ORLANDO LIMA RUA
(org.)

CREATIVITY AND BUSINESS INNOVATION

(VOLUME III)

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CEOS.PP
CENTRE FOR ORGANISATIONAL AND
SOCIAL STUDIES OF POLYTECHNIC OF PORTO

INDEX

PREFACE

The bachelor's degree in Creativity and Business Innovation is a joint study programme offered by the Polytechnic of Porto (P.PORTO), through the Porto School of Accounting and Administration (ISCAP), Vilnius Kolegija - University of Applied Sciences (VIKO), from Lithuania and the Estonian Entrepreneurship University of Applied Sciences (EUAS), from Estonia.

This is a pioneer degree in the context of Portuguese higher education, taught in English. Due to its innovative character, it responds to the new paradigms that higher education institutions (HEI) will have to face. With innovative syllabus, teaching/learning methodologies and assessment methods it develops new paths for higher education programmes.

To conclude this degree, students must develop and present a Final Thesis (Project). Thus, the present book compiles, in the form of chapters, some of the work presented by the students during the academic year of 2021/22. They have been organised in the form of volumes, being the third volume presented (Volume III).

The objectives of this book are (1) to allow students of this bachelor's degree to develop and consolidate knowledge in the various disciplinary areas of Management, (2) to support students in finalising their Final Thesis (Project), and, finally, (3) to promote the transfer of knowledge from Academia to Society.

The organizer and the authors of the chapters are grateful for the support of the entrepreneurship and innovation research line of the Center for Organisational and Social Studies of Polytechnic of Porto (CEOS.PP).

CHAPTER 1 – THE IMPACT OF DIGITAL INFLUENCERS IN THE TOURISM INDUSTRY

Francisca Monteiro

Orlando Lima Rua

ABSTRACT

This research aims to recognize the impact that digital influencers have when it comes to the tourism industry. Furthermore, the purpose of this study is to understand how the general public interacts with the influencers and how these impact their personal choices.

A quantitative methodology was developed through a questionnaire with a total of 85 answers from the general public to find how social media is linked to their daily lives, how they connect with influencers, and how this connection may or may not impact the way they go about their own decisions.

The results show that individuals are spending significant amounts of time on social media, with a higher preference for Instagram. Furthermore, social media influencers have highly valued opinions that do impact the decision-making process.

It is advised that while reading this study, the general public should keep in mind that this is limited to a European cultural and social standpoint.

Keywords: Social media, Influencers, Influencer marketing, Tourism industry.

INTRODUCTION

Over the years, an increasing number of companies experimented with "stealth marketing" (Osterhout, 2010), in which "random" consumers were paid to promote innovative products to unwary bystanders or hired to become 'brand pushers' whose targets were their gullible friends. A significant part of this work was conducted through word-of-mouth, designated areas, email, and early social media. In the 2010s, however, a new marketing phenomenon emerged: the influencer.

This paper focuses on three major themes: marketing, social media, and tourism, to analyse the impact of digital travel influencers in the decision-making process of visitors and in the promotion of tourism destinations. Digital marketing, destination marketing, influencer marketing, and digital influencers are discussed in the Marketing domain. From the standpoint of social networks, Instagram, and the idea of "instagrammable" are emphasised. As it relates to tourism, the emphasis is on a triangle of forces and effects formed by Tourist Destinations, the Market (Supply and Demand views), and DMOs (Destination Management Organizations) seen as harmonising and accelerating parts of strategies and resources among stakeholders.

LITERATURE REVIEW

SOCIAL MEDIA

According to Dutta-Bergman (2004) the evolution of media can be explained by displacement – the idea that when a new "media channel" comes along, it ultimately replaces the ones already in place. This only occurs when two "media channels" have the same purpose and must compete (Ramirez et al., 2008)

Practically speaking, social media is a group of software-based digital technologies that allow users to send and receive information through some sort of online social network - which can be presented as an app and/or website. In a broader perspective, social media is a digital place intrinsically connected to most people's daily lives (Appel et al., 2019). These scholars also state that this leads to decreased interest in the platform itself and increased concern for what other people do in these environments, which consequently translates to an overflow of shared information.

Gowey (2014) states that social media is designed to develop and enrich online communities for networking at its most basic level. He further compares social media usage with

any other social interactions we may partake in our daily lives, like making small talk with a co-worker over a coffee break.

As social networks emerged, individuals were given a new structure that allowed them to connect differently with the people around them. Through these platforms, users could now develop and tap into different communities and as it evolved, the social graph became the basis for information access (Boyd, 2015).

Since its early stages, social media has evolved from representing electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and content creation to becoming an ecosystem in which varied and intricate interactions can occur between different thespians (organizations, businesses, and individuals). Nowadays, social media is widely used and culturally relevant (Appel et al., 2019), so much so that research led by Swant (2016), shows that influencers have become as relevant as traditional WOM, with 49% of Twitter users reporting that they rely on influencers' endorsements.

Due to the explosion of the internet, WOM has become a "mainstream subfield within marketing on the academic side" (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016). Research conducted by Wang (2011), has shown that eWOM is an influential means in persuading members of the public towards using a certain product, as users often do not see a reason for the original poster to enhance the reality of a product as it would not be in their best interest. The techniques used in gathering positive eWOM are very similar to the ones used in traditional WOM marketing, with the differentiation that in the electronic form, the message has a broader reach (Simpson & Siguaw, 2008).

The overall business strategy across platforms has been to monetize users (audiences) by giving advertising services to anybody desiring to reach those audiences with digital content and marketing messages (Appel et al. 2019) Further research (Moe & Trusov, 2011; Stephen and Galak, 2009), has determined the advantages of using social media for marketing purposes. One solid example of this is the "refer a friend" feature, which has positively affected marketing outcomes, particularly when talking about new consumers and sales.

Table 1 – WOM & eWOM: Defining terms

WOM	eWOM	Reference
Oral = Spoken words	Written = Text-based	Berger et al., 2013
Private = Closed access to one receiver	Public = Open access to any number of receivers	Schlosser, 2005
Non-computer-mediated = No electronic devices are used to facilitate communication	Computer-mediated = Electronic devices connected to an online network to facilitate communication	Walther, 2011

Source: Porter (2017).

INFLUENCERS

Influence is a universal concept. We say that we exert influence on someone whenever there is importance or relevance in what we are trying to convey. It is the ability to change the behaviour, opinions, or thoughts of others (Caldini, 1987). Nowadays, through the increased use of information technologies, we find the concept of influence in social media (Rosa et al., 2017).

Survey data and extensive literature review state that social media has evolved rapidly during the last decade and consumer behaviours resulting in new social media marketing strategies. It is crucial that businesses understand these channels and how to exploit them (Mintel, 2009) positively.

Instead of the traditional celebrities who become famous because of films, music, and TV shows, other individuals acquire fame solely through their presence on social media and the content they produce (Khamis et al., 2017). Upon studying this new sort of celebrities, it was discovered that consumers perceived them as more authentic (Stefanone et al., 2010), and there is a higher feeling of relatability towards them which leads to the creation of stronger connections (Tran & Strutton, 2014). Furthermore, they believe these effects translate into a higher purchase intention of the products that social media celebrities favour.

These social media celebrities can be otherwise known as influencers - "people who built a large network of followers and are regarded as trusted tastemakers in one or several niches" (De Veirman et al., 2017, p. 1).

Engagement Labs (2021, p.1) define influencers as "everyday consumers who are substantially more likely than the average to seek out information and share ideas, information, and recommendations with other people. They do this by volunteering their opinions about products and services that they feel passionate about and being turned to for their knowledge, advice, and insights".

According to Raposo (2020), some categories can help us distinguish the influencers depending on the type of content they create and their target audience:

- Digital Natives – someone who started their career in digital marketing.
- Celebrities – these are public personalities who already were considered famous in other social settings and this fame ends up being transferred to the social media setting.
- Experts – these are individuals who are knowledgeable in a certain field (gastronomy, business, …).
- Bloggers – these are individuals who communicate with their audience through a "blog" platform.

- Micro-influencers – ordinary people or experts on a particular topic who have a niche following.

Furthermore, he states that the influencers may also be categorized by the total number of followers they have: (1) Micro influencers – 5000 to 10 000; (2) Macro influencers – 10 000 to 100 000; (3) Mega influencers – above 100 000.

The status of digital influencers will differ based on the range and credibility that brands wish to achieve. These two criteria allow for a greater (or minor) reach according to the number of influencers on a particular Instagram account (Santos, 2018).

Micro-influencers are increasingly in demand for the daily sharing of content, and for the truthfulness and credibility, they convey to their community. Generally, the ads are not paid for by the brands. The rewards range from free samples of products or services. The macro-influencers can deliver both credibility and reach. Celebrities or mega influencers usually have arrangements of paid content and have a greater reach than the other hierarchical classifications (Santos, 2018).

Glover (2009), concludes that further credibility, increased recall, and brand recognition, are all benefits associated with the use of influencers in marketing. She further underlines their importance in the tourism sector, suggesting that their testimonials can significantly influence destination image and awareness. This phenomenon has been documented and studied thoroughly (McCartey & Pinto, 2014)

Influencer marketing

Social media has become a new hybrid component of integrated marketing communications that allows organizations to establish strong relationships with their consumers (Mangold & Faulds 2009).

Carter (2016, p. 2) defines influencer marketing as "a rapidly growing industry that attempts to promote products or increase brand awareness through content spread by social media users considered influential". Swant (2016) defends that influencer marketing relies on people who have developed a significant reputation and are following social media rather than resorting to traditional marketing strategies/tools.

According to Nanji (2017), just 24% of marketers have active influencer programs, and only 5% have incorporated influencers into all aspects of their marketing efforts. Many marketers are still testing the waters with influencer marketing. One of the reasons is that it is still challenging to calculate the ROI of an influencer campaign. Aside from this, other challenges of influencer marketing are 1) finding the right influencer; 2) using the proper engagement

tactics and 3) accurately measuring the performance of an influencer campaign (eMarketer, 2015).

Influencer marketers presently integrate QR codes, promotional codes, and trackable links to able to correlate influencer activity with product purchases and determine the ROI of influencer campaigns. They also depend more on content monetization systems to give them performance metrics (Influencermarketinghub.com, 2017).

In a study, Swant (2016) shows that 40% of participants have purchased an item after seeing it being used by an influencer on Instagram, Twitter, or YouTube. This same study concluded that Twitter users showed 5.2 times increase in purchase intent when subjected to brand and influencer content about a particular product. Furthermore, it has been proven that marketing campaigns linked to an influencer achieve 11 times more return on investment than conventional advertising. (Kirkpatrick, 2016). Other activities such as product reviews, event coverage, affiliate links, and brand mentions are the most important and have shown to be the most effective tactics presently used by marketers (Krasniak, 2016).

Social media is an example of a less expensive tool for conventional advertising (Granberg, 2019), and its massive proportions can be seen in Figure 1.
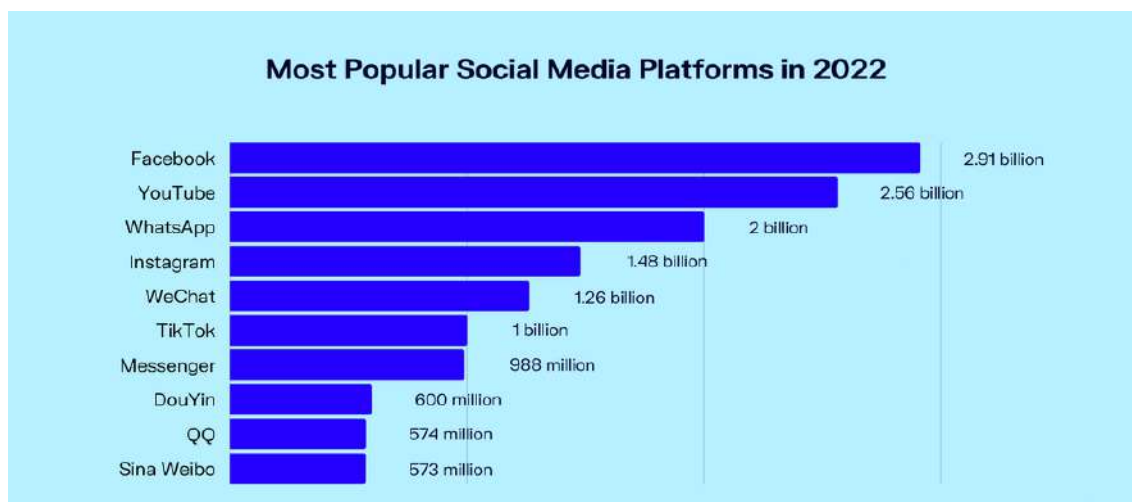

Most Popular Social Media Platforms in 2022

Platform	Users
Facebook	2.91 billion
YouTube	2.56 billion
WhatsApp	2 billion
Instagram	1.48 billion
WeChat	1.26 billion
TikTok	1 billion
Messenger	988 million
DouYin	600 million
QQ	574 million
Sina Weibo	573 million

Figure 1 - Popular social media platforms in 2022, ranked by number of monthly active users
Source: https://www.shopify.com/blog/most-popular-social-media-platforms

Facebook is the social media platform with the highest number of users, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp. Instagram is one of the youngest (2010) out of all the networks displayed in the table above and yet, it's already located at the top. Initially, it was only available to IOS users but in 2012, Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook bought Instagram and the platform expanded to the Android operating system, reaching an even larger number of users (Ting et al., 2015).

Facebook vs instagram

Facebook is a classic social network that has remained the leading social platform with 2,91 billion active monthly users (Table 2) and $6,820 million in advertising income, up 59% from 2015 (Leibowitz, 2018). On the other hand, Instagram has 1,41 billion active monthly users (Table 2) and counts more than 1 million advertisers (Leibowitz, 2018), making it not only the fastest-growing social media in Western countries (Constine, 2018), but also the one where people rather spend their time on (Sheldon & Bryant, 2016) – Alter's research (2018), found that users stay 45% longer when comparing to Facebook.

Previous research conducted by Dehghani and Tumer (2015) has categorized Facebook as the archetypal leading social media and discovered that, by exploiting eWOM, the platform's advertisements improve brand equity and image but they also increase intrusiveness issues (Lin & Kim, 2016). Moreover, newer social media channels, like Instagram, are effective tools for building brand recognition and engaging with younger generations (Barry et al., 2016).

According to Sutherland (2014), Instagram Stories revolve around the idea of sharing a moment for a limited amount of time (24h). This feature brings into play the ephemeral content which motivates users to regularly open the app in search of updates. On the other hand, most content on Facebook doesn't create this urge since most of the content is static. Another key factor that Facebook lacks and decreases user persuasion, is freedom. Unlike Instagram where users can decide whether or not they want to interact with the advertisement that appears in between their Stories (e.g., skip, stop, follow a hashtag, …), on Facebook, when scrolling through the Facebook Wall the ads that appear before many videos are non-skippable and less dynamic which leads to them being perceived as more intrusive and controlling (Pashkevich et al., 2012). Through the psychological reactance theory (Steindl et al., 2015), researchers can conclude that advertisements that interfere with the user's cognitive processes and are associated with the loss of freedom are perceived as negative (Goodrich et al., 2015).

According to Kim and Johnson (2016), on Instagram (particularly with the "Stories" feature), advertisements frequently imitate user involvement by using full-screen recordings, animated elements (…), in contrast to Facebook, where sponsor material is displayed in a more stable and condensed area. These Instagram trends, together with the idea that "Stories" are immediate and personal, help decrease perceptions of intrusiveness of advertisements and boost brand familiarity and likeability. Additionally, because Instagram aims to be beneficial for both personal and business brand promotion, users are likely to perceive the advertising more favourably than on other social media platforms.

"Instagrammable"

In the social media era, and with more individuals trying to make content creation their job, the competition for content production that is appealing is crucial.

"Instagrammable" is an adjective used when producing content which is considered to be attractive and/or interesting enough to be posted on Instagram (Cambridge Dictionary), however with the globalization of the term, this word can also be used for anything "that attracts attention worthy to be shared on social media" (Urban Dictionary). This concept is known and used by most Instagram users however what one considers to be instagrammable is subjective and can differ from person to person (Putra et al., 2019). Pictures are very powerful on their own and can convey feelings, sensations, experiences, etc. (Anderson & Lodging, 2017).

TOURISM WITHIN INFLUENCER MARKETING

Over the years, social media has grown to have a major influence on the choices potential travellers make. As in these platforms, other individuals will share their past trips as well as their recommendations after they have visited a certain location, this is a source of information about potential destinations (Law et al., 2015). This evolution of social media affects consumer travel behaviour, and the information-seeking process as social media users can search for specific online communities to collect data on destinations other users have visited. This behaviour turned social media into an asset for tourism (Ben-Shaul & Reichel, 2018).

For marketeers, it is vital the understand the part that WOM plays in the perception of the potential travellers about the destination and how to match the right costumer group with the resources they need to achieve a positive reaction about a destination. (Scholl-Grissemann et al., 2019).

The broader offer of mobile apps, which allow individuals to no longer need a computer to use social media (Vu et al., 2018), enables users to easily share their feelings and opinions with their followers and instantly portray how their experience is unfolding, this phenomenon is called the "Social Visibility of Brand Consumption" (Josiassen & Assaf, 2013). This overflow of information can work in favour, but also against the destination/company in question since the exposition also leads to the easy spread of negative feedback.

According to Gretzel (2017), major hotel chains have been the leading users of influencer marketing in the travel and tourism industry, with destinations catching up but still falling behind. Influencer marketing has shown to be more successful than DMOs directly endorsing destinations in this industry. Bokunewicz and Shulman (2017) state that, in the context of global competition, DMOs are more prone to use influencers to reach more people because they often

have fewer active followers. Additionally, DMOs also work with influencers to draw in demographic groups which seem to be more gullible like digital natives, or women (Khamis et al. 2017).

In tourism, influencer marketing is a critical part of the destination's branding strategy as influencers can enhance its overall image (Gretzel, 2017). Despite being one of the possible causes of over-tourism in certain regions, influencers may also be leveraged to promote behavioural change and reroute tourism flows to less crowded areas (Gretzel, 2019). Furthermore, destination stereotypes may be fought by DMOs if their social print is being used effectively even if through influencer marketing.

Munar (2011), concludes that a significant amount of "user-generated content" (UGC) has been produced because of the empowerment of tourists on social media, which has significant ramifications for DMOs. The most common type of electronic word-of-mouth is user-generated content, which has severely restricted the DMOs' ability to regulate information about their destinations (Litvin et al., 2008) While conventional information sources are losing appeal, consumer-to-consumer communication is becoming more and more common and in the cluttered information environment, DMOs have trouble projecting the image of the desired destination and in managing the various forms and sources of UGC. (Hays et al., 2013). Given these difficulties, influencer marketing becomes a viable option for DMOs to recapture the attention of the audience and take back some control over the relevant information being broadcasted regarding a particular destination. (De Veirman et al., 2017).

RESEARCH TOPICS

According to the purpose of the study, meaningful and representative samples of a given demographic are used in quantitative research. The formulation of the study objectives and the attempt to quantify the prevalence of a phenomenon are therefore two of the most crucial elements in this sort of technique (Pocinho & Matos, 2022).

From the concepts mentioned in Table 2, several foundational concerns to which an answer is sought were considered.

RQ1: Is WOM being replaced by eWOM?

RQ2: How does social media impact travel behaviours?

RQ3: How important is influencer marketing in the tourism industry?

RQ4: How does the aesthetic of a destination impact its popularity?

Table 2 - Theoretical foundation of the research questions

Research Topics	Authors	Research Questions
Credibility	(Santos, 2018); (Yen & Teng, 2015); (Swant, 2016); (McCarthy & Pinto, 2014); (Mangold & Faulds, 2009); (Glover, 2009)	Q2. Q3
Influencer Marketing	(Gretzel, 2017); (De Veirman et al., 2017); (Nanji, 2017); (Swant, 2016); (Josiassen & Assaf, 2013);	Q2, Q3
"Instagrammable"	(Putra et al., 2019); (Anderson & Lodging, 2017); (Urban Dictionary)	Q2, Q4
Social Media	(Appel et al., 2019); (Boyd, 2015); Gowey (2014); (Ramirez et al., 2008); (Dutta-Bergman, 2004);	Q2, Q3
WOM & eWOM	(Ben-Shaul & Reichel, 2018); (Law et al., 2015); (Berger et al. 2013); (Walther, 2011); (Wang, 2011); (Simpson & Siguaw, 2008); (Schlosser, 2005);	Q1

Source: Own elaboration.

METHODOLOGY

QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The philosophy of science, Galileo, Newton, are all connected to the beginning of quantitative research, in its turn, quantification of data through experimentation, measurement, and rigorous fact control is related to quantitative research (Pitanga, 2020).

While qualitative research emphasizes the dynamic, comprehensive, and personal components of human experience to fully understand the topic at hand, quantitative research focuses on deductive reasoning, logical principals, and quantifiable aspects (Conjo et al., 2022). Furthermore, this author defends that quantitative research is influenced by positivism and holds that the only way to comprehend reality is via the study of unprocessed data that has been gathered using standardized, impartial tools. Quantitative research employs mathematical terminology to explain, among other things, the correlations between variables and the causes of a phenomenon.

According to Knechtel (2014), up until the middle of the 20th century, quantitative research was the foundation for scientific thought. It is distinguished by the researcher's passivity and objectivity when investigating reality. Based on the quantification of data, quantitative research uses statistical tools like percentages, averages, and standard deviations to quantify perspectives and data. In its turn, quantitative data is the observed values of a group of variables that may reflect all or some components of, for instance, a particular segment of the population.

DATA COLLECTION

As this research aims to gather the perspective and opinions of different age sectors, the questionnaire was both shared on social media, and through direct personal requests - some of the questionnaires were even printed and distributed in specific locations and filled out by hand to expand the range of the overall research.

In total, 85 responses were gathered. To guarantee credibility, all questions that were asked were based on the concepts and definitions available in Table 4. One of the main concerns was that the questionnaire would be designed such that everyone could respond objectively using only their know-how. All participants received the same information and were subject to the same circumstances, regardless of their responses. Data were collected during August and September 2022.

QUESTIONNAIRE

Data collection and its validation constitute a crucial phase in the approach used for this research's data processing. One must first gather primary data, or information gathered for the phenomena under research, using the selected technique, in this case, the questionnaire, to gain a deeper and more detailed understanding of the solutions to the problems highlighted (Marques et al., 2021).

A scientific method is a set of procedures and techniques that researchers use to discover, investigate, and achieve their objectives. The scientific method guarantees the objectivity of knowledge (Ruiz, 1996).

It is debatable whether researchers ought to be allowed to gather information from every case to provide answers to investigative concerns. Hence, sample selection is required. The totality of the cases from which the sample of the investigator is drawn is referred to as the population (Taherdoost, 2018). The interaction between the population and the sample can be seen when sampling, this is what enables a bridge between methodological and theoretical discussions (Cash et al., 2022).

When discussing sampling, it is important to establish some basic definitions: (1) Population – the total set of significant cases; (2) Sample: a subgroup of the population. Objectively, in this case, (1) corresponds to all social media users, and (2) corresponds to the total amount of individuals who answer the questionnaire.

The questions that are present in the questionnaire are based on the topics and main ideas identified in Table 3.

Q1: How old are you?

Q2: What is your current occupation?

Q3: On average, how much time a day do you spend on social media?

Q4: Do you follow content creators who exclusively produce tourism/travel-oriented content?

Q5: Where do you find the most appealing content related to tourism?

Q6: Do you have followed (or would consider following) suggestions from social media influencers (e.g. tips to get lower flight rates, restaurants)?

Q7: Before going on a trip, do you look for information about the destination on social media?

Q8: Do you believe that influencers are credible?

Q9: Are you familiar with the "instagrammable" concept?

Q10: Taking into consideration your previous answer, does this concept cross your mind when choosing a travel destination?

Q11: Do you post any content on your social media regarding your travel experiences?

Table 3 - Theoretical foundation of the questions in the questionnaire

Research Topics	Authors	Research Questions
Credibility	(Santos, 2018); (Yen & Teng, 2015); (Swant, 2016); (McCarthy & Pinto, 2014); (Mangold & Faulds, 2009); (Glover, 2009);	Q6, Q8
eWOM	(Ben-Shaul & Reichel, 2018); (Law et al., 2015); (Berger et al., 2013); (Walther, 2011); (Wang, 2011); (Simpson & Siguaw, 2008); (Schlosser, 2005);	Q11
Influencer Marketing	(Gretzel, 2017); (De Veirman et al., 2017); (Nanji, 2017); (Swant, 2016); (Josiassen & Assaf, 2013);	Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6, Q7,
"Instagrammable"	(Putra et al., 2019); (Anderson & Lodging, 2017); (Urban Dictionary)	Q9, Q10

Source: Own elaboration.

PARTICIPANTS' SELECTION

Clearly defining the target population is the first step in the sampling procedure. Typically, population refers to the number of people living in a nation.

A sampling frame is a list of real examples to draw samples. The sample base must be representative of the population. Before we get into the many kinds of sampling strategies, it is essential to comprehend what they mean by sampling and the reasons why a researcher may choose a sample.

The sample is either a subset of the specified sampling frame or the full population. Inferences about populations or generalisations based on existing ideas may be derived from samples. This mostly relies on the sampling strategy used (Taherdoost, 2018). Judgment-based

non-probabilistic sampling was used for the selection process. In a quantitative approach, one anticipates the measurement of pre-established variables, analysing the frequency of occurrences and statistical correlations to verify and explain their effect on other variables. The investigator describes, explains, and makes predictions (Pitanga, 2020).

For this study, as the main goal was to recognize the involvement, understanding, and usage of social media by the general population, no major requirements were in place, as long as the individual had the conditions (in this case, internet connection and basic knowledge of the Google Forms platform) they could reply to this questionnaire. To try to reach all the age gaps, some questionnaires were printed and distributed in specific locations.

The only individuals that didn't carry out the questionnaire where those who are not familiar with social media platforms however that was not a common occurrence.

RESULTS

SAMPLE

A total of 85 fully completed and validated questionnaires were returned, corresponding to the study sample.

To ensure reliability, all the questions that were asked were based on the definitions and concepts that were explored in the literature review. The questionnaire was developed in such a way as to ensure that all individuals neutrally answered the questions, using only their knowledge. To understand better the sample and correlate key factors to the outcomes, three questions were asked.

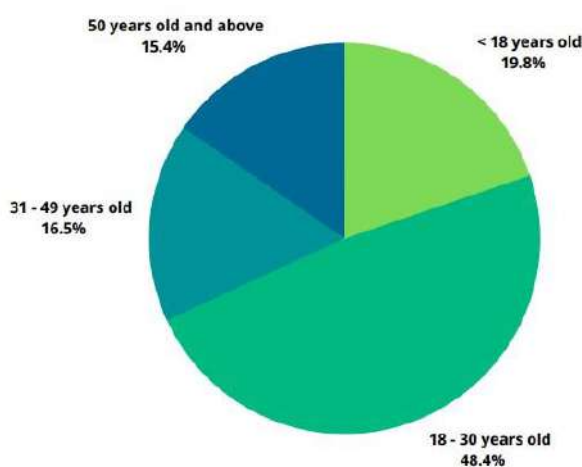Figures 1 and 2 show the age and participants' occupations.

Figure 1 – Age of the participants
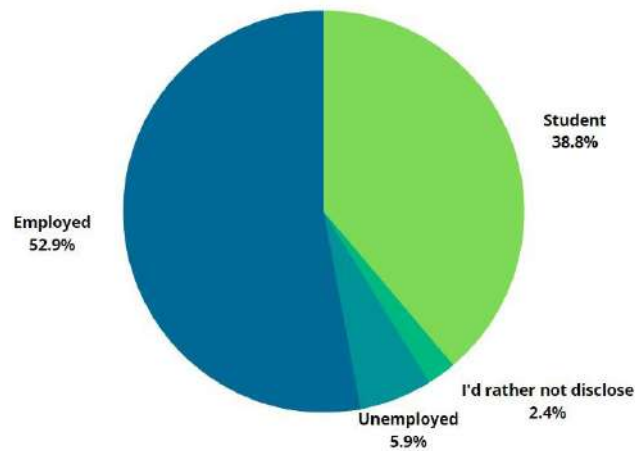Source: Own elaboration.

13

Figure 2 – Participant's occupation
Source: Own elaboration.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS RESULTS

Considering the content and the evidence drawn from the questionnaire carried out, it is important to present the results considering the research questions of this study and cross-reference them with the theoretical framework.

To start, it was important to understand how much time people are spending on average on social media. According to a study made by Statista (2022), the average time spent per day on social media worldwide is of 147 minutes (approx. 2h30m), which means that over 50% of the enquired individuals are spending over the average amount of time on social media (Figure 3).
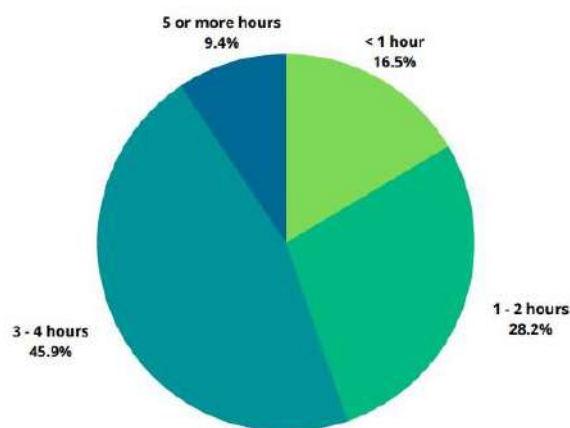

Figure 3 – Average time spent per day on social media
Source: Own elaboration.

14

Aiming to centre the questions around the researched topic, it was asked to the participants, if they follow any influencers which exclusively post travel content (Figure 4). As we can see, 57,6% of the individuals follow these kinds of influencers across different platforms. As there are multiple different platforms available, the following question aims to narrow down the possibilities.
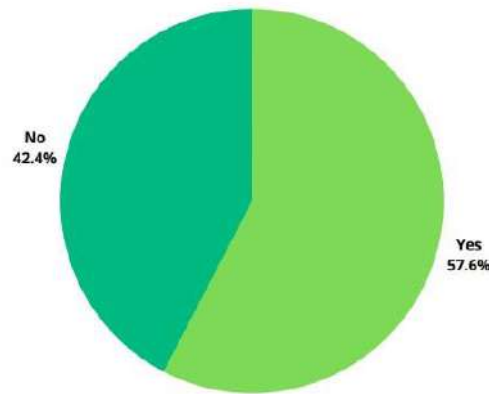

Figure 4 – "Do you follow any influencers which exclusively produce travel content"
Source: Own elaboration.

Only 57,6% of individuals exclusively follow travel influencers this doesn't mean that they do not follow influencers who have other kinds of content but might still share smaller numbers of photos and videos from occasional travelling settings (Figure 4). We can see that only 8.2% of enquired individuals dislike travel/tourism content altogether and that Instagram is the platform that shares the most appealing content, with 70,6% of people advocating for it (Figure 5).
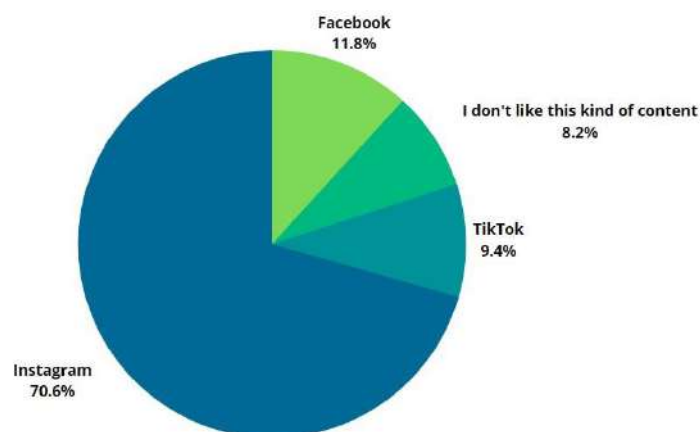

Figure 5 – "Where do you find the most appealing content related to tourism/travelling?"
Source: Own elaboration.

For the next questions, the individuals participating in the questionnaire were asked to react accordingly to a variety of statements.

By analyzing the figure above, we can see that 81,1% of inquired people agree with the statement, whether it is because they have followed influencer tips, or would be open to following their suggestions at some point (Figure 6). To see if social media has an impact on the destinations that individuals might go to, the following questions were asked.
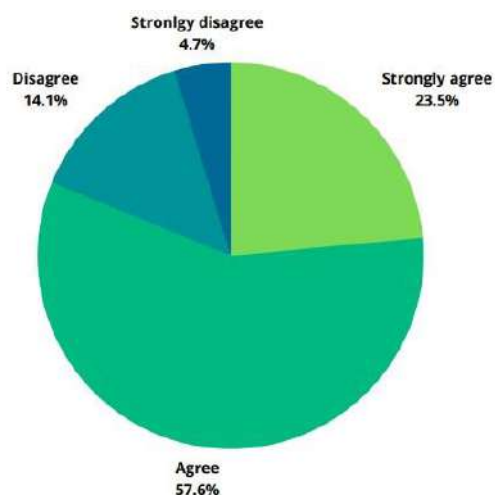

Figure 6 – "I have followed (or would consider following) suggestions from social media influencers (e.g. tips to get lower flight rates, restaurants)"
Source: Own elaboration.

The results of this question were a bit revealing as on the disagreeing side there was a little increase, however, there was a more significant increase on the "strongly agree" of 5,9% (Figure 7).
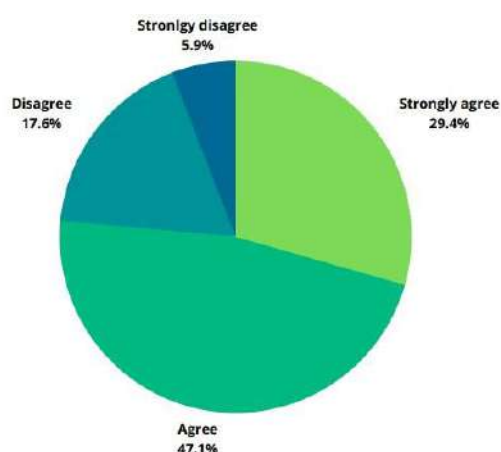
Figure 7 – "Before going on a trip, I look for information about the destination on social media"
Source: Own elaboration.

To understand the perspective of the sample on the influencer's topic, the following question was added. As we can see from Figure 8, a total of 68.2% of people believe that influencers are a credible source of information.

Figure 8 – "I believe that influencers are credible"
Source: Own elaboration.

The outcome of this question was mostly positive, with 69,4% of individuals stating that they are familiar with the said concept (Figure 9).
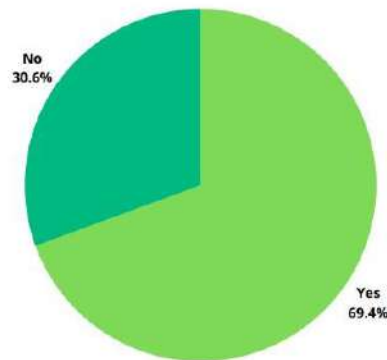
Figure 9 – Are you familiar with the "Instagrammable" concept?
Source: Own elaboration.
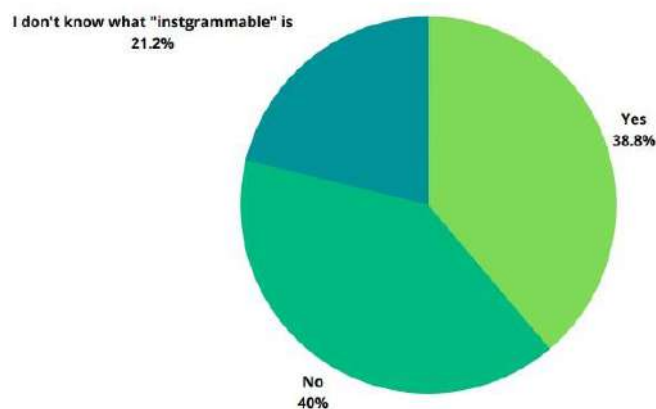
Figure 10 – Does this concept cross your mind when choosing a travel destination?
Source: Own elaboration.
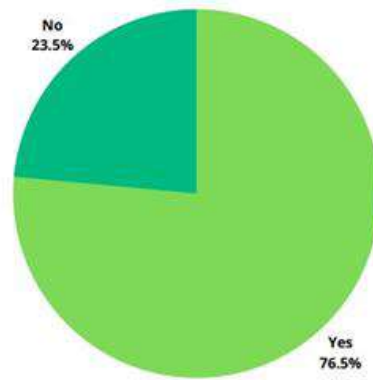
Figure 11 – Do you post any content on social media regarding your travel experiences?
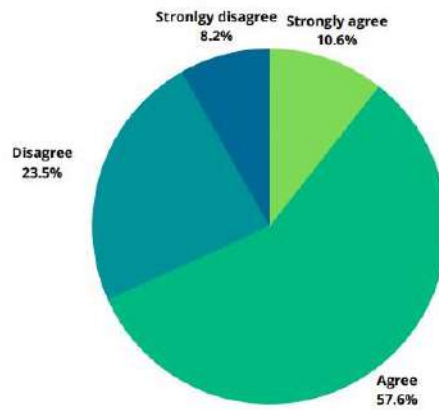Source: Own elaboration.

The last question was straightforward and the majority of participants (76,5%), stated that they do share their travel experiences on social media (Figure 11).

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

As we can see from Figure 3, more than half of the enquired individuals spend over 3 hours of their day on social media which makes up a minimum of 21 hours a week spent only on social media platforms whether sharing, visualizing and/or producing content. Let's analyse the following table (Statista, 2018).
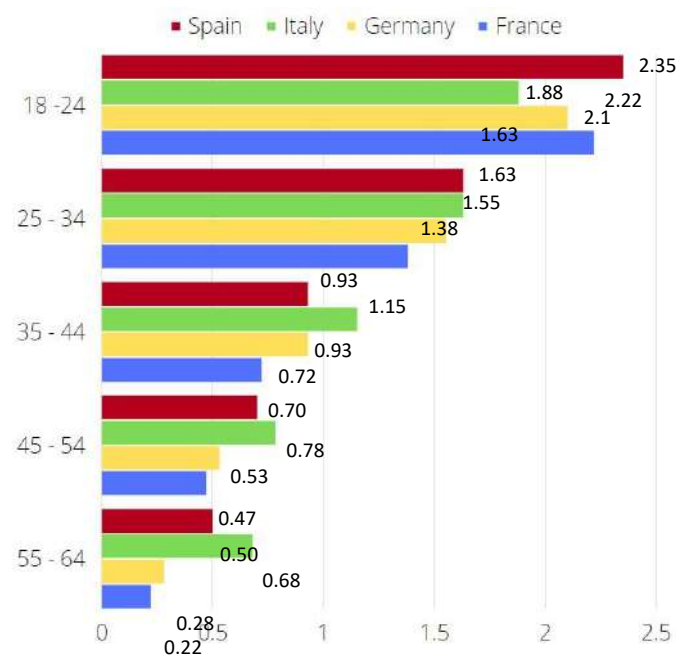
Figure 12 – Average daily TV and video viewing time in selected countries worldwide, by age group (in hours)
Source: Statista (2018).

As we can see, the time spent on average on social media (figure 3), is in most cases superior to what we can see in Figure 12, which leads us to the conclusion that social media has at least the same time of advertisement as an "on-demand" TV setting. This information is relevant because it clearly shows the shift in the way people acquire their information and in the way they can be "influenced" to buy or acquire certain products/services.

Furthermore, in Figure 12 we can see a decrease in screentime for individuals' age. However, if we take the data from Figure 1 and cross it with the data from Figure 3, we can see that the same pattern does not apply. Although older people do spend less time on social media when compared to the younger faction of the sample, it is still significantly more than when compared to the outcome detailed in Figure 12.

Although older people do tend to spend less time on social media than the younger part of the sample, the overall time spent by individuals above 50 years old on social media is significantly higher than the individuals in the same age gap spend watching TV (Figure 13). This helps confirm that the way people choose to spend their screen time is shifting and that social media can have the ability to reach older segments of society.
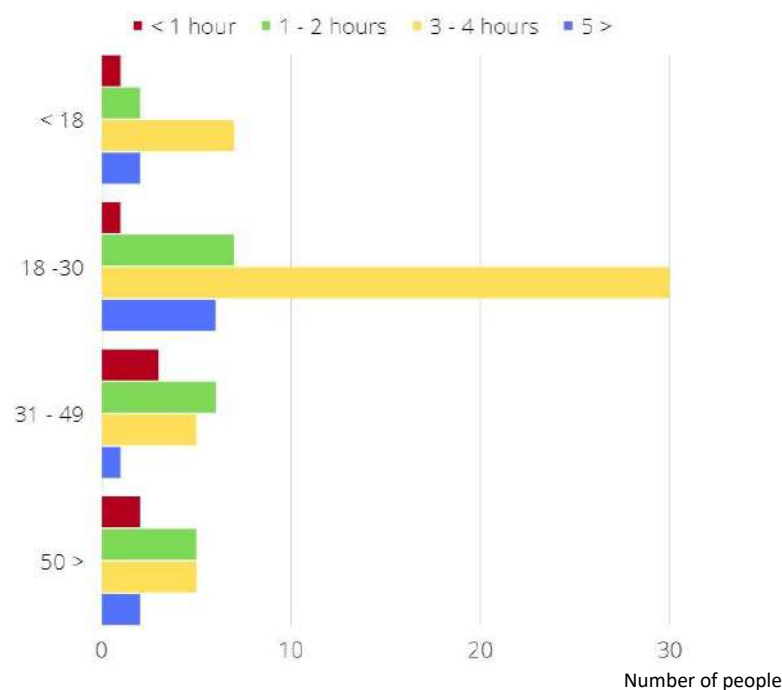

Figure 13 – Average time spent daily on social media by age group
Source: Own elaboration.

When addressing the theme of travel content, by analysing Figure 4, we can see that almost half the sample does not follow influencers that exclusively produce travel content, however, when looking at the results to question 4 (Figure 5) shows us that only 8.2% of the

individuals state they don't like this kind of content. Through figure 5 we can see that despite platforms like TikTok having massive growth in recent years, and YouTube and Facebook being the top 2 most popular platforms in 2022, Instagram remains the preferred platform when it comes to content creation within the tourism/travelling sections.

From Figure 6, we can see that 81,1% of surveyed individuals have followed or would consider following influencer recommendations/tips at some point. Furthermore, when asked if the influencers are credible (Figure 8), 68,2% of the sample were on the agreeing spectrum which again really helps confirm how these social platforms can become massive tools when trying to advertise certain locations and heighten the natural power of WOM. This is also supported when we look at Figure 7 and see that only 23,5% of people do not look for any information about their chosen destination on social media.

Even though 69,4% of surveyed individuals are familiar with the "instagrammable" concept (Figure 9), only 38,8% of these state that this has an impact when it comes to choosing their travelling destination (Figure 10); 40% of the individuals declare that this concept does not cross their minds when selecting their travel destination however when asked if they post any content on social media when travelling, only 23,5% of the people stated that they do not (Figure 11). In conclusion, even though they might not care about the aesthetics of the content they are posting, most people will share their experiences on their social media platforms regardless.
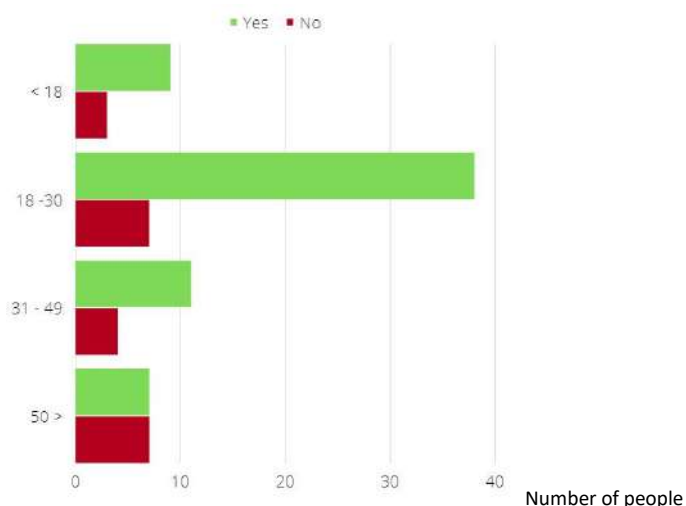

Figure 14 – Results of Q11 sorted by age category
Source: Own elaboration.

When organizing the results of Q11 by age, we can have a better look at the way the different age categories act when it comes to sharing their travel experiences/destinations online.

In conclusion, we can say that although other platforms have had a more accentuated growth throughout 2022, Instagram is delivering content that better suits the aesthetic, informational, and entertaining needs of the population within the tourism/travelling category. Furthermore, there are no doubts about how social media platforms have had incremental growth and continue to do so over the years, creating a direct route to the costumer and this is where influencers become a powerful tool as they have learnt to navigate these intricate lanes. They build their base of followers by feeding a relationship based on trust and credibility topped with pleasing content which can later be used to advertise and set trends in certain locations.

Although there are many guidelines for good content, the "instagrammable" concept is quite an ambiguous and subjective term as each individual has its taste and will like different content however, this isn't necessarily a bad thing as there are many options and communities that have grown across the different platforms. This is exactly an advantage that social media has when compared to other advertising channels. Unlike, for example, on TV where there isn't an option for the advertisements one will see, on social media the advertising is oftentimes less noticeable and with the presence of the algorithm it will align with the content one naturally leans towards.

CONCLUSIONS

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

More than 3,196 million people worldwide use social media today, a number which is growing around 13% every year (Beveridge, 2022) and in this social media age, people go from being brand supporters to content creators for companies, from casual brand endorsers to micro-celebrities looking to become social media influencers. Several of these small and medium-sized celebrities have established a loyal following that is keen to hear their recommendations. With the boost in technologies and the widespread use of social networks, it is natural that consumers' decision-making is based on the content shared on social media.

By establishing mutually beneficial relationships with social media influencers who are compatible with their businesses, DMOs may benefit from these influencers' capacity to engage large/targeted audiences with relevant content. When used properly, these influencer marketing techniques may produce far higher returns on investment than the usage of branded content or conventional advertising, especially since conventional methods (such as TV advertising), might be losing their edge with a large section of the population.

It is possible to link marketing to destinations, helping to disseminate information on the attractiveness and competitiveness of destinations. The DMOs should cooperate with the destination marketing teams to convey as much truthfulness as possible (Acuti et al., 2018). In destination marketing, communication is important, especially through good visual aids (photos, videos), the veracity of content, reviews, and a personalised approach. The connection between the destination and the consumers is an important tool when sharing information and it deeply affects the decision-making process. This bridge between social networks, consumers and destinations are most of the time carried out by digital influencers (Raposo, 2020).

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study should be analysed considering its limitations to provide guidelines for future research. It is important to understand that there are many intricate aspects of social media as well as a wide variety of platforms that focus on different layouts and this will influence the kind of content and the interactions that the users are allowed to perform. Considering that this research was conducted through quantitative methods there was a lack of expression from the participants who could have added more information that would have created a different depth and added more layers to this study.

FUTURE RESEARCH LINES

It would also be interesting to conduct research that is directly connected with DMOs to see their active, or otherwise, role on social media and how this could be connected to the influencers and the dynamization of specific locations.

It is recommended to replicate the same study in other sectors and in other countries to consider other social platforms. Comparison between countries is pertinent to investigate how culture and other nation-related factors can impact the relation between user and influencer, the content that is produced, and how the "instagrammable" concept may differ, among other things.

Finally, it would be interesting to conduct research that would focus on influencers to investigate barriers they might face, what helps them thrive in the social media setting, and so on.

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CHAPTER 2 – HOW INTERNAL COMMUNICATION ENHANCES ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVITY?

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Orlando Lima Rua

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze how internal communication enhances organizational creativity. Consequently, the purpose of this study is to understand the impact that internal communication has on organizational creativity.

Thus, a quantitative methodology was developed through a questionnaire with 93 responses from various elements of organizations in the Portuguese technology sector. The data was studied through reliability and explanatory factorial analysis in order to find the relation between the internal communication and the organizational creativity.

The results show that in organizations both symmetrical internal communication, supportive communication and feedback-seeking behavior positively influence organizational creativity. Symmetrical internal communication makes employees look for feedback in the organizational environment, thus enhancing organizational creativity.

The main conclusions drawn from this study fall on the importance of internal communication in creating a good organizational environment that allows employees to express themselves and give new ideas, thus contributing to the increase of organizational creativity.

It is recommended that organizations increasingly consider the creative capacity of their employees, given that creativity is something that can differentiate them from their competitors.

Keywords: Internal Communication, Organizational creativity, Feedback Seeking Behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Society is made up of organizations that enable us to respond to all our needs, from the most basic to cultural and social ones. Kunsch (2003) states that organizations are human clusters, consciously planned, that go through a process of change, aiming to obtain certain results.

Thereby, the present objective of this study is to understand the relation between the internal communication and the organizational creativity, mainly in the area of the Portuguese technology sector, through a quantitative methodology that will provide answers to the following research question: How internal communication enhances organizational creativity?

According to D´Almeida & Libaert (2000) internal communication is responsible for contributing positively to the success of companies, following the company's strategy at an economic, political and social level. While previous research (Zhou et al., 2008) has highlighted the importance of internal communication systems, few empirical studies have examined whether and how organizations' internal communication efforts can enhance employee creativity. Internal communication aims to generate positive organizational results, such as employee engagement, commitment and performance (Men & Bowen, 2017).

As employees' creative ideas can be extracted from open, free and active exchanges of ideas between various elements of the organization (Amabile et al., 1996), symmetrical internal communication tends to enhance employee creativity. Creativity, defined as the production of new and useful ideas or solutions (Amabile, 1988), is an extremely important part of the organizational environment that affects the well-being of organizations and employees (Oldham & Cummings, 1996) having the ability to help organizations survive and compete (Zhou & Shalley, 2003; Zhou, 1998).

It is important to mention that the creation of a good organizational environment where it is possible to communicate in a simple and open way stimulates the generation of new ideas and consequently the increase of creativity. Being creative is a characteristic capable of differentiating companies from their competitors.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INTERNAL COMMUNICATION

Concept and evolution

The concept of communication has changed over time. Initially, it was seen only as a way to create content and spread information, whether informal or formal. Nowadays, communication provides not only support for the organizational environment, but as a true extension of the company within the scope of its management. The evolution took place to satisfy the needs of the organizational entity in the areas of visibility, authenticity, the transparency of its image and its reputation (Falkheimer et al., 2017).

Currently, communication is the bridge connecting organizational entities with their construction and upward development of brand value for the customer. In this way, it is possible to create a close relationship with the customer and all possible employees, demonstrating the effectiveness and efficiency of the brand. The relationships created are always based on corporate values, which, in addition to transmitting truthfulness, foster strong leadership in the organizational environment, combined with creativity, innovation and resilience (Zerfass & Viertmann, 2016, 2017).

In this sense, leaders who are at the forefront of organizations already have a perception of the significant role of communication within the company, being aware that its improvement causes: stronger connections on the part of employees; the ability to change strategy suddenly to keep up with changes in the surrounding market and generate strategic management; the ability to foster much more effective communication that is reflected in management leadership (Wyatt, 2004; Cheney et al., 2010).

Various definitions were used to describe internal communication (Table 1).

Table 1 - Definitions of internal communication

Author	Year	Definition
Thayer	(1976)	"It is the communication that takes place within the organization and the communication between it and its environment that determines the conditions of its existence and the direction of its movement".
Langarica	(1995)	"Internal communication emerged as a management tool, allowing the dissemination of organizational policies and its own institutional culture and identity".
Ruão	(1999)	"Process by which people manifest and share culture, and through which it is continually created".
Bovée & Thill	(2000)	Internal communication is the "exchange of information and ideas within the organization".
Houaiss	(2001)	Internal Communication is "that which is carried out between the Institution and its internal public and is also different from Administrative Communication, a set of means and procedures used in an Organization for the transmission of information, orders, requests, guidelines, etc".
Mumby	(2001)	"The process of creating collective and coordinated structures of meaning through symbolic practices oriented towards the achievement of organizational goals".
Argenti	(2003)	"Internal communication involves creating an atmosphere of respect for all employees of the organization."
Kunsch	(2003)	"A participative internal communication, through all the instruments available, will involve the employee in the organization's affairs and in the facts that are happening in the country and in the world. It will not be considered a simple number of the electronic card that registers their entries and exits, but

		someone who performs their functions in partnership with the organization and in line with the current social reality."
Clemen	(2005)	"We are talking about people and how they interact with communication tools. It is necessary to assess whether those who issue messages on behalf of the company are prepared for such a task".
Freixo	(2006)	"Complex process of human interaction".
Welsh e Jackson	(2007)	"Communication carried out between the strategic managers of an organization and its internal stakeholders, in order to promote commitment to the organization; a sense of belonging; awareness of your constantly changing and restructuring environment and understanding of your evolving goals".
Newstrom	(2008)	"Communication is the transfer of information and understanding from one person to another (...) its goal is to make the receiver understand the message as it was conceived".
Derecskei	(2015)	"The extension of creativity concept within an organizational framework".
Cerantola	(2019)	He reinforces the idea when he says that "communication focuses on creating meaning and establishing bonds, including emotional ties, between a company and its stakeholders".

Source: Own elaboration.

Organizations see internal communication as a complex and multidimensional process, which goes much further than a simple transmission and reception of information (Araújo & Miranda, 2020). The center of internal communication is people with their emotions, attitudes and relationships (Argenti, 2009), hence the importance of communication in the solidification and maturation of the company. If the communication process is encouraged and evolves continuously, then the actions taken in the future will be more assertive, promoting the personal and professional growth of all involved (Euske & Roberts, 1987; Brandão, 2014).

Developing and enhancing interactions between employees and organizations is necessary to obtain superior feasibility in managing human potential (Kunsch, 2003). Brandão (2018) states that the people responsible for the organization must transmit a culture of transparency, honesty, participation and involvement.

Among the main functions of internal communication, we can highlight:

- Ensuring that the organization fulfils its duties and provides information to all its employees regarding objectives, financial results, as well as any other type of matter that is linked to the organization (Yates, 2006; FitzPatrick, 2012);

- Support and promote major changes, specifically explain the reason for the change, main goals and advantages to all employees involved (FitzPatrick, 2012; Brandão, 2014; Welch & Jackson, 2007);

- Promoting strong and empowered leadership (Yates, 2006);

- Promote engagement and thus encourage all employees to remain in the organization (FitzPatrick, 2012);

- Promote communication between employees from different areas and functions to contribute to positive internal relationships and a much lighter and more dynamic organizational environment (Welch, 2020; Welch & Jackson, 2007);

- Make known to all those involved what the future goals are, as well as the activities to be developed to align all collaborators in the same direction (FitzPatrick, 2012; Brandão, 2014; Yates, 2006; Robbins & Judge, 2017);
- Promote and share the organization's culture and values (Yates, 2006);
- Promote the integration of all elements of the organization to improve the organizational environment (Yates, 2006).

To promote the development of internal relationships, a culture of sharing must be promoted among all employees. Collaborators are not just passive receptors; they should be considered active intervening individuals who formulate messages, interpret, criticize and influence everyone around them (Heide & Simonsson, 2011; Madsen & Verhoeven, 2016; Kunsch, 2003). For companies to be recognized for their excellent reputation (Dortok, 2006), they must include flexibility, transparency and inclusion in communication strategies (Brandão, 2018).

The two forms of communication are classified into two categories. The first is based on the communication channels, while the second is based on the style and purpose. Communication channels are related to the medium, means, manner and methods of communication between individuals. Information senders must guarantee that the appropriate communication routes are chosen so that the information is delivered to persons satisfactorily. Another type of communication depends on the style and intent of the message. In this case, channel-based communication is characterized by being verbal or non-verbal. Verbal can be face-to-face, speech and meeting (Clampitt, 1991), and non-verbal written communication that "allows to disseminate orders, publish results, establish contacts or even motivate and get to know employees better" (Almeida, 2000, p. 77), while style and purpose-based communication is divided into formal and informal.

Electronic means of communication increasingly facilitate communication between employees located in different geographical areas, allowing the connection between different cultures, always based on dynamic relationships to coordinate (Cunha et al., 2007). This form of communication is the most present in all organizations, given the ease with which it is possible to transmit a large amount of information to all the employees involved, consequently increasing the volume of communication.

Furthermore, for example, campaigns and programs (safety campaigns and programs for integrating new employees) are considered means of internal communication, aiming to transmit some information to the employee (Almeida, 2000). For this scholar, decoration is also considered a form of internal communication, events, exhibitions and seminars help to give identity to the organization.

According to Ezezue (2007) there are three basic types of communication, namely:

- Verbal Communication - This occurs most often in a face-to-face setting or connection, such as when delivering information about a new project that must began. It can also include using instruments and electronic equipment like phones and public address systems. The most crucial factor is that a human voice can be heard, and that it is clear and objective. Cascade communication is also included in verbal communication. It is a hierarchical communication process where information moves from one segment to another and from top to bottom, from the leadership to the followers.

- Non-verbal Communication - This kind of communication does not rely on the use of words or letter symbols. Non-verbal information and messages are not written or spoken; they are transmitted through our physical environment, body movement, drawings, and sign language.

- Written Communication - This necessitates proficiency in writing and reading. In written communication, oral communication is transformed into alphanumeric symbols, words, and sentences. For example, when the CEO demands an assistant to communicate via e-mail.

Communication types

The concept of symmetrical internal communication is based on the principle that all individuals must be involved in communication processes to adjust thoughts and behaviors (Grunig, 2006). Symmetrical communication contrasts with asymmetrical communication, which allows little autonomy to employees (Sriramesh & White, 1992) and is characterized by top-down management of employees through predetermined decisions (Hargie & Tourish, 2000). Allied to symmetrical communication, Rhee and Moon (2009) and Smidts et al. (2001) highlight the role of supportive communication and interaction support through openness, empathy and understanding, in this way employees feel supported by their supervisors (Rhee & Moon, 2009).

Formal communication

Internal communication refers to communication within a company or organization. Formal and informal communication are both included in this category. Internal communication also refers to the several departments that send information to employees via various channels (Buble, 2010).

Formal communication takes place inside an organization's hierarchy, from upper to lower levels, or vice versa, or on a single level. There are differences between vertical and horizontal communication.

Vertical communication, according to Katz and Kahn (1966) is the most common kind of employee communication. This type of communication's main purpose is gathering information for decision-making, which works in both directions. In the vertical communication model, it is possible to distinguish two different communication directions, downward communication and upward communication.

Table 2 - Differences between downward and upward communication

Downward communication	Upward communication
Managers send employees information about business policies, guidelines and plans	Employees communicate information to the superiors
From the managers to the employees	Messages are often related to problems that are related to business
What to do and how to do it	Messages of great importance for managers
Recommended that the messages are in written form	Defects are highlighted in order to be improved

Source: Own elaboration.

According to Katz and Kahn (1966), vertical communication is limited due to the nature of relations of dominance and subordination of workers. Employees in the business do not all have the same access to information due to their varying status positions, which can lead to erroneous and incomplete data. This type of information can cause certain insufficiencies in the way employees work, and it should be noted that other forms of communication in an organization also depend on good downward communication.

Horizontal communication, according to Buble (2010), occurs when persons are on the same organizational level, start from the same position, and have an equal say in decision-making. Horizontal communications are essential because they improve cooperation across groups, departments, and services while keeping employees happy through the possibility of communication between colleagues.

Horizontal communication, according to Lehman and Dufrene (2015), allows the coordination and integration of departments and sectors performing relatively independent tasks. It is essential for the firm to deliver great services to its clients that all workers work together effectively. This applies not only to communications between employees within a service, but there is also a high level of communication between employees in various departments. The complete satisfaction of a customer is only possible when the above requirements are met. Formal communication networks may take different forms.

Table 3 - Differences between centralized and decentralized networks

Centralized networks	Decentralized networks
Employees do not have equal access to information	Equal access to information
Information is transmitted through an intermediary	Information is transmitted directly
Effective for simple routine tasks	Effective for complex tasks
Reduced motivation and satisfaction of employees	Greater motivation and satisfaction of employees

Source: Own elaboration.

Informal communication

Informal communication is a form of communication widely used in companies, where all the information transmitted has an unofficial character, being the dominant activity of managers (Mintzberg, 1973). This type of communication does not reflect at all the existing hierarchy within the company, where the level of authority of each person involved is not perceptible and can connect members of the organization in all directions, both horizontally and vertically.

In this way, workers are free to transmit all the information they want and to whomever they want. This communication practice occurs everywhere where employees gather in groups, in offices or rooms for the break, regardless of its veracity. According to Daft and Lengel (1986), this type of communication has several specific characteristics, of which the following stand out:

- Ability to connect employees from different levels of the hierarchy, both horizontally and vertically;

- All types of information can be transmitted to all people, regardless of their level of veracity; informal information is difficult to be verified if they are not based on facts;

- Informal communication is usually responsible for transmitting information that is not directly related to the organization;

- In these cases, expressions such as "she said - she told" are often used in order to pass information more quickly, this practice does not respect the limits of the organization;

- In informal communication, the users themselves create their own techniques, according to the type of information and the aim sought to be achieved.

Problems and barriers to effective communication

To Inyang et al. (2003), communication is considered effective "when the message is transmitted and received in an atmosphere of excellent interpersonal relations, mutual trust, and safety and the messages are unhindered and understood as contracted by the sender".

Etuk (1991), Inyang et al. (2003) and Mullins (2006) identified the following barriers to effective communication:

- Noise: A simple factor that makes all the difference in the efficiency of message transmission, this factor can occur in the workplace, for example, during a meeting and consequently not be transmitted perceptible information to some of the employees.

- Perception: Not all individuals interpret messages in the same way, this situation creates misunderstandings which affects the real meaning of the message and its interpretation.

- Emotions: Each individual feels and expresses their emotions differently, such as condition does not allow for objective listening and effective assimilation of information.

- Source Credibility: Information may be distorted or doubted when the source of the sender is in doubt.

- Information Overload: When the data is enormous, information becomes overloaded to a point that managers may not be able to not accessibly interpret and understand this message.

Machado (2014) reiterates that communication faces problems when compared to a simple process of transmitting information:

- Communication can be difficult to achieve when its importance is diminished within organizations;

- Difficulty in perceiving the correct meaning of what is transmitted in a communicational context;

- Development of fixed communication structures within organizations.

Barnard (1956) argues that organizations are "a system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more people". For an organization to be successful, it is very important to value communication, given that it is much more than relationships, channels and messages (Cheney et al., 2010).

ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVITY

Creativity has the meaning of doing and realizing (Wechsler, 2008), creating takes on the meaning of "making something new grow" or "bringing something into existence" (Glăveanu, 2013). Creativity is referred to the existence of something new, imagination and production, while innovation is defined as "the successful implementation of creative ideas" (Amabile, 1988, p. 126). There are numerous definitions of creativity; however, Bohm (1998), argues that it is practically impossible to define creativity through words. Alencar (1996) reinforces that it is a multidimensional process that involves personal and environmental aspects. The concept of creativity has evolved so that it is increasingly considered a focal point in personal and professional development (Wechsler, 2008).

According to Torrance (1965), creativity is constituted by a set of processes that includes identifying difficulties, formulating hypotheses, testing results, and perceiving committed failures. Furthermore, Amabile et al. (1996, p. 1154), states that "all innovation starts with creative ideas, because the successful implementation of new programs, new products or services depends on people or teams having a good idea". For innovation to be implemented in the company, it is necessary to verify its practicality, ease of implementation and induction of concrete results. Bendassolli et al. (2009), reiterates that, in organizations, creativity is transformed into economic value, which in turn contributes to productivity, competitiveness and organizational survival.

The ease of acquiring new technological equipment means that an organization does not depend directly on the creativity of its employees, however, organizations that can't obtain creativity through team members have to submit to the surrounding conditions. Following this perspective, according to Bedani (2010), it is possible to classify innovation into two distinct branches:

- Intrinsic innovation – When the materialization of creative ideas, generated by the organization's elements, appears in products or services that generate value and profit for the company.

- Extrinsic innovation – Acquisition by the organization of new products or services, from external sources, in order to overcome changes in competition and in the market in which they operate.

The creative environment is then responsible for all the factors that influence the creative spirit of individuals in an intrinsic and extrinsic way and can potentiate or inhibit creative ideas. Amabile and Mueller (2008) assert that the environment enhances creativity when autonomy and self-learning are fostered, while, for example, excessive supervision, lack of communication and freedom inhibit creative thinking (Barlach, 2009).

Purpose of creativity in the workplace and its inhibitors

The implementation of creativity in the workplace aims to generate new and different ideas, help in the diversification of products, surprise and completely satisfy customer needs, allow the recruitment and maintenance of good employees, as well as the implementation of disruptive solutions for new challenges (Moraes & Lima, 2009; Oliveira, 2010; Wechsler, 2008). In the same way that there are factors that enhance creativity, there are also variants that inhibit it, namely, a hostile environment that ends up discouraging creative thinking, excessive authoritarianism, lack of integration and support for employees, unfounded resistance to

change, lack of space in the company to communicate and put new disruptive ideas into practice (Alencar, 1996; Alencar, 2005; Sternberg & Lubart, 1995).

Thus, it is possible to see that the organizational environment is directly influenced by external factors, which can interfere with the creativity of each team member (Fonseca & Bastos, 2003). The organizational environment thus occupies a very important position to enhance or inhibit innovative thinking.

In addition to the organizational environment being strongly influenced by the individual creativity of all employees involved, it is also influenced by the company's structure, values and individual aspects, as well as internal factors that may enhance or inhibit creativity (Veiga, Torres & Bruno- Faria, 2013). The ultimate goal will always be to create a good working environment so that individuals, employees and the organization can have a good relationship.

Taking into account the surrounding environment in the organizational environment, Amabile et al. (1996) found that all individuals, with normal abilities, have a propensity to develop their creative thinking, in a more or less elaborate way. Although there are functions within a company that require more creativity than others, anyone in any context can be creative, if the right conditions are met (Shalley & Zhou, 2008; Shalley et al., 2004).

One of the factors that can boost or inhibit creativity is the introduction of rewards. While for some authors creativity is considered a normal process that occurs when reinforced, for others rewards are seen as a distraction from the true objective of the task, thus decreasing internal motivation (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). According to Amabile (1988), employees who have a better creative performance are those who are motivated from the beginning by interest, by the challenge it represents and by the satisfaction that this task will bring and not by being influenced by external factors. The perspective shared by Klotz (2012) argues that extrinsic rewards can be an asset to increase creativity, insofar as they serve to give recognition to individuals and satisfy their needs as employees while increasing the involvement of individuals in creative tasks (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Therefore, the two reasons mentioned above reinforce that rewards based on support and performance recognition increase intrinsic motivation and, consequently, creative capacity (Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Reinforcement of information and performance recognition can lead the individual to repeat this pattern behavior in the future (Klotz et al., 2012).

However, it is necessary to know how to distinguish moments and understand which type of reward is most appropriate to promote creativity on each occasion. It is possible to identify three different types of rewards, the engagement-contingent rewards that are intended to involve individuals without prior information and without requiring any requirement about the desired behavior and skills (Unsworth, Wall & Carter, 2005), which in turn can create an

inhibiting barrier to the individual's creative thinking (Byron & Khazanchi, 2012). Performance-contingent rewards directly assume that a specific behavior on the part of the individual is expected, which can directly affect internal motivation if interpreted as a measure of control (Selart et al., 2008). Finally, we have creativity-contingent rewards, which, according to Byron and Khazanchi (2012), tend to increase the individual's creative potential by clarifying the behavior that is desired, unlike rewards aimed at routine performance, which tend to decrease creative performance. If the criteria for creativity are clearly stated, then the reward is a factor that will direct the performance, attention and energy of the individual so that he reaches the maximum of his creative thinking (Byron & Khazanchi, 2012).

Another factor that may influence the level of organizational creativity is feedback, which is defined by the information received regarding an individual's behavior or performance (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). To this scholar, this factor is considered a very useful tool that drives learning, development and behavior modification. Zhou (2008) reiterates that if feedback enhances or modifies internal motivation, it is expected that there will be a significant increase in creative thinking. In this case, the ideal is to recognize the employee's performance without restricting their autonomy (Deci et al., 1999), since the communication of negative feedback tends to decrease the quantity and quality of creative performance (George & Zhou, 2001). The ideal way to demonstrate feedback is when individuals are placed in a phase of continuous learning and improvement, where it is possible that problem solutions and improvements, can naturally arise (George & Zhou, 2007). Development feedback is primarily intended to answer the question "where to?" (Hattie & Timperley, 2007), so it is possible to direct the individual's energy towards a much more constructive perspective regarding their work (Egan, 2005).

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTERNAL COMMUNICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CREATIVITY

As the creative ideas exposed by the employees can arise according to the free and open exchanges of ideas (Amabile et al., 1996), the symmetrical communication that plays a crucial role in the organization, has a greater capacity to enhance employee creativity. Creativity, which is defined as the production of new ideas and solutions (Amabile, 1988), is a key element to help an organization survive and stand out among its competitors (Zhou & Shalley, 2003; Zhou, 1998).

Good internal communication provides the achievement of the various objectives outlined by the organization, making all employees develop skills such as empowerment (Liden, Wayne, Sparrowe, 2000), trust (Jo & Shim, 2005), and also fosters a good relationship between employee-organization (Lee, 2022; Kim & Rhee, 2011).

Rhee and Moon (2009) state that a group culture in which everything is more flexible and employee-oriented is directly associated with supporting interaction, unlike hierarchical

cultures that are more focused on company stability. In this way, it is possible to see that the greater the support provided by supervisors/managers, the greater the employee's involvement in the work and the greater the commitment to the company (Walden et al., 2017). Employees perceive that they are being supported through various practices of communication, openness, empathy, equality, active listening and the ability to manage conflict (Rhee & Moon, 2009).

The combination of good internal communication with the individual's traits, leadership behavior and a good organizational environment influence employee creativity and consequently organizational creativity (Anseel, Beatty, Shen, Lievens and Sackett, 2015). The employee's ability to seek feedback within the organization (Madjar, 2005; Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003) generates a huge amount of new and diverse information that highlights the importance of feedback in the creative process (Zhou et al., 2008). The information acquired after receiving various feedback makes the individual reformulate points of view, knowledge and information, giving rise to new perspectives (Madjar, 2005) through new brainstorming techniques that allow the flow of new ideas (Sijbom et al., 2018).

Therefore, emerging from the theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were proposed:

H1. Communication Support (CS) positively and significantly impact Organizational Creativity.

H2. Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC) positively and significantly impact Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB).

H3. Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC) positively and significantly impact Organizational Creativity.

H4. Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB) positively and significantly impact Organizational Creativity.

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The scientific investigation process is composed of three distinct phases, which when linked form a connecting thread between the conceptual, methodological and empirical phases (Fortin, 1999).

This is an empirical study whose main objective is to understand how internal communication enhances organizational creativity. According to Chong (2007), internal communication is no longer seen only for its informative character, to be seen as a tool with many more purposes where the various objectives related to satisfying the needs of employees

or the achievement of objectives that have based on increasing the company's creativity and productivity. When employees align their values with the company's core values, they perform better in their roles and consequently improve performance (Chong, 2007).

Consequently, it was decided that a quantitative approach would be applied, since the main objectives are to generalize results through a sample, with an establishment between causal and character relationships of the phenomena (Carmo & Ferreira, 1998). Quantitative methods refer to the collection and measurement of data in countable form, through surveys/questionnaires (Hammond & Wellington, 2021). According to Ruck (2020), questionnaires are a tool that allows for obtaining results from a more representative sample of the organization, through more accurate measurement of the phenomenon under study. It is always necessary to take into account that employees may interpret the questionnaire differently so that inconveniences can be expected.

According to Álvares (2021), the use of the quantitative method gives rise to a more extensive approach, which brings numerous advantages to the analysis of the issue under study, such as the possibility of collecting a large amount of data in a standardized way, the generalization of results and makes comparison easier. The disadvantages, weight and cost, standardization of the questions and consequently their superficiality, increased individualization and loss of relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee can be mentioned (Campenhoudt & Quivy, 2008).

Sample and data collection

The sample was drawn from several companies located throughout the Portuguese territory, companies in the Portuguese technology sector and with a high number of workers. This questionnaire was carried out from June 14 to June 22, 2022. In a total of 628 companies present in the SABI database, it was possible to obtain 93 complete and validated questionnaires.

Measures

The constructs of this study were measured with scales from previous research.

To measure communication support, five items from Rhee and Moon's (2009) scale were used. A 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1 - strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) was used to measure communication support.

Nine items from Dozier et al.'s (1995) scale were used to measure symmetrical internal communication. A 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1 - Strongly disagree" to "5 - Strongly agree" was used to measure symmetrical internal communication.

To assess Feedback-Seeking Behaviors, a 5-point Likert scale from "1 - Never" to "5 - Always" was used. Feedback-Seeking Behaviors were assessed using items adopted from De Stobbeleir et al.'s (2011) scale.

Table 4 shows all items of internal communication dimensions.

Table 4 - Internal communication dimensions items

Dimensions	Items
Communication support (CS)	1. My manager/supervisor manages employees' conflicts. 2. My manager/supervisor gives employees like me clear instructions. 3. My manager/supervisor actively listens to employees like me. 4. My manager/supervisor empathetically listens to employees like me. 5. My manager/supervisor listens carefully to the opinions of employees like me.
Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC)	1. Most communication between my company and me can be said to be two-way communication. 2. My company encourages differences of opinion. 3. The purpose of communication in our company is to help managers be responsive to the problems of employees. 4. Supervisors encourage employees to express differences of opinion in my company. 5. Employees are not afraid to speak up during meetings with supervisors and managers. 6. Does the company give much importance to its internal communication strategy? 7. Do you consider that the company's Internal Communication strategy has favoured the employees' means of expression? 8. Do you think that the company's internal Communication strategy has allowed the development of a feeling of belonging and of identification with the company? 9. Do you consider that all communications were clear and concise?
Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB)	1. How often do you directly ask for feedback about your work? 2. How often do you directly ask for an informal appraisal of your work? 3. How often do you directly ask for information concerning your performance? 4. At work, how often do you come up with new and practical ideas to improve performance? 5. At work, how often do you suggest new and better ways of performing work tasks? 6. At work, how often do you consider yourself a good source of creative ideas? 7. At work, how often do you promote and champion ideas to others? 8. At work, how often do you search out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas? 9. At work, how often do you exhibit creativity on the job when given the opportunity? 10. At work, how often do you have a fresh approach to problems? 11. At work, how often do you come up with creative solutions to problems?

Source: Own elaboration.

To measure organizational creativity, seven items from De Stobbeleir et al.'s (2011) scale were used (Table 5). A 5-point Likert scale ranging from "1 - Strongly disagree" to "5 - Strongly agree" was used to measure communication support.

Table 5 - Selected dimensions and respective items

Dimensions	Items
Organizational Creativity (OC)	1. I can suggest creative ideas. 2. I can express my voice.

	3. I can extend a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge.
	4. I can transform ideas or solutions into entirely new forms.
	5. I can incorporate new directions or approaches to complete a required task.
	6. I can employ strategies to deal with the constantly changing professional landscape.
	7. I can respond creatively to problems and opportunities.

Source: Own elaboration.

RESULTS

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

61,3% of respondents are female and 38,7% are male (Table 6).

Table 6 - Gender

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	1 – F	57	61,3	61,3	61,3
	2 - M	36	38,7	38,7	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

Source: Own elaboration.

78,5% of the respondents have between 28 and 47 years old (Table 7).

Table 7 - Age

		Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Valid	1) 18-27	5	5,4	5,4	5,4
	2) 28-37	40	43,0	43,0	48,4
	3) 37-47	33	35,5	35,5	83,9
	4) 48-57	13	14,0	14,0	97,8
	5) > 58	2	2,2	2,2	100,0
	Total	93	100,0	100,0	

Source: Own elaboration.

Respondents in this questionnaire had the option to select more than one means of communication, with email (28.5%) being the most chosen option, followed by face-to-face meetings (21.4%) and online meetings (21.0%) (Table 8).

Table 8 - Means of communication

		Frequency	Percentage
Valid	1) Intranet	37	12,5
	2) Newsletter	25	8,5
	3) E-mail	84	28,5
	4) Corporate social networks	21	7,1
	5) Face-to-face meetings	63	21,4
	6) Online meetings	62	21,0
	7) Whatsapp	2	0,7
	8) Skype	1	0,3
	Total	295	100,0

Source: Own elaboration.

PARTIAL LEAST SQUARES

The structural equation model is designated as a multiple regression method to establish relationships between variables (Marôco, 2010), with a minimum relational value of 0.7 to ensure that it is greater than the error variance (Carmines & Zeller, 1979).

Partial least-squares regression is an exploratory analysis method that allows the development of theory, which is currently little tested (Roldán et al., 2014). This method can generate structural models based on small samples, less than 250 observations, as is the case in the present study (102) (Reinartz et al., 2009). And it simultaneously allows to maximize of the variance of the various dependent variables (Chin & Newsted, 1999; Reinartz, et al, 2009), as well as calculating formative and reflective calculation models (Chin, 2010).

The reliability of the variables used in the investigation is calculated through the stability and internal consistency based on Cronbach's alpha, with a minimum required level of 0.7 (Nunnally, 1978; Chin, 2010).

In the present study, Cronbach's Alpha levels were reached between 0.965 (Internal Communication) and 0.965 (Organizational Creativity), as shown in Table 9, which is considered very good and excellent (Pestana & Gageiro, 2008).

Table 9 - Cronbach's Alpha of Multidimensional Variables

Constructs	Cronbach' Alpha	p values
Communication support (CS)	.989	.000
Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC)	.985	.000
Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB)	.991	.000
Organizational Creativity	.984	.000

Source: Own elaboration.

The reliability coefficient was also used to test construction validity (Chin, 1998). As can be seen in Table 10, using the parameters of Gefen and Straub (2005) that defend a minimum level of 0.6, the variables exponentially exceed the reference value.

Table 10 - Composed reliability of multidimensional variables (ρc)

Constructs	Composite reliability	p values
Communication support (CS)	.991	.000
Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC)	.987	.000
Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB)	.992	.000
Organizational Creativity	.986	.000

Source: Own elaboration.

In this test, the analysis of convergent validity is carried out, where the indicators represent only one construction (Reinartz et al., 2009), and the discriminant validity. The method proposed by Fornell and Lacker (1981) was used, which proposes the use of the average variance extracted (AVE) with a minimum value of 0.5 to prove convergent validity. As it is possible to observe in the next table, only the positioning did not obtain the required value (Table 11).

Table 11 - Convergent validity of the model

Constructs	AVE	p values
Communication support (CS)	.958	.000
Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC)	.894	.000
Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB)	.922	.000
Organizational Creativity	.912	.000

Source: Own elaboration.

The discriminating validity is determined by construction and is related to the level at which it differs and stands out from the rest of the model's constructs, making it necessary therefore the lack of correlations with other latent variables. It can be gauged through the principle that all cross loads cannot be higher than the load of each indicator. On the other hand, the Fornell – Larcker (1981) criterion defends that it must be AVE that must be superior to the variance between the constructions of the same model.

Referring to the separation of Chin's explanatory power (1998) between moderate and substantial, it is possible to observe in Table 12 that satisfactory results were obtained regarding the validity of discrimination and, consequently, that the constructions are significantly different.

Table 12 - Discriminant validity of the model

Fornell-Larcker Criterion	OC	CS	FSB	SIC
Organizational Creativity (OC)	0,955			
Communication support (CS)	0,910	0,979		
Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB)	0,956	0,884	0,960	
Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC)	0,959	0,919	0,939	0,945

Source: Own elaboration.

According to Table 13, only two hypotheses were not significant according to Chin (1998) who defend a minimum structural coefficient of 0.2. The bootstrapping technique was used to calculate the relative strength of each exogenous construct.

Table 13 - Path coefficients

Hypotheses	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Error (STERR)	T Statistics (|O/STERR|)	p values
H1: CS -> SIC	0,919	0,916	0,028	32,273*	0,000
H2: SIC -> FSB	0,939	0,935	0,025	37,970*	0,000
H3: SIC -> OC	0,523	0,522	0,085	6,148*	0,000
H4: FSB -> OC	0,464	0,465	0,084	5,560*	0,000

* $p<0.001$.

Source: Own elaboration.

In the following figure, it is possible to observe the final structural research model.

Figure 1 - Structural research model
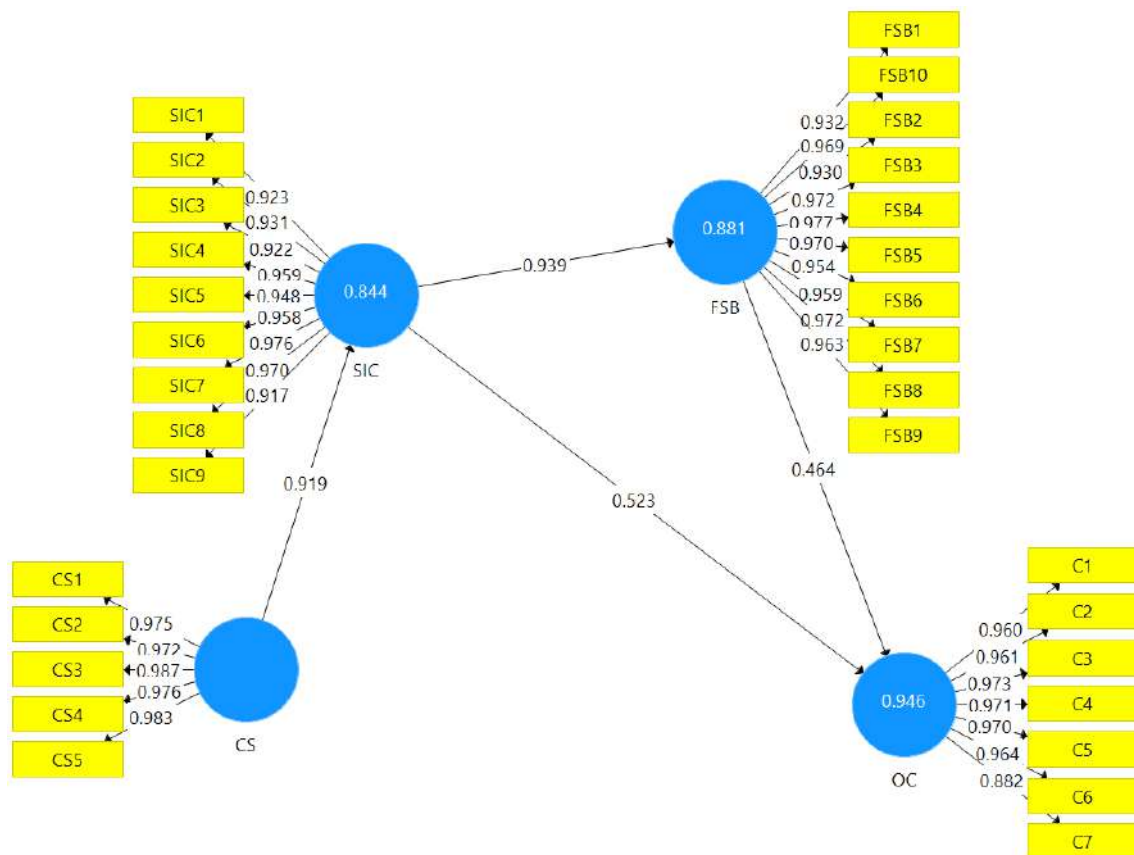
Key: SIC- Symmetrical internal communication; CS- Communication support; FSB- Feedback seeking behaviors; OC- Organizational creativity.

DISCUSSION

After analyzing the questions that were posed in the questionnaire, using reliability analysis that made it possible to establish a relationship between Communication Support (CS), Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC), Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB) and Organizational Creativity (OC) of companies in the technology sector Portuguese, it is possible to observe:

H1. Communication Support (CS) positively and significantly impact Organizational Creativity.

Rhee and Moon (2009) corroborate that supportive communication by leaders/supervisors directly affects employees through openness, demonstration of empathy and ability to listen. Walden, Jung and Westerman (2017) proved that the perception of support from leaders/supervisors, makes employees commit to the organization and become more and more involved in their tasks.

In line with the same thought are Judge & Piccolo (2004) who demonstrated that support communication has a positive influence on employee satisfaction, motivation, effectiveness, and organizational performance.

In this way, McLean (2005) corroborates that how communication channels are encouraged or discouraged translate into a potential source of support or impediment to creativity and innovation.

Most respondents in this study assume that their leaders/supervisors show empathy, availability and openness to communicate with their employees, implying that the more favorable the communication between the surrounding parties, the more favorable the presentation and creation of new products/ideas will be, as the purpose of the work is reinforced, and the result of the creative work is recognized.

H2. Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC) positively and significantly impact Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB).

Symmetrical Internal Communication, according to Grunig (1992), is directly linked to trust, credibility, openness, relationships, reciprocity, horizontal communication, feedback, tolerance and negotiation.

H2 was supported, as the results are in line with Ashford et al. (2003) who report that employees proactively seek feedback to improve performance and to know how they are seen in the eyes of others.

Kang & Sung (2017), Kim & Rhee (2011) and Men (2014) agree with the ideas defended by previous authors and claim that symmetrical communication improves active communication between employees and their superiors, enhancing the sharing of information in the workplace. The vast majority of respondents claim to be involved in an organizational environment with characteristics of symmetrical communication, making feedback-seeking behavior conducive.

H3. Symmetrical Internal Communication (SIC) positively and significantly impact Organizational Creativity.

To support H3, it was necessary to analyze whether symmetrical internal communication affects organizational creativity through the mediating role of feedback-seeking behavior. Kang & Sung (2017) and Kim & Rhee (2011) corroborate this hypothesis, stating that environments with symmetrical communication enhance feedback-seeking behavior on the part

of employees, promoting trust, commitment, and satisfaction, encouraging them to be creative (De Stobbeleir et al., 2011).

Respondents' responses show that the more the environment is shaped with symmetrical communication, the more likely all employees in all departments are to ask for feedback. In line with this thought is De Stobbeleir et al. (2011) who claim that this behavior gives employees different points of view, motivating them to adjust and improve work methods. *H4.* Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB) positively and significantly impact Organizational Creativity.

H4 was supported by De Stobbeleir et al. (2011) that corroborate that the FSB causes employees to have different points of view that sometimes clash, making it necessary to respond to the conflict through thinking outside the box and considering alternatives, generating more ideas and consequently enhancing organizational creativity.

By analyzing the respondents' data, it was possible to verify that the FSB positively influences organizational creativity, in line with this statement by De Stobbeleir et al. (2011) that corroborates that the direct request for feedback allows the employee to have a perception of how others see their work and ideas, allowing their adjustment and improvement. Various perspectives encourage, for example, individuals' brainstorming techniques to generate flows of new ideas (Sijbom et al., 2018).

CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to analyze how internal communication enhances organizational creativity. In particular, how supportive communication, symmetrical internal communication and feedback-seeking behaviors positively influence organizational creativity.

According to the results obtained, it was proven that an organizational environment where it is possible to communicate, where the supervisor listens carefully to the employee and has empathy, makes all employees feel comfortable in asking for feedback on their work and performance. These practices effectively lead to an increase in organizational creativity.

The theoretical overview provided knowledge about the relation between all the dimensions mentioned above, so it was possible to relate each point and understand the influence on professional performance.

One of the limitations of this work is the non-probable sample of convenience due to it not being a random sample but rather specific to the companies in the world of the Portuguese technology sector, the sample size as it was not answered by the majority of companies, a more limited number of responses was obtained, this research can't be generalized for all companies.

For future research, I recommend extending the study to all companies in the technology sector in the world, namely small and medium-sized companies, and see if there are any changes in the results. In addition, I also recommend exploring other companies that are not only linked to these areas, for example, marketing and management companies.

This is the only way companies can differentiate themselves from the rest, obtain new and better results and more motivated workers.

To conclude, it is important to reinforce that good communication within the organization that allows the creation of an environment where there is stimulation and openness to creativity, must be adopted by all companies. For example, to reinforce employee support in the workplace and symmetrical communication, communication professionals can coordinate formal or informal meetings to give employees opportunities to share their ideas, concerns and needs, where they can gain valuable feedback.

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Appendix: Questionnaire

How internal communication enhances organizational creativity?

My name is Joana Miranda and I am in the 3rd year of the Degree in Creativity and Business Innovation in Porto Accounting and Business School (ISCAP). In order to finish the degree, I am developing a dissertation with the above mentioned theme.

This questionnaire is an integral and fundamental part for the conclusion of this study. I thank you in advance for your availability and collaboration in its completion, which aims to analyse How internal communication enhances organizational creativity . The answers are confidential, being analysed globally and for academic purposes only. There are no right or wrong answers. What is important is your opinion.

Taking into account the degree of agreement with the communication support * in your company, indicate the one that best suits you according to the following statements.

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Totally agree
My manager/supervisor gives employees like me clear instructions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor actively listens to employees like me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor empathetically listens to employees like me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor listens carefully to the opinions of employees like me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My manager/supervisor manages employees' conflicts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Taking into account the degree of agreement with the Symmetrical Internal Communication in your company, indicate the one that best suits you according to the following statements.

	Totally disagree | Discordo totalmente	Disagree | Discordo	Undecided | Indeciso	Agree | Concordo	Totally agree | Concordo totalmente
Most communication between my company and me can be said to be two-way communication.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
My company encourages differences of opinion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The purpose of communication in our company is to help managers be responsive to the problems of employees.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

57

Supervisors encourage employees to express differences of opinion in my company.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Employees are not afraid to speak up during meetings with supervisors and managers.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Does the company give much importance to its internal communication strategy?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you consider that the company's internal Communication strategy has favoured the employees' means of expression?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Do you think that the company's internal Communication strategy has allowed the development of a feeling of belonging and of identification with the company?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Do you consider that all communications were clear and concise?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Select the means of internal communication that are most used in your company. *

○ Intranet

○ Newsletter

○ E-mail

○ Corporate social networks

○ In-person and online meetings

○ Outra:

Taking into account the degree of agreement with the creativity in your company, indicate the one that best suits you according to the following statements. *

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Totally agree
I can suggest creative ideas.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can express my voice.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can extend a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can transform ideas or solutions into entirely new forms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can incorporate new directions or approaches to complete a required task.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Totally disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Totally agree
I can extend a novel or unique idea, question, format, or product to create new knowledge.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can transform ideas or solutions into entirely new forms.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can incorporate new directions or approaches to complete a required task.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can employ strategies to deal with the constantly changing professional landscape.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I can respond creatively to problems and opportunities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

59

Taking into account the degree of agreement with the Feedback-Seeking Behaviors (FSB) in your company, indicate the one that best suits you according to the following statements.

	Never	Almost never	Undecided	Often	Always
How often do you directly ask for feedback about your work?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How often do you directly ask for an informal appraisal of your work?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
How often do you directly ask for information concerning your performance?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, how often do you come up with new and practical ideas to improve performance?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, how often do you suggest new and better ways of performing work tasks?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, how often do you consider yourself a good source of creative ideas?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, how often do you promote and champion ideas to others?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, how often do you search out new technologies, processes, techniques, and/or product ideas?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, how often do you exhibit creativity on the job when given the opportunity to?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, how often do you have a fresh approach to problems?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
At work, how often do you come up with creative solutions to problems?	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Gender *

○ Female

○ Masculine

○ Other

Age *

○ 18-27

○ 28-37

○ 38-47

○ 48-57

○ >58

CHAPTER 3 – INNOVATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM BARRIERS IN PORTUGUESE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY FIRMS

Sara Fernandes

Orlando Lima Rua

ABSTRACT

Understanding and implementing innovation in organizations is a central theme that is very present today and constantly evolving.

Accordingly, the main objective of this study is to fill the gaps in the literature by analysing the functioning of companies in the construction sector and the barriers to innovation management systems that they face.

Using an inductive approach and quantitative methodology, a questionnaire on companies' innovation barriers and how efficient their innovation management systems are in overcoming these barriers was used as a case study.

The results show that it is indeed very important to have effective innovation management systems in companies to overcome barriers, but that most companies face internal and external innovation barriers due to weak innovation management.

Keywords: Innovation, Innovation Barriers, Innovation Management.

INTRODUCTION

Since innovation is an extremely complex and multifaceted subject, there are various definitions of innovation in the literature, and, in science, there are several theories and because of that a generally accepted conception of innovation does not exist. So, for a better understanding of this concept, there is going to be used several authors and respective definitions (Siauliai, 1979).

Innovation is naturally systemic, in that way some or even all elements of that system change. It is also multifunctional, it breaks paradigms and traditional rules, which results in a departure from the system (Kogabayev & Maziliauskas, 2017). In a time where innovation is extremely important understanding how it works is crucially for a survival strategy. Since innovation management is a concept that keeps changing each time frame has its notions of what successful or best practices are.

Innovation management is the introduction of management practices that are new to the organization and intended to enhance organization performance (Endres et al., 2022). Furthermore, innovation barriers can have either a positive or negative effect which is mediated by innovation performance and depends on the individual organizations' characteristics and the specific effect that knowledge, financial and demand obstacles have on organizations (Coad et al., 2015).

This study aims to understand what the barriers are in organizations' innovation management systems and how they affect companies. To do this, it is necessary to understand what innovation is, what the barriers to innovation are and how they can affect companies, and how efficient innovation management systems can facilitate an organization's perspective on the barriers.

INNOVATION

CONCEPT AND EVOLUTION

Since innovation is an extremely complex and multifaceted subject, there are various definitions of innovation in the literature, and, in science, there are several theories and because of that a generally accepted conception of innovation does not exist. So, for a better understanding of this concept, there is going to be used several authors and respective definitions (Siauliai, 1979).

From another perspective, The Oslo Manual (OECD/Eurostat, 2018), defends that innovation can be the creation of new knowledge, as well as the diffusion of existing knowledge.

To refer to these types of innovation they use the term *TPP innovation.* The Oslo Manual also suggests that improvements that only serve creative and aesthetic purposes should not be considered innovation (OECD/Eurostat, 2018).

Innovation is not only technological but also social, cultural, institutional, inclusive, green, eco, open, user-driven lean, low-cost, grassroots, public, and transformative (Edwards-Schachter, 2018). Also, according to this scholar, innovation is considered to result from the creation or invention of something new or which adds value by producing wider effects on the economy and technological advances. Besides this, economic and managerial strands of Innovation Studies (IS) can also form classic innovation concepts, which result in the evolution of production and applications of scientific and technological knowledge. Innovation can also result from invention, novelty, and change. Together, they structure a composite of characteristics according to the process and elements involved. Among this set of characteristics are purpose, actors, drivers and resources, inputs, activities and outcomes, value generation, structural and institutional context, and other contextual factors. It is important to reinforce that these elements have undergone and continue to undergo rapid changes that challenge the scope and classic definitions of innovation. The process and outcome when creating or inventing something new that adds value and effects the economy and technological advances can be considered innovation.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) considers that: "*[A]n innovation [..] is any new or substantially improved good or service which has been commercialized, or any new or substantially improved process used for the commercial production of goods and services. "New" means new to your business.*"

According to Ziegler et al. (2022) some authors refer that innovation consists of the generation of a new idea leading to how its implemented into a new product, service, or process. This scholar also defends that this leads to the creation of pure profit for the innovative business enterprise. Innovation is not a one-time phenomenon, it's the cause of a long cumulative process of many organizational decision-making processes. Furthermore, innovation can be considered as the use of new combinations of existing productive forces to solve business problems.

Schumpeter defined that there are 5 types of innovation, which are (1) Introduction of a new product or qualitative change in an existing product, (2) Process innovation new to an industry, (3) The opening of a new market, (4) Development of new sources of supply for raw materials or other inputs, and (5) Changes in industrial organization.

Innovation is a process that combines science, technology, economics, and management, to achieve novelty and extends from the emergence of the idea to its commercialization in the

form of production, exchange, and consumption (Žičkienė & Tamasauskiene, 2021). Hueske et al. (2015) defend that Innovation is the result of scientific work aimed at improving social activities and intended for the implementation of social production.

The Department of Industry Science and Tourism (DIST), an Australian Government department, believes that innovation can be the application of new ideas in a company regardless of whether these ideas are incorporated into products, processes, services, or systems of work organization, management, or marketing. The Business Council of Australia have defined innovation as something new or significantly improved, done by an enterprise, to create an added value either directly or indirectly for itself or its customers (Business Council of Australia 1993).

Innovation is new knowledge incorporated into products, processes, and services. Innovations are classified by him according to technological, market, and administrative/organizational characteristics (Afuah & Utterback, 1997). The quantity of innovation definitions keeps adding to the pile, this indicates that this concept has been evolving and the influences that it has suffered whether in historical or sociocultural contexts prove that it is where innovation types emerge (Fagerberg & Verspagen, 2010).

For easier reading, there follows Table 1 with the authors and respective definitions of innovation in chronological order.

Table 1 - Innovation definitions

Author/Year	Definition
(Business Council of Australia 1993, p.3)	Innovation is something new or significantly improved, done by an enterprise, to create an added value either directly or indirectly for itself or its customers.
(Afuah & Utterback, 1997)	Innovation is a new knowledge incorporated in products, processes, and services. Innovations are classified by him according to technological, market, and administrative/organizational characteristics.
Department of Industry Science and Tourism, (1998) (DIST)	Innovation can be the application of new ideas in a company regardless of whether these ideas are incorporated into products, processes, services, or systems of work organization, management, or marketing.
(Hueske et al., 2015)	Innovation is the result of scientific work aimed at improving the social activities and intended for the implementation of social production.
(Kogabayev & Maziliauskas, 2017)	Innovation is naturally systemic, in that way some or even all elements of that system undergo change. It is also multifunctional, it breaks paradigms and traditional rules, which results in a departure from the system.
(Edwards-Schachter, 2018)	Innovation is not only technological but also social, cultural, institutional, inclusive, green, eco, open, user-driven lean, low-cost, grassroots, public, and transformative
(OECD/Eurostat, 2018)	Innovation can be the creation of new knowledge, as well as the diffusion of existing knowledge
(Žičkienė & Tamasauskiene, 2021)	Innovation is a process that combines science, technology, economics, and management, to achieve novelty and extends from the emergence of the idea to its commercialization in the form of production, exchange, and consumption.
(Ziegler et al., 2022)	Innovation consists of the generation of a new idea leading to how its implemented into a new product, service, or process.

Source: Own elaboration.

INNOVATION MANAGEMENT

Strategies and importance

In a time where innovation is extremely important understanding how it works is crucially for a survival strategy. Since innovation management is a concept that keeps changing each time frame has its notions of what successful or best practices are.

Innovation management is the introduction of management practices that are new to the organization and intended to enhance organization performance (Endres et al., 2022).

For Kimpimäki et al. (2022) the generation and implementation of management practice, process, structure, or technique that is new to the state of the art and is intended to further organizational goals is innovation management.

Gloet and Samson (2020) defined innovation management as a marked departure from traditional management principles, processes and practices or a departure from customary organizational forms that significantly alters the way the work of management is performed.

While Volberda et al. (2013) consider that innovation management is any program, product or technique which represents a significant departure from the state of the art of management at the time it first appears and which affects the nature, location, quality, or quantity of information that is available in the decision-making process.

For a better understanding of innovation management (Adams et al., 2006) defined some steps for innovation strategy:

1. Establish a review team and scope and nature of the question and search strings
2. Undertake Delphi investigation
3. A preliminary search of electronic databases
4. Develop analytic framework
5. A secondary search of electronic databases and Delphi study
6. Content analysis of data set, sorting of measures into first-order categories defined by the analytic framework
7. Review measures against the framework for gaps

This author also investigated a series of innovation management models and areas to define a better strategy. The innovation management models can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2 - Innovation management models

	Cooper and Kleinschmidt (1995)	Chiesa et al. (1996)	Cormican and O'Sullivan (2004)	Goffin and Pfeiffer (1999)	Burgelman et al. (2004)	Verhaeghe and Kfir (2002)
Inputs				Creativity and human resources	Resource availability	Idea generation Technology acquisition
Knowledge management		Resource provision			Understand relevant technological developments and competitor strategies	Networking
Strategy	NPD strategy		Strategy and leadership	Innovation strategy	Strategic management	
Organization and culture		Organizational culture Management commitment	Leadership	Culture and climate	Structural and cultural context of the organization	
Portfolio management	NPD process	Systems and tools	Planning and selection	Portfolio management		
Project management			Communication and collaboration	Project management		Development
Commercialization	Commercialization		Structure and performance			Commercialization

Source: Adams et al. (2006).

This author also considered that innovation management should be done in categories.

(1) The inputs management is about the resourcing of innovation activities and includes factors from finance, human and physical resources, to generate new ideas.

(2) Knowledge management, which means it is necessary to absorb knowledge, in other words, this category is concerned with obtaining and communicating ideas and information that underlie innovation competencies. An organization also can identify, acquire and utilize external knowledge that can be extremely important for an organization's success.

(3) The innovation strategy is a timed sequence of internally consistent and conditional resource allocation decisions that are designed to fulfil an organization's objectives. This type of strategy is used to describe an organization's innovation posture about its competitive environment in terms of its new product or service and market development plans. To perform effectively, an organization must be appropriately differentiated, specialized, and integrated and from that comes the fourth category.

(4) Organizational culture and structure. This concern the way that staff are grouped and the organizational culture within which they work. Comprising both structural and cultural elements does make a difference in the level of innovation in organizations.

(5) Portfolio management, this is very important because of the rapidity at which resources are consumed in the innovation process and the need for these to be managed, it is also important for a successful product or service innovation. How organizations effectively manage their R&D portfolio is a key determinant of their competitive advantage. This portfolio has on its focus making strategic, technological and resource choices that govern project selection and the future shape of the organization.

(6) Project management which is concerned with the processes that turn the inputs into a marketable innovation. With that said, having an efficient process that can manage the ambiguity of the innovation is universally agreed to be critical to innovation.

Finally, (7) Commercialization means taking innovation into the market but also may include convincing production managers to adopt a series of new techniques available to them. The successful introduction of new products and services into markets is important or the survival and growth of organizations.

Table 3 - Innovation management areas

Framework category	Measurement areas
Inputs	People
	Physical and financial resources
	Tools
Knowledge management	Idea generation
	Knowledge repository
	Information flows
Innovation strategy	Strategic orientation
	Strategic leadership
Organization and culture	Culture
	Structure
Portfolio management	Risk/return balance
	Optimization tool use
Project management	Project efficiency
	Tools
	Communications
	Collaboration
Commercialization	Market research
	Market testing
	Marketing and sales

Source: Adams et al. (2006).

Table 3 shows the innovation management areas described above.

Eveleens (2010) defend that innovation management starts with idea generation, which is followed by the selection of which projects should be pursued and which should not, this should be based on both the organizational strategy and the existing portfolio of projects to spread risks. At this point, it must be judged if the innovation is potentially lucrative enough or if it is going to increase the public value enough.

The next step is to turn the selected idea into some tangible product, process, or service, which means the idea will go through development, prototyping, manufacturing, and realization. After this step comes to the implementation or launch, in this step the newly developed product, process or service is implemented in the real world. It entails the preparing of customers and marketing activities. When managing innovation, after the implementation phase it can also happen a post-implementation phase, which means that the innovation would be sustained and supported or even re-innovated and scaled up.

Finally, comes the explicit learning phase, it is not only about learning about the innovation itself but also about how the innovation process went. To make sure the same mistakes are not made in a future project (Eveleens, 2010).

According to Volberda et al. (2013), innovation management reflects changes in the way management work is done, involving a departure from traditional processes, practices, structure, and techniques. Innovation management tends to emerge through necessity. Due to its nature, innovation management is likely to constitute a rather diffuse and difficult-to-replicate attribute for any organization that successfully develops one.

The author also explains that innovation management is only successful if those management innovations are adapted to the unique context of the organization. Changes in the how and what of what managers do in setting directions, making decisions, coordinating activities, and motivating people is covered by innovation management. These changes are an important source of competitive advantage because they are revealed in new managerial practices, structures, or processes and they are context-specific, ambiguous, and hard to replicate.

Management innovation usually has the purpose of increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of internal organizational processes, consequently, increasing the productivity and competitiveness of organizations (Volberda et al., 2013).

INNOVATION BARRIERS

Diversity and impact

One of the most classic topics in innovation literature is the impact it has on productivity. Although the interest in innovation barriers from academics has been increasing it is a surprise how the standard economic or innovation literature has not tackled the analysis of factors that can damage how firms invest and engage in innovation (Coad et al., 2015). When academics talk about innovation barriers it not only results in a market failure problem but is also associated with specific conditions that represent systemic failures for organizations. These barriers are difficult to overcome and could be detrimental do organizations' productivity.

Also, according to this scholar, the innovation barriers can have either a positive or negative effect which is mediated by innovation performance and depends on the individual organizations' characteristics and the specific effect that knowledge, financial and demand obstacles have on organizations. When organizations have low productivity, they may face barriers that prevent them from starting their innovation efforts, such as difficulties in accessing finance or excessive cost of finance that deter them from undertaking innovation. On another hand organizations with high productivity face a distinct set of barriers, such as knowledge barriers that hinder how a company can exploit their innovation outputs. On top of that, high

productivity firms, *ceteris paribus,* might struggle more with lack of demand, especially when they produce new goods or services, radically.

In addition, D'Este et al. (2012) defend that innovation barriers are dynamic, as their presence and relevance tend to vary throughout the innovation process and the size of the firm.

To understand better the role innovation barriers have on companies, (Oke, 2010) argues that management needs to develop a strategy and communicate the role of innovation within a company. Although it is not enough to consider an innovation strategy, the strategy needs to be operationalized by clarifying the meaning of the concept. Furthermore, this author also defends that when service companies try to innovate is less effective than manufacturing companies, which means service companies face more innovation barriers when compared to manufacturing companies.

For Oke (2010), some of the innovation barriers are service/product concept testing, motivating employees to buy into service/product innovation culture, generating service/product innovation ideas, lack of service/product innovation legacy, getting management support for service/product innovation, developing service/product ideas not easily copied by competitors, patenting service innovation, effective service/product development process and having good service/product innovation measures. This author, of the research, was also able to find different results. Eight factors were identified as innovation barriers and the participants were asked to rate each one on a scale from 1 to 5 in terms of how problematic these factors were in managing innovation in an organization (1- not problematic; 5- very problematic). The results can be seen in Figure 1.
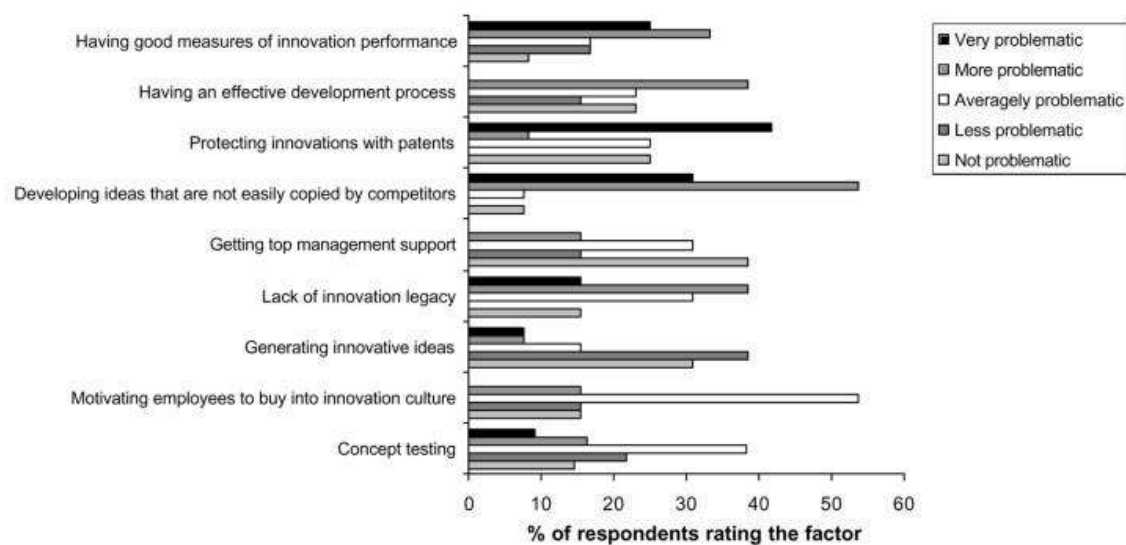

Figure 1 - Innovation Barriers
Source: Oke (2010).

70

Oke (2010) also understood from this research, that the innovation barriers organizations face having a major impact on innovation performance which consequently damages the organization. To develop and launch a successful innovation, organizations depend on internal and external factors, in other words, an organization needs to be able to explore and incorporate new technologies, implement oriented practices that are new to the company and be able to adapt internal mechanisms that allow the proper exploration and development of new ideas (Das et al., 2018).

Dressler (2022) defends that it is important to distinguish internal and external innovation barriers, because both factors influence the ability of an organization's innovation success, besides all that, by making this distinction it is possible to see which barriers the organization can influence, and which are partially or completely beyond its influence.

According to literature research conducted by Das et al. (2018), the most common internal barriers are the organization's strategy, organizational architecture, leadership, organizational culture, the organization or R&D, and performance incentives, whereas the most common external barriers are market dynamics, competitor behaviour, and market technology turbulence.

Sandberg and Aarikka-Stenroos (2014), define internal barriers as a restrictive mindset, a lack of discovery competences, and an unsupportive organizational structure, while external barriers are customer resistance, an undeveloped network, ecosystem dynamics, and technological turbulence. Similarly, Carvache-Franco et al. (2022) believe that innovation barriers are the conditions we can encounter in an organization or their environment that hinder the development of innovation.

Organizational rigidity and lack of resources become barriers. Furthermore, there are three types of innovation barriers, (1) cost and financing barriers (includes lack of internal funds, lack of external financing, and high costs for innovation); (2) knowledge barriers (includes lack of qualified personnel, lack of information on technology, lack of access to market information, and the difficulty in finding cooperation partners for innovation); and (c) market barriers established by dominant companies and uncertainty barriers regarding the demand of products and services (D'Este et al., 2012).

In general, Barrera Verdugo (2017) believes that innovation barriers affect more small firms than large ones due to the difficulties in obtaining funds and financing the scarce of qualified human resources, and the predicaments they face to obtain market information. On the other hand, the lack of qualified personnel and the lack of resources for innovation affect older companies more than younger companies.

In a similar perspective to the two authors mentioned above, Hölzl and Jürgen (2012) believe that the perception of innovation barriers changes according to the organization's behaviours. In addition, the innovation barriers are more intense in organizations that have their R&D to achieve product or process innovation, these obstacles could lead to delaying, abandoning, or not initiating innovative projects. Also, according to this author, innovating is difficult for organizations because of the cost, knowledge, and market factors involved. Thus, five innovations barriers were considered after a questionnaire, which are financial barriers (lack of finance from sources outside an enterprise), skill barriers (lack of qualified personnel), lack of information on technology, lack of information on markets, and lack of innovation partners (difficulty in finding cooperation partners for innovation).

Furthermore, two types of barriers were examined, finance and knowledge-related barriers. The organization's investments in innovation are affected by financial barriers because innovation is very uncertain and the implied costs may be too high, which makes these barriers very important. While knowledge barriers refer to the availability of resources to acquire and process information required for innovation activity (Hölzl & Jürgen, 2012).

Hölzl and Jürgen (2013) distinguished innovation barriers between external and internal. When organizations resist innovation that is when internal barriers emerge, while external barriers happen when organizations interact with each other un the innovation system. These authors noted that many studies on innovation barriers report that innovating organizations experience higher innovation barriers than non-innovators and that organizations with a high R&D and innovation intensity report the highest barriers to innovation. However, organizations with abandoned innovation projects tend to report high innovation barriers, especially in the economic sector.

From a completely different perspective, Meijer (2015) systematized and analyzed innovation barriers based on a phase model innovation. The proposed phases and their respective barriers were:

- *"Idea generation. In this phase, the idea of transforming government through the use of new technologies is developed. Interpretative barriers can play a key role in this barrier: many actors will not be prepared to change the way they have been viewing themselves, others, and the world;*

- *Idea selection. Out of all the ideas that are being developed within an organization, some are selected for further development. Organizational attention and resources are scarce and hence selection is needed. Political and organizational barriers are crucial here: the idea needs to compete with other ideas for attention and resources;*

- *Idea testing. The idea is developed and tested on a small scale to see whether it 'works' in practice. In this phase, the use of new technologies for creating citizen engagement runs into a range of technological, organizational and institutional barriers;*

- *Idea promotion. A successful test will be followed by promotion of the idea to get it implemented on a larger scale. In this phase, financial and capacity barriers may prevent the process of innovation from moving forward. The 'not invented here' mechanism may also form a barrier to the adoption of the idea in another setting.*

- *Idea roll-out. If other organizations have decided to adopt the innovation, they have to implement it. Technological and organizational barriers, again, play an important role. While experimental technology could have worked in an experimental setting and a selected group of enthusiasts were cooperating, the idea now requires robust technology and acceptance by a wide range of employees.".*

Throughout his study, Meijer (2015) also found two barrier domains, government and citizen barriers. Government barriers highlight personnel, technical and financial capacity, legal issues, lack of political and management support and lack of leadership. While citizen barriers emerge when citizens are expected to contribute to the production of public values or when modern technologies cannot be integrated into people's daily routines. This author also identified structural and cultural barriers. Funding, technology, and skills are found as structural barriers and cultural barriers can also be identified on the side of citizens. When citizens are opposed to changes in products or services.

For Schatz (2005), organizations need efficient administration because their job is to avoid exceptions, errors and unforeseen surprises, but all of these factors are at the heart of innovation and that is why too much planning will inhibit innovation. Other barriers include having a general aversion to excellence, organizations unconsciously demonstrating a zero-risk mentality due to the fact some try to avoid mistakes, and the belief that R&D will be more efficient.

RESEARCH TOPICS

In quantitative research, significant and representative samples of a given population are used considering the type of study that is intended to be used. And so, one of the most important steps in this type of methodology is to formulate the research objectives and seek to quantify the occurrence of a phenomenon (Tenente dos Santos Pocinho & Ney Matos, 2022).

After reviewing the most relevant aspects of the literature and the respective authors who mention them, a set of essential research questions (RQ to which an answer is sought were considered (Table 4).

RQ1: What are the main barriers to innovation?

RQ2: How often do organizations face innovation barriers?

RQ3: How important is innovation management for organizations?

RQ4: How important is innovation management in overcoming innovation barriers?

Table 4 - Theoretical foundation of the research questions

Research Topics	Authors	Research questions
Innovation Barriers	(Carvache-Franco et al., 2022); (Das et al., 2018); (Antonioli et al., 2016); (Hueske et al., 2015); (Meijer, 2015); (Coad et al., 2015); (Sandberg & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2014); (Hölzl & Jürgen, 2013); (D'Este et al., 2012); (Hölzl & Jürgen, 2012); (Oke, 2010); (Schatz, 2005); (González et al., 2005)	Q1, Q2
Innovation Management	(Dressler, 2022); (Endres et al., 2022); (Kimpimäki et al., 2022); (Gloet & Samson, 2020); (Volberda et al., 2013); (Eveleens, 2010); (Mol & Birkinshaw, 2009); (Ortt & van der Duin, 2008); (Kessler & Bailey, 2007); (Adams et al., 2006)	Q3, Q4

Source: Own elaboration.

METHODOLOGY

QUANTITATIVE METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

Quantitative research, which has its roots in logical positivist thinking, tends to emphasise deductive reasoning, the rules of logic and the measurable attributes of human experience. Qualitative research, on the other hand, tends to emphasise the dynamic, holistic and individual aspects of human experience to grasp the totality (Conjo et al., 2022). The results of quantitative research can be quantified. Since samples are usually large and considered representative of the population, the results are taken as if they constitute a true picture of the entire target population of the research.

This scholar also defends that quantitative research focuses on objectivity. Influenced by positivism, it considers that reality can only be understood based on the analysis of raw data, collected with the aid of standardized and neutral instruments. Quantitative research resorts to mathematical language to describe the causes of a phenomenon, and the relationships between variables, among others.

According to Pitanga (2020), the origin of quantitative research is associated with the philosophy of science, by Galileo and Newton, and is present in the empiricist and positivist line of thought. Quantitative research is directly linked to the quantification of data, experimentation, measurement and strict control of facts.

Quantitative research was the basis of scientific thought until the mid-20th century and is characterised by the passivity and neutrality of the researcher in the investigation of reality (Knechtel, 2014). Quantitative research is based on the quantification of data and seeks to measure opinions and information using statistical resources such as percentages, averages, and standard deviations. Quantitative data are observed values of a set of variables, which may represent some elements or all elements, for example, of a society, or a certain population. Such data is presented in the form of tables, graphs, or texts.

This author also stated that quantitative research is applied in conducting social, economic, communication, marketing, and administrative research. It is research linked to empirical-descriptive research when one seeks to discover and classify the relationship between variables, and the cause-and-effect relationships between different phenomena.

DATA COLLECTION

It is questionable whether researchers should be able to collect data from all cases to answer investigative questions. Therefore, sample selection is necessary. The complete set of cases from which the investigator's sample is drawn is called the population.

Since investigators did not have the time or resources to analyse the entire population, they applied sampling techniques to reduce the number of cases (Taherdoost, 2018).

When doing the data collection of a survey it is important to establish some basic definitions relevant to sampling discussions.

- Population: the total set of relevant cases (e.g. all the people working in an innovative organizational context);

- Sample: a subset of the population (e.g. people working in an innovative organizational context in one company).

Sampling reflects an interaction between the population and the sample, thus forming a bridge between theoretical and methodological discussions (Cash et al., 2022). In this case, the population would be all the employees in the building industry, and the sample would be the employees who answered the questionnaire.

QUESTIONNAIRE

To prepare the questionnaire, the main topics and their related factors were identified (Table 5). The selection of the topics mentioned arose through the research questions and the authors referenced in the literature review. From these, the questions that make up the questionnaire emerged.

Q1: How long have you been working in an innovative organizational context?

Q2: How often do you believe organizations face innovation barriers?

Q3: In your opinion, what kind of innovation barriers your organization has faced?

Q4: Do you think your organization will face these barriers again?

Q5: Do you think the innovation barriers your organization has faced are internal or external?

Q6: Do you think your organization has an effective strategy to overcome innovation barriers?

Q7: Do you think innovation management is important for an organization's success?

Q8: Do you believe your organization has an efficient innovation management system?

Q9: In your opinion, a poor innovation management system can lead to difficulty in overcoming innovation barriers?

Table 5 - Theoretical foundation of the questions in the questionnaire

Research Topics	Authors	Questions
Innovation Barriers	(Carvache-Franco et al., 2022); (Das et al., 2018); (Antonioli et al., 2016); (Hueske et al., 2015); (Meijer, 2015); (Coad et al., 2015); (Sandberg & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2014); (Hölzl & Jürgen, 2013); (D'Este et al., 2012); (Hölzl & Jürgen, 2012); (Oke, 2010); (Schatz, 2005); (González et al., 2005)	Q2, Q3, Q4, Q5, Q6
Innovation Management	(Dressler, 2022); (Endres et al., 2022); (Kimpimäki et al., 2022); (Gloet & Samson, 2020); (Volberda et al., 2013); (Eveleens, 2010); (Mol & Birkinshaw, 2009); (Ortt & van der Duin, 2008); (Kessler & Bailey, 2007); (Adams et al., 2006)	Q1, Q7, Q8, Q9

Source: Own elaboration.

PARTICIPANTS SELECTION

The first stage of the sampling process is to clearly define the target population. A sampling frame is a list of actual cases from which to sample. The sample base must be representative of the population.

Before we dive into the different types of sampling techniques, it's important to understand what they mean by sampling, and why a researcher might choose a sample. Take a subset of the selected sampling frame or the entire population is called the sample. Samples can be used to craft inferences about populations or generalizations related to existing theories. Essentially, this depends on the choice of sampling technique (Taherdoost, 2018).

The selection method was carried out through non-probability sampling by judgment. In a quantitative approach, one foresees the measurement of pre-established variables, seeking to verify and explain their influence on other variables by analysing the frequency of incidences and statistical correlations. The researcher describes, explains, and predicts (Pitanga, 2020).

Thus, companies from the construction sector were selected since they comply with the case to be studied and research question. One part of the companies were found through websites, whilst the other part was through a previously established contact network. The main criteria used to choose the companies were to be known in the market, to have been present in this market for some years and to have a reasonable number of employees.

Data collection

The questionnaire conducted on *Google Forms* was online for employees of companies in the construction sector and 94 responses were obtained. To ensure reliability, all the questions that were asked were based on the innovation theories and definitions and formulated in such a way that all the experts could neutrally answer them, using only their knowledge. All participants were provided with the same information and the same conditions, regardless of the answers they provided.

RESULTS

SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION

The sample consists of 94 participants and all responses are valid for the study in question.

As said before, to ensure reliability, all the questions that were asked were based on the innovation theories and definitions and formulated in such a way that all the experts could neutrally answer them, using only their knowledge. All participants were provided with the same information and the same conditions, regardless of the answers they provided. As can be seen in Figure 2.
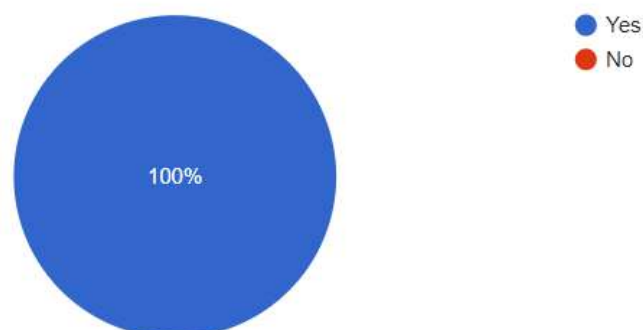
Figure 2 - Reliability of the questionnaire
Source: Own elaboration.

To better understand the perception that employees have of the market in which they operate, two questions were asked (Figures 3 and 4). The first was the age of the individual and the second was how long they had been working in an innovative organizational context. In the figures below it is possible to see the results obtained in each question, respectively.

Age
94 respostas

51-54 y
4 p

22-30 y
27 p

41-50 y
26 p

31-40 y
37 p

y- years
p- number of people

Figure 3 - Age
Source: Own elaboration.

How long have you been working in an innovative organizational context?

94 respostas

>31y
19p

< 10y
23p

21-30y
12p

10-20y
40p

y- years
p- number of people

Figure 4 – Q1 - Time working - Results
Source: Own elaboration.

QUESTIONS RESULTS

Considering the content and the evidence drawn from the questionnaire carried out, it is important to present the results considering the research questions of this study and cross-reference them with the theoretical framework.
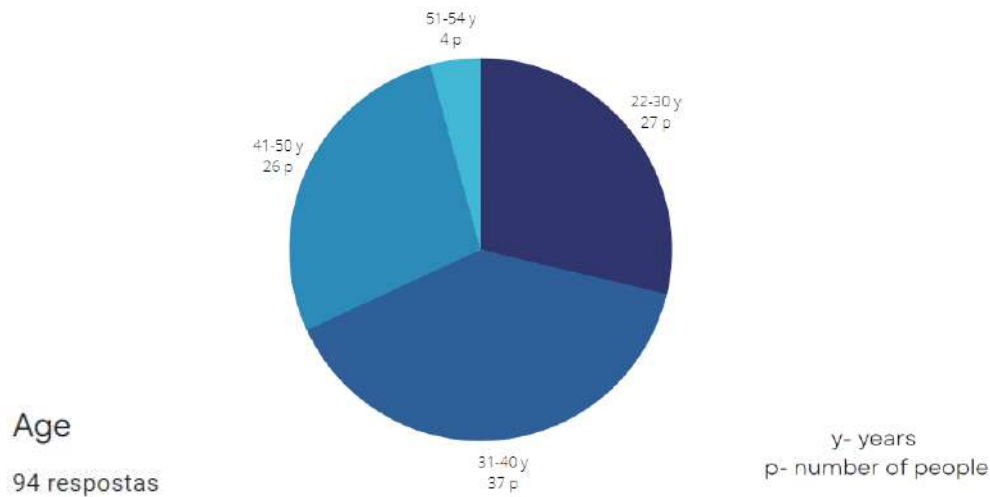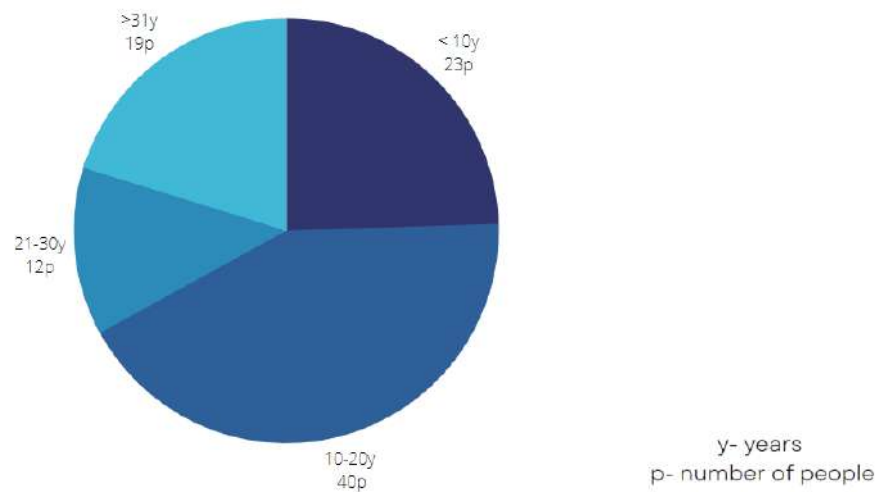
For a better understanding of the results, Q1 is graded between 1 and 5, where 1 means rarely and 5 frequently. While in questions Q6, Q7 and Q8 there is a slightly different classification, because in these, 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree. And, as stated earlier, 94 responses were obtained to this questionnaire.

As can be seen in Figure 5, the frequency with which organizations face barriers to innovation is quite high. Where 93 responses correspond to higher scores, making up 99% of the total percentage of responses. And despite being companies that already have their stamp on this sector they still often face barriers to innovation.

How often do you believe organizations face innovation barriers?
94 respostas
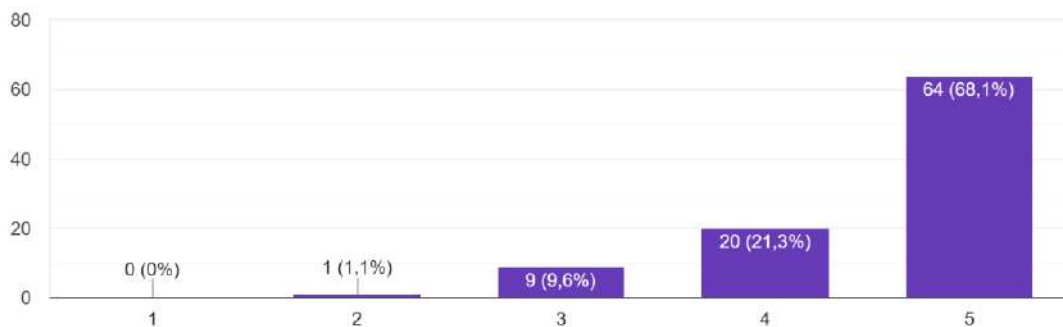
Figure 5 – Q2 Results
Source: Own elaboration.

For a better understanding of Figure 6, they were asked to list the barriers they have already faced as employees of a particular company. The possible options were listed:

- Organizational and cultural barriers;
- Knowledge management barriers;
- Leadership barriers;
- Competitive advantage barriers;
- Product/Service development or implementation barriers;
- Financial barriers;
- Management barriers;
- Human and/or physical resources barriers.

79

It is possible to see that the barriers that had a higher percentage were organizational and cultural barriers, knowledge management barriers, financial barriers, management barriers and human and/or physical resources barriers.

We can observe that financial barriers and knowledge management are the ones with the highest percentage (Figure 6).

In your opinion, what kind of innovation barriers your organization has faced? (you can choose more than one option)
94 respostas

Organizational and culture barri...	61 (64,9%)
Knowlegede management barri...	68 (72,3%)
Leadership barriers	35 (37,2%)
Competitive advantage barriers	37 (39,4%)
Product/Service development o...	31 (33%)
Financial Barriers	67 (71,3%)
Management barriers	65 (69,1%)
Human and/or physical resourc...	47 (50%)
Other	1 (1,1%)

Figure 6 – Q3 Results
Source: Own elaboration.

In Q4 it was possible to see that 36 respondents stated that organizations will again face the same barriers to innovation. On the other hand, 55 people were ambiguous. Figure 7 shows that 96.8% believe that the barriers could be the same as the ones they have, in the past, faced.

Do you think your organization will face these barriers again?
94 respostas

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

58,5%

38,3%

Figure 7 – Q4 Results
Source: Own elaboration.

To understand how the market and organizational environment influence innovation, Q5 focuses on internal and external barriers. Thus, 96.8%, which corresponds to 91 people, answered that organizations are influenced by both barriers (Figure 8).

Do you think the innovation barriers your organization has faced are internal or external?
94 respostas
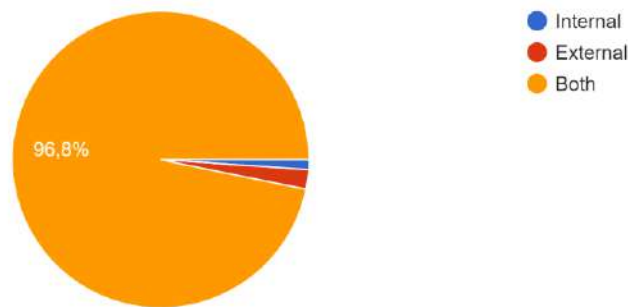
Figure 8 – Q5 Results
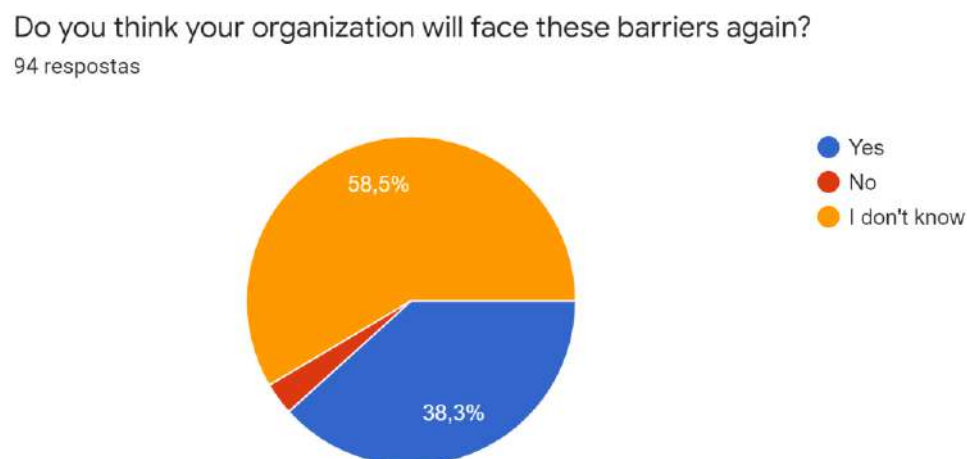Source: Own elaboration.

Figure 9 shows the results of Q6 where 86.2% of the responses showed that organizations do not have effective strategies to overcome innovation barriers. Only 13.8%, which corresponds to 13 people, answered with high values.

Do you think your organization has an effective strategy to overcome innovation barriers?
94 respostas
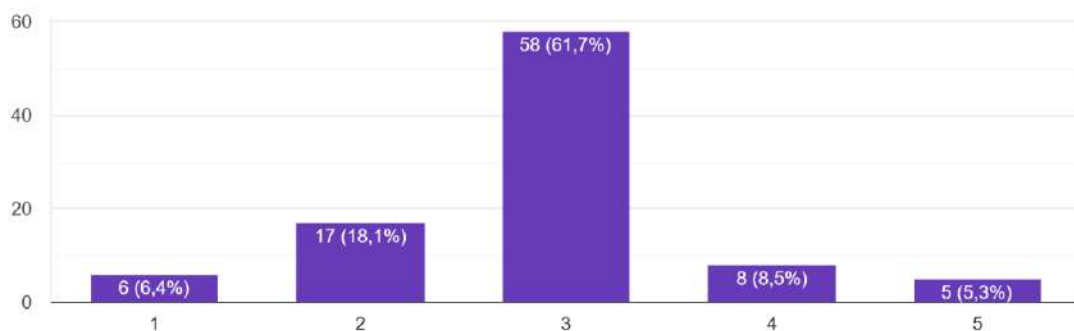
Figure 9 – Q6 Results
Source: Own elaboration.

To understand the value that employees place on innovation management, they were asked to rate its importance in an organization. As it is possible to see in Figure 10, only high values were selected. The highest value predominates with a percentage of 92.6%, corresponding to 87 people.

Do you think innovation management is important for an organization's success?

94 respostas
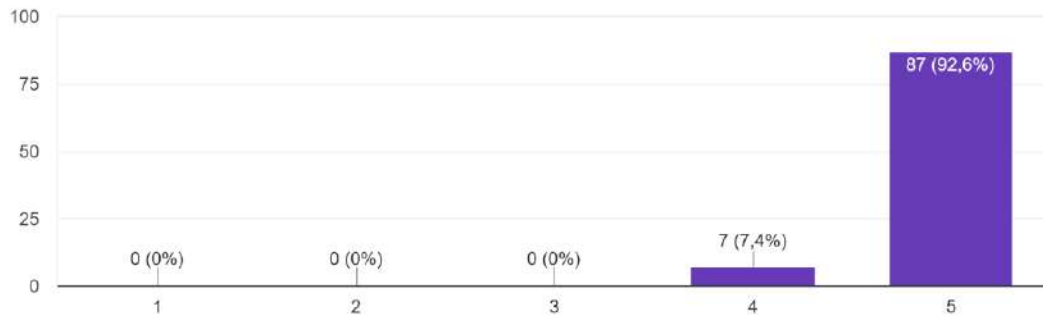
Figure 10 – Q7 Results
Source: Own elaboration.

After questioning the importance of innovation management, they were asked if their organizations have efficient innovation management systems. In this Q8 the lowest values predominate, corresponding to a percentage of 87.3% compared to the highest values which are 12.8% (Figure 11).

Do you believe your organization has an efficient innovation management system?

94 respostas
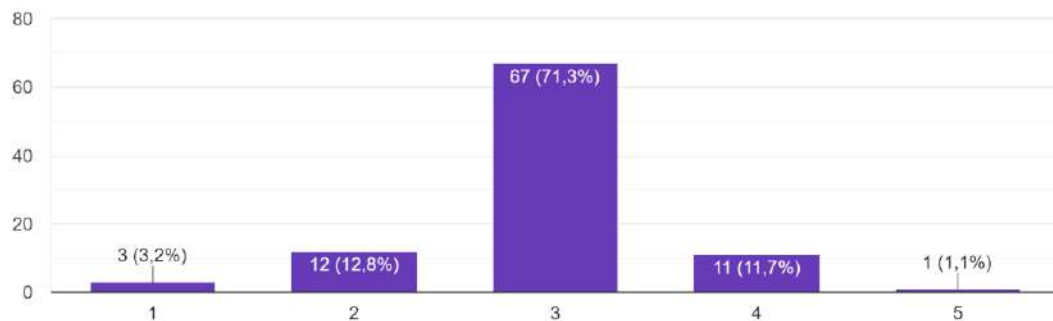
Figure 11 – Q8 Results
Source: Own elaboration.

As a conclusion of the questionnaire, both topics (innovation barriers and innovation management) were converted into one to understand whether the employees think that how innovation management is done will influence whether or not the barriers to innovation are overcome more easily (Figure 12).

In your opinion, a poor innovation management system can lead to a difficulty in overcoming innovation barriers?

94 respostas

Figure 12 – Q9 Results
Source: Own elaboration.

DISCUSSION

After an in-depth analysis of the questionnaire and aggregation of the knowledge derived from the literature review, it is possible to verify that as market competitiveness grows, so do the innovation barriers (Sandberg & Aarikka-Stenroos, 2014).

Overall, employees believe that effective innovation management systems lead to greater ease in overcoming innovation barriers (Figure 1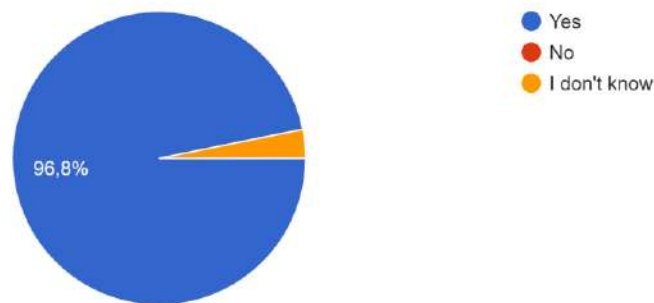2). But despite this, most companies do not have effective strategies to overcome innovation barriers or efficient innovation management systems (Figures 9 and 11).

Figure 6 shows that the barriers with the highest percentage were organizational and cultural barriers, knowledge management barriers, financial barriers, management barriers and human and/or physical resources barriers. But from this list, the financial barriers and the knowledge management barriers stand out. It is possible to observe that financial barriers and knowledge management are the barriers with the highest percentage and that, in a way, they are interconnected, because the way knowledge is managed carries consequences for the financial part of an organization. Financial barriers may not only affect knowledge management barriers but also all the other barriers previously listed in the questionnaire.

Through the answers, it was possible to understand that the employees listed the barriers they have already faced and how frequent they are. Furthermore, they gave their opinion if it would be possible to face the same barriers again (Figure 7). As a complement to the study, to understand which barriers affect organizations the most (between internal and external barriers) question 5 (Q5) was prepared, where the majority response was that both internal and external barriers were frequent barriers in organizations.

CONCLUSIONS

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The empirical study of this sector reveals that barriers to innovation are a current issue that is very difficult for most companies to overcome.

It was found that organizations need to improve their innovation management systems and use more effective strategies to overcome innovation barriers. The study showed that most companies do not have top managers who are experts in analyzing and implementing strategies to overcome barriers that arise as they innovate. In this way, companies are left with an even more difficult task of being able to stand out in what is a red ocean market.

The data reveals that employees are aware of the importance of innovation management systems in companies and that it is something that has not been improved in this sector, since many employees already have more than a decade of experience and still face the same obstacles as in the beginning.

The results show a certain discrepancy when comparing the level of importance that employees place on effective innovation management systems and what is the reality for these employees daily.

This type of study must be done internally in each company to understand where there can be improvements. Since this is a global study, it is impossible to pinpoint where each company is failing, and which barrier or barriers are most common. However, if each company analyzes whether the innovation barriers they face are internal or external and lists them, it will become easier to implement strategies to overcome these barriers.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THEORY AND PRACTICE

This study has direct and indirect implications at both the level of theory and practice. There are not enough studies on the barriers to innovation management systems, especially in the construction sector. Thus, this study contributes to improving and specifying the theory on a current topic such as this.

This study also serves to pave the way for future studies on barriers to innovation management systems in other sectors, and one day possibly compares barriers across sectors of economic activity.

This study aims to understand what the innovation barriers are and to make these current barriers obsolete and increasingly turn innovation into something positive for an organization, and not something scary, difficult to implement and expensive.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

This study should be analyzed considering its limitations to provide guidelines for future research.

First, it is important to mention that the choice of case studies is a small portion of the reality of companies that exist in the construction sector in Portugal. Furthermore, many employees may not be fully informed about what innovation barriers are and what they are, even if it is in their industry.

On the other hand, the fact that it is a questionnaire does not allow people to broaden their answers and more personal response.

Finally, it should be noted that the pandemic has brought immense consequences to companies in all sectors, and the responses obtained are from employees currently working in companies that are recovering from the negative consequences that COVID-19 brought.

FUTURE LINES OF RESEARCH

The gaps mentioned before serving the purpose of drawing new lines of investigation research.

For future studies, it is suggested that other types of methodologies be adopted to draw new conclusions. It may also be possible to combine qualitative and quantitative methodologies, using statistical techniques. These two approaches may complement each other, reinforcing the results of the study.

Considering qualitative methods, it is suggested to examine the topic from a more personal and objective side, so that it is possible to compare overall results from a questionnaire with results from possible interviews.

It is recommended to replicate the same study in other business sectors and other countries in the future. A comparison between sectors and/or countries is pertinent to investigate the influence of innovation barriers in organizations.

Finally, it would be interesting to study the companies individually, investigate factors that cause innovation barriers in organizations and how they overcome them, and understand what impact innovation management systems have on organizations.

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CHAPTER 4 – INNOVATION IN YOUTH WORK

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to understand (1) youth work innovation as social innovation, (2) the importance of having quality youth work innovation, (3) the role of creativity in the field and (4) comprehend how innovation happens in youth work.

Inductive literature review, semi-structured expert interviews as the primary source of data collection, and analyses of information available on the websites of the project as a secondary method.

The following study contributes to complementing the existing theory as it shows the importance of innovation in youth work, as well as it tries to comprehend its environment and how to better meet the needs of youth by establishing its quality development

Innovation in the youth work field is inserted into the definition of social innovation as it aims toward adding social value, and where the process of innovation is as important as the innovation itself, youth work innovation tries to face the needs of young people, by encouraging their participation and active citizenship, on the long term it becomes constructor of social resilience pushing changes in social structures to happen. There is a constant change in the needs and challenges surrounding youth, making its environment rather dynamic.

Keywords: Youth work; Social innovation; Youth needs; Innovation environment.

INTRODUCTION

The present study aims to explore the definition of innovation specifically in the field of youth work (YW), through the understanding of the holistic nature of the mentioned field. Youth work is a concept with multiple variables, that can have different definitions from country to country, making it difficult to find a common ground that suits every country (Cooper, 2018).

It underlined the importance of having quality youth work innovation not just for the target but also for the community, Baker and Mehmood (2015) considered that social innovation has a social transformational power allowing individuals or groups to deal with specific social needs that weren't met completely or partially. Furthermore, when talking about innovation in this context it is possible to frame its definition as a social innovation that specifically targets youth.

Further on, the contributions of Atanasov et al. (2021), had a huge impact in finding a definition for innovation in youth work having into account the field features. Their studies show that the environment of youth work is dynamic and very affected by external conditions, which can either be positive or negative for its innovation. As its positive effects, in the European context, it highlighted the European Union's dedication to creating quality youth work innovation as well as the creation of the European Youth Work Agenda that offers guidelines and pushes innovation to go further. As a negative effect, Jeffs (2015) alerts to the dangers of innovation, for having youth work too dependent on external financers. This study, it is explored the impact of these enhancers and hinders already, but it also aims to understand what people in the field think can also affect innovation in a youth work environment and how innovation appears in this context.

LITERATURE REVIEW

INNOVATION IN THE YOUTH WORK FIELD

Youth work: What is innovation in this field?

Innovation in the field of youth work can be tricky to limit to a simple definition it starts with the difficulty and lack of scientific cohesion in finding a worldwide unrefuted definition for youth work itself. Youth work is a broad term, it doesn't happen in one specific place, or is directed to one specific need, it can present itself in different forms, and it neither is acknowledged by all society. In addition, from country to country, YW varies in practice,

purpose, methods, funding, and even in the age range of what is considered a youth, as well as it evolves at different speeds from country to county (Cooper, 2018).

Since the field evolved differently in different countries, there was a reflection in its vocabulary internationally speaking, some countries have different words or sub-concepts for "youth work" or it doesn't exist at all (European Comission, 2015). Therefore, the translations, sometimes have no direct connection with the meaning of "youth work" or related terms like "youth worker", for example, Sozialpädagogik which directly translates to animator, not to youth worker (Hamalainen, 2015).

To better visualize, Table 1 shows some of the definitions of youth work worldwide:

Table 14 - Youth work definitions

Country	Author	Definition
United Kingdom	Smith (2013)	"20th Century Youth Work can best be described as a "form of informal education" that involved: 1. Focusing on young people. 2. Emphasizing voluntary participation and relationship. 3. Committing to association. 4. Being friendly and informal, and acting with integrity. 5. Being concerned with the education and, more broadly, the welfare of young people."
Irland	National Youth Council of Ireland (2017)	"For the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young people through their voluntary involvement, and which is complementary to their formal, academic or vocational education and training and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organizations"
Australia	Australian Youth Affairs Council (2013)	"Youth work is a practice that places young people and their interests first; Youth work is a relational practice, where the youth worker operates alongside the young person in their context; Youth work is an empowering practice that advocates for and facilitates a young person's independence, participation in society, connectedness and realization of their rights"

Source: Adapted from Cooper (2018).

Among all these differences, there is a need to find a common ground to speak of youth work not just nationally but also internationally. After collecting models and definitions about the topic, Smith (2013), narrow it down to the following shared characteristics:

1. Focus on young people's lives and their concerns;

2.   Young people's connection with society and the context of their social life;

3.   Building supportive and friendly relationships, through positive regard, and processes;

4.   Defending and general understanding approach to young people that includes commitment with:

    a.   Informal education leads to their Independence;

    b.   The flourishing of young people, both physical and emotionally;

    c.   Facilitation of young participation, rights and social justice;

    d.   Acting with integrity (code of ethical conduct);

Adding to this, some authors consider it important to addition the voluntary participation and permission of youth in the definition. On the other hand, others consider that not always these two features are essential for youth work to happen, and adding these to the definition could provoke collision. To give an example, when the police put a young person in the presence of a youth worker, is arguable that the youngster can choose not to collaborate whit the professional. Still, the limited amount of options narrows down their choice. Regarding permission, according to the law of some countries, the youth worker is forced to report to the authorities if the young individual is putting himself or others in danger, even if it is against his wish (Cooper, 2018).

Despite the presented reasons, for the European Commission youth should engage in youth work voluntarily, and even though the EC recognizes it as a working definition, this feature is present:

"Actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they take part voluntarily, designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning." (European Comission, 2015, p. 12).

Apart from the voluntary feature, youth work is defined as the non-formal and informal learning, however, in the opinion of Norqvist and Leffler (2017) youth work can combine different kinds of educational practices that don't exclude formal practices completely from the concept of youth work.

There is also an emphasis on how YW should aim for the personal and social development of young individuals. In fact, in the Final Declaration of the 3 Rd European Youth Work Convention (2020), it is stated that YW should not be done for "pure pleasure" but to create value for youth and the society they are integrated with.

Under the Official Journal of the EU (2010), the activities in the YW context should be guided by youth workers. Nevertheless, it leaves it open the level of intervention of the youth worker. Youth work activities could be managed completely by the youth workers, in co-

operation with youth or completely managed by youth as long as it has the support and guidance of a youth worker.

A youth worker is someone who provides a place or develops activities that give young people the chance to socialize and learn during their free time (Perkins & Borden, 2001). The European Commission (2015) on YW Quality Systems in the EU, adds that a youth worker can either be a professional or volunteer, either be a civil servant or work on the behalf of an NGO. Furthermore, The Expert Group (European Comission, 2015) also states that the broadness of youth work brings a bright side, the endless possibilities in the creation of innovation since it can better face and adapt to the local needs and conditions of young people.

It is possible to fit in the definition of youth work innovation as a branch of social innovation, Portables (2019, p.4) refers that in its very definition it is intrinsic to the creation of a "social change" through the response to a specific social problem or need, however, in the case, its narrowed down to youth-related needs and problems.

On that note, social innovation, as defined by the Young Foundation within the framework of the TEPSIE project, funded by the European Commission (2012):

> *"(…) are new solutions (products, services, models, markets, processes, etc.) that, simultaneously, satisfy a social need (more effectively than existing solutions), create new or better capabilities and relationships, and make better use of assets and resources. In other words, social innovations are good for society and improve society's capacity to act.".*

The Social Innovation definition states that both the process and the result are important (Weerakoon et al., 2016). Creating changes in society's structures aims for social change, not just to meet a specific problem (Cajaiba-Santana, 2014).

Youth work innovation can be described as all the demonstrated methodologies, practices, ways of approaching, or organizational models that are either completely new, have new elements or are improvements from existing ones in the field generally or in a particular context. It should be "value-based and strive towards making social change". As in social innovation definition, for the youth work context, the process is as important as the innovation itself and youth are co-creators and not just the beneficiaries of it and it happens in a complex ecosystem, with multiple different stakeholders and contexts (Atanasov et al., 2021, pp. 20-21).

In the analysis of the previous definitions it becomes obvious the common characteristics between the two concepts:

- Creation of something completely new or changes into what already exists;
- Aim to satisfy a social need, that had not been answered yet, completely or partially;
- The process is as important as the result;

- Aim for social change;

In conclusion, YW innovation acts within the framework of social innovation and happens in a complex ecosystem that characterizes the practice of YW itself. It faces the needs and the social problems of evolving youth, that must participate in the process of the innovation not only being the target of the final product, even though the level of participation, but this process must also be supervised and guided by youth workers. The goal is to promote youth involvement in conversations and make society more resilient.

THE ECOSYSTEM OF INNOVATION IN YW: ENHANCER AND HINDERS

The Innovation ecosystem in YW is very complex, it is not static and rather changes constantly due to being exposed to different triggers and conditions, that can either enhance or hinder innovation. (Atanasov et al., 2021)

Firstly, research and the flow of knowledge are of extreme importance in the development of innovation in the field, before all, young people multi-dimensionally should be understood (Lane, 2022). Building up a "robust debate and self-criticism discussions" in complementation with "collective support" to grow innovation in youth work practices, in a sustainable way (EU, Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention, 2020).

For quick contextualize, in the European context, the European Union created the Youth Strategy 2019-2027, that nothing else is then a European Youth Work Agenda which consists of the following eleven European Youth Goals (European Union, "European Youth Goals | European Youth Portal", 2017).

Table 15 - European Youth Goals

European Youth Goals	EU explanation for it
1. Connecting EU with youth	"Foster the sense of youth belonging to the European project and build a bridge between the EU and young people to regain trust and increase participation".
2. Equality for All Genders	"Ensure equality of all genders and gender-sensitive approaches in all areas of the life of a young person".
3. Inclusive Societies	"Enable and ensure the inclusion of all young people in society".
4. Information and Constructive Dialogue	"Ensure young people have better access to reliable information, support their ability to evaluate information critically, and engage in participatory and constructive dialogue".
5. Mental Health and Wellbeing	"Achieve better mental wellbeing and end stigmatization of mental health issues, thus promoting social inclusion of all young people".
6. Moving Rural Youth Foward	"Create conditions which enable young people to fulfil their potential in rural areas".
7. Quality Employment for All	"Guarantee an accessible labour market with opportunities that lead to quality jobs for all young people".
8. Quality Learning	"Integrate and improve different forms of learning, equipping young people for the challenges of an ever-changing life in the 21st century".
9. Space for Participation for All	"Strengthen young people's democratic participation and autonomy as well as provide dedicated youth spaces in all areas of society".

10. Sustainable Green Europe	"Achieve a society in which all young people are environmentally active, educated and able to make a difference in their everyday lives (…) becoming sustainable is not a choice, it is an obligation".
11. Youth Organizations and European Programs	"Ensure equal access for all young people to youth organizations and European youth programs, building a society based on European values and identity".

Source: Adapted from the Official Journal of the European Union (2018)

Following that, the European Youth Work Conventions are important events for "social learning" in the field, it provides a propitious environment for the flow of knowledge and ideas, and through collaboration, the youth work community of practice determines "solutions and build innovation". The Report of the 3rd Convention, in 2020 emphasizes that the community of practice's innovation and dedication to the Bonn process (political convergence that bears the opportunity to achieve the EYWA) should join the advice provided by the final declaration so that the EYWA can be achieved and that "maintaining, developing and innovating youth work in Europe" should transcend the date of the next convention, in 5 years. In the end, both the conventions and the EYWA, push the field to go further, so it can innovatively respond to the arising of new challenges, always having into account all "young people".

On the other hand, the appearance and the arising of social media brought to youth and YW new challenges. Today, young people spend virtually all their time, almost exclusively in the company of other young people, and when alone they are likely to be in their room communicating by either phone or computer with other young people (Jeffs, 2019). If on one side, it could mean a positive impact in the field, especially in Covid times, the online platforms are important tools for youth actively participate and share their opinion, on the other hand, it's underlined the importance of youth workers to use it as well to provide reliable information and support, on account of these platforms being quick spreaders of fake news and political propaganda (Lane, 2022).

As innovation hinders, Jeffs (2015, 2019) arises awareness of the danger of youth work being developed under the need for external funding, because it has a risk of the developed YW being made to respond to what the funder wants to, leaving some needs of youth itself unsolved. The danger is even bigger when it is considered commercial funders due to they see youth organizations as a cost-effective means to change young behaviour and reduce young offending, putting in cause the delivery of impartial youth work and the response to the actual needs of youth. Additionally, as in every innovation process, creativity barriers can weak the creation of innovative responses in the YW field. Gizarteka and Edmundo (2017) pointed out the major role that the use of some creativity enhancers tools has to help the participants of youth work development meetings to get loose. They provided Dossier Youth-In-Work meant to be a

guide with the best creative and innovative tools so youth workers better face the new challenges in the field.

On the same note, Future Labs also intends to introduce innovative tools in the field of YW, to not only create something new but also to adapt something from other fields into YW, opening new horizons and improving the quality of the product or process (2019).

Sergio Gonçalves, 2019, introduces the technique of Design Thinking in the field, due to one of the key elements of applying this method in the field is the idea of not making assumptions about young people. Instead, it is important to carry out research by asking them directly, testing them with young people and keep repeating the process, involving young people directly.

Concluding, the ecosystem of Innovation in the field of youth work as the concept of the practice shown is very holistic, being influenced by multiple external and internal factors, in a constantly changing environment. Among the enhancers of innovation, there is the importance of research complemented by support and discussion within the community. In the European context, both the European Youth Work Conventions and the European Youth Work Agenda exist to provide a guideline for the field and push it further. On the other hand, the fact that the majority of youth work innovations require external funding could put a barrier to its endless possibilities. On a final note, the creativity barriers are acknowledged by some specialists in the field and there are already some guidelines, studies, and books to specifically help youth workers to overcome them.

The Importance of YW innovation

As previously mentioned, Innovation in YW is characterized by the participation of the target (youth) in the process of it. Youth involvement presents them with valuable life skills, formation of healthy peer-peer relationships as well as youth-adult connections, and participation in activities that support their overall positive development. YW innovation aims to help young people develop creatively, culturally, socially, and entrepreneurially, and it can reach out to groups that are more affected by social exclusion. (EU, Official Journal of the EU, 2010). Furthermore, for marginalized groups, there is a positive impact of participating in YW, which has been shown in different studies

However, YW innovation is not meant just to create value for youth, but for all society, making it more resilient by creating changes in its structures. Indeed, when speaking of the importance of youth work innovation, Finland is a good example to demonstrate it, for some, there is a correlation between the country being the happiest one for five years in a row, and

the sinking numbers of homelessness with the country's strong social work that is based on state and independent research (Lane, 2022)

As one of the facets of civic education, YW innovation should focus on power relations, intersectionality, social justice, emancipation, and the true engagement of young people. By creating competent young co-creators of the European polity, youth work helps in creating critical youth citizenship that can competently respond to contemporary challenges, that affect especially the marginalized groups (European Union, 2020).

One of those challenges is the democratic crisis that is rising in Europe, according to the President of the Assembly of the Republic of Portugal, Augusto Santos Silva, young people are the demographic group that most abstain from elections, he believes that if this is a generational problem and not a life cycle problem, a threat to the democracy is being faced. If it is a life cycle problem, young people eventually will become responsible citizens, otherwise, they will continue to abstain, which could have consequences for fundamental rights and freedom. Augusto Santos Silva even refers to the alarming numbers of the French elections where 53.77% of young French people abstained to justify his worries. Anyways, the solution will be to question young people and be available to listen to them, recognizing their important role in democracy (Lusa, 2022).

Other than creating active citizenship, Youth work has as well significant socioeconomic potential because it can generate economic activity, provide infrastructures, generate economic benefits, and increase youth employment (EU, Official Journal of the EU, 2010).

Going one, the flow of refugees has been affecting Europe, according to Eurostat, from the 1 322 825 migrants' applications for shelter in the EU in 2015, 95 205 belong to unaccompanied children. These numbers demonstrate the importance of creating good youth work projects to integrate these children into society and secure their quality of life. To do it so first is necessary to develop a youth integration strategy having in mind their need for housing, education, healthcare, and guardianship.

Moving on, gender equality is up until this day a topic is no surprise that the EYWA (2018) still points it out as one of the eleven goals. To demonstrate how far society is from achieving true gender equality, the UN Women (2017) made a statement that at this speed it will take 50 years to achieve uniformity in political participation and 118 years to truly achieve pay equality.

Concluding, innovation in YW plays a furcal role to incentivize active citizenship for young people, providing them with information and a chance to be heard. In increasing youth participation, there are advantages to social resilience as well. As a final thought, YW should constantly be evolving and developing to meet the world's challenges. One challenge should not

be diminished to try and face the other, instead, YW should work to try and meet all of them (Lane, 2022).

METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The use of the qualitative methodology within the frame of the case study technique showed to be appropriate to the objective basis and the research proposition of the current study. The qualitative methodology proved to fit better the purpose due to its focus comprehend people's social realities, qualitative research places emphasis on how people interpret and make meaning of their experiences (Zohrabi, 2013).

Qualitative research is usually inductive (Taylor & Bogdan, 1992), because it has an interpretative approach to social reality and the lived experience of human beings (Atkinson et al., 2001). Being the objective of this research to contribute to the very little explored topic of innovation in youth work, an exploratory interview, through an inductive approach, with two experts in the field of youth work, specifically involved in project management, seems to be the best method to contribute to the existing research.

According to Walliman (2006), with qualitative research methods, the analysis is often carried out in the process of data collection and not at the end of the process. On the grounds of this, the interview was semi-structured, where the interviewer planned the questions, but still had the flexibility to make other questions that seams fit accordingly with the answers provided.

DATA COLLECTION AND INSTRUMENT

For qualitative research purposes is recommended the use primary and secondary data (Kuryan et al., 2018). In this case, the primary data are the interviews and the secondary is the information available on the websites of the youth work projects in which the interviewees are inserted.

The interviewing technique used was semi-structured to provide the necessary flexibility to the pre-structure, adding more questions for the conversation as well as changing their order to better fit in (Saunders et al., 2019).

The physical distance between both interviewees (Finland) and the interviewer (Portugal), disallowed the interview to happen face-to-face, and for that reason, the interviews were taken online, using Microsoft Teams, and recorded with the consent of both interviewees.

Before the beginning of the interviews, it is advisable to have a guide with pre-selected questions for a matter of orientation (Edwards & Holland, 2013). Furthermore, two scripts were prepared, one for each interviewed, (Appendices I and II), according to the most relevant thematic retrieved from the literature analysis and, particularly for the last question, with the project each expert is working on.

ETHICAL APPROACH AND SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

In terms of selection, the interviewees needed to correspond to the following criteria:

- Experience in the area: specifically in the area of Youth Work, both interviewed have more than five years of experience in project management in the field. In addition, both of them, had experience in working on multiple projects, being the one that they currently are working on, not the first;

- Direct relation with the field in the area: the two specialists are employed by an organization that carries out research and development of youth work;

- University education: The experts have at least a Bachelor's degree in an approved course important for the youth work context. In addition, both of them are currently finishing a Master's degree in the field as well;

As for the Ethical principal of the research, the interviewees agreed on the following:

- Respect for participants: the interviews were taken place with mutual respect and none of the questions were made to morally harm the participants;

- Informed consent: due to physical distance the interviews happen online, having both of the experts previously informed and agreed with the recording of the interview;

- Presumption and preservation of anonymity: the anonymity of the interviewees are going to be preserved, only the names of the projects in which they are involved will appear. In that order, they will be referred to as A1 and A2 experts.

RESULTS

PRESENTATION OF THE YOUTH WORK PROJECTS

The following part is meant to provide a background of the projects, on which the interviewed experts are currently working.

Savostamo's website

The project koulutusportti, financed by the European Commission, aims to improve the attractiveness of Southern Savonia education by utilizing service design and digitalization, to

face the desertification of the area in terms of students and terms of labour. Savostamo born within the scope of Koulutusportti, is a digital platform that works like a research tool to help young people find inspiration, by providing a personalized selection among all the different education, career paths, or personal development courses that exist in the Southern Savonia region. The website has been developed by its team for the past two years.

Ohjaamo Olkkari 2.0

The project Ohjaamo Olkkari 2.0 develops a coaching program for young people supporting inclusion and employment, as well as a modelling and piloting coaching program in the municipalities of Essote and the entire South Savo region. Expert A2 is involved in the development of the micro-course to coach young people using games and other youth work methods (Ohjaamo Olkkari 2.0, n.d.).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS RESULTS

Having into account the interviews that occurred during this investigation. It is now important to present, the results obtained from the investigation questions to selected experts. In the first phase, it is not going to be presented the results objectively. The results obtained from the interview, on June 26, 2022, of expert A1, a project manager currently working on Savostamo's website, are presented in Table 3.

Table 16 - Results to investigation question from expert A1.

Category	Questions	Results
Youth work definition	Q1	"there is different variety in YW (…) so generally it is about helping youth as much as possible";
YW innovation importance	Q2	"they are not capable to see all the possibilities available for them (…) they don't feel heard"; "it's a two-way system, we should hear youth but also provide them with education and information";
	Q3	"if you do something creative you would express better your feelings than just talk", "the process of creation is important";
YW innovation process	Q4	"it is hard to get youth involved sometimes, special in younger ages (…) they need to be rewarded somehow";
	Q10	"at first it was supposed to be a tool, not necessarily a website, it was meant to be a series of different things to reach more people (…) the investor wanted one big thing, so it evolved from there";
YW innovation environment	Q5	"it is important to have them engaged in the process but that can be tricky because each young people is different from another";

Category	Questions	Results
	Q6	"sometimes if the plan presented is badly done, that puts in cause the acceptance of the investment"; "if the investor is very strick (…) makes it difficult to adapt according with the flow of the process"; "it takes for savostamo one year until we get the money (…) it is a waste of time";
	Q8	"repare the fragilities that covid left behind in education, health-care, (….)";
	Q9	"youth workers are getting better with digital tools because it is already a reality" "(…) it should always be improving and be alert to what is happening";
YW innovation quality development	Q7	"transpereance is important";

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4 shows, is meant to present the contribution of the expert A2, a project manager currently working on Ohjaamo Olkkari 2.0 project, to the present study. The interview take place on June 1, 2022.

Table 17 - Results of the investigation questions to expert A2

Category	Questions	Results
Youth work definition	Q1	"(…) it has different meanings for different countries, especially outside Europe (…)"; "the definition could be clear"; "(…) it can have a different goal"; "(…) work that it is supposed to help young people";
YW innovation importance	Q2	"Guarantees that young people are involved; and their general needs are taken care, they are in a very vulnerable position, they have less resources so it makes it difficult for them to start their life"; "it's an investment (…) they become tax income for the state"; "they are the future decision makers and they want to make the difference";
	Q3	"(…) many organizations have very limited resources, so it is important to be creative to make the best out of it "
YW innovation process	Q4	"participation of young people"; "it's important to ask the target and investigate first (…) discover the need at the that level"; "using existing research but always make the field research (…) involve youth in every step of the way"
	Q10	"come out as a way to keep the positive thinking in young people, to keep them motivated (…) now we are testing the existing

		knowledge of the benefits of using games in education"
YW innovation environment	Q5	"always involve youth every step of the way (…) collecting feedback is important to move the project into the right direction";
	Q6	"on the good side it is stable (…) especially if there is a lot of investment from society"; "it is not possible to have all the money you need for every project"; "it narrows down to the more urgent need"
	Q8	"mental health is a big topic for youth now";
	Q9	"it is important to youth workers to keep the face to face meetings (…) I don't see the digitalization change YW because it is just another place where youth (…)";
YW innovation quality development	Q7	"collecting data about how the goals were meet (…) how is it different, what is the before and after (…) you should be able to show in numbers the result of the project (…) it is hard to measure the impact due to external factors"; "it kind is the same as in marketing to evaluate the impact of a product"

Source: Own elaboration.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

RESULTS ANALYSIS

Social innovation happens within the field of youth as it aims to meet the needs of young people, as emphasized by both experts, youth work means very different things in each country, but one thing the definitions have in common is that it should be conducted towards youth and "trying to help them the best they can" (A1).

The limits of youth work innovation are as unclear it is the definition of youth work, A2 refers to the different practices and contexts of youth work from country to country, especially outside of Europe. This variety of youth work brings endless possibilities but it also makes it harder to define and study.

As the importance of being creative as a youth worker, A2 refers to it as an advantage for having better resources management, as many organizations in the field work with very limited resources. On the other side, A1 refers to creativity as important for communication purposes, people usually are not able to talk about their needs and feelings, and in youth work, it is necessary to be creative to find an indirect way of collecting that information.

Concerning the importance for society, both of them refer to the inclusion of youth, being a particularly fragile group, according to A2, they need help to start their life and be independent. On the other side, A1 refers to the importance of the "two ways system", as youth work should provide a safe space so they can be heard, also information and education should be provided to them, to have more informed citizens. A2 also thinks that investing in it has economic advantages, if youth work is well applied the young individual will be independent sooner and therefore, becomes a tax income sooner.

During the process of creating innovation, A2 thinks that after having the target defined research should be conducted, not just by making use of the existing knowledge but by actually asking the target, and involving them in the process so constantly feedback is collected, and in the flow of the innovation process make adjustments to have a more effective innovation. On the other side, A1 has some reserves, it is important to involve youth in the process, but there is difficulty in engaging them for a longer period.

When asked about the innovation of their projects, it is possible to conclude, that in the case of the A2 micro-course, it was created to keep youth positive and the use of games to do so was something that was meant to be a test of different existing research about the benefits of using games in education. Savostamo project, on the other hand, started as one different idea from the website but evolved to suppress the financers' desires for it.

Moving on to the environment of Youth Work, A2 agrees that the need for investment limits the answer of youth needs to the most urgent ones, but it also can be positive as it is a stable source of resources, the same could not be said if a project is dependent on donations, besides the idea of having unlimited funds to youth work is not realistic. A1 thinks that the financers can affect the freedom of creation, especially if they are very strict with its plan, not leaving much room for testing and improving, adding that in the case of Savostamo the team waited almost a year to receive the funds which is a waste of time.

Finally, being the environment of youth work innovation very changeable, it was asked to them what they think would be the future for the field, A1 refers that going digital is a need today already, while A2 adds that face-to-face meetings should continue to happen, being the Internet just another place where youth spend time, it should be faced like any other, as youth work is already used to adapt to changes, A2 don't see any difference in youth work with the digitalization. On the other hand, they consider that for now, the most immediate need is to face Covid-19 consequences, for A2, it is the mental health of the youth, and for A1, is the pressure upon the education and health care systems.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Innovation in the youth work field is inserted in the definition of social innovation, as it aims to create new methodologies, approaches, projects or services, or change the existing ones, for the creation of value, for young people and for the community in which is inserted. The process here is as important as the innovation itself, because the involvement of youth makes the innovation much more likely to meet their needs, as well as encourages their participation and contribution.

The importance of innovation relies not just on the meeting of youth needs but on creating a resilient society. Youth want to be heard, but most of the time they don't know how or even have the information to make participation in the topics that are being discussed, as the rise of the Internet brought many positive things, but it also made people more prone to fake news and political propaganda, youth work innovation is important to have more informed and included youth to brings new insights and having more people prepared to deal with the world challenges that affect everyone.

Creativity techniques play a role in the youth field because they help youth workers to deal with the hindrance to innovation in the YW environment, allowing them to face resource scarcity, as well as helping them deal with the lack of cooperation of youth through communication.

Innovation happens under the constant change that evolves the environment of youth work. There is constant change in the needs and challenges surrounding youth, provoking innovation to always go further, being rather dynamic than static. On the other hand, the dependence on financers makes the innovation process much slower and it makes it more difficult to shape the innovation during its process.

For the future of youth work, it is predictable to be continuously changing according to the arrival of new challenges, but for now, it seems that the most urgent matters are the environment and democratic crisis, as well as dealing with the side effects of the pandemic, like the pressure on the educational and health systems, as well as the need to promote mental health.

RESEARCH GAPS

The gaps in this investigation must be acknowledged, to better analyse the information given and understand what can be further studied in future investigations.

Starting from, the very narrow amount of sources used to provide a theoretical framework, the present study focused its analysis on very similar theories and studies about the

topic. The study focused on the European perspective leaving behind youth work and practices that happen outside of Europe, which implies not considering other contexts in which youth work innovation happen.

Regarding the data collection, the sample was very homogeneous, both experts are inserted in the same organization, and experienced the same Finnish youth work context, as well as are both youth project developers. This not considers other practices of youth work, like the voluntary youth workers or youth workers inserted into youth clubs closest to youth, as well as it not explores the practices from different countries.

Other than that, there is very little information available about the projects to the public. Most of what is provided come from personal experience with the projects.

FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

Considering the gaps in the present study, for future investigation purpose, it is recommended that both the interview sample and the literature analysed is expanded to other countries and continents if the aim is to consider innovation in youth work as a general concept.

On another note, the sample could be more heterogenous considering more context of youth work rather than just the perspective of project managers. Following the same line, innovation in youth work is characterized by the participation of the target in its process, it may be interesting to have into account young people's opinions about their participation as the main beneficiaries of the innovation, it may help to understand the implications of it in its life. To provide a more tangible source of information than the investigator's own experience, questions about the project could be added in the preparation for the interview.

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Appendix I- Interview with the Expert from the Savostamo Website Project

Place:_____

—

Date:_____

—

Name of the

interviewed:_____

Function in the

Project:_____

1. How would you define youth work?

2. Do you think is important to us society to have quality and   well-implemented youth work? Why?

3. What is the importance of having a creative mind in this field?

4. What are the things to have in mind when creating a project for youth?

5. Is it important to involve youth in the creation of the project? Why?

6. Do you think the need for investment can affect the project's Innovation. And in what ways?

7. What does a project need to have to be considered a quality one in your opinion?

8. What do you think, in general, is the need today in youth work?

9. How do you see the field evolve in the future?

10. How did the Savostamo project born? What was the process to invent and create the website?

Appendix II- Interview with the Expert from the Introduction of Video Games in Education Project

Place:_____

—

Date:_____

_

Name of the

interviewed:_____

Function in the

Project:_____

1. How would you define youth work?
2. Do you think is important to us society to have quality and well-implemented youth work? Why?
3. What is the importance of having a creative mind in this field?
4. What are the things to have in mind when creating a project for youth?
5. Is it important to involve youth in the creation of the project? Why?
6. Do you think the need for investment can affect the project's Innovation. And in what ways?
7. What does a project need to have to be considered a quality one in your opinion?
8. What do you think, in general, is the need today in youth work?
9. How do you see the field evolve in the future?
10. How did the Introduction of Video Games in Education project born? What was the process to invent and create it?