

## The role of managerial skills in motivating teams: A lever for performance and efficiency in freight transport

### Case of an agro-industrial food company

دور المهارات الإدارية في تحفيز الفرق: رافعة للأداء والكفاءة في نقل البضائع

حالة مؤسسة صناعية زراعية غذائية

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#### **Abstract :**

Freight transportation plays a strategic role in economic development and enhancing the competitiveness of organizations. Its effectiveness relies not only on technological advancements and infrastructure, but also on the quality of human resource management. This study examines the combined impact of employee motivation, organizational performance, and operational efficiency in the Algerian logistics and agro-industrial sectors.

Adopting a mixed-methods approach that includes surveys and in-depth interviews, the research focuses on the case of *Agro Merar*, a food-processing company. Findings indicate that improving work-life quality, providing adequate training, and addressing employee needs significantly enhance commitment, psychological well-being, and productivity. Moreover, the study emphasizes the critical role of managerial competencies particularly in leadership and innovation in driving performance.

The paper proposes an integrated model of human resource development as a pathway to sustainable, human-centered organizational performance. It also highlights the importance of aligning administrative skills with motivation strategies to improve logistics efficiency. This research contributes to identifying effective management practices that optimize freight transport operations in a competitive and evolving environment.

**Keywords :** Motivation , Logistics performance, competencies, human capital

**Jel Classification Codes :**

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## ملخص :

يُعدُّ نقل البضائع ركناً أساسياً في التنمية الاقتصادية وتعزيز القدرة التنافسية للمؤسسات. وتعتمد كفاءته ليس فقط على تحسين البنية التحتية والتكنولوجيات، بل أيضاً على إدارة الموارد البشرية. وفي هذا القطاع الذي يشهد تطوراً مستمراً، يُعتبر تحفيز الفرق عاملاً أساسياً لتحسين الأداء اللوجستي وضمان نقل أكثر كفاءة

يتناول هذا المقال التأثير المشترك على تحفيز الموظفين والأداء التنظيمي و الكفاءة في الجزائر. وبالاكتفاء على منهج وصفي وتحليلي مستند إلى دراسات تجريبية سابقة، تسلط الضوء على الترابط بين هذه الأبعاد الثلاثة. بالاكتفاء على الاستبيانات و مقابلات عميقة مع الموظفين و المسؤولين بهذه المؤسسة وتُظهر النتائج أن تحسين جودة الحياة المهنية إلى جانب التدريب المناسب و فهم احتياجات الكفاءات الموجودة، يعزز من التزام الموظفين ورفاههم النفسي وإنتاجيتهم. كما تقترح الدراسة نموذجاً متكافلاً لتنمية الموارد البشرية كمنهج نحو تحقيق أداء مستدام ومتمركز حول الفرد داخل المنظمات

وفي دراسة حالة مؤسسة صناعية زراعية غذائية اقرو مرار، أظهرت الدراسة الميدانية و الابحاث أن أداء الشركات مرتبط ارتباطاً وثيقاً بمهارات المديرين، ولا سيما فيما يتعلق بالقيادة والابتكار المحلي و الدولي. كما تؤكد العديد من الدراسات أن تحفيز الموظفين يلعب دوراً حاسماً في تعزيز التزامهم وإنتاجيتهم، خاصة في قطاعات اللوجستيك والنقل و مجال المبيعات على وجه الخصوص

وفي هذا السياق، من الضروري تحليل كيفية تأثير المهارات الإدارية على تحفيز الموظفين وأدائهم، وكيف يساهم ذلك في تعزيز كفاءة نقل البضائع. وستساعد هذه الدراسة على تحديد أنسب الاستراتيجيات الإدارية من أجل تحسين العمليات اللوجستية، مع دمج دراسة كمية ونوعية.

**كلمات مفتاحية:** الأداء اللوجستي; تحفيز; الراس المال البشري ; الكفاءات

## INTRODUCTION

In a sector as dynamic and strategic as freight transport, operational performance and efficiency are largely contingent upon the motivation of teams. This motivation is not merely driven by material factors or financial incentives; it is equally dependent on the quality of management. Managerial competencies play a crucial role in mobilizing teams, as they directly influence employees' engagement, satisfaction, and capacity to address daily challenges. Inspiring leadership, effective communication, conflict resolution abilities, and the capacity to foster a climate of trust are key drivers that contribute to creating a stimulating and high-performing work environment.

This study seeks to investigate how managerial competencies can be harnessed to enhance team motivation within the context of freight transport. The paper aims to identify the most effective managerial practices and strategies for optimizing collective performance, thereby contributing to the sector's competitiveness.

The central research question underpinning this work is as follows: To what extent do managerial competencies influence team motivation and, consequently, performance and efficiency in the freight transport sector specifically in the case of an agro-industrial company?

In response to this question, the following hypotheses are proposed:

- H1: The development of managerial competencies such as leadership, stress management, and conflict resolution fosters greater team cohesion and enhances performance in freight transport operations.
- H2: The absence or weakness of managerial competencies leads to team demotivation, reduced productivity, and higher turnover rates within the freight transport sector.

### 1. Contextual Framework and Research Objectives

As part of this applied research, we selected a company operating in the agri-food sector: *Agro Merar*, a family-owned limited liability company located in the industrial zone of Es-Senia, in the Wilaya of Oran. The main activities of this company involve the wholesale and retail distribution of food products intended for human consumption. With over five years of experience in this field, the company has established itself in the regional market.

During our internship within this company, we observed several organizational challenges particularly the absence of a clear organizational structure that defines the roles and responsibilities of each employee. This gap has had a direct impact on team efficiency and the overall effectiveness of transportation and distribution processes. On the other hand, we noted a genuine willingness on the part of the management team to improve the internal functioning of the company and modernize operational processes. Moreover, the company expressed a strong need to motivate and train its employees in alignment with its growth strategy, especially to adapt to rapid changes in its external environment, including market competition, technological innovation, and evolving consumer behavior.

## 2. Scope of the Study

This study was conducted over a six-month period, from July to December 2024. The temporal scope allowed for sufficient observation and interaction with the company's operations, staff, and management practices.

In terms of geographical coverage, the fieldwork was limited to the parent site of *Agro Merar*, located in the industrial zone of Es-Senia, Oran (Algeria). This company was selected as a representative case study of Algerian private enterprises operating in the agri-food distribution and logistics sector. The focus on a single organization enabled an in-depth analysis of its internal managerial practices, organizational structure, and human resource strategies, particularly those related to team motivation and logistics performance.

## 3. Significance of the study

This research seeks to address a gap in the scientific literature by focusing on the role of managerial competencies in a specific and underexplored context: freight transport within an agro-industrial enterprise. The study is intended to offer practical recommendations for executives and logistics managers to strengthen team motivation and improve the sector's overall competitiveness.

## 4. Study Objectives

This study aims to achieve a set of key objectives, both theoretical and practical:

### Theoretical Objectives:

- To explore and clarify the conceptual framework related to the role of managerial skills in team motivation and performance improvement.
- To analyze the relationship between administrative leadership, professional motivation, and efficiency in the transportation and distribution of goods.
- To contribute to the academic literature on human resource management in the logistics and agri-food sectors.

### Practical Objectives:

- To diagnose the current administrative practices within *Agro Merar*, based on insights from its management team.
- To assess the impact of the absence of a formal organizational structure on workforce productivity and operational efficiency.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the motivational tools currently in place, particularly within key departments such as sales, storage, and supply.
- To provide concrete, actionable recommendations aimed at improving internal management systems, especially in developing skills and enhancing performance in logistics operations.

## 5. Methodological Approach

To achieve these objectives, we adopted a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews conducted with managers, HR officers, and team supervisors in the core departments of the company. The goal was to gain a deeper understanding of the company's managerial practices and to analyze how motivational mechanisms and administrative skills influence organizational performance.

### I. Literature Review : Managerial Competencies and Motivation in Freight Transport

This literature review synthesizes recent academic contributions that explore the role of managerial competencies in employee motivation and organizational performance within the freight transport and logistics sector. The reviewed studies provide empirical evidence and conceptual insights into how leadership skills, motivational strategies, and work environments influence team performance and operational efficiency.

**Management matters: what do we need to know about the motivation and job satisfaction of humanitarian logisticians?** (Abikova, 2025) focused on the motivation and job satisfaction of humanitarian logisticians. The study identifies key motivational levers, including recognition, decision-making autonomy, and managerial support. It highlights how transformational leadership and interpersonal management skills are critical in maintaining motivation under high-stress conditions. This research demonstrates the pivotal role of soft skills in retaining logistical talent and ensuring operational resilience in complex environments.

**Enhancing Employee Performance in Logistic Companies: The Influence of Competency Development and Remuneration with Job Satisfaction as a Mediating Factor** (Jonneli, 2024) examined the relationship between competency development, remuneration, job satisfaction, and employee performance in logistics companies in Indonesia. Their findings highlight that structured skill-building programs and fair compensation significantly enhance job satisfaction, which mediates improved individual and organizational performance. The study emphasizes the strategic importance of integrated HRM policies that prioritize continuous training and fair wages to optimize productivity in freight transport operations.

**Enhancing employee performance through motivation: the mediating roles of green work environments and engagement in Jakarta's logistics sector** (Nusraningrum,

2024) conducted a study on 222 logistics sector employees in Jakarta to explore how motivation, employee engagement, and green work environments affect performance. The study shows that a healthy and sustainable work environment enhances intrinsic motivation, while employee engagement acts as a mediator between motivation and performance. It advocates for inclusive, eco-conscious managerial practices to strengthen employee well-being and operational effectiveness.

**Evolution de la logistique et son apport à l'amélioration de la performance de l'entreprise : Cas – Secteur agroalimentaire en Algérie** (Yahia Samia, 2023) highlights how modernizing logistics in the Algerian agri-food sector significantly enhances company performance. The study emphasizes the role of effective managerial skills in coordinating operations, reducing costs, and boosting team motivation making it a relevant case for improving freight transport efficiency.

### **1. Role of Human Capital**

In today's increasingly globalized economy, the freight transport sector plays a strategic role by ensuring the flow of goods at both national and international levels. At the core of this complex system is a key driver of success: human capital. Its role and significance are vital to securing performance, safety, and innovation across the sector.

Human capital encompasses all the skills, knowledge, qualifications, experience, and abilities mobilized by individuals in the context of economic activity. In the freight transport sector, this capital is reflected through a wide range of specific functions: truck drivers, forklift operators, inventory managers, sales administrators, fleet managers, security and customs agents, handling and warehousing staff, specialized technicians and engineers, planners, sales representatives, a deliver personnel.

The complexity of these professions requires technical, organizational, and interpersonal skills adapted to field realities. This calls for a deeper definition of the types of human capital involved in these functions, particularly regarding their roles in logistics performance and team motivation.

#### **1.2 Types of human capital**

Human capital refers to the set of knowledge, practical skills, experience, and abilities held by individuals within an organization. It encompasses both explicit knowledge and tacit know-how, as well as the capacity for continuous learning, adaptation, and innovation. This capital forms a key pillar of a company's intangible resources, representing the driving force that contributes through critical thinking, creativity, and efficiency to the achievement of organizational objectives.

**a) Structural capital**

Structural capital relates to the organizational resources that enable a company to operate efficiently and respond to market demands. It is based primarily on formalized and codified knowledge stored in internal databases, procedures, and information systems. This capital also includes the tools, technologies, and processes developed to enhance productivity, quality, and collective performance.

**b) Relational capital**

Relational capital includes the intangible assets derived from the relationships an organization maintains with its external environment such as customers, suppliers, and strategic or institutional partners. It represents the value of knowledge and trust built through these interactions. This capital plays a decisive role in sustaining organizational performance, as the strength and quality of these relationships directly impact competitiveness and the capacity for innovation (Traki, 2022)

**c) Analysis of the Interrelationships**

**Human capital** → The quality of employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities helps strengthen motivation through the recognition of their capacities and the autonomy granted to them.

**Structural capital** → The tools, processes, and information systems support teams by reducing barriers to their efficiency and creating an environment conducive to engagement.

**Relational capital** → Strong relationships with clients, suppliers, and partners enhance trust and pride in belonging, thereby stimulating team motivation.

**Team motivation then acts as a direct lever on:**

- Operational efficiency,
- Service quality,
- Cost reduction,
- Customer satisfaction improvement.

Understanding an individual's actual abilities in a given situation, while taking into account their aspirations and ambitions, represents a strategic lever for assigning them to a role that fully aligns with their potential. (TREBUCQ, 2015) This approach is based on the principle that each employee holds a potential for value creation that must be identified, activated, and optimally positioned within the organizational structure. It thus raises a major challenge in terms of work organization and the effective management of human resources. The individual should therefore be viewed as a unique entity, combining specific skills, abilities, and psychological traits that must be recognized, appreciated, and leveraged in the service of collective performance.

**d) The Strategic Importance of Human Capital at the Core of Logistics Processes**

Human capital should not be viewed merely as an operational resource within supply chains;

rather, it constitutes their true driving force. Investing in employee motivation enables companies to enhance not only their logistical performance, but also their capacity for innovation, resilience, and differentiation. In an era where supply chains are required to be increasingly agile, sustainable, and customer-oriented, the human factor stands out as an essential strategic lever. The continuous advancement of team motivation becomes imperative, particularly in light of the evolving external environment that challenges organizational stability and competitiveness.

## **2. The Concept of Logistics:**

The process of planning, implementing, and controlling the efficient and effective flow and storage of raw materials, work-in-progress, finished goods, and related information from the point of origin to the point of consumption, with the aim of meeting customer requirements.

This definition highlights the very essence of modern logistics, which is no longer limited to the simple transportation of goods, but instead encompasses the integrated management of physical and informational flows. It underlines the importance of coordination, responsiveness, and resource optimization in order to fully satisfy customer expectations while keeping costs under control. In this regard, logistics has become a strategic lever for enhancing business competitiveness.

Logistics is a function whose purpose is to satisfy expressed needs under the best economic conditions for the company, while meeting a defined level of service. These needs may be internal (supply, production) or external (customer satisfaction). Logistics involves various professions and areas of expertise that contribute to the management and control of physical and information flows as well as resources.” (Ferhat, 2021)

This definition highlights the dual role of logistics: addressing the internal needs of the company while ensuring the satisfaction of external customers. It reminds us that logistics is not an isolated function, but a cross-functional discipline that mobilizes various professions and skills in support of overall performance. By optimizing physical and informational flows, logistics contributes to operational efficiency and the creation of value for the company.

## **b) Supply Chain Management: An Integrated and Collaborative Approach**

Due to its multidisciplinary origins, there is no single, universally accepted definition of Supply Chain Management (SCM). However, significant progress has been made in recent years to clarify this concept. The Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals (CSCMP) provides a widely recognized definition, according to which SCM encompasses all activities related to the planning, procurement management, product transformation, and logistics operations. This approach is based on close coordination and active collaboration among the various stakeholders in the supply chain: suppliers, intermediaries, service providers, and customers. SCM thus aims to integrate the management of supply and demand, both within the company and across its entire network of partners.

## **c) The Hierarchical Structure of Supply Chain Management**

Supply chain management is based on a decision-making structure organized into three hierarchical levels: strategic, tactical, and operational. This top-down approach makes it

possible to model and break down complex issues into smaller, more manageable components according to the relevant decision level.

### 3. The Hierarchical Levels of Supply Chain Management

#### Strategic Level

This level concerns the major orientations and long-term decisions of the company. It includes significant investments, site location choices, key partnerships, and overall sourcing policies. These decisions define the framework within which the supply chain will operate.

#### Tactical Level

At the intermediate level, tactical decisions cover the medium term and serve to implement the defined strategy. This includes capacity management, resource allocation, supply planning, and inventory management. The goal is to optimize the use of available resources.

#### Operational Level

The operational level focuses on short-term, often daily decisions. It involves concrete activities such as production planning, order management, delivery scheduling, and task sequencing. This level aims to ensure the efficient execution of the plans set at higher levels.

Supply Chain Management thus follows a top-down logic, from strategy to operations, ensuring alignment between the company's overall objectives and concrete actions in the field.

Title: The Hierarchical Levels of Decision-Making in SCM



(SCM = *Supply Chain Management*)

Source : *Conceptual by the authors*

#### **4. The Importance of Supply Chain Management in the Organizational Structure of the Company**

Supply chain management holds a strategic position within the company's organizational structure, as it connects and coordinates all key functions from procurement to production, including storage, distribution, and customer service. It enables a comprehensive and integrated view of material, information, and financial flows, thereby contributing to improved operational efficiency, cost reduction, and enhanced responsiveness to market changes. By integrating logistics into the organizational chart as a cross-functional activity, the company fosters collaboration between departments, optimizes decision-making, and aligns its operational objectives with its overall strategy. Supply Chain Management thus becomes a lever for performance, competitiveness, and sustainable value creation (Kasmi). This integration helps improve operational efficiency, reduce costs, and increase responsiveness to market developments (Feng & Zhihui).

Recent studies emphasize that integrating SCM into the organizational structure helps strengthen the overall performance of the company. For example, research published in *Sustainable Supply Chain and Business Performance* highlights the positive relationship between sustainable supply chain management and the operational and financial performance of companies. Furthermore, an article by McKinsey & Company points out that companies with an organizational structure optimized for SCM achieve better results in terms of profitability and customer satisfaction (McKinsey & Company, 2020).

#### **5. Team Management within the Logistics Structure**

Team management within the logistics structure refers to the set of practices, methods, and skills employed by managers to organize, coordinate, motivate, and supervise team members involved in logistics activities (procurement, storage, transport, distribution, etc.), with the aim of optimizing flows, improving the overall performance of the supply chain, and ensuring the satisfaction of both internal and external customers (Allard-Poesi, 2012).

##### **1. Key Components of Team Management in Logistics**

- a) Work organization: task allocation, operations planning, and schedule management.
- b) Internal communication: smooth flow of information among logistics stakeholders.
- c) Motivation and team cohesion: maintaining a positive social climate, recognition, and skills development.
- d) Performance monitoring: implementation of indicators (logistics KPIs), individual and collective evaluation.
- e) Incident management: ability to mobilize the team in the face of unforeseen events (delays, breakdowns, emergencies).
- f) Continuous improvement: involving the team in finding solutions to optimize logistics processes.

These elements are essential to ensuring effective management of logistics teams, thereby contributing to the overall performance of the supply chain (Remdani, 2024).

## 2. Key Dimensions of Team Management in Logistics

### a) Task organization and coordination

Enables smooth execution of logistics operations through clear allocation of roles and responsibilities.

### b) Leadership and communication

The logistics manager must adopt an appropriate leadership style (participative, directive, delegative) and ensure effective communication, particularly in warehouses or multi-actor platforms.

### c) Motivation and skills management

Employee engagement is strengthened through recognition, continuous training, and participation in process improvement (participative management).

### d) Performance monitoring

Through indicators such as OTIF (On-Time In-Full), inventory turnover rate, or logistics costs, the manager steers collective efficiency (Kain, 2018).

### e) Incident management

The team's responsiveness to unforeseen events (supplier delays, breakdowns, activity peaks) is a key factor in logistics resilience (*Leading the Charge: Understanding Leadership and Team Management in Logistics*, 2024).

Linking competence to team management within the logistics structure is not only relevant but central to understanding organizational performance in this field.

## 3. The Link Between Competence and Logistics Team Management

### I. Competence as a lever for logistics performance

In logistics, technical skills (such as mastery of IT tools, operation of machinery, inventory management) and behavioral skills (such as teamwork, stress management, problem-solving) are essential to ensure operational efficiency. Good team management aims to develop, mobilize, and enhance these skills to achieve logistics objectives.

"Logistics performance relies on the alignment between team competencies and the requirements of operational processes" (García-Arca, 2018).

### II. The manager's role as a competence manager

The logistics manager is not merely an operational supervisor. They also act as a competence manager, identifying training needs, organizing skill development for employees, and ensuring a good match between job requirements and employee profiles.

"The manager's role is to ensure competence-based management in order to optimize the allocation of human resources to critical logistics tasks" (Boterf, 2006).

### III. Collective competence and organizational intelligence

Beyond individual skills, it is collective competence the ability of a team to cooperate effectively that determines logistics success. The manager must therefore create a climate of trust, autonomy, and accountability that fosters collective intelligence.

Collective competence is a social construct that emerges from interactions and enables a team to respond in a coordinated way to complex situations" (Zarifian, 1999).

#### **IV. The typology of Skills in Logistics Teams**

In the management of logistics teams, it is essential to distinguish between the different categories of skills mobilized by employees. These skills are complementary and indispensable for ensuring smooth operations in an environment often characterized by urgency, variability, and complexity.

##### **A. Technical skills (hard skills)**

Technical skills refer to the mastery of tools, methods, and procedures specific to logistics professions. They are often linked to initial training or professional experience.

##### **Examples :**

- Use of inventory management software (WMS, SAP, Oracle SCM, etc.)
- Operation of forklifts and compliance with safety instructions
- Mastery of procedures for receiving, order picking, and shipping
- Knowledge of customs rules and transport regulations

Technical skills form the foundation of the professionalization of logistics staff, but on their own they are not sufficient to guarantee performance.

##### **B. Organizational skills**

These skills relate to the ability to plan, prioritize, manage deadlines, coordinate tasks, and demonstrate rigor within a just-in-time flow system. They involve both individual autonomy and collective synchronization.

##### **Examples:**

- Planning delivery rounds or picking operations
- Managing priorities during peak activity periods
- Ability to meet deadlines and quality standards
- Adaptation to unforeseen events: supplier delays, stockouts, system malfunctions

These skills enable teams to cope with flow variability and the growing complexity of globalized supply chains.

##### **C. Behavioral skills (soft skills)**

Behavioral skills refer to personal and social qualities that facilitate teamwork, communication, and the management of stressful or conflictual situations. These skills are increasingly valued by managers, as they strongly influence group dynamics.

##### **Examples:**

- Ability to communicate clearly and effectively (both orally and in writing)
- Teamwork and cross-department collaboration
- Stress management in urgent logistics situations
- Initiative and sense of responsibility
- Conflict resolution or mediation within the team

According to Boterf (2006), soft skills constitute real human capital which, when properly valued, promotes collective performance and quality of work life.

Indeed, performance is not based solely on individual skills, but also on the organization's ability to learn, retain, and transmit key knowledge within teams.

#### 8. The concept of knowledge management

Knowledge management refers to all processes aimed at:

- Identifying, formalizing, sharing, and preserving knowledge useful to the organization
- Preventing the loss of knowledge when employees leave or teams change
- Promoting collective upskilling through continuous learning

### II. Applied Logistical Practices in Operational Contexts:

1. Writing procedures and job guides (standardization)
2. Setting up buddy systems or mentoring for newcomers
3. End-of-day or end-of-project experience-sharing meetings
4. Computerized systems to centralize best practices and incidents
5. In-house training led by experienced employees (learning by doing)

An organization's ability to create and share knowledge is a sustainable competitive advantage, especially in operational environments like logistics.

#### a. The Relevance for the logistics manager:

The manager becomes a facilitator of collective learning, valuing informal knowledge (tips, feedback) as much as formal knowledge (protocols, standards). They ensure that information circulates, that mistakes become learning opportunities, and that best practices are shared.

"Knowledge becomes the primary strategic resource in an economy based on collective intelligence, and its management a decisive issue for frontline teams." (Davenport & Prusak, 1998)

#### b. The impact of managerial skills on human dynamics in freight transport logistics

In an ever-changing economic environment marked by increasing demands for speed, reliability, and cost reduction, the freight transport sector faces numerous challenges. The performance of this sector largely depends on the quality of management and team commitment. Managerial skills therefore become a key factor in motivating teams and improving operational efficiency.

Managerial skills whether technical, interpersonal, or organizational play a crucial role in work dynamics. A good manager knows how to adapt their leadership style according to the situation, communicate effectively, manage conflicts, and value the efforts of their team members. In the transport sector, where working conditions can be demanding (irregular hours, time pressure, logistical constraints), these skills help create a climate of trust, foster cooperation, and maintain a high level of motivation.

**c. Team Motivation as a Strategic Driver of Organizational Performance**

Team motivation is a fundamental engine of organizational performance. It goes beyond mere financial compensation to encompass recognition, autonomy, career development opportunities, and the sense of belonging to a shared mission. Effective management fosters a positive corporate culture where employees feel valued and engaged. This, in turn, leads to higher productivity, reduced staff turnover, and enhanced quality of service delivery.

**d. Developing Managerial Competencies in Logistics: A Systemic Approach**

Strengthening managerial skills in the logistics sector requires an integrated perspective. Managers should not only master human resources management tools but also develop emotional intelligence, active listening abilities, and participative leadership. These aspects are essential for building long-term trust with teams, especially in environments subject to intense operational pressure.

**e. Motivation as a Strategic Pillar for Performance**

Positioning employee motivation at the heart of performance strategies transforms managerial culture. By adopting a people-centered approach, transport companies can foster stronger employee engagement. This involves implementing non-financial recognition schemes, continuous training programs, and participatory mechanisms that allow staff to have a say in decisions affecting their working conditions.

**f. The Link Between Motivation and Innovation**

Motivated employees are more inclined to contribute ideas, engage in problem-solving, and display proactive behavior. In a sector where flow optimization and adaptation to new technologies are critical, such innovative capacity represents a vital competitive advantage. Therefore, managerial competencies should aim to stimulate creativity and encourage initiative-taking.

### **III. Integrated Case-Based Methodological Framework**

To address the research question, a mixed-methods approach will be employed:

A quantitative survey will be conducted through a structured questionnaire administered during direct interviews with employees and supervisors of the agro-industrial company engaged in freight transport activities. The survey will target approximately 60 staff members, primarily from the wholesale and retail sales teams, holding positions related to distribution, sales, and inventory management.

A qualitative study will be carried out through semi-structured interviews with managers and logistics supervisors, aimed at complementing the quantitative data and providing deeper insight into the managerial levers implemented involving supervisors and managers from distribution, sales, and logistics departments.

This dual approach is designed to test the proposed hypotheses and to generate findings that contribute meaningfully to the understanding of managerial competencies as a driver of motivation and performance in freight transport.

The questions addressed to employees covered several themes, including:

- Satisfaction with the work environment
- Training and development
- Leadership and motivation
- Transportation conditions and work-related stress
- The contribution of financial and non-financial incentives to performance improvement

This particular employee segment was chosen due to its direct link to the company's core activity and profitability, as well as the dynamic nature of these roles, which directly influence workforce stability, motivation factors, competencies, and expected productivity.

## **Study Findings**

The field study conducted at *Agro Merar* between July and December 2024 revealed several organizational and operational shortcomings that significantly impact employee stability and overall performance. These findings highlight structural and managerial gaps that require urgent attention. The main contributing factors are outlined below:

### ***1. Lack of Professional Training and Development***

The company does not offer structured or continuous training programs, either during onboarding or throughout employees' careers. This shortfall negatively affects both individual and team competencies, limiting employees' ability to adapt to evolving roles and technical demands. The continued reliance on traditional management practices exacerbates the issue.

### ***2. Absence of Clear Organizational Planning, Especially Concerning Work Hours and Rest Periods***

The interviews revealed a lack of defined work schedules that appropriately balance productivity with employee well-being. This organizational ambiguity leads to both physical and psychological stress, ultimately reducing job satisfaction, engagement, and motivation.

### ***3. High Pressure Due to the Nature of the Sector***

Operating in the food distribution sector which is directly linked to daily consumer needs places employees under constant pressure. This is intensified by growing market demand, fierce external competition, and the imperative to meet strict deadlines, particularly in logistics, storage, and sales departments.

#### ***4. Emphasis on Monthly Profit and Limitations in the Incentive System***

The company's current incentive system is heavily tied to monthly productivity metrics, without sufficient consideration of working conditions, task complexity, or individual contributions. This approach has fostered a sense of inequity among staff and has contributed to high turnover rates.

#### ***6. Need of Technological Resources***

Given the significant volume of goods handled daily, reliance on outdated or manual systems severely limits operational efficiency. The absence of modern technological tools affects the performance of core functions, including supply management, storage, order processing, and interdepartmental coordination.

#### ***6. Weak Internal Coordination Between Departments***

A lack of digital systems and clearly mapped workflows hinders effective collaboration between key departments such as supply, sales, and delivery. This communication gap disrupts operational flow and compromises the quality and timeliness of service delivery.

**Table 1.** Sample of Employee interview Summary

| Interview No. | Job Title of Interviewee | Department / Division         | Main Topics Discussed                                                                                                                                             | Key Observations                                          |
|---------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 01            | Warehouse Worker         | Supply and Storage Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Working conditions inside the warehouse</li> <li>- Working and rest hours</li> <li>- Training and development</li> </ul> | Lack of safety measures and organization in the warehouse |
| 02            | Sales Manager            | Sales Department              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Incentive system</li> <li>- Daily work pressure</li> <li>- Coordination with delivery department</li> </ul>              | Incentives are not balanced compared to sales volume      |
| 03            | Delivery Staff           | Distribution Department       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daily workload</li> </ul>                                                                                                | High pressure and frequent                                |

|    |                      |                       |                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                    |
|----|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |                      |                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Order organization</li> <li>- Coordination with warehouse and sales</li> </ul>                                        | changes in orders                                                  |
| 04 | Administrative Staff | Accounting Department | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Operational coordination</li> <li>- Communication with other departments</li> <li>- Use of digital tools</li> </ul>   | Weak information flow despite presence of an integrated ERP system |
| 05 | New Employee         | Various Tasks         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reception of new employees</li> <li>- Initial training</li> <li>- First impression of the work environment</li> </ul> | Lack of continuous training after onboarding                       |
| 06 | HR Supervisor        | Human Resources       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Job stability</li> <li>- Reasons for resignation</li> <li>- Performance evaluation</li> </ul>                         | Need for a clear motivation strategy                               |

Based on the results of the semi-structured interviews (see Table 1), it appears that the absence of training programs and unclear work schedules are major factors behind workforce instability.

The table summarizes the results of semi-structured interviews conducted with six diverse profiles within the company Agro Merar. It covers various key functions (warehouse, sales, delivery, administration, and human resources), providing a cross-sectional view of internal realities.

### Global Conclusion of the Analysis

The analysis of interview results highlights deep-rooted structural and organizational challenges within Agro Merar, notably the absence of clear coordination between departments,

limited digitalization, and weak integration of human resource management into the company's strategic vision. The findings reflect a reactive management style, struggling to keep pace with the increasing demands of the logistics and food distribution sector.

In response to these challenges, and following recommendations from department heads, the company implemented an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system in February 2024. This strategic shift marks an important milestone in the digital transformation of Agro Merar. However, the familiarization process among staff remains slow, and the tool is still under progressive adaptation and improvement to better respond to the operational realities and evolving needs of the company.

Furthermore, the study reveals that certain key positions particularly in logistics, coordination, and systems management require a higher level of education or technical competence than currently available. In parallel, other positions are still undergoing reintegration and alignment with the company's new strategic orientations, especially as it seeks to modernize its practices and consolidate its market position.

In conclusion, while the company has begun taking concrete steps toward improvement, the success of this transformation will depend on sustained efforts in training, internal communication, and role clarification, as well as on the ability to involve all employees in a shared performance culture.

**Table 2.** Identified Motivation and Performance Levers by Interviewee Profile

| Profile / Position          | Themes Discussed                                                                      | Identified Motivation / Performance Levers                                                       | Link to Research Hypotheses                                                                      |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Storage Worker</b>       | - Working conditions - Rest periods - Training and development                        | Improvement of safety measures, better warehouse organization, and access to continuous training | Working conditions significantly influence operational motivation and safety-related performance |
| <b>Sales Manager</b>        | - Incentive system - Daily workload - Interdepartmental coordination                  | Implementation of fair and motivating incentives; improved coordination with delivery services   | Motivational levers (e.g. incentives) impact sales efficiency and employee retention             |
| <b>Delivery Staff</b>       | - Volume of daily tasks - Order planning - Coordination with other departments        | Better workload distribution and scheduling mechanisms                                           | Work pressure and unpredictability negatively affect employee performance and morale             |
| <b>Administrative Staff</b> | - Process coordination - Interdepartmental communication - Use of digital tools (ERP) | Strengthening of communication flows and optimal utilization of ERP systems                      | Information management and digital integration contribute to organizational efficiency           |
| <b>New Employee</b>         | - Onboarding experience - Initial training - First                                    | Need for structured onboarding and                                                               | Early-stage experiences influence long-term engagement, competence                               |

| Profile / Position | Themes Discussed                                                            | Identified Motivation / Performance Levers                                                             | Link to Research Hypotheses                                                                                    |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| HR Supervisor      | impression of work environment                                              | continuous skill development                                                                           | development, and retention                                                                                     |
|                    | - Job stability -<br>Resignation drivers -<br>Performance appraisal systems | Definition of a clear motivation and retention strategy; reinforcement of performance evaluation tools | Strategic HR practices are central to sustaining workforce motivation and long-term organizational performance |

Source : *Conceptual Table 1&2 by the authers*

This table summarizes the insights gathered from the interviews by highlighting the motivation and performance levers specific to each job profile. It reveals that working conditions, recognition (through incentive systems), workload, and interdepartmental coordination are key factors directly influencing employee motivation and performance. The lack of continuous training, weak internal communication, and limited use of the ERP system hinder overall organizational efficiency. This mapping of needs underlines the importance of targeted HR strategies tailored to each role in order to enhance employee engagement and optimize overall company performance.

## The Relationship Between Managerial Competencies and Team Motivation at Agro Merar

### 1. Field Observations

- The company lacked a clear organizational structure and effective interdepartmental coordination.
- Employees expressed needs for training, effective communication, and recognition.
- Supervisors highlighted the absence of a structured motivation strategy.

### 2. Managerial Competencies Identified (or Lacking)

- Leadership (motivating or insufficient, depending on context)
- Stress and conflict management
- Ability to organize, listen, and value teams
- Cross-functional communication

**Table 3 : Effects on Team Motivation**

| Managerial Competency | Observed Impact on Motivation              |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| Positive leadership   | Enhances engagement and sense of belonging |
| Clear communication   | Improves role clarity and reduces tension  |

| Managerial Competency    | Observed Impact on Motivation                    |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Work recognition         | Values efforts and encourages performance        |
| Training and development | Stimulates long-term motivation and autonomy     |
| Lack of coordination     | Leads to stress, frustration, and demobilization |

**Source :** *Conceptual Table 3 by the authers*

The more managerial competencies are developed such as leadership, communication, and planning the more teams are motivated, stable, and high-performing. Conversely, the absence of these competencies results in demotivation, logistical inefficiency, and high turnover.

## Conclusion

The study conducted within Agro Merar clearly demonstrates that employee motivation is closely linked to the managerial competencies applied on a daily basis. In a context marked by progressive growth, increasing competition, and a digital transition underway particularly with the introduction of an ERP system in February 2024 the role of managers emerges as a fundamental strategic lever.

The analysis revealed that the initial absence of structured planning, poor cross-functional communication, and perceived inequity in performance recognition contributed to a climate of demotivation and significant employee turnover. However, recent initiatives reflect a genuine will for improvement: ERP implementation, progressive internal reorganization, the establishment of a detailed organizational chart, and a strategic openness to the external environment, evidenced by collaboration with business experts, researchers, and PhD candidates.

Interview results further indicate that some key roles require targeted skill enhancement, while others are still undergoing reintegration and alignment with new strategic directions. This highlights the need to strengthen managerial capabilities in effective communication, organizational planning, participatory leadership, and change management.

Ultimately, the stability of personnel and the logistical performance of Agro Merar are directly dependent on the ability of its leaders to foster a structured, fair, and motivating work environment one in which every employee understands their role, feels valued, and is equipped with the tools necessary to contribute sustainably to the company's collective success. In this regard, the manager takes on the role of a genuine local HR partner, integrating the human dimension into the drive for optimized logistics performance.

## Scientific Perspectives

Logistics can be defined as an applied scientific discipline dedicated to analyzing, planning, managing, coordinating, implementing, controlling, and continuously improving the flows of information, people, goods, finances, and energy. Within this framework, the management of logistics teams plays a critical role in ensuring the efficiency and effectiveness of operations. (Glistau, 2023)

1. Provide managers with training in motivation techniques and interpersonal communication that are specifically tailored to logistics environments.
2. Establish motivation indicators alongside traditional performance metrics to regularly assess the social climate within teams.
3. Create forums for dialogue where employees can express their needs, ideas, and expectations regarding their work.
4. Recognize individual and team initiatives and achievements not solely through financial rewards, but also through symbolic forms of recognition (awards, praise, development opportunities).
5. Promote participative management by involving teams in decision-making processes related to the organization of their work.

### **Practical Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this field study, it is clear that Agro Merar's logistics performance depends heavily on its ability to strengthen managerial practices and create a stable, motivating, and strategically aligned work environment. The following recommendations aim to support a long-term transformation of the company's HR and logistical practices.

#### **1. Empower Managers as Local HR Partners:**

Managers must act as frontline HR agents, integrating the human factor into daily logistics.

This involves:

- Providing targeted training in motivation, interpersonal communication, and team leadership tailored to logistics.
- Encouraging participative leadership to mobilize teams while valuing individual contributions.

#### **2. Implement a Structured Training and Skills Development Program:**

Introduce continuous and role-specific training covering both technical skills (stock management, tools, logistics workflows) and soft skills (organization, stress management).

This should align with a long-term human capital development strategy.

#### **3. Define Clear Organizational Structures and Working Conditions:**

Establish a detailed organizational chart and standardize schedules and rest periods to reduce ambiguity, fatigue, and dissatisfaction.

#### **4. Redesign Recognition and Incentive Systems:**

Reform the reward system by integrating qualitative indicators such as engagement, initiative, and collaboration. Encourage a mix of financial and symbolic rewards (certificates, public praise, training opportunities).

#### **5. Foster Internal Dialogue and Cross-Departmental Communication:**

Develop internal forums and regular interdepartmental meetings (sales, delivery, supply, HR). Use collaborative tools to ensure transparency and improve coordination.

#### **6. Establish Motivation Indicators:**

Complement productivity metrics with indicators measuring job satisfaction, employee turnover, and internal climate. This allows for better managerial responsiveness.

#### **7. Modernize Technological Infrastructure:**

Build on the February 2024 ERP implementation by providing adapted training and user-friendly interfaces. Integrate inventory systems and logistics dashboards to optimize operational precision and tracking.

#### **8. Anticipate Sectoral and Environmental Pressures:**

Establish an internal strategic monitoring unit to track market changes, competition, customer preferences, and technological innovations. This unit would support proactive decision-making and business agility.

In conclusion, these recommendations converge toward a single objective: leveraging managerial competencies as a driver of internal cohesion and logistical efficiency. The proposed strategy requires coordinated investments in human, technological, and

organizational dimensions, while fostering a culture of continuous improvement and openness to the external environment.