What is the perception of micro and small business managers about cash flow indicators and working capital management?

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ABSTRACT
The knowledge of Micro and Small Business (MSE) managers about cash flow indicators and working capital management is crucial for the financial health of these organizations. The objective of the research is to analyze the perception of managers about cash flow and working capital management indicators and their influence on the company's financial health. The research carried out is classified as qualitative of descriptive nature in which a questionnaire with objective questions was applied to identify and extract information about the level of knowledge of managers about cash flow indicators and working capital management. The results show that the interviewees recognize the importance of these indicators, but, in practice, many do not use them or do so infrequently. Corroborating the low adherence to cash flow and working capital management, two indicators that together are responsible for projecting and ensuring the future situation of the company's cash. The research becomes important due to the scope of a theme little explored, but of great relevance to the performance of managers. From the results obtained, it was possible to answer the objective of the research, with the understanding of the relevance and frequency of the use of cash flow indicators and working capital management. The understanding of managers in the Greater Florianópolis region in the state of Santa Catarina is notorious, but they are not in the habit of using the two indicators in their management processes.

Keywords: Accounting, Micro and small companies, Cash flow, Working capital, Indicators.

INTRODUCTION

The knowledge of Micro and Small Business (MSEs) managers about indicators generated through cash flow and working capital management is crucial for the financial success of organizations (OLIVEIRA, 2023). Cash flow is the movement of incoming and outgoing financial resources over a given period (SEBRAE, 2019), while working capital management refers to the administration of the resources necessary to keep the company's operations running (CERCHI and SANTOS, 2023).

Managers' lack of understanding of these indicators can lead to a number of financial problems, such as difficulties in paying suppliers, maintaining adequate inventories, paying operating expenses, and even investing in growth and innovation (SILVA, M., 2023). Therefore, understanding cash flow and working capital indicators is essential to ensure the financial health

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and sustainability of SMEs (OLIVEIRA, 2023).

The level of knowledge of managers of SMEs about these indicators can vary significantly, depending on factors such as academic background, professional experience and access to training resources, as better-prepared managers tend to make better financial decisions, anticipating liquidity problems and implementing strategies to optimize the company's working capital (MEISTER, 2023).

On the other hand, managers of SMEs with a low level of knowledge may face difficulties in interpreting financial signals, which can lead to wrong decisions and, eventually, serious financial problems, such as the bankruptcy of the company (MINELLO; DA COSTA ALVES; SCHERER, 2023).

The impact of the level of knowledge of managers of SMEs on cash flow indicators and working capital management on the results of companies can be studied from different perspectives, in this article seeks to solve the following research question: what is the perception of managers of micro and small companies about cash flow indicators and working capital management? With the general objective of analyzing the knowledge of the indicators by the managers.

Research on managers' perceptions of managerial and financial tools is essential to understand how these instruments are interpreted and used in organizations. Management control tools encompass systems and practices that enable managers to monitor and evaluate business performance, make informed decisions, and achieve strategic objectives, according to Da Costa (2024).

As a contribution, this research not only addresses a gap in the understanding of the impact of managers' knowledge on the finances of MSEs, but also highlights the practical perception and challenges faced in the implementation of these tools. Its comprehensive and practical approach positions it as a valuable source of information for managers, researchers and others interested in the improvement and strengthening of MSEs.

The research is limited to the spatial aspect, by carrying out the questionnaire only with companies installed in the Greater Florianópolis region, and to the financial and managerial indicators, with a greater focus on cash flow indicators and working capital management.

In order to better organize the work and the presentation of the results of the research, six more sections were prepared in addition to the introduction. The second section with the objective of the research. The third section is the theoretical foundation of the topics covered, they are: micro and small companies, financial management tools, cash flow and working capital management and previous research. The fourth section addresses the methodological procedures used for data collection and its transformation into information. The fifth section presents the results obtained through the questionnaire applied. The final considerations highlight the contributions of the study and the possibilities for future research. The references section closes the article.

OBJECTIVE OF THE RESEARCH

To analyze the managers' perception of cash flow and working capital management indicators and their influence on the company's financial health, through a questionnaire with objective questions.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

This topic presents the theoretical basis that supports the research carried out. Then the following topics will be discussed: micro and small companies, financial management tools, with a greater focus on cash flow indicators and working capital management.

MICRO AND SMALL ENTERPRISES

Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) play a significant role in the Brazilian economy, contributing more than a quarter of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (SEBRAE, 2023). Between 1985 and 2011, this share grew remarkably, from 21% to 27% (SEBRAE, 2023). These companies also stand out as important job generators, accounting for more than half of the formal workforce and 40% of the wage bill in Brazil (SEBRAE, 2023). The production of these projects quadrupled in just ten years, reaching R$ 599 billion in 2011 (SEBRAE, 2023).

In the commercial segment, they represent the largest part of GDP, while in industry and services, their contributions are also remarkable, representing approximately 22.5% and 33.6% of GDP, respectively (SEBRAE, 2023). Several factors contribute to this success, including improvements in the business environment, such as tax simplification through the Simples Nacional, an increase in the educational level of the population, and the expansion of the consumer market, especially the middle class (SEBRAE, 2023). These aspects have stimulated a growth in entrepreneurship by opportunity, as opposed to entrepreneurship by necessity, resulting in more strategically planned companies with greater growth prospects (SEBRAE, 2023). Such data highlight the importance of fostering and improving smaller enterprises for the country's economic development.

It is important to note that even with the great representativeness of MSEs in the production of wealth in Brazil, according to the SEBRAE portal (2023), they have data that draw attention due to the proportion of businesses that close their activities in the first five years of operation. According to information collected on the SEBRAE website (2023), Individual Microentrepreneurs (MEIs) have the highest mortality rate among Small Businesses, 29% close after 5 years of activity, Microenterprises (MEs) have an intermediate mortality rate among Small Businesses, 21.6% close after 5 years of activity and Small Businesses (EPPs) have the lowest mortality rate among Small Businesses, 17% close after 5 years of activity.

Analyzing the sectors, the survey made available by SEBRAE (2023) finds that the highest mortality rate is found in Commerce, with about 30.2% of companies closed in five years. Next come the Manufacturing Industry (27.3%) and Services (26.6%) sectors, with the lowest mortality rates found in the agriculture and quarrying industry with 18% and 14.3%, respectively (SEBRAE, 2023).

According to a survey carried out by SEBRAE (2023) there are some reasons that contribute to the mortality of MSEs, such as the lack of personal preparation of entrepreneurs, since 58% of the sample used did not carry out any type of training before opening their own business, lack of efficient strategic planning, in which the data express that 17% do not use this strategy and 59% even did the planning, but only for a short period of time of no more than 6 months, which implies a low prospect of business longevity.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Financial management is the set of tools such as planning, analysis, and control, with the objective of maximizing the economic and financial results of companies (SILVA, J., 2024). Good financial management includes the integration of actions such as obtaining resources, operating and managing capital, identifying financial needs, planning, and applying resources, which together are responsible for leveraging a company's results (AGUIAR, 2023).

Managers seek, through financial management, to improve the results of their business by increasing equity value by generating profit. Efficient financial management allows you to visualize the company's current situation, through analysis, diagnosing business needs and contributing to the strengthening of the company's strategic planning (BARROS, 2023).

The organization's financial manager needs to have a broad view of the market, be in contact with all areas of the company, control operations, and contribute with strategic information to the business. A financial manager should desirably have analytical capacity, efficiency in planning preparation, skills to manage teams, in addition to the ability to make decisions related to capital management (OLIVEIRA, 2023).

To carry out their duties, the person responsible for management uses accounting reports, such as the Balance Sheet (BP), the Income Statement (DRE) and the Cash Flow Statement (DFC) (AGUIAR, 2023). It also makes use of managerial indicators, such as cash flow management, working capital management, budgeting, and capital structure, in addition to using financial indicators to analyze liquidity, profitability, and indebtedness, comparing the company's performance with others in the same sector (AGUIAR, 2023).

Therefore, effective financial management is essential for business success, requiring the manager to strictly control financial resources and the use of appropriate tools and techniques for strategic decision-making.

Cash Flow

Cash flow is a tool that facilitates the visualization of the inflows and outflows of the company's financial resources, allowing effective management in both the short and long term (SEBRAE, 2019). Maintaining an adequate level of cash is vital for the company to be able to conduct its normal operations and handle unexpected contingencies, such as the insolvency of a customer. Irregularity in cash inflows and outflows, caused by fluctuations in sales, irregular credit policies, and other factors, increases the need for efficient cash management. The ability to predict cash flow and the ability to obtain resources in the financial market are crucial to maintain the company's liquidity (SILVA, B., 2023).

One of the biggest challenges faced by micro and small companies in Brazil is the high number of negotiations carried out without the issuance of an invoice, which prevents the proper registration of these operations according to Pereira; Schroder, (2024). In addition, the common practice of mixing resources from the company's cash with the entrepreneur's personal expenses compromises financial integrity and makes it difficult to make informed decisions according to Mendonca; Iudícibus; Santos, (2023) and Freitas, et al. (2023).

To achieve financial goals, efficient financial management is necessary that eliminates doubts about the allocation of resources, as discussed by Medeiros; Carraro, (2022) and Grejanin; Martins, (2020). Cash flow allows for balancing payments and receipts, constituting an essential instrument for business management control and financial decision-making according to Mendonça; Iudícibus; Santos, (2023); Man; Carraro, (2022) and Grejanin; Martins, (2020)).

For Assaf Neto and Silva (1997), efficient financial management presupposes constant monitoring of financial results, highlighting the importance of continuously evaluating performance and making necessary adjustments. Cash flow allows you to analyze the financial performance of the period and identify the causes of lags in relation to planning, keeping the company aligned with its objectives.

According to the cash flow model (Chart 1) available on the SEBRAE website (2024), it is important that all receipts and payments made by the company are recorded in the cash flow, as well as the classification of operations according to their nature, enabling a better visualization of expenses, revenues and a more accurate control of the transactions that move the company's cash.

Frame 1: Cash flow structure

Enterprise	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3
ENTRIES			
Sales receipt forecast			
Accounts receivable-sales realized			
Other receipts			
Contribution of own resources			
Contribution from a loan			
TOTAL INPUTS			
OUTPUTS			
Suppliers			
Payroll (employees)			
INSS to be collected			
FGTS			
Vacation			
13th salary			
Severance payments			
Withdrawals of partners			
Sales Tax			
Rents			
Electrical energy			
Telephone			
Accounting Services			
Third-Party Services			
Ads - Marketing and Advertising			
Fuels			
Vehicle maintenance			
Factory Maintenance			
Miscellaneous expenses			
Bank loans			
Equipment financing			
Financial expenses			
Other payments			
TOTAL DEPARTURES			
1 (INPUTS - OUTS)			
2 PREVIOUS BALANCE			
3 ACCUMULATED BALANCE (1 + 2)			
NEED FOR WORKING CAPITAL			
DO I NEED TO REDUCE EXPENSES URGENTLY?			
INDICATIVE OF A PROBLEM?			

Source: SEBRAE, 2024

Cash flow control helps small business owners better understand the effects of their decisions on the bottom line. Its use improves the manager's understanding of the functioning of the business and the formation of profit, gradually encouraging the use of the tool in the daily business life.

Working Capital Management

A company's working capital can be defined as the volume of resources needed to cover investments in operating assets, such as inventories and accounts receivable. This covers the period from the entry of inventories into the company until the moment customers pay off their purchases in installments. During part of this period, financing is provided by suppliers of goods and services, as well as by other non-onerous operating liabilities. However, after the end of the credit term granted by suppliers, the company starts to face a need for working capital (CARMO and DE MELO SILVA, 2024).

With the need to balance the deadlines that involve the company's operational cycle, there is a need to subsidize these investments, which most of the time occurs through the raising of funds from third parties, consequently raising financial costs and reducing the profitability of organizations. In view of the situation exposed, it is of paramount importance that managers direct efforts to improve the management of the working capital of their business, either through decisions that aim to reduce the average storage periods, receipt of sales made, as well as to extend the payment terms of suppliers of goods and services, to optimize working capital and reduce the financial costs related to the financing of capital needs (CARMO and DE MELO SILVA, 2024).

In MSEs, many of the financial management tools are unknown to managers, since a portion performs outdated management methods that no longer fit the current reality, as well as processes without a technical basis for execution. This significantly harms the health of the company, which depends on effective management of working capital, the manager's ability to set prices for products, goods and services, as well as the management of essential and non-essential expenses and investments. It is necessary for managers of micro and small companies to seek to manage relationships with suppliers and customers well to protect cash flow. Thus, the working capital management strategy should focus on allocating assets efficiently to cover short-term obligations and ensure that there is capital available for future investments in order to generate greater liquidity for your business (SILVA, L., 2023).

Financial Indicators

Companies and their managers have financial indicators as an ally, which allow a detailed understanding of their structure and performance in the market. These indicators are classified into several categories, among which the liquidity, profitability and indebtedness ratios stand out. Each of these categories plays a crucial role in evaluating the financial aspects of the company.

Liquidity ratios are essential tools for assessing a company's financial health, reflecting its ability to meet its financial obligations in both the short and long term. These indicators are key to measuring the company's solvency and provide a detailed insight into its financial position. Among the short-term ratios, the current ratio, the dry liquidity ratio and the quick ratio stand out. Each of these ratios looks at the company's ability to meet its short-term debts with its available assets, adjusted for changes in accounts receivable and inventory. With regard to the long term, the general liquidity ratio is the most relevant, offering a comprehensive view of the company's ability to settle its long-term obligations, taking into account all assets and liabilities, and adjusting for the operating cycle (MANOEL; OF MATOS; NASU, 2023).

According to Brolesi (2023), debt analyses are tools used to identify the level of dependence on short- and long-term debts on the company's own resources. It is worth mentioning that depending on the business strategy, a high level of debt is not necessarily harmful to the company, and vice versa. More variables are needed to assess the level of indebtedness, such as the interest rate, type of funding and imminent exchange rate risks.

Profitability indicators allow managers to analyze the performance of their strategies in terms of the use of assets and their operational processes. The main focus of profitability analysis is to identify the main points of reduction or increase in the organization's net profit, providing valuable information for managers' decision-making (JACINTHO and KROENKE, 2021).

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

In the previous research section, 3 studies with greater similarity to the theme addressed in the present research were selected.

The work of Salotti and Carvalho (2024) seeks to apply the use of cash flow in publicly traded non-financial companies, listed on B3, portraying a macro view on cash flow management. The article by Medeiros and Carraro (2022) is similar, given the approach to financial indicators, such as budget implementation and cash flow management, in the COVID-19 period in Brazil.

Frame 2: Previous Research

Authors (Year)	Goal	Result	Methodology
(SILVA, L., 2023)	The general objective of this study is to verify the perception of micro and	It can be concluded that in the perception of the managers of the companies in the sample, they have a	The research is characterized as qualitative of descriptive nature, in

	small entrepreneurs in the ceramics sector in the city of Parelhas/RN, regarding the use of corporate finance instruments. As specific objectives: to identify the managers' perception of the importance of these instruments and to verify the frequency of use of these instruments by the managers of the ceramics companies.	certain degree of knowledge of the instruments, even if in a more popular way without technical terms, and that they recognize their importance for a good financial management of the companies. Regarding the frequency of use of corporate finance instruments within these companies, there is a good frequency of use, even if it does not cover all instruments, because, as shown in the results, working capital management has a low adherence to their use.	which a questionnaire with objective questions was applied as a procedure, for a better data collection. The research was developed in 5 stages that consisted of choosing the sector of commercial activity to carry out the research, bibliographic review on the subject addressed to further investigate the theme, development of the questionnaire, to be applied taking into account all aspects to be addressed, application of the questionnaire with the managers of the ceramics and, finally, the analysis of the data obtained.
(SALOTTI and CARVALHO, 2024)	The objective of this article was to measure the cash flow at risk (CFaR) of non-financial companies in the Brazilian capital market and compare it to shareholders' equity, assessing the risk of insolvency.	As a result, it was discovered that non-financial publicly-held companies in the Brazilian market may be at low capitalization, as 18% of the 169 entities that currently have positive shareholders' equity would have it negative at the risk level of 1%. The CFaR during the pandemic were also reestimated, not showing a different pattern in relation to the other periods	A panel composed of 186 companies listed on B³ was applied, between 2010-2022, totaling 4,897 company-quarters. The companies were segregated into eight subgroups, based on their characteristics.
(MEDEIROS and CARRARO, 2022)	This study aimed to describe the result of the implementation of the budget and cash flow management for small businesses in the SOS-PME UFRGS program, an advisory network for entrepreneurs.	It was found that the implementation of the budget and the management of cash flow contributed to maintaining and enabling small businesses during the pandemic.	A questionnaire was applied and 55 responses were obtained, showing that companies that developed a structured and functional cash flow management improved the performance of resources and the prospects of business continuity and mitigated problems verified in deficient cash flows

Source: Survey Data (2024)

In view of the references used, the research produced by Silva, L. (2023), has greater similarity and contributions to the present work, as it sought to identify the perception of managers of the ceramics industry, in the region of Rio Grande do Norte, about the importance and frequency of using financial indicators. Causing the need to apply a new study focusing on financial indicators, such as cash flow and working capital management, in a new region of Brazil.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The research carried out is classified as qualitative of a descriptive nature in which a questionnaire was applied with open and objective questions to identify and extract information about the level of knowledge of managers about cash flow indicators and working capital management (SILVA, L., 2023).

Frame 3: Questionnaire Blocks

Blocks and assertions	**Sources (year)**
BLOCK 1 - Characterization of the manager Enter your gender: How old is you? What position do you hold within the company? How many years have you been in this position in the company? What is your level of education?	(SILVA, L., 2023)
BLOCK 2 - Company Profile How many years has the company been in business? How many employees does your company have? What is your company's tax regime? According to revenue, what classification does your company fall into?	(SILVA, L., 2023)
BLOCK 3 - Knowledge about managerial and financial tools: Within corporate finance, some instruments are widely used by entrepreneurs for better management of their company's finances. Are you aware of the use of these instruments? Among the following corporate finance instruments, which ones you usually use in your company's daily life: Within corporate finance, some instruments are used more frequently than others. Among the following instruments, which ones do you usually use most often?	(SILVA, L., 2023)
BLOCK 4 - Perception of the importance of Cash Flow and Working Capital Management indicators: Do you consider that cash flow projection is an important tool for efficient financial management of companies like yours? Working capital management is a very relevant instrument for financial management. How important do you consider having this instrument for your company? Do you consider that in order to execute good financial management in your field of activity, it is necessary to know and use the corporate finance instruments mentioned in this questionnaire?	(SILVA, L., 2023)
BLOCK 5 - Frequency of use of the Cash Flow and Working Capital Management indicators. How often do you usually use cash flow projection within your company's management? How often do you usually use working capital management within the management of your company?	(SILVA, L., 2023)

Source Silva, L., (2023, p. 42)

Qualitative research aims to collect data and information on a specific topic, based on a robust theoretical basis related to the object under study. This type of research analyzes problems that arouse the interest of the researcher, seeking to offer a deeper understanding of reality and suggest possible solutions to existing issues (SILVA, L., 2023).

The research will be carried out with five micro and small companies in the industrial sector, which operate in food production, located in the Greater Florianópolis region in the state of Santa Catarina. The questionnaire will be structured with the following blocks: 1 – Characterization of the manager; 2 – Profile of the companies; 3 – Knowledge of managerial and financial tools; 4 – Perception of the importance of using Cash Flow and Working Capital Management indicators; 5 – Frequency of use of Cash Flow and Working Capital Management indicators.

The questionnaire was prepared through the Google Forms platform, using objective questions, numerical scales, textual scales and Likert scale, aiming to deepen details about the level of knowledge of the interviewed managers and how often they use the indicators treated. The managers participating in the survey received the link to the questionnaire via Whatsapp, through which they accessed, answered and returned the questions addressed in the survey. The survey sample had the response of 5 managers.

The collected answers were treated and tabulated in Excel, for a better systematization of the information collected and ease in the interpretation of the results obtained, then the synthesis of each of the five blocks of the questionnaire will be presented, highlighting its main points reported in the research.

RESULTS

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA COLLECTED

This topic aims to analyze each block of questions applied in the research with five micro and small business managers in the Greater Florianópolis region and highlight what the main results were. Starting with Block 1, with the characterization of the managers participating in the questionnaire, according to Table 1 below.

According to the answers obtained, it is possible to note the predominance of males in the present study, with 100% of the sample being representative. This number demonstrates the trend of male presence in management positions in the companies in question.

The next question identifies that only 3 age groups were classified in the survey, 25-30 years old with 1 marking, 35-40 years old with 1 and over 40 years old with 3. With this, we can highlight that 80% of the managers interviewed are over 30 years old, demonstrating a higher level of maturity in strategic positions in the companies participating in the survey.

The third question seeks to present the positions held by the participants of the questionnaire, in order to understand the level of professionalization of the companies, since in smaller companies and family businesses, there is a tendency for the presence of the partners in charge of all operations and strategic decisions, while in companies with greater business maturity, the management is mostly carried out by market professionals, without a link with the partners. As a result, it was found that 60% of the sample is composed of partners/owners, 20% of administrators and 20% of administrative managers.

Table 1: Block 1 - Characterization of the manager

Issues	Alternatives	Answers	%
Enter your gender:	Male	5	100%
	Female	0	-
	Other	0	-
How old is you?	From 20 – 25 years old	0	-
	From 25 – 30 years old	1	20%
	From 30 – 35 years old	0	-
	From 35 – 40 years old	1	20%
	Over 40 years	3	60%
What position do you hold within the company?	Partner	3	60%
	Administrator	1	20%
	Administrative Manager	1	20%
	Other	0	-
How many years have you been in this position in the company?	Less than 1 year	0	-
	Between 1 and 5 years	0	-
	Between 5 and 10 years	1	20%
	Between 10 and 15 years old	1	20%
	More than 15 years	3	60%
	Other	0	-
What is your level of education?	Elementary school	0	-
	Middle school	2	40%
	Higher education	2	40%
	Other	1	20%

Source: Survey Data (2024)

As for the time in which the participants have been performing their current functions in their respective organizations, we can highlight that 80% of the interviewees have been in their positions for more than 10 years, demonstrating stability in the functions performed, solidity in the career plan and operational longevity of the companies.

The last question in Block 1 highlights the level of education of the interviewees, revealing a high presence of managers with only complete high school, representing 40% of the options. With the same 40% there are participants who have completed higher education and finally, the 20% of respondents who completed their education at the technical level. The research demonstrates a certain balance between the options, in a way presenting a mix between professionals with greater theoretical depth and others with a greater focus on experience and practice.

Thus, Block 1 of the questionnaire sought to characterize the research participants, so that it was possible to understand their profile, characteristics and functions, starting the other blocks of questioning. Next, Block 2 addressed the profile of the companies, according to the following Table 2:

Table 2: Block 2 - Profile of companies

Issues	Alternatives	Answers	%
How many years has the company been in business?	Less than 1 year	0	-
	Between 1 and 5 years	0	-
	Between 5 and 10 years	0	-
	Between 10 and 15 years old	1	20%
	More than 15 years	4	80%
How many employees does your company have?	Up to 10	0	-
	Between 10 and 50	1	20%
	Between 50 and 100	4	80%
	Above 100	0	-
What is your company's tax regime?	Simples Nacional	0	-
	Real Profit	1	20%
	Presumed Profit	4	80%
	MEI	0	-
According to revenue, what classification does your company fall into?	Individual Microentrepreneur	0	-
	Microenterprise	1	20%
	Small Business	4	80%
	Medium Enterprise	0	-
	Large company	0	-

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The second block begins with the information that 100% of the companies approached (Table 2) have more than 10 years of activity, this demonstrates the solidity in the operation of these companies, because as previously mentioned in the theoretical framework section, about 67% of the MSEs close their activities within 5 years.

As for the number of employees, 4 companies have between 50 and 100 employees and 1 has between 10 and 50. Next, it was questioned what was the classification of the companies according to the tax regime adopted in their activities, and the results were as follows: Presumed Profit with 4 options and Actual Profit with 1 option. This survey is important to analyze the strategies and objectives of companies regarding the tax issue, since most of them have chosen to adopt the Presumed Profit regime.

As the last question for the profile block of the companies, the classification of the companies according to their revenue was highlighted, and the result was as follows: 4 Small Companies and 1 Microenterprise.

Next, block 3 (Table 3) sought to verify the managers' knowledge about managerial and financial tools to support the management of their businesses.

The first question asked the interviewees about their knowledge of the use of auxiliary instruments for better business management, the answer obtained revealed that most of the participants, equivalent to 60% of the sample, are unaware of these tools, generating evidence that corroborates the survey of the level of education of the managers, since 3 of the 5 ended their school career in high school or technical education, with a focus on practical knowledge, without further depth to the theoretical part related to business administration.

Table 3 Block 3 - Knowledge about managerial and financial tools

Issues	Alternatives	Answers	%
Within corporate finance, some instruments are widely used by entrepreneurs for better management of their company's finances. Are you aware of the use of these instruments?	Yes	2	40%
	No	3	60%
Among the following corporate finance instruments, which ones you usually use in your company's daily life:	Short-term planning	1	20%
	Inventory control	1	20%
	Cash Flow Projection	1	20%
	Accounts Payable and Receivable Management	2	40%
	Working capital management	0	-
	Annual budget	0	-
	Long-term planning	0	-
	Other	0	-
Within corporate finance, some instruments are used more frequently than others. Among the following instruments, which ones do you usually use most often?	Short-term planning	0	-
	Inventory control	2	40%
	Cash Flow Projection	2	40%
	Accounts Payable and Receivable Management	1	20%
	Working capital management	0	-
	Annual budget	0	-
	Long-term planning	0	-
	Other	0	-

Source: Survey Data (2024)

When presenting the participants with a list of six options of managerial and financial instruments, each one was asked to choose one of the available options, and the result showed that the tools most used by the interviewees were: management of accounts payable and receivable, short-term planning, inventory control and cash flow projection.

Then (Table 4) the managers were asked how often they used these tools and the answers revealed an interesting behavior, the concern and focus of the managers with the movements in the cash and inventory of their companies, with inventory control, cash flow projection and management of accounts payable and receivable, in respective order of position, identified as the most used tools in the interviewees' daily business routines.

In order to understand the perception of the interviewed managers about the cash flow and working capital management indicators, blocks 4 and 5 of the questionnaire were elaborated, where the participants were asked about the level of importance and frequency of use of the indicators.

The fourth block (Table 4) begins by asking the participants how important cash flow management is to manage companies efficiently. The answers reveal that 80% consider it very important and 20% classify the cash flow projection as important. The results corroborate the theoretical section that details the importance of cash flow for companies in general, since efficient management of inflows and outflows of resources is essential to achieve a higher level of liquidity in their businesses (SILVA, L., 2023).

Table 4: Block 4 - Perception of the importance of cash flow indicators and working capital management

Issues	Alternatives	Answers	%
Do you consider that cash flow projection is an important tool for efficient financial management of companies like yours?	Very important	4	80%
	Important	1	20%
	Neutral	0	-
	Unimportant	0	-
	Unimportant	0	-
Working capital management is a very relevant instrument for financial management. How important do you consider having this instrument for your company?	Very important	3	60%
	Important	2	40%
	Neutral	0	-
	Unimportant	0	-
	Unimportant	0	-
Do you consider that in order to execute good financial management in your field of activity, it is necessary to know and use the corporate finance instruments mentioned in this questionnaire?	Yes	5	100%
	No	0	-

Source: Survey Data (2024)

The second question seeks to understand the level of importance given by managers to working capital management in their companies. The results were similar to the previous question, with 60% considering it very important and 40% important. Complementing the previous questions, the last question asked in the block demonstrates that the interviewees understand the importance of using these two indicators and how much they contribute to the efficiency of business management.

Table 5: Block 5 - Frequency of use of cash flow and working capital management indicators

Issues	Alternatives	Answers	%
How often do you usually use cash flow projection within your company's management?	Too often	1	20%
	Frequently	1	20%
	Occasionally	1	20%
	Rarely	0	-
	Never	2	40%
How often do you usually use working capital management within the management of your company?	Too often	0	-
	Frequently	1	20%
	Occasionally	2	40%
	Rarely	0	-
	Never	2	40%

Source: Survey Data (2024)

To understand the frequency of use of cash flow projection in the management of companies, the first question of block 5 (Table 5) of the questionnaire was included. The results indicate that only 20% of managers use cash flow projection very often, while 20% use it frequently. Another 20% say they use it occasionally, and 40% declare that they never use this indicator. These data indicate a certain contradiction between the perception of the importance of use, presented previously in the fourth block, and the frequency of use of the tool that, despite managers understanding its importance, use it occasionally or even do not use it at all.

When evaluating working capital management, through the second question of the fifth block, the results show that only 20% of managers use it frequently, while 40% use it occasionally and 40% say they never use this practice. It is possible to note the similarity with the results obtained in the previous question, demonstrating that despite recognizing the importance of the two indicators, most of the managers interviewed do not apply them consistently in their management.

ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

In view of previous research, the work shows the understanding of managers' perception about the importance and frequency of using cash flow indicators and working capital management.

The results obtained corroborate what was found by Silva, L., (2023), that entrepreneurs understand the importance of financial indicators for the management of their businesses. When observing the results achieved in the research by Silva, L., (2023), ceramic managers in Rio Grande do Norte use the cash flow tool more frequently in terms of working capital management, which is in line with the analyses carried out in this article.

As for the frequency of use, it is possible to recognize a contradiction when comparing with the results of Silva, L., (2023), since the answers to the questionnaire in this article demonstrate that even with the knowledge of the importance of financial indicators, managers end up not constantly using these tools, which are of paramount importance for the financial health of companies.

CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to understand the perception of managers of micro and small companies about cash flow indicators and working capital management. Throughout the research, several questions were addressed regarding the profile of managers, profile of companies, knowledge about managerial and financial tools, perception of the importance and frequency of use of cash flow and working capital management, seeking to understand the context in which the interviewees and their businesses are inserted, as well as to elucidate the objective of the research.

The results obtained through the research demonstrate that the profile with the greatest predominance in management positions in the companies participating in the sample is male managers of micro and small companies over 30 years of age, and with a level of education between high school and higher education, indicating the need for greater maturity in the positions responsible for decision-making. also evidencing the balance reported in the research, between the presence of managers with practical knowledge and others with technical knowledge.

In view of the issues related to the importance of using managerial and financial tools, with a focus on cash flow and working capital indicators, it is possible to identify that the interviewees understand the importance of these indicators, but that in practice they end up not using them or using them infrequently. In consideration of the indicators most used in the day-to-day life of managers, we have the management of accounts payable and receivable, demonstrating a profile that attributes greater relevance to inflows and outflows in the short term. Corroborating the low adherence to cash flow and working capital management, two indicators that together are responsible for projecting and ensuring the future situation of the company's cash.

From the results obtained, it was possible to answer the objective of the research, with the understanding of the relevance and frequency of the use of cash flow indicators and working capital management. The understanding of managers in the Greater Florianópolis region in the state of Santa Catarina is notorious, but they are not in the habit of using the two indicators in their management processes.

Limitations were found in the present research, in the context of the lack of many studies related to micro and small companies and their relationship with cash flow and working capital indicators. In addition, the survey has a small sample of companies in the Greater Florianópolis region of Santa Catarina, failing to indicate a trend in its results.

As a contribution to future research, it is recommended the quantitative analysis of the results of companies and their relationship with the perception of their managers about the indicators of cash flow and working capital management, as well as a study to understand the reasons related to the awareness of the importance of these indicators and their low adherence by managers in business routines.

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