THE VARIABLES OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS RELATION TO THE STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR: A STUDY OF LODGING FACILITIES (INNS) IN THE CITY OF FLORIANOPOLIS (SANTA CATARINA / BRAZIL)

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ABSTRACT

This study compares the relationship between organizational environment and strategic behavior in 122 inns in the city of Florianopolis. The Miles and Snow (1978)`s typology and Ducan (1972)`s studies were used to define the categories of analysis. The relevance of this work is to bring new evidence to the understanding of how organizations interpret their environments and behave in their sectors. As a practical contribution, present to the managers of inns relevant environmental factors to organizational decision process, as well as instigates a reflection about the relationship between their internal characteristics and the choice of strategic behavior adopted.

Keywords: organizational environment, strategic behavior, inns, lodging facilities, tourism

INTRODUCTION

Namiki (1989) supports that the formulation and implementation of congruent strategies with the external environment has really constituted a great challenge for many executives. Some aspects are of fundamental importance for these strategic choices and are related with the perceptions of the organizational actors, in special the ones of management level, and its interpretations about the environmental pressures that act over the organization.

These findings have taken many theoretical to direct their studies in the search of explanations on how the organizations interpret their environment (Child, 1972; Osbonr and Hunt, 1974), how they behave (Mintzberg et al. 2000; Hampton, 1992) and if this conjugation of action and perception (Hill, 1988; Wright et al, 1991; Milliken, 1987; Aragon-Sánchez and Sánchez-Marin, 2005; Olson; Slater and Hult, 2005; Andrews, 2009) leads to their permanence and growing on their acting sectors. In Brazil, Gimenez, Kruger and Hayashi (1999), Pérola and Gimenez (2000), Rossetto and Rossetto (2003), Teixeira (2007), Teixeira; Rossetto and Carvalho (2009) and others, try to understand the strategic behavior adopted by the leaders and their cognitive styles, but do not deepen on its relation with the environment perception.

Another relevant aspect is related to the focus sector of this research, the hotel sector. If we observe that the tourist sector and, as a consequence, the hotel, have been one of the sectors of higher growing in the country and specially in Santa Catarina (SC), we can observe its great importance for the economy and development of the state. The resulting changes demand that the organizations have to adapt themselves to the

environment and define a coherent strategic behavior coherent in the search of its growing, deserving to deepen how the managers of these institutions notice the relation between this environment and organizational strategic behavior for the formation of their strategies.

Trying to supplement this gap, the aim of this research is to relate the organizational environment and the strategic behavior in the organizational managers' perception on the accommodation sector (inns) in the great Florianópolis (SC) between 1995 and 2010.

ORGANIZATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

For the development of this research it was selected the typology of Duncan (1972). Firstly for being very similar to the typology of Emery and Trist (1965), which work proposed the idea that each type of socio-technical and economical environment would be a "casual plot", that is, a chaining of causes and effects that would have as resultant the adoption but the organizations of a type of structure adapted to the demands and characteristics of its sector. And as there are studies such as Duncan (1972) himself, Tung (1979), Suh et al. (2004) and Rueda-Manazares et al. (2008) that show the typology tests and the operation instruments and the measurement of the environmental dimensions.

On his study, Duncan (1972) tried to identify the organizational environment characteristics that contribute to the decision-making process on its diverse levels, before the variable uncertainty. Duncan's research identified two environmental dimensions: simple-complex and static-dynamic. The first includes the number of factors (frequency) that are considered in the decision making, while the second refers to the variation degree (intensity) of these factors along the time. He also emphasizes that the uncertainty and the complexity degree and the environment dynamic cannot be considered as constant characteristics in an organization. They are dependent on the perception of the organization members and thus can vary on its incidences considering that the individuals differ on their perceptions.

STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR

The Miles and Snow typology has been widely tested on the most diverse business environments and has demonstrated having qualities in terms of codification and prediction (Shortel and Zajac, 1990; James and Hatten, 1994; Rossetto, 1998; Gimenez, 1998; Scherer, 2000; Aragon-Sánchez and Sánchez-Marin, 2005; Olson; Slater and Hult, 2005). Another point that accentuates the strength of the typology is its relevance to the analysis of the strategic behavior of small companies (Gimenez, 1998).

Miles and Snow (1978) distinguished four types of strategic behavior, through which the authors try to supply instruments for the understanding of the organizations. The four types of business strategy are: prospector, defensive, analytical, and reactive.

1) Prospector: prospector companies adopt an aggressive posture in the search of new opportunities, that is, they invest high in research and development or acquire small companies with new business or products; usually they start changes in the companies where they act. These companies solve business problems by enlarging continuously the domain product-market, through the differentiation or low cost. The technology is diverse, flexible and a little standardized. The solution for the administrative problem is with a non-centralized control, wide planning and higher costs and lower efficiency due to lack of the experience curve. The performance is evaluated according to market share and sales volume, amongst others. The risk of this strategy is high, because the non acceptance of a new product can mean significant losses.

2) Defensive: the companies adopt an almost opposite posture to the prospectors, because they try to defend and guarantee the position where they are in. They tend not to introduce technological innovations, competing in the dimensions of price and quality of their products already commercialized. They reached the solution of the engineering problem with the use of a principal technology, generating low cost in the production. The administration tend to be strict, controlled and centralized, aiming at the costs and results, always comparing financial and productive indicators from the current year with the years before. Though the strategy can be applied to diverse industries, the authors conclude that in the stable industries this kind of organization happens with a higher probability. This strategy faces with the risk of being unable to adapt to more dramatic changes in the competitive environment, because the focus prevents from having a diversification, fundamental to follow the changes.

3) Analytical: the analyzer companies adopt an intermediate posture from the prospectors and defenders. That means, they search for new products and markets, but guarantee their products and current markets. This strategy permits that the company guarantees the feasibility of products before launching them. The companies need to keep a constant monitoring of the success and failures of the competitor prospective companies. The adopted technology is stable and standardized, yet it shows a certain flexibility degree. This combination takes to a lack of efficiency from the analyzers side that, on the other hand, tends to adopt a differentiation as competitive advantage. Its structure is usually of matrix form. The great risk of these companies is that they will not reach the necessary efficiency and efficacy, these indicators being used to measure the performance of these companies.

4) Reactive: the companies do not adopt a pro-active posture, they only react to the actions of other ones when forced. They are usually in disadvantage because they suffer the attack of the prospectors and cannot reach the protected market by the defenders and analyzers. The reactive companies get to this situation usually by not getting to define a specific strategy in terms of a centralized leader, or by the contradiction between the chosen strategy and the adopted organizational structure or by the non adaptation of the strategy to the new competitive environment.

METHODOLOGICAL DELIMITATION

Facing to the research problem and the general objective, it was opted by the quantitative approach, performing a survey with questionnaire. Regarding the ends, the research is descriptive, trying to narrate the population characteristics and recognizing the relations amongst variables, but without explaining the phenomena that are described. Due to the relatively small number of inns it was decided to refer the research instrument, previously submitted to a pre test, to all organizations, that is, to make a census.

The questionnaire used in the data collection was divided into three blocks. Block 1 has registered the company and manager characterization. Block 2, containing closed question in a scale of five points, has permitted verifying the perception of the environment according to the Duncan's classification. Block 3 has enabled to identify the strategic behavior through the instrument adaptation of Conant, Mokwa and Varadarajan (1990). This Block was composed of eleven questions that showed four alternatives each, which from the answerer would indicate the one that was closer to the behavior of the company.

From the data base generated the variables were analyzed through two ways according the proposed objectives. To verify and characterize the profile of the inns, managers' profile, environment perception and strategic behavior that means, when it has involved only one variable, it was used the descriptive statistic method. All these simple procedures were realized with Excel®.

For the analysis and simultaneous description of more than two variables it was used multivariate exploratory methods with the software STATISTICA®, with the analysis module in principal components – ACP. For both, the used scales in the questionnaire with the environment factors were considered metric for frequency and intensity. To work with the behaviors it was used the number of times that each one was accounted for each answerer. This way it was generated four columns derived from the eleven questions in the block. Due to the descriptive and exploratory character of the research it was opted for analyzing only the principal plan, where there were projected the variables vectors considered on each processing. In the analysis of the relation between Environment and Strategic Behaviors the use of the frequency and intensity was made as active variables, acting on the calculation of the factors, though the behaviors participated as supplementary variables, with zero mass and only positioning on the graphic outputs to illustrate the relationships.

RESULTS ANALYSIS

The first conducted analysis was to verify how the inns managers notice the organizational environment. Below there is shown the perception average of the frequency (Chart 1) and the changes intensity (Chart 2) from the eight considered factors.

Chart 1
Noticed changes frequency

	N	Average	Standard deviation
Policy	122	4.491	0.707
Economy	122	4.393	0.756
Technology	122	4.426	0.890
Legislation	122	4.250	0.841
Social	122	4.360	0.937
Competitors	122	4.295	0.906
Suppliers	122	3.975	0.838
EMBRATUR	122	3.893	0.861
Average frequency		4.281	0.348

Through the analysis of Chart 1, it is observed that the factors with higher frequency refer to "politics" and "technology", while "Embratur" is the one that comes with lower frequency. This corresponds to saying that the researched inns managers analyze with more frequency when decision making, the factors "policies" and "technologies". On the other hand, what is less considered is the factor "Embratur". The results found could be explained due to the great technological changes that the sector has been suffering and that, even in the inns, have been implemented. The same can be said in the factor policy by the interference of the governments, on its diverse levels, over the tourist sector. What causes a surprise is that "Embratur" is not being considered in the process of decision making. What can be concluded is that the regulatory board is not getting to proper influence the accommodation sector (inns).

Chart 2
Noticed changes intensity

|	N	Average	Standard deviation
Policy	122	4.106	0.861
Economy	122	4.229	0.870
Technology	122	4.237	0.900
Legislation	122	4.319	0.973
Social	122	4.311	0.824
Competitors	122	4.122	0.819
Suppliers	122	3.918	0.959
Embratur	122	3.877	0.887
Average intensity	122	4.140	0.348

It is observed through Chart 2, which shows the perception of the factors variation degree studied, that the ones with higher intensity refer to the factors "legislation" and "social", while the perception of changes in the factors "Embratur" and "suppliers" are the ones that come with higher intensity. This way, the managers consider the factor Embratur low frequency and also low intensity.

Considering the factors grouping it can be observed the ones that associate among themselves in the process of environmental changes perception. Analyzing Picture 1, it is noticed that two groups of answers are associated between themselves: the first of the factors AF1 (policies), AF7 (suppliers) and AF8 (Embratur) and the second of AF2 (economy), AF4 (legislation), AF5 (social) and AF6 (competitors). In other words, the answerers consider that the use frequency of the factors from each of these groups in the process of strategies formulation has a very strong relation among themselves, that is, when they base on a factor for the decision making, the ones from the same group are considered. The Factor AF3 (technology) was not associated to any other one, when the changes frequency is analyzed. What calls the attention is that the factor "legislation" does not associate with the factor EMBRATUR taking to say that the inns managers that use with high frequency in the decision making the first factor do not associate this one to the second.
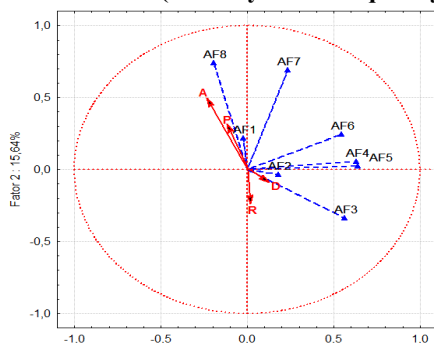
Picture 1
Factors Grouping according to frequency
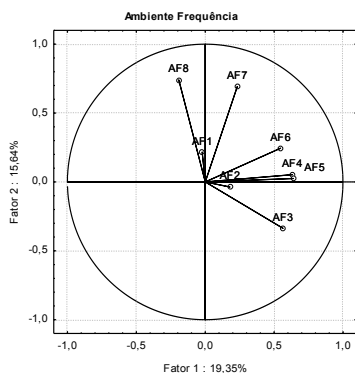
Picture 2
**Factors grouping according to intensity**
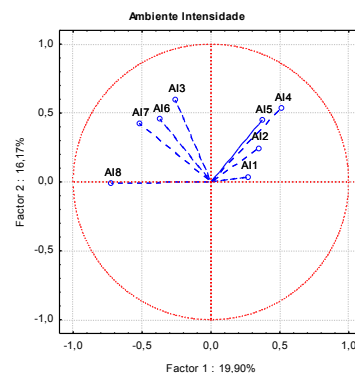
On Picture 2 two groups also highlight, the first composed by the factors AI1 (policies), AI2 (economy), AI4 (legislation) and AI5 (social) and the second formed by AI3 (technology), AI6 (competition) and AI7 (suppliers). The factor AF8 (Embratur) was not associated to any other when the changes intensity is analyzed. Thus, the answerers who consider the variation level of the factor "economy" high, have also made it for the changes of "policies", "social" and "legislation" and when they have given a low variation degree for one of the factors they have also made it for the other ones. The same way happened to a grouping of the factors "technology", "competition" and "suppliers".

Regarding the relationship between the strategic behavior and the environment factors concerning the frequency of use in the decision process (AF1-policies; AF2-economy; AF3-technology;AF4-legislation; AF5-social; AF6-competitors; AF7-suppliers and AF8-Embratur) it can be assured that, according to Picture 3, the companies that notice a higher frequency in the factors "policy" and "Embratur", adopt prospector or analyst behavior. This way, companies that notice a higher frequency in the factor "technology", adopt defensive behavior. For the reactive behavior nothing can be assured.

Picture 3
Relationship between the Strategic Behaviors and the Environment Factors (show by their frequency)

Picture 4
Relationship between the Strategic Behaviors and the Environment Factors (show by their intensity)
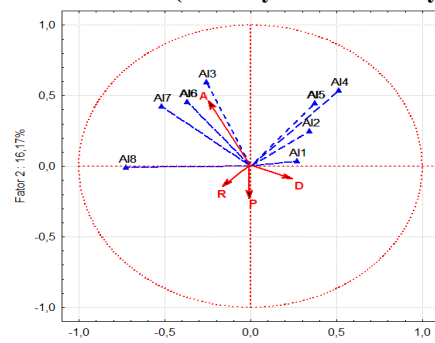
Regarding the relationship between the strategic behavior and the factors from the organizational environment concerning intensity (AI1-policies; AI2-economy; AI3-technology; AI4-legislation; AI5-social; AI6-competitors; AI7-suppliers and AI8-Embratur) it can be assured, according to Picture 4, that the companies that notice a higher variation degree in the factors technology, competitors and suppliers, adopt analyst behavior. The same way, companies that notice a higher variation degree in the factor "policies", adopt defensive behavior. Companies that notice a higher intensity of changes in the factor "Embratur", adopt reactive behavior. For the prospector behavior, when the intensity of the factors changes is analyzed, nothing can be assured.

CONCLUSIONS

The accommodation sector (inns) in the great Florianópolis is characterized, regarding the size of the inns, very homogeneous, with 72% of them between 3 to 8 employees. Concerning sex gender, 52% of managers are men and 48% are women. Regarding the mangers' ages, 32% are in the 30s-40s, followed by, 31%, in the 20s-30s. Analyzing data, it is observed the predominance, according to IBGE, of micro companies. Another inference that can be highlighted is that in most (63%) cases they are administered by youngsters that, or come to the great Florianópolis to enterprise due to the life quality appeal and, this way, ally an entrepreneurial action with the possibility of living near the sea, or assume the family business, because the parents do not want to "run" the business due to the great oscillations that this sector has been suffering because of the hotels growing not only in the center of the island but also on the beaches with higher activity.

When we relate the strategic behavior with the organizational environment, we can verify that the analyst behavior is positively related to the organizational environment measured by the average of intensity perception and the changes frequency. This result shows us that the more changes happen in the studied factors to measure the frequency and intensity of the changes in the environment, the more analyst behavior will be adopted by the studied inns. Companies that notice higher changes frequency in the factors "policies" and "Embratur", adopt prospector or analyst behavior. Companies that notice higher changes frequency in the factor technology, adopt defensive behavior. For the reactive behavior, when the frequency of changes is analyzed, nothing can be assured. Companies that notice a higher intensity of changes in the factor policies, adopt defensive behavior. Companies that notice higher intensity of changes if the factor Embratur, adopt reactive behavior. For the prospector behavior, when it is analyzed the intensity of changes, nothing can be assured.

The relevance of this work is in bringing new empirical evidences for the understanding on how the organizations interpret their environments and behave for the constant search of growing in their acting fields. As for practical contribution it shows to the inns managers, organizational environment factors that are relevant for the decision making, as well as instigates them to a reflection over the relation between their internal characteristics and the option of the strategic behavior adopted. As a suggestion for future works, it is recommended that a study with other chains of inns located in other Brazilian capital is made, to verify how the relation between environment and behavior happens. Another suggestion would be including in the environment construct the complexity, dynamism and munificence analysis. Moreover, new constructs can be established (resources, capacities amongst other ones) in order to evaluate their new relations with the ones already studied on this research.

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