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Spirituality and Knowledge Dynamics



New Perspectives for Knowledge Management
and Knowledge Strategies

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Chapter 9

Knowledge Management and Spirituality in Higher Education Institutions: A New Challenge

Abstract: Based on the existing definitions in the literature on knowledge management and spirituality for other organizations, this study aims to reflect on how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) face issues related to knowledge management and spirituality in the workplace. A qualitative methodology was used to achieve the goal with data collected from interviews with higher education teachers. The conclusion shows that, although most interviewees perceive the HEIs' mission, vision and values, these were not explicitly disseminated. In terms of knowledge management, the organizational culture of HEIs should promote the appreciation and recognition of tacit knowledge about corporate spirituality; there is a long way to go in HEIs as a whole. This work aims to present a transparent interconnection between knowledge management and spirituality in the workplace and, through the integration of research carried out by other authors on this matter, offer a sustained analysis of the data. Also, this study implies implications at a strategic management level of HEIs since management should promote more practical knowledge management and develop practices that contribute to a workplace guided by spiritual values, always considering gains in productivity and competitiveness.

Keywords: Knowledge Management, Spirituality, Higher Education Institutions

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Knowledge Management and Spirituality in Higher Education Institutions: A New Challenge

In a rapidly changing, competitive world and in an economy where the only certainty seems to be uncertainty, it is increasingly complex to manage organizations, assuming knowledge as a source that ensures competitive advantage (Biswakarma, 2018; Nonaka, 1991).

When markets change constantly, technologies proliferate, competitors multiply themselves, and products become obsolete overnight, successful organizations stand out as those that create knowledge, disseminate it throughout the organization and incorporate it into new technologies and products (Nonaka, 1991; Lee, 2016). In this context, mainly due to the specificity of their activity, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are environments of knowledge creation and sharing. They are the intellectual center of knowledge production and research and are responsible for education, research and knowledge transfer to society, thus contributing to national development (I Ojo, 2016). Thus, according to this author, it is expected that such development will depend on the ability of these universities to produce new knowledge, new technologies and quality graduates.

The interest in researching Knowledge Management at the level of HEIs is relatively recent, even though knowledge creation and dissemination have been the main activities of these organizations since their foundations (Quarchioni et al., 2020). Dhamdhare & Ganeshkhind (2016) called them “Knowledge Houses”, where knowledge flows from Professors to Students and new knowledge is created. Therefore, as Rowley (1995) states, one of the main activities of HEIs is knowledge creation and dissemination.

Hence, and as it happens in other organizations, HEIs are increasingly required to have employees with differentiating and unique skills since they are the ones that positively contribute to organizations to maintain competitiveness and distinguish themselves from others. In this context of seeking new skills, spirituality is found. Lakshmi and Das (2021) refer to the present pandemic context, showing that knowledge, ability and attitude are insufficient at individual and institutional levels. Therefore, there is a need to look to the employee as an asset that can contribute to increasing competitiveness and not as a static productive factor. The employee is a human being, and as such, he/she is a rational, emotional and spiritual being, so when he /she performs a job, this must provide some meaning to his life (Rego et al., 2007). According to the authors, if such does not happen, there is an affective and emotional dissociation from the organization, revealing a lower level of effort and commitment.

In this logic, discussing knowledge management and spirituality in organizations is essential. Spirituality can be the employee’s primary motivator, leading him to act on his capacity to increase organizational effectiveness and strengthen knowledge management tools and techniques (Lakshmi & Das, 2021). Thus, according to Rocha and Pinheiro (2021), increasing organizational spirituality can be a way to realize a more

humanized strategy, making knowledge management an efficient method to spread high-level values to the organization.

Lakshmi Das (2021) highlights that spirituality and its impact on management are still at a research stage, so there is no doubt that contemporary organizations, in general, urgently need employees who are physically and emotionally stable and who can effectively deal with their moods and emotions.

The theoretical contribution of this study, from the existing literature, is to provide insight into how knowledge management and spirituality are crucial for generating and sharing knowledge. Regarding practical implications, this study has strategic management of HEIs to leverage knowledge management and spirituality as implications.

This paper has the following structure: literature review, description of methodology, presentation and analysis of results, conclusions, limitations and future lines of research.

Literature Review

Knowledge Management in Higher Education Institutions

The 21st century is characterized by the growth in the importance of knowledge in organizations and its impact on an organization (Bose, 2004). Thus, organizations must be able to implement a solid knowledge management strategy effectively (Ipe, 2003; Bose, 2004; Halawi et al., 2005; Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018; Kavalić et al., 2021) as well as become knowledge-based organizations, since this is a mandatory condition for their success (Bose, 2004; Lee, 2016; Zheng, 2017; Nasab et al., 2017). Bolisani & Bratianu (2018) point out that it is possible to identify the following knowledge processes in an organization: “knowledge creation, knowledge acquisition, knowledge sharing and distribution, knowledge transformation, knowledge storing and retrieving, knowledge losing, and knowledge using” (p. 37). Organizations successfully prepare themselves through effective knowledge management to face demanding and chaotic circumstances (Kavalić et al., 2021).

Linblon Tikkanen (2010) refers to knowledge management as a conscious strategy of getting the proper knowledge to the right people at the right time and helping them share and put the information into action to improve organizational competitiveness. Therefore, knowledge management is an exciting topic for organizations and all institutions offering education and training. Consequently, HEIs are generally challenged to keep up with the changes in this global business environment (Brewer & Brewer, 2010).

The goals of HEIs are diffuse due to their complex and sophisticated nature (Rodrigues et al., 2004). According to these authors, the value society attributes to these institutions depends on the scientific impact of knowledge it generates (research), knowledge transfer skills (teaching and learning) and the utility of the technology it develops. The nature of HEIs’ challenges in structuring their internal value chain and marketing

their products and services differs from other organizations. They are higher learning centers, so they must create an environment where all their stakeholders can participate in knowledge management activities (Hoq & Akter, 2012).

Although knowledge management is not recent in HEIs, it is still fragmented and unfocused since Knowledge Management overlaps with other disciplines (Quarchioni et al., 2020). Besides, HEIs cannot be perceived as places where knowledge is merely created and transferred; they must be seen as institutions highly dependent on knowledge resources but simultaneously extremely exposed to its dissipation. They represent a community of students and people where students are intellectually developed in various fields and where high-level research is promoted (Kassaye, 2018). Hence, knowledge management is fundamental in these institutions (Omerzel et al., 2011; Nawaz et al., 2020).

Quarchioni et al. (2020) state that knowledge management for HEIs must take into account their unique forms of accountability and their multi-layered impact on society (e.g., in terms of dissemination of education, industrial innovation, scientific production, etc.), which makes them different from any other organization, both in the private and public sectors. Given that their outputs are precisely knowledge, one might assume that this has always been managed in HEIs (Ratcliffe-Martin et al., 2000). However, studies have shown that knowledge is not easily shared within HEIs and may not stand as learning organizations in the traditional sense of the term.

A fundamental aspect of improving knowledge management in HEIs is involving all employees in knowledge management practices to strengthen university effectiveness and quality (Dei & van der Walt, 2020). Therefore, Baptista Nunes et al. (2017) point out that human resource management practices, fostering employees' trust and promoting collaborative practices positively impact knowledge sharing.

Quarchioni et al. (2020) also refer to intangible factors such as social relationships, shared understanding, and cultural influences to enhance knowledge sharing. Knowledge transfer can be influenced by organizational policies and technological tools that facilitate one's access to knowledge. How knowledge management manifests derives from its integration with organizational systems and the values it is built on. Knowledge management is achieved through creating, sharing, and applying knowledge, but it needs to feed into organizational best practices and the lessons learned in corporate memory (I Ojo, 2016).

It is undeniable that HEIs create knowledge throughout their academic and administrative processes. However, using tacit and explicit knowledge as an integrated central source is still challenging to improve knowledge sharing and decision-making (Baptista Nunes et al., 2017). When sharing knowledge resulting from scientific production, it is "confined" to exchanges within the laboratories or among faculty members (Quarchioni et al., 2020). These authors say academics follow different behaviors and practices in producing scientific knowledge. It is essential to create policies and strategies that ease and improve the use of tacit and explicit knowledge and the sharing of scientific production.

Khari & Sinha (2018) argue that employees who perceive that their organization focuses on their well-being and the well-being of others tend to have a positive attitude concerning knowledge sharing, influencing psychological flourishing and organizational trust. Van den Hooff Huysman (2009) considers that the organizational culture developed by HEIs is crucial to establishing and creating a knowledge-friendly culture that sets a clear knowledge-related vision and goals. This aspect provides beneficial social dynamics for knowledge sharing.

Spirituality in Higher Education Institutions

The concept of spirituality in the workplace has increasingly gained interest in organizational research, which is indicative of its growing importance in organizational terms (McKee et al., 2008; Saks, 2011; Khari & Sinha, 2018; Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004; Gupta et al., 2014; Vasconcelos, 2018; Lakshmi & Das, 2021), leading to the emergence of a new paradigm in organizational sciences (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). People spend more and more time at work, so if they want to live well they have to find a way to connect what they do to a broader meaning (Wicks, 2014). In this sense, Karakas (2010) points out that 21st-century organizations must incorporate humanistic and spiritual values in their workplaces.

As in any other organization, employees and managers at HEIs need to think more and more about how to incorporate spirituality, wisdom, reflection, inspiration, creativity and compassion into their work, that is, how to carry out an organizational culture geared to the new values.

Spirituality in the workplace has the same positive impact on HEIs as in other organizations (Mat et al., 2012). In this sense, and particularly in a teaching context, Palmer (2003) states that spirituality “is the eternal human longing to be connected to something greater than our ego” (p. 377). According to Dandona (2013), spirituality is passion, putting our heart, soul and spirit into what we do, so work, in addition to having a deeper meaning, also serves a higher purpose.

Belwalkar et al. (2018) state that it is possible to speak of spirituality at work when the work environment promotes an atmosphere that enables the relationship between mind and soul. This happens when the individual seeks to find meaning for their work and perceives a desire to connect with others. These are factors that produce beneficial consequences for the individual, the organizations, and society as a whole.

While studying workplace spirituality and organizational commitment among HEI faculty members, Thakur et al. (2017) report that, overall, organizations are not only concerned with the skills and qualifications of their staff. They seek employees who feel fully integrated into their workplaces and maintain cordial working relationships. In this sense, education is a sector that can provide the best human capital to organizations (Bell-Ellis et al., 2015). HEIs are essential to provide organizations with appropriately qualified knowledge employees (Kokt & Palmer, 2019). HEIs must be gen-

uinely committed employees, which is accepted by academics and other professionals (Bell-Ellis et al., 2015).

According to Soliman et al. (2021), professors are fundamental key workers in HEIs since they are the ones who represent their institutions and determine the quality of the teaching and learning process. Mat et al. (2012) refer to a growing encouragement for the importance of spirituality at the HEI level. For these authors, there are also emerging conceptual and research bases for assuming that the professor can significantly transmit these spiritual values through student-centered attitudes and teaching methods.

From the perspective of the sustainability of HEIs, Alomar et al. (2022) point out that there are benefits to applying spirituality in the workplace since it inspires more significant innovation, reduces absenteeism and attrition, strengthens relationships, enhances productive work and emotional intelligence, employee engagement and loyalty.

Spirituality in the workplace brings positive results to employees on an individual level (happiness, peace of mind, job satisfaction and motivation). In the workplace, it acts as a need for self-improvement. Therefore, organizations that provide their employees with opportunities for spiritual development have better performances (Konz & Ryan, 1999).

Environments marked by spirituality, such as HEIs, are prone to creating knowledge since, on the one hand, they promote efficient knowledge management, and, on the other hand, spirituality enhances trust and promotes sharing. Knowledge sharing can be enhanced if team members establish and promote trust (Shahzadi, 2017).

In this sense, according to Rocha and Pinheiro (2020), knowledge management facilitates a positive relationship between organizational culture and spirituality in the workplace. If knowledge management is an efficient method to spread high-level values, spirituality plays a vital role in organizational theory and practice (Rocha & Pinheiro, 2021).

Spirituality is an organizational identity resulting from its values, practices and speech, composed of work and individual spirituality, including the spirituality of the leader and employees. The environment influences organizational spirituality, culture and knowledge management and generates value and social well-being visible in the organizational image, mission, vision and values.

Research Methodology

Study Type and Case Selection

To meet the goal set out in this study, a qualitative methodology was used to understand the subject under study better. This provides a deep understanding of people's experiences, perspectives and stories in their context (Spencer et al., 2003). In other words,

this methodology allows for exploring human experiences in personal and social contexts and obtaining a greater understanding of the factors that influence these experiences (Gelling, 2015), capturing what is subjective in social phenomena (Silva, 2013). As Lameiras (2016) states:

Among many distinct characteristics, qualitative evaluation is characterized by a concern with exploring phenomena from the perspective of those being studied; the use of unstructured methods sensitive to the social context of the study; the collection of detailed, rich and complex data; a process that is inductive rather than deductive; and answering questions like ‘what is it?’, ‘how?’ and ‘why?’. It employs various methods, including exploratory interviews, Focus groups, observation, conversation, discourse and narrative analysis, video and document analysis (p. 3).

Since interviews are essential in case studies, especially in social research (Yin, 1994), this technique was used to extract rich and nuanced information and elements from the interviewee (Quivy & Campenhout, 1995). According to Kvale (1996), the interview is a deliberate and informed conversation from which the researcher seeks to understand the context of the interviewees, taking into account their experiences. This is crucial to some types of qualitative research, particularly case study research, where the aim is to study people’s understanding of the meanings of their experienced world, describing their experiences and self-understanding.

Analysis Context

The data collection process involved applying interviews with HEI professors in Chile and Portugal (see Table 9.1). The interviews consisted of nine questions (see Appendix A). The interviewees were contacted by telephone to set the day and time of the interview, and if it was not possible to do so in person, to request that it be done by videoconference. These were recorded after the interviewees’ consent and later transcribed. The interviews took place in March 2022, each lasting approximately 35 minutes.

Table 9.1: Interviewees characterization.

Code	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Work	Time Working in the Job	Subject Area in Which Works
A1-CL	48	Female	Master Degree	Professor Management Network Coordinator	Ten years	Management
A2-CL	43	Female	Bachelor Degree	Professor Health and physical activity Network Coordinator	Eight years	Physical Exercise and Health Sciences

Table 9.1 (continued)

Code	Age	Gender	Qualifications	Work	Time Working in the Job	Subject Area in Which Works
A3-CL	55	Male	Doctoral Degree	Titular University Professor Cathedra Coordinator Ethics Committee Member	19 years	Health Sciences
B1-PT	45	Male	Doctoral Degree	Professor Civil Construction and Planning Department Coordinator Director of the CTESP of Civil Construction	22 years	Civil Engineering and OHS
B2-PT	66	Male	Doctoral Degree	Professor	36 years	Economy and Management
B3-PT	61	Female	Doctoral Degree	Professor	22 years	Behavioral and Human Resources Management

Results Analysis and Discussion

In order to better analyze the questions asked during the interviews, it was chosen to group them around two main points, as shown in Table 9.2.

Table 9.2: Grouping of the interview questions.

Thematic group	Questions
Knowledge Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Is your organization concerned about making the best use of tacit* knowledge within it? How do you explain it? 4. What are the internal procedures for the organization to disseminate scientific knowledge? 5. Do you consider the research publication and the attendance of seminars and conferences as scientific production? Why or why not?
Spirituality in work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As an employee, are you aware of the mission, values and vision of the institution where you work? Do you share and identify yourself with the mission, values and vision of your institutions? To what extent? 3. Do you think the institution is using your skills to contribute to social improvement? How do you feel about it?

Table 9.2 (continued)

Thematic group	Questions
	<p>6. Looking at your organization, do you feel an organizational culture of respect, accountability, cooperation, tolerance, welcoming, and mutual help exists? Moreover, is there solidarity among colleagues? Can you give examples?</p> <p>7. Do you feel your organization is sensitive to employees' problems? Can you give examples?</p> <p>8. Does the institution promote an environment of collaboration and team spirit? Can you give examples?</p> <p>9. Do you feel happy with your work? And with your organization?</p>

Knowledge Management

Knowledge management by organizing, documenting, sharing and storing knowledge helps organizations with a higher level of organizational complexity to decide better, in a lighter way, to provide further effectiveness in solving problems (Hoq & Akter, 2012). In this sense, these authors mention that HEIS needs to build information infrastructures as higher learning centers and create a favorable atmosphere where working staff, teaching and non-teaching staff, students, researchers, patrons and other stakeholders can participate in various knowledge management activities.

According to Rowley (2000), HEIs already have knowledge management activities. They need to consciously and explicitly manage the processes associated with knowledge creation and recognize the value of their intellectual capital to maintain their role in society. They are seen as 'knowledge centers' and 'knowledge houses', where there are carried out different activities that generate, preserve, disseminate and apply knowledge. In this way, professors, students and researchers are crucial and are all engaged in various activities (Hoq & Akter, 2012; Dhamdhare & Ganeshkhind, 2016).

When questioned about the use of tacit knowledge by the different HEIs, responses showed significant differences. Some interviewees point out that the HEIs where they work for and make use of this knowledge, though in an unconscious manner. In this regard, interviewee A2-CL mentions that when she was recruited, the HEI not only considered whether she had a master's or doctoral degree but also analyzed her experience. Hence, she states that she was recruited "because I had the profile they were looking for because I like sports, physical activity, healthy living habits, and these are the aspects, the knowledge, the experience that they want me to pass on to the students". Another interviewee considers that his HEI has not always valued the experience and knowledge acquired by professors. However, this situation has changed over time.

Two interviewees consider that there is still no concern from their HEIs in using their employees' tacit knowledge. Interviewee B3-PT even mentions that "there is still

no awareness of the importance of this type of knowledge”. Interviewee B2-PT states that his HEI ignores this type of knowledge, pointing out that certain groups have been created, which “leads to neglecting tacit knowledge and thus underutilizing the available knowledge”.

Hoq & Akter (2012) point out that HEIs should inspire students, professors and employees to share explicit and tacit knowledge. This can be achieved through regular sessions to solve problems, share ideas, and encourage the exchange of knowledge, information and inspiration. Knowledge sharing is only achieved if institutions have human resources management practices that foster employee trust and promote collaborative practices (Baptista Nunes et al., 2017). According to Ratcliffe-Martin et al. (2000), studies have shown that knowledge is not easily shared, and HEIs may not be *learning houses* in the traditional sense.

When asked about scientific knowledge dissemination in general, all interviewees agree that the HEIs where they work have procedures for disseminating this knowledge, such as official web pages, repositories, conferences, lectures, and platforms for inserting scientific articles. Similarly, they also indicate that their teaching activity is related to knowledge dissemination, and some professors dedicate more hours of their work to research than to the teaching component.

However, interviewee B2-PT states that these procedures are scarce in the HEI, where he lectures. Some scientific knowledge is disseminated in bulletin boards, intranet, and institutional disclosure. But only partially. Not all scientific research is disseminated because not all research is appreciated, welcomed and encouraged. All comes down to guidelines and specific goals of internal groups with negotiating power to impose procedures, rules and norms, depending on the pre-established personal goals.

Most interviewees concur that publishing research articles and attending seminars and conferences come across as scientific production, with the most important aspect being that it is possible to disseminate discussion, generate new knowledge, and improve their lectures. Interviewee A1-CL states, “Everything that can be done in a publication, a conference, a talk, will be a seed to generate new research, new knowledge and, therefore, grow”. Interviewee A3-CL indicates that “all that constitutes an activity that generates knowledge, whether quantitatively or qualitatively, is a scientific production, with a methodological design that supports it, a data analysis. . .”.

Interviewee B2-PT points out that, at first, the outcome may seem very small. However, there is a solid basis for knowledge production and dissemination from that point forward. Conferences and seminars address topics with incremental innovation. This increases curiosity, interaction and sharing among colleagues, which becomes a gateway for access and dissemination of tacit knowledge. It also disseminates knowledge in progress that could give rise to new or improved knowledge.

Interviewee B1-PT mentions that these are the elements that the institution considers crucial as a publication. However, from a personal perspective, I consider that there are others. For example, what is the point of a professor being perfect scientifically if he/she is not the best when teaching lectures? (. . .) The school wants lectures

to be taught, period. Moreover, it does not matter if they are good or bad. With today's demands, there is no time to improve the pedagogical part.

As Omerzel et al. (2011) and Nawaz et al. (2020) point out, knowledge management processes in HEIs are as vital as in any other organization. Doing this effectively can enhance decision-making skills, reduce “product” development cycle time (for example, curriculum development and research outputs), improve academic and administrative services and reduce costs.

Spirituality in the Workplace

In the organizational context, which HEIs are part of, one cannot reflect on knowledge management without considering its relationship with organizational culture (Omerzel et al., 2011). The same is true when referring to the issue of spirituality, and this concept has led to a new paradigm in organizational sciences (Jurkiewicz & Giacalone, 2004). Karakas (2010) states that 21st-century organizations must incorporate humanistic and spiritual values in their workplaces. All employees and all managers need to think more about how to incorporate spirituality, wisdom, reflection, inspiration, creativity and compassion at work, that is, how to carry out an organizational culture oriented to the new values.

In this sense, all employees must comprehend, internalize and identify with the organizational culture of their organization. Regarding the organizational culture in HEIs, in general, and despite not being informed, most interviewees are familiar with their institution's mission, vision and values. However, one of the interviewees (B1-PT) stated that he does not know them and has only an idea of his institution's mission, vision and values. He points out that he has worked in the institution for 22 years and that no one ever told him about them, not even when he was recruited. As he states, the perception he built about these was “based on the demands, where there is something behind, not knowing where you want to go”. Corroborating this opinion, another interviewee (B2-PT) said he knows his institution's values, mission and vision because he held a management position. He stated, “I think most of my colleagues do not know that reality”. At the heart of this situation is “the institution's poor communication, as well as a very traditional organizational culture”.

For such facts, HEIs should communicate their mission, vision and values so that all employees are in tune with the institution. Organizations will only have genuinely engaged employees (Omerzel et al., 2011).

Concerning the identification with HEI values, mission and vision, all interviewees claim to identify with what they know or perceive these to be. They consider them to align with their motivation for teaching and what they can convey to their students. However, interviewee B2-PT mentions that, despite personally identifying with them, sometimes “what is ‘thought’ and ‘written’ often diverges from the behavior of agents, which represents a violation of the principles of its mission and goals”.

It should also be noted that interviewee B3-PT stressed the students' hard and soft skills regarding the values, vision and mission. The goal of his institution is to teach, inspire and empower its students to add value to society and the organizations where they work. It is also concerned with providing its students with technical skills (hard skills) and the soft skills that the labor market values, such as the ability to lead, undertake, take risks, work in a team, etc.

Rowley (2000) states that norms, values and practices associated with creating, sharing and disseminating knowledge in HEIs are complex. However, several factors may already be challenging traditional values. Along with the importance of knowledge management for organizations, one should also consider the strategic importance of managing organizational spirituality. According to Konz & Ryan (1999), this can be explained as a dynamic process through which individuals express personal values within the organizational context, thus seeking greater meaning and purpose for their lives through connection with others and the community.

When asked whether HEIs are using their competencies to contribute to society's improvement, all interviewees indicated that, in some way, they contribute to this improvement, mainly through the contents and values they transmit to students and which they subsequently apply in a professional context. Interviewee A1-CL mentioned that, although she could not say yes categorically, she believed students leave very well prepared, that they are good professionals and that this is corroborated by society. Interviewee B3-PT mentions that there is a vital concern about training students with a wide range of skills that can impact the development of society. Also, there is an increasing concern of the faculty to train students based on values of intellectual freedom, critical spirit, professional and social ethics, social responsibility, the pursuit of excellence, respect for difference and appreciation of merit.

Interviewee B2-PT stresses that, although there is a powerful concern in contribution to society, "there is a concern to commodify knowledge/help/contribution instead of providing help for the society to build itself up and grow. Therefore, sustainability is precarious".

Professors generally feel good when they see HEIs use their competencies to contribute to society, even if this situation overlaps with their duties. There is no financial reward/compensation for it. Some interviewees, particularly those who lecture at HEIs in Chile, call attention to this matter since it is evident that HEIs' concern is closely linked to what happens in the society/community where they are located.

Spirituality must be integrated into organizational culture and reflected in daily organizational practices to be effective. This is only possible if management and the board of directors adopt it as a part of their vision (Dandona, 2013). Hence, according to this author, the organization must have a favorable organizational culture to effectively implement spirituality in the workplace. This can increase employee morale, commitment and productivity, reduce stress and burnout at work (Karakas, 2010; Dandona, 2013), enhance creativity, and contribute to personal fulfillment and commitment, ultimately increasing organizational performance (Krishnakumar & Neck, 2002). Jurkie-

wicz and Giacalone (2004), when addressing spirituality, refer to some values, such as adaptability, commitment, motivation, trust, responsibility, respect, justice, receptivity, integrity, mutuality, benevolence, humanism and generativity. These are the values that have a positive impact on the employee's and organizations' performances. Organizations can exhibit these values through their work processes, policies and practices that constitute their culture.

Reflecting on some values of organizational spirituality present in the organizational culture, all interviewees unanimously consider that there is an organizational culture of respect in their HEIs. Most interviewees feel that solidarity and cooperation occur more within than between groups. One of the interviewees mentions that the lack of cooperation is felt because there is a shortage of time, verified when people meet and ask for help, so it is an aspect to be improved. It is also found that, although collaborative work does not always happen, there is always a desire and an intention to do so.

In this context, it is mandatory that this HEI somehow reflects on some aspects of its organizational culture so that, precisely as far as the collaborative process is concerned, it does not remain just an intention.

Interviewee B1-PT also mentions that these aspects are absent, especially when there is competition to improve their careers. In these cases, people try to "go" over each other and feel that anything is possible. It pains me to say this, but people seem to stop being people and live obsessed with a particular position.

This is the environment where Khari & Sinha (2018) refer that employees who perceive that their organizations focus on their well-being and the well-being of others promote psychological flourishing and organizational trust. When asked whether their HEI is sensitive to employees' problems, the interviewees perceive that this sensitivity exists within their groups, that is, more at the level of people in a team or department and not so much at the organizational level in general. For example, interviewee B2-PT states that current department managers brought new feelings, and there is a tendency to improve the levels of collaboration, respect, and tolerance, among others, towards employees' problems. However, such situations are not yet global, and some try to override the feelings of others, nullifying them, for example, certain attitudes of influential groups, which end up conditioning others.

Although the different feelings of the interviewees converge, there are some differences. An interviewee states that the HEI where he teaches has very close management. According to Konz & Ryan (1999), this perspective puts managers and organizations in a difficult position. A manager is trained in four functions: planning, organizing, leadership and control. They are selected, promoted and rewarded according to their ability to perform these four functions, according to the needs of their organizations. Hence, to this author, to be a spiritual guide and to have this proximity with their employees is a responsibility for which managers are unprepared.

At the same time, when asked whether their institution promotes an environment of collaboration and team spirit, not all interviewees consider that this situation occurs. Some interviewees point out that the institution seeks and has work forms that tend

more toward teamwork, such as social events or a work structure in disciplinary networks. However, this collaboration does not always occur because people do not have the will to do so. Interviewee A2-CL states, “As a professor, I think that at the work level, there is no collaboration or team spirit”. Corroborating this opinion, interviewee B1-PT points out that “as a director of a Higher Professional Technical Programs (HPTP), when I sometimes suggest a group work in certain subjects, I often get an answer like, “But do I have to work with that person? Why? I would rather work alone because I can articulate things my way”.

Interviewee B2-PT states, “Theoretically, there is an effort to declare and emphasize team spirit and group work. However, daily things are different and individual values override group values, negatively affecting the organizational climate and culture”.

Hoq & Akter (2012) state that proper coordination and collaboration among ‘university family’ members are essential for effective knowledge sharing and management. If different members do not spontaneously participate in exchanging information and ideas, many blockages are created, which would frustrate all knowledge management initiatives.

When asked if they were happy with their job and organization, all interviewees said they enjoyed their job, teaching, and student contact.

When facing HEI as an organizations, there are differences between the interviewees. Interviewee B3-PT claims to be happy with the organization, stating, “The perception that I have is that my work is increasingly recognized both by the students and the institutions itself”. From a different perspective, interviewee B2-PT points out that, although he feels good about the HEI, they are not in harmony. He adds, “I have learned to live in isolation to get around the setbacks I encountered at school. However, I must confess that today I am respected by my colleagues, regardless of their political, scientific and pedagogical leanings.” Finally, interviewee B1-PT mentions that “some things could be better. I consider that, in general, the most ‘difficult’ and ‘boring’ work that nobody wants always falls upon the same people. I see people who, despite having the skills, do very little and are not called for anything, and sometimes, when they are called, they do not want it and do not accept it, so they do not have to deal with stress, criticism and the possibility of mistakes and failures.”

Given the responses, and in line with the interviewees, Bell-Ellis et al. (2015) state that there is an individual longing for more spirituality in higher education and that most HEIS do not consider this need.

Conclusion

This study reflected on how HEIs view knowledge management and spirituality issues. There was a resort to teachers’ perceptions and feelings about their workplace. As well as an attempt to identify the values of the organization’s culture based on knowledge

and its sharing and dissemination within the HEIs. A study of this nature has some limitations regarding the subjectivity of the questions and themes and the number and type of employees. However, overall, the work allows for some conclusions to be drawn.

It can be concluded that even though the HEIs' mission, vision and values have not been explicitly disseminated, most interviewees have strongly perceived them. Given this reality, it is understood that HEIs should rethink their organizational strategy so that their employees feel genuinely committed and, in parallel, they have knowledge management processes, as argued by Omerzel et al. (2011). As the interviewees revealed, if organizational culture were disseminated more effectively, it would foster all the fundamental organizational values, such as responsibility, cooperation, tolerance, solidarity, and team spirit.

On the topic of knowledge management, specifically in the tacit domain, only two of the six interviewees (A1-CL and A2-CL) mentioned that HEIs take advantage of and value this knowledge. It seems that, once again, the institution's organizational culture at the level of knowledge management is present since it should value and recognize the pre-existing individual knowledge as an asset for the organization. The culture that best suits the knowledge management practices of an organization is where employees do not feel inhibited about sharing knowledge (Hoq & Akter, 2012; Devi Ramachandran et al., 2013).

Although organizational spirituality is fundamental for organizational success, there is still a long way to go for all HEIs. Just as life has no meaning without work, work without spirit also has little meaning, which is why employees who maintain the bonds of spirituality at work exhibit interesting positive values, such as responsibility, justice and reciprocity, as it is argued by Jurkiewicz and Giacalone (2004) and Thakur et al. (2017).

From the answers obtained, one feels that there is, on behalf of those responsible for the respective services, the will to implement improvements at the level of collaborative spirit, mutual help, tolerance and team spirit.

However, it was clear that this is not yet the case globally. The interconnectedness and interdependence of employees experienced through feelings of community and meaningful work lead to more outstanding organizational commitment, job satisfaction, and self-esteem (Milliman et al., 2003). According to Karakas (2010) and Thakur et al. (2017), incorporating spirituality at work provides organizational members with a sense of community and connection, thus increasing their attachment, loyalty, and sense of belonging to the organization.

In general, it is clear that, although professors have different ages, different years of service, and belong to countries with very own particularities, the results converge in terms of answers.

Regarding theoretical implications, this study, at the literature review level, presents a transparent interconnection between knowledge management and spirituality in the workplace. This allows us to sustain concepts and definitions and integrate studies developed by other authors concerning the research goals to develop a more sustained analysis.

Regarding practical implications, this study has some implications at the strategic management level of HEIs since managers should promote effective knowledge management and develop practices that promote a workplace guided by the values of spirituality and always thinking about productivity gains and competitiveness.

This article is not free from limitations. Despite having a small number of interviews and having heterogeneity in the areas of the professors interviewed, we have reached inductive thematic saturation (Saunders et al., 2018). Thus, some issues that could be studied are identified:

- To what extent are the organizational cultures of the HEIs worked on to be endowed with an intensive spirit and oriented spiritually?
- How does the organizational culture help the organization to unify around common goals?
- How does incorporating values of spirituality help HEIs become more competitive and ethical?
- Which values of spirituality should HEIs value most?

Due to its importance for developing HEIs and society overall, this work must be continued.

Appendix A

Interview script

1. As an employee, are you aware of the mission, values and vision of the institution where you work? Do you share and/or identify yourself with your institution's mission, values and vision? To what extent?
2. Is your organization worried about making the best use of the tacit knowledge within it? How do you explain it?
3. Do you think the institution is using your skills to contribute to social improvement? How do you feel about that?
4. What are the internal procedures for the organization to disseminate scientific knowledge?
5. Do you consider the publication of research and the attendance of seminars and conferences as scientific production? Why or why not?
6. Looking at your organization, do you feel there is an organizational culture of respect, accountability, cooperation, tolerance, welcoming, and mutual help? And is there solidarity among colleagues? Can you give examples?
7. Do you feel your organization is sensitive to employee problems? Can you give an example?

8. Does the institution promote an environment of collaboration and team spirit? Can you give examples?
9. Do you feel happy with your function? And with your organization?

Appendix B

Excerpts of interviews concerning knowledge management and spirituality in Higher Education Institutions

Thematic Codes		Excerpts
Knowledge Management	Tacit Knowledge	<p>The institution respects each professor's tacit knowledge or 'cultural baggage'. (A1-CL)</p> <p>This is not always the case. Sometimes, the people selected to perform some tasks are not the ones with the required knowledge nor the ones with the most experience (B1-PT)</p> <p>I do not think so. I am convinced that my organization ignores that! My institution still operates by groups, what we call "chapels". This leads to neglecting tacit knowledge and underutilizing the available knowledge. In terms of technical and administrative staff, the situation is much worse. Even communication and feedback with some of the sectors is non-existent (B2-PT)</p> <p>I do not think there is an awareness of the importance of this kind of knowledge (B3-PT)</p>
	Scientific Knowledge and Knowledge Transference	<p>Everything that can be done in a publication, a conference, or a talk will be a seed to generate new research and new knowledge and, therefore, grow (A1-CL)</p> <p>When we talk about scientific knowledge, there is a formality within teacher training, in training, in what is the progress of the curriculum. Due to the formality of being a scientist, one goes from the state of being an assistant lecturer, then a lecturer and then a professor... which is not only concerned with transmitting knowledge to climb the hierarchy but to generate the respective cases of transmitting scientific knowledge (A3-CL)</p> <p>All that constitutes an activity that generates knowledge, whether quantitatively or qualitatively, is a scientific production with a methodological design that supports it, a data analysis or a proposal that endorses it as quantitative or qualitative. Therefore, it is knowledge. (A3-CL)</p> <p>These are the elements that the institution considers crucial as a publication. However, from a personal perspective, I consider that there are others. For example, what is the point of a professor being perfect scientifically if he/she is not the best when teaching lectures? (...) The school wants lectures to be taught, period. Moreover, it does not matter if they are good or bad. With today's demands, there is no time to improve the pedagogical part. (B1-PT)</p>

(continued)

Thematic Codes		Excerpts
		<p>These procedures are scarce. Some scientific knowledge is disseminated in bulletin boards, intranet, and institutional disclosure... But only partially. Not all scientific research is disseminated because not all research is appreciated, welcomed and encouraged. All comes down to guidelines and specific goals of internal groups with negotiating power to impose procedures, rules and norms, depending on the pre-established personal goals (B2-PT)</p> <p>I would highlight the organization of conferences and lectures. There is a strong incentive for collaboration and cooperation between teams from different areas of knowledge and research groups, informal talks on various topics, and workshops (B3-PT)</p>
Spirituality in Work	Mission, Values and Vision of the Institution	<p>In the case of the school, yes, I know them and have worked with them. In the case of the university in general, not so much. I do not have deep knowledge, but I know them (A1-CL)</p> <p>I know them because usually when we plan the whole structure in the disciplinary issue of plans and programs, the mission and vision are always embodied... (A2-CL)</p> <p>In practice, I do not know. I perceive the institution's mission, values and vision, but not from written information that goes in that direction. (...) I do my part within what I direct, and here, I can say that I identify myself with the perception that I have of them (B1-PT)</p> <p>I know the mission and values of my institution because I was in a management position. However, I think most of my colleagues do not know that reality. This is due to the institution's poor communication and traditional organizational culture. I identify with the essence of those values. However, what is "thought" and "written" often diverges from the behavior of the agents, which violates the principles of the mission and objectives (B2-PT)</p> <p>So far as the HEI to which I belong seeks excellence in training the individuals who choose the institution to obtain their academic qualifications. In terms of vision, my HEI aims to teach, inspire and empower its students to add value to society and the organizations where they work. It is also concerned with equipping its students not only with the technical skills (hard skills) but also with the soft skills that the labor market values so much, such as the ability to lead, undertake, take risks, and work in teams, etc. (B3-PT)</p>
	Organizational Culture: Respect, Responsibility, Cooperation, Tolerance, Welcoming, Mutual Help and Solidarity	<p>Some of the concepts you point out are present. I think there is a good environment, respect, collaborative work, or if that collaborative work does not always occur, at least there is the desire, the intention (A1-CL)</p> <p>We have a perfect working environment, respect, empathy, and tolerance, but sometimes we lack cooperation. This is because our demand is also very high, and we lack time to cooperate normally. (A2-CL)</p>

(continued)

Thematic Codes	Excerpts
	<p>There is competition, a separation between people, helping each other when necessary and not always. There are individual and group interests. For example, if there are prospects of a contest to increase in rank, you can see people trying to “go” over each other and feel that anything is possible. It pains me to say this, but people seem to stop being people and live obsessed with a specific position component at work (B1-PT)</p> <p>At the University, we still live in “little chapels”. Tolerance, cooperation, welcoming, and mutual help, among many other values, are found within groups and little between groups. For this very reason, I believe that these values are not lived in the organization (B2-PT)</p> <p>More and more, I feel that there is cooperation and mutual help among my department colleagues. Maybe because we are not a very big department and a Department of Organization and Management, this culture of sharing, cooperation, and solidarity is felt in all the elements. There is a strong concern about integrating new colleagues. (B3-PT)</p>
Employees’ Well Being	<p>If we look at Valparaiso University as a whole, with all the schools, it is not sensitive. But if we focus on one school, yes, and this is because we are less, we are more humane, and we know each other (A1-CL)</p> <p>Roughly speaking, I think so. It is stated that it has been changing, offering training alternatives or workshops to help teachers and involving more social issues, contingency issues, inclusivity, the issue of inclusive language and stress management in the classroom, and mindfulness; that is, they have opened up in a certain way to go to not so classical and traditional in the training of professors and students since they can also participate. (A2-CL)</p> <p>In some cases, yes. Especially health problems in which there is somehow a spirit of solidarity and mutual help and support to employees on the part of the institution. However, the concern to organize activities and demands compatible with family activities does not always happen (B1-PT)</p> <p>I have to recognize that current department managers bring new feelings, and there is a tendency to improve the levels of collaboration, respect, and tolerance, among others, toward employees’ problems. But such situations are not yet global, and the feelings of some try to override the feelings of others, nullifying them, for example, certain attitudes of influential groups, which end up conditioning others (B2-PT)</p>

(continued)

Thematic Codes	Excerpts
Collaboration and Team Spirit	<p>The school where I work is networked, which comprises different subjects within the same line of work. However, it also groups other subjects. (A1-CL)</p> <p>We always talk about interdisciplinary issues between all the faculties. The councils are made between all the schools at the board level, and then it goes to the schools themselves, but it does not happen in practice. Finally, as a professor, I think that at the work level, there is no collaboration or team spirit. The work is seen more from the point of view of production and management and not so much from the work environment and human resources. (A2-CL)</p> <p>Jobs, in general, are collective works, and the structure of our school is always teamwork. Teamwork that depends on the shift direction can be organized in networks, committees, delegates, etc., and it is always promoted. (A3-CL)</p> <p>Not always. Sometimes, the institution promotes it, but people are not always willing or ready. The school asks, but sometimes it is not easy. For example, to define and organize an HPTP with specific rules. Each person thinks about their Curricular Unit and forgets about everything else, not being able or not wanting to see the whole. I do my job, and the next person can close the door. In reality, it cannot be like this. Some teachers cannot approach or relate subjects other than their own when sometimes extracting and complementing these ideas would be interesting. As a director of an HPTP, when I sometimes suggest group work in certain subjects, I often get an answer like, "But do I have to work with that person? Why? I would rather work alone because I can articulate things my way". Perhaps in these aspects, the institution could promote an environment of collaboration and team spirit so that each professor would not look only at their content but at their curricular unit (B1-PT)</p> <p>Theoretically, there is an effort to declare and emphasize team spirit and group work. However, daily things are different and individual values override group values, with adverse effects on the organizational climate and its culture (B2-PT)</p> <p>It organizes some social events for the employees to socialize and promotes some concerts for the community (B3-PT)</p>

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