EURASIAN JOURNAL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT

www.eurasianpublications.com

THE RIGHT DEALING WITH POWER – BEING THE PERSON WHO CONTROLS

Juraj Misun
University of Economics in Bratislava, Slovak Republic
Email: juraj.misun@euba.sk

Abstract

In the eastern approach to organizational control, the term subject of control is used for person or team who performs control on the control object. Due to the relatively large power and the possibility to take corrective action, it has a very responsible role, mostly for managers. The aim of this paper is to point out the views of the managers on the performance of control function, based on the results of our questionnaire survey on 376 respondents from 331 companies operating in Slovak Republic. In addition to this aim, we make a comparison to past results (questionnaire of 2014/2015 with 284 respondents) and we point out the differences between the theory of organizational control in western and eastern countries. We present various findings on how control is performed according to the different characteristics of the research sample.

Keywords: Controlling, Management Function, Subject of Control, Eastern Approach to Control

1. Introduction

No entity, a company or a person can exist in a vacuum without being monitored, assessed, evaluated or controlled of its functioning and conducted by many entities from the environment in which it is located, fulfils its mission and operates (Kracmar *et al.* 2013).

The term "control" is probably one of the worst defined in English language, because it has many meanings. In 1960, Rathe created a list of 57 different variations of differences, which ranged from prohibiting to manipulating. There are two major themes in these variations: control as domination – the person who controls has the power to enforce his will, and control as regulation – the person detects a deviation between the plan and the reality and forces this person to act (Emmanuel *et al.* 2013).

Controlling is a constantly ongoing process of designing standards, measuring performance, comparing the performance with standards, and implementing corrective actions to ensure effective and efficient running of the organization's activities. If there is any purposeful human activity ongoing, it always needs some degree of control. Without such a control, the probability to achieve the intended decreases. Depending on earliness and frequency of control, the probability of achieving the intended rises towards the certainty and the risk of wasting resources and efforts decreases (Boddy, 2008). According to Merchant *et al.* (2003), control represents the ending of the management process.

Although this is often not the case in the post-soviet countries, control can also have many positive meanings, including the desire for order, predictability or reliability. When things

are under control, suppliers know what and when to deliver, people know what they are expected to do, customers know when they can expect the delivery; employees know they will be paid for their work. In this sense, controlling is an essential part of organizational life – it helps to ensure that the collaboration of many people and organizational units collectively adds value to resources. The absence of such control means insecurity, chaos, inefficiency and waste – an organization that destroys value instead of increasing it. "However, control depends on influencing people, so designing a control system is not a technical, rational process, but one that needs to take account of human factors and the context. Control also depends on power, and can alter the balance of power" (Boddy, 2008, p. 600). Through control, companies try to increase the probability that individuals and groups will behave in a way that will lead to organizational goals. This means that control is purposeful and its purpose is to influence people to take action and make decisions that are in line with the organization's goals (Flamholtz *et al.* 1985).

Control has been combined with various additional names for decades. Therefore, it is no wonder that there is no uniform view of a certain roofing concept that should represent control. After studying different theoretical works, we can conclude that the highest term in control theory is organizational control. It is also important to divide the terms control and controlling. While control is in most cases a one-time act, controlling is the managerial function that is in charge of performing individual controls and, where appropriate, synchronizing them into a control system.

Management accounting, management accounting systems, management control systems, and organizational controls are terms, which are sometimes used interchangeably. Management accounting is a collection of practices (for example budgeting and product costing), management accounting systems is the systematic use of management accounting to achieve some goal, management control systems is generally interpreted broader encompassing management accounting systems and also other controls such as personal or clan controls (Brenner, 2009). In general, management accounting refers to a collection of practices such as budgeting or product costing, while management accounting systems refer to the systematic use of management accounting to achieve some goal (Chenhall, 2003).

Controlling as a term is used both in Anglo-American literature as well as in German literature. Both theories have their spheres of influence and since the German language among Eastern European scientists is common, these countries incline to the German theory. While in the Anglo-American literature, controlling means the management function of control, in the German (and some Eastern European) professional and scientific literature acquires the meaning of managerial accounting of Anglo-American literature. It is very likely that in the future, both theories will approach to each other and the growing Americanization of society will play a big role.

It is very interesting to see how much attention is paid to managerial accounting and how the managerial function of controlling continues to be neglected. We see the reason in simpler applications. Although at first glance, the application of different formulas, ratios, or conversions may seem challenging, management accounting is hardly likely to pose controlling when evaluating qualitative indicators. In this respect, it will probably be very difficult to replace controlling in a digitizing world.

The purpose of both managerial accounting and financial accounting is to provide useful information for the decision-maker. They do this by collecting, processing and reporting information for decision-makers. In general, a large portion of managerial accounting involves obtaining cost information for decision-making in planning and control (Wild and Shaw, 2010).

2. Literature Review

In this section, we focus our attention primarily on the controlling subject. In the theoretical part about the subject of control, it should be noted that the Anglo-American (and Western overall) control theory understands the terms subject or object in control different from the ones in the eastern lands. Subject is perceived rather what the control is about; the term object is often

used for the purpose of the control. In the Eastern theory, the subject is the entity performing control over an object that has or wants to abide this control.

During our research, we have discovered several diametrical differences between Western theory of organizational control and the theory that gradually developed in the Soviet bloc countries. We call this theory the Eastern approach to control. However, the common feature is not geographic location, but similar history. While China is part of Eastern approach, India and Japan are not. Nearly all of the studied works from the last two mentioned countries have a clear connection to British and American literature.

These differences are due to the genetics of dictatorial regimes. Strict formal control brings high discipline. We use the word "genetics" intentionally, as we observe not only the "I have to control someone" opinion but also the "I want to be controlled by someone" approach in our surveys. We point out the major differences between the Western and Eastern approach to organizational control in Table 1, while the sophisticated classification of formal control is shown in Figure 1. On the other hand, there is the Western approach that puts emphasis on self-control and self-discipline with the opinion "in order to make a good job, I have to control my work by myself".

Table 1. Major differences between the Western and Eastern approach to control

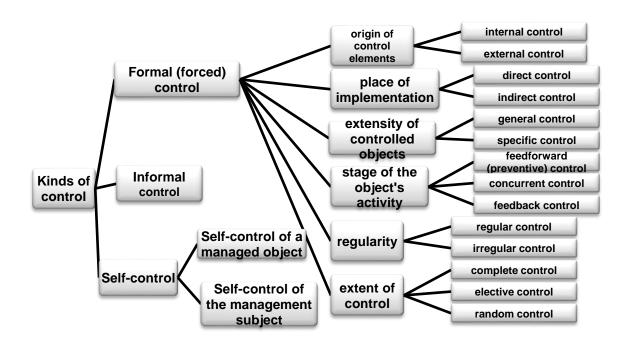| Aspect	Western approach	Eastern approach
Types of control	mainly feedforward, concurrent, and feedback controls	sophisticated typology with the accent on formal control (as shown in Figure 1)
Forms of control	bureaucratic/administrative, clan, and market control	verification, control survey, supervision, inspection, review, audit, operational research
Steps in control process	mainly three to four	five to eight
Meaning of external control	a manager controls an employee	an entity outside the organization controls its operations, results or state
Meaning of internal control	an employee or a manager controls himself or herself, as well as control of financial affairs of a company	a manager or a unit controls an employee or another unit
Level of control	strategic, managerial/ management, operational	deficiently covered in literature
Object of control	results, actions or personnel	systems that may be target-influenced (social systems and man, technical systems, biological and inanimate systems)

Source: own work.

Figure 1. Typology of control in the Eastern approach

Source: Author's own preparation based on Kracmar *et al.* (2013); Kokavcová *et al.* (2012); Konečný (1998); Majtán *et al.* (2003); Oláh *et al.* (2011); Sedlák (2008); Vépyová (2001); and Zlámal *et al.* (2007).

Controlling is an important activity and one of the main responsibilities of the management body at all levels of the organizational structure of each organization. Its content is, above all, the monitoring, verification and evaluation of the control object. The management body uses it in its management activity, in particular to eliminate deviations and deficiencies. Such conceived control activity puts high demands on the subject of control. Control can only work in relationship between the subject and the object. Always someone controls someone or something. The subject as the bearer and executor of the control function controls the particular object and the system implemented for it in terms of its role, duties, activities, etc. (Kracmar *et al.* 2013).

"Control subjects execute control in an organizational setting. They conduct the relevant control activities by employing specific control techniques" (Hutzschenreuter, 2009, pp. 27-28). Simply put, the term subject answers in controlling the question "who is performing control?", while object of control describes someone/something being controlled.

The control subject can only become a real system that has the preconditions for target influencing. Control is a component of all possible types of target influencing, especially management, but also governance, administration, commanding, teaching, education, etc. Control is not limited in the society; control subject can be state and citizen, producer and consumer, social group and its member, etc. It results from the fact that everyone who has an influence on targets should control (Kracmar *et al.*, 2013). The process of control is always realized by the control subject on the object (matter) of control with the use of proper methods and tools of control. The subject of control are mainly line managers, senior management subsystems, organizational units (Kokavcová *et al.* 2012).

Taking into account the visibility of the control subject, we recognize visible and invisible subjects. Control subjects are usually visible, especially when control is carried out by superiors in direct interaction. It can also be invisible, for example, if social control is done indirectly by other employees. Another indirect form is the so-called "Big Brother", when the employee is aware about the control activity but he cannot identify the controlling subject at all. Potential

additional forms may include electronic controls that use information technology or mystery shopping (Hutzschenreuter, 2009).

The main subjects of control are humans and human-created social systems. Supporting control subjects may be inanimate systems (computers, control circuits, automatic control systems, etc.), which control according to the program processed by man (Kracmar *et al.* 2013).

The classification of control subjects deals primarily with the question of the relationship between the subject and the control object. In this case, we distinguish: subjects that make up its subsystems (e.g. company staff) and carry out internal control in relation to it; and subjects that are outside the system and carry out external control in relation to it.

In other words, in the context of organizations, control subjects can be categorized to internal and external. In essence, we can consider all employees in the organization as internal control subjects. The problem, however, is that companies tend to entrust control to specialized organizational units, respectively higher levels in the hierarchy. First of all, it is expected and the control power is also entrusted to the manager in the organizations (Hutzschenreuter, 2009).

According to Zhang (2014), the types of control by subject of control in China are: corporate governance control, whose the major controllers are the board of directors; management control, usually implemented by managers, and task control that the employees are the main people who implement this.

External control, where the subject and object are not part of the same system, is necessary to balance the various systems, such as the state and the commercial sphere. The state sphere in many cases examines the commercial sphere, and since there are many focuses and contents of the controls, there has been a gradual formation of specialized entities devoted to specific control.

There are several classifications of external control subject in the literature. However, the problem lies in the fact that all these classifications are from the point of view of the public administration or administrative law. Based on the study of several sources of domestic (Slovak and Czech) and foreign literature, we can synthesize the basic classifications of external control subjects from the point of view of objects in the commercial sphere, according to their origin. Although at first glance, it may seem that all entities come from the public administration and the division is therefore similar to the division of public administration, it is not. Our classification of external subjects of control, according to their origin and their major differences are listed in Table 2.

Table 2. Major facts about the subjects of external control

Origin of the subject	Facts

public administration and public life	• in the vast majority of cases, they have legislative authority to carry out control;
	• the objects of the control must abide their control if they do not want to be subject to legislative consequences;
	• their next breakdown is:
	    o subjects coming from central government bodies that are run by a member of the government (ministries), including their subordinate bodies at the local level,
	    o other central state administration bodies,
	    o other institutions coming from public life, including various bodies not coming from the first two groups (such as national bank);

commercial sector	• do not have the legitimate authority to exercise external control,
	• if the obligation to expose the control is based on legislation, the object may choose between competing subjects of external control,
	• their relationship to the object is based on a contract,
	• the object is subjected to external control on a voluntary basis in order to obtain a certain (mostly long-term) advantage,
	• the control subject receives a reward for execution of the control,
	• the objectivity of the control subject is guaranteed by its reputation; damaged reputation results in loss of customers and often ends with the termination of the control subject,
	• although there are many other types, the most important subjects from the private sector are:
	    o audit companies mainly focused on the verification of financial statements,
	    o certification bodies focusing in particular on product certification and ISO certification of systems,
	    o credit rating agencies that primarily verify the creditworthiness of commercial entities, to a lesser extent also states and regions;
	    o other, smaller subjects not belonging to the above groups specialized in a sub-area;

non-profit sector	• have neither legal powers nor contractual relations to carry out control in the control object, • however, they act as important subjects, especially in cases where both the subject and the object can benefit from a distorted or incorrect result of the control of the subject from the public administration or the commercial sector, • in the case of exposure to external control, the object receives more prestige than that of public administration/life and private subjects, as it is assumed that the objective of the third sector subject is not to gain advantages for itself in the form of fines or rewards.

Source: own work

Our classification of external control subjects from the point of view of objects coming from the commercial sphere is shown in Figure 2.
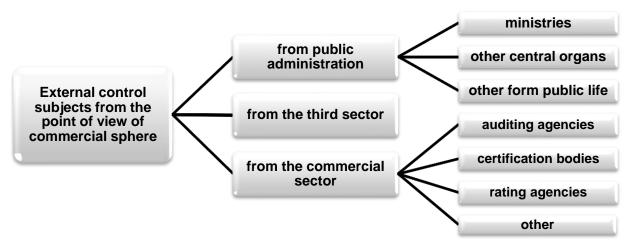
Figure 2. Classification of external control subjects
Source: own work

Preferred features for managers, which should not be missed especially for the control positions, has to be the following: intelligence, initiative, self-confidence; "helicopter view" – ability to see wider contexts, ability of system approach; ability to work (mostly communicate and collaborate) with different employees; sense of comprehensive responsibility; monitoring and adhering to the set objectives; experience with group leadership; experience with holding different job positions (Kracmar *et al.* 2013).

There are different approaches to the understanding of the term control, namely; regulatory, negative, professional, informational, educational, repressive, cybernetic, and complex (Majtán *et al.* 2016). It is ideal if the managers look at control complexly, but in practice, we meet with the fact that they often deviate from this ideal. In the professional approach, they leave control to other persons or institutions. In a repressive approach, they abuse control to treat their inferiority complex. In an information approach, they only get information, but forget to act or leave the decision to someone more important. In the regulatory approach, they do not see the importance of preventive action. The very large problem occurs, when the subject of control does not use this function of management properly and causes damages to the objects of control.

Abroad, however, we can also find a very different understanding, which are called perspectives of control. In their application, it is assumed that control involves human and technical (machines and processes) systems of a particular organization (Hewege, 2012). We see many negatives, but control should not cause negative feelings to be able to develop all its benefits. One of these approaches is educational, which aims to improve further development by pointing to errors during the process, with penalties following at repetitive errors.

3. Methodology

The goal of this paper is to point out the views of the managers on the performance of control function, based on the results of our questionnaire survey. In addition to this goal, we make a comparison to past results and we point out the differences between the theory of organizational control in Western and Eastern countries. With the planned continuation of this research, the presented results are still preliminary. They come from two separate questionnaire surveys. The first survey of the perception of control by Slovak managers was carried out as a part of a larger research of external control in Slovakia at the turn of 2014 and 2015. The questionnaire consisted of four main parts that served to evaluate the results of the sample survey: company identification, managers' general attitudes to control, specific experience with external control of the company, and information on external control in general. For this paper, only the second part is relevant, as it focuses on the respondent's attitude towards control. Of 337 completed questionnaires, 284 questionnaires were left for further processing.

The second questionnaire survey collected data at the turn of 2016 and 2017. It switched from external to internal control and was the first to be a part of the then freshly accepted research project devoted to internal control. Questionnaire's emphasis is on new trends in organizational control. Following the experience of the first questionnaire, the respondents were better specified, resulting in better returns and data that are more relevant. Overall, 395 completed questionnaires were received, of which 376 were further processed and 19 were excluded for various reasons. Although there is with many companies an overlap in the research sample, the questioned respondents are not the same. Both samples (Table 3) do not represent statistical representativeness for the Slovak Republic but are compatible with their parameters.

Using a range of positive, neutral, negative; respondents had to evaluate their attitude to control, both when controlling (they are subject to control), or when they are controlled (they are the object of control). In both cases, we asked respondents for a short justification. This also helped us to resolve questionnaires from inadequately competent respondents. A third questionnaire is planned for the turn of 2018 and 2019. We used standard scientific methods in evaluating and interpreting the results of our questionnaire surveys. Description of both research samples is shown in the following Table 3.

Table 3. Major differences between the Western and Eastern approach to control

	Questionnaire	
	2016/2017 (376 total)	**2014/2015 (284 total)**
	Number of employees in the previous year	
microenterprises	115	130
small	96	86
medium	62	37
large	103	31
	Management level of the respondent	
higher	120	115
middle	62	30
lower	147	74
informed employees[1]	47	65
	Higher territorial unit of Slovak Republic[2]	
Bratislava (BA)	210	79
Trnava (TT)	36	18
Nitra (NR)	25	44
Trenčín (TN)	26	27
Žilina (ZA)	31	42
Banská Bystrica (BB)	17	51
Prešov (PO)	22	8
Košice (KE)	9	15

Note: [1] Although they do not hold a managerial position, "informed employees" represent an important part of our research samples as they have access to rare business information. Include are accounting officers, economists and employees directly responsible for the control function (without being managers). [2] The other characteristics of the sample were the name of the company, revenues in the previous year, economic result in the previous year, object of activity, legal form and seat of the company, but they are not necessary for the purpose of this paper.

Source: own work

4. Research Results

In this section, we will look at our latest research results and compare them with previous results in order to discover potential trends. First, we look at the overall results for 2016/2017. As can be seen in Figure 3, the views of the surveyed managers on the performance of control function were by a large portion positive. More than three-fourths of the sample of 376 respondents stated their positive attitude, when they have to act as a control subject. This result is encouraging, but without deeper analysis, we cannot tell how well the managerial control

function is performed in the surveyed companies. For the purpose of deeper analysis, we included justifications of choice from the scale in our questionnaire. A neutral attitude to exercising control was stated by more than 23 percent of surveyed respondents and a negative attitude only in one percent of the cases.
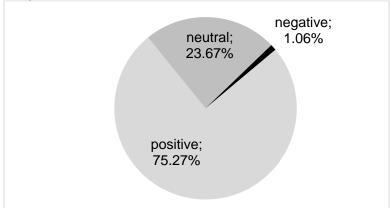

Figure 3. Overall attitudes to control in role of the subject of control (2016/2017)
Source: own work

Since positive attitudes to control do not signal serious problems, it is important to focus on neutral or negative attitudes in the deeper analysis. To proof our point, we can mention just few justifications of positive attitudes to the control function (Table 4, rows 1-6). The overwhelming majority of the analyzed positive responses (not only listed in the table) show a sufficient managerial competence of the respondents. We have not found any skewing to abuse of power or frustration over the performance of this managerial function in positive attitudes.

Among the neutral attitudes, we find the first problems with controlling in companies. Some examples of 89 neutral attitudes of respondents are given in Table 4, rows 7-11. We can classify them to problems with company's control system and personal problems. The first one shows a state that is not ideal, the respondents see ways how to improve the control system in the company, however, probably do not have enough power to enforce the desired change. The second problem arises because manager has to deal with his subordinates and to use his power to eliminate and prevent deviations. Many managers do not like to exercise control, because they are worried that their subordinates will not like them anymore, when they will require increased discipline. Unfortunately, other problems can arise, when they refuse to control employees, just to be everyone's favorite boss. On the one hand, they may lose respect, as the problems that arose were intentionally unseen, on the other hand, the motivation of the best employees may reduce. The big happy family is already in a big trouble. A relatively large problem indicates a negative attitude towards control. In our survey, we found four of them. All are listed in Table 4, rows 12 to 15.

In the first case, the respondent suggests that in his large company, a lack of responsibility among the employees exists. Not only this shows problems with personal, but also with the management. If there is evidence of poor work done, managerial action has to follow to correct the deviations. In this case, we see, the only action taken was to correct the results, not the reasons. From the whole answer, the phenomenon of bad work has gone into corporate culture. Employees simply know that there is a safety net in case they make mistakes. Therefore, they do not need to be sufficiently circumspect at work.

The second case perfectly fits into personal problems when performing control. Although the respondent states, he likes to spend his control time with different work, the interesting fact is in the second part of the answer. He does not like to be the bad guy. Unfortunately, this is also an integral part of manager's job and another managerial function – organizing gave his job the power to correct deviations.

In the third case, we do not see a problem with the whole control process, only with the last step – correction of deviations. We can see our respondent has problems with the execution of the correction, and an important one: problems with employees should not be

discussed in front of customers. This can lead to damage of reputation of the company, especially in this age of social networks. The possibility of abuse of power, resulting from the competence to control, is in this case very high.

Table 4. Attitudes to control of selected respondents when they are subjects of control

	Attitude	Justification	Respondent description
1.	positive	In particular, control is used to improve processes and quality, and most employees are able to self-control.	owner/small machinery industry company/TN
2.	positive	Control for me means preventing deviations and future losses of the company.	quality control manager/large electronic components producer/TT
3.	positive	The company is certified by ISO, so it is under constant control. Various forms, from internal audits, through external to certification and recertification. Of course, an internal control system is in place in the company.	quality manager/middle-large chemicals processing company/BA
4.	positive	People, activities, processes regularly subjected to control can bring the resulting effect in terms of quality of work, compliance, efficiency gains, reduced error rates of controlled objects.	CFO/small financial services company/BA
5.	positive	In our company, we perform internal control in a number of forms or types, both preventive and concurrent, in view of the object of activity, but especially the feedback we consider – in order to maintain a constant improvement of the quality of the services provided and the satisfaction of the clients – for extremely important.	executive/other educational micro-enterprise/NR
6.	positive	Controlling of operations, processes, adherence to set rules in all areas (work practices, OSH, quality of work done) is an absolute necessity of long-term sustainability of the required quality of outputs and permanent improvement of efficiency and quality.	measuring manager/large electricity distribution company/KE
7.	neutral	On the one hand, control provides relevant information for decision-making, on the other hand, the poorly interpreted negative findings during the inspection can threaten the cooperation and performance of the team.	team leader/large telecom service company/BA
8.	neutral	Within our company, due to the low number of employees, control is carried out between each other. This means that all the necessary actions in the company are monitored by more employees where everyone is interested in the proper running of the team.	manager/other trade micro-enterprise/BA
9.	neutral	Working in the center of shared services, specifically in the accounting department, requires subordinate control to detect and correct errors in time. On the other hand, control is occasionally exaggerated, inefficient and time-consuming.	team leader/large wholesale company/BA
10.	neutral	We have an emphasis on controlling the results, not on a concurrent control. I like this approach because the employer shows more confidence in competencies and abilities of its employees, and that makes them particularly more motivated. Simply put, the unspoken credo of corporate culture in our company is: "It does not matter how you get to the necessary results in the first place, just achieve them!"	channel marketing manager/small wholesale company/BA
11.	neutral	Direct control in the company is trouble-free. Because some services are outsourced, the supervision of external companies requires constantly increasing efforts.	CEO/small metal-working company/BA
12.	negative	In our controls, we are constantly looking for and correcting the errors of the other employees, there is nothing positive about it in our structure.	head of the store/large retail company/BA
13.	negative	Control is a necessary thing. I take it as part of the necessary activities in my work but at the same time, it takes me a lot of time and often I have to deal with the non-observance of procedures which means I have to stand in the role in which people take me negative I also do not like.	office manager/small retail company/BA
14.	negative	Control should be done in the occupational space, not in front of the customers.	team manager/medium-large retail company/TT
15.	negative	It is not necessary to control employees as I am constantly on site.	owner/hospitality micro-enterprise/TN

Source: own work

In the latter case, we encounter a problem when the entrepreneur assumes that through direct control, he can monitor everything and everyone. It does not correspond to reality; it only leads to looking for opportunities. In addition, constant monitoring often results to a reduction in motivation, as employees do not see any confidence in their skills and abilities in manager's view. Promotion at work seems unattainable to them, and therefore, there is also no need to increase efforts.

Let us now proceed with the comparison with earlier results. As mentioned above, there was another questionnaire survey at the turn of 2014 and 2015. Although focused on external control, it also included questions about the attitude to control. This makes it possible to compare the current attitudes with current ones (Figure 4).
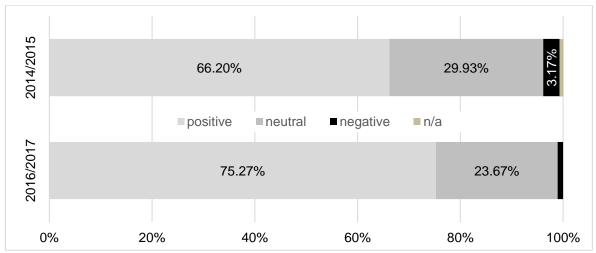

Figure 4. Comparison of attitudes to control in role of the subject of control
Source: own work

As can be seen from the figure, all the results went to the better. The share of positive attitudes increased from almost two thirds (66.2%) to more than three quarters (75.27%). Neutral attitudes, which are often used by respondents to refuse answering the question, dropped from nearly 30 percent to nearly 24 percent. The decline in negative attitudes can be considered significant, when only one percent of the respondents have negative attitudes to perform control in contrast to more than 3 percent in 2014/2015.

Let us now proceed with the analysis of attitudes according to selected characteristics of the research sample. First, we approach respondents' views according to the level of management, in which they are active (Figure 5).
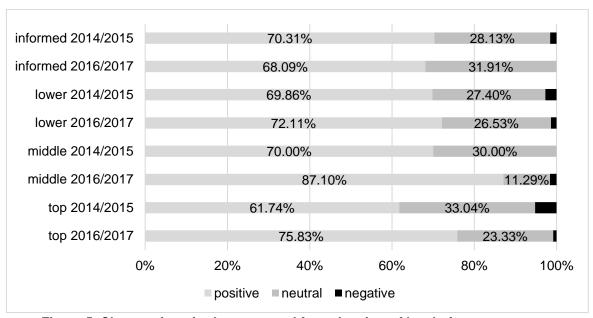
Figure 5. Changes in attitudes to control from the view of level of management
Source: own work

In every single category of level of management, we see a decrease of negative attitudes in performing the control function of management. The most significant decline was in the top-management category, where negative attitudes fell from 5.22 percent to 0.83 percent. One of the justifications in 2014/2015 surveys was "Rather negative, because employees cause a lot of mistakes, and the business policy suffers because of them" (sales manager, medium-large wholesale company, ZA). Another respondent clarified his negative attitude as follows: "Monthly we send statements, we make reports" (owner of a small transport company, BB). In categories middle management and informed employees, we see zero negative attitudes in 2016/2017.

According to the size of business, changes in the attitudes to performing control between the surveys of 2014/2015 and 2016/2017 are displayed in Figure 6.
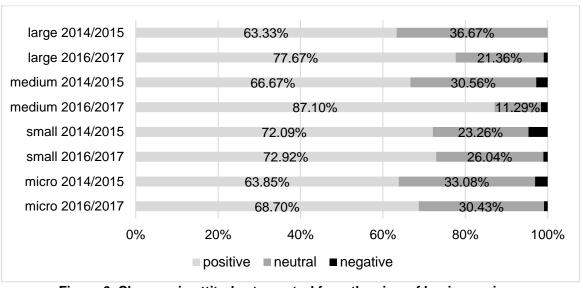

Figure 6. Changes in attitudes to control from the view of business size
Source: own work

Once again, we see declines, with the exception of large companies. Whereas there were no negative attitudes in 2014/2015 within this category, we discovered one in 2016/2017 (Table 4, row 11). A significant decline of negative attitudes can be found in the category of small companies, where the share of negative attitudes fell from 4.65 percent to 1.04 percent.

5. Conclusion

Sometimes, control may appear as useless. A man can live without planning, so he can live without control. Unfortunately, control has its place in the modern life. When we see there is a problem, we try to fix it. The more important something is, the higher is the probability we will control its course and state.

To perform control is not as easy as it seems at the first glance. Not everything can be expressed quantitatively and a subject has to deal with information, which are hard to process. The higher a control subject is situated in a hierarchy, the harder the controls and the decisions are going to be. The subject of control – it does not matter whether it is a man, a woman or a team – has a huge responsibility. As we can see, to be a subject of control is not always an easy task. With the competence, the entity obtains a large portion of power. Unfortunately, it has to deal with it very responsibly. Failing to do so, it is exposed to major risks that are, in the long run, comparable to those of no control.

Based on the analysis of quantitative and qualitative answers of our two questionnaires, we can say that the managers in our research sample are sufficiently competent to properly handle the management control function. Only in a few cases, we have noticed cases that may indicate problems with the company's control system and personal problems with performing control. Given the relatively large research sample (especially in 2016/2017), we can evaluate the results very positively.

In general, the decline in negative attitudes, we explain to ourselves to a greater extent by better economic conditions in the current period. At the turn of the years 2014 and 2015, Slovak companies had to fight the last consequences of the financial crisis. On the contrary, at the turn of 2016/2017, we are experiencing an expansion of the economy with a fall in unemployment and very good prospects for the near future. This imposes less requirements on control, increases the tolerances for allowed deviations, reduces the intensity of control, and the performance of the control function is delegated to lower levels of management.

To a lesser extent, we consider the reason for better perception of the performance of the managerial function to control the increasing professional maturity of managers. Managers increasingly see the need to control the business. However, not in the very mechanical way, where the smallest deviation means failure and results in punishment. Managers start to understand that numbers do not mean everything, and a good manager needs to know how to analyze and evaluate qualitative indicators to see the overall picture of actual and potential performance.

However, when we turn the perspective and make the subject of control an object of control, the results are no longer so favorable. The share of negative attitudes to control increased in both samples (Figure 7). In 2014/2015, negative answers jumped from 3.17 percent in the role of subject to 11.97 percent in the role of object of control. In 2016/2017, the increase was not so significant. Negative attitudes increased from 1.06 percent to 8.51 percent. Managers' attitudes, when they are exposed to control, however, are analyzed in our other papers.
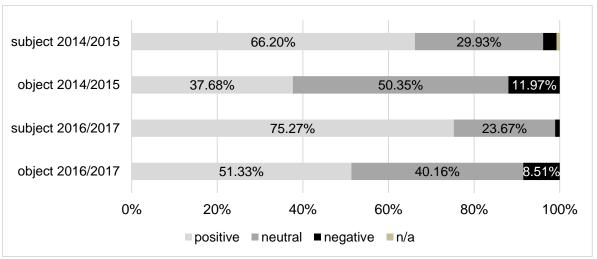
Figure 7. Changes in attitudes to control when subjects become objects of control
Source: own work.

References

Boddy, D., 2008. *Management: An introduction.* 4th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.

Brenner, B., 2009. *Management control in Central and Eastern European subsidiaries.* Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230201743

Chenhall, R. H., 2003. Management control systems design within its organizational context: Findings from contingency-based research and directions for the future. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, *28*(2), pp. 127-168. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0361-3682(01)00027-7

Emmanuel, C. R., Otley, D. T., Merchant, K. A., 2013. *Accounting for management control*. 2nd ed. London: Springer-Science+Business Media.

Flamholtz, E. G., Das, T. K., Tsui, A. S., 1985. Toward an integrative framework of organizational control. *Accounting, Organizations and Society, 10*(1), pp. 35-50. https://doi.org/10.1016/0361-3682(85)90030-3

Hewege, C. R., 2012. A critique of the mainstream management control theory and the way forward. *SAGE Open*, *2*(4), [online]. Available at: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2158244012470114> [Accessed on 3 June 2018].

Hutzschenreuter, J., 2009. *Management control in small and medium-sized enterprises: Indirect control forms, control combinations and their effect on company performance*. Wiesbaden: Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-8349-8395-4

Kokavcová, D., Závadský, J., Kuchárová Mačkayová, V., Závadská, Z., 2012. *Manažment I. Ako plánovať, organizovať a rozhodovať. Historické a moderné aspekty manažmentu [Management I. How to plan, organize and decide. Historical and modern aspects of management]*. Bratislava: Iura Edition.

Konečný, M., 1998. *Management od prvotních řídících dokumentů po současné systémy řízení [Management from initial directional documents to current systems of management]*. Karviná: KarTis.

Kracmar, J., Majtan, M., Jurovych, M., Misun, J., Misunová Hudakova, I., Oravsky, P., Zalezakova, E., 2013. *Kontrolovanie [Controlling]*. Bratislava: KARTPRINT.

Majtán, M., Grznár, M., Kachaňáková, A., Slávik, Š., Szabo, Ľ., Szarková, M., Thomasová, E., 2003. *Manažment [Management]*. Bratislava : Sprint vfra.

Majtán, M., Grznár, M., Matulčíková, M., Papulová, E., Slávik, Š., Szabo, Ľ., Szarková, M., Thomasová, E., 2016. *Manažment [Management]*. Bratislava: Sprint2.

Merchant, K. A., Van der Stede, W. and Zheng, L., 2003. Disciplinary constraints on the advancement of knowledge: The case of organizational incentive systems. *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, *28*(2), pp. 251-286. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0361-3682(01)00051-4

Oláh, M., Šidelský, Ľ., Cibák, Ľ., 2011. *Finančná kontrola [Financial control]*. Bratislava: Sprint dva.

Sedlák, M., 2008. *Základy manažmentu [Fundamentals of Management].* Bratislava: Iura Edition.

Vépyová, M., 2001. *Kontrolný systém podnikateľských jednotiek [Control system of business units]*. 2nd ed. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo EKONÓM.

Wild, J. J., Shaw, K. W., 2010. *Managerial accounting*. 2010 Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Zhang, X., 2014. *Enterprise management control systems in China*. Dalian: Springer Science & Business. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-642-54715-7

Zlámal, J., Bellová, J., Bohanesová, E., 2007*. Podniková ekonomie a management [Business economics and management].* Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci.