

OUTSOURCING OF FINANCIAL AND ACCOUNTING SERVICES IN BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

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Purpose: The aim of this article is to analyse and evaluate the use of financial-accounting outsourcing services in the management of enterprises. With the development of financial-accounting services, the application of elements of automation and robotisation in financial-accounting IT programmes, the basic function of accounting – the information function – is gaining new importance.

Methodology/approach: In the course of research work, studies of Polish and foreign literature were carried out in the field of: management, accounting, the corporate sector, outsourcing, and IT systems used in accounting. A CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interview) survey questionnaire was used as a research tool in the empirical study. The survey was conducted with two groups of respondents: accountants preparing and providing information from the financial accounting subsystem, and managers of enterprises – recipients of information.

Findings: The results obtained cannot be generalised, but they confirm the advantages and disadvantages of using outsourcing services, set new directions for the entrepreneur's communication with the accounting office, and the informational function of accounting in the process of outsourcing financial and accounting services is also gaining new importance.

Practical implications: Development of new channels of communication between the entrepreneur with the accounting office.

Originality/value: The results of the survey provide a new perspective on outsourcing services in the context of the development of modern technologies and new communication and data processing channels and data processing.

Keywords: outsourcing, management, financial and accounting services.

Category of the paper: research paper.

1. Introduction

Outsourcing is a concept well established in the practice of managing organisations. Over the last 50 years, and in Poland since the 1990s, it has evolved from the outsourcing of isolated simple business functions to a strategic management concept. According to this concept, the words formulated by H. Ford: "if there is something we cannot do more efficiently,

cheaper and better than our competitors, there is no point in us doing it. We should hire someone to do the job better"(Grudzewski, Hejduk, 2004) are an expression of the adopted philosophy of action. Insufficient knowledge of business owners, complemented by the complicated legal and tax system in Poland, favour the decision to outsource financial and accounting services. Particularly acute problems in this regard are observed in the tax system (Molenda, Burzyńska, 2023). Accounting and financial functions are easily subject to processes of standardisation and coding and are therefore suitable for outsourcing. Business entities decide to outsource a selected area of accounting shiftily due to cost control (Bolcu, Boharu, 2021). In Poland, accounting outsourcing services are carried out both by traditional accounting offices, outsourcing companies offering back-office services implemented as part of BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) and foreign shared service centres named Service Share Centers (Marcinkowska, 2015).

Accounting outsourcing consists of transferring individual accounting functions to external entities in order to reduce operating costs and gain access to accounting expertise and skills. In financial and accounting outsourcing, we should additionally focus on the tasks and functions performed by financial and accounting services (Molenda, Burzyńska, 2023).

The aim of this article is to analyse and evaluate financial and accounting outsourcing services in enterprise management. During the research work, studies of Polish and foreign literature were carried out. The literature research used the method of indirection and deduction. The empirical study then used the methods of synthesis and analysis, using a survey questionnaire as a research tool. An important element of the empirical research was the evaluation of outsourcing services by two groups of respondents: accountants providing information and managers using information in day-to-day decision-making and strategic management. The size of the business entity was used as the main criterion for evaluating financial and accounting outsourcing services and the following research questions were formulated:

- How do accountants rate the advantages of financial and accounting outsourcing?
- How do managers rate the advantages of financial and accounting outsourcing?
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- How do accountants rate the cooperation in the implementation of financial and accounting outsourcing services?
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The carried-out study allowed for the development of a model for the outsourcing of financial and accounting services oriented towards supporting the implementation of business management functions. The model takes into account the use of modern technologies, online communication between entities and the National System of e-Invoicing, which will become mandatory for entrepreneurs from July 1, 2024.

The article updates the results of the research conducted by the author for her doctoral thesis, entitled: 'Accounting information system in the management of small and medium-sized enterprises'.

2. The essence of outsourcing financial and accounting services in the accounting information system

The term outsourcing comes from the English language and is an abbreviation of three words: outside, resource, and using. In Poland, according to the PWN Encyclopaedia, outsourcing means a management strategy consisting in commissioning to a specialised external company the performance of tasks that are not directly related to the core business of the commissioning company. Outsourcing was designed in the 1970s in the United States. It was based on handing over to external companies some of the inconvenient business functions, e.g., property guarding or cleaning services (Grudzewski, Hejduk, 2004). In Europe, the term 'outsourcing' was first used in 1979 and referred to the acquisition of German automotive projects by British entrepreneurs. In Poland, the development of outsourcing occurred in the 1990s. In the literature, a definition of outsourcing was formulated by Bendor-Samuel. He defined outsourcing as "the entrustment by an organisation of the execution of a specific process to a service provider, specifying in detail the results that the client intends to achieve, but without instructions on how to perform individual tasks, leaving the initiative in this respect to the contractor" (Bendor-Samuel, 2001). According to M.F. Greaver Junior, outsourcing means "the transfer of an organisation's recurring internal tasks, the staff, machinery, equipment, technology and other resources related to their execution, as well as the decision-making competence regarding their use, to external service providers in accordance with the provisions in the contract (contract)" (Greaver Junior, 1999). In the Polish literature, it is worth noting that outsourcing is "an undertaking consisting in separating from the organisational structure of the parent enterprise the functions performed by it and transferring them to be performed by other business entities" (Trocki, 2001). The impact of outsourcing on changing the organisational structure of a company and its contacts with the environment was emphasised by J. Penc. According to him, "outsourcing is the use of comprehensive services that are a combination of various partial services sold and billed as a unit, which are offered by external contractors - bidders" (Penc, 1997). J. Oleński perceives outsourcing as "a method of optimising the use of a company's resources and means, involving the execution of process functions belonging to the tasks of an economic or social entity (enterprise, public administration unit, social institution and others) by external entities" (Oleński, Bliźniuk, Nowak, 2005).

Extensive research on the outsourcing of accounting and tax consultancy, the organisation of the cooperation of entities in the SME sector was conducted by Matejun (Matejun, 2006, pp. 21-29; Matejun, 2009). Determining the importance of employee ethics in accounting outsourcing was dealt with by Górska (Górska, 2016). Matejun presented criteria for the selection of an outsourcing provider affecting the quality of cooperation between entities (Matejun, 2009; Matejun, 2011). The competences of employees of accounting offices offering outsourcing services in small entities were analysed by Juźwicka and Zakrzewska-Bielawska (Juźwicka, Zakrzewska-Bielawska, 2014). The organisation of the accounting system as a process in large entities, of which an increasing number of components are purchased in the form of accounting services, was presented by Sobańska (Sobańska, 2011).

The need to reduce operating costs in the activities of business entities to gain access to modern technology and expertise, are increasing the need to outsource financial and accounting services. Accounting functions are becoming the central source of all information and entities are using outsourcing as a strategy to improve their performance. The use of modern technologies is accelerating the digital transformation towards Industry 5.0, in which the execution of all processes, including accounting, is changing (Balicka, 2023). Digitisation and automation support the outsourcing of financial and accounting services by enabling remote service delivery and instant access to accounting data. Accountants freed from the burden of repetitive and routine tasks are more able to focus on value-adding tasks such as reporting and business consulting (Isip, 2022). The use of outsourcing of financial and accounting services by companies has contributed to a different view of the information function of accounting. The information function of accounting, which is changing under the influence of the use of modern technology, is playing a special role towards the creative function, the creation of added value through real-time information provided.

3. Methodology of the study

For the purpose of this article, the author conducted a study of both desk-based and primary data analyses. In the first stage, empirical research on the state of outsourcing of financial and accounting services in the management area was reviewed. Based on the analysis of the literature review, the author decided to select two groups of respondents for the primary research. One of them were the accountants participating in qualification courses organised by the Accountants Association in Poland – Regional Branch in Bydgoszcz. The other group are the managers/directors/owners managing companies. Within both groups, detailed criteria were defined for the entry of a particular group into the survey, hence the sample selection was purposive.

Methodology for surveying accountants

In the group of accountants, it was taken as the main classification criterion that the respondent should have completed at least Level II, III, IV certification of the accounting profession. This criterion ensured that reliable information was obtained from a person with appropriate professional qualifications. Providing high quality financial information requires knowledge and competence supported by a certificate. In the group of accountants, the research tool was a survey questionnaire prepared both in paper form: PAPI (Paper and Pencil Interview), and CAWI - Computer - Assisted Web Interview. Semi-open questions with the option to answer 'Other (What?)', and closed questions were used, and a nominal scale (including Likert-type scale) was adopted as part of the measurement scale. The survey was addressed to 164 accountants attending qualification courses. Upon receipt of the return of the questionnaires submitted, a validation of the questionnaires was carried out. 144 complete and properly completed questionnaires were obtained. The numerical data were coded into a matrix in the form of an Excel file, into which data were also incorporated from the electronic survey collection system.

Methodology for surveying companies

In the case of enterprises, it was assumed that the respondent completing the survey questionnaire must be a person holding one of the following positions in the enterprise:

- owner/manager of the company,
- holding a top management position (strategic level),
- holding a middle management position,
- holding a management position at operational level.

As in the group of accountants, the research tool was a CAWI (Computer - Assisted Web Interview) survey questionnaire, which included questions analogous to those for the group of accountants. The questionnaire was addressed to 474 entities cooperating with the Centre for Knowledge and Technology Transfer of the Bydgoszcz University of Science and Technology. 107 correctly completed questionnaires were accepted for an in-depth analysis. The size of the enterprise was adopted as the comparative criteria of both groups relating to the assumed aims of the study. After the completion of the surveys carried out in both groups, the results were collated and conclusions were drawn, which served to develop the concept of outsourcing financial and accounting services presented in section 5 of the article.

4. Results of the study

The survey was conducted among accountants participating in 2nd, 3rd, 4th degree courses conducted by the Accountants Association in Poland – Regional Branch in Bydgoszcz. A total of 144 accountants participated in the survey. The most numerous groups of respondents consisted of accountants employed in small entities: 76 persons, followed by medium-sized entities: 52 persons, and large entities: 16 respondents.

In the following inquiry, the respondents answered the question about their job position in the company. The results are shown in Figure 1.

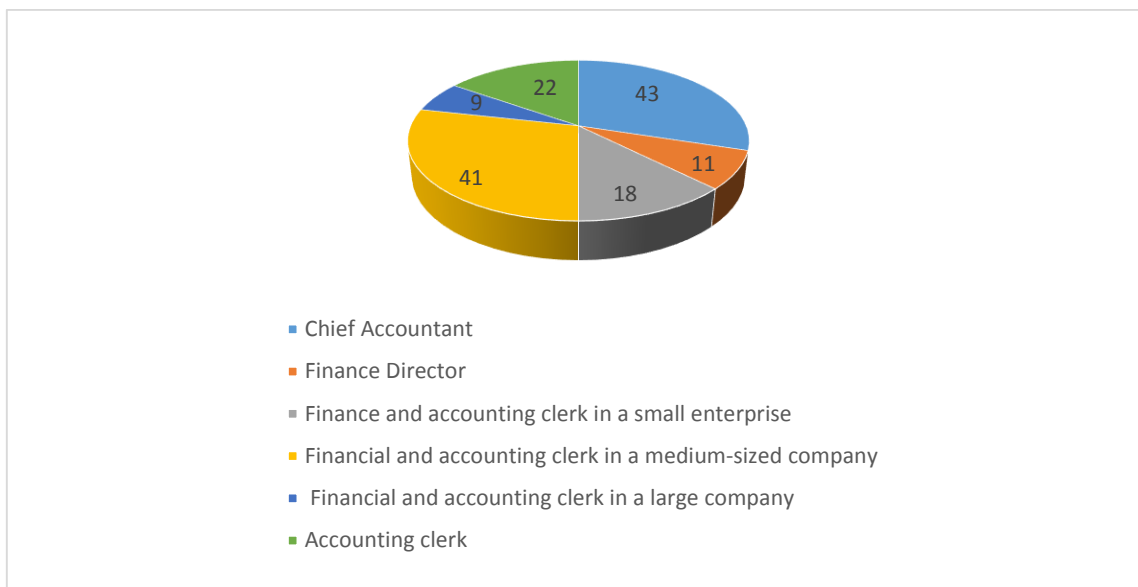


Figure 1. The position occupied by the accountant.

Source: own study.

Most frequently, the respondents surveyed were employed in the position of chief accountant: 43 respondents, and in the finance and accounting services of medium-sized enterprises: 41 respondents. The survey also included 11 finance directors, 22 employees of accounting offices and 18 employees of finance and accounting services of small enterprises, and 9 employed in large entities. Employees of companies in the manufacturing, service and retail sectors participated in the survey.

In the relevant part of the survey, respondents first assessed the advantages of outsourcing their bookkeeping. The results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1.

Advantages of entrusting financial and accounting services to an external entity in the opinion of accountants

Advantages of entrusting financial and accounting services to an external company	Small entrepreneurs	Medium entrepreneurs	Large entrepreneurs
sense of security resulting from the comprehensive provision of services	35,0%	51,0%	30,8%
saving of time	64,9%	67,3%	64,3%
lower costs than in-house financial and accounting department	55,7%	57,1%	50%
receiving up-to-date information about changes in legal, tax and accounting regulations	63,0%	67,3%	38,5%
avoidance of errors, penalties, reimbursement of subsidies received	61,3%	65,3%	30,8%
preparation of necessary reporting for the entity	54,3%	22,4%	53,8%
provision of individual solutions adapted to the company's needs	43,1%	36,7%	46,1%
quality of outsourcing services/access to expert knowledge	59,9%	69,4%	38,5%
support in making business decisions	41,2%	55,1%	38,5%
ensuring data security in the IT financial and accounting programme	63,2%	51,0%	30,8%

* The results represent the sum of the definitely important and important categories.

Source: own study.

In the opinion of accountants, saving time is *definitely important* and *important* in entrusting financial and accounting services to an external entity. Accountants employed by small entities additionally pointed to the avoidance of penalty errors (61.3% of indications), ensuring the security of financial and accounting data (63.2% of indications) and lower costs than an in-house financial and accounting department.

Medium-sized accountants rated the quality of outsourcing services/access to professional knowledge (69.4% of indications), receipt of up-to-date information on changing legal/tax regulations (67.3% of indications) and, similarly to small accountants, avoidance of mistakes (65.3% of indications) as *important* and *definitely important*. Respondents employed in large entities rated the advantages of outsourcing financial and accounting services lowest, pointing to time savings (64.3% of indications) and preparation of reporting for the entity's needs (53.8% of indications).

In the next question, respondents rated the disadvantages of outsourcing financial and accounting services. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2.*Disadvantages of outsourcing financial and accounting services in the opinion of accountants*

Disadvantage of outsourcing financial and accounting services to an external company	Small entrepreneurs	Medium entrepreneurs	Large entrepreneurs
limitation to the knowledge and experience of one outsourcing company	27,2%	46,9%	69,2%
lower level of control over financial and accounting documentation	56,1%	49%	84,6%
lack of knowledge of company specifics/individual approach	65,1%	32,7%	61,5%
longer time of realization of orders	56,7%	61,2%	69,2%
lack of current access to financial and accounting data	57,4%	71,4%	69,2%
risk of losing financial and accounting data	34,3%	44,9%	61,5%
lack of support in taking business decisions	56,3%	61,2%	69,2%

* The results represent the sum of the definitely important and important categories.

Source: own study.

All the disadvantages mentioned in the questionnaire of finance-accounting outsourcing services to an external entity were rated by accountants working in large entities as *important* and *definitely important*. Accountants working in medium-sized entities additionally pointed to the longer lead time (61.2% of indications), lack of current access to financial data (71.4% of indications) and lack of support in making business decisions (61.2% of indications). Accountants employed by small entities were least likely to perceive disadvantages of outsourcing accounting services. They pointed out the lack of company-specific knowledge/individual approach (65.1% of indications) and the lack of support in business decision-making (56.3% of indications).

Accountants offering outsourced services evaluated their cooperation with companies. This cooperation was assessed by accountants employed by small and medium-sized entities and accounting offices. Large entities employing accountants had their own finance and accounting departments. As far as weaknesses were concerned, two aspects were highlighted: the timeliness of delivered documents, and errors in delivered accounting documents, which was particularly important in the aspect of cooperation with an outsourcing company. The most frequently indicated advantages were the storage of accounting documents (76% of total indications for values from +3 to +5) and the qualifications of the employees of the accounting office (73% of total indications for values from +3 to +5). Next in order of importance, indicated by 65% of the respondents, was both time saving in accounting and tax decisions, and the risk of losing data in the financial and accounting programme. The results are shown in Figure 2.

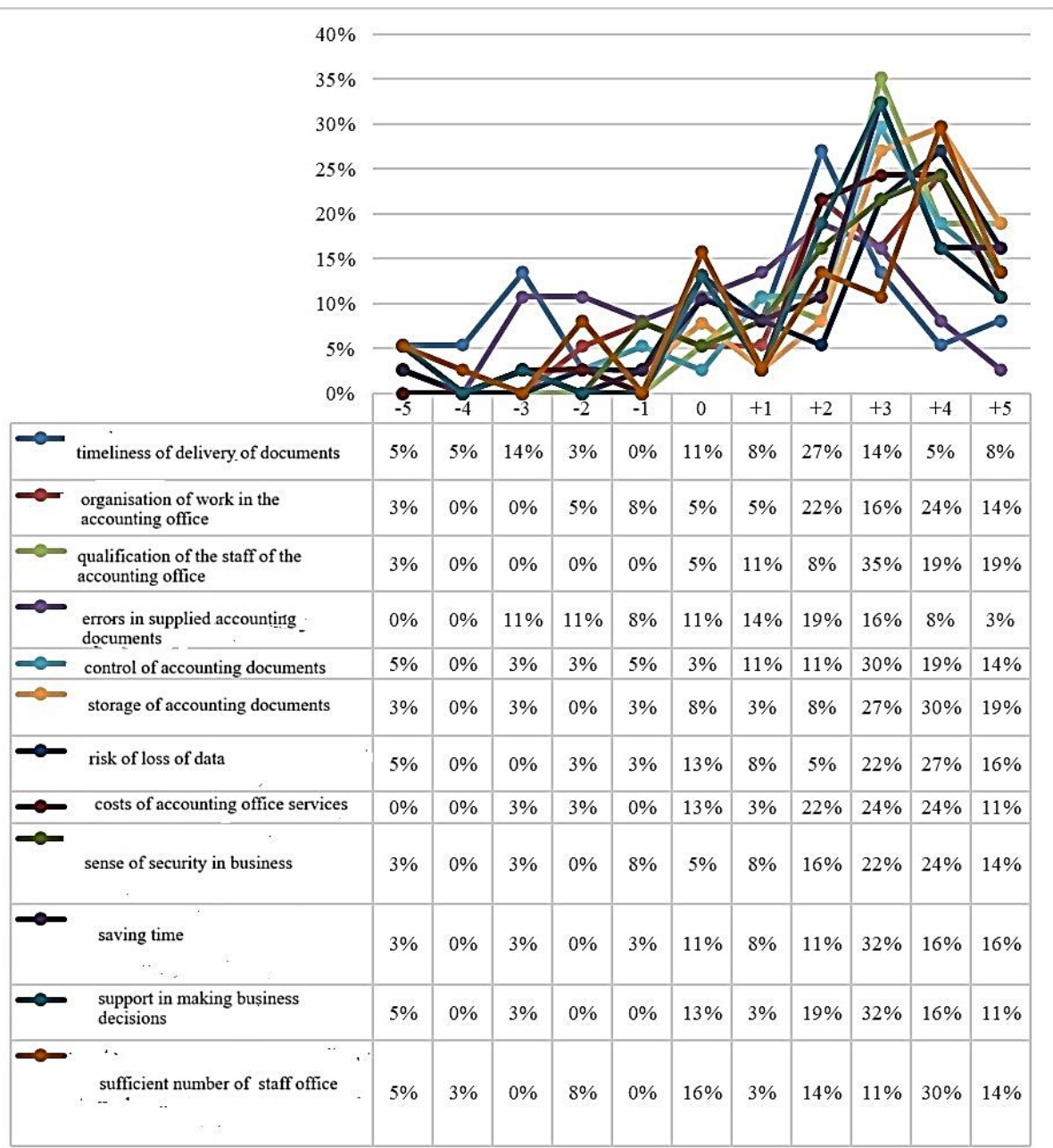


Figure 2. Weaknesses and strengths of business cooperation with an outsourcing company.

Source: own study.

In the next stage of the survey process, business managers responsible for carrying out the management function in the entities were interviewed. 107 entrepreneurs correctly filled in the survey questionnaire. The most numerous groups were entrepreneurs/owners of small entities with 62 respondents, followed by the medium-sized ones with 39 respondents and the large ones with 6 managers. The job structure of entrepreneurs is shown in Figure 3.

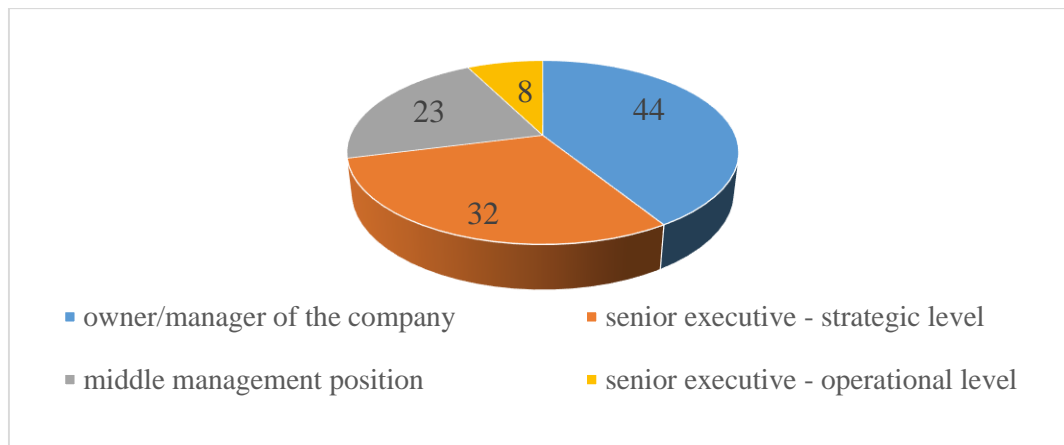


Figure 3. The position occupied by the manager.

Source: own study.

Forty-four owners/managers took part in the survey, 32 strategic level managers, 23 middle managers. Eight respondents held an operational level position. The managers first rated the advantages of financial and accounting outsourcing services. The results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3.

Advantages of entrusting financial and accounting services to an external entity in the opinion of managers

Advantages of entrusting financial and accounting services to an external company	Small entrepreneurs	Medium entrepreneurs	Large entrepreneurs
sense of security resulting from the comprehensive provision of services	64,6%	52,6%	33,3%
saving of time	75,4%	60,5%	50%
lower costs than in-house financial and accounting department	71,3%	55,3%	50%
receiving up-to-date information about changes in legal, tax and accounting regulations	76,3%	50,0%	33,3%
avoidance of errors, penalties, reimbursement of subsidies received	85,8%	63,2%	16,8%
preparation of necessary reporting for the entity	86,3%	73,7%	33,3%
provision of individual solutions adapted to the company's needs	34,6%	57,9%	50%
quality of outsourcing services/access to expert knowledge	79,7%	51,5%	33,3%
support in making business decisions	44,1%	42,4%	33,3%
ensuring data security in the IT financial and accounting programme	70,2%	51,5%	33,33%

* The results represent the sum of the definitely important and important categories.

Source: own study.

The advantages of financial and accounting outsourcing services were most appreciated by managers of small entities. In their opinion, the preparation of the necessary reporting for the entity's needs (86.3% of indications), the avoidance of penalties, errors (85.8% of indications) and the quality of outsourcing services/access to professional knowledge (79.7% of indications) are *definitely important* and *important* in the outsourcing of financial and accounting services. Managers also highlighted time savings (75.4% of indications) and receiving current

information on tax changes (76.3% of indications). Managers of medium-sized entities confirmed that, in their opinion, it is *definitely important* and *important* to prepare the necessary reporting for the entity (73.7% of indications), to avoid error penalties (63.2% of indications) and to save time (60.5% of indications). The responses of middle managers coincide with those of managers of small entities. Other advantages were indicated by managers of large entities. Half of the respondents considered the provision of individual solutions tailored to the needs of the entity and lower costs than an in-house finance and accounting department to be *important* and *definitely important*. Managers of large entities, similarly to small and medium-sized ones, also pointed to time savings.

In the next question, similarly to accountants, managers rated the disadvantages of financial and accounting outsourcing services. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Disadvantages of entrusting financial and accounting services to an external entity in the opinion of managers

Disadvantage of outsourcing financial and accounting services to an external company	Small entrepreneurs	Medium entrepreneurs	Large entrepreneurs
limitation to the knowledge and experience of one outsourcing company	18,8%	55,3%	50%
lower level of control over financial and accounting documentation	44,2%	68,4%	83%
lack of knowledge of company specifics/individual approach	37,9%	73,7%	50%
longer time of realization of orders	24,2%	73,7%	33,3%
lack of current access to financial and accounting data	52,5%	76,3%	50%
risk of losing financial and accounting data	18,8%	68,4%	33,33%
lack of support in taking business decisions	47,9%	78,9%	67%

* The results represent the sum of the definitely important and important categories.

Source: own study.

As in the group of accountants, the greatest disadvantages of financial and accounting outsourcing services were indicated by managers of large entities, pointing to the lack of control over accounting records (5 respondents) and the lack of support in making business decisions (4 indications). These concerns were also confirmed by managers of medium-sized entities (68.4% of indications) and (78.9% of indications) respectively. Managers of small entities also considered lack of current access to financial data (52.5% of indications) and lack of support in making business decisions as *important* and *definitely important* disadvantages. However, this was the least numerous group. Managers provided additional comments on financial and accounting services:

- accounting office staff are only accounting operators,
- sufficient knowledge is possessed by the manager/owner of the office,
- employees of accounting offices are not sufficiently trained, only the managers are,

- external financial and accounting service providers do not have full financial and operational knowledge of the company,
- the client using external services does not have comprehensive knowledge in the financial and accounting sphere, which causes numerous gaps in the flow of information.

These causes entail the risk of mistakes being made, a lack of control over accounting records and, as a result, the loss of ability to react quickly enough in crisis or control situations.

The surveyed managers were also asked whether they had cooperated with companies offering financial and accounting outsourcing services. Of the companies surveyed, 51% used finance and accounting outsourcing services (76% of small entities, 20% of medium-sized entities) large entities had their own finance and accounting department. The group of respondents using outsourcing services was asked to evaluate the cooperation, as presented in Figure 4.

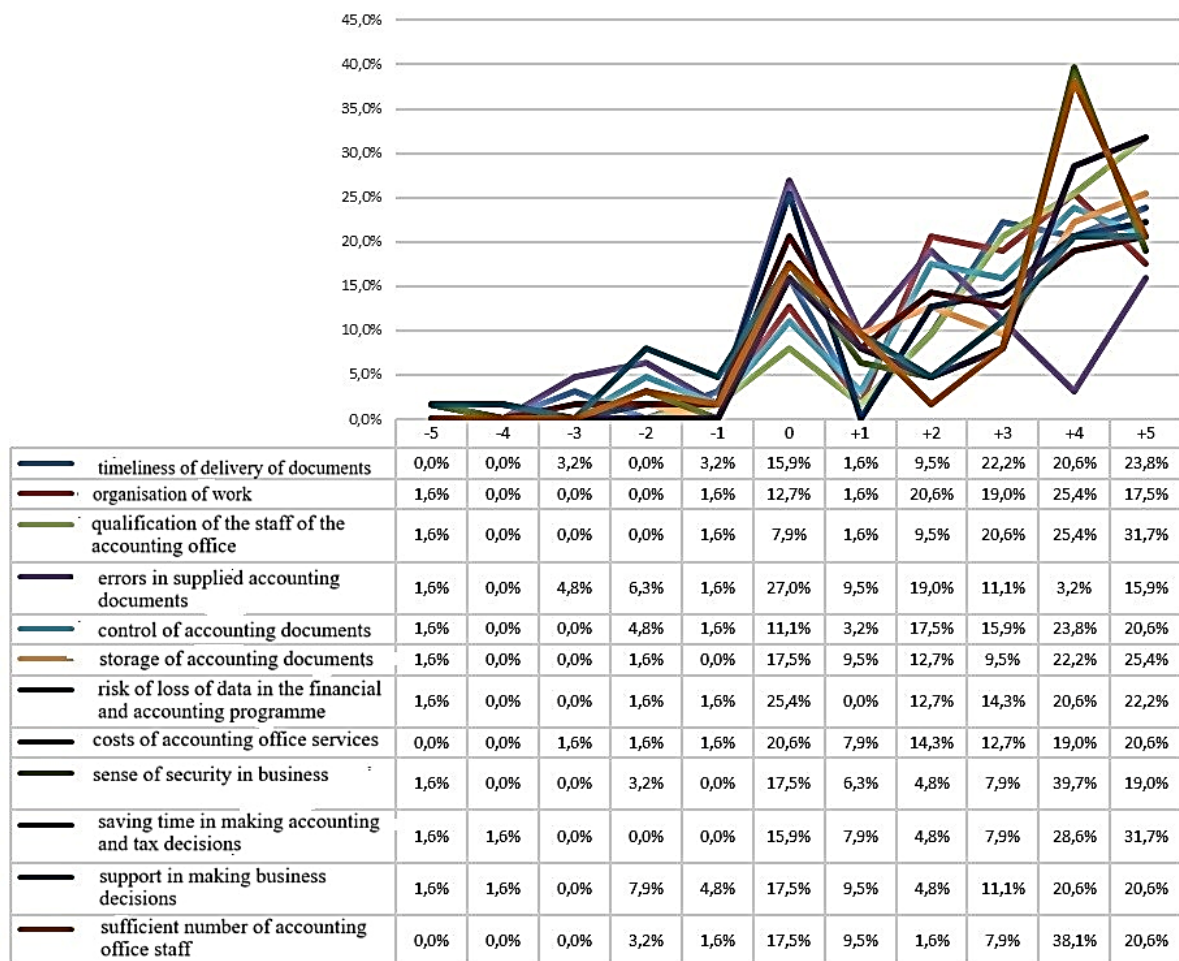


Figure 4. Evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of cooperation between companies and an outsourcing company - opinion of managers.

Source: own study.

In the overall evaluation, the company's cooperation with the outsourcing company was assessed from the perspective of strengths. Disadvantages of outsourcing services were indicated to a small extent. Some of the categories indicated were difficult for the respondents to define as weaknesses or strengths, e.g. errors in the provided accounting documents indicated by 27% of the respondents, or the risk of losing data in the financial and accounting programme 25.4%. Small companies were much more active in the category of strengths, pointing above all, to time savings in accounting and tax decisions, a sufficient number of office staff in relation to the number of companies serviced and a sense of security in business activities. In terms of assessing the disadvantages and weaknesses of cooperating with or entrusting financial and accounting responsibilities to outsourcing companies, managers expressed concern about proper communication, resulting in the company not having adequate information, especially in terms of current access to financial and accounting data.

5. A management-oriented model for outsourcing financial and accounting services

Modern applications are streamlining the communication process between financial and accounting outsourcing entities and accounting offices. Process automation is transforming the outsourcing of financial and accounting services, providing businesses with innovative solutions that improve business operations. Entrepreneurs are becoming business partners with modern accounting firms that understand the specifics of their business and find the best solutions to streamline their operations. Access to up-to-date and specialised knowledge of accounting staff, fixed assets in the form of equipment/software allow for better business efficiency, lower labour costs and higher profitability (Maszczak, 2019). Currently, the development of financial and accounting outsourcing services is influenced by online communication. The need for the client to deliver documents in person or for office staff to collect them has disappeared. This has an impact on time savings and the possibility for both parties to carry out effective activities (Jonas, Świetla, 2015).

The general model of an enterprise with entities offering financial and accounting outsourcing services is presented in Figure 5. The following model takes into account the process of financial and accounting outsourcing, starting with the input data provided by the client, data transfer using a modern application ensuring online communication, control of received documents, preparation of documentation by the accounting office in accordance with the provisions of the cooperation agreement, quality control of the work done before sending it to the client (again using the application), output data in the form of documents, reports, reports available to the client. The proposed model takes into account the National e-Invoice System KSeF), which will be applicable to entrepreneurs from July 1, 2024. KSeF is an online system

for sending, receiving, and storing structured invoices, which will require entrepreneurs to report in real time (Pokrop, Pałys, 2021). The basis of KSeF is the input of structured invoices in XML format, as established by the Ministry of Finance. The system will check the correctness of the documents and authorise its circulation (Burchart, 2022). Entrepreneurs and providers of financial and accounting outsourcing services may have to decide on the form of cooperation – the transfer of documents.

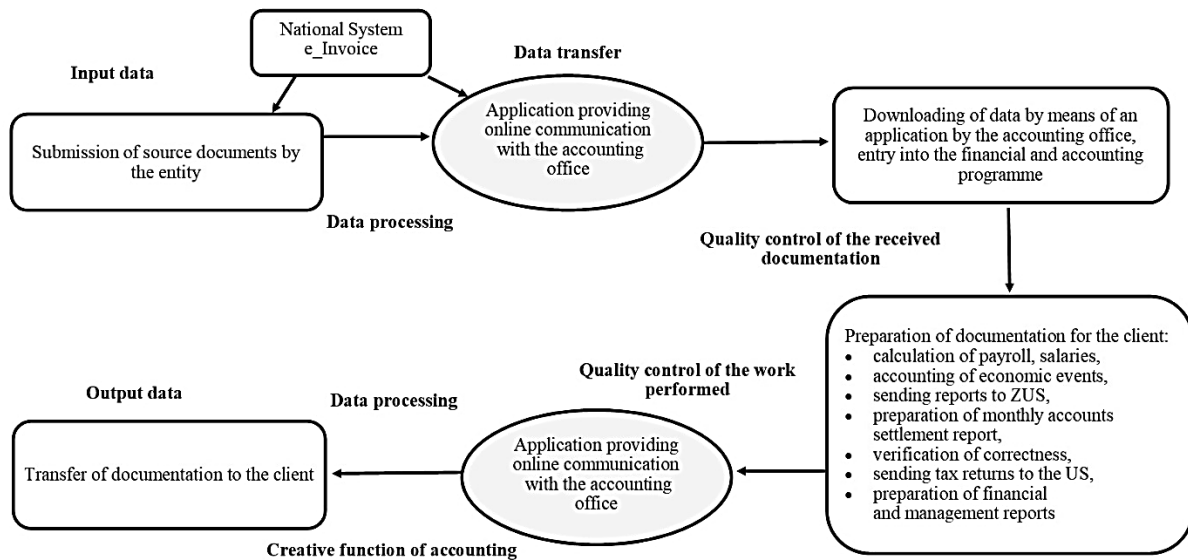


Figure 5. General model for financial and accounting outsourcing services to support business management.

Source: own study.

Companies implementing the proposed model can gain:

- improved communication process in exchange of documents, information,
- time savings due to automation of activities,
- real-time access to financial and accounting documentation,
- access to additional functions offered by the application, streamlining other areas of the entity's activities, allowing efficient communication,
- data security.

When implementing a model of cooperation using online communication between entities, it is necessary to determine the best way of communication and data exchange and to adapt the accounting, HR and payroll processes and reporting to the specifics of the industry and the entity's information needs. The use of a modern application will provide the business with:

1. the possibility to issue invoices to contractors: send invoices online, manage filters, add attachments, set up payments, payment reminder payment reminders,
2. the rapid online exchange of documentation with the accounting office: seamless exchange of documents between entities online, all documents in one application, ensuring data storage security,
3. the possibility of using an internal drive for archiving and storing documents,

4. the automation of accounting processes: completion of contractor data by TIN, electronic document circulation, payment management,
5. the enrichment of the application with a finance module allowing for the generation of financial forecasts, financial control, simple budgets and KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) at this stage: key performance indicators adapted to the specificity and information needs of the company.

Automation of accounting processes is changing financial and accounting outsourcing services. Accountants become specialists who systematically analyse the financial situation of an entity, provide advice, and indicate areas of change. Outsourcing financial and accounting services, longer business relationships between entities may lead to higher quality of financial statements because the risk of their distortion is reduced due to the knowledge and independence of external accountants (Höglund, Sundvik, 2016; Cullinan, Zheng, 2017). The above solutions require high-quality technical equipment and an Internet connection. They place the accounting profession in a new reality that should be followed by educational institutions (Faitusa, 2019).

6. Conclusions

With the emergence of new business models and technological solutions, outsourcing of financial and accounting services is becoming an increasingly beneficial form of cooperation between business entities. Still, most entities offering financial and accounting outsourcing services focus their offer on traditional solutions: keeping accounting books, preparing annual reports, monthly and annual tax returns, HR and payroll matters, and providing information on basic changes in tax and legal regulations. We are currently observing far-reaching changes in the nature and form of this cooperation. Entrepreneurs expect an expansion of the service offer and new solutions that improve the exchange of information between entities. Entrepreneurs are looking for support in running a business and making decisions by anticipating their consequences.

According to accountants, the most important advantage of financial and accounting outsourcing services was saving time for entrepreneurs and access to specialist knowledge, i.e., receiving current information on changes in legal, tax and accounting regulations. Accountants indicated the most important disadvantages of delegating accounting to an external entity: lack of knowledge about the specificity of the company/individual approach, lack of current access to financial and accounting data. Accountants from medium-sized enterprises also indicated a longer order processing time. For entrepreneurs, the most important limitations in using outsourcing services are the lack of current access to financial and accounting data and the lack of support in making business decisions.

According to the conducted research, the most frequently recurring limitations and concerns on the part of entrepreneurs in using financial and accounting outsourcing services were lack of current access to financial and accounting data and lack of support in making business decisions. Additionally, entrepreneurs pointed out communication problems:

- receiving information at the last minute,
- insufficient information and shifting of responsibility between the entrepreneur and the accountant,
- failure to provide information in a clear and precise manner,
- lack of additional services, e.g., decision-making consultancy, reports, monthly reports.

Modern entities offering financial and accounting outsourcing services appearing on the Polish market combine accounting, legal and IT knowledge, creating and recognizing a new approach to the accounting information system and the information function in this system. In such solutions and the proposed model in Figure 5, the information function of accounting evolves towards the creative function, because the information received by the entrepreneur in the outsourcing process creates added value.

The development of online cooperation between enterprises and entities offering outsourcing services and the resulting benefits, according to the author, will be an interesting field for future empirical research.

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