



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Controlling COVID-19

Management Control Systems in a COVID-19 world:
“traditional” vs “modern” approaches

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Católica Porto Business School
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Resumo

2020 foi um ano particular e memorável que trouxe uma grande variedade de novos desafios e obstáculos, não só para as pessoas, mas também para as organizações, devido à pandemia. Nas organizações, o processo “tradicional” de planeamento, com a definição anual do orçamento e respetivas metas de negócio, tem vindo a ser criticado pela sua ineficiência como instrumento de gestão (Otley, 1994) mesmo num contexto relativamente estável da envolvente. O contexto da envolvente decorrente da pandemia COVID-19, com elevados níveis de incerteza e volatilidade a nível económico e social, veio criar desafios acrescidos na aplicação das metodologias e processos mais “tradicionais” de planeamento e controlo de gestão.

Os sistemas denominados como mais tradicionais de controlo de gestão ainda estão muito presentes nas empresas em Portugal, apesar das críticas a que têm sido alvos na literatura mais recente, onde as suas lacunas têm vindo a ser exploradas de forma intensiva. Deste modo, nos últimos anos, vários sistemas alternativos de controlo de gestão continuam a ser desenvolvidos, com o surgimento de novos métodos e processos de controlo, no sentido de criar um processo de gestão mais adaptável e descentralizado para lidar com ambientes altamente competitivos e voláteis.

O objetivo principal desta dissertação é avaliar a forma através da qual as empresas, com a aplicação de diferentes mecanismos e processos de controlo (que configuram um sistema integrado de controlo de gestão), enfrentaram e continuam a enfrentar os novos desafios de incerteza, volatilidade e restrições operacionais decorrentes do impacto da pandemia COVID-19.

Em primeiro lugar, o autor realizou um estudo misto quantitativo-qualitativo, através de uma análise *clustering*, agrupando as empresas em Portugal consoante o tipo de mecanismos e processos de controlo que utilizam, de modo a estudar

quais os mais comuns. Tendo como base o universo de 1,538 empresas que responderam ao inquérito inicial, foram selecionadas para uma análise do tipo qualitativo (entrevista), duas empresas que se destacaram ao utilizarem abordagens opostas, contrapondo uma perspectiva mais “tradicional” dos sistemas de controlo de gestão a abordagens mais “modernas”. Por fim, através destes estudos de caso, foi possível explorar como ambas as empresas lidaram com alterações da envolvente decorrentes da pandemia, como adaptaram os seus sistemas de controlo de gestão e qual o papel que estes têm vindo a desempenhar neste contexto.

Palavras-chave: COVID-19; Mecanismos de controlo; Medidas de adaptação

Abstract

2020 was a particular and memorable year that brought a wide variety of new challenges and obstacles, not only for people, but also for organizations, due to the pandemic. In organizations, the traditional planning process, with the annual budget definition and respective business goals, has been criticized for its inefficiency as a management tool (Otley, 1994) even in a relatively stable environmental context. The environmental changes resulting from the pandemic COVID-19, with high levels of uncertainty and volatility at an economic and social level, have created additional challenges in the application of more “traditional” methodologies and processes of planning and control management.

The management control systems known “traditional” are still very present in the Portuguese companies, despite the criticisms they have been targeted in the most recent literature, where their gaps have been explored intensively. Thus, in recent years, several alternative management control systems continue to be developed, with the emergence of new control methods and processes, in order to create a more adaptable and decentralized management process to deal with highly competitive and volatile environments.

The main objective of this dissertation is to evaluate the way in which companies, with the application of different control mechanisms and processes (which constitute an integrated management control system), faced and continue to face the new challenges of uncertainty, volatility and operational restrictions resulting from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Firstly, the author carried out a mixed quantitative-qualitative study, through a clustering analysis, grouping companies in Portugal according to the type of control mechanisms and processes they use, in order to study which are the most common. Based on the universe of 1,538 companies that responded to the initial survey, were selected for a qualitative analysis (interview) two companies that

stood out by using diverse approaches, contrasting a more “traditional” perspective of management control systems to more “modern” approaches. Ultimately, through these case studies, it was possible to explore how both companies dealt with the changes in the environment resulting from the pandemic, how they adapted their management control systems and what role they have been playing in this context.

Keywords: COVID-19; Control mechanisms; Adaptation measures

Tables of Contents

Acknowledgments	ii
Resumo	iii
Abstract	v
List of Figures.....	viii
List of Tables.....	ix
Glossary.....	x
1. Introduction.....	1
2. Literature Review	5
2.1. Management Control Systems.....	5
2.1.1. “Traditional” control mechanisms.....	9
2.1.2. “Modern” control mechanisms.....	10
2.2. Effects of MCSS when managing in uncertain contexts.....	16
3. Methodology	19
3.1. Goals and Hypothesis	19
3.2 Quantitative Methodology – Survey and Clustering Analysis	20
3.2.1 Survey.....	21
3.2.2 Clustering Analysis.....	24
3.3 Qualitative Methodology – Case study approach.....	25
3.3.1. Case Selection	26
3.3.2. Data Collection and Analysis.....	27
3.3.3. Data Interpretation.....	28
3.3.4. Report of the findings	28
4. Clustering Analysis Findings	31
4.1 Final Clusters	31
4.2 Analysis of the Results.....	32
5. Case Studies	35
5.1 Companies Selected for Interviews.....	35
5.1.1 Company X.....	35
5.1.2 Company Z	38
6. Case Studies Findings – Description and Analysis.....	43
6.1 Management Control Systems.....	43
6.1.1 Strategic Planning.....	44

6.1.2 Budget.....	47
6.1.3 Performance Evaluation, Goals and Compensation.....	49
6.2 Main obstacles imposed to the two companies by the pandemic context.....	52
6.3 Adaptative measures and their impact.....	54
7. Conclusions.....	60
7.1 Contributions to the literature.....	64
7.2 Suggestions for future research and case studies limitations.....	65
References.....	67
Annexes.....	71
Annex A.....	71
Annex B.....	79
Annex C.....	82
Annex D.....	104

List of Figures

FIGURE 1. Methodology Sequence.....	30
FIGURE 2. Traditional- modern MCSs spectrum.....	31
FIGURE 3. Final Cluster centres per variable.....	33
FIGURE 4. Company Distribution per cluster.....	34
FIGURE 5. Company Z's business units.....	39
FIGURE 6. Company X's control management problem solving.....	58
FIGURE 7. Company Z's control management problem solving.....	59
FIGURE A 1. Survey's first page.....	71
FIGURE A 2. Survey's second page.....	72
FIGURE A 3. Survey's third page.....	73
FIGURE A 4. Survey's fourth page.....	78
FIGURE B 1. SPSS output – Initial Cluster Centres defined by the author.....	79
FIGURE B 2. SPSS output – Iteration History.....	79
FIGURE B 3. SPSS output – Final Cluster Centres.....	80
FIGURE B 4. SPSS output – ANOVA.....	80
FIGURE B 5. SPSS output – Number of cases in each Cluster.....	81
FIGURE C 1. Company Z's answer to question A1.....	82
FIGURE C 2. Company Z's answer to question A2.....	82

FIGURE C 3. Company Z's answer to question A3.....	82
FIGURE C 4. Company Z's answer to question A4.....	83
FIGURE C 5. Company Z's answer to question A5.....	83
FIGURE C 6. Company Z's answer to question A6.....	83
FIGURE C 7. Company Z's answers to group B1)	84
FIGURE C 8. Company Z's answers to group B2)	85
FIGURE C 9. Company Z's answers to group B3)	86
FIGURE C 10. Company Z's answers to group B4)	87
FIGURE C 11. Company Z's answers to group B5)	87
FIGURE C 12. Company Z's answers to group B6)	88
FIGURE C 13. Company Z's answers to group B7)	89
FIGURE C 14. Company Z's answers to group B8)	90
FIGURE C 15. Company Z's answers to group B9)	91
FIGURE C 16. Company Z's answers to group B10)	92
FIGURE C 17. Company X's answer to question A1.....	92
FIGURE C 18. Company X's answer to question A2.....	93
FIGURE C 19. Company X's answer to question A3.....	93
FIGURE C 20. Company X's answer to question A4.....	93
FIGURE C 21. Company X's answer to question A5.....	94
FIGURE C 22. Company X's answer to question A6.....	94
FIGURE C 23. Company X's answers to group B1)	94
FIGURE C 24. Company X's answers to group B2)	95
FIGURE C 25. Company X's answers to group B3)	96
FIGURE C 26. Company X's answers to group B4)	97
FIGURE C 27. Company X's answers to group B5)	98
FIGURE C 28. Company X's answers to group B6)	99
FIGURE C 29. Company X's answers to group B7)	100
FIGURE C 30. Company X's answers to group B8)	101
FIGURE C 31. Company X's answers to group B9)	102
FIGURE C 32. Company X's answers to group B10)	102

List of Tables

TABLE 1. Comparison between different types of MCSs - control mechanisms	15
TABLE 2. Case Study approach	29
TABLE 3. Company X's cluster membership results (sample)	37
TABLE 4. Company Z's cluster membership results (sample)	41
TABLE 5. Comparison of MCSs	51

Glossary

BB	Beyond Budgeting
CFO	Chief Financial Officer
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
HR	Human Resources
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MCS	Management Control System
OEM	Original Equipment Manufacturer
R&D	Research and Development
SNS	National Health Service (in Portuguese, <i>Serviço Nacional de Saúde</i>)
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it stands as absolutely fundamental for an organization to develop and implement reliable management control systems (MCSs), with strong control mechanisms. MCSs are formal and information based procedures that managers rely on to maintain or alter patterns in organizational activities, according to Simons (1994).

MCSs are basically designed as actions that the managers take in order to make sure that their organizations perform at the highest of levels, aiding them to adapt to changes in the external environment and to achieve their goals, by delivering quality results to the stakeholders and shareholders. A MCS must be understood as a prime factor of development of the company, insofar as, by affecting the behaviour of the managers, it guides them towards the implementation of the strategy. Thus, it involves all the members of the organization in order to improve individual and collective results (Jordan et al., 2002). Consequently, it has become increasingly important to study and explore which are the control mechanisms employed by the organizations and to assess if they are being used efficiently, such as the results produced by them.

“The primary factors that influence management control choice are: technology, external environment, structure, strategy, size, and national culture” (Chenhall, 2003). In terms of external environmental changes, at the moment, the world is living one of the most stressful and problematic phases of the “modern” history, with the arising of a global pandemic, caused by the Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). This has impacted almost every aspect of people and organizations’ lives, with the planning and control management processes being highly affected, leaving the managers no choice but to adapt and choose a more agile approach to fight these new hurdles (Rigby et al., 2020).

Since March of 2020, all sorts of Portuguese organizations have been in an extremely delicate situation, being their control mechanisms very diverse, which vary from the most “traditional” form to the most “modern” one. Therefore, the way they cope with these new circumstances depends highly on the type of control mechanisms that they normally use.

The aim of this dissertation is to explore how they are coping with the obstacles imposed by the pandemic, through the study of their control mechanisms. Additionally, using empirical evidence, it will be attempted to access which were the most effective control mechanisms and to investigate if there is a real connection between the theory on control and planning and the practice, via the development of two case studies. Specifically, the author will select two organizations, with distinct MCSs, compare them and explore how they dealt with the challenges of 2020 and 2021, more specifically how they have adapted their management control systems that lead to the latest results achieved.

Despite the fact that the literature on planning and control management systems is already very broad and extensive, the topic of how companies have adapted their control mechanisms to overcome the obstacles that have emerged with this level of uncertainty has yet to be studied in depth. Furthermore, this research will provide strong insights on how organizations are coping with those circumstances and what they have achieved so far. Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the research findings for this dissertation are context specific and cannot be designed as a general process, once there is a complexity and a variety of different organizational details, variables and control mechanisms in Portugal. Therefore, the defined research question is the following:

“How have the companies operating in Portugal, with diverse management control systems, adapted to cope with the obstacles imposed by the global pandemic of COVID-19?”

In order to explore the research question, a qualitative research method was conducted, however supported by a quantitative research method. In the first place, a web-survey approach was chosen with the purpose of grouping various companies based on the control mechanisms utilized by them, through a clustering analysis. The survey was intended to explore the control practises and key planning process elements, such as the budget, performance evaluation, targets, compensation, strategic planning and other tools used by the companies. Subsequently, a qualitative research method was developed, in a form of a case studies, where two interviews with companies working in the Portuguese territory were performed. The first one with the Human Resources (HR) manager of the company with “traditional” control mechanisms and with the Chief Financially Officer (CFO) of the company with “modern” control mechanisms. Posteriorly, a comparison was performed between them, in terms of the struggles, adaptative strategies created and inherent results attained during this pandemic time.

In terms of data collection, the primary data was gathered through the process of the two interviews with the managers of the companies selected. Moreover, the secondary data was collected through documentation, archival records and the web-survey evaluation trough a clustering analysis. For bye, the data gathering process was guided by the literature review in order to allow a better interpretation and analysis of the information.

This paper is structured in seven main chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 will comprise a literature review on the MCSs subject where the following topics will be explored in three different main sections: Management control systems, “traditional” and “modern” control mechanisms and the effects of MCSs in managing the uncertainty that emerged with the pandemic. The literature provides important insights on the theories regarding MCSs, their

evolution and will also be helpful to provide a better understanding on the survey building process and on the interpretation of the general findings.

Afterwards, Chapter 3 will present the goals and hypotheses of this investigation. Furthermore, it will provide a meticulous description of the research methodology, with the quantitative-qualitative method selection, more specifically the illustration of the survey and respective clustering analysis, together with the case study approach. Following that, Chapter 4 will present the clustering analysis findings regarding the control mechanisms employed by the companies operating in Portugal, via the display of the final clusters and respective statistical analysis. Subsequently, in Chapter 5, the author will introduce the two companies selected for the interviews in terms of the industry they are inserted in, their history, how they operate and their control mechanisms. In Chapter 6 it will be presented a detailed exposition of the information and findings retrieved from both interviews, always contrasting the gathered data to the theory, when applicable.

Concluding, in Chapter 7 the author not only will present the main conclusions and contributions to the literature drawn by the case study, but also the case limitations and suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Management Control Systems

“In broad terms, a management control system is designed to help an organization adapt to the environment in which it is set and to deliver the key results desired by stakeholder groups, most frequently concentrating upon shareholders in commercial enterprises” (Merchant & Otley, 2006).

Since the beginning of the 20th century, control has been referred to by thoughtful business people as a main function of management and Fayol (1916) determined that the four core functions of management are planning, organizing, coordinating and control. Nevertheless, the first definition of management control was provided by Anthony (1965) when he broke down the concept into the three following processes:

- Strategic Planning, focused on the long-term, where the general plans and strategies, alongside with the goals and objectives that are required to be implemented by the organization are set;
- Operational Control, which is focused on the short-term, depending mainly on non-financial measures of performance and on the organizational situation;
- Management Control, the one which relies heavily on the accounting and other financial aspects and the goal is to ensure that the resources needed are acquired and used effectively, so that the organizational targets are accomplished successfully. Generally, these are the processes that link strategic planning and operational control.

Lowe and Machin (1983) believed that the concept developed by Anthony (1965) was too specific, limited and narrow, stating also that that view had problems of ambiguity when defining the strategies and goals. Furthermore, the authors also considered that the methods used to control the production were lacking psychological discussion and behavioural issues, thus focusing too much

on a type of control based on financial reasoning. Hereupon, Lowe and Machin (1983) proposed a broader and more comprehensive definition of management control designed to certify that the organization adapts to changes in its external environment. Furthermore, the authors also affirmed that the employees' work should be measured by operational sub-goals, linked with the company's objectives, through a system of organizational information gathering, accountability and feedback.

Following the first definition of control management, the MCSs topic has been an important subject of study, thus countless subsequent researchers have contributed to the broadening of the term through the years. Lowe and Machin (1983) criticized Anthony's view for being too restrictive and for having excessive emphasis on financial, accounting-based controls, although it can be seen as a preliminary ground-clearing and key exercise, which echoed through the work of many authors (Otley et al., 1995). Apart from them, Hofstede (1980) is a great example of the many authors who studied and criticized MCSs' first definition, once he explored extensively the terms "management", "control" and "system", stating that MCSs must have a stronger management control philosophy and that management cannot be narrowed down to its accounting focus.

Throughout the years, due to the breadth and complexity of the control field, numerous authors developed their own frameworks and ideas. While some directed their focus to a particular control device, others targeted a more inclusive frameworks or even identified contrasting control models (Merchant & Otley, 2006). Namely, Ouchi (1977) suggests, in his framework, three control strategies: output, behaviour and clan. The choice between these is based on the information's characteristics (which behaviours are desirable?) and the ability to measure the results. Contrastingly, Bruns and Waterhouse (1975) and Merchant (1981) centre their attention into two control approaches, administrative and interpersonal, underlining budgetary control.

Recent perspectives on theme demonstrate a more complete and wider view of the term. On one hand, Govindarajan and Gupta (1985) and Simons (1995) focused their study on the “abandoned” variable as the core of their analysis, being that business strategy. Simons (1995) produced a framework, where he asserted that MCSS are “information-based routines and procedures” that senior managers use to alter or maintain patterns in the organization. Moreover, these procedures may assist their decision regarding how much they want to favour each of the following unique four types of control, which are the so called “levers of control”, creating the opposing forces of an effective strategy implementation (the Yin and the Yang):

- Belief and Interactive Control Systems: They create the positive and inspirational forces. On one hand, the belief systems are used as organizational core values, used to inspire and direct the search for new opportunities, while on the other hand, the second ones, are strategic uncertainties, used to stimulate the learning and emergence of new ideas/strategies by the organization;
- Boundary and Diagnostic Control Systems: These create constrains and ensure order compliance. Boundary systems represent the risks to be avoided, setting limits on the search for new opportunities, whilst the diagnostic control systems are used to motivate, monitor and reward the achievement of specific goals.

Alongside with this author, Merchant and Van der Stede (2007) also elect informal controls as being a structural part of MCSs. These authors describe management control systems as “everything managers do to help ensure that their organization’s strategies and plans are carried out or, if conditions warrant, that they are modified”. Thus, developing a better understanding on what it means to be able to measure outcomes well and how that quality should be judged. Therefore, Merchant and Van der Stede (2007) point out that organizations have in their hands four distinct forms of control:

- Results control, which intends to control the outputs through performance measures, monitoring and rewards, with the enforcement of targeting achievement;
- Action control, with the purpose to prevent undesirable behaviours and promote desirable ones in order to achieve task accomplishment;
- Personnel control, which ultimate goal is the exercise of self-control by individual employees, hence it is built on people's natural tendencies to control themselves and perform beneficial tasks for the well-being of the organization;
- Cultural control, configuring the group control, among organizational members, through the establishment of shared values, social norms and beliefs.

Additionally, Malmi and Brown (2008) have an unorthodox view of MCSs, once they conjecture this phenomenon as a package and state that "many of the individual controls have significant research streams associated with them". For that reason, they believe that not all MCSs should operate only under the cybernetic principle, although this being of major importance. Therefore, they provide four more forms of control, alongside with the cybernetic one: planning, reward and compensation and, finally, administrative and cultural. Fundamentally, they believe that MCSs should be defined as a package and not holistically as a unique system, in their fullness.

Recently, other important variable has been affecting the development of MCSS which is internationalization, so to guarantee the success of an organization in foreign markets it is imperative to manage its control mechanisms and develop a strong global strategy (Hitt et al., 2012). This variable hinders, for instance, the ability to properly forecast, thereupon MCSs stands as the key to evaluate the outcome of the alternatives and provide capacity to manage the aftereffects of the external environmental changes (Hitt et al., 2012).

In sum, traditionally, MCSs' goal is to obtain operational efficiency through the evaluation of the subordinates' performance (Strauß & Zecher, 2013), however in the "modern" competitive world, they provide the opportunity and duty to managers to implement practices that can deliver competitive advantage. That being said, in a "modern" view, it is understandable to treat them as a combination of tools and processes, so that the behaviours of the employees are moulded to strive for the achievement of the organizational goals.

2.1.1. "Traditional" control mechanisms

Several authors have asserted that "traditional" MCSs use the budget as the central point of most organizations' control mechanisms, once it is viewed as an unique tool that can create a single coherent summary, being performance defined usually as profitability (Otley, 1999). On one hand, Otley (1994) states that "information is the necessary final ingredient to complete the control loop" and that, in its "traditional" feed-back form, information on actual performance is compared with pre-set inflexible targets and standards, while the deviations that occur are used to indicate the need for a simple corrective action. On the other hand, traditionally, the author says that accounting measurement is stressed, and that non-financial performance measures are neglected, alongside with the strategic planning.

Contrastingly, Yu and Ming (2008) associate "traditional" control mechanisms to behavioural controls, output controls and input controls. By the authors' definition, behaviour controls imply that employees are directly accountable for their work and for the actions they choose to make, regardless of the outcomes of these ones. Particularly, on this type of controls, there is a major significance placed on procedures and methods, since responsibilities are imposed to subordinates in a top-down fashion, through a direct supervision made by the manager who appraises the work of the employee, being feedback the remedial

tool (Ouchi & Maguire, 1975). Subsequently, output controls imply that administrative work is measure through performance records that fulfil organizational needs as a whole. Thus, performance targets are pre-determined and mutually set, appraisals are based on the results achieved by subordinates and financial rewards specifically associated with performance outcomes (Snell & Youndt, 1995). Lastly, input controls work as the main tactic to select the type of strategy appropriated to the organization when it exists incomplete information on how tasks should be performed or when managers are not able to directly supervise the production process or the service provision. Therefore, this type of controls suggests an overseeing of the prior conditions of performance, such as employees' knowledge, skills, motives or values, and it is capable of being implemented through selection and training (Yu & Ming, 2008).

2.1.2. "Modern" control mechanisms

Otley (1994) criticizes the "traditional" management control paradigm, once he asserts that the assumptions and language used in it do not correspond to the reality of the current problems that most organizations face anymore. To this end, the author states that several modifications have occurred regarding the business context, more specifically in the nature of contemporary business. Moreover, since the last decade of the 20th century, the following changes have been altering the design and operation of MCSs (Otley, 1994) :

- Increased uncertainty, once the current business environment is more propitious to an increasingly rapid pace of change than before. Hence, it makes the future harder to forecast, which requires faster planning, flexibility and adaptation. There has been a growing tendency for global economy and fragmentation of the organizations, with ethical, social, political and technological alterations. Consequently, control mechanisms

will require an empowerment of lower-level employees, increased levels of self-control and group accountability;

- Organizational size, specifically a reduction in the size and number of people employed in business units, led by technological evolution. Additionally, the growth in the focus by units in their core business and an increase on managers' responsibilities, which require a closer integration of strategic planning, management control and operational control;
- Concentration and alliances growth, with the goal of creating a sustainable competitive advantage, that may lead to a higher level of monitoring and control through the companies' supply chain, alongside with a cooperative management style;
- Decline of manufacturing and increase of service-based enterprises, with "modern" control mechanisms being adapted to focus on knowledge-based employees, whilst time is the main resource and innovation and responsiveness to customer needs are the outputs.

The author believes, then, that these changes will lead to several implications for organisation's control techniques, such as the adaptation of the budgeting process to a horizontal inclination, a lower emphasis placed in financial control mechanisms and a process of decentralization within the organization. Moreover, he also proposes that companies should rely on non-financial measures, benchmarked alongside with more flexible target setting for continuous improvement. In conclusion, the keys to survive and succeed in this changing environment are adaptation, innovation, empowerment and long-term orientation (Otley, 1994).

Posteriorly, in the end of the 20th century, in United Kingdom, emerged a management model with an integrated "modern" MCSs, named Beyond Budgeting (BB). Hope and Fraser (2003) argue that this Beyond Budgeting

movement is “about releasing people from the burdens of stifling bureaucracy and suffocating control systems, trusting them with information and giving them time to think, reflect, share, learn and improve”. The goal of Beyond Budget principles is to disrupt with the “traditional” management model that relies deeply in an unyielding budgeting process, which the authors believe being inadequate for a fast movement world and economy. This decentralize and adaptive model provides responsible employees the capacity and authority to draw decisions, search for opportunities and strive always for a competitive performance and consistent results’ delivery. BB is a management philosophy, having in its foundation 12 principles that work as guide to organizations, in terms of development of a flexible organizational structure and creation of an adaptive management process (Hope & Fraser, 2000). Hence, those principles are the following ones:

Leadership Principles

1. Purpose: Engage and inspire people around bold and noble causes, instead of short-term financial goals;
2. Values: Organizational command through shared values and sound judgment, removing the focus on rules/regulations;
3. Transparency: Enable the access to information to the employees;
4. Organization: Cultivate a philosophy of belonging, by organizing around teams that are held accountable, without hierarchical control;
5. Autonomy: Provide people freedom to act and, above all, trust them;
6. Customers: Align all employees with the costumer’s demands, in order to avoid a conflict of interests;

Management Process

7. Rhythm: The organization of management process must be built around business rhythms and events, instead of the calendar year;

8. Targets: These ones must be directional, competitive and benchmarked against the ones of other organisations, rather than fixed and cascade targets;
9. Plans and forecasts: They should work as lean and unbiased processes, deprived of rigidity;
10. Resource allocation: Develop a cost-conscious mind-set and make resources available as needed, rather than using detailed resourced allocation through the budget;
11. Performance evaluation: This process should be made holistically, thus promoting learning and development through peer feedback;
12. Rewards: Reward shared success against competition, in place of fixed performance contracts

Recently, in this line of ideas, an agile approach to management control was developed by Rigby et al. (2020) to guide companies on coping with the obstacles imposed by the pandemic. In the first place, the authors suggest changing the purpose of planning and budgeting towards higher performances, rather than predictable earnings. They affirm that improving performance (return on invested capital and earnings growth) is thirty times more impactful than the indicator earnings per share. Moreover, the authors state that predicting (forecasting), commanding and control are ineffective and unreliable in a period of crisis, especially in a world of unpredictable and accelerating changes. Secondly, organisations need to shift the focus from accounting precision to strategic focus, as a result they must convert the targeted financial outcomes into strategic portfolio guidelines and the resources should be allocated from the strategy down, instead into individual projects. For this uncertain future, (Rigby et al., 2020) propose aligning resources with strategic priorities, nonetheless the possibility of losing market share and of a decrease on the investment in innovation. Lastly, they advise to plan faster and more frequently, once if

budgets remain inflexible and forecasts are not adjusted, it is not possible to continuously improve accuracy, even if the person building them obsesses over it, since small mistakes can compound over time. As a final point, the authors disclose that business planning can go along the following steps:

- Describe an expected path;
- Estimate the possible changes of the outcomes;
- Clarify the hypothesis behind the estimations and assess their validity;
- Make the necessary changes;
- Adapt the plans, according to the new released information to achieve the best outcomes possible.

All authors, cited previously in this section, advocating the use “contemporary/modern” control mechanisms, go “hand in hand” in some aspects of their line of thoughts. At first, each one of them believe that the “traditional” MCSs are unreliable during uncertain and unpredictable times and that the emphasis placed on financial control techniques must diminish, thus organizations should focus on a long-term strategic planning (Hope & Fraser, 2003; Otley, 1994; Rigby et al., 2020). Furthermore, they also agree that budget flexibility and adaptability is fundamental, once the “traditional” budget tends to block the management of risk and that setting specific and precise targets might suggest a degree of certainty about future events that is unrealistic.

In conclusion, the major aspect that differentiates “modern” control mechanisms from “traditional” ones is that the first ones “attempt to define interpretations and meanings that can become widely understood and shared by organization members so that actions are guided by a common definition of the situation” (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2004). Moreover, “modern” controls enhance commitment and identification with the company, instead of resistance. This way, it is possible to identify the source of control as internal to the individual

and that relying increasingly in non-accounting measures and in the long-term, in what concerns strategy and planning, is the best decision (Costa et al., 2014).

TABLE 1.
Comparison between different types of MCSs - control mechanisms

Item	“Traditional” MCSs	“Contemporary/modern” MCSs
Control:		
▪ Style	Command and control	Participative
▪ Philosophy	Empowerment	Innovative and empowerment
▪ Point focus	Outcome	Processes
▪ Emphasis	Costs	Activities
▪ Characteristics	Budget based and financial	Strategic, financial and operational
Organizational strategy:		
▪ Approach	Top-down, predictive	Bottom-up, adaptive
▪ Time horizon	Shor-term focus	Long-term focus
▪ Planning	Formalized, extensive and pre plan	Loose planning
Management:		
▪ Role	Plan, assign and enforce	Delegate, facilitate and mentor
▪ Style	Autocratic	Decentralized
▪ Communication	Formal	Informal, transparent
▪ Role assignment	Individuals, specialization	Self-organizing teams
Employee:		
▪ Motivation	Extrinsic	Intrinsic
▪ Feedback	Seldom	Frequent
▪ Work	Standardized procedures	Autonomous and innovative

Item	“Traditional” MCSs	“Contemporary/modern” MCSs
Targets/goals:		
▪ Type	Financial	Financial and non-financial
▪ Focus	Accounting value	Shareholder value
▪ Flexibility	Predetermined and inflexible	Flexible
▪ Time-horizon	Short-term focus	Long-term focus
▪ Objective	Meet standards	Continuous improvement
Performance evaluation:		
▪ Tracking	Ad hoc and infrequent	Continuous
▪ Measures’ clarity	Ambiguous and private	Clear and public
▪ Rewards	Fixed Performance	Contracts
▪ High performers	Difficultly identifiable	Easily identifiable

Source: (Anthony, 1965; Chenhall, 2003; Costa et al., 2014; Fayol, 1916; Hitt et al., 2012; Hope & Fraser, 2000; Lowe & Machin, 1983; Mintzberg, 1989; Otley et al., 1995)

2.2. Effects of MCSs when managing in uncertain contexts

“The formalised and vertical structure of the mechanistic organization is considered suitable in stable environmental conditions, while the informal and lateral structure of the organic organization is more appropriate in dynamic and uncertain settings” (Bedford & Malmi, 2015).

Similarly to Bedford and Malmi (2015), most authors consider that “traditional” management control systems are not suitable to cope with an uncertain and volatile environment, thus giving priority to flexible and adaptive “modern” control mechanisms in this matter. Despite of that, “traditional” MCSs are still somehow substantially embedded in Portuguese organizations.

When compared to other crises, like natural disasters or financial crises, COVID-19 is an abnormal situation where the level of uncertainty is amplified due to its fast global spread that affects the great majority of countries and markets.

Gomez-Conde et al. (2020) assembled a study to understand to which extent broad-scope (“modern”) management control systems mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on investor and shareholder expectations. Moreover, the study was developed under the assumption that managers use this financial information to increase their width of vision in decision-making. Broad-scope MCSs are externally oriented (outside the firm), in terms of information collection, with non-financial targets and, in terms of time horizon, is future oriented once the information relates to future events rather than historical ones. These systems facilitate the decision-making process, with more sophisticated information and are an example of the use of contemporary control mechanisms (Gomez-Conde et al., 2020). The results for this study, based on a survey, demonstrate that there is a mitigating effect when using a broad-scope MCSs as a response to the negative effects generated by the pandemic on the market value of an organization. Furthermore, boundary systems, which are minimum behavioural standards that employers set for their employees, allow flexibility and freedom for them to act, by transmitting the risks to the whole firm. Moreover, boundary systems also safeguard that the innovative actions and solutions meet the requisites of the organisations even within predefined limits. Finally, this evidence also suggests that investors value the breath of vision brought by broad-scope MCSs when managers deal with crisis by recurring to certain pre-established strategic parameters (Gomez-Conde et al., 2020).

In conclusion, through the development of the literature review, it was possible to understand how the management control systems field has evolved over the years. Additionally, an important distinction was made between the

“traditional” form of the control mechanisms and the new “modern” approaches, which has followed that same evolution mentioned. Ultimately, the final emphasis was placed on the utilization of MCSs under uncertain environments, with the example of a study that was developed during the COVID-19 period that will provide us some context for further investigation.

3. Methodology

3.1. Goals and Hypothesis

The central pinpoint of this study is to explore how companies managed to cope with the economic, social and cultural problems caused by COVID-19 when using and adapting their diverse control mechanisms. Therefore, a distinction was made between the methods and adaptations developed by company which uses “traditional” and a company that uses “contemporary” management control systems under this uncertain period of time that the world is living. Furthermore, the author similarly accessed the results these have obtained so far, and what were their perspectives for the future, always by placing the focus on their control management strategies. Prior to that investigation, a research was commanded through a cluster analysis based on a web-survey, in order to examine which types of MCSs are more commonly used by the Portuguese organizations and what are the most usual control practises implemented by them.

A more bureaucratic (“traditional”) structure of control mechanisms provides the organization a better performance in a context of simple, predictable and stable environments, with a routine technology, as opposed to “modern” control mechanisms who perform better under uncertain circumstances (Mintzberg, 1989).

Therefore, it is expected that the companies with “contemporary/modern” MCSs need a smaller number of adaptations and suffered less damages than the ones which use a “traditional” type, if their businesses were impacted equally, once this pandemic has emerged as one of the most uncertain periods of time of the “modern” history. Companies with a bigger capacity of adaptability and flexibility are expected to be the ones that will cope better with these pandemic times and that will be able to create more effective measures to bypass this situation. Finally, and most importantly, it is expected that the companies operating in Portugal under study will lean towards “modern” MCSs, by

developing measures to adapt the “traditional” control mechanisms they apply to a more “modern” configuration.

In this regard, the proposed research question is the following:

“How have the companies operating in Portugal, with diverse management control systems, adapted to cope with the obstacles imposed by the global pandemic of Covid-19?”

The next sections will explain how this research was conducted for this investigation, in order to comprehend how the theory studied in the literature review chapter translates into reality. Fundamentally, a mixed method of research (quantitative and qualitative) was considered the most appropriate one.

Unavoidably, we must educate ourselves to use multiples methods of research and appreciate the value of both quantitative and qualitative methods to improve the experience since a complete picture cannot be fulfilled by one method alone (Grafton et al., 2011). Hence, it will be possible to observe that the “average rigor of the qualitative analysis in all accounting research to increase”, which means going beyond word counts and extracting meaning from the context with high validity and transparency (Grafton et al., 2011).

That being said, the author planned to develop the most complete study possible, therefore by combining a quantitative and qualitative methods of research that will, ultimately, complement themselves and enrich the entire dissertation.

3.2 Quantitative Methodology – Survey and Clustering Analysis

On one hand, in this chapter, all the components utilized to build the web-survey will be introduced, alongside with its results. Initially, it will be explained which target group was chosen for this survey, coupled with the reasoning behind that choice and the survey design. Furthermore, the author will present

the overall organization of the survey regarding the two main groups, while performing a comprehensive and individual analysis to all sections that make up the second group of the survey, representing the basis for the clustering analysis.

On the other hand, the developing of the cluster analysis will be demonstrated, comprising the data gathering from the survey and respective transformation for clustering purposes. Finally, the author will present how did the clustering process unfold in order to obtain the final results of the quantitative analysis.

3.2.1 Survey

Conducting surveys can be serviceable in terms of gathering information about characteristics, actions or opinions of a pre-established sample and the incidence, distribution and relationship that exists among variables (Coughlan et al., 2009; Pinsonneault & Kraemer, 1993).

In this section, the author will present the web-survey goals, and the survey's overall organization, with the emphasis being place on the second main group, once it is the one that accesses the diverse control mechanisms that the companies apply in their work.

Target Group

In the first place, the target group was defined by recurring to the Sabi's database, and it contemplates only the companies operating in Portugal with a minimum revenue of 100 thousand euros in 2019, that have provided an email contact, performing a total of 91,430 companies. Despite of that, for numerous reasons external to the author, the email has only reached 82,287 companies. The Excel sheet containing Sabi's database was only minimally filtered, once, with this study, the author pretends to reach all sorts of companies with no regards to their location within the country, their size or industry. Wherefore, the main goal, when selecting the target group, was to comprise all the Portuguese companies

available on the database, so that the results would be as complete as possible. Furthermore, the ultimate goal with this broad target group definition was to access if there exists a bigger tendency for the use of a “traditional” or “modern” approach by the companies when defining their MCSs, in Portugal.

The total population of the survey was 1,538 companies, which have filled the survey entirely, consequently being this the sample that represented the companies operating in Portugal when studying their control mechanisms.

Survey Design

The web-survey was developed through the website Online Pesquisa, which is an online software that creates, distributes and briefly analyses surveys. Furthermore, it was organised through two main groups of questions, with two distinct types of focus, which were based on the literature review and on the survey performed by Bedford and Malmi (2015) on the paper “Configurations of Control: An exploratory analysis”.

The first group is centred, in a comprehensive way, in the business strategy, the internal and external environment of the companies, thus having only six questions, which will provide a broad understanding about the sector and industry where the companies operate.

The second group is the “core” of the survey, where the questions regarding the control mechanisms that the company utilize are explored in depth, which will be the focus of the clustering analysis. Hence, this group is segmented into ten different sections, each representing one unique category, with an equal level of significance, exploring intensively different management control constructs. Furthermore, all sections include a minimum of two questions and a maximum of four and all questions have three possible answers (see Annex A). That said, the first answer is always a representation of a “traditional” approach to that particular control mechanism, while the third represents a “modern” approach

to it. The division into sections/categories allows to clearly understand to which companies have a more “traditional” or “modern” approach to the control mechanisms they use, within different and specific aspects of the business. Therefore, the ten sections stand as it follows:

1. Strategic Planning (3 questions), where the flexibility and detail of the strategic plan for the year is explored, such as the level of participation involving that process;
2. Budget (3 questions), this section investigates to which extent is the budget an important tool for the company and how often it is revised during the year. Additionally, also explores the use of rolling forecasts;
3. Politics and Procedures (3 questions), where the topics of business decentralization, autonomy and formalization of procedures are accessed;
4. Communication and Information Sharing (2 questions), being this section the one that explores the transparency of information and of the employee’s work within the company;
5. Organizational Culture and Values (2 questions), which evaluates how deep the company’s culture and values are embedded into the employees;
6. Performance Evaluation (4 questions), where the level of performance tracking, review, dialogue and clarity are evaluated;
7. Goals and Targets (2 questions), being this section the one where the data regarding the employee/organization targets’ time horizon and balance between financial and non-financial goals is retrieved;
8. Compensation (3 questions), where the time horizon, level of specificity and subjectivity of compensation and bonuses are studied;
9. Cost Centres (2 questions) which involves the analysis of the level of intensity and monitorization of the cost centres in the company;
10. Recruitment and Selection (2 questions), exploring how detailed and important the recruitment and selection processes are.

3.2.2 Clustering Analysis

Clustering can be a powerful data-mining tool that allows to identify and classify discrete groups or types of behaviours. Essentially, a clustering analysis attempts to discover clusters (groups) of data objects that are related in some sense to one another, thus the members of a particular cluster will be more similar to each other than to the members of other clusters. Moreover, the main goal of this analysis is to find high-quality clusters such that the inter-cluster similarity is minimal, and the intra-cluster similarity is maximum. That being said, clustering algorithms can be valuable to find natural groupings, not previously defined, when there are no obvious groupings.

Furthermore, the scrutiny of the findings provided by the survey will be achieved through a cluster analysis using the software SPSS, where the companies will be grouped into clusters based on the similarity of the management control systems they employ.

Following this introduction to the clustering process, it will be described, in depth, the data transformation and cluster algorithm selection processes for this specific case.

Data Transformation for Clustering Analysis

As said before, every survey question from the second group has 3 possible answers, always in a scale from the most “traditional” answer to the most “modern”. Therefore, the data was transformed, via Excel, into numeric answers comprising the values of 1,2 and 3, which means that the companies with higher scores, in average, would logically represent the ones which employ the most “modern” control mechanisms. Subsequently, the author performed an average of the values of the questions per section for all the companies, so that it could be possible to perform the cluster analysis with only ten numeric variables, embodying, each of the ten sections, one single variable.

Hereupon, the data was transferred to the SPSS software, in order to start the clustering process, where all variables were transformed into scale variables. Posteriorly, the cluster centroids were defined with the numbers 1, 1.8, 2.2 and 3 so it was possible to have clear and scaled centroids that allow to show the difference between companies with diverse control mechanisms (see Annex B). Hence, with a very small number of iterations used (see Annex B), it was possible to group not only companies into clusters that contained similar control mechanisms, within each of the categories, but also the ones that represented the same “style” of control mechanisms in the scale from “traditional” to “modern”.

Algorithm Selection

“Clustering algorithms can automatically recognize the pattern inside the data so as to analyse the collected data without their labels” (Lei, 2016).

The k-means algorithm was chosen to cluster the companies since it is simple and adaptable, can warm-start the position of the centroids, being able to work with large sets of data and to enable the manual definition of the number of k (clusters) (Arthur & Vassilvitskii, 2006).

In sum, a total number of 4 clusters was defined so that the companies could be organized in wide categories, but also with some level of specificity. No missing values were found in the data, nor significant outliers.

3.3 Qualitative Methodology – Case study approach

The research approach utilized in this study is a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods. A survey that, by being analysed through a clustering analysis, represents the quantitative data of this investigation. This quantitative element of the methodology used was developed and directed to numerous Portuguese companies, so that it could be accessed which were the most predominant control mechanisms applied by them. Furthermore, it was possible

to make comparisons between them and ultimately select, for an interview, two companies with opposite types of control mechanisms, one with pure “traditional” MCSs and the other with “modern” MCSs. Posteriorly, the central investigation of these case studies was focused on the interviews performed to the two selected companies.

A case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009). The case study method can be very helpful and relevant when the research questions of the investigation seek to explain, in-depth, some current circumstance of the world and mainly when the question asked is of a “how” or “why” nature (Yin, 2009). Moreover, this theory applies directly to the present case, where the goal is to answer the question of “how” a particular social/economical phenomenon works, more specifically how the companies have adapted to the global pandemic circumstances in the matter of their MCSs. Furthermore, the case study must be exerted when dealing with a contemporary event and when the researcher has little or no control over the case, being the pandemic COVID-19 the most influential present-day theme.

Crowe et al. (2011) outlined four different stages that should be followed when planning and undertaking a useful case study. The following stages will then be summarized and explained properly: Case selection, data collection and analysis, data interpretation and report of the findings.

3.3.1. Case Selection

In the first place, it is fundamental to define and select the case by carefully formulate the research question, which should flourish from the analysis of the literature review and appreciation of theoretical issues that generate knowledge to the case (Crowe et al., 2011).

Ultimately, when selecting the case study, it must be noted that there are three main different approaches: Intrinsic case study, instrumental case study and collective case study. While the intrinsic case study is selected by its uniqueness, once it evokes genuine interest by the author, the instrumental case study deals with the investigation of the phenomenon of less importance by the author, only to get general understanding about a wide problem. In the collective case study approach, multiple case studies are carefully selected that allow cross-section and comparisons between them (Crowe et al., 2011).

On one hand, the aim of this paper is to generate a wider comprehension of which are the most common control mechanisms and how companies with distinct MCSs are coping with the pandemic, so the most suitable approach is the instrumental case study. On the other hand, the approach utilized was also collective, considering that each company will be studied separately and afterwards comparisons will be made between them.

3.3.2. Data Collection and Analysis

One of the most challenging aspects of the case study research is the wideness of the variety of sources of evidence that can be relevant, typically including interviews, observations, documents or statistical information, being the nature of the evidence qualitative, quantitative or both (Yin, 1981). For the purpose of developing a credible and valid understanding of the case, this should include the collection of multiple sources of evidence, using a range of quantitative instruments like surveys and also standard qualitative techniques, such as interviews (Crowe et al., 2011). Moreover, the underlying assumption is that the issue should be approached from different angles which can lead to a holistic picture of the whole phenomenon.

The present case studies will be supported by a variety of both primary data and secondary data. The primary data is from a qualitative nature and will be gathered through the two semi-structured interviews conducted with the companies that have opposite MCSs. The secondary data is both from qualitative and quantitative nature, once the information is not only gathered through literature, such as theories, definitions and similar studies, but also by the clustering analysis of the companies who have participated in the survey.

3.3.3. Data Interpretation

It is essential to provide a coherent interpretation of the typically contrasting sources of data, whether being qualitative alone or together with quantitative. Besides that, it is requested a detail-rich data in the analysis process, with a repeated reviewing and sorting of this one. Data will need to be organised and coded to allow the key problems to be easily derived at a later stage (Crowe et al., 2011).

3.3.4. Report of the findings

The case study findings should influence theory development and testing, nevertheless they cannot be "forced to fit" the particular theoretical framework that was reasoned. Furthermore, when reporting the findings, it is important to provide enough contextual information to understand the processes and procedures that were followed and also to explain how the conclusions were retrieved. Additionally, the anonymity of the individual participants should be ensured (if agreed in advance) by designating appropriate codes or withholding descriptors (Crowe et al., 2011). Over and above, specifically in a collective case study, researchers may choose to present the findings from individual cases separately before mingling across cases.

During the elaboration of this paper, the confidentiality of the private information was secured, through specific codes which were allocated to both companies, more specifically Company X and Company Z. The findings of the survey were derived through a broad and self-explanatory clustering analysis and the ones drawn from the interviews were extracted individually and subsequently compared through a detailed qualitative analysis.

In sum, despite the criticism pointed to the case study method, such as the possible lack of rigor, or the inability to generalize, this approach has proven to be an important way of investigating an empirical present topic through an articulated set of procedures and triangulation of results, always allied to a certain level of skill/disposition of the researcher to do so (Yin, 2009).

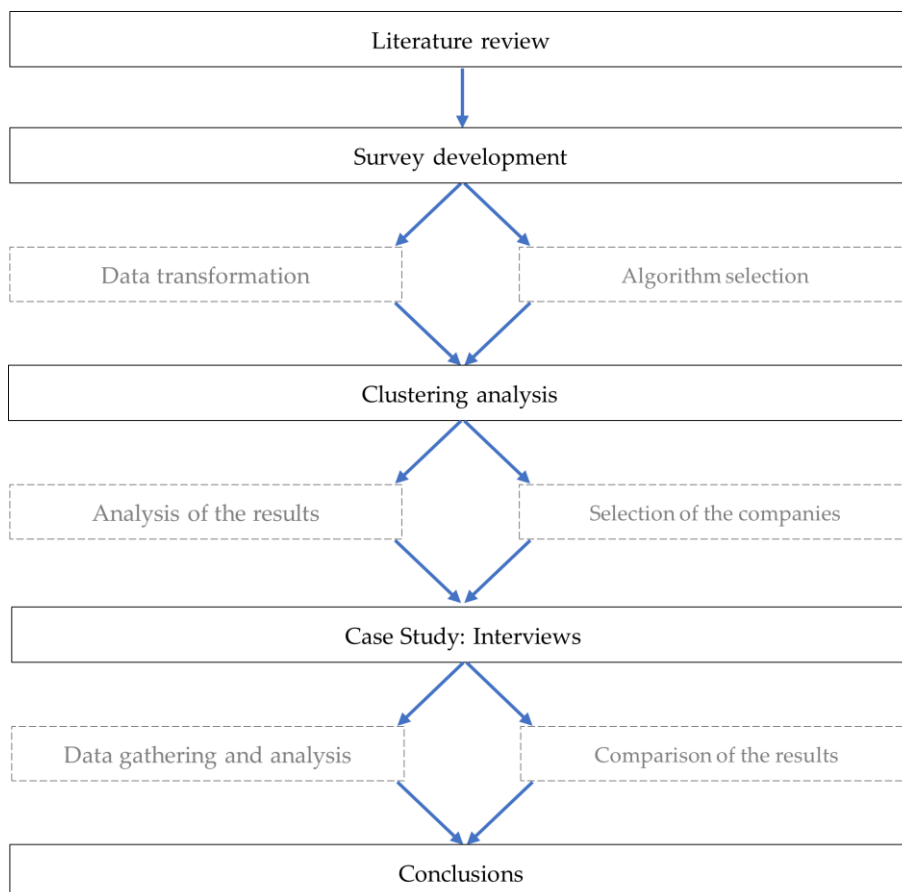
TABLE 2.
Case Study approach

Topic	Stages	The present Case Studies
Research Question	Case Selection	“How have the companies operating in Portugal, with diverse management control systems, adapted to cope with the obstacles imposed by the global pandemic of Covid-19?”
Selection Approach		Instrumental and Collective
Primary Data	Data Collection and Analysis	2 semi-structured interviews with companies operating in Portugal
Secondary Data		Literature (documents, papers, books, studies) and web-survey (clustering analysis)

Topic	Stages	The present Case Studies
Nature of Data	Data Collection and Analysis	Mix of qualitative and quantitative, although predominantly qualitative
Coding of Information	Data Interpretation	Companies were designed by codes, as following: Company X and Company Z
Organization of Data		Big amount of data, with high level of detail and organization. Results derived naturally and with a logical sequence
Participants		The participants of this study are anonymous, so all private information remains confidential
Contextual information	Report of the findings	All the outcomes of this study were supported by literature review, survey, clustering analysis and interviews. Each company was analysed separately and afterwards a cross-section of the results was performed.

Source: (Crowe et al., 2011)

FIGURE 1.
Methodology Sequence



4. Clustering Analysis Findings

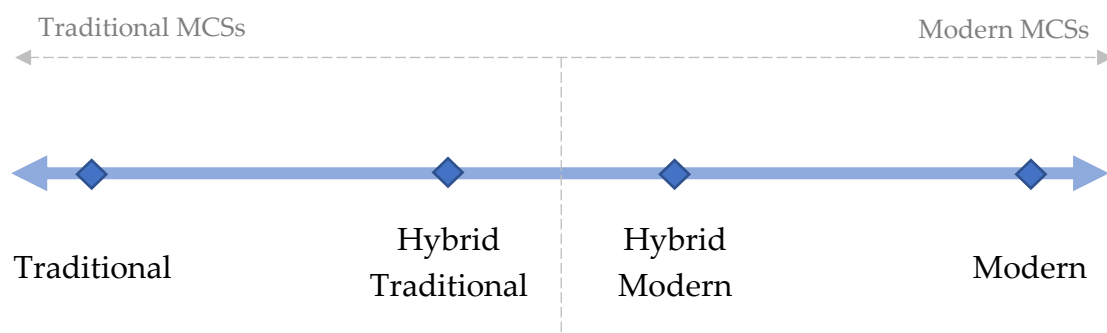
4.1 Final Clusters

The cluster analysis classified and congregated the 1,538 companies into 4 main clusters/categories, according to the survey answers, in a scale from the most “traditional” to the most “modern” and the groups are the following ones:

1. Traditional cluster, which represents the companies that implement pure “traditional” control mechanisms in their MCSs;
2. Hybrid Traditional cluster, that represents the companies with a hybrid system of control mechanisms privileging the more “traditional” ones;
3. Hybrid Modern cluster, being inserted in this group the companies that combine the use of both “traditional” and “modern” MCSs in terms of control, however giving a bigger preference to the last ones;
4. Modern cluster, where are inserted the companies with pure “modern” control mechanisms.

Concluding, the companies operating in the Portuguese territory can be divided in two big groups (Figure 1.). While the first one encompasses the companies within the clusters 1 and 2 with more “traditional” MCSs, the second group contains the companies in the clusters 3 and 4 which are the ones with “modern” MCSs. The interviews will be performed to one company inserted in the first group and to other company inserted in the second group.

FIGURE 2.
Traditional- modern MCSs spectrum



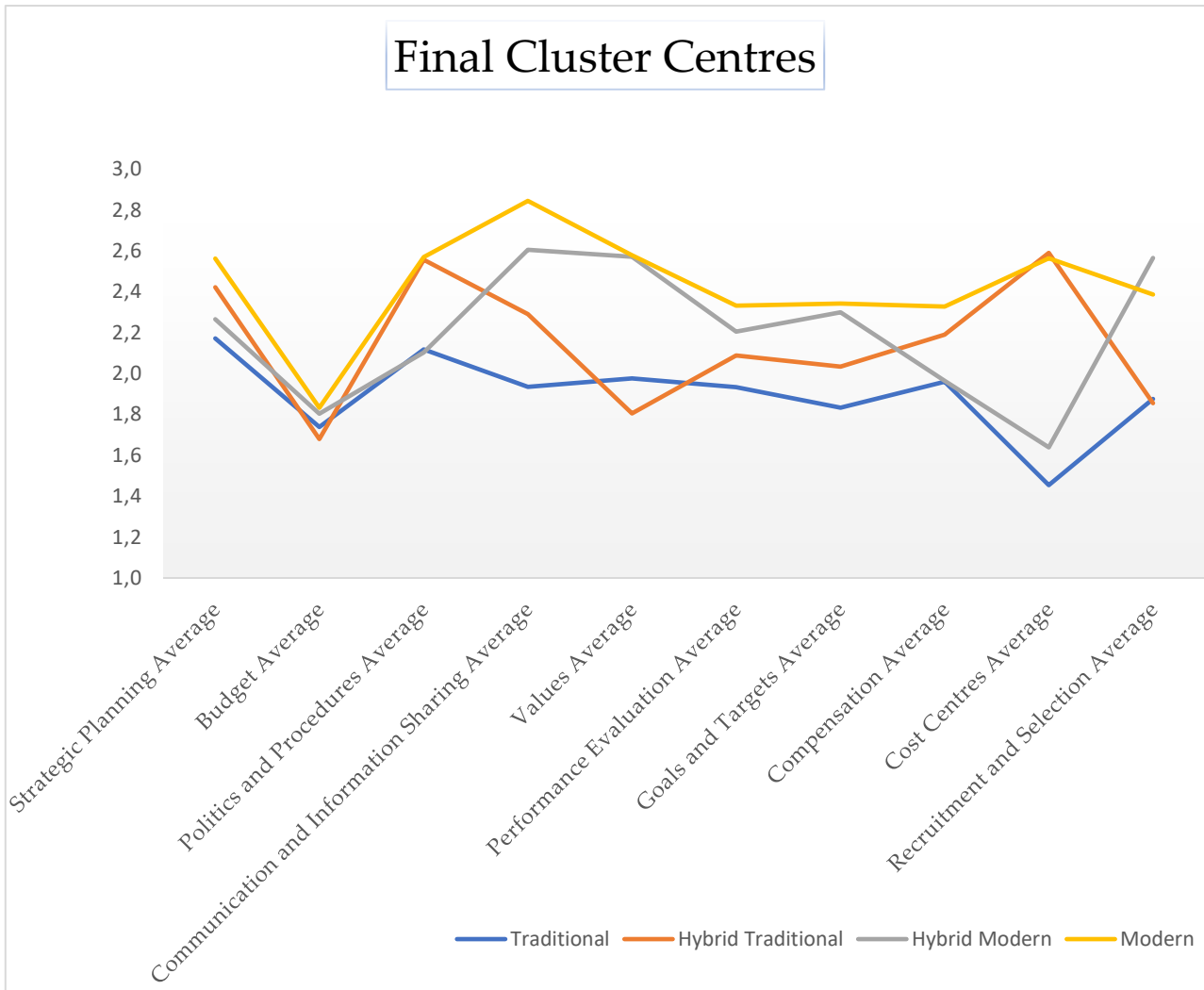
4.2 Analysis of the Results

The final cluster centres of the clustering analysis are the ones observed in Figure 3., for each variable. The centre of the cluster is the average of all points (each category per company) that belong to that cluster, being the coordinate-wise mean of all of the vectors in the initial data that have been deemed to be in that cluster. Therefore, for one company to be a part of one specific cluster is due to the fact that the “distance” of its results to that cluster centre, in average, is the smallest.

On one hand, it can be observed that the categories “Strategic Planning”, “Politics and Procedures” and “Communication and Information Sharing” are the ones where the companies utilize the most “modern” control mechanisms. Therefore, the companies studied, in general, incorporate a broad, flexible and participative process of strategic planning, and also provide a high degree of freedom to the employees and of visibility of their work to the top management (see Annex B).

On the other hand, the categories “Budget” and “Compensation” are the ones that stand out as having the most “traditional” management control systems, in the country. This happens on account of the heavy budget reliance and also on the non-implementation of tools like rolling forecasts, adding to the short-term vision in terms of employees’ compensation and the inexistence of subjectivity regarding the distribution of the bonuses (see Annex B).

FIGURE 3.
Final Cluster centres per variable

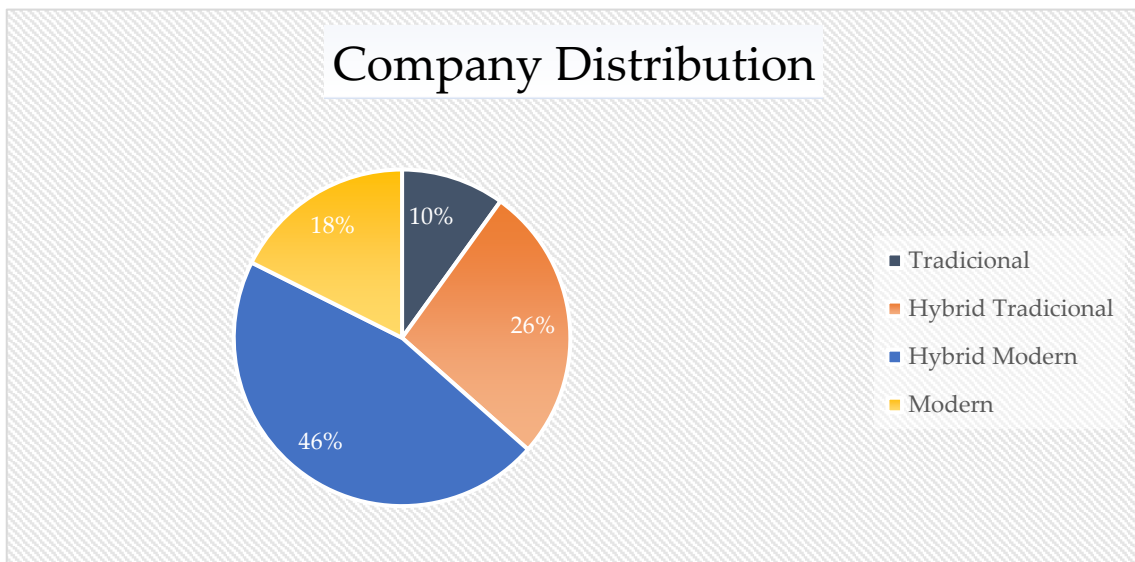


Moreover, there are some more bullet points that stand out regarding the individual questions to the survey. In the first place, it exists, in these companies, a significant level of formalization in the processes, allied to a low frequency on the performance evaluation process, which might regress the process of continuous improvement (Otley et al., 1995). Secondly, these companies are extremely dependent on cost centres when it comes to monitoring the activities of the value chain. Lastly, in general, there are an implicit culture and values shared by the whole organization, encompassed in formal documents, such as statements of purpose, that are distributed through the whole organization.

Finally, the companies established in Portugal privilege, in their recruitment process, the hiring of people that have values aligned with them.

Additionally, in Figure 3., one can infer that the “modern” cluster encompasses, generally, the companies that have the most “modern” control mechanisms in almost all the categories, whereas the “traditional” cluster represents largely the companies with the most “traditional” control mechanisms in most categories. Despite of that, these two clusters are not those that are more predominant in Portugal, regarding this sample.

FIGURE 4.
Company Distribution per cluster



Furthermore, through the analysis of Figure 4. It can be concluded that over than 60% of the companies operating in Portuguese territory (in the sample) have “modern” control mechanisms in their structure and that the biggest group of companies is inserted in the Hybrid Modern cluster with a total 705 companies. Therefore, it is possible to infer that, given this sample, there is a big influence of the “modern” control mechanisms in Portugal. The number of companies with pure “traditional” or “modern” control mechanisms is not significant, thus the extremes seem not to be predominant in Portugal, prevailing the hybrid MCSs with a balance of both “modern” and “traditional” control mechanisms.

5. Case Studies

5.1 Companies Selected for Interviews

In this chapter, the author will introduce both companies, under the names of Company X (Traditional) and Company Z (Hybrid Modern), that were chosen for an interview, based on the results of the survey. The selection of the companies was primarily based on the fact that these were inserted in opposite sides of the traditional/modern spectrum and in their availability for an interview. Nevertheless, other factors played an important role for this choice, such as their industry losses due to COVID-19, their history and accomplishments and, finally, the differences in their answers to the survey.

The focal points of this preliminary study will be the studies of their historic background, the products/services they provide and the industries they operate on. Furthermore, it will also include a broad analysis of the control mechanisms, used by the two companies, based exclusively on their answers to the survey. This analysis will be fundamental in order to present context to the case study, specially to the investigation of the strategic decisions and results obtained with the implementation of the control strategies during this pandemic period.

5.1.1 Company X

Company X stands as a technological leader in the wind energy sector and the biggest turbine German manufacturer with a total of 15.000 turbines and over 19GW of Wind power installed capacity worldwide. Alongside with that, it also has extensive expertise and years of experience in the field of project development, offering its customers comprehensive support during the entire project planning and maintenance stages, with customised logistics solutions afterwards.

The organization was founded in 1984, the same year when the first turbine was developed, having instituted its headquarters in Aurich, Germany. Eventually, during the 21st century, the company expanded to other locations in Germany and in the world, such as France, Brazil and Turkey, with the construction of production units and factories. Furthermore, in 2008, Company X established a branch in Portugal, where nowadays owns a rotor blade and a production tower in Viana do Castelo and a mechatronic factory in Lanheses, holding specialists in the areas of R&D, Site Assessment and also Project Management and Sales.

Internationally, Company X is present in more than 45 countries with a decentralized network of maintenance and sales services, having assembled already more than 30.000 wind systems in the whole world, which makes it one of the most advanced turbine manufacturers globally.

This company distinguishes itself from most of the other manufacturers once its wind turbines have numerous special technical features. In the first place, Company X stands as the pioneer in the gearless propulsion concept since 1993, which allows the company not to depend on rare-earth metals. Moreover, all components of the wind turbines are manufactured in the company's own facilities and, finally, their design makes them something completely unique.

Lastly, Company X employs, at the moment, around 18,000 people and has an annual turnover of 4.5 billion euros.

The industry

Company X is in the wind power industry, which incorporates the design, manufacture, construction, and maintenance of wind turbines, as well as other ejaculatory power equipment. The industry is currently undergoing a period of

consolidation and rapid globalization, with much of the recent wind farm development taking place outside the older established markets.

In an article published by Research and Markets (2020) it was found that the world wind turbine industry was expected to grow at a 5.34% rate between 2019 and 2025, once different nations’ governments will constantly try to achieve their targets of reducing their carbon footprints in the future. Likewise, globally, there is a rapid shift from non-renewable fossils towards clean energy sources, such as the wind, which, alongside with the rise in the prices of electricity, greatly increases the demand for wind turbines, among other alternatives.

Nonetheless, the American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) estimated in March of 2020 that 35 billion dollars in investments were at risk, also jeopardizing 43 billion dollars in investments and payments to the rural communities, due to the pandemic (Rack, 2020). Furthermore, the enterprise Wind Europe (2020) estimated a negative impact also in the wind installations for 2020, thus predicting a decline of 30% of this process in comparison to the industry’s forecasts.

Control Mechanisms

According to the clustering analysis, based on the company’s answers to the survey, Company X was classified as Traditional (Table 3.). In terms of its control mechanisms, when compared with the other companies from the sample, Company X was assigned to the most “traditional” cluster/group.

TABLE 3.
Company X’s cluster membership results (sample)

Case number	Company	ID of the answers	Final cluster
1312	-	79420034	Modern
1313	-	79420851	Hybrid Traditional
1314	Company X	79422186	Traditional
1315	-	79423437	Hybrid Modern

Case number	Company	ID of the answers	Final cluster
1316	-	79427085	Hybrid Modern
1317	-	79428456	Modern

Company X has pure “traditional” control mechanisms in the following categories: “Budget”, “Goals and Targets”, “Compensation and Cost Centres”. In most of the other categories it has hybrid control mechanisms, however, when compared to the rest of the companies which are predominantly “modern” in their MCSs, Company X has the lowest values in the 10 control mechanisms categories, in average.

The company’s strategic planning is moderately flexible, participative and very detailed and extensive, moreover the budget stands as a fundamental tool for the company and revisions to it are not usual. There is a high-level of formalization of the procedures (top-down) and of freedom given to the employees to perform their tasks. Additionally, the company encompasses a wide sharing of the company’s culture to the employees and has a deep reliance in the cost centres that monitor all the departments in the company. Ultimately, the performance evaluation process is focused primarily on the short-term, based on formulas, having a medium degree of flexibility.

In sum, taking into consideration all this information, it makes sense that this company is classified as “traditional” in what concerns its control mechanisms, thus being inserted in the cluster number 1.

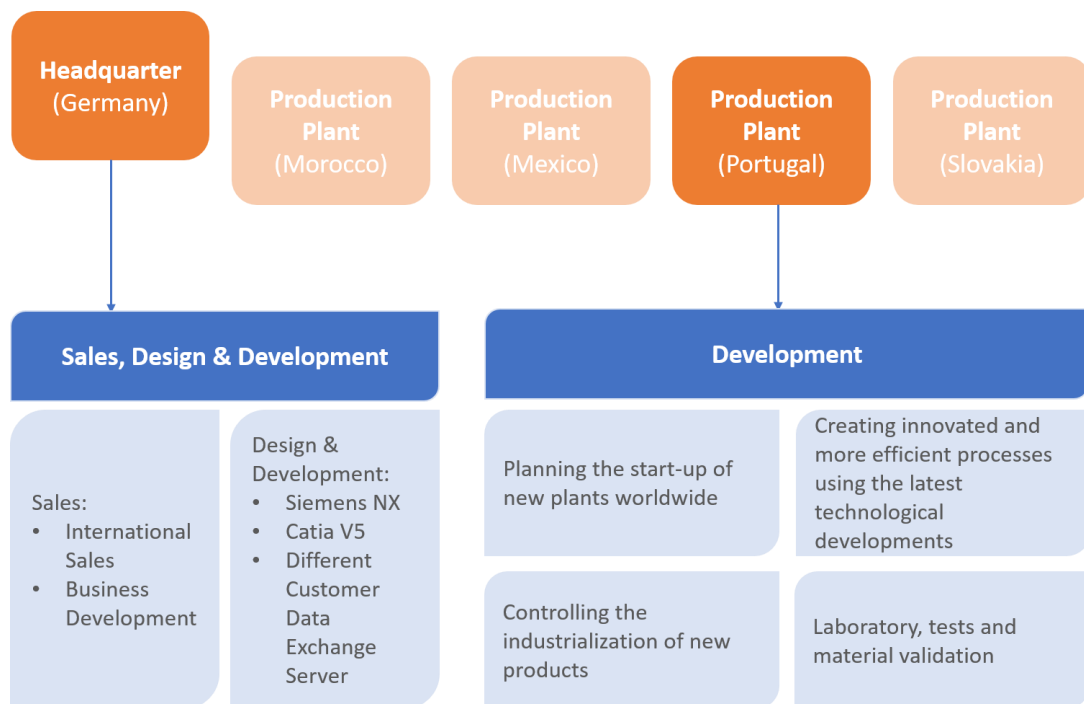
5.1.2 Company Z

Company Z is a leading provider of rubber, thermoplastic and rubber-to-plastic (2K) components for the automotive industry. As a leading player in the market, the company offers a diverse range of products, patented solutions and

development services to its customers, thus acting as a major supplier for its current and future customer.

The group has been acquiring its competences on the fields of development and production of rubber, plastic and thermoplastic components since 1974, with the acquisition of a production site in Germany. Afterwards, Company Z has built a strong international footprint with a Full-Service Development Centre in Germany and today with four manufacturing plants in Portugal (since 19959), Slovakia, Morocco and Mexico (Figure 5.). Company Z’s headquarters are located in Germany, while Portugal owns one of its production plants, however acting also as a development centre. Moreover, Germany and Portugal are the only countries where the company holds laboratory for new products and materials:

FIGURE 5.
Company Z’s business units



The company differentiates itself from the competitors due to its capacity for internal design/development in its technical development centre and for the quality scoring throughout the product’s life cycle. Furthermore, the

organization' primary focus is the injection of multi-component parts and assemblies of great complexity, based on innovative concepts and high level of automation.

In sum, Company Z started in Germany in 1974 and expanded to 5 different locations around the globe and holds, until now, 47 years of experience, with an annual turnover of 36 million euros and approximately 600 employees.

The industry

The company is inserted in the Auto Parts and Equipment Manufacturing industry, which provides products to the automotive industry. Company Z serves the 1st Tier, 2nd Tier and OEM customers by developing, producing and supplying polymeric parts according to their specific requirements. According to a study developed by Martin (2016), the competition in this industry is fundamentally based on the price and on technological advancement. Thus, the companies that achieve the most success are the ones which invest strongly in R&D and achieve a global scale, by working efficiently and controlling costs.

Moreover, the competition level within the industry is huge, while the biggest treats to it are mainly the times of abnormally low commodity prices, that can cut capacity, causing a shortage in the market. Besides that, the risk of new competitors entering the market is not high, especially in less developed and faster growing markets, being the only solution entering as a low-cost leader or with higher technological innovation (Martin, 2016).

In a study conducted by S&P Global in September of 2020, the Auto Parts and Equipment industry was ranked in the top five industries which were most negatively affected by Covid-19, based on a credit analytics Probability of Default Market Signals model (PDMS). Within the Customer Discretionary Sector, it was estimated that this industry would have a revenue change of almost negative 20%

between 2019 and 2020, most probably also affected by the drop in the Automotive Industry revenues as well (Haydon & Kumar, 2020).

According to the preliminary assessment of the company Z in the survey, it is observable that it places the focus in high-quality products and services, rather than in low-price strategy.

Control Mechanisms

The analysis of the survey data, along with the clustering analysis, lead to the classification of Company Z as “modern” within the traditional-modern spectrum. Hence, this company is inserted in the cluster number 3, having Hybrid “modern” control mechanisms (Table 4.).

TABLE 4.
Company Z's cluster membership results (sample)

Case number	Company	ID of the answers	Final cluster
506	-	79029466	Hybrid Traditional
507	-	79030369	Hybrid Traditional
508	Company Z	79032752	Hybrid Modern
509	-	79034367	Traditional
510	-	79039457	Hybrid Modern
511	-	79040036	Hybrid Modern

On one hand, the company employs “modern” control mechanisms in the six following categories/sections: “Strategic Planning”, “Politics and Procedures”, “Communication and Information Sharing”, “Organizational Culture and Values”, “Goals and Targets and Recruitment and Selection”. On the other hand, in the “Budget” and “Compensation” categories, the company applies “traditional” control mechanisms, while in the sections of “Performance Evaluation” and “Cost Centres”, Company Z, opts for a hybrid system.

The company directs a participative approach in terms of the strategic planning process, relying heavily on a flexible and adaptable budget, while

sharing widely the company's values with all employees. Furthermore, there is a moderate formalization imputed to the processes, a high degree of freedom given to the employees and visibility of their work to the top management. Nevertheless, the compensation contracts of the employees are focused on the short-term performance and there is an equilibrium between short-term and long-term goals. There is also a balance between financial and non-financial goals/targets of the workers, adding to the fact that they are mostly non-flexible.

In conclusion, given the gathered data from Company Z's survey results, this company was inserted the Hybrid Modern control mechanisms control cluster.

6. Case Studies Findings – Description and Analysis

In this chapter, the author shall explore the data collected from the interviews with Company X and Company Z. Initially, the MCSs used by both companies will be deeply analysed in separate, particularly their strategic planning, budgeting and performance evaluation processes. Posteriorly, the author will try to understand and explain the main obstacles the companies faced during the pandemic. Consequently, the adaptations and measures both companies undertook, to cope with the new circumstances that emerged in the last year, will be scrutinized and contrasted, always having as pinpoints the ones referring to control management. Moreover, will also be explored broadly the results obtained until the present and some potential measures that both companies have in perspective for this unpredictable future that awaits them.

Ultimately, the author will perform a comparison between the control mechanisms and adaptative measures used by the companies with the literature under study, focusing on both previous empirical evidence and theoretical approaches, to try to understand how they relate to reality.

6.1 Management Control Systems

In this first section, the control mechanisms and procedures that both Company X and Company Z have embedded in their foundations will be studied in detail, based on the information provided during the interviews. This investigation will be basal to understand how the problems both had, in the years of 2020 and 2021, affected them in particular. Additionally, it will be fundamental to comprehend what motivated the companies to develop the specific control and planning strategies that allowed them to adapt to the changes in the external environment.

At this initial stage, the two companies under study will be analysed separately due to the significant differences in their approaches to their control management and planning processes. Company X is purely “traditional” in that aspect and Company Z tendentially “modern”, according to the clustering analysis performed previously.

6.1.1 Strategic Planning

Company X

Company X, as stated previously, is headquartered in Germany, where all processes are controlled, in what regards all company’s production centres and offices, including the ones in Portugal. According to the company’s Human Resources manager, the Portuguese branch has a reporting mission towards the headquarters, given the orders that are assigned to the branch. In this degree, the strategic planning of this Company X follows a pure top-down approach, once it is created an information calendar, in Germany, being sent every year to all branches of the company around the world, while these ones must keep providing information to the headquarters. Moreover, the company is organized per areas, from A to Z, and each area has its own controller who is responsible for the control, report and management of the processes from his area, which may incorporate several departments. According to Ouchi and Maguire (1975) this imposition of responsibilities, with a more direct supervision, is typical of a “traditional” form of MCSs.

As stated by the responsible for Human Resources department in Portugal, the strategic planning process for the year has two central moments, being the first one in September of the previous year. Hence, in that period, that budget starts to being developed and the costs being defined for the next year. The second central moment occurs during the planned year, when the process suffers a major adjustment in July. Nevertheless, in the last years, the company has been implementing a small analysis to the planning process for the last months of the

year. These adjustments and analysis exist due to the uncertainty provoked by the climate, that highly affects most aspects of the business, such as the production, installation or maintenance, given that all areas of the company are interconnected. Hereupon, the HR manager affirmed that since the company's business depends on something they cannot control, then the owners need to control more and adjust the production more frequently. Additionally, the parts needed for the construction of a turbine, for example, have a considerable size and are extremely expensive.

In conclusion, Company X's management employs a top-down approach, as detailed as possible, in the process of developing and commanding their strategic planning, in order to overcome the uncertain obstacles that the wind turbine industry imposes.

Company Z

In the case of the company Z, the development of the strategic planning process is always based on the evolution of the organization and on the needs that the actionists communicate to the top management. Usually, the growth of the profitability level is the main goal.

The strategic planning process starts in the first month of the fiscal year, the moment when the first lines of the company are summoned to a meeting, being the employees that have been working in the company for a long period of time. Subsequently, a participative process of brainstorming begins, where those employees are assigned to small working teams with the goal of presenting and discussing some ideas that they have developed as a team. Hence, 6 of those ideas are chosen as the strategic lines for the future, 2 selected by the top management and 4 through means of voting.

The implementation and development of the strategic lines is allocated to work teams, which include people that were present at the meeting and other

employees that normally are selected based on their competences to work on that strategic line. Thus, the process is always oriented to contribute for the accomplishment of the goals that the company has drawn for the following years, always in the long-term. After this procedure, during the year, the company puts into practice a monthly follow-up to pressure and analyse the viability of each strategic line, evaluating all the possible parameters and assessing if the company should advance to further investments in that field. Nevertheless, if an idea is classified, posteriorly, as unviable, it does not mean that in the future this one cannot be revisited, once the assumptions in which that idea was based on can easily change.

The CFO stated that he always adopts this participative and flexible approach because it provides the employees the opportunity to put into practice the suggestions that they have been talking about for years. Consequently, it is possible to develop those ideas by all of the organization, instead through a top-down process. "It is not only participative, but also accountable", he said. This helps to complement the "modern" theory, from Birkinshaw (2014), of bottom-up resource allocation being ideal to self-organize your job.

Furthermore, each trimester, the top management shares the results of the organization with the first lines of work. Posteriorly they share them with their teams, in order to congratulate/improve the work of the employees, being this a fundamental element of the motivation process.

The profitability goal, that the actionists and top management together determine, is benchmarked with the average of the Auto parts and Equipment's industry. Nevertheless, the board always takes into consideration the fact that reaching the industry's average remains a huge challenge for Company Z, once it is considered a micro company within the sector and the margins are very

small. Therefore, the volume is a highly substantial variable and the growth in terms of sales is crucial, so that the fixed costs can be diluted.

6.1.2 Budget

Company X

The tool that Company X considers indispensable and essential to the proper functioning of all activities has to be the budget. The revisions to it are not frequent and its flexibility is very moderate, once the company focuses on the detail when building it, so that everything works as planned. This high reliance on the budget, with a small number of adjustments, is typical from a “traditional” Management Control System, according to (Hope & Fraser, 2003).

The HR manager said that, in the process of maximizing the level of detail conferred to the budget, Company X establishes target times, which are calculations made by recurring to some tools such as the meteorology, so that it can be possible to keep track of the employees’ work on the projects and to meet the company’s deadlines. In the event that the project time surpasses the target time, the company performs an analysis to access if that target time was incorrectly defined or if something in the project itself was being performed ineffectively, in order to be fixed.

The company relies significantly on cost centres. Therefore, to each cost centre is assigned one owner, whose job is to manage and control it, by approving all costs and invoices while, ultimately, reporting to the top management. Each department of the company, depending on its size, may have multiple cost centres, however the reporting process is performed by each cost centre owner individually. Henceforth, the hourly cost of the work defined in the budget, planned in the previous year, might suffer some deviations during the year and, in all the areas of the company, those costs are imputed to their respective cost centre.

In order to meet the projects' target times, when a delay occurs, the company always resorts to overtime to recover the production target time, which was an example that the HR manager gave for explaining a situation where the hourly cost increases. Furthermore, the owner of each cost centre is responsible for keeping track of all these deviations and for making all efforts to prevent them from happening, so that the company performs as projected in the budget.

Company Z

The budget is a fundamental tool for the yearly exercise of Company Z, once it works as the main reference for the company, considering the fact that this tool is where lie the goals and the main theoretical assumptions that the company adopts and relies on.

Despite of the fact that the budget is mainly a "traditional" control mechanism, the company's CFO stated that this budgeting process he implemented is "completely distinct". In the first place, the budget is approved bottom-up, being revised not only in the 6th month, but also in the last trimester, alongside with a detailed follow-up process through the whole in year, in order to promote continuous improvement and analysis. Secondly, the budget is performed envisioning the following five years, targeting the long run, where multiple budgets are developed when the circumstances demand them. In some lines of the budget, a small rolling forecast procedure is implemented to deal with uncertainty, such as in the case of the sales, which provides flexibility to the process. In last, it is conceded a high degree of freedom to the employees when budgeting, although requiring a deep analysis to the investments through the year and a detailed cost control process.

Company Z's budgeting process stands as a budget run-rate, where the KPIs from the last trimester of the previous year are revisited and analysed to access if these correspond to the standards defined by the company. In the event that is

true, then those are designated as the run-rates for the following year, being that procedure repeated on the 6th and 9th months of the budget's year. Nonetheless, if those KPIs/strategic lines do not fulfil the organisation's requirements, an improvement plan is conceived. An improvement plan is a set of bottom-up action plans that is performed during the time of that budget where the management attempts to find which mistakes have been made previously, while elaborating specific solutions to improve the scrutinized KPI. These budgetary improvement plans, currently, amount to a total of 300 in all the factories that the organization has around the world. From this, one can identify the CFO's ideas in the ones demonstrated by Otley (1994), who believed that adaptation, empowerment, flexibility and decentralization are the keys to cope with the contemporary changing environments and to promote continuous improvement.

According to the Company's CFO, the Auto Parts and Equipment industry is very predictable, so it is not required the utilization of a rolling forecasts system per say in the whole organization, also because it is vastly expensive to implement and sustain in terms of money and other resources. Nevertheless, the treasury department possesses one, since cash management can be determinant, especially because the company has been going through a harsh restructuring process in the previous years, which lead to a highly uncertain environment. This idea of the use of rolling forecasts being an effective way on responding to emerging threats and opportunities is in accordance with the literature of Hope and Fraser (2000).

6.1.3 Performance Evaluation, Goals and Compensation

Company X

All business areas composing Company X have their own balance scorecard, KPIs, monthly analysis and annual targets. For most employees, the evaluation of their performance is achieved through the analysis of the main KPIs regarding their area of business, once these indicators are all connected to compensation

systems and are reviewed monthly. The targets are fundamentally financial, and the compensation system work as it follows:

1. Financial compensation: The employees can win a bonus, being an adjustable component (percentage) of their salary, depending on the achievement of their area's KPIs, regarding the work accomplished as a team. These KPIs are all related to the productive performance of each area, such as the product quality or the hourly cost of the work.
2. Non-financial compensation: This represents the one indicator that the employee can completely control on his own, thus the achievement of that target is dictated by his personal work and effort.

Moreover, the achievement of the KPIs' targets is shared and posted in all business areas, so that everyone pushes for each other, being a way of getting the employees to produce and also to motivate them. "This is also a procedure developed to inform them how they and the management are evaluated", stated the HR manger.

Company Z

The performance evaluation exercise for the year is conducted always through the analysis of 3 performance areas, which relate to the different types of employees' targets:

- Individual performance: based on the individual work and results of the employee, rewarding the personal effort;
- Team performance: evaluates if the department, where the employee is inserted in, has reached its objectives and if they have worked effectively as a team, thus stimulating a strong team spirit;
- Company performance: it concerns the results of the organization as a whole. This performance area evaluates if the company has reached their targets with the contribution of the employees.

All these criteria are crucial to the assessment of the employees' work during the whole year. In that order, an employee will be rewarded with 3 different bonuses in the case that his individual, team and organizational objectives are all fulfilled. The targets associated with the performance of the team and of the organization are all financial. Nevertheless, the individual targets are focused on how the employees developed their work and if they have made all efforts to do it properly, consigning the performance evaluation process also a non-financial component. Furthermore, these targets are mainly long-term oriented and every trimester the results of the company and departments are shared with the whole organization, promoting a highly comprehensive information sharing.

TABLE 5.
Comparison of MCSs

MCSs	Company X	Company Z
Strategic Planning	Top-down resource allocation and detailed planning process, with the assignment of one controller per area of business, responsible for its management.	Bottom-up resource allocation, through a participative and flexible approach. Brainstorm used to select the strategic lines and their implementation is assigned to different teams, while employed an intense and frequent follow-up process.
Budget	Traditional budgeting process focused in the short-term, with only 2 review moments in the year. High reliance on detailed and non-flexible target times to control all processes.	Long-term oriented and flexible run-rate budget. The detailed revisions are infrequent; thus, multiple improvement plans are produced during the year. Rolling forecast are utilized in some critical budget lines.

MCSs	Company X	Company Z
Performance Evaluation	This process mainly focused on the analysis of the KPIs from the employees' business area. A review to those KPIs is performed monthly.	The process is focused on the evaluation of the results from 3 different performance areas.
Goals and Target Setting	The targets are mainly financial and short-term oriented.	There is a balance between financial and non-financial goals. Short and long-term oriented.
Compensation	The employee's compensation system represents a percentage of the salary and it is connected to the productive performance of his area. However, one of the indicators also considers their personal effort.	The employees can win up to 3 types of bonuses depending on their personal effort, their team results and the overall organizational results.
Procedures and Politics	High formalization of procedures, wide sharing of the company's culture and values and deep reliance on cost centres.	Moderate formalization of procedures, with high freedom and visibility conferred to the employees' work and wide sharing of information and of the company's values.

6.2 Main obstacles imposed to the two companies by the pandemic context

In the first place, in Company X' case, it is important to note that the production and work developed never stopped during the pandemic in Portugal, although it affected diverse areas of the business. That being said, the major impact that Company X felt during 2020 was mostly international, once several countries were shut down, causing an increase in the lead time in the delivery of raw materials and of the products globally. The planning and budgeting processes suffered an impact in this regard and had to be modified, since some processes were delayed.

“The pandemic is something completely unique that has devastating effects because it brings tons of uncertainty and everything changes without any logic”, said the Company Z’s CFO. He also stated that the main problem the pandemic caused to the planning and budgeting processes for the years 2020/2021 was the unpredictability, which reached a level never seen before. Beyond the fact that the company’s business volume was affected immensely, during the year of 2020, it became almost impossible to predict when the normal level of volume was going to come back, in which terms or even if that was really going to happen. Hence, when the sales started to grow again, all happened at a very high pace and in high volumes, thus the company incurred in overheads, being extremely impactful financially. Moreover, in an industry where the level of predictability is high, according to Company Z’s CFO, this process can be even more devastating.

Company X’s factories and offices had to be altered massively, with the objectives of preventing the virus to spread and to avoid personal contact. The company was not used to performing telework, which turned out to be a big challenge in terms of redefining the workplace, causing some suspicion among employees and affecting the motivation in the beginning. Hereupon, the uncertainty that arose the beginning of the pandemic was definitely an obstacle, creating some problems to the people management and IT departments, by also reformulating the employees’ protection policies.

The budget and the strategic lines of Company Z had to be revised and even transformed also in some cases, so that it could be achieved a substantial degree of conservatism for the end of 2020. Apart from that, none of the employees won the bonuses that concerned the criteria regarding organization’s performance and, in a high number of cases, neither the ones concerning the team’s performance. Those problems, allied to a high job uncertainty, naturally affected the employees’ motivation. Lastly, in some of Company Z’ branches, several

employees had their wages lowered, so that it could be possible to hold the company financially, which also generated discontent that was hard to manage.

6.3 Adaptative measures and their impact

Adaptative Measures

Company X had to overcome the obstacle caused by high uncertainty through the modification of the planning process, taking the bottom-up approach, instead of the top-down one, which a common “non-traditional” practise when operating under uncertain environments (De Baerdemaeker & Bruggeman, 2015). This measure, according to HR manager, adding to the fact the production in Portugal never stopped, was supreme to coordinate the teams and manage the projects for the years 2020/2021, which “lead to the minimization of the impact caused by the pandemic”.

Adaptability and continuous learning were the two main keys to cope with the obstacles imposed by the pandemic, according to Company Z’s CFO. It is verifiable that he agrees with the points made by Rigby et al. (2020), where they state that learning, adapting and growing, without trying to predict the unpredictable, stand as fundamental to cope with these troubled times. In order to do so, the company implemented not more revisions to the budget (once these ones already were frequent) but conferred a higher degree of detail and extension to those. The budget changed in some minor respects, such as in the increase on the level of caution when projecting the sales for 2021 and in its rules of approval, with some adjustments made to the profitability level aimed to by the organization.

Moreover, during 2020, a new budget was constructed, even though the previous budget was not dismissed. Company Z had always the previous and main budget as a reference, in the interest of fulfilling the strategic lines set in the

beginning. Additionally, the first budget was fundamental to keep the employees motivated throughout the “pandemic” year, which goes along with the ideas from Soares (2020) on having two budgets: a realistic one and other for motivation purposes. This measure turned out to be very influential, once, in the last trimesters of the year, the revenues of the company grew up and almost matched the values those preconceived in the main budget. Additionally, the company carried out an even more intense follow-up process than usual and reduced the autonomy of the decision teams in what concerns the budget, but only in terms of its execution.

The strategic planning method used by Company Z was also slightly modified, with a day-to-day management approach used, through constant planning processes developed every day. “Plan more and more frequently” during the pandemic, Rigby et al. (2020) advised, so that it can be possible to repeatedly improve the accuracy of the budget and targets in less time and with less effort. The level of flexibility in the outlined plan by Company Z increased and, in terms of goals and objectives these were not altered for the remain of 2020, being the employees not only evaluated by their individual and team performance, but also by the profitability of the company as usual.

In the Human Resources department, Company X implemented rules and policies to safeguard the work of the employees and their health, with the aim of increasing the motivation. That being said, the health safety protocol implemented by the company was tighter than the protocol recommended by SNS, with the example of the installation of temperature measure chambers in the factories before it was required. Besides that, the adaptation to the telework tool was a success, once it was given more freedom to the employees to perform their job, with less control, more time to their private life and, in some cases, lead to an increase in the net salary.

“People are at home and are very motivated because they notice that the company values their well-being more than to the rest”, said the HR manager. Finally, Company X adjusted the hours of the employees shifts in order to promote a better organization and maximize production, and even in some countries that were shut down, the company resorted to lay off.

During the past year, the motivation of Company Z’s employees logically dropped due to all the circumstances related to their personal lives, adding to the fact that they might lose their jobs or have their salaries cut. In that order, the company created some adaptative measures regarding this problem that were implemented primarily in Portugal, where the government helped with financial aid program. In the first place, the company paid and preponed the employees’ holidays to the second trimester of 2020, since there was no production process going on at that moment. Moreover, some financially efforts were made in order to capture and utilize the financial aid, provided by the government, in the most efficient way to preserve all jobs.

Moreover, the CFO stated that the motivation of the employees ended up to being natural. Apart from extrinsic, due to the measures taken by the company, the motivation was also intrinsic because the workers desired primarily to keep their jobs, having most of them been proudly working in the company for several years. In sum, the employees felt the need to help the company to overcome these obstacles, being the company’s culture a fundamental factor in this recovery process (Snell & Youndt, 1995).

Organizational results

In the first place, the results of the measures, according to the Company X’s HR manager, turned out to be very satisfactory once the employees felt motivated and protected. Furthermore, in Portugal, the revenues of the company did not suffer a major decrease, when comparing to what was projected in the

budget. The major proofs of these achievements were the facts that the company hired 500 employees in 2020 and that the small number of COVID-19 cases that the company has registered were all contracted in the employees' private life.

In Company Z's case, on the financial aspect, during 2020, the revenues decreased and results obviously were not satisfying. Nevertheless, the company's drop in revenues was lower than the predicted average by a study from SP&Global, particularly in Portugal where the revenues decreased in 13% compared to the 20% decrease in the Auto Parts and Equipment's industry. Throughout 2020, the second trimester (lockdown months) was catastrophic in terms of sales for Company Z, however the company was able to recover in the second part of the year, allowing it to react "properly to the loss".

For this upcoming future, Company X plans to make a revision to the budget and redefine the targets and goals of the employees. Consequently, the HR manager believes that the performance evaluation process will be adjusted, once the pandemic is lasting more than previewed, however this is a decision that will be made by the top management working in the headquarters.

Finally, coming to this inconstant year of 2021, Company Z's CFO believes that the company will perpetuate this financial recovery based on the continuous learning process. He also affirmed that the goals and targets of the whole organization and employees were readjusted for this year. Ultimately, he referred that the high level of flexibility, follow-up, company's culture and information sharing will remain untouched in order to overcome the upcoming obstacles and the substantial degree of unpredictability.

FIGURE 6.
Company X's control management problem solving

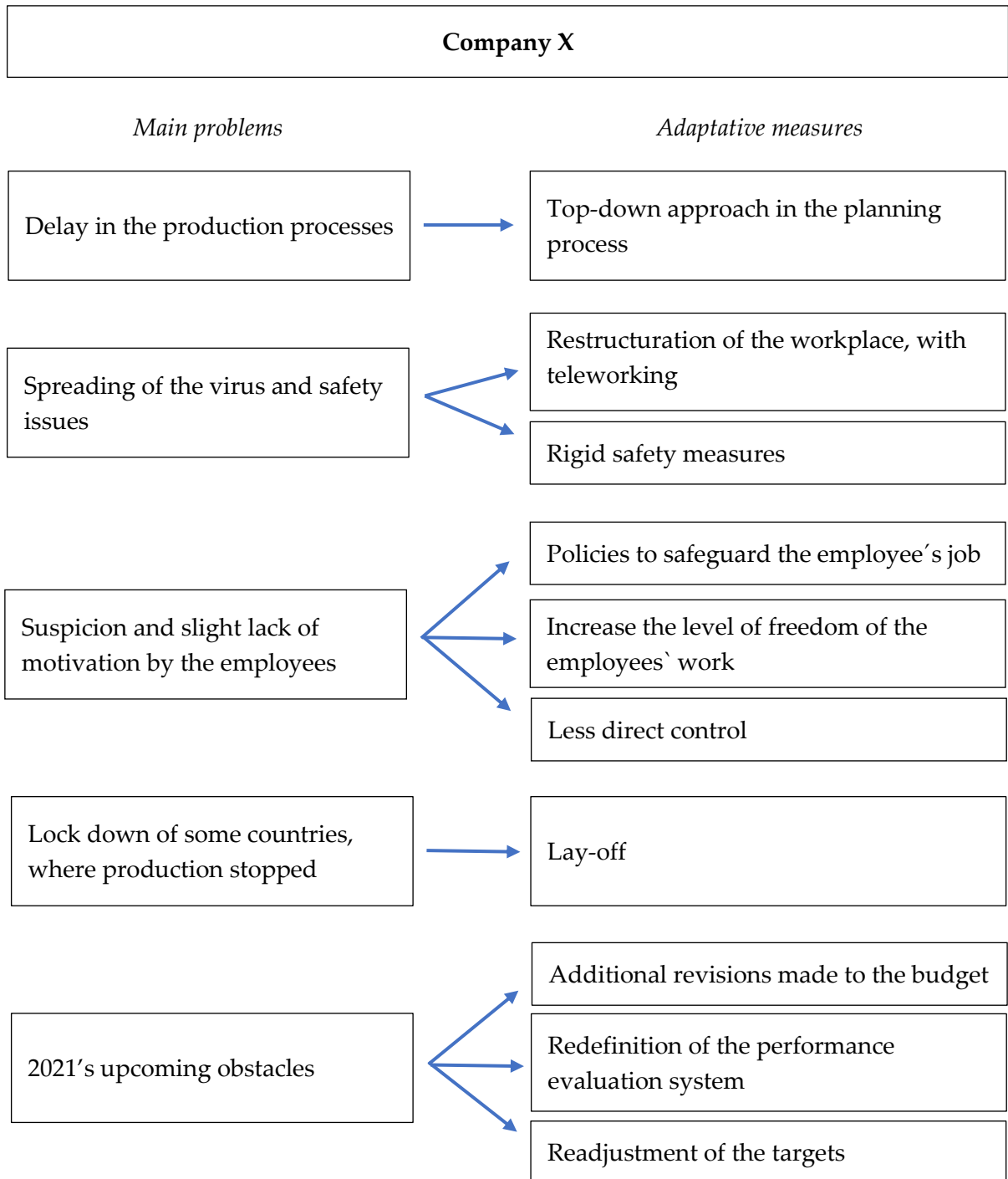
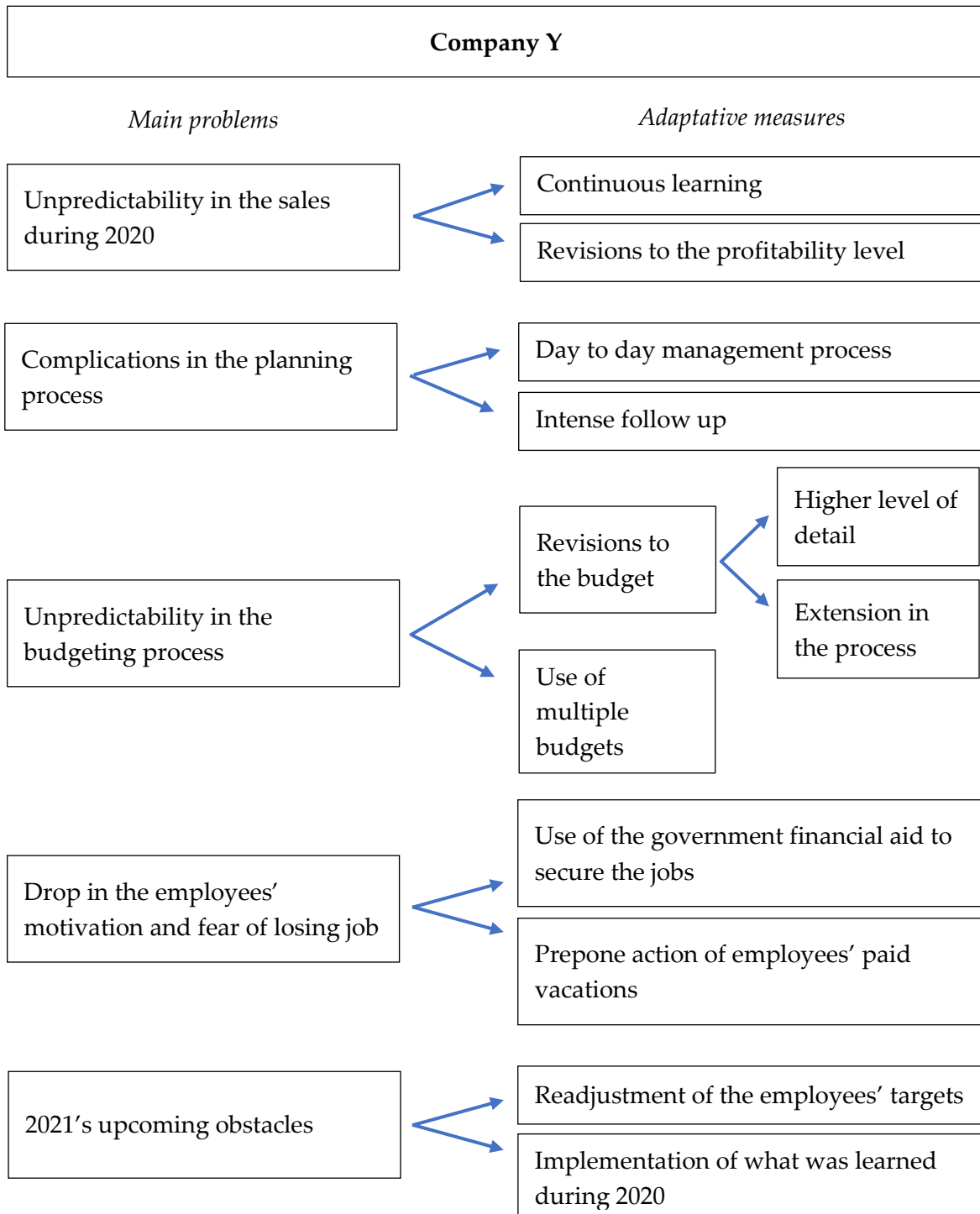


FIGURE 7.
Company Z's control management problem solving



7. Conclusions

There is no doubt that the global pandemic that emerged in the end of 2019 brought devastating consequences to all sorts of areas, nevertheless it also provided some opportunities to be explored. As such, the prospects to develop studies and investigations to learn and test our adaptative capabilities as human beings and society are unlimited. Hereupon, this dissertation stands as a single example of seizing those opportunities.

The Management Control Systems literature is vast and was already deeply researched by numerous authors, however COVID-19 opens the door to a new chance. That chance is to try to understand how company managers refined and adapted their control management strategies in order to effectively respond to one of the most unpredictable periods of time, while evaluating what can be done in the future.

The main objective of this dissertation is to investigate how companies, using different types of control mechanisms, readjusted in order to react effectively to the obstacles imposed by the global pandemic of COVID-19. Notwithstanding that, a study was also developed to aid the primary investigation, where it was assessed which are the main control mechanisms used by the companies in Portugal, through a detailed clustering analysis.

Trough the evaluation of the results provided by the clustering analysis it was possible to draw some important conclusions, regarding the MCSs' study in the Portuguese organizations. In the first place, it was possible to observe that currently, in 2021, the "modern" control mechanisms are more "popular" in Portugal, despite the fact that the pure "modern" approach represents a very small percentage. Subsequently, the companies, in average, incorporate a flexible and participative strategic planning process, through a bottom-up resource allocation approach, while the traditional budget remains an essential tool for

them, with little preference given to alternatives such as the rolling forecasts. Ultimately, the short-term vision when planning and the formalization of processes are still a reality, although the utilization of the type “Control and Command” not being usual, once the companies offer, in general, a substantial degree of freedom to the employees in their work.

Following the clustering analysis, the author selected two companies to performed semi-structured interviews to fulfil this study’s requirements. Firstly, Company X was classified as having “traditional” control mechanisms and Company Z was classified as taking a “modern” approach. By conducting these interviews with the HR manager and CFO of the companies, respectively, it was possible to understand, in depth, how both conducted their control management policies. Furthermore, it was studied which were the main problems they faced and are facing during the pandemic, which strategies were implemented to overcome them and investigate the results they have obtained with those. That being said, the author could comprehend which were the differences and similarities in the adaptative measures used by Company X and Company Z, nonetheless the considerable differences in their contexts and external environments.

As it was possible to verify in the findings chapter, both Company X and Company Z leaned to implement “modern” control measures as a strategy to cope with the uncertainty that emerged in the beginning of 2020 and they were successful in this matter, complementing the study developed by Gomez-Conde et al. (2020) . The empirical evidence led us to confirm that even Company X, which takes a “traditional” approach to its control mechanisms, adapted and utilized “modern” control mechanisms to respond to the circumstances. This justifies the ideas of disrupting with the “traditional” control management style, which are inadequate in a fast paced and unpredictable world and economy, by Hope and Fraser (2003).

In the first place, both companies readjusted their planning processes, where Company Z implemented an even more flexible day-to-day planning and Company X completely transformed its “traditional” approach towards a bottom-up strategy, proving the ideas of Rigby et al. (2020) that suggested to plan more and faster, with a resource allocation strategy starting at the lower levels of the company.

Subsequently, it was observable that the budget remained a fundamental tool in both cases, despite the criticisms it has been receiving for its unusefulness (Alvesson & Kärreman, 2004; Hope & Fraser, 2000; Otley, 1994), being only subject of some minor changes. On one hand, Company Z, as shown previously, relies heavily on the budget, nonetheless having a “modern” approach to it. During 2020, it increased the level of detail to the reviews to it and employed the multiple budgets’ strategy, one for motivation and other for conservatism. On the other hand, Company X didn’t perform any modifications to the budgeting process in Portugal, what could be explained by the fact that the company was not forced to stop the production, allowing the use of the same “traditional” budget, once business continued “as usual”. Nevertheless, the HR manager did confirm that, for the upcoming future, there will be some level of adjustment to the budget by the top management.

In the Human Resources department, when dealing with the lack of employees’ motivation in the beginning of the pandemic, once again, both companies executed the same strategies, which were to always protect their jobs at maximum by recurring to a restructuration of the workplace and a lay off process. Moreover, both managers stated the company’s implicit culture and values played an important role to keep people motivated and companies working effectively during the most problematic months. In each case, there was a prior strong sense of belonging and identification with the company, which is a key aspect that differentiates the “modern” control mechanism from the

“traditional” ones and very helpful in unpredictable situations (Costa et al., 2014).

Furthermore, Company X shifted from “traditional” to “modern” when it lowered the emphasis of its direct control and command strategy. The company provided a higher degree of freedom to the employees when performing their tasks, which was already natural in Company Z’s case. Hence, this strategy constitutes a complementary proof to the ideas of Gabriel (1999), who asserted that new control mechanisms are characterized by having the source of control internal to the individual.

Nevertheless, contrarily to predicted, the number of adaptations made by both companies was very similar. It was expected by the author, based on the literature review, that Company X, which has pure “traditional” control mechanisms, would implement far more changes than Company Z. This can be explained by the fact that the Company Z productive process stopped for two full months, which generated far more uncertainty, while contrastingly, in Company X’s case the production never stopped in Portugal. Despite of that, Company X implemented the most aggressive change to its MCSS, with the shift from the top-down to the bottom approach strategy in the strategic planning process. For this upcoming future it is expected, by the HR manager, some adjustments to the budgeting and performance evaluation processes.

Finally, the company which has suffered the harshest consequences (mainly financial) in their Portuguese branch was Company Z, which tends to use “modern” control mechanisms. Nevertheless, it has performed better than the average of its industry in terms of revenue loss, while recovering in the second half of 2020, due to the “modern” adaptations of its control mechanisms. In contrast, Company X’s business in Portuguese territory did not suffered a

substantial financial impact, which can be, once more, explained by the fact that the production process was never shut down.

7.1 Contributions to the literature

The main contributions of the present case studies to the existing literature, regarding the Management Control Systems topic, are essentially the following ones:

- Broadening of the investigation and information concerning the tendency of the MCSs implemented in the companies working in Portugal, with the development of a substantially comprehensive survey on the subject;
- Delivery of useful strategies, based on real organizational problems, for the Portuguese companies to use when in periods of high volatility and uncertainty of the external environment;
- Important complement on the research of the differences between “traditional” and “modern” management control systems.

Firstly, the readers of this dissertation can benefit from the fact that a considerable number of 1,538 companies were employed as the sample of the web-survey, providing useful insights about the most common types of control mechanisms used in the country. Subsequently, both interviews provided highly important complements to the study on how to cope with the obstacles originated in the pandemic period. Moreover, also insights on what can be done when facing very unpredictable situations, in terms of control management, with the example of two companies that were successful in their adaptative measures. This study provides another proof for the theory that “modern” control mechanisms are more useful when dealing with a substantial level of unpredictability (Costa et al., 2014; Gomez-Conde et al., 2020; Merchant & Otley, 2006; Otley, 1994; Otley et al., 1995)

Finally, this study provides the most comprehensive survey of specific management control practices employed by the companies in Portugal. Furthermore, the information gathered may allow a more in-depth empirical analysis for several investigations in future. Notwithstanding the fact that numerous similar surveys of control management practises have been developed in the past (see, *inter alia*, INE, 2016), the present survey presents a more focused approach in the area of management control, contrasting the more “traditional” with the more “modern” practices.

7.2 Suggestions for future research and case studies limitations

For future research concerning this topic, the author would recommend the development of several studies having an even higher number of companies as a sample when studying the control mechanisms used in Portugal. This recommendation is made once there are more than 100,000 companies operating in the country at the moment, that fill the criteria previously defined by the author. Additionally, it would be useful to investigate the strategies utilized during the pandemic by companies inserted in other industries, within different contexts, and access the main contrasts.

Additionally, it would make sense to apply this same survey to future investigations, in order to get a dynamic perspective of the evolution of MCSs in Portugal. In the future it is imperative that multiple studies keep being developed, while the pandemic lasts and also posteriorly to it, to access its consequences and the recuperation programmes implemented, regarding the control management area of study.

Lastly, the author believes that it is required to prolong the study of the management control systems’ adaptations created by Company X and Company Z, to evaluate the future control measures and their results.

In what regards this study's limitations, it is important to note the possible bias that could unconsciously be incorporated when analysing the gathered evidence relatively to the pandemic once it was mainly based on the interviews. Moreover, the findings were inferred by recurring to only two case studies, which are context specific and based on the experience of only two companies, being very imprudent to generalize the facts.

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Annexes

Annex A Survey's template

The following screenshots represent the survey that was provided to all the 1,538 companies:

FIGURE A 1.
Survey's first page



The screenshot shows the first page of a survey. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the title "Controlo de gestão - Mecanismos de controlo nas empresas portuguesas" in white text. To the right of the title is a progress bar showing "0 %". Below the header, the main content area is white. It contains two paragraphs of text in Portuguese, followed by the name "José Miguel Teixeira". Below the name is the logo of the Universidade Católica do Porto, which includes a circular seal and the text "CATÓLICA CATÓLICA PORTO BUSINESS SCHOOL PORTO". At the bottom center of the page, there is a small grey button with the text "Próx."

FIGURE A 2.
Survey's second page

Controlo de gestão - Mecanismos de controlo nas empresas portuguesas

25 %

A) Estratégia de negócio e ambiente interno e externo da empresa

1. Nos últimos anos (pré-covid), quão previsíveis têm sido as ações ou mudanças importantes no ambiente externo da empresa em termos de:

	Imprevisível	Previsível
a) Clientes (ex: nível de procura ou requisitos do cliente)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b) Fornecedores (ex: qualidade e disponibilidade dos recursos)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c) Concorrentes (ex: a entrada de novos concorrentes no mercado e suas estratégias)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d) Tecnologia (ex: R&D, inovações de produto)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e) Conjetura economia	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

2. Quão diversos são os requisitos de produto/serviço exigidos pelos clientes da empresa (necessidade de customização vs oferta standard)?

Similares

Diversos

3. Quão diversas são as estratégias e táticas dos principais concorrentes em relação à sua empresa?

Similares

Diversas

4. Quão difícil é obter os inputs (recursos) necessários para a empresa?

Baixa dificuldade

Alta dificuldade

5. Quão alta é a intensidade concorrencial nos principais segmentos de produtos / serviços da empresa?

Baixa intensidade concorrencial

Alta intensidade concorrencial

6. Indique o nível de ênfase que a empresa coloca nas seguintes prioridades estratégicas em relação aos seus concorrentes, ao nível de:

	Ênfase reduzido	Ênfase elevado
a1) Produtos / serviços de baixo custo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
a2) Preço baixo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b1) Ser a primeira no mercado com novos produtos / serviços (inovação)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b2) Gama alargada de produtos / serviços (oferta integrada)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b3) Volume ou produto rápido / mudanças no mix de serviços	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c1) Fornecimento de produtos / serviços de elevada qualidade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c2) Cumprimento preciso das especificações de entrega	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c3) Prazo de resposta rápida no fornecimento	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c4) Serviço ao cliente de alto nível	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

FIGURE A 3.
Survey's third page

Controlo de gestão - Mecanismos de controlo nas empresas portuguesas

50 %

B) Mecanismos de controlo

B1) PLANEAMENTO ESTRATÉGICO

1. A empresa adota uma abordagem participativa no seu processo de planeamento estratégico * ⓘ

Muito pouco participativo

Apenas a gestão de topo e alguns diretores participam

Participação de vários níveis hierárquicos

2. Como descreveria o plano estratégico da empresa? * ⓘ

Bastante detalhado e extenso

Trata-se de um esboço abrangente de objetivos e ações estratégicas

Não é efetuado um planeamento estratégico formal

3. Qual o grau de flexibilidade na execução do plano estratégico? * ⓘ

- O plano é seguido rigorosamente, através de processos formais, com pouca flexibilidade de adaptação
- O plano é seguido com alguma flexibilidade, face às mudanças na envolvente
- O plano funciona apenas como um guia (elevada flexibilidade)

B2) ORÇAMENTO (BUDGET)

1. Até que ponto, a gestão de topo, coloca grande importância no exercício anual de orçamento? *

- Grande importância
- O orçamento tem vindo a perder preponderância com os anos
- Baixa ou nula importância

2. Existe algum processo programado de revisão orçamental? *

- Nenhuma revisão ao orçamento é feita normalmente durante o período
- As revisões ao orçamento não são frequentes, mas podem acontecer
- O orçamento é revisto e sujeito a alterações frequentes

3. A empresa utiliza um sistema de previsão contínua (Rolling Forecast). * ⓘ

- Não utiliza qualquer sistema do tipo rolling forecast
- Esta ferramenta está em fase de implementação na empresa
- Utiliza um sistema do tipo rolling forecast

B3) PROCEDIMENTOS E POLÍTICAS

1. O trabalho dos colaboradores é determinado por procedimentos formais e padronizados. * ⓘ

- Existe um grande nível de formalização (procedimentos) dos processos de trabalho
- Apenas alguns processos são formalizados
- Há um reduzido nível de formalização dos processos

2. Os colaboradores têm a liberdade de criar os seus próprios métodos de execução do trabalho, se nenhum procedimento padrão for estabelecido? *

- Não
- Raramente têm essa possibilidade de tomada de decisão por si próprios
- Normalmente sim

3. Até que ponto as atividades entre as subunidades organizacionais da empresa (ex: departamentos) são coordenadas através de processos formais de planeamento (top-down)? *

- São altamente coordenadas através de processos formais de planeamento
- São coordenadas parcialmente através de processos formais de planeamento
- São coordenadas através de processos mais flexíveis, sem grande formalidade de planeamento (ex: unidades definem os seus próprios objetivos)

B4) COMUNICAÇÃO E PARTILHA DE INFORMAÇÃO

1. Indique a acessibilidade à informação de desempenho dentro da empresa. * ⓘ

- Acesso muito restritivo a informação (só acessível à gestão de topo)
- Acesso restrito somente a informação considerada confidencial
- A informação flui de forma livre e transparente em toda a empresa

2. Quão visíveis são, para a gestão de topo, as ações que os colaboradores realizam para alcançar os seus resultados? *

- Baixa visibilidade para a gestão de topo
- Apenas em alguns departamentos
- Alta visibilidade para a gestão de topo

B5) CULTURA E VALORES ORGANIZACIONAIS

1. Os valores, normas e objetivos da empresa são colocados em documentos formais e comunicados para todos os trabalhadores. (ex: mission/value statements, statements of purpose) * ⓘ

- Discordo
- Apenas em alguns documentos
- Concordo

2. Mesmo não existindo evidência formal de valores da empresa, considera que há uma cultura implícita? *

- Não é evidente uma cultura da empresa partilhada pelos colaboradores
- Há alguma evidência de uma cultura da empresa
- Existe uma cultura da empresa muito forte e percebida por todos os colaboradores

B6) AVALIAÇÃO DE DESEMPENHO

1. Quão flexível é a metodologia de avaliação das metas de desempenho dos colaboradores, em comparação com o estabelecido? *

- Inflexível (as metas nunca são alteradas)
- Flexibilidade moderada (as metas são adaptadas se houver variações muito significativas no contexto da envolvente)
- Flexível (as metas são sempre contextualizadas)

2. Com que frequência os colaboradores são confrontados sobre o cumprimento das metas de desempenho, com a expectativa de melhoria contínua? * ⓘ

- Raramente (trimestralmente ou mais)
- Frequentemente (mensalmente)
- Muito frequentemente (diariamente/semanalmente)

3. Até que nível, a avaliação dos colaboradores, se baseia, primordialmente, no cumprimento de objetivos e metas de desempenho? * ⓘ

- Baseia-se fundamentalmente no cumprimento de objetivos e metas de desempenho
- Baseia-se no cumprimento de objetivos e metas de desempenho e noutros elementos de avaliação
- A avaliação dos colaboradores não depende do cumprimento de objetivos e metas de desempenho

4. Trabalhadores eficazes e ineficazes da empresa conseguem ser facilmente distinguidos/compensados pelo seu desempenho. *

- Não, não são evidentes e conhecidas as consequências de um bom ou mau desempenho
- Em algumas situações são evidentes e conhecidas as consequências de um bom ou mau desempenho
- Sim, são totalmente evidentes e conhecidas as consequências de um bom ou mau desempenho

B7) METAS/OBJETIVOS

1. Os objetivos e metas são exclusivamente financeiros ou há um equilíbrio entre objetivos e metas financeiros e não financeiros? * ⓘ

- Os objetivos e metas são exclusivamente financeiros
- Os objetivos e metas são principalmente financeiros
- Existe um equilíbrio entre objetivos e metas financeiros e não financeiros

2. Os objetivos e metas são focados principalmente no curto prazo (um ano ou menos) ou o planeamento é feito com maior foco em objetivos e metas de longo prazo (mais de um ano)? *

- São focados no curto prazo
- Existe um equilíbrio entre curto e longo prazos
- São focados no longo prazo

B8) INCENTIVOS/BÓNUS

1. Os contratos de remuneração (incentivos e bónus) especificam claramente como a remuneração variável está relacionada com o grau de cumprimento das metas de desempenho por parte dos colaboradores ? * ⓘ

- Esta relação é especificada, em detalhe, nos contratos de remuneração
- Os contratos de remuneração especificam em grande parte essa relação
- Não é especificada a relação entre o desempenho e a remuneração variável

2. Indique o ênfase colocado no desempenho de curto prazo (um ano ou menos) em relação ao desempenho de longo prazo (mais de que um ano) para a definição da remuneração variável dos colaboradores. *

- Baseada principalmente no desempenho de curto prazo
- O desempenho de curto prazo tem o mesmo nível de importância do de longo prazo
- Baseada principalmente no desempenho de longo prazo

3. Os bónus subjetivos são considerados no sistema de remuneração da empresa. *

- A compensação variável é totalmente baseada em fórmulas e metas pré-determinadas
- Apenas em algumas situações estes são considerados
- A avaliação subjetiva de desempenho é dominante na empresa

B9) CENTROS DE CUSTO

1. Quão intensa é a segmentação da organização em múltiplos centros de custo na empresa? *

- Forte intensidade de utilização de centros de custo organizacionais
- Moderada intensidade de utilização de centros de custo organizacionais
- Fraca ou nula intensidade de utilização de centros de custo organizacionais

2. Os sistemas de controlo de custos monitorizam praticamente todas as atividades e processos da empresa? *

- Monitorizam em grande detalhe todas as atividades e processos da empresa
- Monitorizam as atividades e processos mais relevantes da cadeia de valor
- O controlo de custo não é um elemento preponderante para a monitorização das atividades e processos

B10) RECRUTAMENTO E SELEÇÃO

1. Quão detalhado é o processo de recrutamento e seleção para um cargo de direção? *

- Pouco detalhado
- Detalhado
- Bastante detalhado

2. Qual o nível de importância dado à seleção de colaboradores que tenham atitudes e valores alinhados com a empresa, e não apenas as suas competências técnicas? *

- Não é um fator preponderante
- Importante
- É fundamental para a seleção dos colaboradores

Anter.

Próx.

FIGURE A 4.
Survey's fourth page

Controlo de gestão - Mecanismos de controlo nas empresas portuguesas

75%

Considerações finais

1. Indique, por favor, o nome da sua empresa, para um tratamento dos resultados mais eficaz (opcional).

[Será garantida a confidencialidade dos dados fornecidos](#)

2. Estaria disponível para uma entrevista, com duração máxima de 30 minutos, a fim de explorar e aprofundar os temas tratados? *

sim

não

2.1. Se sim, deixe, por favor, o seu email em baixo, para que o possa contactar num futuro próximo:

Muito obrigado pela sua colaboração!

José Miguel Teixeira

zemiguelteixeir@gmail.com

Annex B

Outputs from SPSS

The following tables show the SPSS outputs that were generated during the cluster analysis:

FIGURE B 1.
SPSS output – Initial Cluster Centres defined by the author

	Cluster			
	1	2	3	4
Strategic Planning Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Budget Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Politics and Procedures Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Communication and Information Sharing Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Values Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Performance Evaluation Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Goals and Targets Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Compensation Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Cost Centres Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00
Recruitment and Selection Average	1.00	1.80	2.20	3.00

Input from FILE Subcommand

FIGURE B 2.
SPSS output – Iteration History

Iteration ^a	Change in Cluster Centres			
	1	2	3	4
1	2.729	1.442	0.901	1.845

a. Iterations stopped because the maximum number of iterations was performed. The maximum absolute coordinate change for any centre is 1,093. The current iteration is 1. The minimum distance between initial centres is 1,265.

FIGURE B 3.
SPSS output – Final Cluster Centres

	Cluster				Average
	“traditional”	Hybrid “traditional”	Hybrid “modern”	“modern”	
Strategic Planning Average	2.172	2.423	2.265	2.563	2.356
Budget Average	1.739	1.680	1.804	1.833	1.764
Politics and Procedures Average	2.118	2.557	2.103	2.569	2.337
Communication and Information Sharing Average	1.935	2.291	2.606	2.845	2.419
Values Average	1.977	1.804	2.572	2.579	2.233
Performance Evaluation Average	1.933	2.089	2.206	2.333	2.140
Goals and Targets Average	1.833	2.034	2.299	2.343	2.128
Compensation Average	1.961	2.191	1.965	2.328	2.111
Cost Centres Average	1.454	2.590	1.639	2.565	2.062
Recruitment and Selection Average	1.876	1.856	2.565	2.387	2.171
Average	1.900	2.152	2.202	2.435	

FIGURE B 4.
SPSS output – ANOVA

	Cluster		Error		F	Sig.
	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df		
Strategic Planning Average	8.140	3	0.102	1534	79.632	0.000
Budget Average	1.793	3	0.159	1534	11.252	0.000
Politics and Procedures Average	26.378	3	0.165	1534	159.611	0.000
Communication and Information Sharing Average	35.633	3	0.182	1534	195.503	0.000
	Cluster	Error	F	Sig.		

	Mean Square	df	Mean Square	df		
Values Average	63.141	3	0.181	1534	349.418	0.000
Performance Evaluation Average	6.459	3	0.103	1534	62.858	0.000
Goals and Targets Average	14.722	3	0.162	1534	90.897	0.000
Compensation Average	11.039	3	0.197	1534	55.905	0.000
Cost Centres Average	121.448	3	0.193	1534	630.825	0.000
Recruitment and Selection Average	53.029	3	0.211	1534	251.499	0.000

The F tests should be used only for descriptive purposes because the clusters have been chosen to maximize the differences among cases in different clusters.

FIGURE B 5.
SPSS output – Number of cases in each Cluster

Cluster	Traditional	153.00
	Hybrid Traditional	409.00
	Hybrid Modern	705.00
	Modern	271.00
Valid		1,538.00
Missing		0.00

Annex C

The following screenshots represent Company Z's answers to the survey.

FIGURE C 1.

Company Z's answer to question A1



FIGURE C 2.

Company Z's answer to question A2

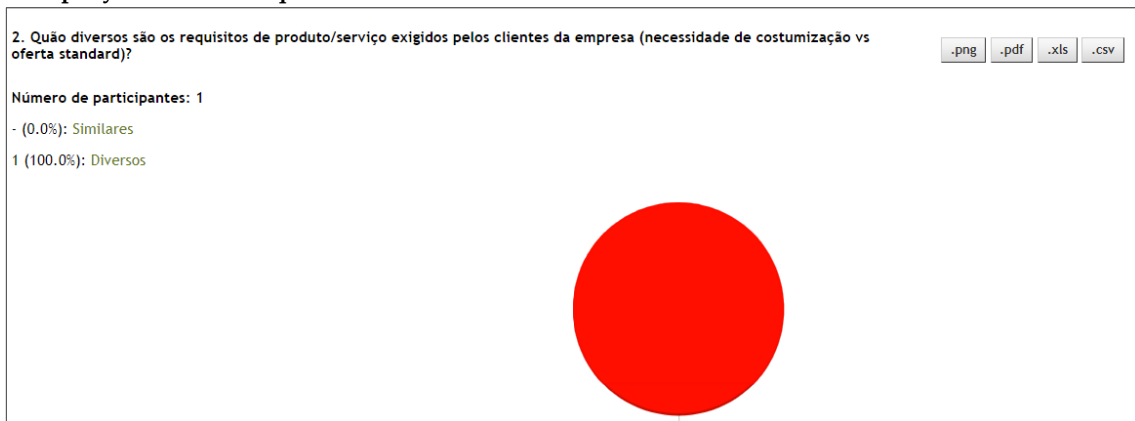


FIGURE C 3.

Company Z's answer to question A3

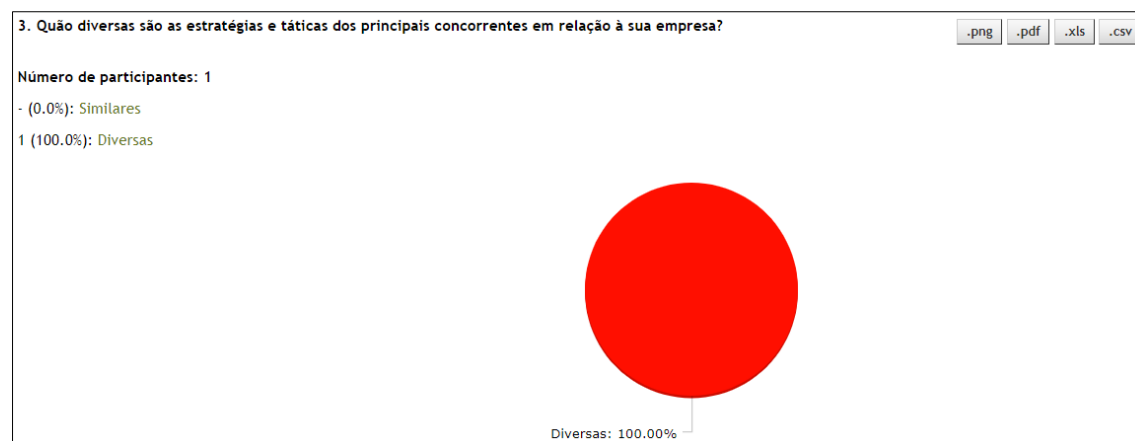


FIGURE C 4.
Company Z's answer to question A4

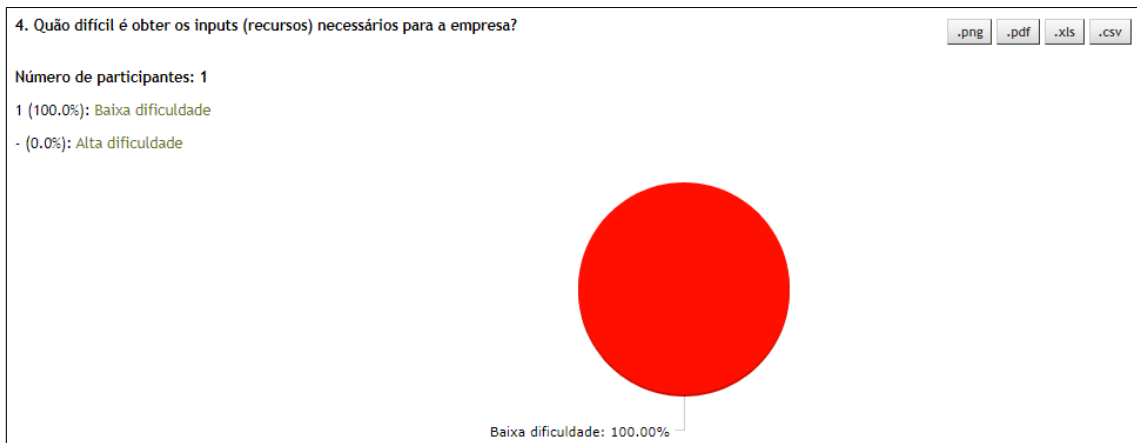


FIGURE C 5.
Company Z's answer to question A5



FIGURE C 6.
Company Z's answer to question A6



FIGURE C 7.

Company Z's answers to group B1)

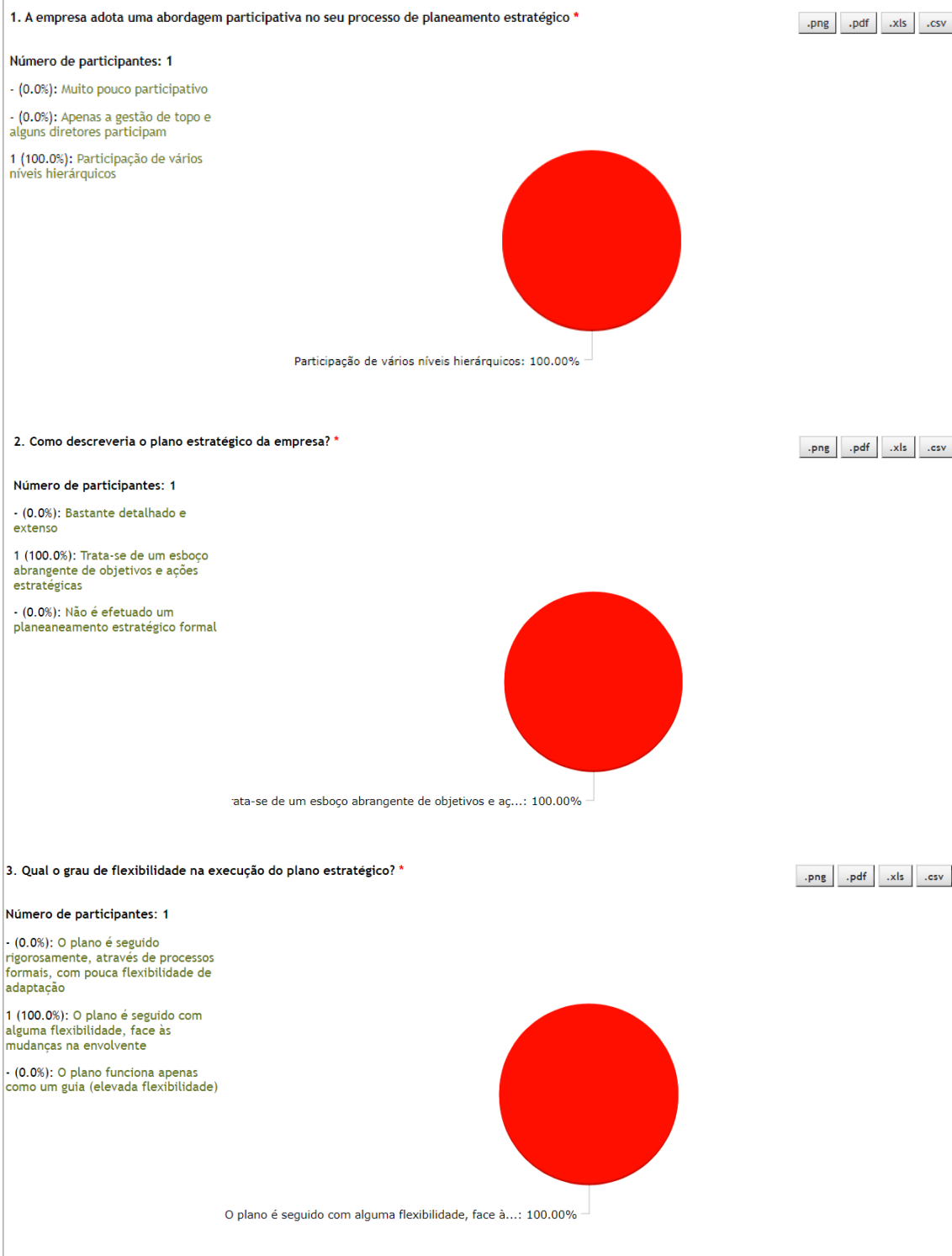


FIGURE C 8.
Company Z's answers to group B2)



FIGURE C 9.
Company Z's answers to group B3)



FIGURE C 10.
Company Z's answers to group B4)



FIGURE C 11.
Company Z's answers to group B5)





FIGURE C 12.
Company Z's answers to group B6)



3. Até que nível, a avaliação dos colaboradores, se baseia, primordialmente, no cumprimento de objetivos e metas de desempenho? *

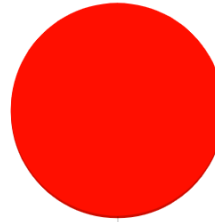
.png .pdf .xls .csv

Número de participantes: 1

- (0.0%): Baseia-se fundamentalmente no cumprimento de objetivos e metas de desempenho

1 (100.0%): Baseia-se no cumprimento de objetivos e metas de desempenho e noutros elementos de avaliação

- (0.0%): A avaliação dos colaboradores não depende do cumprimento de objetivos e metas de desempenho



Baseia-se no cumprimento de objetivos e metas de d...: 100.00%

4. Trabalhadores eficazes e ineficazes da empresa conseguem ser facilmente distinguidos/compensados pelo seu desempenho. *

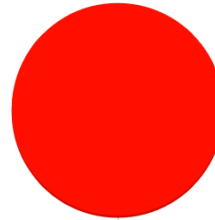
.png .pdf .xls .csv

Número de participantes: 1

- (0.0%): Não, não são evidentes e conhecidas as consequências de um bom ou mau desempenho

- (0.0%): Em algumas situações são evidentes e conhecidas as consequências de um bom ou mau desempenho

1 (100.0%): Sim, são totalmente evidentes e conhecidas as consequências de um bom ou mau desempenho



Sim, são totalmente evidentes e conhecidas as cons...: 100.00%

FIGURE C 13.

Company Z's answers to group B7)

1. Os objetivos e metas são exclusivamente financeiros ou há um equilíbrio entre objetivos e metas financeiros e não financeiros? *

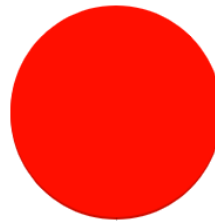
.png .pdf .xls .csv

Número de participantes: 1

- (0.0%): Os objetivos e metas são exclusivamente financeiros

- (0.0%): Os objetivos e metas são principalmente financeiros

1 (100.0%): Existe um equilíbrio entre objetivos e metas financeiros e não financeiros



Existe um equilíbrio entre objetivos e metas finan...: 100.00%

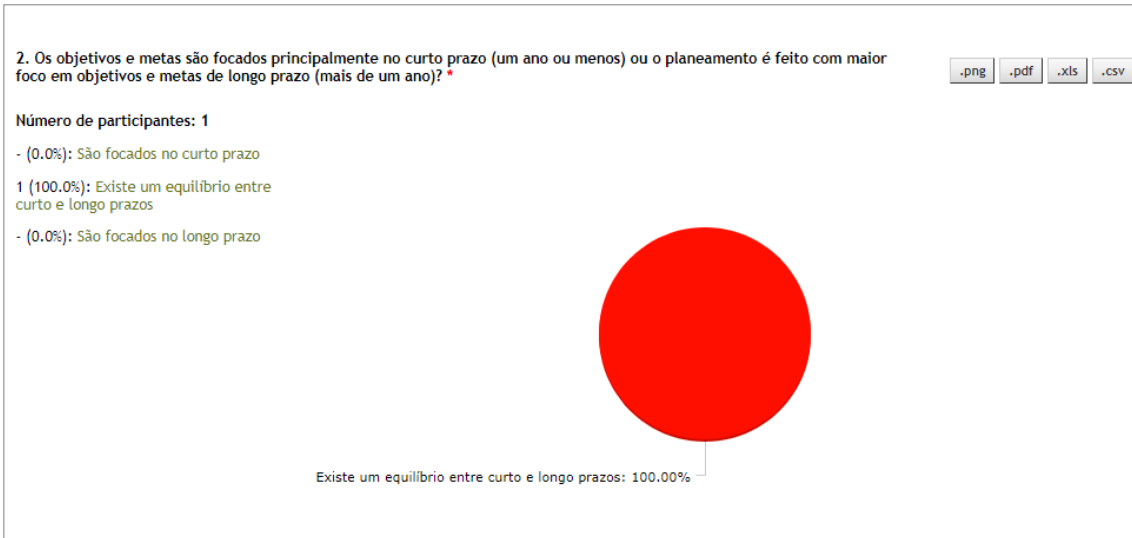


FIGURE C 14.
Company Z's answers to group B8)





FIGURE C 15.
Company Z's answers to group B9)



FIGURE C 16.
Company Z's answers to group B10)



The following screenshots represent Company X's answers to the survey:

FIGURE C 17.
Company X's answer to question A1



FIGURE C 18.
Company X's answer to question A2



FIGURE C 19.
Company X's answer to question A3

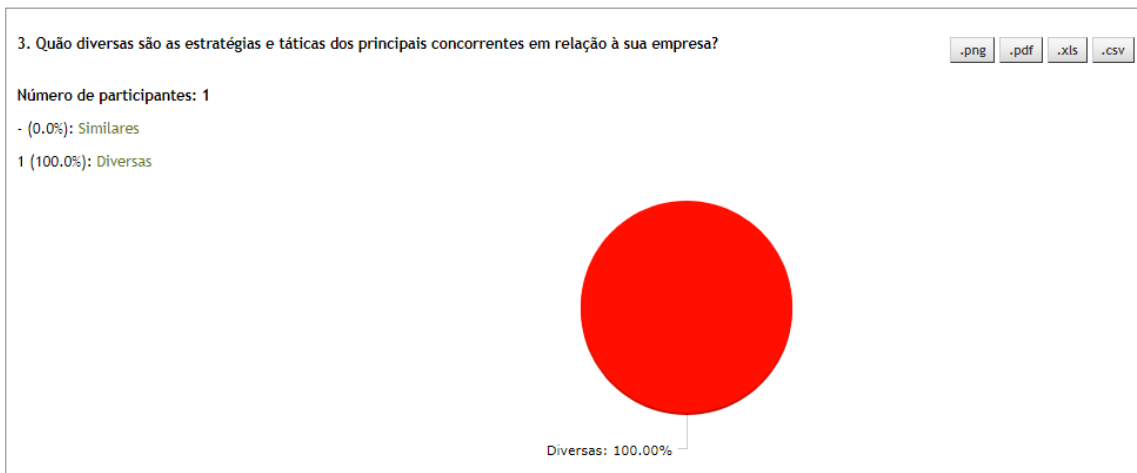


FIGURE C 20.
Company X's answer to question A4

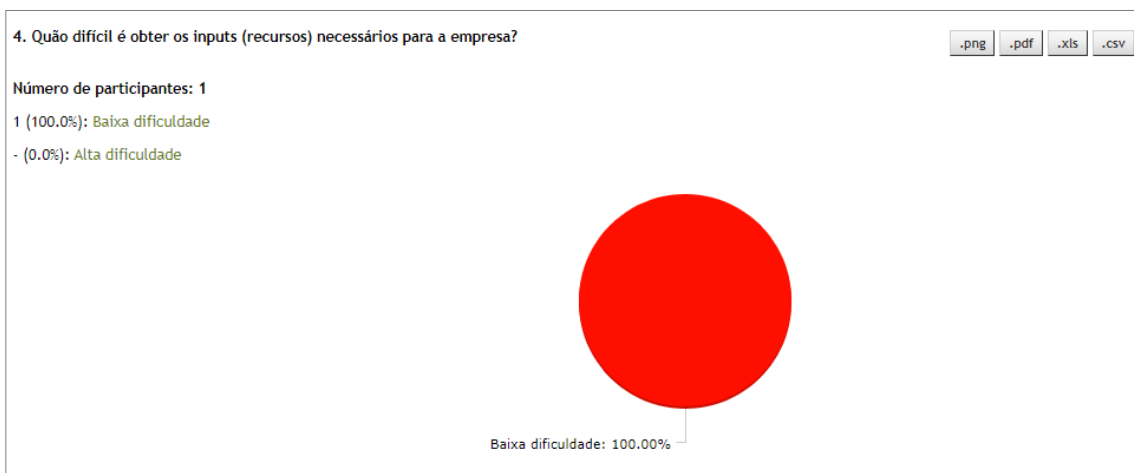


FIGURE C 21.
Company X's answer to question A5

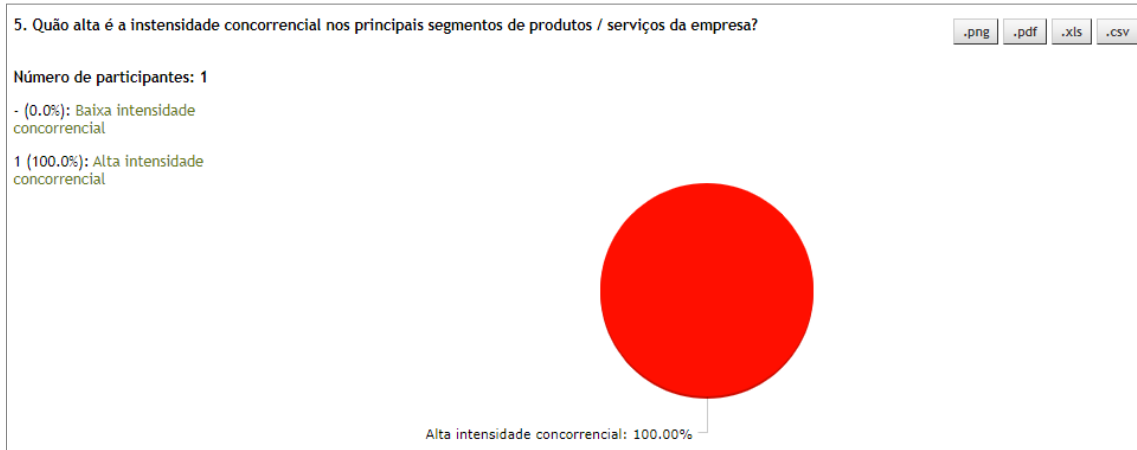


FIGURE C 22.
Company X's answer to question A6



FIGURE C 23.
Company X's answers to group B1)



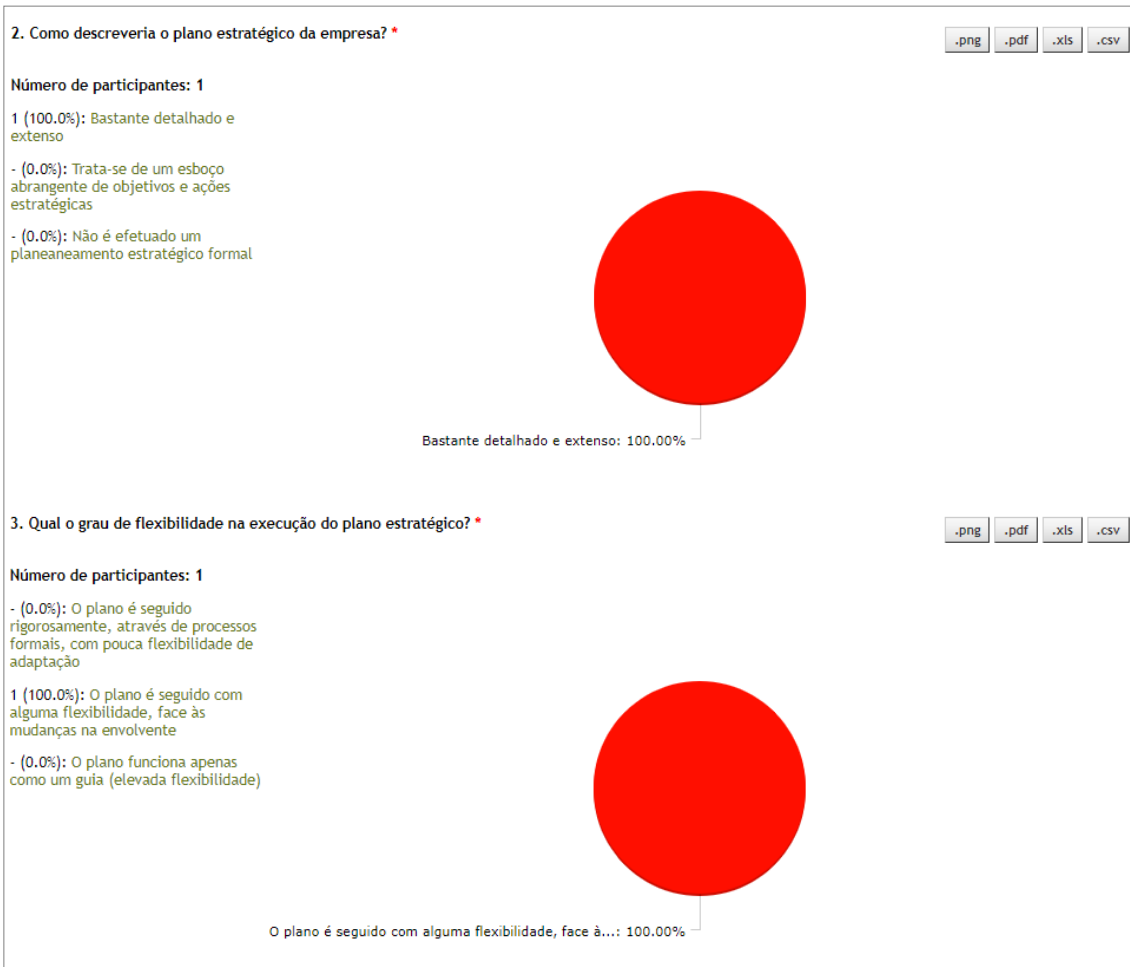


FIGURE C 24.
Company X's answers to group B2)

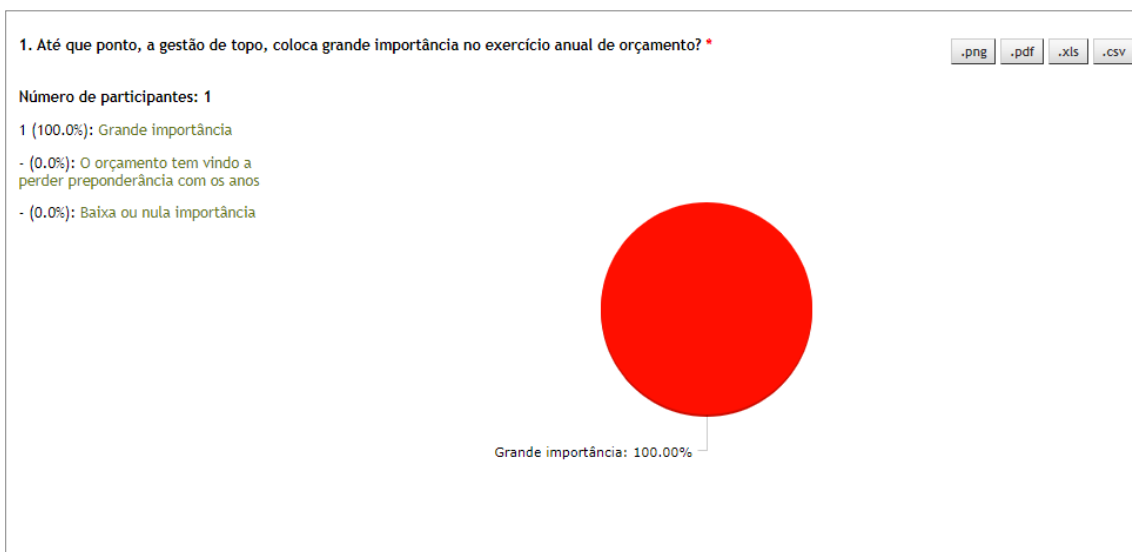




FIGURE C 25.
Company X's answers to group B3)





FIGURE C 26.
Company X's answers to group B4)



2. Quão visíveis são, para a gestão de topo, as ações que os colaboradores realizam para alcançar os seus resultados? *

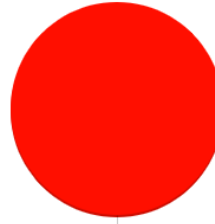
.png .pdf .xls .csv

Número de participantes: 1

- (0.0%): Baixa visibilidade para a gestão de topo

1 (100.0%): Apenas em alguns departamentos

- (0.0%): Alta visibilidade para a gestão de topo



Apenas em alguns departamentos: 100.00%

FIGURE C 27.

Company X's answers to group B5)

1. Os valores, normas e objetivos da empresa são colocados em documentos formais e comunicados para todos os trabalhadores. (ex: mission/value statements, statements of purpose) *

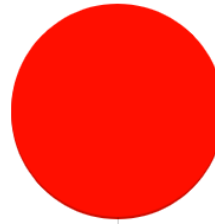
.png .pdf .xls .csv

Número de participantes: 1

- (0.0%): Discordo

1 (100.0%): Apenas em alguns documentos

- (0.0%): Concordo



Apenas em alguns documentos: 100.00%

2. Mesmo não existindo evidência formal de valores da empresa, considera que há uma cultura implícita? *

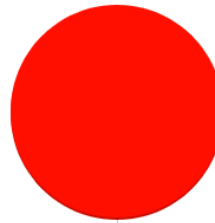
.png .pdf .xls .csv

Número de participantes: 1

- (0.0%): Não é evidente uma cultura da empresa partilhada pelos colaboradores

- (0.0%): Há alguma evidência de uma cultura da empresa

1 (100.0%): Existe uma cultura da empresa muito forte e percebida por todos os colaboradores



xiste uma cultura da empresa muito forte e perceb...: 100.00%

FIGURE C 28.
Company X's answers to group B6)





FIGURE C 29.
Company X's answers to group B7)



FIGURE C 30.
Company X's answers to group B8)



FIGURE C 31.
Company X's answers to group B9)

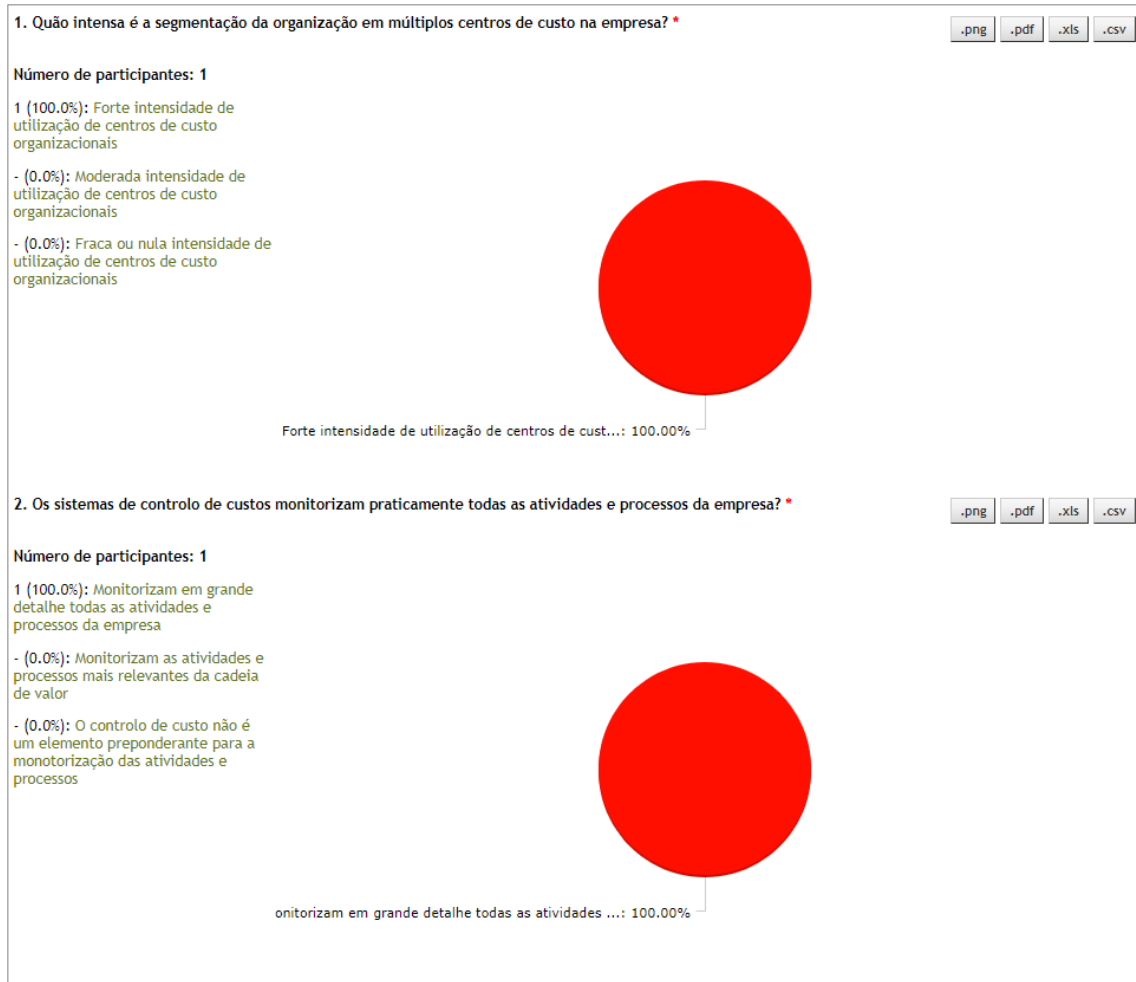


FIGURE C 32.
Company X's answers to group B10)



2. Qual o nível de importância dado à seleção de colaboradores que tenham atitudes e valores alinhados com a empresa, e não apenas as suas competências técnicas? *

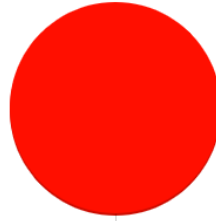
[.png](#) [.pdf](#) [.xls](#) [.csv](#)

Número de participantes: 1

- (0.0%): Não é um fator preponderante

- (0.0%): Importante

1 (100.0%): É fundamental para a seleção dos colaboradores



É fundamental para a seleção dos colaboradores: 100.00%

Annex D

Interview to Company Z – transcription

Entrevistador:

Boa tarde, em primeiro lugar, gostava de lhe agradecer por ter aceitado o meu convite para esta entrevista.

Antes de começarmos, e antes de explicar todo o contexto da entrevista eu quero apenas esclarecer-lhe alguns pontos. Em primeiro lugar, a informação que eu recolher é confidencial e será apenas usada no âmbito deste estudo. Os resultados serão reportados de uma forma agregada, sem o identificar individualmente ou à empresa que representa. E sempre que fizer alguma referência específica a si ou à empresa será referido através de códigos, tal como empresa X ou entrevistado Y, portanto, pode estar completamente seguro relativamente a esse aspeto. Por fim, gostaria de pedir a sua autorização para gravar esta entrevista, para posteriormente eu poder fazer a transcrição e analisar de forma mais aprofundada a informação. É possível?

Posto isto, esta entrevista surge como método de estudo da minha dissertação para concluir o Mestrado em Gestão, com especialização em *Business Analytics*.

Posto isto, com esta entrevista em gostaria de explorar três aspetos principais:

1. Alguns resultados das respostas por parte da sua empresa ao inquérito, através de uma análise mais aprofundada aos mesmos.
2. As dificuldades impostas pela pandemia que a empresa teve de ultrapassar e adaptações que tiveram de ser feitas, sempre com o foco no controlo de gestão e planeamento.
3. Por último, os resultados que a empresa obteve até então, comparando com os resultados passados e o que se prevê agora para este futuro incerto.

Desta forma, em primeiro lugar gostaria que me definisse as suas funções na empresa?

Entrevistado:

Sou o CFO da Empresa.

Entrevistador:

Vou então dar início à entrevista propriamente dita e em primeiro lugar explorar alguns tópicos que derivam do inquérito aprofundando algumas questões:

1. No inquérito ficou visível que o planeamento estratégico na empresa é um processo flexível e de cariz participativo. Consegue-me descrever em linhas gerais como este é criado e como se desenvolve ao longo do ano, num ano normal pré-covid?

Entrevistado:

O planeamento estratégico é sempre feito com base no desenvolvimento da empresa e nas necessidades que o acionista nos transmite, ou seja, mais vendas, mais margem, mais rentabilidade e, portanto, no nosso caso no ano antecedente ao covid o objetivo era duplo: a primeira prioridade é crescer em vendas e na segunda manter as margens. Para tal, convocamos uma boa parte das primeiras linhas do grupo para uma reunião e essas pessoas que já têm muitos anos de casa, fizemo-las participar e, numa primeira fase, efetuamos um *brainstorming* em que atirámos para cima da mesa todas as ideias que estavam guardadas há muito tempo, algumas que já tinham sido abordadas e mesmo algumas que já tinham começado a ser desenvolvidas. Eramos cerca de 15 pessoas, e posteriormente, dividimos as 15 pessoas em 5 grupos de 3, dando cada pessoa 2 ou 3 ideias para o *brainstorming*, ou seja, entre 6 e 9 ideias por grupo, tendo o grupo que escolher 5 ideias e fazer uma apresentação das mesmas ao resto das outras pessoas, tendo que vender as ideias às outras pessoas. Nessa apresentação mostraram porque é que aquilo contribuía mais para as vendas, porque lhes foram dadas quais eram

as prioridades da empresa para o quinquênio seguinte e venderam cada uma das suas ideias e na apresentação discutiam-se as ideias também. Após essas apresentações, foram escalonadas um conjunto de ideias, cerca de 15, para votação e eu e mais uma pessoa da parte do *management* dissemos: “Destas 15 vamos selecionar apenas 6 das quais duas são escolhidas pelo *management* 4 são escolhidas por vocês em votação”. No fundo para que houvesse alguma intervenção do *management* em alinhamento com as escolhas feitas. E pronto assim aconteceu, escolhemos as linhas estratégicas. Isto era o processo de escolha, depois criamos equipas de trabalho para as pôr em prática dependendo da especialidade de cada pessoa. A pessoa responsável por cada ideia era chamada o “*Champion*” e ele escolhia pessoas, com base no nível de competência técnico e de gestão, para trabalhar essa linha de planeamento estratégico e o ajudar a desenvolver essas ideias.

Entrevistador:

Ou seja, essas pessoas que eram chamadas posteriormente para ajudar a desenvolver as ideias mais a fundo também contribuía para o desenvolvimento do processo de planeamento estratégico?

Entrevistado:

Sim, não só as que participavam na reunião, mas essas também, até porque após o processo de *brainstorming* algumas eram “libertadas” deste processo, sendo que outras pessoas eram aproveitadas. Posso dar um exemplo: Uma das linhas estratégicas, sendo que somos uma empresa de borrachas, era começar a apostar nos plásticos, mas o técnico dos plásticos não estava presente na reunião, mas esteve na equipa que fez o desenvolvimento da linha estratégica do plástico.

Depois, houve um acompanhamento mensal da evolução do processo, para perceber se efetivamente depois tinha viabilidade e se tudo estava a ser feito, do ponto de vista de gestão, para se analisar todos os parâmetros possíveis para ver

se não falhávamos e se definitivamente íamos avançar mesmo, por exemplo, para investimentos e para outro tipo de análises.

Entrevistador:

Isto acontece num ano, digamos normal, pré-covid?

Entrevistado:

Certo, posso dizer que nas empresas em que faço planeamento estratégico adoto sempre nos meus clientes este modelo participativo porque isto depois dá força a que as coisas sejam feitas por toda a organização e que não sejam *top-down*. Isto é muito valioso, nesta fase de reestruturação da empresa, porque havia certas coisas que pessoas que trabalhavam em linhas inferiores na empresa já andavam a dizer há 20 anos e algumas ideias foram implementadas agora mesmo por essas pessoas. Porque também é muito fácil andar a dizer isso durante muito tempo, mas depois é necessário dar responsabilidade e liberdade a essas mesmas pessoas para tentarem mesmo elas desenvolverem e ver se é mesmo possível elas desenvolverem-nas. Isto não é só participativo, mas sim também responsabilizador.

Entrevistador:

Para além disso, também acaba por ser flexível, porque depois há reformulação a cada mês e o acompanhamento...

Entrevistado:

Há o *follow-up* e há pressão para se concretizarem, porque pusemos recursos nisto, quanto mais não seja, pessoas. Podemos, por exemplo na situação dos plásticos, depois perceber que não somos competitivos e é um investimento com pouca rentabilidade, logo acabamos por fechar algumas portas, porque o mundo não é sempre o sucesso, mas fechamos de uma forma racional. Não é dizer que não dá, é analisado e daqui a 5 anos podem ser revisitadas porque os pressupostos podem ser revisitados.

Entrevistador:

Só mais uma questão em relação a este tema, quando os acionistas propõem objetivos e metas da vendas e receitas, fazem um *benchmarking* com outras empresas ou com base em resultados passados?

Entrevistado:

Os meus acionistas não colocam objetivos de vendas, é uma *Private Equity*, portanto querem é objetivos de rentabilidade. No setor automóvel as margens são muito pequenas, portanto o volume é muito importante. Eu tenho de ter um departamento gigantesco de qualidade porque a qualidade é uma das áreas primordiais do setor automóvel. A diluição dos custos fixos traz rentabilidade, por isso é que é importante crescer em vendas, porque eu com a mesma estrutura, que é mínima para a minha indústria, eu consigo vender muito mais. Portanto diluo custos e aumento a rentabilidade que é o que o meu acionista quer. No meu caso quando eu peguei na empresa, esta tinha rentabilidade negativa e o objetivo do meu acionista era reestruturar a empresa, e até foi um processo muito participativo, porque fomos nós que apontamos o objetivo para estar na média do setor, sendo que o primeiro passo era trazê-lo para o nível zero e o segundo passo era trazê-lo para a media do setor.

Entrevistador:

Ou seja, houve um *benchmarking* com a média do setor.

Entrevistado:

Sim, com a média de rentabilidade do setor, mas as médias do setor têm muito que se lhe diga, porque o EBIT, por exemplo, do meu setor é 5% a 7%, mas a minha é uma microempresa dentro do setor, com uma fatura de 50 milhões. Portanto, analisando na média, é mais difícil para mim porque a empresa é muito pequena, no caso do setor.

Entrevistador:

A empresa tem no *budget*, uma ferramenta fundamental para o seu exercício anual, e ainda que já haja várias revisões programadas ao mesmo, é algo que vai um pouco contra uma visão mais “moderna”, que a empresa apresentou ter no inquérito, em relação aos mecanismos de controlo. Sentiu que neste período mais incerto o *budget* continuou a impor a sua preponderância habitual na empresa? As revisões foram ainda mais frequentes?

Entrevistado:

No nosso caso as revisões não foram mais frequentes, mas foram mais detalhadas e extensas, porque houve uma mudança de circunstâncias muito forte. Nós fazemos o *budget* anual, fazemos uma revisão aos 6 meses e uma aos 9 meses, para os últimos 3 meses. Isto porque a nossa empresa é cotada e, portanto, precisa de ter estas revisões para dar um sinal aos investidores em bolsa. O *budget* no nosso setor é uma ferramenta importante, porque funciona como um referencial, sendo um traçar de objetivos e pressupostos teóricos. Nós temos sempre que nos comparar com certos pressupostos. Por exemplo, eu quero ter um consumo de matérias de X e o meu objetivo é reduzir x%. O meu *budget* é muito diferente dos *budgets* que eu vejo para aí e inclusive dos *rolling forecasts*. Nós fazemos o que chamamos o *budget run-rate*, eu pego nos KPIs da empresa no último trimestre do ano em que estamos. Por exemplo, eu estou a refazer do último trimestre do ano e os KPIs operacionais são X, se eles estiverem dentro dos objetivos, senão posso ser um pouco mais conservador, e essa passa a ser a minha *run-rate*, ou seja, se eu não melhorar nada eu vou ter esta rentabilidade para o ano e depois em cima disto nós colocamos o *improvement plan*, que é um conjunto de planos de ação que se vão fazer durante o período do *budget* que é *bottom-up* (desde o operador até às primeiras linhas e até ao *management* se necessário) em que as pessoas dizem onde podem melhorar alguma coisa numa linha em específico do plano estratégico, como por exemplo reduzir uma pessoa num dado processo e é

lhes questionado como o poderão fazer, quanto custaria, quando a vão desenvolver. Os *budgets*, nas 4 fábricas e nas 5 entidades que temos, têm cerca de 300 planos de ação *bottom-up* e que nós damos objetivos às pessoas. Por exemplo, nós ao estar com rentabilidade 0, para no ano seguinte termos uma rentabilidade de 3%, para isso temos uma *run-rate* iniciada no 0 e, em teoria, para chegarmos ao objetivo precisamos de 500 mil euros de plano de ação de melhorias (*improvement plan*), logo as pessoas nas fábricas têm que arranjar forma de as conseguir com planos de ação exequíveis. No entanto, se queremos 500 mil euros, metemos possivelmente a meta em 700 mil euros, porque muito planos de ação podem não funcionar em toda a sua extensão. Se uma medida não funcionar, o *management* propõe logo o desenvolvimento de outra medida para alcançar a meta desse *improvement plan* no mesmo valor. Depois vamos fazendo um *follow-up* dessas medidas ao longo do ano, todos os meses é reportado o que foi feito até então e se o plano de ação tem sido desenvolvido com os resultados esperados. Isto é sempre *bottom-up*, para evitar o *top-down*, para evitar que a gestão de topo esteja a intervir muitas vezes sem ter a visibilidade e informação necessária para tal. Na gestão de topo sabemos, por experiência, onde podemos ser mais competitivos, mas a verdade é podemos estar a cortar demasiadas pessoas para alcançar os resultados, quando haveria formas mais eficientes e detalhada de o fazer.

Entrevistador:

E no *bottom-up* é possível obter uma maior quantidade de informação, melhor até e mais generalizada...

Entrevistado:

Claro. Se eles conseguirem atingir os objetivos, nem sequer é pensado a implementação de *top-down*. Só há a melhoria contínua dos processos que existe sempre. Isto acontece porque, vindo de *bottom-up*, as pessoas sabem exatamente o que é necessário e também as responsabiliza. Nós depois fazemos o seguimento

ao longo do ano e, portanto, também sabemos logo se as medidas não começaram a tempo e isso pode pôr em causa os objetivos do *budget*, o que dá para corrigir isso a tempo.

Entrevistador:

Ainda no assunto do *budget*, não chegou a ser equacionada a implementação da ferramenta *rolling forecasts*?

Entrevistado:

O único *rolling forecast* que utilizamos é na tesouraria, porque no nosso caso é a parte que nós consideramos mais crítica de controlar, sendo que estávamos numa situação de reestruturação, mais incerta.

Entrevistador:

Em situação de pandemia, mais incerta da envolvente, não fará então sentido implementar?

Entrevistado:

A pandemia é algo completamente única que tem uns efeitos devastadores porque traz imensa incerteza e tudo muda sem nenhuma lógica. O problema da pandemia não é só perder os volumes, é não saber quando vão voltar, em que medida é que vão voltar e sequer se vão voltar. No meu caso, conseguimos reagir muito bem adequando a estrutura e adaptar rapidamente com os mecanismos de controlo que já tínhamos implementado, também com a ajuda das medidas do governo, apesar de noutros países sem medidas, para ter o menor impacto possível à perda. O grande problema foi depois quando as vendas cresceram, porque cresceram muito rapidamente, os clientes começaram a pedir muito rápido e nós não conseguimos reagir tão rápido como o cliente pediu. Tivemos de incorrer em sobrecustos. Nós não temos *rolling forecasts* no resto, nem refazemos o *budget*, mas há linhas no *budget* em que fazemos um pequeno *rolling forecast*, como por exemplo nas vendas. Temos as vendas do *budget* e um *rolling*

forecast para os três meses seguintes ao final do *budget*, já baseados nos pedidos dos clientes. Vamos avaliando e já vamos sabendo à partida quanto iremos vender nos três meses seguintes, mas também já temos uma ideia muito sólida quanto vamos vender nos outros meses, até porque os clientes só dão *forecasts* a 12 semanas. Na pandemia tudo mudou sem grande lógica, e estamos inseridos num setor com grandes volumes, forte previsibilidade, mas hoje em dia está tudo muito incerto. A compra de um automóvel vai gerar automaticamente *orders* para múltiplas empresas e múltiplos fornecedores de peças e o que faz com que seja possível gerar previsibilidade, o que é uma vantagem e até conseguimos ver através de outros indicadores, como ver quais são os carros que estão a gerar mais procura. Se temos exposição à Ford e vemos que a Ford está com problemas, sabemos que temos de ser prudentes nos *budgets*. A Renault está a ter mais sucesso, logo posso ser mais otimista, aí está a previsibilidade também deste setor, no entanto nesta altura está tudo muito incerto mesmo.

Entrevistador:

Agora queria questioná-lo relativamente a questões relacionadas com a adaptação à pandemia focadas no controlo de Gestão. Como foi desenvolvido o planeamento para os anos 2020/2021 especialmente em que pontos foi o ciclo anual de planeamento afetado, em relações aos anteriores? Algumas das ideias que falou foram alteradas ou impossíveis de implementar?

Entrevistado:

Como eu disse anteriormente, o grande fator aqui foi a imprevisibilidade, o orçamento foi desenvolvido normalmente, com os investimentos, sendo eles no *budget bottom-up*, mas depois são decididos durante o ano com base em análise do investimento em si. Não é como em muitas empresas em que está aprovado e quando chega ao mês X eu posso gastar. No meu caso são aprovados *bottom-up* dando um cariz mais conservador ao *budget*, eles não põem lá coisas que por exemplo em tesouraria não joguem e só não permito coisas que não façam sentido

a nível do grupo, caso contrário deixo por tudo. O *budget* está aprovado, não quer dizer que os investimentos estejam aprovados, tem que haver uma análise de cada investimento durante o ano. O *budget* foi feito da mesma forma com alguma prudência a nível de vendas, com conservadorismo, nós cortamos um bocadinho por causa da imprevisibilidade. Outras coisas, como em alguns recursos, como por exemplo contratar novas pessoas, ficaram condicionados e apesar do *budget* não se ter alterado, algumas regras de aprovação foram alteradas. O *budget* é uma bola, aquilo tem de fazer tudo sentido, ou seja, quando as vendas se verificarem durante 4 meses, por exemplo, quer dizer que a imprevisibilidade é menor, ou sejam poder entrar aquela pessoa que temos no *budget*. Mas se não se verificar, não é apostar outra vez no *budget* que vai funcionar. Houve um maior *follow-up* e houve um menor grau de liberdade não no *budget*, mas na execução (autonomia menor das equipas de decisão). É claro que houve algumas alterações, porque até colocamos menos vendas, mas as alterações que houve foi as pessoas que trabalham comigo terem de adaptar o *budget* para ter a rentabilidade que nós queremos.

Entrevistador:

No processo de desenvolvimento talvez não tenha havido grandes mudanças, se calhar um pouco mais de *follow up* e conservadorismo...

Entrevistado:

Sim, exatamente.

Entrevistador:

As metas e objetivos...

Entrevistado:

Claro que foram refeitos, porque eu andei para a frente em 2019, muito para a frente, porque quando faço um *budget* não faço para o ano seguinte, mas sim para os 5 anos seguintes. Portanto o que eu tinha para 2021 quando fiz o *budget* em

2019 não é o que eu tenho agora para 2021, porque há coisas que não são possíveis ou então poderão a ser possíveis, mas como somos um bocado mais conservadores nas vendas, porque as vendas são o que lideram no nosso caso, se as vendas superarem o nosso conservadorismo podemos ter melhores resultados. Mas claro que agora vai haver uma maior redefinição de metas.

Entrevistador:

De acordo com variados autores que focam o seu estudo no controlo de gestão, tal como David Otley e Hope e Fraser, é nestas alturas mais imprevisíveis a nível da envolvente que se conseguem notar as vantagens de um sistema de controlo mais “moderno”. Como por exemplo, um orçamento e processo de planeamento mais flexíveis, uma partilha de informação e de valores mais generalizada dentro da empresa, uma definição de metas um pouco mais a longo prazo, entre outros. A empresa sentiu isso?

Entrevistado:

Neste caso o planeamento, sendo a imprevisibilidade tão grande, o método de planeamento é uma gestão mais em cima cada dia. Existe o *budget* que é o referencial, apesar de no terceiro trimestre estar a perder 30% das minhas vendas, temos sempre de nos comparar com esse referencial. Não quer dizer que estivéssemos à espera de lá chegar, mas é um referencial, porque até o primeiro terceiro e o quarto tiveram muito próximos do que estávamos a espera. O segundo trimestre foi quando houve um *lockdown* e foi desastroso e eu refiz o *budget* para o segundo trimestre e fui muito conservador, tendo eu previsto uma queda então de 30% para o final do ano o que acabou por não ser o que aconteceu. Logo, o que eu refiz, esqueci-o e passei a usar o original, esta é a flexibilidade que temos de ter, vários *budgets*, e não é porque eu fiz um novo que esqueço o *budget* original, tendo estado sempre presente, para não desfocar as pessoas, porque os *assumptions* depois mudam todos e eu e a minha equipa sabemos perfeitamente quais os pressupostos que se alteraram e é importante, apesar de termos outros

budgets feitos, nunca esquecer o referencial. Apesar de interessar estar próximo da realidade, mas nunca iríamos conseguir prever porque a imprevisibilidade foi brutal. Houve grande flexibilidade da ação especialmente dos planos delineados. Na tesouraria tenho um *rolling forecast*, pois trabalho sempre em empresas em reestruturação e a parte do *cash* pode-me determinar tudo, portanto tenho de gerir bem as coisas de forma a que não chegue um momento em não tenha dinheiro, não é ter menos dinheiro, portanto isso é muito crítico.

Entrevistador:

Gostaria de saber se alguma ferramenta de controlo foi implementada ou reformulada neste período de pandemia ou mesmo se alguma ferramenta de controlo foi abandonada? Aos níveis de: Remuneração dos trabalhadores ou avaliação de desempenho; Formalização dos procedimentos e processos; *Budget*; Centros de custos

Entrevistado:

Na minha empresa somos um pouco conservadores. As pessoas têm sempre nos seus objetivos anuais, tirando aqueles que precisam de ser de curto prazo, nos operadores em que o absentismo é uma ferramenta, a produtividade que eles têm durante a semana. Mas nas primeiras linhas existem sempre três blocos ou áreas de performance: Performance individual, se a pessoa fez tudo o que estava ao seu alcance, se fez tudo o que tinha para desenvolver, sendo uma performance muito individual. Uma performance de equipa, ou seja, a equipa que ela lidera ou a empresa pela qual está responsável cumpriu os objetivos. E uma visão de grupo, se o contributo que essa equipa deu para o grupo resultou no grupo a ter cumprido os seus objetivos. Se tudo correr bem, essa pessoa desenvolveu bem a sua atividade individual que contribuiu para o desenvolvimento da sua atividade individual e de equipa e se contribuiu para o grupo, então é 100%. Porquê, mais uma vez? Os objetivos de médio e longo prazo são importantes, mas a empresa não gerar dinheiro para pagar prémios, a pessoa pode-se ter

portado espetacularmente, mas só vai ganhar um terço do prémio. Há sempre um refúgio que salvaguarda a pessoa de não ganhar nada, porque o seu desempenho individual vai ser sempre premiado em todas as circunstâncias, mas o que interessa também é se o seu desempenho individual contribuiu para a empresa no global e isto estimula que as pessoas trabalhem em equipa e se ajudem uns aos outros para atingir os objetivos da equipa e do grupo. Nesse aspeto não houve alteração dos objetivos, porque já temos mecanismos que nos permitem controlar situações mais complicadas, porque também é preciso que a empresa gerar dinheiro para pagar todos os bónus. Para além disso, os nossos centros de custo, não são os centros de custos tradicionais, mas sim uns centros de proveito ou de geração de valor.

Entrevistador:

Nesta fase da pandemia, apesar dos objetivos terem tanto um foco financeiro como não financeiro, o foco financeiro perdeu alguma importância?

Entrevistado:

Não, não houve alteração dos objetivos. Os objetivos no geral contemplam sempre estas dimensões, os resultados do grupo é a rentabilidade, portanto as pessoas têm de ser avaliadas por isso. O resultado da equipa pode ser o resultado da fábrica, pode ser financeiro e depois o individual. O do contabilista é o da fábrica, o da sua equipa e o seu desempenho pessoal. O individual à partida não tem componente financeira.

Entrevistador:

As pessoas que já tinham os seus objetivos pré-definidos mantiveram-se iguais?

Entrevistado:

Nada foi alterado. Todas as pessoas têm os objetivos financeiros que representam os objetivos do grupo e se o grupo não atingiu como não atingiu, apesar de empresas dentro do grupo terem atingido e essas pessoas ganharam, as outras já

não. Por exemplo, os meus diretores financeiros têm uma parte individual é a sua empresa e é o grupo, houve alguns que ganharam o individual, ganharam o da sua empresa porque a empresa atingiu, mas não ganharam o do grupo porque o grupo não consegui atingir. Das três partes só ganharam 2/3, houve outros que não atingiram duas partes. E há outros que até não atingiram nenhuma.

Entrevistador:

Como se motivam os trabalhadores nesta altura? Que estratégias foram desenvolvidas para tal, por causa do trabalho em casa?

Entrevistado:

Depende das localizações. Eu giro localizações muito dispersas no mundo. Em Portugal por exemplo, e não depende só do próprio país depende também da própria cultura local onde está inserida cada empresa, não muito preciso grandes medidas. Como estamos numa empresa em reestruturação a grande preocupação das pessoas era não perder o emprego. Nós tentámos proteger ao máximo os empregos, ou seja, não diminuir pessoas, foi o que tentamos sempre mesmo naqueles momentos mais críticos, por exemplo aplicando logo férias às pessoas e para evitar despedir, apesar de no Verão já não poderem gozar grande parte das férias que teriam. As pessoas não perdiam salários nas férias na mesma, isto porque na altura não precisávamos mesmo de trabalho porque não havia produção, e as pessoas foram flexíveis porque sabiam que era a única alternativa e a sua mentalidade já era não perder o emprego. Motivamos sim, mas com coisas algo básicas dado ao que poderíamos fazer. Até porque a empresa tinha saído de um período de reestruturação e do nada entra isto. Ficaram logo todas com medo do que vai acontecer ao grupo. A motivação delas era lutar o mais possível para manter o seu posto de trabalho porque naquela altura se perdiam aquele, não arranjavam facilmente em nenhum lado. A motivação foi natural. Tentámos proteger sempre o rendimento das pessoas, apesar de tudo o que aconteceu,

sendo as férias uma medida, porque as pessoas ganhavam o mesmo e não perdiam benefícios salariais e estavam a alinhar-se com a empresa.

Entrevistador:

Como disse as adaptações como feitas de forma diferente em países diferentes?

Entrevistado:

Sim, até porque em alguns países havia medidas de apoio público como em Portugal e noutros países não. Por exemplo, no México as pessoas eram obrigadas a ir para casa e nós a pagarmos o salário a 100%, o que dificultou imenso a situação.

Entrevistador:

Vamos à última parte agora, às questões relacionadas com os resultados obtidos até então. A indústria das “Auto Parts and Equipment Manufacturing” foi uma das que mais sofreu com a pandemia de acordo com um estudo realizado pela SP&Global em que foi prevista a queda em cerca de 20% para o sector. Foi esta a realidade que a empresa enfrentou?

Entrevistado:

Sim, o grupo sim, um pouco menos cerca de 16%. Em Portugal foi ainda menos, cerca de 13% de perda, no entanto em 2021 está a haver uma grande recuperação em relação ao setor, por causa da nossa adaptabilidade e de percebermos como funciona. O segundo trimestre foi de longe pior em relação ao *budget* que tínhamos delineado, mas houve grande recuperação nos seguintes para valores bem mais próximos até porque o *lockdown* acabou.

Entrevistador:

Até então houve algum tipo de feedback da parte dos colaboradores em relação às medidas de controlo tomadas? Se houve alguns sinais dados pelos mesmos em relação às adaptações realizadas?

Entrevistado:

Trimestralmente são partilhados, como normal, os resultados do grupo com as primeiras linhas e as primeiras linhas fazem a mesma coisa nas suas equipas locais, para as pessoas se sentirem responsabilizadas ou congratuladas por estar a correr mal. O feedback das pessoas, não havendo alteração do processo de comunicação, em alguns casos foi menos agradável. Por exemplo no México, tivemos que reduzir salários e dizer-lhes que em caso contrário não seria possível aguentar a empresa sempre com transparência e através de os informarmos. Poderia ter que despedir pessoas ou mesmo, no limite, fechar a fábrica. No primeiro mês ainda alinharam com alguma reticência, no segundo mês já houve alguns problemas.

Entrevistador:

E em Portugal, com o apoio do estado?

Entrevistado:

Em Portugal qual foi a grande vantagem? Os apoios do Estado ajudaram a atenuar, e aqui as pessoas já trabalham há algum tempo na empresa e, portanto, e têm uma cultura mais de grupo e de empresa, mais alinhadas e com mais orgulho na empresa e ajudaram muito. Mas as medidas para manter os postos de trabalho e rendimentos das pessoas foram muito importantes.

Entrevistador:

Para este futuro próximo há mais adaptações em perspetiva que irão ser feitas ao nível das metas e objetivos dos trabalhadores, planeamento, budget ou avaliação do desempenho?

Entrevistado:

Claro, as metas foram adequadas à realidade que temos, não podemos ter metas inatingíveis. O *budget* para 2021 que tenho agora deste primeiro ano, deste primeiro quinquénio é diferente do que o que eu tinha o ano passado para 2021,

que era o segundo ano do *budget* no fundo e, portanto, está toda a gente alinhada de cima para baixo com os novos objetivos.

Entrevistador:

Vai haver um maior *follow-up*...?

Entrevistado:

Não porque esse grande *follow-up* já existe todos os anos e é continuar sempre a fazê-lo e a dialogar com as pessoas e a partilhar informação constantemente.

Entrevistador:

Da minha parte é tudo, tem alguma questão que queira fazer?

Entrevistado:

Não, não.

Entrevistador:

Muito obrigado, então, pelo tempo disponibilizado para a entrevista. Posteriormente até posso partilhar os resultados da tese consigo se assim o desejar.

Entrevistado:

Sim gostaria que mos enviasse claro. Obrigado.

Interview to Company X – transcription

Entrevistador:

Bom dia, em primeiro lugar, gostava de lhe agradecer por ter aceitado o meu convite para esta entrevista.

Antes de começarmos, e antes de explicar todo o contexto da entrevista eu quero apenas esclarecer-lhe alguns pontos. Em primeiro lugar, a informação que eu recolher é confidencial e será apenas usada no âmbito deste estudo. Os resultados serão reportados de uma forma agregada, sem o identificar individualmente ou

à empresa que representa. E sempre que fizer alguma referência específica a si ou à empresa será referido através de códigos, tal como empresa X ou entrevistado Y, portanto, pode estar completamente seguro relativamente a esse aspeto. Por fim, gostaria de pedir a sua autorização para gravar esta entrevista, para posteriormente eu poder fazer a transcrição e analisar de forma mais aprofundada a informação. É possível?

Entrevistada:

Sim

Entrevistador:

Posto isto, esta entrevista surge como método de estudo da minha dissertação para concluir o Mestrado em Gestão, com especialização em *Business Analytics*. Desta forma, com esta entrevista gostaria de explorar três aspetos principais: Alguns resultados das respostas por parte da empresa ao inquérito, através de uma análise mais aprofundada aos mesmos; As dificuldades impostas pela pandemia que a empresa teve de ultrapassar e adaptações que tiveram de ser feitas, sempre com o foco no controlo de gestão; Por último, os resultados que a empresa obteve até então, comparando com os resultados passados e o que se prevê agora para este futuro um bocadinho mais incerto.

Desta forma, em primeiro lugar gostaria que me definisse as suas funções na empresa?

Entrevistada:

Eu trabalho juntamente com o administrador da empresa, que é o único em Portugal. O meu cargo abrange algumas áreas, nomeadamente as áreas de Recursos Humanos, Formação, Tradução, Secretariada e também, depois, dou apoio nas áreas que ele me pede ou para o substituir, por exemplo em Gestão de Comunicação Públicas, como em escolas ou Câmaras e eventos que é necessário. A área financeira que temos aqui em Portugal, deixe-me só enquadrá-lo um

bocadinho, nós somos uma empresa internacional e temos a nossa sede na Alemanha que controla tudo e todos os processos e nós aqui fazemos aquilo que eles nos pedem. Localmente, o reporte é feito daqui para lá mediante os pedidos que existem. Existe já um calendário de informação que é enviado e depois existem pedidos pontuais para nós fazermos um reporte nas áreas do *controlling*. Estamos organizados por áreas, ou seja, cada *controller* tem uma área de A a Z, por exemplo, temos um *controller* para uma fábrica, temos um *controller* de *corporate*, temos outro para *service* e fazem de A a Z. Há empresas que se organizam por *controllers* financeiras e de negócio, mas a nossa não, o nosso faz tudo e domina perfeitamente aquela área. Toda a nossa função aqui é de reporte para a sede e eles decidem tudo.

Entrevistador:

Claro, isto em Viana do Castelo, certo?

Entrevistada:

Sim, a nossa sede é em Viana do Castelo, neste momento estamos com quase 2000 trabalhadores. Estamos a crescer bastante bem, temos três fábricas em Viana, temos um escritório grande e administrativo também em Viana, com quase 200 pessoas e temos técnicos que estão espalhados pelo país e também são cerca de 200, temos também técnicos espalhados pelo mundo que são os da instalação, que fazem a montagem das máquinas. Em Portugal não há mercado, eles estão cerca de 90 e muitos por cento fora do país, também são cerca de 200 e depois temos a fábrica de Lanheses que tem cerca de 120 pessoas e temos um pequeno escritório em Lisboa. Vamos abrir este ano um escritório do Porto.

Entrevistador:

Muito bem. Vamos então dar início à entrevista propriamente dita e começar por explorar alguns tópicos que derivam do inquérito aprofundando algumas questões, só uma ou duas.

No inquérito, ficou visível, que o processo de planeamento estratégico é bastante detalhado e tem um nível moderado de flexibilidade. Consegue-me descrever em linhas gerais como este é criado e como se desenvolve ao longo do ano num ano normal pré-covid?

Entrevistada:

O planeamento é feito em dois grandes momentos, ou seja, o planeamento do ano N é começado no ano N-1 e por regra a partir de setembro. Ou seja, começa-se a fazer o orçamento etc. e começamos a fazer os custos para o ano seguinte, no entanto por volta de junho, mais ou menos, é feito, por regra, um ajustamento. O momento em que nós vemos como estão as coisas. Nós também estamos dependentes do tempo (clima), que é algo muito básico. Por exemplo imaginando que eu tenho um parque para montar num sítio qualquer, se atrasar, pode ser por neve, ventos excessivos, por calor excessivo também, tudo isto vai atrasar tudo o que está para trás, desde questões de logística, planeamento de recursos humanos, fornecedores, gruas, tudo está interligado, ou seja, estamos muito dependentes daquilo que não controlamos. Isto faz com que a meio do ano, pelo menos uma vez, façamos uma análise. Por regra, a empresa X, nos últimos anos, faz em setembro uma pequena nova análise. Lá está, como nós dependemos de algo que não controlamos precisamos de fazer mais controlo, porque precisamos de ajustar produção, e na nossa produção não estamos a falar de peças pequenas, são muito grandes e com muito peso e caras. No detalhe da informação, nós temos efetivamente os *target times*, isto para a parte de *service*, que é um cálculo que eles têm de fazer na produção que é feito recorrendo a uma série de ferramentas, meteorologia e por aí... Por exemplo, para produzir determinada peça ou para fazer determinada tarefa no terreno eu tenho um tempo estimado de X e depois as pessoas vão registando, à medida que vão fazendo as tarefas, os seus tempos e vão fazendo medidas. Se estiver abaixo do *target time*, perfeito, se estiver acima, significa que algo está a correr mal, e até pode acontecer que o

target tenha sido mal definido, e temos que analisar estes desvios. Outra coisa tem a ver com o custo hora que está planeado de acordo com o orçamento que desenvolvemos no ano anterior, mas, por razões diversas, pode alterar-se. Imaginando-se que numa fábrica tenho um problema na produção e esta atrasou-se uma semana, perfeitamente possível, neste caso vamos ter de recuperar a produção com *overtime*, sendo que o meu preço vai ficar mais alto porque tenho que pagar o tempo normal e trabalho e ainda mais *overtime*. Há imensas variáveis que podem influenciar, que nem sempre têm a ver connosco internamente. Conseguimos atingir um nível de detalhe bastante pormenorizado porque tem a ver com o negócio. Cada área depois divide-se em centros de custos e nós temos de imputar os custos de uma peça de uma turbina, por exemplo, a cada centro de custos e nisso fazemos imputação em todas as áreas.

Entrevistador:

Ao nível do processo de planeamento ainda, qual é o nível de participação dos colaboradores? São só as primeiras linhas? Só a gestão de topo?

Entrevistada:

Cada centro de custos tem um *owner*, que não significa que seja só o responsável do departamento. Às vezes o departamento é tão grande, que tem vários centros de custo, em que o principal é o responsável pelo departamento, mas depois também tem os intermédios, que se justificam aos responsáveis pelo departamento. E depois cada um vai gerindo e aprovando as coisas que lhe aparecem, os custos, as faturas, vai aprovando de acordo com o facto de ser ou não dono do centro de custo.

Entrevistador:

Ok. Agora mais na parte do orçamento, a empresa tem no *budget*, uma ferramenta fundamental para o seu exercício anual com revisões não frequentes ao mesmo, o que vai de encontro a uma visão puramente tradicional de mecanismos de controlo de acordo com variados autores como David Otley ou Hope e Fraser.

Sentiu que neste período mais incerto o *budget* continuou a impor a sua preponderância na empresa ou houve alguma flexibilidade maior dado ao mesmo? As revisões foram ainda mais frequentes? Ou manteve-se tudo igual mais ou menos?

Entrevistada:

Houve uma constância porque de facto nós nunca parámos de trabalhar na pandemia. Notamos de facto um bocadinho o impacto da pandemia especialmente no início naquelas atividades que tinham a ver com internacional porque houve países que se fecharam totalmente, como agora temos, a Portugal mesmo. Quando temos atividade nesse país nota-se o impacto, quando falamos numa fábrica que esteja totalmente em Portugal o impacto que estamos a falar é no número de horas das pessoas que estão em casa, ou por isolamento profilático que não foram muitos. Nas atividades que são internacionais tivemos de recorrer ao *lay-off*, mas nas de cá não aconteceu, porque continuamos sempre a trabalhar. Ajustamos os turnos, como ter de sair meia hora antes ou entrar meia hora depois para que não parasse a atividade.

Entrevistador:

Certo, agora questões relacionadas com a adaptação à pandemia focadas no controlo de Gestão, ou seja, tudo o que aconteceu após a pandemia do Covid-19 nos anos 2020 e 2021

Como foi desenvolvido o planeamento deste ano? Em que pontos foi o ciclo anual de planeamento foi afetado?

Entrevistada:

Nós continuamos sempre com a atividade e partimos do pressuposto de que a atividade iria continuar da forma como esta estava planeada. Mais do que a pandemia, o que é capaz de ter tido mais efeito na nossa atividade, nem foi a pandemia, mas sim as condições climáticas. Na pandemia tive apenas cerca de

10% das pessoas em casa. Tivemos um impacto mais internacional, mas no local conseguimos controlar. Aumentou um bocadinho o *lead time* de entregar as matérias primas, mas o envio das coisas para o estrangeiro também ficou mais lento e as coisas estão mais paradas. Nós não parámos a atividade, mesmo no escritório, quem foi para casa há um ano, ninguém parou, estamos sempre a trabalhar.

Entrevistador:

Muito bem, ainda bem que assim foi. Alguma ferramenta de controlo foi reformulada ou implementada neste período de pandemia, de acordo com aquelas abordadas no inquérito? Talvez em Portugal não, mas na empresa.

Isto ao nível da formalização dos processos, a liberdade de circulação da informação dentro da empresa ou mesmo ao nível da visibilidade do trabalho realizados pelos trabalhadores para a gestão de topo.

Entrevistada:

No início, nós não tínhamos qualquer ferramenta de teletrabalho nem de trabalho remoto, o que causou alguma estranheza. A própria empresa não aceitava e de repente pusemos 200 pessoas em casa. A verdade é que estão em casa quase há um ano, eu sou uma delas, e tem corrido bem. No início houve aquela incerteza, com a proteção dos colaboradores, como é que nós íamos gerir por exemplo na política de IT. Com a troca dos computadores fixos por portáteis, muitas pessoas tiveram de levar os fixos para casa. No início, foi um bocadinho desconfiado, não vou dizer que não, mas depois fomos conseguindo perceber que as coisas iam aparecendo feitas, as pessoas passaram a ter um bocado mais de liberdade para trabalhar e acabam por até trabalhar mais, até porque não há grande coisa para fazer. As pessoas passaram a ter um regime de controlo em que elas próprias fazem o registo das suas horas e nós podemos verificar, mas não o fazemos, e depois as pessoas enviam o registo, e nós acreditamos porque as coisas estão a

acontecer. As pessoas passaram a ter esta maior liberdade, trabalham de manhã, de tarde ou à noite. O controlo foi meramente resultado do trabalho feito.

Entrevistador:

Eu ia-lhe questionar relativamente ao facto de como se conseguiu motivar as pessoas nesta época de pandemia, mas também já percebi que a motivação foi um pouco natural.

Entrevistada:

Foi, porque temos muitas pessoas que nem são de Viana do Castelo, moram longe da empresa, tornou-se extremamente vantajoso esta nova forma de trabalho porque poupam nas viagens, algumas com um custo mensal médio de 400 euros líquidos. Há um ano que este custo não existe, ou seja, desta forma acabaram por ter o salário deles “aumentado”, porque não têm este custo. Sempre que é preciso vão lá ao escritório, mas é muito raramente e tornou-se vantajoso porque, lá está, não perdem este tempo de viagem, veem o salário líquido aumentado, não há o desgaste das viaturas, não é necessária a combinação de boleias, estão perto de casa e da família e combinar o horário com o da família. Ou seja, estas pessoas, o grosso dos trabalhadores, acabou por ficar satisfeito com estas medidas. Até as pessoas de Viana estão em casa e gostam porque estão no conforto da sua casa e sentem-se mais protegidos do vírus. Nós num ano nunca pensamos em regressar por exemplo, e eu sei de empresas que foram para casa, foram para o escritório, e andam nisto. Nós não dissemos para regressar e isto foi uma coisa muito apreciada mesmo ali em junho/julho em que não regressamos quando o vírus acalmou, por decisão da administração. Isto foi de facto um fator de motivação inesperado para nós, porque as pessoas perceberam que a empresa cuida deles e que prefere que as pessoas, mesmo vivendo perto, fiquem em casa, em vez de se exporem a uma possível infeção, e isto correu muito bem.

Entrevistador:

Agora, a nível de *targets* e objetivos dos trabalhadores, consegue-me explicar como funcionam? Se são exclusivamente financeiros e ligados aos resultados financeiros da empresa... Se são também não financeiros. Houve algum procedimento que tenha sido tomado?

Entrevistada:

Todas as áreas da empresa têm o seu *balance scorecard* e os seus indicadores, tem a sua análise mensal e o seu *target* anual. Mensalmente vemos o que vai variando e onde temos que interferir. Quando falamos em áreas de produção ou áreas de técnicos eles são realmente avaliados por estes indicadores, cada um na sua área, ou seja, os indicadores do *service*, os indicadores da instalação, os indicadores da supervisão. Eles vão buscar os indicadores que têm mais impacto na produção, ou seja aqueles que têm mais peso e a cada um deles estão ligados sistemas de incentivos. Como é que isto acontece? Por exemplo, um operador, da fábrica tem uma componente variável de cerca de 25% do seu salário mensal ligado a indicadores e ele tem de dar da perna para lá chegar, ele e todos, claro que tem uma parte individual que está ligada só à sua pessoa, mas no geral tem uma parte de indicadores que são todos os meses afixados, esse *achievement*, que normalmente são sempre os mesmos, não ser que haja alterações do *balance scorecard*, aí são alterados. Mas todos os meses afixamos o *achievement* dos indicadores por áreas, e eles recebem dinheiro por isso. Isto faz com que todos puxem uns pelos outros e é uma forma de os pôr a produzir e a trabalhar e também motivar, para além disso, é uma forma de os informar da forma de como são avaliados, eles e nós.

Entrevistador:

Ou seja, é um objetivo de equipa sempre?

Entrevistada:

A parte produtiva sim. Depois, lá, tem um só indicador que é pessoal

Entrevistador:

E esse é financeiro ou não financeiro?

Entrevistada:

É não financeiro. Os outros sim, são todos ligados com produção, que pode ter a ver com qualidade do produto, horas... O pessoal é algo que eles conseguem controlar.

Entrevistador:

Já me disse que a produção não parou, então quer dizer que estes objetivos não foram reformulados ou redefinidos?

Entrevistada:

Não, por acaso não, e eu não lhe sei explicar como porque como é que uma fábrica com mais de 800 pessoas só tem 5 casos positivos. Nunca tivemos nenhum foco, positivos contínuos andamos na média dos 5 e mesmo os isolamentos profiláticos também não são muitos. O que eu entendo, até hoje, é que as medidas de segurança estão acima das legalmente previstas, e como tal, são mais rigorosas. Do género já antes de ser obrigatório tínhamos as câmaras de medição de temperatura corporal e alguém que tenha algum tipo de risco vai para casa e mesmo quando a DGS diz que pode voltar a sair de casa, só entra na fábrica depois de apresentar um teste negativo e garantimos o tempo que ficam em casa. As regras internamente são mais fechadas quando comparando com o que está cá fora e se calhar justifica. Temos até o indicador de que as pessoas que foram infetadas foram na vida privada e não na fábrica.

Entrevistador:

Agora, para finalizar, queria fazer-lhe umas questões relacionadas com os resultados obtidos até então.

A empresa Wind Europe, num estudo, estimou um impacto negativo nas instalações eólicas para 2020, que será 30% face às mudanças da indústria

relativamente ao covid e que as receitas iriam cair. Foi esta realidade que a empresa enfrentou?

Entrevistada:

Não porque nós já tínhamos as coisas planeadas *bottom-up*, ou seja, neste momento o mercado está muito calmo, nós já sabíamos muito bem onde é que íamos fazer os projetos e os projetos que íamos fazer para este ano são os que vamos fazer, não vamos fazer mais. Ou seja, como quando planeámos, fazemo-lo por baixo e o impacto acabou por se dissipar. O maior impacto que efetivamente tivemos foi no fecho de países que atrasou processos e na entrega de materiais. Foi os maiores impactos que tivemos, mas também isto também foi absorvido pela continuidade da produção e atividade. Juntamente com um planeamento abaixo do que estamos habituados o impacto acabou por se dissipar na totalidade. Houve sempre um bocadinho, mas não lhe vou dizer que foi brutal.

Entrevistador:

Muitas empresas tiveram um impacto assinalável claro.

Entrevistada:

Pois! Nós recrutamos cerca de 500 pessoas o ano passado, a empresa já é conhecida por estar em contraciclo, sempre!

Entrevistador:

Até então houve algum tipo de feedback da parte dos colaboradores em relação às medidas de controlo tomadas? Se houve alguns sinais dados pelos mesmos em relação às adaptações realizadas

Entrevistada:

Sim, sim claro! Como já disse as pessoas estão em casa e estão muito motivadas porque notam que a empresa dá mais importância ao bem-estar do que ao resto.

E também nas fábricas sentem-se seguras, porque as medidas estão bem acima do que o que a DGS pede.

Entrevistador:

Para este futuro próximo há mais adaptações em perspectiva que irão ser feitas ao nível das metas e objetivos dos trabalhadores, planeamento, *budget* ou mesmo avaliação do desempenho, entre outros? Ou vai ser um processo mais de aprendizagem contínua para já?

Entrevistada:

Não, vai haver ajustamentos e vai ser antes de junho. Até porque ninguém estava a espera que isto durasse tanto tempo. E até a vacinação vai ter impacto, porque tudo isto tem a ver com as pessoas e se as pessoas não estiverem bem para trabalhar não vai dar, por isso pode haver aqui efetivamente uma revisão, sendo que o que pode alterar vai ser aquilo que não depende localmente de nós, ou seja, o que está no internacional.

Entrevistador:

Ok, da minha parte está tudo concluído. Não sei se tem alguma questão para colocar.

Entrevista:

Não tranquilo. Se tiver alguma dúvida pode-me contactar à vontade, tenho todo o gosto em ajudar.

Entrevistador:

Muito obrigado. Então se no futuro for necessário acrescentar algo entro em contacto consigo, tudo bem?

Entrevistada:

Sim, sim, sim...

Entrevistador:

Muito bem, eu em março entrego a tese, depois posso partilhar os resultados com a empresa se assim o desejar.

Entrevistada:

Claro, envie para mim se não se importar

Entrevistador:

Tudo bem. Mais uma vez muito obrigado e bom dia.

Entrevistada:

De nada, bom dia!