

## Abstract

This study investigates the impact of ownership concentration and audit opinions on firm performance, focusing on the mediating role of going-concern audit opinions. Using a dataset of U.S. companies engaged in shareholder activism and disclosing material changes through Schedule 13D filings, the study spans a 24-year period (2000–2024), the analysis reveals that concentrated ownership negatively affects return on assets (ROA), primarily due to reduced transparency and entrenched decision-making. Logistic regression indicates that firms with concentrated ownership are more likely to receive going-concern audit opinions, signaling financial instability. Mediation analysis confirms that going-concern opinions significantly mediate the relationship between ownership concentration and ROA, highlighting their role in amplifying the adverse effects of concentrated ownership on firm performance. These findings emphasize the need for robust corporate governance frameworks to mitigate risks associated with ownership concentration and to enhance auditor independence. The study contributes to the literature by demonstrating the complex interactions among corporate governance mechanisms, audit practices, and firm performance, offering valuable insights for managers, policymakers, and researchers.

**Keywords:** ownership concentration, audit opinions, going-concern, firm performance, corporate governance, return on assets (ROA), mediation analysis, financial transparency.