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ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESSES IN ROAD FREIGHT TRANSPORT: CORE, SUPPORT AND MANAGERIAL DIMENSIONS

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ABSTRACT: Organisations represent a complex system composed of interconnected processes. Every action that is taken at a certain organisational level has an impact on the subsequent ones, which may or may not be part of the same process. To understand the operational system that lies beyond the face of the organisation, it is necessary to develop a proper understanding of the processes that make everything run smoothly. Upon observing a medium-sized road freight transport organisation, it has been noted that there are several processes that are carried out in order to allow the company to provide the service. Therefore, a thorough analysis of the organisation and the mechanisms through which it functions is deeply needed. The aim of this paper is to identify and analyse the core, support and management processes within a medium-sized road freight transport organisation, to showcase the complexity of the organisation and the necessity of quality management.
KEYWORDS: business process management, process analysis, process-based approach, road freight transport, quality management.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Road freight transport is a vital link in global supply chains, facilitating movement across time and space on any land-based itinerary. Given the specific characteristics of this mode of transport, such as speed, low cost, and the ability to access land points that cannot be served by any other modes of transport, as well as globalization and the rapid growth of the economy and global consumerism, this field has been, is, and will continue to be essential [1]. However, road freight transport organisations must adapt to the demands of external actors, such as customers and other types of stakeholders. Given their diversity, there is a wide range of criteria related to aspects such as speed, availability, costs, and sustainability [2]. To carry out its daily activities, any organisation runs a set of interconnected processes, which are more or less visible at a superficial analysis. For this reason, it is imperative that the organisation is analysed from the perspective of the processes that take place within it, by people who have the information, the knowledge and the skills necessary for such an approach. Process management has numerous benefits, including, but not limited to cost reduction, increased process efficiency, improved intra-organisational communication, increased productivity, and transparency [3].

Given that speed, adaptability, safety and integrity of the goods are key differentiators in road freight transport services, increasing efficiency is a top priority for organisations operating within this industry. Another problem identified in the road freight transport industry is the lack of adaptation to the digital age. Although companies use different transport management platforms, the reality observed in practice is that processes within these types of organisations are often slow and inefficient [4]. From this point of view, a process-based approach facilitates the development of the organisation and increases its efficiency, as well as its adaptation to the dynamics of the industry, technology, and mass digitization.

2. CONTEXT

Road freight transport organisations function through an interconnected network of various processes, from transport itself to knowledge management and risk management. The literature [5][6][7][8] proposes dividing processes according to their role within the organisation and in relation to their field of activity. The three categories identified are support, core and management processes. While core processes are closely related to the organisation's main business activity, support and management processes play a complementary role. These categories include all processes that enable and ensure the smooth running of the core processes. Figure 1 graphically represents the pyramid of processes within an organisation, according to academic literature [9][10].

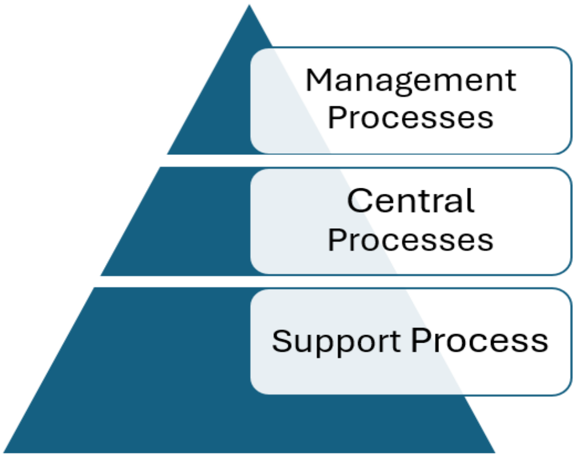

Figure 1. Process classification
Source: Processing of academic literature [9][10]

Support processes enable the efficient functioning of the organisation's activities but may not be essential to its main objectives. Consequently, support processes serve to ensure the efficient functioning of core processes, being the "hidden foundation" on which the operations of the road freight transport organisation are built. The absence of support processes would make operations difficult, if not impossible, as they guarantee the fulfilment of the essential criteria for the execution of road freight transport activities and ensure the availability of the necessary resources.

Although these processes may not be adequately recognized in discussions regarding road freight transport, they are of crucial importance. Six support processes were identified within the studied road freight transport organisation, which are essential to ensure the smooth running of activities: procurement, cleaning and sanitisation, data handling, maintenance, accounting, quality assurance.

Core processes comprise all processes that constitute the main activities of the road freight transport organisation. They enable the provision of services requested by customers, inherently contributing to the added value creation and the generation of revenue. Over time, the idea that core processes are essential to the organisation's activities and that their efficient execution promotes organisational success has been emphasised. Therefore, they should not be subject to outsourcing decisions. Consequently, to ensure the effectiveness and success of the organisation, as well as to protect its confidential information, these processes must remain internal.

Paradoxically, given the organisation's focus on road freight transport and its dual role as a carrier and freight forwarder, outsourcing the road freight transport process is essential. The company resorted to shipping goods through third parties to meet customer demand, as it could not satisfy all requests received using its own resources alone. The following core processes were identified within the organisation analysed: dispatching, transportation using the company's own fleet, transportation using an intermediary vehicle from a road freight transport service provider.

The aim of this paper is to analyse all the processes that are carried out within a medium-sized road freight transport organisation. Thus, it aims to facilitate a better understanding of how such an organisation operates and how the processes correlate. In this regard, the analysis will be carried out so as to provide answers to the following questions:

- What does the process do?
- How does the process work?
- What is the role of the process?
- How does the process integrate with other processes within the organisation?

3. PROCESS ANALYSIS

The sanitisation and cleaning process encompasses all operations (sub-processes and activities) that ensure compliance with hygiene standards in the workplace. Various activities are carried out as part of this process, depending on where it takes place. For example, in the case of motor vehicles used in road freight transport, the sanitisation and cleaning process will include activities such as sweeping the trailer, blowing out the residue from the trailer with compressed air, washing and disinfecting the trailer with approved substances, washing the exterior of the assembly, including the underside. Washing the underside of the assembly plays an important role in cleaning up residues that can build up over time and cause problems later on. Proper cleaning and sanitising of the trailer is also extremely important to eliminate the risk of cross-contamination of goods.

Given that the organisation under review operates primarily in the bulk goods niche, especially animal feed and fertilizers, cross-contamination of goods can have devastating consequences for the goods. In addition, the vehicle interior must also be sanitised, both through typical cleaning operations such as washing and wiping windows and other elements to remove dust deposits, and through cleaning the air conditioning system. Failure to clean the air vents regularly can lead to respiratory diseases, a risk that can be easily minimized through this process.

Regarding the cleaning and sanitisation process within buildings, this generally includes activities such as dusting furniture, sweeping and washing floors, sorting waste appropriately, sanitising bathrooms, cleaning the kitchen, descaling water filters, and complying with personal hygiene standards. On the service side, this process also includes cleaning up debris and properly sorting waste resulting from vehicle maintenance, such as various types of oil or tires. It is also important to periodically clean and sanitise air conditioning units in all work environments to prevent the growth of bacteria that can harm people working in these places.

It should be noted that the cleaning and sanitising process, although seemingly trivial, has multiple roles within the organisation. First, it ensures adequate quality of working conditions. Second, it plays an important role in risk management, in terms of the risks associated with diseases that may arise in the absence of this process. In addition, it ensures that the goods transported are not subject to cross-contamination, directly relating to the process of road transport of goods. Furthermore, through waste management, this process strengthens the sustainability component of the organisation.

The procurement process is responsible for ensuring the material resources necessary for the smooth running of the business. This process includes purchases of consumables such as stationery and office equipment, automotive lubricants, auto parts, fuel, energy, and any other material resources that need to be purchased, as well as purchases related to technological equipment or motor vehicles and vehicles used in road freight transport and related activities. This process includes the sub-process of selecting suppliers and negotiating prices. Various activities may also be carried out to select suppliers, such as requesting multiple price quotes from different suppliers, organising tenders to obtain a competitive price, comparing the quotes received and choosing the winning bid. Given the organisation's dependence on these resources and the need to optimize costs, this process is particularly important considering that the price of the transport service must account for all costs incurred by the organisation, whether they are directly or indirectly correlated to the road freight transport process. Thus, this process directly influences not only the relationship with suppliers, but also the relationship with customers.

In addition, the procurement process is closely linked to both quality management and resource management. By choosing quality in the procurement process, it is ensured that the selection process is not based solely on the lowest price [11]. In the case of motor vehicles used in road freight transport, there are several factors to consider, such as, but not limited to, efficiency, safety, fuel consumption, reliability, and travel and rest conditions. Thus, the procurement process influences the freight transport process in terms of quality for all stakeholders.

The data handling process encompasses all operations carried out for the analysis, recording, and processing of data. Within this process, information received in physical or electronic form is transferred to the organisation's computer system. For example, data related to a specific road freight transport operation is entered into the transport management system (TMS). This data is taken from emails, telephone conversations or written communications, messaging platforms, consignment notes, documents accompanying the goods and any other relevant documents. Through the data handling process, this data is used to compile the transport file for the operation performed. This process also supports fleet maintenance by tracking completed operations and scheduled maintenance dates. The data handling process is essential for the organisation, as it facilitates the efficient storage of information, better deadline management for legal documents, as well as records maintenance for consumed and available resources. The process also creates an accurate database and ensures its continuous maintenance.

It should be noted that the data handling process is closely linked to all other processes within the organisation. For example, in relation to human resource management, this process is used to create a file for a new employee, facilitate the drafting, signing and termination of employment contracts, keep records of the monthly activity of individuals within the organisation and the days of leave taken, etc. In relation to the road freight transport process, the data handling process facilitates the creation and updating of the transport file, which is then sent to the accounting process, in the invoicing sub-process, for the preparation of the invoice. This process also keeps track of the resources used for each transport, such as road tolls. In relation to management processes, the data handling process ensures clarity, accuracy, integrity, and completeness of data on organisational activity so that the necessary reports can be prepared. Given that every process has a set of input data and a set of output data, it is clear that the data handling process is essential within the organisation, as it is interconnected with all other processes.

The accounting process encompasses all financial and fiscal operations carried out within the organisation under study. This process includes sub-processes such as preparing tax invoices, verifying and validating them, sending them to customers, ensuring the collection of amounts due for services rendered, paying invoices issued by suppliers, and preparing financial and tax reports. This process also involves validating all invoices issued by suppliers, commonly referred to as inputs, and invoices issued to customers, also referred to as outputs. Ensuring their accuracy and integrity is essential because this financial data will be used both internally, in profitability reports, and externally, in reports to the state. Given that errors in reporting to the state have a very low tolerance level on the part of the authorities, it is imperative that those involved in this process understand its importance, rigor, and responsibilities.

The accounting process is of particular importance within any organisation, as it ensures the management of its financial resources. The role of this process is to ensure the correct operation of financial flows and to prepare the necessary legal reports, such as the balance sheet and trial balance, as well as to prepare employee payrolls and calculate taxes. Taxes owed to the state cover a variety of different aspects, including, but not limited to: value added tax refunds, income tax, both for shareholders and employees, dividend tax, health and social security contributions. The accounting process also determines the depreciation period of assets and the appropriate classification of assets, as well as the calculation of the organisation's total liabilities.

Given that the accounting process ensures the smooth flow of financial resources, both within the organisation and in relation to its internal and external stakeholders, it plays a critical economic and financial role. Considering that the implementation of any process depends on the availability of the financial resources necessary to carry out the activities within it, the accounting process interacts directly with all the other processes. The need for financial resources refers to both the purchase of necessary goods, consumables, and equipment, as well as the provision of human resources through the payment of appropriate salaries.

The quality assurance process guarantees that the necessary quality requirements are met throughout the entire organisation. Compliance with quality standards must be an integral part of any organisation so that potential problems can be prevented. Thus, the aim is to eliminate non-conformities through systematic checks and clear, concrete, and well-established procedures to guarantee both safety and security, as well as strict compliance with customer requests and the regulatory framework applicable to road freight transport [12]. Figure 2 graphically presents the flow of the process.

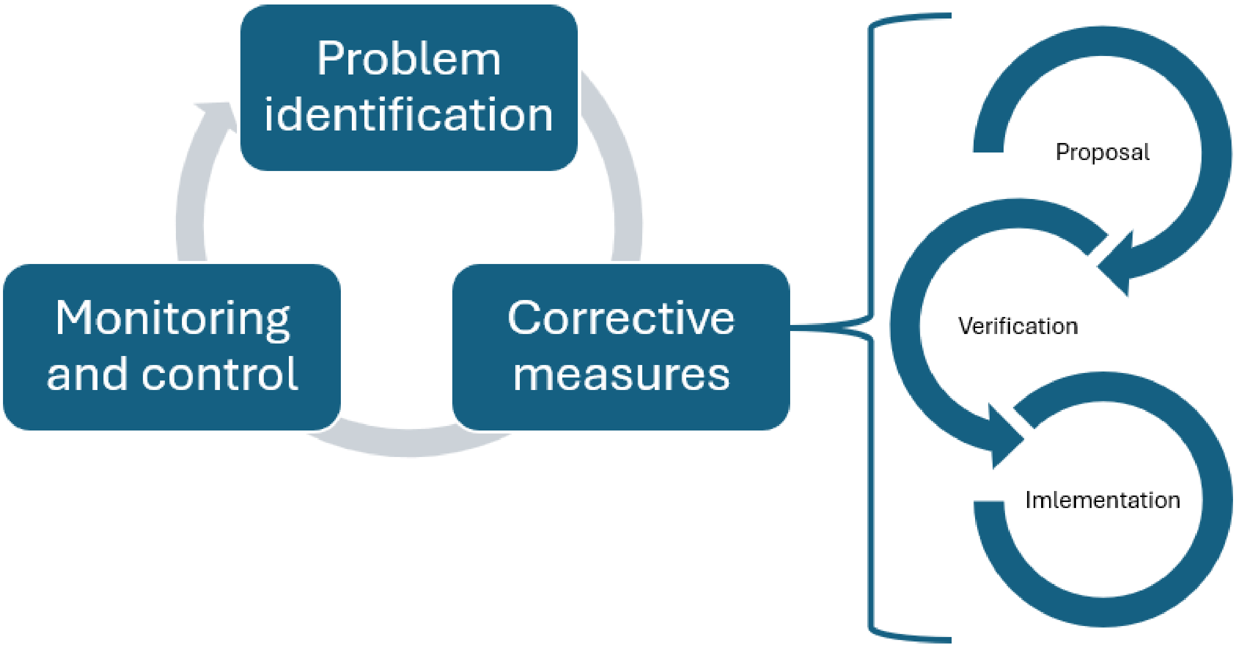

Figure 2. Quality assurance process
Source: Author's own contribution

This process serves to oversee the smooth running of activities, ensuring the quality of road freight transport services, both in accordance with internal standards imposed by the organisation and external standards imposed by the customer. The quality assurance process facilitates the strengthening of partnerships by maintaining service quality and increasing the level of intra-organisational and inter-organisational trust. Punctual deliveries, in accordance with the established deadlines, without any problems, lead to increased customer satisfaction and facilitate customer loyalty. In addition, it strengthens the organisation's reputation as a reliable partner, which can have positive effects in terms of retaining existing customers and attracting new ones.

Within the road freight transport organisation, the quality assurance process monitors compliance with quality standards in all other processes, checking how they are carried out and identifying issues that are or may become problematic. In addition, it is imperative in the quality management process, as it is an integrated process, in the sense that quality assurance is a fundamental component of quality management.

Strategic management encompasses all sub-processes and activities focused on formulating, developing, and achieving the organisation's strategic objectives. This process facilitates the formation of a competitive advantage for the organisation over its competitors, maintains and increases market share, and aims to achieve success for the organisation. At the same time, this process also includes sub-processes focused on identifying appropriate methods for optimizing all operations and enhancing the organisation. In other words, strategic management is directly responsible for formulating, developing, and implementing one or more strategies within the road freight transport organisation. The generic term "strategic" is used rather than "of strategy" because, depending on the different areas of the organisation, there may be several strategies at the departmental level that together aim to achieve the overall strategy of the organisation and, implicitly, its success and profitability. Figure 3 visually presents the strategic management process, illustrating its cyclical nature.

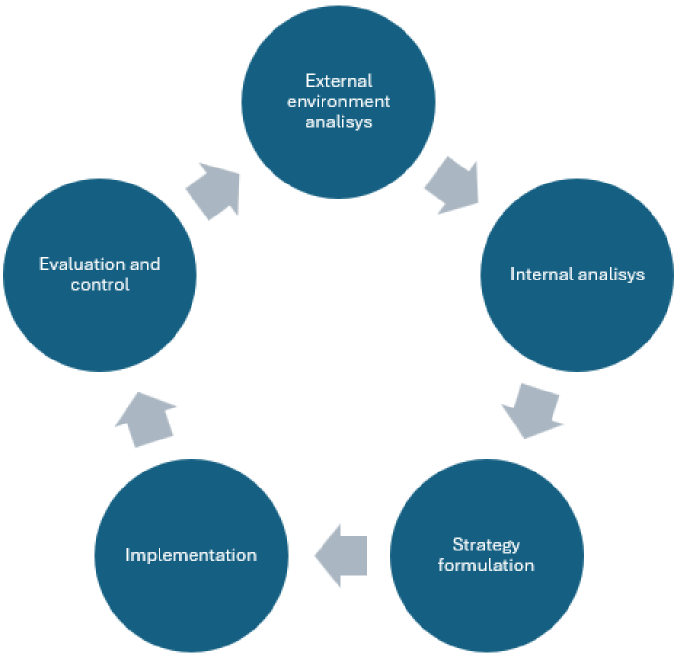

Figure 3. Strategic management process

Source: Author's own contribution

The role of the strategic management process is to define and implement the organisation's long-term strategy and the objectives to be considered in this regard. Thus, within this process, the necessary mechanisms must be identified or developed in order to facilitate the alignment of the use of available resources in close connection with the achievement of the previously defined objectives. Strategic management also has the role of anticipating market changes and identifying solutions to adapt to external dynamics, as well as the role of quickly identifying solutions to any problem, disruption, or unforeseen event that may occur.

By analysing the internal and external environment of the organisation, the process is closely linked to risk management, identifying potential risk factors and formulating clear strategies to avoid certain risks. In addition, the process facilitates informed, fact-based decision-making, thus being closely linked to the quality management process. Furthermore, strategic management is closely linked to the accounting process, facilitating the allocation of budgets in accordance with the organisation's strategic objectives. In road freight transport, strategic management aims to increase efficiency and optimize operations by planning and correlating operational and strategic decisions.

Resource management is the process of ensuring the efficient allocation and use of an organisation's financial, material, technological, and digital resources, ensuring that resources are available when they are needed. For example, it ensures a continuous and sufficient supply of fuel for road freight transport. Resource management is also concerned with the efficient use of resources, minimizing losses and waste by optimizing operations, eliminating downtime, and optimizing routes. In addition, the resource management process promotes organisational sustainable development, in line with international requirements for environmental protection and sustainable development.

The resource management process not only ensures the necessary flow of resources for the organisation's operations but also aims to ensure that they are used efficiently. Keeping records of stocks and allocated resources is essential to ensure that the organisation has the necessary resources and, at the same time, to monitor the efficiency of their use. The process uses technological resources to monitor how activities are carried out, check efficiency levels, and identify opportunities for optimization.

Resource management plays a crucial role in road freight transport organisation, as it enables and ensures, through the allocation of resources, the smooth running of the road freight transport process. For example, it is impossible to deliver goods under the agreed conditions if the vehicle has no fuel. In addition, this process is closely linked to the procurement process, communicating the material or technological resources that need to be purchased. The process also facilitates cost reduction by increasing efficiency and minimizing losses, thus being closely linked to the strategic management and accounting processes.

Human resource management is a management process which, although it could be included in resource management, has been selected for separate analysis due to the fact that it ensures the availability and efficiency of the most important resource in a road freight transport organisation. This ensures that the organisation has the necessary skills and capabilities to carry out its processes, as well as sufficient staff to undertake all necessary activities. This process also involves formulating, developing, and improving procedures related to the recruitment and training of new employees, identifying and developing plans for the continuous training of employees, evaluating organisational and individual performance, and aspects related to the retention of people in the organisation. In addition, the human resources management process ensures compliance with the Labor Code and the integration of its provisions into internal policies by developing individual and collective employment contracts and job descriptions, as well as special provisions, such as those related to occupational health and safety and fire prevention and extinguishing, through monthly training sessions that are clear and structured in accordance with the needs of the type of personnel being trained. In addition, the evaluation function of this process also determines the appropriate remuneration of individuals, depending on their role, performance, and skills.

The human resources management process plays a particularly important role as a link between organisational strategy and ensuring an adequate workforce. An adequate workforce means both the availability of a sufficient number of workers to carry out the processes and ensuring that individuals have the knowledge and skills necessary to carry them out. By identifying and implementing measures to ensure the motivation and personal satisfaction of individuals, human resource management actively contributes to the smooth running of organisational operations. On the other hand, by incorporating legal provisions into internal policies, their adoption and, implicitly, compliance are facilitated, while at the same time reducing risks due to increased safety and security at work.

The human resource management process is closely linked to the risk management process, facilitating the minimization of risks associated with accidents or illnesses in the workplace. Also, by ensuring the continuous development of individual and collective skills, this process creates a link with the strategic management process. If the resource management process ensures the availability of an adequate fleet to respond to transport requests, human resource management ensures the existence and qualification of personnel who can carry out these actions, thus correlating at the same time with the road freight transport and dispatching processes. Also, given that the human resources process processes the data of new and existing employees, there is a link to the data handling process.

Risk management encompasses all operations carried out within the organisation to identify, analyse, anticipate, minimize, and prevent risks that may arise during daily activities. In this sense, it is necessary to rigorously analyse all other processes, as well as the environment in which they take place, in order to identify and assess risk factors. Subsequently, the risk management process identifies solutions that can be used to reduce the organisation's risk level. In addition, this process develops a practical strategy that can be quickly applied in crisis situations caused by unforeseen or unavoidable risks. The process monitors the effectiveness of the measures implemented, thus facilitating continuous improvement.

The role of the risk management process is to ensure that activities are carried out without impediment. This ensures the smooth functioning of the entire organisation and aims to reduce the level of risk and its occurrence. The process facilitates the visualization of vulnerabilities and aims to minimize them. In addition, by ensuring reliability and a high level of safety, customer confidence increases, thus facilitating long-term partnerships developed not only through pricing strategies but also through service quality. Another important aspect is the reduction of costs associated with risk elements in the long term through the implementation of safety measures that effectively prevent accidents.

Risk management influences the implementation of all other processes within the organisation. Firstly, it facilitates strategic management by reducing long-term risks and ensuring the safety and security of road freight transport. It is also closely linked to the resource management process. Risk management determines the measures to be implemented, and resource management provides the necessary levers. In relation to the human resources management process, it directly influences induction and periodic training for all categories of staff. In relation to the road freight transport process, risk management aims to ensure that transport is carried out smoothly, in accordance with the terms and conditions of delivery, without the occurrence of foreseeable risks.

Knowledge management is responsible for collecting, analysing, and structuring data so that it can be transformed into information that can be shared throughout the organisation. Knowledge management has two essential components: individual knowledge and collective knowledge. Individual knowledge consists of the information, skills, and capabilities of individuals within the organisation that are not widely known, while collective knowledge encapsulates the essential information necessary for the smooth running of the business, disseminated to all individuals involved in the organisation, regardless of their hierarchical position. Through knowledge management, relevant individual knowledge is transformed into collective knowledge, accessible to all individuals within the organisation. In addition, knowledge management ensures access to relevant information for informed, fact-based decision-making.

In a highly competitive industry such as road freight transport, where opportunities for differentiation are limited and the cost of substitution is almost non-existent, knowledge and knowledge management are important factors in creating a sustainable competitive advantage over competitors. From this point of view, the role of this process is extremely important in ensuring that market share is maintained and increased. In addition, the knowledge management process is the link between practical experience and the formulation of organisational strategies. Moreover, it facilitates access to accurate information, thus eliminating errors caused by a lack of knowledge necessary to perform an activity. This also facilitates increased organisational efficiency by sharing information and best practices at the organisational level.

Knowledge management directly influences the strategic management process by providing data and information on the operations carried out within the organisation and how activities are carried out, facilitating the formulation of informed strategies with a high degree of applicability. This process also provides information on how organisational resources are used, communicating directly with the resource management process. In addition, the process transmits information to human resource management so that initial and periodic training facilitates the transmission of concrete and accurate information to individuals. Improving communication flows also facilitates the creation of a relaxed, collegial working environment. Furthermore, by using historical data, the knowledge management process actively contributes to risk management by identifying problem areas within the organisation that are prone to risk.

Quality management defines quality standards within the road freight transport organisation and ensures their long-term maintenance. This process defines quality criteria such as, but not limited to speed, reliability, safety, and security of transport, strict compliance with the conditions agreed in transport orders, proper maintenance of vehicles and equipment used, and compliance with all necessary occupational health and safety measures, by formulating and implementing clear, standardized procedures. In addition, the process constantly monitors organisational efficiency, identifying areas for improvement and proposing solutions in this regard.

The quality management process has the role of establishing the quality standards applied within the organisation and ensuring that activities are carried out in accordance with them. In this regard, the process aims to formulate clear working procedures in order to facilitate the standardization of other processes, with a view to achieving and maintaining both internal and external quality standards. In addition, it acts as a guarantor of quality by monitoring the conduct of operations within the organisation, together with the quality assurance process. Through a qualitative approach, the organisation can create a sustainable competitive advantage, facilitating the differentiation of transport services through reliability and seriousness, as well as an increased level of trust from partners.

In relation to other processes within the organisation, quality management aims to formulate, implement, and maintain quality standards and facilitates the promotion of a quality-focused organisational culture. For example, quality management formulates procedures and implements standards to be followed in both road freight transport and support processes. In relation to the human resource management process, it identifies solutions for promoting quality at both the organisational and individual levels. In addition, it facilitates the training process for new employees through procedures and process standardization. In relation to risk management, it helps reduce risks by implementing preventive measures designed to ensure quality and reduce impediments and non-conformities.

The dispatching process includes all activities related to the organisation of road freight transport, such as, but not limited to: taking transport orders, setting prices, identifying and allocating a vehicle for transport, planning the route and identifying the optimal route, transmitting the necessary data to the driver, tracking the transport status via GPS for own vehicles or by contacting the driver in the case of freight forwarding, transmitting the current status to the customer, and verifying the accuracy of documents. Thus, the dispatching process is the link between the transport service and the customer, facilitating the provision of a service in accordance with the request and quality standards.

The dispatching process plays a major role in the road freight transport organisation, being the central link between the customer and the actual road transport operation and other organisational activities, so that all customer requirements and all legal regulations in force can be strictly complied with. For example, route planning must identify the optimal route for the selected vehicle type so that provisions regarding traffic on public roads are not violated, such as those relating to restricted access on certain road segments for heavy vehicles. Thus, in relation to the service beneficiary, better communication and increased satisfaction are facilitated by optimizing intra-organisational operations. Continuous monitoring and documentation of transport are also key aspects, as they allow real-time information to be provided to the customer and, implicitly, a higher level of transparency.

As a central process, dispatching is bidirectionally linked to both support and management processes, influencing each other. To facilitate transport using a vehicle from its own fleet, it needs them to be available and in very good technical condition, which is ensured through resource management. Also, allocating the most suitable vehicle is a strategic decision, as there are several aspects to consider: the distance to the loading point, the current status (loaded, unloaded, on break, etc.), the time needed to reach the loading location, meeting the delivery deadline (the driver must be able to make the delivery within the set deadline, without affecting the driving schedule imposed by law in any way), etc. The dispatching process also ensures a high level of service quality, in accordance with management and quality assurance processes. In addition, risk management is another process to which dispatching relates, as it is necessary to identify, anticipate, and prevent risks, as well as to identify quick solutions in case of impediments (e.g., identifying an alternative route due to a temporarily closed road segment or quickly identifying another vehicle in case of an accident). The dispatching process also involves data handling, by entering the transport file into the TMS, as well as a direct link to the accounting process, by setting prices and, after verification, sending the documents to the accounting department for post-transport operations, such as preparing the tax invoice.

The process of transporting goods by road using a vehicle from the company’s own fleet ensures the actual transport of goods by road from the loading point to the unloading point. Although it seems like a simple process, there are several sub-processes and activities involved. Once the vehicle to be used for transporting the goods has been selected through the dispatching process, the necessary information is sent to the driver. Upon arrival at the loading location, the driver notifies the contact person and supervises the loading process, then secures and stows the goods. After completing all the necessary documents, the driver checks their accuracy and signs them if everything is in order, or requests that any errors be corrected. Subsequently, during transport, the driver is required to follow the planned route but, at the same time, must ensure that the legal provisions are not violated in any way. If the route is not compliant, they must notify the responsible dispatcher or, if communication is impossible, identify an alternative route with high efficiency. In addition, the driver is required to comply with environmental regulations. As long as the goods are loaded, the driver is directly responsible for the integrity of the goods. Once at the unloading point, they supervise the process and take over the transport documents after checking their accuracy.

The process of transporting goods by road using a vehicle from the company's own fleet is at the heart of the organisation, being its very purpose. Thus, its role is essential to the organisation's existence. By using its own vehicle, the process can be controlled and monitored more easily, facilitating the maintenance of quality standards. The process also plays an essential role in creating a sustainable competitive advantage, as priority requests can be fulfilled even in situations of major fluctuations in demand, due to independence from third parties.

In order to carry out the transport, information is required on the loading and unloading locations, the contact persons for all points where the goods are handled, the route to be followed, the necessary documentation, and the goods to be picked up. This information is obtained from the dispatching process. On the other hand, the resource management process is responsible for ensuring the necessary material resources and the technical condition of the vehicle, while the human resources management process ensures appropriate training for drivers so that operations are carried out in accordance with quality standards and the legal regulations in force. In addition, the risk management process intervenes in situations where risks could not be foreseen and/or avoided, in which case a solution must be identified to continue operations as quickly as possible.

The process of freight forwarding in road freight transport consists of carrying out transport through a third-party carrier. Thus, the organisation takes the transport request from the customer and identifies, in the database or through specialized platforms, a suitable vehicle for carrying out the transport. It is extremely important to thoroughly check the organisation that will carry out the transport so that all legal provisions are complied with and, at the same time, a service of the same quality is provided. If it is a new supplier, its data is entered into the TMS to create the transport file. For existing partners, the transport file is created directly. After the transport price has been agreed with the carrier, a new transport order is issued by the organisation to the carrier. Once this has been accepted, the vehicle data is sent to the end customer. Subsequently, transport monitoring operations are carried out so that accurate information can be transmitted to the customer and, at the same time, compliance with the contractual deadlines for loading and unloading can be ensured. After unloading the goods, the transport documents and tax invoice are requested and verified. If they are compliant, the necessary data is entered into the TMS platform and forwarded to the accounting department for the preparation of the invoice to the customer.

The role of the freight forwarding process is to ensure that the transport is carried out even in the absence of a vehicle from the company's own fleet, thus facilitating reliable, long-term partnerships. This increases the level of flexibility and adaptability of services, allowing different types of goods to be transported without the need to own all types of vehicles used in specialized road freight transport. Also, the process of freight forwarding in road freight transport is an additional source of income, thus ensuring the profitability of the organisation.

In terms of process integration, the process of freight forwarding in road freight transport depends directly on the dispatching process, through the first mode of operation described above, and, secondarily, on resource management, as the lack of tangible resources (vehicles) leads to the need to outsource the service process. Also, the data handling process facilitates freight forwarding through the use of TMS. On the other hand, quality management oversees the process to ensure a consistent level of quality in all operations carried out within the organisation. From a strategic management perspective, this process facilitates expansion and entry into new markets or niches with low-risk exposure through subcontracting, thus also integrating with risk management.

Figure 4 graphically represents the processes within the organisation, based on their classification and how the three categories of processes interact.

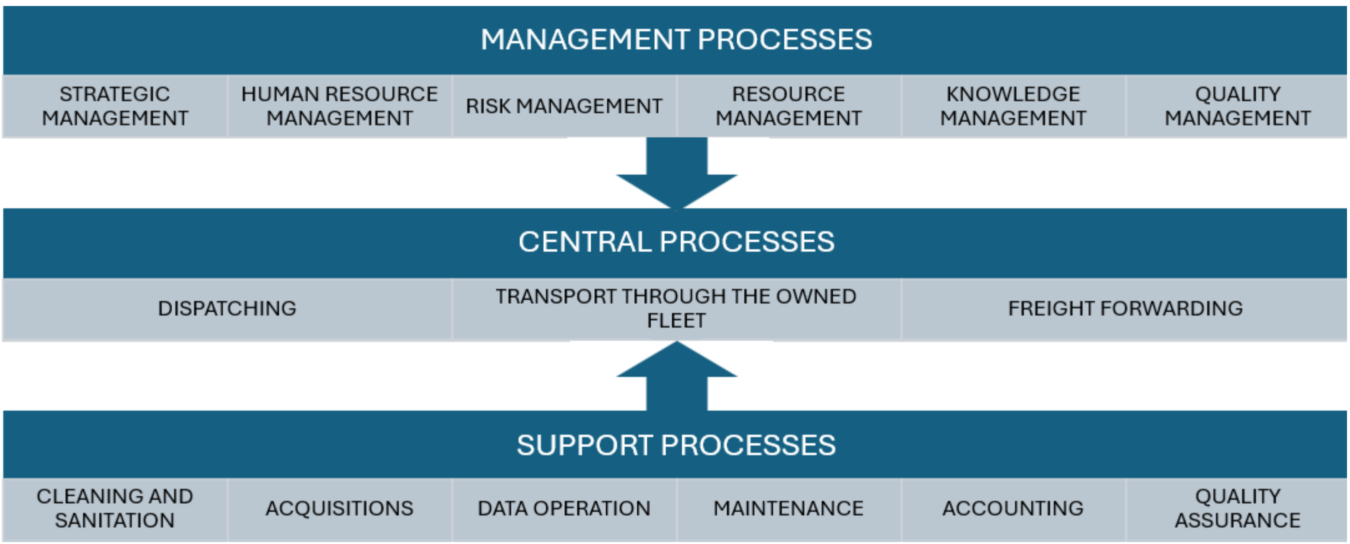

Figure 4. Process classification within a medium-sized road freight transport organisation

Source: Author's own contribution

4. CONCLUSION

Road freight transport is a crucial element of modern-day economy, facilitating global commerce. Although seemingly simple, road freight transport is a complex activity, carried out through a sequence of core processes, guided by a variety of management processes and facilitated by support processes. In total, 15 processes were identified within the analysed organisation, including 3 core processes, 6 management processes, and 6 support processes. This paper has successfully identified, presented and analysed all these processes, aiming to facilitate a better and deeper understanding not only of the studied organisation, but also of the field it operates in, as well as similar organisation.

However, taking into consideration the fact that this study has been conducted on only one medium-sized organisation, there are limitations in terms of generalization. Therefore, further research is needed in order to validate the findings and assess their applicability to other organisations.

All in all, this paper has attained its objective to clearly provide insights into how a road freight transport organisation carries out its daily activities. This paper should represent a starting point for further research on the topic. In addition, it may be a starting point for peers trying to catch a grasp of the road freight transport industry. Moreover, practitioners may use the findings to compare it to other organisations, as a tool for identifying areas for improvement.

5. REFERENCES

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