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**KNOWLEDGE
MANAGEMENT AND
ORGANIZATIONAL
LEARNING AS
COMPETITIVE
PERFORMANCE
FACTORS IN AN
ORGANIZATION**

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to present the relationship between knowledge management and organizational learning in a business environment. The convergence of these two constructs will occur through the sharing of information in the various departments that make up an organization. In the post-modern world, much is said about organizational environments, about the competitive advantage of organizations as a means of maintaining and differentiating themselves in the competitive globalized market. Treating the innovative capacity of organizations as a competitive differential, the present study used a descriptive and qualitative analysis as a methodology through bibliographical reviews, approaching knowledge management and organizational learning as a competitive factor in an organization. From the relationship between these two constructs, a theoretical model is proposed and analyzed that presents knowledge management and organizational learning supported by organizational culture, in order to provide an organizational environment in which it is possible to innovate and achieve the desired competitive differential. in the market. At the end, a reflection on the theoretical model proposed by the author of the article is developed.

Keywords: Organizational environments, knowledge management, competitive advantage.

INTRODUCTION

We are currently experiencing what is being called the third industrial revolution, this revolution, characterized by the mass production of information, is sustained by the evolution of information and communication technologies that provide organizations and their employees with easy and immediate access to any desired information. Although there is a positive aspect provided by the ease

of access to information, on the other hand, a lot of information has been downloaded that, most of the time, does not have real added value to the business in organizations.

This flood of information ends up directly affecting the knowledge management process of companies, since, in the face of a vast informational universe, it becomes a complicated task to discern what is true information, with added value, from disinformation that, once used, it can result in knowledge without value, not generating a competitive advantage. This scenario of attention is still reinforced by the false understanding, on the part of many organizations, of what knowledge management really is about.

This understanding is often limited to providing employees with access, through information systems, to various documents with explicit knowledge (CAPURRO, 2011).

According to Uhry & Bulgacov (2003, p.23), "in the current competitive environment driven by processes such as globalization, knowledge appreciation and information volatility, the knowledge that deserves to be managed is the knowledge that adds value to the company's business". The challenges behind the management of this knowledge are not only found in propagating them so that they are applied to goods and services, but also in developing facilitating processes that promote the generation of knowledge, in order to transform the knowledge generated into real advantages. competitive.

The main objective of this article is to present the relationship between knowledge management and organizational learning in a business environment. Given this, it is understood that knowledge management must be supported by other processes in order to generate new knowledge and innovate, keeping organizations competitive in today's dynamic market.

The present study adopts bibliographic reviews as a methodology, addresses knowledge management and its relationship with organizational learning. Based on the relationship between these two constructs, mentioned above, a theoretical model is proposed and analyzed that presents knowledge management and organizational learning, which are anchored by the organizational culture in order to promote an organizational environment, in which it is possible to innovate and achieve the much-desired competitive edge in the market.

The article began with an introduction that showed an overview of the research, the theme, the justification, the main objective, the theoretical framework with the main concepts that will be deepened in the theoretical foundation on the subject and a brief description of the method to be used. applied in the development of the work.

Then, the development of the work is presented through the theoretical foundation, in which authors base the arguments written during the research. In the development, the subject is also described in all its aspects, such as: the description of the methodology used in the course of the work and the results found with its discussions.

Finally, the conclusion that deals with the final synthesis of the work with its final considerations.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The concept of knowledge management in organizations emerged in the early 1990s, and according to Sveiby (1998), knowledge management must be considered in conjunction with business strategy and no longer at the operational level. The concept assumes that all existing knowledge in the organization, departments and processes belongs to the organization and that all

employees can have access to the company's knowledge (CET, 2012).

Knowledge management, from English Knowledge Management, is a term that has attracted many researchers to its study in recent decades. It is a cross-sectional area of activity between its various correlated areas, mainly, strategic management, theory of organizations, information systems, among others. Knowledge management provides, with an integrated vision, the management and sharing of all assets owned by the company.

These assets can be: assets, values, credits, rights and the like that, at a given time, form the equity of a natural or legal person and that are valued at their respective costs. This information can be in a database, in a procedure or document, as well as in the employees of a company according to their experiences and abilities.

It is important to point out that, when well implemented, knowledge management in organizations can be of great value to the company, contributing significantly to the generation of wealth, profits and value for itself and its employees. Thus, to implement knowledge management, organizations need to be like a human community, in which collective knowledge represents the greatest differential. It is in the collective knowledge that the competences for the development of the work are based.

ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Organizational learning can be understood as a process aimed at the uninterrupted creation and dissemination of knowledge within an organization. To achieve this objective, organizational learning must use methods that contribute to facilitate the externalization of tacit knowledge of employees. The organizational learning process must still be flexible and adaptable to the various changes in the organization's internal and external

environment so that it continues to generate value (SILVEIRA, 2004).

Steil & Pacheco (2008) state that: “learning and knowledge are considered complementary concepts”. Therefore, if learning is guided by a well-defined process, it is capable of generating new knowledge and this knowledge, in turn, is input information for a flow that will culminate in future learning.

Júnior & Stano (2010) address the organizational learning process at three levels:

1. Individual: characterized by the subject's negative and positive emotions.
2. Group: characterized by the transfer of knowledge between participating individuals from different groups within the organization.
3. Organizational: characterized by the institutionalization of knowledge transfer processes, thus generating an organizational memory.

For Fleury (1997) & Oliveira Jr. (2007) organizational learning is closely linked to the knowledge management process. According to the authors, this convergence between the two processes results in the generation of the skills necessary for strategic positioning.

According to Senge (2008):

It characterizes an organization with an effective organizational learning process because it is an organization in which there is an environment responsible for stimulating employees to think of new solutions, achieve results and where the collective is placed with greater importance than the individual (SENGE, 2008, p. 7).

For Bitencourt (2001), organizational learning has two important components: insights and organizational memory. Insights are shared knowledge and mental models that employees within the organization must learn together, so as not to block change in business behavior. Organizational memory, in turn, is the result of knowledge, procedures, rules and

goals generated by the organization that must be stored and managed in order to preserve this knowledge so that they can contribute to the organization's learning.

According to Garvin (1993), organizational learning is the process resulting from five skills: Systematic problem solving, Experimenting with new approaches, Learning from past experience, Learning from the experiences and best practices of others, and Transferring / Disseminating knowledge quickly and easily. efficiently across the organization.

Zangiski, Lima & Costa (2009) illustrate, as shown in Figure 1, the organizational learning process defended by Garvin.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

A company's organizational culture is a set of values, norms, and rules that individuals must follow to interact with other employees within the company. This culture determines how people must act and how they must make decisions (CROZATTI, 1998).

In order to know the organizational culture of a company, it is necessary to know its entire structure, its relationships, its history, its customs and the behavioral changes that it causes when there are changes. It is often said that people react badly to changes and, in part, this may be true due to the need to disconfirm what was previously considered important in the reality of that organization (FREITAS, 2010).

According to Fernandes & Pedroso (2010),

It is also possible to obtain an understanding of the organizational culture of a company by evaluating the social values that are absorbed in the work environment and that guide the vision and value of an organization seeking its growth and maintenance in the labor market (FERNANDES; PEDROSO, 2010, p. 9).

The organizational culture can be revalidated or modified, according to the

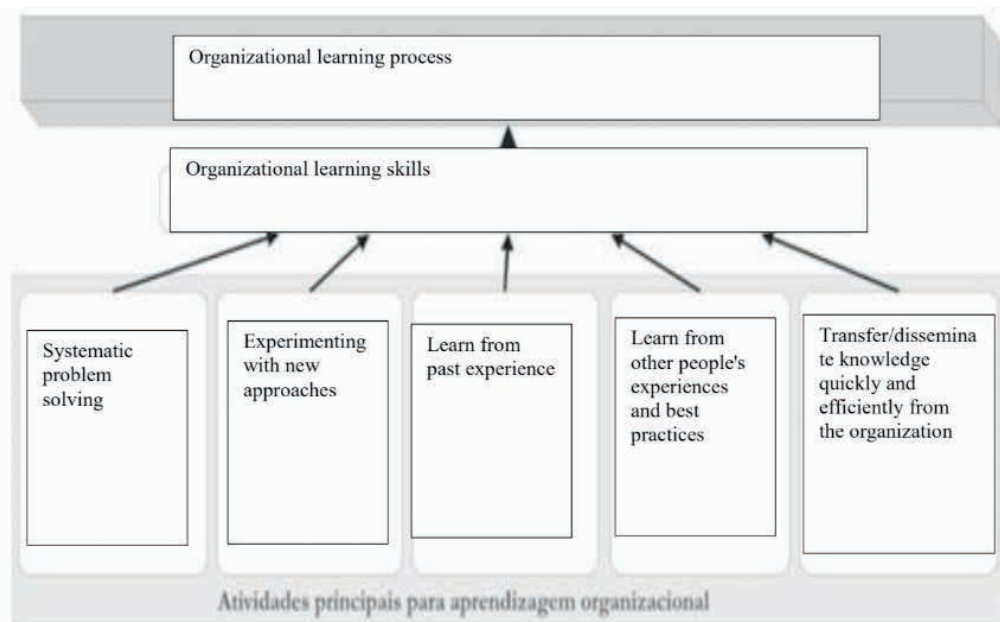


Figure 1 - Organizational Learning Process

Source: Zangiski; Lima & Costa, 2009.

Eras:	Era of classical industrialization	The era of neoclassical industrialization	Era of information
Periods	1900-1950	1950-1990	After 1990
Predominant organizational structure	Bureaucratic, functional, pyramidal, centralizing, rigid and inflexible. Emphasis on departments.	Mixed, matrix, with emphasis on departmentalization by products or services or strategic service units.	Fluid, agile and flexible, fully decentralized. Emphasis on cross-functional team networks.
Predominant organizational culture	Theory X. Focus on past, traditions and conservative values. Emphasis on maintaining the status quo. Valuing tradition and experience.	Transition. Focus on the present and current. Emphasis on adapting to the environment. Valuing renovation and revitalization.	Theory Y. Focus on the future and destiny. Emphasis on change and innovation. Valuing knowledge and creativity.
Organizational place	Static, predictable, few and gradual changes. Few environmental challenges.	Intensification and acceleration of environmental changes.	Mutable, unpredictable, turbulent, with large and intense changes.
Ways to deal with people	People like inert and static product factors. Emphasis on strict rules and controls to regulate people.	People as organizational resources that must be managed. Emphasis on organizational objectives to direct people.	People like proactive and intelligent human beings who must be driven. Emphasis on freedom and commitment to motivate people.
Administration of people	Industrial relations	Human resource Management	Management of people

Table 1 - Evolution of organizational culture

Source: Chiavenato, 1999.

transformations that the company has been going through, or by changing its managers or even by external influences. In the process of change, transformations are inevitable for the organization in the highly competitive market and if companies have to adapt to these changes, the employees who are inserted in them must also have the same procedure.

According to Tanure (2010, p.24), “the change of culture is a longer, harder and far from easy process, but possible. Most of the time, it occurs due to some radical change, from the business or management point of view.”

Chart 1 shows the evolution of organizational culture within companies, according to Chiavenato (1999, p.27).

The organization's culture may prove inadequate for the current competitive environment. In these cases, a change in the organizational culture is necessary to maintain the company in the labor market and initiate a new culture that favors constant learning (GONÇALVES, 2013).

The organizational culture, therefore, must favor the development of competences or professional abilities, promoting interaction in an effective way, thus generating knowledge so that employees can, in any situation, identify, locate, evaluate, organize, communicate and use it both for the problem solving as well as lifelong learning.

A INNOVATION

Joseph Schumpeter was perhaps the first author to focus on the importance of innovations and technological advances for companies and the economy.

According to Schumpeter (1982), “in the current globalized market, organizations bet on innovation as a way to guarantee their competitiveness and leadership”. The challenge for organizations lies in seeking an innovation management model that is effective and

manages to generate a competitive advantage.

Innovative companies are characterized, those that value the creative potential of all its employees, regardless of their position or activity performed. Innovative companies preach innovation as an organizational objective and to allow the participation of all their employees, generally, they are companies in which the organizational culture and the hierarchy of employees are more flexible.

Lastres & Albagli (1999) define two types of innovation: radical and incremental, with radical innovation being understood as the introduction of a new product, process or entirely new form of production. Incremental innovations, according to the name itself, refer to the inclusion of improvements to products or processes, in order to maintain the innovation process, a model of constant improvement must be applied, seeking the best physical and human resources and paying attention to the use of new technologies. Competitive advantage will then be the privilege of organizations that manage to maintain a constant pace of improvement (GONÇALVES; FILHO; NETO, 2006).

According to Fleury & Fleury (1997, p.58), “technology has never been as important as it is today; even so, it has become more difficult to establish competitive advantage from technology alone”. Undoubtedly, the technological factor cannot be considered, in isolation, as the main competitive factor of organizations, however, technology plays a fundamental role in providing competitiveness, productivity and reducing borders (GONÇALVES; FILHO; NETO, 2006).

METHODOLOGY

To achieve the general objective proposed in the work, this research begins with a literature review, in order to support the results achieved at the end of the work.

The methodology used in the research was descriptive and qualitative.

Research is classified according to its objectives as descriptive, which, according to Gil (2010, p. 47), is one that “aims to describe the characteristics of a given population or phenomenon”, that is, the result of using the theoretical model in the research. day-to-day application of a company.

The character of the research is qualitative. According to Moresi (2003) says that qualitative research allows identifying key issues and formulating questions. The result of the convergence between knowledge management and organizational learning, which is the sharing of information, suffer interference from the organizational culture and innovation, which are described in the theoretical foundation of the research. A general reflection of the theoretical model is also made in the discussions of the research results.

Initially, data were collected based on documental and bibliographical analysis, and then data collection was extracted from bibliographical research for the creation of the theoretical model proposed in the research, which is the convergence between organizational learning and management. of knowledge.

DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

To present the results achieved in the research, a theoretical model was elaborated using two constructs, “Knowledge Management” and “Organizational Learning” through the theoretical foundation of the work.

As evidenced by Uhry & Bulgacov (2003):

In the current competitive environment, driven by processes such as globalization, knowledge valuation and information volatility, the knowledge that deserves to be managed is the knowledge that adds value to the company’s business, but the challenges behind the management of this knowledge

are not only found to propagate them so that they are applied to goods and services, but also to develop facilitating processes that promote the generation of knowledge, in order to transform the knowledge generated into real competitive advantages (UHRY; BULGACOV, 2003, p. 17).

Therefore, it can be understood that to promote a generation of knowledge considered effective in an organization, it is not enough just to manage documents efficiently, but to implement processes and a favorable environment that allow this practice.

Gonzalez & Martins (2011) state that: “the involvement of employees generates a really effective contribution, from the moment that they do not act mechanically, but that they understand why the participation of people is important in the growth of the organization”. According to the same authors, organizations must be able to develop the technical and human capabilities of their employees, and for this, the creation and maintenance of an environment that favors learning are fundamental.

As an example, the authors cite the formation of work groups that help to promote a common language among those involved, enhancing the potential for developing improvements and assimilating knowledge.

Teare & Monk (2002) and Gonzalez & Martins (2011) also defend the creation of a culture that values learning, stating that: “this is a necessary factor to make the improvement process a routine and that this continuous learning process must encourage the development of skills by individuals, always caring about disseminating information”.

According to Beckett et al. (2000) organizations that are ineffective in promoting organizational learning and managing their knowledge become more vulnerable in the current competitive market. Thus, knowledge is considered a decisive factor for maintaining a company in the market. Faced with such

statements, one can understand knowledge management as a complex process, difficult to manage and implement and that must be supported by other processes.

Still according to Ferreira, Alvarenga Neto & Carvalho (2012) the relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management can be understood as a “two-way street” so that knowledge management favors the dissemination of information in the organizational environment in an effective way. Meanwhile, organizational learning contributes to the creation of new knowledge, generating innovations for the company and creating a competitive advantage.

Given the justifications presented, Figure 2 presents the model proposed in the article, which addresses the convergence between knowledge management and organizational learning.

The proposed model presents, mainly, the relationship between the constructs “Organizational Learning” and “Knowledge Management”. The construct “Organizational Culture” is considered in the model as a determining factor over the other processes presented, since a favorable organizational culture is a critical factor for the implementation of knowledge management and organizational learning processes which, in turn, are the study focus. Because, an organizational culture rooted in the company means that employees, especially the oldest ones, do not aim for radical changes in the work process within an organization because they do the work in an almost mechanical way, without worrying about the transfer of knowledge, which is done through the sharing of information, between the departments in a company.

The relationship between organizational learning and knowledge management can be understood as a relationship of exchange and mutual benefit, through the sharing of information, while knowledge management

allows the maintenance and dissemination of information effectively in the organizational environment, organizational learning contributes to the creation of new knowledge. This new knowledge is responsible for generating innovations for the company, which in turn guarantee the competitive advantage in the market.

CONCLUSION

From the research it is evident that it is in the knowledge contained in the employees of an organization that the chances and opportunities of the companies to survive in the competitive market consist. The implementation of knowledge management is what increasingly differentiates the competitiveness between companies.

The competitive advantage depends on the knowledge that these companies create and mobilize in the organizational environment. With the use of appropriate tools and methods, it is possible to manage the flow of knowledge within the organization and direct it, providing a favorable environment for its creation, sharing and dissemination, making management and decision-making processes effective.

Finally, it became evident that competitiveness is the ability of companies to formulate strategic actions that allow a sustainable situation in the market. However, it is in the knowledge contained in the people who work in the organization, which will be the main focus of these actions, creating the strategic differential in the conquest and maintenance of market share.

Therefore, knowledge management is a process of creating innovative knowledge and an essential and differentiated resource to leverage competitive advantage. Knowledge must be created based on people’s experiences, valuing intellectual capital, which is the main way of measuring the added value to the organization.

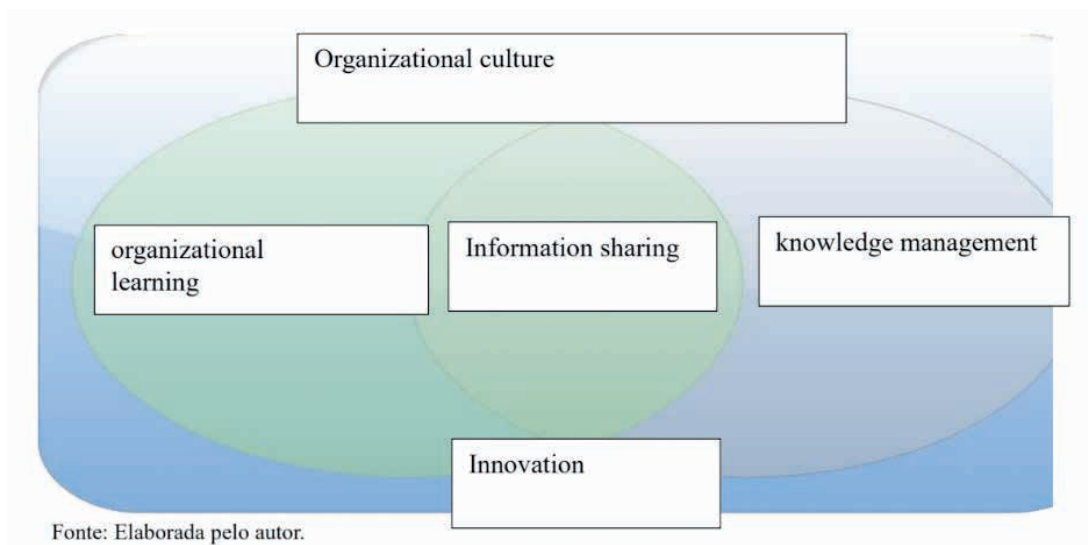


Figure 2 – Convergence between organizational learning and knowledge management

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