

MANAGEMENT'S PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF ACCOUNTING INFORMATION AND THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONAL IN DESIGNING THE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS MODEL

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Abstract

The role of accounting information and therefore of the accounting professionals in firms and their contribution to the efficient conduct of economic activity has been the subject of numerous studies and is a major concern for researchers. As a result, financial information provides managers with a detailed and accurate picture of a firm's financial situation, performance and development over time. The aim of this study is to conduct a critical review of the literature on the importance of accounting information in sustainable business and to identify management's perception of the role of accounting information and the accounting professional in designing the sustainable business model. The research methodology used was the qualitative method, which allowed us to obtain in-depth and detailed information about management's perception of the role of accounting information and the accounting professional in developing a sustainable business. The results of this study underline the trust and appreciation placed in accounting professionals, recognising their vital role in the development and success of a sustainable business. This positive perception among managers participating in this study is an important indicator of the value and impact that accounting professionals bring to organisations. Managers also recognise that a competent and experienced accounting professional makes a valuable contribution by interpreting and analysing financial and accounting information, thus ensuring that the organisation operates in an efficient and sustainable manner.

Keywords

management perception, accounting information, accounting professional, sustainable business

JEL Classification

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Introduction

Over the years, many issues related to the use of accounting information in managerial planning and control, financial performance evaluation, strategic decision making have been investigated. These studies have demonstrated the significant impact of accounting information and the accounting professional on the performance and success of firms in their business environment. Through accounting information, managers can gain adequate knowledge and understanding of the economic reality they represent (Prozan, 2015). This information is the main tool through which managers can gain a correct perspective on the results of the activity carried out in firms. They provide managers with a detailed and accurate picture of the firm's financial situation, its performance and its evolution over time.

The purpose of this study is to conduct a critical review of the literature on the importance of accounting information in firms, focusing in particular on assessing this role from a theoretical perspective and identifying management's perception of the role of accounting information and the accounting professional in designing the sustainable business model. Accounting information is considered the most important resource within a firm's information system (Străpuc, 2019) and is particularly valuable for management. Practically, accounting information is indispensable in the management activity of a firm and represents the main support in the managerial decision-making process (Diaconu, 2015).

In order to achieve the purpose deduced from the research, a series of objectives were established, as follows:

Specific objective 1: Establish a clear research direction to assess management perception. We want to identify how management understands and appreciates the importance of accounting information and the accounting professional in the process of developing a sustainable business. Through this objective, we aim to direct our research efforts to gain a deep understanding of management's perspectives and opinions in this regard.

Specific objective 2: To interview the people in management roles in the firms that constitute the target group of our research. We focused on people in positions of authority, such as managers, directors, partners/directors, directors and CEOs, and other relevant management positions within a firm. Choosing 'management' as a framework term allows us to include all these leadership positions and gain a broad perspective on their perception.

Specific objective 3: Careful analysis of respondents' perceptions of the role and importance of accounting in sustainable business development. We want to understand how management perceives accounting as a valuable and indispensable resource for sustaining a business over the long term and for strategic decision-making. Analysis of this perception will give us a clear insight into management's attitude and depth towards accounting issues.

Specific objective 4: To assess the level of influence of factors influencing management's perception of the topic. In our research, we aim to identify and assess different factors that may influence management's perception. By understanding and quantifying these factors, we will gain a complete and more detailed picture of management's perception of the role of accounting and the accounting professional in the context of sustainable business.

The results of the survey revealed that managers attach great importance to accounting information and to the accounting professional in managing and making decisions in sustainable business. Therefore, management awareness of the role of accounting information and the accounting professional is closely related to the fact that management decisions have a direct influence on the financial and sustainable performance of an organisation.

1. Review of the scientific literature

The accounting profession is a complex and essential area of business, often perceived as an activity dominated by figures and asset records. Although in the past it was all about transferring information into accounting ledgers, this process has become simpler thanks to specialised software. However, the accounting profession is not limited to record-keeping, but involves interpreting and analysing information in the context of the programmes used, a skill that a programme alone cannot achieve. In the age of digitisation, automation is taking over some of the work and the role of the accountant is evolving towards analysis, advice and detection of programming errors. Thus, the accounting profession goes beyond simple data manipulation, bringing with it responsibility and expertise in interpreting information and providing relevant solutions in a changing business environment (Boghian and Socoliuc, 2020).

The accounting profession covers all economic activities, requiring knowledge of accounting and involving a community of specialists (accountants and auditors) and their professional organisations. The objectives of the accounting profession include complying with professionalism standards, achieving high performance in the provision of services, and meeting client requirements (Grigoroï and Şelaru, 2012). According to Dîncenoc (2023), the accounting profession is evolving in line with major changes in various fields. Financial globalisation has led to the formation of a common language of financial reporting. This implies improved global economic relations and interdependence, but also a loss of national sovereignty in the economic field. The need to harmonise accounting regulations requires international cooperation and reforms at national level to ensure the quality and uniformity of financial information reported by local entities.

One of the relevant studies in this area focuses on the role of accounting information in risk analysis and tax fraud control (Străpuc, 2019). This study explores how accounting information can be used to identify and manage risk and tax fraud, thus providing a valuable tool for protecting firms' financial interests and preventing losses. New information technologies lead to computerized accounting, and the dissemination of

accounting information requires well-reasoned economic decisions. The purpose of accounting information is to meet the needs of users, and the dissemination of information has a strong impact on decision-making (Bajerean, 2015). Savić and Pavlović (2023) also consider these findings to be important for accounting professionals, management and other stakeholders.

Accounting information is used to achieve a number of objectives, including: assessing financial performance and results achieved; analysing the costs and benefits associated with the activities carried out; identifying trends and risks to which the organisation is exposed. To achieve these objectives, accounting information must be relevant, accurate and understandable. A rigorous approach is required in the collection, processing and presentation of information so that it supports decision-making. Also, continuous adaptation of accounting practices to market changes and user needs is essential to maintain the relevance and usefulness of accounting information (Mateş, Pordea, 2021).

Haleem and Kevin (2018) are of the opinion that it is essential for management to understand the principles of accounting in order to apply them to the activities of the organization they lead in order to achieve a successful accounting result. The debate around the accounting profession focuses on three major challenges: integrated thinking, globalisation and technology, which will define the future of this profession. Accounting experts discuss adapting to the digital age and business requirements to provide integrated services and guide directions, thus contributing to business development. Therefore, these issues are essential especially for the management of entities (Dolghi, 2022), but also on the sustainable development on the business environment (Herbei (2023).

2. Research methodology

The research methodology used was the qualitative method, which allowed us to obtain in-depth and detailed information about management's perception of the role of accounting information and the accounting professional in developing a sustainable business. This included the use of the managers' questionnaire to collect the necessary data and to better understand the participants' perceptions of the research.

2.1. Establishing the research strategy

The first stage of the empirical research consisted in establishing the working hypotheses, which were developed and detailed below, respectively:

H1 - Management's perception of the role of accounting highlighted in the study through the perspective of two dimensions, i.e., accounting information and accounting professional is negatively influenced by the size of the firm in which the respondents work. It is assumed that the larger the size of the firm, the less favourable management's perception of the role of accounting will be. This can be explained by the fact that in larger firms there is often a complex hierarchical structure and decisions may be taken by several people, which may affect management's perception of the importance of accounting.

H2 - Management's perception of the role of accounting in developing a sustainable business is positively and significantly influenced by management's perception of the role of the accounting professional in developing a sustainable business. This perception is critical in determining how management approaches and leverages accounting in efforts to build a sustainable and successful long-term business.

H3 - Management's perception of the role of accounting information negatively and insignificantly influences their perception of the role of accounting in developing a sustainable business. It is assumed that when management does not attach high importance to accounting information or does not consider it relevant for sustainable business development, this negative perception may indirectly affect the perception of the role of accounting in general. Thus, a lack of understanding or appreciation of accounting information may diminish the value attributed to accounting in sustainable business development.

H4 - The age of the organisation in which respondents work has a positive but insignificant influence on their perception of the role of accounting in developing a sustainable business. It is assumed that individuals working in organisations with a longer history and more established experience may have a more favourable view of the role of accounting in developing a sustainable business. However, the influence of the age of the organisation is considered to be insignificant as other factors may also play a more important role in management's perception of accounting.

These working hypotheses have been formulated to guide the research and will be tested in later stages of the study to gain a deeper understanding of management's perception of the role of accounting information and the accounting professional in developing a sustainable business.

After establishing the working hypotheses, we proceeded to develop the questionnaire, representing the next stage of our research. This questionnaire comprises a total of 25 closed questions and is structured in four distinct sections. The first section of the questionnaire is of a general nature and aims to categorise respondents according to gender, age, level of education and position in the company. This section helps us to obtain relevant demographic information and to perform a more detailed analysis of the results according to the respondent's characteristics. The second section focuses on questions related to the respondent's firm. These questions cover specific aspects related to the company, such as firm size, sector of activity and length of operation. The purpose of this section is to get an overview of the business context of the firms represented in our sample. The third section of the questionnaire contains a series of questions on respondents' perceptions of the role and importance of accounting information within a firm.

With these questions, we want to assess the participants' opinion on the impact and relevance of accounting information in the decision-making process and sustainable business development. The last section of the questionnaire focuses on assessing respondents' perceptions of the role of the accounting professional in sustainable business

development. Through specific questions, we aim to gain insight into the importance and contribution of accounting professionals in ensuring effective and sustainable business management.

The third stage of our research involved establishing the sample. The questionnaire was therefore distributed to individuals who own firms or hold senior positions within them. In selecting the sample, we took into account the fact that in small firms, where the majority of our respondents come from, owners are actively involved in business management. Thus, all respondents who met the inclusion criteria were included in the sample, these criteria being: owning and managing a business; holding a management position in a business; and answering all the questions in the questionnaire.

After developing the questionnaire and establishing the sample, we proceeded to the next stage of the research, namely the application of the questionnaire. The research was carried out between March and June 2023 using the questionnaire, developed using the Google Forms platform. The fifth stage of the research consisted of processing the data, i.e. the responses obtained, using Excel software, and then analysing and evaluating the data, which was carried out using IBM SPSS version 26 software.

All the steps undertaken in this stage aimed at developing a statistical model to assess the factors influencing management's perception of the role of accounting information and the accounting professional in the development of a sustainable business. The variables used in the research and the linear dependence relationship between the variables are shown in Table 1:

Table no. 1. Description of econometric model variables

Variable name	Explanation
<i>Dependent variable</i>	
Variable1	Perception of sustainability - questions 22,23 and 24
<i>Independent variables</i>	
Variable2	Firm size - questions 9, 10 and 11
Variable3	Perception of the role of the accounting professional - questions 17, 18, 19, 20 and 21
Variable4	Perception of accounting information - questions 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16
Variable5	Age of the firm - question 8
<i>Linear dependence relationship between variables - linear equation</i>	
$Variable1 = \alpha - \beta1 \times Variable2 + \beta2 \times Variable3 - \beta3 \times Variable4 + \beta4 \times Variable5$	

Source: own processing in SPSS

The proposed econometric model takes the form of a linear equation involving all the variables considered in the analysis, as can be seen in the table above.

2.2. Descriptive and statistical analysis of the data

The questionnaire was distributed to people who own and manage a business or hold a management position in a company. Our sample included a total of 64 respondents, with a significant proportion of 72% women, who were more responsive to the questionnaire. In terms of geographical distribution of respondents, the majority, 56.3%, were from Suceava, while 11% were from Botoșani. The rest of the respondents came from counties such as Alba, Argeș and Bistrița-Năsăud. We also received responses from people in Bucharest. It is important to mention that we also distributed the questionnaire on social media pages dedicated to Romanian entrepreneurs, which explains the presence of respondents from other parts of the country besides Suceava and Botoșani counties.

To classify respondents by age, we established five age ranges. According to Figure 1, it can be seen that the majority of respondents, i.e., 31.1%, fall in the age range of 31 to 40 years and 41 to 50 years. This shows that the two age groups are equally represented among the respondents. We also observed a significant presence of respondents over 60 years old, i.e., 8.6%, as well as people under 30 years old, representing 24.6% of the total sample and showing high responsiveness to the questionnaire.

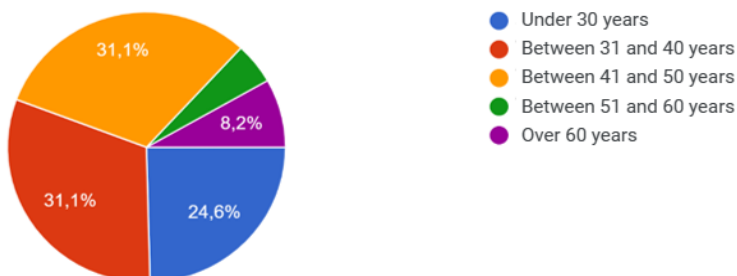


Figure no. 1. Age structure of the sample

Source: own processing based on questionnaire responses

As mentioned above, one of the basic criteria for selecting participants in the sample was their position in a firm. Of the total respondents, almost 60% are directors, while about 24% are shareholders/partners. Also, about 9% of respondents are both directors and partners in the same firm. It is important to note that all respondents meet the inclusion criterion because they hold managerial positions within a firm. This criterion was established on the assumption that people in management positions in a firm also have a decision-making role in the decision-making process. Within this decision-making process, accounting, accounting information and accounting professionals are the main source of information (Diaconu, 2015). For this reason, we considered that these individuals are able to understand and answer the questions included in the questionnaire in a relevant way, thus ensuring that the research results have a solid basis. By including these key participants, we are confident that we will gain relevant and in-depth insight into management's perception of the role of accounting information and the accounting professional in developing a sustainable business.

We can also see that most of the participants in this study, i.e., 42.6% of those who consented to participate, are high school graduates. The composition of the sample by level of education is shown in Figure 2.

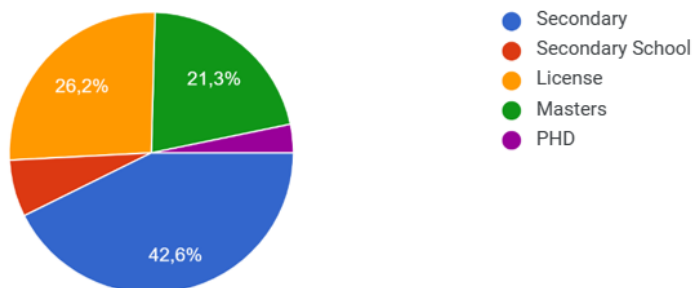


Figure no. 2. Structure of the sample by level of education

Source: own processing based on questionnaire responses

The second set of questions in our survey aimed to identify the key characteristics of the economic entities in which respondents operate. According to the data collected, the initial hypothesis that the majority of firms are organised as limited liability companies (LLCs) was confirmed. This is not a surprise, given that the SRL is the most common form of organization of economic activities in Romania, with an even higher share in the specific region investigated in our study.

Specifically, SRLs constitute no less than 75.4% of the total economic entities represented by the respondents in the study. The scope of activity of these entities is varied, covering a multitude of economic sectors. However, there are two predominant areas of activity: manufacturing, which accounts for about 25% of the total, and trade, which accounts for more than 16% of the total. Other significant but less represented sectors are hotels, restaurants and cafés (Horeca), agriculture, financial services and transport. In terms of respondents' level of financial and accounting knowledge, the majority self-assessed their skills as being at an average level, with this group accounting for 30% of all respondents. At the same time, 20% of respondents considered themselves to have a lower level of knowledge in this area.

An important finding relates to respondents' perception of the value of accounting information. The overwhelming majority of respondents, more than 60%, expressed the belief that accounting information is crucial to obtain data on a firm's financial performance. Also, almost half of the respondents, around 48%, believe that accounting information provides essential data on tax liabilities and taxes owed to the government. A smaller segment, 15% of respondents, put forward the idea that accounting information provides an integrated view of performance, financial position, cash flow, taxes, profit or dividends.

Analysing these data, we can see that the management of the companies is equally interested in the financial performance of the company and its obligations to the state. An interesting correlation is established between these responses and the respondents' self-assessment of their level of financial-accounting knowledge, indicating that their perceptions of the value of accounting information are closely related to their own expertise in this area. In the context of modern business dynamics, accounting information is often seen as essential for the success and sustainable development of companies. A significant proportion of respondents, around 45%, strongly believe that accounting information plays a major role in business development. This indicates a positive management perception of the role of accounting information in business development and correlates with their perception of how management knowledge of accounting information contributes to business development. This result correlates with their belief that understanding and interpreting accounting data correctly contributes significantly to business development. An overwhelming majority, around 80%, say that knowledge of accounting information helps to manage both resources and operations more effectively. They therefore believe that accounting information is not only a legal requirement but also an essential management tool. Accounting information is also seen as an essential tool for making decisions (46%), increasing profitability (38%), reducing

risks associated with investments and reducing amounts owed to the state. A significant number of respondents, 26%, believe that this type of knowledge can contribute to the development of a sustainable business. Also, 74% of respondents said that they take accounting information into account in their decision-making process. These managers recognise the importance and fundamental role that accounting information plays in providing financial data and assessing business performance. They understand that this information is essential for informing strategic decisions and ensuring effective management of financial resources and risks. So, we see that managers rely on accounting information to assess the financial performance of the business, identify trends and patterns, monitor costs and revenues, evaluate operational efficiency and assess the results of initiatives and projects. They understand that accounting information provides an objective view of the financial condition of the business and supports them in their decision-making process to achieve strategic objectives.

Therefore, this significant proportion of managers actively considering accounting information demonstrates a data-driven approach and a commitment to informed decision making within the firm. These managers understand that the appropriate use of accounting information contributes to improved financial performance and long-term business sustainability. Thus, they invest time and resources in ensuring accurate, up-to-date and relevant accounting for decision-making within their organisation.

Overall, this trend highlights the importance of accounting information in managers' decision making and confirms that managers recognise and value their essential role in business development and success.

Accounting professionals are considered primarily responsible for the preparation and filing of financial statements, according to 75% of respondents. This perspective underlines the importance attributed to accounting professionals in ensuring the accuracy and compliance of financial information and compliance with legal requirements and accounting regulations. This result indicates a "fair" understanding of the basic responsibilities of an accountant. More than half of the respondents (55%) believe that accounting professionals should provide management with information on changes in tax matters. In addition, duties such as calculating taxes (50% of respondents) and calculating dividends (28% of respondents) are also perceived as part of the responsibilities of accounting professionals. These results highlight that accounting professionals are involved in specific tax compliance and revenue sharing activities, thus strengthening their role in managing the financial and tax aspects of the business.

On a positive note, 40% of respondents realised that the role of an accountant is not just about the technical aspects of working with figures, but also includes providing managerial advice on strategic decision-making. This reflects their understanding that accounting professionals have the ability and expertise to provide valuable advice and financial guidance, thereby helping management to make informed and strategic business decisions.

This perception reflects an increased appreciation for accountants and their contribution to business development. It also signifies a high level of confidence in their ability to guide the company through financial and tax complexity. In summary, it appears that the role and importance of accounting information and accounting professionals are understood and appreciated by firm management, providing a solid foundation for sustainable business development in the future.

Our analysis aimed to clarify several aspects of management's perception of the role that the professional accountant plays in the organization. An essential component of this approach was question number 18, designed with the explicit intention of assessing how the accountant's activity is understood: as a generator of costs or benefits.

The results we obtained revealed an extremely interesting and positive picture of professional accountants. Impressively, we can see that the answers of the respondents (more than 90% of them) highlighted the fact that they perceive the benefits brought by a professional accountant to a company to be much more valuable than the costs associated with the services provided by him. Moreover, it has been proven that the professional accountant is considered an essential element of the organization, as approximately 60% of the respondents recognize in the person of the professional accountant, the person whose contributions are indispensable for the efficient operation of the company. However, the accountant's role is not limited to keeping the financial records in order. Almost 57% of respondents see the professional accountant as a trusted advisor, while 26% see the accountant as the person a firm should turn to when making important decisions. However, not all managers consider the professional accountant indispensable for their firm; about 10% of respondents see the accountant as a necessary evil, imposed by legal regulations.

It was also interesting to note that some respondents perceive the accounting professional as a business partner. Specifically, for around 61% of respondents, the accounting professional plays a vital role in business development, while over 73% admitted that they could not run a business effectively without their support.

We also asked respondents about the concept of business sustainability and how it relates to the role of the professional accountant. For 65% of respondents, sustainability in business is understood as the conduct of business in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. Another 45% see business sustainability as related to a firm's ability to survive even in crisis conditions. More than 20% of respondents consider sustainability from the perspective of obtaining short-term and long-term profits, while a percentage of 6% see sustainability through the lens of business internationalization.

Regarding the contribution of the accounting professional to the development of a sustainable business, the overwhelming majority of managers (over 93%) recognized that it plays an essential role. But how can they contribute? Opinions vary. Most (over 62%) associate sustainability with the role of the accountant to advise the management in applying the principles of sustainable development within the organization's activity.

More than 57% believe that the accounting professional contributes to the development of a sustainable business by providing accurate information on profit and costs.

The final question in our study aimed to specifically identify the expectations management has of a professional accountant. We asked respondents to name a quality that they consider essential in the work of a professional accountant, in order to better understand what is really important to them in the relationship with the person responsible for the accounting of the company. From the analysis of the answers, we found that the most common expectation of the management, with a percentage of more than 41% of the respondents, is that the accounting professional is always up to date with the latest accounting information and regulations and demonstrates great flexibility. This includes the ability to quickly adapt to legislative changes, as well as the ability to understand and correctly interpret new regulations.

About a quarter of respondents, 23% to be exact, pointed out that the most important quality of a professional accountant is their ability to manage time effectively. That means being able to prioritize tasks, meet deadlines, and work in a way that improves the efficiency of the entire accounting process.

For a proportion of 15% of respondents, the essential aspect is that the accounting professional must benefit from a solid reputation, be well recommended and have extensive experience in the field. These respondents place particular importance on practical experience and proven competence in accounting. Finally, 10% of the respondents mentioned the availability and promptness of the professional accountant as essential. In their view, a professional accountant must always be ready to answer questions, solve problems quickly and be constantly accessible for the needs of the firm.

Analyzing the responses as a whole, we can conclude that the majority of study participants have a highly positive perception of the crucial role that accounting information and accounting professionals play within an organization. Both in a general sense and in terms of developing a sustainable business, the importance of a well-informed, flexible, efficient, experienced and reactive accounting professional is recognized and appreciated.

It is evident that participants understand that accounting information is fundamental to making informed and strategic business decisions, and accounting professionals play a critical role in providing this information. They recognize that a competent and experienced accounting professional makes a valuable contribution by interpreting and analyzing financial data, thereby ensuring that the organization operates in an efficient and sustainable manner. It also highlights the importance of features such as correct information, flexibility in adapting to changes, efficiency in managing accounting information, relevant experience and quick response to the organization's needs. These aspects are considered crucial to ensure that the professional accountant fulfils their role in an effective and professional manner.

Thus, the results of this study underline the trust and appreciation given to professional accountants, recognizing their vital role in the development and success of a sustainable business. This positive perception among managers participating in this study is an important indicator of the value and impact accounting professionals bring to organizations.

3. Results and discussions

As a result of data processing in SPSS, we developed a linear econometric model through which we evaluated the level of influence of the factors that influence management's perception regarding the role of accounting in the development of a sustainable business. So, the model explains the existence of a link between management's perception of sustainability (variable 1) as a dependent variable and variable 2 (company size), variable 3 (perception of the role of the professional accountant), variable 4 (perception of accounting information, respectively) variable 5 (the age of the company), as independent variables, respectively influencing factors of the perception regarding sustainability.

Table no. 2. Model summary

Model summary					
Model	Correlation report	Determination report	Adjusted Determination Ratio	Standard Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0,465 ^a	0,216	0,163	0,40749	1,718
a. Predictors: (Constant), Age of firm, Perception of accounting professional, Size of firm, Perception of accounting information					
b. Dependent variable: Perception of sustainability					

Source: Own processing in SPSS

From Table no. 2 we find that the value of the correlation ratio is 0.465 which indicates that there is a correlation of medium intensity between the variables of the model. To understand what this means, we must remember that the correlation coefficient can vary between -1 and 1. A value close to 1 shows a strong positive relationship between the variables, while a value close to -1 indicates a negative relationship strong. In our case, the coefficient of 0.465 shows that there is a moderate correlation between the variables of the model, indicating a positive association between them, but not to such a strong degree as to allow us to make informed predictions.

In addition, the value of the determination ratio, denoted as R², is 0.216. This coefficient, expressing the proportion of total variation in the dependent variable, can vary from 0 to 1. In this case, an R² of 0.216 tells us that only 21.6% of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variable. In other words, almost 78.4% of the observed variation is caused by unknown factors or random errors.

Next, we analyze the value of the Durbin-Watson coefficient, an important indicator of the quality of our statistical model. This coefficient, named after the British statistician James Durbin and the American statistician Geoffrey Watson, is used to detect the presence of autocorrelation (dependence between values of a variable that are separated

by time intervals) in the residuals of a regression model (Dufour and Dagenais, 1985). In our case, the value of the Durbin-Watson coefficient is 1.718. This is a good result because the value approaches 2, which is the ideal value, indicating that the residuals (or errors) are not autocorrelated.

Table no. 2. Model ANOVA

ANOVA						
	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	2,696	4	,674	4,059	,006 ^b
	Residual	9,797	59	,166		
	Total	12,493	63			
a. Dependent variable: Perception of sustainability						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Age of firm, Perception of accounting professional, Size of firm, Perception of accounting information						

Source: Own processing in SPSS

Table no. 3, which we analyze in this discussion, represents an essential source of data that was the basis of the decision to validate our statistical model. These data provide the detailed view and analytical insight needed to understand the variations and relationships between the variables under study. By analyzing the information obtained, we can evaluate the accuracy and effectiveness of the proposed model.

According to the data presented in the table, the estimated explained variance, a crucial measure of the accuracy of our model, amounts to 2.696. This represents the proportion of variance in the phenomenon being studied that is explained by our predictor variables. The closer this value is to 3, the better our model explains the variation in the data, indicating better predictability and therefore stronger model validation.

Next, the residual variance, which refers to that portion of the variance not explained by our model, has a value of 9.797. Ideally, we would like this value to be as small as possible, which would mean that our model is able to explain a greater proportion of the variation in our data. However, this residual value must be taken in the context of other statistical metrics such as the Fischer coefficient and sig value. for the F test.

The Fischer coefficient value in our analysis is 4.059. This coefficient is used to assess whether there is a significant difference between the means of the studied data groups. In this case, a higher value of the Fischer coefficient indicates that our model shows significant differences between groups, suggesting that our predictor variables have a significant effect on the response.

Finally, the sig value. for the F-test, which is a measure of how likely our results are due to chance, is 0.006. This is below the standard threshold of 0.05, suggesting that our results are statistically significant and unlikely to be due simply to chance.

Therefore, in the light of these data and our evaluation, we can conclude that the analyzed model is statistically validated. This demonstrates a clear and significant dependence between the studied variables through a linear relationship, thus allowing us to make

accurate and useful predictions based on it. Despite a slightly larger residual variance, all other indicators support the validity of our model, making it a reliable tool for further analysis.

Table no. 5. Coefficients

Coefficients						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2,515	,283		8,891	,000
	Company size	-,012	,118	-,013	-,099	,921
	Perception of accounting information	-,251	,100	-,473	-2,501	,015
	Perception of accounting professional	,588	,149	,702	3,937	,000
	Age of firm	,032	,065	,064	,490	,626

a. Dependent Variable: Perception of sustainability

Source: Own processing in SPSS

The parameters of the multiple linear regression model determined in Table no. 6 define the perception of sustainability according to the factors that influence it, as follows:

$$\text{Variable1} = 2.515 - 0.012 \times \text{Variable2} - 0.251 \times \text{Variable4} + 0.588 \times \text{Variable3} + 0.032 \times \text{Variable5}$$

The econometric interpretation of the obtained model provides us with a series of information on how management's perception of the role of accounting in the development of a sustainable business is influenced. The statistical model is best represented by the perception of the professional accountant's role in developing a sustainable business, with a sig value. of 0.000, then by management's perception of the role of accounting information in business development, the value of sig. being 0.015. The biggest deviation was recorded by variable 2, which recorded a sig value. of 0.921 and shows us that the size of the company where the managers work is not relevant in shaping their perception regarding the role of accounting in the development of a sustainable business. A large deviation is also presented by variable 5, namely the age of the company that recorded a sig value. of 0.626.

We observe that the seniority of the company where the managers work is not able to significantly influence their perception. Therefore, management's perception of the role of accounting information and the professional accountant in developing a sustainable business is decisively influenced by their perception of the role and importance of the professional accountant in developing a business. Under these conditions, hypothesis H2 is confirmed, namely that management's perception of the role of accounting in the development of a sustainable business is positively and significantly influenced by the

management's perception of the role of the accounting professional in the development of a sustainable business. In other words, the more favorable the managers' perception of the professional accountant is, the more they will be convinced of its role and importance in the development of a sustainable business. This result shows us that management that recognizes the importance of accounting in the development of a sustainable business is more likely to pay adequate attention and allocate the necessary resources in the accounting department. They understand that accurate and up-to-date financial information is fundamental to making informed and strategic decisions. Management therefore invests in qualified accounting professionals and advanced technological equipment to ensure accurate transaction recording, transparent reporting and effective cost control.

Also, management's positive perception of the professional accountant's role in developing a sustainable business encourages close communication and collaboration between the accounting department and other departments. Management recognizes its accountants as strategic partners and valuable consultants in the process of planning and implementing sustainable business strategies. By involving accountants early in the decision-making process, financial opportunities and risks associated with sustainable development initiatives can be better identified.

Management's perception of the professional accountant's role also affects employees' attitude and commitment to accounting and sustainable business development. If management highlights the importance of accounting and recognizes the contribution of accounting professionals, employees will be more motivated to follow good accounting practices and help improve the company's financial performance. This positive perception can create a collaborative and favorable working environment for managing and optimizing financial resources in order to achieve long-term sustainable development. We therefore observe, as a result of the results obtained, that management's perception of the role of accounting in the development of a sustainable business is closely related to the management's perception of the role of the professional accountant.

The results of our study indicated that managers consider the accounting professional and their work more relevant and valuable than the accounting information itself. This finding confirms hypothesis H3, according to which the perception of the people with management positions in companies regarding the role of accounting information negatively and to an insignificant extent influences their perception of the role of accounting in the development of a sustainable business. The age of the firm positively influences management's perception of the role of accounting in the development of a sustainable business, but the influence of this factor is relatively modest. This result confirms hypothesis H4, according to which the seniority of the organization in which the respondents work positively but insignificantly influences their perception of the role of accounting in the development of a sustainable business. This shows us that it is not relevant if a manager works in a newly established company or, on the contrary, in one with a long history on the market, this aspect is not able to significantly influence his perception, even if the influence is still positive.

The results obtained from our research also confirm our hypothesis H1. Management's perception of the role of accounting highlighted in the study through the perspective of two dimensions, namely accounting information and the accounting professional, is negatively influenced by the size of the company in which the respondents work. Basically, according to the model, the bigger the company where your manager works, either by the fact that it has more employees, or by the higher value of the assets owned by the company, or by the turnover, his perception will be less favorable regarding the role of accounting information and the accounting professional in the development of a sustainable business. It is quite possible that for managers, doing business sustainably is rather a factor that prevents them from achieving higher profits or developing the business in general. It is true that aligning with the principles of sustainable development involves certain costs for companies with the implementation of these principles, but studies have proven that, in the long term, sustainable companies are more profitable than companies that do not give importance to the aspects related to the development of a sustainable business. However, regardless of the factors that influence the managers' perception and to what extent, most agreed that the accounting professional has a contribution to the development of a sustainable business, as shown in Figure no. 3.

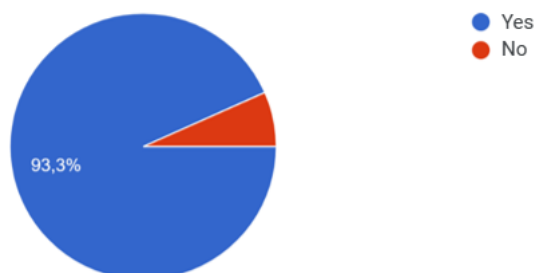


Figure 3. Contribution of the accounting professional to sustainable business development from a management perspective

Source: own processing based on questionnaire responses

Analysing the results of our research we can say that the relationship managers develop with the accounting professional is more important to them than the accounting information itself. The better managers feel about accounting professionals, the more they will trust that accounting information is able to contribute to the development of their business in a sustainable way. Accounting professionals should bear in mind that the information they pass on to managers will have more credibility when the relationship they develop with managers is of high quality. Managers expect accounting professionals to be knowledgeable and flexible at all times. More than 40% of respondents consider this to be an essential quality for an accountant. This shows that managers rely on the accounting professional for news or changes that may occur in legislation, for example, and also shows that managers trust the accounting professional.

For many managers it is more important that the accounting professional manages their time and tasks correctly because they are dependent on this. An accountant who does not manage their time correctly does not show confidence and cannot show professionalism as this can negatively affect the prosperity of the firm. For example, if the manager relies on the accountant to communicate on time everything his company owes to the state and the deadlines for payment, and the accountant, because he is not organised efficiently, is late in communicating these matters to the manager, the company is liable to penalties or this negatively affects cash flow because it means that the company in question has to make overpayments. 15% of managers surveyed consider it essential that an accounting professional is available and prompt. For other managers, it is important that the accounting professional they call on is experienced, as this gives the manager concerned confidence that the accounting professional will perform their tasks effectively. There were also some who placed emphasis on communication with the accounting professional, seeing the ability to communicate easily as an essential quality of an accounting professional.

Given that the accounting professionals are a creators of accounting information, it is relevant that they also have the ability to communicate this information so that it reaches the people concerned and is valued.

Conclusions

The results of the study highlighted the major role and importance given to accounting information both in the management of sustainable businesses and in the decision-making process within these businesses. Managers therefore recognised that accounting information is crucial for assessing a company's financial performance and for informing strategic decisions. The review of the literature on the importance of accounting information in firms revealed that accounting information is the most valuable resource in a company's information system.

They are indispensable in the management activity of a company and provide the main support in the managerial decision-making process. The role of accounting information in companies and its contribution to the efficient conduct of business has been the subject of numerous studies. The use of accounting information in managerial planning and control, the assessment of financial performance and strategic decision-making are key issues in this context. Accounting information has a high priority in decision-making due to its superior certainty, relevance and credibility, and plays a key role in optimising the performance and management of organisations.

We therefore conclude that management's perception of the importance of accounting information and the professional skills of accounting professionals are relevant in the context of sustainability and are critical factors in promoting effective accounting practices and developing business in a sustainable way.

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