

Chapter 3 Methodology

The present chapter is used to illustrate how the empirical analyses were carried out, with the purpose of letting the lector know the methodology utilized in the elaboration of the studies.

3.1. Objectives

Concerning the empirical analysis about supplier parks in Mexico, the objectives of this investigation in this chapter are:

- Illustrating the general supplier park landscape in Mexico
- Taking two Mexican supplier parks as examples and describing the basic functions in the parks, which consist of the administration, employment issues, relationship between OEM and suppliers and the definition of the supplier park type
- Analyzing to which extent the advantages and disadvantages elaborated in the previous chapter apply to the Mexican supplier park with particular emphasis on the applicability of the 4 dilemmas by Sako

Talking about the second empirical analysis, the evaluation consists of two general objectives:

The first general objective is to evaluate the applicability of the alternative concepts to ASPs in the Mexican context.

The second objective is to analyze the role of freight forwarders in the process of Just-in-time delivery by the example of ABX Logistics Mexico.

3.2 Sources of information

Analysis about supplier parks in Mexico

The grand majority of the information for this investigation is obtained by secondary data through a documental research. Nonetheless, as working in a freight forwarding company and working with clients located in one of these supplier parks I had the opportunity of questioning them about their actual situation in the park which I am going to implement as well.

Concerning the second analysis, the information for the evaluation is obtained by telephone interviews and questionnaires addressed to logistics and operations manager from Mexican automotive suppliers¹. In this case I took advantage of contacts and companies who either work with ABX Logistics or are part of the CAMEXA².

In case of the investigation of the importance of the freight forwarders the information are obtained on the one hand by interviewing the sales executive and sub-executive of ABX in Mexico-City, on the other hand by secondary data.

Primary and secondary data

Questionnaire and telephone interviews were the bases for the primary sources. Precisely, the questionnaires were sent first to the manager of the logistic and operations department of the automotive suppliers. Afterwards, in case more specific information needed, telephone interviews were held. Whilst working with those clients I took the opportunity of asking questions which I considered important in this study, particularly the issue of warehousing.

Furthermore, in case of the importance of the freight forwarders in the JIT-delivery, the primary sources were obtained by personal interviews with the sales executive and the sales sub-executive of ABX Mexico. Secondary data were obtained by information from the ABX global homepage and a PPS-presentation of the financial data of ABX Mexico.

3.3 Objects of the investigations

The objects in the first investigation are two Mexican supplier parks. The first one is *Parque Industrial FINSA in Puebla*, the first supplier park in Mexico founded in 1992 and initiated in 1996. The second supplier park is *Ford Futura Hermosillo*, which was a project started in 2003 and finished in 2005.

The objects for the second investigation were automotive suppliers with direct supply for the car manufacturers (Tier-1-suppliers) with a location outside of a supplier park. The persons asked and interviewed are manager in the

¹ In this study I did not focus on suppliers from a particular region. The importance for me was that they were located outside of supplier parks.

² CAMEXA is the German-Mexican Chamber of Commerce

purchase/logistics and operations departments. In each company one responsible was interviewed, except for some suppliers who have different subsidiaries throughout the country and supply different car manufacturer. They were taken into consideration as well.

In case of the freight forwarders the objective was to interview the sales executive and sub-executive as they are in constant contact with the client and they have the deepest knowledge about the services ABX offers.

3.4 Data collection

Automotive supplier parks Mexico

Most of the data were collected by a documental research. In case of *Parque FINSA* in Puebla, the data were collected primarily from the FINSA homepage, papers from various authors and a press release from Volkswagen de Mexico.

As primary data I took advantage of my daily work with one of ABX's clients located at *Parque FINSA* and asked them informal question about the OEM-supplier relationship and their impressions of the supplier park.

Concerning *Ford Futura Hermosillo*, the data are exclusively obtained by documental research. Thereby, a lot of information was obtained by reports from *El colegio de Sonora*.

Automotive suppliers

The data were collected on behalf of a questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of both opened and closed questions, in which the closed questions compose the bigger part.

The questionnaire is structured in 3 parts. The first part contains both opened and closed questions about the location of the suppliers, the products they are providing, the average distance to their clients, the number of their clients and the main reasons for their location choice.

The second part focuses in the transport and the JIT-delivery. The exclusively closed questions in multiple-choice-form comprise the transportation mode the suppliers choose to deliver the goods to their clients, the responsible party for the supply of the goods (i.e. the car manufacturer, the supplier itself or a 3PL or freight forwarder).

The third and last part focuses on the communication between the OEM and its suppliers. Therefore, the questions concerning communication and collaboration imply the way the communication between OEM and Suppliers is carried out, the degree of interdependence between OEM and suppliers, and factors which the suppliers consider to be important for a good collaboration and communication between them and the car manufacturers.

ABX Logistics Mexico

The data concerning the importance of freight forwarders in the JIT-delivery are collected on behalf of personal interview held in the office of ABX Logistics Mexico in Mexico-City. The interview contained exclusively opened questions. The topics which were discussed are the following:

- Services of ABX (what are they “selling” to their clients) focusing on the automotive sector
- The impact ABX has to deliver the goods JIT
- ABX and the issue of multimodal deliveries

In the question the focus was put on the Mexican market by asking primarily question about their operation in Mexico.