
Insights on the New Coordinates in Internal Audit

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Abstract

In a continuous changing world, internal audit registers its own dynamic. The present paper emphasizes the priorities and trends in internal audit reflected by international surveys as well as the empirical study performed by the authors in regard with the use of IT tools by the Romanian internal auditors. Starting from these coordinates, the authors investigate means of enlarging the use of IT focusing on data analysis and IT security issues. The authors' investigation continues on coordinates less approached in the academic field, regarding the behavior dimensions and its impact on the internal auditors' work. The study's conclusions could represent important benchmarks in the practitioners' work and offer a large field for debate in the academic and research field.

Keywords: internal audit, trends, IT tools, behavior dimensions, skills, communication

JEL Classification: M42, M480

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1. Introduction

There is an unanimity in recognizing the importance of internal audit (IA). The debates in regard with the place, role and importance of IA provide multiple perspectives approaches, underlying elements that sometimes remain less visible but with lot of significance, not just theoretical, that prove to be extremely relevant. The authors' research aims at emphasize some essential elements for the internal audit in the effort of ensure its role as it is defined in the best practice guidelines, IA charts issued by each IA department and corporate governance requirements.

The link between the place, role and importance of IA represents an important topic providing the space for a generous debate in the theoretical and professional practice filed. The debate can start from the place, role and importance of IA, established by the international standards and best practice guidelines but it should approach also more sensitive aspects of the effective role and place acquired by IA and, based on these, the IA's importance recognized inside of the organization.

The research aimed at underlying some aspects driving towards the increasing IA quality and, as a result, to its role fulfillment and importance in the organization. Even if there is a correct implementation of the IA function (through allocated resources, the establishment of correct reporting lines etc.), based on the organization's culture and the experience of the management, just the IA's quality proved by the delivered results maintains and consolidates the role and importance of the function. As long as IA, through the results of its missions, is not responding to the shareholders' expectations, IA will not succeed to fulfill its role and the perception in regard of its role and importance inside of the organization will be affected.

CAE (Chief Audit Executive) is essential for ensuring the activities' alignment to the standards, ensuring the communication inside and outside of the organization, the strategy for the evolution of the IA function through the increase of the internal auditors' quality of work and, implicitly, the more robust support provided to the management and all organizational structures. Aiming at fulfilling their role, internal auditors should improve and consolidate the communication lines inside the organization, understand the major concerns and to anticipate the shareholders' expectations. The elements that could bring the new value expected to be created by

IA are the anticipation (of the expectations) and innovation. These elements impose a long-term proactive thinking with direct implications in the implementation of the new IT techniques in the internal auditors' work and the imperative need to develop the internal auditors' computing and data analysis skills. The audit (not just the internal audit) is considered one of the professions facing in the future a massive impact of the automation determining major changes in the profession and in the professional profile (Zitting, 2017:9).

The aim of this study is to emphasize some aspects of internal audit less approached by the researches, but having major importance in the professional field. We refer to the professional profile of the internal auditor, more and more complex, the IT impact on IA and the behavior dimensions of the internal auditors.

The present paper wishes to initiate an ample discussion in the professional field on the approached topics aiming at strengthening the Romanian IA and consolidating its place in the companies.

2. Methodology

The research purpose was to identify the trends and significant changes in the internal audit at the global scale. The investigation has been conducted on the following coordinates: critical areas on which IA is focusing, new risks raising interest, IT impact over IA. Aiming at covering the paper's objective, a qualitative research has been performed consisting in the literature review and documents issued by IIA, mainly working guidelines on different aspects of the technologies and working tools in a computerized environment. There were studied the analysis issued at global scale by the international professional organizations in regard with the IA's evolution and trends.

The qualitative research was continued with an empirical research, the authors aiming at investigate insights of the Romanian internal audit departments focusing on the use of IT. Data has been collected using the online platform <http://isondaje.ro/>, based on a questionnaire with 20 issues. The data processing has been realised accessing the information in the analysis section of the platform. The questionnaire addressed public institutions and private companies. There were collected 44 responses: 61.4% from private companies and 38.6% from public institutions.

The research's conclusions can represent important coordinates in IA strategy design in the Romanian organizations ensuring the increase of IA's effectiveness and efficiency.

3. New priorities in internal audit

The dynamic of the organizations' significant business models and processes determine the focus of the IA's missions towards critical areas as for example risk management – with higher focus on strategic risks, corporate governance, organizational culture, cyber security (Chambers, 2017). The organizational culture can significantly impact the company's evolution and business processes, the company's values and the perception of important aspects, like risks and the need of innovation, the behavior and inter-departmental relations etc.

Negative elements in the organizational culture are reflected not only in the company's business processes but implicitly in its results and the IA missions' achievements. From this perspective, organizational culture and corporate governance are in focus of IAs.

The international surveys emphasize that the most respondents understand the need to analyze the risk induced by the organizational culture but just 53% of them understand how to perform the internal audit mission in this area. The number of respondents performing this kind of missions is rather low (28% of the respondents), which emphasizes the need for a specific training of the internal auditors (Chambers, 2017). The cyber security became a stringent problem for all the entities no matter of their size or industry. Even if the international studies state the risk of information security on the first place in the last years, the progress in enlarging IA missions in this area is not at the expected level. The IA specialists recognize the risks induced by information technology and, as a result, the assurance need on cyber security (Chambers, 2017). This fact is determined by the specific expertise required by the investigated domain and the limited number of specialists in the field joining the IA departments. At the international scale, the expertise in IT (information security inclusively) is one of the most

demanding but it is registered a significant deficit of specialists, restriction that impacts IT departments also.

If we analyze the international surveys' results investigating the audit committee members' perception it can be retained as a first concern the effectiveness of the risk management process followed by the compliance issues and the management of the cyber risks. Maybe it is not less relevant that on the fifth place is placed the *tone at the top* message and organizational culture (KPMG, 2017).

The increased expectations in regard with internal audit, the diversity and complexity of the audit universe, as well as the need to deepen some aspects aiming at providing the risk assurance impose a much coherent and articulated cooperation with the second line of defense, represented by the risk management, conformity, legal, IT security, control departments etc.

Another trend, based on innovation issues, requires IA to focus on providing advising and predictive approach. The predictive approach will enable to signal, to the management, transactions that were not finalized yet and mismatching the template defined in time as a result of the business processes performed. Nowadays, the IA's "classic" procedures and approaches can emphasize suspicious transactions just after their finalization. In regard with the advisory role of IA, the international analysis emphasizes, from CAEs' point of view (47%), that the shareholders are not considering the advisory role of IA. In the same time, it is underlined that the organizational culture is not supporting the strategic role of IA (PWC, 2017).

The diverse problems and the need of deepening some complex areas implying modern information technologies in IA missions, diversifies the requirements on the internal auditors' professional training. The knowledge and skills required focus on: general knowledge on IT, information security, data mining techniques and data analysis, knowledge in the industry the company is operating in, analytical and critical thinking (Chambers, 2017). A lot of these skills are difficult to be found at the aspiring internal auditors.

4. New approaches as a result of IT integration

Internal audit registers a significant dynamic imposed by the diverse requirements it has to cover, the continuously changing environment in which IA operates exposing the companies to an extended set of risks etc. The evolving technologies, the markets' globalization and the increased importance of the corporate reputation induce unforeseen risks (IIA, 2018). IA is asked to provide, to those in charge with governance and executive management, the assurance that organization can face those risks effectively. This risk approach of IA should be performed from the perspective of the strategic objectives of the company. The risks exposing the company have their dynamic, registering changes in the business's and, implicitly, on the objectives' fulfillment. The international studies emphasize changes in the CEOs' perception in regard with the most important risks confronting the companies. More and more the concern is focusing on the geopolitical instability, terrorism and climate changes (IIA, 2018). Next to those risks, which are impacting the entire society, there are other risks like cyber-attacks (we already mentioned them), regulatory changes, the difficulty to attract professionals with certain skills and expertise etc.

This extended set of risks exposing any organization, imposes an increased responsibility in their identification and assessment. This determines the need of an extended collaboration with the first line of defense (the operational management) aiming at understanding the true threats induced by the specific processes and activities performed in the company but also with the second line of defense too, aiming at determine the efficacy of the risk management processes and control (departments of financial control, IT security, risk management, compliance, controlling, legal etc.). This collaboration should be performed from the IIA's no. 2050 standard' perspective emphasizing the need of sharing information and coordination with other internal and external entities providing assurance in their expertise field. These requirements are imposing not just a qualitative increase in the professional training standard on the awareness of risks, but also on the techniques used in IA. The

usage of the information technology in its most evolved areas – artificial intelligence, data analysis etc. – becomes imperative. This way, a new phase in IT integration (in the IA's processes) is followed. Practically, it is performed the switch from the processes' efficacy towards their transformation, imposing a new perception over the data. IIA has always signaled on these aspects in regard with IT use, issuing a guide on the IT usage's evolution in IA. CAE has the responsibility to think and implement a multiannual strategy on IT implementation in the department's processes and activities. CAE will focus on: the electronic management of the missions, electronic working papers, sample and collected information storage, collaborative platforms' usage providing collaboration means for the internal auditors, no matter of the location they are etc. The usage of the advanced data analysis techniques and data mining should be implemented with the appropriate attention provided to the internal auditors' training and review of the methodologies and working procedures.

The switch to the continuous audit, and use of the advanced data analysis techniques (in the context of an explosive increase of the data volume) are essential for the internal auditors. The „classic” techniques of testing emphasize if the implemented controls ensure the business processes' performance as established. Data analysis with the new available analytical techniques will allow IA to have a higher contribution to the processes' improvement, based on its recommendations and the increase of its performance (IIA, 2018:5).

The recent studies emphasize the new audit generation of techniques and technologies creating new value (Zitting, 2017:14):

1. Data analysis
2. Mobile devises – essential audit tools
3. Continuous audit
4. Real time assurance through automation.

The stringent need to use the huge volume of data available inside and outside the company imposes, from the internal auditors' part, good knowledge on the regression, classification and clustering techniques, the foundation for advanced statistical analysis providing valuable information regarding the processes performed (in the company, the evolution

– forecast data inclusively – of risks and their impact, market trends etc.). It is not insignificant the fact that the universities' accounting studies are not focused on statistic techniques or patterns' recognition skills and anomalies' analysis, which are essential for data analysis as it is required nowadays (Earley, 2015).

CAE should attract in its team data analysis specialists or to strength the cooperation with IT department aiming at ensure the needed data analysis. The skills on data analysis will allow internal auditors to make the step forward from the sample working (small sets of data) to the full data analysis. Data analysis is applied in audit planning and analytical procedures as well. Through data analysis are identified transactions' patterns or anomalies that need more attentive investigations. The anomalies could be transactions, as for example, the ones not corresponding to the internal auditor's expectations based on his knowledge on the analyzed processes.

Data analysis can be realized in relation with two factors for identifying variations comparing with a certain model (AICPA, 2014). There can be selected sets of key indicators that can be put in correlation aiming at emphasize potential values for other key indicators, significant variations comparing with a potential trend justifying detailed analysis. Using powerful applications for data analysis the auditor could examine whole volume of transactions (being not limited at samples) providing another understanding over the analyzed data. The global studies emphasize the following activities already performed based on data analysis: testing the whole population of transactions, samples' establishment, testing the individual controls, determining the scope of audit, development of the continuous auditing tools, risk assessment etc. (Protiviti, 2017).

The use of mobile devices like tablets, smart phone, laptops etc. together with other devices (for communication use inclusively) provide mobility, rapid access to the data, computing performances, extended connectivity etc. Remote working, data and knowledge sharing in the working team or different teams having their own missions already became common, increasing the quality of the professional work. In the same time, the auditors are asked to audit activities/processes implying the use of new generation devices. In this context, knowledge on the particularities and means of use of mobile devices as

well as the potential risks they induce became essential. Between the emergent risks IA is asked to analyze, can be included those related to the information technology specific for the 21st century, with focus on cloud computing, IoT (*Internet of Things*) and mobile devices.

The continuous audit, already assimilated in the professional practice provides abilities in the "monitor and evaluation of the effectiveness of automated controlled operations" (AICPA, 214). In the same time, it provides alert flags in case of unusual transactions needing detailed analysis.

An aspect linked to the IT integration, inside the organization, raises for IA the responsibility in regard with cyber security. This responsibility comes to deepen IA's relation with IT department (it was already mentioned the collaboration in regard with data analysis), this collaboration providing a solid understanding of the organizational risks induced by IT use. Aiming at perform missions on cyber security domain, internal auditors should improve and extend their IT knowledge and skills or they should have access at persons with expertise in systems configuration and administration and software development (Janison et al, 2018). Using external expertise on IT security is not excluding the need of improving internal auditors' knowledge and skills in the field.

5. Empirical study on the use of IT tools in the Romanian internal audit field. Data analysis and study findings

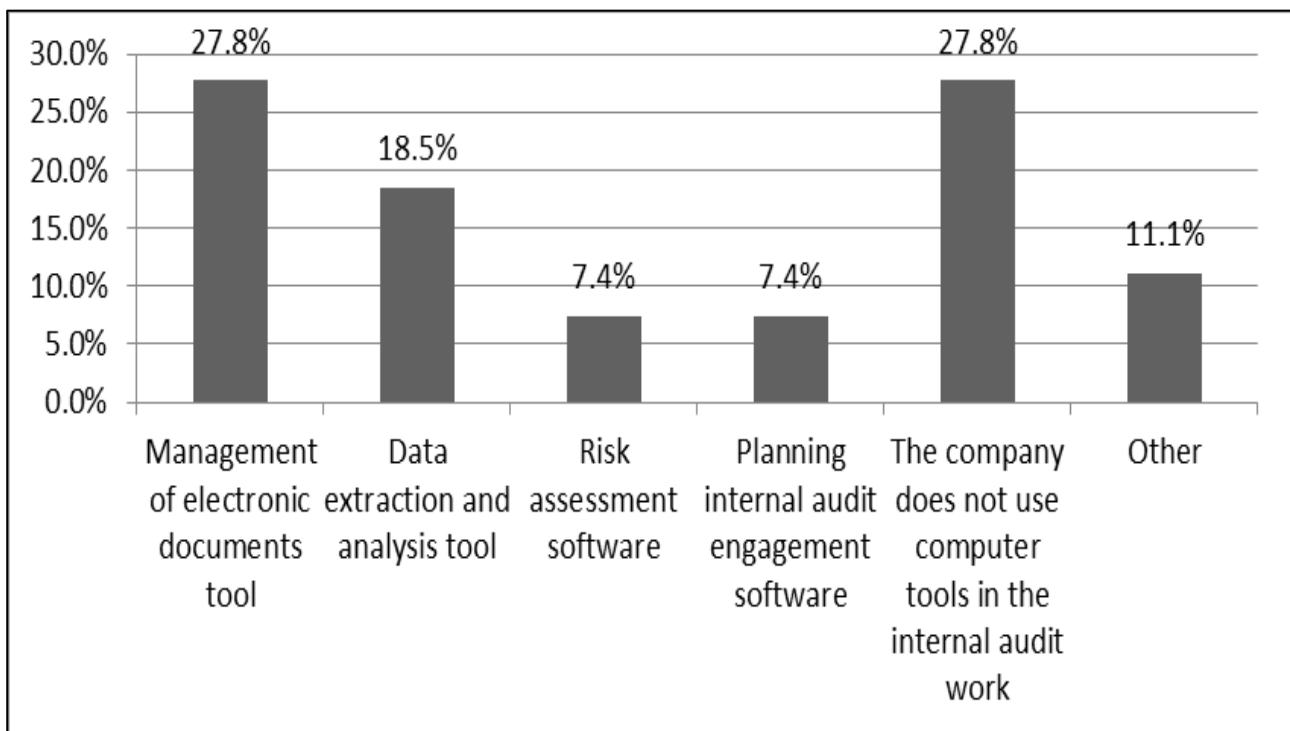
This study aims to highlight the main categories of IT tools used by Romanian internal auditors as well as to analyze some qualitative aspects related to the IA functions implemented within organizations.

According to the positions occupied within organizations, the structure of the respondents is as follows: 43.2% of the respondents are internal auditors, 20.5% head of the internal audit departments, 34.1% managers and 2.3% members of the audit committee. 16.7% of the respondents hold the certification for internal auditors granted by the Institute of Internal Auditors, while 32.5% are

members of the Romanian Chamber of Financial Auditors. As already mentioned, 61.4% of responses pertain to private companies while 38.6% to public institutions. The sample targeting private companies includes: large companies - 37.1%, medium-sized companies - 25.9%, small companies and micro enterprises - 18,5%. The breakdown by enterprise category was based on two indicators: the number of employees and annual turnover.

The analysis highlighted the fact that computer tools are used mostly in the management of electronic documents (27.8%), and for data extraction and analysis (18.5%) (Figure no. 1). Only 15% of the respondents declared they use dedicated tools for risk assessment or audit planning. It is worrying that 27.8% of the respondents declared they do not use any IT tools in the internal audit work.

Figure no.1. Types of IT tools used in the internal audit field

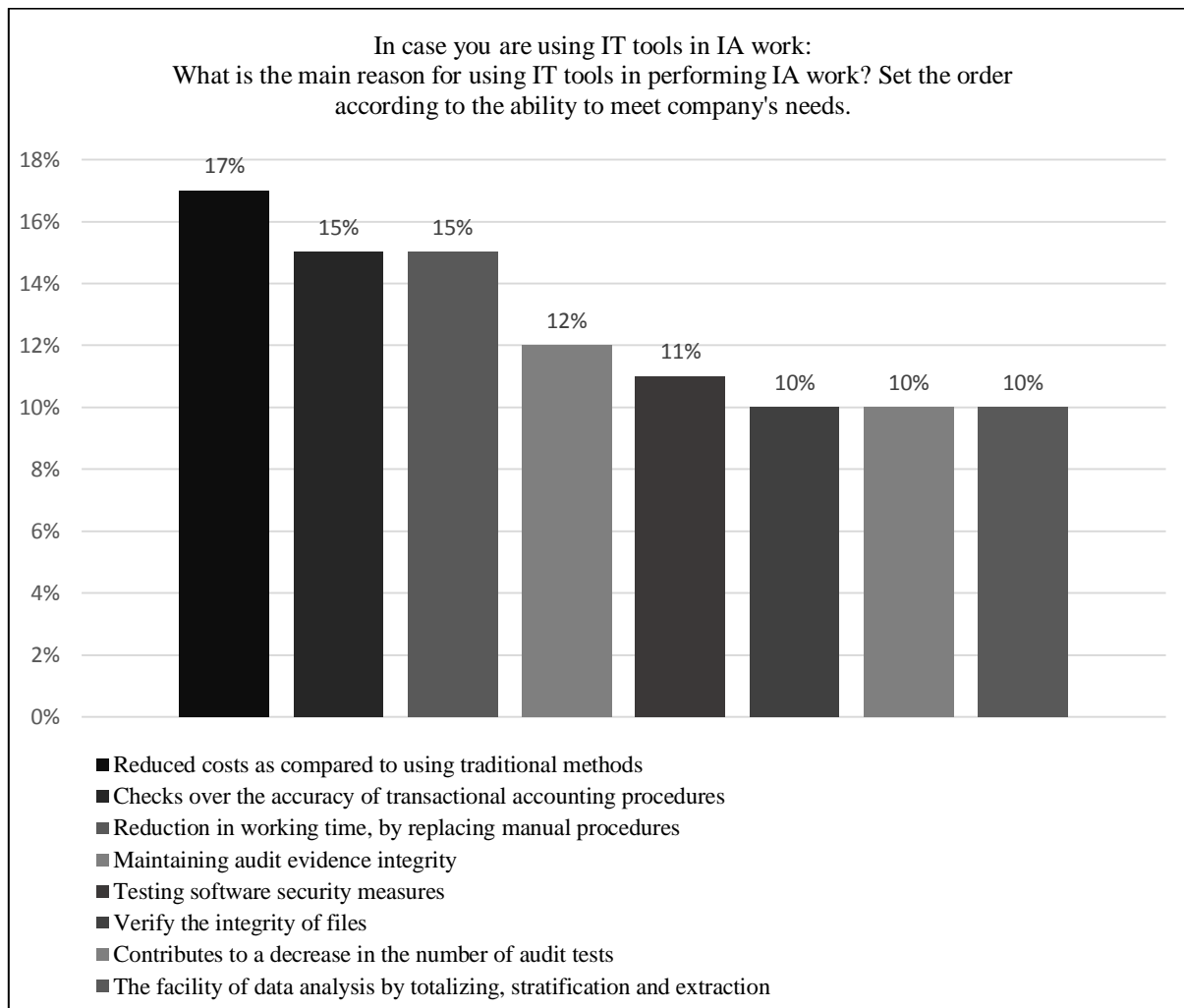


Source: Authors' findings, based on isondaje.ro internet platform

The respondents identified as benefits of utilizing IT tools the reduced costs as compared to using traditional methods (17%), the checks over the accuracy of transactional accounting procedures (15%) and the reduction in working time by replacing manual procedures (15%). Maintaining the integrity of audit evidence and the feature of IT tools to test security measures are highlighted as IT-specific advantages by 12% and 11% of respondents, respectively. The survey

reveals that the ability to verify the integrity of files, the decrease in the number of audit tests and the data analysis' features on summarizing, stratification and extraction have all the same perceived importance (10%). These results reveal the user's awareness over the efficiency that characterizes the use of IT tools, since the information technology is being increasingly integrated in the internal audit work (Figure no. 2).

Figure no.2. The benefits of using IT tools in the internal audit field



Source: Authors' findings, based on isondaje.ro internet platform

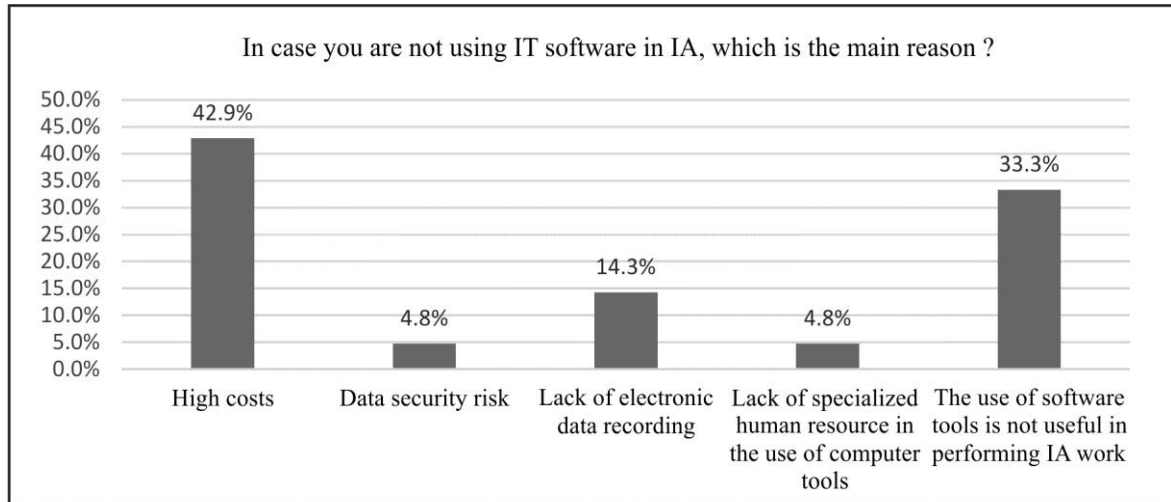
The survey results show that 36.4% of the total number of respondents did not attend annual training sessions related to IT tools, 27.3% of respondents attended less than 10 hours of IT training, while 36.4% devoted to training more than 10 hours.

The authors appreciate that IT tools ways of use remain poorly known and for this reason ongoing training programs on this subject are extremely necessary.

The study also investigated the reasons and obstacles internal auditors encounter in the use of IT tools (Figure

no. 3). The most invoked argument is the high cost of IT tools (42.9%). One third of respondents believe that the use of these software tools is not needed in performing internal audit work. The missing of electronic data recording (14.3%) and data security risks (4.8%) are other justifications with a low weight in the total of respondents. Another reason is the missing of specialized human resources in the use of computer tools (4.8%).

Figure no. 3. Obstacles in the use of computer tools in the internal audit work

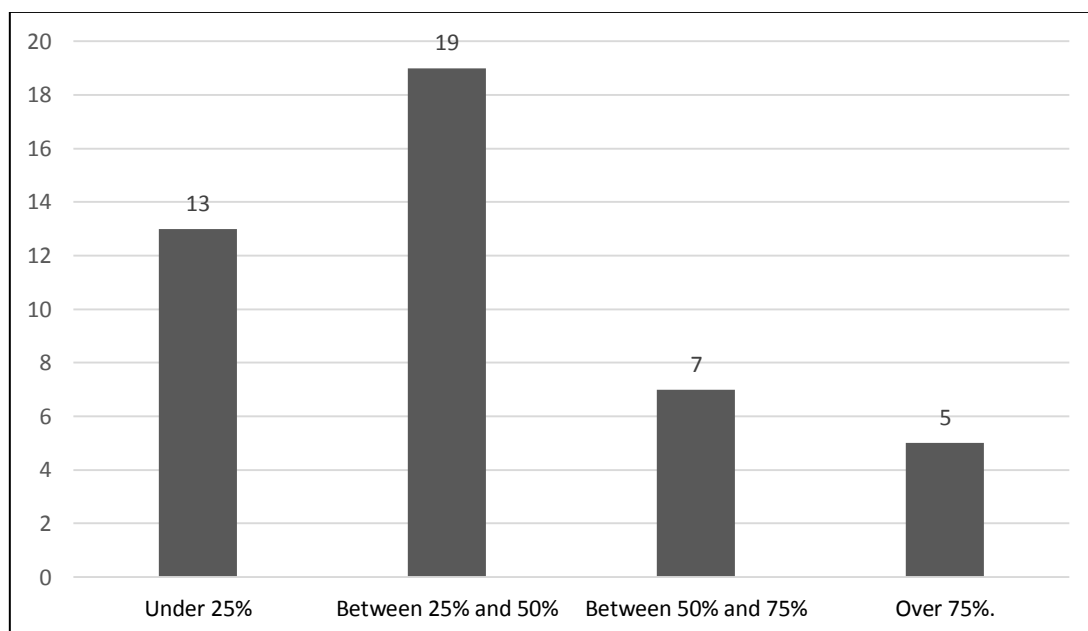


Source: Authors' findings, based on isondaje.ro internet platform

The study's findings highlight the low use of computer assisted auditing techniques (CAATs) (Figure no. 4). 43.2% of respondents declare that computer-assisted activities cover between 25% and

50% of the total activities. Only 27% of respondents benefit from the advantages of IT tools while performing most of their activities.

Figure no. 4. The share of the activities carried out by using the IT tools in the internal audit engagements



Source: Authors' findings, based on isondaje.ro internet platform

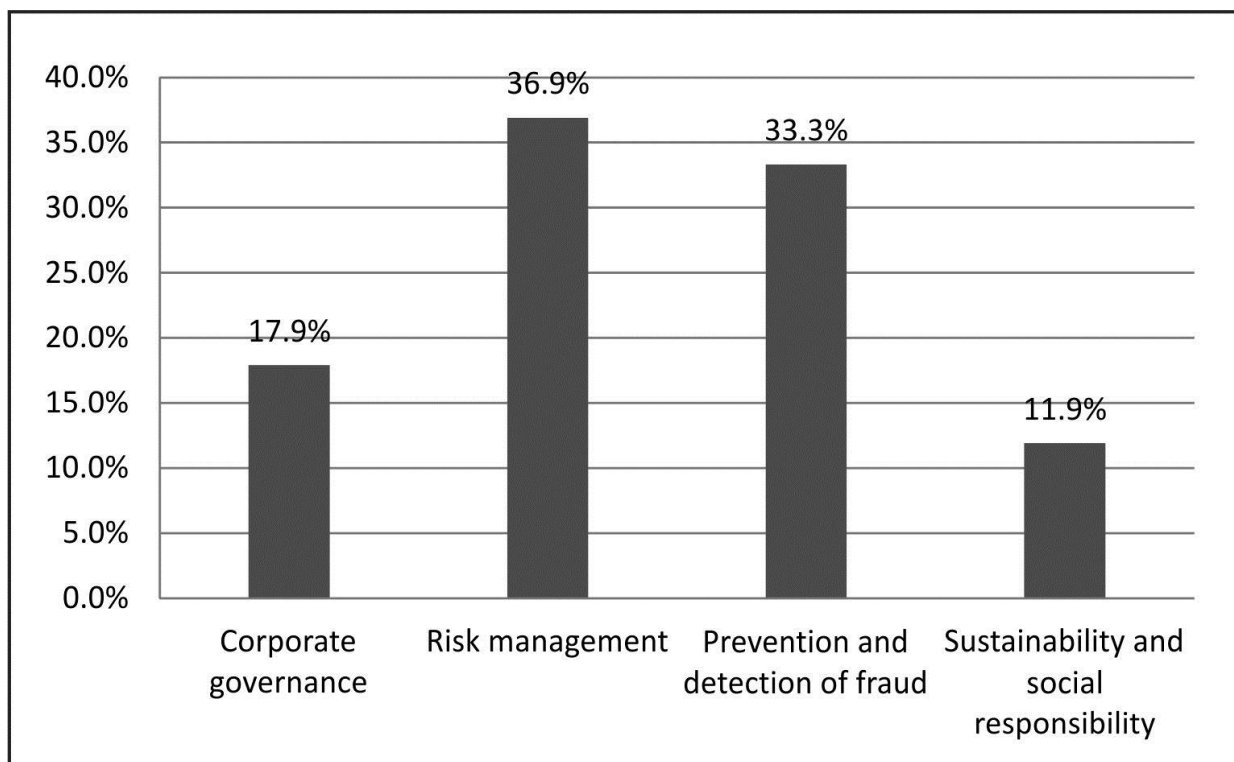
54.5% of the respondents stated that the risk-based approach was applied in the internal audit missions, followed by the classical approach (34.1%). The least used method is the continuous audit approach (only 11.4%).

We considered relevant to identify the extent of internal audit universe (at the level of the surveyed organizations) and to identify the way in which internal audit aims to support the company in achieving its objectives by assessing and enhancing the effectiveness of governance and risk management processes. The study highlights that the main area internal auditors focus on is the risk management (RM), and for this reason RM is the subject of internal audit missions in 36.9% of the

analyzed cases. This is due to the role of internal auditors in assisting audit committee and the company's management by examining the existing risk management processes, as well as making recommendations for their improvement.

An important role of internal auditors acknowledged by companies' management is the prevention and detection of fraud; for this purpose, a third of the respondents reported dedicated missions. Corporate governance is the third area of interest in audit engagements among respondents (17.9%). 11.9% of respondents declared that the IA plan included social sustainability and accountability engagements (**Figure no. 5**).

Figure no. 5. Areas of interest in audit engagements

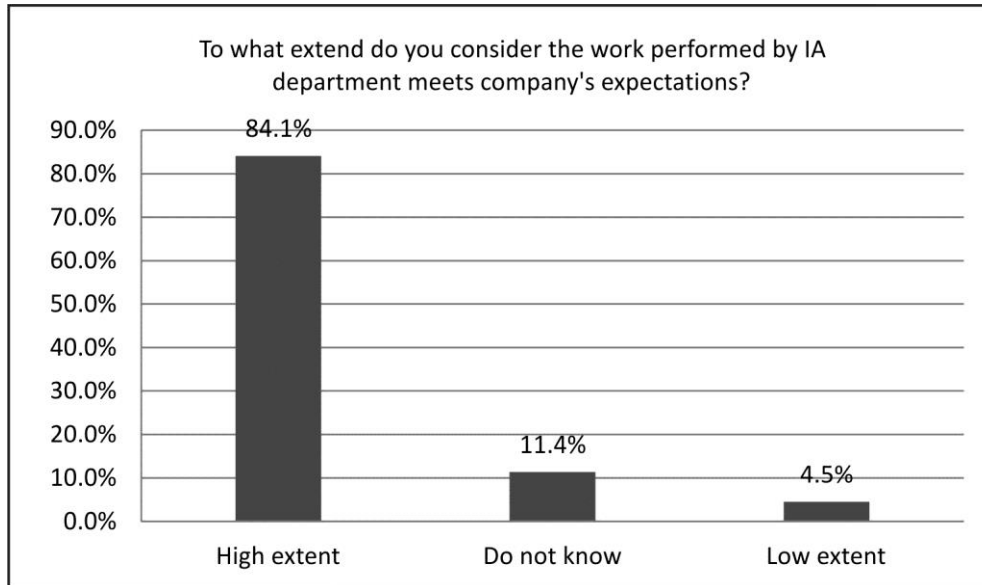


Source: Authors' findings based on isondaje.ro internet platform

84% of respondents remark that the IA's activities are, to a large extent, in line with the organization's expectations. This is the result that internal audit

function developed sufficiently enough to reach a more mature stage and also to IA's efforts to support the company in achieving its objectives (**Figure no. 6**).

Figure no. 6. The degree internal auditors' work meets the company's expectations



Source: Authors' findings, based on isondaje.ro internet platform

The respondents' answers can be justified by the difficulty of highlighting the added value created through IA activities and the inappropriate perception of company's management over the role and responsibilities of IA. The aforementioned aspects must be correlated with the resources mobilized in carrying out the internal audit activity reflected by the available budget. Most respondents considered as satisfactory the budget of the internal audit function, while only 27.3% of respondents considered that the allocated budget was insufficient.

6. Behavioral dimensions and their implications in internal audit

Certainly, the majority of specialists will agree that mastering "communication skills, often called *soft skills* are among the most important skills that successful internal audit professionals need" (Dittenfofer, 2011: 12). Communication skills should be cultivated, developed both in the verbal and written communication. They prove to be essential to the development of personal relationships within the organization, allowing internal auditors to know the sensitive issues within the

organization and the expectations of stakeholders, to collect the necessary data and information during the course of their engagement, to draft reports and recommendations, discuss them and resolve conflicts or antagonistic points of view that inevitably occur.

The soft skills we have already mentioned refer to good relationship within the organization at all hierarchical levels, but also with external auditors and supervisors, without harming the independence and objectivity of internal auditors; of particular importance is the communication with the members of the audit committee and top management. Soft skills also imply information sharing, essential in terms of inter-organizational collaboration, but also due to internal audit responsibilities in relation to organizational entities involved in the second line of defense. We refer here to the organizational entities responsible with risk management, compliance, money laundering prevention, cyber security, controlling etc. Soft skills also imply the ability to argue, in a strong manner, the identified irregularities and their impact, risk ratings, as well as the ability to convince the auditee of the need for the recommendations' implementation and proposed deadlines. Balance, measure and solid arguments based on the collected evidence provide the power of

persuasion, efficient communication and problem solving, avoiding tense situations and contradictory discussions, "neutralizing" the resistance to accepting the internal auditors' points of view and change following the recommendations made. We must admit that internal auditors sometimes experience hostility, either openly expressed or masked, to the internal audit activity itself.

The global study conducted by IIA highlights that one third of the respondents admitted that they experienced sometimes a negative interpersonal relationship due to their role as internal auditor (IIA, 2017). Obviously, the poor quality of such relationships is impacting the internal auditor's work efficiency and effectiveness. But why do these situations arise? Surely, inadequate communication with the management and the auditee determines this attitude. Another cause may be the negative elements within the organizational culture. The IIA Global Study highlights that 79% of the respondents who said that often deal with negative interpersonal relationships have admitted that organizational culture exerts a negative effect on these relationships (IIA, 2017). The authors appreciate that it cannot be omitted from the analysis of the cognitive process, known in psychology as the *theory of social identity* (IIA, 2017). The *in-group bias* theory highlights the identified delimitation between the group represented by the auditee and internal auditors, as an *out-group*. Overcoming this delimiting vision requires strong communication skills from internal auditors' part. A possible way of mitigating this attitude, as well as accepting the opinion of internal auditors, and implicitly their recommendations, may be the internal auditors' acknowledgement on the expertise of the auditee.

In order to overcome issues and remain objective and focused on the objectives set, the auditors should demonstrate strong communication skills in order to obtain the information they need and contact the key people for the issues addressed by the IA mission, demonstrating an attitude that proves objectivity, professionalism, the desire to help by improving the activities and respect for the auditee. It is essential for the auditors to have negotiation skills as well as to recognize the interlocutors' personality traits. The discussions engaged on the audit report can be, for instance, directed accordingly with the interlocutors' personality (rational persons, people with a strong ego, choleric personality).

Managing tense moments, such as hostility towards the content of the internal audit report, is essential. The preparation of the discussion session of the IA report should take into account, next to the elements related to the personality of the interlocutors, other aspects such as the timing of the discussion, finding a strategy in conducting the discussion allowing the auditee to express its position and to early identify the common points of view. The internal auditor should put himself in the auditee's shoes in order to understand the possible disagreements over his conclusions (the auditee's points of view on the report are available before the discussion), the factors that determine the report rejection so as to prepare additional arguments.

Open dialogue and objectivity are essential. It is very important to highlight, in the IA report discussion phase, the progress made by the auditee, emphasize to the auditee that his hard work is recognized and valued and a reciprocal collaboration is extremely beneficial to both parties. If the recommendations made involve substantive changes over the assessed processes, the auditor must understand the possible reluctance. The auditee takes into account the costs involved, performance aspects (in relation to which he will be evaluated later) and it is normal to manifest some resistance, since the results to be obtained, after recommendations' implementation, are not being known yet.

Good communication, interpersonal relationships built within the organization (as well as the belief in IA's fairness, professionalism, discretion created between company's employees, regardless of the hierarchical level) and the perception that internal audit is a partner in solving problems and achieving goals (opposed to the perception of being a "policeman" in the search for mistakes) ensure that IA is requested to solve any arisen issues. This is one of the measures that indicate there is confidence in the internal audit and the IA ensured its visibility and the desired position within the organization.

All above mentioned aspects determine the specialists to believe that internal auditors must have a high level of "emotional and social intelligence" (Dittenhofer, M. et al., 2011). Naturally, the authors raise the question: In how many organizations does the auditor's continuous training program include the development of communication skills and emotional and social intelligence?

Internal auditors' self-trust in their power to carry out their tasks is of utmost importance. This self-confidence comes from solid professional training, the experience acquired over the years, a deep understanding of the company's processes and activities, industry-specific knowledge, as well as mastering their communication skills. IA's strong professional training and experience will induce the auditee's confidence in his partner (the internal auditor) and in the value/relevance of its assessments. Under these circumstances, the auditee may require the assessment of particular issues related to the audit area, unless these were already included in the mission's objectives set by audit team.

The authors believe that the quality of internal audit function can be improved in the context of understanding the way it is perceived by different entities and persons within organizations. A fundamental role is played by the questionnaire filled in by the head of the audited entities, the annual assessment required by the executive management, the evaluations and the discussions with the members of the audit committee and the board of directors. The number and nature of management's requests to initiate internal audit missions indicates the level of trust and recognition of the IA department's role.

CAE plays a fundamental role in reducing the risks associated with the dynamics of interpersonal relationships. Firstly, the internal audit department should be perceived as a partner that assists the organization to achieve its objectives. Another important aspect is related to developing and strengthening the soft skills for the entire internal audit staff and understanding the impact that organizational culture has on interpersonal interactions. It should not be forgotten that internal auditors' recommendations can improve organizational cultural issues. But how many internal audit departments included organizational culture in the audit universe? This is an extremely wide subject of analysis. It is quite probably that the result of such an analysis for Romanian organizations would not be very satisfactory.

Conclusions

The importance, place and visibility of the internal audit function within the organization are not a given but the result of dedicated, professional and objective work done year after year. The diverse issues that internal

auditors have to answer impose a complex professional profile, aligned with the changing business environment and its requirements. The IT impact on the profession and the professional profile is important. A good mastering of IT techniques and technologies bring efficiency, superior quality of internal auditors' work and consequently, well-documented opinions and sound recommendations. This determines the need for a step-by-step long-term strategy, developed by the CAE, aiming at implementing the IT dedicated applications until extensive data analysis solutions are implemented.

The dynamics and increased risks complexity require extensive data statistical analysis and revision of annual IA's plans in relation to the identified changes in risk exposure. CAE is the specialist who has the ability and the duty to inform and advise the management on key risks, being the one who reaches the best understanding of business processes and risk exposure issues. At the same time, CAE is the one who has to promote innovation and the strategic steps of integrating new information technologies aiming at increase in internal auditors' work quality and efficiency.

Communication is essential in internal audit work. Identifying key organizational issues, stakeholders' expectations and the necessary information to carry out IA's missions can only be achieved through ongoing dialogue and open communication. Discussing on IA's reports and recommendations requires from the internal auditors' part a good understanding of their interlocutors and master the art of dialogue and negotiation that enables them to clearly express and successfully defend their key points of view in the event of contradictory discussions.

This empirical study highlighted important aspects of internal audit work in some Romanian entities and the IT tools use in the internal audit missions in the era defined by the progress of information technology. Among the benefits of implementing and using IT tools in IA missions it can be added the improvement of audit quality by facilitating effective tests. Thus, the precision of the analytical procedures is increased and the samples' preparation and the processing of large volumes of data are more rapid. Moreover, the strategy of using information technology needs to be correlated with the ability to better cover the risks faced by the organization, the improvement of performed processes and activities, minimization of costs etc.

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