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Sustainable Business Concepts and Practices

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Sustainable Business Concepts and Practices

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FOREWORD

The Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business aims to provide a unique international forum to facilitate the exchange of cutting-edge information through multidisciplinary presentations on examining and building new theories and business models for success through management innovation.

It is acknowledged that the conference has established itself as one of the major conferences of its kind in the EuroMed region, in terms of size, quality of content, and standing of attendees. Many of the papers presented contribute significantly to the business knowledge base.

The conference attracts hundreds of leading scholars from leading universities and principal executives and politicians from all over the world with the participation or intervention of presidents, prime ministers, ministers, company CEOs, presidents of chambers of commerce, mayors, and other leading figures.

This year the conference attracted over 200 people from over 25 different countries. Academics, practitioners, researchers, and doctoral students throughout the world submitted original papers for conference presentations and publication in this Book of Proceedings. All papers and abstracts were double-blind reviewed. The result of these efforts produced empirical, conceptual, and methodological papers and abstracts involving all functional areas of business.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Many people and organizations are responsible for the successful outcome of the 15th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business. Special thanks go to the Conference Co-Chairs Prof. Maria Crescimanno and Prof. Antonino Galati, of the University of Palermo, for accomplishing a superb job. Undoubtedly, our appreciation goes to the conference hosting institution as well as to our numerous sponsors and supporters.

It is acknowledged that a successful conference could not be possible without the professional work and special cooperation of the Track Chairs and Reviewers for reviewing and commenting upon the many papers that were submitted to this conference. Special thanks also go to the Session Chairs and Paper Discussants who have managed through their interventions and discussions to make this conference a real success.

The last but not the least important acknowledgement goes to all those who submitted and presented their work at the conference. Their valuable and cutting-edge research has highly contributed to the continued success of the conference.

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BOOK OF CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

ORGANIZING KNOWLEDGE VISUALISATION IN EMERGENCY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN UNIVERSITIES

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyse and understand the use of Knowledge Visualisation (KV) in universities. Specifically, we want to understand how KV can support decision-making in universities and which KV formats are used in emergency management. This study uses a dual methodological approach: qualitative and exploratory. The collection of data and information is based on the analysis of two case studies, semi-structured interviews and observed participation. To understand the role of KV during the emergency, the two European countries most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic crisis (Italy and Spain) have been identified. Two teams of researchers (one Italian and one Spanish) carried out interviews with the universities' communication managers. The results of this research offer food for thought for the academic debate on knowledge management in universities through a comparative analysis between two countries—Italy and Spain.

The results highlight the flexibility of Knowledge Visualization formats and their ability to support decision-making in the emergency phase.

This study is not without limitations. The results focus only on the role of Knowledge Visualization in the decision-making process during an emergency phase. Further insights are needed to understand the impact of KV in no-emergency phase. In addition, to understand its real impacts, it is necessary to explore how people in organisations act regarding KV by building sufficient awareness and also acquiring more knowledge, which we hope can be the next step of the investigation.

Keywords: Knowledge Visualisation, Emergency, University, Decision-making; Comparative Case studies, Knowledge Management.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knowledge Visualisation (KV) is a research area that is increasingly gaining attention because it examines the use of visual representations to improve knowledge management at all levels; including

personal, inter-personal, team, organisational, inter-organisational and social levels. Many scholars have highlighted the importance of using diagrams, graphs, schemes, mind maps and social graphs captured in real-time (Berinato, 2016; Miah et al., 2017). Visual representations of information and knowledge have been indicated as a dimension of modern knowledge management to support decision-making process (Miah et al., 2017). Organisations worldwide have had to face the pandemic, but KV could be a format that supports the decision-maker in emergency management. In this context, the decision-maker can use KV formats (images, maps, etc.) to transform data and information into accessible forms of representations to extract new knowledge and information. This study fills this gap in the literature by offering an overview on the use of KV in universities during an COVID-19 emergency. Based on these premises, this research starts with an analysis of the literature on the subject of KV and its formats. It then focuses on the empirical analysis of a case study on the University of Jaén (Spain) and the "Magna-Græcia" University of Catanzaro (Italy) as organisations that have been deeply impacted by the coronavirus.

This study investigates KV—through a qualitative and exploratory approach—with the help of two research questions.

RQ1: How does KV support emergency management in universities?

RQ2: What KV formats are used to support decision-making and knowledge management?

The remainder of this paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides a theoretical framework on KV and issues in the decision-making process during an emergency. Section 3 proposes a detailed description of the methodology. Section 4 presents the findings and conclusions that are then discussed in section 5, in which the study's limitations and recommended future research are also identified.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Knowledge Visualisation Perspective

The field of Knowledge Visualisation focuses on creating and transferring knowledge through visualisation (Eppler and Burkhard, 2004; Meyer, 2010; Yan et.al., 2011). Eppler and Burkhard (2004) presented a widely accepted definition of KV, stating that it *"is defined as a field that examines the use of visual representations to improve the creation and transfer of knowledge between at least two people. Knowledge visualization thus designates all graphic means that can be used to construct and convey complex insights"*.

KV tends to improve the transfer and creation of knowledge between people by providing them with the means to express what they know. Consequently, KV tends to increase knowledge-intensive communication between individuals; for example, by relating new insights to concepts already understood (Eppler and Burkhard, 2004). Eppler and Burkhard (2007) proposed a revised

definition of KV as "*the subject that studies how to improve complex knowledge creation and transmission between two or more applying visual representation*" (p.18). The primary goal of KV is to support knowledge creation and sharing processes. Burkhard (2005) compared Knowledge Management (KM) and KV and concluded that KV is classified as a component of KM, mainly because knowledge transfer is a key process in knowledge-intensive organisations. Burkhard

2.1.1 Knowledge Visualisation Format

According to Eppler and Bresciani (2013), KV refers to all graphic means that can be used to develop or mediate experiences, methods or skills. KV encourages the creation and transfer of knowledge by providing users with an extended range of formats to express and share what they know. The transfer of visual knowledge is complex and challenging as the recipient's background cannot be distinguished. Visual formats need to be specific, but to become knowledge, information must be processed, meaningful and integrated into the user's mental knowledge structure. KV formats may include a sketch, diagram, map, images, physical model and interactive visualisation (Meyer, 2010). Starting with early symbols, visualisation formats have been designed to improve and enhance knowledge sharing and overcome limitations of time and space (Katuscakova et al., 2019).

For the actual creation and transfer of knowledge through visualisation, Burkhard (2005) stated that at least five perspectives should be considered. The framework distinguishes six types of knowledge: declarative knowledge (knowing what), procedural knowledge (knowing how), experiential knowledge (knowing why), knowledge about people (knowing who), location-based knowledge (knowing where) and knowledge based on legislation or values (know-what-if). With the help of the function, it is possible to differentiate between different aims for the use of KV, including knowledge sharing through visual means, knowledge creation, learning from visual representations, visual coding of experiences in the past for future users or knowledge mapping (Eppler and Burkhard, 2004; Elouni et al., 2016). The target group perspective, on the other hand, underlines the fact that knowledge visualisation must satisfy the preferences of primary and potential target groups. Their background needs to be taken into consideration, in addition to their expectations when choosing a display format. The situation perspective view emphasises that the use of visualisation depends on the physical or virtual environment and the number of people interacting to manage knowledge.

Finally, the format perspective view outlines the view formats into seven main groups that use media prerequisites as a ranking criterion.

2.2 Knowledge Visualisation in the decision-making process

For all organizations, the decision-making process is one of the most important activities. It is a process involving choices, and this process generally consists of several steps: identifying problems, generating alternatives, evaluating alternatives, choosing an alternative, implementing the decision,

and evaluating decision effectiveness (Schoenfeld, 2011). The KV formats help decision-makers to see patterns in data that are more difficult to detect through rational methods, improving decisions (Lurie and Mason, 2007). According to Lurie and Mason (2007), the use of KV formats in decision-making shows higher performance, in terms of speed, appropriateness, accuracy and completeness. KV formats that shape and present information more effectively facilitates better communication and supports sense-making (Al-Kassab, 2014). Visualisation can help to support decision-making processes, but it is important to understand its role in terms of knowledge. Visualisation formats can be interpreted as knowledge enablers and could influence knowledge processes such as sharing, integrating and translating (Canónico et al., 2021). Using appropriate visual representations allows us to present knowledge at a given moment and link it to previous knowledge, facilitating knowledge dissemination for decision-makers and problem-solving. Diagrams, tables and maps are useful for representing precise and indexical information, both quantitatively and qualitatively, supporting decision-making by constraining the set of alternatives that one must consider during a decision-making activity and specifying paths and commonalities among different problem states within an information space (Parsons and Sedig, 2014). Decision-makers need to be aware that KV can enhance knowledge processes and bias them by constraining the attention to a limited set of alternatives, focusing the attention on the wrong variables or encouraging inaccurate comparisons (Al-Kassab, 2014). KV investigates the use of visualisation techniques to facilitate communication in knowledge-intensive processes and support the creation of new knowledge by using visual techniques. It also explicates, shares or develops knowledge and supports the creation of visualisations for contents that constantly change, such as a process or complex project (Burkhard, 2006).

3. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a dual methodological approach has been implemented: qualitative and exploratory. The qualitative research approach is appropriate for obtaining a greater description of the phenomenon by the complex nature of the organisations under observation. In fact, knowledge, due to its immaterial nature (Moustaghfir and Schiuma, 2013; Vesperi, et al., 2019), is difficult to capture and observe with different methodologies. This explains why this approach is used, where the "theory is founded" on the participants' experiences, behaviours, and attitudes. The exploratory nature aims to build the theoretical premises regarding KV, the use of KV in universities and the strategic ability to support decision-making. The case study structure is useful for fully understanding an organisation in its context (Crowe et al., 2011, Hyett et al., 2014). The use of several cases brings out the common characteristics of the same phenomenon in different contexts. The case studies identified in this study are two public universities from two European countries (Italy and Spain). We decided to select two

universities with similar organizational characteristics in terms of size, student population and departmental organisation. The case studies investigate two public universities in two different European countries (Italy and Spain), most affected by the COVID-19 health emergency. The Italian university is "Magna-Græcia" University of Catanzaro (UMG- ITALY) and the Universidad de Jaen (UJA-SPAIN).

The analysis of universities brings us to the organisational actors who above all can teach about the management of the COVID-19 emergency to work in coordination and overcome decision-making problems. While analysing the case studies, the interviews' documents and transcription, the quality indicators of the rigour of the case study research that Yin (2003) proposed, were used. Specifically, the analysis was based on the rigour and relevance of the results. Methodological design and execution define the rigour of the methodological process (Remenyi, 2012).

Three data collection techniques were used: desk analysis, participant observation and semi-structured interviews (Schiele and Krummaker, 2011). The documentary analysis made it possible to understand and identify the organisational characteristics of the case studies and the response models to COVID-19. Several documents were examined: COVID-19 university regulations and measures and university websites. The data collected with the documents' analysis made available and published on the university websites were integrated during the interviews with the university decision-makers. To increase the quality of the material and identify significant consistencies with the aim of the research, a thematic analysis is carried out (Patton, 2002). To make comparable interviews, the researchers conducted interviews with decision-makers from the two universities, who have functions specifically related to the KV. The researchers conducted the interviews via video meetings. The interviews lasted from 40 to 65 min. Specifically, the UMG researchers interviewed the General Manager. The UJA researchers interviewed the Deputy Rector, who is responsible for communication.

At the end of each interview, the researchers who conducted the interview shared and discussed the interviews' results with the interviewees, based on the approach described by Ricoeur (1986; Kahkonen, 2014; Canonico et al., 2021).

Finally, participant observation was done by the researchers who carried out the field work by accessing the university premises and verifying the KV tools present.

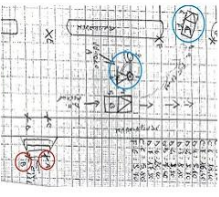
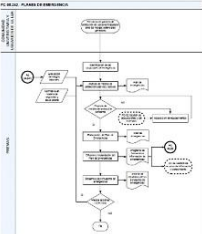



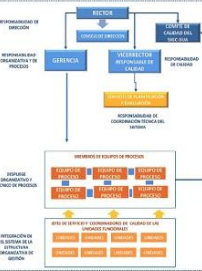

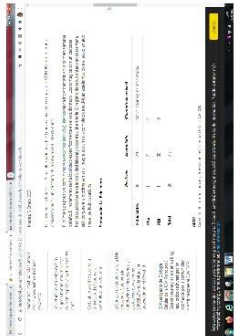
4. FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This study is based on the framework for KV proposed by Burkhard and Eppler's model (2005, 2007) helps us to identify and understand the use of KV in the university context at UMG and UJA, explaining the interactions of the decision-maker with the use of formats for KV. KV is understood as

a crucial component of Knowledge Management (KM), where decision-makers need to explore and obtain information and then manage and share knowledge.

In the emergency phase, making knowledge visible (accessible, discussed and shared), represented a support tool especially for the universities in this context. The decision-making process—following a temporal sequence—begins when the UJA Deputy Rector and UMG General Manager have to make a feasible and effective decision in a short time (Emergency Phase: COVID-19) using heuristic sketches, diagrams, images, maps, objects, etc. The reason visual archetypes, containing representations of the real world, are used is because humans have the ability to process images quickly and relate them to previous knowledge already associated with a known image. When you see an image, you know what it represents even though you don't remember the name/concept. It's important for the decision-maker to be aware of the type of recipient that identifies the target group and the context of the recipient, which can be an individual, a team, an entire organisation or a network of people. In these case studies, it was fundamental for the two universities to know the context and the cognitive background of the recipient to find the right visualisation method for the KV. KV offers a systematic approach to creating, codifying, transferring and identifying knowledge at various levels: among individuals, from individuals to groups, between groups and from individuals and groups to the entire organisation. To do so, knowledge must be recreated in the mind of the receiver (El Sawy et al., 1997). This depends on the recipient's cognitive capacity to process the incoming stimuli (Vance and Eynon, 1998). Once the knowledge is displayed, the decision-maker acquires feedbacks from the target audience. Thus, the person responsible also needs to convey it in the right context and in a way that it can ultimately be used and remembered.

Fig. 1 – Comparison of KV format in case studies

Formats	UMG	UJA
<p>Sketches Simple drawings that help us visualize the key features and the main idea very quickly. They can be used in group reflections and communication processes as they make knowledge debatable. Additionally, they allow room for interpretation and thus stimulate creativity and keep the attention of a group fixed on the discussed object</p>		
<p>Diagrams Schematic representations that are used to display, explore and explain relationships. They reduce complexity, make abstract concepts accessible and amplify cognition. Unlike sketches, they are precise and determined. Examples of the diagrams are bar- and pie charts and Gantt-, Fern- or process diagrams</p>		
<p>Images They represent reality but can also be artistic. They are able to address emotions and can inspire, motivate or energise the audience and thus are often used for advertisements (images are visual)</p>		
<p>Knowledge Maps Consist of two components: The context, which should be easy to understand for all users of the map, and project milestones are mapped within this context</p>		
<p>Concept Maps Intended to represent meaningful relationships between concepts in the form of propositions</p>		
<p>Interactive Visualization Computer-based interactive visualizations allow you to access, control, explore, combine and manipulate different types of complex data, information and knowledge. They also fascinate the recipients and enable interactive collaborations and thus help create new insights</p>		

Source: our elaboration

The decision-maker, with the help of their competences and acquired experience, will initiate a new decision-making process that will lead to the construction of a new visualisation. In this new phase, the decision-maker will be able to refine or add further KV formats until the creation, codifying, transfer, identification, and so on of knowledge is successful.

The integrated use of multiple formats such as diagrams, graphs, schemes, mind maps and interactive visualisations was indicated by the two interviewees as support during the decision-making process. KV, in the era of the pandemic, has allowed them to homogenise knowledge and speed up choices. The usability of the visual format has improved decision-making, and KV has created a new environment for it. Using this format made it possible to acquire knowledge information as it was supported by visual elements. Particular emphasis was placed on internal customers, actively involved in the design and implementation of the display formats. The display formats have been evaluated very well in terms of performance and preferences by the internal customers themselves, and the analysis of the visual formats has shown that the different types of KV have a specific degree of usefulness depending on the activity. Knowledge visualisations were used to explain and answer questions about why, what, whom, when and how. The diversity of the target audience has emphasised that KV must be adapted to the preferences of the target audience (teaching staff, administrative staff, students, etc.), which then must be implemented into the different types of KV. The formats used in the universities can inform multilevel coordinated decision-makers on how to improve knowledge creation, identification and transfer. In the two universities, to date, a Model for Quality Management and a Strategic Plan for Emergencies have been implemented.

5. DISCUSSION

The results of this study have provided significant insights into theoretical, methodological, and empirical reflections.

From a theoretical point of view highlights the KV central role in the debate on decision-making problems. KV allows you to create, transfer and share knowledge in a new and rapid way, supporting decision-making processes through visual representations. The empirical analysis of the case studies allowed us to answer our research questions. This empirical observation of universities in two different European countries has highlighted the role of KV in supporting decision-makers during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first research question aimed to understand the support that KV provides in the context of emergency management in universities. Through interviews with decision-makers, the analysis of internal documents and participatory observations from both universities, the data collected show that the use of KV has had an overall positive impact on a social and emotional level

(collaboration and involvement), leading to better communication and a better understanding of information and data, as well as decision-making.

The different KV formats adapt to organizations' characteristics, allowing them to speed up their decision-making process. The results of the interviews and the analysis of the documents show that KV is widely used in universities. In the preliminary phase of the interviews, the universities' decision-makers showed their awareness of the potential and importance of KM. However, the use of different KV formats in universities confirmed that decision-makers were not aware of KV. Despite this gap, decision-makers have made extensive use of different KV formats. KV formats have helped decision-makers see patterns in data that are more difficult to detect through rational methods, improving decision-making (Lurie and Mason, 2007). Visual representations can expand problem-solving capabilities by allowing more data to be processed without overburdening the decision-maker (Lurie and Mason, 2007, p. 2).

The results of this study highlight that KV supports decision-makers at all stages of the decision-making process. The interviews with the decision-makers made it clear that visualisation can help support decision-making, but it is important to understand its role in terms of knowledge. Hence, KV formats allow for more efficient and faster knowledge management (e.g., sketches and maps). The formats have been valid support in the COVID-19 emergency phase for both UMG and UJAN. Furthermore, the different formats of KV were used with regard to the recipients (administrative staff, teachers, students, etc.). Strategic plans made it possible to introduce the new KV formats quickly into the organisations. The strategic plans also represented the main way to introduce KV formats to universities. According to Lurie and Mason (2007), the use of KV formats in decision-making shows higher performance, in terms of speed, appropriateness, accuracy and completeness. KV formats shape and present information more effectively, facilitates better communication and supports the creation of meaning (Al-Kassab, 2014).

The empirical observation of universities, in two different European countries, has allowed us to highlight how KV formats fit into the decision-making process.

KV, in its different formats, has allowed decision-makers to make the decision-making process more flexible, quick and shared. The empirical observations revealed that KV is particularly effective in sharing new knowledge. The introduction of new KV formats is linked to the introduction of regulations, confirming that visualisation increases the speed of the dissemination of knowledge.

From the methodological perspective, the results of this study highlight the effectiveness of the methodological tools used (analysis of case studies, interviews and participatory observations) to study the phenomenon of KV in complex organisations. The use of a qualitative methodology, in fact,

has made it possible to grasp the more submerged and emotional aspects of the use of the visualisation of knowledge in the decision-making process during the emergency phase.

Therefore, this article aimed to contribute to the debate on managerial and social implications. First managerial implication is directly related to the real comprehension of KV regarding people involved in decision-making processes. In addition, to understand its real impacts, it is necessary to study how people in organisations act regarding KV by creating sufficient awareness and also acquiring more knowledge, which we hope can be the next step of the investigation.

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CULTURAL SHOCK AND ACADEMIC CULTURE IN POST-COVID 19 PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study aims to analyze the levels of Culture Shock (CS) that university students manifest after the period of Distance Learning and physical return to university structures. The research deals with the phenomenon from the theoretical perspective of human resource development (HRD).

Design/methodology/approach –Data were collected through a Mumford (1998) questionnaire for the measurement of culture shock (CSQ). 341 questionnaires were collected. The survey sample is made up of university students from 5 Italian universities. Statistical analyzes were carried out to test the hypotheses.

Originality/value – The main innovation of this study consists in evaluating the culture shock of university students, in the phase of returning to university structures, after the distance learning period. Additionally, the study offers an original application to Mumford's (1998) CSQ questionnaire.

Findings - The results show that university students suffer from culture shock upon returning to university structures after the distance learning. The category of university students most affected by culture shock are women, from large universities with an average age of over 30

Practical implications – The results of this study show that universities should focus their attention on the psychological and emotional well-being of students.

Keywords: Shock, University Student, Covid-19, Questionnaire, Human Resource Development (HRD)

1. INTRODUCTION

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global pandemic status caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus (World Health Organization, 2020). As a result, a wave of fear and

panic has been generated within society, often transformed into a rush to purchase personal protective equipment for Covid-19 (surgical mask, disinfectant gel, gloves, medicines and vitamins). Many governments, with the aim to contain the spread of the virus and contagion between people, have started a "lockdown" program, blocking all activities in entire sectors (Mishra et al., 2020; Ayala, et al., 2022). Activities that suffered of the "lockdown effect" included the higher education sector. Consequently, in order not to suspend teaching activities, the universities have decided to realize Distance Learning (DL). The DL can be defined as a new educational and training model based on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). In a very short time, the teaching activities, traditionally carried out face to face in universities, are replaced by online lessons followed by students in their homes, through online and ICT platforms. Distance learning has spread through asynchronous and/or synchronous modalities mediated by electronic platforms (Clark and Mayer, 2016; Delgado-Gallegos, et., 2021) in order to share and transfer knowledge (Garrison, 2011, Gamage, et al., 2020). During the lockdown, university students had to adapt (without any alternative) to the new method of teaching and learning carried out exclusively online via laptop and telephone (Spicer, 2020; Kuning, 2021). This new environmental condition, in a very short time, has generated a profound impact on people's behaviors, beliefs and norms. In other words, Covid-19 has profoundly influenced the constituent elements of academic culture. As a result, a new academic culture based on online activities was created and quickly accepted (Dardjito and Robiasih, 2020). In line with these assumptions, the new online academic culture is based on the ability of university teachers to provide educational content, through ICT platforms, and to reduce temporal and spatial barriers with students (Bozkurt, 2019, Bozkurt and Sharma, 2020; Laufer, et al., 2021). Distance learning gave university students the feeling of being safe during the rapid spread of SARS-CoV-2 infection. Distance learning has been welcomed by university students and professors as a central element of the new culture of learning and participation in academic life. This new academic culture has been assimilated to a "new normal" (Tesar, 2020; Mseleku, 2020; Casacchia, et al., 2021); or a new way of living and enjoying university lessons during a pandemic. A new academic culture is defined based on new study habits and rules, participation in virtual meetings and a greater focus on the benefits of technology, without moving from home. The current pandemic situation, characterized by a drastic reduction of deaths caused by Covid-19 and a widespread vaccination campaign, after almost two years of DL, university students are faced with returning to university facilities and classrooms. This further change, combined with the perception of a still current risk of contagion, can represent a shock for university students. It is possible to define this shock as a culture shock, represented by the rapid change in the ways to attending lectures and university facilities. Culture shock can be seen as a powerful process of transformation both on an individual and social level of cultural forces (Cupsa, 2018; Furnham, 2019;

Dorda and Shtembari, 2020). Furthermore, culture shock can give rise to a series of emotional reactions (e.g., irritability, fear, stress) in a new environmental and cultural context. Culture shock can be seen as the process of initial adaptation to a new cultural environment (Pedersen, 1994). Several studies (Zhou, et al., 2008; Koris, et al., 2021), have shown that culture shock can have an impact on different aspects of the life of an individual or an organization (Takeuchi and Chen, 2013; Jyoti and Kour, 2017; Deopa and Fortunato, 2022). In the current competitive scenario, employees (or human resources) represent a strategic resource for organizations. For this reason, organizations base their competitive advantage not only on the knowledge and skills of their employees, but also on organizational well-being (Wilson, et al., 2004; Zampetakis, 2022). After Covid -19 with the rapid advancement of technology, in order to offer employees, the opportunity to improve work performance and organizational well-being, most organizations have had to redefine their Human Resource Development practices (HRD, Swanson & Holton, 2005). In line with numerous studies (Hill and Stewart, 2000; Harrison and Bazzi, 2017; Nizamidou and Vouzas, 2020) Human Resource Development (HRD) is a specific strategic area associated with the development of individual. Universities, from the HRD point of view, perform a dual function. The first function, universities are important levers in the creation of the human capital of the next generations and above all for the training of human resources. As a result, university students are heavily influenced by academic culture (routines, behaviors and values present in the university) and can shape their beliefs and behavior as future employees. Changing elements of academic culture can change their future job performance. Culture shock can have a negative impact on the health of university students.

From these premises, this study aims to investigate the phenomenon of culture shock that university students are experiencing upon returning to the university facilities, after the period of lockdown and distance learning. For this reason, the present study aims to cover this area of research which is currently not fully analyzed. In particular, the study wants to understand the phenomenon of culture shock that students have had and are experiencing upon returning to the classroom, in the theoretical perspective of HRD (Swanson and Holton, 2005). This study aims, through the measurement of the state of culture shock, to understand the impact that the return to university facilities and distance learning has had on the psycho-emotional health of university students.

We present the rest of this work as follows: after this (i) introduction, (ii) the main theoretical elements on culture, cultural shock and academic culture are discussed. Below, (iii) the methodological steps and the data collection process are illustrated. The study is based on the administration of the Culture Shock Questionnaire (CSQ; Mumford, 1998) to 341 university students from 5 different Italian universities. Finally, (iv) the main conclusions and suggestions for future research.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Culture and Cultural Shock

A consolidated literature on the phenomenon of culture shock exists in sociological, anthropological and economic studies. In recent decades, the phenomenon of culture shock is a topic that has fascinated scholars of organization and management studies (Pukthuanthong and Walker, 2007; Furnham, 2012; Taamneh, et al., 2018; Dorda and Shtembari, 2020). Despite this wide and varied literature, scholars agree that in order to understand the phenomenon of culture shock, it is first necessary to define the concept of culture. Defining the concept of "culture" is difficult (Spencer-Oatey and Franklin, 2012). The difficulty of defining the concept of culture is confirmed in the work of Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952). In fact, Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), identify over 160 different definitions of the term culture. Then, Kluckhohn (1961) proposes a definition widely accepted by scholars. According to Kluckhohn (1961) the culture consists of a community's ways of thinking, feeling and reacting. Culture, therefore, consists of a set of behavioral habits and moral values that guide human behavior handed down from generation to generation (Kazi, 2009). According to Hofstede (1980), culture separates members of a social environment from others. Culture is dynamic, made up of people who share the same opinions, conscious practices, values and behaviors. Culture can be transferred through symbols and artefacts such as language, philosophy, food, social activities, music and the arts (Kazi, 2009). Through artifacts, the culture of a social entity (community, enterprise, etc.) becomes tangible. Thus, culture can be experienced and becomes a product of learning. This can generate the opinion that one's culture is correct since it is the only one or at least the first to be learned. (Hofstede 1980). The concept of culture is not a stable concept over time. People's experiences in life, or significant events, can affect culture. From this point of view, culture is dynamic and constantly evolving. Culture, therefore, becomes dynamic and constantly evolving because it is continually influenced by people's experiences, beliefs and norms. Some events can deeply affect people's behaviors and values, changing the culture of a community or social entity. People who, as a result of dramatic events, come into contact with new elements of their culture, can generate a sense of disorientation, fear and anger (Skierlo 2007). These feelings are associated with the phenomenon of "culture shock". The expression "culture shock" indicates the feeling of psychological disorientation that a person experiences from the loss of elements of reference in the social relationship (Kalvero Oberg, 1960 p. 178) and in their own culture. An interesting definition of culture shock is given by Adler (1975). According to Adler (1975, p.13), culture shock can be defined as a set of emotional reactions to the loss of reference artefacts and symbols from one's own culture and to the misunderstanding of new cultural stimuli. Culture shock can manifest itself with symptoms of anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, fatigue, irritability, loneliness, forgetfulness, nostalgia, and

feelings of non-adaptation (Pedersen, 2004, p. 27). Culture shock, therefore, can be caused by the rapid change in the deep environmental conditions.

Culture shock causes a state of discomfort as the person who comes into contact with the new culture is unable to control or predict the behavior of other people (Naeem, et al., 2015). According to Peoples and Bailey (2009), culture shock can be defined as "the feeling of uncertainty and anxiety that an individual experiences when placed in a strange cultural context" (p. 431). In addition to this aspect, culture shock determines a difficulty in communication, hence the term "language shock" (Smalley, 1963). Guthrie (1975), replaces the term "culture shock" by using the term "cultural fatigue". Cultural fatigue is the attitude and the set of psychological efforts that a person demonstrates in adapting to a new cultural context. Culture shock, therefore, can manifest its negative effects on a person's social, work and behavioral life. From the HRD perspective, it is essential to understand the reactions of culture shock, on an individual level, as people may experience different effects that could reduce work performance (Winkelman, 1994; Furnham, 2019; Dorda and Shtembari, 2020; Ward, et al., 2020). Understanding a culture, and its distinctive elements, is essential for properly managing the people of a social community or organization (Hampden-Turner and Trompenaars 1997).

2.2 Academic culture and Covid-19

During the Covid-19 pandemic, people had to learn new routines and change their behavior. Maintaining social distance, the use of personal protective equipment (mask, gloves and hand sanitizer) are just some examples of new behaviors that people have had to adopt. As a result, the culture has undergone a profound change. Culture is something that unites the people of a community or organization. Members of a community or organization share values, behaviors and norms every day. Culture represents a standard for the behavior of individuals. Culture in universities has been recognized as an important research area (Weick, 1976; Becher, 1981; Clark, 1983; Bartell, 2003; Tierney and Lanford, 2018; Warter, 2019). Universities are complex social organizations with a distinct culture. The characteristics of academic culture are numerous and complex. The goals of the members belonging to this organization are heterogeneous with different expectations. First, university professors are experts with a high level of knowledge specialization. The term "ad hococracy" is used to describe organizations with personnel possessing specialized skills with a wide operational autonomy (Mintzberg, 1979). Academic culture is defined as "expertocracy" (Sporn, 1996), to emphasize the role of professors within the university. Furthermore, the academic culture is characterized by a hierarchical structure and formal regulations. In addition, within the university there is a decision-making process, often consisting of multiple phases and very long due to the involvement and different interests. Academic culture is based on the involvement and commitment of university students and professors. Students and university professors share common spaces, behaviors and

values for long periods. University students are the recipients of the knowledge transfer process, and have expectations about their training and preparation for the job. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a very important impact on the academic culture and behavior of university students. University students, during the Covid-19 pandemic, suffered physical and social restrictions during the lockdown. This brought about a new normal and a new culture.

Figure 1 -Evolution of teaching



Source: our elaboration

Figure 1 relates two dimensions: Technology-intensive rate (TI) and Time (t). Fig. 1., suggests the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic situation, has determined three historical phases of teaching.

The first phase - Pre-Covid-19 Phase - represents the historical period before the proclamation of the world pandemic state. Academic culture was mainly based on a process of teaching delivery through face-to-face lessons and a transfer of knowledge through interaction between university professors and students in classroom. The environment of university is stable, with technology used prevalently as a support to teaching that requires physical presence.

The second phase - Lockdown Phase - is characterized by a rapid diffusion and implementation of the technology in the teaching delivery process and in the transfer of knowledge between professor and university students. The Covid-19 pandemic has imposed a drastic reduction in face-to-face contacts between professor and students. Communication is direct and fast through ICT platform..

The last phase - Re-Entry Phase - represents the phase of the “new normal”. At this stage, university students and professors re-enter universities, after the lockdown period, absorbing new routines and procedures. University students and professors are faced with a new academic culture. The rate of use of the technology is lower than in the lockdown phase. The university environment becomes more

dynamic and fragile (Alraja, et al., 2022), for this reason they have to adopt a new technology for both distance learning and physical education.

Technology is not only used as a teaching aid, but continues to represent a professor-student interaction tool. The study focuses the attention on “re-entry” phase, highlighting the impact on the psycho-emotional health of university students.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

To investigate the phenomenon of culture shock among university students and the impact on their health, we based this research on exploratory and inductive analysis. Through a methodological process divided into six phases, qualitative and quantitative data were collected.

The first phase - analysis of literature - was identified the Culture Shock Questionnaire (CSQ) developed by Mumford (1998) and composed of 12 questions divided into two parts: elements of "core" culture shock and elements of interpersonal stress. The Culture Shock Questionnaire (CSQ; Mumford, 1998) is a widely used and validated tool in the academic literature to investigate the phenomenon of culture shock. CSQ, is based on the six aspects of culture shock outlined by Taft (1977), reformulated in the form of questions.

In the second phase - pre-reading questionnaire - the questionnaire was analyzed to understand the consistency with the objective of the research and with the recipients. In this study, we used a modified version of the CSQ. In our version we have added a section to collect information on age, gender, degree course, university, duration and number of exams taken in the distance learning period.

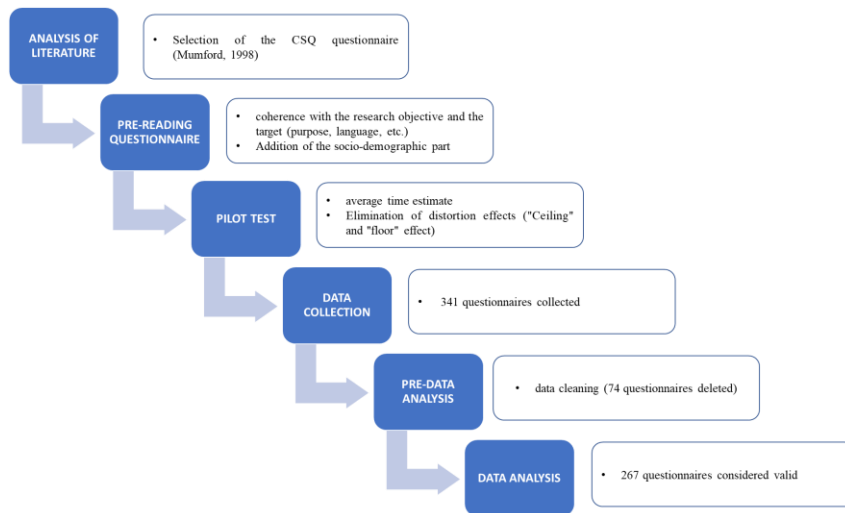
Subsequently - in the pilot test phase - we administered our modified version of the CSQ questionnaire to a sample of 20 university students. This pilot test made it possible to understand the average time for completing the questionnaire. In particular, the pilot test made it possible to reduce the main errors, namely: i) use of language and terms consistent with the target; ii) definition of the average compilation time; iii) unclear, ambiguous, confused or mistaken items have been eliminated and iv)) reduction of the “ceiling” effect and the “floor” effect.

In the fourth phase - data collection - the questionnaire was administered both through an online platform and in paper form. The questionnaire takes 15-20 minutes to complete. 341 questionnaires were collected from February to May 2022.

In the fifth phase - data pre-analysis - the data were analyzed to understand if they were complete and correctly filled in. About 20% of the questionnaires (74) were considered incorrectly completed.

Finally - data analysis - the data were processed, and the results were graphically reported.

Figure 2 – Methodological process



Source: our elaboration

3.1 Participants profile information

The personal information form was developed by the researchers. Items on “age”, “gender”, “degree course”, “sized university”, “distance learning months” and performance in the distance learning period were added. These items have been inserted to better contextualize the phenomenon. The questionnaires collected, administered both through the online platform and in paper form, were 341. At the end of the Pre-Data Analysis phase, 267 were considered correct and valid. The observed population was composed of Italian university students belonging to different universities and different degree courses. The first variable is the gender of the respondents. The observed population is composed of 267 university students, of which 122 are male (46%) and 145 are female (54%). It should be noted that in the questionnaire the gender field “Other/Prefer not to answer” was provided in which to bring together the different gender identities but no one has selected the choice.

The second observed variable is age of respondents. The Table 2, below show this information.

Table I. Age of the respondents

AGE	RANGE	19-26	53,00%
		27-32	35,00%
		33-40	12,00%
	INDICATORS	Mean	25
		Var	16
		Min	19
		Max	40

Source: our elaboration

To simplify the analysis of the collected data, the degree courses have been divided into three macro-categories, based on the prevalence of the nature of the courses. The table below show the main demographic information.

Table II. Main Demographic Information of degree course

		N	%
DEGREE	Management and Law	144	54,00%
	Humanities and Social Sciences	86	32,00%
	Healthcare and Medicine	37	14,00%

Source: our elaboration

Finally, the students were classified according to the size of the university and according to the months in Distance Learning (DL).

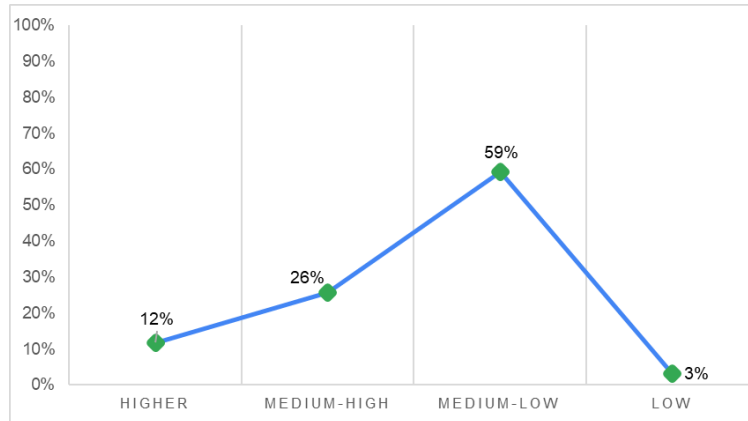
We created an Excel file to analyze all information in the questionnaires. In the data analysis, frequency distributions, percentage distribution, and means were calculated. Furthermore, the hypotheses on whether age, gender, the duration of the distance learning period (DL Months), the size of the universities (Sized University) and university performance (Performance) were tested. The Pearson correlation coefficient (Pearson's r) was used to test the research hypotheses.

4. FIRST RESULTS

During the Covid-19 pandemic and the lockdown period, traditional teaching activities were replaced with a remote teaching system. Now, university students are faced with a physical return to the university facilities. For this reason, students are faced with a new academic culture, which includes a combination of elements of the traditional system of classroom activities and online learning systems. For this reason, the first result of this study is aimed at understanding the level of culture shock that university students are experiencing, through the administration of the questionnaire. In this study, we used a modified version of the CSQ questionnaire (Mumford, 1998). The higher score indicates a high level of culture shock. Figure 3 shows the main results of the questionnaire. The results of the questionnaires show that university students are experiencing a culture shock upon physical return to university after the lockdown and distance learning (DL). From the data collected, through the administration of the questionnaire, it emerges that about 12% of the population observed has a "Higher" level of culture shock. The rest shows "medium-high" (26%), "medium-low" (59%) and finally "low" (3%) cultural shock level. The first consideration is that culture shock exists among university students. In fact, only a small percentage (3%) shows a low level. Instead, particular attention should be paid to "high" and "medium-high" levels of culture shock. The two categories comprise approximately 40% of the observed population. College students who exhibit these levels of culture shock are more likely to generate drastic negative emotional behaviors, such as fear, depression, and even dropout.

The university students interviewed demonstrate a state of malaise. Culture shock has a negative impact on the health of university students. In general terms, university students experience a feeling of general discomfort and pain.

Figure 3 – Distribution of Cultural shock



Source: our elaboration

Our research has not only set itself the goal of identifying the level of culture shock in university students. The research, in fact, has set itself the goal of understanding the main causes and factors that can influence the level of culture shock. In order to obtain more information on the phenomenon investigated and on the correct interpretation of the data, the answers obtained from each single questionnaire were processed and correlated to aspects such as: "Age", "Gender", "DL Months", "Sized University" And "Performance".

Table IV. Hypotheses test results

Hypothesis	Path	β Coefficient	Results
H1	Shock \rightarrow Age	+ 0,91	Support
H2	Shock \rightarrow Gender	+ 0,56	Support
H3	Shock \rightarrow DL months	+ 0,67	Support
H4	Shock \rightarrow Sized University	+0,70	Support
H5	Shock \rightarrow Performance	- 0,68	Reject

Source: our elaboration

Table 5 reports the relationship that exists between the levels of culture shock and the variables taken into consideration. In particular, we tested the hypothesis that the "Age" variable could influence the level of culture shock. From the data collected it emerges that the hypothesis can be accepted. The analysis of the data, in fact, shows that culture shock is influenced by the age of university students. University students aged 19-25 have lower levels of culture shock. The shock level is positively affected with increasing age. The second variable taken into consideration is "gender". Gender affects the level of shock. In general, males are the least affected by culture shock. Importantly, the "University of size" variable has a significant impact on culture shock. Students from large universities suffer the most from culture shock. The "DL Months" variable is poorly linked to the level of culture

shock. This variable represents the number of months the student has lived in distance learning. Finally, the hypothesis that academic performance affects the level of culture shock is rejected.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Universities have shown a good propensity to adapt in a dynamic and uncertain context such as during the Covid-19 pandemic. The process of reorganization and restructuring of teaching activities, after a long period of distance learning, requires students and university professors' new social skills to face life in a new university environment and academic culture. Differentiated entry and exit paths, space demarcations, use of the surgical mask during lessons, hybrid modalities and control of the green pass vaccination, represent some of the new routines of university life. The Figure 1, highlights the phases of the "new normal" that Covid-19 has imposed on academic culture. The results of this study highlight that university students are facing an active process of confronting the post-Covid-19 "new normal".

Upon physical return to the classroom, university students are experiencing difficult times that can generate emotional pain and learning difficulties. Culture shock is a process that is triggered to deal with change. The study shows that university students are suffering from a culture shock; in some cases, with very high levels. About 40% of the university students interviewed suffer from a "high" or "medium-higher" level of culture shock. The results highlight that university students suffer from psychological distress. To suffer the most are the students, from large universities who have spent long periods of DL.

From the theoretical HRD perspective, attention to the well-being of students in universities represents an important analytical perspective. Hence, universities must not only be considered as producers or intermediaries of new knowledge, but must deal with the personal growth of students. For this reason, universities are called upon to integrate and broaden their core teaching mission. Considering the teaching activity, not only as a moment of knowledge transfer, but starting to consider the well-being and personal growth of students. For this reason, university students should develop coping strategies to cope with culture shock. University must implement practices on human resources development (HRD), career development and organizational well-being for university students and professors. Measuring culture shock can be a good practice for assessing the health and well-being of university students.

From the perspective of the practical and managerial implications, the results of this study indicate that universities should start training courses, involving university professors and administrative staff, with the aim of transmitting the main strategies of coping and individual well-being, facilitating the building new social relationships.

Universities should be able to stimulate and cultivate the psychological well-being of university students. Between anxiety and depression, due to culture shock, university students continue their studies with difficulty sacrificing their health

The study is not without limits. The main limitation of this study is represented by the analysis sample (267 valid questionnaires). Although the questionnaires collected represent a sufficient number to test the various hypotheses, enlarging the survey sample can lead to a greater understanding of the phenomenon. Furthermore, the study focuses only on university students. Further studies should broaden the typology of interviewees to include professors and university administrative staff.

The results offer indications for future studies. Specifically, the results highlight that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought about a new culture and a new normal in the lives of university students. This must necessarily involve new reflections in the management of the life and well-being of university students.

The results of this study can offer insights to university managers. In fact, universities must not be seen as organizations that only deal with learning and education, but must be concerned with the growth and well-being of university students. Universities must take charge of the emotional experience of university students (such as the culture shock from Covid-19) and of how students interact with each other, creating bonds and relational capital. The results of this study present characteristics of innovation and originality. In particular, this study considers the culture shock that covid-19 has caused. On the other hand, many other investigators have focused attention on the culture shock that university students face during periods of study abroad. Future studies on the subject should be aimed at understanding whether university professors have also suffered culture shock or extend the sample of analysis.

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ENHANCE KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN AGRI-FOOD SECTOR: SOME PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

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ABSTRACT

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, corporate museums are becoming a very widespread organizational phenomenon. In the academic debate, studies on the corporate museum are few and focus exclusively on a communication and marketing perspective. In academic debate, only a small number of studies have focuses on this phenomenon from the knowledge management (KM) perspective. The corporate museum can become a place of representation of organizational memory and a source of knowledge and innovation. In management and organization studies, define organizational memory as a repository of knowledge and KM practices (Grant, 1997; Alavi & Leidner; 2001; Antunes & Pinheiro, 2020; Zahra, et al., 2020). In this study, we consider "organizational memory" as a set of knowledge present within an organization in the form of documents, information material or any other form that can represent managerial routines and practices (Vesperi and Ingrassia, 2021). The strategic function of the corporate museum does not end with the mere collection and representation of organizational artefacts. The corporate museum can be understood as "Ba" (Nonaka & Toyama, 2005, p. 428). According to Nonaka and Konno (1998), the ba is in a specific space created to collect and manage the knowledge of an organization. Ba is to be considered a shared space in which people - through dialogue, interaction with organizational artefacts and the contextual sharing of knowledge - can learn new knowledge and innovative solutions.

In line with this definition, the corporate museum, through the representation of organizational memory, can be consider as a place where, through the representation of organizational artefacts, experiences and KM practices, visitors remove any psychological barrier, starting the sharing process. of knowledge, through a process of socialization (Nonaka, et al., 2000). The corporate museum becomes a platform for advancing individual and organizational knowledge. The process of knowledge creation, therefore, becomes a cyclical process (Nonaka, 1994).

2. METHODOLOGY

This study aims to highlight the strategic value of corporate museums, by relating the concepts of organizational memory and *ba*. To achieve this aim, the study is based on a qualitative-exploratory approach. In particular, in order to fully understand and frame the general dynamics of the phenomenon (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994; Ventura, et al., 2020) the study is based on the analysis of the main theoretical references on knowledge management, organizational memory and *ba*. In order to bring out aspects of KM, the methodology was based on the use of a variety of sources. In particular, information and data were collected by consulting the public and free database created by Museimpresa (<https://museimpresa.com>). Museimpresa is an Italian association, founded in 2001 with the aim of promoting the enhancement of historical archives and business museums. The data were observed up to the date of 05/15/2021 (mm/dd/yyyy).

3. CONCLUSIONS AND FIRST CONSIDERATIONS

From the analysis of the Museimpresa databases, descriptive statistics were created, with the aim of understanding the diffusion of the phenomenon of the corporate museum in Italy. From the consultation of the databases, there are n. 101 corporate museums, who voluntarily registered in the database. It emerges that the geographical distribution is not homogeneous in the Italian territory (Vesperi and Ingrassia, 2021). Most of the corporate museums are located in central-northern Italy. This data is consistent with the history of the country's industrial evolution. Then, our survey focused on the agri-food sector. The agri-food sector, due to its intrinsic characteristics, represents crucial elements for the implementation of KM practices (Vesperi and Coppolino, 2022). Almost 40% of the corporate museums present in the databases can be connected to the agri-food sector. This demonstrates the need to reflect on the phenomenon of corporate museums in the agri-food sector. The results of this study, in this version, represent first elements of reflection on corporate museums. From the KM theoretical perspective, the corporate museum represents a collection of knowledge practices of an organization or a sector. Following this line of study, corporate museums can represent places in which to favour the development of new ideas, innovation and the development of new knowledge. Furthermore, this study associates the phenomenon of the corporate museum with the "*ba*" (Nonaka and Konno, 1998). This study is not without limitations. The first limitation is that this study is a work in progress. In fact, some aspects are still under investigation. In particular, the future steps of this research will focus on the realization of semi-structured interviews with the top and middle management of the corporate museum and with the associated parent company. The interviews will be aimed at understanding the relationship between the business museum and inter-organizational relationships, the organizational practices represented in the corporate museum and

the management of innovation (discussion of new ideas, creativity and development of new knowledge). This study may have interesting implications for research. In particular, the study of corporate museums from the KM perspective still appears poorly developed. There are few studies that focus on the inter-organizational relationships between the corporate museum and the parent organization. From the point of view of practical implications, the corporate museum can represent a place for the development of new ideas and innovation but above all to improve KM practices.

Keywords: Organizational Memory, Knowledge Management, Agri-food organization, BA.

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