



Faculty of Economics and Tourism
"Dr. Mijo Mirković"



The 10th International
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**"Finance, Economics and
Tourism - FET 2022"**
22nd -24th September 2022
Pula, Istria, Croatia, EU

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THE ADOPTION OF USAR – CASE STUDY OF A MICROENTERPRISE IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

The restaurant industry has evolved positively, recording historical highs in the economy of several countries until 2020, such as Macao (China), Jordan, Spain and Croatia (World Tourism Organisation, 2021). However, academic studies in this sector have not followed this evolution, leaving gaps in the theoretical information available to academics and managers. In addition, given the high fixed costs characteristic of the restaurant industry, the intensive labour (Moser, 2002) and the poor knowledge of managers (Sardo, Serrasqueiro and Alves, 2018, Campos et al., 2022) about administration can influence the success of businesses. Thus, it is urgent to create strategies to help managers make supported decisions; therefore, this study's objective is to implement the Uniform System of Accounts for Restaurants (USAR) in a restaurant microenterprise in Portugal through a qualitative methodology – Case Study. The most appropriate method is the case study's unique exploratory type. The authors used several sources of evidence to obtain the results, which underline the importance of the adapted implementation of the USAR to the restaurant reality. Several detailed supporting schedules present in this accounting system were adopted and others were adapted according to the needs of the object of study. This research contributes to the development of information regarding management accounting and the restaurant industry, which until today is poorly developed (Lima Santos et al., 2016, Sardo, Serrasqueiro and Alves, 2018), for instance, the low use of financial indicators and metrics (Heo, 2017); moreover, it is suggested to apply the USAR not only in enterprises with similar dimensions but also in enterprises with different dimensions and characteristics, to generalise the results obtained here.

Keywords: management accounting, restaurant management, uniform system of accounts for restaurants, USAR.

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, tourism has been developing significantly and contributing very positively to countries' economies (Ramos and Costa, 2017, Abranja, Almeida and Elias Almeida, 2019). Among the various tourism subsectors, accommodation and restaurants are the most important, as they perform a significant role in terms of revenue and employment generated (Lima Santos *et al.*, 2016).

However, although the accommodation subsector is explored in several studies by various authors (Lima Santos *et al.*, 2012, Nunes and Machado, 2014, Faria, Ferreira and Trigueiros, 2018, Campos *et al.*, 2022), there is a lack of literature information on the restaurant subsector. Still, managers express the wish to achieve success in their companies and, to support them, it is necessary to provide conditions for the development of restaurants, helping companies to achieve their goals more easily and for a longer period, especially microenterprises, because they have fewer human and financial resources.

In the case of companies operating in Portugal, the restaurant sector has been growing on average 2% per year, and in 2019 there were 35,883 active companies that represented 7.6% of the total number of companies in operation (474,971). The death rate of these companies was between 7.2% and 8.1% between the years 2015 and 2019. The birth rate, for the same period, was higher, between 8.3% and 8.7%, so it can be said that this sector of activity is a volatile but regenerating sector (Table 1). These companies employed 219,122 workers in 2019 which, in relative terms, represents almost 7% of the total number (3,176,666) of people employed in Portugal (Bank of Portugal, 2021).

Table 1 Number of companies

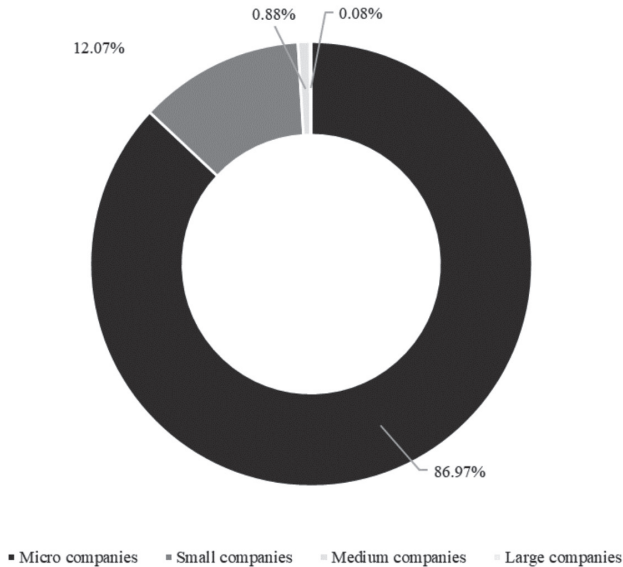
Year	No. of companies	% Death	% Birth
2019	35,883	7.9%	8.5%
2018	35,082	7.2%	8.6%
2017	34,272	7.6%	8.6%
2016	33,494	8.1%	8.3%
2015	32,957	7.6%	8.7%

Source: adapted from Bank of Portugal (2021).

The restaurant sector is composed of micro, small, medium, and large companies. Micro companies are the most representative in this sector, reaching almost 90% of the supply at this level (Figure 1). However, only 0.08%

of the organisations represent large companies, which is reflected in absolute terms in a total of thirty companies. Although the number of large companies is quite small in Portugal, according to Dasilas and Papasyriopoulos (2015) and Degryse *et al.* (2012), the size of an organisation is positively associated with a higher level of heterogeneity of activities and a lower risk of bankruptcy.

Figure 1. Characterisation of the restaurant industry in Portugal

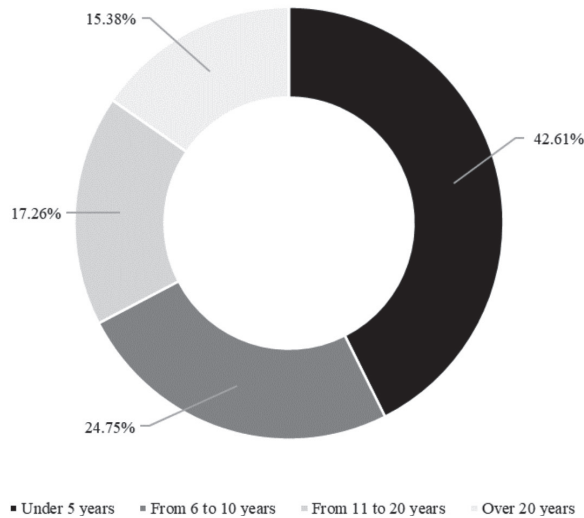


Source: Adapted from Bank of Portugal (2021)

Most businesses in the restaurant sector have a short longevity, as almost half of the supply operates for a maximum of five years and only 24.75% remain in the market for more than two decades (Figure 2). However, Khémiri and Noubbigh (2018) state that entrepreneurial age has a positive relationship with business leverage.

The data obtained from the statistical tables on restaurants and similar establishments from the Bank of Portugal (2021) corroborates what the authors previously mentioned, as the organisations that have a higher turnover are the ones that remain in the market for more than 20 years.

Figure 2. Longevity of the restaurant industry in Portugal



Source: Adapted from Bank of Portugal (2021)

According to Silva (2019), the knowledge of the various financial tools increases the financial literacy of managers and contributes to the success of a company. In addition, management control in restaurants increases opportunities to achieve the proposed objectives and the use of an effective control system allows the monitoring of several management indicators (Davis *et al.*, 1998, Ferreira, 2015).

Given the complex nature of restaurant operations, managers should learn accounting and management skills (Yembergenov and Zharylkasinoва, 2019), which facilitate the measurement of the company's financial and non-financial performance (Elbanna *et al.*, 2022) using, for example, appropriate accounting systems.

Finally, and for the reasons considered above, it becomes relevant to study the contribution that accounting systems give to the organisations of this subsector of tourism. Therefore, the object of study of this research is to implement the USAR in a micro restaurant company through the case study methodology. The achievement of the objective implies some steps and the implementation of the following specific objectives: the adaptation of the detailed supporting schedules and the adoption of an analytical chart of accounts adjusted to the reality of the object of this study.

In this way, the following research question is proposed: “Is the implementation of USAR beneficial to the management of a microenterprise in the restaurant subsector?”.

This paper is structured as followed: First, a literature review was done, characterising the restaurant management control; Second, the methodological approach was described; Third, the findings were presented and discussed; Finally, conclusions were drawn as well as theoretical and practical implications.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter highlights the importance of management accounting in the restaurant industry. Thus, the literature review covers the operations in restaurants and F&B (food & beverage) companies, management control in the restaurant industry, and the original document of the USAR with the explanation of its main statement and all the detailed supporting schedules.

2.1. THE OPERATIONS IN RESTAURANTS AND F&B COMPANIES

With the significant increase in tourism and the consequent evolution of the restaurant subsector, there is an increase in competition and the consumers' quality standards have changed to more demanding levels (Lourenço, 2012). To keep up with these modifications that have occurred and to have a competitive advantage, managers need to offer an excellent product/service to their customers and stipulate goals to meet the objectives set by the company (Rocha, 2020).

However, the restaurant industry is a very volatile sector, characterised by its high fixed costs (Lima Santos *et al.*, 2016); it is also easily affected by inflation variations and the constant change in raw material prices, which causes managers to be forced to change the prices of their meals (Rocha, 2020). Nevertheless, Rocha (2020) argues that managers' knowledge about prices can compromise the structure of the restaurant. The reasons that may be at the origin of these problems are the fact that restaurants are characterised by intensive labour, leaving no time for operational management issues, the perishability of foods/raw materials and also seasonality, thus influencing the development of this sector (Lima Santos *et al.*, 2016).

Considering the above information, the restaurant operations cycle that Moser (2002) advocates assists managers in more effective control of the restaurant, starting with the implementation of control criteria at the stage of purchasing raw materials until the sale of products/service delivery.

2.2. MANAGEMENT CONTROL IN THE RESTAURANT INDUSTRY

Control is one of the management functions to which managers usually devote the most attention and can be summarised in three stages: defining objectives, evaluating performance and, depending on variations, proposing corrective actions (Jordan, Neves and Rodrigues, 1993, Teixeira, 2011).

For this purpose, according to Silva (2019), informed decision-making and the performance of a company are strengthened through the knowledge of the financial instruments available, which means that the financial literacy of managers and employees is fundamental to the success of any company.

The creation of conditions to bridge the gap between the established objectives, the reality, and the possibility of identifying and fixing errors along the way, allows the perception of the importance that proper management control has in the restaurant business industry (Moser, 2002, Ferreira, 2015).

The intrinsic complexity of the operations of this sector of economic activity requires the design of an efficient control system that aims, through the collection of information, to monitor sales prices, increase revenues and control costs, ensuring quality standards in the service (Davis *et al.*, 1998). In this context, the same authors emphasise essential aspects such as profitability and the prevention of inefficiencies or even theft (Lima Santos *et al.*, 2016).

According to Elshaer (2022), there are some specificities in restaurant accounting: the restaurant prices do not consider overhead expenses and normally restaurants do not analyse the activities costs versus adding value. This author argues that in the restaurant industry, the importance is related to price and quality, so traditional accounting systems should be complemented with the application of advanced systems.

For a correct implementation of a management control system, the following criteria should be followed (Ferreira, 2015, Nascimento, 2015):

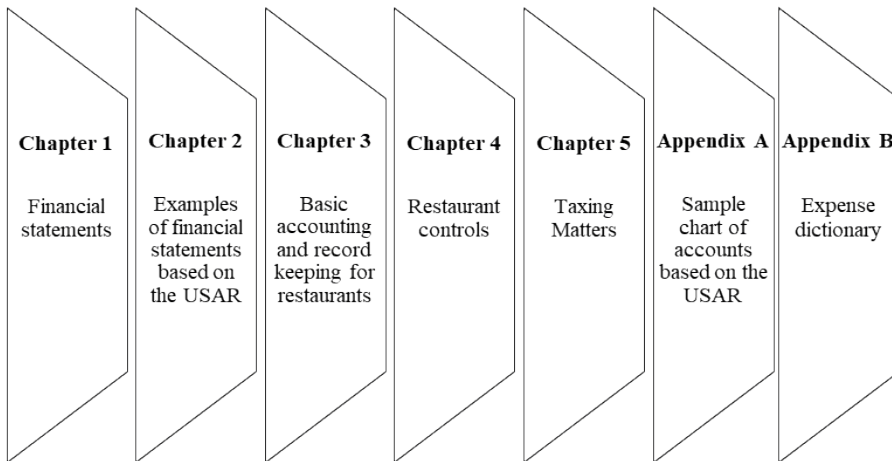
- Clear definition of the objectives to be achieved.
- Availability of means and computer equipment for the collection of information.
- Definition of work procedures.
- Timely adequacy of corrective measures.

2.3. THE UNIFORM SYSTEM OF ACCOUNTS FOR RESTAURANTS

The most popular accounting system used for restaurants worldwide is USAR, which works with strict guidelines that provide useful information for operating management and create conditions for managers and users to access funding (NRA, 2012). USAR was created in 1968 in the United States of America by the National Restaurant Association and already has several versions, the most recent being from 2012 (NRA, 2012).

The USAR could be applied to small, medium, or large businesses. It provides some benefits, such as uniform classification and presentation, comparisons among companies, fast accounting systems, and tested systems (Schmidgall, 2011). This system consists of 5 chapters and 2 appendices (Figure 3), which are fundamental for the control and management of restaurant operations, with emphasis on the most difficult to control (Campos, Gomes and Lima Santos, 2020).

Figure 3. Structure of the USAR



Source: Adapted from NRA (2012)

Starting by describing the chapters, the official USAR document begins by presenting various financial statements, such as the income statement, the 28 detailed supporting schedules, the balance sheet and the statement of cash flow. The detailed supporting schedules represent the lines of the income statement and provide information that helps obtain operating indicators to support decision-making (Quintaneiro and Martins, 2007, NRA, 2012):

- Food and beverage sales by department.
- Food and beverage sales by meal period.
- Food sales and cost.
- Food sales and costs of sales of non-alcoholic beverages/soft beverages.
- Beverage sales by type of beverage.
- Beverage sales by location of the bar.
- Beverage sales and cost by beverage type.
- Cost of beverages.
- Merchandise sales.
- Other operating income.
- Cost of employees' meals by meal served.
- Cost of employees' meals by the percentage of employees.
- Cost of employees' meals by meal discounts reported in gross sales.
- Cost of manager complimentary meals by discounts reported in gross sales.
- Cost of manager complimentary meals by percentage.
- Total labour cost, for full-service.
- Total labour cost, for limited-service restaurants.
- Direct operating expenses (other controllable expenses).
- Music and entertainment (other controllable expenses).
- Marketing (other controllable expenses).
- Utilities (other controllable expenses).
- General and administrative expenses (other controllable expenses).
- Repairs and maintenance (other controllable expenses).
- Occupancy costs (non-controllable expenses).
- Equipment leases (non-controllable expenses).
- Depreciation and amortisation (non-controllable expenses).
- Interest expense (corporate overheads).
- Other income/expense (corporate overheads).

Given the possibility of a restaurant having more than one business area, detailed supporting schedules provide additional and more accurate information to managers (National Restaurant Association, 2012).

The second chapter presents two examples of financial statements based on the USAR. Chapter 3 explains in a simple way how the accounting process works to help managers. Chapter 4 explains how the restaurant controls food and beverages, cash, labour, and primary cost (sum between the cost of raw materials and labour). Chapter 5 is dedicated to tax matters, explaining how taxes apply to restaurants. Since the nature of the USAR is North American, the taxes present in the official document of this accounting system are directed only to its country of origin. However, it is easily changed according to the country where the USAR is implemented (NRA, 2012).

Finally, Appendix A presents a financial chart of accounts based on the USAR and Appendix B exposes a cost dictionary that helps clarify several questions that may arise when assigning an individual cost in a particular department of the restaurant (NRA, 2012).

2.4. THE INCOME STATEMENT IN USAR

The income statement, also known as the operating summary statement, seeks to provide a complete economic and financial overview of companies (Quintaneiro and Martins, 2007, NRA, 2012). The income statement is considered the most important for restaurant managers because it analyses not only income but also labour costs, food costs and other costs. Ogbeide (2014) agrees and argues that, for profit maximisation of any business, it is essential that the manager can interpret and analyse financial statements to make decisions and make changes when necessary (NRA, 2012).

This statement provides insight into how the restaurant is doing in terms of revenues, costs and main operating margins for a given period and in terms of results. From an overall perspective, this statement presents information on sales revenues (F&B and merchandise), prime cost (cost of sales - which is composed of raw materials plus labour costs), and the other controllable costs, which results in the controllable income; subtracting the non-controllable expenses, the restaurant's operating income is obtained. It is important to note that:

- the amounts included in the line “beverages” are related to alcoholic beverages such as beer, liquor and wine; the amounts related to water and soft drinks are included in the line “food”,
- the “cost of sales” is calculated through the following formula: Cost of sales = Beginning inventory + Purchases - Ending inventory,
- “labour costs” include the salaries of managers and employees and social contributions; charges may include, among others, taxes on salaries,

- social security and health insurance contributions and indemnities to employees,
- the “other controllable expenses” are directly influenced by operational policies and management decisions; they are divided into six items to allow the comparison with other restaurants and with the sector averages:
 - “direct operating expenses” include, among others, the expenses of uniforms, laundry, and restaurant charts,
 - “music and entertainment”, where the expenses vary according to the concept and theme of each restaurant,
 - “marketing” includes all the expenses with activities aimed at promoting the restaurant and its success through the relationships established with the customers, among others, advertising, creation of its website, public relations and loyalty programmes,
 - “utilities”, which includes expenses for electricity, water, fuel and waste disposal,
 - “general and administrative expenses”, as the name indicates, includes the expenses associated with the restaurant’s operations, among others: accountant, legal expenses, bank charges, communications, office supplies and insurance (except insurance for employees and insurance for the premises),
 - “repairs and maintenance” include all the costs of maintenance and repair of the interior and exterior building and structural elements of the restaurant, such as signage, landscaping and parking,
 - the “controllable income” behaves as a margin to assess the level of controllable revenue and costs; it can be used as a management incentive or an additional payment,
 - “non-controllable expenses” show investment-related decisions and are not directly influenced by operational policies and management decisions; they are divided into three items:
 - “occupancy costs” include expenses on rents, property taxes and insurance of premises,
 - “equipment leases” include expenses on the rental of machinery, equipment and computers,
 - “depreciation and amortisation” include depreciation of tangible fixed assets such as furniture and equipment and reduction in the value of intangible assets,

- the “restaurant operating income” is the difference between the controllable income and the non-controllable expenses.

To obtain the income before tax, the restaurant’s operating income is reduced by overhead costs, interest expenses and other income/expenses:

- “corporate overheads” may vary according to the company’s structure and are more common in restaurant chains, as they do not normally arise in independent restaurant operations, where these types of costs are included under “general and administrative expenses”,
- “interest expense” is considered the financial charges with short- and long-term debts, such as loans obtained,
- in “other income/expenses” are included items that do not belong to the operating activity of the company, for example, the sale of fats or other waste and gains or losses on the disposal of assets and investments or related to contracts.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

There has been an increase in the use of qualitative research in management accounting. This method, according to Boodhoo and Purmessur (2009) can be used to explore human behaviour which cannot be quantified. The qualitative analysis consists of an interpretive and naturalistic attitude to a given subject, resulting in empirical research on the routine and of the individuals or object of study (Njie and Asimiran, 2014).

Considering the information presented above, the methodology selected in this study was qualitative; it consists of a research strategy that allows for in-depth knowledge about the development of theory in management accounting and control. This methodology has been developed over the years by several authors (Ghauri, Grønhaug and Kristianslund, 1995, Tsang, Prideaux and Lee, 2016) and presents advantages such as the use of more than one research method to relate the information obtained (Vieira, Major and Robalo, 2009).

The case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real context; it is widely used when there is a fragile degree of knowledge about a given phenomenon and serves as an analysis of change processes (Benbasat et al., 1987, Yin, 2010). The same authors argue that the case study is widely used in organisations/companies and management studies.

Benbasat et al. (1987, p. 371) also underline eleven characteristics that they consider essential for the preparation of a case study, which are as follows:

- (1) The research questions are examined in a natural setting.
- (2) Data is collected by multiple means.
- (3) One or a few entities (person, group, or organisation) are examined.
- (4) The complexity of the unit is intensely stirred.
- (5) Case studies are best suited to the exploration, classification, and hypothesis development stages of the knowledge-building process; the researcher should have a receptive attitude towards exploration.
- (6) No experimental controls or manipulations are involved.
- (7) The researcher cannot specify the set of independent variables in advance.
- (8) The results obtained depend strongly on the integrative powers of the researcher.
- (9) Changes in site selection and data collection methods may occur as the researcher develops new hypotheses.
- (10) Case research is useful in studying the “why” and “how” questions, because these deal with operational links to be investigated over time rather than frequency or incidence.
- (11) The focus is on contemporary events.

Considering the complexity of the object of study, the most appropriate method to achieve the results is the case study’s unique exploratory type (Yin, 2018, Jørgensen, 2010). Yin (2018) argues that a case study happens when problems are little known which, in this case, makes perfect sense as there is a dearth of information on studies that identify these techniques and apply them to microenterprises in the restaurant industry. Therefore, this type of case study is a preliminary stage of research and generates ideas with the aim of obtaining generalisations (Vieira et al., 2009).

This method is often used in qualitative research in management accounting and organisations and it is based on in-depth reflection (Vieira, Major and Robalo, 2009). Other authors also used this method in their studies (Creswell, 2018, Seyitoğlu and Ivanov, 2020, Ecker and Strüver, 2022). The case study has strengths (Yin, 2018), as it allows the broadening of knowledge about a company (which may represent the reality of much of the restaurant sector) and improves the working methods used by managers and employees (improves the preparation of operational and financial information), as well as provides detailed information about the USAR.

Thus, according to the objective of the present study and the main research question, the following specific research questions were formulated:

- Research Question 1 (RQ 1): Is USAR a useful management accounting tool in a microenterprise?
- Research Question 2 (RQ 2): Being useful, is the original version of the USAR easy to implement in a microenterprise? Or is it better to adjust the USAR?
- Research Question 3 (RQ 3): What is the opinion/perception of managers and collaborating accountants regarding the implementation of the adjusted USAR in the company?
- Research Question 4 (RQ 4): What problems may arise with the implementation of the USAR?
- Research Question 5 (RQ 5): Apart from decision support, what are the benefits obtained by implementing USAR in a microenterprise?

To obtain accurate results, four sources of evidence were used: archival records, participant observation, interviews and documentation.

Archival records were obtained through reports in the literature and the official USAR document. Participant observation was crucial because it allowed us to understand how the company’s operations and daily routine work. The interview, which is considered the most important source of evidence in a case study (Yin, 2018), allowed us to answer all the research questions; the interviews were conducted with all the employees (one chef and two waitresses) and two managers of the restaurant, as well as the accountant, between December 2021 and January 2022, and lasted an average of 20 minutes. The questions asked of the interviewees (Appendix I) had various objectives under analysis (Table 2) to answer the research questions. Lastly, documentation based on company account reports and the adapted USAR allowed the design of a model according to the needs of managers and employees.

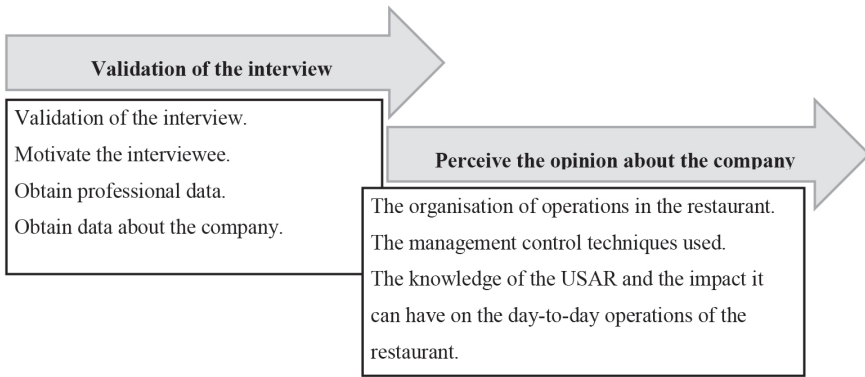
Table 2. Relationship between the research questions and the objectives under analysis in the interviews

Research questions	Objectives under analysis in the interviews
RQ 1	Assess the knowledge of the respondents about the USAR.
RQ 2	Connect the respondents with elements of accounting management and understand if there is a need to change the detailed supporting schedules/ adapt the USAR addressed to the respondents’ needs.
RQ 3, RQ 4 and RQ 5	Understand what the respondents’ opinion about the possible implementation of USAR in the restaurant is and how it can help daily in the tasks performed and in making more informed decisions.

Notes: RQ = research question

Also, the questions that were asked during the interviews had specific objectives associated with them to achieve the results of the present study. The interview had an initial moment of validation, where the interviewer motivated the interviewee and obtained various information. Briefly, the interview aimed to understand the company’s opinion regarding its operation, the management techniques used and the knowledge of the USAR, as shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Objectives associated with the interview questions



After this stage, the data collected was processed and analysed using quality criteria with regular evaluation of the information obtained, and a pilot test was prepared to prove the authenticity of the interviews; confidentiality criteria were also considered, always maintaining impartiality, protection of company data and an ethical standard (Yin, 2018).

Finally, the case study, by the fact of researching in depth a contemporary phenomenon (Benbasat, Goldstein and Mead, 1987), contributes to the knowledge of management in the restaurant industry, not only for the company object of the study but also for other micro and small businesses, where managers intend to improve the management of their company through management control systems which, in this specific case, is the USAR.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The results emerge from a first analysis extracted from the information present in the archival records, where it was possible to realise that over 90% of the restaurant supply in Portugal is represented by microenterprises and that most of them have reduced longevity. This limitation is considered by the National Restaurant Association (2012), which argues that the adoption of

USAR increases the longevity of companies and can be adaptable to any type and size of restaurant business. The literature studied allowed the deepening of knowledge on the topics addressed, as well as enabling the formulation of the research questions and the validation of the results and their discussion.

In the final stage of the research, participant observation, interviews, and documentation, through reports, accounts, and the adaptation of the USAR to the needs of the object of study were essential sources of evidence to obtain results and answer the research questions proposed. Table 3 presents the sources of evidence that allowed answering the research questions. This means, for example, that to answer RQ₁, it was necessary to use archival records (Bank of Portugal, the official document of the USAR and the literature review), participant observation and interviews. Documentation (reports and accounts and USAR adapted) was not necessary to answer this question.

Table 3. Relationship between the sources of evidence and the answers to the research questions

RQ	Archival records			Participant observation	Interview	Documentation	
	Bank of Portugal	USAR	Literature review*			Reports and Accounts	USAR adapted
RQ ₁	*	*	*	*	*		
RQ ₂	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
RQ ₃			*	*	*	*	*
RQ ₄			*		*	*	*
RQ ₅		*	*		*		*

Notes: RQ = research question

**Analysis of the themes, formulation of the research questions, and validation of the results and discussion*

Beginning with the first research question, through the archival record and participant observation, it has been proved that the USAR becomes a useful tool for the management of a restaurant and is essential to improve the results of a company; it is also highlighted that all interviewees did not know the accounting system; however, they understand that, if implemented correctly, it could generate higher profit for the company (NRA, 2012).

About RQ₂, it was necessary to put the interviewees in contact with the detailed supporting schedules, which resulted in the elimination of several detailed supporting schedules and the adaptation of the others. Therefore, the original version of the USAR should be adjusted to make it easier to implement in a microenterprise.

Replying to RQ 3, during the participant observation process, resistance to the implementation of a management control system was identified. However, the interviews showed otherwise. Managers argued that the implementation of USAR or another accounting system could be an asset for the restaurant's management, allowing it to be updated in an ever-changing economic environment and improving the company's vision for the future. These opinions agree with Ferreira (2015).

Regarding RQ 4, despite the respondents' perception of the advantages, the introduction of the USAR can bring some problems. It is argued that knowledge about basic accounting should be extended to all hierarchical levels through simple training to improve skills and competencies, avoiding problems that may arise, which will result in better management control. This opinion is in line with what the NRA (2012) argues.

Although there are some barriers to implementing the USAR, the benefits that can result from it outweigh them. To prove the benefits and simultaneously answer RQ 5, the following sources of evidence were used: documentation (NRA, 2012) and interviewees. In addition to supporting decision-making, the adoption of USAR will allow for more effective cost control at all levels and an increase in company revenues (Oliveira, 2014) which, consequently, is reflected in a higher profit margin for the company.

4.1. DESIGN OF THE ADAPTED USAR

After answering all the research questions, all the conditions for adapting the USAR to the reality of the restaurant under study were settled.

From the reading of the chart of accounts of the company analysed, 2,000 accounts were eliminated that had not been used and about which there was no expectation of use. Despite some different designations, some accounts classes, which follow the Portuguese accounting rules, are like those presented in the chart of accounts based on the USAR (National Restaurant Association, 2012). To obtain the necessary information for the automatic filling of the detailed supporting schedules (DSS), two hypotheses were considered:

- The first hypothesis would involve splitting the income accounts and the cost accounts according to the information to be included in the DSS; this solution would be more complex because the company's chart of accounts already presents some breakdowns related to tax issues, for example, if the operation is performed in Portugal (PT), in the European Union (EU) or worldwide (WW), or if the applicable VAT (value added tax) is the standard rate (SR), intermediate rate (IR) or reduced rate (RR).

This option would make the chart of accounts very heavy, so it was not chosen.

- The second hypothesis, which was the one chosen, implies that the transaction accounts in the chart of accounts of the company are imputation accounts (in an analytical chart of accounts whose code starts with 9) – this is illustrated below with a small example related to the account 62 External supplies and services (ESS) where the transaction account is indicated with an asterisk*.

62 ESS

622 ESS – Specialised Services (SS)

6221 ESS – SS: Specialised jobs

62211 ESS – SS: Specialised jobs PT

622111 ESS – SS: Specialised jobs PT, Deductible VAT

6221113* ESS – SS: Specialised jobs PT, Deductible VAT SR

In this situation, the movements on account 6221113 will be reflected on account 96221 Specialised jobs, whose value will be used to fill in the DSS when necessary.

In this sense, of the 28 DSS presented by the original USAR, and in accordance with the research results, it is proposed to eliminate several DSS and merge some, thus facilitating the process of filling in information for the company’s managers and employees. Thus, the total number of DSS was reduced to 13, as follows:

- DSS_1 Food and beverage sales by department.
- DSS_2 Food and beverage sales by meal period.
- DSS_3 Beverage sales and cost by beverage type.
- DSS_4 Merchandise sales.
- DSS_5 Food sales and costs of sales of non-alcoholic beverages/soft beverages.
- DSS_6 Total labour cost, for full-service.
- DSS_7 Direct operating expenses.
- DSS_8 Utilities.
- DSS_9 General and administrative expenses.
- DSS_10 Repairs and maintenance.
- DSS_11 Occupancy costs.
- DSS_12 Depreciation.
- DSS_13 Other income/expense.

This way, the conditions are met to answer the main research question of this study – the implementation of the USAR is beneficial for the management of microenterprises in the restaurant subsector if it is adjusted to their reality; the cutting of 15 detailed supporting schedules and the omission and adaptation of several lines of the remaining detailed supporting schedules were proposed.

In summary, the benefits obtained by implementing the USAR will increase the longevity of any microenterprise, and its analytical insight can help to face future crises. The adoption of the USAR, being a competitive advantage, positions the restaurant and provides a detailed view of the company's future.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions of this case study, based on the main research question and the specific research questions formulated, allowed a response to the objective initially proposed. Reflecting on the high representation that microenterprises have in the restaurant industry, the objective of this research consisted of the implementation of the USAR adopted through a case study in a micro restaurant.

After performing the several stages present in a qualitative methodology that fits the case study method, it was possible to answer the initial question and prove that the implementation of the USAR is beneficial for the management of a microenterprise, but it must be adjusted to adapt to the real conditions of the company. For this purpose, the knowledge of the managers and employees of any micro and small restaurant becomes decisive for effective control, as well as for the correct implementation of the adapted USAR.

The recourse to various sources of evidence allowed answering the research questions formulated, certifying that:

- The USAR is useful for the management of a microenterprise.
- The original version of the USAR needs adjustments to adapt it to the reality of a microenterprise.
- With the implementation of the USAR, problems may arise such as reduced knowledge on the part of its users.
- In addition to more informed decision-making, the USAR allows for an increase in the longevity of a micro restaurant business and an accurate view of its management and future, improving its competitive advantage.

Regarding the main objective of this study, the implementation of the adapted USAR determined a preliminary step that consisted of adjusting the

general chart of accounts used by the company, for which the elimination of more than 2,000 accounts was proposed, making it more rational and intuitive for managers.

To consolidate the objective of the implementation of the USAR, we proceeded to the merger and adaptation of its 28 detailed supporting schedules to the reality of the company under study, having validated 13 of these schedules.

During the study, limitations were identified; one was the complexity of restaurant operations and the reduced knowledge of managers and employees about management accounting and the USAR; another was the scarcity of information on the subject addressed, which was verified in the difficulty in diversifying the bibliographic sources and indicating the authors who study the subject.

Despite the problems, the contributions of this study are more relevant because the authors sought to contribute to the broadening and deepening of research on management accounting in the restaurant industry and for the opportunity of applying the USAR in companies with similar characteristics to the company under study, as well as in restaurants of different sizes and characteristics, to generalise the results obtained here.

Based on the conclusions presented, and the limitations pointed out, there is a need to increase the number of studies in this area of research.

This study being the beginning of a research process, some suggestions for future research are the application of the USAR adapted to restaurants of the same size and characteristics, or even to restaurants of different sizes and characteristics, to generalise the results obtained here.

Another interesting future research proposal is the study of the restaurant's performance through metrics and indicators of restaurant management, since they are not included in the USAR and are a tool appreciated by restaurant managers.

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APPENDIX I – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Specific objectives	Guiding Questions
Validation of the interview:	Obtain permission to record the interview. Inform the interviewee about the objectives of the study, given the specificity of catering operations, ensure that all responses are accurate, and guarantee confidentiality. Request data on your current role in the company. Request data about the company.
Interview questions:	IQ 1. How does the management of the restaurant work? IQ 2. Do you know the USAR – Uniform System of Accounts applied to restaurants? a. [If yes] How do you use it? Do you make use of all the statements and of the income statement that the USAR provides? b. [If no] Knowing the organisation of the restaurant operations, if you could, would you adopt an information system to increase revenues and decrease costs (efficiency) and therefore improve the profitability of the company? QI 3. Of the lines appearing on the income statement, which do you consider the most important and which the least important? (Examples can be given based on the detailed supporting schedules). QI 4. How would the USAR help in the daily management of the restaurant? What are its benefits? IQ 5. What are the difficulties that may arise with the implementation of the USAR?

Notes: IQ = interview question.



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