

FACTORS AFFECTING VALUE ADDED TAX COMPLIANCE BEHAVIOR OF ENTERPRISE: A STUDY OF THE TAX OFFICE OF BINH TAN DISTRICT, HO CHI MINH CITY

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Abstract - The study identifies factors affecting the Value Added Tax compliance of taxpayer at The Tax Office of Binh Tan district, Ho Chi Minh city (HCMC). The study combines the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies by 2 steps of preliminary and official research. The official research was launched with quantitative method. Samples were selected by convenience sampling method with sample size of 300 corporate taxpayers. The results of multivariate regression analysis showed that 7 factors affecting the VAT compliance behavior of the corporate taxpayer from top to bottom, namely: Tax management, Awareness on penalty and criminal; Simplification of tax declaration; Financial position of corporate taxpayer; Trust on tax authority integrity; VAT knowledge; Awareness on equality. The main findings recommended some solutions to successfully facilitate the enterprises to improve their VAT compliance and help the tax authority to effectively manage VAT payments.

Key words - Tax compliance behavior; Value Added Tax; The Tax Office of Binh Tan district

1. Introduction

In order to outperform the self-tax calculation, declaration and payment and orient toward a modern tax management mechanism, the taxpayer compliance shall be improved. The tax authorities have made great efforts to evaluate the tax compliance, accordingly apply the proper and effective behaviors in the practice of tax management and administration. Compliance with payment to the State budget in general and tax compliance in particular, is inevitable that the governing entities shall perform. Currently, there are over 100 ongoing tax revenues, tax types, fees and duties, including direct and indirect tax types.

According to Pham The Anh and Nguyen Duc Hieu: "Density of indirect tax against total tax revenue is increasingly high and exceeding 60% in 2016, accounting for 11% of GDP. VAT is the biggest revenue among various indirect tax types, accounting for 50% - 60% total indirect tax collections in the period of 2006 - 2019. VAT has been recognized as the biggest revenue of the State budget, accounting for over 23% of total tax income and over 19% of total State budget; Income in 2016, 30.6% of total tax income and 24.7% of total State budget income in 2019" [1]. Particularly, in Vietnam, VAT role is increasingly important when the commercial tax revenues reduce due to the regional free trade agreements as well as approval of World Trade Organization's trade liberalization standards. Therefore, taxpayer's VAT compliance plays a very significant role in assuring the successful completion of State budget revenue estimates.

VAT management in Vietnam in general and in Binh Tan district, HCMC in particular, is struggled with great challenges about how to make correct, sufficient tax collection, avoid tax losses, improve the tax compliance towards voluntary tax compliance of corporate taxpayer. Meanwhile, tax collection management resources in Vietnam are still restricted and Covid-19 pandemic is extremely complicated. It is expected to continue affecting the future budget revenue. The study aims to identify the factors affecting the VAT compliance of taxpayer in Binh Tan district, HCMC to release the proper and effective conduct in the tax management and administration practice of at The Tax Office of Binh Tan district, facilitating the corporate taxpayer's tax compliance, gradually reducing the errors and misconducts during enterprises' fulfillment of tax policies.

2. Literature review and research model

2.1. Concepts of tax and value added tax

Article 3 of the Law on Tax Management No. 38/2019/QH14 species that: "Tax is a mandatory payment to the State budget of organizations, households, household businesses and individuals as prescribed by the laws on tax". Article 2 of the Law on Value Added Tax No. 13/2008/QH12 defines: "VAT is a tax against the added value of goods and services arisen during production, circulation and consumption". It means that VAT is an indirect tax type by nature. Manufacturers and service providers are taxpayers; however, consumers are subject to tax through goods and service price.

2.2. Concept of tax compliance

Tax compliance refers to all income and payments for entire tax obligations by performing the provisions of the laws, Ordinances or court's judgments [2]. According to James and Alley: "Tax compliance, under the simplest understanding, refers to the extent of tax obligation compliance specified in the tax law" [3]. According to the viewpoint of the General Department of Taxation of Vietnam, tax compliance refers to taxpayer's required obligation compliance, including tax registration, declaration, assessment, payment and reporting activities. Any violations from such phases result in tax non-compliance at different extents.

2.3. Theoretical framework on tax compliance behavior

2.3.1. Behavior theory of Watson

Behavior theory, or so call as Behavior Psychology,

was officially set up in 1913 by Watson. He released the viewpoint that a person may perceive the full knowledge about behavior by studying and changing his operating environment. Pure behavior psychology believed that all behaviors are resulted from experience. Anyone, regardless of education background, may be trained in any way whatsoever with proper impacting conditions.

Therefore, the behavior theory assumed that tax compliance shall be formed in persons having active psychology characters, habits and behaviors to be well matched with the social standards; In order to ensure tax compliance, it is required to prevent the formation, eliminate and restrict the negative psychology qualities, habits and behaviors that are not well matched with the social standards, ensuring that tax non-compliance is minimized in any circumstances.

2.3.2. Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

The theory of reasoned action specified that behavior is generated by personal purposes. Although appearance of an action intension is defined by three factors namely: Belief- that the behavior will lead to the intended outcome; Normative beliefs- that the belief in standard expectations of other persons and motivations to satisfy such expectations and Control beliefs - that are beliefs about existence of items to support or prevent the behaviors to be displayed and awarded about the supporting items and behavior restrictions claimed to be the supreme right [4].

Before an individual does anything, they believe in results obtained from such behaviors. Accordingly, a decision is made that it is planned to do or not to do such a thing. It relates to the taxpayer's awareness. Taxpayers, who recognize the significance of tax payment, shall believe into the tax payment significance to maintain the belief in country development behavior. Individually, the taxpayer shall believe in normative prospects of other persons and motivate to satisfy such belief expectations.

2.3.3. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

The Theory of Planned Behavior, set up in 1991 by Ajzen, assumed that the most important factor deciding the behavior is the intention to perform such behavior, affected by 3 factors, namely a person's attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms and awareness of such behavior control [5]. This affirmed the link between attitudes, subjective norms and awareness of behavior control which may be forecasted and explained for the intention to perform a behavior.

In the tax compliance study, this theory helped the researchers to explain the behavior relations, resulting in tax compliance, facilitating the tax authority to manage the enterprise's tax compliance by forecasting their behaviors from their position.

2.3.4. Theory of Allingham and Sandmo (AS theory)

This theory was developed by Allingham and Sandmo. AS theory assumed that the tax invasion behavior is prevented by penalty and audit. Taxpayers would decide to violate and evade their tax obligations when they assumed that the tax invasion expenses are too low and believed that such conduct shall not be detected or audited [6].

Taxpayers would also make the tax invasion when they recognized that the compliance expense is high. Wordy tax system and relevant procedures encouraged the tax invasion trends. Moreover, when the taxpayer realized that they may not be found as the tax inspection or examination is rarely conducted by the tax authority, they may implement more complicated tax invasion behaviors to reduce the payable tax amounts. Such findings were well matched with the theoretical proposals that fear of detection shall affect the extents of tax compliance behavior. It meant that tax invaders shall make more precautions when probability of detection is high.

2.4. Scientific assumptions and research model

From related studies and practice at The Tax Office of Binh Tan district, 7 research assumptions on factors affecting VAT compliance of enterprises in Binh Tan district, HCMC were suggested by the author, namely: (1) Simplification of tax declaration; (2) Belief in tax authority's integrity; (3) Financial position of corporate taxpayer; (4) Tax management; (5) VAT Knowledge; (6) Awareness on tax system equality and (7) Awareness on penalty and criminal. It is assumed that the above factors positively affect the tax compliance behavior.

(1) Simplification of tax declaration

Silvani and Baer emphasized that tax management should be simplified under the perspective of the taxpayer, maintaining the annual procedures and records as simple as possible to encourage the compliance [7]. Therefore, simplification of tax declaration may facilitate the management, management efficiency improvement and cost reduction [8]. According to Deyganto, simplicity of tax system is characterized by forward relation with tax compliance attitude [9] while Le Chi Cong simplification of tax declaration is featured by active impacts on encouraging corporate tax compliance behavior [10]. Therefore, the research assumptions are proposed:

Hypothesis H1: Simplicity of tax declaration positively affecting tax compliance behavior.

(2) Belief in tax authority's integrity

According to the Statement of Vietnam Taxation Industry, integrity is always defined as compliance to the laws and code of conduct honestly and reliably. The study launched by Le Thi Lieu et al unveiled that integrity factor of tax authority is equivalent to tax compliance of corporate taxpayer. Belief in integrity is the taxpayer trust on moral of tax officials whom they are believed that negative issues shall not occur upon tax payment to the collector [11]. The study initiated by Usman specified the active relation between the integrity awareness and tax compliance extent of taxpayers [12]. By highly appreciating the tax authority's integrity, their tax compliance shall be improved. Hence, the assumption is that:

Hypothesis H2: Belief in tax authority's integrity having forward impacts on tax compliance behavior

(3) Financial position of corporate taxpayer

According to the study launched by Palil, financial distress is one of key factors, affecting tax compliance of corporate taxpayer in Malaysia [13]. This was clarified in

the studies initiated by Tehulu and Dinberu [14], Deyganto [9], Usman [12], Nguyen Thi Ngoc Diep and Nguyen Huy Hang [15] that the financial position of enterprises has an active impact on tax compliance behavior. Hence, the assumption is that:

Hypothesis H3: Financial position of corporate taxpayer positively affecting tax compliance behavior.

(4) Tax management

Tax management is defined as a process to organize and launch the implementation of tax laws in the economic life. The tax authority shall perform the tax management functions (such as tax registration management, propaganda, support, benefits, reduction, exemption, declaration, inspection, examination, administrative penalty for breach, enforcement, etc.) to affect the taxpayer's tax compliance behavior. The study of Le Chi Cong [10], Nguyen Thi Ngoc Diep and Nguyen Huy Hoang [15] concluded that tax inspection has an active impact on enterprise's tax compliance behavior. The main findings of Anjulo and Waje also unveiled that the tax management has active relation and statistical significance to VAT collection performance [16]. Hence, the assumption is that:

Hypothesis H4: Tax management having the active impact on tax compliance behavior

(5) VAT knowledge

The automatic tax declaration and payment system requires the taxpayers to have adequate knowledge and capacity to understand about the tax affairs and some issues related to tax attitudes such as tax knowledge or awareness on equality of tax system, affecting tax invasion [17]. The in-depth knowledge on tax in combination with understandings about tax regulations, financial knowledge help the taxpayers to determine the economic consequences of their misconducts in case of tax invasion. The study launched by Deyganto [9], Setiawan, Harnovinsah [18] and Khuc Dinh Nam, Nguyen Thi Binh Minh [19] unveiled that tax knowledge has an active and significant impact on tax compliance of corporate taxpayers. Hence, the assumption is that:

Hypothesis H5: VAT knowledge of corporate taxpayer positively affecting tax compliance behavior.

(6) Awareness on tax system equality

Equality is an important request in tax development process. When the tax system ensures equality in mobilization of tax obligations and assurance of equality in tax inspection and examination, the corporate taxpayer shall be prone to be more active to tax compliance. The study launched by Tilahun specified that tax system's equality factor is decisive, affecting the voluntary compliance of taxpayer [20]. The studies of Tehulu and Dinberu [14], Setiawan and Harnovinsah [18], Nguyen Thi Ngoc Diep and Nguyen Huy Hoang [15] also suggested that awareness on tax system's equality is a factor, significantly affecting tax compliance behavior. Hence, the assumption is that:

Hypothesis H6: Awareness on tax system's equality has an active impact on tax compliance behavior.

(7) Awareness on penalty and criminal

The theoretical study conducted by Allingham and Sandmo unveiled that penalty and awareness on criminal had an impact on tax compliance [6]. This study assumed that tax compliance shall be improved when relevant penalties for non-compliance increase. In order to obtain high effectiveness, the penalty should be quickly and strongly applied. The threat of penalty would prevent tax invasion behavior. Setting up an effective system to handle tax invasion behavior is an important solution to enhance tax compliance. Corporate taxpayers are likely to comply when the non-compliance behavior is inevitably fined. The main findings of Tehulu and Dinberu [14], Tilahun [20], Deyganto [9] recognized that the tax invasion penalty is a factor, remarkably affecting the tax compliance behavior.

Hence, the assumption is that:

Hypothesis H7: Awareness on penalty and criminal has an active impact on tax compliance behavior.

From the summarized factors and analysis, the research model was proposed to be well matched with the practices and subjects at The Tax Office of Binh Tan district, HCMC, as illustrated in Figure 1.

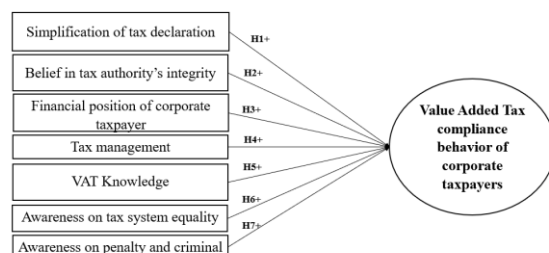


Figure 1. Proposed research model

Source: Recommendations of author group

3. Research method

This study is carried out by combining quantitative research and qualitative one. The applied qualitative research method is the focused group discussion method to work out the most common viewpoint on tax compliance behavior. During discussion, the author looked for how to deeply investigate by directly asking the open questions to respondents to orient toward a deeper discussion. Purpose of this technique is to summarize and give out observation variable that is mostly interested by the corporate taxpayers and having a significant impact on tax compliance behavior. On the other hand, the wordings are modified in an adequate, understandable and clear manner by consulting the discussion members.

The quantitative research is carried out by 2 steps: Preliminary study with 30 enterprises to validate variable reliability and commissioning to adjust the official questionnaire. The official study is initiated by collecting data through direct interviews via questionnaires delivered to 350 corporate taxpayers in Binh Tan district under convenience sampling method. The collected data is processed by SPSS 26 software to validate the scale reliability, EFA, Pearson correlation analysis and linear

regression analysis to validate the initial assumptions, validating the difference by demography such as business form, scale of enterprise, fields of operation and terms of operation.

4. Main findings

4.1. Descriptive statistics of sample

According to the sampling basis specified at research method section, the sample size is selected to be 350 enterprises in Binh Tan district, HCMC, the returned questionnaires were 329. During screening, there were 308 questionnaires with complete and accurate survey contents. The data collected from 308 questionnaires would be used to analyze and evaluate impacts of factors, affecting tax compliance behavior of enterprises in Binh Tan district.

For business form, Liability Limited Company made up the highest percentage (64.29%), private enterprise form accounted for 30.19%, Joint Stock Company accounted for 18.83% and other only accounted for 5.52%. This partially reflected that key business form groups in Binh Tan district are Liability Limited Company and private enterprise.

For scale of enterprise, small scale enterprises made up the highest percentage (52.92%), medium enterprise accounted for 22.08%, ultra-small scaled enterprise accounted for 20.78% and large-scale enterprise made up a relatively low percentage (just 4.22%).

For field of business, the highest percentage (42.21%) was assigned to enterprises involving in manufacturing fields, next was enterprises involving in construction (22.40%), commerce enterprises accounted for 21.75% and enterprises involving in service fields accounted for 13.64%. The survey results also reflected the general situation when Binh Tan District was one of area having the highest manufacturing enterprise figures.

For terms of operation, 55.19% of respondents had 5-10 year terms of operation, 22.65% of respondents had terms of operation less than 10 years and 19.16% of enterprises having over 10 years of operation.

4.2. Scale reliability assessment by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

The analysis and summary results unveiled that Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of the scale was greater than 0.6. Corrected Item-Total Correlation of observation variables were greater than 0.3. It unveiled that 7 factors set up from 29 observation variables were accepted and planned to be used in the further EFA.

4.3. Exploratory factor analysis

EFA results unveiled that NTCB4 is rejected as this variable has factor loading of $0.449 < 0.5$. It meant that 28 variables are kept and grouped into 7 factors as shown in the initial research model.

EFA results of independent variables upon rejection of NTCB4 variable, the coefficient $0.5 \leq KMO = 0.878 \leq 1$ and Bartlett's validation obtained the significance $Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05$, satisfying the statistical conditions, the observation variables had linear relation with

representative factors. The value Eigenvalue = $1.110 > 1$ and 7 factors with good information summary significance were extracted. Total Variance Explained of 66.819% > 50% unveiled that 66.819% of factor variation is explained by observation variables, so-called as measurement variables of the factor's scale. The Rotated Component Matrix results unveiled that 28 observation variables create 7-factor combination as initially setup factors. All observation variables had factor loading coefficient greater than 0.5. It meant that those are 7 factors affecting the dependent variables of Tax compliance behavior initially setup by the author. Component's observation variables of such 7 factors would be kept to continue the linear regression analysis.

For the dependent variable, validation results of KMO and Bartlett's unveiled that $0.5 \leq KMO = 0.810 \leq 1$ and value Sig. Bartlett's Test = $0.000 < 0.05$ unveiled that the factor analysis for dependent variable is suitable in terms of statistical significance. There was 1 variance explained with Eigenvalues of $2.664 \geq 1$ and Total Variance Explained was 66.589% > 50%, specifying that EFA model is feasible. It means that 1 factor is explained with 66.589% of observation variables. Rotated Component Matrix specified that 4 observation variables are combined as 1 factor. All observation variables had factor loading coefficient greater than 0.5. Therefore, 4 observation variables measuring dependent variables would be continued to be maintained for linear regression analysis. The Pearson Sig. correlation value of independent variables QLT, NTHP, TDG, NTLC, TTTC, KTT, NTCB with dependent variable, namely tax compliance behavior, were smaller than 0.05. It meant that such independent variables relate to the dependent variable.

4.4. Linear regression analysis

Explanation extent validation: The model had modified R^2 value of $0.687 = 68.7\%$. It means that 68.7% of variation of dependent variable (tax compliance behavior) is explained by 7 affecting factors to be introduced into the model. Conformity of ongoing multi-variable regression model was validated by coefficient Sig. The analysis results unveiled that the coefficient $Sig. = 0.0000 < 0.05$, hence, the linear regression model is suitable with the data set and likely to be used, assuming that H_0 is rejected and all 7 initial assumptions from H_1 to H_7 are accepted. The coefficient Durbin-Watson was $d = 1.953$, within the range of 1-3, hence, no first-order series autocorrelation occur. The value Sig. validating t regression coefficient of independent variables was smaller than 0.05. Hence, such independent variables were assigned with significance to explain the dependent variables. As VIF coefficient of independent variables was smaller than 10, no multi-collinear phenomenon is available.

Standardized regression equation on factors, affecting tax compliance behavior of enterprises in Binh Tan district was characterized by following form:

$$\begin{aligned} TTT = & 0.330*QLT + 0.296*NTHP + 0.216*TDG \\ & + 0.79*TTTC + 0.118*NTLC + 0.116*KTT \\ & + 0.079*NTCB \end{aligned}$$

4.5. Difference validation

The study also validated whether there is a difference in tax compliance behavior between the business form groups, scale of business, fields of operation and terms of operation. As a result, there was only difference in tax compliance behavior between groups of scale of enterprise, fields of business and terms of operation. No difference was found in tax compliance behavior between different enterprise form group.

The findings also unveiled that the bigger the scale is, the higher tax compliance behavior shall be; Enterprises involving in trade had the highest tax compliance behavior, next was enterprises involving in manufacturing and service fields, and the lowest extent of tax compliance behavior was assigned to enterprises involving in construction fields; the longer the term of operation is, the higher the tax compliance behavior shall be.

5. Discussion of main findings

Tax compliance behavior is highly concerned by many researchers and tax managers. In order to have proper and effective behaviors in practices of tax management and administration, identification of factors affecting tax compliance behaviors of enterprises is extremely essential.

The main findings unveiled that the independent variables have a "positive" impact on dependent variables. It meant that any changes in independent variables have forward impacts on dependent variable.

The main findings also specified that the factor having the highest impact on tax compliance behavior judged by the enterprises is Tax management with value $\beta = 0,330$, this result reflected the high expectation of taxpayer to tax authority's management. If this content was outperformed, highly positive improvements shall be obtained for enterprise's tax compliance behavior. Meanwhile, factor Awareness on equality with $\beta = 0.079$ was the lowest criterion, reflecting that the enterprises fail to completely trust in tax system's equality. Next was the factor, the factor, Enterprise's Tax Knowledge with coefficient $\beta = 0.116$, had the second low impact. It meant that some respondents assumed that when their tax knowledge increases, the tax compliance is not necessary to increase but they know how to make correct tax payment to avoid mistake due to ignorance or find the tax invasion properly. The factor, Awareness on penalty and criminal with coefficient $\beta = 0.296$, had the second powerful impact on tax compliance behavior. Most of respondents judged that if any tax non-compliance behaviors are fined by the tax authority and penalty and fines are increased upon non-compliance, the enterprise's tax compliance behavior shall be increasingly improved. Particularly, the fines higher than benefits obtained from tax invasion and debts would make the taxpayers to have high tax compliance. The factor, Simplification of tax declaration with coefficient $\beta = 0.216$, was the third impacting factor. It is possible to say that most of respondents judged that simplification of tax declaration has a positive impact on encouraging taxpayer's tax compliance behavior. This was assigned with special significance when tax self-declaration and

payment mechanisms were being applied. The next factors affecting tax compliance behavior included Financial position of corporate taxpayer with coefficient $\beta = 0.179$ and factor, Trust on Integrity with coefficient $\beta = 0.118$.

6. Conclusions and implications

The Study unveiled that all 7 factors namely: (1) Simplification of tax declaration; (2) Belief in tax authority's integrity; (3) Financial position of corporate taxpayer; (4) Tax management; (5) VAT Knowledge; (6) Awareness on tax system equality and (7) Awareness on penalty and criminal affect tax compliance behavior of enterprises in Binh Tan district, HCMC. The previous studies unveiled that tax compliance behavior is affected by basic factors namely Simplification of tax declaration, Financial position of corporate taxpayer, Tax knowledge, Tax management, Awareness on tax system equality and awareness on Penalty and criminal as shown in the study of Palil [13], Tehulu and Dinberu [14], Anjulo and Waje [16], Tilahun [20], Usman [12], Le Chi Cong [10], Nguyen Thi Ngoc Diep and Nguyen Huy Hoang [15], Khuc Dinh Nam and Nguyen Thi Binh Minh [19]. The author supplemented the factor Belief in Tax Authority's Integrity from the research model of Le Thi Lieu et al [11]. This was completely suitable with the literature review previously referred and summarized by the author. According to the coefficient β , mean value of observation variable and actual situation in Binh Tan district, some general solutions were recommended for each factor to improve the taxpayer's tax compliance behavior as follows:

Tax self-declaration and payment mechanism is great to tax management; however, it is misused due to low awareness of taxpayer and ineffective IT application on tax control. The tax authority should take more powerful actions to completely recover the restrictions of State budget revenue management, focusing on improving the qualification and preventing the negative practices and corruption practices in tax collection fields. Setup the risk classification criteria set and apply the risk management in tax management functions, including: Tax registration; Tax declaration, payment and debt; Enforcement of official administrative decisions; Tax benefits; Tax inspection and examination; Management and use of invoices, vouchers and other operations in tax management as prescribed, facilitating reformation and modernization of tax management, improving tax management effectiveness and efficiency in the next context under the international practice.

Enhance the "warning" feature in penalty sanctions for non-compliance taxpayers, minimizing the possible violations. Publicly disclose enterprises involving in tax non-compliance, tax invasion and debt on mass media. If the tax violations are highly dangerous to the society by its nature and extent, criminal proceeding shall be considered to properly sanction violators and warn and avoid new violations. Create a good message to taxpayers if they intentionally fail to comply with tax regulations. Then, a very high penalty shall be applied.

Simplify tax declaration procedure and reduce the

exposure between taxpayer and tax officials by automating all tax declaration procedures.

Apply the policies, encouraging the new enterprises, facing with differences to enjoy tax rate incentives, extend the tax payment term and create favorable conditions for tax compliance taxpayers.

Make the integrity as the public concern as well as the great concern of enterprise for operation of the public agencies, including tax authority. Take measures to improve the integrity in tax authority's operations. Focus on training and improvement of Tax officials and public servants. Launch the emulation campaign for the tax officials and public servants, upholding the great devotion and friendly attitude to the taxpayers. The senior tax authority should outperform the inspection and supervision to improve the integrity of their subordinate.

Design and develop the professional training programs related to tax laws, tax affairs and e-billing for the enterprises. Tax policy propaganda and question and answer should be regularly launched under various forms so that the tax policies are synchronously and consistently performed for each corporate taxpayer. Thanks to programs on improving tax law knowledge, the taxpayers may improve their tax compliance behavior.

Launch the propaganda and support for the corporate taxpayers, improving the social awareness in tax compliance issues, helping taxpayers to be aware of the benefits offered by the government from VAT they have paid, thereby helping the taxpayers obtain a clearer awareness on equality. Set up tax agents to support the taxpayers to make tax payment, facilitate denouncement procedures to the competent authorities as necessary, actively inspect tax service-related complains, ensuring taxpayer benefits. Policy makers should continue upholding the enhancement and encouragement to corporate taxpayers to involving in policy making process to archive the equality objectives./.

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