

# THE IMPACT OF USAGE OF CLOUD IT TECHNOLOGY ON ACCOUNTANTS' LIFE-WORK BALANCE

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## **ABSTRACT:**

*In today's fast-paced business environment, due to need of efficiency and performance but also due to post-crisis business environment, newer and newer IT tools are adopted and implemented by businesses fighting for their life in a true Darwinian environment. Considering the initial asserted business conditions, in the post-crisis (after 2010) business environment, one of the most innovative IT business instruments that made its way in the present hash business environment is Cloud Computing with its subdivision – Accounting Cloud Services. This study tracks the impact of usage Accounting Cloud Services on financial professionals and accountants' personal life-work time balance and determines various implications for the continuity and for potential thrive of each and every business in Romania in post-crisis environment (after 2010). We surveyed 42 accounting and financial professionals from 5 medium and big companies in Romania and we analyzed the results in order to determine the impact of usage of Accounting Cloud Software onto the balance between personal time and work time and the general positioning of professionals' opinions related to usage of Cloud technologies. We found out that while they appreciate the top-tier and up-to-date technologies the younger accounting and financial professionals tend to keep and want to keep a good balance between the personal time and working time considering that newer technologies should also ease the life of the employee and not only sustain and maintain the profit margin of the Company. What nobody (considering all the human resources range, from CEOs to sales and customer support employees) should never forget is that a business' first-tier asset is formed by the capacities and the professional adaptation degree of the working force to this highly competitive post-crisis environment in Romania. No matter what, each successful business on the long run is designed around the idea of people (in different positions: employee, customer, other).*

## **KEY WORDS:**

*Cloud computing, accounting cloud, personal life – work time balance, accountant, Romania*

## **1. INTRODUCTION - THE LOCAL BUSINESS AND DIGITAL CONTEXT OF CLOUD PHENOMENON**

According to Charles Darwin's theory presented in his work (*On the Origin of Species*) "it is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one that is most adaptable to change." Also during the end of the last century but mainly during the first 2 decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, countries, companies, professionals were forced by various natural or market forces expressed in different circumstances (like the crisis from 2008-2009) to adapt

furthermore in this outstanding march to a (hopefully not like Aldous Huxley's dystopian) brave new world. Due to companies need of a more and more efficient and cost-controlled way of action in post-crisis business environment, the modern IT software solutions made its way in the businesses' day to day life, one of the most vivid IT solution during the last 5 years being Cloud Computing with its particular development of Accounting Cloud Services Solution. As Ionescu, Prichici and Tudoran (2014) have noted "it's well-known for each and every CFO from every business that having a strong and well-tailored IT solution is one of the key success factor" (along with the competitiveness of its employees). In a KPMG report from 2012 related to cloud technology it was disclosed the fact that "55% (at 2012) of the big companies in Romania use in different forms the cloud technology" (KPMG, 2012). According to Ionescu, Prichici and Tudoran (2014) an Accounting Cloud application represents "an accounting IT solution that's accessible to whomever has an internet connection without requesting the installation or specific hardware resources (servers)".

Considering the special mix of employees and technology that (along with other factors – mainly external, associated with the market) sustain and make a company grow, this study assesses the way financial & accounting employees were impacted by the usage of Accounting Cloud Services considering their personal life versus working time balance. We, the authors, do consider (this being also one of the motivations of this study) that studying the relation between the elements that form this business mix (employees-technology) might help or destroy a business just like a substance brings its effects onto a human body – in the right concentration being a medicine, in the wrong concentration being a poison. This is why we consider of utterly importance the way the financials & accounting employees have perceived and received the 'brave new world' cloud technology and we want to observe, to assess the way their day-to-day life was impacted. In this quantitative study, considering the vital equilibrium between employees and the software used in a company, we surveyed the opinions and attitudes of 42 accounting and financial professionals in 5 big local companies related to usage of accounting cloud software using a survey of 10 questions, the study being focused on impact of use of accounting cloud on employees (internal actors) and also on financial auditors and fiscal authorities (external users of data). The external users of data are mainly a point of focus considering that in Romania, accounting has also a financial audit, fiscal authorities and State-oriented profile of disclosure (Albu, Albu, Girbina and Sandu, 2010).

The study, after this introductory section, is structured in 4 parts: literature review, the research methodology, the survey results and a conclusive section (with one focused conclusive part and one integrative conclusive part). Considering the literature reviewed for this study we observed that mainly the studies related to usage of accounting cloud software are mainly focused on the executives' opinion about cloud services or are generally focused on enterprises' interests missing the main point that the interests of a company are promoted by its employees that form the cells of the company. Thus, we underline the importance of this study due to its focus on the stance and opinions of the employees related to impact of usage of accounting cloud on their work-life balance.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Ionescu, Prichici and Tudoran (2014) that quote executives of Microsoft Romania in an interview given to magazine “Stiinta si Tehnica” (in 2013) “the development of Cloud is sustained mainly by economic realities – the big businesses limit the positive evolution of the cash-flow and don’t need big investments to cover spikes in activity and also the smaller businesses can afford performant IT services.”

Thus, considering the impact of 2008-2009 economic crisis and the implications related to the strong control over the necessary IT investments, technologies like Cloud Computing and Business Intelligence (BI) gain more and more space in face of other costlier IT systems. Moreover, related to digitalization of the economy (and accounting profession especially), referring to the last 20 years, Tugui and Gheorghe, (2016) observe the digitalization phenomenon of informational flows as well as their pressure during the interaction with the accounting profession. The expansion of computer-based techniques and IT technologies push the acceptance to the highest limits, “up to the potential point of replacing traditional professionals with a software” (Tugui and Gheorghe, 2016).

In a study of a EY it is highlighted the cornerstone position of usage of cloud technology in case of managing the human resources. According to this study we observe that not only accounting but also other operational segments of the company are impacted by cloud technology that has the power “to integrate HR and business strategy” (EY, 2014).

Of course, new technologies bring new dangers like security aspects and issues associated to it. “The field of security in the process of deploying, managing and auditing cloud-based applications is the main theme of criticism” when it comes to cloud solution as thoughtfully notes Mangiuc, (2016). While suppliers of cloud services advertise the new cloud-related technologies as the safest wave of technologies in IT history, often ignoring the obvious issues, skeptics tend to “demonize” the new paradigm, by presenting it as the end to true security and the beginning of a new and dark era, where privacy is nothing but a well preserved illusion – and the two aspects, the two forces reflect also in the day-to-day approach of businesses’ employees to this new accounting cloud technology.

According to Ionescu, Ionescu, Tudoran and Bendovschi (2013) the use of accounting cloud technology can have a notable impact on accounting profession in Romania being considered also the efficiency, productivity, operational costs and clients’ satisfaction degree factors in order to assess the impact. This research is focused on studying the accounting cloud fingerprint on the accounting flows inside a company. This study was based on fundamental analysis type, data analysis and on assessment of previous researches. Also the authors have used empirical research mechanisms – they have used a questionnaire in order to determine the impact of cloud technology on regular accounting activity. Their survey was distributed in the first half of 2013 and there were targeted the persons with BA/MA accounting studies that are not employed (73 persons surveyed).

Based on the survey results and also on the other sources of the study, there can be identified several advantages (security, adaptability, eased management of information, compliance, global access, trial period) but also some disadvantages (reticence related to security aspects, internet - dependent system, potential loss of control over data, certain degree of dependence – to provider, to connection conditions, others).

Along with this study focused on the impact of cloud on business accounting flows, we have identified also Deloitte's study focused on cloud penetration in the economy – a study that's focused on surveying the executives of medium-size companies from Romania. In Deloitte's cloud analysis "a total of 466 respondents from businesses with annual revenues from \$100 million to more than \$1 billion provided their insights for this survey; 65 percent of the respondents were senior executives, and 79 percent were from private companies."(Deloitte, 2013) Nearly half of the surveyed executives declared that they have spent in 2013 more than in 2012 on technology and more than 56 % of surveyed executives have declared that their organization is already using some kind of form of cloud-based service. Also it is a thing to be pointed out that almost 40% of the consulted executives declared that data privacy and security risks are holding them back to use in an extensive way cloud technology (Deloitte, 2013).

All those factors being considered as we have observed already in the literature already reviewed (mainly from the business' point of view, or from the executives point of view, or from the economical environments' point of view), we will research in the next steps of this study the way the use the Accounting Cloud Services has impacted the day-to-day life of Romanian employees (general financial & accountants staff), we will observe and analyze their opinions related to Accounting Cloud technology and the way Accounting Cloud has impacted the personal life versus the working time balance (if a certain impact will be observed and will allow a potential assessment) assessing also the potential implications of the facts observed.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

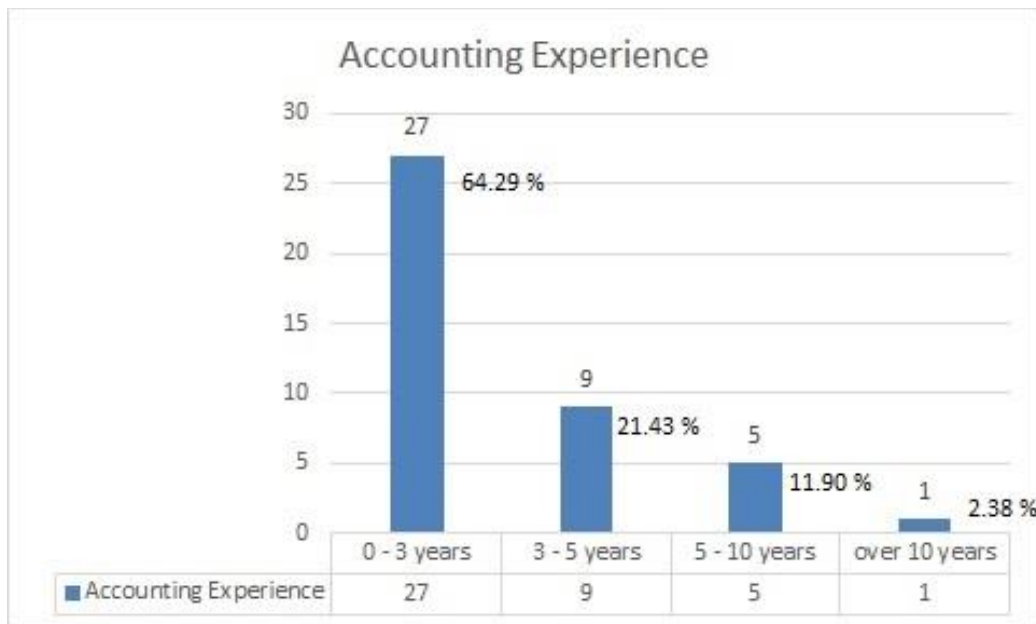
On a continuous basis we observed that during the last 20 years accounting and information technologies developments continue to get closer and closer and develop emergent tendencies – like Accounting Cloud IT solutions. This study is motivated by the fact that mainly the millennials generation represent the main accounting & financial workforce that took contact with the Accounting Cloud technology. Considering the aspect of the millennials' focus on managing their own time resources and having "hands-on" control onto their own life this study gains traction and coagulates its motivation and drive being of interest to employers. (PWC, 2011)

For sure, organizations are surely becoming more comfortable with cloud solutions that replace more and more the traditional accounting software solutions and recognize their worth as efficient tools for saving time and money, but how their employees are managing with these solutions from their own personal time-management interests? This question is a common-sense question considering that the usage of technology should be implemented only from the point of view of business' advantages, for a higher degree of operational and managerial efficiency (Deloitte,2013). And if a company is more efficient we are interested to evaluate what's the impact of this efficiency on the balance of work-life equilibrium in case of the employees.

The assumed and applied research methodology was of exploratory type, with no hypothesis presumed and assumed (in order to not distort potential results), considering the somewhat ‘virgin land’ of the present research paper.

The research method used was the survey and our study has a *quantitative perspective* focusing on analyzing the data on distinct survey levels of years of accounting and financial experience. Thus, the research method used (in the research environment of quantitative and qualitative angle of interpretation) was the survey – a survey of 10 questions that assessed the opinions of 42 financial and accounting specialists using Accounting Cloud solutions and working in 5 big Romanian companies (see Figure 1), we asked what was the experience in accounting of the respondents – we have found out that out of the 42 respondents, 27 persons had between 0 and 3 years of experience (64.29%), 9 persons had between 3 and 5 years of experience (21.43%), 5 persons had between 5 and 10 years (11.90%) and 1 person had more than 10 years of experience (2.38%). All surveyed persons have either a BA or a MA degree in Accounting or connected professional areas (i.e. Banking, Auditing) this criteria being a basic eliminatory one in order to have access and answer to our survey.

**Figure 1**



In order to coagulate the questions, we first identified the areas to be analyzed as research horizons sight-lines. And the areas were determined starting from the questions that motivated this study.

First we were interested of aspects related to the relevance of their professional experience, considered in years (see Figure 1, above), knowing that the general approach to accounting cloud technology and technology in general might be different from generation to generation – mostly comparing and understanding the traits of X generation or Y generation or Z (post Y/millennium) generation (PWC, 2011).

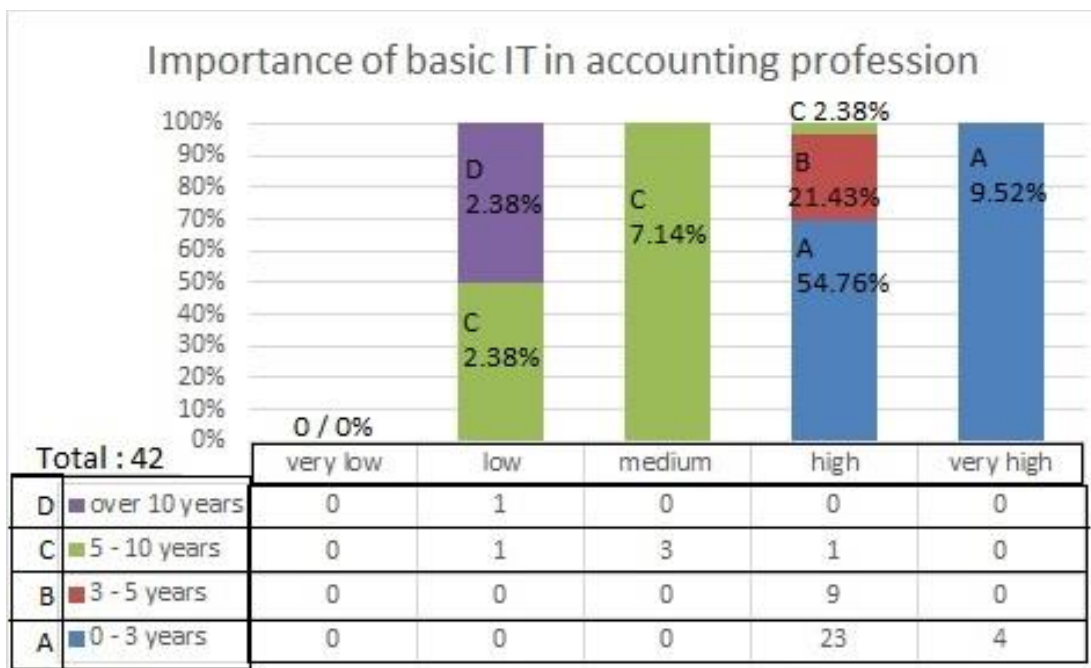
The second area assessed the general knowledge of IT at a basic level (MS Office Suite usage, OS Windows) and the knowledge of usage of accounting cloud technology – the second area of research being placed in the context of the first research area (years of professional experience). The third area is also the core area of our study assessing the impact of usage of accounting cloud technology on work-life balance of the accounting & financial professionals and the concerns of them related to usage of accounting cloud technology.

The fourth dimension of this study consists in assessing the human resources positioning when it comes to trainings on accounting cloud (and the work-time balance implications). The fifth area of study consists in assessing the opportunity (in terms of data disclosure efficiency) of usage of accounting cloud when it comes to relating with external parties (fiscal authorities or financial auditors).

#### 4. SURVEY RESULTS

In order to determine the approach of the surveyed persons related to the accounting cloud technology we first assessed their level of knowledge of general basic IT knowledge and cloud knowledge, according to the second area assumed to be studied. According to the PWC study (PWC, 2011) the persons from Y generation (those born from the 1980's to the young 2000's) are more IT-friendly than those from the X generation and the Z generation (post-millennials, those born after the crisis of 2007-2009) are breathing technology.

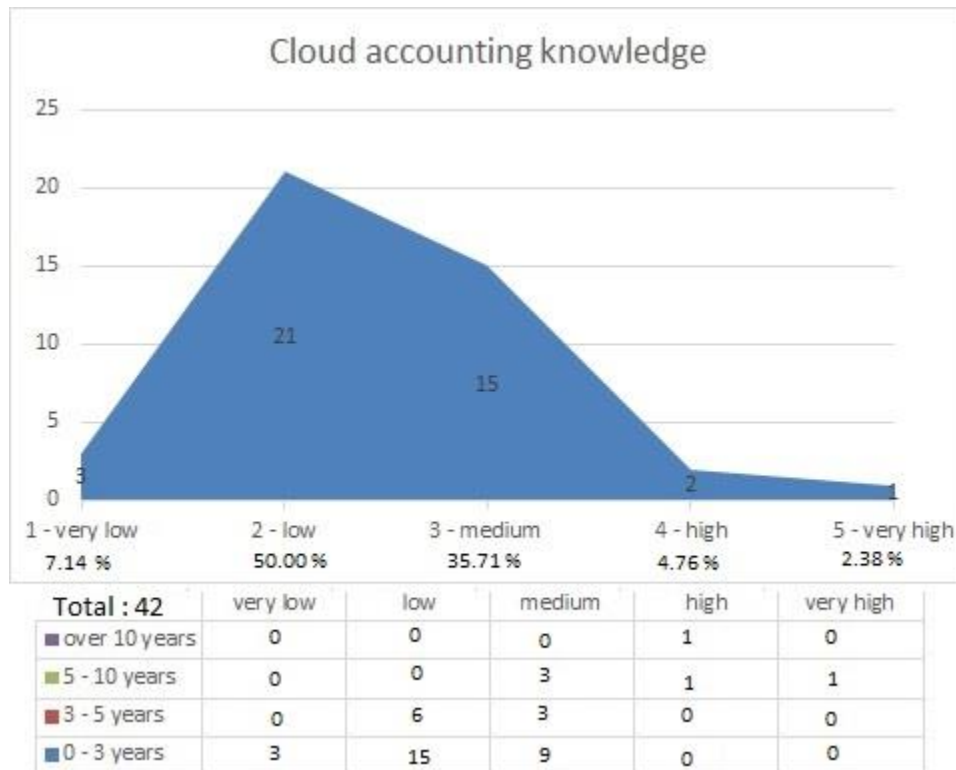
Figure 2



As we can observe in Figure 2, when it comes to general basic IT skills related to accounting profession out of a total of 42 respondents the level of importance associated by respondents to

basic IT technology (OS Windows, MS Office suite, others) on a scale from 1 (very low as importance) to 5 (very high as importance) – a significant part of respondents (33 respondents) have rated as “high” the importance associated to general IT knowledge of an accounting professional. Also, 2 persons have rated general IT knowledge’ importance as “low”, 3 persons rated it as “medium” and 4 persons as “very high”. When it comes to the level of cloud knowledge the situation observed in case of the surveyed persons can be observed in Figure 3, below:

**Figure 3:**

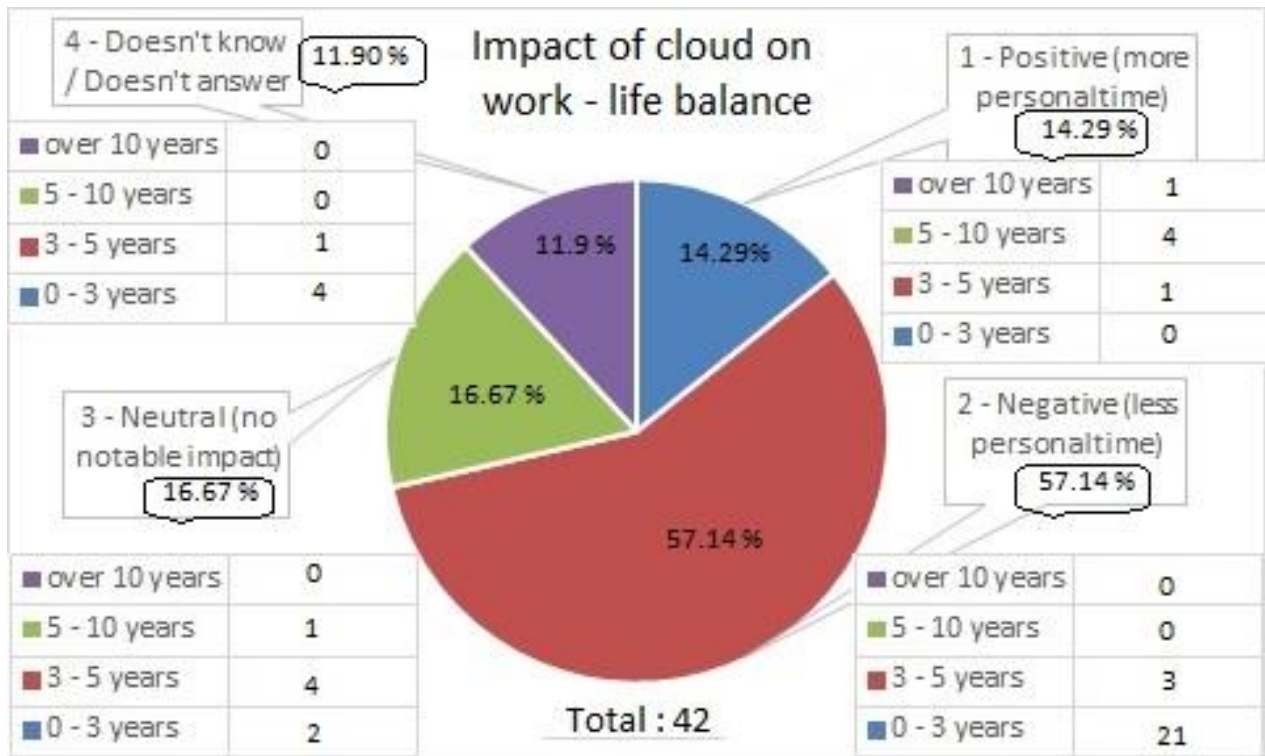


Only 2 persons out of 42 (4.76 %) assess their level of cloud knowledge as being “high” and only one person out of 42 (2.38%) assess his level of cloud knowledge as “very high”. The median results are concentrated in “medium” knowledge area (the most respondent being the 0-3 years ones – 9 persons) and in the “low” knowledge area where again the starters (0-3 years professional experience) are dominating (please see Figure 3, above).

Someone might think (also considering the literature reviewed) that accounting cloud solutions are too new and maybe their degree of penetration is not high enough. But we already have observed in the Deloitte study (Deloitte, 2013) that the degree of penetration of cloud solutions is already high (around 50% of the surveyed executives confirmed that). But where are the specialists? – one might ask. But let’s advance furthermore and we might identify some answers. In case of the third area of research, considered by us the core one, we asked the surveyed persons first to determine if there is one impact of using accounting cloud solutions on their work-life time balance, we researched the attitude on employees about potential trainings on accounting cloud and we assessed the general concerns of the accounting and financial professionals on the accounting cloud solutions.

In case of the first point of research the results were as presented in the Figure 4, below:

**Figure 4:**

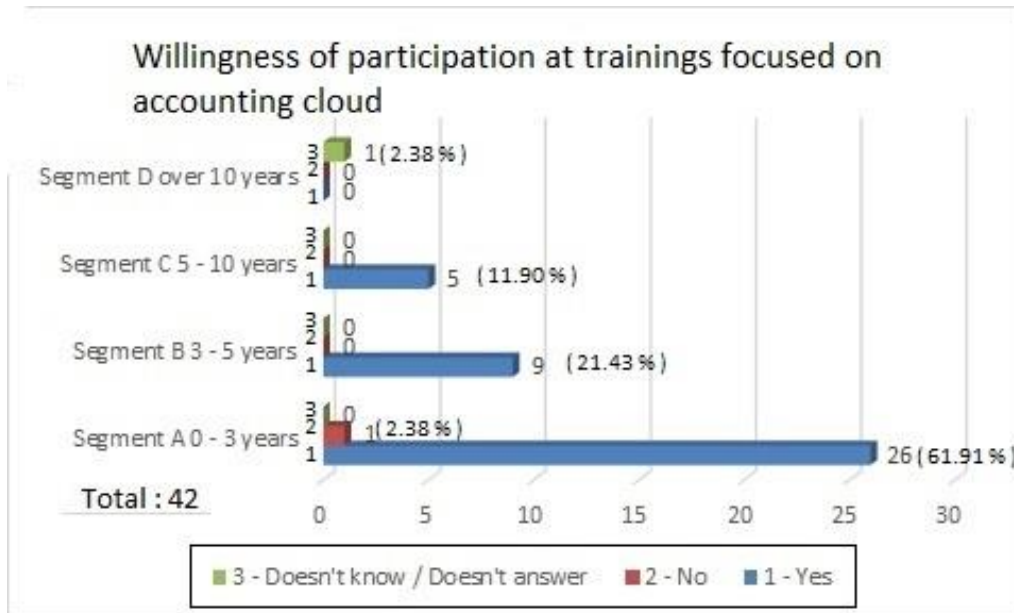


In the graphic above (Figure 4), we have evaluated the opinion of the accounting professionals about the impact of accounting cloud services on their personal life versus the working time balance and the answers were as it follows: out of 42 respondents only 6 persons (14.29%) have assessed the experience of accounting cloud services as a positive one (more personal life time available), 24 persons (57.14%) have assessed as negative this experience (less personal life time available, more working hours), 7 persons (16.67%) assessed the accounting cloud experience as an non-impacting element , as a neutral factor on their work-life time balance, without any implication, and 5 persons (11.90%) didn't knew or didn't have responded.

Having in mind the high concentration of 0-3 years professionals we were curious where is the biggest concentration of 0-3 years respondents – and (to our surprise) we have found out that the highest 0-3 years professionals concentration in in the negative impact (less personal time) area. In the next figure (Figure 5) we assessed the openness to potential trainings focused on accounting cloud software also like the other figures, this being corroborated with the age of respondents in order to obtain more relevant information:



**Figure 5:**

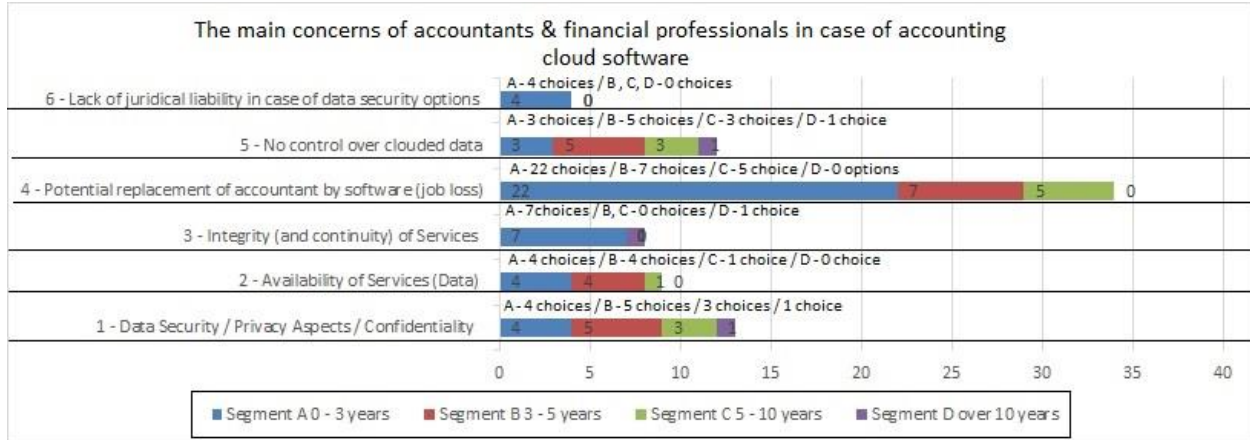


In Figure 5, above presented, we assessed the level of will of respondents regarding the consolidation of their accounting cloud software knowledge and out of 42 respondents 40 (95.24%) responded positively being opened to more training in accounting cloud software, 1 person was negative about it (0 – 3 years segment – 2.38%) and 1 person didn't know what to answer (> 10 years segment – 2.38%).

So, we can assess that indeed all are opened to trainings without any doubt. In the next figure – Figure 6, the last component of the research core – we have requested the 42 respondents to assess their main general concerns related to accounting cloud technology (multiple-choice options allowed) and we have obtained the following results : 13 persons (30.95%) are anxious about data security and privacy aspects, 9 persons (21.43%) expressed concerns related to availability of services, 8 persons (19.05%) expressed concerns related to integrity/continuity of services, 34 persons (the highest percent 80.95%) on potential replacement of the accountant by the software (loss of jobs), 12 persons (28.57%) highlighted the no control over cloud data option, and only 4 (9.52%) pointed to lack of liability of cloud providers in case of security incidents.

Analyzing the core components, we observe the following situations: when it comes to 0-3 years professionals although they work extra-hours (negative impact of their work-life balance) and are opened to the idea of more training focused on cloud, they manifest a certain anxiety related to the potentiality of being replaced by a software someday. This result is synonymic to the result obtained by Cernusca and Balaciu (2015) only that the results in our case are higher (22 out of 42 respondents - 52.38%). From our point of view this anxiety is not motivated considering that even those software programs will have to be manipulated and used by someone. This might call new IT skills and education enrichments to the accountants and financials, of course, so new horizons of IT-based education might be requested in the next 5 to 10 years from accountants (see below Figure 6).

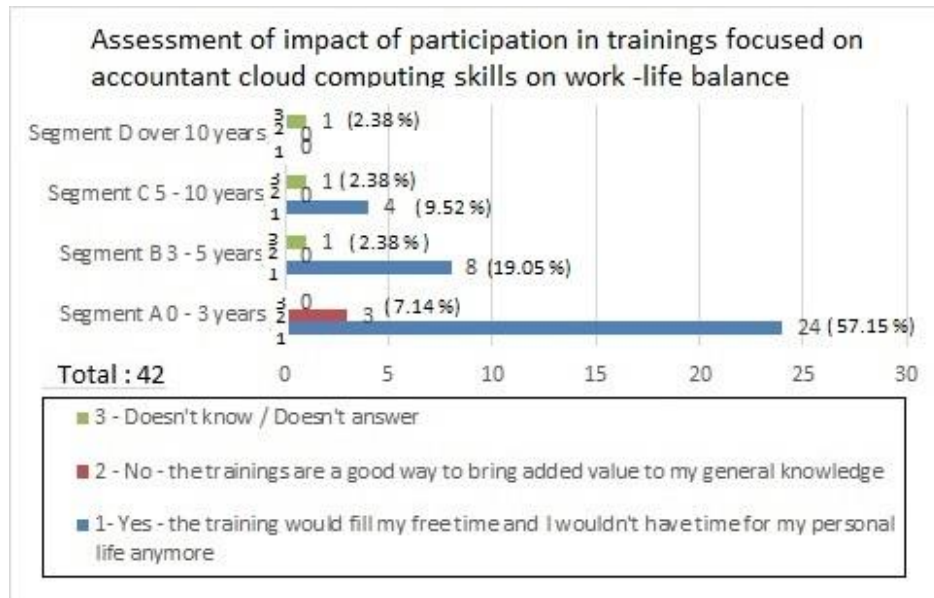
**Figure 6:**



Related to Figure 6 above, in case of the accounting professionals, when they were asked to assert their main concerns as specialists related to cloud technology the answers proved to be at least interesting: related to data security / privacy aspects and confidentiality mainly the mid to high experienced accountants expressed their concerns (13 out of 42 = 30.95%). In case of availability of services 9 out of 42 (21.42%) expressed concerns the low (0-3 years) and mid (3 – 5 / 5 – 10 years) experienced professionals, in case of integrity (and continuity) of services the less experienced professionals expressed their anxiety 8 out of 42 (19.05%), in case of the potential replacement of accountant by software (job loss) , as already noted, the vast majority of respondents expressed their concerns regarding the fact of being replaced by an accounting software (34 out of 42 - 80.95% with an evenly distribution on all professional experience levels), 12 out of 42 (28.57%) expressed concerns related to lack of control over clouded data this being mainly the option chosen by the mid to high experienced professionals (5 – 10 years and over 10 years experience) and finally the lack of juridical liability of cloud providers was a concern mainly to the young professionals 0 – 3 years 4 out of 42 (9.52%) (maybe due to their weak juridical knowledge regarding the right and obligations from the contracts signed with the accounting cloud services providers).

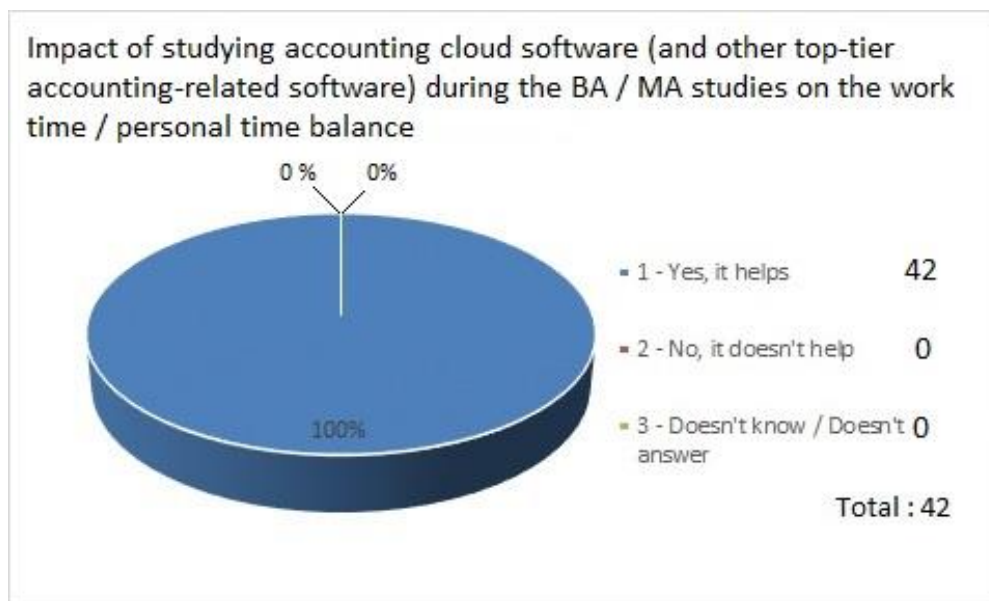
In the next analysis research area (the 4<sup>th</sup>), we will analyze the HR-linked questions from the survey that we are analyzing here. Related to the previous analysis related to the openness to potential trainings, we also asked in the survey if the respondents are open to the idea of more trainings but outside working hours and we have asked them if they are ok with this kind of approach. We have evaluated the 42 respondents ‘projected impact of more accounting cloud training on the personal life vs working time balance and we observed that 36 persons (85.71%) considered that more training would fill up their free personal time even more and their personal time would be affected, 3 persons (7.14%) declared that no impact would exist on their personal life, valuing the rise of general knowledge and 3 persons (7.14%) didn’t respond anything. Analyzing the results of the answers at this question we observe that the majority of those that would reject trainings in their free time (24 persons – 57.14%) are 0 – 3 years professionals. This observation can be easily linked with the one from the PWC study that assesses the Y generation and their general approach to a good distinction between working hours and free time.

**Figure 7:**



Furthermore, we have evaluated whether more accounting cloud (also along with other software options used heavily in the working field – like SAP, Citrix, Midas, Temenos software and others – software programs named by the respondents) studies during BA / MA studies would help their present professional time balance situation and out of 42 respondents, all agreed positively regarding this option, so there’s not too much to analyze here (see Figure 8, below).

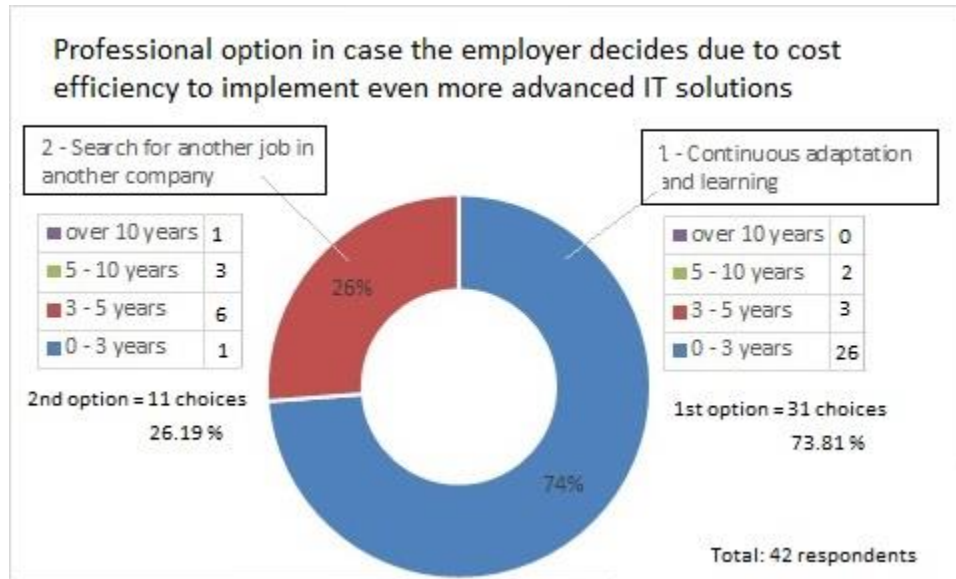
**Figure 8:**



One question of the survey that might reveal more information about our study is the next one (see below Figure 9) – in the ninth situation surveyed we tried to assess the potential reaction of

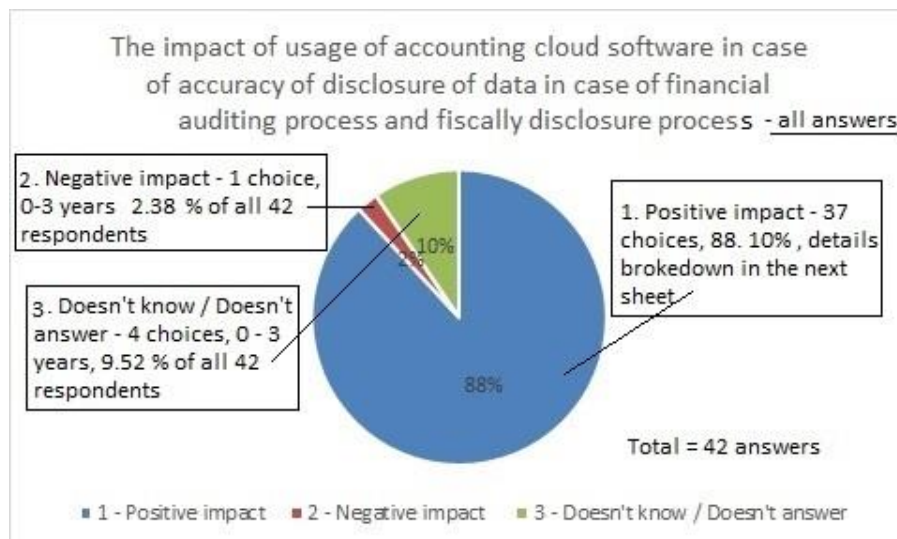
the surveyed persons in case their employer upgrades furthermore the implemented IT solution and out of 42 respondents the results were these one: 31 persons (73.81%) responded that they will continuously adapt and learn furthermore but 11 persons (26.19%) responded that they would search for another job.

**Figure 9:**

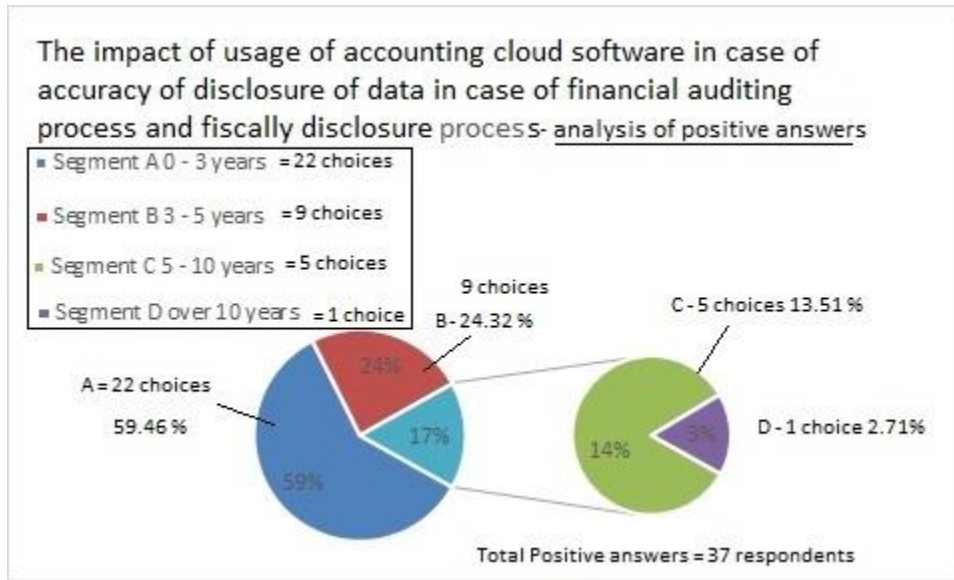


Last but not least, in the last issue analyzed we tried to assess whether there is any impact on their working time versus personal life time considering the implications of using the accounting cloud services in case of financial auditing or in case of fiscally disclosure process and out of focus group of 42 persons, 37 assessed (88.10%) that the impact would be positive (they would have more personal life time), 1 person (2.38%) assessed that the impact would be negative (less personal life time) and 4 persons (9.52%) were neutral , they didn't knew what to respond (see Figure 10 and 11 below).

**Figure 10:**



**Figure 11:**



In Figure 11 above the positive answers are broken on professional experience categories as it follows: out of the 37 positive respondents (that assessed that using cloud has a positive impact on accuracy of disclosure of data) – 1 person has an experience above 10 years, 5 persons has between 5 and 10 years, 9 persons has an experience between 3 and 5 years and the majority of the answers – 22 answers, 59.46% out of the 37 respondents – were young professionals, 0-3 years.

## 5. POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE RESEARCH

In order to synthesis conclusions and the implications of this small and applied study related to impact of accounting cloud we first have to watch the extremes, the statistical spikes of the results as per each questions in order to determine the profile of the focus surveyed group, the implications and potential thinking themes.

**Table 1**

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q9	Q10
<b>Mean</b>	3.2	3.94	2.67	2.21	1.03	1.14	1	1.44	1.14
<b>Median</b>	1	4	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Minimum</b>	1	0	0	5	1	3	0	11	1
<b>Maximum</b>	27	33	21	24	40	36	42	31	37
<b>Sum</b>	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42	42

In case of Table 1 we have calculated based on the data obtained from our 42 respondents the Mean, Median, the Minimum, the Maximum and the Sum of the values obtained (as observed in Table 1). Based on the data obtained and analyzed, we observe that the target group is (generally) a young professional focus group (0 – 5 years professional accounting experience), that appreciates (probably due to daily usage) the low and medium technology (usage of OS

Windows, MS Office suite) but that still has things to learn regarding the new cloud technologies (the majority of respondents rated their knowledge of accounting cloud technology as being at a low level – 21 out of 42 respondents). Considering the responses, although they appreciate technology and are adaptable to new conditions the young financial & accounting professionals appreciate as negatively the introduction and usage of accounting cloud services from the point of view of the balance between personal life time and working hours' time. The main idea noted in the discussions with the focus group was that the accounting cloud solution was not always perfect when it came to processing and importing the data (or exporting the data post-processing to SAP, as example) and it was necessary the human manual intervention in order to rearrange the accounting data – which, of course, was time-consuming (in most of the cases). So, one of the conclusions is the one that technology still has furthermore to evolve until it will replace the accountant (although those times are not quite far away).

The surveyed focus group is strongly positively (40 positive replies at the 5<sup>th</sup> question) when it comes to more trainings related to accounting cloud technology but (and this is relevant) not outside the working hours (36 replies out of 42 at 6<sup>th</sup> question)!

Generally speaking, the focus group has a positive approach regarding new technologies projecting their will related to more modern IT accounting software technology, accounting cloud being included but also other replies being noted (such as SAP, Citrix, Midas and other ERP – enterprise resource planning software – but also related to accounting software cloud solutions - 41 positive replies out of 42 – 7<sup>th</sup> question) and manifests a certain inclination for continuous improvement and adaptation to the work market (31 positive replies out of 42 – 9<sup>th</sup> question – mainly the young ones proving more flexible) but on the long run they somewhat have some relevant level of fear of being replaced by a machine or by a software (34 such replies out of 42 – 8<sup>th</sup> question). When it comes to financially auditing or fiscally disclosing the financial results, a strong positive majority is observed, independent of the professional experience criteria factor (37 positive replies out of 42 – 10<sup>th</sup> question).

**Table 2**

The main concerns as accountant (multiple answers allowed for each person) related to cloud technology :	Experience in accounting 0-3 years	a) Data Security / Privacy aspects/Confidentiality	b) Availability of Services (Data)	c) Integrity (and continuity) of Services	d) Potential replacement of accountant by software (job loss)	e) No control over clouded data	f) Lack of juridical liability of cloud providers (in case of security incidents)
* The main deviations (+20%) were marked with bold							
Experience in accounting 0-3 years	1.00						
a) Data Security / Privacy aspects/Confidentiality	<b>-0.47</b>	1.00					
b) Availability of Services (Data)	<b>-0.22</b>	0.03	1.00				
c) Integrity (and continuity) of Services	<b>0.24</b>	-0.19	-0.11	1.00			
d) Potential replacement of accountant by software (job loss)	0.02	<b>-0.33</b>	-0.19	0.08	1.00		
e) No control over clouded data	<b>-0.52</b>	<b>0.37</b>	0.06	-0.17	0.04	1.00	
f) Lack of juridical liability of cloud providers (in case of security incidents)	<b>0.24</b>	<b>-0.22</b>	-0.17	<b>0.46</b>	0.16	<b>-0.21</b>	1.00

In case of the Table 2 above we have calculated the main deviations between the age of main respondents (0-3 years) and the answer related to the main anxiety sources when it comes to accounting cloud and we have marked above with bold the main deviations (+/-20%).

We have observed that in case of the young professionals (0-3 years) they tend to not be very anxious when it comes to data security or if they don't have control over data. But a very

interesting fact is the one that despite their young age they manifest certain fears of being replaced by an accounting software in the not so far future. Also we have observed that there is a positive deviation related to Integrity and continuity of Services – so the 0-3 years professionals manifest interest in this direction considering that if the system is down and they have to finish something right in that day they will have to work until late in order to finish it (if the system recovers after a number of minutes or hours (it's visible the impact on the work-life time balance)).

## **6. CONCLUSIONS – RESULTS AND POTENTIAL FURTHER PATHS OF RESEARCH**

So, conclusively the young accountant generation is technological literate, is opened to adaptation and continuous improvement, but also keeps its eyes well focused on the personal time – working hours' balance. What a company should do to destroy its market position would be to oblige its staff on a continuous base to work extra-hours. After all, technology has evolved not to eat more hours from the personal time of employees but to free them up and to bring more profit for shareholders. More work isn't always equivalent with better work as well as never the quantity has issued quality. As Cernusca and Balaciu (2015) note, "the future professional accountants must be aware of the qualities and characteristics that a good accountant should have, such as a sense of responsibility, honesty, ethics and professional conduct, confidentiality, integrity, attention to detail, thoroughness and determination."

Now some questions arise in the light of our study: what offers assurance that there still will be a certain professional border that would offer identity between an accountant and an IT specialist or just even a software (and this is an opened question meant to power up more profound studies in this direction)? What guarantees that the accountant profession won't become something of the past like some other jobs did (like the watchmakers or watch repairers, or the men that polished manually the shoes on the streets for some pennies) in front of the tsunami wave-like of the IT technologies advance?

There are professional voices that sustain that traditional accountants will migrate to new fields like management consulting, business consulting or financial analysis areas. Do we have any kind of guarantees regarding these aspects? No, we don't have. IT might evolve in numerous aspects.

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