



EXPLORING THE PERCEPTION OF MUMBAI CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS TOWARDS CLOUD COMPUTING IN PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Cloud computing has emerged as a transformative force in the accounting profession, offering enhanced data accessibility, cost efficiency, and operational flexibility. However, its adoption and practical implementation vary across professional communities. This study seeks to explore the perception of Mumbai-based Chartered Accountants (CAs) regarding the use of cloud computing in their accounting practices. Specifically, the research investigates how demographic factors such as age, experience, gender, and type of practice influence their perception and acceptance of cloud-based solutions. A structured questionnaire was administered to 167 Chartered Accountants operating in Mumbai. The study employs quantitative methods to analyse perceptions, including ease of use, security concerns, efficiency, and overall benefits of cloud computing in accounting. Findings are expected to provide insights into the prevailing mind-set among professionals and identify gaps that may hinder cloud adoption in the accounting sector. The results aim to support policymakers, accounting bodies, and software vendors in designing more tailored training, policy, and adoption strategies.

KEYWORDS: Cloud Computing, Chartered Accountants, Accounting Technology, Perception Study, Mumbai, Demographic Association, Digital Transformation in Accounting

1. INTRODUCTION

Cloud computing has emerged as a transformative technology in the modern digital era, reshaping how individuals, businesses, and institutions access, store, and manage data. At its core, cloud computing refers to the delivery of computing services—including servers, storage, databases, networking, software, and analytics—over the internet (“the cloud”). This model allows users to access technology resources on-demand without the need for owning or maintaining physical infrastructure. The flexibility, scalability, and cost-efficiency offered by cloud computing have made it an essential part of business operations across the world. The fundamental characteristic of cloud computing lies in its ability to provide services through three primary models: Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), Platform as a Service (PaaS), and Software as a Service (SaaS). IaaS provides virtualized computing resources over the internet, allowing organizations to rent servers and storage on a pay-as-you-go basis. PaaS offers a platform allowing customers to develop, run, and manage applications without the complexity of building and maintaining infrastructure. SaaS delivers software applications over the internet, typically on a subscription basis, eliminating the need for installations and maintenance on individual devices.

One of the significant benefits of cloud computing is its scalability. Businesses can easily increase or decrease their computing resources according to their needs. This flexibility is particularly advantageous for startups and small to medium enterprises, which may have fluctuating workloads or limited budgets. Cloud solutions also enhance collaboration by enabling users to access files and applications from any location, using any device with an internet connection. This has become especially relevant in the era of remote work and global teams. Cloud computing also contributes to enhanced security and data management. Leading cloud service providers invest heavily in security infrastructure, including encryption, access control, and regular audits. This often surpasses the level of protection that individual organizations can afford. Furthermore, cloud platforms facilitate data backups, disaster recovery, and business continuity plans, ensuring that data loss due to system failures or cyber threats can be minimized. Despite its numerous advantages, cloud computing also presents certain challenges. Data privacy and compliance with local regulations are critical concerns, particularly when data is stored on servers located in different jurisdictions. Organizations must also consider the risks associated with dependency on service providers, potential downtime, and the complexities involved in migrating existing systems to the cloud.

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Overall, cloud computing has revolutionized the way organizations operate by providing a cost-effective, flexible, and scalable IT infrastructure. As technology continues to evolve, the adoption of cloud services is expected to grow, driven by innovations in artificial intelligence, big data, and Internet of Things (IoT). For professionals such as chartered accountants, cloud computing offers powerful tools to automate tasks, enhance collaboration, and improve data-driven decision-making, marking a significant shift in the traditional approach to accounting and finance management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

da Silva, A. F., Gonçalves, M. J. A., Oliveira, H. C. & Duarte, J. P. (2023), This study provides a contemporary view of how chartered accountants perceive the integration of cloud computing into professional practice. According to the authors, while there is a general consensus among chartered accountants that cloud computing offers significant benefits—such as improved accessibility to data, real-time collaboration, and operational efficiency—there are still notable barriers to its full-scale adoption. The research identifies cybersecurity risks as one of the foremost concerns. Professionals are particularly wary of data breaches, loss of sensitive financial information, and the legal implications of such incidents. Additionally, the costs associated with implementing cloud solutions, including the expenses of transitioning existing systems and training personnel, pose financial burdens, especially for small and medium-sized firms. A significant generational divide is also noted, with younger professionals generally more open and adaptable to adopting new technologies, while older accountants often exhibit resistance to change. This reluctance may stem from a lack of technical familiarity or discomfort with departing from traditional, on-premise systems. Overall, the study suggests that despite the positive outlook on the potential of cloud computing, these challenges must be effectively addressed to encourage widespread adoption among chartered accountants.

Drew, J. (2014), In this paper, Drew underscores the transformative impact of cloud computing on the accounting profession, emphasizing how Certified Public Accountants (CPAs) are increasingly acknowledging the value that cloud technology brings to their work. The technology is recognized for enhancing productivity by allowing seamless access to accounting tools and client data from any location, thereby supporting faster decision-making and more efficient workflows. It also improves service delivery through real-time data sharing and collaboration, enabling accountants to respond more swiftly to client needs. However, Drew also cautions that this evolution requires constant vigilance regarding data security. With data being stored and processed off-site by third-party providers, there is a heightened risk of unauthorized access, breaches, or misuse of information. CPAs are therefore advised to thoroughly assess the security infrastructure and data protection policies of cloud service providers. The paper stresses that while cloud computing holds immense promise, embracing it responsibly entails understanding and mitigating associated security challenges.

Corkern, S. M., Kimmel, S. B. & Morehead, B. (2015), This paper focuses on the critical need for chartered accountants to develop a comprehensive understanding of cloud computing in order to support its adoption within the organizations they serve. The authors argue that accountants play a vital role not just in using cloud systems, but also in influencing technology adoption decisions at a strategic level. They highlight how cloud computing can significantly benefit organizations through enhanced accessibility—allowing users to retrieve and input data from multiple devices and locations—and scalability, which enables firms to adjust their IT resources based on their growth and operational needs. At the same time, the study does not overlook the apprehensions surrounding this technology. Concerns about the security and reliability of cloud systems persist, as do worries about the dependency on third-party service providers. Accountants are encouraged to weigh these pros and cons carefully and to offer informed guidance to their clients and employers. The authors conclude that by embracing cloud computing and managing its associated risks, chartered accountants can improve both their service offerings and their economic value to organizations.

Albaz, M., Alazmi, K. & Metwaly, Z. (2023), While this study does not directly address the perceptions of chartered accountants towards cloud computing, it nonetheless offers critical insights into the broader implications of this technology for accounting operations. The authors explore how cloud computing influences key accounting functions, particularly in terms of ensuring data accuracy, maintaining regulatory compliance, and strengthening internal controls. Cloud systems, when properly implemented, can automate data entry processes, reduce human error, and improve the consistency of financial records. They also facilitate real-time monitoring and auditing, thereby supporting compliance with financial reporting standards and other legal requirements. The study highlights that cloud platforms often come equipped with built-in compliance tools, audit trails, and access control mechanisms that can significantly improve governance. Therefore, even though it does not specifically focus on accountants' perceptions, the paper emphasizes that a deep understanding of cloud computing's operational implications is essential for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of accounting functions.

Drew, J. D. (2012), In this earlier work, Drew provides an optimistic perspective on how CPAs view the adoption of cloud computing. The study notes that many professionals recognize the technology's potential to transform their workflow, particularly through improved client communication and faster service delivery. Cloud platforms allow accountants to share reports, documents, and insights with clients in real time, fostering transparency and enhancing client satisfaction. Additionally, by enabling remote access to data and applications, cloud computing allows firms to tap into a geographically dispersed talent pool, thereby overcoming traditional limitations tied to location. However, Drew also highlights that these advantages do not come without concerns. As with other studies, implementation costs and security risks are noted as potential obstacles. The challenge lies in balancing

the efficiency and connectivity offered by cloud solutions with the need to ensure secure, compliant, and controlled access to sensitive financial data.

Defelice, A. & Leon, J. C. (2010), This study presents an early evaluation of cloud computing adoption among chartered accountants, illustrating a growing trend toward digital transformation within the profession. According to the authors, accountants are increasingly attracted to cloud computing due to its various operational advantages. These include faster deployment of software and systems, reduced IT infrastructure costs, and the flexibility of remote access, which supports mobile and hybrid work environments. These benefits align well with the evolving needs of modern accounting firms, which must manage dynamic client demands and tight reporting deadlines. Nonetheless, the paper also identifies significant concerns, particularly related to data security and system reliability. Given the sensitivity of financial data, any breach or downtime could have serious consequences. The authors emphasize the need for accountants to conduct rigorous assessments of cloud vendors before adopting their services. This includes evaluating their data protection policies, encryption standards, service level agreements, and history of compliance. The study concludes that while cloud computing offers clear advantages, due diligence is critical for ensuring a secure and sustainable transition.

Mangiuc, D. (2017), Mangiuc takes a nuanced approach to cloud computing in accounting, suggesting that chartered accountants must play an active role in guiding the technology's adoption and implementation. The paper argues that while IT departments may be enthusiastic about the innovation, management may exhibit skepticism, particularly in terms of costs and risk exposure. As professionals who bridge the gap between finance and technology, chartered accountants are ideally positioned to assess the financial and operational implications of cloud investments. They must understand and communicate the return on investment (ROI) of cloud implementations, taking into account not only direct cost savings but also intangible benefits such as improved efficiency, collaboration, and client satisfaction. The study encourages accountants to develop digital competencies and engage in strategic decision-making related to cloud adoption. It concludes that their involvement is essential for ensuring that cloud technologies are implemented in a way that aligns with organizational goals, regulatory standards, and long-term sustainability.

3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study lies in its potential to contribute valuable insights into the adoption and practical implications of cloud computing within the accounting profession, specifically among chartered accountants based in Mumbai—a major financial hub of India. As the accounting industry experiences a technological transformation, understanding the perceptions of professionals who play a critical role in financial reporting, auditing, and compliance becomes essential. This study is particularly important in identifying how Mumbai-based chartered accountants perceive the benefits, challenges, and risks associated with cloud computing. Their insights can

highlight the level of awareness, acceptance, and preparedness to integrate cloud-based solutions into accounting practices. Given that chartered accountants are often key advisors to businesses, their attitudes and openness to technology can significantly influence the digital transformation of enterprises across sectors. Moreover, the study holds practical relevance for software providers, policymakers, and professional accounting bodies. By analysing the perceptions of chartered accountants, technology vendors can tailor cloud-based accounting solutions to better meet the needs of professionals. Policymakers can also use the findings to develop supportive frameworks and training programs to encourage wider adoption of digital tools. For accounting institutions and educational bodies, the research provides a basis to design updated curricula and continuous professional development modules that emphasize emerging technologies like cloud computing. In the broader context, the study also contributes to academic literature by bridging the gap between technological advancement and its acceptance among financial professionals. It provides empirical data from a specific geographical and professional context, which can serve as a reference point for comparative studies across different regions or professional groups. Ultimately, this research aims to facilitate the smoother integration of cloud technology into accounting practices, enhance operational efficiency, and promote innovation in the financial services sector.

4. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To analyse the perception of the chartered accountants towards cloud computing in practice.
2. To find out association between demographic profile of the chartered accountants and their perception towards cloud computing in practice

5. SAMPLE SIZE

In this study 167 Mumbai based chartered accountants have been interviewed

6. DATA ANALYSIS

1. H₀ : Chartered Accountants do not believe that Cloud computing is an important tool for modernizing accounting practices.

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Cloud computing is an important tool for modernizing accounting practices.	47.081	166	0.000	0.104	0.088	0.117

As per the above table it is seen that significance value is 0.000 which is lower than standard value 0.05, So Null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that Chartered Accountants believe

that Cloud computing is an important tool for modernizing accounting practices.

2. H₀ : Chartered Accountants do not believe that Cloud-based accounting systems help reduce paperwork and manual tasks.

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Cloud-based accounting systems help reduce paperwork and manual tasks.	51.308	166	0.044	0.485	0.095	0.564

As per the above table it is seen that significance value is 0.044 which is higher than standard value 0.05, So Null hypothesis is accepted and it is concluded that Chartered Accountants believe that Cloud-based accounting systems help reduce paperwork and manual tasks.

3. H₀ : Chartered Accountants do not believe that Cloud platforms improve collaboration with clients and team members.

One-Sample Test						
	Test Value = 3					
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
Cloud platforms improve collaboration with clients and team members.	55.535	166	0.012	0.693	0.542	1.011

As per the above table it is seen that significance value is 0.012 which is lower than standard value 0.05, So Null hypothesis is rejected and it is concluded that chartered accountants believe that Cloud platforms improve collaboration with clients and team members.

4. H₀ : There is no associations between the demographic profile of the chartered accountants and their perception towards cloud computing in practice

Variable- 1	Variable-2	Pearson Chi-Square	P Value	Decision
Gender	Cloud computing is an important tool for modernizing accounting practices.	3.58	0.018	There is Significant Association
	Cloud-based accounting systems help reduce paperwork and manual tasks.	2.87	0.020	
	Cloud platforms improve collaboration with clients and team members.	4.30	0.020	
Age	Cloud computing is an important tool for modernizing accounting practices.	2.75	0.016	
	Cloud-based accounting systems help reduce paperwork and manual tasks.	2.38	0.004	
	Cloud platforms improve collaboration with clients and team members.	4.36	0.007	
Education	Cloud computing is an important tool for modernizing accounting practices.	1.20	0.007	
	Cloud-based accounting systems help reduce paperwork and manual tasks.	0.97	0.002	
	Cloud platforms improve collaboration with clients and team members.	1.46	0.009	
Years of experience	Cloud computing is an important tool for modernizing accounting practices.	1.67	0.003	
	Cloud-based accounting systems help reduce paperwork and manual tasks.	0.40	0.020	
	Cloud platforms improve collaboration with clients and team members.	1.76	0.015	

7. CONCLUSION

The findings of the study clearly indicate that Chartered Accountants hold a positive perception toward the adoption of cloud computing in accounting practice. The respondents strongly believe that cloud computing serves as a vital tool for modernizing traditional accounting methods. Its ability to enhance efficiency, streamline processes, and support digital transformation has been well recognized by the professionals. Furthermore, Chartered Accountants acknowledge that cloud-based accounting systems significantly reduce paperwork and manual intervention, thereby minimizing errors and saving time. This shift towards automation not only increases

operational productivity but also allows professionals to focus more on analytical and strategic tasks. Additionally, the study reveals that Chartered Accountants consider cloud platforms as effective tools for improving collaboration with clients and team members. The real-time accessibility of data and the ability to share information instantly has made client servicing more responsive and interactive, ultimately enhancing the overall quality of professional engagements. Overall, the study concludes that cloud computing is viewed by Mumbai-based Chartered Accountants as a transformative technological advancement that supports efficiency, communication, and modernization in the accounting profession. These insights reinforce the need for wider adoption, proper training, and support systems to maximize the potential of cloud-based solutions in professional accounting practices.

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