

Streamlining of centralization of operations for a multinational telecommunications company in the Latin American market.

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<p>The purpose of this thesis is to provide an analysis to help future companies in the process of implementing the strategy of centralizing operations to get advantages regarding processes, performance, costs savings and growth abroad when becoming a multinational company in the Latin American market.</p> <p>This study was based on a multinational company from the telecommunication industry, where the author was doing her internship, working for the Supply Chain and Logistics department remotely performing activities. It is intended to answer the questions related to how multinational companies use the centralization of operations as a feasible strategy. Additionally, to figure out which kind of activities are centralized, enlist benefits, and how is this beneficial in the Latin American market telecommunications industry.</p> <p>The analysis was based on qualitative research and carried out through a series of questions that were asked during individual interviews. Several details of the most relevant topics were discussed between the Team leader and the Supervisor of the Supply Chain and Logistics department and a specialist in the study area.</p> <p>The results showed several advantages regarding agilization of processes, optimization of resources and cost-saving. The company was able to have streamlining outcomes that help the readers understand why is this strategy feasible. Additionally, a subcontracting model strategy was explained to complement the multinational company model regarding the management of massive work in the Latin American region. The partnership was created with Phone Carrier companies to enter the market with better acceptability criteria.</p> <p>In conclusion, multinational companies centralize operations that can be performed remotely to obtain benefits and concentrate the expertise on a defined location for better solution providing. Further studies will have a better picture of the line that telecommunication companies follow when expanding to new markets.</p>	
Keywords Streamlining, centralization, supply chain operations, remote administration, cost benefits, multinational companies.	

Table of contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Background.....	1
1.2	Thesis Objective	1
1.3	Demarcation.....	2
1.4	International aspect.....	3
1.5	Anticipated benefits.....	3
1.6	Key concepts.....	4
1.7	Case company	5
1.8	Risk management.....	6
2	Streamlining in multinational companies	7
2.1	Multinational companies	7
2.2	Centralization theory.....	8
2.3	Administrative operations related to Warehouse and Distribution.....	8
2.4	Subcontracting	9
3	Research Methodology	10
3.1	Data collection methods	10
3.2	Research design	11
3.3	Sampling	13
4	Data and results	15
4.1	Company strategy and positioning as a multinational enterprise	15
4.1.1	Procurement and subcontracting	21
4.2	Operations selection and implementation plan	22
4.3	Advantages obtained by centralizing remote operations.....	26
4.3.1	Cost reduction as a result of streamlining advantages.....	27
5	Conclusions.....	29
5.1	Theory substantiation on implementation for multinational companies.....	29
5.2	Recommendation for further research.....	29
5.3	Evaluation and reflection on learning	30
	List of References	31
	Appendices.....	34
	Appendix 1. The Overlay matrix.....	34
	Appendix 3. Growth of the case company when positioned in Mexico.....	36
	Appendix 4. Location of Share Centers for centralization of operations per region.	36
	Appendix 5. Agenda overview during pandemic (priorities of case company).	37

1 Introduction

This chapter presents the outcome of detailed research that explains a multinational company's advantages on optimization of supply chain processes when centralizing specific administrative operations in a country. The author wanted to share the obtained result to help people interested in learning about the companies' growth and development and how they are strategically delegating operations.

Additionally, to provide information to all those entrepreneurs who want to expand their business but have limited knowledge about the benefits of a suitable supply chain strategy based on their interest. A common stopper for those people is the concern if it is worth it to expand a business out of the country of origin, so having a real-company study can help them better understand how the strategy is built.

1.1 Background

The purpose of this thesis was to study a Supply Chain topic that was found attractive by the author since she started working for a Multinational Telecommunications company, specifically in the Supply Chain and Logistics department, providing service for countries in Latin America. The company centralizes activities to get advantages for costs, human resources, optimization, and other factors. It was decided to focus the study on the benefits obtained throughout the centralization of operations that can be done remotely from an established share centre.

This topic was perceived as an opportunity to share, with people interested in telecommunications work, relevant information about how the industry works. At the same time, those who are planning to become a multinational company in the long-term and learn about how centralization of operation could be a feasible strategy for them.

1.2 Thesis Objective

The objective of this thesis was to develop a study about how multinational telecommunication companies centralize administrative operations related to warehousing and distribution to streamline processes when operating in the Latin American market.

The research question was defined as How does the centralization of operations related to warehousing and distribution of a multinational telecommunication company in Latin

America streamline the processes? It was intended to solve the question through qualitative research to get reliable results by the end of April 2021.

The following questions were used during the interview to obtain reliable information from the Supply Chain and Logistics department's internal members related to the centralization of operation and selection methods.

IQ1. How does the centralization of operation works?

IQ2. How companies choose which operations should they centralize?

IQ3. Do companies have operations in which they can choose to centralize or not? Must operations be centralized as a mandatory step of the strategy?

IQ4. Which optimal advantages of centralizing operations benefit the most to multinational companies?

IQ5. Which benefits a Telecommunication Services company can get when centralizing administrative operations?

1.3 Demarcation

The research focused specifically on the Telecommunication Services industry in the Latin American market. And only on administrative operations (activities that can be done remotely). Physical/in-field functions like manufacturing processes, physical distribution and deliveries, installation of sites, etc., were not studied deep. Nevertheless, they were mentioned to explain how subcontracting strategies are implemented to give a better idea to the readers about the company administration model. Additionally, it was focused on the optimal advantages that the centralization process provides for the internal administrative activities.

The centralization of operations has many benefits for a multinational company. Throughout the analysis, it was mentioned in detail the strategy of how the company decides to centralize specific operations.

This research was not developed in a financial environment; it was entirely focusing on Supply Chain. Let us not forget that a real company would be taken as the commission company to develop this thesis. The company works in manufacturing gadgets, but this

department of the company was not analysed; only telecommunications services, better known as Carrier and Infrastructure department was covered.

The expected result was a complete analysis of a multinational telecommunication company and how centralization operations have driven the company to succeed in the Latin American market. Additionally, which benefits the company were making the supply chain processes optimal and finding out which obstacles the company had been facing during the process.

1.4 International aspect

The thesis topic has the International aspect required in GLOBBA theses. The subject focused on a foreign world leader multinational telecommunications company where the author is currently working and its supply chain remote operations. Additionally, what makes this thesis international focused is that those small operations are performed with Latin American countries where the company has been positioned.

1.5 Anticipated benefits

The expected benefits from this study were divided into internal, external, and personal.

First, for the internal benefits, a well-developed explanation will be provided to the Supply Chain and Logistics team currently working on the administrative operations related to warehousing and distribution. Lately, the company employees have been curious about why and from where these operations are coming from. Since they are all committed to their work and willing to learn more about the company processes, this thesis document will help them understand the decision-making of operation's handover better and provide the company with a well-informed staff on what they are working on. As a result, the company will raise motivation and envelopment from their employees.

Second, for the external benefits, the future entrepreneurs that will read this thesis can have a better picture of how the centralization of operation can be a suitable strategy for impulse growing business. Furthermore, boosting foreign investment in the Latin American market can benefit the increasing economy, employment opportunities, and technological development.

Last, for personal benefits, the author has further planned to implement the centralization of operations strategy for an upcoming development on the family business, taking place

in the telecommunications industry. The analysis of the administrative operations and its behaviour when centralizing can help a small-medium company become more feasible and find new markets abroad.

The thesis outcome was detailed research that explains the advantages multinational companies can get when centralizing specific operations in a country. The intention is to share the analysis results to help people learn about the companies' growth and development. Additionally, to provide information to all those entrepreneurs who want to expand their business but have limited knowledge about their benefits if they a suitable strategy of their supply chain based on their interest.

1.6 Key concepts

This section aims to provide a mini-dictionary for the reader not familiar with the research topic and the concepts implemented through the thesis development. Moreover, the concepts will give the reader a clearer idea of the context of several paragraphs.

A multinational company is also known as an enterprise that operates in different countries controlled from the home country. This company can manage production or delivery services in other locations to expand the business to foreign markets. (Greshma 2018.)

The remote administrative operations are all those operations executed for administrative interest, which can be performed with tools like online platforms, computers, digital documents, etc. They can be focusing on a specific activity of the chain or the general process. It involves activities related to coordinating, planning, and directing services. (Mathews 2019.)

A centralized organization can be defined as a structure for companies where decision-making and activities are concentrated on a specific place. Usually, the direction is coming from superior offices established in the company's home country, and all other lower levels follow the directions indicated. Similarly, centralized organizations tend to standardize processes and standards in decentralized locations abroad. (CFI 2020.)

Streamlining can be understood as a strategy to make the process more efficient by removing or relocating parts. It is implemented by employing faster or simpler methods to make the working procedures be performed more. (COBUILD 2020.)

The operative costs, also known as operative expenses, are costs the company needs to consider during a specific period when a process or activity takes place in the company. They include resources used for operations such as facilities, human resources, tools, developing online systems, platforms, transport, etc. (Accounting Coach 2020.)

Distribution is the movement of goods and services as a step on the Supply Chain. It can deliver the goods directly to their accredited retailers or provide finished products to their final destiny. (Woollard 2015.)

Warehousing can be defined as the administration of storage and goods of a company, where different tasks are executed. It needs to be mentioned that warehousing is not limited to administration only. Besides, it covers the manual labour required within the facilities and the administrative operations' activities such as delivery information, documentation, examination, and certification. (Woollard 2015.)

Subcontracting is a common strategy implemented by big companies in different industries. It consists of delegating a part or several parts of the work to a third party to perform under the standards previously established between the company and the subcontracts. The decision to engage a third party comes from the necessity of expertise for a particular process. At the same time, it provides benefits such as cost savings and better demand control in mass. (Merriam Webster 2018.)

1.7 Case company

The commissioned company is a multinational company from the telecommunications industry. This company expanded worldwide and arrived in Mexico in 2018, locating 1 of the four share centres to provide service and centralize operations of more than 10 Latin American countries in which the company had entered. The company is located in Querétaro; a city considered one of the best options due to its outstanding cultural environment, technological innovation, industrial growth, and accelerated business development. IT transformation is inevitable, so the case company continuously innovates and builds efficient, agile, flexible data centres, flexible expansion, agile deployment, easy operations and maintenance, extensive data analysis, and massive computing and Infrastructure.

The strategy used for centralization was focused on several benefits and advantages. Since the author was working in the Supply Chain Department, the intention was to analyze remote operations in areas of the supply chain such as distribution and warehousing.

Moreover, learn how that successful strategy could be applied for other multinational companies when centralizing operations related to the areas of the Supply Chain mentioned before.

1.8 Risk management

Through this study, the author faced various challenges that could intervene in the implementation of market research, such as time frame, the confidentiality of information from the private company, and the physical location of the author and participants.

Due to the Covid situation, the author and the company face some changes in the work environment's dynamic. First, since the area where she is working was chosen to work from home, it might get challenging to get appointments to do the interviews. Moreover, the availability of the respondents needs to be considered; the position they have in the company can demand more time and a tight agenda which could not have free space for interviews on an extended schedule.

Additionally, the author was aware of the confidentiality restrictions that the case company has regarding internal information processes, detailed numbers, denominated names of strategies, and location. There was a possibility of obtaining rejection answers to detailed questions during the interviews. Therefore, research on reliable information about companies with the same characteristics and strategies must be addressed to complete the analysis of centralization of operations to work on a comparison type of essay.

Lastly, the case company did not permit to show the name in this thesis. As a result, future readers might doubt if the study was developed with an existing company. The author must be clear and detailed as best as possible, give examples, and organize ideas to provide coherence to a well-developed report.

2 Streamlining in multinational companies

In this chapter, the author provides theoretical research related to the topic that this thesis studied. The figure below shows the topics and subtopics analyzed during the development of the study with the case company (Figure 1).

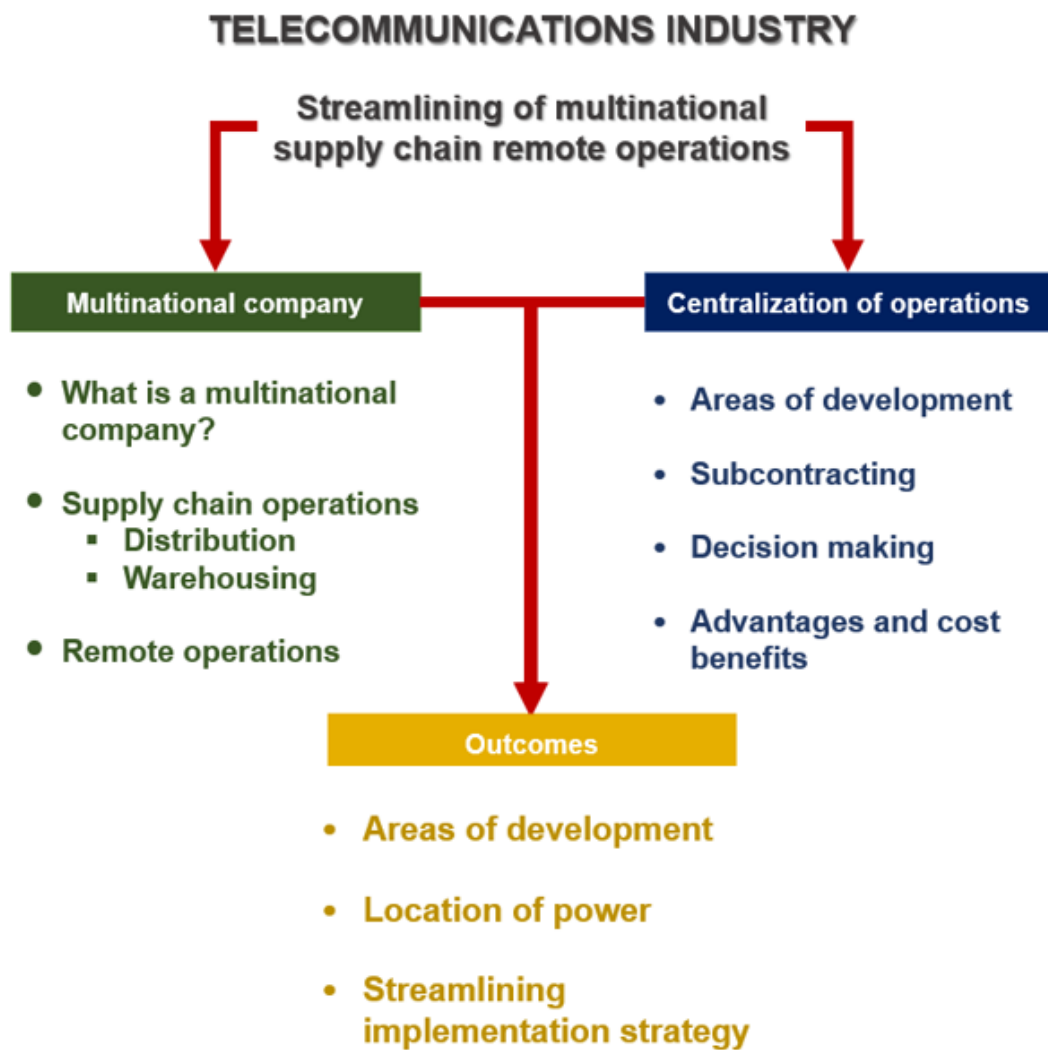


Figure 1. Streamlining of multinational supply chain remote operations.

2.1 Multinational companies

The analysis of becoming a multinational company addressed the benefits for businesses and host countries when a company decides to expand. Multinational companies are defined as companies that operate in their home country and more than one foreign country (Pettinger 30 May 2019.) The companies can focus on sell products to the market, provide services, or even allocate specific operations such as distribution, manufacturing, or warehousing to get advantages for a well-developed supply chain.

The commissioned multinational company with which the study was developed decided to centralize Latin American countries' operations in Mexico. The Mexican market has attractive advantages related to costs when foreign countries decide to invest. One of the most remarkable ones is the country's trade agreements that allow entering more than 45 international markets (HOW2GO n.d.) According to ALMER SA (08 February 2017), some Asian companies decided to invest in Mexico because, even when the labour expenses are similar between the countries, Mexico is better positioned for supply chain expansion interests in the Latin American market.

One of the main characteristics of multinational companies is that they have to be specialized and competitive in their local markets for them to be able to integrate into foreign markets. (Varadan 2019.) It is important that, when a company becomes multinational, there has to be a clear delegation of tasks and duties to keep good management out of the home country (UKEssays 2018).

2.2 Centralization theory

Fayol's centralization principle was implemented in the study to analyze how effective this strategy has been for companies nowadays and which advantages it had provided. Centralization of operations for an administrative model refers to concentrating activities like decision-making and positioning expert staff in a specific location to control the organization better. (Corporate Finance Institution 2017.) Henry Fayol stated that centralization would depend on the company's nature and size (Alfonso 2018). Moreover, companies will base their centralization decisions on their interest, for example, if their primary purpose is quality service, costs reduction, resource optimizations, among others.

Considering the advantages above, multinational companies can reach success if they find a way to create a strategy based on company needs and interests. The benefits already mentioned will drive companies to achieve development and innovation focused on streamlining, improving logistic strategy, providing employment opportunities, and bringing knowledge from different countries to grow.

2.3 Administrative operations related to Warehouse and Distribution.

The study was based explicitly on administrative operations that can be done remotely. An administrative operation is an activity related to coordinating, planning, and directing services and company management. (Mathews n.d.) Some examples are data management, front office operations, transactions, ERP systems, platforms' configuration, etc. The study

results drove us to analyze which operations are suitable to centralize to create a strategy focused on saving costs and reducing operating expenses.

In addition to the topic of the operation, must be considered operating expenses such as office-related type which are those expenditures that are not directly related to the production of goods or services; they are connected, for example, to legal fees, accounting, insurance costs, office supplies, rent costs for non-production facilities, etc. (Accounting Tools 2019.)

Considering that the primary purpose would be reducing costs of operative expenses for a multinational, entering countries with trade agreements with countries that could be their suppliers to low prices and tax payments can be beneficial. According to Tejvan Pettinger (21 May 2019), when operating in other countries with lower corporation tax rates, profits can be filtered. Additionally, transportation and logistics can get more manageable thanks to the company's location inside the host country, thus saving money and time (Flores 2020.)

To complement the theoretical framework, according to OBERLO (2019)," distribution is an essential element of operations as, without a role that tracks and improves the relationship between manufacturers and customers, a company cannot ensure the best possible service." and OBERLO (2019) also provided information about warehousing which says that" The primary function of a warehouse is to store products or goods before moving them to another location. But there can be some secondary functions of warehousing that enhance a warehouse's space."

2.4 Subcontracting

Another strategy that multinational companies implement is Subcontracting which consists of hiring a third party to execute specific activities where they have experience and knowledge already. That way, the leading company avoids unnecessary expenses related to operative activities in which they are not experts (Donde Ir 26 June 2020). For example, suppose the company wants to do all activities on its own. In that case, that costs time and money to invest in hiring staff, training, practices, and increase the risks when executing operations. If the company decides to subcontract, it will optimize processes and save costs. The subcontracting strategy facilitates the entry of products and services of the company in new markets due to the local subcontracting companies' adaptability. (Matutes 2005.)

3 Research Methodology

This chapter describes the steps taken to develop the research. The data collection methodology and supportive information of why it was the most suitable analysis are explained in detail, describing how the data was collected and interpreted. Moreover, the research design shows how the interviews were implemented. Lastly, the reason why the sampling selection was defined for conducting the study to obtain reliable information was mentioned. The Overlay matrix is provided in the appendices chapter (Appendix 1).

3.1 Data collection methods

A qualitative research method was implemented for this thesis. This method focuses on understanding people's experiences, behaviours, attitudes, and interaction. It does not generate numerical data. However, it provides an extensive evaluation with specific details and a significant research opportunity and development on the topic (Pathak 2013). In the table below, the author summarized the main characteristics of the qualitative research method. The table below shows the features and characteristics that a qualitative research method should be based on (Table 1).

Table 1. Qualitative research method.

	QUALITATIVE
Purpose / Objective	The strategy explains and describes the data based on the characteristics so the study can be focused on qualities in rich detail. This method allows going deep into the topic.
Research Design: Data collection and Sampling	The results are obtained from interviews, open surveys, and open questionnaires. Considering that the answers that were gathered are coming from the experience of the interviewed people, there is an opportunity for implementing focus groups, observation methods, etc.
Analysis and Interpretation	The analysis involves every detail obtained from the research to understand the big picture of the process. It is high time demanding because the results are gotten from the narrative descriptions. The answers tend to be specific and with a lot of characteristics mentioned. They can be interpreted with text and pictures, adding observations through the analysis.
Characteristics	Subjective, flexible, general, process-oriented, focused on the reasons, realizing on the direct experiences of human beings, based on innovation and adaptation, inductive approach, use small samples, narrative description and interpretation, specific results.

According to Taylor Powell (2013), the qualitative analysis process provides narrative data which can come in different ways such as open-ended questions and written comments on questionnaires; testimonials; individual interviews; discussion groups or focus groups interviews; logs, journals and diaries; observations; documents, reports and news articles; stories; and case studies.

The tools implemented for this research were individual interviews with participants and desktop research by reading documents, reports and news articles. Additionally, the author acquired knowledge from the company courses previously mentioned. The staff knowledge based on experience was more useful during the interviews and easier to understand instead of trying to understand a non-familiarized topic on a platform with much information from all departments.

3.2 Research design

The study of the topic was divided into two. First, the author was studying, taking courses and participating in training within the company. This was a learning method required from the Supervisor of the area of the case company to give the author permission to use the company as a base to develop the research. Since the company was not allowing to show the name on any part of this thesis, the Supervisor provided learning material to the author that benefited her performance on the internal work and her thesis development. Citations that contain the name of the company, references of the websites, link from internal platforms, or names of the interviewed people who elaborates in the company were strictly forbidden to be shown.

Second, an implementation of a research design based on the Research objective and investigative questions was conducted. Below the figure that explains how the research design was created, who will participate and which questions were dug in deeper depending on the person interviewed (Figure 2).

The research design shows how it was divided into two phases. For the first phase, the author contacted the Team leader and the Supervisor of the department of study to schedule an appointment via zoom to have the interview. The questions were asked in deep depending on the interviewed person knowledge background during these individual interviews.

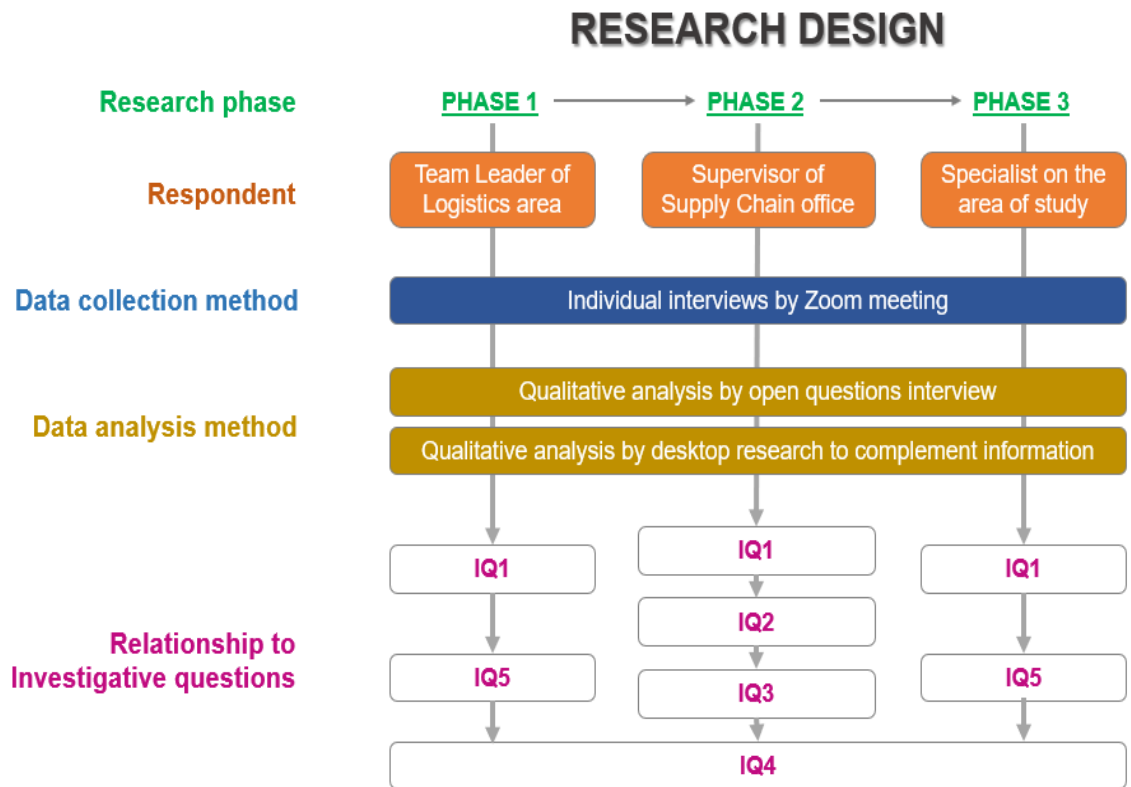


Figure 2. Research design.

First, with the Team leader, the IQ1 and IQ5 were addressed regarding his experience in different industries and the numerous years he worked in the telecommunications industry.

Next, with the Supervisor, the IQ1, IQ2 and IQ3 were addressed regarding her experience in the specific analysis and evaluation area where she performs her work within the company; the decision making on what operations should be centralized and the processes related to it is one of the main tasks of her position in Supply Chain and Logistics Office.

Then, with the specialist on the area of study, the IQ1 and IQ5 were addressed regarding the specific tasks he has on the distribution and warehousing activities; he has previously worked on-field activities. Nowadays, he works as a partner of the case company providing subcontracting services.

Finally, all participants answered IQ4, answers from different perspectives and positions related to which advantages the multinational companies were getting when centralizing operations provided extensive information to reach valuable conclusions. Since they all have worked in other multinational companies before entering this case company, they know different working experiences.

3.3 Sampling

The company has plenty of people with well-developed knowledge, so the approach focused on those experts who know better about specific processes and activities. Ensuring that every employee gets as much knowledge as possible from different areas is one of the company's principles.

The strategy that was implemented consisted of contacting the team leader of the Logistics department, the Supervisor of the Supply Chain office in the LATAM share centre, the Supervisor of the Supply Chain office in a Latin American country that has centralized operations in Mexico, and an expert on the subcontracting strategies that the company has (Figure 3).

Team Leaders and Supervisors had activities from many departments before achieving those positions; that gives them a better understanding of where the process steps are come from and how or why they are organized like that. Everyone's point of view is helpful because they are focused on a specific area; they can contribute with details and talk from their experience. Additionally, they can provide examples of issues they had experimented with during operations and the challenges they had faced, among other contributions.

A strategy to motivate informants to participate in this study is the future development of the author's professional development to develop the employees in the area. The company always wants to ensure that every employee gets as much knowledge as possible from different areas to become proactive and help in urgent cases when demand increases. Moreover, people from the company's home country, like the supervisors of Supply Chain offices, always feel flattered when treating them as an expert and showing interest in learning from them.

Working in the company was an advantage for the author to get reliable information, be in direct contact with the informants and experts of the area of study, and access internal learning platforms. Additionally, the online approach all are currently working with allowed contacting informants from other countries to solve specific questions and share different perspectives and experiences while working the supply chain and logistics processes involved.

SUMMARIZED MAP OF POSITIONS ON SUPPLY CHAIN DEPARTMENT

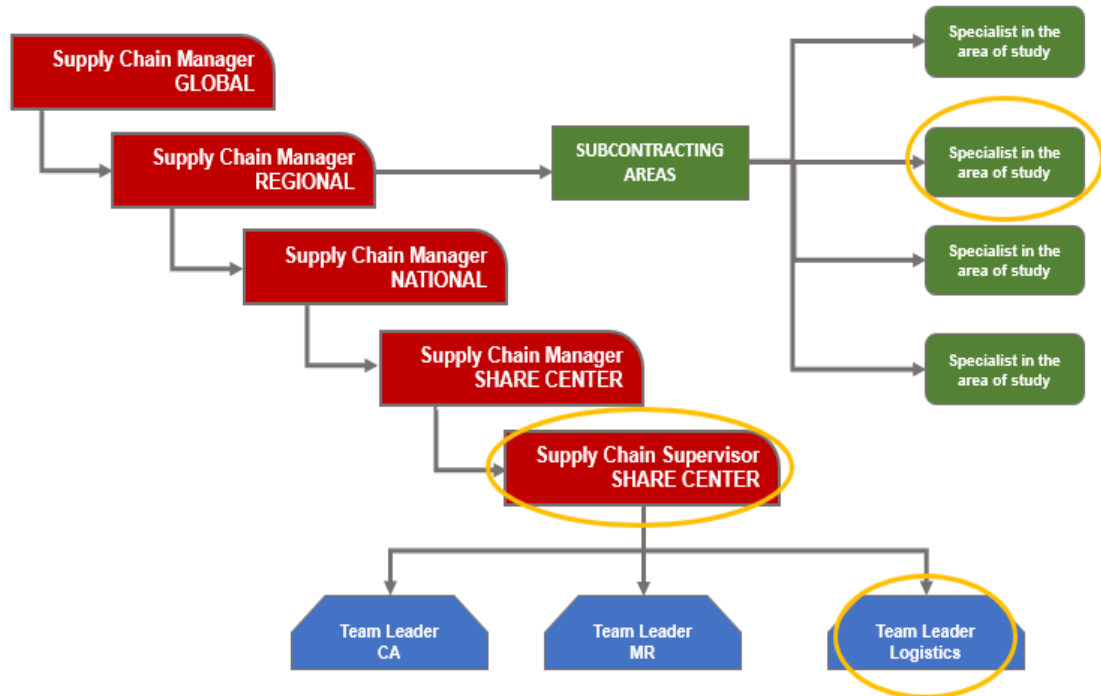


Figure 3. Summarized map of positions on the Supply Chain department.

4 Data and results

This chapter interprets the key findings from the interviews and translates them into an analysis divided by topic. The information obtained from the respondents were combined to complement each section of the company's streamlining strategy analysis. It is essential to mention that names, company names, and real numbers regarding information details would not be said to respect the confidentiality agreement previously established and mentioned.

4.1 Company strategy and positioning as a multinational enterprise

The Internet has changed the way people work, learn, and live. Especially during these pandemic times, the Internet has been offering more meeting systems, collaboration systems, online education, telemedicine, and more home entertainment.

The company of study has many years in the market and around 20 years in Mexico. It is based on the Telecommunications industry, which, at least in Mexico, did not stop for any circumstance even during a pandemic. It is considered a primary industry because it is vital for the development, communication, and economy of the country. Moreover, it is a strategic partner for other companies due to the influence of internal communication infrastructure.

A multinational company like this one is compound by Headquarters in origin, where all decisions and processes are defined. The innovation regarding technology, models, products, and services are created in headquarters. Additionally, the methods are standardized, the expertise is concentrated, and the higher hierarchical positions are located here. When the company is profitable enough, they proceed to market research to expand and position themselves in countries abroad. Thus, it is necessary to evaluate different aspects such as acceptability in the market, needs and interest of the possible partner companies, technological standards, taxes, and fees.

According to the company's internal research, the internet traffic analysis based on the services provided during the year 2020 has increased by a 30% during this pandemic. The industry of telecommunications has been facing various challenges regarding internet services and social responsibility. However, this means a huge business opportunity for companies working in this sector.

In 2020, the business of suppliers of internet services in Latin America had achieved a growth of more than double. Currently, the business counts on more than 1000 suppliers of internet services and members using the case company's technologies. Additionally, in Mexico, it has been shown great potential on the revenue of internet services. Lately, the customers, suppliers and partners are giving good feedback on the case company's work, identifying the business as a reliable local business of internet services and Infrastructure.

The positioning of the case company in Latin America was locating a Share center with expertise concentrated in the same office. They will provide service for remote operations from the Mexico share center. In this location, they focus on more than five different focuses from where the Supply Chain and Logistics department for Infrastructure were studied to develop this analysis.

It is essential to mention that the company is well-known worldwide because of its smartphone market presence. They offer several gadgets which have become more prevalent in Latin America in the past five years. The gadgets sector in the company only occupies 20% of their value proposition. Is the 80% of the company focus are radio bases and Infrastructure (Figure 4). There is shown a better picture of how big the company has become position as the leader in the telecommunications market.

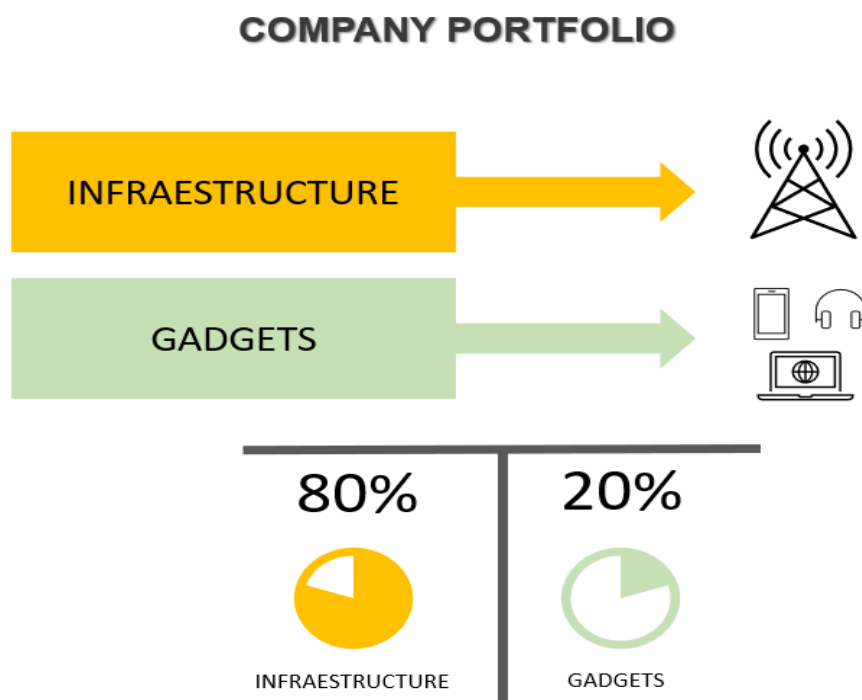


Figure 4. Company portfolio.

The company has global leadership in the telecommunications industry and smart devices manufacturing. They operate with four different business units. Only two of them were analyzed. The author participated in the Logistics area for the Brazil Supply Chain office, from the LATAM share center located in Mexico: Carrier and Enterprise division.

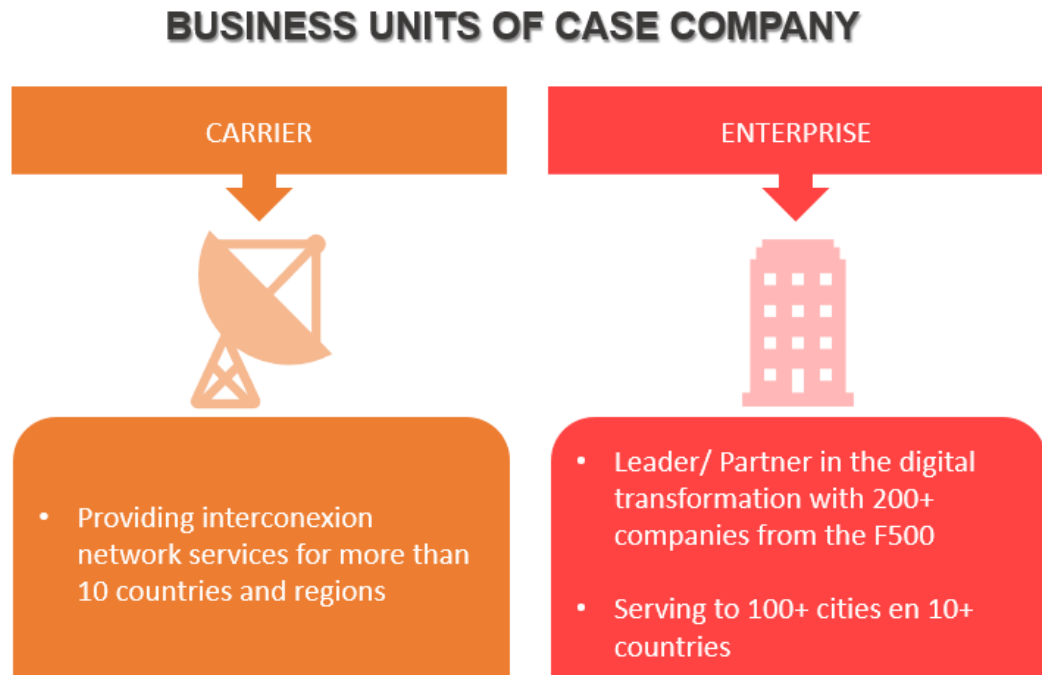


Figure 5. Business units of the case company

The figure above shows the two business units of focus. The Carrier unit refers to the service based on ethernet technology which became universally popular. It provides network services related to communication channels. It builds a network of technology that connects people by allowing internet connection, phone calls, and data transportation, among other commercials, residential, and mobile services (Figure 5).

The Enterprise unit refers to a private infrastructure implementation for companies. It allows better control of internal data administration and enforces the capacity to visualize opportunity areas, implement services, diagnose problem areas, and track daily operations. (CIENA 2019.)

Both business units mentioned are working in more than ten countries around Latin America, helping the company expand its services and be positioned as the best option in the telecommunication industry.

The following map shows the position of service centers that the company had strategically positioned. Locations shown on the map are not precisely indicated regarding confidentiality restrictions. Nevertheless, they are shown as closely as allowed by the company for this study purposes in every country imaginary limit (Figure 6).



Figure 6. Latin America positions of case company and operation center's location.

The figure about shows four different types of centers: training centers, which are located strategically in countries with a higher workload and higher number of projects, where the labour force is usually concentrated to work on mass; supply center, which receives manufactured material sent from headquarters and distributes around the Latin American countries; technical support centers, which is formed mainly by engineers and technology experts that can use their skills to test the equipment and make analysis on the behaviour of the network test; and solutions center, better known as Share center, where the decision making, concentrated expertise, and remote administrative operations are full.

The company has the Caribbean countries as one of the most recent clients due to their late entry on technology developments in the telecommunications industry, bringing Infrastructure through negotiations with the government to introduce telecommunication services. For example, the Dominican Republic can be mentioned as an example, one of the first Caribbean countries opening doors for this industry to enter the market.

One of the main barriers when entering this country was the lack of technology and the lack of phone carrier companies willing to provide their services. The entry of the company into the market consists of creating a partnership between Infrastructure and Network.

The case company, as previously mentioned, is dedicated to building Infrastructure for providing quality equipment. In other words, they create and give the material such as optical fibre, cabinets, wires, antenna, so other companies specialized in Network can enter offering packages services to connect central through the wire and advanced wireless methods.

To place an example, a phone carrier company called OT&O will be used for confidentiality restrictions. This company provides Network around Latin America. To provide service in the Dominican Republic, it needs a well-developed and high-quality infrastructure that can promise its network services will be spread correctly. Our commissioned company negotiates the partnership between Network and Carrier with OT&O, which will benefit both parties by expanding their services to more countries and increasing their sales.

The company offers their services through Sales staff that talk about the strategy and convince them why it is the first option. It is compromised and has the skills to install Infrastructure in all areas and provides an extensive portfolio for the clients to choose from depending on the area's needs. It can be a city or in a small town. The sales team can decide and recommend which technology suits the better on the place where the company wants to place the equipment.

An important part that needs to mention is that this company, like many other companies from their country of origin, offers the best deal of prices but does not compromise the quality of its materials. This does not mean that the service they provide is not good quality; the quality of technology is one of the best. The thing is that the pricing strategy of products is engaging the customers to purchase the infrastructure service package in significant amounts; is an investment that needs to be done for extensive territory within the country, this is not a scenario where the country is only installing telecommunications for just a city or a neighbourhood.

When the company enters and is established in the country, the massive recruitment process starts to look for people with technology backgrounds. Engineers, experts on sales, supply and programming. The following table will explain the steps the company used to

follow when entering new countries and preparing the staff to start operating for services (Table 2).

Table 2. Steps on starting operation in a new country.

Action	General description
Entering the market in a country	After negotiating with government and private companies, the company arrives at the market by selling infrastructure projects requiring a massive group of people to work on them.
Recruitment	The company starts by hiring local experts in telecommunications, engineering, supply, logistics, and accounting. This, to construct an entire labour force that can perform the activities involved in the company purposes.
Training and setups	An expert with years of experience in the company from headquarters is sent to entry to train the recruited staff. Depending on the area, he/she spends from 2 to 6 months training people to make sure that the processes will be executed as stated by the quality department.
Start operating	Finally, the company labour force in the Latin American country is ready to start operating and providing service within the area. If some issues or challenges need to be solved, they must contact headquarters experts to ask for a reliable solution.

After actions are finished, the Rep Office starts to work on the project sold by the company. The company evaluates how the market accepts the services during a specific period and how the Infrastructure is growing positively. The most valuable competitive advantage of the company is that they offer speed on their projects; while the competition is setting an installation plan for a year, they offer it for six months. This convinces the customer because of the need for development and urgency regarding demand. Let us remember that telecommunications became a primary industry, so many other industries depend on it.

In brief, the features that differentiate the company from the competition is that they are selling fast solutions, good quality, offers installation, maintenance and posterior services, short-time development.

4.1.1 Procurement and subcontracting

The Infrastructure starts to be built within the chosen country, and together the company starts functioning with the activity's performance. But the research keeps looking for the reason on how the company achieve a massive number of employees to work on many projects, additionally, in how they train the staff in such a limited time to deliver the tasks in a short period. The investment in recruitment is usually one of the biggest concerns of a company due to the enormous monetary investment required.

The case company works under a Subcontracting strategy that consists of creating a partnership with a third party to delegate specific tasks. The agreement between the parties implies working under the quality requirements and standardized process that the company has previously defined.

Subcontracting is a common strategy implemented by big companies in different industries. It consists of delegating a part or several parts of the work to a third party to perform under the standards previously established between the company and the subcontracts. The decision to engage a third party comes from the necessity of expertise for a particular process. At the same time, it provides benefits such as cost savings and better demand control in mass. When the company decides to implement subcontracting, it starts a procurement process.

The figure below shows how the procurement of subcontracting is made. The Case company start looking for candidates to work with them (Figure 7). Nonetheless, the company does not rely only on making a procurement with every company in the country. They ask for recommendation from their Phone Carrier companies that have already established partnerships on subcontracting. When the company receive the recommendation, the procurement department starts interviewing these subcontracting companies to find the best quality, price and capacity they could offer to match the case company requirements.

It is essential to mention that the case company can hire multiple subcontracting companies per state or national regions. This recruitment is strategically made to satisfy the demand all around the country and be able to achieve the short-period projects promised to the clients on the infrastructure projects.

Depending on the size of the project, the company decides how many subcontractors they could need. They need to be certified by the company to ensure their capabilities and

quality controls would be implemented properly. If more work is offered to a subcontracting company, the better price they will give to the clients depends on how expensive it is for the contractor to transport their staff to different regions. The subcontractors are also focusing on the best logistic deals they can work on.

PROCUREMENT FOR SUBCONTRACTING COMPANIES

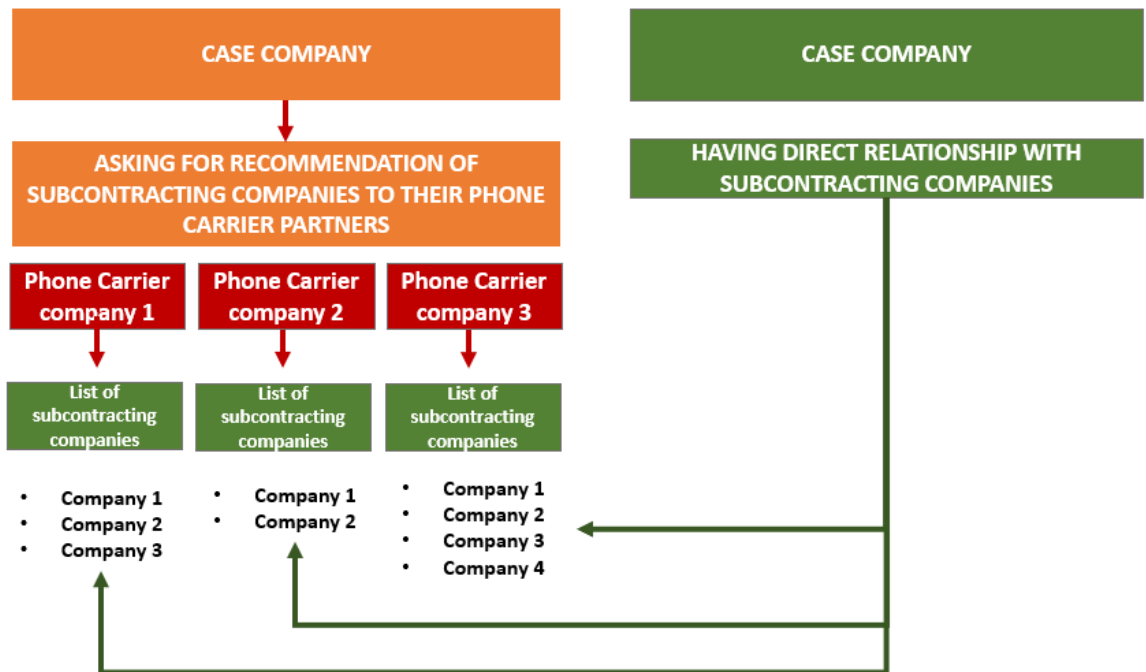


Figure 7. Procurement for subcontracting companies.

The case company is focusing on starting the service from the beginning: from putting the cement on the ground until the configuration of the equipment. For this, they use subcontracted companies previously mentioned. This is a strategy to save costs since they do not have to pay a salary, registration, insurance, training, etc., to have persons under their responsibility. The same happens with configurations, transports, maintenance, and several departments within a company.

4.2 Operations selection and implementation plan

This subtopic focuses on the Supply chain department and how this operations model is divided into this department.

Warehousing and distribution are part of the Supply Chain. They are composed of tangible and intangible operations. Tangible operations are all those activities that are physi-

cally executed like transportation, move and dispatch material, warehousing of items, material in facilities, etc. Intangible operations refer to all operations that are the administrative part of the tangible activities already mentioned. For example, payments, transactions, ERP systems, configuration, databases, so on.

There are too many processes that a person needs to learn when entering to work there. The case company has documents and all the processes standardized related to every action that is performed in the company. The standards are defined from the home country of the company; additionally, in this company, they even have their platforms to keep the confidentiality of the process and at the same time to have better internal management of the operations. The systems are divided by activities per area. Based on this system, the experts start creating SOPs to help people understand how the activity is done and which steps they should follow. The exciting thing here is that the process can have variations depending on where this one is being performed.

Table 3. Supply Chain and Logistics operations.

AREA	ACTIVITY
DISTRIBUTION	<u>Tender creation:</u> Assign a vehicle to transport specific material.
	<u>Cross-docking routes:</u> Choosing the best route in the country where the vehicles can get more material and optimize logistics.
	<u>Delivery Notes creation:</u> Documents that inform delivery details of the material, such as an address, country, state, site, who will be receiving the material on-site, telephone number, when it will be arriving, among others.
WAREHOUSING	<u>Inventory on items:</u> The control of items and material within a specific warehouse is monitored from a platform. This allows forecasting how much material need to be requested to headquarters, how many items are available for projects installation, and other details like location, schedules, etc.
	<u>Material request creation:</u> Based on the availability of the items, a number needs to be created for the people in charge to send the items, can arrive at the warehouse and pick up the correct material.

	<p><u>Cargo claims solutions:</u> If there was an item or equipment managed that is coming back to the warehouse, the staff can check if there is availability to replace the pieces as soon as possible to continue with the installation of site technology.</p>
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The table above shows some examples of administrative operations related to the Supply Chain and Logistics that can be done remotely (Table 3). The names of the activities are assigned by the company; below, and there is a description to make them explicit.

The activities that have been decided to centralize are not part of a mandatory step of the company, but they are part of a long-term plan to saving costs and agile the information flow. The Share center in Mexico has, as one of its purposes, the optimization of processes and concentrate the expertise to provide better solutions around the region. In the company, like in plenty others, there is hierarchical management regarding each department where the decision making needs authorization from higher positions.

There is a process for the selection of operations that will be centralized. According to the Supervisor of Supply Chain office in the Mexico Share center, the operations related to this department are evaluated: by the level of difficulty, if there are more projects coming up and demand will increase, previous results on quality, and how the process is divided in the country. For example, how many people are involved in how many steps of the material requests, and the methods implemented to work on the operation; if it is via a platform, physical printing of documents, communication between employees, how many issues the rep office has already experimented, etc.

The figure below shows how the negotiation between the share center and rep office is performed. The Manager of the Supply Chain office in the Mexico Share center is the one in charge to start the negotiation. She asks both supervisors from the share center and in the rep office to show their results and reports regarding a specific activity. Additionally, prices and costs related are evaluated during the negotiation.

Finally, there is a presentation with the Supply Chain Manager at the Regional level. Both offices, Rep and Share center, try to give best arguments to keep the activity in one of the offices; by having more activities, they help increasing benefits such as employment opportunities on the office, better positioning of the level on technology development in the country, closer control of the operation, among others.

NEGOTIATIONS OF ACTIVITIES HANDOVER

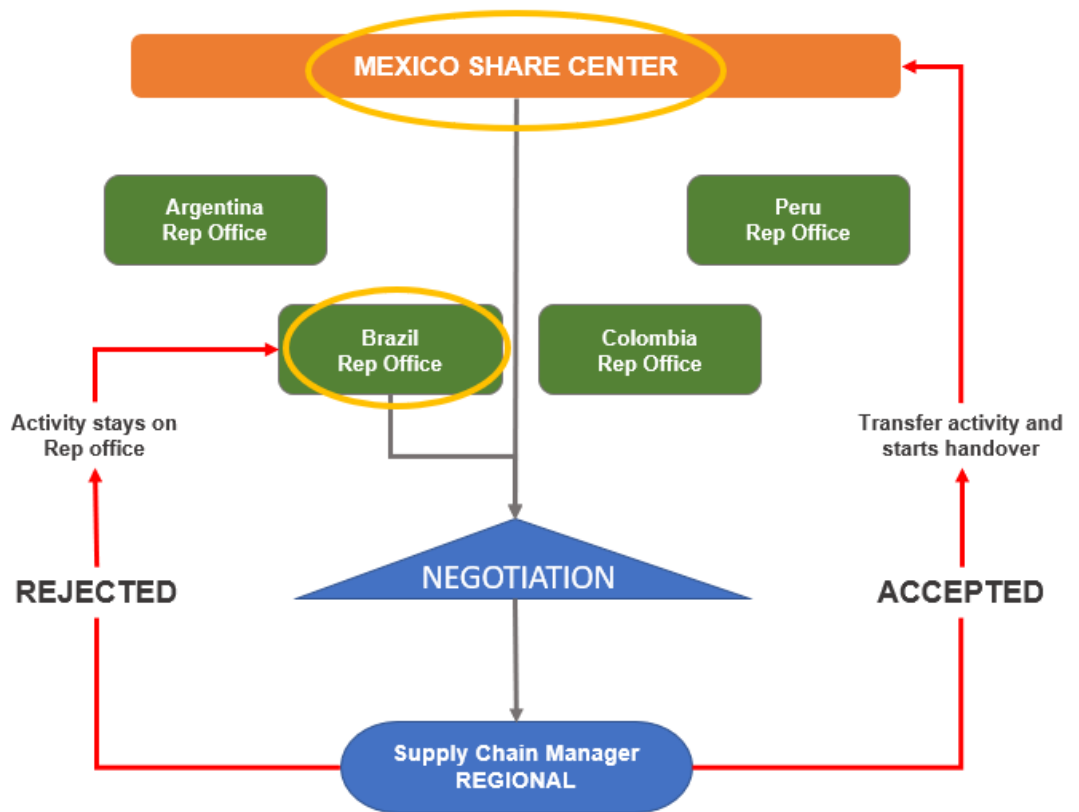


Figure 8. Streamlining in process based on expertise.

The Supply Chain Manager Regional level analyses the pros and cons and decide. If the proposal of centralization is approved, the activity is handover to the Share center during a 2-3 month period. If the proposal is rejected, the Rep offices keep the activity and keep working usually; there would probably be a further negotiation if some results regarding performance or appearance of issues are found (Figure 8).

The reason why the Manager of the Supply Chain office is taking the initiative to centralize an operation is that the Manager of the Region gives orders to centralize operations if they have strong support on numbers and savings related to resources. Once again, the operations are not a mandatory step, but it is a desire to improve performance by centralizing as much as possible.

STREAMLINING IN PROCESS BASED ON EXPERTIZE

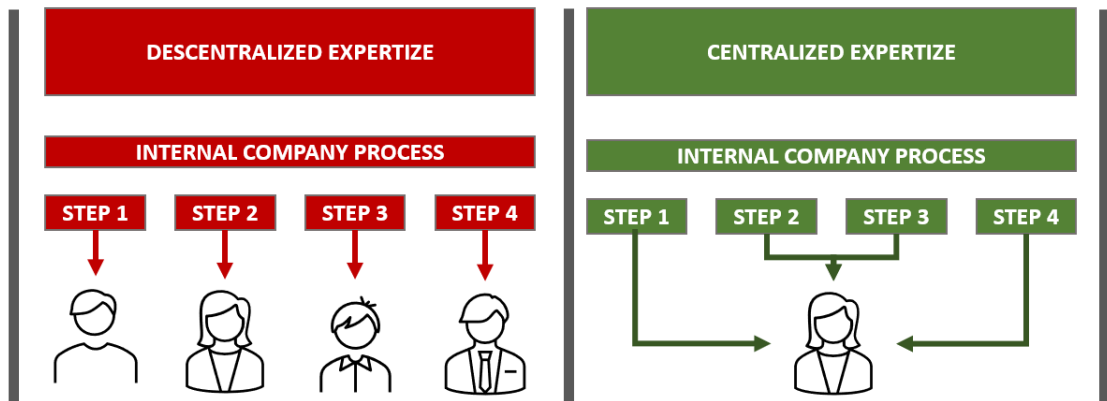


Figure 9. Streamlining in process based on expertise.

The figure above shows how an operation is performed in a decentralized office, where human resources and expertise are divided by steps (Figure 9). On the other hand, there is a centralized office in where the expertise is concentrated and let the expert perform a whole operation bringing agile problem solution and human resources optimization.

The sharing center centralized 75% in 4 years the operations related to distribution and warehousing. That means that, in the past, there was a person per step on a project's activity, or a manager per every operation on the supply chain, supervising and making all requests individually. With the expertise, reduce the number of employees can be reduced and increase efficiency when working from the bigger picture.

4.3 Advantages obtained by centralizing remote operations.

To promote agile Network, ultimate connectivity, and service agility, the case company established one of their 11 share centres in Mexico. There are share centres located in South Africa, Romania, Bulgaria, Russia, Pakistan, India, China, and Mexico. In Queretaro office, they have more than 10 Rep Offices for the region they provide service, which is Latin America. The rep offices located in this region have cultural and demographic similarities, such as the way of working, language, time zone, etc. From this, we can start by mentioning the main advantages that the company can have when centralizing operations.

First, the agile performance on administrative activities increases. The employees from a shared centre offer better quality, reports, and work done in less time, etc. It gives a value proposition on workload management.

Second, languages and culture are a common barrier when companies want to expand to other countries. When locating a shared center that can provide service to the region with similarities destroys the barriers regarding language and adaptability on ways of work. Additionally, improves communication and creates better working relationships between staff from different countries.

Third, the management of inventories, routes, location of sites between other specific activities has been benefited with faster solutions since they have been centralized. The easiness the employees have found in management and administration of the operations have increased the speed on work.

Fourth, the time zone is where all countries of the Latin American region match ideally to provide service from a shared center. It would be difficult to centralize operations from a European or Asian country where the time zone has more than 5hrs in between. If the rep office had an issue, they would have to wait at least one business day to receive an answer to provide a solution; this delay on the answer will bring delay in response, affecting the working flow and not delivering the projects on time. The Project managers and Rep office staff can quickly contact people from the Share Center in Mexico. This close relationship gives benefits like the same time frame of working between countries from the same region.

Lastly, when having experts concentrated in the share center, it's easier to send one of them to give training or even stay for some time to teach in the country where they need to improve some processes or solve specific issues, instead of bringing all the team to headquarters to take training. Moreover, carrying one person from the rep office country implies a risk of not achieving the complete knowledge and going back to the country not prepared enough to spread the correct familiarity with the proper standards.

4.3.1 Cost reduction as a result of streamlining advantages

To satisfy the demand by entering a new market, the company decides to offer the best prices among the competitors in the telecommunications industry. On the other hand, it implies a high workload on staff from the rep office and the share center; it leads the company to invest.

Since it is known, when a company is offering solutions quickly, it could mean that the costs would increase a lot. For this company, the most growing prices were the human re-

sources to perform the activities. To delivering the work on time, they hire not one but various subcontractors in the area who are certified to work as partners of the case company to complete the job and have the expected results on the projects.

Regarding human resources costs, the centralization of operations in a country with lower labour force salaries by law are suiting better the company expenses. The expenses of Human resources decrease, which benefits the revenue to charge more for the work done. For example, in Mexico, the working can be paid way cheaper than in Brazil, so it is better to transfer the activities to the country.

Next, there are the costs related to renting facilities where the labour force should be located to perform the activities. The less stuff a company can have in a country, the smaller the place has to be. Additionally, training for the team at rep offices can be done in a faster, agile way and can provide service as experts instead of hundreds of people. Facilities costs also reduced thanks to the centralization of the Share centers; training and communications are getting better thanks to the concentration of expertise in one place.

The operations are done faster and in mass. Moreover, the company has better control over the carrier projects scheduling the activities and the workload by a person. Having less staff, more money could be invested in different improvements on warehouses, distribution tools, technology for the own company, rewards to the clients, etc.

5 Conclusions

This final chapter concludes the key findings of the thesis. First, the author provides the arguments acquired from the analysis to prove that the theory of centralizations principle works beneficially for multinational companies. Second, further research will help and motivate future companies to implement this strategy to get a good streamlining on various internal areas. Lastly, the author reflects on her learning and how this thesis contributed to the academic performance and professional growth during the six months where the research took place.

5.1 Theory substantiation on implementation for multinational companies

According to the Supply Chain Manager Regional level, the efficiency of the work delivery increased from 20 to 32 per cent between 2018-2019, talking about Purchase order and Material requests remote operations. There was a preference in paying overtime for the company than having people working with not a 100% of the workload.

The company started realizing that the managers sometimes lacked knowledge about different activities related to areas they were not familiar with, like transporting, payments, quotations. This led the company to implement the centralization principle. Henry Fayol stated that centralization would depend on the company's nature and size (Alfonso 2018). Moreover, companies will base their centralization decisions on their interest.

The key finding from this analysis provided a better explanation of the company strategies that can be shared with the employees within the company. The labour force will learn about the internal management of centralization and will be able to understand the reason for the increment of workload and operations. The level of expertise increases per region. Since having problems with a country and then solve them, it can be tried to manage another situation similar to other countries and be more constructive when working as a team trying to find out better and faster solutions.

5.2 Recommendation for further research

The analysis of the company centralization strategy provided a real case example of a multinational company. Now, imagine there is a company from the telecommunication industry, or even another industry, where supply chain operations are fundamental for the growth in different markets. The costs and administration to positing in other countries are

high. Nevertheless, if key operations that can be done remotely are centralized, there can be benefits obtained regarding quality, control, and performance.

The outcome of this thesis was achieved as expected. Now, further entrepreneurs can read this study to learn more about the features and characteristics of a multinational company. Moreover, the advantages and cost benefits of implementing a centralization structure on operations. In the research below, it was found out that when focusing on remote operations, the workflow can get easier.

5.3 Evaluation and reflection on learning

The conduction of this thesis allowed the author to learn about a key strategy that is currently implemented in the company she is working. Additionally, she acquired detailed information on the implementation process for further implementation on a particular business. The study was based on a telecommunication company and the operations related. Nevertheless, the analysis and results show that the operations related to the supply chain area can occur in companies from different industries.

The development of the thesis challenged the author on writing skills, management of time, enforcing academic learning from her four years studying an international business degree, and compromise with her performance on a real company which was expecting a good outcome from this research.

Some challenges were faced during the thesis development. First, the strict confidentiality on internal information due to the company's regulations and strategy against competitors. The limited knowledge and restrictions about showing real numbers and names of the processes implied extra work describing the models in as much detail as possible so that the hypothetical examples could be understood and related to the topic. Second, the author had to manage the high workload between working and studying since she moved to study abroad in the Netherlands during the thesis development semester. She was facing a tight schedule and various responsibilities to handle.

Despite the challenges previously mentioned, the author found motivation in her professional growth and desire to test her skills to perform high-quality work. The final results were shared with the case company; the Team leader of the logistics area gave great feedback on the job and communicated the document within the department for learning purpose among the employees.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. The Overlay matrix

The Overlay Matrix

Investigative Questions (IQs)	Theoretical Framework ¹	Research Methods	Data Analysis/ Results
IQ 1. How does the centralization of operation works?	Multinational companies, administrative operations of distribution and warehousing, centralized operation.	Interviews for experts inside the commissioned company. Online courses and material on commissioned company platforms.	The expected result will be general information on how the company works and the specific strategy of centralization.
IQ 2. How companies choose which operations should they centralize?	Warehousing and Distribution operations, optimization, measure feasibility.	Interviews for experts inside the commissioned company. Online courses and material on commissioned company platforms.	These questions can be helpful to understand, through an analysis, which of the current centralized operations have been centralized and characteristics they take into count.
IQ3. Do companies have operations in which they can choose to centralize or not? Must operations be centralized as a mandatory step of the strategy?	Supply chain operations, optimization, measure feasibility.	Interviews for experts inside the commissioned company. Online courses and material on commissioned company platforms.	To know for which other operations are they focusing this strategy and if it is mandatory or just for some specific cases
IQ4. Which optimal advantages of centralizing operations benefit the most to multinational companies?	Administrative centralized operations, costs benefits, streamlining on supply chain	Interviews for experts inside the commissioned company. Online courses and material on commissioned company platforms.	We will analyze in a general way how centralization benefits a company in terms of costs
IQ 3. Which benefits a Telecommunication Services company can get when centralizing administrative operations?	Administrative centralized operations, focus on the industry of study, costs benefits, streamlining on supply chain	Interviews for experts inside the commissioned company. Online courses and material on commissioned company platforms.	These questions go deep in understand if the centralization strategy implemented depend on the industry.

Appendix 2. Investigative Interview questionnaire



Investigative Interview Telecommunications Case Company

Hello! My name is Melany Flores, I work in the Supply Chain and Logistics area of our company. At the same time, I am an international business student at Haaga Helia University of Applied Sciences in collaboration with Universidad Mondragon Mexico.

As a final step of my degree program, I am developing a research thesis with the title "Streamlining of centralization of operations for a multinational telecommunications company in the Latin American market".

The purpose of this thesis is to study the Supply Chain topic streamlining obtained throughout the centralization of operations. The following questions will be asked to obtain reliable information from the Logistics' department's internal members related to the centralization of operation and selection methods.

We appreciate your time during this interview, and we will keep your information confidential. The result of this study will be used for scholarly purposes.

IQ1. How does the centralization of operation work?

IQ2. How companies choose which operations should they centralize?

IQ3. Do companies have operations in which they can choose to centralize or not? Must operations be centralized as a mandatory step of the strategy?

IQ4. Which optimal advantages of centralizing operations benefit the most to multinational companies?

IQ5. Which benefits a Telecommunication Services company can get when centralizing administrative operations?

Appendix 3. Growth of the case company when positioned in Mexico.



Appendix 4. Location of Share Centers for centralization of operations per region.



Appendix 5. Agenda overview during pandemic (priorities of case company).

