

INNOVATION IN AGRIBUSINESS AS AN STRATEGY FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

This task is focused on understanding the strategic alliances in agribusiness in a wholesale market in the city of Porto Velho / Rondônia. As support, it was used the Systems Theory that as Nolasco et al. (2014) introduced the idea of a set of elements interconnected to form a whole where the system is global and presents the systemic emerging with the characteristics and specific properties that cannot be found in isolation. Specific objectives: (1) Raise the main forming elements of the strategic alliances focused on wholesaler agribusiness in Porto Velho; (2) Analyze the functional scenery of the fundamental alliance of agribusiness under study and (3) propose pro-innovation measures as competitive strategy in agribusiness under study. It was used the 5W2H tool that to Zago, quoted by Viana et al (2013) serves as an action plan, for it allows the action of means and activities, so a target will only be achieved if there is a good plan of action. Sasdelli (2012) states that the Ishikawa Diagram also known as cause-effect diagram has the function to identify the causes of a specific problem. Neto (2011), points out that the SWOT analysis is a structural Administration Tool, used in the analysis of the internal and external environment in order to formulate strategies for the weaknesses of an organization; the procedure adopted was the documentary research, which to Canzonier, quoted by Schwartz (2014) is the query to files in several typologies. The results are shown in tables, figures and graphs to a better understanding of the research.

Keywords: Amazon, Agribusiness, Strategic alliances, Innovation.

1 INTRODUCTION

This work aims to demonstrate the importance of strategic alliances in wholesaler agribusiness in the city of Porto Velho, through a survey conducted on a wholesaler market. Through observation it was concluded that the owner did not know the theoretical basis of strategic alliances and the competitive advantages that these alliances can provide to his enterprise. In this scenario, the research did survey the main threat; opportunity; weakness and strength with the help of the Swot Analysis Tool, focusing on propose consistent actions for each point indicated followed by a proposal of innovation aiming at the sustainability of the enterprise. Next, the general and specific objectives of the research to be answered the following question will be addressed: What are the strategic alliances that the wholesaler agribusiness under study participate to maintain its competitive potential? To answer this question, the study has as main objective: study the main characteristics of strategic alliances of the wholesaler agribusiness in Porto Velho, and the specific objectives: raise the main elements of the formation of strategic alliances focused on the wholesaler agribusiness of Porto Velho(1), analyze the functional scenario of the fundamental alliance of the agribusiness under study; (2) and propose pro-innovation measures as a competitive strategy in the agribusiness under study (3).

2 THEORETICAL-CONCEPTUAL REFERENCE

For the development of the research it was used the Systems Theory which, as Nolasco et al. (2014) introduce the idea of a set of elements interconnected to form a whole; there the system is global and presents the systemic emergent with the specific characteristics and properties that cannot be found in isolation.

2.1 Concept of strategic alliances

Johanson & Mattsson cited by Oliveira et al. (2011) state that a strategic alliance occurs when two or more organizations decide to join forces to achieve common strategic objective.

Oliveira et al. (2011) cites Douglas and Craig who talk about collaboration among allies, according to the authors, the strategic alliances act in the structural function of an organization such as the research and development of new products, marketing, production and distribution.

As Ballou cited by Oliveira et al (2011), the strategic alliances bring several benefits such as reduce operating costs, capital for investment, easiness access to technologies, increase the quality of services to customers, easiness to win market and reduction of risks.

2.1.1 Agribusiness Concepts

According to Pedro Filho (2015), Agribusiness is the set of businesses related to the agriculture business within an economic point of view and is divided into three main stages: pre portress, inside portress and post portress. According to Vieira (2012), the portress segments are comprised by suppliers, inputs and services such as machinery, implements, pesticides, corrective, fertilizers, technology and financing. There are several public and private agencies and companies related to this area of activity, as EMBRAPA (Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation), CEPLAC (Executive Committee of the Cocoa Farming Plan), the Secretariat of Agriculture, the universities and the BNDES (National Bank of Social Development).

Vieira (2012), states that the activities of the agricultural production units involve the handling and preparation of soil, cultivation, irrigation, harvesting, the preparation for production and the output of the product in natura for marketing.

The segments post portress are the storage, manufacturing, packaging, distribution activities (Vieira, 2012). After performing all these steps to obtain the product, it is headed to the consumer market.

2.1.2 Wholesale commerce concepts

Cônsoli and Giuliani (2013) cite Cobra which states that the wholesalers' institutions buy and resell goods to retailers and other traders or industrial establishments, but do not sell in small quantities to final consumers.

Cônsoli and Giuliani (2013) cite Churchill and Peter adding that the wholesalers create values for suppliers and customers, carrying out distribution functions, so wholesalers are also called distributors.

Cônsoli and Giuliani (2013) cite Cobra which states that the wholesalers have multiple functions into a distribution channel, making sales contact, maintain inventories, distribute products, support customers with credit and financial aid.

2.2 Scenario concept

Souza and Takahashi (2012) cites Peter Schwartz that describes scenery as a tool used to have a long view in a world of great uncertainty, in order to have perceptions of future environments and the consequences of the present decisions.

Fellows (2011) cites Miller & Waller stating that during the construction of scenarios issues such as current and future trends of a given project are discussed in order to create scenarios of possibilities. Decision makers exercise their decision capacity on possible futures and focus on those identified as the most plausible. Internal and external contingencies to the enterprise, uncertainties, trends, opportunities hard to be anticipated, are based on the scenarios identified and evaluated thus allowing consistent actions.

2.2.1 SWOT Analysis Concept

Neto (2011) states that the SWOT analysis is a structural tool of the administration, used in the analysis of the internal and external environment in order to formulate strategies for companies. In this analysis it is identified the Strengths and Weaknesses of the company, as well as internal Opportunities and Threats for the same in which are: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats, founded by Kenneth Andrews and Roland Christensen. This technique aids in the development of the strategic planning, in order to focus on the combination of the strengths and weaknesses of an organization and in the same time the opportunities and threats in the market.

2.2.2 Ishikawa Diagram Concept

According to Lima cited by Sasdelli (2012) Ishikawa diagram (also known as cause-effect diagram or fishbone diagram) was proposed by the Japanese Dr. Kaoru Ishikawa in 1943. Its function is to identify the alleged causes of specific problem. With the application of this tool it is possible to detail the process described and clearly define the problem. Ishikawa diagram represents the relationship between the effect and all possible causes which might have contributed to this effect.

For Takakura it is a way to raise symptoms at the analysis stage of a given situation through the construction of Ishikawa diagrams (Sasdelli, 2012). This diagram is used in situations where there is a large unwelcome and condensed effect by the organization members. Therefore, Ishikawa diagram is used for identifying the drivers that lead to unwanted effects. It is an analytical tool used to study a problem and enables the identification of it's the possible causes.

2.3 Innovation concept

According to Mota (Soares, 2013) the innovation stems from the necessity of adaptation to environmental obstacles, to growth and development of the same and the necessity to fight for the survival of organizations.

Vuelma (2013) cites Schumpeter which states that innovation is the continuous process that replaces the old for the new and revolutionizes the economic structures characteristic of the capitalist system. Entrepreneurs make use of the innovation in a product, service or process aiming to a competitive advantage; for a while, this is the the only example of innovation. The entrepreneur can earn a good money with it, but other entrepreneurs will seek to imitate the current innovation and thus, other inventions will emerge, as discussed in Vuelma (2013).

According to Peter Drucker cited by Martins (2011), innovation is the effort to create change focused on economic or social potential of an enterprise. So for Vila et al cited by Martins (2011), innovation is of fundamental importance in a competitive environment. Without it the company stagnates, competitors take the lead and the company dies.

2.3.1 Competitive Strategy concept

Souza et al (2013) cites Nogueira et al who states that competitive strategy is related to programs, plans and actions carried out by an organization in order to preserve or increase the competitive advantages already conquered related to the competition.

For Porter cited by Souza et al (2013) the competitive strategy of an enterprise usually is constituted by specific strategies as financial, technological, marketing and production, aiming at the harmony in all its actions, in order to enable the conquest of the competitive advantage by the developing of the value chain processes of an organization. Therefore, the competitive strategy involves the long-term goals of the company and is composed by specific strategies adopted.

3 METHODOLOGY

In the preparation of this research it was found the necessity for a qualitative approach that as Llewellyn and Northcott quoted by Freitas and Jobbour (2011), focuses on identifying the characteristics of the possible events of the organization. In Fig.1 the diagram of the methodology employed in the investigation is shown.

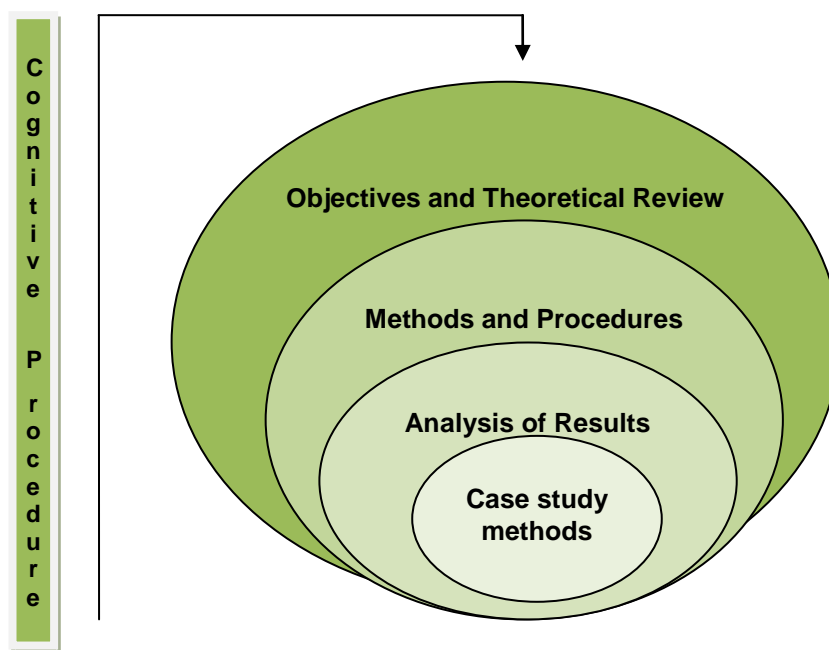


Figure 1. Methodology diagram. Source: Based on Pedro Filho (2012).

3.1 Methods

According to Coutinho (2014), a method is set of general techniques to be common to a number of significant results. For this survey we will use the case study method that according to Costa et al. (2013) is a specific method of field research. The field studies are thorough investigations of how the phenomena occur. The application of this method aims to develop a comprehensive model describing behaviour patterns that will help in making decisions about the studied object or the proposal of a transformative action. The research will also have the aid of 5W2H tools, Ishikawa Diagram and SWOT Analysis. According to Viana (2013) to 5W2H tool serves as an action plan, for it possible the action of means and activities, so a target will only be achieved if there is a good plan of action. To Lima (Sasdelli, 2012) the Ishikawa diagram, also known as cause-effect diagram has the function to identify the alleged causes of a particular problem. According to Neto (2011), the SWOT analysis is a structural administration tool, used in the analysis of the internal and external environment in order to formulate strategies for the weaknesses of an organization. The Table 1 presents the descriptive research.

Table 1. Description of the research with the help of 5W2H tool.

| | | |
|------------|--------|---|
| 5 W | What? | A search will be made in order to identify the main elements of formation of strategic alliances in a wholesaler market in Porto Velho. |
| | Why ? | To have knowledge of the means used by the wholesaler market which make them sustainable and competitive in the market. |
| | Who? | The interview will be with the owner of the organization; |
| | Where? | The research will be developed in a wholesaler market located in Porto Velho. |
| | When ? | It will be used one week to the In loco research, three days to three to the interview and 3 weeks to the research development. |

| | | |
|----------------|-----------|--|
| 2 H | How ? | Obtain information through interviews, research and in loco and meeting to research development. |
| | Hwo much? | There will be a cost of 50,00 for transportation. |

Source: Prepared by the author based on the research

3.2 Procedures

The applied procedures involved documentary research that to Schwartz et al. (2014) citing Canzonier, states that it is the consultation of files in various types, as well as the field research that the author reports as being the study of the object or the source in their own environment. Severino (2013) defines the collect procedures as practices operation techniques which are determined and shall be consistent with the methodology used in the study. On these, in Table 2 the instruments used will be summarized.

Table 2. Research procedures

| Instruments | Description |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1 Selection of the institution | 1.1 The institution chosen for the developing of the theme strategic alliances in the wholesaler agribusiness, which enabled better understanding of the strategies used by the wholesaler market to remain in the market. |
| 2 Interview Application | 2.1 It allowed comparing theory with practice, allowing thus, the survey of the issues for the elaboration of technical knowledge through the theory taught by the authors mentioned above, facilitating the objective of the survey. |
| 3 Observation | 3.1 During the investigative process in the organization, the difference between what the theory addresses and which is developed in practice as well as the degree of knowledge of the representative of the organization front of the performed questioning. |

Source: Adapted from Medeiros et.al (2012).

4 STUDY OF THE MAIN FEATURES OF STRATEGIC ALLIANCES IN WHOLESALER AGRIBUSINESS IN THE CITY OF PORTO VELHO

The city of Porto Velho, capital of Rondônia state, is situated on the right bank of the Madeira River, far seven kilometers from Santo Antônio waterfall, as demonstrated in Fig. 2.



Figure 2. Infographic of the Porto Velho city, capital of Rondônia state.

Source: Adapted from Silva (2014).

According to the data found at the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, the estimated population of the Municipality of Porto Velho for the year 2011 was 435,732 persons distributed between urban and rural areas (IBGE, 2011). It has an estimated population of 502,748 for 2015.

4.1 Survey of the main elements formers of strategic alliances focused on wholesaler agribusiness in the city of Porto Velho

In the interview with the owner of the wholesale market studied it was observed the lack of knowledge about strategic alliance. The respondent stated that the studied establishment did not have any bond with third parties. That contradicts the very concept of strategic alliance according to the theoretical survey of this task. On the other hand, the predominance of business with suppliers, technicians, government, union, employees and customers was noted. There is no doubt that the multiple relationship of strategic interests of the company results in competitive advantage, this only possible through alliances, even if these are conducted informally. Thus it is possible to reconstruct the tactical scenario for a functional strategy aimed at a similar organizational structure like the one studied, as is shown in the Ishikawa diagram (Fig. 3 and Table 3).

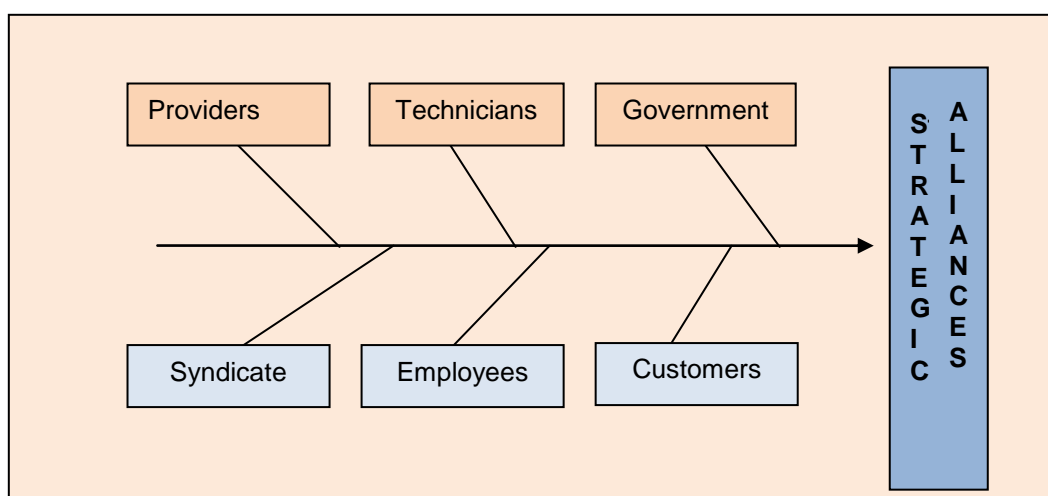


Figure 1: Diagram describing the strategic alliances. Source: Prepared by the author based on the research.

Table 3: Description of the strategic alliances of the studied enterprise.

| Strategic Alliances | Description |
|---------------------|--|
| Suppliers | The wholesaler has an alliance with its suppliers in order to maintain the sustainability of the offer of its products and maintain the right supplier of its merchandise. This type of alliance is informal, since there is no contract between the wholesaler and its suppliers. |
| Technicians | There is an alliance with the responsible technicians for the training and learning process of the organization's employees. |
| Government | The wholesaler has alliances with the government to get financing, reduce the taxes levied on transport and on the purchase of products sold. |
| Syndicate | The wholesaler market does not participate in any Syndicate; |
| Employees | The wholesaler market has an alliance with its employees because the employees provide the labor for the development of the organization activities and, in exchange, the organization ensures sustainability to them through the salary. |
| Customers | A type of alliance that the wholesaler market studied has with its customers is the green Thursday, on this day, fruits and vegetables are sold for a cheaper price than the other days. |

Source: Based on the research.

4.1.1 Survey of the characteristics of the wholesaler agribusiness under study

According to the bibliographic research, agribusiness is the set of businesses related to the agriculture business within an economic point of view and is divided into three main stages: pre portress, inside portress and post portress. The survey was conducted on a wholesaler market that fits in the post-portress stage of the agribusiness. Thus, the Table 4 describes the main features of the post-portress stage of the agribusiness under study.

Table 4. Elements that compose the post-portress stage of the agribusiness.

| Elements | Description |
|----------------------|---|
| 1. It Stores | The enterprise sells by wholesale and therefore it stores a large volume of goods; |
| 2. It distributes | The wholesaler works with the distribution of products for enterprises that sell at retail; |
| 3. It commercializes | And it also sells products directly to the end consumer, but only by wholesale. |

Source: Based on the research.

4.1.2 Description of the function of the wholesaler market under study

An enterprise is called wholesaler market when it buys and sells merchandises in large quantities, but not in small quantities to their final consumers. For this reason it is also a distributor. In Table 5 below, the comparison between what the theory says about the function of a wholesaler market and what happens in practice in the establishment will be analyzed.

Table 5. Demonstration of the functions of the organization studied.

| Theory | Practice |
|--|---|
| According to literature raised, the functions of a wholesaler are to make sales contacts, maintain inventories, distribute products and support the customers with credit and financial aid. | The performance of the enterprise under study in its function complies only in part with the theory, because it maintains sales contacts, it has the stocks, distributes the products, but does not offer credit to customers, nor financial aid. |

Source: Based on the research.

4.2 Analysis of the functional scenario of fundamental alliance of agribusiness under study

The literature review indicated the importance of building scenarios, since, through them, it is possible to point out the external and internal contingencies of an enterprise, as uncertainties, trends and opportunities, factors of hard prediction. The interpretation of scenarios allows it to identify and evaluate coherent actions. In the scenario under study the strengths and weaknesses that compose it are identified, as is analyzed below.

4.2.1 Analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the wholesaler market

The SWOT Analysis of studied wholesaler market indicates the component parts listed in Table 6 below. The interview with the owner of the property indicates his lack of knowledge, for his vision makes him limited to the development of strategy; this stems from the necessity for training courses since its formation makes him a professional of routines practices inherent of the business, but without domain to overcome technical aspects required in facing the competition.

Table 6. Demonstration of the weaknesses of the organization studied.

| Weaknesses | Description |
|---|--|
| 1. lack of theoretical knowledge | Through the interviews it was found that the entrepreneur does not have knowledge on strategic alliances and that these could bring competitive potential for his enterprise; |
| 2. lack of alliances with other wholesalers of the state | The enterprise is not joined to the syndicate of wholesalers of Rondônia, therefore, they are behind the associate wholesalers that achieve benefits for their enterprises; |
| 3. Openness to other competitors because of its inefficiency | The organization under consideration is not taking advantage of the opportunities that it has to bring innovative products at competitive prices and because of this, it is leaving a gap for new enterprises to join in his line of business; |

Source: Based on the research.

Regardless of whether the reality, the observation made on the entrepreneurial performance is possible to say that even not having the skills required to face the competition, the interviewee already reveals resourcefulness to strategy. The strengths listed in Table 7 below were identified.

Table 7. Demonstration of the strengths of the organization studied.

| Strengths | Description |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Purchase in large quantity | The wholesaler purchase in volume, thereby achieving sustainability of its suppliers. |
| 2. Alliance with its suppliers | The wholesaler has alliance with its suppliers, so buying at lower prices and selling at competitive prices. |
| 3. Selling Strategy | An example of pricing strategy is the green Thursday; the day is specific for promotion of fruits and vegetables, offering them at lower prices than the other days. |

Source: Based on the research.

4.2.2 Analysis of the threats and opportunities of the wholesaler market

Given the observation made during the interview it was possible to identify the threats that surround the enterprise, as a result, the entrepreneur is not enjoying the advantages that the syndicate of the State offers his organization. On table 8 below will be shown the threats the organization faces.

Table 8. Demonstration of the threats in the organization studied.

| Threats | Description |
|--|---|
| 1. Loss of Market | It risks of losing customers by not seize the market opportunities and therefore be obliged to sell at non-competitive prices. |
| 2. Loss of good business with new suppliers entering the market | The syndicate of the wholesalers of the State of Rondônia offers meetings where various suppliers offer their products at a highly competitive price. |
| 3. Loss of offering innovative products in his enterprise | There are also people in these meetings that bring innovative products to negotiate with entrepreneurs affiliated to the syndicate. |

Source: Based on the research.

In the face of punctuated threats, the survey identified the opportunities that the organization has to change this negative scenario, as shown in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Demonstration of the opportunities in the organization studied.

| Opportunities | Description |
|--|--|
| 1. Affiliation to the Syndicate (SINGARO) | Through affiliation to the SINGARO Syndicate (Syndicate of Wholesalers of Rondônia), it is possible to increase its competitive potential and reverse the negative scenario in which the organization is inserted. |
| 2. Professional training | Training courses and training in marketing, sales, for the entrepreneur and also his team. |
| 3. Growth in the market caused by the inefficiency of other wholesalers | If the wholesaler put into practices all the opportunities that the market gives to enlarge its external strategic alliances, he can expand the business and gain more market share. |

Source: Based on the research.

4.2.3 Critique in the face of current Brazilian economic scenario

According to Mara (2014) although the growth prospects for the wholesaler sector in 2014, the downturn in the economy with a reduction in household consumption was already affecting the business and could hinder the sustainable growth of the Brazilian wholesalers, and today we are facing the scenario described by Mara in 2014, since every day the super-wholesalers are selling less.

Given the current scenario of the Brazilian economy demonstrated above, it is clear that the wholesaler studied needs to enjoy the benefits that the syndicate of the State provides for their establishment and thus increase their competitive potential as the trend is the significant decrease in sales.

4.3 Proposal of pro-innovation measures such as competitive strategy in agribusiness under study

Based on the theoretical framework raised during the research, we saw that the innovation arises through the necessity to adapt to obstacles in the organization's survival and to achieve a competitive advantage; therefore, before the analysis of the threats facing the organization, the survey sought an innovation with a focus on sustainability of the studied commerce. Thus, in the following subtopics, the innovation proposal and the benefits that they will provide to the organization will be described.

4.3.1 Description of the proposed innovation to the enterprise studied

The research has as its proposal of innovation for the establishment under study, the membership to SINGARO (syndicate of wholesaler markets of Rondônia). For the wholesaler studied can have all the benefits that this syndicate brings its members and thus ensure its sustainability in the market and get several competitive advantages. Below in Table 10, the proposal of innovation will be shown with the help of 5W2H tool.

Table 10: Innovation proposal in face of 5W2H tool.

| | | |
|-----|------------------|--|
| 5 W | What? | The affiliation to the SINGARO (Syndicate of the Wholesale Trade of Rondônia). |
| | Why? | In order that the enterprise achieve sustainability in the labor market through the competitive advantages that it will have by affiliating to the said Syndicate. |
| | Who? | The owner of the studied organization. |
| | Where? | In the wholesaler market under study located in the city of Porto Velho. |
| | When ? | When the research is finished, it will be taken for consideration of the enterprise owner, later, he will decide whether to join or not. The proposal will be brought to the entrepreneur on 25 October. |
| 2 H | How ? | To join the Syndicate, it is necessary to fill a registration form and send it by email to the syndicate. |
| | How much? | The payment is made monthly and the value depends on the quantity of the organization's employees. |

Source: The author based on the research.

4.3.2 Description of competitive advantage that the development will have by performing the proposal of innovation

In literature it was found that the competitive strategy is related to plans and actions carried out by an organization with the objective of preserving or increasing the competitive advantage over the competition. Therefore Table 11 below demonstrates the competitive advantages that the wholesaler market studied will have to perform to the proposal of innovation required.

Table 11: Advantages to join the proposed Syndicate.

| Affiliates | Advantages |
|--|--|
| 1. Volkswagen Trucks | Discount up to 10% on the purchase of trucks. |
| 2.Honda | Motorcycle 8%; parts 15%; tires 5%. |
| 3.PC Systems | Enterprise management system with 12% of discount on the license. |
| 4. Serasa Experian | Through the partnership between Serasa Experian and Singaro, the organization will have advantages and great discount on the contracting of services offered. |
| 5.Unimed | Discounts on health insurance. |
| 6. Participation On the Annual Convention of ABAD (Brazilian Association of Wholesalers and Distributors) | The convention is held once a year in a state of the country in order to present new products, where great business between suppliers and buyers are realized. |

Source: The author based on the research.

5 CONCLUSION

Through this research, it was found that the owner is unaware of the strategic alliance concepts and what benefits these alliances bring to the enterprises regarding to financing and various facilities such as health insurance discounts, medical examinations, dentists, acquisition of trucks, motorcycles, parts, systems, contributing much to decrease the organization's costs and also providing relationship with new suppliers providing great business.

Regarding the exposed subject above, the research sought a way for the organization to improve itself and reach sustainability in the labor market. A proposal to the property was made to join the SINGARO (Syndicate of wholesaler markets of Rondônia) where it was exposed all the competitive advantages that the wholesaler market in the study will have by joining the Syndicate quoted.

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