

## **TAX OPTIMIZATION IN ROMANIA FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF ACCOUNTING PROFESSIONALS IN SUCEAVA COUNTY**

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### **Abstract**

The tax optimisation dome involves the use of legal methods and strategies, which result from the use of tax deductions, tax exemptions and deferrals or tax planning, all of which can be used to reduce the taxes paid by companies and thereby achieve higher financial ratios. In this context, the aim of our research is to test the level of understanding and awareness of the term tax optimization, the accounting and tax legislation associated with the term tax optimization, and to identify tax optimization proposals by accountants in Suceava County. Subsequent to the proposed purpose, two research objectives were set, which aim, on the one hand, to assess the level of knowledge, perception, experience of the respondents, as well as to identify common trends related to tax optimization, and on the other hand, to assess the knowledge and perceptions of the participants in relation to the regulations and policies applicable in the field of tax optimization, to identify the level of compliance or concern of accountants in applying these regulations, with a focus on identifying the existence of differences in their perception of tax optimization. In order to achieve the set goal and related objectives, qualitative research was used, based on the structured questionnaire technique administered electronically to accountants. The results obtained show a wide acceptance of tax optimisation techniques and strategies among accountants, mainly due to their positive impact on business sustainability. The paper may be useful to the government, tax regulators and auditors, who can base their future tax policies and strategies on the findings of this research, as well as to the academic community, who can use them to guide future research.

### **Keywords**

tax optimisation, accountants' perception, tax predictability, business sustainability

### **JEL Classification**

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## **Introduction**

In recent years, tax optimisation has become a topic of major interest to theorists, practitioners and regulators in the field of accounting and taxation. It refers to the strategic application of accounting methods and tax regulations, in accordance with legal requirements, with the aim of minimising a company's tax liabilities.

With reference to the economic context specific to Romania, we state that it is influenced by a complex and constantly changing tax and legislative environment, which leads to a business environment lacking predictability. For these reasons, we stress that accounting professionals, especially chartered accountants, play a crucial role in ensuring compliance with tax legislation and providing tax advice and services to their clients. At the same time, they need to keep abreast of tax developments and identify legal opportunities for tax optimisation in order to support their clients in maximising tax efficiency and thereby achieving greater liquidity and financial solvency. For these reasons, we considered it more than appropriate and important, in the specific context of Romania, to undertake research on the perception, knowledge and experience of accounting professionals regarding tax optimisation.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to survey the perception of accounting professionals in Suceava County regarding their understanding of the term tax optimization, the accounting and tax legislation associated with the term tax optimization, as well as to identify tax optimization proposals on their part through a structured questionnaire.

In order to achieve the purpose of the research, two main objectives were set:

O1. To assess the level of knowledge, perception, experience of the respondents as well as to identify common trends related to tax optimisation.

O2. To assess participants' knowledge and perceptions of applicable tax optimisation regulations and policies, to identify the level of compliance or concern of accountants in applying these regulations, with a focus on identifying whether there are differences in their perception of tax optimisation.

In order to achieve the purpose and objectives of the research, qualitative research was employed utilizing a questionnaire structured in four sections. These sections aimed to gather information on the respondents' profile, their understanding of the term 'tax optimization', the accounting and tax legislation associated with the term in question, and to identify proposals for tax optimization from accountants in Suceava County.

The detailed analysis of the questionnaire results allows the identification of relevant opinions and provide useful recommendations in the field of tax optimisation from the expert accountants responding to the survey.

The next section of our research is devoted to a review of the literature on the studied topic and is of high importance due to the framing of our research in the existing

publications and highlighting its particular contributions in relation to the results of previous studies.

Therefore, the literature review will provide a broader perspective and better understanding of the perception and usefulness of tax optimization from the perspective of accounting professionals and will serve as a basis for drawing relevant conclusions and making useful recommendations in the field of tax optimization.

### **1. Review of the scientific literature**

As we pointed out in the previous section, we believe that reviewing the literature on the topic under study offers multiple positive valences, primarily stemming from the identification of key findings in the literature focused on tax optimization.

Thus, according to the authors Ciocanea et al. (2021), tax optimization or legal tax evasion, as it is called in the specialized doctrine, is considered to be the result of legal processes that provide the taxpayer with an opportunity to evade the payment of tax obligations "decently" and intelligently towards the state, without violating legal provisions. This makes it all the more important for accountancy professionals to identify the best accounting and tax treatments to help achieve the objective of optimal taxation, with beneficial effects on increasing business value.

In this regard, the study conducted by authors Jindrichovska and Kubickova (2016) and focused on the perception and role of accounting professionals in the Czech Republic and China, revealed that in mainland accounting, such as accounting in the Czech Republic, the main role of accountants lies mainly in calculating and optimizing taxes, while the orientation of accounting in China, to the principles of a capital market economy, have also produced changes in the accounting principles and practices recognized in this country. This shows that there are different perceptions of accounting professionals in the two accounting systems depending on their nationality.

Nicolaescu et al. (2016) draw attention in their study to the perception of accounting professionals, on the one hand, and accounting students, on the other hand, regarding the existence and development of the creative accounting phenomenon. The authors, conclude that both accounting professionals and students consider creative accounting techniques as ways of tax optimization.

The research undertaken by Diamantu and Chiriță (2019) on the perception of individuals regarding the tax payment system, highlighted the role of economic education of individuals regarding taxation and that it is the optimal way of making them aware of their tax liability and that they have a dual role in the tax system, both as a beneficiary and a financier. For these reasons taxpayers need to fully understand the tax system in order to understand the benefits they will receive from the state as a result of paying taxes.

In the same vein, the tax strategy oriented towards optimization is very important both from the perspective of the state, which aims to maximize tax revenues to the state budget,

but also for entities because the goal is the continuous desire to grow the business (Munteanu & Jakubowicz, 2022).

The study by Brühne and Schanz (2022) through the analysis of 33 interviews with 42 tax risk experts and focusing on corporate tax risk management from the perspective of practitioners' perceptions of tax risk, tax risk management practices, and influences leading to variation in tax risk management practices at the entity level, revealed that tax risk is multi-faceted and context-dependent, and comprises six tax risk components in its structure: Financial, reputational, compliance, political, tax process and personal liability, and that communication plays a key role in managing tax risk.

It follows from these considerations that it is important to achieve an optimal level of taxation in a country that contributes to its sustainable development with a high degree of taxpayer acceptability. This high level of tax compliance can only be achieved if the level of goods and services offered to citizens is satisfactory.

The study by Ramírez-Álvarez (2023) aimed at testing the role that accountants play in tax evasion by microenterprises in the Ecuadorian tax system, highlighted the importance of simultaneous persuasive notifications by both accountants and taxpayers in increasing the collection of budget revenue related to declared corporate income tax. In addition, the study showed that accountants' notifications of penalties paid by firms for non-payment of taxes were the most important treatment to reduce tax evasion through under-reporting of income. Paleka and Vitezić (2023) find that increasing taxpayer compliance is one of the main tasks for governments around the world given the increase in taxes as a result of the economic downturn affected by COVID-19.

Burandt (2021) conducted research on the phenomenon of tax competition and its utilization in tax optimization. The author concludes that not all tax optimization practices constitute an abuse of legal provisions, economic freedom, or the global openness of countries' borders. These practices, favouring business decisions regarding the location of companies, suggest that considering all practices involving tax havens as illegal could violate these privileges.

Authors Lungu et al. (2023) point out the negative impact of the interdependent relationship between accounting and tax regulation with respect to tax accounting treatments, which lead to an increase in audit risk due to the international exposure of firms' operations, but also as a result of differences caused by divergent tax regulations between countries.

In conclusion, the literature review highlights that tax optimisation is a current, complex and diversified topic, which incorporates multiple valences generated both by the arguments put forward by researchers in favour of the benefits and necessity of tax optimisation, but also by the warnings regarding the ethical and legal aspects derived from operations that exceed tax optimisation techniques and are associated with tax avoidance.

We therefore believe it is essential that accounting professionals acquire and maintain a high level of professional training and are responsible in the application of tax optimisation techniques so as to ensure compliance with the legal rules in force and minimise the tax risks for their clients.

## **2. Research methodology**

In order to achieve the proposed goal, a structured questionnaire was applied to accountants working in Suceava County, testing their perception of the understanding of the term tax optimization, accounting and tax legislation associated with the term 'tax optimization' and identifying tax optimization proposals from them.

The questionnaire, comprising 30 closed questions, was created and distributed via the Google Forms platform, thus providing an easy and efficient method of collecting data from respondents.

Within the questionnaire, the questions were structured into four distinct sections, each with a specific objective, aimed at collecting the necessary information to achieve the overall research aim and objectives. Thus, the questions in the first section aimed to collect demographic information about the participants, such as age, gender, degree completed and accounting experience. This information allowed us to obtain a complete profile of the accountants involved in the study and to identify possible correlations between demographic characteristics and perceptions of the term tax optimization and their tax optimization solutions and recommendations. The second section includes a set of questions focused on identifying the perception of the term tax optimisation, its understanding and the participants' views on the concept. The questions aimed at identifying common trends used by accountants with reference to tax optimisation as well as assessing the level of knowledge and experience of accountants with regard to tax optimisation. The third section includes questions focused on examining accounting and tax legislation associated with the term tax optimisation, with the aim of assessing participants' knowledge and perceptions of the regulations and policies applicable in this area. The questions also aimed to identify the level of compliance and concern of accountants in applying these regulations as well as to identify the existence of differences in respondents' perceptions of tax optimization. The fourth section includes questions aimed at identifying tax optimisation proposals from the accountants' perspective as well as providing recommendations and strategies for tax optimisation in different business contexts and environments.

As previously mentioned, the questionnaire was electronically sent to the accountants in Suceava County, using the contact information from their personal web pages. Additionally, to maximize, the accountants were contacted by telephone to explain the need and usefulness of the research undertaken. However, only 58 valid responses were received from the targeted accountants. The responses were centralised using the Google Forms platform and subsequently exported using Microsoft Excel, thus obtaining a unified and homogeneous database of responses.

The answers were subjected to processing and interpretation, on each of the four sections of the structured questionnaire, using graphs and charts provided by Google Forms, allowing a clear and coherent presentation of the conclusions drawn from the research, highlighting both the positive aspects and the possible aspects requiring improvement, as well as identifying possible useful recommendations in the field of tax optimisation.

The next section is dedicated to analysing and interpreting the responses provided for each of the four sections of the structured questionnaire, in order to achieve the established purpose and objectives.

### **3. Results and discussions**

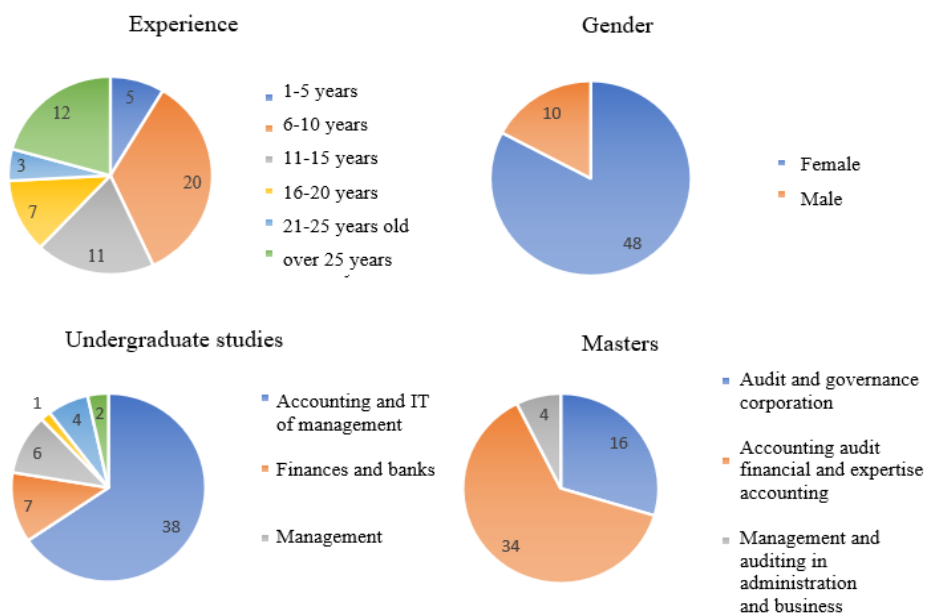
As previously mentioned, this section is dedicated to an in-depth analysis of the results of the questionnaire applied to accountants in Suceava County regarding their perception of the role and importance of tax optimization in ensuring business sustainability. For a better understanding and a coherent presentation of the results of the research, we have resorted to the use of charts and graphs developed in accordance with the answers provided by respondents, aspects that will allow us to highlight the main conclusions and trends identified in terms of tax optimization.

Thus, we have resorted to a presentation of the results obtained on each of the four sections of the structured questionnaire applied to the accountants, in their order, with the highlighting and underlining of the most relevant trends, correlations and important conclusions drawn from the answers provided, in line with our objectives within each section.

Therefore, in the following, we will present the most relevant results and their adjacent discussions, starting with the first section, dedicated to the profiling of the responding accountants through the demographic data provided, and continuing with the sections on the perception of the term tax optimisation, the accounting and tax legislation associated with it, and the proposals for tax optimisation, from the perspective of the responding accountants.

#### **3.1. Results on the profile of the responding accounting professionals**

This section included questions that target the demographic and professional characteristics of the responding accountants, such as gender, age, professional background and accounting experience. Individual graphical presentations were developed to show the distribution of participants according to these criteria. We considered this section important for understanding the context in which these accounting professionals operate, as it may provide relevant insights into their perception of tax optimisation.



**Figure no. 1: Profile of respondents**

Source: own development

From the analysis of the four figures, presented above, which aim to outline a profile of the responding accounting professionals, we deduce that the group of respondents involved in this study presents a significant diversity in terms of their characteristics. Thus, firstly, from Figure 1, a varied distribution of respondents' experience in the accounting field is observed. Thus, only five participants in our study are accounting experts with a low experience, lying in the range of 1-5 years of experience, and a number of 20 participants, fall in the range of 6-10 years of experience in this field. There are also a number of 11 respondents who reported 11-15 years of experience, i.e., medium to advanced experience in accounting, and 12 respondents reported more than 25 years of experience in accounting, which we consider to be high experience. As mentioned above, a relatively homogeneous distribution of respondents' professional experience can be observed. For these reasons, we believe that this variety of respondents, viewed from the perspective of respondents' experience in accounting, may influence their perception and understanding of the term tax optimization, representing an important variable to be taken into account in further analysis of the results. In addition to experience in the field, Figure 1, reveals the distribution of respondents by gender. The results indicate that the majority of participants (48) are female, while a smaller number (10) are male, which means a high proportion of women among accountants in Suceava County.

From the perspective of professional training, it can be seen that most respondents (a number of 33 out of the total number of respondents) are graduates of bachelor's degrees

in accounting, being graduates of the accounting and management information technology study program, followed by 7 graduates of the finance and banking study program. We note that a small number of respondents are graduates (i.e., 6 respondents) of other fields of study, i.e., Management and Marketing, Economics of Tourism Trade and Services, Business Administration. This distribution reveals a high specialisation of professionals in the field of Accounting and Finance, which means that they are expected to have a specialised knowledge of tax optimisation. It is also noted that the advanced training of respondents (Master's degree) was also in the field of accounting and auditing (i.e., 86% of respondents out of the total population) and 14% of respondents are Master's graduates in Management and Business Administration. From the above, we can highlight the fact that accountants in Suceava have an average to high experience in the field of accounting, belong mostly to the feminine gender and have an adequate university education, both in terms of undergraduate studies in accounting and by continuing these studies at the master's level, in the same field of study. We believe that these data, according to which we have outlined the profile of the accountant in Suceava county, represent the premises that will influence the respondents' perceptions and understanding of tax optimization, and which we consider important in the analysis and interpretation of the results.

### 3.2. The perception of the term fiscal optimization in the eyes of the respondents

If the previous section was dedicated to questions allowing us to outline a profile of the accountant in Suceava County, the second section aimed at testing the perception of accounting professionals regarding the level of familiarity with the concept of tax optimization, as well as the opinion and perception of respondents regarding its usefulness and importance in ensuring business sustainability.

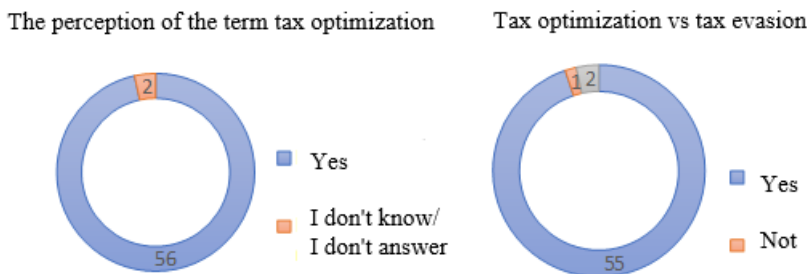


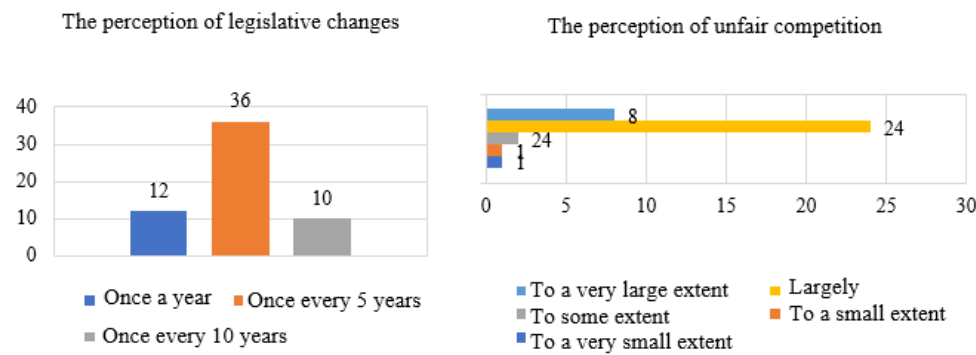
Figure no. 2: Perception of the term tax optimization and its comparison with tax evasion

Source: own development

The results of our study, from this perspective, and which can also be viewed in figure no. 2, revealed that most of the respondents, who are accounting experts, are familiar with the concept of tax optimization and understand the clear difference between it and the concept of tax evasion, this also suggests that the accounting experts questioned used



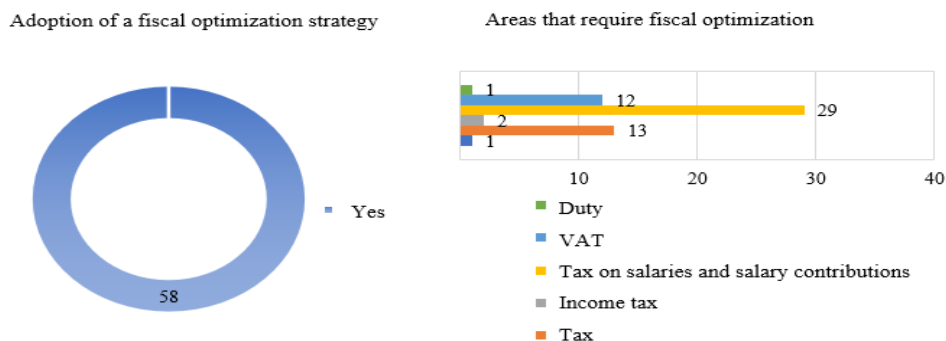
techniques and strategies in their work of fiscal optimization. Also, the results obtained demonstrate that they understand the distinction between the legal and ethical use of tax strategies and the illegal or fraudulent actions of tax evasion, used to avoid paying taxes.



**Figure no. 3: The perception of the frequency of fiscal legislative changes, respectively of the unfair competition of evasive companies**

Source: own development

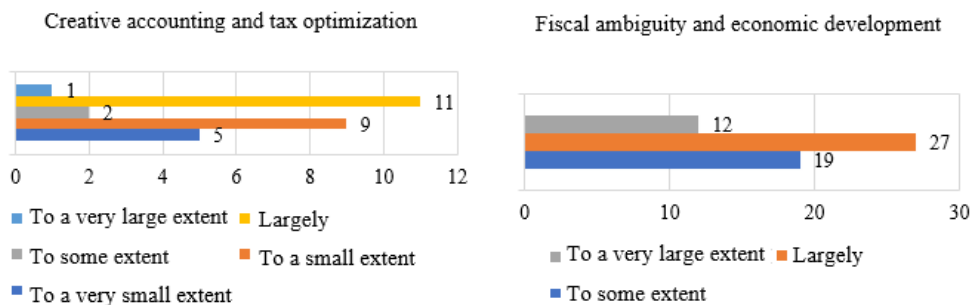
As we see in figure no. 3, professional accountants believe that fiscal legislative changes should take place once every 5 years and recognize the significant impact of unfair competition by evasive firms on other commercial companies. These conclusions highlight the importance of a moderate frequency of legislative changes, i.e., ensuring a stable and predictable tax system, and the need to combat unfair competition to ensure a fair and equitable competitive environment for all businesses. In our view, these are also the optimal ways to ensure the optimal development of companies.



**Figure no. 4: The opinion regarding the adoption of a fiscal optimization strategy, respectively areas that need fiscal optimization**

Source: own development

Regarding the polling of respondents' opinion regarding the adoption of a fiscal optimization strategy as well as the areas that require fiscal optimization strategies (according to figure no. 4), the respondents consider that the adoption of fiscal optimization strategies is an important and necessary aspect in their profession, because these fiscal policies adopted can lead to positive financial results for the company. The results of the study indicate a favorable opinion regarding the adoption of such a strategy, at the company level, which denotes the confidence of these experts in the importance of fiscal optimization, as a successful managerial strategy in achieving optimal financial advantages (a high degree of liquidity, creditworthiness and financial solvency) in accordance with existing tax legislation. Also, the accounting experts questioned are of the opinion that there is a need for fiscal optimization in areas such as profit tax, VAT and salary contributions, which denotes the involvement and responsibility of accounting experts in the efficient management of fiscal aspects and in fulfilling fiscal obligations in a legal and ethical way.



**Figure no. 5: The perception of the link between creative accounting and the avoidance of tax burdens and the instability and ambiguity of the tax framework**  
 Source: own development

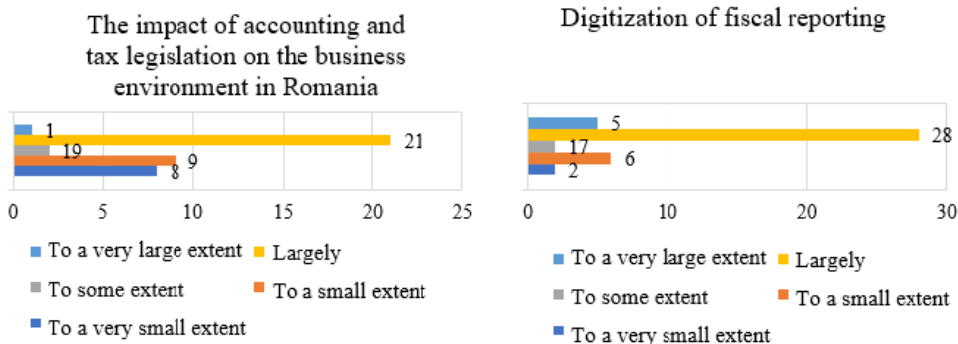
From the perspective of the perception of the link between creative accounting and the avoidance of tax burdens, respectively the instability and ambiguity of the tax framework (according to figure no. 5), the results show that accounting experts have varied opinions regarding the link between creative accounting and the avoidance of tax burdens, as well as about the impact of the instability and ambiguities of the fiscal framework on the development of economic entities.

Thus, there are differences in perception regarding the contribution of creative accounting in avoiding tax burdens, and accounting experts recognize the negative impact of the instability and ambiguities of the tax framework on the development of economic entities. These conclusions emphasize the complexity and importance of fiscal management in the context of ensuring the sustainable development of companies, the need for a stable and clear fiscal framework, with major implications for facilitating the development of enterprises.

**3.3 Evaluation of the level of knowledge of the accounting and fiscal legislation and the need to achieve the fiscal optimum in the eyes of the respondents**

Section III of the questionnaire of the structured questionnaire focused on questions related to accounting and fiscal legislation and the need felt by them regarding fiscal optimization. Thus, the questions in this section aimed to assess the level of knowledge and understanding of the respondents regarding the legislative aspects that regulate fiscal optimization practices. In our view, accounting and tax legislation play a crucial role in the definition and application of tax optimization strategies and that it is essential that accounting experts are aware of these regulations in order to provide quality services and ensure compliance with legal regulations in the field of accounting and taxation. Therefore, testing the level of familiarity of the respondents with the accounting and tax legislation relevant for tax optimization, as well as the way in which they apply it in their professional practice, represent aspects that we consider of crucial importance for companies. We also consider it important to test the level of information and the competence of accounting experts in the field of fiscal optimization, as well as to identify possible gaps or ambiguities in accounting and fiscal matters that may require additional attention from the state and regulatory bodies.

For these reasons, the questions in this section were formulated to test the level of knowledge, perception and application of accounting and tax legislation in the context of tax optimization among accounting professionals.



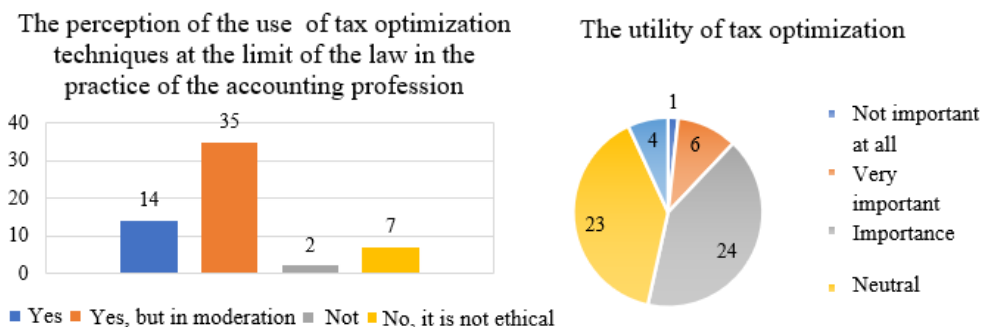
**Figure no. 6: The perception of the impact of the complexity of accounting and tax legislation on the business environment in Romania, respectively the lack of a real-time electronic tax reporting system**

*Source: own development*

Therefore, in assessing the perception of accounting professionals regarding the impact of the complexity of accounting and tax legislation on Romania’s business environment in, as well as the absence of a real-time electronic tax reporting system (figure no. 6), the results reveal that these professionals believe the high complexity of such accounting and tax legislation significantly impacts the business environment in Romania. Furthermore, they perceive that the lack of a real-time electronic tax reporting system has a significant

impact on the tax reporting process to the tax administration. These results highlight the need to simplify and clarify the legislation, as well as the implementation of an efficient fiscal reporting system, to support the development and competitiveness of the Romanian business environment.

Likewise, accounting professionals indicate the existence of a diversity of opinions and perceptions among accounting professionals regarding the use of tax optimization techniques within the limits of the law and the usefulness of this practice in accounting activity (figure no. 7). Thus, some of the respondents show an openness towards the use of tax optimization techniques, either with measure or even when they are at the limit of legality. We believe that this opinion may be influenced by the desire to maximize tax and financial advantages for organizations. On the other hand, there are professional accountants who reject the use of these techniques, either for legal or ethical reasons, considering it inconsistent with professional norms and ethics.



**Figure no. 7: The perception of the use of tax optimization techniques at the limit of the law in the practice of the accounting profession and the usefulness of tax optimization**

*Source: own development*

Regarding the usefulness of using fiscal optimization in accounting practice, the results indicated the existence of two currents of opinion, among the respondents. Thus, some respondents consider that tax optimization is very important or important for companies, recognizing the significant benefits brought by this practice, and others adopt a neutral attitude or even consider it of little importance, citing aspects related to ambiguity or scepticism regarding the benefits that tax optimization can bring for companies.

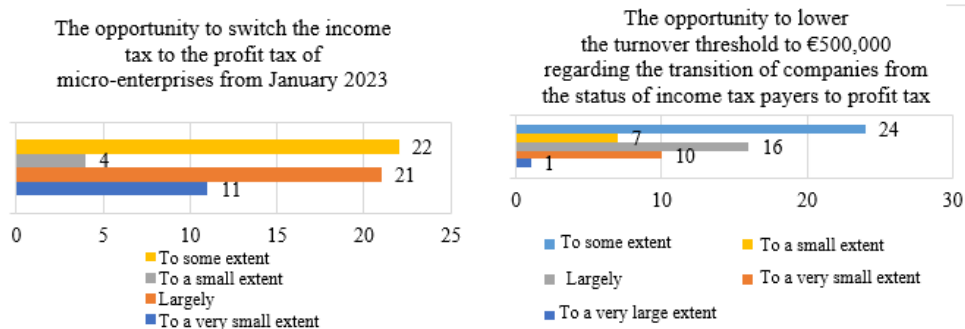


Figure no. 8: Perception of the latest tax legislative changes

Source: own development

Regarding the respondents' opinion regarding the fiscal changes (the opportunity for micro-enterprises to switch from income tax to profit tax from January 1, 2023, respectively the decrease of the turnover threshold to 500,000 euros regarding the transition from income tax payer to the profit tax, according to figure no. 8), the results show that most of the respondents consider it opportune to move micro-enterprises from the category of income tax payers to the profit tax, recognizing the advantages and potential benefits of this change, the number of sceptics being many more reduced. Regarding the lowering of the turnover threshold to €500,000 for the transition of companies from income tax to profit tax, the opinion of the respondents is very varied, from the significant support of this proposal to the rejection or reservation towards it.

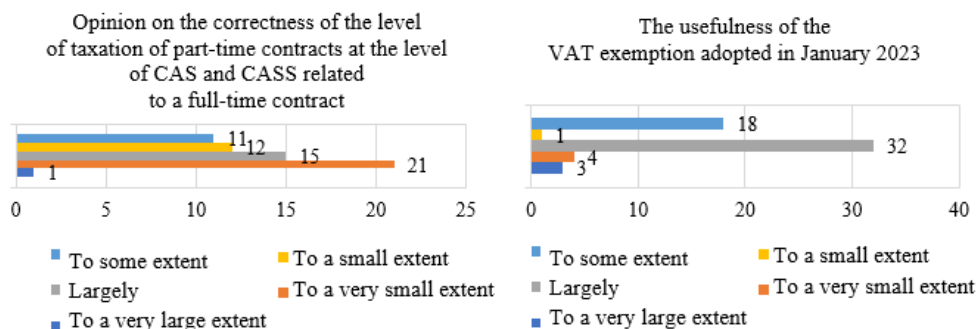


Figure no. 9: Opinion on the level of taxation of part-time contracts, respectively VAT exemptions

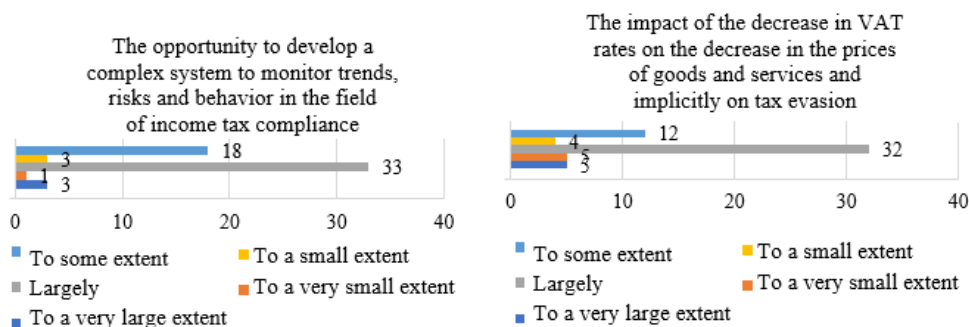
Source: own development

Regarding the opinion of the respondents regarding the taxation of part-time contracts (highlighted in figure no. 9), the results obtained indicate the existence of a tendency of

dissatisfaction among most accounting professionals regarding the current level of taxation of these contracts (at the level the charging of a full-time contract, for those who have only a part-time contract), compared to a significant number of respondents who consider that the charging level is correct. In contrast, the majority of respondents perceive the VAT exemptions adopted in January 2023 as useful to a great extent or to some extent, and only a minority segment of respondents expressed a less favorable perception of these tax facilities. We believe that a more detailed analysis of the benefits and impact of VAT exemptions can bring a more complete perspective on them, as well as to objectively evaluate and inform the decision-making process in fiscal and economic matters.

### 3.4. Identification of tax optimization proposals from the perspective of accounting experts

In the fourth section of the structured questionnaire, we focused on obtaining tax optimization proposals from the respondents. Therefore, the purpose of this section resides in the desire to evaluate the ideas and suggestions of the participants regarding possible improvements in the tax field.

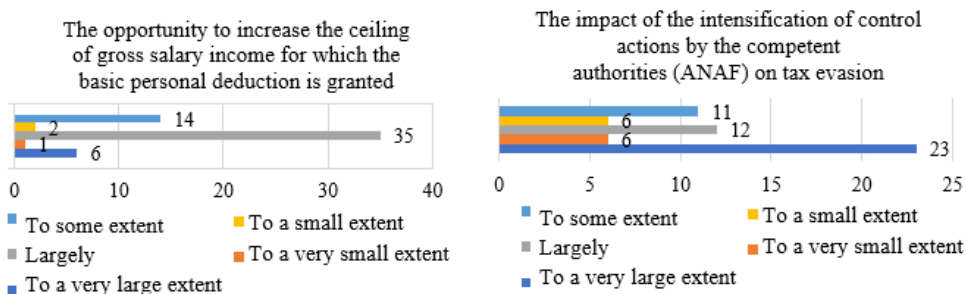


**Figure no. 10: Opinion regarding compliance in the field of income tax and reduction of VAT rates**

Source: own development

Thus, regarding the respondents' opinion regarding compliance in the field of income tax and the reduction of VAT rates, according to figure no. 10, most respondents consider it appropriate to develop a complex system for monitoring trends, risks and behavior in the income tax field. This indicates recognition of the importance of rigorous monitoring to ensure tax compliance and identify risks or irregularities. However, there are also a small number of respondents with a more reserved or contrary opinion, expressing concerns about the costs or complexity of implementing such a system. Also, the majority of respondents believe that the reduction of VAT rates would lead to a decrease in the prices of goods and services, having a positive impact on the reduction of tax evasion. However, there are also divergent views on the size of this impact, with some respondents considering it negligible or minor. These differences of opinion reflect the diversity of

perspective and experience of respondents regarding the relationship between VAT rates and tax evasion.

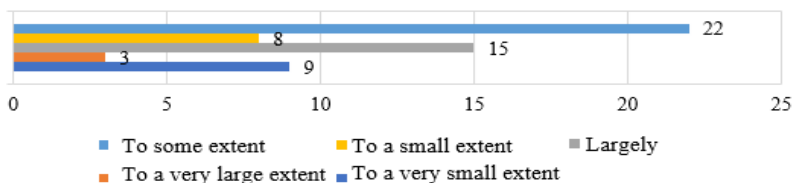


**Figure no. 11: The perception of the opportunity to increase the gross salary income ceiling for which grants the basic personal deduction, respectively the intensification of control actions by ANAF**

Source: own development

As regards the respondents' perception of the appropriateness of increasing the ceiling of the gross salary income for which the basic personal deduction is granted, i.e., the intensification of control actions by the bodies with tax control powers (ANAF), as can be seen in Figure 11, the majority of respondents consider it appropriate to increase the ceiling of the gross salary income for which the basic personal deduction is granted. This indicates the need to adjust this ceiling in order to provide a higher personal deduction and to boost employees' net wage income. There are, however, also divergent views, belonging to a small number of respondents, expressing that such an increase is not necessary or would not have a significant impact. In addition, a majority of respondents believe that increased control actions by the competent authorities, in particular by ANAF, would reduce tax evasion. This perception indicates a recognition that stricter supervision and sanctions against tax evaders can significantly contribute to reducing tax evasion.

The impact of the adoption of the e-invoice system on the reduction of tax evasion



**Figure no. 12: The perception of the impact of the adoption of the e-invoice system on the reduction of tax evasion**

Source: own development

Regarding the survey on the perception of the impact of the adoption of the e-Invoice system on the reduction of tax evasion, according to the data in Figure 12, most of the respondents (47 respondents) consider that the adoption of the e-Invoice system contributes significantly to the reduction of tax evasion. This perspective is supported by the fact that the use of e-Invoice can bring transparency and efficiency in the process of invoicing and recording business transactions, thus limiting the possibilities of tax evasion. At the same time, there are also a smaller number of respondents who are less convinced of the impact of the e-invoice system, indicating to a very small extent (3 respondents) or to a small extent (8 respondents) that it would have a limited effect in reducing tax evasion.

### **Conclusions**

Our research paper, highlights the crucial importance of tax optimisation in the context of responsible management of tax liabilities, emphasising its benefits and implication in promoting a transparent, fair and favourable tax environment for both taxpayers and the tax system as a whole. Its main purpose was to investigate the perception of accounting professionals in Suceava County regarding tax optimization in the context of Romania's current accounting and tax regulations. We investigated their attitudes, opinions and perceptions regarding the importance and effectiveness of tax optimization in the Romanian business environment.

Thus, the results of the structured questionnaire administered to accounting professionals revealed valuable information on how accounting professionals perceive and understand tax optimization in a specific context, thus identifying key issues that may influence their behaviour and decisions in this area. Thus, the results of the study demonstrated a full understanding and applicability of tax optimisation strategies among accounting professionals, who are aware of the importance of adopting such strategies in order to improve the financial situation of entities and ensure the sustainability of businesses.

The results of our survey revealed that the majority of respondents are familiar with the concept of tax optimisation and understand the clear difference between it and the concept of tax avoidance, suggesting that the accountants surveyed have used tax optimisation techniques and strategies in their work. The results also show that they understand the distinction between the legal and ethical use of tax strategies, i.e., tax optimisation strategies, and the illegal or fraudulent actions of tax avoidance used to avoid paying taxes.

Respondents also agree with a moderate frequency of legislative changes (they believe that these should not be made faster than 5 years), i.e. ensuring a stable and predictable tax system and the need to take measures to combat unfair competition and ensure a fair and equitable competitive environment for all businesses, which in our view are also the best ways to ensure optimal devolution of companies, together with the need for a stable and clear tax framework, with major implications on facilitating business development.

The results also highlight the need for tax optimisation in areas such as corporate tax, VAT and payroll contributions, which shows the involvement and responsibility of



accountants in managing tax issues efficiently and in fulfilling tax obligations in a legal and ethical way.

Testing the perception of accounting professionals on the impact of the complexity of accounting and tax legislation on the business environment in Romania, i.e. the lack of a real-time electronic tax reporting system, revealed that the surveyed accountants believe that a high complexity of accounting and tax legislation has a significant impact on the business environment in Romania and that the lack of a real-time electronic tax reporting system has a significant impact on the tax reporting process to the tax administration. This highlights the need to simplify and clarify legislation and implement an efficient tax reporting system to support the development and competitiveness of the Romanian business environment. In terms of the tax optimization strategies that accounting professionals perceive as most appropriate, the results of our survey revealed pertinent findings provided by respondents. Thus, in terms of the respondents' opinion on income tax compliance and lower VAT rates, the majority of respondents consider it appropriate to develop a comprehensive system for monitoring trends, risks and behaviour in the field of income tax. This indicates recognition of the importance of rigorous monitoring to ensure tax compliance and identify risks or irregularities, with a small number of respondents with a more reserved or contrary view, expressing concerns about the cost or complexity of implementing such a system, reinforcing the above. The majority of respondents also believe that lower VAT rates would lead to lower prices for goods and services, with notable effects and a positive impact on reducing tax evasion. Respondents also considered it appropriate to increase the ceiling of gross salary income for which the basic personal deduction is granted, i.e., to intensify control actions by the bodies in charge of tax control (ANAF). This indicates the need to adjust this ceiling in order to provide a higher personal deduction and to stimulate employees' net salary income. In addition, the majority of respondents believe that increased control actions by the competent authorities, in particular ANAF, would reduce tax evasion. Respondents also believe that the use of e-invoicing can bring transparency and efficiency to the process of invoicing and recording business transactions, thus limiting the scope for tax evasion.

We believe that the results obtained can be useful both to the state and to the regulatory and control bodies in the field of accounting and taxation, with a view to drawing up future accounting and tax regulations and to the management of entities that can develop their tax optimisation strategies on the basis of these results. Also, our results can be useful for the academic world that can use these results for the foundation of future scientific works on this topic. At the same time, we also consider it important to mention that the results of the questionnaire analysis do not represent a complete generalization of the entire population of accountants, but reflect the specific perceptions and opinions of the questionnaire participants, especially as the main research limitation identified is the small number of respondents surveyed. Nevertheless, we believe that these results can provide valuable clues and information for understanding how tax optimization is perceived and used in the accounting field.

We also believe that further research is needed in particular in relation to the tax changes that came into force on 1 January 2023, which we consider to be extremely recent, and which will represent new future research directions for us as well.

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