

The Effect of Firms' Depreciation Method Choice on Managers' Capital Investment Decisions

Scott B. Jackson

[+ Author & Article Information](#)

The Accounting Review (2008) 83 (2): 351-376.

<https://doi.org/10.2308/accr.2008.83.2.351>

Share ▾

Tools ▾

Cite ▾

This study examines whether straight-line depreciation, relative to accelerated depreciation, causes non-executive managers to make non-value-maximizing capital investment decisions. To do this, I conduct experiments in which managers must decide whether to continue using an existing asset or invest in a replacement asset. By design, replacing the existing asset yields higher cash flows and managers are aware of this fact. However, if the asset is replaced, then the greater remaining book value under straight-line depreciation relative to accelerated depreciation causes earnings to be lower. Lower earnings and psychological forces may push managers of firms that use straight-line depreciation away from making the economically efficient capital investment decision. The results suggest that managers of firms that use straight-line depreciation are less likely to invest in a replacement asset than are managers of firms that use accelerated depreciation. Further, the results suggest that managers perceive that an asset depreciated using straight-line depreciation has provided less retrospective utility than an asset depreciated using accelerated depreciation. In turn, I find that depreciation method-induced differences in managers' retrospective utility perceptions influence their prospective utility perceptions, which, in turn, influence managers' asset replacement decisions. By theoretically and empirically linking firms' depreciation method choice to managers' capital investment decisions, I provide evidence that a seemingly innocuous choice made for external financial reporting purposes can cause managers to make non-value-maximizing capital investment decisions.

This content is only available via PDF. Note: Supplemental materials and Teaching Notes are not available for Early Access articles. Links within the PDF will be activated once the article has been compiled and published in an issue.

American Accounting Association

You do not currently have access to this content.

[Skip to Main Content](#)

Don't already have an account? [Register](#)

Member Login

[Log in](#)

Pay-Per-View Access
\$25.00

AAA Members: Please log in for free access to content. Note, Teaching Notes are a full member benefit and are not available to student members.

 Buy This Article

?

[View Metrics](#)

Citing Articles Via

Web Of Science (33)

Google Scholar

CrossRef (55)

Email Alerts

Article Activity Alert

Publish Ahead of Print Alert

New Issue Alert

Print ISSN: 0001-4826 Online ISSN: 1558-7967

Information for Authors

Authorship Policy

Plagiarism Policy

Data Integrity Policy

Citing Corrected Articles Policy

Minimizing Overlapping Decision Rights Policy

Prior Publication Policy

