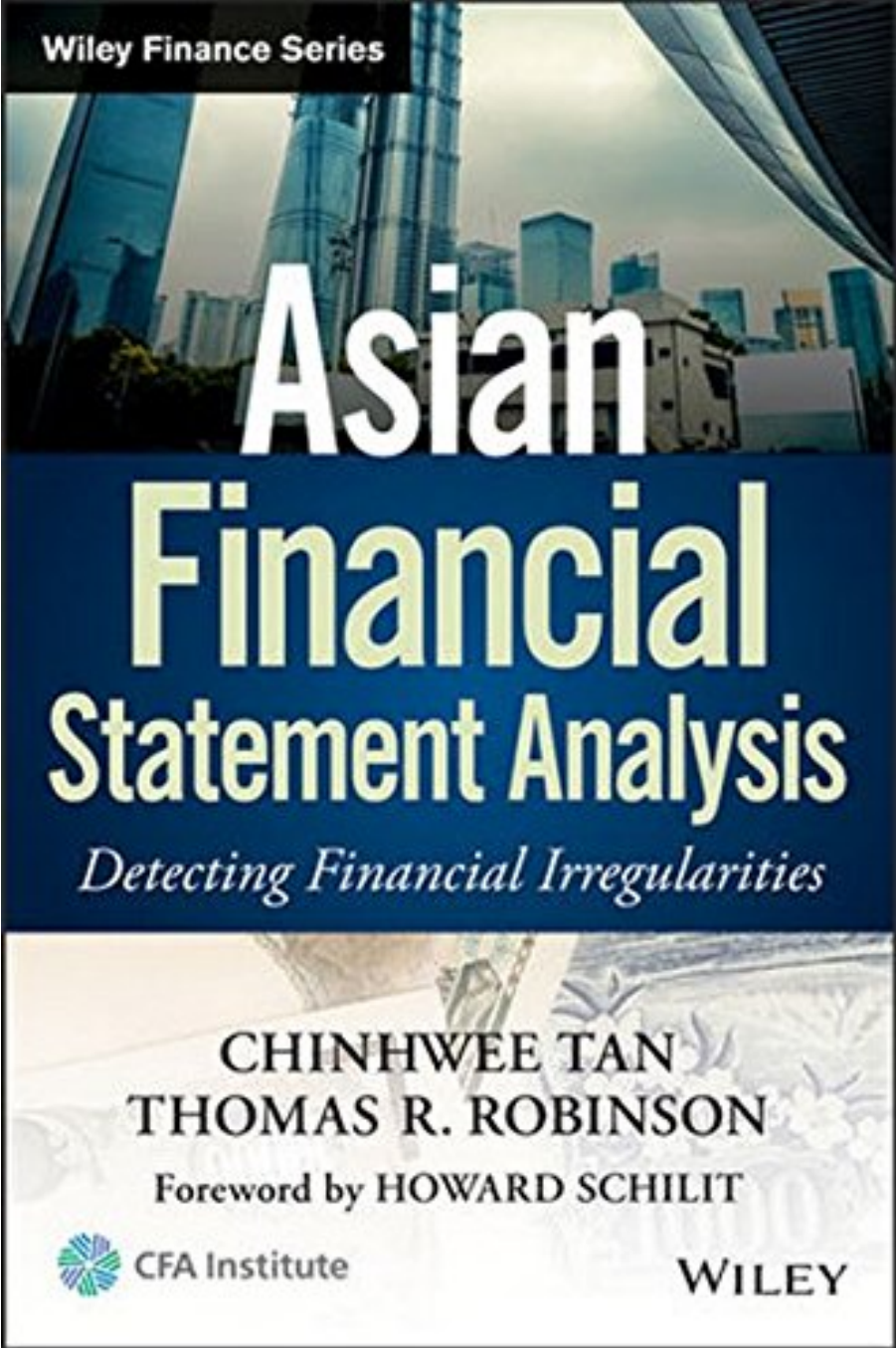
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DETECTING FINANCIAL IRREGULARITIES
(WILEY FINANCE) BY CHINHWEE TAN,
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Asian Financial Statement Analysis

Detecting Financial Irregularities

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Gain a deeper understanding of Asian financial reporting and how to detect irregularities

The Asian region, and particularly China, is becoming a hotbed of investment activity. There have been quite a few accounting scandals in Asia in the recent years – now rivaling those we have seen in the Americas and Europe. Assessing potential or active overseas investments requires reliance on financial statements, the full parameters of which may vary from region to region. To effectively analyze statements, it is necessary to first understand the framework underlying these financial statements and then lay out a protocol for detecting irregularities. It's impossible to create and implement a practical plan without a deeper knowledge of the various factors at play.

Asian Statement Analysis: Detecting Financial Irregularities provides a framework for analysis that makes irregularities stand out. Authors Chin Hwee Tan and Thomas R. Robinson discuss international financial reporting standards, including characteristics particular to the Asian region. Tan and Robinson's combined background in academia and Asian finance give them a multi-modal perspective and position them as top authorities on the topic. In the book, they address issues such as:

- Detection of irregularities independent of particular accounting rules
- The most common irregularities in the Asian market
- Similarities and differences between U.S. and Asian accounting techniques
- An overarching framework for irregularity detection

The book uses real-world examples to illustrate the concepts presented, with the focus on Asian companies. As the first ever in-depth study on manipulation and irregularities in the Asian market, Asian Financial Statement Analysis: Detecting Financial Irregularities is uniquely positioned to be a valuable resource in the move toward the next phase of global reporting standards.

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3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

All that glitters is not gold. This is a great guide to avoiding investment mistakes in Asia

By Lim Jit Soon

Analysts and investors tend to focus on income statements and modeling future earnings in their investment analysis. Not enough attention is given to balance sheets and cashflows. Indeed when a stock becomes the darling of the market, analysts often forget to investigate if indeed “all the glitter is really gold”. Tan and Robinson’s timely book – Asian Financial Statement Analysis: Detecting Financial Irregularities -provides a useful reference and guide for analysts and investors who want to dig deeper into financial statements with the view to avoiding investment mistakes.

Providing a systematic framework and using numerous Asian case studies (including Satyam and Olympus), the authors show readers how to systematically look out for warning signs. Spanning seven chapters and written in a user friendly format, the book covers topics like Detecting Earnings Management and Detecting Overstated Financial Position with relevant case studies embedded in each of the chapters to drive home key lessons.

For those who need a refresher on cashflows, Chapter Five which is entitled “Detecting Overstated Operating Cashflows”, explains how cash flows are constructed and how they can be manipulated to magnify a company’s prospects. The chapter on Evaluating Corporate Governance and Related party issues provides an excellent framework for identifying potential conflicts of interest.

Towards the end of the book, Tan and Robinson thoughtfully puts everything together and offers a “Recipe for Detecting Cooked Books” which outlines the steps required for a thorough analysis of company financial statements. Asian Financial Statement Analysis is a must read for analysts and investors wanting to hone their skills in investment analysis.

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

The definitive book for Financial Shenanigans in Asia

By Nguyen Dang Trung

As a sell-side credit analyst with a focus on high-yield (junk) bonds in Asia, I took a particular interest in the book because the high-yield bonds and equity markets in Asia have plenty of financial irregularities. I was not disappointed. The book is a wonderful read for any investors and analysts who want to invest in Asia companies, both in bonds or equity. What I like are:

- Simple to understand: As mentioned in the introduction, the author writes with the non-technical readers in mind so he explains the concepts in simple, layman language.

- Well-structured book and well-structured framework to look for fraud: I particularly like how he explained and stressed the interrelationship between income statements, balance sheet and cash flows. He gave various examples of ways to "cook the book" and how to detect such activities. In my humble experience of talking to various investors and analysts in Asia, many people overlook this linkage concept and tend to focus on perhaps the income statements or only the balance sheets. The author pointed out that financial irregularities tend to leave tell-tale signs in other parts of the financial statements and rightly so.

- Plenty of great case studies with lessons at the end: Many of those case studies are well-known if you have followed the due-diligence based research firms and short-sellers such as Muddy Water, Glaucus Research, and Citron Research. If you have not, the case studies will be really eye-opening. The author has summarised them nicely without getting bogged down with details. Many case studies are still new to me.

As a professional habit, I tend to look for peer comparison. The closest peer for this book may be the classic

Financial Shenanigans by Howard Schilit and Jeremy Perler, which I have with me too. I found the Tan ChinHwee's book a lot more in-depth and enjoyed it a lot more than the latter. It is also Asia-focused and more relevant to my work. The Financial Shenanigans did not touch on the manipulation of balance sheet and the interrelationship between the three financial statements, for example. While it explains more ways to manipulate incomes statements and cash flows, Tan ChinHwee's book gets deeper to the fundamental of what happens to the balance sheet and cash flows when various items in the income statements get manipulated or vice versa.

In addition, Tan's book has a unique and valuable chapter on Corporate Governance and Related-party Issues which are rampant in Asia. Few other books have touched on it as most investment books so far are written by Westerners. Asian analysts and investors discuss about them but few has written a structured report to analyse it.

I highly recommend the book to any investors in Asia companies.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

All Accounting Games Must Come To An End - A Logical and Handy Guide for avoiding value traps and investment missteps

By S. Ching

Many great (and true) things have been said about 'Asian Financial Statement Analysis' by other reviewers here. I have nothing but enthusiasm to add to their comments. I would like to affirm one thing in particular - that this book is simple (not easy) enough to be picked up by a non-finance layman, yet deep enough for industry practitioners to mine it repeatedly for insights. Chin Hwee and Thomas have done a wonderful job laying out the technical jargon clearly and concisely. I would like to offer two of my takeaways from the book:

Firstly, I appreciated the fact that the core of the book lies the reminder that all accounting games will come to an end. At first glance, it may seem disheartening to know that if 'a company wants to intentionally perpetrate fraud, it can be very hard to detect until it is too late, even for experienced auditors and analysts' (p22). How then, can the man on the street decide which companies are worth his dollar? This is where 'Asian Financial Statement Analysis' steps in - while it does not guarantee a foolproof ability in detecting frauds - it does present a comprehensive checklist, coupled with detailed real world case studies to distill key lessons from. At the root of it, the book reminds us that the built in check and balance utility of the accounting framework will eventually overcome the will of the most determined fraudster. For investors, this brings to mind Warren Buffett's famous punchcard analogy - there are plenty of companies in the world, why force yourself to invest in a company that you see even a single red flag in?

Despite it's appearance as a numbers driven text, the book's second fundamental lesson is that companies have real human beings at their helm. While it may be tempting for the analyst to lapse into treating each company as no more than numbers on a paper, this approach misses the root issues of fraud. The last chapter begins with authors reminding us that 'accounting scandals have been around for as long as capital markets'. This is primarily due to the opportunity created to 'obscure the true economic picture' of a business when you separate 'ownership and control' (p159). Throughout the book, the authors remind us that misaligned incentives will lead to a higher probability of fraud. Analysts must attempt to understand the psychology and the mentality of the management as well as to look for warning signs in the actions and movements of the Board of Directors in a company. Understanding the motivations and correctly judging the character of the management will put an investor in good stead.

In sum, this book's clear and logical framework of checklists as well as the presence of multiple real world

case studies is well worth paying attention to before making any investment. I look forward to future editions with more case studies and lessons to glean from.

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