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ARTIGOS

STRATEGIC KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT IN BRAZILIAN ORGANIZATIONS: A CASE OF OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES OR A STRATEGIC SHIFT?

GESTÃO DO CONHECIMENTO ESTRATÉGICO EM ORGANIZAÇÕES BRASILEIRAS: UM CASO DE VINHO VELHO EM GARRAFAS NOVAS OU UMA MUDANÇA ESTRATÉGICA?

Rivadávia Correa Drummond de Alvarenga Neto
Dr. em Ciência da Informação pela UFMG. Professor da Fundaçãp Dom Cabral.
E-mail: riva@alvarenganeto.com.br

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ABSTRACT

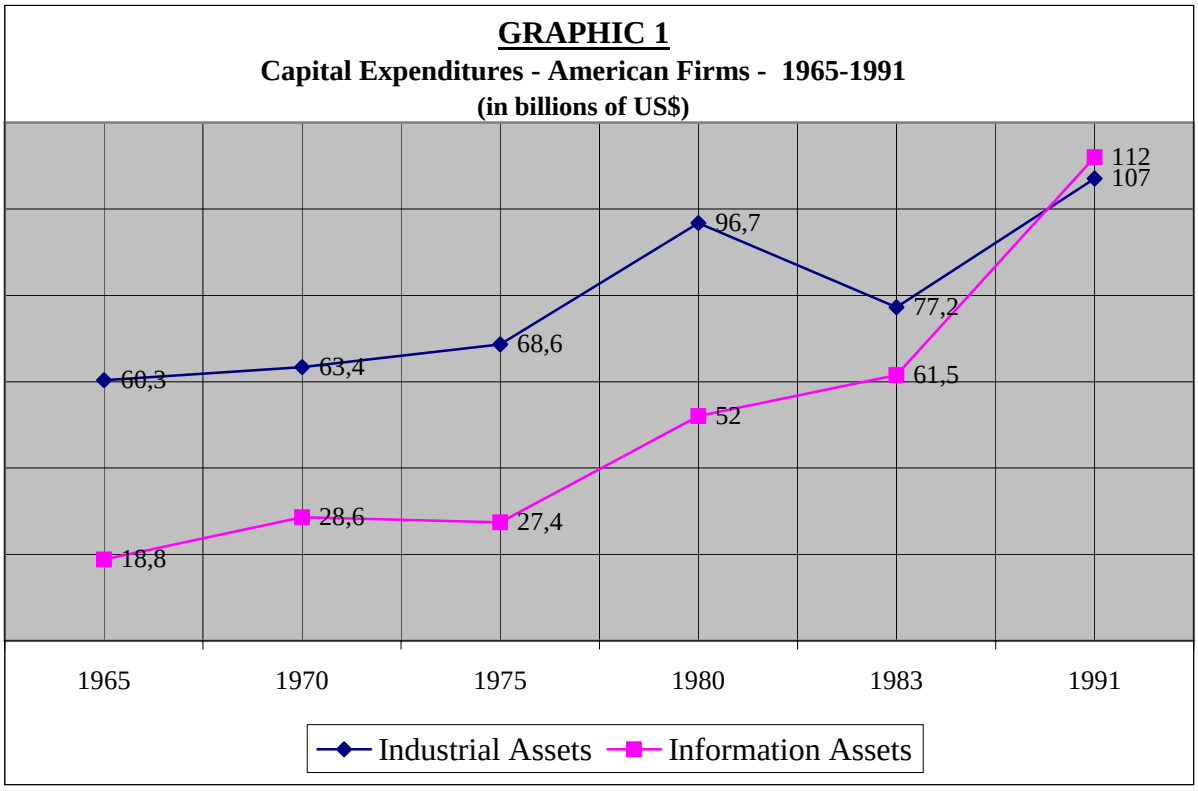
Investigates the theme known as "Knowledge Management" (KM) in three large Brazilian organizations trying to discuss its concepts, constituent elements, managerial approaches and tools, while aiming at leaving behind the purely terminological discussion, which is innocuous and naive. The basic presuppositions were two: (i) most of what it´s referred to or named KM is actually "Information Management" (IM) and IM is just one of the components of KM. KM is more than simply IM due to the fact that it includes and incorporates other concerns, such as the creation, use and sharing of information and knowledge in the organizational context; (ii) a conceptual model or map can be formulated based on three basic conceptions: (a) a strategic conception of information and knowledge, (b) the introduction of such strategy in the tactical and operational levels through the several managerial approaches and information technology tools and (c) the creation of an organizational space for knowledge. The main objective is to investigate and analyze the conceptions, motivations, practices and results of KM effectively implemented in three large Brazilian organizations. The qualitative research strategy used was the study of multiple cases with incorporated units of analysis and three criteria were observed for the judgment of the quality of the research project: validity of the construct, external validity and reliability. Multiple sources of evidence were used and data analysis consisted of three flows of activities: data reduction, data displays and conclusion drawing/verification. The results confirmed the presuppositions and the fact that KM means a rethinking of management practices in the information era. It was also identified that the main challenges facing organizations committed to KM have its focus on change management, cultural and behavioral issues and the creation of an enabling context that favors the creation, use and sharing of information and knowledge.

Keywords: Knowledge management. Strategic information management. Enabling context or "Ba". Knowledge management conceptual umbrella metaphor. Knowledge and information management.

1 INTRODUCTION

The emergence of a technological and economical paradigm based on innovation, information and knowledge, as well as the growing consolidation of technologies such as microelectronics, information technology and computer networks, bring complex and multifaceted issues to surface facing contemporary organizations. Stewart (1998) suggests that

ground zero or "Year 1" of the informational era or post-industrialism is 1991. His analysis considered capital expenditures in the United States as registered by the Agency of Economic Analysis of the US Department of Commerce in between 1965-1991. The comparison contrasted the expenditures of American companies with capital goods typical of the industrial era – such as machines and equipment for production engineering – vis-a-vis the expenditures of American companies with capital goods typical of the so called information era – computers and telecommunication equipment. As seen on GRAPHIC 1 below, the two lines - capital expenditures in the industrial era and capital expenditures in the information era – intersect in 1991. The conclusion is that since 1991, American firms are spending more with equipment that collect, process, analyze and disseminate information and less with equipments that are typical of the industrial era. His analysis can be applied to the Brazilian context (SOUZA; ALVARENGA NETO, 2003), as information and knowledge management have become key issues for competitiveness of Brazilian firms.



Graphic 1 - Capital expenditures of American Firms, 1965-1991
Source: Adapted from Stewart (1998).

This transition of the "*old rigidity of the atoms to the fluidity of the bits*" in organizations lights up many discussions concerning the profusion of new terminologies created in the information era. Therefore, contemporary organizations face new terms such as "knowledge management", "communities of practice", "strategic intellectual capital management", "competitive intelligence", "organizational learning" and many others. These different perspectives reflect different conceptions of organizational knowledge and organizations themselves, besides a growing need of meticulous analysis about the upcoming opportunities for gaining competitive advantages through strategic use of information and knowledge. In this particular arena, KM arises both as an opportunity and an oxymoron, depending on how it is conceited, analyzed, practiced and measured for its results concerning the organizations' core-business and readiness to compete. Alvarenga Neto (2002) and Marchand e Davenport (2004) suggest that most of what it is called "knowledge management"(KM) is actually information management. They also affirm that KM is more than simply information management due to the fact that it includes and incorporates other concerns such as the creation, use and sharing of information and knowledge in the organizational context, not to mention the creation of the so called "enabling context" or "enabling conditions", among others. Hence, information management is just one of the components of KM and a starting point for other KM initiatives and approaches.

Many researches have risked definitions for KM. Wilson (2002) examined the "*Web of Science*" databases from 1981 to 2002 and verified the great diversity of concepts attributed to KM, reaffirming all the terminological controversy and polemic. He also confirmed the exponential growing of publications with the expression "knowledge management", as show in FIGURE 1.

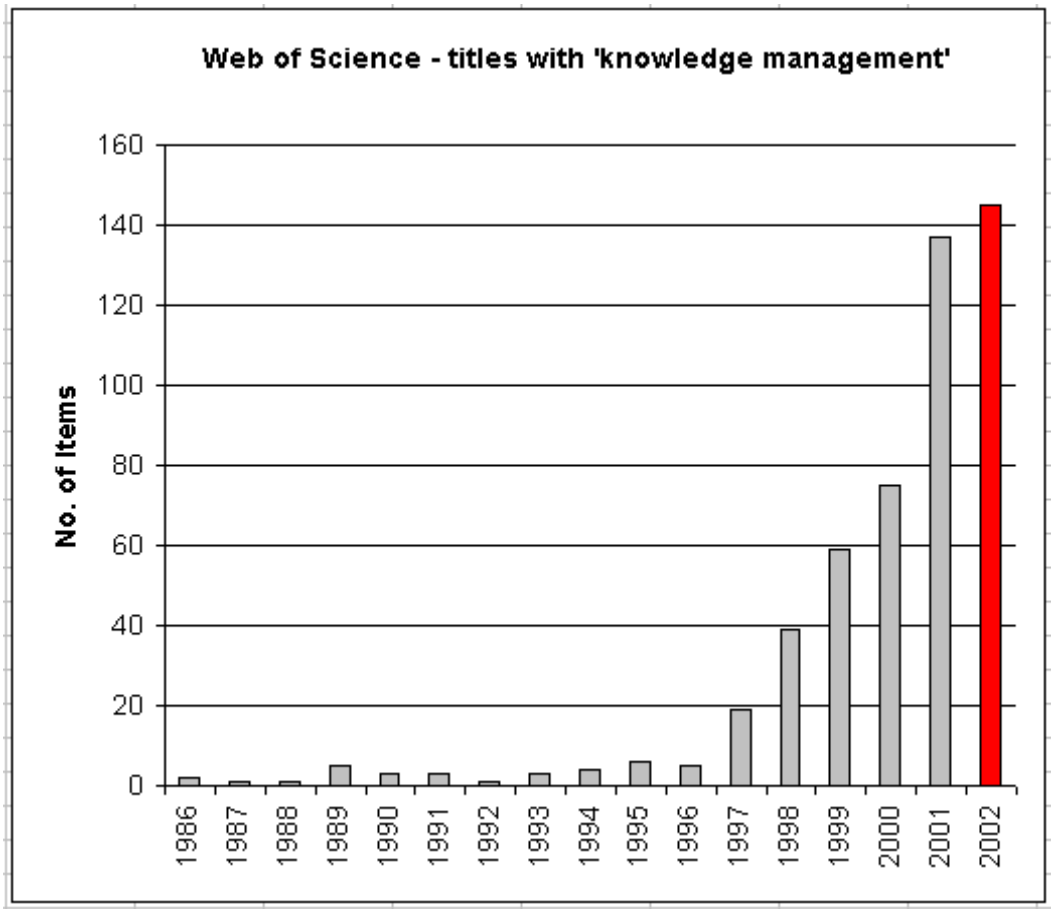


Figure 1 - Publications with the expression "Knowledge Management" – *Web of Science* – Source: Wilson (2002).

The current debate about KM is also and mainly divulged in recent publications of mainstream authors from the librarian and information science field research, such as Davenport and Cronin (2000). They suggest that:

> though considerable academic and professional attention has been focused on this area in the past decade, the concept is not yet stable: the term appears to be used differently across domains with each claiming that its partial understanding represents a definitive articulation of the concept. (DAVENPORT; CRONIN, 2000)

Their inquiry is seminal: "*Is it a semantic drift or a conceptual shift*?" Davenport and Cronin (2000) explored the concept of KM in the context of three domains committed to KM, that is to say, (i) librarian and information science (information management or KM by another name), (ii) process engineering (business processes, ontologies, the management of 'know-how') and (iii) organizational theory (from knowledge as a resource to knowledge as a capability; tacit and explicit knowledge conversions; the context, "Ba" or organizational space for knowledge). The objective of their proposal - called "KM Triad Framework" – is the proposition of a tool or analysis instrument that it's suitable for exploring the tensions that might arise in any organizations

committed to KM, where different domains have different comprehensions. The "KM Triad" can be used to identify conflicts or territorial struggles and to contribute for a collective understanding of all interactors of the KM space in organizations.

Debates like those, associated with the lack of a conceptual definition and all the controversy surrounding the term KM, motivated a research study concerning how Brazilian organizations understand, define, implement, practice, measure and evaluate KM, what motives led them to those initiatives and what they expect to achieve with it. The basic presuppositions were two, respectively: (i) most of what it´s referred to or named "Knowledge Management" is actually "Information Management" and information management is just one of the components of KM. Consequently, KM is more than simply information management due to the fact that it includes and incorporates other aspects, themes, approaches and concerns such as the creation, use and sharing of information and knowledge in the organizational context, not to mention the creation of the so called "enabling context" or "enabling conditions", among others; (ii) a conceptual model or map can be formulated based on three basic conceptions: (a) a strategic conception of information and knowledge, factors of competitiveness for organizations and nations; (b) the creation of an organizational space for knowledge or the enabling context – the favorable conditions that should be provided by organizations in order for them to use the best information and knowledge available; (c) the introduction of such strategy in the tactical and operational levels through the several managerial approaches and information technology tools, which are susceptible to communication and orchestration. The results of such study will be presented in this paper.

2 KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT: MODELS, MAPS AND CONCEPTUAL TRIALS

A conceptual KM model or map can be formulated based on three basic conceptions: (i) a strategic conception of information and knowledge - as proposed by Choo (1998) - factors of competitiveness for organizations and nations; (ii) the creation of an organizational space (in the tactical level) for knowledge, the enabling context or "Ba": the favorable conditions that should be provided by organizations in order for them to use the best information and knowledge available - as suggested by Von Krogh, Ichijo and Nonaka (2001); (iii) the introduction of such strategy in the operational level through the several managerial approaches and information technology tools,

which are susceptible to communication and orchestration, metaphorically named here as a "KM conceptual umbrella";

2.1 A STRATEGIC CONCEPTION FOR INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE IN ORGANIZATIONS

Choo (1998) asserts that the "knowing organizations" are those that use information strategically in the context of three arenas, namely, **(a) sense making, (b) knowledge creation and (c) decision making**. Concerning (a) sense making, its immediate goal is to allow the organizations' members the construction of a mutual and shared understanding of what the organization is and what it does. Strategic reflections must be done concerning the organization's mission, vision, values and culture, allowing its members to bring meaning to their lives and jobs. An ambitious and challenging vision or state of the future reveals the organization's intention and it is extremely valuable, contributing to communicate the types of knowledge that are welcomed and will be nurtured. Sense making's long term goal is the warranty that organizations will adapt and continue to prosper in a dynamic and complex environment through activities of prospect and interpretation of relevant information that allow them to understand changes, trends and scenarios about clients, suppliers, competitors and other external environment actors. Organizations face issues such as the reduction of uncertainty and the management of ambiguity. Competitive, competitor and social intelligences, environmental scanning, marketing research and activities alike are organizational initiatives that aim at constructing meaning about issues for which there are no clear answers. TABLE 1 presents the organizational sense making process through an information perspective:

Table 1- The Sense Making Process

Information Needs	Information Seeking	Information Use
What are the new trends in our industry? What are the core competences of our competitors? What do our clients value?	Environmental scanning Information systems Researches	Reduction of uncertainty and management of ambiguity: collective interpretation Shared knowledge construction Decision Making

Source: Adapted from Choo (1998).

(b) Knowledge creation is a process that allows an organization to create or acquire, organize and process information in order to generate new knowledge through organizational learning. The new knowledge generated, in its turn, allows the organization to develop new abilities and capabilities, create new products and new services, improve the existing ones and redesign its organizational processes. TABLE 2 supplies an analogy between knowledge creation models and permits inferences between their differences and likenesses.

Table 2 - Knowledge Creation Processes

KNOWLEDGE PROCESSES *(WIKSTRÖM & NORMANN 1994)*	KNOWEDGE CREATION PHASES *(NONAKA & TAKEUCHI 1995)*	KNOWLEDGE-BUILDING ACTIVIES *(LEONARD-BARTON 1995)*
Generative Processes: Generating new knowledge	Sharing tacit knowledge ---------- Creating concepts	Shared problem solving Experimenting and prototyping
Productive Processes: operationalizing new knowledge	Justifying concepts Building an archetype	Implementing and integrating new processes and tools
Representative Processes: Diffusing and transferring new knowledge	Cross-levelling knowledge	Importing knowledge

Source: Choo (1998, p.130)

The third component of Choo's (1998) model involves (c) decision-making. The firm must choose the best option among those that are plausible and presented and pursue it based on the organization's strategy. Decision making process in organizations is constrained by the bounded rationality principle, as advocated by March and Simon (1975). Many inferences can be made upon the decision theory, Choo (1998) and also March and Simon (1975) list a few of them:

i. the decision making process is driven by the search for alternatives that are satisfactory or good enough, rather than seeking for the optimal solution;

ii. the choice of one single alternative implies in giving up the remaining ones and concomitantly in the emergence of trade-offs or costs of opportunity;

iii. a completely rational decision would require information beyond the capability of the organization to collect, and information processing beyond the human capacity to execute.

2.2 THE CREATION OF AN ORGANIZATIONAL SPACE FOR KNOWLEDGE, THE ENABLING CONTEXT OR "BA"

The creation of organizational knowledge is, in fact, the augmentation of knowledge created by individuals, once fulfilled the contextual conditions that should be supplied or enabled by the organization. This is what Von Krogh, Ichijo and Nonaka (2001) call "Ba", enabling conditions or enabling context. "Ba" is needed in the tactical level in order to bridge the existing gap between strategy and action. In this context, the understanding of the word "management" when associated with the word "knowledge" should not mean control, but promotion of activities of knowledge creation and sharing in the organizational space. Hence, KM assumes a new hermeneutic perspective – from knowledge as a resource to knowledge as a capability, from knowledge management to a management towards knowledge, from knowledge management to a management **from** and **to** knowledge. Nonaka and Takeuchi (1997) and Von Krogh, Ichijo and Nonaka (2001) list the many elements of "Ba", namely: creative chaos, redundancy, layout, organizational culture and human behaviour, leadership, intention or vision of future and empowerment, not to mention organizational structure and layout, among others.

2.3 THE "KM CONCEPTUAL UMBRELLA" METAPHOR

At last, the "KM Conceptual Umbrella" metaphor assumes that below its boundaries, many themes, ideas, managerial approaches and IT tools concerning information and knowledge in the organizational context are addressed and susceptible to communication and orchestration. It's imperative to highlight a few of them, such as, 'strategic information management', 'intellectual capital', 'organizational learning', 'competitive intelligence' and 'communities of practice'. It's exactly the interrelation and permeability between those many themes that enable and delimitate the upbringing of a possible theoretical framework which can be entitled "knowledge management". Feedback is achieved by classifying the themes below the "KM conceptual umbrella" in the model proposed by Choo (1998). Competitive intelligence and environmental scanning are initiatives – managerial approaches and IT tools - that drive the strategic concept sense making into action. That is, sense making is a strategic conception and, e.g., competitive intelligence, an action-driven managerial approach - a way to turn strategy into action is by using the right managerial approach or IT tool that can be found in the "KM conceptual umbrella". Communities of practice, strategic information management and organizational learning fit into the thematic of knowledge creation and so on.

Last but not least, it's desirable to recur to Choo (2002) once again for the closing of this section, as he suggests a conceptual framework that could be useful for the comparison of possible information and knowledge management strategies. CHOO's starting point is the "Johari Window", an approach that describes the dynamics of human interaction and communication and has its genesis in the first names of its inventors, namely, Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. His arriving point is the proposition of the "Windows of Knowledge Management ", as shown in TABLE 3:

Table 3 - Windows of Knowledge Management

We know what we know	We know what we don't know
Provide Information Access Facilitate Knowledge Sharing Intranets, Portals, Taxonomies, Benchmarking	Directed Information Seeking Promote Knowledge Creation Competitive Intelligence, R&D, Market Research
We don't know what we know	**We don't know what we don't know**
Information Auditing Knowledge Mapping Communities of Practice, Knowledge Networks	Environmental Scanning Knowledge Discovery Scenario Planning, Future Search, Dialogue

Source: Choo (2002, p.261)

3 THE METHOD

Research should not be assumed solely as a rational task – the one that is approached with safety and assurance - but the one that has the side effect of augmenting fear and grief (BOURDIEU, 1998).

From this point of view, it's a peremptory call to abandon the solely terminological discussion of KM and an essential condition to move on to the exploitation of a conceptual framework that is being designed in the field, as proposed by Alvarenga Neto (2002; 2005) and Souza and Alvarenga Neto (2003).

In resume, it's about elaborating a coherent system of relations that must be put to judgment as it is. It's also necessary to achieve a comprehension that knowledge is something that is built of and from other knowledge from which we can exercise apprehension, criticism and lack

of confidence. Another cornerstone is the fact that any attempt to represent reality will undoubtedly be more imperfect than what reality is and it's absolutely necessary the process of socialization among researchers in order to achieve field advance, bearing in mind that innovation occurs in the frontiers of creative minds in synergy of purposes.

As said before, this paper aims at trying to propose a conceptual demarcation for the thematic knows as "knowledge management". Far from proposing a definite, quintessential solution or a hermetic model, it does aim to contribute to a better understand of the area/theme, as well as its borders and scopes.

In order to study the visions and concrete initiatives of Brazilian firms in the knowledge management field, case studies in three large Brazilian organizations were realized, aiming at leaving behind the purely terminological discussion, which is innocuous and naive. The analytical model was divided in five analytical categories as guidelines to field research, namely: (i) reasons or motives that lead the organization to KM initiatives; (ii) the firm's definition or understanding of KM or/and KM's concepts; (iii) aspects, managerial approaches and tools considered under the aegis of the firm's KM area, program or project ("KM Conceptual Umbrella); (iv) the emphasis or priority aspects of KM; (v) main results related to or generated by KM initiatives.

A *sine qua non* condition in choosing the organizations was the fact that they should have already had KM implemented and, for this matter, three organizations - belonging each one to one of economy's three sectors - were chosen, that is to say, Centro de Tecnologia Canavieira (CTC), Siemens do Brasil and Pricewaterhouse & Coopers (PwC). The qualitative research strategy used was the study of multiple cases with incorporated units of analysis and three criteria were observed for the judgment of the quality of the research project: validity of the construct, external validity and reliability. Multiple sources of evidence were used – semi-structured interviews, documental research and direct observation - and the proposal of Miles and Huberman (1984) was adopted in order to analyze the data collected in the field. Their proposal consists of three flows of activities: data reduction, data displays and conclusion drawing/verification (FIGURE 2).

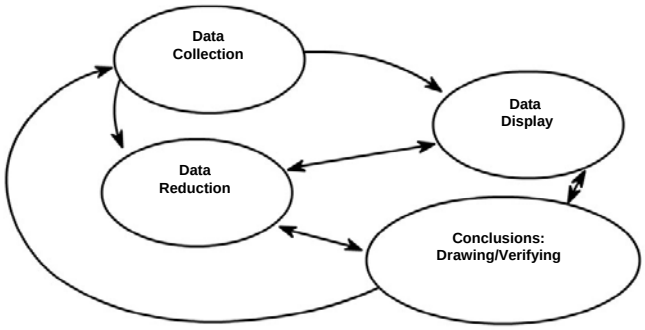


Figure 2 - Components of data analysis: interactive model
Source: Miles and Huberman (1984).

The field research was realized in the cities of (i) Piracicaba, SP, (ii) São Paulo, SP and (iii) Belo Horizonte, MG in the period of March, 19th, 2005 to April, 12th, 2005. A total of 17 interviews were conducted, which resulted in 35 hours of tape recording and 533 pages of transcriptions. As to documental research, approximately 1600 pages were analyzed with a loss of 12%. Four data reduction cycles were necessary until data could be incorporated to the final work and eight reduction displays were produced based on the analytical categories created (TABLE 4).

Table 4 - Data Reduction Processes–Data Analysis of Field Research

Data Reduction Processes	From (pages)	To (pages)
1st Reduction Process	2150	180
2nd Reduction Process	180	100
3rd Reduction Process	100	52
4th Reduction Process	52	Final work

Source: Alvarenga Neto (2005)

The results will be presented in the lines bellow.

4 RESULTS ANALYSIS

The main reasons or motives for the adoption of KM in the organizations of this study concerned the following aspects:

i. Lack of practices of protection and sharing of information and knowledge, leading the organization to a constant reinvention of the wheel and continuous duplication of efforts;

ii. Problems with data/information collection, treatment, organization and dissemination, indicating lack of strategic information management;

iii. Recognition that both information and knowledge are the mains factors of competitiveness of modern times;

iv. Need for the creation of an organizational space for knowledge, also knows as "Ba" or "enabling conditions", vis-a-vis the need to address cultural and behavioral issues.

Evidences and testimonies collected in field interviews confirm the statements above:

> *"*...+ each part, area or department of our firm had idiosyncratic methods for storing and managing knowledge... [...] nowadays the firm is concerned with knowledge because knowledge is the main factor of competitiveness. [...] there were problems with information retrieval."* **(CTC's Coordinator of Technology Transfer)**
>
> *"*...+ thirty years generating technology and, as time went by, with turnover or retirement, knowledge was lost. [...] a few areas or departments were mutilated and had to start from ground zero – they were unable to retain knowledge for reusing it for its own good. [...] the loss of critical generated knowledge was a critical issue: lacking efficiency in information capture, people were taking their personal files with them…".* **(CTC's Chief Executive Officer)**
>
> *"*...+ both critical information and vital knowledge were lost and not shared."* **(PwC's Auditing Manager)**
>
> *"*...+ PwC's greatest asset is the knowledge of its people… to make the knowledge of those professionals sharable"* **(PwC's Director of the Auditing Department and Human Resources Department)**
>
> *"*...+ a transformation in the management model: from a very hierarchical model, stamp here, stamp there (sic), which is a slow model, to a much more network organic model. *...+ that's the idea of KM, to break all kinds of barriers: geographical, hierarchical, linguistic, temporal, and personal, among others."* **(Siemens' Knowledge and Information Manager)**
>
> *"*...+ quick access to organizational knowledge is a competitive differential."* **(Siemens' Sales Manager)**

There was a lack of consensus concerning a definition for KM in the organizations of this study. Nevertheless, a few terms were common in the answers of interviewees (content analysis), namely, process, information, knowledge, innovation, tacit-explicit knowledge conversion,

registration, sharing, organizational culture, access and use, among others. Here are a few testimonies of interviewees that confirm this assertion:

> *"*...+ there is no consensus of what KM is or should be in the organization – it's a challenge. *...+ there's a delimitation of performance areas: information treatment, tacit knowledge, enabling of sharing... *...+ KM is a process, it has phases but no end. [...] process that aims to enable information and knowledge sharing, intangible assets protection, (sic) where knowledge is focused".* **(CTC's Knowledge Manager)**
>
> **...+ it's not very clear, but it's all that is managed for obtaining knowledge, innovation*". **(CTC's Chief Executive Officer)** *"*...+ it's a process that contributes to place the workers' knowledge in a network".* **(Siemens' Regional Director)**
>
> *"*...+ it's not a miracle, it's not a (sic) 'knowledge unlocker plus'. It's a great change in the philosophy of the organization's strategic management. *...+ tools for collaboration and the creation of channels".* **(Siemens' Knowledge and Information Manager)**
>
> *"*...+ KM is a process, it has no end.* [...] *process for capturing all the knowledge that permeates the organization. *...+ readiness, use and share for the firm's good".* **(PwC's Documentation and Information Manager)**
>
> *"*...+ KM is sustaining an environment that enables the coexistence of creation, development, sharing and dissemination of strategic knowledge to the organization – it's creating the context, it's a process that should permeate all the business processes of the organization".* **(PwC's KM Coordinator for South and Central America)**

The next step was to investigate the theoretical proposal entitled "KM conceptual umbrella". Henceforth, the interviewees were asked to answer which aspects, managerial approaches and tools were considered under the aegis of the KM area, program or project in their respective organizations. Here's a comprehensive summary of the answers: (a) environmental scanning, competitive intelligence, market research, (b) strategic information management, electronic document management, process mapping, (c) intellectual capital management, competencies and people management, intangible assets, (d) communities of practice – both real and virtual, (e) organizational learning, including e-learning, (f) decision making support and (f) creation of the enabling conditions or "Ba".

> *"*...+ yes, external environment information, competitor's products, market trends, clippings... *...+ there's also an informal information collection made by workers that (sic) "fish" something in the market and put it in the intranet – even rumors".* **(Siemens' Sales Manager)**
>
> *"*...+ KM is an strategic area hooked to the directorship, providing information to support decision making processes, it's directorship's advisory".* **(CTC's Knowledge Manager)**
>
> *"*...+ to implement a rigid taxonomy for all the organizational content".* **(Documental Research, CTC, 2005)**

The interviewees were also inquired about the emphasis or priority aspects of KM in their organizations. Data analysis revealed that the starting point for KM initiatives – strategic information management – was reaching a stage of concept maturity, with consciousness that it is a permanent process. The organizations of this study were putting their efforts at advancing in aspects related to sharing, organizational culture and the creation of "Ba" or the enabling conditions. It's imperative to highlight the existence of many initiatives that are genuinely Brazilian initiatives, adopted to address the creation of "Ba", like the "Cultural Moment" at CTC and the "Knowledge Happy Hour" at Siemens. This last initiative is:

> *"*...+ it is an informal practice of conferences, where essential organizational knowledge is shared in a tacit, spontaneous way. It's a local specific initiative that fits general policies. The speeches last for one hour and are presented by the firms' personnel".* **(Documental Research, Siemens, 2005)**

At last, the main results related to or generated by KM were nominated by the interviewees: (i) innovation cycle reduction and faster time-to-market solutions; (ii) market share and portfolio increase; (iii) facilitation of expertise and people location; (iv) creation of an organizational memory and repository; (iv) increase in the learning capacity and (vi) ability to anticipate competitors' actions and movements.

5 CONCLUSIONS

This paper's main goal was a conceptual demarcation of KM. Far from proposing a definite solution or a hermetic model, it hoped to contribute for a better understanding of the field, its borders, scopes and connections. A KM integrative model was elaborated starting from that proposed by Choo (1998), associated to the "Ba" or enabling conditions proposition conceited by Von Krogh, Ichijo and Nonaka (2001), in addition to the several managerial approaches and tools metaphorically denominated as the "KM conceptual umbrella". These three ideas interconnected are contributive for the construction of a theoretical framework as a starting point.

Another corollary of this work assumed the task of confirming the integrative conceptual KM framework through the discussion and analysis of a Brazilian research work in three Brazilian organizations committed to KM. FIGURE 3 presents the proposition of a conceptual framework/model to KM:

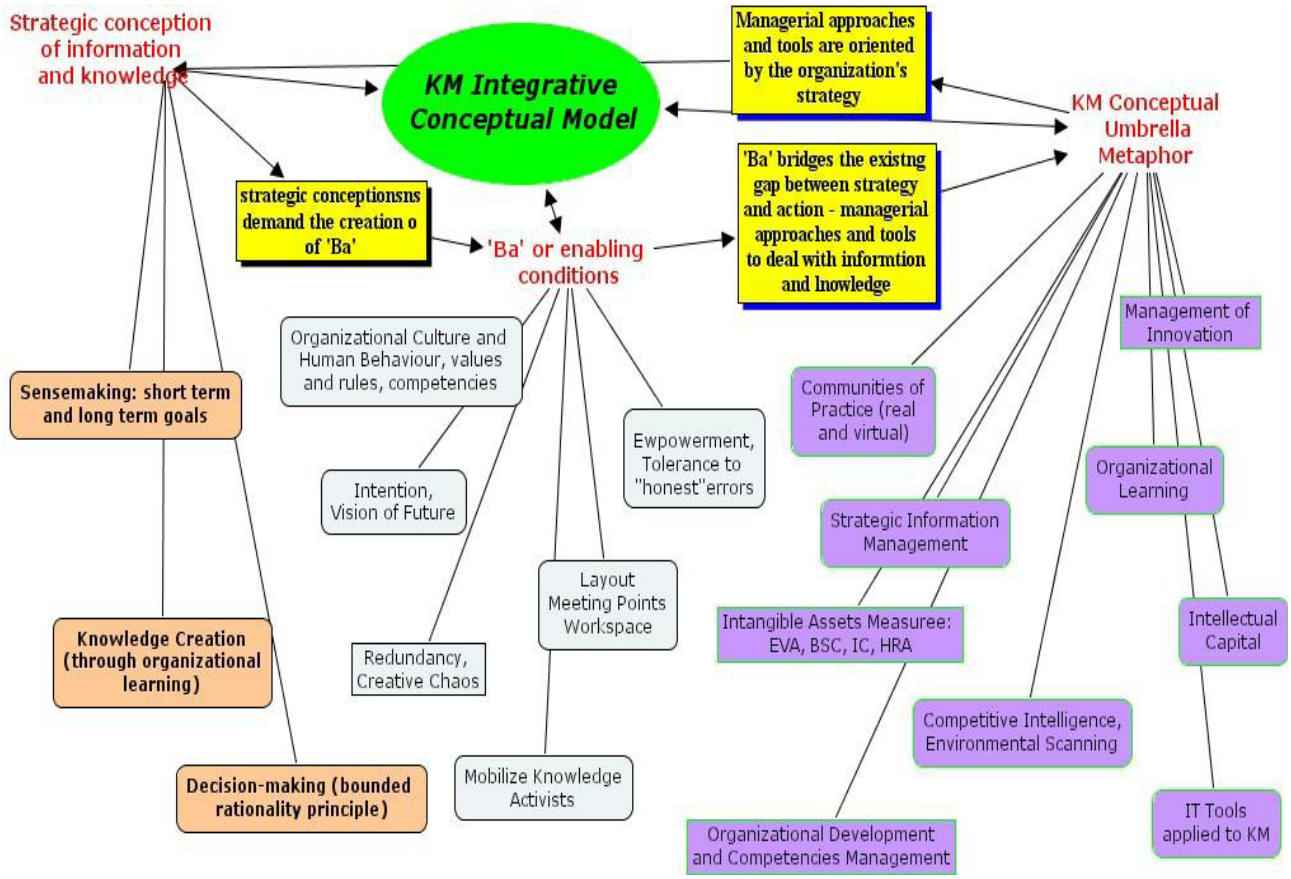


Figure 3 - KM: an Integrative Conceptual Model Proposition

Figure 3 confirms the theoretical framework presented in the literature review while bringing it to an integrative model proposition. This conception integrates the strategic, tactical and operational levels of the organizations concerning KM initiatives, e.g.: the strategic concept "sense making" is driven into action by using managerial approaches or tools for this purpose – found in the "KM Conceptual Umbrella - such as competitive intelligence, market research or environmental scanning; the strategic concept "knowledge creation" is driven into action by using managerial approaches or tools such as "strategic information management", "intellectual capital" and "communities of practices", among others. From strategy to action, "Ba" is needed to bridge the gap as it creates the favorable context for creativity, innovation, empowerment and creative chaos, among others. It is interesting to observe that the managerial approaches and tools considered in the "KM Conceptual Umbrella Metaphor" are also interconnected: strategic information management is the starting point that can lead to the strategic management of intellectual capital, the organization of communities of practice, the startup of organizational memory and organizational learning and so on.

The results confirmed the presuppositions and the fact that KM means a rethinking of the management of the knowing organizations or organizations of the information era. This statement has its origins in the comprehension that information and knowledge are the main factors of competitiveness for contemporary organizations and nations. It was also identified that the main challenges facing organizations committed to KM have its focus on change management, cultural and behavioral issues and the creation of an enabling context that favors the creation, use and sharing of information and knowledge. Another remarkable challenge is the proposal or creation of a group of metrics and/or performance indicators to evaluate KM. In this particular issue, Siemens' already taken a step forward by introducing its own metrics, named "KS-Enabled" and "Strategic Skill Gap". The truth is that KM must use both quantitative and qualitative metrics.

The conclusions suggest that KM is an oxymoron, perhaps an impossibility. Knowledge as such cannot be managed, it is just promoted or stimulated through the creation of a favorable organizational context. The word "management" when associated with "knowledge" must be apprehended as promotion or stimulus for the creation and sharing of organizational knowledge and KM assumes the meaning of a management from and to knowledge.

KM is highly political, demands knowledge managers and is an endless process that needs to be aligned with the organizations' strategy and highly in tune with leadership premises. KM is not the same as information technology (IT), but it can be a process supported by information technology. Not all KM initiatives need IT, as demonstrated by CTC and Siemens with their "Cultural Moment" and "Knowledge Happy Hour" initiatives.

It's recommended to test this model and also KM practices in small and medium firms in the Brazilian organizational context.

GESTÃO DO CONHECIMENTO ESTRATÉGICO EM ORGANIZAÇÕES BRASILEIRAS: UM CASO DE VINHO VELHO EM GARRAFAS NOVAS OU UMA MUDANÇA ESTRATÉGICA?

RESUMO

O artigo investiga do tema conhecido como Gestão do Conhecimento (Knowledge Management – KM) em três grandes organizações brasileiras tentando discutir seus conceitos, elementos constituintes, abordagens e ferramentas gerenciais, enquanto procura deixando de lado a discussão puramente terminológica, que é inócua e ingênua. Os pressupostos básicos são dois: (i) a maior parte do que é referido ou chamado de KM é na verdade "Gestão da Informação" (Information management – IM) e IM é somente um dos componentes do KM. KM é mais que simplesmente IM devido ao fato que inclui e incorpora outros interesses como a criação, uso e compartilhamento da informação e do conhecimento no contexto organizacional; (ii) um modelo conceitual ou mapa que pode ser formulado com base em três concepções básicas: (a) concepção estratégica de informação e conhecimento; (b) a introdução desta estratégia nos níveis táticos e operacional por intermédio de diversas abordagens gerenciais e ferramentas de tecnologia da informação e (c) a criação de um espaço organizacional para conhecimento. O principal objetivo é investigar e analisar as concepções, motivação, prãticas e resultados de KM efetivamente implementados em três grandes organizações brasileiras. A estratégia de pesquisa qualitativa usada foi estudo de casos múltiplos com a incorporação de unidades de análise e três critérios foram observados para o julgamento da qualidade do projeto de pesquisa: validade do constructo, validade externa e confiabilidade. Multiplas fontes de evidência foram usadas e a análise de dados consistiu de três fluxos de atividades: redução de dados, exposição de dados e desenho/verificação da conclusão. Os resultados confirmaram as presuposições e o fato que KM significa um repensar das práticas de gerenciamento na era da informação. Também foi identificado que os principais desafios das organizações comprometidas com KM tem seu foco na gestão da mudança, aspecots culturais e comportamentais e criação de um contexto que favoreça a criação, o uso e o compartilhamento da informação e do conhecimento.

Palavras-chave: Gestão do conhecimento. Gestão estratégica da informação. Contexto favorável ou "Ba".

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