



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

# Organizational climate and its dimensions

A case study of OneVet Group S.A.

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# Organizational climate and its dimensions

A case study of OneVet Group S.A.

Master's Final Assignment in internship modality  
presented to Catholic University of Portugal  
to obtain Master's degree in Human Resources Management

by

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# Abstract

Nowadays organizations deem human capital as a decisive element that has a direct influence on the quality of their provided services/products. One of the sustaining pillars of a healthy, safe and prosperous working environment is linked to employee well-being, considered a major focus within the Human Resources area. From that point of view, it is important that organizations understand the power that employees have on the determination of the organization future success.

The following investigation was carried out while performing a curricular internship, and aims to describe, through a study case, the organizational climate subject and its dimensions of corporate strategy, leadership, team work, job involvement, motivation and training, within a specific organization of the veterinary sector called OneVet Group S.A. It is also intended to investigate the perception that OneVet Group employees have upon the previously mentioned dimensions, as well as presenting proposals for improvement that optimise the organization growth.

Alongside the understanding of OneVet Group's organizational characteristics and management, a questionnaire was administered and several interviews were performed, according to a mixed method research paradigm (qualitative and quantitative).

It was verified that, from the employees' perspective, team work dimension is considered positive whilst training dimension is seen as an undervalued element. All obtained results and main conclusions are strictly connected to the observed and reported reality.

**Key-words:** organizational climate; dimensions; veterinary sector



# Resumo

Atualmente as organizações consideram o capital humano como um elemento decisivo que influencia diretamente a qualidade dos produtos/serviços prestados. Um dos pilares que sustenta um ambiente de trabalho saudável, seguro e próspero está intimamente ligado ao bem-estar dos colaboradores, sendo este aspeto um dos focos mais importantes dos Recursos Humanos. Desse ponto de vista, é importante para as organizações inteirarem-se do poder que o colaborador tem na determinação do seu sucesso.

A presente investigação foi realizada em contexto de estágio curricular e pretende descrever, através de um estudo de caso, o tema clima organizacional e as suas dimensões de estratégia organizacional, liderança, equipas de trabalho, envolvimento no trabalho, motivação e formação, numa organização específica do setor veterinário denominada OneVet Group S.A. É igualmente pretendido investigar qual a perceção que os colaboradores da OneVet Group têm sobre as dimensões previamente enumeradas, assim como a apresentação de propostas de melhoria que permitam potenciar o crescimento da organização.

A par da compreensão das características organizacionais e gestão administrativa da OneVet Group, foi aplicado um questionário e entrevistados colaboradores, de acordo com o paradigma de investigação misto (qualitativo e quantitativo).

Verificou-se, por parte dos colaboradores da OneVet Group, que a perceção da dimensão *equipas de trabalho* é considerada positiva, enquanto a dimensão *formação* é vista como um elemento atualmente desvalorizado. Todos os resultados obtidos, incluindo as principais conclusões, estão estritamente relacionados com a realidade observada e reportada.

**Palavras-chave:** clima organizacional; dimensões; setor veterinário





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# Abbreviation Index

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
<b>HRM</b>	Human Resources Management
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources
<b>MFA</b>	Master's Final Assignment
<b>OVG</b>	OneVet Group S.A.
<b>IR</b>	Inter-risco
<b>ROI</b>	Return on Investment
<b>SB</b>	Scientific Board
<b>gq</b>	General questions
<b>cs</b>	Corporate strategy
<b>li</b>	Leadership
<b>wt</b>	Work teams
<b>mo</b>	Motivation
<b>tr</b>	Training
<b>CEO</b>	Chief Executive Officer
<b>CTO</b>	Chief Technology Officer
<b>FMC</b>	Financial Manager & Controlling
<b>FAS</b>	Financial & Administrative Support Assistant
<b>FTr</b>	Financial Trainee
<b>PMA</b>	Project Manager Assistant
<b>CRM</b>	Customer Relationship Management & Business Support Assistant
<b>HR</b>	Human Resources & Operations Support Manager
<b>HRTTr</b>	Human Resources Trainee
<b>AC</b>	Accounting Assistant
<b>MKT</b>	Marketing Assistant
<b>MKTTr</b>	Marketing Trainee



# Introduction

We live in a global economy characterized by fierce and increasing competition among organizations, which is supported by its quick response and service quality as critical vectors that define successful companies (Caetano & Vala, 2007).

In this panorama, human capital is increasingly recognized as a key point for the quality of the delivered products/services. As so, Chiavenato (1999) emphasizes the importance of the human element in an organization and suggests managers ought to treat employees as basic elements of organizational effectiveness. Employees ultimately have the power to broaden or limit the strengths and weaknesses of companies, depending on how they are taken care.

Armstrong (2014) describes Human Resources Management (HRM) as the element dealing with all aspects on how people are employed and managed within organizations. This includes (among many other aspects) employee well-being as a pillar for a healthy, safe and supportive work environment.

There has been throughout the years a growing significance in motivating employees while performing their jobs, understanding and improving their work environment, as well an effort in strengthening their commitment to the interests, strategies, and values of the company where they are integrated into (Caetano & Vala, 2007). Motivated employees contribute more effectively and with better results.

In light of this, Martinez et al. (2015) based on the constructs illustrated by Goetzel et al. (2001) states that management (and more specifically the organization's administration board) should focus on increasing its productivity through employees' happiness while integrating these aspects into the organizational culture, strategy and their Human Resources (HR) practices/policies.

Bearing in mind employee well-being as a means for companies' prosperity and management, Coda (1993) implies that organizational climate is an indicator of such well-being and employee satisfaction as it assesses the perception employees have of the organization and how they feel about it. Organizational climate can be then translated as the general understanding of the workforce's perception of an organization.

Following the previous constructs related to the importance of employee well-being and their perception of the organization, the objective for the following Master's Final Assignment (MFA) is to investigate organizational climate.

This investigation aims more specifically at a further understanding of the *organizational climate dimensions* within a particular organization. A thorough analysis on the importance of these dimensions, associated to a specific case, became the central investigated subject, assessing how **certain organizational climate dimensions affect employees' perception of a specific organization within the veterinary sector**. These dimensions are *corporate strategy, leadership, work teams, job involvement, motivation, and training*. In order to do so, a questionnaire was administered and several interviews were conducted.

The investigation was carried out while performing a curricular internship within OneVet Group S.A (OVG). As so, the main purpose presented in this Master's Final Assignment is to **investigate the dimensions of organizational**

**climate** while confronting it with current literature. The final aim is to present **proposals for improvement**.

The present investigation is divided into six main sections:

- **Theoretical framework** which includes the topics of organizational climate and organizational climate dimensions;
- **Methodological approach** which includes the research question, research paradigm, data collection and propositions;
- **Empirical approach** which includes characterization of the organization and choice of organizational climate dimensions
- **Results and discussion of the obtained data;**
- **Proposals for intervention;**
- **Final reflections, and research limitations.**

For the theoretical framework, from a conceptual point of view, a short review of organizational culture was also done. Although the main concern is devoted to organizational climate, many authors connect both concepts as inseparable (e.g. Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013).

As referred *ut supra*, employees are the most important asset within an organization, ergo employee well-being is seen as a vital feature for organizations to thrive. Considering the above, organizational climate is an effective way to assess employees' perception, and therefore verify their well-being at a given period of time. OneVet Group S.A. is a fairly new organization with little foci on HR development, as the organization's current spotlight are HR and Financial administrative procedures such as payroll, invoicing, receipts and others. Assessing OneVet Group's organizational climate will encourage and support the implementation of development measures, including (at a later stage) performance appraisals and talent development.

The obtained information through this analysis will try to answer the following questions:

1. Do the reviewed organizational dimensions create a positive impact on the way employees perceive the organization?
2. Are there dimensions with more relevance than others?

To sum up, the current MFA intends to analyse in a precise way the reality of OneVet Group S.A. at a given period of time, while understanding the concept of organizational climate and how it affects employees' perception.

# Chapter 2

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 1. Organizational climate

#### 1.1. Understanding the concept

Organizational climate or corporate climate is a premise that concerns the way employees perceive, experience and depict their work and workplace. This construct descends from the areas of psychology and organizational behaviour and its definition has been evolving throughout time (Schneider et al., 2013).

While literature does not present a specific date for when this construct was first formed, there is an extent of agreement that it has its roots around the 1960s (e.g. Litwin & Stringer, 1968; Litwin & Tagiuri, 1968; James & Jones, 1974). In 1978 it was published an article called “*Organizational Climate: Science or Folklore?*” (Woodman & King, 1978: 817) where therein is compiled a set of generally accepted definitions for this construct from several authors, and are cited *ut infra*:

- **Litwin & Tagiuri (1968)**

“Organizational climate is a relatively enduring quality of the internal environment of an organization that is experienced by its members, influences



their behaviour, and can be described in terms of the values of a particular set of characteristics (or attributes) of the organization.”

- **Campbell et al. (1970)**

“A set of attributes specific to a particular organization that may be induced from the way that organization deals with its members and its environment. For the individual member within the organization, climate takes the form of a set of attributes and expectancies which describe the organization in terms of both static characteristics (such as the degree of autonomy) and behaviour-outcome and outcome-outcome contingencies.”

Forehand & Gilmer (1964: 362) postulated organizational climate as “the set of characteristics that describe an organization and that distinguish the organization from other organizations, are relatively enduring over time, and influence the behaviour of people in the organization”. According to the authors, organizational climate could affect individual behaviour by limiting the freedom of choice, and/or rewarding and punishing and establishing which stimuli individuals are in contact with.

Bispo (2006) defined a model [Table 1] in which 3 levels of organizational climate are depicted: not favourable, reasonable and favourable. The author refers that employees, managers and clients benefit from a favourable level of organizational climate.

As previously mentioned on the introduction, the constructs of organizational climate and organizational culture cannot be dissociated from one another (Schneider et al., 2013). Next topic of the present literature review approaches the similarities of both constructs.

<b>Not favourable</b>	<b>Reasonable</b>	<b>Favourable</b>
Frustration	Indifference	Satisfaction
Demotivation	Apathy	Motivation
Lack of integration between organization/employee	Low integration between organization/employee	High integration between organization/employee
Lack of credibility between organization/employee	Low credibility between organization/employee	High credibility between organization/employee
Lack of talent retention	Low talent retention	High talent retention
Lack of productivity	Low productivity	High productivity
Fail to adapt to changes	Sufficient adaptation to changes	High adaptation to changes
High turnover	Medium turnover	Low turnover
High absenteeism	Medium absenteeism	Low absenteeism
Low dedication	Sufficient dedication	High dedication
Low involvement with quality	Sufficient involvement with quality	High involvement with quality
Unsatisfied clients	Indifferent clients	Satisfied clients
Low training achievement	Medium training achievement	High training achievement
Lack of involvement with the organization	Sufficient involvement with the organization	High involvement with the organization
Business underachievement	Business stagnation	Business success

**Table 1:** levels of organizational climate. Source: adapted from Bispo (2006).

## 1.2. Organizational climate versus organizational culture

Organizational *culture* and organizational *climate* are two distinct concepts with the same purpose: to understand how individuals experience their work and organizational settings. While climate can be represented as the perceptions and meaning attached to all workplace environment, culture “may be defined as the basic assumptions, values and beliefs that characterize a work setting and are taught to newcomers as the proper way to think and feel, communicated by myths and stories”(Schneider et al., 2013: 362).

In a broad sense, organizational climate is a perceptual description of what the organization is, involving all processes and routines, while organizational culture underlines all reasons and mechanisms for why such processes and routines occur within the organization (Ostroff, Kinicki, & Muhammad, 2012).

Ostroff et al. (2012) conceived a heuristic model representing the authors' perspective of culture and climate [Figure 1].

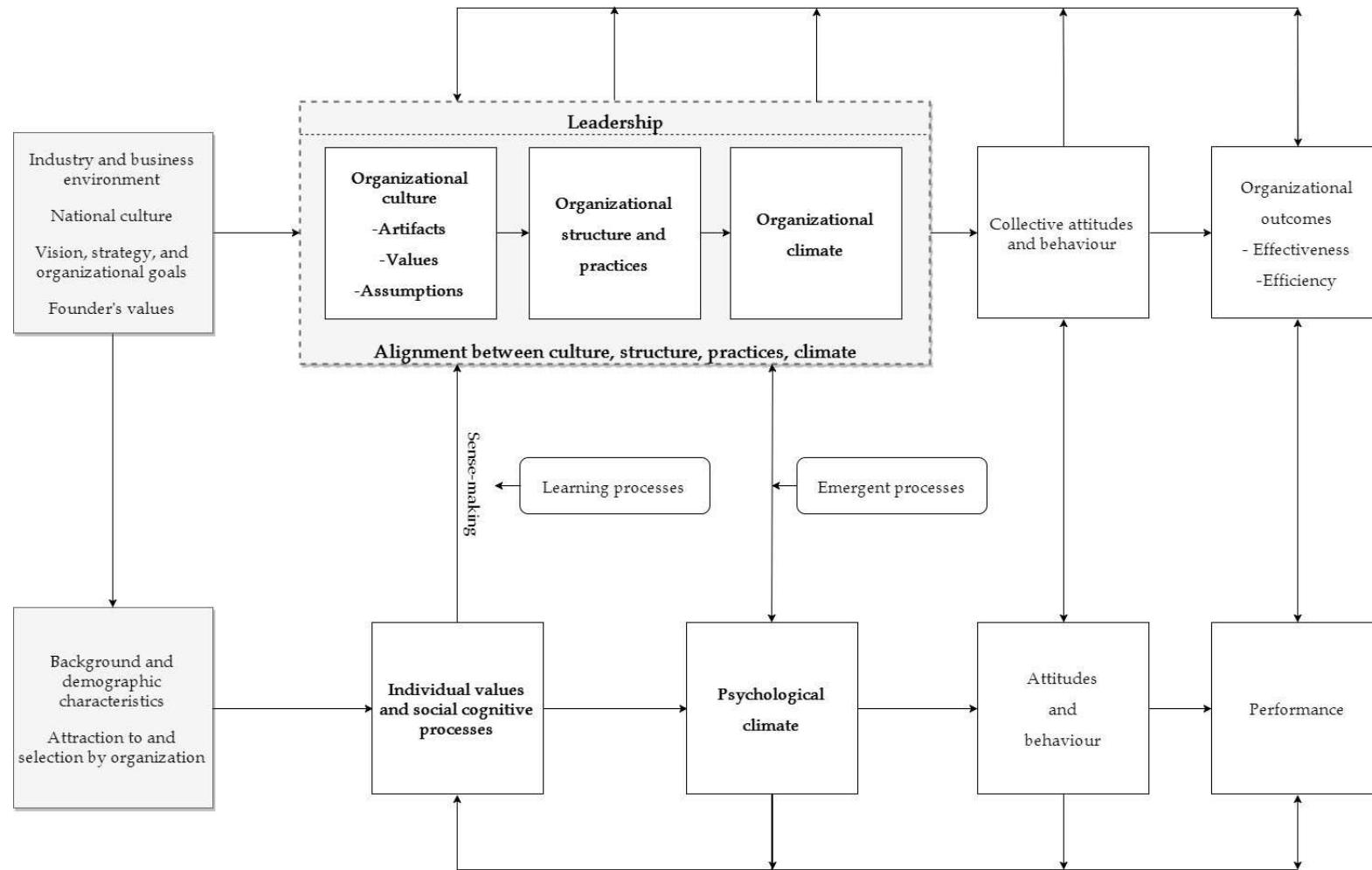
In this model, macro and micro environment features such as industry and business, national culture, organizational aspects like vision, strategy, and goals, and the founder's values, as well as leadership style, have a great impact on organizational culture, structure, processes, and climate.

The previous aspects promote employees' attitudes and behaviours observed through employee effectiveness and efficiency and consequently enhancing performance.

Background and demographic characteristics plus the attraction to and being selected by the organization, generate certain individual values and processes thus influencing and producing psychological climate, which promote once more employees' attitudes and behaviour, and again enhancing performance. The authors refer psychological climate as an individual perception and organizational climate more has a shared perception of the work settings.

Aspects such as emergent processes (e.g. new software programs, new co-workers) have a likewise implication on organizational culture, climate (organizational and psychological), structure and practices. These are learned over time producing an effect of sense-making (understanding/comprehension) of the organization's dynamics among employees.

The model envisioned by Ostroff et al. (2012) discloses an overview on how internal organizational characteristics (e.g. culture and structure) and external characteristics (e.g. surrounding environment) affect the employees' collective attitudes and behaviour within the organization, that is, their perception upon



**Figure 1:** model of organizational culture and climate Source: adapted from Ostroff et al. (2012).

their workplace. Such perception may be measured into several organizational climate dimensions as is specified on the subsection below.

### 1.3. Measuring organizational climate

Organizational climate is an extensively reviewed concept being targeted as one of the key foci in understanding organizations. As so, there are a considerable number of research studies on its measuring techniques (Muchinsky, 1976).

Forehand & Gilmer (1964) in their “*Environmental Variation in Studies of Organizational Behaviour*” research included 5 dimensions of organizational measurement: *size; structure; systems complexity; leadership pattern* and *goal directions*.

*Size* refers to the influence of group dimension in the individual’s perception of the organization. Related to group size, comes *structure* – this dimension assesses the structure of authority and relationships among employees and groups. *Systems complexity* concerns the number of organizational elements/components and how their relations and interactions influence employees. *Leadership pattern* refers to organizational properties that are controlled by leaders and its influence on employees’ perception. Lastly, *goal directions* measure organizational goals/objectives plus personal characteristics (skills and attitudes) as an influence on members’ behaviour.

Another ground-breaking research in organizational climate was conducted by Litwin & Stringer (1968). This research had as main purpose to pinpoint which dimensions were common to several organizations. It includes an instrument with 50 items/questions about the organization and assesses 9 dimensions of climate: *structure; responsibility; reward; risk; warmth; support; standards; conflict* and *identity*.

Like Forehand & Gilmer (1968), *structure* concerns employees' perceptions on the organization's framework. *Responsibility* measures the authority employees have on their own job. *Reward* assesses the perceived fairness of policies and processes. Followed comes *risk* as the sense of riskiness and challenge in the job. *Warmth* concerns the perception on work group atmosphere. *Support* refers to the perceived sense of helpfulness among employees. *Standards*, much like Forehand and Gilmer's goal directions, considers the perceived importance of goals and performance standards. *Conflict* emphasizes the willingness of hearing different opinions. The last dimension, *identity* measures the perception of belonging and being a valuable member for the organization.

Patterson et al. (2005) developed a multidimensional measure of organizational climate containing 17 organizational climate dimensions, being the research that covers the highest number of dimensions within the present literature review. The dimensions are: *involvement; autonomy; supervisory support; integration; welfare; training; effort; formalization; tradition; reflexivity; innovation and flexibility; outward focus; clarity of organizational goals; pressure to produce; quality; performance feedback; efficiency.*

*Involvement* concerns to the will of the organization in letting employees participate in decision-making processes and the employees' perception of such will. *Autonomy* refers to the level of freedom and discretion allowed to an employee over their function, and the degree to which the organization gives to their employees to enact their work. *Supervisory support* concerns the extent to which employees perceive support and understanding from their immediate supervisor. *Integration* refers the extent of trust and cooperation among employees (indifferent of department). *Welfare* deals with the degree to which the organization values and cares for their employees. *Training* describes the perception employees have upon their professional development and training actions. *Effort* concerns the degree to which people endeavour in achieving their

goals. *Formalization*, in similarity with the dimension *structure* (Forehand & Gilmer, 1964; Litwin & Stringer, 1968), deals with the way employees perceive and are concerned with formal rules and procedures. *Tradition* concerns the extent to which established “ways of doing things” are valued within the organization. *Reflexivity* describes the employees’ perception upon objectives, strategies, and work processes. *Innovation and flexibility* refers to employees’ perception on being oriented toward change, and the degree of encouragement and support for new ideas/ innovative approaches that exists within the organization. *Outward focus* refers to the perception of the organization’s response to customers’ needs and marketplace in general. *Clarity of organizational goals* focuses the concern with clearly defined goals and main strategy of the organization. *Pressure to produce* concerns the perception of employees towards the pressure from the company to meet targets and objectives. *Quality* refers to the emphasis the organization puts on quality procedures. *Performance feedback* measures the employees’ perceptions on performance appraisals and feedback of job performance. *Efficiency* refers to the degree of importance on efficiency and productivity at work.

In the present-day, Raúl, Echeverri, & Cruz (2014) through a systematic literature review (1999-2011) presented a compilation of contemporary organizational climate assessment tools and their 8 most commonly evaluated dimensions: *decision-making*; *organizational clarity*; *leadership*; *social interaction*; *institutional motivation*; *system of rewards and incentives*; *organizational openness* and *supervision*.

*Decision-making* (also *autonomy* or *responsibility*) refers to the employees’ perception of the ability of others to decide or them to decide. *Organizational clarity* assesses the perception employees have on corporate practices and its adequacy on the organization. *Leadership* measures how employees view their leaders and leading practises. *Social interaction* concerns the employees’

perception of support and relationships among peers. *Institutional motivation* refers to the existing perception of the support of personal and professional goals. *System of rewards and incentives* is the perception that the members of the organization have on benefits, whether these are pecuniary or not. *Organizational openness* can be seen as the perception employees have in being listened to and the flexibility to consider employees' necessities and suggestions. *Supervision* comes as the final most common evaluated dimension and concerns the perception of the supervisors' abilities. The authors mention the existence of several other aspects that can be observed in their systematic literature review, albeit not being as frequent in the current published research of organizational climate measurement.

Schneider (1975) recommends that the study of organizational climate dimensions differ from research to research, as the bulk of the dimensions may not be relevant for each specific study, being the focus of the subsection *ut infra*.

#### 1.4. Organizational climate dimensions framework

Patterson et al. (2005) emphasizes that it is unlikely researchers will want to apply all organizational climate dimensions since "the logistics of administering the questionnaires and analysing the resultant data sets, are likely to prove too cumbersome" (p. 399). The authors suggest that the dimensions can be chosen in a more refined way depending on the research questions being posed. Molina (2000) delimitates context and singular characteristics of organizations as important vectors in assessing organizational climate dimensions.

Table 2 was created to facilitate the readers' view on all previously presented dimensions, compiling all relevant dimensions from each reviewed research. Some dimensions were grouped as their constructs shared similar definitions, only with a different nomenclature.



<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Forehand and Gilmer (1964)</b>	<b>Litwin and Stringer (1968)</b>	<b>Raúl, Echeverri, and Cruz (2014)</b>	<b>Patterson et al. (2005)</b>
<b>Size</b>	x	-	-	-
<b>Structure / Formalization</b>	x	x	-	x
<b>Systems complexity</b>	x	-	-	-
<b>Leadership pattern / Leadership/ Supervision/ Supervisory support</b>	x	-	x	x
<b>Goal directions/ Standards/ Organizational clarity / Clarity of organizational goals</b>	x	x	x	x
<b>Responsibility / Autonomy</b>	-	x	x	x
<b>Reward/ System of rewards and incentives / Reflexivity</b>	-	x	x	x
<b>Risk</b>	-	x	-	-
<b>Warmth/Support/ Social interaction / Integration</b>	-	x	x	x
<b>Conflict</b>	-	x	-	-
<b>Identity/ Organizational openness/ Welfare</b>	-	x	x	x
<b>Decision-making / Involvement</b>	-	-	x	x
<b>Institutional motivation</b>	-	-	x	-
<b>Training</b>	-	-	-	x
<b>Tradition</b>	-	-	-	x
<b>Flexibility and innovation</b>	-	-	-	x
<b>Outward focus</b>	-	-	-	x
<b>Effort</b>	-	-	-	x
<b>Efficiency</b>	-	-	-	x
<b>Quality</b>	-	-	-	x
<b>Pressure to produce</b>	-	-	-	x
<b>Performance feedback</b>	-	-	-	x

**Table 2:** organizational climate dimensions. Source: own elaboration.

Bearing in mind the information presented Table 2 and the recommendations from Patterson et al. (2005) and Molina (2000) stating that there should be a filter in choosing which dimensions to assess depending on the organization's

specificities, there were 6 dimensions/concepts that placed a more relevant role in the construction of the present investigation. The empirical approach supporting the choice of the organizational climate dimensions/concepts to assess may be found in Chapter 3, subsection 2.

The first dimension proposed to be assessed is (the only dimension) common amongst all 4 reviewed researches: *goal directions/ standards/ organizational clarity / clarity of organizational goals*. To shorten the dimension's name and given that the main purpose was to assess the organization's strategy, the dimension was named **corporate strategy**.

The second proposed dimension for the present investigation is common to 3 of the reviewed researches: *leadership pattern/ leadership/ supervision/ supervisory support*. To facilitate the reader's understanding of the dimension, it was short-named as **leadership**.

The third proposed dimension is common to 3 of the reviewed researches: *warmth/ support/ social interaction/ integration*. The main purpose was to assess work teams and the interaction among peers, as so the new nomenclature of the dimension became **work teams**.

The fourth proposed dimension is also common to 3 of the reviewed researches: *identity/ organizational openness/ welfare*. As the main purpose was to assess the perception of employees on their job and their involvement the name of the proposed dimension was shorten to **job involvement**.

The fifth proposed dimension to assess is presented in only one of the reviewed researches: *institutional motivation*. It was short-named to **motivation**.

Finally, the sixth proposed dimension is also presented in only one of the reviewed researches: *training*. The name did not change.

The next subsection further reviews the proposed dimensions/concepts.

## 2. Organizational climate dimensions

### 2.1. Corporate strategy

Corporate strategy can be defined as “the pattern of actions managers employ to achieve organizational objectives” (Strickland & Thompson, 1996:20). It is interpreted as the overall direction of a company. Purcell (1999) emphasizes that these actions are what differentiate organizations from their competitors. It takes a vital role within the development and growth of an organization. However, notwithstanding the importance associated to this concept, Harvard Business Review magazine (2013) published an article called “*When CEOs Talk Strategy, Is Anyone Listening?*” that included a research performed on Australian organizations stating that only 30% of their employees knew their organization’s strategy. According to Boxall & Purcell (2003) strategy emerges from a stream of action over time, being a continuous process.

Johnson, Scholes, & Whittington (2005) underlined some strategic decisions influencing organizations’ success. These are long-term planning (of the organization); determining the range of the organization’s activities; earning power and advantage over competitors; proposing continuous improvements in the business environment; and promoting competences (capabilities). These strategic decisions will inevitably affect employees’ perception of the organization.

### 2.2. Leadership

Leadership covers an immense extent within current and past literature, being one of the most subjective covered issues in Management. In the perspective of Yukl (1998), leadership is a process through which an individual or a person within a group or organization has the ability to influence the events’

interpretation of other members within the group. These events include choice of objectives, organization of work activities and development of abilities, among others. House et al. (1999) advocates that these individuals address others to contribute more effectively for the organizations they are in.

Abraham Zaleznik (1977) suggests leaders are empathic, showing a high degree of emotional involvement with the surrounding people. According to Zaleznik, leaders detect emotional signals and use them in order to build significant relations, showing concern on a work-life balance. According to Prentice (2004) a leader's job is to provide recognition of roles and functions within the organization allowing members to satisfy and fulfil motivations and interests.

### 2.3. Work teams

Since the early days of mankind, people working together in teams or groups for a common purpose has been a common practice.

Salas et al. (1992) define teams as distinguishable sets of two or more persons interacting dynamically, interdependently and adaptively toward a common (and valued) goal or mission. Each member has its own specific role and functions to perform and have limited cycle of membership.

Another perspective comes from Sundstrom, De Meuse, & Futrell (1990:20) where the authors state work teams as "interdependent collections of individuals who share responsibility for specific outcomes for their organizations".

Literature suggests differences among the concepts of *teams* and *groups*. While groups are seen as a collection of interdependent individuals that combine and coordinate their individual efforts, teams tend to share a sense of common purpose, strong bonds and motivations (Sisson, 2013). On the other hand, some

scholars do not make any distinction and use both terms interchangeably (e.g. Kozlowski & Bell, 2001).

Organizations have been increasing their confidence towards work teams since the 80's (Ilgen, 1999). In reality, organizations are more inclined to rely on teams/groups to solve problems and make decisions, suggests Cunha et al. (2007). The authors drew their main conclusions from a research conducted by Paul Osterman (1994). In this study 54.5% of the 694 inquired organizations had self-managed teams. The economic, strategic, and technological panorama encouraged organizations to interest themselves in groups and work teams (Gil, Alcover, & Peiró, 2005).

Cunha et al. (2007) claim that the existence of a group within an organization can be observed when their members:

- a) Define themselves as members of the group;
- b) Are motivated to enter or keep themselves within the group;
- c) Are defined by one another as members of the group;
- d) Identify themselves;
- e) Interact themselves in a regular basis;
- f) Participate in a system of interconnected roles;
- g) Share common norms;
- h) Thrive to achieve common purposes;
- i) Feel that belonging to the group is rewarding;
- j) Have a collective perception of being a whole;
- k) Stay together in a hypothetical confrontation with other groups or individuals;
- l) Feel that they share a common destiny.

Each group has a unique identity that enables distinction from other groups and require mutual interaction as well as being aware of such interaction (Cunha et al. 2007).

## 2.4. Job involvement

Job involvement or engagement shows the degree to which an employee is enthusiastic about performing his or her work (George, 2009). According to Macleod & Clarke (2009) job involvement portrays a workplace approach in which employees are committed to their organizations' goals and values and are stimulated in contributing to corporate success while at the same time enhancing their own sense of well-being.

Balain & Sparrow (2009) *apud* Armstrong (2011: 202) synthesized the main characteristics leading to job involvement:

- a) Enriched and challenging jobs (job characteristics);
- b) Quality of the employee - organization relationship (perceived organizational support);
- c) Quality of the employee - supervisor relationship (perceived supervisor support);
- d) Rewards and recognition.

The previous characteristics influence employees' perceptions on work environment and job satisfaction (Purcell, 2001).

## 2.5. Motivation

Pinder (1998) defines motivation as the set of external and internal forces to individuals that affects their behaviour. These forces determine how individuals direct their behaviour, their effort level and their perseverance in overcoming obstacles (George & Jones (1999).

Deci (1992) suggests that the concept of motivation is linked with 3 major issues related to behaviour adjustment: (1) what "energizes" individuals' actions; (2) how these actions are directed; and (3) how these actions are voluntarily controlled.

Armstrong (2014:170) highlights two types of motivation: *intrinsic* and *extrinsic*.

*Intrinsic* motivation takes place when individuals feel that their work is important, interesting and challenging and that it provides them with a reasonable degree of autonomy (freedom to act), opportunities to achieve and advance, and finally scope to use and develop their skills and abilities. Intrinsic motivation is usually linked with job involvement, and weights in the perception employees' have on their work settings.

On the other hand, *extrinsic* motivation happens when an ulterior cause motivates people. These ulterior causes may include "incentives, increased pay, praise or promotion; and punishments such as disciplinary action, withholding pay, or criticism". Extrinsic motives have an instant effect on employees and are considered powerful motivators.

## 2.6. Training

Training is a learning experience in which the employees improve their abilities at work (De Cenzo, 1996). It is considered a fundamental practice, given the fact that the lack of know-how and required work abilities within a certain profession or function may cause work inefficiency (Liang et al., 2014).

It has been clear that organizations failure in achieving their objectives cannot be explain purely from bad management decisions, but from lack of human capital investment as well (Keltner & Finegold, 1996)

Training/education is a key-factor in a well-succeeded career and to a sustainable economic growth (Verhaest & Omey, 2013)

It needs to be assured that training is consistent with the organization or the department's requirements, since it is a process that involves costs, from both the employee (not necessarily pecuniary) and the organization (are usually pecuniary). Sometimes from both sides (Liang et al., 2014).

# Chapter 3

## METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

### 1. Research question

The present assignment investigates the relevance that the organizational climate dimensions of *corporate strategy, leadership, work teams, job involvement, motivation and training* have on OneVet Group. The main purpose is to understand if the suggested dimensions are beneficial to a favourable organizational climate, and if is there a dimension that is more relevant than others.

Having all the previous in consideration the research question implicit in this dissertation is: **how the organizational climate dimensions of corporate strategy, work teams, leadership, motivation, job involvement, and training affect the employees' perception of OneVet Group.**

#### 1.1. Research paradigm

John Creswell (2009) mentions three frameworks in designing an investigation: quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches. This last method uses pragmatic assumptions (*how* questions). Creswell states that this method gathers “both numeric information (e.g., on instruments) as well as text



information (e.g., on interviews) so that the final database represents both quantitative and qualitative information”.

Yin (2006:6) discerns 3 types of research strategies (exploratory, descriptive, or explanatory) depending on the type of questions that are posed.

*How* and *why* questions are more explanatory, and likely to lead to the use of case studies, histories, and experiments as the preferred research strategies.

Case studies' main purpose is obtaining a deep knowledge through the complexity of at least one case (Stake, 1995)

For all the reasons above mentioned this investigation was designed according to a mixed method approach framework, using “study case” as a research strategy, based on a survey and several interviews.

## 1.2. Data collection

To address the research question, data was collected in three major moments:

(1) A **semi-structured interview** with the Financial and Controlling Manager to further understand and characterize the organization;

(2) A **questionnaire** applied to all employees of the organization in order to assess organizational climate *in situ*, and;

(3) A **set of unstructured interviews** to a number of selected employees in order to understand the different weigh of each dimension.

These moments were at all times supported with direct observation from the researcher during 9 months from September 2016 to May 2017 (the entire period of the curricular internship).

## 1.2.1. Interview to OneVet Group's Financial and Controlling Manager

### **Sample**

The sample was selected by convenience/availability. It is composed by one participant ("Colb. 1") chosen by proximity. The participant is male, has 41 years-old, and works as Financial and Controlling Manager at OneVet Group.

### **Instruments**

The instrument used for this first moment was an interview. Interviews are a method that allow a planned and deliberated interaction, with the main purpose to access relevant information. Another characteristic is the possibility of building a direct relation with between the interviewer and interviewee (Gomes & Cruz, 2007)

In order to perform the interview, an interview guide was used as a support in collecting the necessary data [Appendix 4] allowing a pre-selection of pertinent information to explore. The interview guide was composed by two main topics: *OneVet Group's acquisitions*, and *how employees feel about the acquisitions and being managed by a new executive board*.

### **Procedure**

Colb. 1 was asked to participate at the end of December 2016. The main purpose of the interview was explained and the meeting day was set for the 4<sup>th</sup> of January 2017. The participant was required to fulfil a "Consent-to-Participate Form" [Appendix 3] in order to ensure data privacy. The place determined to conduct the interview was a meeting room within the OneVet Group headquarters. At the beginning of the interview, it was explained that it would be recorded and the recording would be used only for the purpose of the current investigation. The importance of Colb. 1's participation in the interview was also clarified and it was explained that if, for any reason, the participant wanted to

terminate the interview, it would be possible without any prejudice. The interview took fifty-four minutes. At the end, the researcher thanked Colb. 1's participation and there was an exchange of ideas on the subject. Transcription may be found in Appendix 5.

### 1.2.2. Questionnaires

#### **Pilot study and development of the instrument**

According to the literature review, organizational climate research involves the measurement of several dimensions, and the selection of which dimensions to assess is directly related to the characteristics from each organization.

After a thorough analysis of the existing dimensions presented in Table 2 in Chapter 2 and in partnership with the Executive Director of OneVet Group, the chosen dimensions were: *corporate strategy; leadership; work teams; job involvement; motivation*, and *training*. The empirical approach that led to the choice of these dimensions can be found in Chapter 4.

After selecting the dimensions, an instrument was created based on an existing questionnaire by Patterson et al. (2005) named *Organizational Climate Measure (OCM©)*. The OCM© was originally in English Language and composed by 84 items. The document was fully translated to Portuguese Language and then presented to the Executive Director. Some of the items were withdrawn as they were considered too invasive, and some words were modified, for instance "organization" and "company" were replaced by "OneVet Group" as it was considered more inclusive for employees. Because the questionnaire was designed to assess all levels of workforce, simple and straightforward wording was taken into account.

The reviewed format included a first part containing instructions explaining the purpose, format, and anonymity, plus demographic data (*age, functional area, marital status, gender, academic qualifications, seniority at the company, and salary*)

and a second part containing blocks of questions divided into the 6 previously selected dimensions. The questionnaire also contains a “*general questions*” block of questions with its main purpose to assess the general perception of employees towards OneVet Group. There is a total of 41 items, divided into 7 clusters. The items follow a 5-point Likert scale response format of *strongly disagree* (1), *disagree* (2), *neither agree nor disagree* (3), *agree* (4), *strongly agree* (5).

The reviewed format was afterwards applied to a pilot group composed by four participants: one Portuguese teacher (63 years-old), one psychologist (25 years-old) and two veterinarians (24 and 26 years-old). During the piloting it was observed that the questionnaire would take 20 to 25 minutes to complete and that a blank space for additional remarks was missing, which was posteriorly added to the final version of the questionnaire.

The final version was called “*Clima Organizacional na OneVet Group*” (Organizational Climate within OneVet Group) and can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Administering the questionnaire**

The “*Clima Organizacional na OneVet Group*” questionnaire was administered to all employees that possessed an exclusivity contract with the organization, as so, all employees that held an outsourcing type of contract were not considered. In this sense, only 170 employees out of the 189 existing within the Group were asked to complete the “*Clima Organizacional na OneVet Group*” questionnaire.

The method used to administer the questionnaire was *Google Forms* (an online, free platform that allows creating reliable surveys) available online from the 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2017 to the 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2017. An URL containing the questionnaire was sent from the Executive Director by email to all the 170 employees.

### 1.2.3. Unstructured interviews to OneVet Group's employees

#### Sample

The sample was selected by convenience/availability. It is composed by 7 participants ("Colb. 2"; "Colb. 3"; "Colb. 4"; "Colb. 5"; "Colb. 6"; "Colb. 7" and; "Colb. 8") chosen by geographical proximity. Table 3 shows a more detailed description of the participants including gender, functional area and the unit (hospital or clinic within OneVet Group) that the participants belong to.

Participant	Unit <sup>1</sup>	Gender	Functional area
Colb. 2	Coimbra Veterinary University Hospital	Female	Veterinary doctor
Colb. 3	Coimbra Veterinary University Hospital	Female	Veterinary nurse
Colb. 4	Coimbra Veterinary University Hospital	Female	Veterinary assistant
Colb. 5	Aveiro Veterinary Polyclinic	Female	Veterinary assistant
Colb. 6	Aveiro Veterinary Polyclinic	Female	Receptionist
Colb. 7	Aveiro Veterinary Polyclinic	Male	Veterinary doctor
Colb. 8	Aveiro Veterinary Polyclinic	Female	Veterinary nurse

**Table 3:** participants' profile from the units' interviews. Source: own elaboration.

#### Instrument

The instrument used were unstructured interviews. As previously noted interviews allow the researcher to establish a closer connection with the interviewees (Gomes & Cruz, 2007). The choice of unstructured interviews instrument was due to the context in which the interviews were conducted, sometimes in between surgeries, not allowing the use of an interview guide.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants may also provide veterinary services to other units within the Group albeit being formally inserted in only one unit for management purposes.

## Procedure

The sample was selected by geographical convenience (both units are reachable by public transportation from OneVet Group headquarters). In order to reach the interviewees, full authorization from the Executive Director and Clinical Director of the units was compulsory. Both Clinical Directors were contacted by telephone the week prior to the interviews, and access to the facilities, as well as authorization were positively obtained.

The interview day for Coimbra Veterinary University Hospital was set for the 21<sup>st</sup> March 2017 and for Aveiro Veterinary Policlinic the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2017. All participants were required to fulfil a “Consent-to-Participate Form” [Appendix 3]. The place for the interviews was the units’ facilities and the interviewees were selected according to availability at the moment. No records were allowed. At the beginning of all interviews, the importance of the interviewees’ participation was clarified and thanked. It was also explained that if for any reason the participants wanted to terminate the interview, it would be possible without any prejudice. All interviews were conducted separately and took an average of 15 to 20 minutes each.

### 1.3. Propositions

Due to the empirical scarcity on the influence of organizational climate’s dimensions within the veterinary sector research, hypotheses were replaced for propositions.

Literature review determined which dimensions were assessed within the realm of organizational climate which additionally to the organization’s characteristics and needs were compressed into *corporate strategy, leadership, work teams, job involvement, motivation, and training* (e.g. Forehand & Gilmer, 1964). Bearing these constructs in mind, the propositions are:

**P1: the dimensions of corporate strategy, leadership, work teams, job involvement, motivation, and training cause a favourable/positive impact on the way employees perceive their work.**

**P2: there is/are (a) dimension(s) among the dimensions of corporate strategy, leadership, work teams, job involvement, motivation, and training that has/have a stronger impact on the way employees perceive their work**

# Chapter 4

## EMPIRICAL APPROACH

### 1. The organization

**Name**

OneVet Group S.A. (OVG)

**Headquarters' location**

Rua Professor Melo Adrião, 25, 4100 – 340 Porto, Portugal

**Activity**

Veterinary medicine

**Type of services** (*all exclusively related to veterinary medicine*)

Cardiology, orthopaedics, ophthalmology, feline medicine, preventive medicine, veterinary medicine, anaesthesia, reproduction and obstetrics, internal medicine, dermatology, neurology, exotic animals, nutrition, and general surgery.

**Status**

Anonymous Society



**Date of foundation**

2012

**Number of employees**

It counts with 189, out of which 19 on an outsourcing regime (data collection in February 2017)

**Logotype****Mission**

OneVet Group's mission is to contribute to the progress of the veterinary medicine market in the Iberian Peninsula, by creating conditions through the magnitude of the group in order to introduce an approach to the (veterinary) sector that focused on business and management, increasing its profits and creating synergies as a result of this same magnitude, thus allowing the release of essential resources towards the delivery of a differentiated, innovative and of higher quality service for the customer, providing the shareholders the expected Return on Investment (ROI).

**Vision**

To make OneVet Group the reference player in the veterinary medicine market in the Iberian Peninsula, leading the sector through a quality service differentiation, powered by a network of knowledge derived from the creation of a network of hospitals and clinics.

## **Values**

### *Customer Orientation*

OneVet Group aims to be better, and learn more so that it can provide the best to their patients and owners.

### *Results Orientation*

The achieved results will allow continuous improvement, clients' satisfaction, and the project's sustainability.

### *Quality Service*

OneVet Group honours the quality of the provided services, and value the life of the animals that are in the group.

### *Innovation*

OneVet Group engages itself in achieve beyond their defined objectives and goals and puts an effort in providing the state-of-the-art technology to their patients.

### *Ethics*

The group's veterinarians have a strong sense of honesty and integrity, in order to offer the best veterinary medical care.

## **Strategic goals/objectives:**

At a short-medium term the main OneVet Group's strategic goals are as follows:

1. Be the Iberian leader in providing veterinary medical care;
2. Service Quality differentiation;
3. Investment in training;
4. Reach 40 units in 5 years;
5. Constant investment in innovation, new technologies and equipment.

All data was retrieved from OneVet Group's institutional website (OneVet Group, 2017).

## 1.2. Historical analysis

To illustrate how OneVet Group S.A. started, it is relevant to mention Inter-Risco (IR) as its primary source of investment. IR is a private equity company that focuses on build-up and expansion investments (Inter-Risco, 2013)

In a broad sense, IR counts with several entities (investors) that help financing their projects based on a posterior ROI logic, and has performed more than 100 proprietary add-on acquisitions since 2007. OVG comes in a buy-and-build strategy with the main purpose of maximizing a sector that has not yet been exploited, but has potential – veterinary medicine. According to Ramalho (2017) the overall turnover value of this sector in Portugal is EUR 150 million, and there are 1 503 medical centres of veterinary medicine (CAMV – *Centros de Atendimento Médico Veterinários*) as reported by the Ordem dos Médicos Veterinários (2017) - Veterinarians Portuguese Order. Since 2012 the market has been growing at a compound annual growth rate of 10.5% (Ramalho, 2017) providing the investors the opportunity of:

1. Earn bargaining power among suppliers;
2. Attain synergies from a central services perspective (as is the OVG example);
3. Mobilize value among shareholders;
4. Secure a group where the best veterinary practices could be consolidated;
5. Differentiate by quality over price.

As so, the birth of OneVet Group S.A. starts with the acquisition of Porto Veterinary Hospital in 2012 by IR. At the present time OVG counts with 19 veterinary units (6 hospitals and 13 clinics) spread around Portugal (with a major focus in the Northern and Central Area – Porto and Lisbon) plus the shared services based in Aldoar, Porto. All units were acquired by Inter-Risco, aside

Coimbra Veterinary University Hospital which was the only unit built from scratch [Figure 2 and Table 4].

### Units' location

Geographical location of OneVet Group units can be found in Figure 2.

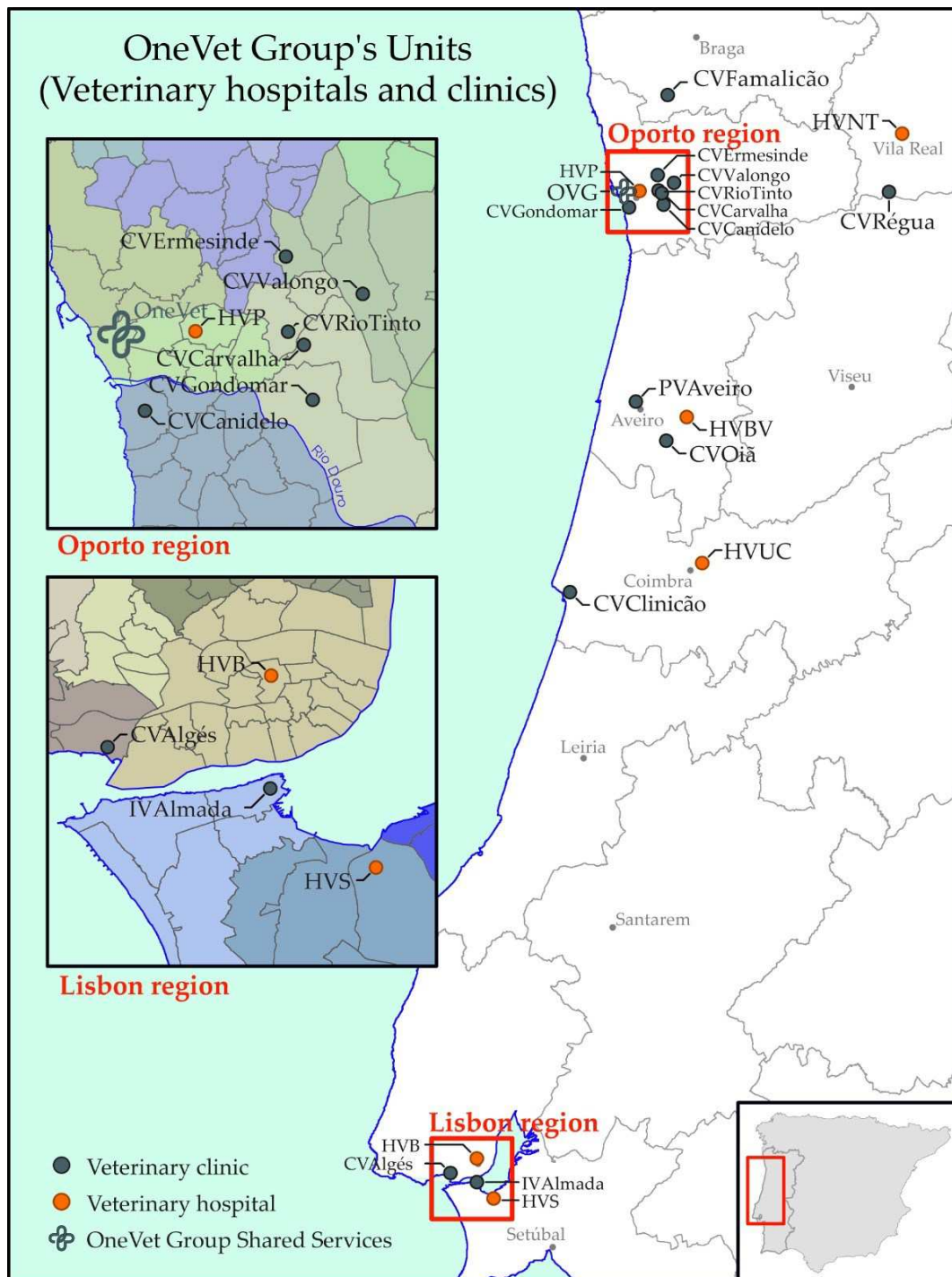


Figure 2: units' location. Source: own elaboration.

Having significantly grown since its birth, the group is currently the largest complex of veterinary medicine units in the Iberian Peninsula. It is also the only group at a national level with an autonomous structure and professional management, supported by a team of expert managers (OneVet Group, 2017).

Date	Milestone
2012	Porto Veterinary Hospital ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Baixo-Vouga Veterinary Hospital ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Alto de Algés Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Veterinary Institute D. Sancho I – Almada ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Aveiro Veterinary Policlinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Oiã Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
2013	Trás-os-Montes Veterinary Hospital ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Carvalha Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Ermesinde Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Gondomar Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Rio Tinto Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Valongo Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Famalicão Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
2014	Seixal Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Coimbra Veterinary University Hospital ( <i>built</i> )
	Canidelo Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Clinicão Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )
2015	Berna Veterinary Hospital ( <i>acquisition</i> )
	Peso da Régua Veterinary Clinic ( <i>acquisition</i> )

**Table 4:** units' milestones. Source: own elaboration.

### 1.3. Structure

In terms of internal structure, OneVet Group follows a more centralised approach, with most of the decision-making process a responsibility of the Scientific Board (SB) which is composed by IR representatives, plus the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) also called Executive Director, and the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of OneVet Group. The main decisions are made within the SB, the

information is then communicated to the shared services (in Aldoar) which have the responsibility of transmitting it to the units afterwards – whether they are veterinary clinics or veterinary hospitals [Figure 3].

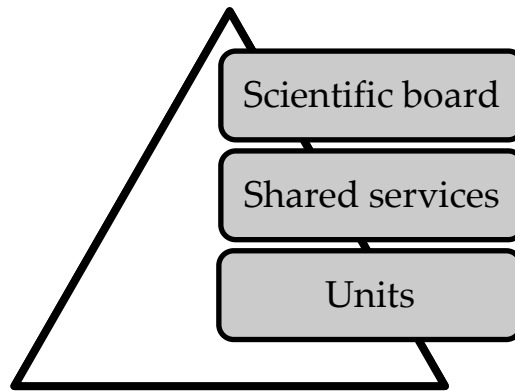


Figure 3: OneVet Group hierarchy. Source: own elaboration.

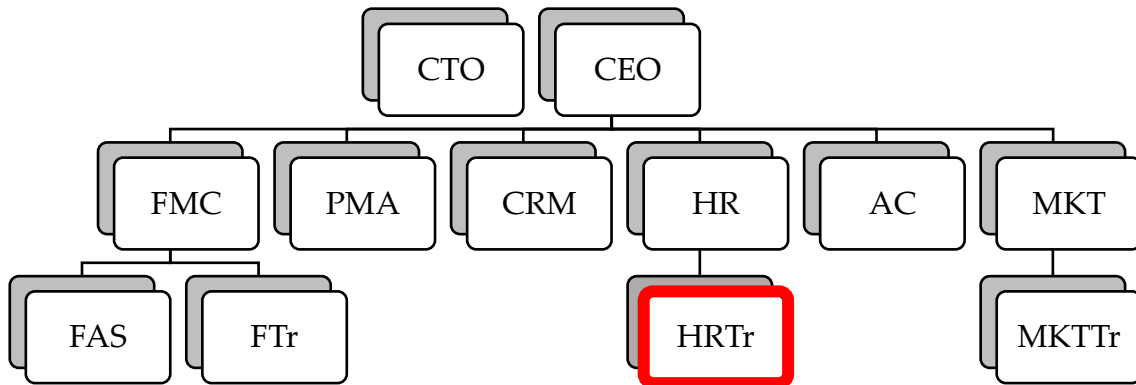
#### 1.4. Shared services organogram

The organogram presented below [Figure 4] displays the hierarchical relationships within the shared services of OneVet Group. The highest level shows **the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)** – 1 person, supported by the **Chief Technology Officer (CTO)** – 1 person, with a background in veterinary medicine for better business support). The following levels (second, third and fourth) show all the major supporting managers and assistants, which are:

- (1) **Financial Manager & Controlling (FMC)** – controls the **Financial & Administrative Support Assistant (FAS)** and a **Financial Trainee (FTr)** – 3 people;
- (2) **Project Manager Assistant (PMA)** – 1 person;
- (3) **Customer Relationship Management & Business Support Assistant (CRM)** – 1 person;
- (4) **Human Resources & Operations Support Manager (HR)** – controls a **Human Resources Trainee (HRTr)** – 2 people;
- (5) **Accounting Assistant (AC)** – 1 person, and finally;

(6) **Marketing Assistant (MKT)** – controls a **Marketing Trainee (MKTr)** – 2 people.

For a better understanding, the role performed under the curricular traineeship for the purpose of the present investigation is underlined in a red box.



**Figure 4:** OneVet Group organogram. Source: own elaboration.

### 1.5. Human Resources

Before describing the workforce existing under OneVet Group’s management, it is pertinent to point out that there are 189 workers overall, however for the following descriptive statistics (and the questionnaire conducted within the organization) only 170 are considered. The remaining 19 workers do not hold any kind of exclusivity and hold an outsourcing type of contract – *data from February 2017*.

Table 5 underlines OneVet Group’s workforce per gender. There is a large percentage of female employees, with numbers showing 74.7% of women, against 25.3% of male employees.

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	127	74.7
Male	43	25.3
<b>Total</b>	170	100

**Table 5:** OneVet Group’s workforce per gender. Source: own elaboration.

Table 6 shows the number of employees per unit. It can be verified that most of the workforce presented in the organization works within a hospital (60%) while the remaining employees work in a clinic (35.3%) or within the shared services (also called Administration).

<b>Unit</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Clinic</b>	60	35.3
<b>Hospital</b>	102	60.0
<b>Shared services</b>	8 <sup>2</sup>	4.7
<b>Total</b>	170	100

**Table 6:** OneVet Group's workforce per unit. Source: own elaboration

Table 7 indicates OneVet Group's main functions. Administrative and others (e.g. managers, or receptionists) and represent 7.6% of the organizations' workforce. Veterinary Assistants have a representation of 26.5% within the Group. Veterinary Doctors have the largest share of percentage within the organization with 46.5%, while Veterinary Nurses represent 19.4% of total workforce.

<b>Function</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Administrative and others</b>	13	7.6
<b>Veterinary Assistants</b>	45	26.5
<b>Shared Veterinary Nurses</b>	33	19.4
<b>Veterinary Doctors</b>	79	46.5
<b>Total</b>	170	100

**Table 7:** OneVet Group's workforce per main functions. Source: own elaboration.

Finally, Table 8 divides the percentage of employees per employment contract. It can be seen that 34.7% of all employees have a fixed-term contract. The largest piece of the workforce holds an open-ended type of contract (54.7%). Professional internship employees round 10.6% of total workforce within OneVet Group.

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<sup>2</sup> For the headcount of the shared services were excluded the trainees, and the accounting assistant.



<b>Employment contract</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Fixed-term contract</b>	59	34.7
<b>Open-ended contract</b>	93	54.7
<b>Professional internship</b>	18	10.6
<b>Total</b>	170	100

**Table 8:** OneVet Group’s workforce per employment contract. Source: own elaboration.

## 2. Dimensions choice

As it was previously stated in literature review, each organization has its own set of characteristics that allow a better adjustment while selecting the dimensions to assess organizational climate. As a result of direct observation, contact with several employees and a thorough analysis of the micro and macro aspects of the organization also mentioned in literature review, certain dimensions became more relevant to assess than others.

### **Corporate strategy**

OneVet Group was born from a set of already existing clinics and hospitals (except Coimbra’s unit) each with its own corporate strategy and management. These hospitals and clinics became part of the Group due to an acquisition process. In light of this, it is vital to understand the employees’ perception of the (new) strategy.

### **Leadership**

As a direct result from the acquisitions process there was a shift of the decision-making power from the previous director/owner of the acquired clinic to the Administration of OneVet Group. In this sense, it is relevant to understand how employees feel and perceive the new management/managers and their new level of autonomy/responsibility.

## **Work teams**

The core of OneVet Group is veterinary medicine and its veterinarians. As the veterinarians' job requires a serious amount of team work and working in teams, all issues related to logistics, clinical cases discussion, ethics and others, must be solved as a group (e.g. a veterinary surgeon may never perform a surgery without a veterinary anaesthetic). As so, it is important to assess their perceptions related to the teams in which they work with.

## **Job involvement**

OneVet Group is a fairly new organization with growing prospects. As it was previously stated, the Group is composed with already existing elements, with their own rules and ways to function. It is vital to understand employees' level of engagement and understand how employees perceive what is (now) expected from them.

## **Motivation**

OneVet Group relies entirely on employees' effectiveness. A motivated employee is a productive employee. In this sense, it is relevant to understand employees' motivations.

## **Training**

Due to strategic and financial decisions, there were internal issues that led to organizational changes. These changes placed an important role on the dimension of training (e.g. two new software programs were implemented in the past months). It is vital to understand employees' standpoint on training.

# Chapter 5

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Sample description and distribution

#### 1.1. Questionnaires

Overall completed questionnaires were received from **61 employees** (out of 170) constituting a 35.88% response rate across the sample. There is no evidence that response rates vary per unit within the Group. There were **three stages** in the analysis.

**Stage one** tests the reliability of the questionnaire through Cronbach's alpha test. This is a measure of internal consistency and is commonly used for questionnaires with multiple Likert scale questions. Cronbach's alfa value should be positive and presented in a scale from 0 to 1, in which 0 represents an unacceptable internal consistency and values higher than 0.9 represent an excellent internal consistency.

Table 9 shows that the Cronbach's alfa value for this questionnaire is 0.95 indicating a high internal consistency.

**Reliability Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	Number of Items
.952	.953	41

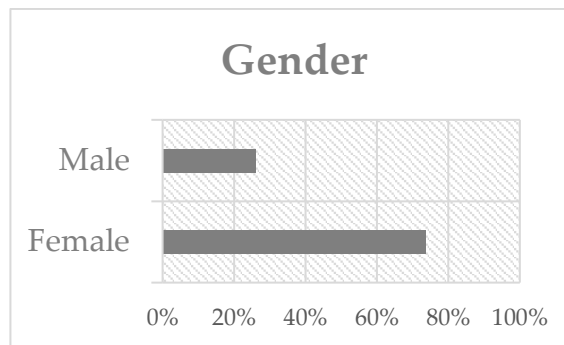
**Table 9:** Cronbach' Alfa for the administered questionnaire. Source: own elaboration.

**Stage two** describes the sample. In a universe of 170 employees that were inquired, it can be observed that the 61 validated questionnaire responses are distributed as follows in Table 10.

Function	Total of responses	OVG Global <sup>3</sup>	%T <sup>4</sup>	%C <sup>5</sup>
<b>Veterinary doctor</b>	24	78	14.1%	30.7%
<b>Veterinary nurse</b>	8	34	4.7%	23.5%
<b>Veterinary assistant</b>	16	45	9.4%	35.5%
<b>Administrative + Other</b>	13	13	7.6%	100%
<b>Total</b>	61	170	35.8%	-

**Table 10:** sample description. Source: own elaboration.

The majority of respondents are female as numbers show 73.8 % against 26.2% of males [Figure 5]. There is a large distribution of respondents with a college degree (around 44.3%), while 26.2% have a master's degree, and 27.9% does not hold any higher-level qualification [Figure 6].

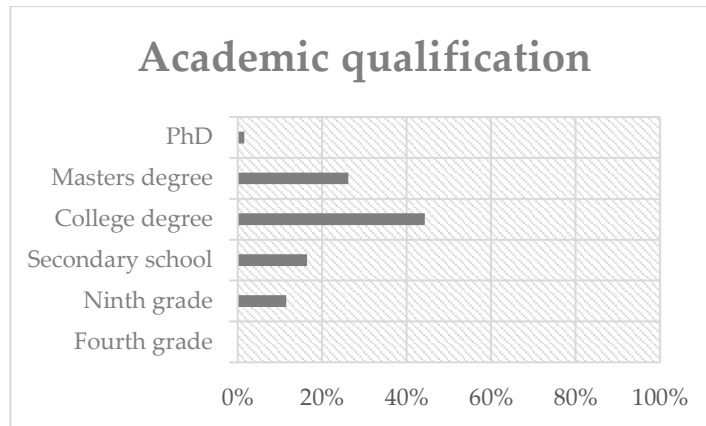


**Figure 5:** sample per gender. Source: own elaboration.

<sup>3</sup> Sum of all existing employees per category

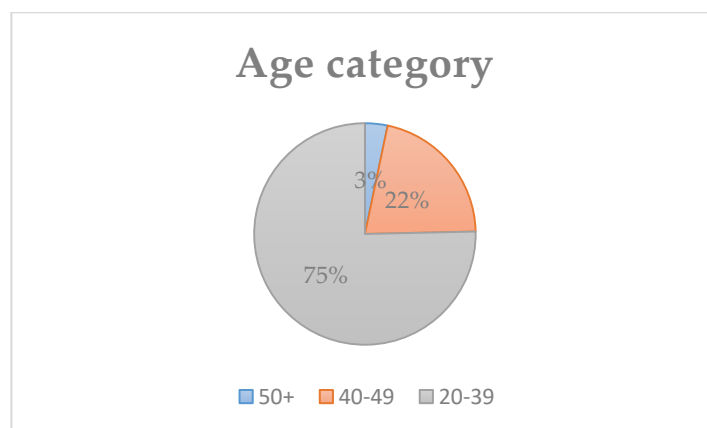
<sup>4</sup> Rate of responses per total of existing employees

<sup>5</sup> Rate of responses per total of categories

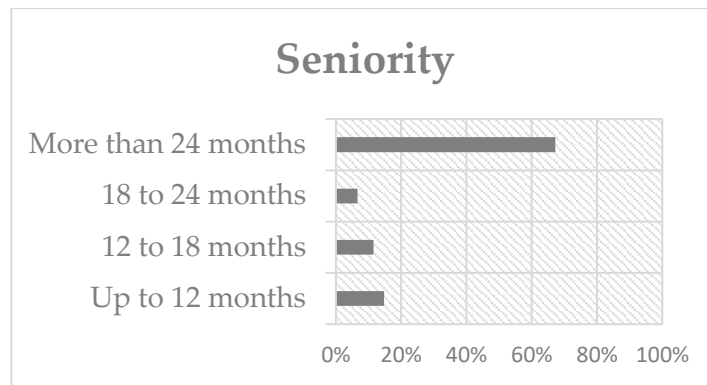


**Figure 6:** sample per academic qualification. Source: own elaboration.

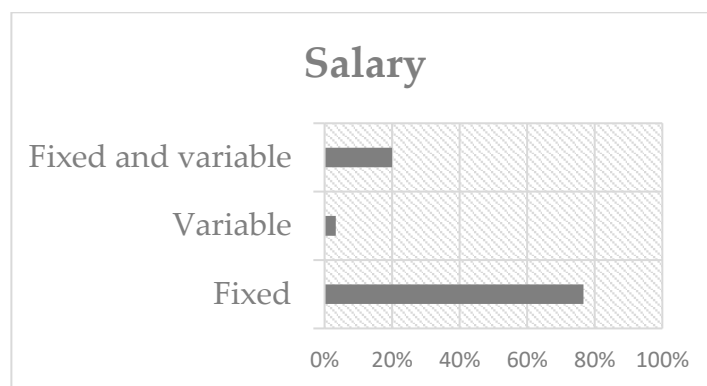
There is a predominance of individuals with ages between 25 to 39 years old indicating that the sample counts with vast majority of young adults. Numbers show a rate of 75% young adults within the total respondents [Figure 7]. More than half of the respondents (65.8%) have a seniority within the organization higher to 24 months [Figure 8]. In terms of salary, 76.7% receive a fixed salary, 3.3% a variable salary (one nurse) and 20% a mixed salary with both fixed and variable wage [Figure 9].



**Figure 7:** sample per age category. Source: own elaboration.



**Figure 8:** sample per seniority. Source: own elaboration.



**Figure 9:** sample per salary. Source: own elaboration.

Based on these findings, it can be assumed that a typical respondent to this questionnaire is a young female veterinary doctor who holds at least a college degree.

**Stage three** describes the major highlights that can be found while analysing the questionnaire. As it was previously mentioned this questionnaire is based on a Likert scale that ranges from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The overall average of all the blocks of questions included within the questionnaire is  $\bar{x} = 3.52$ . However, for this study it is more pertinent to understand what was the most frequently answered value among the respondents, ergo the mode (which in this case is 4).

Table 11 indicates the overall average and mode per cluster. **Work teams** is the cluster with higher average ( $\bar{x} = 3.87$ ) and a mode of 4 and **training** is the cluster with the lowest average ( $\bar{x} = 2.87$ ) and a mode of 3, being the cluster with the lowest mode.

Cluster	Total respondents = 61	
	Overall average ( $\bar{x}$ )	Overall mode
General questions	3.49	4
Corporate strategy	3.50	4
Leadership	3.33	4
Work teams	3.87 <sup>6</sup>	4
Job involvement; motivation	3.72	4
Motivation	3.65	4
Training	2.87 <sup>7</sup>	3 <sup>8</sup>

**Table 11:** overall average and mode per cluster. Source: own elaboration.

To have a general overview of the questionnaire, its clusters and responses distribution, a statistical analysis on the basis of the most frequently answer was conducted.

Given the fact the majority of respondents placed their answers at the 3<sup>rd</sup> level of Likert (“*neither agree, nor disagree*”) in the questionnaire it was decided to group and rename the 5 Likert levels into 3 different categories (named **D**, **N** and **A**) in order to have a more practical reading of the scales’ extremities, as follows:

- **Category D** ( $C_D$ ) contains both level 1 (“*strongly disagree*”) and level 2 (“*disagree*”)
- **Category N** ( $C_N$ ) contains level 3 (“*neither agree, nor disagree*”)
- **Category A** ( $C_A$ ) contains level 4 (“*agree*”) and level 5 (“*strongly agree*”)

<sup>6</sup> Cluster with the highest point average

<sup>7</sup> Cluster with the lowest point average

<sup>8</sup> Cluster with the lowest point mode

A first step within the statistical analysis was to understand the individual opinion of each of the respondents ( $j$ ) per each of the clusters ( $i$ ). As so, for each of the clusters, it was calculated the mode ( $m$ ), showing the respondents' most frequent answer ( $m_{i,j}$ ) of the categories  $C_D, C_N, C_A$ .

The second step was to understand the general opinion within OneVet's employees per each of the clusters. It included the account of the frequency of answers per cluster, defined on the previous step. The frequency of answers was then reconverted into percentages, having in consideration the number of respondents within the questionnaire ( $k = 61$ ).

For a clearer understanding, the following equations were considered:

$$D_i = \frac{|\{m_{i,j} : m_{i,j} \in C_D\}|}{K} \times 100$$

$$N_i = \frac{|\{m_{i,j} : m_{i,j} \in C_N\}|}{K} \times 100$$

$$A_i = \frac{|\{m_{i,j} : m_{i,j} \in C_A\}|}{K} \times 100$$

Where  $i \in I = \{gq, cs, li, wt, mo, tr\}$ <sup>9</sup> is the index that refers to each of the clusters,  $j \in J = \{1, 2, 3, \dots, K\}$  the index of each participant,  $m_{i,j}$  the elements of the sequence  $\{m_{i,j}\}$  that contains the mode of the responses from each participant in each cluster,  $C_D = \{1, 2\}$ ,  $C_N = \{3\}$  and  $C_A = \{4, 5\}$  the sets that define the mapping into each of the three categories, and  $K$  the number of participants.  $|\cdot|$  defines the sequence size contained within.<sup>10</sup>

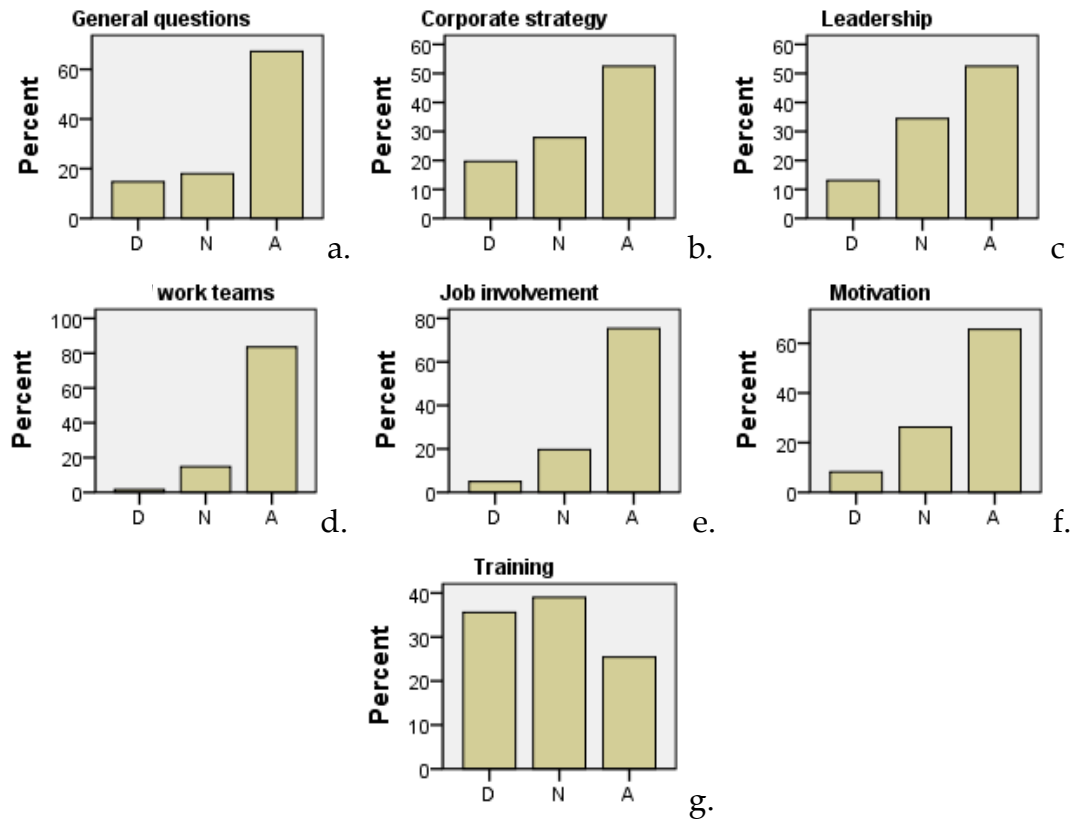
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<sup>9</sup> On the equation the clusters abbreviations are: gq for *general questions*; cs for *corporate strategy*; li for *leadership*; wt for *work teams*, mo for *motivation*, and tr for *training*.

<sup>10</sup> in the specific cases where there was multiple mode, only the first value was considered, and in the specific cases where there was not a mode, the response was not considered.



The following histograms [Figure 10] show the distribution of respondents within all the 3 different categories (D, N and A).



**Figure 10:** histogram of the clusters. a. general questions; b. corporate strategy; c. leadership; d. work teams; e. job involvement; f. motivation; g. training. Source: own elaboration.

### General questions

It is not considered an organizational climate dimension, and it covers the general employee perception and well-being within the organization. It comprises questionnaire items:

**Q1.** Quero continuar a trabalhar aqui (*I want to continue working here*).

**Q2.** Recomendaria o meu local de trabalho a um amigo (*I would recommend my workplace to a friend*).

**Q3.** Identifico-me com a cultura do meu local de trabalho (*I identify with the culture of my workplace at OneVet*).

**Q4.** Sinto-me como “parte da família” no meu local de trabalho (*I feel as a “part of the family” on my workplace at OneVet*).

**Q5.** Os fatores externos ao meu trabalho influenciam o meu desempenho (*External problems to my job influence my performance*).

Table 12 shows that a large percentage of respondents (67.2%) stated that they agree or strongly agree with the statements, about 15% disagree or strongly disagree, and 18% neither agrees nor disagrees.

Category	Frequency	Percent
<b>D<sub>gq</sub></b>	9	14.8
<b>N<sub>gq</sub></b>	11	18
<b>A<sub>gq</sub></b>	41	67.2
<b>Total</b>	61 <sup>11</sup>	100

**Table 12:** frequency of respondents for General Questions cluster. Source: own elaboration.

In general employees want to continue working for the organization, data confirmed by the interviews that took place within the clinics and hospitals. Interviewees mention work teams as one of the major stimulus, which can be confirmed by the percentage of replies to **Q4**, which rounds about 60% [Appendixes 6 and 7]. However, these results are not as promising as it might be expected, given the fact that only 41 employees within the entire OneVet community (170 employees) responded strongly that they are willing to continue their professional careers at the organization, which may not be consistent with the reality *in situ*.

### **Corporate strategy**

Corporate strategy is the first dimension of the questionnaire. It intends to evaluate how employees feel about the way the organization is being directed. It comprises questionnaire items:

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<sup>11</sup> Amount of respondents

**Q6.** Conheço a estratégia da OneVet (*I know OneVet's strategy*).

**Q7.** Identifico-me com a estratégia da OneVet (*I identify with One Vet's strategy*).

**Q8.** A garantia da qualidade de serviço é uma preocupação presente no dia-a-dia da clínica ou hospital ao qual pertenço (*Ensure quality service is a continuous concern in the daily routine of the clinic or hospital I belong to*).

**Q9.** A opinião dos clientes é usada para melhorar os serviços prestados (*Clients' opinion is used to improve the provided services*).

Table 13 shows that about 20% of the respondents replied that they disagree or strongly disagree with this dimensions' statements. More than half (52.5%) agree or strongly agree with the statements, and almost a third (27.9%) neither agree, nor disagree.

<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>D<sub>cs</sub></b>	12	19.7
<b>N<sub>cs</sub></b>	17	27.9
<b>A<sub>cs</sub></b>	32	52.5
<b>Total</b>	61	100

**Table 13:** frequency of respondents for Corporate Strategy cluster. Source: own elaboration.

For the first dimension, only half of the respondents know and agree with how the strategy of the organization is being conducted. This is a relatively small number considering the large interest of the organization in having all of its employees aware (and more importantly supportive and loyal to) the OneVet Group strategy. The Group grows by buying already existing hospitals and clinics (with their already existing corporate strategies) and in this sense, as it was mentioned in Chapter 4, subsection 2, it is imperative to homogenise or incorporate the previous corporate strategy from the bought units with OVG's corporate strategy and vision.

## Leadership

This is the second dimension of the questionnaire, and it relates to the perception employees might have on the way the organization, and its activities are being managed. It comprises questionnaire items:

**Q10.** Tenho a autonomia necessária para a função que exerço (*I have the necessary autonomy to perform my job*).

**Q11.** As minhas ideias e opiniões são ouvidas (*My ideas and opinions are taken into account*).

**Q12.** O meu superior envolve-se e acompanha o meu trabalho (*My supervisor gets involved in what I do and monitors my job*).

**Q13.** Existe uma distribuição clara de atribuições e responsabilidades pelos colaboradores (*There is a clear distribution of tasks and responsibilities among employees*).

**Q14.** Os acontecimentos importantes são comunicados (*Major occurrences are announced*).

**Q15.** Existe preocupação pelo equilíbrio entre a vida familiar e profissional (*There is a concern in work-life balance*).

**Q16.** Existe cooperação entre colaboradores (*There is cooperation among employees*).

**Q17.** Existe cooperação entre as várias equipas de trabalho (*There is cooperation among work teams*).

**Q18.** A comunicação entre colaboradores é eficaz (*Communication among employees is effective*).

**Q19.** A comunicação entre as várias equipas de trabalho é eficaz (*Communication among the various work teams is effective*).

Table 14 shows that more than half of the inquired population (52.5%) agree or strongly agree. Around 34% of the respondents neither agree nor disagree and 13.1% disagree or strongly disagree.

Category	Frequency	Percent
D <sub>li</sub>	8	13.1
N <sub>li</sub>	21	34.4
A <sub>li</sub>	32	52.5
<b>Total</b>	61	100

**Table 14:** frequency of respondents for Leadership cluster. Source: own elaboration.

Leadership dimension presents the same frequency and percentage of replies as the previous dimension of corporate strategy (about half of the population), which is also a possible underperforming outcome for the organization, although the results are consistent with the findings from the interviews where differences of opinion among veterinarians and Administration are visible. **Q15.** is the item with the highest number of replies for the Likert levels of strongly disagree and disagree, slightly surpassing the Likert levels of agree and strongly agree [Appendix 2] which suggests the organization should have a stronger focus on the work-life balance of its employees. During the interviews, work overload was strongly mentioned, which could take a toll on employees' personal life and explain the following results.

### **Work teams**

It is the third dimension of the questionnaire. It assesses the way employees depict their work group. It comprises questionnaire items:

**Q20.** Sou respeitado profissionalmente pelos meus colegas (*I am professionally respected by my peers*).

**Q21.** O ambiente de trabalho no meu local de trabalho na OneVet é saudável (*Work environment at my workplace at OneVet is healthy*).

**Q22.** Relaciono-me bem com os meus colegas (*I get along well with my peers*).

**Q23.** Relaciono-me bem com o meu superior (*I get along well with my supervisor*).

**Q24.** O meu local de trabalho na OneVet é competitivo (*My workplace at OneVet is competitive*).

Work teams is the cluster that ranked the highest. It can be seen by Table 15 that nearly all of the population (83.6%) agree or strongly agree with the dimensions statements. About 14.8% neither agree nor disagree and a very small percentage (1.6%) disagrees or strongly disagrees. There are no respondents that strongly disagree or disagree with items **Q20.** and **Q22.** as it can be seen on Appendix 2.

Category	Frequency	Percent
D <sub>wt</sub>	1	1.6
N <sub>wt</sub>	9	14.8
A <sub>wt</sub>	51	83.6
<b>Total</b>	61	100

**Table 15:** frequency of respondents for Work Teams cluster. Source: own elaboration.

Numbers suggest a strong connection between work teams dimension and a positive perception from the employees around their work peers. There are not almost respondents that disagree with the dimensions statements (only one) and a really significant number of employees feel good about the work teams they are inserted. The following results could be explained by the fact that teams have not significantly changed since their unit was acquired by OneVet Group. As the Financial Controlling mentioned [Appendix 5, line 21] all bought units come with the respective “filling” including the existing working teams that might had

already established a bond among the elements that maintained. The only unit that was not bought was Coimbra Hospital, which could present a different result. However, while interviewing the participants, all without exception, mentioned a great working environment and their positive perception upon the work teams they were inserted.

### **Job involvement**

The fourth dimension of the questionnaire assesses employee engagement, and employee enthusiasm while performing their jobs, as well as their connection with the workplace. It comprises questionnaire items:

**Q25.** Sei o que é necessário e previsto na realização das minhas funções (*I know what is necessary and expected from my tasks*).

**Q26.** O meu trabalho valoriza-me profissionalmente (*My job values me professionally*).

**Q27.** Existem momentos de convívio entre os colaboradores (*There are socializing moments among employees*).

**Q28.** Sinto-me realizado pelo meu trabalho (*My job fulfils me*).

**Q29.** É expectável que as pessoas trabalhem demasiado num dia de serviço (*It is expected employees to overwork on a working day*).

**Q30.** A informação disponível é relevante para o desempenho do meu cargo e responsabilidade (*The available information is relevant to perform my job and responsibility*).

**Q31.** Os instrumentos e ferramentas estão acessíveis para o desempenho do meu trabalho (*Working tools are accessible to perform my job*).

Job involvement also presents an asymmetry on the distribution, with 75.4% of the respondents stating that they agree or strongly agree with the dimensions'

statements, as Table 16 shows. About 20% neither agree nor disagrees with the previous statements and 4.9% disagrees or strongly disagrees with them.

Category	Frequency	Percent
D <sub>ji</sub>	3	4.9
N <sub>ji</sub>	12	19.7
A <sub>ji</sub>	46	75.4
<b>Total</b>	61	100

**Table 16:** frequency of respondents for Job Involvement cluster. Source: own elaboration.

Results suggest that the respondents perceive positively their job involvement at OneVet Group. Despite the outcomes from some of the dimensions (training dimension mostly, as it will be shown *ut infra*) in the questionnaire, employees in general feel fulfilled by their jobs. After the interviews it became visible that their job involvement was due to their passion for animals and the tasks they performed at the respective unit. Another aspect mentioned within the interviews was the work overload, which is consistent with the findings from the following questionnaire on item **Q29**, where a significant number of respondents placed their answer in the agree category and only a small percentage disagree with the statement [Appendix 2].

### **Motivation**

It is the fifth dimension of the questionnaire.

It comprises questionnaire items:

**Q32.** No meu local de trabalho as pessoas dão o seu melhor (*On my workplace, people try their best*).

**Q33.** No meu local de trabalho as pessoas gostam do que fazem (*On my workplace, people enjoy what they are doing*).



**Q34.** As pessoas esforçam-se para desempenharem o seu trabalho (*People make an effort to perform their jobs*).

**Q35.** As perspectivas de carreira são importantes para a motivação do meu trabalho (*Career future prospects are important for my job motivation*).

**Q36.** Os elogios ao meu trabalho dão-me motivação (*Compliments to my job motivate me*).

**Q37.** O meu desempenho é avaliado regularmente (*My performance is appraised regularly*).

**Q38.** O meu desempenho é reconhecido (*My performance is recognized*).

Table 17 shows that about 66% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statements. Less than a third (26.2%) neither agree nor disagree, and 8.2% disagree or strongly disagrees with the statements.

Category	Frequency	Percent
D <sub>mo</sub>	5	8.2
N <sub>mo</sub>	16	26.2
A <sub>mo</sub>	40	65.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 17:** frequency of respondents for Motivation cluster. Source: own elaboration.

In general, this dimension's numbers suggest that employees are motivated, as it has a large percentage of respondents that agree with the statements from the dimension. Interviews show that this motivation may come from their passion for the job and work teams. In this sense, **Q33.** shows consistent results with the findings from the interviews, with a significant percentage (however not as high as expected from the interviewees' answers and the observed within the units) stating that people enjoyed their jobs. Of all the items of the dimension, the items related to performance appraisal were the items that ranked the lowest (**Q37.** and **Q38.**) suggesting that employees do not feel that their job is appraised

and consequently recognized. Indeed there has never been a formal performance appraisal within the organization since its birth in 2012 which could explain the following results.

## **Training**

It is the last dimension within the questionnaire. It is related with employee perception on how the organization deals with their professional development. It comprises questionnaire items:

**Q39.** A OneVet investe na formação para o desenvolvimento e valorização dos seus colaboradores (*OneVet invests in the training for the development and valorisation of its employees*).

**Q40.** A formação oferecida adequa-se em conteúdo e formato – presencial; e-learning, entre outras (*The existing training is adequate in content and format – on-the-job; e-learning; among others*).

**Q41.** Sou encorajado a desenvolver as minhas competências (*I am encouraged to develop my skills*).

It is the cluster that ranked the lowest and also with the less amount of items. It is the only cluster presenting a higher percentage (34.4%) of respondents that disagree or strongly disagree with the statements, over the respondents that agree or strongly agree (25.4%) as it can be seen on Table 18. More than a third of respondents neither agree nor disagree with the dimensions' statements (37.7%).

Training being the dimension with the least number of items in the entire questionnaire could lead to a different reality than what numbers show, however results are consistent with the observed reality and the conducted interviews. Several aspects could explain such low results. The first aspect could be related to the insufficient level of training actions on the new software programmes Bizagi and NAV as stated within the interviews and also validated from direct

observation within the curricular internship. The second aspect could be related to the lack of funding in investing on external training. The final aspect could also be related to how the organization is being directed and led – the top priority of OVG is not developing a strong training policy, for now. There are, nevertheless, plans for their development in a short-term future, as well as a performance appraisal policy.

Category	Frequency	Percent
D <sub>tr</sub>	21	34.4
N <sub>tr</sub>	23	37.7
A <sub>tr</sub>	15	24.6
<b>Total</b>	59 <sup>12</sup>	96.7

**Table 18:** frequency of respondents for Training cluster. Source: own elaboration.

Overall results show that in general the respondents agreed with the statements from the questionnaire. The cluster with higher results is the dimension work teams, being coherent with the results from the unstructured interviews during which this dimension was strongly mentioned. The cluster with lowest results is the dimension training, also being coherent with the results from the interviews, as it was also a strongly mentioned issue. Both histograms [Figure 10] support the apparent perception on the importance of work teams and training dimensions.

All detailed percentage of responses of the “*Clima Organizacional na OneVet Group*” questionnaire divided per all five levels of Likert can be found in Appendix 6. All detailed information related to mean, median, and mode, as well as variance, minimum and maximum per question are included in Appendix 7. Full description of the histograms per question can be found in Appendix 2.

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<sup>12</sup> Cases where the responses were not considered due to non-existing mode.

### 1.1.1. Crossing variables

#### **Professional category**

On the analysis of the following questionnaire, it is also relevant to cross the professional category with the item **Q1. I want to continue working for the organization**. Crossing the variables related to **professional category** and the previous item **Q1**, the results on Table 19 indicate that the majority of the respondents (70.5%) either agree or strongly agree with the statement and are willing to continue working for OneVet Group.

#### *- Administrative or other*

About 13% of the respondents strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, indicating unwillingness in continuing to work for the organization, 15.4% neither agree nor disagree and 57.6% agrees or strongly agrees with the statement.

The primary focus of the following questionnaire was to assess veterinarians as they are the true core of OVG. However, there are also some professional categories that cannot be ignored such as the receptionists, secretaries and the Administration (not considered veterinarians *per se*) and are important as well to make the organization thrive. Although results show that a large percentage of respondents want to continue working for the organization, it is not a high percentage, considering that nearly a third of the people that belong to the following professional category do not agree or are neutral with this particular statement. On the questionnaire there was a blank space on which respondents could write their personal opinion, and one of the observations was from a respondent from the present category that stated the lack of communication and personnel as two strong downsides of the organization. The previous downsides could provide a glimpse on why numbers are not as high as expected.

- *Veterinary assistants*

About 13% of the respondents disagree with the statement, with no respondents that strongly disagree with the statement. About 19% neither agree nor disagree, and the majority (68.8%) of the respondents within the category of veterinary assistants agree or strongly agree with the statement indicating willingness in continuing to work for the organization.

Although the percentage is slightly higher than the percentage from the previous category, it is not particularly high and it can be explained by a number of reasons. Regarding formal hierarchy, veterinary assistants are one of the bottommost categories, which obliges them to take orders from the remaining categories, as well as perform their jobs of taking care of the animals, client service by attending the owners, and sometimes cleaning tasks. During the interviews workload and lack of recognition for their jobs was mentioned, data consistent with two observations of veterinary assistants from the blank spaces of the questionnaire that stated the same. One of the observations severely criticized the organization stating that OVG required extra hours, work overload, travels and there was not social or pecuniary recognition. The respondent also mentioned that other employees from different categories performed the same tasks and were treated differently and better. The respondent also specified that the team was composed by top performers, being a strong reason in continuing to work for the organization, which is consistent with the previous questionnaire results and the performed interviews that stated work teams as an essential dimension.

- *Veterinary doctors*

Only 4.2% of the respondents disagree, with no respondents that strongly disagree with the statement, in similarity with veterinary assistant category.

About 17% neither agree nor disagree, and the vast majority (79.2%) of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement indicating willingness in continuing to work for the organization.

Veterinary doctors are the category with the highest percentage among the four main existing categories. In terms of veterinary hierarchy are one of uppermost professionals, consequently earning more money and recognition which could explain why results are higher on the present category. Nevertheless, three observations from respondents from the blank spaces mention work overload, excessive amount of working hours and a non-compatible salary (considered low) with the level of attributed responsibility. The previous might contribute for the percentage not being even higher. During the interviews lack of adequate training was also mentioned.

- *Veterinary nurses*

About 13% of the respondents disagree, with no respondents that strongly disagree with the statement, in similarity with veterinary assistant, and veterinary doctor categories. About 25% (nearly a third of the veterinary nurses' population) neither agree nor disagree, and the majority (62.5%) of the respondents either agree or strongly agree with the statement indicating willingness in continuing to work for the organization.

Veterinary nurses are the category that presents the second lowest percentage among all the enumerated professional category. It is the mid category within the hierarchy and according to the observed their tasks are helping the veterinary doctors, taking care of the animals, provide client service to owners, and similarly to veterinary assistants, sometimes cleaning the facilities when needed. The percentage of people who are not willing to continue working for the organization could be explained by work overload (as all the previous categories also mentioned) and higher expectations for a better salary, as one observation

from the blank spaces of the questionnaire suggests. The observation also stated that work teams are remarkable and there is a high sense of trusting teammates, being consistent with all the previous findings to this point.

**Willingness \* Category**

	Category				Total
	Administrative or other	Veterinary assistants	Veterinary doctors	Veterinary nurses	
Strongly disagree	7.7%				1.6%
Disagree	15.4%	12.5%	4.2%	12.5%	9.8%
Neither agree nor disagree	15.4%	18.8%	16.7%	25%	18%
Agree	46.2%	43.8%	66.7%	37.5%	52.5%
Strongly agree	15.4%	25%	12.5%	25%	18%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

**Table 19:** crosstab between variables “category” and “willingness”. Source: own elaboration.

## Dimensions

The “*Clima Organizacional na OneVet Group*” questionnaire was developed and applied to a significant sample from all units within the organization. In order to better understand the findings from the following this investigation, the variables related to **Q1. I want to continue working for the organization** and the **six dimensions** were crossed. For this analysis, it was decided to keep the previously referred Likert levels into the categories **D, N** and **A**<sup>13</sup>.

- *Corporate strategy*

Numbers show that 6.6% of the respondents do not identify with OneVet corporate strategy, nor want to continue working for the organization. About 8%

<sup>13</sup> D = strongly disagree and disagree; N = neither agree, nor disagree and; A = Agree and strongly agree

wants to continue working for the organization, but do not identify with the corporate strategy. Less than half of the respondents (41%) simultaneously want to work for OneVet Group and identify with the strategy [Table 20]. As the organization is at constant organizational change (new acquisitions every year, and new employees at a constant rate) it could mean that OVG's employees have not had the chance to fully absorb the organization's values and strategy, which could explain the results why less than half of the respondents do not know or do not identify with the organizations' strategy.

**Willingness \* Corporate strategy**

		Corporate strategy			Total
		D	N	A	
Willingness	D	6.6%	1.6%	3.3%	11.5%
	N	4.9%	4.9%	8.2%	18.0%
	A	8.2%	21.3%	41.0%	70.5%
	Total	19.7%	27.9%	52.5%	100.0%

**Table 20:** crosstab between variables "corporate strategy" and "willingness". Source: own elaboration.

- *Leadership*

Table 21 shows that 3.3% of the respondents do not identify with the dimension leadership, and do not want to continue working for the organization. The same percentage of respondents wants to continue working for OneVet Group, but do not identify with the dimension. Less than 40% wants to continue working for this company and identifies with the dimension leadership. More than 6% (6.6%) identifies with the dimension, but do not want to work for the Group. The same reasons stated within the previous dimension of corporate strategy could explain the low rank of employees that agree with the dimensions' statement and still and to work for the organization. A further analysis on the company's staff registers revealed that the organization has not had the same



leader (Executive Director) for more than 2 to 3 years in a row. The fact that some administrative processes are being constantly restructured (as a direct result of new management's *modus operandi*) could influence this dimension's results.

**Willingness \* Leadership**

		Leadership			Total
		D	N	A	
Willingness	D	3.3%	1.6%	6.6%	11.5%
	N	6.6%	4.9%	6.6%	18.0%
	A	3.3%	27.9%	39.3%	70.5%
Total		13.1%	34.4%	52.5%	100.0%

**Table 21:** crosstab between variables "leadership" and "willingness". Source: own elaboration.

- *Work teams*

For this dimension it is possible to verify that only 1.6% of the respondents do not feel that work teams are positive and do not want to continue working for the organization. Numbers show that there are no respondents who do not identify with the referred dimension and are at the same time neutral/willing to continue working for the organization, which means that the majority (nearly 61%) does believe that work teams are important and want to continue working for OneVet Group. This is the dimension with the largest amount of frequencies (percentage) while relating both variables (willingness and work teams) on the Likert level of the category Agree [Table 22]. As interviews also show, this is a very important dimension. The high rank of results could be linked to the job's characteristics as working in teams is a vital and very common feature of health-related areas. Team elements need to trust each other professionally to perform successfully their main functions/tasks, as there are often animals' lives at stake. Even though the vast majority of OVG's units were acquired, there was not a belligerent restructure (the original employees often stayed *in situ*), being one

reason why elements have such a high feeling of trust: there are indeed new employees, however the original teams maintained overall the same.

**Willingness \* Work teams**

		Work teams			Total
		D	N	A	
Willingness	D	1.6%	3.3%	6.6%	11.5%
	N		1.6%	16.4%	18%
	A		9.8%	60.7%	70.5%
	Total	1.6%	14.8%	83.6%	100.0%

**Table 22:** crosstab between variables “work teams” and “willingness”. Source: own elaboration.

- *Job involvement*

There are 3.3% of the respondents who are not willing to continue working for the organization and do not identify with the dimension of “job involvement”. There are no respondents who want to continue to work for OneVet Group, but do not identify with the referred dimension. On the contrary, it is possible to verify that 57.4% of the respondents are involved to their jobs and are willing to continue working for the Group. About 5% identify with the dimension, but do not want to continue working for the organization [Table 23]. As it was stated by the Financial Controller [Appendix 5, line 60] after the acquisitions, their previous leader does not hold decision power anymore, leading to differences of opinions on how management should be done (whether by the old procedures or the new ones). Even though processes and procedures have changed, more than half of the respondents that want to continue to work for the organization still feel that they are job involved and that their decision power and responsibility has not been affected.

**Willingness \* Job involvement**

		Job involvement			Total
		D	N	A	
Willingness	D	3.3%	3.3%	4.9%	11.5%
	N	1.6%	3.3%	13.1%	18%
	A		13.1%	57.4%	70.5%
	Total	4.9%	19.7%	75.4%	100.0%

**Table 23:** crosstab between variables “job involvement” and “willingness”. Source: own elaboration.

- *Motivation*

Numbers show that only 1.6% of the respondents feel that they are not motivated and do not want to continue working for the organization. There are 3.3% of the respondents who do not feel motivated but are willing to continue working for OneVet Group. About 56% of the respondents are motivated and want to continue working for the organization. There are no respondents who are motivated and do not want to continue working for the Group [Table 24]. More than half of the respondents still want to work for the organization, which could be a direct result from the work’s characteristics and intrinsic motivation (shown within literature review). While performing the unstructured interviews it was evident that a large weigh of the employee’s motivation came from their passion for their jobs.

**Willingness \* Motivation**

		Motivation			Total
		D	N	A	
Willingness	D	1.6%	9.8%		11.5%
	N	3.3%	4.9%	9.8%	18%
	A	3.3%	11.5%	55.7%	70.5%
	Total	8.2%	26.2%	65.6%	100.0%

**Table 24:** crosstab between variables “motivation” and “willingness”. Source: own elaboration.

- *Training*

Numbers show that 8.5% of the respondents feel that training is inadequate and are not willing to continue working for the organization. A considerable percentage (20.3%) feels that training is inadequate but want to work for the Group. On the other hand, only 22% feel that training is adequate and want to continue working for the organization. Only 1.7% feel that training is adequate and do not want to work for OneVet Group. This is the dimension with the **least** amount of frequencies (percentage) while relating both variables (willingness and training) on the Likert level of the category Agree [Table 25]. These results are coherent with the results from the unstructured interviews which state that there should be a higher focus on training issues. Regardless the fact that only 8.5% of the respondents disagree with the statements within the dimensions and want to leave the organization, it is relevant to mention that there are as many respondents that feel training is inadequate as respondents that feel training is adequate.

**Willingness \* Training**

		Training			Total
		D	N	A	
Willingness	D	8,5%	1,7%	1,7%	11,9%
	N	6,8%	8,5%	1,7%	16,9%
	A	20,3%	28,8%	22,0%	71,2%
	Total	35,6%	39,0%	25,4%	100,0%

**Table 25:** crosstab between variables “training” and “willingness”. Source: own elaboration.

Spearman Correlation is commonly used to measure correlations among pairs of variables. The correlation’s description among the clusters can be seen in Table 26. A full description of the correlations among all questions of the questionnaire can be found on Appendix 8. The green colour indicates a high correlation, while the red colour indicates a low correlation. All with statistical significance.

	General questions	Corporate strategy	Leadership	Work teams	Job involvement	Motivation	Training
General questions	1						
Corporate strategy	0.524	1					
Leadership	0.8	0.669	1				
Work teams	0.016	0.444	0.015	1			
Job involvement	0.511	0.485	0.646	0.071	1		
Motivation	0.305	0.608	0.335	0.721	0.131	1	
Training	0.611	0.589	0.443	0.332	0.334	0.452	1

Table 26: Spearman’s correlations among the questionnaire’s clusters

There is a positive, solid correlation between the variables *motivation* and *work teams* as the **correlation coefficient shown is 0.721**. These data suggest that employees are motivated and view positively their work teams. The following findings are coherent with the interviews, and the previous results that state work teams as the highest ranked dimension. However, *work teams* variable is not related to *leadership* as the **correlation coefficient shown is 0.015** showing a weak (though positive) correlation.

There is also a strong, positive correlation between the variables *leadership* and *general questions*, with the **correlation coefficient of 0.8** which suggests employees feel good about the way they are being led. This is a surprising and antagonistic finding, as the interviews show there are different points of view among veterinarians and the Administration (meaning, their leaders) on how to manage the Group. A repeated expression used among nearly by all interviewees (including the Financial Controller) was the preference for the Administration to “see numbers over lives”.

## 1.2. Unstructured interviews

For this subsection, a summary framework of the noted statements is presented, since no records were allowed.

Out of the main dimensions identified in literature review, all participants referred **work teams** as a vital element on their jobs. When asked for further explanation, nearly all veterinarians were prompt to answer that in health-related jobs, it is very common to work as teams. Trust among elements is vital, as well as having well defined roles within teams. There was a new element to one of the units at the time of the interview, having referred that integration within the team had been positive.

Teams are seen as competent and effective, and there is a shared perception of fellowship within team members. There is a perceived positive relationship among colleagues. Being well integrated within the team and trusting peers is considered to be vital for both personal and professional growth, as well as personal well-being. In times of higher pressure, all members rely on each other to thrive and achieving their goals and objectives. One of the interviewees pointed out that the atmosphere among the group members was one of the main reasons the group/team was able to endure critical moments of high pressure and work peaks. Another pointed reason was the passion in being a veterinarian, as it felt very rewarding to save animals' lives and receive gratitude from the owners.

All interviewed elements stated a general sensation and feeling of satisfaction towards their jobs and job characteristics, and referred to the existence of social gatherings (both formal e.g. Christmas dinner, and informal e.g. lunches) among the elements of the Group – not necessarily the same units – as a positive outcome of work teams' atmosphere. Despite the apparent positive atmosphere among group members, most of the participants stated the expression “numbers over lives” as their main concern to the Administration's management decisions

towards the clinics and hospitals. One reported case was cited by one of the interviewed nurses who explained that her main priority when a customer brings a dying pet was to save the animal's life rather than insert and invoice the medication that was needed to save the animal and verify the profit made in that specific day.

The need to hire more people was also a shared concern and consequently a shared suggestion for the Administration by all interviewees. This suggestion is sustained by the worker's perception of having a work overload and moments of high pressure.

Another addressed issue was **training**. Half of the participants referred that they lacked training in two main areas:

1. The new ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software programs – Bizagi and NAVISION;
2. Professional development (related to veterinary medicine new practices).

Several of the interviewees reported the inconsistency in some of the units that belong to the Group received training on the new software programs, and other units did not receive, being a serious matter to be considered by the Administration. Even though some time has passed since the implementation of Bizagi software program (specifically), and the interviewees feel mostly at ease in working with the program, training would have been beneficial to avoid mistakes and become more efficient and effective. One of the interviewees stated that despite having passed some time, training would still be beneficial since there were some technical issues that were not mastered yet.

On the other hand, concerning professional development, some employees stated that the Administration should finance trainings more often (externally to the Group) in order to develop professional growth in terms of new veterinary practices and techniques. These investments would allow employees becoming

more efficient (and better) than other competitor clinics and hospitals. The only trainings that were financed by the organization were performed internally and sometimes did not meet the employees' real needs. Veterinary medicine is an area of constant evolution, and being updated with the new state of the art is a need that regards all professionals of the veterinary area (doctors, nurses and assistants).

## 2. General results

Comparing the data from the interviews and the data from the questionnaire, one dimension came out as the dimension with the highest perception of positive impact within the organization – **work teams**. Questionnaire results show that this dimension scored the highest. These findings are consistent with the conducted interviews where the participants stated work team as having a major influence in their daily work lives. Positive outcomes from members' interaction include personal learning and fulfilment. During the interviews while discussing work teams and general satisfaction, some participants mentioned the possibility of "learning new approaches" and "learning with each other" as two of the major assets in working in teams.

An interesting finding relies on the existence of social gatherings outside the outskirts of the organization, both with the entire Group in a formal occasion (e.g. Christmas dinners) and within the units' themselves as an informal occasion. In both visited units during the interviewing period, it was referred that these informal events existed for the sole purpose of socializing, independently of hierarchy levels and workplace.

As referred in the literature review, Bispo (2006) developed a model in which several levels related to a favourable organizational climate are depicted. The main elements include satisfaction among employees, a high level of motivation,



and a high level of integration within teams and within the organization itself. Having the particular case of interviewing a new element to one of the units, it was verified that the integration process was adequate and satisfactory as there was a “large sense of team spirit and having people’s backs” as it was cited by the interviewee.

A major drawback is the dimension related to **training**, as it was the dimension that ranked the lowest levels. Bispo (2006) also mentions training as being one of the elements that constitutes a favourable organizational climate. A closer look upon the histogram related to training indicates that respondents perceive that the organization does not pay enough attention to training issues, however the variance among the answers is high on the questionnaire, and throughout the interviews that difference of opinions is visible, with half of the interviewees stating that the training is satisfactory and the other half stating the exact opposite.

All of the above considered, the proposition **P2: there is/are (a) dimension(s) among the dimensions of corporate strategy, leadership, work teams, job involvement, motivation, and training that has/have a stronger impact on the way employees perceive their work** can be confirmed as the results from the questionnaire and interviews suggest the organizational climate dimension **work teams** as being the dimension with the most perceived positive impact in the employees’ work settings, and **training** being the exact opposite, as the dimension with the most perceived negative impact in employees’ work settings.

# Chapter 6

## IMPROVEMENT PROPOSALS

As it was verified through all the investigation, training is the dimension scoring the lowest levels among the 6 mentioned dimensions. In this Chapter, two proposals for internal improvement were collected and are presented.

### 1. First proposal – homogenising training processes

The majority of the interviewees and questionnaires respondents stated the training on the new software programs was insufficient and was not available to all units. In order to have the expected results of productivity and efficiency, **all units should have a homogenised process and policy of training**. After a further research in the Group's past records, the only available document related to training was outdated (from 2012), it still had the previous logo of the unit before the acquisition process, and regarded the participants' evaluation of the training. As it was stated by the Financial and Controlling Manager, and the Executive Director, the organization is fairly new and all processes need to become unified and homogenised. A solid suggestion is to start by the training processes and promote equality among units. Figure 11 shows the outdated document provided by the organization.



Com o intuito de melhorar o serviço prestado pelo *Hospital Veterinário do Porto* agradecemos o preenchimento deste inquérito relativo ao módulo em que participou.

<b>IDENTIFICAÇÃO DO CURSO</b>			
Nome da acção: SGQ no HVP		Módulo: N/A	
Local de Realização: <input type="checkbox"/> HVP <input type="checkbox"/> Outro _____		Data de início: 08-10-2012	Data de fim: 08-10-2012

<b>AVALIAÇÃO DO MÓDULO – classifique os itens abaixo listados</b>					
	<b>Insuficiente</b>	<b>Médio</b>	<b>Bom</b>	<b>Muito Bom</b>	<b>Não aplicável</b>
<b>Geral</b>					
1. Objectivos do módulo.					
2. Duração do módulo.					
3. Conteúdos.					
4. Distribuição do horário.					
<b>Teórica</b>					
4. Documentação recebida.					
5. Exercícios realizados.					X
<b>Prática</b>					
6. Equipamentos utilizados nas aulas práticas.					X
7. Instalações em que decorreram as aulas práticas.					X

<b>AVALIAÇÃO DO FORMADOR – classifique os itens abaixo listados</b>																
	<b>Clareza na comunicação</b>				<b>Domínio das temáticas</b>				<b>Relacionament o com os formandos</b>				<b>Powerpoint's fornecidos</b>			
<b>Nome do Formador</b>	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Ana Paula Loureiro																

Na sua opinião este módulo correspondeu às suas expectativas?  
 Sim  Não

Que sugestões de melhoria gostaria de fazer?

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<b>IDENTIFICAÇÃO DO PARTICIPANTE facultativa (se pretender resposta pf colocar os contactos)</b>	
Nome completo:	
E-mail:	Telefone:

Figure 11: outdated training document from OneVet Group.

## 2. Second proposal – developing the veterinarians

According to Rego et al., (2015) training refers to the achievement of objectives related to work. All training processes are specific and may be distributed into several steps (called *training cycle*). The most important step OneVet Group needs to consider is *identifying and diagnosing possible training needs of all of the units*. It was referred that veterinary medicine is an area of constant evolution and it is necessary to keep updated with the latest techniques and practices. This diagnose can be made at 3 major levels – *organizational, operational and individual*. Bearing in mind the reported issues from interviewees, *operational* level should receive a particular focus, since it is the level with the least apparent degree of focus. Another strong suggestion is the **creation of a task force strictly directed in identifying employees' needs**. The present task force would visit all the units and collect the main needs throughout **personal interviews**. Personal interviews are more advised than questionnaires (although this instrument can be used as well) because it promotes a stronger bond between employees and the Administration, one of the main issues addressed as well. One recurrent concern was the mindset differences between “numbers” and “animals' lives”, and personal interviews allow both elements (Administration and veterinarians) to exchange points of view, as well as getting to know both realities and contexts (hospitals/ clinics *versus* offices). Table 20 shows a support document that can be used in identifying needs.

<b>Needs identification</b>
Trainee signature: _____
Date _____

<b>STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVIEW</b>	
<b>Main questions (example):</b>	<b>Objective:</b>
1. Where do you work/which department – explain to me what are your main tasks.	<i>Get to know personal background.</i>
1. Have you ever participated in a training action before? a. <b>If yes:</b> For how long. When. How would you classify the overall experience? What were the purposes of the class? What did you learn? b. <b>If no:</b> Why do you want to have a training course? What skills/ techniques/ practices/ tools are you hoping to improve/ achieve?	<i>Understand main personal motivations in learning. Understand the needs of the student.</i>
1. What are your main expectations towards the training	<i>Understand the expectations towards the training course.</i>

<b>OBSERVATIONS</b>	
<b>From the trainer</b>	<b>From the trainee (if any)</b>

**Table 27:** needs identification support document suggestion. Source: adapted from Bonfiglioli Engineering's internal documents.

# Chapter 7

## CONCLUSIONS

### 1. Summary

Recognizing the quality of the workforce is a crucial factor in obtaining organizational results. It is important to maintain employees with high levels of motivation while performing their activities, as it is expected that motivated employees contribute more effectively achieving better results.

Bearing the previous premise in mind, this investigation focused in comprehend how the different dimensions that affect *organizational climate* are related. At any given point of the present case study there is the intention to generalize the obtained results to a wider population as it was based in a non-probabilistic sample and refers to a specific context.

The main objectives proposed were to understand the influence certain dimensions had in the context of organizational climate. Having all the previous in consideration it was sought to answer the research question: **how the organizational climate dimensions of corporate strategy, work teams, leadership, motivation, job involvement, and training affect the employees' perception of OneVet Group.**

In order to do so there was both a thorough analysis on revision of literature and an understanding of the organization as a whole. Literature review revolved

around the sphere of organizational climate and 6 of its usually assessed dimensions. These dimensions vary from organization to organization, depending on the structure and type of organization, being some of them more relevant than others. Given the small amount of studies related to the role of organizational climate in the veterinary sector, plus the existence of a wide range of dimensions that might affect organizational climate in general, the focus on 6 specific dimensions was a result from direct observation and empirical research.

**These dimensions are adapted to the OneVet Group's particular context.**

Results show that work teams have a particular (positive) emphasis in the way the organization's employees depict their workplace, as they are seen as vital for the well-functioning of their jobs.

On the other hand, while results show a strong connection to work teams, they also seem to show a strong (negative) connection within the sphere of training and differences of opinion in managing the Group. Some of the major issues addressed were the lack of training whether internally for the new software programmes or externally for the development of new skills. Work teams seem to play an important role in this sense, as they minimize the lack of training with other ways of teaching/learning via case discussion, reaching a positive outcome.

Two proposals of intervention were created having in consideration OneVet Group's specific needs and issues. When done properly, training can make workers more efficient and save costs at a long-term. Furthermore, training will promote a beneficial and more positive impact on the way employees perceive their workplace, making them more able to be willing in continuing to work for the organization and enhance their well-being.

## 2. Research limitations and next steps

Although the research has reached its aims, there were some inevitable limitations:

- **Sample size:** this study focuses in a single case, of a specific organization (OneVet Group);
- **Lack of available data and access:** all actions within the organization required previous authorization and records were not allowed;
- **Data collection:** all interviews were performed during working hours on hospital or clinic context, not being possible to have long-duration interviews and being sometimes interrupted by medical emergencies;
- **Measure used to collect the data:** during the construction of the questionnaire, it was decided upon a 5-point Likert scale – as it was verified, most of the respondents replied *neither agree nor disagree* being difficult to discern viable conclusions.

Next steps following this investigation are: (1) to understand what reasons led the dimension related to *training* score a low rank, and if these reasons are specific to this particular case and organization or if they can be generalized; (2) to collect a larger sample, while using a pair-point Likert scale; (3) to understand what other dimensions outside the realm of work teams and training have a relevant stand for the veterinary medicine sector.



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# APPENDIX 1 - Questionnaire

## Questionário – Clima Organizacional na OneVet Group



O presente inquérito tem como principal objetivo efetuar o diagnóstico do clima organizacional das unidades da OneVet Group.

Este inquérito é anónimo e todos os dados obtidos são considerados confidenciais.

É composto por uma primeira parte de foro demográfico (como idade, habilitações académicas, etc.) e uma segunda parte composta por um conjunto de afirmações, às quais pedimos para classificar segundo uma escala.

Pedimos a vossa colaboração no preenchimento deste inquérito da forma mais completa e sincera possível, sendo que não há respostas certas, ou erradas!

### Parte 1 – Dados demográficos

1. **Idade:**

2. **Função:**

3. **Estado civil:** Solteiro | Casado | Divorciado | Viúvo | União facto

4. **Género:** Feminino | Masculino

5. **Habilitações literárias:**

- a. 4<sup>a</sup> classe
- b. 9<sup>o</sup> ano
- c. Ensino secundário
- d. Licenciatura
- e. Mestrado
- f. Doutoramento

6. **Antiguidade**

- a. Até 12 meses
- b. De 12 a 18 meses
- c. De 18 a 24 meses
- d. Mais de 24 meses

7. **Remuneração**

- a. Fixa
- b. Variável
- c. Fixa e variável

## Parte 2 – Questionário de diagnóstico de clima organizacional

Responda às afirmações seguintes com base na escala que se segue:

Discordo completamente	Discordo	Não concordo, nem discordo	Concordo	Concordo completamente
1	2	3	4	5

Questões gerais					
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Quero continuar a trabalhar aqui.					
2. Recomendaria o meu local de trabalho a um amigo.					
3. Identifico-me com a cultura do meu local de trabalho na OneVet.					
4. Sinto-me como “parte da família” no meu local de trabalho na OneVet.					
5. Os fatores externos ao meu trabalho influenciam o meu desempenho.					
Estratégia organizacional					
6. Conheço a estratégia da OneVet.					
7. Identifico-me com a estratégia da OneVet.					
8. A garantia da qualidade de serviço é uma preocupação presente no dia-a-dia da clínica ou hospital ao qual pertença.					
9. A opinião dos clientes é usada para melhorar os serviços prestados.					
Liderança					
10. Tenho a autonomia necessária para a função que exerço.					
11. As minhas ideias e opiniões são ouvidas.					
12. O meu superior envolve-se e acompanha o meu trabalho.					
13. Existe uma distribuição clara de atribuições e responsabilidades pelos colaboradores.					
14. Os acontecimentos importantes são comunicados.					
15. Existe preocupação pelo equilíbrio entre a vida familiar e profissional.					
16. Existe cooperação entre colaboradores.					
17. Existe cooperação entre as várias equipas de trabalho ( <i>caso se aplique</i> ).					
18. A comunicação entre colaboradores é eficaz.					
19. A comunicação entre as várias equipas de trabalho é eficaz ( <i>caso se aplique</i> ).					
Equipas					
20. Sou respeitado profissionalmente pelos meus colegas.					
21. O ambiente de trabalho no meu local de trabalho na OneVet é saudável.					
22. Relaciono-me bem com os meus colegas.					
23. Relaciono-me bem com o meu superior.					
24. O meu local de trabalho na OneVet é competitivo.					

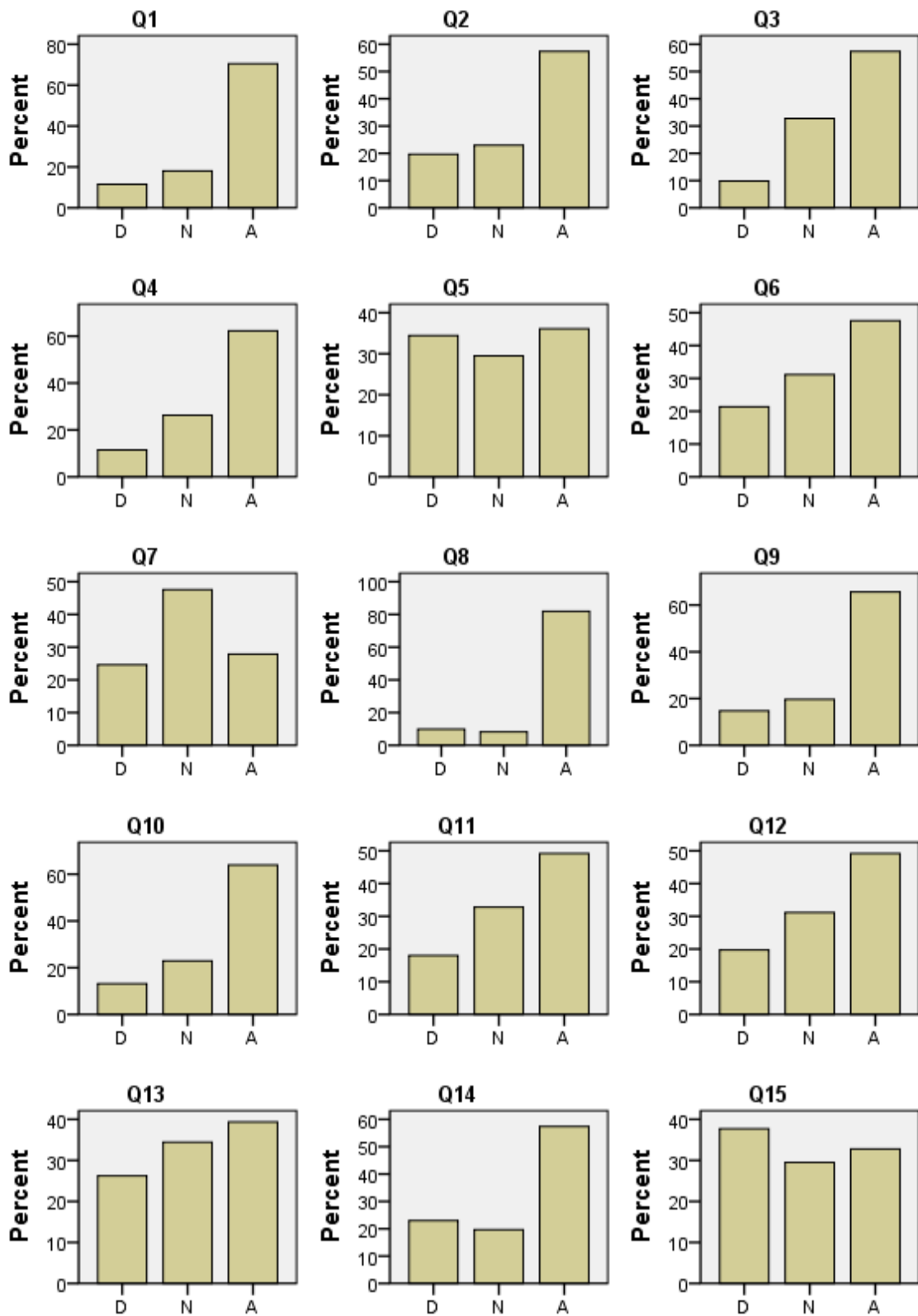
<b>Função e envolvimento no local de trabalho</b>					
25. Sei o que é necessário e previsto na realização das minhas funções.					
26. O meu trabalho valoriza-me profissionalmente.					
27. Existem momentos de convívio entre os colaboradores.					
28. Sinto-me realizado pelo meu trabalho.					
29. É expectável que as pessoas trabalhem demasiado num dia de serviço.					
30. A informação disponível é relevante para o desempenho do meu cargo e responsabilidade.					
31. Os instrumentos e ferramentas estão acessíveis para o desempenho do meu trabalho.					
<b>Motivação</b>					
32. No meu local de trabalho as pessoas dão o seu melhor.					
33. No meu local de trabalho as pessoas gostam do que fazem.					
34. As pessoas esforçam-se para desempenharem o seu trabalho.					
35. As perspetivas de carreira são importantes para a motivação do meu trabalho.					
36. Os elogios ao meu trabalho dão-me motivação.					
37. O meu desempenho é avaliado regularmente.					
38. O meu desempenho é reconhecido.					
<b>Formação</b>					
39. A OneVet investe na formação para o desenvolvimento e valorização dos seus colaboradores.					
40. A formação oferecida adequa-se em conteúdo e formato (presencial; e-learning...)					
41. Sou encorajado a desenvolver as minhas competências.					

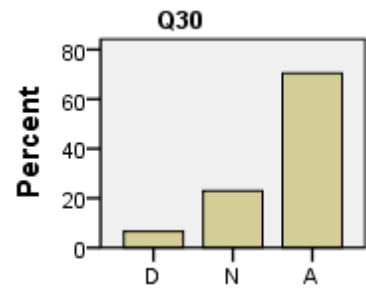
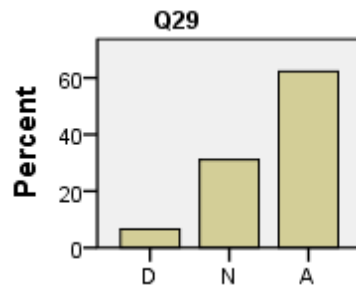
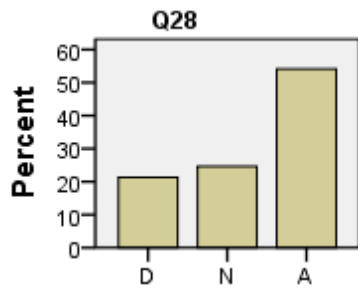
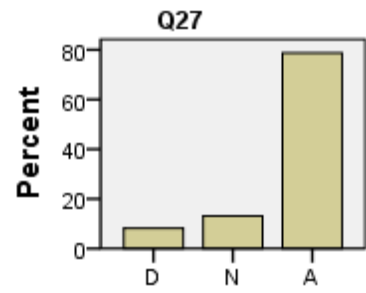
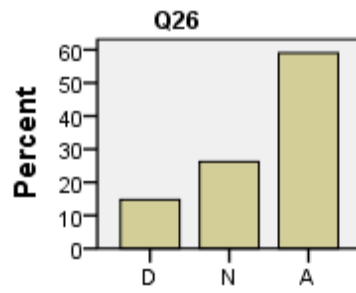
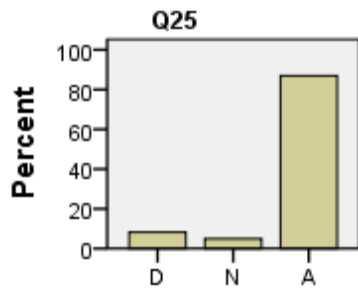
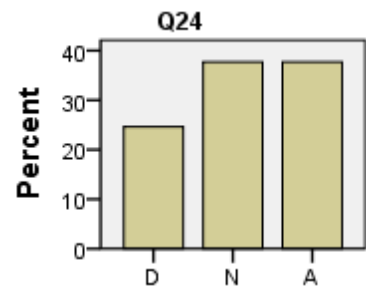
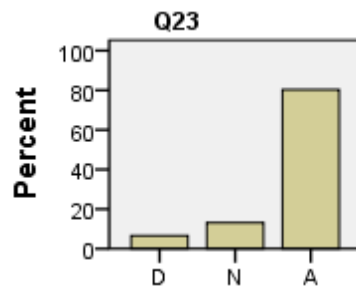
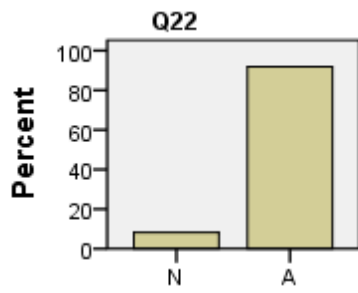
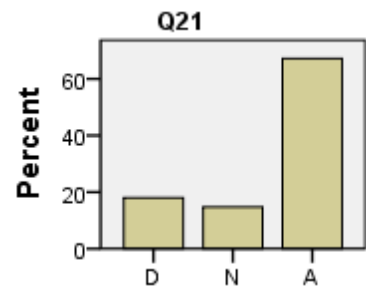
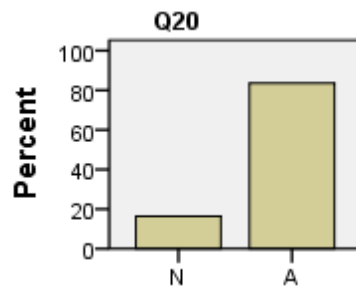
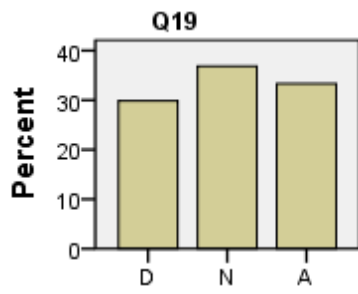
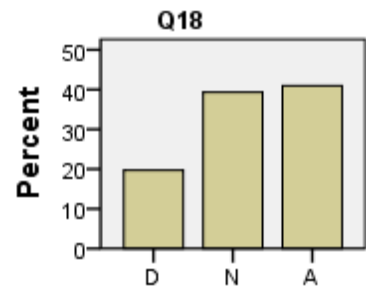
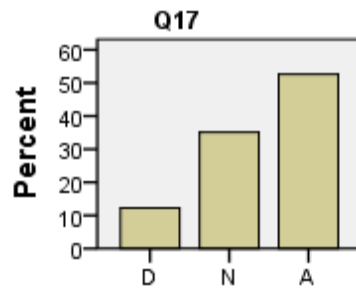
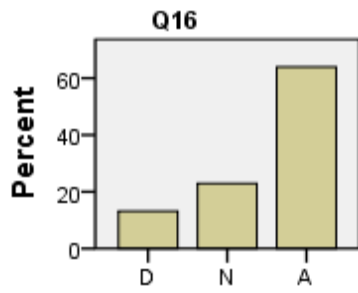
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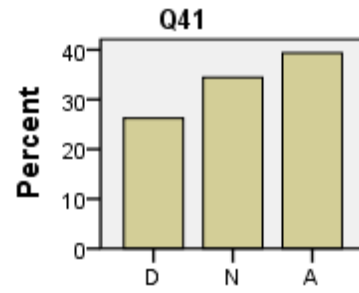
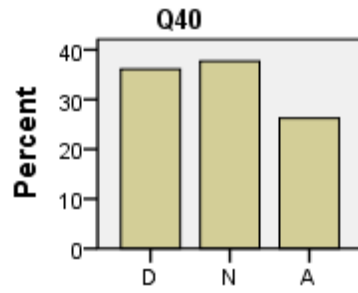
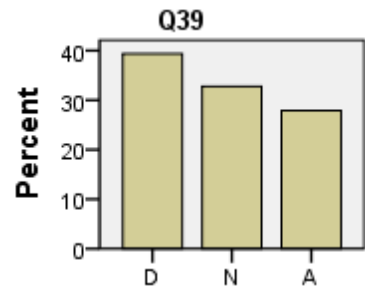
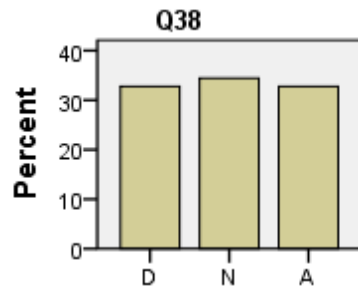
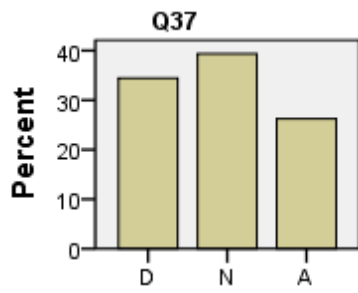
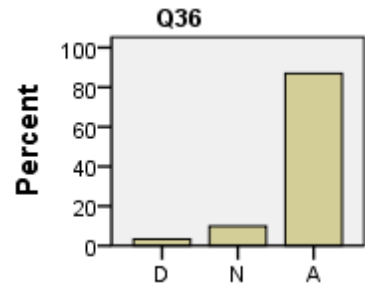
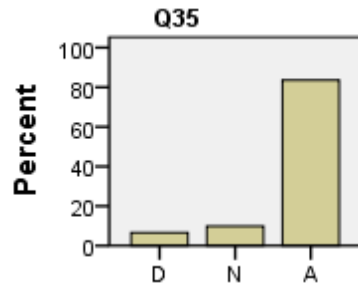
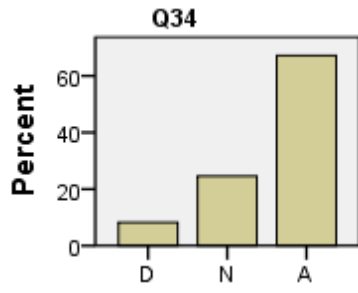
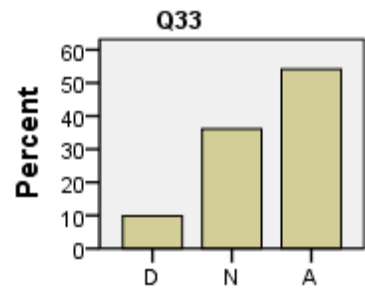
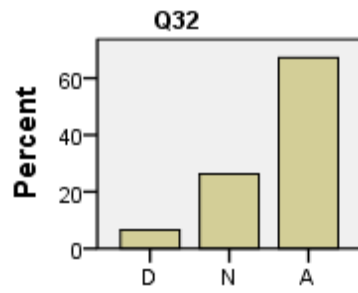
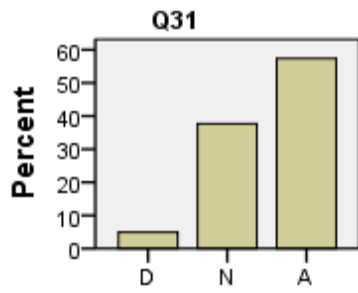
*Obrigado pela sua colaboração.*



## APPENDIX 2 – Questionnaire items histograms







## APPENDIX 3 – Participation form



CATÓLICA PORTO  
BUSINESS SCHOOL

### Consentimento Informado

No âmbito da realização do Trabalho Final de Mestrado (TFM) da Universidade Católica Portuguesa, solicito a sua colaboração com o objetivo de recolha de dados sobre a organização.

As respostas dadas, bem como possíveis documentos fornecidos e/ou gravações efetuadas serão estritamente confidenciais, e utilizados apenas para fins académicos.

Muito obrigada pela sua disponibilidade,

---

(Entrevistado/a)

---

(Entrevistadora)

*Janeiro, 2017*

# APPENDIX 4 – Interview guide



## Guia de Entrevista

1. Agradecer a presença e informar que poderá terminar a entrevista a qualquer momento sem consequências.
2. Poderá explicar mais sobre capital de risco?
3. Poderá explicar mais sobre o caso da OneVet Group, especificamente.
4. Alguma questão/problema/necessidade que queira apontar?
5. Agradecer pelo tempo disponibilizado.

## APPENDIX 5 – Interview transcription

1 **Investigator:** Hello, well... first of all I would like to thank you for all the help.  
2 Before we start I would like to stress that if any information is confidential or you  
3 would like to end this interview, it's entirely possible.

4 **Financial controller:** Yes, yes. Don't worry. Let's go!

5 **Investigator.** Could you explain more about private equity and the case of  
6 OneVet?

7 **Financial controller:** Yes... of course. There is a portion of the population that  
8 wants to invest (money speaking) in a certain product or service in hope of  
9 having a return of investment. Venture capital companies focus on that.

10 **Investigator.** Yes...

11 **Financial controller:** Well... precisely what is happening here at OneVet. We  
12 come in a "buy and-build" approach. Inter-Risco is OneVet's main source of  
13 investment. You can check the website, but I believe it holds nearly 99% of the  
14 Group. If I am not wrong, the veterinary medicine sector is worth about 120Mn  
15 or 130Mn, and it has more than one thousand veterinary professionals. It was  
16 considered to be a very poorly explored sector. As so, the investors saw an  
17 opportunity of: earning bargaining power among suppliers, attain synergies  
18 from a central services perspective, mobilize value among shareholders, secure a  
19 group where the best veterinary practices could be consolidated and differentiate  
20 by quality over price. In our case, all the acquisitions are made with all the  
21 "filling" included: professionals, suppliers, and facilities. Again, check the  
22 website but I think that the chronology of our acquisitions is: 2012 for Porto  
23 Veterinary Hospital; Baixo-Vouga Veterinary Hospital; Alto de Algés Veterinary  
24 Clinic; Veterinary Institute D. Sancho I – Almada, and; Aveiro Veterinary  
25 Policlinic; Oiã Veterinary Clinic. 2013 was a good year. It was when I entered this  
26 Group \*(laughs)\*

27 **Investigator:** \*(laughs)\*

28 **Financial controller:** As I was saying, in 2013 came Trás-os-Montes Veterinary  
29 Hospital; Carvalha Veterinary Clinic; Ermesinde Veterinary Clinic; Gondomar  
30 Veterinary Clinic; Rio Tinto Veterinary Clinic; Valongo Veterinary Clinic, and;  
31 Famalicão Veterinary Clinic. In 2014 was the time for Seixal Veterinary Clinic;  
32 Coimbra Veterinary University Hospital and this was the only one built from  
33 scratch. You should visit it. It is very beautiful.

34 **Investigator:** Isn't it the one that has the entrance for dogs, and another entrance  
35 for cats?

36 **Financial controller:** Yes, the one exactly. It is one of the things that differentiate  
37 us from others. Aren't we genius...\*(laughs)\*

38 **Investigator:** \*(laughs)\*

39 **Financial controller:** Continuing... then came Canidelo Veterinary Clinic, and;  
40 Clínica Veterinary Clinic. And finally, in 2015 Berna Veterinary Hospital, and;  
41 Peso da Régua Veterinary Clinic. It is a whole new story, all the acquisitions  
42 process... There is first a very thorough market study, the units are not bought  
43 because someone has just decided that. It can take months, years even, until the  
44 unit is selected. Everything is put to study: income, suppliers, how much do they  
45 spend, how much do they earn, and mostly, what kind of profit can we take from  
46 these acquisitions. Imagine that we eventually we want to buy a unit. As a matter  
47 of fact... take Porto for example. It took about 3 years from the idea of "we are  
48 acquiring" from the actual "we acquired". A proposal is offered to the clinic  
49 director or whoever owns the place. There is almost no room for negotiation.  
50 They either take it or leave it. After that is when all the fun starts: we acquired a  
51 unit, now what? All processes need to be homogenised: branding, financial issues  
52 like the tax number [NIF] and so on...The early stage is important...

53 **Investigator.** What happens at an early stage?

54 **Financial controller:** Hum...At an early stage all employees are usually, let's  
55 say... apprehensive, trying to figure out the real outcome of the acquisition.  
56 Typically, there is a 9-month-period (called the "wow period") in which people  
57 are fascinated by novelty. It's *after* that period that the real problems start –  
58 people sink in that there are new rules, new teams, new software, new leaders,  
59 new everything. Their previous director does not hold decision power anymore,  
60 these are now made within the Administration, and differences of opinion start  
61 to arise. The major difference on perspectives between the Administration and  
62 the vets that work for the organization are between "numbers" and "animals".  
63 Employees feel that the Administration does not have technical knowledge on  
64 veterinary medicine, and administration is not seen as a positive aspect, but  
65 rather as a "necessary evil". Portuguese people, culturally speaking, are resistant  
66 to changes and in fact there are differences. For the veterinary professionals,  
67 medicine is much more important and for the Administration, suppliers,  
68 invoicing, products and other financial and management aspects are more  
69 important. The initial 9-months-period need to be very well managed in terms of  
70 expectation.

71 **Investigator.** I see... Are there any issues that you point out?

72 **Financial controller:** Oh yes, I do! So many things to say... where should I start!..  
73 Everything depends on the type of leadership and the work-teams people are in.  
74 Leadership needs to be devoted to people. The sphere of activity, the levels of  
75 commitment with the units, the level of emotional relation that can be established  
76 them and the way how the Administration sweeps employees off their feet, even  
77 at a distance of 300km, is absolutely vital to obtain the levels of productivity  
78 expected from the units. Managements' main paradigm lies in how to link  
79 emotionally teams and projects. By doing so, satisfaction levels will arise very  
80 quickly. And it is absolutely crucial to have that satisfaction level high (and  
81 measure it also) especially among teams, among the members within the teams,



82 with the project, with the Administration, and so on. Sometimes this level of  
83 satisfaction is more important than financial profit. Teams need to be motivated  
84 at all levels: with each other as team mates, with the Administration, with the  
85 project, and ultimately with Inter-Risco. We have a great need in figuring out  
86 employees' perspectives. These [new perspectives] is what makes us understand  
87 their side of the coin and help us grow as a company that cares for their people.

88 **Investigator:** Hum...On my behalf I have no further questions. I don't know if  
89 you would like to add something else...

90 **Financial controller:** No... I am okay!

91 **Investigator:** Then all I have left is to say thank you so much for your time. It was  
92 really enlightening.

93 **Financial controller:** Believe me it was a pleasure.

## APPENDIX 6 – Percentage of responses

Question	Percentage of responses (= 61 respondents)				
	1	2	3	4	5
Q1	1.6%	9.8%	18%	52.5%	18%
Q2	8.2%	11.5%	23%	42.6%	14.8%
Q3	3.3%	6.6%	32.8%	44.3%	13.1%
Q4	6.6%	4.9%	26.2%	27.9%	34.4%
Q5	21.3%	13.1%	29.5%	23%	13.1%
Q6	6.6%	14.8%	31.1%	39.3%	8.2%
Q7	8.2%	16.4%	47.5%	23%	4.9%
Q8	3.3%	6.6%	8.2%	44.3%	37.7%
Q9	8.2%	6.6%	19.7%	39.3%	26.2%
Q10	4.9%	8.2%	23%	37.7%	26.2%
Q11	6.6%	11.5%	32.8%	29.5%	19.7%
Q12	4.9%	14.8%	31.1%	37.7%	11.5%
Q13	9.8%	16.4%	34.4%	32.8%	6.6%
Q14	11.5%	11.5%	19.7%	42.6%	14.8%
Q15	16.4%	21.3%	29.5%	19.7%	13.1%
Q16	1.6%	11.5%	23%	42.6%	21.3%
Q17	1.8%	10.5%	35.1%	36.8%	15.8%
Q18	8.2%	11.5%	39.3%	32.8%	8.2%
Q19	7%	22.8%	36.8%	31.6%	1.8%
Q20	0%	0%	16.4%	55.7%	27.9%
Q21	4.9%	13.1%	14.8%	37.7%	29.5%
Q22	0%	0%	8.2%	47.5%	44.3%
Q23	1.6%	4.9%	13.1%	55.7%	24.6%
Q24	9.8%	14.8%	37.7%	23%	14.8%
Q25	1.6%	6.6%	4.9%	59%	27.9%
Q26	3.3%	11.5%	26.2%	39.3%	19.7%
Q27	4.9%	3.3%	13.1%	55.7%	23%
Q28	9.8%	11.5%	24.6%	39.3%	14.8%
Q29	0%	6.6%	31.1%	39.3%	23%
Q30	0%	6.6%	23%	57.4%	13.1%
Q31	1.6%	3.3%	37.7%	47.5%	9.8%
Q32	1.6%	4.9%	26.2%	44.3%	23%
Q33	3.3%	6.6%	36.1%	31.1%	23%
Q34	3.3%	4.9%	24.6%	41%	26.2%
Q35	3.3%	3.3%	9.8%	34.4%	49.2%
Q36	3.3%	0%	9.8%	34.4%	52.5%
Q37	14.8%	19.7%	39.3%	18%	8.2%
Q38	16.4%	16.4%	34.4%	27.9%	4.9%
Q39	16.4%	23%	32.8%	21.3%	6.6%
Q40	16.4%	19.7%	37.7%	23%	3.3%
Q41	11.5%	14.8%	34.4%	32.8%	6.6%

## APPENDIX 7 – Questionnaire main statistics

Question	Mean	Median	Mode	Variance	Min.	Max.
Q1	3.75	4	4	0.86	1	5
Q2	3.44	4	4	1.28	1	5
Q3	3.57	4	4	0.85	1	5
Q4	3.79	4	5	1.37	1	5
Q5	2.93	3	3	1.76 <sup>14</sup>	1	5
Q6	3.28	3	4	1.07	1	5
Q7	3.00	3	3	0.93	1	5
Q8	4.07	4	4	1.03	1	5
Q9	3.69	4	4	1.38	1	5
Q10	3.72	4	4	1.20	1	5
Q11	3.44	3	3	1.28	1	5
Q12	3.36	3	4	1.07	1	5
Q13	3.10	3	3	1.16	1	5
Q14	3.38	4	4	1.47	1	5
Q15	2.92	3	3	1.61	1	5
Q16	3.70	4	4	0.98	1	5
Q17	3.54	4	4	0.90	1	5
Q18	3.21	3	3	1.07	1	5
Q19	2.98	3	3	0.91	1	5
Q20	4.11	4	4	0.44	3	5
Q21	3.74	4	4	1.36	1	5
Q22	4.36	4	4	0.40 <sup>15</sup>	3	5
Q23	3.97	4	4	0.73	1	5
Q24	3.18	3	3	1.35	1	5
Q25	4.05	4	4	0.75	1	5
Q26	3.61	4	4	1.08	1	5
Q27	3.89	4	4	0.94	1	5
Q28	3.38	4	4	1.37	1	5
Q29	3.79	4	4	0.77	2	5
Q30	3.77	4	4	0.58	2	5
Q31	3.61	4	4	0.61	1	5
Q32	3.82	4	4	0.82	1	5
Q33	3.64	4	3	1.03	1	5
Q34	3.82	4	4	0.98	1	5
Q35	4.23	4	5	0.98	1	5
Q36	4.33	5	5	0.82	1	5
Q37	2.85	3	3	1.29	1	5
Q38	2.89	3	3	1.30	1	5
Q39	2.79	3	3	1.34	1	5
Q40	2.77	3	3	1.18	1	5
Q41	3.08	3	3	1.21	1	5

<sup>14</sup> Question with the highest point variance

<sup>15</sup> Question with the lowest point variance

