HETEROGENEITY OF FAMILY BUSINESSES: AN IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTING INNOVATION UNDER THE LENS OF INSTITUTIONAL LOGICS?

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ABSTRACT
The complexity of the environment in family business resonates in a variety of organizational behaviors and dynamics, including, for example, management accounting innovation (MAI). In this context, this study aims to understand how the heterogeneity of family businesses is articulated with the MAI under the lens of institutional logics. To this end, a qualitative study was conducted through interviews with managers of family businesses. The results of this research reveal how the different characteristics of family business relate to MAI practices, especially regarding the predominant institutional logics within the organizations — family logic and business logic. This study provides theoretical contributions by elucidating how size, openness to professional management, and organizational stance of the family in the business are distinct elements among family business that can either restrict or promote MAI from the perspective of institutional logics. In practice, the findings offer insights into how the particularities of family businesses may impact the adoption of MAI. Based on this, both family and non-family managers can identify ways to overcome internal barriers to maximize MAI, according to the unique realities of family business.
Keywords: family business; heterogeneity; management accounting innovation; management accounting practices; phenomenography.

1 INTRODUCTION

Family business are organizations recognized for their unique organizational nature (Bergmann, 2024). These are organizations that are considered as rational as non-family businesses, but they have several heterogeneous aspects that influence their daily actions (Huerta et al., 2017). This heterogeneity is the result of the structural coupling between the family and the company elements, which reports a particular organizational identity, incorporating different organizational actions and skills (Frank et al., 2010). In view of this, the heterogeneity of family businesses has been considered a relevant topic in empirical research due to its impact directly portrayed in the behaviors and dynamics adopted in organizations (see Bergmann, 2024).

The various categorical differences between family businesses involve different sources of heterogeneity (Daspit et al., 2021; Huerta et al., 2017), such as heterogeneity in governance mechanisms (see Arteaga & Escribá-Esteve, 2021), financial, accounting, and tax policies (see Bergmann, 2024), in the definition of family business (Diaz-Moriana et al., 2018), among other aspects. Despite the wide range of research found in the literature on the heterogeneity of family businesses, several relevant questions associated with the heterogeneity of these companies still lack answers (Bergmann, 2024).

One of these issues is linked to the management accounting of family businesses. Specifically, little attention has been paid to discussions about how the particularities that exist in the family’s business environment interact with the management accounting practices that are implemented in the organization (see Kapiyangoda & Gooneratne, 2021). While some scholars identify that the heterogeneity of family businesses can reduce the degree of information asymmetry in the organizational environment, denoting a lower need to apply management accounting practices (MAPs), others argue that the different conflicts of interest existing in family businesses drive the adoption of MAPs (see Dasanayaka et al., 2021).

The controversial results in the literature also extend to MAI in family businesses (Hariadi & Alsawayeh, 2020; Hiebl, 2013). MAI refers to the introduction of a new management accounting practice adopted for the first time in the company (Pavlatos & Kostakis, 2018; Zawawi & Hoque, 2010). Thus, while some family businesses adopt innovations in accounting to ensure business continuity, promoting greater transparency and detail in information (Hiebl, 2013), others are hesitant to adopt MAI due to the high costs associated with its implementation (Hariadi & Alsawayeh, 2020).

Considering these gaps and that the heterogeneity of family businesses can impact on the behavior of family businesses (see Bergmann, 2024), in this research, we will understand how the heterogeneity of family businesses is articulated with the MAI under the lens of Institutional Logics. Studies depict different scenarios of MAI as they are implemented in specific sectors or organizations (Chiwamit et al., 2017), resulting in variations in the practices that are adopted (Ansari et al., 2010; Wanderley et al., 2014). One of the explanatory factors for the adoption of MAI can be explained by the approach of institutional logics (Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018).

This is due to the perspective of institutional logic, which resides in a metatheoretical framework aimed at analyzing the interrelations formed between macro and micro levels, involving institutions, organizations, and individuals within social systems (Thornton et al., 2012; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). More specifically, the different institutional logics that may prevail in social systems, such as those of family, state, market, professions, religion, and business, can influence various organizational and individual behaviors (Thornton et al., 2012).

In the context of family businesses, studies such as Gottlieb et al. (2021) find the family, business, and professional logics associated with management accounting and control. Meanwhile, in the study by Rizza and Ruggeri (2018), the authors denote the family, business, and community logics associated with the institutionalization of management accounting tools. Thus, the coexistence of multiple logics in the context of family businesses may indicate different tensions in management accounting practices (Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018), which may occasionally be reflected in MAI.

Furthermore, given the heterogeneity found in the environment of family businesses, it is argued that the level of tension can vary significantly. For instance, it is widely recognized in the literature that family enterprises tend to adopt management accounting practices to a lesser extent than non-family businesses, often due to resource constraints or even because family members usually follow non-accounting information (like previous experiences, or feeling) for decision-making (see Gottlieb et al., 2021; Ndemewah et al., 2019). In this context, it is understood that the way multiple institutional logic affects decision-making and even the outcomes of organizations is relevant to the organizational context (Durand et al., 2018), especially for family businesses that are constantly seeking the continuity of their operations (Calabrò et al., 2019).

Thus, it is noteworthy that the innovation of this study lies in the comprehensive analysis of different family businesses, covering small, medium, and large organizations across industrial, commercial, and service sectors. Additionally, the study considers specific characteristics of each organization, such as the generational aspect, governance structure, family involvement, and social ties established within each company. These elements, which reflect the heterogeneity of family businesses (see Daspit et al., 2021), can be articulated with MAI.

Therefore, by exploring how the heterogeneity of family businesses is articulated with the MAI, under the lens of institutional logics, the study allows us to add contributions to the literature. By considering institutional logics as an analytical lens, it is possible to understand the interactions of the particularities of family businesses implicit in the choices of family businesses to adopt or resist MAI. Occasionally, this contribution aspires both to provide theoretical insights for the management accounting literature in family businesses and to offer practical guidance for professionals and managers on how the adoption of MAI can be adhered to or boosted in the organization. Thus, managers can leverage the results of this research to formulate more effective strategies for a sector of great importance to the global economy, family businesses (see Gagné et al., 2021). Based on these findings, they can gradually incorporate MAI, adjusting it according to the specific context of each organization.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Institutional logics in family businesses

The theoretical approach of institutional logics evolved from neoinstitutional theory, rooted in sociology (see Thornton et al., 2012). Although stemming from this theory, institutional logics are distinguished by their ability to address the duality of the material-practical elements of institutions (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) as well as their cultural-symbolic components (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Thus, it emerged as a new approach to institutional analysis with the works of Friedland and Alford (1991), Haveman and Rao (1997) and Thornton and Ocasio (1999). They are recognized as "the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social realities" (Thornton & Ocasio, 2008, p. 101). In other words, they are considered a metatheoretical framework for examining the interactions that occur at the level of institutions, individuals, and organizations within social systems (Thornton et al., 2012). According to Thornton and Ocasio (2008), the focus is on the distinct effects of institutional logics on both individual and organizational behavior. In Thornton's (2004) study, the author categorizes the logic of family, religion, state, profession, organization and market. Subsequently, in the work of Thornton et al. (2012), the authors included the logic of the community. Each of these logics has a central logic, which directs and at the same time constrains individual, organizational and societal behavior (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008).

More specifically, despite the coexistence of different logics in the business environment, society has been recognized as an inter-institutional system, in which multiple logics can coexist as institutional patterns that directly influence the actions of individuals and organizations (Friedland & Alford, 1991). For example, Liang et al. (2023) explored the family business landscape and found that institutional logics, specifically family, religion, and market logic, shape the strategic orientation adopted in the organization. Nevertheless, in the study by Aparicio et al. (2017), through a qualitative investigation, they found that the implicit and explicit objectives of family businesses are manifested by family, business, and community logics.

In context of family businesses, studies indicate that multiple logics can coexist, such as the family logic and business logic (see Liang et al., 2023; Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018). The family logic prescribes the behavior of individuals focused on the needs and values of family members (Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018). That is family logic focuses on ensuring financial security for family members, privileging harmony, and family goals, in supporting the employability of family members, as well as ensuring promotions of these members within the organization (see Aparicio et al., 2017). While business logic orients a behavior to standards and practices focused on the profitability of the business, exercising more professional policies, aiming to maximize economic return, with business growth (Aparicio et al., 2017; Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018).

Thus, when multiple logics coexist, tensions and conflicts of logics can arise (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018). As a result, the existing contradictions of a set of institutional logics offer individuals, society and organizations opportunities to transform individual identity (Friedland & Alford, 1991; Thornton & Ocasio, 2008). In family businesses, this occurs especially when family members prioritize business logics, reflecting behavior driven by values, practices, and policies aimed at economic and professional objectives, consequently, family logic is threatened by this contrary prioritization (Liang et al., 2023). However, this dichotomy is also found in the study by Rizza and Ruggeri (2018), in which the authors find three different institutional logics in the institutionalization of management accounting tools, the logic being the family, company, and community. According to the authors, institutionalization occurs when the co-presence of different logics converges with each other. In this line, as postulated by some authors, in order to address heterogeneity in organizational practices, it is necessary to examine institutional logics (Lounsbury, 2008; Friedland & Alford, 1991; Hyvönen et al., 2009).

2.2 Heterogeneity of family businesses

The business landscape of family businesses stands out for its unique behavior compared to other organizations, due, in part, to the values established by family members in the company structure, thus denoting that they are a heterogeneous group of companies (Dibrell & Memili, 2019; García-Álvarez & López-Sintas, 2001). The heterogeneous environment consists of a "range of categorical and/or variational differences between family businesses at a given time or overtime" (Daspit et al., 2021, p. 3). In the literature, there are different categories or aspects that characterize the heterogeneity of family businesses (see Arteaga & Escribá-Esteve, 2021; Diaz-Moriana et al., 2018; Nordqvist et al., 2014), permeating from the family structure to aspects related to family dynamics and values. In this research, we rely on the categories suggested by Daspit et al. (2021), who indicate that the heterogeneity among family businesses may be associated with various factors. Among them, the authors highlight the preservation of socioemotional wealth, intergenerational succession, family ownership and management, board composition, international expansion, short-term vision, the organization's size and growth, family capital, entrepreneurial behavior, and interactions with employees.

Moores and Mula (2000) were pioneers in investigating, through a quantitative approach, the heterogeneity of family businesses associated with different management practices and controls, which vary according to the life cycle stage of these companies. In the study by Arteaga and Escribá-Esteve (2021), the authors analyzed 490 family businesses and identified four different types of family businesses and characterized them as follows: (i) founder-centered companies; (ii) protective companies; (iii) consensual companies; and (iv) companies evolved in business. According to the authors, these groups differ in terms of the characteristics of the ownership structure, the involvement of family members in management, and the complexity of both family and organization. Daspit et al. (2023) investigates the heterogeneity of family business at the organizational level and highlight categorical differences in terms of goals (business goals and family goals), governance (family ownership, family management, and family control), and resources (social capital, human capital, and financial capital). Along the same lines, under a configuration approach, in the study by Nordqvist et al. (2014), the authors classify nine types of family businesses, varying significantly in the involvement of the family in the ownership and management of family businesses.

Among the various studies investigating heterogeneity in family businesses, certain categorical distinctions stand out among them. In a recent literature review conducted by Bergmann (2024), the author identified that generational and succession aspects are the most frequently addressed in analyzing the heterogeneity of these businesses. However, some gaps remain unexplored, particularly concerning heterogeneity related to aspects of finance, accounting, and taxation (Bergmann, 2024). Although research advances in the investigation of the heterogeneity of family businesses, according to the studies mentioned above, the focus of investigation on the distinctions between family and non-family businesses still prevails (Chua et al., 2012). Thus, the authors reinforce that research on the heterogeneous environment of family businesses must transcend explanations about the numerous variations identified in the behavior and environment of family businesses. More specifically, the main objective of family business theory is to provide explanations about why, which requires a deeper understanding of the heterogeneity of these companies in order to understand the distinctions in these companies (Chua et al., 2012), among them, MAI can also be a factor of distinction between family businesses, as elucidated in the next subsection.

2.3 Management Accounting Innovation

The new economic context and the rapid diffusion of technologies are some of the factors that force companies to adopt the MAI (Pavlatos & Kostakis, 2018; Zawawi & Hoque, 2010). In this context, there is a growing call to introduce new management accounting practices that not only support the improvement of analytical calculations for pricing but also improve accounting management tools aligned with the organizational strategy, aiming at the future of the organization (Oyewo, 2021). Among the practices of MAI, the literature has focused on activity-based costing (ABC), target costing, balanced scorecard (BSC), and strategic management accounting, which stem from approach practices that go beyond the budget (e.g., Hoque, 2014; Ax & Greve, 2017). In this line, for Zawawi and Hoque (2010), MAI is consistent with the implementation of one or more "newer" or modern practices for the first time, such as ABC costing, time-oriented ABC costing, BSC, and activity-based management. Concomitantly, from the perspective of Ben Hamad and Fournès (2023), the innovation of an accounting practice is intrinsically linked to the adoption of a management accounting tool, which is considered a novelty by all those involved in the organization.

Despite the extensive variety of studies that have investigated MAI, highlighting the study by Ax and Greve (2017), Pavlatos and Kostakis (2018), and Naeemi et al. (2023), it is noted that these studies predominantly focus on the definition of MAI proposed by Zawawi and Hoque (2010), which will also be adopted as a reference in this research. The main focus of studies on MAI is to unveil the factors and characteristics of the company that are associated with the adoption of innovation (Ax & Greve, 2017). In the study by Naeemi et al. (2023), the authors found that organizational culture, crisis control indicators, and information and communication technology are elements that are associated with the adoption of MAI, especially in times of economic crisis. In the same vein, in the study by Pavlatos and Kostakis (2018), the authors argue that companies more impacted by economic crises tend to adopt and use MAI compared to those less affected by the crisis. Furthermore, the authors reveal that MAI provides better information to deal with uncertain environments caused by economic crises. Meanwhile, for Oyewo (2021), competition and environmental uncertainty, of which they are coercive factors, may be associated with the adoption of more innovative management accounting practices.

Among the multiple factors that may be associated with MAI, in the context of family businesses, there are specific factors of these organizations that can interact with the MAI (see Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018), such as institutional logics. In this line, the literature has denoted that the decision-making of family members (family logic) and the particularities of the business (business logic) are key elements that interact with management accounting practices, as discussed by Rizza and Ruggeri (2018). Nonetheless, in the study by Wanderley et al. (2022), the authors reveal the underlying developments associated with MAI, highlighting a specific case of the BSC through the lens of institutional logics. The results reveal tensions between the company's characteristics under organizational logics and the perceived characteristics of the BSC. In the context of family businesses, the literature shows that, in general, family business use management accounting practices less frequently than non-family business (Hiebl et al., 2015; Hiebl & Mayrleitner, 2017). These differences can be explained by the tensions between family logic (as a constraint) and business logic (as a driver) (Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018).

3 METHODOLOGICAL PROCESSES

As mentioned in the introductory section, this study aims to understand how MAI is articulated with the heterogeneity of family business, using the institutional logics approach. Thus, a qualitative exploratory study was conducted under an interpretive approach (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018; Patton, 2014). The methodological choice of this study is based on the need to provide a broad and detailed understanding of how elements of heterogeneity in family business interact with MAI, influencing or even limiting its adoption. Given this, qualitative research focuses on the attribution of meaning and the interpretation of phenomena within their natural contexts (Denzin, 2008). Among the various qualitative research approaches, exploratory research allows for the analysis of the aforementioned interactions. The companies investigated in this research and the characteristics of the interviewees are presented in Figure 1. This information provides a comprehensive view of the profiles of family business and certain aspects of their heterogeneity, allowing for a deeper analysis of the factors associated with family business that relate to MAI.

Figure 1
Descriptions of the previous cases investigated

Case	Sector	Size	Year of foundation	Governance structure	Family Generation*	State
E01	Commercial	Small (9 employees)	2011	100% family	Second	SC
E02	Industrial	Medium (105 employees)	1955	100% family	Third	SC
E03	Industrial	Small (10 employees)	2005	100% family	Second	SC
E04	Industrial/Commercial	Big (720 employess)	2001	100% family	Second	SC
E05	Commercial	Medium (90 employess)	2010	100% family	Second	SP
E06	Industrial	Big (750 employess)	1973	100% family	Second	SC
E07	Service	Small (6 employess)	1997	100% family	Second	SC
E08	Industrial	Medium (124 employess)	1998	100% family	Second	SC
E09	Industrial	Medium (124 employess)	1998	100% family	Second	SC
E10	Industrial	Medium (200 employess)	1980	100% family	Third	SC
E11	Industrial	Big (830 employess)	1986	100% family	Second	SC
E12	Service	Small (30 employess)	1970	100% family	Third	SC
E13	Industrial	Big (1700 employess)	1949	100% family	Third	SC
E14	Commercial/Service	Small (30 employess)	2003	100% family	Second	SC
E15	Service	Big (450 employess)	1991	100% family	Second	SC
E16	Commercial	Big (4.000 employess)	2001	51% family	Third	MG
E17	Industrial	Medium (450 employess)	2004	100% family	One	SC
E18	Industrial	Medium (100 employess)	1955	100% family	Third	SC
E19	Industrial and Commercial	Medium (380 employess)	1970	100% family	Third	SC

Note: *Family generation present in the management of the organization.
Source: Survey data (2024-2025).

To carry out the interview, a semi-structured script was formulated. The conduct of the semi-structured interview is justified by its flexibility in conducting the questions, as well as allowing the interviewer to make adjustments in the order and include additional questions to obtain more comprehensive clarifications (Qu & Dumay, 2011). Initially, the study aimed to capture the characteristic elements of the organizational context of the analyzed company, such as industry sector, size, and company history. Subsequently, a series of questions were asked to understand the management accounting practices used in the organization, the family's perception of these practices, how MAI occurs, and the factors that either restrict or drive it.

The final set of questions consists of closing questions, intended to allow the interviewee to share any additional information not covered during the interview.

It is important to note that, given the interpretivist nature of the research, the semi-structured interview guide was not taken from a previously validated script in the literature. To ensure the validity of the data collection instrument, it underwent several cycles of revision and refinement after being reviewed by two experienced researchers in the fields of management accounting and family businesses. This process helped align the interview questions with the research objective, while respecting the particularities of the context under study. The interviews were conducted, analyzed, and coded in portuguese. Subsequently, the content was translated into English and then back-translated into Portuguese in order to identify possible inconsistencies or distortions in the translated interview texts.

3.1 Data analysis process

In conducting the data analysis, the thematic analysis technique was used, following the approach outlined in the study by Bepari et al. (2024). This analysis concerns a flexible methodology, whose objective is to identify themes present in a textual dataset (Cassell & Bishop, 2019; King & Brooks, 2018). Although the literature recognizes that there is no standardized guide for conducting thematic analysis (see Castleberry & Nolen, 2018), there are some steps to ensure a comprehensive and systematic analysis.

The initial stage of the analysis involved familiarization with the data through a process of reading and re-reading the transcripts, which allowed for the alignment of field notes previously taken after each interview. Subsequently, the next step involved coding, in which the data were transferred to MAXQDA software for organization and coding. During this phase, the most significant excerpts in the data were coded (Castleberry & Nolen, 2018; Bepari et al., 2024). Following this, the coded segments were integrated to generate a report summarizing the key excerpts for each theme.

Since data collection was carried out in conjunction with other studies on similar topics, the analysis and data saturation for the present study began after the completion of data collection. Thus, the saturation procedure adopted in this research was categorical saturation, following the guidelines of Falqueto et al. (2018) and Hoffman et al. (2017). Initially, we divided the transcripts into two main groups: (1) industry and (2) others. Subsequently, the transcripts were alternated between groups and analyzed with the aid of an electronic draw. Considering that the cases are not proportional, the last cases consisted only of companies in the industrial sector. Using an Excel spreadsheet, we listed the new elements identified for each theme addressed in the study. This allowed us to identify the point of saturation, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 - *Point of Saturation*

	Interviewed																		
Categories	E04	E13	E01	E02	E16	E10	E12	E17	E05	E11	E07	E03	E15	E09	**E14**	E08	E18	E19	E06
Company size	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	**0**	0	0	0	0
Openness to professional management	3	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	**0**	0	0	0	0
Organizational stance of the family in the business	2	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	**0**	0	0	0	0
Total	6	1	2	2	1	0	3	1	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Prepared by the authors.

As presented, saturation occurred in the 15th interview, with additional interviews conducted due to the analysis taking place after the completion of data collection.

4 ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

The context of the family businesses analyzed in this study reveals different organizational profiles that vary in terms of industry sector (industrial, commercial, and service), size (small, medium, and large), family ownership (family equity ownership in the business), CEO (family member or non-family member), generation involved in the business (first, second, and third), succession intentions (family or non-family continuity), openness to professional management, and the organizational stance of the family in the business (static or dynamic), among other aspects that demonstrate the heterogeneity of the family businesses examined in this research, as presented in Figure 2.

Figure 2

Heterogeneity of the Family Businesses Analyzed

Case	Sector	Size	Family Owned	CEO	Family generation involved in the organization	Intention of family succession	Openness to professional management	Organizational stance of the family in the business
E1	Commercial	Small	100% family	Family member	Second	Yes	No	Static
E2	Industrial	Medium	100% family	Non-family member	Third	No	Yes	Dynamic
E3	Industrial	Small	100% family	Family member	Second	No	No	Static
E4	Industrial/Commercial	Big	100% family	Family member	Second	No	Yes	Dynamic
E5	Commercial	Medium	100% family	Family member	Second	Yes	No	Dynamic
E6	Industrial	Big	100% family	Non-family member	Second	No	Yes	Dynamic
E7	Service	Small	100% family	Family member	Second	No	No	Static
E8	Industrial	Medium	100% family	Non-family member	Second	No	Yes	Dynamic
E9	Industrial	Medium	100% family	Non-family member	Second	No	Yes	Dynamic
E10	Industrial	Medium	100% family	Family member	Third	Yes	Yes	Dynamic
E11	Industrial	Big	100% family	Non-family member	Second	No	Yes	Dynamic
E12	Service	Small	100% family	Family member	Third	No	No	Static
E13	Industrial	Big	100% family	Non-family member	Third	No	Yes	Dynamic
E14	Commercial/ Service	Small	100% family	Family member	Second	Yes	No	Static
E15	Service	Big	100% family	Family member	Second	Yes	Yes	Dynamic
E16	Commercial	Big	51% family	Family member	Third	No	Yes	Dynamic
E17	Industrial	Medium	100% family	Family member	First	Yes	Yes	Dynamic
E18	Industrial	Medium	100% family	Non-family member	Third	No	Yes	Dynamic
E19	Industrial/Commercial	Medium	100% family	Family member	Third	Yes	Yes	Dynamic

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Among the various elements that reflect the heterogeneity of family businesses, three main themes emerged that are articulated with MAI, namely: (1) company size, ranging from small, medium, to large firms; (2) openness to professional management; and (3) organizational stance of the family in the business – static versus dynamic. In the next subsection, empirical evidence is presented to illustrate how these three elements resonate differently in MAI within the family organizations investigated in this research.

4.1 Company Size

It is observed that company size plays a determining role in how MAI is implemented and practiced within the organization. It is observed that the small family businesses (E01; E03; E07; E12; and E14) showed a predominance of the family logic, especially regarding the structures and decision-making processes that are more centralized around family objectives, the informality of management, and the resistance to change. As revealed in case E12: “Here I have a bit of that difficulty that they are not open to understanding this need [more structured management processes], right? So, it’s very family-oriented and not very professional.”

These are companies that present a strong dynamic associated with family ties and the trust placed in family members, which reinforces the configuration of these companies in the centralization of decision-making based on the attributes valued by the family. Added to this is the emphasis on family control in management, where it is observed that, despite having operated in the market for many years, they do not show significant business growth compared to other organizations that have evolved from small businesses into medium or large ones (see Figure 14). Given this, they tend to show limitations regarding the formalization of organizational processes, as well as in the adoption of more complex management accounting tools, such as specific costing methodologies, strategic planning, performance indicators, budgeting, among other more analytical and strategic tools. As revealed by case E07, when asked about the management accounting practices used in the organization, “We don’t have anything fixed like that [...] It’s something we want to improve [...] try to automate more and more to have time left to move away from operational tasks”.

This limitation is noted by the interviewees themselves, who perceive organizational size as a restricting factor, as described in case E01: "I don’t see why we should adopt a new practice or tool, right? Since it’s a small company, I don’t think we need certain things. What we have is already enough." This perception reflects a rationale based on simplicity and practicality in the use of management accounting practices, as highlighted in case E03: "Today we keep everything very basic, let’s say, nothing in a system, just the control of how much the company produced, the monthly costs, and what was left over”. The decision to adopt or not adopt MAI — in this group centralized by family members — tends to be strongly influenced by the very centralization of the decision-making process. This choice is often linked to the perception that a small-scale operation and lower organizational complexity do not require the use of more sophisticated practices, as denoted in the previous account of case E01.

Although in case E07 the company is transitioning to process automation in some accounting routines, there is still a noticeable absence of traditional management accounting practices, such as strategic planning, specific costing and pricing methodologies, budgeting, and performance indicators, among other tools. It is understood that this gap can be explained by the strong daily involvement of family members in decision-making positions, which leads to the adoption of more informal and simplified controls, adjusted according to the demands of the business.

Regarding medium-sized companies (see Figure 14), institutional ambivalence is evident between family and business logics. Despite the coexistence of multiple logics, there is a notable predominance of the business logic, characterized by the decentralization of the decision-making process, in which strategic positions are occupied by members external to the business family, as well as by the transition from a small company to a medium-sized company, where the pursuit of growth is evident in these organizations. As revealed by case E08:

> The company basically started in the founder's garage, right? [...] It gained sales volume, they started making sales outside of [company's city of operation], here in the region, and then they understood that there was a very promising market for this type of [company activity]. [...] The industry developed a lot, and two years ago, it changed from a limited company to a corporation (E08).

Furthermore, the business logic is also based on the ability to adapt to changes in the market in which the company operates. These evidences resonate in MAI, such as openness to new management accounting practices, as illustrated in case E19:

> So this part of managerial information I brought here around 2010, 2011. So, we have a system, we have information for everything you want, okay? [...] All these system things, some started from this year, with strategic planning, right? We implemented strategic planning, we acquired a tool which is [...], right? A strategic planning control tool as well, right? Yeah, but it's very complete (E19).

Exceptions are found in cases E02 and E18, which are experiencing financial difficulties due to ongoing judicial recovery processes. As highlighted in case E02: "We have a very big financial limitation [...]. It ends up being an extra cost for us that we just don't incur, right?" (E02). Even with this limitation, the interviewee points out that there are planned projects that have not yet been implemented, as they are, in his words, 'kept in the drawer,' waiting for more favorable conditions for execution.

> So I would say that today we really have quite a few limitations in this regard. I have a few small projects in the drawer, you know? Waiting for a better moment to get approved, to get things going, projects ranging from leadership to improvements in software systems for the area (E02).

In contrast, the other medium-sized companies did not mention challenges regarding the adoption of MAI, recognizing it as a beneficial tool for the organization. In these companies, MAI is regarded as a resource to help guide the company in achieving its goals, as highlighted in case E10: "We keep innovating and bringing in new tools, pulling us out of our comfort zone and, most importantly, providing indicators or managerial information that can contribute to the business strategy and objectives" (E10). In this way, it is perceived that, as the family business reaches a new size or adopts a more complex configuration in its organizational structure, the perception of managerial accounting tools also tends to change. In most cases, this change occurs either through the initiative of the family itself or through the actions of non-family managers, who introduce these tools or collaborate in their implementation.

In the same vein are the large companies, where there is a predominance of business logic, also associated with the constant pursuit of business growth. As revealed by case E11:

> The company has grown a lot in these 15 years that I have been here, right? Yeah, when I started at the company, we had a warehouse of about 2,500 to 2,800 m², right? We acquired other properties, expanding the company's production facilities. [...] We are in a constant process of renovations here that never stops. Every time I think it will end, it doesn't. It's more space, right? Today, occupied with production, we are occupying about 30,000 m² (E11).

In these organizations (medium and big), it is noticeable that MAI is institutionalized as a necessary and strategic tool for organizational decision-making. These companies have been more frequently investing in the adoption of new management accounting tools and practices — for example, specific software tailored to management accounting tools, as seen in case E08, where the interviewee states: "I believe that with the implementation of the budgeting system and automation processes, we will have greater reliability in the data presented" (E08). In addition, there is an integration of information through ERP systems and platforms such as Power BI, which are currently being adopted.

> We need to use the tools, right? So, Power BI has been a very interesting tool in this regard. [...] We've been working for about a year and a half on extracting this information in a very didactic way so that we can take this information to the action plan, you know? (E17).

Added to this is the factor of automation which, as evidenced in case E15, a large company, is strongly linked to MAI.

> There are several tools, right, that can improve this management in general, right? Many things are automated. The girls who work with me are always innovating in this sense that we can automate even more. So, specifically speaking here about the financial sector, it's anything and everything that can be automated (E15).

This mobilization fosters a more analytical and didactic view of information that adds value to business management, with monitoring and projections for the organization's future. Therefore, company size emerges as an important element for MAI, acting sometimes as a restricting factor—especially in small firms—and sometimes as a driving force, as in the case of medium-sized companies with available financial resources and large companies.

4.2 Openness to professional management

The openness to professional management also stands out as an important and heterogeneous factor among the family businesses investigated in this study, which is reflected in the MAI. Companies that demonstrate an orientation toward professional management supported by a management structure composed of family members and external managers with specific expertise in administration, accounting, or finance, tend to integrate management accounting as an active and strategic tool in their organizational processes. In these cases (see Figure 14), the presence of business logics can be identified mainly through the decentralization of decision-making and the company's orientation toward business objectives.

> The beginning of the company. It was in a small shed made of construction planks, 6 by 6 meters, right? And then we started to professionalize. [...] today we have 3 manufacturing units and 18 commercial units. [...] none of our managers is a family member (E04).

With the presence of non-family members in business management, bringing specific expertise in the field, it is possible to observe the implementation of various short- and long-term practices, such as strategic planning, budgetary control, the use of different KPIs, costing methodologies, as well as the use of ERP systems and Power BI. According to the interviewees, these are considered new approaches to management accounting “I think Power BI is a good case. A good case of innovation” (E17).

> We have strategic planning and, as I said, we think about the company not only in the present, right? We are making several investments within the company. We are expanding some areas, right? That is part of our strategic planning, of what we want for the coming years (E11).
>
> We have strategic planning that is extremely alive in our company, to the point that it is displayed in our meeting room and undergoes subsequent changes throughout the year. [...] We have an annual budget and a forecast when necessary, right? We make adjustments (E04).

The openness to professional management shows that these companies are more willing to include non-family members in key positions within the organization, such as CEOs, directors, and managers, as described by interviewees E09 and E13:

> [...] they agreed it would be best to transform the company, which was a limited liability company, into a corporation and, at the same time, to professionalize the company. The family then became part of the board of advisors and shareholders only (E09).
>
> All the directors, managers, executive board, and even the group president [group name] are market professionals. [...] The situation we are in is that only family members are on the board, and the entire executive management is professionalized (E13).

This stance highlights the flexibility of the family logic in prioritizing family members for top positions in the organization, in favor of the business logic, which is characterized by the decentralization of the decision-making process and the competence of external members in managing the business. It is noticeable that the inclusion of external members with specific knowledge in administration, finance, and accounting favors the diversification of competencies and skills from different professionals for the introduction of new practices—more analytical and modern ones—geared toward decision-making. Examples of this can be seen in cases E09 and E11, where the interviewees highlight the hiring of an external member to occupy a management position with the aim of implementing management accounting practices in the organization:

> We are implementing [system name] this year, which is a budgeting platform, precisely so that each leader becomes more accountable for the budgeted versus the actual results, right? [...] Because before we used to do everything in Excel, and there wasn't much monitoring. So the arrival of [manager's name] is exactly for that, I assigned him this task, right? I said, look, [manager's name], I want you to use this platform to really hold each leader accountable for the budgeted and actual figures each month, so we don't get to the end of the year and be surprised, right? (E09).
> They wanted to move out of that niche and enter retail with their own brands, right? So, that's why I came in at the time, because everything had to change. We had to define pricing, have accurate cost data to be able to move into retail. The company needed its own cash flow management; it changed everything completely, so we needed a different kind of financial management (E11).

On the other hand, companies operating under a predominantly family-based management structure—where the family logic prevails and the openness to professional management is not intensified—demonstrate a more limited practice with management accounting and MAI. In these organizations (see Figure 14), the approach to MAI is more restricted, with management practices and routines that show low strategic and analytical orientation, lacking tools with long-term projections and structured planning. Managerial information remains heavily centralized among family members and is often neither systematized nor shared with non-family members, as revealed in case E12:

> It has always worked like this, but it hasn't always been perfect, right? And if we want to grow, we can't grow just by keeping things in our heads. There has to be a structured process. There have to be goals. Objectives. Indicators. Planning. Mission, vision, and values, come on, mission, what I want to be, right? When am I going to become that? If I don't have this, I just keep going day by day (E12).

Thus, it is observed that the centralization of decision-making regarding whether to adopt MAI tends to be restrictive when combined with the absence of external specialist professionals, resulting in a more conservative and routine management of management accounting practices.

> Lack of professional management, right? [...] Things change, you know? Twenty years ago, we had to handle things one way, and now it's different. So, this brings some problems and sometimes blocks the company's growth, right? Its development (E12).

This narrative contributes to the preservation of more traditional and informal organizational processes, thereby hindering the introduction of new management accounting practices focused on business strategy. In this context, the openness to professional management in the business acts as an important factor in consolidating MAI by promoting the formalization of organizational processes and encouraging the inclusion of non-family members in key positions, compatible with the professionals' experience and expertise.

4.3 Organizational stance of the family in the business

Another relevant element is the organizational stance of the family in the business, which may vary between a more static or dynamic approach, and has been a factor of heterogeneity among family business that resonates in their articulation with MAI. It is observed that these two approaches reflect different profiles of family businesses and, consequently, different organizational practices associated with family and business logics. Among the companies analyzed, it is noted that the cases showing an orientation toward a more static stance (see Figure 14) tend to preserve organizational routines based on the 'past,' in which the family logic is manifested in these companies, which are organizations that show a lower propensity for change and growth, demonstrating resistance to the use of more complex and technological management accounting practices. According to reported in case E01.

> Every invoice I receive, I enter into my planner with the due date for each bill, and then on the payment day, we check it because we need to have this internal payment control, right? [...] So these are the management processes I've always followed, always with this control in the planner, because I don't understand technology very well (E01).

Thus, these are companies in which the preservation of routines and organizational practices is predominant, causing managerial accounting and MAI practices to remain, for the most part, based on more operational and traditional practices. It is observed that the focus is on the basic control of operations and monitoring specific organizational activities, such as cash flow, revenues, productivity, among others, as described in case E03.

> My control goes from sewing thread, pricing, and purchasing to payroll, all taxes, and production monitoring. Since it is a company with a simpler operation, we don't need systems. So it's really more basic, more operational (E03).

Added to this is the static stance associated with strong resistance to change, especially regarding the implementation of management accounting practices, as revealed in case E12, where there is an absence of a more structured and formalized management:

> None, we don't have any management accounting practices. If I tell you that, honestly, it's one of my biggest disappointments. The difficulty in implementing a more structured budget is largely due to the challenges I already mentioned to you, a very family-oriented management without a professional approach, where everything was just going along as it was, and nothing really improved. So, there are no goals for employees, no budget implemented, no performance analysis, nothing (E12).

In these companies, accounting is more focused on financial and tax obligations, with management accounting practices not being prioritized. This behavior reflects the predominance of family logic, associated with family control, which denotes the preservation of organizational practices, maintaining the routines and practices that family members have used over the years in the organization. Meanwhile, in companies where there is a greater prevalence of a more dynamic stance of the family toward the business, and business logic predominates, even if the family remains actively involved in the business, there is greater openness to professionalization and, consequently, to MAI.

> We have a genuine drive for growth, and our team is aligned with that vision, so the business has been progressing [...] driving the business precisely to ensure sustainability and professionalization, right? (E04).

In these cases, MAI has been aligned with organizational strategy, capable of providing relevant managerial information that supports the organization's decision-making processes, such as long-term planning, projections, as well as performance monitoring and control. This openness to MAI is expressed, for example, through the adoption of KPIs, costing and pricing methodologies, use of formal budgets, and ERP systems that integrate information from different departments within the organization.

> We have a well defined strategic planning. To put it simply, we monitor and have performance planning, so there are goals. We have a cost center by department. [...] We have a management system with a lot of technology, so in addition to a robust ERP, we have a BI to quickly access this information [...] daily sales performance data, how the cost center of each department is doing. This information is available, accessed, and shared with quick access rights so that they can track performance and follow the business strategy, right? (E16).

Given this, it is perceived that the stance reflects a more active view of the family regarding business strategies, focusing on the continuity and sustainability of the company. Added to this are the organizational characteristics of the companies according to the family's organizational stance in the business. In other words, companies with a more static family stance tend to operate with the same organizational structure over the years, showing only timid or occasional changes. This is the case of companies E01, E03, E07, E12, and E14, which, despite operating for more than 10, 20, or 30 years, maintain organizational structures similar to the original ones, without significant changes. On the other hand, companies with a more dynamic stance demonstrate greater structural transformation, reflecting the transition from micro or small size to medium size (E02, E05, E08, E09, E10, E17, E18, and E19) and, in some cases, even large size (E04, E11, and E15), thus signaling more significant structural and strategic evolution in these organizations.

It is worth highlighting that although the family and business logics predominate, other institutional logics also emerge, even if occasionally, in the interviewees' narratives. One example is case E07, in which the interviewee associates the family's stance in the business with a biblical passage: "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's," reflecting the influence of religion logic. Meanwhile, case E08 reveals the family's active stance on product quality in relation to the market, associating it with market logic: "So, the founder highly valued product quality, so much so that [the company], in the market in which it operates, is truly recognized as one of the brands of highest quality". Despite these mentions indicating the presence of other institutional logics in the family business environment, they appear subtly in the narratives, without showing a significant or dominant influence linked to the MAI.

5 DISCUSSIONS OF THE RESULTS

The study used the institutional logics approach as a theoretical lens to understand how the heterogeneity of family business articulates with MAI. The evidence, based on participants' accounts, reveals that the heterogeneity of family business — expressed through the themes: company size, openness to professional management in the business and organizational stance of the family in the business — plays an important role in the MAI of the family business analyzed in this research. There are various factors that act as drivers or barriers to MAI. According to Amara and Benelifa (2017), aspects such as organizational structure, size, technology, and information complexity are recognized as elements driving change in management accounting within organizations. On the other hand, studies like Lohr (2012) point to limitations related to resource scarcity, while Hiebl (2013) highlights the perception of family managers, who often see management accounting more as an unnecessary cost than as a resource for organizational strategy.

Our results show that company size has been an important factor in recognizing the heterogeneity of family business and its articulation with MAI. In the study by Stanley et al. (2019), the authors emphasize that company size is an important differentiating element among family business. Treated both as a cause and effect in company actions, it plays a fundamental role in the differentiation observed in the family business environment (Daspit et al., 2021). It is an indicator that reflects the complexity degree of a company through its administrative capacity (Arteaga & Escribá-Esteve, 2021; Corbetta, 1995; Zahra et al., 2004). Thus, based on the results presented, it is noted that family business differ into three sizes — small, medium, and large.

Small firms tend not to adopt MAI with more modern and sophisticated practices, such as BSC, benchmarking, ABC costing (see Hoque, 2014; Ax & Greve, 2017), remaining with less formal and traditional practices, and in some cases, a total absence of management accounting practices was reported. The main reasons for this tendency are related to the fact that small firms do not have complex organizational processes and therefore do not demand the formal and structured adoption of MAPs (Kapiyangoda & Gooneratne, 2021). Furthermore, the restricted perception of family members regarding MAI, often not recognized as a strategic tool, constitutes another barrier to the adoption of more formalized management accounting practices (Hiebl, 2013). Along the same lines is the lack of resources, which, although mentioned in some medium-sized firm cases, the literature recognizes that small and medium firms may have financial resource constraints for adopting new management accounting practices (e.g., Lohr, 2012).

Regarding medium and large firms, due to their demand for more complex organizational structures, financial resource capacity, and formalization of organizational processes, there is openness to MAI, corroborating studies by Pelz (2019) and Scapens and Bromwich (2010). The research findings also highlight openness to professional management in the business as another characteristic of the heterogeneity of family business in their articulation with MAI. Through openness to professional management, it was possible to uncover different profiles and practices within this group of family business. The literature recognizes that professionalization in the context of family business occurs through the presence of non-family managers in management positions (Dekker et al., 2015; Hall &

Nordqvist, 2008). Recently, studies have addressed elements associated with professionalization, emphasizing the involvement of non-family managers, decentralization of authority, formalization of corporate governance structures, and adoption of formal financial control mechanisms (Hall & Nordqvist, 2008; Howorth et al., 2016; Hiebl & Mayrleitner, 2019; Songini, 2006; Stewart & Hitt, 2012). Therefore, professionalization in family business can encompass numerous organizational aspects (Hiebl & Mayrleitner, 2019).

Moreover, our results show that openness to professional management in the family businesses analyzed occurs when non-family managers are involved in business management, especially those with expertise in administration, finance, or accounting. Thus, it is observed that the inclusion of new members in business management with specific knowledge contributes to the adoption of management accounting (see Giovannoni et al., 2011; Hiebl & Mayrleitner, 2019), which occasionally reflects the introduction of MAI. Meanwhile, the non-inclusion of external members in management reveals a tendency toward stagnation in management accounting practices, with the use of practices focused on business operations, poorly aligned with long-term strategies and perspectives. According to Stewart and Hitt (2012), not all family businesses undergo professionalization, as some business families want to but are unable to professionalize, while others simply do not prioritize professionalization.

Another factor that relates to MAI is organizational stance of the family in the business, which also represents one of the elements of heterogeneity of family business in this study. A more static organizational posture of the family is associated with the preservation of organizational routines, where a resistant behavior to change among family members is observed, especially in restricting MAI. According to the literature, family business that preserve and value legacy and control tend to adopt a family-oriented business approach, based on non-economic objectives such as family harmony and continuity (see Basco, 2017). Thus, decision-making centralization is perceived in this group of firms, which tends to foster resistance to change and preservation of simpler, more traditional practices and routines (Ahmad Tipu, 2023). In contrast, when a more dynamic approach predominates in the organization, organizational behavior is directed toward achieving economic and financial goals (Basco, 2017), fostering an environment more conducive to adopting new management accounting practices aligned with strategy and organizational performance.

Within this discussion, the coexistence of different institutional logics in the context of family business is observed (see Liang et al., 2023; Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018). In this research, despite the subtle presence of other institutional logics, such as religion and market logics, identified occasionally in some interviews, the study acknowledges that these institutional logics are secondary compared to the predominance of family and business logics, which emerged more prominently in connection with MAI. As highlighted in the literature, family and business logics guide the actions and organizational behaviors of individuals (Basco, 2017). Thus, the plurality of institutional logics present in family business helps explain why some firms tend to maintain more traditional and operational management accounting practices, such as inventory control and cash flow monitoring, while others show openness to adopting more strategic and modern management accounting practices (see Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018), including ABC costing, strategic planning, benchmarking, as well as the use of Power BI platforms and automation.

Firms grounded in family logic are characterized by the predominance of family power and a more centralized organizational structure (Wimalasinghe & Gooneratne, 2019). According to Rizza and Ruggeri (2018), family logic directs individuals' actions based on family values, primarily aiming to meet the needs of family members. That is, directed towards non-economic objectives (Aparicio et al., 2017; Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018). Moreover, according to Aparicio et al. (2017), family logic is supported by the concern that family members have with family unity, in supporting the employment of family members within the organization, and in ensuring the promotion of those considered the most capable among them. Given this, the results of this study show that in small firms, where openness to professional management is limited and a more static organizational stance of the family predominates, family logic manifests itself. In this context, when family logic predominates in the organization, MAI is limited. On the other hand, in medium and large firms, where there is greater availability of financial resources, openness to professional management, and of a more dynamic organizational stance of the family is associated with the business logic is observed, boosting the MAI. These results can be explained by the fact that business logic facilitates the institutionalization of new management accounting tools (Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018). This occurs because business logic guides individuals' actions toward patterns and practices aimed at achieving business profitability, that is, seeking to maximize the economic return of the organization (Aparicio et al., 2017; Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018). Moreover, it is also associated with the pursuit of business growth, through the expansion into new markets and the development of a business portfolio, associated with the company's economic objectives (Aparicio et al., 2017; Rizza & Ruggeri, 2018).

Based on this discussion, three propositions were formulated:

P1 – The size of the company constitutes a conditioning factor for MAI, acting as a driver when the business logic prevails and as a constraint when the family logic dominates.

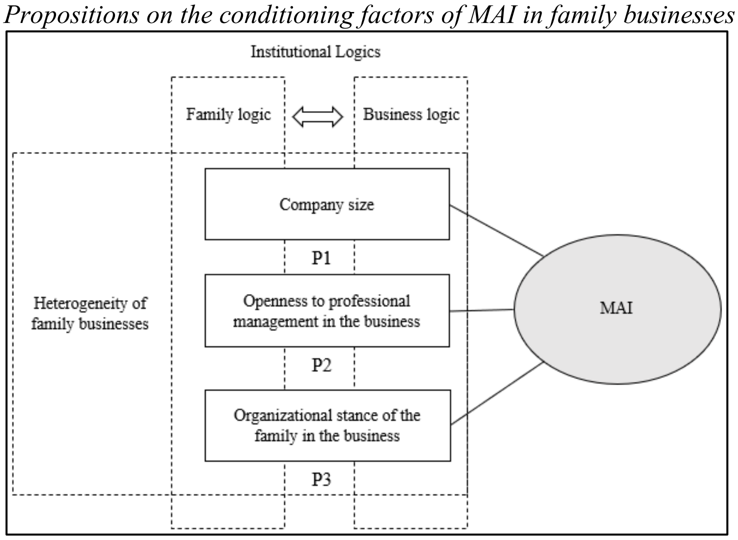
P2 – Openness to professional management constitutes a conditioning factor for MAI, acting as a driver when the business logic prevails and as a constraint when the family logic dominates.

P3 – The organizational stance of the family in the business constitutes a conditioning factor for MAI, acting as a driver when the business logic prevails and as a constraint when the family logic dominates.

Figure 3 presents the propositions formulated in this research, synthesizing the main factors of heterogeneity in family businesses as conditioning factors for MAI in the analyzed context.

Figure 3

Propositions on the conditioning factors of MAI in family businesses



Source: Prepared by the author.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to understand how the heterogeneity of family business articulates with MAI through a qualitative approach, involving 19 interviewees. It is highlighted that the heterogeneity of family business articulates to MAI mainly concerning firm size, business professionalization, and organizational stance of the family in the business. It is observed that MAI tends to be restricted when family logic predominates and driven in contexts where business logic prevails. Based on these results, the research offers advances for the current literature.

Initially, the study presents theoretical implications for family business literature by identifying different firm profiles according to size, professionalization, and organizational stance of the family in the business, advancing the discussion on family business heterogeneity (Arteaga & Escribá-Esteve, 2021; Daspit et al., 2021; Huerta et al., 2017). This study also contributes empirical advances to management accounting literature, specifically regarding MAI, by depicting how different factors of family business heterogeneity influence its articulation with MAI through the lens of institutional logics. These findings complement the studies by Rizza and Ruggeri (2018) and Hiebl and Mayrleitner (2019), who similarly explored management accounting in the family business context. In addition, the present study offers new insights into the prevailing institutional logics in the organizations investigated, particularly the family and business logics, which directly influence the institutionalization processes of MAI, according to the results presented. The theoretical implications are also highlighted through the propositions formulated in this research, which contribute to a deeper understanding of the heterogeneous factors of family businesses that condition MAI.

Furthermore, the study presents practical implications. By evidencing how specific elements of family business — such as firm size, openness to professional management, and organizational stance of the family in the business — articulate with MAI, the results provide support for family managers to reconsider the importance of these elements when introducing new management accounting practices. The adoption of more strategic and analytical practices can be fostered by an organizational environment more open to professionalization, for example. Thus, both family and non-family managers can use this study's findings to propose more strategic interventions for their business, aligning with MAI.

The study has limitations related to qualitative research, such as sample size restrictions and lack of generalizability (Latif et al., 2023). Additionally, the study focuses on the heterogeneity of family business in three dimensions, not considering other factors that could enrich the understanding of the phenomenon explored here, such as organizational culture and the business life cycle, which may also relate to MAI. Another limitation lies in the study's participants, as it focused on owners and managers' accounts. Future research could include participants from different organizational roles directly associated with management accounting and MAI, such as coordinators, controllers, cost and budget analysts, and internal accountants. Including these professionals could provide new insights into the phenomenon from a more technical or operational perspective. There is a conceptual limitation concerning MAI, as the study did not specify which management accounting practices can be considered innovative, which frequently occurs in MAI focused studies, for example, on the BSC (see Wanderley et al., 2022). Therefore, future research could deepen the identification of specific tools associated with MAI, especially in articulation with family business heterogeneity. Finally, this study's exclusive focus on family business is also considered a limitation. Comparative studies between family and non-family business are timely to identify similarities and differences in MAI.

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