

## FACULTY OF ACCOUNTANCY **UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA**

## **BACHELOR OF ACCOUNTANCY (HONORS) AC220**

## **PRACTICAL TRAINING (PAC 671)**

## **FIELD REPORT:**

## **DIGITALIZATION IN ACCOUNTING**

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#### Section A

#### 1. Introduction

On November 7, 2008, three businesses merged to form MNZWAJA (AF 001959): MH Associates (AF 1290) founded in 2001, Wan Ali Jaafar Associates (AF 1074) established in 1997, and MNZ Associates (AF 1012) established in 1994. With its resources, expertise, and knowledge, MNZWAJA has established its corporate goal to become the top accounting firm in Malaysia. Mutual trust, high ethical standards, and their professional reputation serve as the cornerstones of their services to clients. These standards, which include maintaining the utmost confidentiality for all client information and exercising professional independence in all assignments, are binding upon their staff. They serve a range of clients, from individuals to large organizations, with a commitment to providing the best services. Each client is attended by at least one of their partners, executive directors, or managers, ensuring prompt, efficient, and cost-effective service. As a result, MNZWAJA successfully merged with other branches in various cities such as Terengganu, Johor Bahru, Kelantan, Kuala Lumpur, Pulau Penang and Sabah.

In Kemaman, the branch is led by Puan Norhazira Binti Azmi as an assistant manager of East Coast Region. She is also the supervisor of every trainee in MNZWAJA, Kemaman. There are also two senior auditors in that branch namely Puan Nor Sahiela and Puan Tengku Ira. They are genuinely good and experienced auditors to work with.

MNZWAJA has also provided their trainee with RM500.00 allowances every month. If there is any audit fieldwork at the client's office, trainees and even their staff can claim for fuel.

#### 2. Summary of work done

During my internship, I have been exposed to many scope of work in the accounting field. I have been involved in preparing the worksheet of audit working paper for certain sections such as Sales, Purchase and Expenses.

Firstly, before starting any audit process, I will open the current audit file for the current audit process of the client. For a former file of one company, it will be closed and to be put in the blue file and kept in the file room.

Once my supervisor emailed me the Management Account of the client I will start doing the Opening Balance Analysis (OBA) and Working Trial Balance. Opening balances are based upon the closing balances of the prior period and reflect the effects of transactions and events of prior periods and accounting policies applied in the prior period. The opening balance will be analyzed from the previous year in order to make sure the ending balance of the previous year matches with the opening balance of the current year. Working Trial Balance of current year will be keyed in based on the trial balance as at 31 December 2023 and as per balance sheet. Before that, I need to do casting on the last year's figures as per last year's reported figure in the blue file (PAF). Then, if it matches, current working trial balance can be made. Usually, when doing WTB, I will refer to the current Trial Balance, Balance Sheet, Trade Debtor/Creditor Ledger.

Next is the Test of Details. Before starting the test of details, I need to prepare three sheets, number one lead schedule. Lead schedule is the summary from working trial balance of what item that will be included in the section. For the lead schedule only a general amount will be taken. Second is listing. Listing is the listing of the item in the lead schedule. Third is the summary sheet. Summary is the sheet that will be prepared for the item selected from listing and the section will be determined in this summary to be audited.

After that I will run the sampling table in order to choose samples for key items and non-key items. Non-key items will be selected after deducting key items. The key item and non-key item will be determined by the amount of performance materiality. Selected samples will be chosen after being tested with a sampling interval. Those first amounts that are bigger than the sampling interval number will be selected as the sample in a non-key item.

Lastly is vouching. Usually I will be vouching for Sales, Purchase and Expenses most of the time. Vouching is defined as the verification of entries in the books of account by examination of documentary evidence or vouchers, such as invoices, debit and credit notes, statements, receipts, etc. After doing the Test Of Details and Running Sampling table, the selected sample will be vouched. The vouching process needs me to check the amount, the date of the invoice, the date of payment transaction and make sure there are the supporting documents to prove those transactions are incurred.

In my summary sheet, sometimes there is an item that I need to do for a reasonable test especially for salary. In this section, the salary of the staff will be keyed-in including the EPF, EIS, overtime paid, allowances or any deduction during the period. If there is any difference between the reasonable test and the summary of salary provided by the client, the adjustment will be done.

I also went for audit fieldwork at a client's company. Audit fieldwork required me to stay there for almost a week. Other than that, I am also involved in stocktake audit and statutory audit. Stocktake audit is basically to check whether or not the client's stock at their premises are tally as reported in the system. While statutory audit is a legally required review of the accuracy of a company's or government's financial statements and records

#### 3. Strengths and Weaknesses

While doing my internship in MNZWAJA, I have figured out some strengths and weaknesses that I can take as a good example and life lesson. I was so grateful, during my internship, I was blessed with a good supervisor and colleague. I was assisted and guided by them whenever I'm doing my task.

They also offered me good teamwork and great communication at the office. Due to that, as an intern, I was able to learn more and get new knowledge. I felt motivated to come to work everyday and explore new things in this accounting/auditing field. Even though I made a mistake, they never gave me pressure but helped me figure out what should be done right instead.

Whenever I feel clueless about my task, they taught me and helped me in doing my task. As a result, I was able to learn and understand more regarding the task assigned. Also, whenever I am involved in the audit fieldwork, stocktake audit or statutory audit, they will give me a chance to do it by myself with their assistance and guidance.

The only weakness of this place is that they do not ask for their trainee, including me doing the full audit. My everyday work is doing the NA for Sales, NB for Purchase, ND for Administration Expenses, and sometimes KC Alternative. So basically, I only do vouching and reasonable tests.

However, I enjoyed having my internship here and alway feel positive in doing my everyday tasks. This internship period has become a transformative journey for me as it is filled with growth, learning, and meaningful connections. From this internship, I discover my strengths, cultivate new skills, and gain insights that shape my future careers. Here's to embracing challenges, fostering creativity, and building a community that supports and inspires each other. I hope this experience would be a stepping stone towards a bright and successful future ahead

#### 4. Self-Reflection

Reflecting on my six-month internship at MNZWAJA, I am filled with a sense of accomplishment and growth. This experience has been invaluable in shaping both my professional skills and personal development. One of the most significant aspects of this internship was the exposure to real-world accounting practices. Working on client accounts, preparing financial statements, and assisting with audits gave me hands-on experience that classroom learning could not provide. I learned to navigate accounting software efficiently and gained a deeper understanding of accounting principles and regulations.

Moreover, collaborating with experienced professionals taught me the importance of teamwork and effective communication. I discovered how to ask thoughtful questions, seek feedback, and contribute meaningfully to projects. This skill set will undoubtedly benefit me in future roles and endeavors. Beyond technical skills, this internship taught me about professionalism and workplace etiquette. From adhering to deadlines and managing priorities to handling client interactions with courtesy and professionalism, I honed skills that are crucial in any career.

On a personal level, this internship challenged me to step out of my comfort zone and embrace new experiences. I learned to adapt to fast-paced environments, solve problems creatively, and remain resilient in the face of challenges. Looking ahead, I am grateful for the mentorship and guidance I received during this internship. I am confident that the lessons learned and experiences gained will serve as a strong foundation for my future career in accounting.

#### **Section B: Digitalization In Accounting**

#### 1. Introduction

Accounting's digitalization is a revolutionary move away from manual, traditional processes and toward automated, technology-driven procedures that are changing the face of financial management. It is now essential for businesses to embrace digital tools and technologies in accounting to maintain efficiency, accuracy, and competitiveness as they navigate a more complex and dynamic market environment. This shift entails a thorough reorganization of the methods for capturing, processing, and analyzing financial data in addition to the simple substitution of digital records for paper records. This allows for more intelligent and strategic decision-making.

The integration of advanced software, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and data analytics into accounting workflows has brought about unprecedented levels of automation and real-time data access. These innovations streamline routine tasks such as bookkeeping, payroll, tax preparation, and financial reporting, significantly reducing human error and freeing up accountants to focus on higher-value activities. For instance, automated data entry and reconciliation processes ensure that financial data is both accurate and up-to-date, while cloud-based solutions facilitate seamless collaboration across different locations. Moreover, the power of machine learning and predictive analytics provides businesses with deeper insights into financial trends and potential risks, enabling more proactive and informed decision-making.

Automation and real-time data access have reached previously unheard-of levels in accounting workflows thanks to the incorporation of cutting-edge software, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and data analytics. By streamlining repetitive processes like payroll, tax preparation, bookkeeping, and financial reporting, these innovations dramatically lower the chance of human error and free up accountant time for higher-value work. But still, there few organizations refuse to adapt to this digitalization as they might have lacked awareness of what digital accounting could bring to their daily operations as they might see few issues regarding the digitalization in accounting.

#### 2. Issue

People might see digitalization in accounting as a threat due to worries about losing jobs, as automation can reduce the need for manual tasks. There are also concerns about data security and privacy, with sensitive information at risk of cyberattacks. Transitioning to new digital systems can be expensive and require extensive training, which can be challenging for businesses and employees too.

Careers are also always evolving as a result of globalization, increased competition, and technological advancements. 702 job titles could potentially become automated, with accounting having the greatest chance of doing so in the near future, according to Lawrence Frey. Artificial intelligence and automation systems will also handle a large number of accounting transactions in the upcoming years (Tekbas, 2018). As has been said before, in the accounting industry, digitalization may be seen as a threat or an opportunity. There is an opportunity when accountants learn new skills, especially in engineering, that will support the emergence of new accounting professional types. According to the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), accountants put themselves at risk if they do not understand how digital transformation and technology are changing the workplace.

In addition, the accounting sector is currently growing and developing. The field of accounting is growing as a result of changes in customer expectations and technological advancements. Given that the accounting industry now uses a number of automated systems that were not available even a decade ago, the scope of an accountant's work should therefore grow and become more flexible in response to technological developments and digitalization. The adoption of digitalization in the accounting sector has resulted in a significant transformation in the role of accountants, as they are now more reliant on the advancement of contemporary tools and technology.

However, it's undeniable that a lot of companies are still apprehensive to go through the digital transformation process for a variety of reasons, such as incomplete data, a poor strategy, a slow rate of experimentation, complicated tools and technologies, inadequate planning and

training, a lack of talent and skills, security concerns, a lack of funding, and ignorance of the necessity for digital transformation (Schwertner, 2017). Thus, every sector including the accounting profession should embrace digitalization as it could bring a lot of benefits to the key players in the accounting world in the face of the latest technological modernization.

#### 3. Discussion: The Benefits of Adapting to Digitalization in Accounting Profession

There are actually a lot of advantages of digitalization in accounting that every accountant could benefit from. Every accountant should be aware of these benefits as it could help them to bring changes in the industry for future periods.

#### i. Reduce the accountant's workload

In the accounting world, the adoption of advanced computer systems has reduced the workload of accountants and simplified repetitive processes within traditional settings (Tekbas & Nonwoven, 2018). The accountant now has ample time to dedicate to using expert judgment on any matter impacting the business. This enables accountants to perform their daily tasks with greater effectiveness and efficiency. Because of the comprehensible format of the automated data collection, processing, and visualization, the data is now readily accessible and transparent. Because of this, businesses are able to provide greater information to all workers, even those who are lower in the hierarchy. Thus, employees at all levels are therefore better equipped to make decisions, which improves overall business performance and promotes an open and accountable culture within the company. As has been said by (Chesled, 2020 in Cijan et al., 2019) this ease of access could also lead to higher worker productivity.

Many accounting tasks are already automated in many businesses, especially in large companies, according to Arntz et al. (2017). These tasks, which include bookkeeping, payroll processing, and invoicing, are automated because they involve recurring, regular, stable, and structured actions. Moudud-UI-Huq (2014) highlighted that automation and digitization support auditors in the process such as going-concern decisions, materiality assessments, internal control evaluations, audit planning, and analytical review procedures. This is because, by adopting digitalization, they can quickly analyze financial data to spot risks and provide precise calculations. Digital tools can also streamline audit planning and resource allocation. Finally, advanced data analytics enhance analytical reviews by uncovering patterns and anomalies that manual methods might miss.

Therefore, for more structured, programmable, and repetitive tasks where obtaining human knowledge and expertise is not particularly challenging or demanding, digital tools in accounting can therefore be successfully applied (Moudud-Ul-Huq, 2014). These kinds of smart technologies, however, are not intended to eradicate human intelligence; rather, by offering vital business insights, it will assist accountants in becoming more effective strategic advisors. Additionally, it will improve accountants' access to a wider variety of almost real-time data from more sources. Thus, digitalization can help in reducing an accountant's workload in running their daily task.

#### ii. Professionals Upskilling Opportunities

Digitalization is now considered one of the largest and longest lasting transformations (Leitner-Hanetseder et al., 2021). In today's accounting industry, terms like artificial intelligence, Big Data, blockchain technology, cloud solution, software robot, and integrated system are frequently used. Accountants will face changes as a result of these technologies. These changes will require the accountants to upgrade their skills, take on new responsibilities, collaborate and engage in innovative ways, particularly when it comes to human-machine interactions (Gulin et al., 2019).

In today's digital workplace, accountants need to be flexible and able to keep up with technology developments. "Change is the only constant in life," said the Greek philosopher Heraclitus. By doing so, accounting firms that plan ahead and grasp the possibilities presented by modern technologies may benefit effectively from a digitally driven business. Plus, industrial era 4.0 also requires developing new digital skills for the workforce, which will evolve the way that people work (Beechler & Woodward, 2009). This will help accountants to develop and improve their professional skills in order to remain effective and relevant in the industry.

According to (Santoso et al., 2021), workers are also required to be competent in digitalization as it will help them to enhance and shorten their work time. This will allow professionals to focus on higher-value activities like strategic planning and advisory services. It is important to note that the most valuable tasks performed by accountants, such as interpreting and analyzing financial information, cannot be completed by automation or artificial intelligence. This is said so because these activities need a deep understanding of context, subtlety, and judgment. Although automation and artificial intelligence (AI) are excellent at processing vast amounts of data rapidly and precisely, they fall short in understanding intricate business environments, evaluating qualitative factors, and applying professional skepticism and ethical considerations. Accountants will need to apply their knowledge to make strategic recommendations, communicate insights catered to particular business requirements, and make well-informed decisions, which require human insight and critical thinking that are impossible for machines to duplicate.

As said by Kokina et al. (2017), the need for human accountants will never go way. Thus, accountants can take this opportunity in upskilling their profession and therefore they can add value in their performance.

#### iii. Large Data Can Be Extracted Quickly

The growing volume of information challenges the organizational capacity to manage the documentary collection effectively, as pointed out by Cézar (2009). Digitalization of accounting allows for the quick extraction of large data sets and the more effective use of key technologies like Big Data, Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, Robotic Process Automation (RPA), and Data Analytics (AIDA) by accountants. By utilizing cutting-edge technology to shorten their workdays and reduce workload, accountants can concentrate on more significant assignments. Accountants now have more time to devote to forward-looking advising assistance and other services due to digitalization (Smith, 2018).

Various studies also address that automation in the accounting profession could bring greater speed in task execution, which is one of the main advantages (Brands & Smith, 2016; Gonçalves et al., 2022; Ribeiro, 2018; Fernandez & Aman, 2018). This is because automation plays a crucial role by streamlining data entry and consolidation processes, significantly reducing the time required compared to manual methods. Additionally, artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms can swiftly analyze and categorize data, making it easier to access relevant information quickly. The use of databases optimized for high performance ensures that queries are executed efficiently, enabling accountants to extract and work with large datasets in real-time.

Moreover, digitalization enhances data handling capabilities, making it possible to manage extensive volumes of information with unprecedented speed, accuracy and promptness of accounting information that helps in saving costs. According to Ratmono, Frendy, and Zuhrohtun (2023), the use of digitalization in management accounting systems contributes to an increase in the accuracy and promptness of accounting information, which ultimately results in cost savings. Advanced analytics tools will allow accountants to have deeper insights into financial data, helping identify cost-saving opportunities. As a result, the ability of an organization in emerging countries' metropolitan regions to make decisions has improved. This is said so because digital tools such as automated data entry, cloud computing, and real-time financial reporting eliminate many of the manual processes that are prone to human error. This ensures that the financial data captured is more accurate and reliable.

#### 4. Recommendation: How To Encourage the Digitalization in Accounting

#### i. Awareness and Education: Combining Accounting Knowledge With Technology

As has been said in the report of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), 'Digital skills are becoming near universal requirements for employment. Yet they are rapidly changing – and employers must respond quickly, training workers for future skills as well as for the skills needed today.'

By educating accounting professionals about the benefits and practical applications of digital tools, they can better understand how these technologies can enhance their work. Awareness campaigns and training programs can dispel fears and misconceptions about digitalization, making the transition smoother. According to an article by the Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA), ongoing education and professional development are crucial in equipping accountants with the necessary skills to leverage digital advancements, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in a technology-driven environment.

Therefore, combining accounting knowledge with technology is essential because it integrates the expertise of accounting professionals with the power of digital tools to optimize financial management. Technology enhances the accuracy, efficiency, and speed of accounting processes, allowing professionals to focus on strategic analysis and decision-making.

Additionally, studies reveal that the biggest disruption to accounting and organizations is digital technology (CGMA, 2019). AICPA and NASBA initiated the CPA Evolution initiative in response to the evolving skill set required of accountants, which includes the introduction of a new CPA exam in 2024 (Behn, 2021). The exam consists of three main sections: accounting, audit, and tax/regulation; additionally, there is one section each from business analysis and reporting (BAR), information systems and controls (ISC), and tax compliance and planning (TCP). To stay current with developments in the field, digital technology concepts will be incorporated into every section (Behn, 2021). This move ensures that accountants are prepared for the changing demands of their profession and helps them gain more exposure to digital things.

#### ii. Promoting data security and integrity

In recent years, we have seen well-publicized events that highlight the weaknesses and possible repercussions of insufficient data security in the accounting industry. For example, the well-known Equifax data breach in 2017 exposed millions of people's private financial information. The incident damaged the company's finances and reputation (Smith, 2017). This has created boundaries between an organization in adapting to digitalization in accounting. They become reluctant to change as they are afraid of the risk of getting exposed to the cyber threats due to digitalization.

In order to overcome the fear, promoting data security and integrity can enhance the encouragement of digitalization in accounting because it addresses one of the main concerns which is security that professionals and organizations have regarding digital adoption. Ensuring robust data protection measures can help in building trust and confidence in digital systems. For example, to restrict who has access to sensitive financial data, for instance, the company can set up robust access controls that make use of role-based access controls and multi-factor authentication (MFA). Consequently, critical accounting systems would only be accessible to authorized personnel. Hence, the data and information are secured.

Emphasizing strong cybersecurity practices and demonstrating the effectiveness of these measures can alleviate fears about data breaches and cyberattacks. When accountants and businesses see that their sensitive financial information is secure, they are more likely to embrace digital tools and processes, leading to broader adoption of digitalization in the accounting industry. Gaining trust is crucial for overcoming barriers to digital adoption, allowing the industry to benefit from enhanced accuracy, efficiency, and real-time insights. Plus, by having a more secure and safe cybersecurity system, it will not only gain the trust of accountants but also other people such as the client itself. They will become more confident in using the accountant services.

Therefore, prioritizing and showcasing strong cybersecurity practices not only safeguards financial information but also encourages the adoption of innovative digital solutions, driving the accounting industry towards a more efficient and technologically advanced future.

#### iii. Investment In Research And Development of Good Accounting Software

Wrong selection of accounting software for a company may lead to financial losses, bankruptcies of the company, closure of the company and losses of jobs to accounting personnel (Aduamoah, 2017). The adoption of computerized accounting systems leads to accountants who can use specific software and thus costs more (Taiwo, 2016).

It is crucial to take the time to choose the best accounting software packages that are most appropriate for the organizations. It ensures that the software aligns with the specific needs and workflows of the business. The right software can improve efficiency by automating routine tasks, enhance accuracy by reducing manual errors, and provide valuable insights through advanced analytics and reporting features. Additionally, suitable accounting software can scale with the business as it grows, integrate seamlessly with other systems, and comply with relevant regulatory requirements. Taking the time to choose the best fit helps maximize the return on investment, support strategic decision-making, and foster overall organizational productivity and success.

Moreover, not every organization can benefit from generic accounting software. In order to get the best accounting functionalities, they might need to invest in customized accounting software. This prompts management to implement best computerized accounting practices in an organization in order to take strategic planning for their sustainable profitability. The issues with book record keeping will be lessened with the advent of new technology and more user-friendly software.

Investing in research and development (R&D) for good accounting software is also crucial because it drives innovation and improves the functionality, usability, and efficiency of accounting tools. Continuous R&D efforts in accounting software also lead to the development of advanced features such as AI-driven automation, predictive analytics, and enhanced security protocols. These innovations not only streamline financial processes but also enable accountants to make more informed decisions based on real-time data insights.

In essence, by prioritizing R&D in accounting software, organizations can stay ahead of competition, improve user satisfaction, and enhance overall operational efficiency in financial processes.

#### 4. Conclusion

Accounting's digitalization is a revolutionary change that goes beyond simple process automation. Financial professionals can now focus on more strategic activities as it streamlines repetitive tasks like data entry and reconciliation, resulting in a fundamental improvement in efficiency. Higher degrees of accuracy in financial reporting and analysis are achievable for businesses with the use of cutting-edge software and cloud-based platforms. This precision is necessary for both regulatory compliance and obtaining a more real-time and transparent picture of financial health, which is necessary for making well-informed decisions.

Additionally, businesses can more efficiently utilize enormous amounts of data thanks to digitalization. By utilizing data analytics and machine learning, businesses can obtain practical insights that stimulate innovation and business expansion. These insights support trend identification, future outcome prediction, and resource allocation optimization. Organizations may gain a competitive edge in their industries by using digital tools to help them respond faster to customer demands and changes in the market.

Adoption of digital accounting solutions also improves departmental and team collaboration and communication. Transparency and accountability are enhanced by real-time access to financial data made possible by cloud-based systems. In today's globalized and digitally connected business environment, remote work arrangements have grown in importance and this accessibility not only increases workflow efficiency but also supports them. All things considered, embracing digitalization in accounting gives companies the ability to innovate more easily, navigate complexity more skillfully, and eventually experience sustainable growth in a changing economic environment.

Therefore, every sector should embrace digitalization in accounting as it could help in making changes from various aspects. As the 4.0 industrial era grows forward, we should stay aligned with it in order to stay relevant in this industry.

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## 6. Appendices

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