ARTICLE

Transfer of knowledge of retirement workers in a higher education institution

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Abstract

We sought to understand the importance and contribution of knowledge transfer (KT) of workers in the retirement phase in a higher education institution (HEI). Such research is justified by the fact that KT in retirement is approached by different areas but with little emphasis on administrative sciences. A qualitative case study was carried out based on the theoretical framework of knowledge creation and transference, in which retired workers and managers and young workers participated. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups were carried out with the participation of 32 people and non-participant observation with about 260 workers. Data were organized with the support of NVivo®11 software, triangulated, and analyzed using content analysis. It is stated that KT contributes to improve work relationships and bring people together, acquires a greater degree of autonomy and recognition, perceives opportunities for professional and personal growth, and contributes to the HEI since the institutional history is valued, processes are improved, organizational costs are reduced, and the organizational climate is optimized. It is concluded that different knowledge is important for HEIs and the people who are part of them, and the need to implement actions is highlighted so that knowledge is not lost when the worker retires.

Keywords: Knowledge transfer. Retirement. Higher education institution..

Transferência do conhecimento de trabalhadores em processo de aposentadoria em uma instituição de ensino superior

Resumo

Buscou-se, neste trabalho, compreender a importância e a contribuição da transferência do conhecimento (TC) de trabalhadores em processo de aposentadoria em uma instituição de ensino superior (IES). Tal pesquisa se justifica em razão de a TC, no contexto da aposentadoria, ser abordada por diferentes áreas, porém, ter pouca ênfase nas ciências administrativas. Realizou-se um estudo de caso qualitativo, embasado no marco teórico da criação e na TC, do qual participaram trabalhadores em processo de aposentadoria, gestores e trabalhadores jovens. Foram realizados entrevistas semiestruturadas e grupos focais, com a participação de 32 pessoas, bem como observação não participante com cerca de 260 trabalhadores. Os dados foram organizados com o apoio do software NVivo®11, triangulados e analisados por meio da análise de conteúdo. Afirma-se que a TC traz contribuições para os trabalhadores no sentido de melhorar as relações de trabalho e aproximar as pessoas, promover maior grau de autonomia e reconhecimento, perceber oportunidades de crescimento profissional e pessoal, bem como contribuir para a IES, uma vez que o histórico institucional é valorizado, processos são aprimorados, custos organizacionais são reduzidos e o clima organizacional é otimizado. Assim, concluímos que os diferentes conhecimentos são importantes para a IES, bem como para as pessoas que dela fazem parte, e ressaltamos a necessidade da implementação de ações para que o conhecimento não seja perdido quando o trabalhador se afastar do trabalho.

Palavras-chave: Transferência de conhecimento. Aposentadoria. Instituição de ensino superior.

Transferencia de conocimientos de trabajadores en proceso de jubilación en una institución de educación superior

Resumen

En este trabajo, se buscó comprender la importancia y contribución de la transferencia de conocimiento (TC) de trabajadores en etapa de jubilación en una institución de educación superior (IES). Tal investigación se justifica por el hecho de que la TC en el contexto de la jubilación es abordada por diferentes áreas, pero con poco énfasis en las ciencias administrativas. Se realizó un estudio de caso cualitativo, basado en el marco teórico de creación y transferencia de conocimiento, en el que participaron trabajadores en proceso de jubilación, directivos y trabajadores jóvenes. Se realizaron entrevistas semiestructuradas y grupos focales con la participación de 32 personas, así como observación no participante con cerca de 260 trabajadores. Los datos se organizaron con el apoyo del software NVivo®11, y se triangularon y analizaron mediante análisis de contenido. Se afirma que la TC brinda un aporte a los trabajadores con el fin de mejorar las relaciones laborales y acercar a las personas, promover un mayor grado de autonomía y reconocimiento, percibir oportunidades de crecimiento profesional y personal, así como contribuir a la IES, una vez que se valora la historia institucional, se mejoran los procesos, se reducen los costos organizacionales y se optimiza el clima organizacional. Se concluye que los diferentes saberes son importantes para la IES, así como para las personas que forman parte de ella, y se destaca la necesidad de implementar acciones para que los saberes no se pierdan cuando el trabajador se jubile.

Palabras clave: Transferencia de conocimiento. Jubilación. Institución de enseñanza superior.

INTRODUCTION

Retirement emerges in the field of Human Resource Management (HRM), since several social, cultural, and economic factors result from this process (Antunes, Soares, & N. Silva, 2015) and represent a challenge for which organizations are not always prepared. Among these challenges, there is the incentive to transfer knowledge (KT) among workers, especially with regard to KT from mature workers to younger generations, since individuals from different generations have and share knowledge at different times (Gerpott, Willenbrock, & Voelpel, 2017; P. C. N. Souto, 2014). According to P. C. N. Souto (2014), the knowledge of mature workers was built over the years through interactions, relationships and experiences that are often difficult to reconstruct.

Costa et al. (2018) state that work transcends income-related needs, also involving the conception of identity, appreciation, and personal development, being considered a health-promoting activity. Thus, the aforementioned authors point to the relevance of the permanence of people over 60 years old in the labor market, who have more than rudimentary skills and routine know-how, since they have tacit knowledge that involves intangible factors. Therefore, it is important for organizations to also improve their focus on practices and incentives related to HRM, since work has a social and psychic function, being a factor of integration in certain groups and one of the great foundations of constitution of individuals (Lancman & Sznelwar, 2004).

The research gap is justified since the topic of KT among workers in the context of retirement has been addressed by different areas of study, but with little emphasis on applied social sciences. Based on the integrative review method, it was possible to observe the need for further research in the area. Although interest in the subject has grown over the years, there is a low number of international and national studies that integrate KT into the context of retirement, such as Bales and Long (2011), Fossatti and Mozzato (2021), Hu (2010), Lambert, Marks, Elliott, and Johnston-Anderson (2016), Lemay, Bernier, Rinfret, and Houlfort (2012), Palm (2017) and Short (2014). Thus, the relevance of studies that consider organizational issues in the respective theme is highlighted, but that also perceive the complexity/subjectivity that involves workers in the context of retirement.

Alvares et al. (2020) state that research in the area of knowledge management (KM) should continue to progress, since the interdisciplinary character of the area receives contributions from other sciences but should also enrich them. J. P. M. Silva, J. M. Castro, and Siqueira (2022) corroborate this question and highlight the need to expand the discussion about the KT process in the national context, seeking its complete understanding. Still, studies focused on KT in higher education institutions (HEIs) do not address the respective theme in the context of retirement, such as P. G. Castro, Teixeira, and Lima (2014), L. S. Fraga (2017), Guerrero and Urbano (2012) and Santos, Pereira, and Lopes (2016). Thus, researching KT in the context of retirement in an HEI adds originality to the study and highlights the theoretical gap.

Given the above and without ignoring the fact that there are facilitators and obstacles in KT, which have already been outlined in several studies (Davenport & Pruzak, 2003; Gonzalez & Martins, 2015; Lemos & Joia, 2012; Sabbag, 2007; Takeuchi & Nonaka, 2008), this article aims to understand the importance and contribution of KT for workers in the process of retirement at an HEI. Thus, in the sequence, we will present the theoretical reference of this study and the methodological procedures, followed by the analysis of the results, ending with the conclusions and references that supported it.

THEORETICAL REFERENCE

Knowledge transfer

The field of KM is understood from different perspectives, since knowledge is multifaceted and complex (Zimmer & Leis, 2011). According to Nonaka and Takeuchi (2003), KM is defined as the process of creating new knowledge, disseminating it in the organization and incorporating it into its practices. One of the purposes of KM is the sharing of knowledge, which is important both for organizations and for the people who are part of them (Tonet & Paz, 2006).

For Davenport and Prusak (2003), knowledge is produced in people's minds as a mixture of experiences, values, information, and insights. Thus, KT occurs through stimulation and the combination of existing and acquired knowledge (Van Wijk,

Jansen, & Lyles, 2008). Davenport and Pruzak (2003) point out that only people can create knowledge; the organization can support workers through KT-friendly environments. According to J. P. M. Silva et al. (2022), KT is a complex process that involves cultural, relational, institutional and geographic barriers, therefore, it is understood in a multidimensional way.

For Takeuchi and Nonaka (2008), knowledge manifests itself explicitly or tacitly: explicit knowledge takes place through words, data and visual resources; tacit knowledge is rooted in people's actions and experiences and is more difficult to share. The authors state that the way organizations find to create new knowledge is by converting tacit knowledge into explicit and vice versa, through the Seci spiral, which includes four phases: socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization.

In the **socialization** phase, tacit knowledge is shared from individual to individual. Learning occurs through observation, imitation, and experience. In the **externalization** phase, knowledge is shared from the individual to the group and becomes explicit through dialogue, the use of metaphors and collective reflection. In the **combination** phase, explicit knowledge is shared from the group to the organization. At this moment, the union of newly created knowledge and existing knowledge takes place. In the **internalization** phase, explicit knowledge is shared from the organization to the individual and becomes tacit again, thus creating new knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 2003).

J. P. M. Silva et al. (2022) point to the importance of the categories that allow analyzing the concepts linked to the KT process, such as the disseminative capacity of the source (capacity and motivation to transfer, as well as to use, the opportunities to do so), the absorptive capacity of the receiver, the relationship dynamics (bond, trust, and cultural proximity), transfer outcomes, nature of knowledge, and channels and mechanisms for transfer.

According to Gonzalez and Martins (2015), the focus of current studies on KT is on the organizational factors that facilitate or inhibit this process, since some cultures motivate and encourage KT, while others, even if unintentionally, discourage it. Lemos and Joia (2012) point out that hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational structures hinder communication, information sharing and, consequently, tacit KT. It is thus observed that knowledge retention is a complex phenomenon, in part because valued knowledge is tacit and subjective, depending on collaborative learning with others (Wikström, Eriksson, Karamehmedovic, & Liff, 2018).

Based on Davenport and Pruzak (2003), among the factors that inhibit the sharing of knowledge among people are the lack of mutual trust; cultural differences; the lack of time; the idea of productive work; the status and rewards of the knowledge holder; the lack of ability to absorb knowledge and intolerance of errors. On the other hand, Sabbag (2007) highlights the factors that facilitate and encourage KT, such as trust between team members; transparency in relationships; ethics; loyalty; horizontal relationships of equality and respect for differences; the desire to belong to the group; the work environment and recognition.

Antunes et al. (2015) state that KT oriented actions can bring contributions to organizations regarding the appreciation of workers and individual KT that can be apprehended at the organizational level. For Tonet and Paz (2006), sharing knowledge at work consists of a way to ensure the dissemination of knowledge that workers need, resulting in competitiveness differential and continuous qualification.

Transfer of knowledge in the context of retirement

Retirement causes the worker to face several losses that include economic and subjective factors, such as benefits and the status offered by the position held, health insurance, additional profit, decision-making power, sense of belonging to the organization or to groups of work, among others (L. H. F. P. França, 2002). Kreling (2016) observes that there is still a large participation of retirees in the labor market, which may be related, on the one hand, with the need to increase income in order to contribute to the family budget and, on the other, with the increase in longevity. The need to provide for the family associated with the loss of purchasing power caused by the low values of social security benefits can also contribute to explaining the permanence of mature workers in the labor market (Ribeiro, Almada, J. F. Souto, & Lourenço, 2018).

In addition, the professional role is one of the most valued, being a source of recognition, prestige, and power (Zanelli, 2000). The referred author states that retirement is a moment of transition that can offer opportunities for personal development when potentialities, sources of pleasure and growth are discovered. The increasing aging of workers is a critical point of

analysis for the HRM area (Ashworth, 2006), since it can result in the loss of knowledge due to the departure of workers who, over the years, built their history in the organization in which they are inserted (L. H. F. P. França & Carneiro, 2009). According to Purwanti and Romedly (2019), retirement can mean the loss of inherited information, productivity, and customer relationships, among other factors. To minimize this situation, it is possible to offer projects that encourage the sharing of knowledge and experience between professionals from different generations (Munari et al., 2017). In this sense, Purwanti and Romedly (2019) point out that stimulating the link between organizational commitment and workplace culture has played an important role in effective KT among mature and young workers. For A. F. Dias, J. B. França, Vivacqua, Borges, and Lima (2019), collaboration between workers is an important process to unite their potential and knowledge in organizations. J. P. M. Silva et al. (2022) point out that relational dynamics are part of the KT process and the bonds between people need to be further explored in this context.

Retirement is a rite of passage that should be seen from a psychological rather than a chronological perspective (Marra, Brito, Oliveira, & B. O. S. V. Dias, 2011) and which has repercussions in different spaces. The dismissal of an individual is capable of modifying the way an organization understands its methodologies, policies and practices (Antunes et al., 2015). According to A. F. Dias et al. (2019), the absence of a strategy to avoid the loss of knowledge of mature workers due to retirement may correspond to damage to the organization itself.

Cepellos (2018) points out that managers tend to have positive perceptions of mature workers with regard to loyalty to the company, punctuality, commitment, the ability to carry out diagnoses and emotional balance. However, they also have negative ideas about this public, such as inability to perform heavy physical work, difficulty adapting to changes and new technologies, preference for activities with less challenges, inflexibility, and lack of willingness to receive training.

Vasconcelos (2018) points out that mature workers can be considered valuable, since their knowledge and experience constitute an authentic source of organizational wisdom capital. According to Mansour and Tremblay (2019), when mature workers have the opportunity to use their skills and experience and transfer them to younger workers, they tend to be more satisfied and committed. On the other hand, the reality of the mature worker is also marked by the non-recognition of their potential, as well as stigma and prejudice (Barros & Muniz, 2014). The individual who is sharing knowledge may, for example, feel insecure about sharing it for fear of losing ownership or the privilege of knowledge (Macau, Muramoto, & Nakagawa, 2009). In this sense, studies point out that the proximity between group members is an important element for knowledge sharing (Moreno, Cavazotte, & Dutra, 2020).

Since knowledge is created only by individuals, it is necessary for organizations to support, encourage and stimulate activities that foster knowledge, as well as its transfer (Takeuchi & Nonaka, 2008). Kato, Nagayama, and Tamaki (2019) suggest creating materials that contain the explicit knowledge of more experienced workers. As for tacit knowledge, they indicate the use of videos, in which such experience is recorded.

Zanelli (2000) emphasizes the importance of managers' commitment, with the objective of ensuring the development of workers, through the dissemination of knowledge that promotes the construction of a culture of recognition in the most diverse moments of the career. According to Guinot and Chiva (2019), trust in leadership has a positive indirect effect on work and team performance. For Moreno et al. (2020), people who identify more with their group and have the support of a leader with a transformational style tend to have more positive attitudes towards knowledge sharing. Cepellos and Tonelli (2017) point out that organizations are not yet prepared for the aging of the workforce and, although managers' perception of older professionals is positive, there are few age management practices.

Recent research, such as that developed by A. M. Fraga, Colomby, Gemelli, and Prestes (2021), Hanashiro and Pereira (2020), M. A. P. Silva and Helal (2022) and Tonelli, Pereira, Cepellos, and Lins (2020), conclude that still little attention is given to age management in Brazilian research and organizations, despite its importance, even more so in view of the aging of the population. Therefore, it is observed that KT can become beneficial both for individuals and for organizations, since, according to L. H. F. P. França (2010), these recognize that they should not give up people with a high degree of knowledge, since, in addition to losing experienced professionals, part of the organization's history is also lost.

Given the above, according to Helal, Nóbrega, and Lima (2021), the HRM area needs to treat retirement as a complex and multidimensional phenomenon and implement actions that include spaces for learning and sharing professional experiences between generations of workers. Also because the division of knowledge between different generations contributes to lower levels of ageism (Firzly, Van De Beeck, & Lagacé, 2021; Lagacé, Van De Beeck, & Firzly, 2019).

The importance of research on ageism is evident precisely so that actions are taken to combat this type of prejudice (A. M. Fraga et al., 2021; Helal & Viana, 2021). These last authors point out that the subject is still little studied in the field of administration, especially in Brazil. As stated by Firzly et al. (2021), underestimating the cost of ageism in organizations is dangerous. Therefore, even though this phenomenon has not been the focus of this research, one cannot deny its negative impact on KT.

Finally, as Fossatti and Mozzato (2021) and Munari et al. (2017), it should be noted that different organizational practices related to HRM are needed, such as age management and encouraging intergenerational KT. Furthermore, as well punctuated by Fossatti and Mozzato (2021) and Fossatti, Mozzato, and Grzybovski (2021), companies should reflect on KT among workers, especially among different generations, since workers of different ages, through interaction, exchange experiences and information, which brings gains to all involved: workers and organization.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

This is a qualitative case study, which, following Yin (2016), seeks to increase the researcher's familiarity with a phenomenon and allows for in-depth studies on a variety of topics.

The field of study constitutes the Administrative Center of an HEI, which has its headquarters in the State of Rio Grande do Sul and acts as the maintainer of three institutions focused on teaching: secondary education, higher education, and foreign language teaching. At the time of the survey, the HEI had approximately 1,200 administrative technicians, around 900 professors and 140 paid interns. Of these, around 80 workers are in the process of retiring and around 60 professionals will enter retirement in the coming years. Due to the breadth of sectors and areas available, we chose to focus the investigation on workers in a given area – administrative center – because of the similarity of functions. This has approximately 50 sectors and 260 technical-administrative employees. Of these, 16 are in retirement process.

The inclusion criteria for research participants were: a) having an employment relationship at the HEI; b) be in the retirement phase (be legally retired or expect to retire within a period of up to three years); c) act in the administrative center of the HEI; d) agree to participate in the study by reading the Informed Consent Form.

The managers of the sectors of the administrative center participated in the research, with the condition that, in the respective sector, there was one or more mature workers. Some of these managers are also in the process of retirement, so they participated in both stages: as mature workers and as managers. The Human Resources manager and the supervisor of the Personnel Development Section of the respective HEI also took part, due to the relevance of these areas of activity and their relationship with the proposed theme. Two young employees from each sector of the administrative center were also involved in the study, with the condition that, in such sectors, one or more mature workers worked. Such participants were randomly invited, through a draw, in order to guarantee the variability of profiles and perceptions. Thus, the surveyed population corresponds, in all, to 276 members of the surveyed sector; 32 people were selected for conducting the interviews and creating the focus groups: 14 workers in the process of retirement, of which four are managers, eight managers and 14 young workers. Participants who were able to participate in these last two data collection techniques are visualized in Box 1.

Box 1
Survey participants

Area	Number of mature workers participating	Number of participating managers	Number of young workers participating
A	2	1, in the process of retirement	2
B	5	1, in the process of retirement	2
C	1	1, in the process of retirement	2
D	1	1 in the process of retirement	2
E	1	1	2
F	1	1	2
G	2	0	1
H	1	0	1
I	0	2	0

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

As data collection techniques, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and non-participant observation were used (Flick, 2008). After the initial stage of interviews, two focus group meetings were held: one with mature workers and another with young workers. At the same time, the non-participant observation technique was used, according to Flick (2008), since the chain of events was followed, refraining from interventions in the field.

Data were analyzed using content analysis, which, according to Bardin (2016), consists of a set of systematic and objective techniques for describing the content of messages received during data collection. To carry out the content analysis, the phases listed by Bardin (2016) were followed, explained in Box 2.

Box 2
Phases of data analysis

Phases	Procedures
Phase 1 Pre-analysis	• Transcription of interviews • Focus group transcript • Organization of non-participant observation field script notes • Content systematization • NVivo®11 software support for data organization • Formulation of propositions
Phase 2 Exploration of materials	• Coding according to the analytical categories, with the support of the NVivo®11 software, working with the analysis units
Phase 3 Treatment of results, inference and interpretation	• Condensation of information for analysis, with the support of NVivo®11 software • Treatment of results • Interpretation and analysis of results, according to the proposed theoretical reference

Source: Adapted from Bardin (2016).

According to Bardin (2016), in the first phase, the pre-analysis, the research material was organized, with the aim of making it operational, systematizing the initial ideas. In the second phase, the exploration of the materials, data coding was carried out, according to the analysis category and the identification of recording units. This phase allowed for the richness of interpretations and inferences, corresponding to the analytical description phase, in which the data were submitted to an in-depth study, guided by the proposed theoretical reference. To assist in the data organization process, the NVivo®11 software was used. Mozzato, Grzybovski, and Teixeira (2016) point out that this tool helps in the data encoding process, qualifying the analysis material, and facilitating data triangulation. The category and its analytical subcategories can be seen in Box 3.

Box 3
Analysis category and subcategories

Analytical category	Subcategories
Value attributed to KT	Perception of the value attributed to KT by young workers and managers
	Perception of the value attributed to KT by mature workers
	KT contributions to mature workers
	KT contributions in an HEI

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

Qualitative data are presented in excerpts, in numerical sequence, according to the following nomenclature: interviews of workers in the process of retirement/mature workers (E-A); interviews of young workers (E-J); manager interviews (E-G); focus group with workers in the process of retirement/mature workers (G-A); and, finally, the focus group, with young workers (G-J).

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

Field research context

The field research context is presented, since both the retirement process and the institutional context add particularities to the research. Regarding the context of the HEI, we observe the prolonged permanence of mature workers, issues related to the quality of life, stability, and security that the HEI offers and the good relationship between people, as well as the explicit affection of the workers for the tasks they perform and by the HEI itself. In addition, the HEI has the particularity of having a traditional culture, a political character, and a broad and bureaucratic structure, divided into different sectors, which sometimes hinders the flow of processes and the KT itself. As Gonzalez and Martins (2015) point out, the culture of each organization influences KT among workers, facilitating or inhibiting it. In this case, it is observed that the bureaucratic and hierarchical nature of the organization can be seen as an inhibitor for KT. On the other hand, it was possible to observe, through the field diary, that there is a feeling of belonging to the institution studied, as well as proximity between the workers, which create bonds that go beyond professional boundaries. In this context, J. P. M. Silva et al. (2022) already pointed to the importance of relational dynamics in the KT process, which, in this case, can be a positive factor in the studied institution.

The particularities of retirement highlight the fact that it is linked to the end of work activities, productivity, and usefulness in the work environment, bringing with it anxieties such as the fear of losing value, proximity to finitude and the difficulties and limitations of workers. Such data are in line with the studies by Barroz and Muniz (2014), which point out that the reality of the mature worker is also marked by the non-recognition of their potential, stigma, and prejudice. Empirical data evidenced the so-called prejudice against aging, ageism, in the sense addressed by A. M. Fraga et al. (2021) and Helal and Viana (2021). Even though ageism is not the focus of this work, it is worth calling attention to its danger, as Firzly et al. (2021) do. That said, the importance of age management in organizations and for the people who are part of them is evident (Hanashiro & Pereira, 2020; M. A. P. Silva & Helal, 2022; Tonelli et al., 2020).

On the other hand, retirement also brings with it the feeling of reward and appreciation for the years dedicated to work, as well as the possibility of learning and sharing knowledge and experience. In this sense, both Mansour and Tremblay (2019) and Vasconcelos (2018) emphasize the importance of the knowledge and experience of these workers in the context of KT.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, in addition to retirement being strongly linked to financial issues and insecurity regarding the job market, it is also associated with social, family, and subjective aspects. In this context, intergenerational issues are also highlighted, since, in the organizational environment, different generations relate to each other, sharing spaces, activities, knowledge and experience. Through non-participant observation, it was possible to notice that the studied institution offers

some mechanisms for the transfer of knowledge, as well pointed out by J. P. M. Silva et al. (2022). Among them, development opportunities stand out, in which workers frequently interact, informal and formal spaces for discussion and documented procedures, among others.

As for the research participants, of the 14 mature workers, six are men and eight are women. Of the mature women participating in the survey, four are already retired and four will retire in the coming years. The average retirement time is seven years and the average length of stay at the HEI is 30.3 years. Of the mature men participating in the survey, four are already retired and two will retire in the coming years. The average retirement time is 4.5 years and the average length of stay at the HEI is 26.1 years. With regard to the eight managers participating in the research, four are men and four are women. Four of the interviewed managers are considered mature workers. The average length of stay at the HEI is 22.3 years. As for the 14 young workers, two are men and 12 are women. The other participants in the survey make up a group of mixed workers, both in terms of generation, age, gender, and length of service. However, the average length of stay at the HEI is 7.1 years.

Value assigned to knowledge transfer

In the perception of young workers, KT is beneficial for everyone involved, that is, both for those who transmit knowledge and for those who receive it, as well as for the HEI itself, as can be seen in the following speech:

> I think it would be like having a tripod. The point that unites the tripod is thinking about the university as a whole. Both for me, who's learning, it will make my job easier so that things work out for the university, and for those who are in the process of retiring, who worked here and want everything to work out and for things to work properly. And for the university, which also wins, because things will happen more smoothly, respecting the norms and processes (E-J2).

The value assigned to TC is especially concerned with the HEI and the continuity of activities (E-J2), as well as the possibility of learning from mature people, with their mistakes and successes and their experiences, as mentioned G-J5: "Reference people change little; we will realize when the person leaves", aspects highlighted by Lemos and Joia (2012). Young workers highlight the importance of being able to do a good job based on the knowledge of people who are retiring, as revealed by E-J1: "That person with 30 years of university experience knows a lot [...]; I think it's interesting to pass on knowledge to those who stay; not that the person will not learn, but it is much easier if there is someone to teach", which corroborates Mansour and Tremblay (2019), P. C. N. Souto (2014) and Vasconcelos (2018), who emphasize the importance of knowledge of mature workers and the sharing of this content with younger workers.

Both for managers and for young workers, KT is valuable, especially as it develops other professionals and allows continuity of activities carried out in the organization. On the other hand, despite young workers realizing the importance of such sharing, there is resistance to the fact of learning from mature workers, since, although management perceives the importance of KT, there is little practice and incentive for such action on the part of companies, according to the empirical data collected. Such information corroborates J. P. M. Silva et al. (2022), since KT involves cultural, relational, and institutional barriers. In this context, Cepellos and Tonelli (2017) already pointed out that organizations are not yet prepared for the aging of the workforce.

For managers, sharing knowledge is a way for it to be valued and respected in the organization in which they work, as can be seen in the testimony of E-G7: "People will follow you and respect you for your trajectory here, for your history at the institution; they will believe and trust you and respect you for everything you built within the institution". The data confirm what Cepellos (2018) thinks, since managers tend to have positive perceptions about the loyalty and commitment of mature workers in organizations.

For mature workers and managers, sharing knowledge is important for the progress of activities. Here is the supporting statement:

> It is important because our activity, if a person arrives tomorrow, would have to start from 0; [...] the process is slow to analyze; so if you don't share with someone and tomorrow I leave, nobody knows; so, we think a little about the institution; [...] it improves my work if someone can help (E-A1).

The evidence confirms the statements by Lambert et al. (2016) and Royer and Latz (2016), who point to the preservation of institutional memory, through the succession of workers. In addition, KT can contribute to mature workers, since sharing their own knowledge is a way of continuing their history, as E-A8 says: "You have to leave room for others, are you preparing someone to replace you? I know that if I left today, a lot of the work would still get done." This aspect confirms Ashworth (2006), who states that the legacy of knowledge and experience of mature workers can continue if it is incorporated into group processes. In addition, Davenport and Prusak (2003) have already pointed out that knowledge is a mixture of experiences, values, information and insights, which necessarily depend on people. Zanelli (2000) states that retirement is a moment of transition that can offer opportunities for personal development when potentialities, sources of pleasure and growth are discovered and, in this context, knowledge sharing is a path for this.

For young workers, sharing knowledge is seen as a way to reassure the mature worker, ensuring that the work continues in the best possible way, even in their absence, as mentioned by E-J13: "Are these people not suffering too? To worry that, in a little while, they won't be here anymore? I think people suffer from it too, so it's also a benefit for them; I think it reassures them."

Empirical evidence reveals that the mature worker is recognized through the sharing of his knowledge, according to Lemos and Joia (2012) and Zanelli (2000). Here are the supporting statements:

> When I know something, I like to pass it on and share it; if I do not share, it seems that it is useless (E-A12).

> We realize that our bosses consult us a lot because of this background; we are always being asked to pass on some information about the rules, the institutional regulations, the academic processes that I work with" (E-A14).

Mature and young workers agree with the resistance in acquiring and transmitting knowledge, as attested by Macau et al. (2009), which point out that the individual may feel insecure about sharing their knowledge, as is clear in the following statements:

> There are people willing to accept criticism and people who already have that prejudice and say "ah, but that person has been here for a long time, it has always been like this"; I think not everyone is open to this knowledge (E-A10).

> Sometimes they [mature workers] don't want to pass it on to anyone; there are people with a lot of experience that they don't pass on to others for fear of not being needed anymore (G-J3).

During the focus group, it was observed that KT does not only occur from mature to younger workers, it is a double path, as G-J5 reveals: "It is not necessarily from the oldest to the youngest, it depends on the knowledge that is being transferred." The managers participating in the research observed differences between these two groups of workers with regard to commitment (E-G2), immediacy (E-G2), the way of facing frustrations (E-G2), resistance to change (E-A7) and forms of relationship (E-A9), again corroborating Cepellos (2018), who points out the positive and negative perceptions in relation to the mature worker. However, managers emphasize the importance of different generations working together to achieve organizational results. Here are testimonials in this regard:

> It seems that [young workers] are more concerned about arriving at 5:30 pm on a Friday. The immediacy of young people scares me, I joined yesterday and I want to be a boss, in an institution that doesn't have this pace (E-G2).

> I think they are mature and experienced people to work with, they are aware and responsible. But they are resistant to change and innovation (E-A7).

> No wonder that, in a while, they date [young workers] only virtually. It's making people colder in terms of relationships (E-A9).

> Those who are arriving come with a way of thinking and those who are leaving have knowledge that they have built up over the years. This vision that each one has can make the processes go through a different look, which provides the growth of the companies (E-G1).

The data presented confirm the statements by Colet and Mozzato (2017), as well as by Munari et al. (2017), when highlighting the role of organizations in the sense of using skills that encourage the sharing of experience and knowledge among professionals from different generations. In addition, Sabbag (2007) already highlighted the importance of trust between team members and horizontal relationships of equality as factors that benefit KT.

According to the data presented in Box 4, KT can contribute to workers in an HEI, whether they are young or mature, as well as to the HEI itself.

Box 4
Contributions of knowledge transfer in an HEI

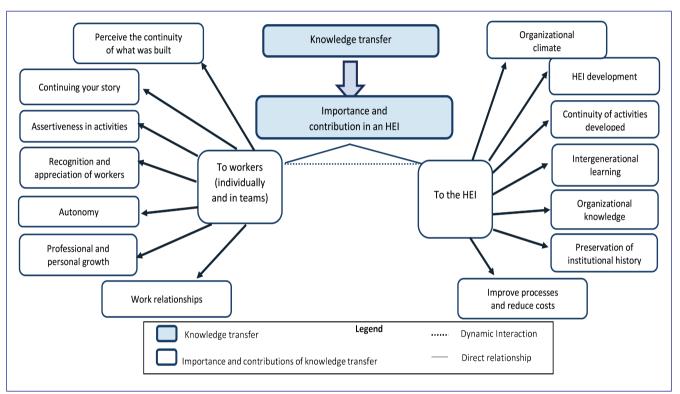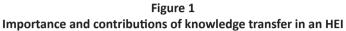| Contributions	Context units
To workers (mature and young)	"These are experiences that I had in life and that I can show you without you having to fail" (E-G8).
	"I think this help, daily advice, problem solving; [...] this contributes a lot to our growth" (E-J10).
	"Sometimes, it happens that, in a sector, someone leaves, gets sick, goes away, and the sector does not know how to continue with the activities; ends up affecting the atmosphere, relationships" (E-G2).
	"I always try to pass on knowledge to people in the sector, as a way to speed up work; it is a way to have a greater success in the acquisition of products; people feel safer" (E-G4).
	"For young people, it is an experience to see in others a little of what can be done with everything they have already contributed to the institution. Young people gain more experience, have more responsibility for what they are doing. [...] It is very important to share this with people" (E-J6).
To the HEI	"The institution loses a lot with this [non-transfer of knowledge], people take things with them that belong to the university; not that the university cannot build again, it just takes time" (E-A5).
	"I think the benefit is to continue the work. From the moment you pass on the knowledge to someone with another vision, with new experiences, the person can contribute to the improvement of processes, informatization" (E-G1).
	"The university would benefit in the sense of not letting knowledge die. [...] When people retire in certain sectors, the university suffers a great loss. People who have the knowledge, who, if they leave today, the university loses its north of where to look" (E-J3).
	"These experiences that people go through of what went right and what went wrong is very important; we can learn a lot; the institution grows, it is as if it were evolving instead of going backwards" (E-J12).
	"From the moment you manage to institutionalize a process of sharing with these older people, it flows more, speeds up, faces less problems; [...] the institution stands to gain not only economically, but also in terms of relationships. [...] They only have to gain, the institution and the people" (E-J13).

Source: Survey data.

Managers also perceive the contribution of KT to the workers themselves, due to its influence both on professional growth in the HEI itself and on the personal development of each one (E-G8). Young workers also recognize the value of KT in an HEI (E-J10).

The KT also collaborates with work groups/teams (E-G4) and, again, it is observed that its value cooperates for the growth of sectors and, thus, for the evolution of the HEI itself and the development of relationships in the work environment (E-G2). For young workers, KT contributes to work groups as it is possible to prepare the team to solve daily problems, as well as to move forward with activities in the sector in which they work (E-J6), as Van Wijk et al. (2008) rightly points out. Furthermore, A. F. Dias et al. (2019) and J. P. M. Silva et al. (2022) emphasize the importance of interaction and collaboration among workers for KT to occur.

In the perception of all research participants, KT also contributes to the HEI as a whole, since, through it, the institutional history is recognized and valued (E-A5); it is feasible to improve processes based on mistakes and successes made in the past (E-J12); organizational costs are reduced (E-J13); it improves the organizational climate (E-J13) and there is no loss of knowledge with the departure of mature workers (E-J3). In this way, the HEI can benefit from KT, since it is possible to learn from the social interaction of different individuals in organizations, allowing the development and renewal of capabilities. Finally, in order to understand the importance and contributions of KT in an HEI, we present Figure 1, which was prepared based on the empirical data collected.

Figure 1
Importance and contributions of knowledge transfer in an HEI

Note: In Figure 1, what is marked in light blue color refers to knowledge transfer and what is not colored refers to the importance and contribution of knowledge transfer. The dotted items (.....) represent a dynamic interaction; items in a straight line (___) represent a direct relationship between the data.

Source: Elaborated by the authors.

CONCLUSIONS

Upon reaching the end of this research, it can be said that it was possible to obtain greater knowledge about the importance of KT for workers in the process of retirement at an HEI and the benefits that this practice promotes for workers and the HEI itself. It is noteworthy that, for managers and young workers, the value attributed to KT is the possibility of learning from mature people, in addition to KT having a special value as it develops other professionals.

KT can help mature workers, since sharing their own knowledge is a way to continue their history and be valued and recognized. KT also contributes to the HEI since, through it, the institutional history is recognized and valued, it is possible to improve processes, reduce organizational costs, improve the organizational climate, and not lose knowledge with the departure of mature workers.

In the **theoretical-academic scope**, the research contributes to studies on KT in the context of retirement, since these topics do not have wide correspondence in the national and international literature when related. The research data corroborate the theories presented, confirming them, and strengthening the theme at the national level, highlighting, in the theoretical sphere, the contribution of the perceptions of young workers in relation to the sharing of knowledge by mature workers, since the former also show resistance, although they have a positive understanding of such action.

As **practical and managerial contributions**, we highlight the possibility of understanding the importance of KT, especially from the point of view of professionals in the process of retirement, and the reflection on the role of management with regard to KT for these workers.

As **limitations**, it is observed that this is a cross-sectional study, which was carried out in a specific period of time. **Future research** could be longitudinal, in order to contemplate the respective theme with dynamism and a prospective vision. Further studies on KT and its relationship with retirement are suggested, especially in Brazil, as these are still incipient.

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Anelise Rebelato Mozzato: Conceptualization (Supporting); Formal Analysis (Supporting); Investigation (Supporting); Methodology (Equal); Project administration (Supporting); Resources (Equal); Software (Supporting); Supervision (Lead); Validation (Equal); Visualization (Equal); Writing - original draft (Supporting); Writing - review & editing (Equal).