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Profit Sharing between Managers and Investors: An Experimental Investigation

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Running Head: Profit Sharing between Managers and Investors: An Experimental Investigation

Profit Sharing between Managers and Investors:

An Experimental Investigation

Abstract

This study analyzes the effect of interest and power structures and conflict of interest

among managers and investors and tests the effect of different payout mechanisms on

willingness to pay. In this study 74 student subjects are involved in a setting where the manager

is determining his own compensation. A series of experiments that vary managers' ability to

determine their own compensation and investors' ability to punish inappropriate behavior are

reported. The experiments involve pairs of subjects consisting of an investor and a manager with

asymmetric decision making powers. When managers compensate themselves inappropriately,

investors' recourse is to shun the company's shares—a model that arguably corresponds more

closely to reality than the accepted efficient market traditional paradigm. The experiment shows

that managers share profits even when investors cannot withhold investment and investors fairly

compensate managers as well. This pattern explains both the ability of capital markets to

function despite the presence of inherent moral hazard, and occasional managerial misbehavior.

Keywords: Behavioral Finance; Payout Policy; Experiment

JEL Codes: G02; G03

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