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# Financial Reporting Revolution: How it Integration Drives Efficiency and Accuracy

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***Author's contribution***

*The sole author designed, analysed, interpreted and prepared the manuscript.*

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## ABSTRACT

**Aims:** This study investigated the transformative impact of IT integration on financial reporting, examining how organizations leverage advanced technologies to streamline operations, enhance data accuracy, and improve strategic decision-making.
**Methodology:** Through a quantitative analysis of 100 respondents representing diverse sectors, including manufacturing, finance, healthcare, IT, retail, and others, this research explored key indicators such as reduction in manual errors, improvement in coordination and collaboration, and effectiveness of training programs post-IT integration.
**Results:** Findings revealed a significant reduction in manual errors, with 60% of respondents reporting a notable decrease, attributing it to automated data validation and streamlined workflows. Moreover, 40% of participants note a significant improvement in coordination and collaboration across departments, facilitated by centralized data access and real-time communication tools. The

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study also highlighted the effectiveness of training initiatives, with 75% of respondents indicating moderate to very effective outcomes in preparing teams to utilize new IT systems proficiently. Despite these advancements, challenges such as system integration complexities and varying levels of user satisfaction remain prevalent. Approximately 15% of respondents reported no significant change in operational efficiency post-IT integration, citing issues related to data integration and system compatibility. Furthermore, while 45% expressed satisfaction with IT integration, 10% remained neutral or dissatisfied, emphasizing the importance of ongoing support and continuous improvement in maximizing the benefits of IT integration.

**Conclusion:** The integration of IT systems has significantly enhanced efficiency and accuracy in financial reporting across various industries, as evidenced by the majority of respondents who reported improvements in areas such as time efficiency, cost effectiveness, accuracy of reporting, and strategic decision-making. Real-time reporting capabilities enabled by advanced IT systems have empowered organizations to respond swiftly to market changes, optimize resource allocation, and make informed strategic decisions.

*Keywords: Financial reporting; IT integration; technology adoption; training effectiveness; strategic decision-making; technological advancements; user adoption; system integration.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The integration of Information Technology (IT) into financial reporting has significantly transformed the landscape of finance. This revolution is driven by several factors, including the demand for real-time data, the need for improved accuracy, and the pressure to meet stringent regulatory requirements.

Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is emerging as a key technology for reducing manual errors and enhancing efficiency in financial reporting and risk management processes worldwide. RPA can replicate human activities in the user interface, making it non-intrusive and cost-effective compared to other automation technologies [1,2]. By automating repetitive, rule-based tasks, organizations can minimize human intervention and improve accuracy in financial reporting [3]. This automation extends to risk management processes, where eliminating manual tasks can significantly reduce errors and increase efficiency [4]. Technologies like cloud computing, artificial intelligence, and blockchain are also transforming financial reporting, providing immediate and reliable results by reducing human errors [5]. However, implementing RPA comes with challenges, and organizations must carefully assess processes for automation to maximize benefits and mitigate risks [3]. The adoption of integrated financial management systems (IFMIS) and computerized accounting systems in Tanzania has shown mixed results in improving financial reporting quality and performance. While IFMIS adoption has enhanced the understandability and reliability of financial reports in local governments [6], many micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) still struggle to adopt financial reporting standards due to inadequate knowledge, lack of awareness, and perceived high costs [7]. The implementation of accrual accounting reforms in the public sector has faced challenges, including weak political commitment and insufficient technical competence, despite increasing managerial accountability [8]. In the private sector, the adoption of computerized accounting systems has been hindered by factors such as cost and lack of management support, despite their potential to improve financial performance [9]. These findings highlight the need for comprehensive strategies to address both technical and institutional factors in improving financial reporting practices across different sectors in Tanzania.

Automated data validation is crucial for maintaining data integrity and accuracy in various domains, including financial reporting. Multiple studies have demonstrated the benefits of automated validation in data migration, political datasets, and data warehousing [10-12]. Automated validation processes significantly reduce testing time, costs, and risks associated with manual validation while improving data quality [10,12,13]. Researchers have developed and implemented automated validation tools and test suites for diverse datasets, such as charity financial information, political donations, and government lobbying [14]. These tools can efficiently detect errors in data preparation phases and ensure data consistency [12]. The implementation of automated data validation is particularly important in data warehousing, where data quality directly impacts business decisions and compliance with regulations [13].

Workflow automation offers significant opportunities for streamlining processes across various industries, including healthcare and finance. It can enhance efficiency, productivity, and quality by identifying sequences of tasks that can be automated using technology [15]. The level of automation depends on task characteristics, such as repetitiveness and the degree of human intervention required. In financial institutions, automated reporting systems like AutoFiState can significantly reduce time and labor costs associated with financial operations in EU-funded projects [16]. Workflow optimization techniques, when applied to financial institutions, can further improve process efficiency. A survey of finance/IT professionals and a case study demonstrated the effectiveness of various optimization methods in reducing workflow execution time [17]. Successful implementation of workflow automation requires careful consideration of people, processes, and technology, as well as ongoing monitoring and improvement [15].

Tanzania has implemented various reforms to streamline financial workflows and improve economic governance. The introduction of an Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) has enhanced fiscal discipline, expenditure management, and real-time budget monitoring [18]. Public Financial Management reforms have focused on addressing key weaknesses in financial control and customizing solutions to local conditions [19]. ICT usage, including mobile phones, computers, and the Internet, has boosted business efficiency in areas such as material processing, management activities, and marketing [20]. Land policy reforms have aimed to streamline land management systems, implement sound land information management, and facilitate land transactions [21]. These reforms have contributed to improved resource allocation, accountability, and economic performance, with GDP growth exceeding 5% and inflation maintained below 5% in recent years [18].

Real-time business intelligence (RTBI) systems enable managers to make informed decisions promptly by providing access to up-to-date financial data [22]. These systems present information when and where decisions need to be made, supporting operational and tactical decision-making processes [22,23]. While Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems promise increased speed and visibility of operations, their benefits can be compromised by the need for additional tools to correct distorted data representations [24]. The concept of Zero Latency Enterprise (ZLE) has emerged as a solution to minimize the time lag between event occurrence and information absorption, enhancing strategic decision-making in organizations [25]. Implementation of ZLE in Data Marts has shown significant results in supporting real-time decision-making, particularly in commercial departments [25]. Overall, these technologies aim to improve the timeliness and accuracy of information available to managers for better decision-making.

Dynamic reporting through real-time data integration is revolutionizing financial information management globally. [26], proposed an adaptive approach combining hybrid financial ontology, resilient distributed datasets, and real-time discretized streams to address latency issues and semantic heterogeneity in financial data integration. This approach enhanced reporting quality and availability in short timeframes. [27], highlighted how Big Data improves managerial accounting, financial accounting, and financial reporting practices, enhancing transparency and stakeholder decision-making. [28], explored the potential of eXtensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) in facilitating real-time reporting, noting its ability to improve data extraction across databases and websites. The study also investigates practitioners' expectations regarding costs, benefits, and readiness to adopt XBRL technology. These advancements in dynamic reporting are transforming the financial reporting environment, offering more timely, relevant, and efficient information dissemination globally. Recent studies have explored the impact of financial management systems and reporting reforms in Tanzania. The adoption of Integrated Financial Management Systems (IFMIS) in local governments has improved the understandability and reliability of financial reporting quality, though relevance remained unchanged [6]. In the central government, the implementation of accrual accounting reforms has been influenced by coercive pressures from donors and auditors, as well as normative pressures from employee training [8]. These reforms have increased managerial accountability, but face challenges such as weak political commitment and inadequate technical competence. Looking ahead, the integration of dynamic compliance frameworks and generative artificial intelligence in financial regulatory technology (RegTech) shows promise for enhancing regulatory efficiency and risk management in Tanzania's financial landscape [29]. However, responsible adoption requires careful consideration of potential benefits, challenges, and regulatory implications.

Standardization of IT systems in organizations can lead to improved efficiency, quality, and control in business processes [30]. However, implementing standardization in multinational companies faces challenges due to differences in language, culture, and regulations [31]. The process of standardization is dynamic and influenced by local characteristics and user interactions, rather than solely determined by pre-planned designs [32]. In healthcare, standardization has been shown to facilitate faster implementation, greater quality control, and significant cost savings [33]. IT intensity alone can enhance efficiency and quality but may increase customer-facing time [30]. The interplay between IT and process standardization is crucial, as IT creates business value by enabling standardization and control [30]. Organizations must carefully consider process types when implementing standardization to maximize its benefits [30].

The adoption of standardized IT systems for financial reporting in Tanzania faces several challenges. Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) struggle with inadequate knowledge, lack of awareness, perceived high costs, and weak regulatory enforcement [7]. In the healthcare sector, the absence of health information system standards control mechanisms hinders integration efforts [34]. Multiple actors involved in health information system (HIS) standardization require coordination through boundary objects to manage diverse interests [35]. However, the implementation of Integrated Financial Management Systems (IFMIS) in local government authorities has shown some positive effects on financial reporting quality, particularly in improving understandability and reliability of reports [6]. To overcome these challenges, recommendations include comprehensive training for MSMEs, establishing formal mechanisms to control information system standards, and considering factors such as utilization capacity and internal audit effectiveness in IFMIS adoption.

Audit trails play a crucial role in ensuring transparency and accountability in automated systems. They create comprehensive records of data access and changes, supporting financial reporting and regulatory compliance [36]. In versioning file systems, audit trails can commit to a version history, allowing auditors to verify file contents at any point in time [37]. For acquisitions automation, audit trails serve as a check on fiscal control procedures and help prepare for audits [38]. To address concerns about auditor credibility, especially in cases of potential collusion, a "black box log file" has been proposed as a tertiary monitoring system for continuous assurance. This secure, read-only record of auditor actions and interactions with management would serve as an "audit trail of an audit," enhancing the overall credibility of the audit process [39]. Research on audit trails and automated systems in Tanzania reveals mixed progress. While internal auditing in Tanzanian organizations lags behind in effective IT use due to factors like lack of management support and inadequate training [40], some sectors have seen improvements. The implementation of a digital log tracking system in Tanzania's timber sector has enhanced transparency and increased revenue collection [41]. In local government authorities, attributes such as audit quality and organizational setting positively influence internal audit effectiveness [42]. The Public Service Reform in Tanzania has led to improvements in records management practices, which can enhance accountability and transparency in public sector organizations [43]. These findings suggest that while challenges persist, there is potential for automated systems to create comprehensive audit trails and simplify the audit process in Tanzania, particularly when supported by appropriate organizational structures and management commitment.

Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems have evolved from manufacturing-focused approaches like Material Requirement Planning (MRP) to comprehensive solutions integrating various business functions [44]. ERP integration provides a holistic view of an organization's operations, improving efficiency across departments [45]. Integration can occur at multiple levels, including system-specification, organizational, and socio-organizational, with different levels influencing local and global ERP implementations [46]. Modern ERP systems are integrated both internally and externally with customers, suppliers, and business partners [47]. While technological integration studies primarily focus on internal systems, methodological research emphasizes supply chain management and e-business integration [47]. However, there is a need for more rigorous research on how integration issues are effectively addressed by stakeholders in ERP projects, as many existing studies lack robust methodologies or rely on single cases [47].

Tanzania has made significant strides in developing interoperable systems for seamless data flow across different sectors. In healthcare, the country implemented a national health information exchange, integrating 15 separate information systems to improve data availability and efficiency [48]. This initiative followed a five-step procedure based on the "Mind the GAPS" framework, addressing data exchange challenges in various healthcare scenarios [48]. In the financial sector, Tanzania introduced mobile money interoperability, allowing cross-platform transactions between telecom and bank accounts [49]. Factors influencing user acceptance of this system include perceived ease of use, price value, network availability, security, and service quality [49]. The country's approach to interoperability in digital financial services has been praised for its focus on industry engagement and governance, serving as a model for other developing markets [50].

The traditional methods of financial reporting are troubled with significant challenges that undermine the efficiency and accuracy of financial data management. These methods rely heavily on manual data entry and processing, which are time-consuming and prone to human error, leading to inaccuracies and inconsistencies in financial reports. The lack of real-time data access delays reporting and decision-making processes, while the absence of standardized protocols across departments complicates data consolidation. Furthermore, keeping up with dynamic regulatory requirements is challenging without automated systems, and manual processes struggle to meet the complex demands of modern financial regulations. Limited analytical capabilities of traditional methods restrict advanced data analysis and predictive insights, crucial for strategic planning. Additionally, manual financial reporting incurs high labor costs, allocates significant resources towards maintaining outdated processes, and poses data security risks due to vulnerabilities in manual handling. These issues are worsened by the scalability challenges, as traditional methods do not adapt well to organizational growth and evolving business environments. Thus, the integration of Information Technology (IT) into financial reporting is imperative to address these inefficiencies, enhance data accuracy, ensure regulatory compliance, and support advanced analytical capabilities, ultimately transforming financial management practices.

The objective of the study was to explore and demonstrate the transformative impact of integrating Information Technology (IT) on the financial reporting processes within organizations. This study aimed at identifying how IT integration can address the inherent inefficiencies and inaccuracies associated with traditional financial reporting methods, such as manual data entry, delayed reporting, and inconsistent data formats. It sought to evaluate the benefits of real-time data access, automation, standardization, and advanced analytical capabilities facilitated by IT, and how these advancements contribute to improved decision-making, enhanced regulatory compliance, and overall operational efficiency. By analyzing case studies and industry data, the study intended to provide comprehensive insights into the practical applications of IT in financial reporting and the tangible improvements in accuracy, speed, and strategic value that such integration can deliver to businesses.

The significance of the study lies in its potential to provide valuable insights and practical solutions to the longstanding challenges faced by organizations in financial reporting. By highlighting the transformative impact of IT integration, this study highlighted the importance of adopting modern technologies to enhance the accuracy, efficiency, and reliability of financial data management. It demonstrated how automation, real-time data access, and standardized processes can significantly reduce errors, streamlined workflows, and ensured timely compliance with regulatory requirements. The findings of this study are crucial for financial professionals, business leaders, and policymakers as they navigate the complexities of modern financial environments and seeks to optimize their reporting processes. Additionally, this study contributes to the academic discourse on financial management and technology, offering empirical evidence and best practices that can inform future research and development in this field. Ultimately, the study aimed at empowering organizations with the knowledge and tools needed to leverage IT for superior financial reporting, driving better business outcomes and fostering a more robust and transparent financial ecosystem.

**The remaining part of the paper is organized as follows:** Methodology is in section 2, while section 3 contains results and discussion of the study and conclusion and recommendations are in section 4.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The method employed in this study included a mixed-methods approach to comprehensively analyze the impact of IT integration on financial reporting processes. The research began with a quantitative phase where a structured survey was distributed to a sample size of 100 finance professionals from various industries. The survey included questions about the types of IT systems used, the extent of their integration, and specific metrics related to efficiency and accuracy in financial reporting. The data collected provided a broad overview of the current landscape and allowed for statistical analysis to identify trends and correlations.

Following the survey, the study conducted in-depth qualitative interviews with a subset of 20 participants from the original sample. These participants were selected based on their responses to the survey, ensuring a diverse representation of industries, company sizes, and levels of IT integration. The interviews aimed to gather detailed insights into the experiences and challenges faced by these professionals. They explored how IT integration influenced their day-to-day operations, the specific benefits observed, and any obstacles encountered during implementation. This qualitative data enriched the quantitative findings by adding context and depth to the numerical trends identified.

To analyze the collected data, the study used a combination of statistical tools and thematic analysis. Quantitative data from the surveys were processed using statistical software to identify significant relationships between IT integration and improvements in efficiency and accuracy of financial reporting. For the qualitative interviews, thematic analysis was conducted to identify common themes and patterns across different participants' experiences. The integration of these methods allowed for a robust analysis, ensuring that the conclusions drawn were both statistically significant and contextually grounded, providing a comprehensive understanding of how IT integration drives efficiency and accuracy in financial reporting.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section probes into the heart of our investigation the results and discussion surrounding the impact of Information Technology (IT) integration on financial reporting. By analyzing the data gathered from both the quantitative survey and qualitative interviews, the study aimed at illuminating the transformative power of IT in enhancing efficiency and accuracy within this critical business function. The quantitative analysis of survey data unveiled key trends and potential correlations. The qualitative interviews provided a deeper dive into the lived experiences of those directly involved in the financial reporting process. The study explored how IT integration has impacted the workflows, data management practices, and ultimately, the overall accuracy and timeliness of financial reporting.

**Table 1. Demographic Information of Study respondents**

| Demographic Information | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| **Job Title** | | |
| Accountant | 30 | 30% |
| Financial Analyst | 25 | 25% |
| Finance Manager | 20 | 20% |
| CFO | 15 | 15% |
| Other | 10 | 10% |
| **Industry** | | |
| Manufacturing | 20 | 20% |
| Finance & Banking | 25 | 25% |
| Healthcare | 15 | 15% |
| IT & Technology | 20 | 20% |
| Retail | 10 | 10% |
| Other | 10 | 10% |
| **Company Size** | | |
| Small (1-50 employees) | 45 | 45% |
| Medium (51-200 employees) | 40 | 40% |
| Large (200+ employees) | 15 | 15% |
| **Years of Experience** | | |
| Less than 5 years | 20 | 20% |
| 5-10 years | 35 | 35% |
| 11-15 years | 25 | 25% |
| More than 15 years | 20 | 20% |

## 3.1 Demographic Information of Respondents

This segment presents general information of respondents such as Job Title, Industry, Company Size, and Years of Experience of the respondents approached with interview and questionnaires.

### 3.1.1 Job title

This study involved a diverse group of finance professionals, each bringing unique perspectives and insights based on their job roles. As shown in Table 1, among the 100 participants, 30 were accountants, representing the largest group. Accountants are typically responsible for managing financial records, ensuring accuracy in data entry, and preparing financial statements. Their role is crucial in maintaining the integrity of financial information. During the interviews, accountants highlighted how IT integration streamlined routine tasks such as data collection and validation, allowing them to focus more on strategic analysis rather than manual entry. They also discussed improvements in error reduction and the ease of generating comprehensive reports, which enhanced their ability to meet compliance requirements efficiently.

Financial analysts made up the second largest group, with 25 participants. These professionals primarily focus on analyzing financial data to support decision-making and strategic planning within their organizations. The integration of IT systems, particularly business intelligence tools and advanced analytics software, significantly impacted their work. Interviewed analysts reported that IT integration allowed them to access real-time data and perform complex analyses more quickly and accurately. This capability enabled them to provide more timely and insightful recommendations to management, thereby enhancing the overall strategic planning process. They also appreciated the ability to visualize data through advanced reporting tools, which facilitated clearer communication of financial insights to non-financial stakeholders.

Finance managers, comprising 20 participants, play a critical role in overseeing the financial health of their organizations. They manage budgeting, forecasting, and financial planning activities. The finance managers interviewed emphasized the strategic benefits of IT integration, particularly in enhancing their ability to perform accurate and timely financial forecasting. The automation of routine processes freed up time for more in-depth financial analysis and strategic planning. Additionally, the integration of various IT systems allowed for more cohesive financial management, with real-time data facilitating better-informed decision-making and more efficient resource allocation.

Chief Financial Officers (CFOs), who numbered 15 in the study, are responsible for the overall financial strategy and governance of their organizations. CFOs highlighted the transformative impact of IT integration on financial reporting and corporate governance. They discussed how integrated systems provided a holistic view of the organization's financial performance, which was crucial for strategic decision-making. Enhanced data accuracy and real-time reporting capabilities were particularly valued, as they supported more agile and informed decisions. CFOs also noted the importance of IT systems in ensuring compliance and managing financial risks more effectively, thereby safeguarding the organization’s financial integrity.

The remaining 10 participants fell into the "Other" category, encompassing various roles such as internal auditors, compliance officers, and financial consultants. These professionals provided insights into the broader impacts of IT integration across different facets of financial management and reporting. Internal auditors and compliance officers, for instance, noted the enhanced ability to monitor and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements due to the increased transparency and traceability provided by integrated IT systems. Financial consultants discussed how IT integration allowed for more efficient client reporting and improved the overall quality of financial advisory services.

In general, the diverse range of job titles among the participants in the study provided a comprehensive view of the multifaceted benefits and challenges of IT integration in financial reporting. Each group highlighted different aspects of the transformation, underscoring the wide-ranging impact of technology on improving efficiency, accuracy, and strategic capabilities in financial management.

### 3.1.2 Industry

Regarding industry category, respondents came from a range of industries, each experiencing unique benefits and challenges from IT integration in their financial reporting processes. As per Table 1, the manufacturing sector, represented by 20 participants, revealed a significant transformation due to IT integration. Manufacturing companies, often dealing with large volumes of data from various operational sources, found that integrated IT systems facilitated more efficient data aggregation and analysis. This improvement helped streamline inventory management, cost control, and production planning. Manufacturing professionals noted that enhanced data accuracy and real-time reporting capabilities reduced errors and improved decision-making, enabling more agile responses to market changes and operational disruptions.

The finance and banking sector, the largest group with 25 participants, showcased a profound impact of IT integration on financial reporting accuracy and compliance. Financial institutions are heavily regulated and require meticulous attention to detail in reporting. Participants from this sector emphasized how IT systems improved the precision and timeliness of financial reports, aiding in compliance with stringent regulatory requirements. The integration of advanced analytics and automation tools allowed these institutions to detect and address discrepancies more swiftly, enhancing risk management and ensuring the integrity of financial data. Moreover, the use of IT systems facilitated better customer insights and improved the overall efficiency of financial services.

In the healthcare industry, represented by 15 participants, IT integration played a crucial role in managing the complexities of financial reporting associated with patient care, insurance claims, and regulatory compliance. Healthcare professionals highlighted how integrated IT systems streamlined billing processes, reduced administrative burdens, and improved the accuracy of financial data. The automation of reporting tasks allowed healthcare organizations to focus more on patient care and strategic planning. Additionally, IT systems helped in tracking financial performance across various departments, ensuring efficient resource allocation and supporting the financial sustainability of healthcare providers.

The IT and technology sector, with 20 participants, naturally exhibited a high level of IT system adoption and integration. Professionals from this sector discussed the seamless incorporation of sophisticated IT tools into their financial reporting processes, which significantly enhanced efficiency and accuracy. The use of cloud-based solutions, artificial intelligence, and machine learning algorithms facilitated real-time data processing and advanced analytics. This integration not only improved the speed and accuracy of financial reporting but also supported innovative financial modeling and predictive analysis. IT professionals underscored the strategic advantage gained through the ability to quickly adapt to market trends and make data-driven decisions.

Retail industry participants, numbering 10, highlighted how IT integration transformed their financial reporting by improving inventory management, sales tracking, and customer insights. Retailers often deal with high transaction volumes and diverse sales channels, making accurate and timely financial reporting challenging. The integration of IT systems enabled more efficient tracking of sales data, cost management, and profit analysis. Retail professionals noted that enhanced reporting capabilities allowed for better forecasting and inventory control, reducing waste and optimizing stock levels. This integration also supported a more personalized customer experience through better understanding of purchasing patterns and preferences.

The "Other" category, comprising 10 participants from various industries such as education, government, and non-profits, provided a broad view of IT integration impacts. These professionals discussed how IT systems improved financial transparency and accountability, which are critical in non-commercial sectors. For instance, government and non-profit organizations benefited from streamlined grant management, improved donor reporting, and enhanced compliance with funding requirements. Educational institutions found that IT integration supported better budget management and financial planning, ensuring efficient allocation of resources to support educational goals.

In summary, the study demonstrated that while the benefits of IT integration in financial reporting were universally acknowledged across industries, the specific impacts varied according to the unique needs and challenges of each sector. Manufacturing focused on operational efficiency, finance and banking on compliance and risk management, healthcare on administrative streamlining, IT on advanced analytics, retail on inventory and sales tracking, and other sectors on transparency and accountability. Each industry leveraged IT integration to enhance their financial reporting processes, leading to improved efficiency, accuracy, and strategic capabilities.

### 3.1.3 Company size

In this study, the impacts of IT integration were examined across companies of varying sizes, each facing distinct challenges and reaping different benefits. Small companies, with 1-50 employees, represented the largest group with 45 participants as indicated in Table 1. For these smaller enterprises, IT integration was a game-changer in terms of resource optimization and operational efficiency. Due to limited personnel and financial resources, small companies often struggle with manual financial reporting processes. The adoption of integrated IT systems allowed these companies to automate routine tasks such as data entry, invoice processing, and basic financial reporting. This automation freed up valuable time for employees to focus on more strategic activities, such as financial planning and analysis. Additionally, small companies benefited from improved accuracy in financial data, which reduced errors and the associated costs of corrections. The ability to generate real-time reports also enabled small businesses to make more informed decisions quickly, enhancing their agility and competitiveness in the market.

Medium-sized companies, with 51-200 employees, included 40 participants in the study. These companies typically face the dual challenge of managing growth while maintaining operational efficiency. For medium-sized businesses, IT integration played a crucial role in scaling their financial operations effectively. Participants reported that integrated IT systems facilitated better coordination among different departments, ensuring that financial data from sales, operations, and procurement were seamlessly consolidated. This consolidation enhanced the accuracy and timeliness of financial reporting, which is critical for strategic decision-making. Medium-sized companies also leveraged advanced analytics and business intelligence tools to gain deeper insights into their financial performance, identifying trends and areas for improvement. The integration of IT systems supported more sophisticated budgeting and forecasting processes, helping these companies manage their growth more effectively and allocate resources efficiently.

Large companies, with more than 200 employees, represented 15 participants in the study. These organizations often have complex financial reporting requirements due to their size and diverse operations. For large companies, IT integration was essential for managing the vast amounts of financial data generated across multiple business units and geographic locations. Participants from large companies highlighted the importance of centralized IT systems in providing a unified view of the organization's financial health. These systems enabled consistent and standardized reporting across the entire enterprise, which is crucial for regulatory compliance and corporate governance. Large companies also benefited from advanced data analytics and real-time reporting capabilities, which supported strategic initiatives such as mergers and acquisitions, market expansion, and risk management. The ability to drill down into detailed financial data allowed senior management to make more informed decisions, improving overall organizational performance.

Across all company sizes, the study revealed that IT integration significantly enhanced the efficiency and accuracy of financial reporting processes. Small companies focused on automating routine tasks to optimize limited resources, while medium-sized companies emphasized the importance of integrated systems in managing growth and improving coordination among departments. Large companies relied on centralized IT systems to handle complex reporting requirements and support strategic decision-making. Regardless of size, all companies experienced improved data accuracy, reduced errors, and faster reporting times, which collectively contributed to better financial management and strategic planning.

In general, the study highlighted the transformative impact of IT integration on financial reporting across companies of all sizes. Small companies achieved greater operational efficiency and agility, medium-sized companies managed growth more effectively through improved coordination and insights, and large companies enhanced their ability to handle complex financial data and support strategic initiatives. The integration of IT systems emerged as a critical enabler of improved financial reporting processes, driving efficiency, accuracy, and strategic capabilities across the board.

#### 3.1.4 Years of working experience

In the case of years of working experience as shown in Table 1, the respondents' years of experience in financial reporting played a crucial role in shaping their perspectives on IT integration. Those with less than 5 years of experience, comprising 20 participants, were generally more adaptable and receptive to new technologies. This group often viewed IT integration as a natural and essential component of their professional environment, having been exposed to digital tools and systems early in their careers. They reported that integrated IT systems simplified their learning curve, allowing them to quickly grasp complex financial processes. The automation of routine tasks and the availability of real-time data enabled these less experienced professionals to focus on analytical and strategic activities, enhancing their skill development and career growth. Their familiarity with technology also meant they were more likely to leverage advanced features of IT systems, such as data analytics and business intelligence, to provide valuable insights and contribute to their organizations' decision-making processes.

Professionals with 5-10 years of experience, the largest group with 35 participants, had a balanced perspective, having worked with both traditional and modern financial reporting methods. This group appreciated the efficiency and accuracy brought by IT integration, particularly in reducing the manual effort required for data collection and validation. They experienced firsthand the transition from manual processes to automated systems and noted significant improvements in productivity and data accuracy. With a solid understanding of both old and new systems, these professionals were well-positioned to drive the integration efforts within their organizations. They highlighted the importance of continuous learning and adaptation, recognizing that ongoing updates and enhancements to IT systems required them to stay informed about new features and best practices. This group often took on leadership roles in training and mentoring less experienced colleagues, helping to bridge the gap between traditional financial practices and modern technological advancements.

Participants with 11-15 years of experience, totaling 25, brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise to the study. Having spent a significant portion of their careers relying on traditional methods, these professionals initially faced challenges adapting to IT integration. However, they acknowledged the transformative benefits once they overcame the initial learning curve. This group emphasized the strategic advantages of IT systems, particularly in enhancing the accuracy of financial reporting and enabling more sophisticated financial analysis. They noted that integrated IT systems allowed them to focus more on strategic decision-making and less on routine, time-consuming tasks. Their extensive experience provided them with a deep understanding of the intricacies of financial reporting, which they used to optimize the use of IT systems. By leveraging their knowledge, they were able to identify areas where technology could add the most value, driving improvements in efficiency and accuracy across their organizations.

Those with more than 15 years of experience, comprising 20 participants, offered insights grounded in decades of professional practice. This group had witnessed the evolution of financial reporting from entirely manual processes to the current state of sophisticated IT integration. Initially, there was some resistance to change, as they were deeply entrenched in traditional methods. However, their extensive experience also meant they understood the critical need for accuracy and efficiency in financial reporting. Over time, they recognized the substantial benefits of IT integration, particularly in terms of data integrity and compliance. These seasoned professionals appreciated how IT systems reduced the risk of human error, ensured consistency in financial data, and facilitated more comprehensive and timely reporting. They also valued the ability to generate detailed financial insights that supported high-level strategic planning and governance. Despite initial reservations, this group became strong advocates for IT integration, leveraging their deep industry knowledge to guide successful implementation and adoption within their organizations.

In summary, the study highlighted how participants' years of experience influenced their perceptions and adoption of IT integration in financial reporting. Those with less experience were more adaptable and quickly embraced new technologies, while mid-career professionals balanced their knowledge of traditional and modern methods to drive integration efforts. More experienced professionals initially faced challenges but ultimately recognized the strategic advantages of IT systems, using their extensive knowledge to optimize their implementation. Across all experience levels, the integration of IT systems was seen as a critical factor in improving the efficiency, accuracy, and strategic capabilities of financial reporting processes.

#### 3.1.5 Impact on time required for financial reporting

Within the realm of financial reporting, timeliness holds immense importance. Investors, creditors, and other stakeholders rely on accurate financial statements delivered within a reasonable timeframe. This section digs into the core objective of this study - exploring the impact of Information Technology (IT) integration on the time required for financial reporting.

The study revealed substantial changes in the time required for financial reporting due to IT integration. As per Fig. 1, a significant portion of respondents, 50 out of 100, reported a notable decrease in the time needed to complete financial reporting tasks. They emphasized how automated data collection and processing significantly reduced the manual effort involved. One respondent noted:

> *"…With the integration of IT systems, what used to take us days can now be completed in a matter of hours. The efficiency gains are remarkable…"*

These professionals found that IT systems streamlined repetitive tasks, allowing them to focus on more analytical and strategic activities, thus optimizing their overall workflow and productivity.

Another 30 respondents observed a moderate decrease in the time required for financial reporting. This group highlighted improvements but also acknowledged some ongoing challenges in fully leveraging IT systems.

> *"…While we've seen improvements in our reporting times, we're still fine-tuning our processes to maximize the benefits of the new system…,"* said one financial analyst.

These participants appreciated the reduction in manual data entry and validation but noted that adapting to new systems and ensuring data integrity across different platforms required a learning curve. Despite these initial challenges, the moderate decrease in time was viewed positively, as it indicated progress towards more efficient financial reporting practices.

However, not all participants experienced a reduction in time. Ten (10) respondents reported no change in the time required for financial reporting after IT integration. This group often cited issues such as insufficient training, resistance to change, and the complexity of transitioning from legacy systems as barriers to realizing time efficiencies.

> *"…We've implemented the IT systems, but without proper training and support, it's hard to see any real improvement in our reporting times…,"* mentioned one finance manager.

For these organizations, the potential benefits of IT integration were yet to be fully realized, highlighting the need for better implementation strategies and ongoing support.

Interestingly, a small number of respondents, five each, reported either a moderate or significant increase in the time required for financial reporting. These participants often faced significant initial disruptions due to the transition to new IT systems.

> *"…The initial phase of integrating the new system was quite disruptive, and we actually saw an increase in the time needed for reporting…,"* said one respondent.

These organizations encountered challenges such as data migration issues, system compatibility problems, and the need for extensive staff training. Despite these setbacks, there was a general consensus that these were temporary challenges, and the long-term benefits of IT integration would eventually outweigh the initial increases in reporting time.

Overall, the study indicated that while the majority of participants experienced a decrease in the time required for financial reporting due to IT integration, the extent of this impact varied. The significant decreases reported by many highlighted the transformative potential of IT systems in streamlining financial processes and enhancing efficiency. However, the experiences of those who saw no change or an increase in time underscored the importance of effective implementation, training, and support in realizing the full benefits of IT integration.

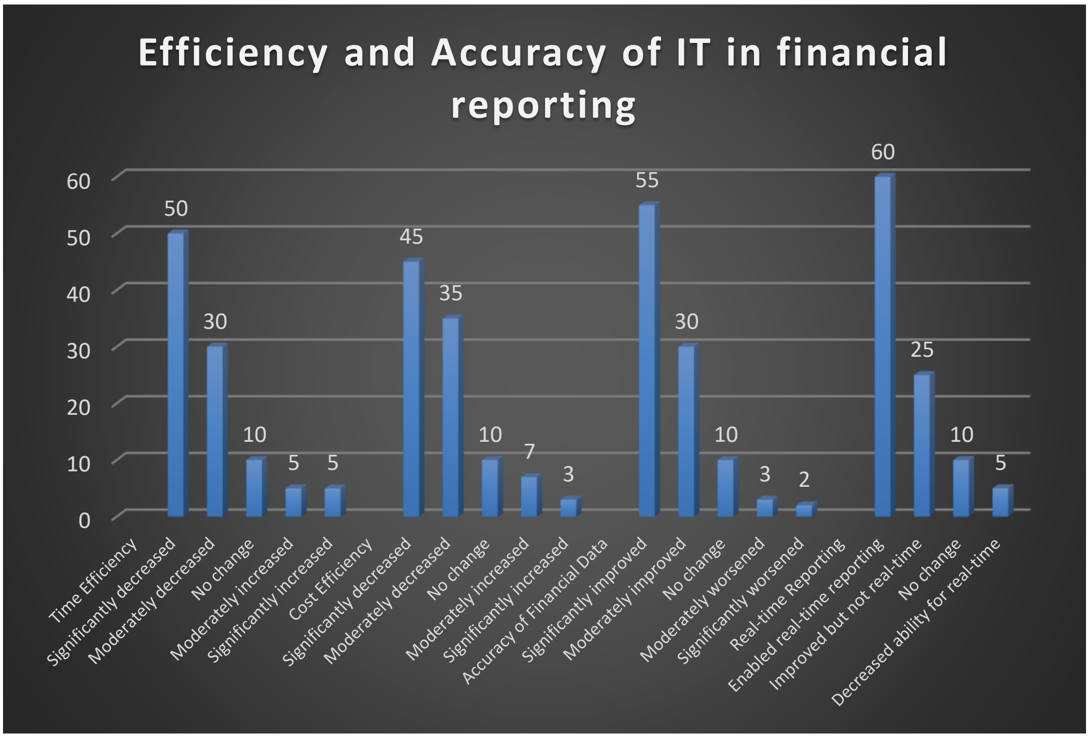


**Fig. 1. Showing efficiency and accuracy of IT in financial reporting**

#### 3.1.6 Impact on cost of financial reporting

The integration of IT systems has had a profound impact on the cost of financial reporting, as revealed by respondents in this study as per Fig. 1. A significant number of participants, 45 out of 100, reported a significant decrease in the costs associated with financial reporting processes. These professionals highlighted how automation and streamlining of data collection and reporting tasks resulted in substantial savings. One CFO noted:

> *"…We've seen a drastic reduction in our operational costs since implementing the new IT systems. Tasks that used to require extensive manual effort are now automated, which has translated into significant financial savings…"*

The efficiency gains from IT integration allowed organizations to allocate resources more strategically, focusing on value-added activities rather than repetitive administrative tasks.

Additionally, 35 respondents noted a moderate decrease in the cost of financial reporting. This group recognized the initial investment in IT systems but emphasized the long-term cost benefits. As noted by one financial controller

> *"…While there was an upfront cost to implementing the new systems, the ongoing savings and efficiencies have far exceeded our expectations…"*

These respondents appreciated the reduction in labor costs associated with manual data entry and the mitigation of errors that previously required costly corrections. The moderate decrease in costs highlighted the overall financial benefits of IT integration, contributing to improved financial performance and resource allocation within organizations.

Contrariwise, 10 respondents reported no change in the cost of financial reporting post-IT integration. This group often cited challenges such as ongoing maintenance costs, licensing fees for software upgrades, and the need for additional IT support as factors mitigating potential cost savings.

> *"…While we anticipated cost reductions, the reality is that maintaining and upgrading the IT systems comes with its own set of expenses…,"* mentioned one finance manager.

For these organizations, the realization of cost efficiencies was contingent on effectively managing ongoing IT expenditures and optimizing the use of integrated systems to maximize return on investment.

A smaller number of respondents, seven and three respectively, noted moderate and significant increases in the cost of financial reporting. These participants experienced challenges such as higher-than-expected implementation costs, customization of IT systems to meet specific organizational needs, and additional training expenses. One financial analyst explained:

> *"…The initial phase of IT integration was more costly than anticipated, especially with the need for extensive staff training and system customization…"*

Despite these initial setbacks, many believed that the long-term benefits, including improved accuracy and scalability, would ultimately justify the initial investment.

In summary, the study highlighted that while a significant proportion of participants reported decreases in the cost of financial reporting due to IT integration, the extent of these savings varied. The substantial and moderate decreases underscored the transformative impact of IT systems in reducing operational expenses and improving overall financial efficiency. Conversely, those reporting no change or increased costs emphasized the importance of careful planning, ongoing management of IT expenditures, and adapting strategies to optimize the full potential of integrated systems.

#### 3.1.7 Impact on accuracy of financial reporting

The impact of IT integration on the accuracy of financial reporting has been a pivotal aspect for finance professionals, as highlighted by respondents in this study as shown in Fig. 1. A substantial majority of participants, 55 out of 100, reported a significant improvement in the accuracy of financial reporting following the implementation of IT systems. These professionals emphasized how automated data validation, real-time reporting capabilities, and error detection mechanisms contributed to enhanced data integrity. One respondent stated:

> *"…The integration of IT systems has drastically reduced the occurrence of manual errors in our financial reports. We now have more confidence in the reliability of our data…"*

The ability to generate accurate and reliable financial information promptly has enabled organizations to make more informed decisions and comply with regulatory requirements more effectively.

Additionally, 30 respondents noted a moderate improvement in the accuracy of financial reporting. This group acknowledged that while IT integration had improved overall data accuracy, there were still areas for refinement.

> *"…We've seen noticeable improvements in data consistency and validation checks with the new IT systems. However, ensuring data integrity across all platforms remains a continuous effort…,"* explained a financial analyst.

These respondents appreciated the reduction in human error and the ability to perform more detailed analysis without the fear of data discrepancies, thereby enhancing the credibility of financial reports within their organizations.

On the other hand, 10 respondents reported no change in the accuracy of financial reporting post-IT integration. This group often cited challenges such as data migration issues, system compatibility problems, and the need for additional training to fully leverage the capabilities of new IT systems. One CFO explained:

> *"…While the new systems promised improved accuracy, we're still grappling with data integration challenges that affect the reliability of our financial reports…"*

For these organizations, realizing the full potential of IT integration in improving accuracy required addressing technical and procedural hurdles and investing in ongoing system optimization.

A smaller number of respondents, three and two respectively, noted moderate and significant worsening in the accuracy of financial reporting. These participants encountered issues such as system bugs affecting data outputs, inadequate data validation protocols, and a lack of user confidence in new IT systems.

> *"…The transition to new IT systems initially led to data discrepancies and inaccuracies*

> *that undermined our confidence in financial reporting…,"* said one financial controller.

Despite these setbacks, many expressed optimism that ongoing adjustments and improvements would mitigate these challenges and restore confidence in the accuracy of financial data over time.

In general, the study emphasized that while a majority of participants reported improvements in the accuracy of financial reporting due to IT integration, challenges and variations existed. The significant and moderate improvements highlighted the transformative impact of IT systems in enhancing data integrity and reliability. Contrariwise, those reporting no change or worsening accuracy emphasized the need for continuous refinement, technical support, and user training to fully capitalize on the benefits of integrated systems.

#### 3.1.8 Capability for real-time reporting

The capability for real-time reporting emerged as a critical area of transformation following the integration of IT systems, as highlighted by respondents in the study. According to Fig. 1, the majority of respondents, 60 out of 100, reported that IT integration enabled real-time reporting, revolutionizing their approach to financial data management. These professionals emphasized how access to up-to-the-minute financial insights allowed for agile decision-making and proactive strategic adjustments. One respondent noted:

> *"…Real-time reporting has been a game-changer for us. We can now monitor key financial metrics as they happen, enabling faster responses to market changes and operational challenges…"*

The ability to generate real-time reports empowered organizations to detect trends early, optimize resource allocation, and seize growth opportunities with greater agility.

Additionally, 25 respondents noted that while IT integration improved reporting capabilities, their systems did not yet support real-time reporting. This group acknowledged the advancements made in data processing speed and report generation but highlighted ongoing efforts to achieve real-time status. One financial analyst mentioned:

> *"…Our IT systems have certainly sped up our reporting processes, but we're still working towards real-time capabilities that would give us a competitive edge…"*

These participants appreciated the progress made in data accessibility and timeliness but recognized the need for further enhancements to fully leverage the potential of real-time reporting in driving business performance.

Inversely, 10 respondents reported no change in their ability for real-time reporting post-IT integration. This group often cited challenges such as legacy systems integration, data silos across departments, and limited IT infrastructure as barriers to achieving real-time insights. As reported by one respondent:

> *"…While there have been improvements in reporting efficiency, our current systems don't support the instantaneous data updates needed for true real-time reporting…"*

For these organizations, achieving real-time capabilities required overcoming technical constraints and investing in more advanced IT solutions capable of seamless data integration and synchronization across the enterprise.

A smaller number of respondents, five in total, noted a decreased ability for real-time reporting following IT integration. These participants experienced setbacks such as system performance issues, data latency problems, and difficulties in maintaining synchronization across multiple platforms.

> *"…The transition to new IT systems initially promised real-time reporting, but technical glitches have hindered our ability to access timely financial data…,"* said one financial controller.

Despite these challenges, many expressed confidence in their IT teams' ability to address these issues and restore real-time reporting capabilities through ongoing system optimization and troubleshooting efforts.

Generally, the study highlighted that while a significant proportion of participants experienced enabled or improved capabilities for real-time reporting due to IT integration, challenges and varying levels of progress existed. The majority reporting enabled real-time reporting underscored the transformative impact of IT systems in enhancing data accessibility and responsiveness. Conversely, those reporting no change or decreased capabilities emphasized the need for continuous improvement, infrastructure investment, and technical support to fully realize the benefits of real-time reporting.

#### 3.1.9 Impact on compliance and audit preparation

The impact of IT integration on compliance and audit preparation emerged as a critical aspect of operational efficiency and regulatory adherence, as articulated by respondents in the study as illustrated in Fig. 2. A substantial number of participants, 40 out of 100, reported a significant improvement in their organization's ability to meet compliance requirements and prepare for audits following IT integration. These professionals emphasized how integrated IT systems enhanced data accuracy, transparency, and documentation, thereby streamlining compliance processes. As explained by one respondent.

> *"…Our ability to track and document financial transactions has vastly improved with the new IT systems. Auditors now have easier access to detailed records, which has streamlined our audit preparation significantly…"*

The automation of compliance checks and real-time data updates ensured that organizations remained proactive in addressing regulatory changes and mitigating compliance risks effectively.

Moreover, 45 respondents noted a moderate improvement in compliance and audit preparation capabilities post-IT integration. This group highlighted the benefits of standardized reporting formats, enhanced data security measures, and improved transparency across financial operations.

> *"…We've seen noticeable improvements in audit trail capabilities and data integrity checks, which have bolstered our confidence during audits…,"* explained a financial controller.

These participants appreciated the reduction in manual data gathering and the ability to generate comprehensive audit reports promptly, thereby facilitating smoother audit processes and regulatory inspections.

On the other hand, 10 respondents reported no change in their organization's compliance and audit preparation efforts post-IT integration. This group often cited challenges such as legacy system constraints, incomplete data migration, and the need for additional training in compliance protocols as factors hindering potential improvements. One CFO reported:

> *"…While there have been advancements in certain areas, our overall compliance and audit readiness haven't seen significant improvements…"*

For these organizations, achieving comprehensive compliance required overcoming technical and procedural barriers and investing in continuous training and system updates to align with evolving regulatory requirements.

A smaller number of respondents, three and two respectively, noted moderate and significant worsening in compliance and audit preparation capabilities following IT integration. These respondents encountered issues such as system integration failures, data security breaches, and discrepancies in financial reporting, which adversely affected their compliance standing.

> *"…The transition to new IT systems initially promised greater compliance efficiency, but technical hiccups and data discrepancies have undermined our audit preparedness…,"* said one financial analyst.

Despite these setbacks, many expressed confidence in their organization's ability to address these challenges through enhanced system monitoring, cybersecurity measures, and proactive compliance management strategies.

In general, the study highlighted that a majority of the individuals noticed improved adherence and preparedness for audits due to the integration of IT systems. However, there were challenges and variations in advancements observed. The research indicated that IT systems significantly enhance precision, openness, and adherence to regulations. Conversely, individuals who did not witness any enhancements or experienced decreased capabilities stressed the significance of continuous enhancements, technical support, and ensuring that regulations are adhered to in order to fully benefit from integrated systems.

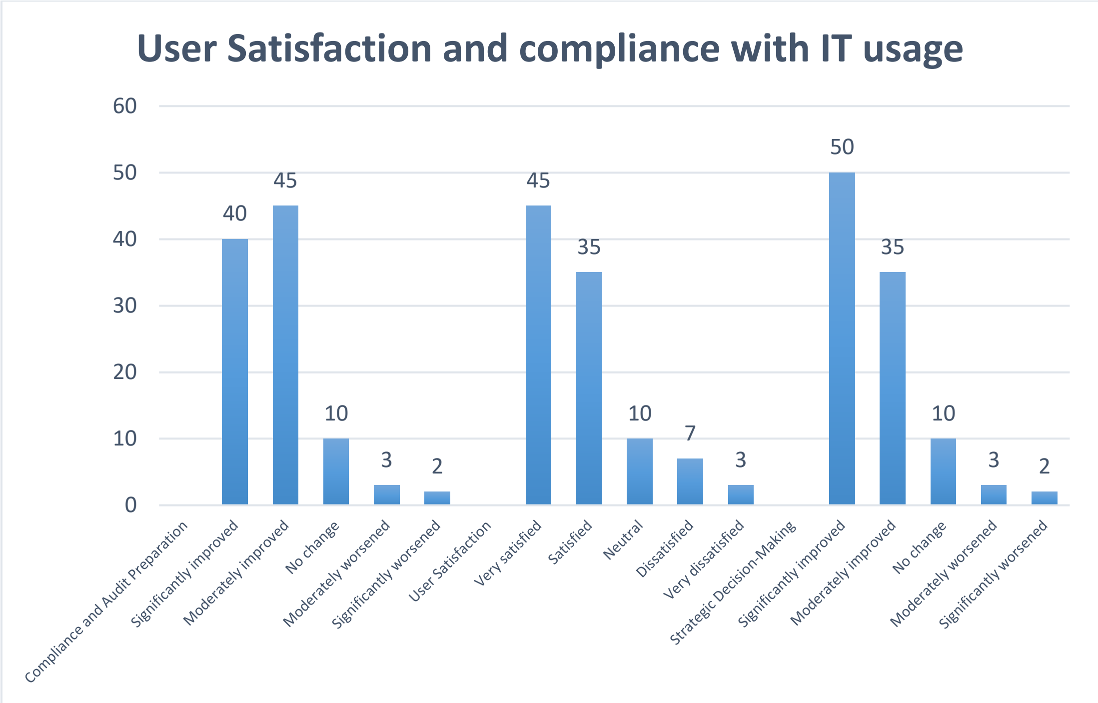


**Fig. 2. Showing user satisfaction and compliance with IT usage**

### 3.1.10 Overall satisfaction with IT integration

The overall satisfaction with IT integration among finance professionals varied significantly, as captured in the study. As per Fig. 2, a notable 45 out of 100 respondents expressed being very satisfied with the IT integration in their organizations. These individuals highlighted the substantial benefits realized in terms of efficiency, accuracy, and strategic capability. As noted by one respondent:

> *"…Our transition to the new IT system has been transformative. Not only have we seen a dramatic increase in the speed and accuracy of our financial reporting, but the system has also provided us with deeper insights into our financial health. This has been a game-changer for strategic planning and operational efficiency..."*

Such profound satisfaction stemmed from the seamless integration of advanced IT solutions that automated routine tasks, reduced manual errors, and offered real-time data analytics, which collectively empowered more informed decision-making.

Another 35 respondents reported being satisfied with the IT integration, acknowledging significant improvements while also noting areas for continued development. One financial controller explained:

> *"…The new IT systems have certainly streamlined many of our processes and improved data accuracy. However, we are still in the process of fully leveraging all the features available. With continued training and system optimization, I am confident that our satisfaction will only grow…"*

These respondents appreciated the enhancements in operational efficiency and data management but highlighted that the full potential of the IT systems was still being unlocked as they adapted to the new technology and integrated it into their daily workflows more comprehensively.

In contrast, 10 respondents felt neutral about the IT integration, indicating mixed experiences and outcomes. This group often pointed out that while there were benefits, the transition was marred by implementation challenges and learning curves. One respondent shared:

> *"…While we recognize the potential of the IT systems to improve our financial reporting, the implementation phase was riddled with issues that have yet to be fully resolved. It's been a challenging journey, and the results have been a mixed bag so far…"*

For these individuals, the initial promise of IT integration had not yet been fully realized, and their satisfaction levels were tempered by the ongoing need for system adjustments and user training.

A smaller segment of the respondents, seven in total, reported being dissatisfied with the IT integration. These participants highlighted significant hurdles such as system incompatibilities, insufficient training, and persistent technical issues. One respondent lamented:

> *"…The transition has been far from smooth. We've faced numerous technical glitches that have disrupted our workflow, and the lack of adequate training has left many of our team members struggling to utilize the system effectively. The expected improvements in efficiency and accuracy have not materialized…"*

Such dissatisfaction underscored the importance of robust implementation strategies, comprehensive training programs, and continuous technical support to address and mitigate integration challenges.

Lastly, three respondents were very dissatisfied with the IT integration, expressing profound disappointment with the process and outcomes. These individuals cited severe disruptions to their operations, increased errors, and a lack of support as critical issues. One respondent stated:

> *"…The IT integration has been a disaster for us. Not only have we experienced frequent system failures, but the overall lack of support and training has compounded our problems. It's been a major setback rather than an improvement…"*

This level of dissatisfaction highlighted the critical need for thorough planning, effective execution, and ongoing support to ensure the successful adoption of new IT systems and to avoid adverse impacts on organizational performance.

In summary, the study revealed a range of satisfaction levels with IT integration among finance professionals. The majority expressed high levels of satisfaction, citing significant improvements in efficiency, accuracy, and strategic insights. However, the mixed and negative responses underscored the challenges associated with IT integration, including implementation issues, the need for comprehensive training, and the importance of continuous support.

### 3.1.11 Impact on strategic decision-making

The impact of IT integration on strategic decision-making has been substantial, as indicated in Fig. 2. A majority of respondents, 50 out of 100, reported a significant improvement in their ability to make strategic decisions post-IT integration. These professionals emphasized how real-time access to accurate financial data and advanced analytics tools enhanced their strategic insights and decision-making capabilities. One respondent remarked:

> *"…The integration of IT systems has revolutionized our strategic planning process. With real-time data at our fingertips, we can swiftly analyze trends, forecast outcomes, and make informed decisions that drive our business forward. It's like having a crystal ball that provides clear, actionable insights…"*

The ability to access comprehensive and timely financial information enabled these organizations to react proactively to market changes, optimize resource allocation, and capitalize on growth opportunities more effectively.

Another 35 respondents noted a moderate improvement in their strategic decision-making capabilities due to IT integration. This group acknowledged the advancements in data accessibility and analytical capabilities but also recognized areas for further optimization.

> *"…Our decision-making process has definitely benefited from the new IT systems. We now have better data visualization and forecasting tools, which have improved our strategic planning. However, there is still room to enhance data integration and user training to fully leverage these capabilities…,"* explained a financial controller.

These respondents appreciated the increased granularity and depth of financial insights provided by IT systems, which facilitated more nuanced and data-driven strategic decisions. Nonetheless, they emphasized the importance of ongoing system refinement and user training to maximize the potential of IT integration.

Conversely, 10 respondents reported no change in their strategic decision-making abilities post-IT integration. This group often cited challenges such as incomplete data migration, system integration issues, and the need for additional user training as barriers to realizing the full benefits of IT systems.

> *"…While we expected the new IT systems to enhance our strategic decision-making, the reality has been less impressive. We are still grappling with data inconsistencies and integration challenges that hinder our ability to make timely and informed decisions…,"* mentioned one finance manager.

For these organizations, the anticipated improvements in strategic planning and decision-making were yet to be fully realized, highlighting the need for addressing technical and procedural hurdles and investing in continuous system optimization.

A smaller number of respondents, three and two respectively, reported moderate and significant worsening in their strategic decision-making capabilities following IT integration. These participants encountered issues such as system performance problems, data reliability concerns, and increased complexity in accessing critical information. One financial analyst lamented:

> *"…The new IT systems have introduced more challenges than solutions. We are dealing with frequent system outages and data integrity issues that have actually hampered our ability to make sound strategic decisions…"*

Such negative experiences underscored the importance of robust implementation strategies, effective troubleshooting mechanisms, and comprehensive support systems to mitigate the adverse impacts of IT integration on strategic planning processes.

In short, the study revealed that while a majority of participants experienced improvements in strategic decision-making due to IT integration, there were significant variations in the extent of these improvements. The significant and moderate improvements highlighted the transformative potential of IT systems in providing real-time, accurate, and actionable financial insights that drive strategic decision-making. Inversely, those reporting no change or worsened capabilities emphasized the challenges associated with system integration, data reliability, and user training.

#### 3.1.12 Reduction in manual errors

The reduction in manual errors due to IT integration emerged as a significant improvement in financial reporting processes, as highlighted by respondents in this study. According to Fig. 3, the majority of respondents, 60 out of 100, reported a significant reduction in manual errors following the implementation of IT systems. These experts emphasized how automated data validation, streamlined workflows, and error-detection mechanisms contributed to enhanced data accuracy and reliability. As noted by one respondent:

> *"…Since integrating IT systems into our financial reporting processes, the incidence of manual errors has plummeted. Automation has not only saved us time but has also minimized the risk of human error in our reports…"*

The elimination of manual data entry and the adoption of automated reconciliation processes were cited as pivotal in reducing discrepancies and ensuring the integrity of financial data.

Moreover, 25 respondents noted a moderate reduction in manual errors, recognizing the improvements made while acknowledging ongoing challenges. One participant noted:

> *"…We've definitely seen a decrease in manual errors with the new IT systems, particularly in data entry and reconciliation. However, ensuring consistent data quality across all platforms remains a priority for us…"*

These participants appreciated the increased accuracy and reliability of financial reports but emphasized the need for continuous refinement of IT systems and processes to further minimize errors and optimize operational efficiency.

On the other hand, 10 respondents reported no change in the incidence of manual errors post-IT integration. This group often cited challenges such as legacy system constraints, data integration issues, and insufficient user training as factors that impeded the anticipated improvements. One respondent who is CFO remarked:

> *"…While the new systems promised to reduce errors, we're still grappling with data discrepancies and inconsistencies that affect the reliability of our reports…"*

For these organizations, achieving significant reductions in manual errors required overcoming technical and procedural hurdles and investing in comprehensive training and system upgrades to align with best practices in data management and reporting.

A smaller number of respondents, three and two respectively, noted moderate and significant increases in manual errors following IT integration. These participants encountered issues such as system compatibility problems, inadequate data validation protocols, and the complexity of integrating new IT systems with existing workflows.

> *"…The transition to new IT systems has introduced unforeseen challenges, including an increase in manual errors due to data integration issues. We're working closely with our IT team to address these issues and improve our data management processes…,"* explained a financial controller.

Despite these setbacks, many expressed confidence in their organization's ability to address these challenges through ongoing system optimization and user training initiatives.

In summary, the research showed that while a majority of participants experienced reductions in manual errors due to IT integration, challenges and variations existed. The significant and moderate reductions highlighted the transformative impact of IT systems in enhancing data accuracy and reliability. Conversely, those reporting no change or increased errors emphasized the need for continuous improvement, technical support, and user training to fully realize the benefits of integrated systems.

#### 3.1.13 Improvement in coordination and collaboration

The modern workplace thrives on collaboration and coordination. Information flows freely, teams work seamlessly across geographical boundaries, and knowledge sharing is key to success. This study dug into the impact of Information Systems (IS) on these crucial aspects of organizational life. As indicated in Fig. 3, the majority of respondents, 40 out of 100, reported a significant improvement in coordination and collaboration across teams following the implementation of IT systems. These professionals highlighted how centralized data access, real-time communication tools, and collaborative platforms facilitated smoother workflows and enhanced cross-departmental cooperation.

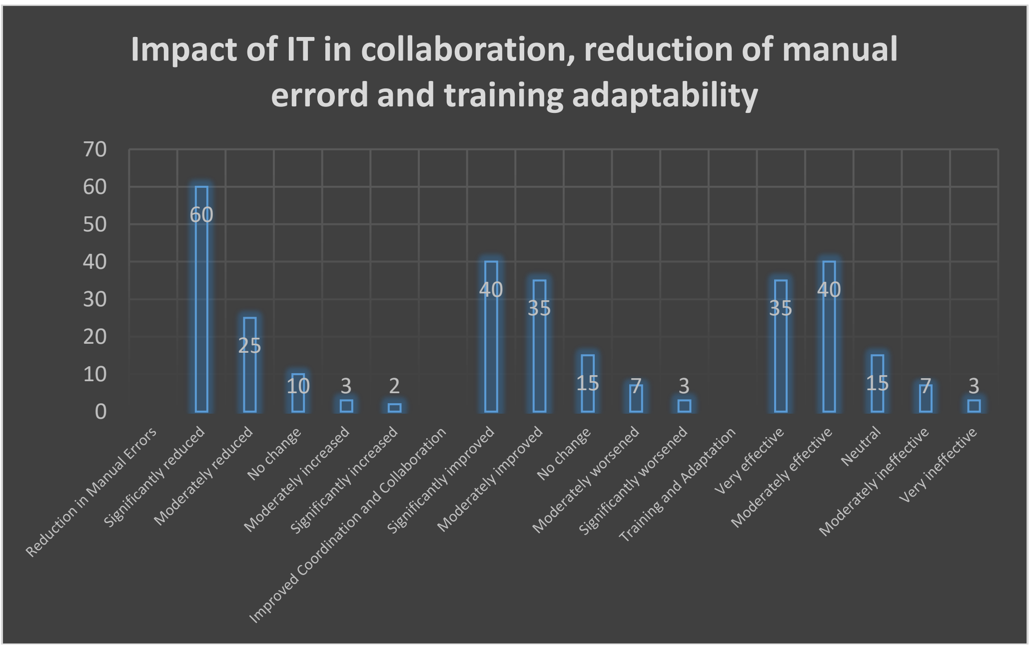


**Fig. 3. Showing the impact of IT on collaboration, reduction of manual errors and training adaptability**

> *"…The integration of IT systems has greatly improved our team's ability to collaborate on financial reporting tasks. With shared access to real-time data and collaborative tools, we can now work more seamlessly across departments, ensuring consistency and accuracy in our reports…,"* explained one respondent.

The ability to break down structure and adopt a culture of transparency and collaboration was cited as instrumental in improving overall operational efficiency and teamwork.

Additionally, 35 respondents noted a moderate improvement in coordination and collaboration, acknowledging the strides made while recognizing ongoing areas for enhancement. One respondent in this category noted:

> *"…Our organization has seen noticeable improvements in teamwork and communication since adopting new IT systems. Collaborative platforms have enabled us to share insights and data more effectively, although there is still room for improvement in integrating these tools fully into our workflows…"*

These participants appreciated the increased efficiency in information sharing and project management but highlighted the need for continuous training and optimization of collaborative tools to maximize their impact on organizational synergy and performance.

Contrariwise, 15 respondents reported no change in coordination and collaboration post-IT integration. This group often cited challenges such as resistance to change, limited adoption of collaborative tools, and organizational silos as barriers to achieving seamless teamwork.

> *"…While the new IT systems have introduced collaborative features, the cultural shift towards more integrated teamwork has been slow. We're still working on breaking down departmental barriers and promoting a more unified approach to financial reporting…,"* mentioned one CFO.

For these organizations, realizing the full potential of IT integration in improving coordination required addressing cultural and behavioral aspects alongside technical enhancements.

A smaller number of respondents, seven and three respectively, noted moderate and significant worsened coordination and collaboration following IT integration. These participants encountered issues such as system compatibility problems, inadequate training on collaborative tools, and misalignment of workflows across departments.

> *"…The transition to new IT systems has actually strained our team dynamics. Compatibility issues and a lack of training have hindered our ability to collaborate effectively, leading to delays and misunderstandings in our reporting processes…,"* explained a financial controller.

Despite these setbacks, many expressed optimism in their organization's ability to overcome these challenges through dedicated efforts to enhance system integration, foster a collaborative culture, and provide comprehensive training and support to all stakeholders involved.

In summary, the paper highlighted that while a majority of participants experienced improvements in coordination and collaboration due to IT integration, challenges and variations existed. The significant and moderate improvements underscored the transformative impact of IT systems in breaking down silos and promoting cross-functional collaboration. On the other hand, those reporting no change or worsened collaboration emphasized the need for continuous improvement, cultural alignment, and comprehensive support to fully realize the collaborative potential of integrated systems.

#### 3.1.14 Effectiveness of training and adaptation

The digital landscape is constantly evolving, demanding a workforce equipped with the skills and adaptability to navigate this ever-changing terrain. This study investigates the effectiveness of training programs in equipping individuals with the necessary tools and knowledge to adapt to new technologies and workflows. As illustrated in Fig. 3, A significant number of participants, 35 out of 100, expressed that the training provided was very effective in preparing teams for the new IT systems. These professionals emphasized the importance of comprehensive training programs that equipped employees with the necessary skills to leverage new technologies effectively.

> *"…The training sessions were invaluable in helping us understand the capabilities of the new IT systems. We learned how to navigate the platforms, use advanced features for*

> *financial reporting, and troubleshoot common issues, which boosted our confidence in utilizing the systems…,"* explained one financial analyst.

The investment in thorough training not only accelerated the adoption of IT systems but also fostered a culture of continuous learning and improvement within their organizations.

Additionally, 40 respondents found the training moderately effective, acknowledging its benefits while also noting areas for improvement. As echoed by one respondent:

> *"…The training provided us with a good foundation for using the new IT systems. It covered the basics and introduced us to key functionalities, but there were instances where we needed more specific guidance tailored to our departmental needs…"*

These participants appreciated the efforts made in upskilling employees but highlighted the importance of ongoing support and targeted training sessions to address evolving challenges and optimize the use of IT systems in financial reporting.

On the other hand, 15 respondents felt neutral about the effectiveness of the training provided post-IT integration. This group often cited mixed experiences and outcomes, where the training sessions met some expectations but fell short in adequately preparing them for operational challenges.

> *"…The training sessions were informative, but they didn't fully prepare us for the complexities of using the new IT systems in our day-to-day tasks. We needed more hands-on practice and personalized support to navigate through the system effectively…,"* mentioned one financial controller.

For these individuals, achieving proficiency in using IT systems required additional resources and a more tailored approach to training that aligned with their specific roles and responsibilities.

A smaller number of respondents, seven and three respectively, found the training moderately ineffective and very ineffective. These participants encountered challenges such as outdated training materials, insufficient hands-on practice, and a lack of follow-up support post-training.

"The training sessions were poorly organized, and the materials provided were outdated. As a result, many of us struggled to adapt to the new IT systems, which impacted our productivity and confidence in using the platforms," expressed a financial director.

Such response highlighted the critical need for continuous improvement in training strategies, ensuring that they are relevant, engaging, and aligned with organizational goals to support successful IT integration and adoption.

In short, the research highlighted that while a majority of participants found the training and adaptation efforts effective following IT integration, challenges and opportunities for improvement existed. The effectiveness of training sessions was pivotal in accelerating the adoption of IT systems and enhancing user proficiency in financial reporting tasks. However, those expressing neutral or negative sentiments emphasized the importance of tailored training approaches, ongoing support, and updated resources to maximize the benefits of IT integration effectively.

## 4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The integration of IT systems has significantly enhanced efficiency and accuracy in financial reporting across various industries, as evidenced by the majority of respondents who reported improvements in areas such as time efficiency, cost effectiveness, accuracy of reporting, and strategic decision-making. Real-time reporting capabilities enabled by advanced IT systems have empowered organizations to respond swiftly to market changes, optimize resource allocation, and make informed strategic decisions. Furthermore, the reduction in manual errors and the improvement in compliance and audit preparation underline the critical role of IT integration in ensuring data integrity and regulatory adherence.

However, challenges such as system compatibility issues, data security concerns, and varying levels of user proficiency have also been highlighted. These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive planning, effective change management strategies, and ongoing support to maximize the benefits of IT integration.

**The study would like to recommend:**

- Enhancement in training initiatives to ensure that all stakeholders, from financial analysts to senior management, are proficient in using new IT systems.

- Strengthening in data security protocols to protect sensitive financial information from cyber threats.
- Ensuring that IT integration initiatives align closely with organizational objectives and priorities.
- Implementing robust monitoring mechanisms to track the effectiveness of IT systems post-integration.

**In the future further research must be carried on:**

- Conducting longitudinal studies to assess the sustained impact of IT integration on financial reporting efficiency and accuracy over extended periods.
- Investigation of user experiences and adoption rates of IT systems across different user groups within organizations.
- Investigation of emerging technologies and innovations in IT integration that could further enhance financial reporting processes.
- Studying the influence of organizational culture and change management strategies on the success of IT integration initiatives.
- Analysis of the economic and financial performance metrics associated with IT integration initiatives.

## DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of manuscripts.

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## COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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