

## Influence of the Internal Environment on the Logistical Strategies of Amazon Small Service Organizations

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### Abstract

**Context:** External environments of uncertainty and instability force organizations to modify their actions. The reason for this change is that the necessary data and information cannot be obtained to establish constant and reliable changes in strategies capable of aligning organizational objectives simultaneously. **Objective:** This study aimed to analyze whether the impacts of the internal environment caused changes in the logistics strategies of small service organizations operating in Manaus. **Methodology:** The method used consisted in the elaboration of a research protocol. The units of analysis consisted of three intentionally chosen organizations of the small logistics sector, whose data were collected through semi-structured interviews and the results were generated from content analysis. **Results:** The results showed that the logistics chain is made up of national suppliers and consumers, organizations are managed by professionals with adequate technical training and professional experience in the area, the impact of the internal environment is economic and threatens the companies' logistics strategies. **Conclusion:** The impacts of the internal environment caused organizations to reduce their logistics operations.

**Keywords:** Indoor environment; Strong points; Weaknesses; Logistic strategies; Uncertainty.

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### I. Introduction

The years from 2015 onwards are being of deep economic and social crisis in Brazil. The crisis was further aggravated by the confrontation of the history of corruption that the country has always been the scene of. As a consequence, the economic, social, political, legal, demographic and institutional indicators created a scenario of deep instability and uncertainty, entering the organizational boundaries and generating, for example, the deepest unemployment ever seen in Brazilian history.

In this critical global environment, the business environment has also changed. Internal instability has forced organizations to make decisions based on inaccurate and uncertain data and information. wrong. But they had to decide their futures. An environment of uncertainty and instability forces organizations to modify their actions. External influences affect internal reality in such a way that organizations may even disappear from the environment. And changes in the external environment can impact their strategies, especially logistics.

In this sense, this study aimed to analyze whether the impacts of the internal environment force changes in the logistics strategies of small service organizations located in the city of Manaus. The central hypothesis is that there is a direct relationship between changes in the internal environment and logistics strategies, so that when internal scenarios change, consequently, logistics strategies change. The contribution of this article to organizational and logistical studies is the description of the way in which changes in internal environments caused by external deep crisis scenarios relate to the logistics strategies they perform.

## **II. Internal Environment And Logistics Strategies**

The external environment is the scenario where the internal logistics strategy takes place. The other part is in the external environment. Together, internal and external logistics strategies make up the organizational supply chain, which needs to be adequately managed (Kot, 2018; Hariharan, Suresh, & Nagarajan, 2018; Pullman, Longoni, & Luzzini, 2018). The way this is done, how it is performed, is considered in this study as a logistics strategy, whose purpose is to minimize the costs of delivery to customers and the acquisition of materials and services, optimizing internal production and distribution operations (La Londe, & Masters, 1994; Shpileva, & Serhii, 2019).

In this sense, this section shows the functioning of the internal environment, pointing out its most visible elements, and then the relationship schemes of the internal environment with its elements and the external environment. It is from these relationship schemes that organizational strategies are formulated and executed, which of course includes logistics strategies.

### **2.1 The internal environment**

The internal environment is the part of the organization formed by the human part and its developments in terms of values and aspirations, which includes employees and owners (Gonçalves, 2011). Values and aspirations cannot be changed by the company in the short term. Because they are basically mental products, this psychic dimension of the internal environment needs to be known so that they can be directed to strategies and actions. For an adequate maintenance of the groups that make up the internal environment, it is necessary an adequate management of the psychic factors from the culture and organizational climate diagnoses. The human dimension is therefore what makes the whole strategic scheme work.

For Paiva (2010), the internal environment involves physical and social factors within the organizational boundary. The same factors that influence the internal environment of the organization, internal part of the organizational boundary, also influence the external environment, which is done through the internal-external communication channels. Communication management is indispensable for strategy development and execution. From the perspective of open systems theory, the internal environment adapts according to the feedback from the external environment. Strategic plans are made according to the behavior of the external environment (threats and opportunities) and the functioning of the internal elements (strengths and weaknesses).

The perception of the company's main strengths and weaknesses is only possible from the analysis of the internal environment, just as the knowledge of threats and opportunities is only possible through the analysis of the external environment (Olortegui, 1996), of course. The external environment cannot be controlled by the organization (De Graaf, & Dewulf, 2010; Kalieva, Ivanchenko, & Mirgorodskaya, 2018). The external environment is thus a vital factor for the success of the company's strategic planning because it directly influences its internal environment.

It is the forces of the internal environment, on the other hand, that have the purpose and challenge of helping the organization achieve its objectives (Jacomassi, 2005). The internal environment has elements, components that highlight deficiencies and qualities, which can be identified under organizational analysis. Thus, its weaknesses and strengths are necessary for its positioning before the external environment.

The external environment decisively interferes with the internal environment (Gonçalves, 2011). Internal conditions are under the domain of the organization (Jeoung, & Hong, 2018). When threats and opportunities are considered, analyzes of the internal environment make sense and provide for the development of action flows aligned with what goes on outside their borders. Thus, when looking outside their territory, the internal forces gain many times different senses than they could show, if viewed in isolation.

The internal environment is therefore composed of its employees, management, owners, shareholders, corporate culture, machinery, equipment, facilities, infrastructure, logistics schemes, production systems and a series of vectors that, in line, make up the organizational strategy. And as these elements change, change all the time, so too does the strategy need to keep up with internal changes and transformations. When one considers that the external environment and its elements also undergo transformations and changes, the challenge of developing aligned strategies increases even more.

### **2.2 Logistics strategies**

The process of formulating organizational strategies has as its starting point the determination of the vision of the future, which represents the destiny that will order its operations (Breen, 2020; Errington, & Gewertz, 2019; Syahroni, & Santoso, 2018). When the future ahead is distant, there is the strategic plan and the long-term strategies. The strategic plan is thus the prototypical example of how long-term strategies will be implemented (Souza, Ferroli, & Meier, 2010; Teixeira, Dantas, & Barreto, 2015). The strategic plan is broken down into smaller plans called tactical and operational. These three types represent the path the organization intends to take toward achieving its vision of the future.

The strategy is designed from the logical conjunction of the analysis of two groupings of variables. The first, which involves the entire organization, controls and shapes its behavior, as it is composed of forces beyond its control (Adeleke et al, 2018; Bendickson, Gur, & Taylor, 2018); The second, which is delimited by the organizational boundaries themselves, is composed of variables over which the organization can exercise control (Souza, Ferroli, & Meier, 2010; Santos et al, 2015).

The end aimed at the execution of organizational strategies is always the reach of a certain target audience from its products and services (Barbosa, 2013) from transformational courses of action (Junges, Barbiani, & Zoboli, 2015). The reason for this is that strategies are not designed so that reality remains the same, constant. The intended result of the strategies (and the organizational plans) is the transformation of reality. This explains, in part, why organizations tend to endure from (incremental or revolutionary) changes built by their social bodies and led by their executives at all levels.

Just as strategies are designed for the organization, there are strategies for its parts. This is what usually happens to the logistics, financial and marketing sectors, which are almost always targets of sectoral plans. The design of the strategies follows, first, the construction of future scenarios (Liu, Liu, & Li, 2015), on which, later, the criteria that will lead to the intended destination, such as sustainability issues (Seroka-Stolka, 2014) are established. ) and environment (Simão, Gonçalves, & Rodriguez, 2016).

As logistics is inserted in an organizational and environmental context, it is influenced by these two environments. In the case of service organizations, logistics represents an organizational dimension whose failure decisively compromises not only the sectoral strategy, logistics, but also its organizational macro strategies. In other words, it is the logistic strategies that most often structure the execution (and success or failure) of global, organizational strategies.

In turbulent environments this influence is even more decisive. This is why several studies have focused on seeking to understand the operation of logistics systems under conditions of uncertainty, such as Yang et al. (2016), which has focused on the analysis of contracts and relational norms in turbulent environments by Tofighi, Torabi, & Mansouri (2016), focused on multiple uncertainty analysis to increase resilience of areas under natural disaster conditions, and that of Xu et al. (2015), whose objective was to reduce or eliminate the adverse effects of uncertainty in the process of supply.

These examples show the importance of knowing the influence of the internal environment on logistics operations. With the knowledge generated, the possibility of success of organizational and logistics strategies increases considerably, especially when the internal environment presents a high degree of instability. It is in this sense the contribution of this article to the logistics area, by identifying the impacts of the internal environment on the strategies of small service organizations.

### **III. Research Methodology**

The methodological procedures used to achieve the objectives pursued by this research are described here. First, the characteristics of the research are presented, followed by the description of the subjects, data collection strategy used, forms of analysis and interpretation of results.

#### **3.1 Search features**

This research is characterized by being eminently qualitative, which used the Survey method, whose purpose is to generate explanation for a given population from the study of a sample. According to Volpato's (2006) classification, this study, seeking to understand the impacts that the internal environment has on the logistics strategies of small service organizations in Manaus, is placed under the relational type of cause-effect. For this, the unit of analysis was the managers' perception to generate explanations about the set of these organizations, with level of interorganizational analysis. Thus, there is an individual unit of analysis and level of interorganizational analysis (Nascimento-e-Silva, 2012). The perspective of analysis was synchronic, since the explanation of the causal relationship concerns the reality of that time, which the researched organizations experienced.

#### **3.2 Subjects**

The subjects of this research were the logistics managers of the service organizations. The reason for this choice was to obtain maximum reliability in responding to the impacts of the internal environment on the logistical objectives of these organizations. Of course, other managers could also be selected, but it is likely that their answers lacked the depth and empirical basis required for this investigation.

The three selected organizations also present the breadth of interrelated situations with the internal environment capable of accurately identifying the causal relationship that this study intends to discover. Thus, there was no mathematical system for determining the size and composition of the sample. The subjects were chosen for convenience.

### **3.3 Data collection and organization strategy**

Data were collected from interviews conducted using a research protocol. Overall, the strategy used had seven steps. The first step consisted in the elaboration of the research protocol, defining the questions that would be formulated (both demographic and explanatory) and the rules for analysis and interpretation.

The second stage aimed to select the organizations that would be contacted to provide the data and information needed to answer the central question of the study. The protocol required contact with three companies, all medium or large. The third step was to contact the logistics managers of these organizations via email to answer an electronic questionnaire.

The fourth stage was the interview, conducted in accordance with the research protocol prepared in the first stage. The fifth step consisted of transcribing the interview in a word processor, recording each question and its consequent answer provided. The sixth and last step was the creation of the data mass, which is the synthesis of the answers and their digitization in a spreadsheet, so that it was possible to cross the data of one question with the data of others, a fundamental condition for the generation of results. of the study.

### **3.4 Data Analysis and interpretation of results**

Data analysis was done individually, given the small number of answers to each question. This allowed for deeper understanding of the results generated by the individual data sets. Thus, demographic data generated results for the set of organizations analyzed, as provided for in the protocol, whose level of analysis (amplitude of responses) was interorganizational, even though the answers were obtained individually (unit of analysis).

The results of demographic issues were generated by specifying them with the organizations of which they belong. For example, the question that sought to identify the origin of the main suppliers of the surveyed companies generated a response table with two entries: one with the name of the organization and another with the sources of the suppliers.

The results related to the central research question, which sought to identify the impact of the internal environment on the logistics strategies of the surveyed industries were generated as follows: first identified the impact cited by the respondent, then this impact was framed in one of the dimensions. environmental analysis and culminated in the impact assessment: if positive, opportunity was considered; if not, the conceptual framework was a threat.

The choice for this type of procedure was due to the fact that the tables can present several organizational behaviors simultaneously, which allows us to understand not only the specific aspect of an organization, but also the simultaneity of the researched organizational set. The whole view allows the apprehension of perspectives that would otherwise be harmed.

## **IV. Results And Discussion**

This study aimed to identify the main impacts of the internal environment on the logistics strategies of three service organizations operating in the city of Manaus, Brazil. Here the findings will be presented, grouped into four parts. The first shows the main characteristics of the company surveyed, the second highlights the findings for the logistics systems of these organizations, the third presents the impact of the internal environment on logistics strategies and the fourth part discusses these findings.

### **4.1 Characteristics of the companies surveyed**

Company A operates in the storage market. It has an average annual turnover of 5 million reais (approximately 1.2 million US dollars), generating approximately 112 direct and 15 indirect jobs. It has no electronic management system yet and is seeking to implement the ISO9001 certification. Its clients are all located in the state of Amazonas (Brazil) and are looking for markets outside the Brazilian North. Seeks to expand its operating environment to serve the domestic market; subsequently, it intends to reach the international market, aiming to become a strong market influence.

Company B is a medium-sized organization that has been operating in the regional market for nine years and has become a food distributor. Its products are highly demanded in the northern market.

Company C operates in the warehousing and distribution market. It employs more than 200 people, considered a medium-sized company, with annual revenues of 3.8 million reais (approximately 0.9 million US dollars). It seeks better quality of operation and speed in its internal processes, efficiently and effectively.

### **4.2 Logistic aspects**

Brazil is the country of origin of the main suppliers of the companies that participated in this study. Brazil is the main supplier of the three companies. These data point to the degree of internalization of companies operating in the Manaus service sector. In terms of strategic logistics planning, these results indicate that the organization has solid knowledge of the internal market from its logistics operators. Because they are close to their customers, they are not met by the logistical challenges of international long-distance transportation.

Regarding the Brazilian states where the largest domestic suppliers are located, the results are shown in table 1. The state of Amazonas is the main supplier of inputs and other materials, being considered the most important for companies. Other states where suppliers are located are São Paulo and Roraima. For company A, São Paulo; for company B, Amazonas, São Paulo and Roraima; and for company C, the state of Amazonas stands out.

Companies	Suppliers' home states
A	São Paulo
B	Amazonas São Paulo Roraima
C	Amazonas

**Table 1.** Business suppliers home states

These results, from a logistic point of view, may be considered relevant points in the logistics strategy. The first is a positive aspect because of concentrating on a single state most suppliers bring logistical advantage; The other is negative, because depending on only one supplier state, you may have problems with the supply chain. The rule of geographical diversity of suppliers is also valid, which is contrary to the reality found in the logistics management of the companies studied: the greater the diversity, the greater the possibility of avoiding distribution problems. Brazil is the main demand center of the researched companies' operations.

These results seem to indicate that Brazilian national companies use the logistics strategy to supply the local market. This logistics strategy has led them to focus close to their customers as a way of mitigating logistics challenges, especially those of cost and in-depth knowledge of their customers.

In terms of the Brazilian states that concentrate most of their consumers, table 2 shows Amazonas, cited by companies A and C, followed by Roraima, indicated by company B. These results indicate the market precariousness of these companies because they concentrate your main customers in a single region.

Companies	Customers' home states
A	Amazonas
B	Roraima
C	Amazonas

**Table 2.** Origin states of top enterprise customers

Table 3 shows the results obtained for the question that sought to identify the number of professionals working in the logistics sector of the companies surveyed. Company A had the lowest number with 8 professionals, while Company B had the largest with 15 professionals. Company B contains the median quantity, with about 11 professionals. Two companies concentrate 21 of the 34 professionals who are part of the logistics sectors of the surveyed company's sample. These companies are likely to match the size of the logistics industry to the size of their production: the larger the production, the larger the team of logistics professionals tends to be. Company A has the least logistics professionals working. This shows that the companies surveyed are small.

Companies	Number of Logistics Professionals
A	8
B	15
C	11

**Table 3.** Number of logistics professionals.

Table 4 shows the results related to the professional training of respondents. The findings showed that company B's logistics manager has only the technical course (in logistics), while company A and B's managers have a college degree, both with a degree in production engineering. These results show that all professionals have technical-scientific training appropriate to the functions they perform, ie, have knowledge and skills to do so.

Companies	Professional training of respondents
A	Graduação em engenharia de produção
B	Técnico em logística
C	Graduação em engenharia de produção

**Table 4.** Professional training of respondents.

Table 5 shows the managerial exercise time of the respondents in the company itself. Here only the exercise time in the current company function has been accounted. The findings showed that there are managers,

such as company A, who has been in office for a decade, while other organizations have managers under the age of five. Except for the manager of Company B, the other two have extremely relevant experience to give them the knowledge and skills needed to properly perform their missions.

Companies	Time as a logistics manager
A	4 years
B	7 months
C	10 years

**Table 5.** Time as a logistics manager

These results indicate that the logistics chain of the surveyed organizations begins and ends in Brazilian territory, with their main customers and suppliers concentrated in the states of the Brazilian Amazon. Organizations employ a small group of logistics professionals because their operations are small, with professionals whose technical background is specific to logistics operations and with solid professional experience. This allows the researched organizations to perform at least satisfactorily in their enterprises, from the perspective of logistics management.

**4.3 Internal environment and logistics strategies**

Table 6 presents the impacts of the internal environment on the vectors of the logistics strategies of the surveyed organizations. Organization A sees as the main center of the impacts of changes in the internal environment the financial vector, followed by the economic one. This means that downtime and lack of investment compromise organizational financial health. Allied to the insufficient customer base (this explains the constant search for new customers), which represent going beyond the organization's borders, entering the external environment, the economic impact can further aggravate the company's situation.

Companies	Impacts	Environmental Dimension
A	Inventory stopped Constant search for new customers Lack of investment	Financial Economic Financial
B	Last generation storage equipment Search for new customers Storage stock is small	Machines / Equipment Economic Infrastructure
C	Wide storage structure Late arrival of products Obsolete handling equipment	Infrastructure Logistics Machines / Equipment

**Table 6.** Impacts of the external environment

The impacts of organization B are both internal (equipment and inventory) and external (attracting new customers). Having state-of-the-art warehousing equipment has a positive impact on the logistics strategy machine / equipment vector, while reduced inventory is a negative impact on the infrastructure vector because it can compromise your operations. The search for new customers affects the economic dimension of the organization, whose impact goes beyond organizational boundaries.

Organization C has its impacts on the storage structure, both to allocate products and to move them, and to the external logistics chain, which is beyond its control possibilities. These results indicate, internally, impacts directly on the company's logistics operations, and externally, in terms of operational alignment needs with its suppliers.

These results indicate that the uncertainties of the national economy are profound risks to the realization of organizational goals because strategies, as a path leading to them, become high risks. Thus, when these situations happen, organizations usually take defensive positions, taking downsizing or maintaining the current size strategies. Growth and development strategies were not detected in this study.

Table 7 shows the assessment of the impacts of the internal environment on organizational strategies made by managers. The results show that of the nine identified variables that affect the logistics strategies of the surveyed organizations, all focused on economic-financial (predominant) vectors, machinery / equipment, infrastructure and external logistics operations. In addition, five of these impacts were considered weak and four strong. Strong impacts require immediate organizational responses, while weak impacts need to be monitored so that they do not compromise the logistics system.

Companies	Environmental Dimensios	Impacts Assessments
A	Financial Economic Financial	Weak point Threat Weak point
B	Machines / Equipment Economic	Strong point Threat

	Infrastructure	Weak point
C	Infrastructure	Strong point
	Logistics	Weak point
	Machines / Equipment	Weak point

**Table 7.** Internal Environmental Impact Assessments

Table 8 details managers' responses to the impacts of the internal environment on their organizations' logistics strategies. Company A's manager presented two internal environmental weaknesses that impact his company's logistics strategies. According to him, high inventories and lack of investors for project development cause, respectively, high storage costs (which might not be foreseen in the company's production); and without investments for future projects, process errors, whatever they may be, cannot be remedied without mechanical or technological acquisitions. These two aspects, combined, prevent the organization from developing and executing consistent logistics plans.

Companies	Impacts	Justifications
A	Inventory stopped Constant search for new customers Lack of investment	Lack of sales Search for new customers Lack of investors for new projects
B	Last generation storage equipment Constant search for new customers Small stock	Faster storage productive process Search for new customers Lack of investors for new projects
C	Wide storage structure Late arrival of products Obsolete handling equipment	Large storage capacity Delay in product deliveries Lack of investment

**Table 8.** Justifications for impact assessments

Company B manager identified two strengths that influence company logistics strategies and only one weakness. The two strengths cited are, respectively, the state-of-the-art equipment acquired by the company, to speed up and facilitate the production or storage processes, and the constant search for new customers for the company. The negative point, which is influenced more by external reasons, such as the political and economic crisis and the drop in growth in the service sector that the country is going through, is the lack of investors for new projects regarding the warehouse structure, which, according to the manager, no longer supports the needs of the company. Obviously, this reason is still a weak point and, consequently, influencing the company's logistical strategic objectives.

Company C's manager presented two negative impacts (weak points) and one positive (strong point) of the internal environment on logistics strategies. The strong point is the fact that the organization has great capacity to serve service providers in the city of Manaus. On the other hand, constant delays in product deliveries due to poor organization are becoming a weak point in new customer loyalty efforts. Considering the economic crisis experienced in the regional and national scenario, the lack of investment in the sector becomes a mirror of the atypical economy of the consumer market of its services.

#### 4.4 Discussion of results

The results regarding the logistic aspects show that the companies' logistics chain consists of mostly national suppliers as well as Brazilian customers. This shows that these medium and large companies operate in Brazil to meet national needs. Even though the companies approached are national and knowledgeable about the geoeconomic and political obstacles that the country went through at the time of this study, except for one of them, all managers have at least two years in the position. This allows them to cope better with environmental turbulence.

The logistics systems of such surveyed organizations suffer major impacts due to structural deficiencies of companies and these internal factors can be highly significant in logistics strategies. And among these environmental forces, the financial and economic one was the predominant one in the configuration of an internal scenario unattractive to logistics operations. When the adverse internal scenario is combined with external environmental turbulence, it generates uncertainties of large impacts, which, consequently, increases the risk level for these companies' investments.

Although the international scenario was not so threatening, the impression from contact with the interviewees was that the extremely complex and turbulent national reality had overridden any external opportunity. This means that the opportunities that may have appeared have been dimmed by the weaknesses of the organizations. And as they were financially unstable, they were unable to improve their processes, at the risk of not being able to replace the invested capital. In this power play, designing and implementing logistics strategies requires extreme innovation skills.

In scenarios of extreme turbulence and instability, many organizations preferred to wait for the external environment to calm down or to regain the least predictability before they could resume operations. This attitude, however, can be complicated if the period of turbulence and instability extends. In fact, many organizations failed to survive the long periods of uncertainty, lasted through 2018 (and in many sectors continues through 2019) and were discontinued; others reduced in size and began to operate on a micro scale. These were organizational strategies applied to survive, few of which were able to take advantage of the crisis period to innovate and grow.

## V. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that changes in the internal environment influence the logistics strategies of small service organizations when operating in environments under severe crises, such as the one that began in Brazil in 2015. These influences are mostly on the vectors. organizational strategies, such as infrastructure, machinery / equipment and finance, but also go beyond the organizational environment, entering the external environment, such as the need to expand the client portfolio and capture investments. This represents confirmation that organizational growth depends not only on investing in improvements to its internal processes and adjusting its strategic plans to deal with variances in the operating environment.

The findings indicate that the environment of the surveyed organizations was one of uncertainty and instability. In this case, the operation of the demand-supply scheme does not allow organizations to be able to predict and operate their production systems without incurring high risks, risks that greatly reduce their chances of success. Its clients were scattered in the northern region of Brazil, most notably in the state of Amazonas. All of them were, therefore, subjected to the harsh weather that every critical environment presents, which helped to understand their reactions to the crisis, configured in the executed logistics strategies.

Roughly, as it was found in this study, what small organizations have been doing is reducing their size, reducing the number of people and, consequently, the amount of service provided. The reason for this is that, as much as the internal environment can innovate in achieving the logistical strategic objectives, constant changes in the external environment almost always make them hostage to the uncertain scenario. This behavior is similar to what occurs in nature in times of temporal adversity: people shrink, reducing their body size in contact with wind, rain and cold. Similarly, individuals remain stationary until the threats of thunderstorms pass or soften, so that they may continue their paths. Organizations also shrink in size and virtually stop their operations, waiting for the turmoil to soften or dissipate. Your survival depends on this strategy, the way it is done.

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