

# Brazilian Food Industry: A Case of Absorptive Capacity and Knowledge Assimilation among Leaders

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## **Abstract:**

**T**he study aims to analyze how the assimilation of knowledge takes place in the Production Unit Marau-RS, a member of the Food Corporation SA. It was a qualitative and exploratory study as case study. The data were collected through with 15 formal leadership of agribusiness. Manufacturing sector was chosen and it has 700 employees. Open questions based on analytical categories defined from the selected literature were data collection instrument, and content analysis was technique of data analysis. The results indicated that the respondents had some kind of specific knowledge that as been enhanced with new assimilated into daily operational practices. The assimilation of knowledge takes place in a simple way, that is, despite the organizational structure is divided production sectors, the communication process flows normally and staff has the opportunity to learn from each other, and new knowledge is applied in routines that maintain, over time, the competitiveness of industry operating in the global market.

**Keywords:** *Absorptive Capacity; Knowledge; Agribusiness.*

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

In the current knowledge economy, the definition of a strategy supports the creation of enterprise value in global business. To Moustaghfir and Schiuma (2013), a virtuous cycle of creativity, R & D, knowledge generation, application and innovation, enhances the pace of competition and change. However, it can be said that the knowledge, skills and intangible values emerged as the main competitive advantage engines, forcing companies to rethink the way they do business and remain profitable, and affect consumer behavior, causing the production processes are driven by market demand that, consequently, gives rise to new business models based on customization and personalization.

The relevance of the assessment and management of intangible assets and knowledge assets has emerged as a central concern. To Lerro, Lacobone and Schiuma (2012), managers have recognized that the competitiveness of their organizations no longer lies in traditional financial and tangible resources.

Although they can still represent significant assets, they are not able to ensure differentiation and sustainable competitive advantages.

Knowledge has become a fast and effective way to develop skills that relate to increased competitive advantage, as companies seek constantly improved quality, efficiency, innovation and market experience (Daghfous, 2004).

It has long been aware of the importance of knowledge and human talent as a competitive differentiator among companies. Kim (1998), by linking knowledge with wealth creation, realize that knowledge occupies an increasingly prominent position in relation to the traditional factors of production, ie the physical and tax assets. The gap between the market value of a company and the value of its tangible assets is widening.

The main variable that explains this gap is the stock of knowledge in the company, ie, unlike land, labor and capital (traditional finite factors of production in the economy), knowledge and ideas are infinite economic goods, whose systematic use can generate increased revenue.

It is this dynamic that emerges absorptive capacity (AC). Cohen and Levinthal (1990) AC aims to explain the organization's ability to identify related phenomena, assimilate, transform and exploit knowledge of the environment. For

the authors, the AC for an organization is also related to their ability to recognize the value of new information, assimilate it and apply it for commercial purposes.

For Lane and Lubatkin (1998, p. 474) "a company must develop a thorough understanding of their own knowledge, the processes by which converts knowledge into skills, and the ability of these capabilities to meet the demands of their environment." Lane, Koka and Pathak (2006) complement this understanding to mention that possess relevant prior knowledge is a necessary, but not sufficient for a company that has absorptive capacity.

Studies such as Patterson and Ambrosini (2015) indicate that the theoretical framework also suggested that the absorptive capacity of the process is moderated by activation triggers, social integration mechanisms and appropriateness schemes. Also, there are prerequisites (source of knowledge, complementarity and experience) as well as the results (strategic flexibility, innovation and performance). Thus, we note that the results are achieved generally by the interaction between existing knowledge in the organization and those transferred into this.

Based on these considerations, is part of the Food Corporation SA, large multinational company, which operates in various food production lines. His last years were characterized by steady expansion of market share from the acquisition and merger processes, and joint ventures. It should be noted that the Production Unit Marau-RS has on its staff 3,000 professionals engaged in activities related to chicken slaughter, in natura cuts, sausages, boiled and cured products.

In the case of a large company with strong presence in domestic and international market that is pressed by the need to assimilate new knowledge to maintain its competitive position, emerges the following research question: What is the dynamics of knowledge assimilation in industries engaged in domestic and foreign markets and are pressured by competition in the sector in which they operate?

In this sense, the study aims to analyze how the assimilation of knowledge takes place in the Production Unit Marau-RS, a member of the Food Corporation SA.

This organization, the Production Unit Marau-RS, was selected it is integrates Food Corporation SA, it has wide organizational structure, in addition to the significant number of employees.

## II. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The study characterized as a case study, intentionally chosen by the representation in the agribusiness segment, which is justified by the lack of AC dynamic in manufacturing processes of the Food Corporation SA respect to case study setting. Primary and secondary were the data. Primary data were collected through the questionnaire in August 2009, consists of 25 open questions that contemplated analytical categories such as: (a) the internal factors that influence the AC (Ahanotu, 1998; Boer, Bosch and Volberda, 1999; Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Daghfous, 2004; Zahra and George, 2002); (B) the external factors that influence the AC (Daghfous (2004); Padilha, 2009); and (c) uptake mechanisms external knowledge. As for the secondary data, these were collected in company, research at industry sites.

Table 1 presents the research participants and the functions or positions held, which amounted to 15 surveyed.

Table 1: Research Participants

RESEARCH STAFF	NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS
Industrial Manager	01
Sausage Area Supervisor	02
Sector Supervisors (preparation of raw materials / hygiene, bologna / sliced and sausages / cured)	03
Sector Technicians (preparation of raw materials / hygiene, bologna / sliced and sausages / cured)	10
TOTAL	15

Source: Study Data (2009)

The respondents were chosen as being key people within the organizational structure of the Production Unit of Marau, the Food Corporation S/A. The data collected were analyzed through the content analysis technique.

## III. ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

### 3.1 Characteristics of The Company Studied

The Food Corporation SA, one of the largest food companies in Latin America, ranks third in poultry slaughtering and is among the ten largest hog slaughterers in the world and is also a leading Brazilian companies in milk catchment.

According to data provided by the company, it is dedicated to the production of more than 2,500 products, sold in more than 110 countries. It currently operates 22 meat processing plants, 17 hatcheries, nine feed mills, 13 dairy processing units and desserts, margarine processing plant, 15 points for milk collection, and a soybean processing plant, distributed in the states of Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, Paraná, Goiás, São Paulo and Mato Grosso.

Abroad, it has offices in England, France, Japan, Netherlands, Russia, Singapore, United Arab Emirates (Dubai), Hungary, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Austria, and distribution center in the Netherlands. It also has 27 distribution centers in 13 Brazilian states and the Federal District, as well as a distribution center in Europe, reaching eighty thousand supermarkets, retail stores, wholesalers, food service and other institutional clients in domestic and foreign markets.

Its installed capacity of slaughter is 10 million heads of poultry / week, 70,000 heads of pigs / week and freeze 730 000 ton / year of poultry meat and 10 thousand tons / year of pig meat.

According to data provided by the company, the Production Unit of meat, in the city of Marau-RS, has slaughtering capacity of 183,000 birds / day and 297 ton / day of products such as bologna, sausage, cured ham. Its storage capacity is 1,400 tons / day. The Unit of the workforce is 3,000 employees, of which 2,300 are allocated in the slaughter industry and chicken cuts and the remaining 700 employees, dedicated to the production cuts for manufactured products.

### **3.2 Absorptive Capacity**

Since its introduction by Wesley Cohen and Daniel Levinthal, in an article published in 1989 in the Economic Journal, the AC has become used as a construct in academic research. From a conceptual point of view, Cohen and Levinthal (1989) were the first to analyze the AC, which is the company's ability to identify, assimilate and exploit the knowledge of the environment. Then they suggested that the AC of a company is its ability to recognize the value of new information, assimilate it and apply it for commercial purposes. Thus, the AC of a company depends on its internal experience, the expertise and processes that enable it to assess the significance of external ideas and innovations.

However, it is important to note that there are a number of studies have been devoted to exploring other aspects of the construct, for example, the relationship between absorptive capacity and innovation (Arbussa and Coenders, 2007; Cepeda-Carrion et al, 2012; De Jong and Freel, 2010; Kostopoulos et al, 2011; Murovec and Prodan, 2009), between the absorptive capacity and technology compatibility (Noor et al, 2010; Rothaermel and Alexander, 2009; Rush et al, 2014), only to name a few.

In this direction, Lane, Koka and Pathak (2006), by combining these ideas of his studies with AC's definition of Cohen and Levinthal (1990), suggest a more detailed definition of the term:

Absorptive capacity is a company's ability to use external knowledge through three sequential processes: (1) recognizing and understanding potentially valuable new knowledge outside the company through exploratory learning; (2) assimilate valuable new knowledge through transformative learning; and (3) use the knowledge assimilated to create new knowledge with business results by exploiting the learning (Lane, Koka and Pathak, 2006, p. 856).

Cohen and Levinthal (1989) added to this emerging literature a rich set of explanations of economic basis of "how" and "why" an R & D company plays this secondary role. Together, the three articles of Cohen and Levinthal (1989, 1990, 1994) provide an evolution of the AC definition, its antecedents and outcomes.

Cohen and Levinthal (1990), the organizational AC relies on AC of its individual members, that is, the AC of a company is the sum of the absorptive capacity of their employees. This seems to be related not only to the acquisition and assimilation of information by an organization, but also the organization's ability to exploit these differences. Moreover, what is clear in studies of the authors is that in organizations just cannot depend only on its interface with the external environment, but also the transfer of knowledge between and within organizational subunits, and this path / flow facilitated by communication structure with the external environment and the organization, and between internal subunits and the proper allocation of specialist staff internally.

#### **3.2.1 Identification of Respondents**

In the analyzed leadership team, twelve are males and three females with an age range 29-48 years. There was a diversity of education of the respondents, 13% with high school, 40% enrolled in graduate degree in Industrial Administration, 27% with complete higher education (Mechanical Engineering, Industrial and Food Administration Engineering), and the remaining 20% , majoring in Economics and Management. The working time of this function is from three to 14 years.

The researched joined the company, 67% reported that the process took place through internal recruitment, 20% joined the activity by appointment and 13% joined by line of succession. It is important to mention that there are 700 employees in this team led by these professionals.

#### **3.2.2 Previous Knowledge**

According to Daghfous (2004), the first internal factor affecting the AC is based on prior knowledge. Prior knowledge is the ability to recognize the value of new knowledge, its assimilation and its application in commercial use (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990).

Analyzing the responses to the questionnaire noted the existence of a prior knowledge base that facilitated and assisted in the development of functions. According to those surveyed, prior knowledge was assimilated by acting, throughout his career, in other companies. This knowledge necessarily would not be specific respondent in the current function, which greatly expressed new possibilities to be applied to the current functions.

#### **3.2.3 New Knowledge**

Among the arguments found in the literature, we note that the AC in terms of prior knowledge and familiarity with new knowledge, results in the assimilation of knowledge and future search for new (Padilha, 2009).

All respondents identified the need to seek new knowledge to the function they perform. Thus, one can identify the data collected, the new knowledge is assimilated in different ways, such as supervised internships, participation in the area courses, information exchange practices between sectors Unit, regular joint meetings between the sectors, exchange of experiences, training given by the company, reading books, newspapers and magazines, internet, among others.

### **3.3 Internal Factors Affecting The Absorptive Ability**

It should be noted that among internal factors that influence the AC of a company, (Ahanotu, 1998; Boer, Bosch and Volberda, 1999; Cohen and Levinthal, 1990; Daghfous, 2004; Zahra and George, 2002), the following:

- (a) **prior knowledge base** having a positive effect that affects AC and represents the ability to recognize the value of new knowledge, assimilation and its application in commercial purposes;

- (b) **individual AC** depending on the initiative of the companies to seek the improvement of their AC investing in the development of AC employees through activities such as training, whilst considering that organizational learning also plays an important role in the development of AC ;
- (c) **technical skill level of employees** in a particular area is generally considered the absorption of new knowledge, which also influences the AC related to the assimilation of knowledge;
- (d) **diversity training and knowledge**, this factor offers two advantages in favor of AC (a) increasing the chance of new knowledge and (b) diversity training;
- (e) **organizational structure** contributing to identify the AC for an organization is not only the increase of the previously related level of knowledge, but also by deliberate choices of their organizational forms and combining abilities;
- (f) **significant external factors** contributing to the increase in the organizational learning process;
- (g) **communication** cooperates for the creation of internal knowledge transfer opportunities;
- (h) **Organizational culture** refers to the distribution of power and the ways it is used;
- (i) **firm size** may or may not affect the innovativeness of a company and also AC.

### **3.3.1 Prior Knowledge Base**

As a first internal factor affecting AC, Daghfous (2004) brings prior knowledge base that a company has to act in the business. The AC is a dependent way (path dependent) resulting from the cumulative nature of knowledge (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990) that influences the contribution of past experiences to the memory of the organization (ZAHRA and George, 2002).

Considering that prior knowledge contributes to the AC, the ability to absorb new knowledge also culminates with the generation of new knowledge. Thus, it can be established that prior knowledge of the respondents, acquired through action learning, experimentation and adaptation, is one of the most important factors that make up the company's ability to explore new knowledge (Ahanotu, 1998).

### **3.3.2 Single Absorptive Capacity**

The individual AC is dependent in large part on the AC news company (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990).

In the interviews was clear that there is concern about the development of individual knowledge. This perception is combined with the importance given to personal growth that therefore strengthens work teams and converges to the search of the ideal person to perform a certain function. In the opinion of an Area Supervisor:

"(...) How to manage my staff follows the philosophy of the right person to the right place. The constant search for personal opinions, the way of acting and thinking makes the challenges are different for each person."

Then, It may be noted that developing the AC through its primary elements, each individual AC becomes, in turn, essential to organizational competitiveness as a whole (DAGHFOUS, 2004).

### **3.3.3 Technical Qualification Level**

As shown previously, the technical skill level of formal leaders understand the high school training college in progress, a college and specialization.

Given this, it is noted that the knowledge sought in academic education contributes to the assimilation of new knowledge, building new ways of thinking and especially new applications prior knowledge that is added with the new knowledge.

For the Sector Supervisor: "The qualification is essential for the absorption of knowledge. The better the rating, the better the absorption of knowledge."

This is where Daghfous (2004) mentions that prior knowledge and skills contribute to the development of creativity through new links between old and new knowledge.

### **3.3.4 Training and Knowledge Diversity**

As for training and knowledge diversity, the data collected revealed that diversity training (backgrounds) knowledge offers advantages that favor the AC, which is confirmed in studies by Cohen and Levinthal (1990). According to a Sector Advisor:

"(...) The diversity of education (training) of my employees fluctuates from primary school to undergraduate level. This does not preclude the ability to absorb knowledge, for the transfer of information from me is directed according to the powers of understanding of what I am putting these employees who have a varied training (...) I believe that education is important for development tasks that require a higher intellectual effort ".

In addition, the Sector Supervisor added: "(...) the different backgrounds of knowledge facilitates the assimilation of new knowledge if the work is developed as a team."

Noting that there are working groups with different level of education, respondents reported that the greater integration between their subordinates, the easier it is the assimilation of new knowledge, culture is more susceptible to change and, especially, people feel more challenged in the functions they perform.

The empirical data may be faced that Daghfous ideas (2004). For the author, the knowledge of each member set can be enhanced by allowing the integration between the different types of knowledge existing in the company.

### **3.3.5 Important External Factors**

For external factors, important is the understanding that companies are not alone and do not operate in isolation. Daghfous (2004) identified in the literature that the factors that determine the AC of a company include the dynamics of the sector, as the analysis of direct competitors.

One of the main ways of identifying new knowledge of the external environment, according to the perception of participants, was benchmarking. This technique is to verify in other sectors of the Producer Unit and among the other units, new procedures that achieve a score above the expected average.

It is worth mentioning that the Unit Marau producer is one of several divisions of the Food Corporation SA, and has no relationship with stakeholders, for example, external suppliers and consumers.

In this sense, the Manager of Marau Unit revealed: "(...) the mapping of variables that may affect the business of the Food Corporation SA is held by the parent company, which discloses the information through targeted periodic reports to the responsible heads of each Unit."

Analyzing the answers it was noted that Production Unit has a concern in the fulfillment of objectives and goals. External factors do not directly influence the assimilation of knowledge.

### **3.3.6 Organizational Structure**

To Daghfous (2004), the organizational structure also influences the AC. Production Unit Marau is divided into sectors which perform certain parts of the production process. In this regard, some industry mentioned that the Technical Unit of the structure, organized into sectors, help in the transfer of information and facilitates internal communication. This structure adopted format also helps at the time of decision-making and especially the assimilation of new knowledge that add to the already internalized by those involved in the process.

Given this, it can be considered that the unit structure is a positive factor when analyzing the capacity to assimilate new knowledge. Its structure includes mechanisms that favor an interconnected communication, agile and accurate, converging to a systemic view of the manufacturing process as well as assisting in the implementation of emerging changes over time.

### **3.3.7 Communication**

As the organizational structure of the Food Corporation SA is organized into sectors, communication can constitute an important element in the creation of knowledge assimilation opportunities. This can be observed when analyzing the practices of continuous process improvement.

The media most used by respondents are informed emails, the newspapers, the magazines of the organization, the feedbacks, the murals, meetings, seminars and monthly reports.

In turn, communication between the sectors of the company contributes to the creation of new knowledge assimilation opportunities. This reinforces the idea that communication increases the mechanisms of social integration, reduces barriers to finding information increases the assimilation efficiency and processing capabilities (Boer, Bosch and Volberda, 1999).

### **3.3.8 Organizational Culture**

Organizational culture refers to the distribution of power and the ways it is used, generating important implications for AC (Daghfous, 2004).

From the point of view of an Area Supervisor, employees are empowered to make decisions and there is a kind of incentive that supports the conduct of "delegation of responsibility".

However, an industry Technical emphasizes that: "We are encouraged by our superiors and we pass this incentive to our subordinates in order to generate new ideas, discussion and possible implementations in the factory."

By analyzing the organizational culture of the Food Corporation SA, it was found that there is a hierarchy of power, not more centralization in its broadest sense. All relevant information is passed on to sectors according to the need for specific employees.

Aspects such as vision, mission, values and policies are set at the corporate level and internalized by producing units according to organizational guidelines.

### **3.3.9 Company Size**

To Daghfous (2004), among the factors that affect AC, is the size of the company. According to the perception of respondents, the Food Corporation SA, being a multinational and large business, positively enables the development of capacity to assimilate new knowledge of its employees. This is to note that the organizational structure provides mechanisms for integration between and intra-sectors, enabling decisively the assimilation of new knowledge.

In this regard, one Sector Technical highlights: "The size of the company positively affects the assimilation of new knowledge, because we have to always be incorporating our knowledge because of the emerging market demand."

That same point, the Sector Supervisor reports: "(...) It depends. Some guidelines are corporate, without freedom of action (...). On the other hand, at the operational level, how to make grants freedom of action that allows the expansion of knowledge. "

What is noticeable is that despite the Unit studied have a significant size that includes 3,000 employees and manufacturing sector 700 employees, it can be said that size does not negatively influence the assimilation of knowledge. This is due to the existence of certain autonomy in terms of operational conduct.

For Daghfous (2004), the size may or may not affect the innovativeness of a company and also the AC. However, some authors argue that larger companies do a better job of innovation because the large investments in R & D and innovation suggests that size are positively correlated.

## **3.4 External Factors Affecting The Absorptive Ability**

In designing Daghfous (2004), one of the most important external factors that affect AC, is the knowledge of the external environment, since the companies are not alone and do not operate in isolation. The same author identified in the literature that the factors that determine the AC of a company include the dynamics of the sector, ie the analysis of direct competitors.

From the considerations made, to work out from the literature, analysis of structure that will be applied to the selected firm (Figure 2).

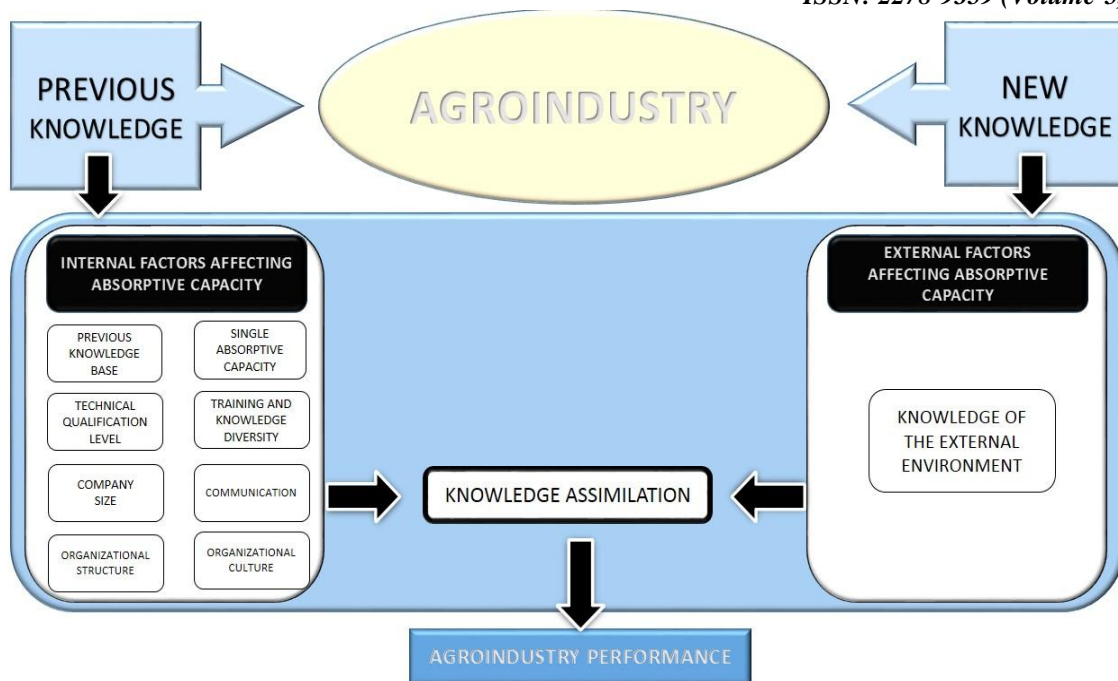


Figure 2 - Structure analysis of absorptive capacity in agribusiness.  
 Source: Adapted from Padilha (2009).

Figure 2 shows the analytical framework formulated from the insights drawn from the literature review and that will guide the empirical part of the study, on the premise that the prior knowledge and new knowledge affect the performance of agribusiness in the market where operates.

#### 3.4.1 Knowledge of the External Environment

Gatekeepers, or "special agents" that lie within the organization serve as key boundaries between the company and the external environment, realizing the interface with the knowledge of the external environment (Cohen and Levinthal, 1990).

Accordingly, the AC company also depends on the gatekeepers that contribute to the increase of the organizational learning process (DAGHFOUS, 2004). According to the account of some respondents:

(...) The company has a corporate specific sector for exploration of the external environment, always worrying about competitors and making strategic benchmarking. (Technical Sector)

(...) Unity and the entire Company, worries about the products launched by competitors. (Sector Advisor)

(...) Focus on improvements and the Unity knowledge is acquired between sectors, or even between other producing units. The Company has a specific sector focused on the pursuit of knowledge in the external environment. (Unit Manager).

As mentioned earlier, the search for external knowledge is through the Unit Sectors, or even among other units of the same organization. For customers and suppliers, the team of Marau Unit employees do not have access, and information related to these stakeholders are accompanied by Headquarters in the municipality of Videira, state of Santa Catarina.

### 3.5 Mechanisms of External Knowledge Assimilation

#### 3.5.1 Assimilation Ways of Knowledge to Activity

According Zahra and George (2002), the assimilation of knowledge is related to the ability of companies to absorb external knowledge and can also be defined as the routines and processes that allow their understanding, analysis and interpretation of information from external sources.

In this respect, the analysis of the responses of respondents referred to the understanding that the assimilation of knowledge takes place in a simple way, that is, due to the organizational structure. The communication process flows normally and people have the opportunity to learn from each other. It is this dimension that is the assimilation of knowledge and the application in the industry. According to the Manager of the Unit:

(...) Procedures that allow the sharing, communication and assimilation of knowledge at the individual level to the organizational level are the quality seminars, corporate committees, shared projects. The assimilation of knowledge across sectors takes place through development meetings and communication, presentation of case studies, detailed presentations of the sector. We have an efficient internal communication, a computerized communication, electronic billboards, murals, posters, bulletin boards. For this, the use of expert knowledge (specific) occurs through position and technical requirements, human and communication profile. As a source of learning that enhances knowledge, I can mention the training in the workplace, CIPA, GMP, HACCP, international standards, 5S, the Integrated Management System and the encouragement of basic and further training. This all contributes to employees to learn new expertise that can be applied in the function they fulfill, because the better the basic training of the employee, the greater the capacity of understanding and therefore learning in developed functions.



In this regard, Boer, Bosch and Volberda (1999) in their studies to address the general organizational structure of the company, argue that the assimilation of knowledge varies. This depends on whether the company has a functional, divisional or matrix structure.

The structure of Producing Unit studied the Food Corporation SA is divisional. Thus, the information transfer, guidelines, work instructions, and other important, is carried out through regular meetings with transfer indicators, courses in specific areas of expertise, which contributes to the assimilation of knowledge by company employees.

Made analyzes of questionnaire responses, Figure 3 summarizes the main results of the study that followed the proposal analysis structure in Figure 2.

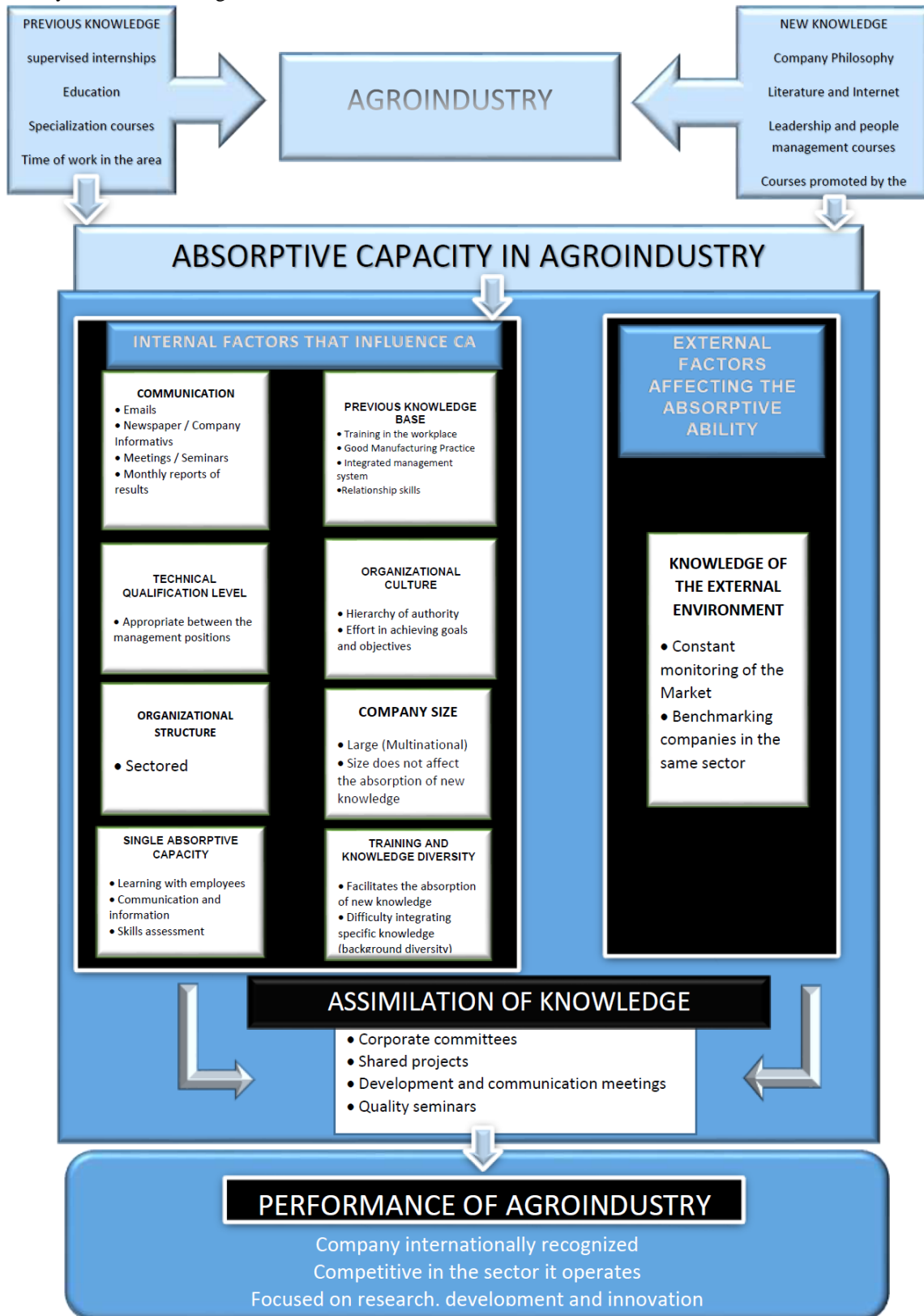


Figure 3 - Systematization of the empirical results of absorptive capacity in agribusiness.  
 Source: Prepared by the authors (2015).

As defined objective, it is noted that the analysis of structure helped in guiding the methodology for understanding how occurs in AC Production Unit of the Food Corporation SA

According Zahra and George (2002), the assimilation of knowledge refers to the ability of companies to absorb external knowledge and can also be defined as the routines and processes that allow their understanding, analysis and interpretation of information from external sources.

In this respect, the analysis of the interviews refers to the understanding that the assimilation of knowledge takes place in a simple way, that is, despite the organizational structure is divided into sectors of production, the communication process flows normally and staff have the opportunity to learn with each other.

And finally, it can be said that there is the assimilation of new knowledge that is applied in routines that maintain, over time, the competitiveness of the company operating in the global and highly challenging market.

#### IV. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Global businesses increasingly are characterized by interdependence and complexity that forces organizations to be flexible, proactive and dynamic. In this context, the most traditional strategies, approaches and policies are not effective as before. The new challenge, especially for businesses that deal with global business is the ability to drive its transformation into smart organizations, able to leverage their intellectual capital to achieve their goals in business and blaze new paths of development.

This growing tendency to value knowledge increases the importance of people in organizations. Employees are evaluated for their ability to innovate, to identify, assimilate and apply new knowledge to bring the organization to maintain and expand its competitive advantages. Thus, the research and understanding of how the assimilation of knowledge occurs in Unity Marau-RS Producer member of the Food Corporation SA, interpreted in the light of the AC literature and systematized in formulating and implementing an analysis structure (Figure 2:03 ) contributed to the understanding of these aspects

In this regard, it was noted that, as the company is sectorized, the factors that most influence on the AC are illustrated by internal factors, as the assimilation of knowledge takes place between the areas closest, with a contest for the best results that integrate performance evaluation and scope of defined goals.

Importantly, the company offers knowledge assimilation mechanisms, providing ways to capture and dissemination of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge that is explained by communication practices, both formal and informal, which are reinforced with technical qualification of incentive employees.

When referring to the methodological procedures used to develop this study, we can not generalize the results, since the technique used was the exploratory research. In this respect, the study has limitations, especially in the ratio in data collection stage of formal leaders present some difficulty in understanding the questions, which led to an argument deficiency on the answers provided.

In step which dealt with the review of the literature, readings and analysis of publications raised the acquisition, assimilation, transformation and exploitation of the AC, and the acquisition, exploration and transformation were not included in the analysis structure due to time constraint They involved the construction of the study. It is this dimension that verified the lack of studies focused on transforming knowledge in agribusiness, which in a way could be an important indication for future studies and could in the understanding of AC in this type of industry member of agribusiness.

Therefore, the analysis of the converged data to the assumptions identified in the literature to be noted that prior knowledge is a necessary, but not sufficient for a company to AC. The study also contributed to the understanding of the value of new knowledge that is accumulated and which make up the organizational memory of the investigated industry.

Related to challenge, especially for businesses that deal with global business, is developing the capacity to develop into intelligent organizations, as organizations able to leverage their intellectual capital to achieve their business objectives and blaze new paths of development.

And finally, the understanding of the need to think systemically and using different approaches in agribusiness studies aims to contribute to the development of the sector in trying to explain emerging issues by analyzing structures supported by scientific studies.

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