

# Andrea Richardson and Eleanor O'Higgins Corporation certification advantages- impacts on performance and development

**Article (Accepted version)  
(Refereed)**

**Original citation:**

Richardson, Andrea and O'Higgins, Eleanor (2018) Corporation certification advantages-impacts on performance and development. [Business & Professional Ethics Journal](#). ISSN 02772027 (In Press)

© 2018 [Philosophy Documentation Center](#)

This version available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/90889>

Available in LSE Research Online: November 2018

LSE has developed LSE Research Online so that users may access research output of the School. Copyright © and Moral Rights for the papers on this site are retained by the individual authors and/or other copyright owners. Users may download and/or print one copy of any article(s) in LSE Research Online to facilitate their private study or for non-commercial research. You may not engage in further distribution of the material or use it for any profit-making activities or any commercial gain. You may freely distribute the URL (<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk>) of the LSE Research Online website.

This document is the author's final accepted version of the journal article. There may be differences between this version and the published version. You are advised to consult the publisher's version if you wish to cite from it.

**B Corporation Certification - Advantages Benefits?**

**Impacts on performance and development**

## Abstract

---

B Corporations are for-profit companies meeting specific social and environmental standards. This exploratory study into B Corporations aims to enhance the understanding of the certification on organizational performance. As previous research indicates that third party labels impact financial performance and that positive corporate social performance can lead to positive financial performance, this paper first seeks to determine whether B Corporation Certification positively impacts companies' financial performance. Second, following previous B Corporation literature, this research tests whether certification leads to positive non-financial results in the form of strategic advantages. Finally, it asks whether Certification negatively impacts organizations' plans to develop internationally and/or by going public. While this study's results provide little support that B Corporation Certification significantly impacts organizations' financial performance or growth, they do indicate that B Corporations experience positive non-financial strategic results post certification. The results of this study may be used to infer or test conclusions about socially responsible labels more broadly in the future.

## 1. Introduction

---

A new corporate social performance certification has been developed by the non-profit B Lab; however, much is still unknown about the impact of certification on organizational performance. Organizations earning this new certification are called “B Corporations”. This study examines the financial, non-financial strategic and growth effects of B Corporation Certification.

B Corporations (also known as B Corps) are for-profit companies certified by B Lab confirming they have met certain social and environmental performance, accountability, and transparency standards. As per B Lab (2016f), “B Corp is to business what Fair Trade certification is to coffee or USDA Organic certification is to milk.” B Lab opened in 2006 and certified its first B Corporation in 2007. At the time of writing, there have been over 1,600 B Corporations certified in over forty countries.

In order to become a B Corp, companies need to meet performance requirements, legal requirements, and complete a variety of documents (B Lab, 2016d). Performance requirements are evaluated through the B Impact Assessment which measures the overall impact of an organization on its stakeholders. A score of 80/200 is ~~need~~required to be considered for B Corporation Certification and the assessment must be updated every two years. A B Corporation must also consider the impact of ~~their~~-its decisions on all ~~their~~-its stakeholders (to the extent the law permits). A B Corporation may do this by updating its articles of incorporation or making other structural changes. ~~protect its social mission by legally requiring directors and officers to consider the interests of all stakeholders (not just shareholders) in decision-making.~~

### *Benefit corporations*

B Corporation Certification is often confused with “benefit corporation” status certification, a similar social performance credential. It is important to note that B Corporations and benefit corporations are not one and the same. While both B Corporation Certification and benefit corporation status certifications require companies to meet higher standards of accountability and transparency, benefit corporation is a legal structure only available to American companies (benefit corporations are incorporated under different state provisions calling explicitly for various forms of stakeholder concern) and performance standards are self-reported (in other words, the B Impact Assessment is not necessarily used) (B Lab, 2016a). While some companies may be both a certified B Corporation and a benefit corporation, this paper focuses on the former (but draws on recent benefit corporation research in the literature review to consider certain aspects of certification in general).

While B Corporation Certification is available to any for-profit business regardless of size, location, or corporate structure, there are few publicly listed and international B Corps. As identified by B Lab (2016e), “a number of institutional and practical barriers have made it hard for international private and publicly listed companies to earn B Corp Certification.” Only a handful of public companies are currently certified: the American company Etsy, Brazil’s Natura, Australia’s Ethical in Australia, and New Zealand’s Snakk Media (B Lab, 2016b).

### *Benefit corporations*

While there has been little research specific to B Corporations, further academic writing has more analyses have been completed on benefit corporations. Although B

Corporations and benefit corporations are not one and the same, many authors extend conclusions about benefit corporations to B Corps. ~~This paper focuses solely on B Corporations and does not aim to debate whether findings about benefit corporations can accurately be applied to B Corporations; however, as some authors' research conclusions do consider these two are applicable to both B Corporations and benefit corporations, credentials to be interchangeable,~~ it is important to address the research on benefit corporations as part of this literature review.

Much of the writing on benefit corporations debates whether benefit corporations are as socially beneficial as they claim. Goldschein and Miesing (2016) argue that benefit corporation status allows companies to address societal problems while enhancing the practice of corporate responsibility. It highlights the lack of knowledge about or awareness of benefit corporations and the cultural and legal impediments for investors in both private and public markets. Brown (2016) evaluates how effectively states have implemented the benefit corporation legislation, emphasizing the challenges arising from irregularities in implementation across states (in particular, the differences in reporting and monitoring requirements). These irregularities make it difficult for stakeholders to hold benefit corporations accountable. Finally, Koehn's (2016) research discusses the benefits claimed by supporters of the benefit corporation legal form, and then challenges these claims while explaining reasons to doubt whether benefit corporations are indeed socially useful.

In a 2016 published interview, Jay Coen Gilbert (a co-founder of B Lab) explains the future role of both benefit and B Corporations. Gilbert's vision includes "...growth of the community of B Corps through further expansion globally among these small and medium sized businesses, as well as an expansion into those parts of the economy more under the sway of capital markets – large public and international entities". He further explains that the

challenge in growing the movement is not in convincing businesses to use the benefit corporation structure, but in convincing the public markets of benefit corporations' potential: "...[it is] important the market sees that benefit corporations can have successful public offerings and perhaps even that existing public corporations can convert to benefit corporations" (GilbertSteingard, 2016). Otherwise, Gilbert explains, the venture community's interest will decrease, making it difficult for benefit corporations which require outside capital.

### Research domain

This paper focuses on the research domain of the impact of B Corporation Certification on organizations' financial performance, non-financial strategic performance in the form of strategic changes, and international and public listing growth, from the point of view of senior executives and owners. The learnings from this in-depth examination of B Corps have the potential to provide insights into the impact of socially responsible third party labels more generally and can be used to assist greater social performance efforts.

The first aim of this study is to determine the impact of B Corporation Certification on companies' financial and non-financial strategic performance in order to determine whether a tangible impact of B Corporation Certification can be identified, in the view of those who own and run those companies. This information could help organizations make informed decisions when determining whether to become B Corp certified, and perhaps influence decisions surrounding other socially responsible certifications. This paper Our study asks-interrogates current B Corporations as to what they see as the impact of certification on their own company's growth, on becoming publicly listed and international

organizations. ~~and the impact of certification on their own company's growth.~~ Previous B Corporation (and benefit corporation) research has focused on the social impacts of the broader social business movement while this paper's research goes a step further to examine the impact of B Corporation Certification on individual companies' financial performance, non-financial strategic performance, as well as public listing and international growth planning. Overall, this research adds to the limited array of literature specific to B Corporations, while also supporting previous literature about broader social responsibility.

The next section of this paper presents a literature review and hypotheses development ~~exploring: i) the impact of third party labels (such as B Corporation Certification) on corporate financial performance, ii) the connection between corporate social performance and corporate financial performance, iii) the connection between B Corporation Certification and corporate non-financial strategic performance, iv) the connection between B Corporation Certification and international and public listing growth, and v) benefit corporations.~~ This review of previous literature is used to develop this study's three key hypotheses: 1) Organizations will experience improved corporate financial performance after B Corporation Certification, 2) Organizations will experience improved corporate non-financial strategic performance after B Corporation Certification, and 3) Organizations' likelihood of growing internationally and/or going public will decrease after B Corporation Certification. Then Ssection three presents the study's data collection and testing methodology. Findings and analysis are presented in section four and discussion and implications are presented in section five. Finally, section six consists of conclusions, caveats, and opportunities for further research.

## 2. Literature Review

This section begins by examining previous literature on the connection between general third party certifications and financial performance. Furthermore, it explores the impact of corporate social performance (like that required by the B Corporation Certification) and corporate financial performance. The connections between B Corporation Certification and corporate non-financial strategic performance and B Corporation Certification and international and public listing growth are then discussed through current B Corporation literature. Previous research on benefit corporations is reviewed. Finally, this section concludes by summarizing the literature review and developing hypotheses.

## **2.1 The impact of third party labels (such as B Corporation Certification) on corporate financial performance**

Socially responsible organizations are not always easy to identify as they can take different legal forms and can define and measure impact in different ways. A benefit of third party B Corporation Certification is that it advertises an organization's "profit with purpose" approach (Bridges Ventures, 2015).

Literature supports this idea that socially responsible third party certifications and labels (such as B Corporation Certification) positively impact organizational financial performance. Parkinson (1975) defines certifications and seals as "third party approvals" and concludes that seals and certifications significantly influence consumer choice behaviour. Especially in the absence of other cues such as differential pricing and physical differences, displaying a familiar seal or certification creates a positive attraction towards a product. Schuler and Cording (2006) support Parkinson's findings when they argue that the corporate social performance (CSP) and corporate financial performance (CFP) relationship depends on consumer behaviour and is influenced by two factors: 1) information intensity about

corporate social performance and 2) consumer morals. This first factor (information intensity) is a function of third party information (which is more readily believed than information produced by the organization itself) and the dispersion of this information. This is consistent with the idea that third party certification increases information intensity, and therefore leads to a stronger CSP-CFP relationship. Etilé and Teyssier (2016) use an experimental market to compare the impact of two corporate social responsibility (CSR) signaling strategies: 1) CSR signaling through a certified third party label and 2) CSR signaling through unsubstantiated company claims. Their research concludes that third party certification clearly produces efficiencies.

No studies were found reporting a negative or neutral relationship between socially responsible third party certifications and organizational financial performance.

## **2.2 The connection between corporate social performance and corporate financial performance**

The business case for B Corporation Certification rests in large part on the argument that organizations can do well by doing good. Due to the large number of individual studies producing conflicting or inconclusive results on this topic, this research focuses on evaluating meta-analyses and literature summaries that collect and analyse all previous studies on the corporate social performance (CSP) - corporate financial performance (CFP) link. This paper uses the definition of CSP as defined by Wood (1991): “a business organization’s configuration of principles of social responsibility, processes of social responsiveness, and policies and programs, and observable outcomes as they relate to the firm’s societal relationships”.

Orlitzky, Schmidt, and Rynes (2003) present an effect-size meta-analysis of all prior quantitative research on the connection between CSP and CFP. Previous summaries of CSP-CFP literature rely on narrative reviews or the “vote-counting” method of aggregation (tabulations of significant and non-significant findings). These previously used techniques do not correct for sampling and measurement error while the methods used by Orlitzky et al. make these desired corrections. To ensure all relevant studies are included in their testing, these researchers use computer searches of ABI/Inform Global and PsycINFO databases using the keywords ‘organizational effectiveness and corporate social performance’ and a wide array of synonyms. These two databases give access to more than 1,200 international journal articles from 1970 onward. Orlitzky et al.’s meta-analysis finds that CSP is positively correlated with CFP across studies and that the relationship tends to be bidirectional and simultaneous. This research notes that measurement error explains 15-100 percent of cross-study variation in CSP-CFP correlations.

Beurden and Gössling (2008) examine the relationship between CSP and CFP with a meta-analysis of previously available literature. They identify articles for their study by applying search strings with both ‘CSP’ and ‘CFP’ (or synonyms) in both the ABI/Inform Global and Springer Link databases. Relevant articles are scanned and judged according to the researchers’ list of exclusion criteria, including any definitions or measurements of CSP or CFP that do not suit their theoretical model, doctoral dissertations, single case studies, and articles written prior to the Bruntland report. The Bruntland report, issued by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987, identifies sustainability as a concept including social, economic, political-institutional, and environmental aspects (United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development, 2007). As this is a key piece in adjusting attitudes towards CSR, Beurden and Gössling explain that only including items published after this report allows their results to more accurately reflect the contemporary situation. Beurden and

Gössling's results show that 68 percent of included studies demonstrate a positive relationship between CSP and CFP. Furthermore, 26 percent display no significant relationship, and only 6 percent display a negative relationship. This ~~is~~<sup>is</sup> study proposes that “the effect of CSP on CFP is solely a positive one; we can therefore clearly state that, for the present Western society, ‘Good Ethics is Good for Business’” (Beurden & Gössling, 2008).

~~Even m~~<sup>More</sup> More recently, major surveys and studies addressing the relationship between CSP and CFP support these academic meta-analyses and literature reviews. For example, The International Finance Corporation (2012) reports that, over five years, the Dow Jones Sustainability Index performed at an average of 36.1 percent better than the traditional Dow Jones Index. In addition, Eccles, Ioannou, and Serafeim (2014) summarize their research by stating “High Sustainability companies significantly outperform their counterparts over the long term, both in terms of stock market as well as accounting performance.”

No recent meta-analysis or literature summary reports a negative or neutral CSP-CFP relationship. However, some individual studies do report a negative or neutral relationship between CSP and CFP, suggesting there are contingencies that enhance or detract from the effects of CSP on CFP. One such contingency was the extent to which CSP enhances reputation, a relevant factor in B Corp certification which should promote reputation, in turn, boosting CFP (O'Higgins and Thevissen, 2017).

These findings that CSP is positively related with CFP and the conclusion that third party certifications of social responsibility positively impact organisational financial performance have never been explored and tested through an examination of B Corporation Certification whose assessment system for validation is very strict. This leads to the first hypothesis:

*Hypothesis #1 - Organisations will experience improved corporate financial performance after B Corporation Certification.*

### **2.3 The connection between B Corporation Certification and corporate non-financial strategic performance**

The B Corporation Handbook by Ryan Honeyman (2014) presents some of the most comprehensive research on B Corporations thus far. This Handbook provides a step-by-step resource to explain the B Corporation movement and supports the business case for B Corporation Certification through interviews with certified organizations. Specifically, the Handbook outlines ten benefits to B Corporation Certification:

- being part of a community of leaders with shared values; attracting talent and engaging employees; increasing credibility and trust; generating press; benchmarking and improving performance; attracting investors; protecting a company's mission for the long term; building a collective voice; saving money; and leading a global movement.

Similarly, "An Entrepreneur's Guide to Certified B Corporations and Benefit Corporations" (Barnes, 2017) is a tool for new companies considering B Corporation or benefit corporation status. The guide leads entrepreneurs through relevant decision criteria, including the pros and cons of obtaining either B Corporation or Benefit Corporation status. The benefits of B Corporation Certification explored in this guide are very similar to Honeyman's and include: resiliency; brand identification, networking and strategic partnerships; capital attraction; and quality of workforce. Disadvantages of certification are also listed, including: heightened level of scrutiny; additional resource commitment; and a potential threat to near-term shareholder profit.

For the purpose of this research, "non-financial performance" encompasses the following factors (most of which were outlined in the above research): partnerships, knowledge-sharing, consumer brand recognition, press brand awareness, benchmarking

performance, investor interest, organizational reputation, employee attraction and retention, socially responsible action, products/services offered, markets served, supply or distribution chains, and marketing strategy. Overall, these non-financial factors can be deemed to confer strategic advantage, so they are labelled “strategic”.

This paper tests these findings that B Corporation Certification can lead to improved non-financial strategic performance through its second hypothesis:

*Hypothesis #2 - Organizations will experience improved corporate non-financial strategic performance after B Corporation Certification*

#### **2.4 The connection between B Corporation Certification and international and public listing development**

Bridges Ventures’ (2015) article, “To B or Not to B”, explains that B Corporation Certification can only create value for investors through positive branding and potential sales increases if there is mainstream awareness of the B Corporation movement. In order to achieve this awareness, it is noted that B Lab needs “large, well-known companies” to become B Corps (Bridges Ventures, 2015). For the purpose of this study, “large, well-known companies” are defined as international and/or publicly listed organizations. Bridges Ventures’ article also questions whether B Corporation status creates governance issues. The B Corporation legal framework requires that decision-makers consider the interests of all stakeholders (including broader society and the environment) rather than solely shareholders. This presents obvious tensions for publicly listed companies which have traditionally been required to hold the best interest of financial shareholders above all else. These traditional

ideas stem in large part from Friedman's (1970) classic position that "there is one and only one social responsibility of business - to use its resources and engage in activities designed to increase its profits so long as it stays within the rules of the game, which is to say, engages in open and free competition without deception or fraud". Aneel Karnani (2011) also believes the "only responsibility a law-abiding business has is to maximize profits for the shareholders, and this will lead to maximizing social welfare."

Even for investors who believe corporate social action will benefit their investment, there are further tensions; it has yet to be determined whether the B Corporation "mission lock" is too restrictive (Bridges Ventures, 2015). Corporate structures in place to preserve the long term social mission of B Corporations can lead to less flexibility for investors. While new management teams can reverse earlier B Corporation Certification, this reversal may negatively affect an organization's reputation (Bridges Ventures, 2015). These legal and mission-related challenges lead to this paper's third hypothesis:

*Hypothesis #3a - Organizations' likelihood of developing internationally will decrease after B Corporation Certification.*

*Hypothesis #3b - Organizations' likelihood of going public will decrease after B Corporation Certification.*

### **3. Method**

---

#### **3.1 Data collection design and sample**

Two methods of data collection were used in this research: a questionnaire and follow-up interviews. An internet questionnaire was most desirable as it allowed for the structured collection of data from a wide array of respondents from varying locations.

The questionnaire was developed using Qualtrics robust and flexible online survey system. Qualtrics was selected for its rich feature set, including a variety of question types, reporting options, and skip and branching logic. In addition, it allows survey takers to save their work and return later. The questionnaire was distributed to 340 B Corporations on the “B Hive” online forum. Employees from any registered B Corporation can create a B Hive profile to network with other B Corporations. The 15-20 minute survey included four key sections:

- 1 *Basic company information* – including: the year the company was B Corp certified; the industry of the B Corporation; the location of the B Corporation; and whether the B Corporation is publicly listed and/or operates internationally.
- 2 *Short term financial impact of B Corporation Certification* – to determine the financial impact, respondents were asked to evaluate different aspects of their organizations’ financial results on an ordinal scale of 1-5 (consisting of “terrible”, “poor”, “average”, “good”, and “excellent”) for the one year immediately prior to certification and the year immediately subsequent to certification. The change between these responses before and after B Corporation Certification was then determined. For example, if an organisation reported “poor” (level “2”) financial results prior to B Corporation Certification and “good” (level “4”) financial results subsequent to B Corporation Certification, then the organisation’s financial change determined to show an increase in financial results. Respondents were then asked how much they attribute this change in financial results to B Corporation Certification on an ordinal scale of 1-5 (from “none at all” to “a great deal”).

It should be borne in mind the usual method of ascertaining financial performance from public records is not available for the vast majority of B Corporations which are not publicly listed. Also, we were interested in the company perceptions of the impact of B Corporation certification.

- 3 *Longer term financial impact of B Corporation Certification* – the same ordinal response questions explained above were asked a second time, but respondents were asked to consider differences in the five years prior to B Corporation Certification and all the years since certification.
- 4 *Longer term non-financial strategic impact of B Corporation Certification* - to evaluate longer term non-financial strategic impact of B Corporation Certification, respondents were asked to rate how B Corporation Certification impacted the following non-financial organizational factors on an ordinal scale of -3 to +3 (from “extremely negatively” to “extremely positively”): partnerships, knowledge-sharing, consumer brand recognition, press brand awareness, benchmarking performance, investor interest, organizational reputation, employee attraction and retention, socially responsible action, products/services offered, markets served, supply or distribution chains, and marketing strategy. Overall, these non-financial factors can be deemed to confer strategic advantage, so they are labelled “strategic”.
- 5 *Impact of B Corporation Certification on developing into international and publicly listed companies* – on an ordinal scale of 1-5 (from “much less likely” to “much more likely”) respondents were asked to evaluate how much more or less likely their organization is to grow internationally or to go public since B Corporation Certification. Respondents were then asked how much they attribute this change in growth plans to B Corporation Certification on an ordinal scale of 1-5 (from “no attribution” to “entire attribution”).

Sample – There are over 1,600 B Corporations certified at the time of writing (B Lab, 2016c). The sample selected for this paper included B Corporations from the US (where the B Corporation movement originated) and UK (where the B Corporation movement has only recently been initiated). The online questionnaire had 103 respondents (a response rate of 30 percent). 82 percent of overall survey respondents are American organizations as the majority of British B Corporations felt it was too soon to tell how the certification had impacted their organization. Respondents' companies were certified between 2007 and 2016, with an average certification year of 2013. The sample included organizations operating in the following industries (as named on the B Corp website): agricultural services; apparel, footwear, and accessories; architecture, design and planning; building materials; design/build; education and training services; food and beverage; healthcare providers; housewares, home furnishings, and accessories; HR consulting and recruiting; investment advisor; management and financial consulting; marketing and communications services; other energy generation; real estate development; recycling services and waste management; renewable energy generation and installation; sports equipment, toys, and accessories; storefront; sustainability consulting; and transportation and logistics.

Interviews can be useful as follow-up to particular questionnaire respondents to further investigate responses (McNamara, 1999). Therefore, after an initial analysis of questionnaire results, organizations reporting conflicting or unanticipated responses were approached for interviews. In-person meetings were not possible due to the widespread locations of interviewees; therefore, phone and email interviews were conducted. Overall, ten organizations were interviewed with detailed notes being taken by the interviewer. The interviews were semi-structured, including three key sections:

- 1 *Predetermined introduction questions* – questions about an organization’s inception and growth, its social mission prior to B Corporation Certification (if relevant), and the B Corporation Certification process.
- 2 *Predetermined questions about survey responses* – these included questions about unanticipated or conflicting responses in an interviewee’s online questionnaire responses. Questions were predetermined prior to the interview, but varied depending on respondents’ survey answers and the particular area where further information was desired. For example, respondents indicating notably large especially significant changes in financial performance subsequent to B Corporation Certification were asked for more specific details on how or if certification led to these particular changes. Organizations reporting significantly positive financial changes were asked if they felt any particular actions by their organizations helped them capitalize on their B Corp status. Companies reporting significantly notably differing different results between the short and longer term were asked when and why they felt these results changed.
- 3 *Follow-up* – as is the nature with semi-structured interviews, the above set of predetermined open-ended questions prompted follow-up discussions with the opportunity for the interviewer to further explore specific themes.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) establish four key criteria for qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. They also describe techniques that can be used to conduct qualitative research in a way that meets these criteria. One such technique is triangulation, or the use of multiple data sources. Therefore, two methods of triangulation were used in this study. First, data was collected from a variety of sources (data source triangulation); 103 B Corporations from twenty-one industries and two countries were survey respondents. Organizations varied in size from less than ten employees to over 1,000

employees and were certified between 2007 and 2016. Both international and local organizations were included in the initial questionnaire distribution. Respondents were all private companies as there are very few publicly listed B Corporations. Second, both qualitative and quantitative data was gathered through questionnaires and interviews (methods triangulation).

In smaller companies, the survey respondent was usually the CEO or company owner. These individuals have access to information about the company's overall performance, and can therefore provide credible insights. In relatively larger companies, the questionnaire was usually completed by the individual responsible for corporate social performance. These individuals typically have access to both financial data as well as broader organizational information data in order to track CSP metrics, given that even the larger companies in the sample would still be relatively small and devoid of elaborate hierarchy. Therefore, all the respondents could provide credible responses to all the questions.

## **3.2 Testing and analysis**

### *3.2.1 Quantitative analysis - relative frequency tables*

Much of the questionnaire collected data with closed-ended questions using ordinal (ranking) scales. As required with ordinal scales, this data was tested using nonparametric methods and median values as the measure of central tendency. The data was structured into relative frequency graphs of overall results.

### *3.2.2 Qualitative analysis – thematic*

Part of this study's survey asked open-ended questions about the advantages and challenges of B Corporation Certification on public listing and international growth. While

these open-ended questions were important to ensure the collection of unanticipated ideas, they did result in higher question skip rates. Semi-structured interviews were then conducted to gain further information about conflicting or unanticipated responses. Qualitative thematic analysis was used to manually code and categorize both these open-ended survey question and interview responses into perspectives held by respondents. Once responses were coded and categorized, themes and ideas were highlighted. Thematic analysis is one of the most common qualitative research analysis methods and is an appropriate research approach to be used in combination with other quantitative techniques (Guest, 2012). The freedom and flexibility of this method was desirable as this study investigates a new topic with the potential for unanticipated responses and themes.

## **4. Results**

---

Section four first the quantitative findings on short and longer term financial performance, longer term non-financial strategic performance, and growth. It then presents the main themes emerging from the qualitative thematic analysis.

### **5.1 Quantitative analysis**

#### *4.1.1 Financial performance*

First, organizations' short and longer term financial performance is examined. Respondents were asked to evaluate their organizations' revenues, expenses, net income, debt, and overall financial results on an ordinal scale of 1-5 (consisting of "terrible", "poor", "average", "good", and "excellent") for the one year immediately prior to certification and

the year immediately subsequent to certification (short term). Respondents were then asked how much they attribute this change in financial results to B Corporation Certification on an ordinal scale of 1-5 (from “none at all” to “a great deal”). The same ordinal response questions were asked a second time, but respondents were asked to consider differences in the five years prior to B Corporation Certification and all the years since certification (longer term).

Figure 1a graphs short term financial performance increases while Figure 1b graphs short term financial performance decreases. Figures 2a and 2b also graph financial performance increases and decreases, but over the longer term. The graphs also show how much organizations attribute changes in these areas to their B Corp status.

-----  
**Figures 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b here**  
-----

Overall results indicate a greater increase than decrease in financial performance since B Corporation Certification in both the short and longer term. However, the respondents' attribution of these results to certification is very low; most median attribution scores are 1 (representing “none at all”) or 2 (representing “a little”). Decreases in financial performance also show lower attribution scores. Attributions do not change considerably between the short and longer term.

### 5.1.2 *Non-financial strategic performance*

Survey respondents were given an ordinal scale of -3 to +3 (from “extremely negatively” to “extremely positively”) to rank the impact of B Corporation Certification on a number of non-financial strategic factors. Longer term non-financial strategic impacts are summarized in Figure 3.

-----  
**Figure 3 here**  
-----

The average score for every factor was +1 (“slightly positively”) except “investor interest” where the average score was 0 (“neither positively no negatively”) and “organizational reputation” and “socially responsible action” where the average score was +2 (“moderately positively”). These results indicate that, according to the perceptions of respondents, the longer term impact of B Corporation Certification on non-financial strategic performance is almost entirely positive, with the greatest impact being reported for “organizational reputation” and “socially responsible action”. This shows that participants feel the B Corporation Certification contributed more significantly to their organizations’ non-financial strategic performance than financial performance.

### 5.1.3 *International development*

Organizations’ change in likelihood to grow internationally since B Corporation Certification is next examined, as seen in Figure 4.

-----  
**Figure 4 here**  
-----

Nearly 70 percent of organizations surveyed have not changed their plans to grow internationally since B Corporation Certification. Of the few organizations that are less likely to grow in this way, the majority do not attribute it to their B Corporation status. The few organizations more likely to grow internationally do attribute it in part to B Corporation Certification.

Survey respondents finished the questionnaire by answering how they felt the B Corporation Certification will impact their future growth overall. 75 percent of respondents

think their B Corporation status will positively impact growth and 25 percent feel it will have no impact. No respondent feels B Corporation Certification will have a negative overall impact on growth. This is summarized in Figure 5.

-----  
**Figure 5 here**  
-----

#### *5.1.4 Public listing growth*

Organizations' change in likelihood to become publicly traded is summarized in Figure 6.

-----  
**Figure 6 here**  
-----

Nearly 70 percent of organizations surveyed have not changed their plans to go public since B Corporation Certification. Of the few organizations that are less likely to grow in this way, the majority do not attribute it to their B Corporation status.

## **4.2 Qualitative analysis**

Through open-ended survey questions and interviews, participants described the impact of B Corporation Certification on the success of their organizations and future development plans. The following section outlines the five main themes emerging from these discussions.

External performance benefits –A majority of survey participants feel that the B Corporation Certification does provide external performance benefits. Some organizations suggest that their companies have not changed behaviour since certification, but that B Corp status simply “puts a stamp on what existed before”. This “stamp” then acts as a competitive differentiator, assisting in employee recruitment and “building credibility and trust when

speaking with consumers or suppliers”. As one interviewee explains, “...the B Corporation filters out those who aren’t legitimate - those who are just talking about ‘doing good’ as a marketing gimmick.” [Another stated “Our company was already structured as a for-profit, social venture, but the B Corps Certification gives third party accreditation, which is helpful.”](#)

Companies considering international growth feel they will benefit from the contacts in the international B Corporation network and that consumers in new markets will feel reassured seeing a familiar certification on a new market entrant. Companies considering public listing growth feel the certification will help them gain access to additional capital from cause-oriented investors.

Limited knowledge of B Corporations – Most respondents feel **strongly** that the general public still does not know what the B Corporation stamp means. One interviewee explains “Most of our clients are not aware of our status and don’t factor it into their decision to hire us.” [Another notes “B Corp certification gives my business instant credibility - among those who know what B Corp certification is.”](#)

Further, some respondents considering international growth feel the certification could become a cultural barrier in countries without large corporate social performance movements. Respondents do feel, however, that the external benefits explained above will only increase with the growth of the movement.

Investor aversion – When considering the impact of B Corporation Certification on publicly traded companies, many respondents feel that investors “simply walk away when they hear ‘B Corp’”. Most believe this is because investors are still not convinced it is possible to be profit-seeking while also engaged in “doing good”. As one respondent explains, “Many investors think of social organizations as nothing more than non-profits in different clothes.” Another interviewee, however, feels some of this aversion extends beyond financial factors: “We’ve heard some comments from people worried about ‘yet another

certification’ – there’s no trust yet.” This respondent finds, however, that once investors are made aware of the certification’s high standards they are much more receptive.

Many respondents are concerned that protecting the B Corporation mission and values, given investor interests and short term financial pressures, would be a challenge should they become publicly traded. One respondent, however, does identify the B Corporation status as a benefit when faced with these competing priorities, as it provides companies with the legal requirement (and therefore protection) to consider interests outside those of investors. [Another did indicate that being a B Corp lets them “...attract capital from millennials and other investors looking for liquid impact investments.”](#)

Legal, regulatory, and reporting impacts – A few respondents believe that the B Corporation Certification creates neither additional challenges nor benefits to company growth. However, many respondents already operating internationally explained that the legal and regulatory environments in which they work vary, making it complex to hold a global standard like the B Corporation Certification. When considering the implications of going public as a B Corp, many organizations identify social performance reporting as a challenge. One respondent identifies the disincentive to focus on this type of reporting as a publicly traded company: “...publicly traded companies are only measured by the price of their stock, which primarily reflects company value and financial performance. Therefore, it is difficult to measure operations using a ‘triple bottom line’ when only one of those bottom lines counts.” Contrary to this idea, however, a few respondents feel that maintaining the B Corporation status requires [significant in-depth](#) reporting, and that this preparedness could assist with reporting as a public company.

Too soon to tell – Finally, many participants feel it is still too soon to understand the impact of B Corporation Certification on their organization: “We are still young in our

strategy and finding footing in how to utilize our B Corp status.” They highlight that it is especially difficult to isolate whether financial performance changes are due to B Corp Certification. Overall, however, participants seem optimistic that their B Corporation status will eventually have favourable financial and non-financial strategic impacts.

## 5. Discussion and Implications

---

### 5.1 Implications and contributions of the study

Examining overall short term financial results, this paper’s findings indicate that, according to the perceptions of organizations surveyed, more organizations experience an increase (rather than a decrease) in all areas of financial performance after B Corporation Certification. However, most of these organizations do not ~~significantly~~ attribute this increase to their B Corporation status. Over 50 percent of organizations report no short term change in any area of financial performance. In addition, while organizations’ positive financial change increases over the longer term, respondents still do not attribute much of this change to B Corporation Certification. Therefore, these findings ~~do not strongly~~ support this paper’s first hypothesis – *organizations will experience improved corporate financial performance after B Corporation Certification*. However, improved financial performance after B Corporation Certification does not mean the improvement is because of the B Corporation Certification in the opinion of the respondents.

Perhaps the most likely reason for this result is the general public’s limited knowledge of B Corporations. As identified in the above qualitative findings, most respondents feel

~~strongly~~ that the wider population does not know what the B Corporation stamp means.

Organizations who were performing socially prior to B Corporation Certification would have already attained the internal benefits of socially responsible action and, therefore, would have only observed a change in financial results if their B Corp status helped them advertise this corporate social performance. However, no benefits of third party certification can be realized if the general public does not know what the B Corporation Certification means. Therefore, the finding that organizations will not necessarily improve their corporate financial performance after certification is not necessarily applicable to socially responsible labels more generally. It does, however, emphasize that third party labels need to clearly communicate their deeper meaning to consumers in order to be effective, perhaps through a greater education effort or through graphics and words that make the label's ethical purpose evident at a quick glance.

Another reason this first hypothesis is not supported may be that companies have not changed their behaviour since certification; perhaps B Corp status has simply “put a stamp” on their previous CSP. If organizations were already operating socially and already enjoying a socially responsible reputation with the wider public, they may not observe an increase in financial performance after B Corporation Certification, or, if observed, it cannot be traced to any visible change in social performance that was already present beforehand.

It is also possible that, as identified in this paper's qualitative findings, it is simply difficult to isolate the reason for financial change and measure how much is attributable to B Corp Certification. This study's quantitative testing shows that over 50 percent of all respondents report a positive impact on *non*-financial strategic factors (other than investor interest). This was supported by qualitative survey comments. For example, one respondent noted “The most significant/visible impact of B Corp Certification has been in our job applicant pool. This has helped us to hire more competitive candidates as we grow.” Another

[explains that B Corporation Certification “...allows us to learn from other best in class companies.”](#) Consistent with this paper’s second hypothesis - *organisations will experience improved corporate non-financial strategic performance after B Corporation Certification* - results indicate that, [according to perceptions of the organizations surveyed](#), the longer term impact of B Corporation Certification on non-financial strategic performance is nearly entirely positive, with the greatest impact being reported for “organizational reputation” and “socially responsible action”. Organizations’ financial results are [significantly](#) impacted by external factors, and may therefore be volatile regardless of an organization’s internal decisions and actions. The benefits of positive non-financial strategic performance, however, can lead to spin-off effects throughout the organization resulting in longer term organizational sustainability. It is possible that these non-financial factors do affect the financial results of organizations in a way that is difficult for organizations to identify. Therefore, the B Corporation Certification may in fact contribute to positive financial performance, but indirectly. The phenomenon may manifest itself as the following causal chain:

High responsibility impact → B Corporation Certification → non-financial advantages → financial advantages

If known, such positive non-financial findings, even if indirect, may encourage more organizations to become B Corporations or obtain another socially responsible label. [This is supported by the idea that companies which seek the B Corporation Certification believe they already behave responsibly, so deserve this kind of endorsement or stamp.](#)

Finally, while an obvious relationship between B Corporation Certification and positive financial performance is not observed, there is nearly no reported decrease in financial performance subsequent to certification. In addition, in the few instances where organizations do report a financial decrease, there is no attribution to the company’s B

Corporation status. Therefore, while these findings do not support this paper's first hypothesis to demonstrate a [significant](#) financial benefit to B Corporation Certification, they also do not suggest that B Corporation Certification leads to any negative financial impacts.

This paper's third hypotheses – *organization's likelihood of developing internationally will decrease after B Corporation certification* and *organization's likelihood of going public will decrease after B Corporation certification* - are unsupported. Nearly 70 percent of organizations surveyed have not changed their development plans since B Corporation Certification. Of the few organizations that are less likely to develop internationally or to go public, most do not attribute this change to their B Corporation status. Furthermore, 15 percent of respondents are *more* likely to become international, and the median attribution of this change to their B Corp status is "a moderate amount". Overall, 75 percent of respondents feel that certification will positively impact company development, and no one feels it will impact negatively.

Qualitative responses concerning the likelihood of companies growing internationally are quite varied. Some respondents feel that B Corporation status would benefit international growth through the contacts in the international B Corporation network and through consumer confidence inspired by a familiar certification. Others suggest that legal and regulatory requirements would make it difficult to hold a global standard like the B Corporation Certification or that B Corp status might create a cultural barrier. [As stated by one survey respondent "Multinational operations are difficult because of cultural issues; the B Corp label is potentially another cultural obstacle to overcome."](#) Another noted that ["The lack of awareness and understanding in the business value of sustainability" could be another challenge of growing internationally as a B Corp.](#) -Finally, some respondents believe that certification would lead to neither additional challenges nor benefits for international growth.

Overall, these responses do not indicate that developing internationally is [necessarily](#) a

limitation of B Corporations. The comments show that it is difficult to generalise, and it may be that individual contingencies of companies involved will dictate whether and how B Corporation status affects international expansion.

The information gathered through interviews and open-ended questions largely shows that B Corporations are experiencing investor aversion to the certification. This challenge suggests that companies will decrease their likelihood of going public after certification. The inconsistency between the qualitative and quantitative data may indicate that the organizations surveyed never intended to go public anyway, so the belief that B Corporation Certification is damaging to investor interest has not impacted their plans. Alternatively, this result could indicate that B Corporations which are committed to going public have not let potential investor challenges deter them. Overall, these responses do not indicate that going public is a limitation of B Corporations. However, the qualitative responses do indicate that B Corps are more concerned about the impact of certification on public listing growth than they are about the impact of certification on international growth.

Overall, it may simply be too soon to observe the impact of B Corporation Certification. As the majority of organizations surveyed have been certified only a few years (3 years on average), even “longer term” results cover a relatively short time period. This is supported by this paper’s qualitative research, which shows that many participants feel it is too soon to fully understand the impact of B Corporation Certification.

## **5.1 Limitations of study and opportunities for future research**

Internet questionnaires can result in high question skip-rates (Wright, 2005). This could have been mitigated by making questions mandatory, but may have skewed data by insisting individuals answer questions to which they did not feel they had a valid response.

Therefore, the final questionnaire results had varying respondents per question. A necessary limitation of this study is that collected data was self-reported by survey respondents. There is a possibility of positive response bias as survey respondents have already shown commitment to the B Corporation movement by certifying their organizations. Thus, if possible, future research should find some way of accessing and analyzing actual financial accounts.

In addition, a reason this paper could not support a direct link between CSP and CFP may be that companies were already operating socially and enjoying a socially responsible reputation and therefore may not have observed an attributable increase in financial performance after B Corporation Certification. Therefore, further exploration of whether B Corporation Certification leads to financial benefits for organizations already operating socially is a promising area for future research, especially as longer term data becomes available. Further research could be also conducted discussing the relationships between more specific non-financial facets of organizational performance and an indirect impact on CFP. This research only considered particular facets of non-financial strategic performance. Further research may examine additional areas of impact, in particular, those difficult to currently test given that few B Corporations have been certified for more than a few years. In addition, similar testing could be performed across other socially responsible labels to determine whether these non-financial benefits are unique to B Corporation Certification. Examining the impact of specific third party socially responsible certifications at differing stages and mainstream popularity on CFP could provide insights into the future financial performance of B Corporation Certifications.

Limitations in this study's examination of international growth may be due to the broad use of the word "international". For different companies, growing internationally might mean different commitments – from simply serving a customer abroad, to opening and

operating an entire branch in another country. This may have caused the diversity of responses between both qualitative and quantitative data regarding international growth. This is a necessary limitation of this study due to the diversity of the companies included and the broader nature of the research question, hence our conclusion that implications of B Corporation Certification for international growth are contingent on circumstances of individual companies. However, this presents an opportunity for future research delving specifically into the impact of different factors governing international growth on B Corporations and socially responsible labels more generally to help determine more precisely their best avenues for international expansion.

Finally, as noted above, this research does not indicate that becoming public is always a limitation of B Corporations, although some respondents did voice disquiet about accountability to the capital markets. Certainly, there are only a handful of publicly traded companies certified. This suggests the need for further research into potential publicly traded B Corp candidates to understand their hesitations.

## **6. Conclusions**

---

This study aimed to answer the research question: What is the impact of B Corporation Certification on organizations' financial performance, non-financial strategic performance and international and public listing development? Using an internet questionnaire and follow-up interviews, the research gathered data about the short and longer term financial and longer term non-financial strategic effects of B Corporation Certification and inquired about the impact on development into international and publicly listed companies. Ordinal scale data was structured into relative frequency graphs. Qualitative

thematic analysis was used to manually code and categorize open-ended survey question and interview responses.

This research cannot support a ~~strong~~ relationship between financial performance and B Corporation Certification; the majority of organizations studied ~~observed-perceived~~ no change in their financial performance after certification, attributable to B Corporation status. The results do, however, indicate overwhelmingly positive non-financial strategic impacts, with the most ~~significant-notable~~ being in the areas of “organizational reputation” and “socially responsible action”. The benefits of positive non-financial strategic performance can lead to spin-off effects throughout the organization resulting in longer term organizational sustainability. Finally, data on organizations’ development plans do not indicate that becoming international or going public are necessarily limitations of B Corporations, although some respondents voiced concerns on both fronts.

Results from interviews and open-ended questions show that respondents feel the B Corporation Certification does provide external performance benefits. Identified challenges arising from certification include: the general population’s limited knowledge of B Corporations; investor aversion; and legal, regulatory, and reporting impacts.

This exploratory study into B Corporations can be used to enhance the understanding of CSR type certification on organizational performance. Previous research on both B Corporations and benefit corporations focuses in large part on the social impacts of the broader social business movement while this paper’s research goes a step further to examine the impact of B Corporation Certification on individual companies’ financial performance, non-financial strategic performance and public listing and international development. In that regard, this paper sheds light on both Gilbert’s ([Steingard, 2016](#)) vision of a community of B Corps that includes large publicly traded and international entities and on Bridges Ventures’ (2015) conclusion that more large, well-known companies are required to become B Corps

before the movement can go mainstream. On a practical level, it is possible these findings can help attract international and publicly listed companies to the certification, bringing it mainstream and thereby elevating the social performance of the broader corporate community.

The newness of the B Corporation movement – 70 percent of survey respondents were certified in 2014 or later – means that many organizations felt they cannot accurately respond to the longer term survey questions. But, given this time constraint, this study has made a beginning, discovering some of the experienced effects of B Corporation status by the companies themselves. This suggests the opportunity for further research in due course to examine longer term effects. Future studies could also compare B Corporations to control companies (comparable social organizations without the B Corp stamp) to better determine what results are specifically due to B Corporation status.

Finally, while this paper specifically examined B Corporations, this is just one of many socially responsible labels. The results of this study could be used to infer or test conclusions about socially responsible labels more broadly.

## References

---

B Lab. (2016a). *Certified B Corps and benefit corporations*. Retrieved from <https://www.bcorporation.net/what-are-b-corps/certified-b-corps-and-benefit-corporations>

- B Lab. (2016b). *FAQs about public companies and B Corp Certification*. Retrieved from [https://www.bcorporation.net/sites/default/files/documents/faqs/FAQ\\_Public\\_Companies\\_and\\_B\\_Corp\\_Certification.pdf](https://www.bcorporation.net/sites/default/files/documents/faqs/FAQ_Public_Companies_and_B_Corp_Certification.pdf)
- B Lab. (2016c). *Find a B Corp*. Retrieved from <https://www.bcorporation.net/community/find-a-b-corp>
- B Lab. (2016d). *How to become a B Corp*. Retrieved from <https://www.bcorporation.net/become-a-b-corp/how-to-become-a-b-corp>
- B Lab. (2016e). *Multinationals and public companies*. Retrieved from <http://www.bcorporation.net/become-a-b-corp/how-to-become-a-b-corp/multinationals-and-public-companies>
- B Lab. (2016f). *What are B Corps?* Retrieved from <https://www.bcorporation.net/what-are-b-corps>
- Barnes, Abi. 2017. *An Entrepreneur's Guide to Certified B Corporations and Benefit Corporations*
- Beurden, P., & Gössling, T. (2008). The worth of values – a literature review on the relationship between corporate social and financial performance. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 82(2), 407-424. doi:10.1007/s10551-008-9894-x
- Bridges Ventures. (2015). *To B or not to B: an investor's guide to B Corps*. Retrieved from <http://bridgesventures.com/are-b-corps-a-good-investment-bridges-releases-new-paper-as-the-movement-hits-the-uk/>
- Brown, Summer. 2016. "Benefit Corporations: A case study in the issues of implementation and adoption of the fastest growing business form in the United States. *Business & Professional Ethics Journal* 35 (2-3):199-216.
- Eccles, R., Ioannou, I., & Serafeim, G. (2014). The impact of corporate sustainability on organizational processes and performance. *Management Science*, 60(11), 2835-2857.

- Etilé, F., & Teyssier, S. (2016). Signaling corporate social responsibility: third-party certification versus brands. *The Scandinavian Journal of Economics* 118(3), 35.
- Friedman, M. (1970, September 13, 1970). The social responsibility of business is to increase its profits. *The New York Times Magazine*.
- ~~Gilbert, Jay Coen. 2016. The Benefit Corporation: A legal tool to align the interests of business with those of society: An interview with Jay Coen Gilbert, Co-Founder, B Lab. *Business & Professional Ethics Journal* 35:1, 5-15.~~
- Goldschein, Perry, and Paul Miesing. 2016. How Benefit Corporations effectively enhance corporate responsibility. *Business & Professional Ethics Journal* 35 (2-3), 109-128.
- Guest, G. (2012). *Applied thematic analysis*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Honeyman, R. (2014). *B Corp handbook*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- International Finance Corporation. (2012). The Business Case for Sustainability. Retrieved from:
- [http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics\\_ext\\_content/ifc\\_external\\_corporate\\_site/ifc+sustainability/learning+and+adapting/knowledge+products/publications/publications\\_brochure\\_businesscaseforsustainability](http://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/topics_ext_content/ifc_external_corporate_site/ifc+sustainability/learning+and+adapting/knowledge+products/publications/publications_brochure_businesscaseforsustainability)
- Karnani, A. (2011). Doing well by doing good: The grand illusion. *California Management Review*, 53(2).
- Koehn, Daryl. 2016. Why the new benefit corporations may not prove to be truly socially beneficial. *Business & Professional Ethics Journal* 35 (1):17-50.
- Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- McNamara, C., PhD. (1999). *General guidelines for conducting interviews*. Retrieved from <http://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm>

O'Higgins, E.R.E., & Thevissen, T. (2017). Revisiting the corporate social and financial performance link: A contingency approach." *Business and Society Review* 122(3): 327-358.

Orlitzky, M., Schmidt, F., & Rynes, S. (2003). Corporate social and financial performance: A meta-analysis. *Organization Studies* 24(3), 403-441.

Parkinson, T. L. (1975). The role of seals and certifications of approval in consumer decision ~~making~~ *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, 9(1), 1-14.

Schuler, D. A., & Cording, M. (2006). A corporate social performance-corporate financial performance behavioral model for consumers. *The Academy of Management Review* 31(3), 540-558.

[Steingard, D., & Gilbert, J. C. \(2016\). The Benefit Corporation: A Legal Tool to Align the Interests of Business with Those of Society; An Interview with Jay Coen Gilbert, Co-Founder, B Lab. Business and Professional Ethics Journal, 35\(1\), 5-15.](#)

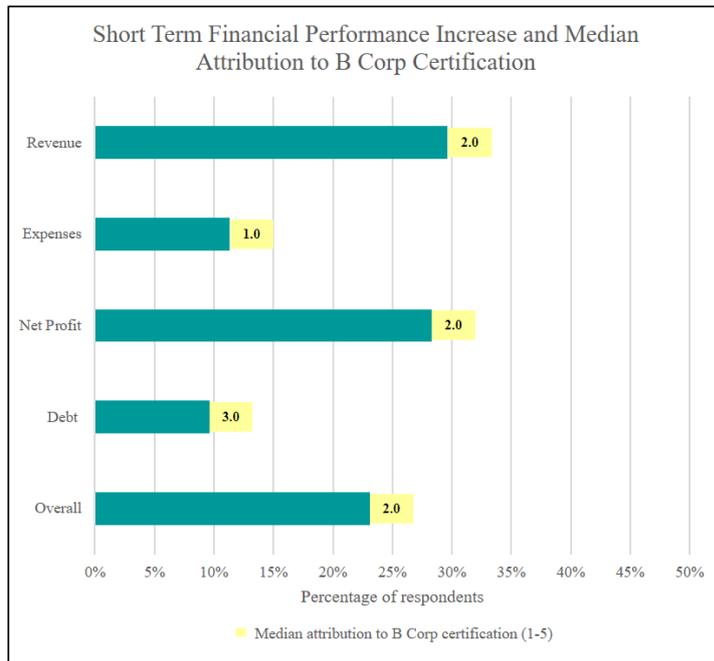
United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development. (2007). Framing sustainable development [Press release]. Retrieved from [http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd15/media/backgrounder\\_brundtland.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/csd/csd15/media/backgrounder_brundtland.pdf)

Wood, D. J. (1991). Corporate social performance revisited. *The Academy of Management Review* 16(4), 691-718.

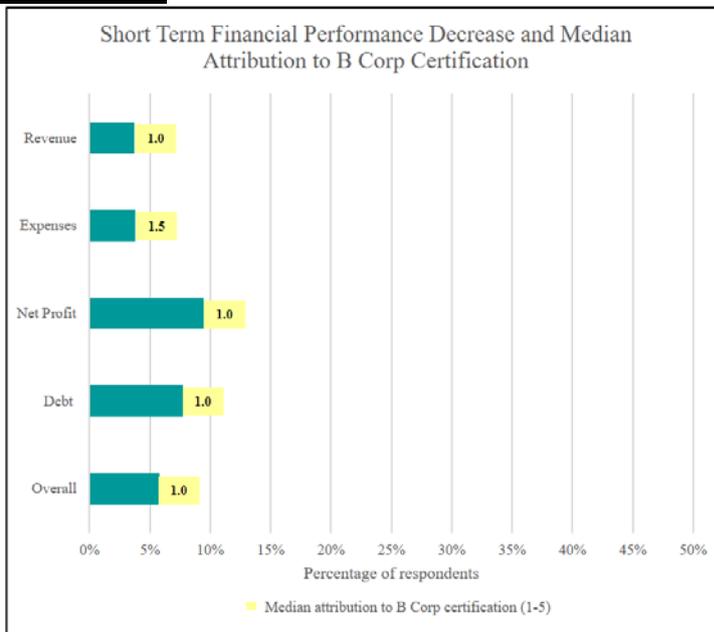
Wright, K. B. (2005). Researching internet-based populations: Advantages and disadvantages of online survey research, online questionnaire authoring software packages, and web survey services. *Journal of Computer ~~Mediated~~ Communication*  
doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2005.tb00259.x

## Figures

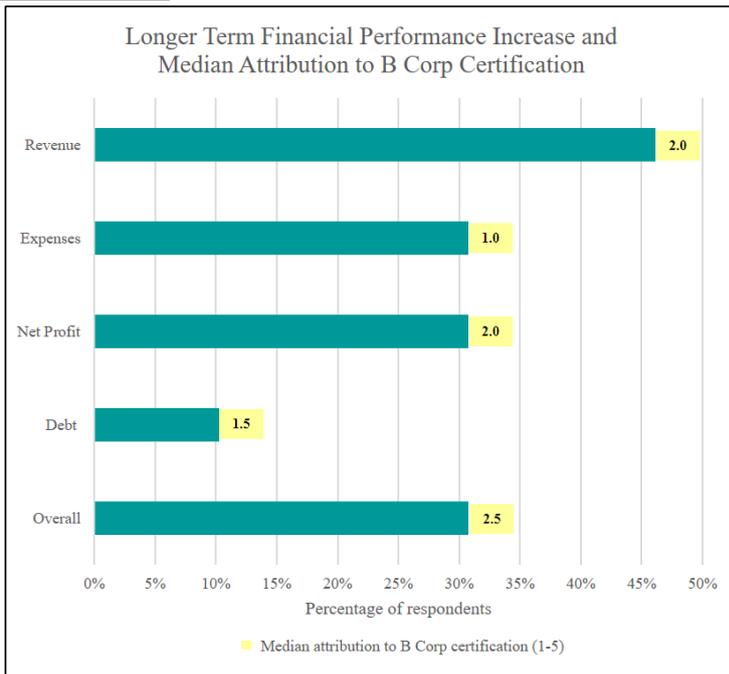
**Figure 1a: Short Term Financial Performance Increase and Attribution to B Corp Certification**



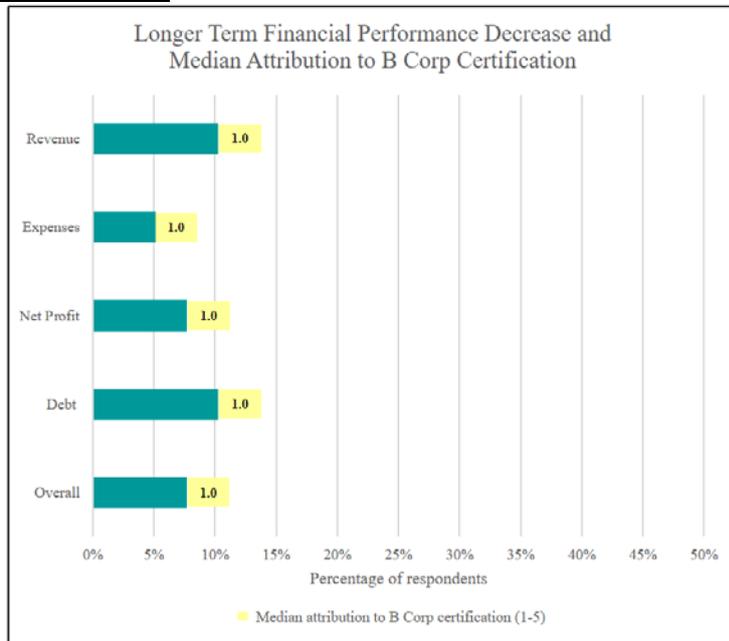
**Figure 1b: Short Term Financial Performance Decrease and Attribution to B Corp Certification**



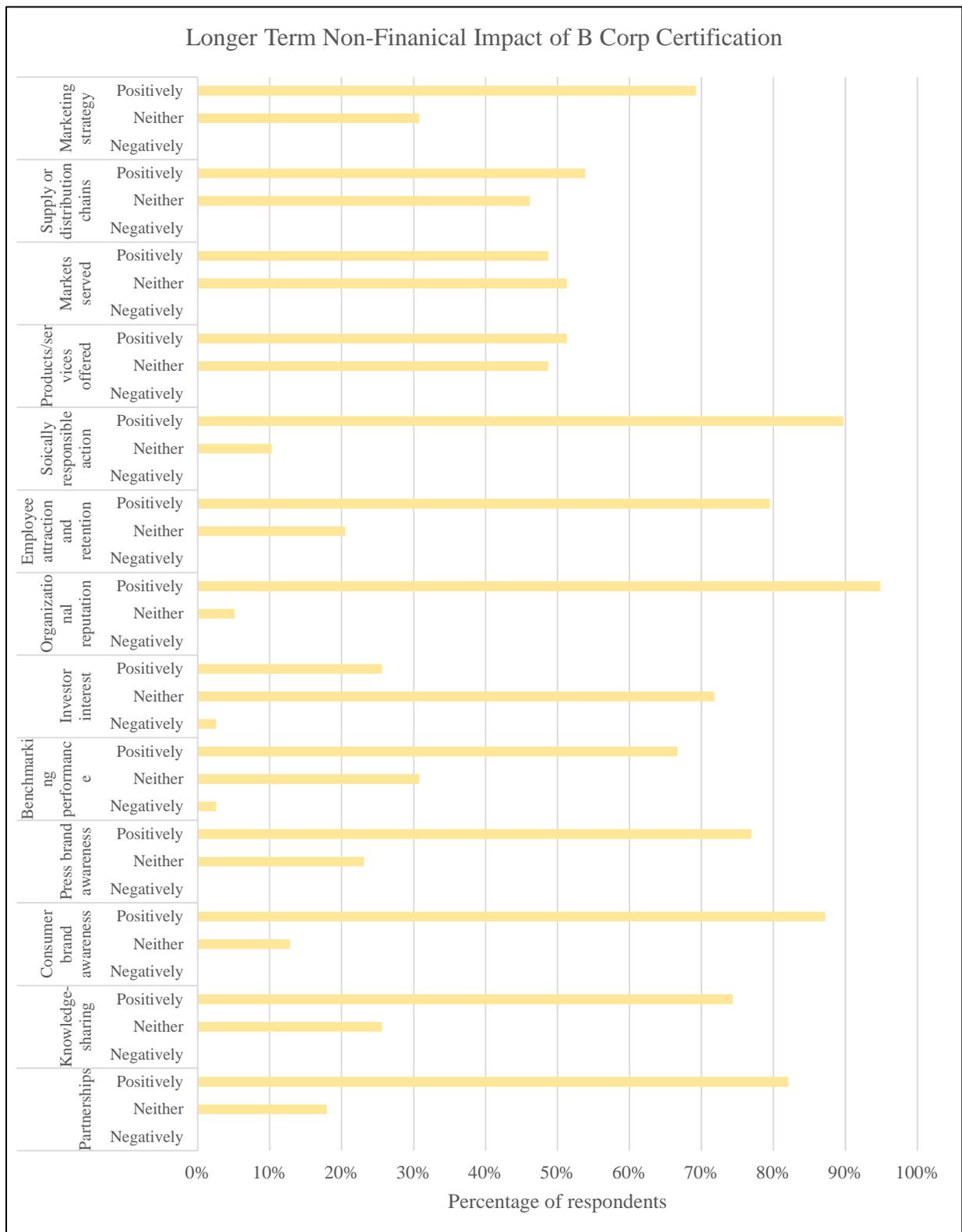
**Figure 2a: Longer Term Financial Performance Increase and Attribution to B Corp Certification**



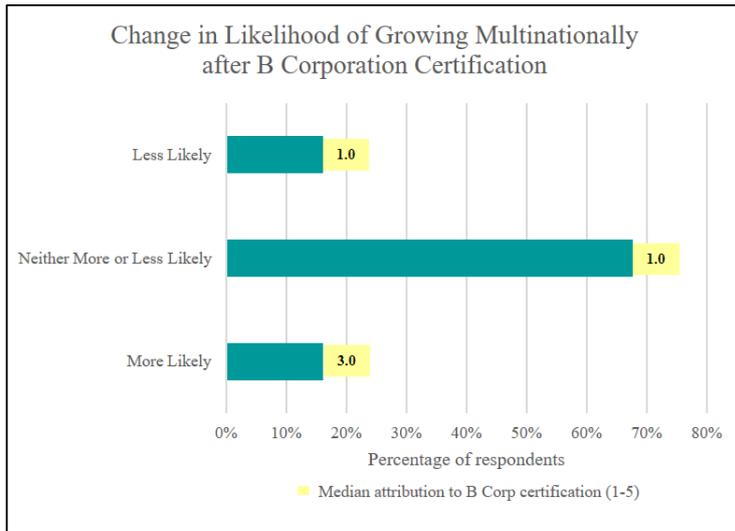
**Figure 2b: Longer Term Financial Performance Decrease and Attribution to B Corp Certification**



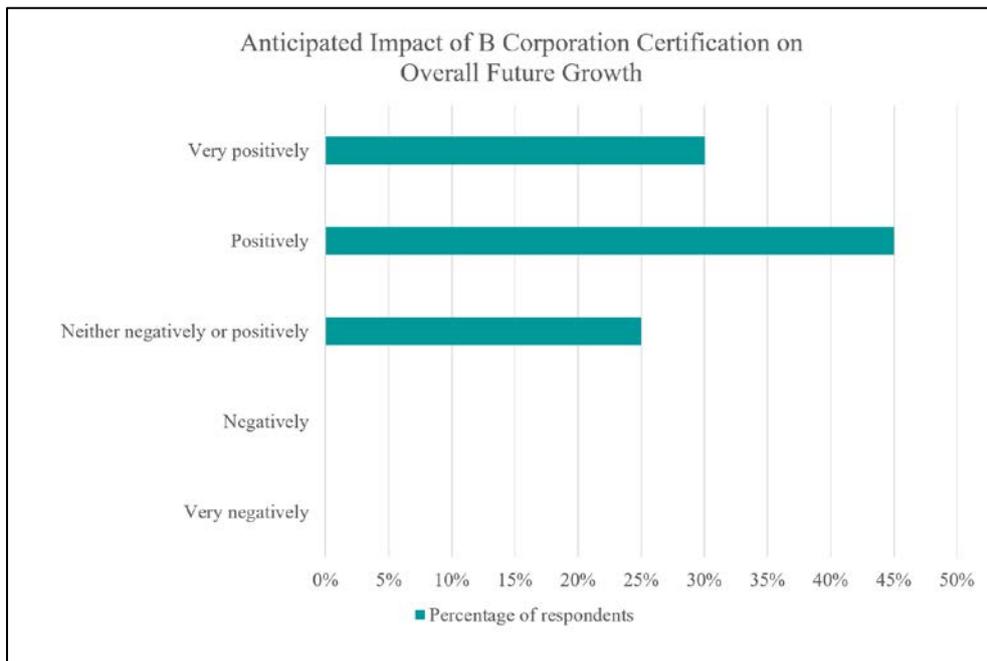
**Figure 3: Longer Term B Corp Certification Impact on Non-Financial Strategic Performance**



**Figure 4: Change in Company International Growth Plans after B Corp Certification**



**Figure 5: Anticipated Impact of B Corporation Certification on Overall Future Growth**



**Figure 6: Change in Company Public Listing Growth Plans after B Corp Certification**

