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Human Resource Managers' Lived Experiences of Integrating Knowledge Management and Human Capital Management

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This is to certify that the doctoral dissertation by

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Walden
University
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Abstract

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by

Andrea C. Hunt

MBA, New Jersey City University, 2014

BS, New Jersey City University, 2012

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Management

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Abstract

Organizational leaders in the United States are encountering significant human capital challenges with the major demographic shift in the U.S. workforce. Critical to addressing these challenges and workplace success is the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers, which necessitates the integration of these practices into existing human intellectual capital management (HICM) strategies. This research addressed the need for an understanding of human resource managers' experiences of the integration of these practices and strategies. The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of a purposive sample of 16 human resource managers specific to their integration of knowledge management (KM) processes with HICM strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States, which was also the focus of the research questions. The concepts of KM processes and HICM strategies supported the inquiry. Data were collected with semistructured interviews. Thematic analysis revealed seven themes: nature of knowledge, new knowledge, external influences on knowledge process integration, internal influences on knowledge process integration, knowledge process integration improvements, knowledge process integration hindrances, and knowledge process outcomes. The findings could positively impact social change by extending human resource professionals' knowledge about how these issues affect the successful integration of KM processes and HICM strategies, creating shared value, and connecting successful businesses practices and the health of a community.

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother, Vera Mae Pugh. Although you are not here physically, I felt your spirit encouraging me through this process. I remember you saying, “God knows the plans for your life. You must learn how to trust his word.” I kept my promise to you and dedicate the highest level of education achievable—a doctorate in philosophy in management—to you! Love you Grandma.

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My academic journey started 11 years ago with learning how to learn again. I have been blessed on this journey while acquiring extensive knowledge from scholars who helped me truly understand the meaning of earning a Doctor of Philosophy. I have been privileged to receive support and encouragement from a plebian of extraordinary people. I am grateful for support from my family, friends, church members, and mentors.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Of increasing importance to the modern economy is the role of knowledge-based resources and capabilities to business success (Ramadan et al., 2017). Businesses that are successful at creating, developing, and using knowledge and intellectual assets experience competitive advantages (Ponisciakova, 2020; Ramadan et al., 2017). Inseparably connected to a business's knowledge management capability is its ability to manage its intellectual capital assets (Ramadan et al., 2017). Although research has indicated that the integration of knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies is critical to organizational performance, human resource managers' perceptions about this critical integration are not well understood (Wang et al., 2016).

Several societal changes necessitated the need for this study, including major demographic shifts in the U.S. workforce (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016), an employee engagement crisis (Mann & Harter, 2016), and the changing nature of the market from one of mass production to customization that stresses quality, price, and delivery speed (Shujahat et al., 2019). Business leaders should understand the importance of the integration of knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies in addressing the human resource management challenges caused by these societal changes (Sousa & Rocha, 2019). Human resource managers adept at integrating knowledge management practices into their company's intellectual capital management strategies experience success in the hiring, retention, and management of

knowledge workers needed for the modern economy, which contributes to the overall success of the business (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

The social implications of successful businesses include the benefits of creating shared value. Shared value is understood as the connection between successful businesses and the health of a community (Porter & Kramer, 2011). First, businesses need a flourishing community that creates product demand and provides public assets and a supportive environment critical to economic success. Second, communities need successful businesses that can provide jobs and wealth creation opportunities for citizens (Porter & Kramer, 2011). In essence, by improving value at the business level, societal values are improved (Porter & Kramer, 2011). The social implications of high-performing, successful businesses include improving citizens' access to basic human needs for housing, food, safety, and well-being as well as educational opportunities that advance individual prosperity and societal-level progress (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

This chapter is organized into 12 major sections. First, a background of the research literature on the topics of knowledge management practices and human intellectual capital management strategies is presented. Second, I provide the problem that was the focus of this study. The third section contains a concise statement of the purpose of the study. Fourth, the research questions are stated. In the fifth section, I describe the conceptual framework undergirding the study, followed by a description of the nature of the study. In the seventh section, I provide definitions of key terms. The eighth section contains a description of the study assumptions, followed by discussions of the scope and delimitations and the limitations. In the 11th section, I discuss the

significance of the study and conclude the chapter with a summary and transition to the next chapter.

Background of the Study

Given the shift from an industrial society to a knowledge-generating society, knowledge workers are important wealth creators in the modern-day economy (Palvalin et al., 2017). A major focus of business management scholars in the 21st century is how to increase the productivity of knowledge workers, especially in terms of unstructured intellectual tasks pivotal to innovation (Shujahat et al., 2019). Researchers have agreed that the ultimate goal of knowledge management in the postindustrial knowledge economy is innovation, which improves organizational performance and enhances competitive advantage (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011; Shujahat et al., 2019). Some scholars have contended that a company's ability to manage, maintain, and create knowledge has a positive impact on its new product introduction into the marketplace (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011).

Researchers have identified two main components of knowledge management: knowledge management environment and knowledge management process (Shujahat et al., 2019). Knowledge management process is defined as the most important of the two components because it entails the creation of the knowledge that can survive irrespective of environmental supports (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011; Shujahat et al., 2019). Ponisciakova (2020) explained the importance of knowledge management for systematically managing and processing data in a way that supports sustainable business development. Categorizations of knowledge processes vary, with four processes typically

identified in the theoretical literature: knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, knowledge acquisition, and knowledge documentation (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011). Operationally, knowledge management is defined as involving the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Shujahat et al., 2019). I used this three-process operational definition of knowledge management for the purposes of the current study.

Knowledge creation entails the development of new and useful ideas and solutions important to aspects of organizational activities, including those related to products, technology, and management practices (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011). Shujahat et al. (2019) described four subprocesses of knowledge creation within organizations: socialization, combination, externalization, and internationalization. They further explained that, in order to ensure the creation of knowledge, organizations should work on antecedents of these subprocesses, which are opportunity, motivation, capability, and greater perceived importance (Shujahat et al., 2019).

Knowledge sharing refers to moving knowledge existing within the organization between different actors within and between departments at various hierarchical levels (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011). Employees can transfer insights via formal or informal means and by either donating or collecting knowledge elements (Shujahat et al., 2019). Scholars have stressed the importance of knowledge sharing over knowledge generation because most knowledge resides within employees and is of little value to the organization until shared and applied (Al-Husseini & Elbeltagi, 2015). The antecedents

of knowledge sharing are intrinsic and extrinsic incentives, social and organizational norms, organizational values, and top-level leadership support (Shujahat et al., 2019).

Knowledge utilization is also referred to in the literature as knowledge implementation or knowledge application and relates to organizational responses to different types of knowledge (Shujahat et al., 2019). Simply stated, it is "the application of knowledge that has been shared" (Shujahat et al., 2019, p. 444). Knowledge utilization is of greater importance than the other two processes because knowledge that is created and shared is of no value to an organization until it is applied (Shujahat et al., 2019).

In response to changes in workforce demographics in the past 2 decades, organizational leaders are placing a strategic emphasis on human capital investments (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). As a result of these demographic changes and shifts from an industrial society of mass production to one of product customization, leaders need to adapt by addressing related human capital challenges of hiring, retaining, and managing the new knowledge worker (Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019). In order to successfully meet these challenges, human resource managers should be capable of integrating knowledge management practices into existing human capital management strategies (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

Researchers have documented the positive relationship between knowledge management practices and organizational innovation, performance, and competitive advantage (Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Wong et al., 2015). Other researchers have contended that the integration of knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies can improve organizational

performance (Wang et al., 2016). Yet, there is a gap in the literature specific to human resource managers' perceptions about and experiences with this integration (Wang et al., 2016). In the current study, I addressed this knowledge gap to extend human resource managers' understanding of the importance of this integration for the purpose of maximizing human intellectual capital through the creation, sharing, and utilization of knowledge within the organization.

Problem Statement

The changing demographic composition of the workforce necessitates that organizational leaders place greater emphasis on human capital issues (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). An employee engagement crisis has been indicated, with only 32% of U.S. employees being enthusiastic about and committed to their work and workplace (Mann & Harter, 2016). Further exacerbating the problem for leaders and managers is the challenge of adapting to changes from a market of mass production to a new market of customization that emphasizes quality, price, and delivery speed (Shujahat et al., 2019). Critical to addressing these human capital challenges and succeeding in the workplace is the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers, which necessitates the integration of knowledge management practices into existing human capital management strategies (Sousa & Rocha, 2019). The general problem was that while organizational leaders in the United States are operating within a knowledge-based economy, many human resource managers have a limited understanding of the ways and mechanisms of knowledge management and in strengthening human intellectual capital (Muñoz-Pascual et al., 2019).

The specific problem was that although the theoretical and empirical literature indicates that integrating knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies can help enhance organizational performance, human resource management professionals' experiences with this integration are not well understood (Malik et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2016). Researchers have shown that knowledge management practices can increase organizational innovation and performance while contributing to achieving a sustainable competitive advantage (Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Wong et al., 2015). Merely acquiring human intellectual capital is not enough, organizational leaders must adopt measurable knowledge management practices to optimize individual and organizational performance outcomes (Hussinki et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). Reviewing 2 decades of research specific to the alignment of intellectual capital and knowledge management, Wang et al. (2016) recommended that knowledge managers (i.e., human resource managers) extend their understanding about the synergies between human intellectual capital and knowledge management strategies to maximize knowledge resources within an organization.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of 16 human resource managers specific to their integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States.

Research Questions

The overarching research question was as follows: What are the lived experiences of human resource managers related to integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States? When conducting hermeneutic, phenomenological research, secondary questions (SQs) are helpful for further guiding the exploration of theory-driven questions (Smith et al., 2009). I explored three processes identified in the knowledge management literature in this study:

SQ1: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge creation processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

SQ2: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge sharing processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

SQ3: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge utilization processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

Conceptual Framework

Two concepts grounded this study: knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies. Of the two main components of knowledge management, knowledge management environment and knowledge management process, knowledge management process is most important because it involves the creation of

knowledge that can survive irrespective of environmental supports (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011; Shujahat et al., 2019). Knowledge management processes include knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Shujahat et al., 2019). Intellectual capital includes human capital, organizational capital, customer capital, and external stakeholder capital (Ramadan et al., 2017). However, for the purposes of this study, I only examined human intellectual capital. The links between these concepts have been investigated in the literature with researchers concluding that an organization's management of its intellectual capital assets is connected to its knowledge management capability (Ramadan et al., 2017).

The knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Shujahat et al., 2019) are grounded in Drucker's (1999) seminal knowledge-worker productivity theory. Drucker identified six major factors that determine knowledge worker productivity. The starting place for determining the productivity of knowledge workers is to identify the task. Second, to be productive, knowledge workers should be able to manage themselves; they require autonomy. Third, the work should entail continuing innovation. Fourth, knowledge workers should be continuous learners who are committed to continuous teaching. Fifth, knowledge worker productivity is as concerned with quality as it is with quantity of output. Lastly, organizational leaders focused on maximizing knowledge worker productivity should perceive and treat knowledge workers as assets rather than costs. Paramount to productivity is knowledge workers' desire to work for the organization over other professional opportunities (Drucker, 1999).

Human intellectual capital strategies are grounded in Wright and McMahan's (1992) seminal theory of strategic human resource management (SHRM). The theorists defined SHRM as "the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals" (Wright & McMahan, 1992, p. 298). In their seminal work, Wright and McMahan further explained that SHRM theory is concerned with decision making about (a) human resource practices, (b) the composition of the human capital resource pool, (c) specification of required human resource behaviors, and (d) the effectiveness of decisions in terms of various business strategies and/or competitive situations. These early theoretical definitions were focused on human capital, while later theory development shifted toward the human resource management practices impacting human capital (Wright & McMahan, 2011). This latter research demonstrated a consistent relationship between human resource practices and individual and organizational performance, ultimately leading the researchers back to emphasizing the importance of human capital itself and how best to attract, motivate, develop, and retain talent (Wright & McMahan, 2011). A more detailed analysis of knowledge management processes and intellectual capital management strategies is provided in Chapter 2 along with a discussion of the underlying theoretical foundations.

Nature of the Study

In this study, I used a qualitative approach with a hermeneutic, phenomenological research design (van Manen, 2014). Researchers use phenomenology when their goal is to understand individuals' lived experience of a particular phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; van Manen, 2017). A qualitative phenomenological approach was

appropriate for this study because the objective was to address the problem of a lack of understanding of human resource managers' perceptions about the phenomenon of inquiry: the integration of knowledge management practices with human intellectual capital strategies. Because it is not known to what extent knowledge management practices are being integrated with human intellectual capital strategies by human resource managers, a hermeneutical approach with an emphasis on interpretation was more suitable than a classical or descriptive, transcendental approach.

I conducted semistructured interviews with 16 human resource managers located in the eastern region of the United States with experience in management, finance, and human resource management. Human resource managers were chosen due to their decision-making practices addressing human capital challenges in the workplace in the areas of hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers (Wang et al., 2016). I used the hermeneutic circle approach to analyzing the data to arrive at a deeper understanding of human resource professionals' experiences (Heidegger, 1962). Additionally, van Manen's (2014) approach to thematic analysis guided the process of identifying meaning structures in the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon as represented in the interview transcripts. The study included the qualitative data analysis software program ATLAS.ti 9 to organize and code the data using a two-cycle coding process (Miles et al., 2014).

Definitions

Relevant literature provided the following definitions for the concepts and key terms used in this study.

Human intellectual capital: The "individual knowledge stock of an organization," including employees' "competence, knowledge, skills, innovativeness, attitude, commitment, wisdom, and experience" (Attar et al., 2019, p. 5579).

Human intellectual capital management strategies: Strategies used by human resource professionals to manage an organization's human intellectual capital, including those strategies related to the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

Knowledge creation: The development of new and useful ideas and solutions important to organizational activities, including those related to products, technology, and management practices, encompassing four subprocesses: socialization, combination, externalization, and internationalization (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011; Shujahat et al., 2019).

Knowledge management: The three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Shujahat et al., 2019).

Knowledge sharing: Moving knowledge existing within the organization between different actors within and between departments at various hierarchical levels (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011). Employees can transfer insights via formal or informal means and by either donating or collecting knowledge elements (Shujahat et al., 2019).

Knowledge utilization: Also referred to as knowledge implementation or knowledge application, this term relates to organizational responses to different types of knowledge (Shujahat et al., 2019). Simply stated, it is "the application of knowledge that has been shared" (Shujahat et al., 2019, p. 444).

Strategic human resource management: "The pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals" (Wright & McMahan, 1992, p. 298).

Assumptions

One assumption was that participants had professional knowledge about knowledge management. I also assumed that participants had a working knowledge of human intellectual capital management strategies specific to the human resource practices of hiring, retaining, and managing knowledge workers. These first two assumptions were important to this study because the research literature indicated that business leaders are not integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual management strategies (Wang et al., 2016). With a working knowledge of knowledge management and human intellectual capital management in the workplace context, participants could articulate their perceptions about the integration of the two.

Another assumption was that participants were honest and transparent when responding to interview questions about their lived experiences of knowledge management and human intellectual capital management and their perceptions about the integration of both in the workplace. The basis of this assumption was my assurances of confidentially, including anonymity of the participants and their employers' identity as well as the protection of all data collected during this study.

Scope and Delimitations

The general problem was that organizational leaders and managers in the United States are encountering significant human capital challenges with the major demographic

shift in the U.S. workforce (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). Critical to addressing these challenges and succeeding in the workplace is the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers, which necessitates the integration of knowledge management practices into existing human intellectual capital management strategies (Sousa & Rocha, 2019). The specific aspect of this research problem addressed by this study was the need for an understanding of human resource management professionals' lived experiences with the integration of knowledge management practices and human intellectual capital management strategies (Wang et al., 2016).

Two delimitations of the current study related to the target population from which the study sample was drawn. First, the professional service firms from which participants were recruited are located in the eastern geographic region of the United States. Second, I delimited the sample size to 16 human resource managers. The delimitations of geographic area and sample size limit the transferability of findings to other professional services firms located in other areas of the country and the world.

Two additional delimitations were related to the conceptual framework. The concept of knowledge management, which is grounded in Drucker's (1999) knowledge-worker productivity theory, includes two main components: knowledge management environment and knowledge management processes. Although numerous knowledge management conceptual frameworks are documented in the research literature, I delimited the study to investigating the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization as defined by Shujahat et al. (2019). The concept of intellectual capital, grounded in Wright and

McMahan's (1992) theory of SHRM, includes human capital, organizational capital, customer capital, and external stakeholder capital (Ramadan et al., 2017). I also delimited the study to investigating only human intellectual capital from the perspective of Wright and McMahan's (2011) latter work that emphasized the importance of human capital itself and how best to attract, motivate, develop, and retain talent.

Limitations

The study's qualitative phenomenological research design has methodological weaknesses. First, the data collection method of semistructured interviews limited the sources of data to 16 human resource managers working for professional services firms located in the eastern region of the United States. This limitation of a small sample is related to issues of transferability of study findings to other contexts and settings. Ultimately, decisions about transferability in qualitative research lie with "the person seeking to make an application elsewhere" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298). The original researcher "cannot know the sites to which transferability might be sought, but the appliers can and do" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 298). The original researcher can help persons who read their study to make decisions about transferability by using rich, thick description when detailing the research methodology and reporting study findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Two types of biases could influence the study outcomes. First, the study interviews captured the participants' perceptions about experiences from their recent or distant past, which introduced the possibility of recall bias or recollection error in that participants may incorrectly recall former experiences due to memory effects or the

influence of recent events (Blome & Augustin, 2015). Another type of bias, researcher bias, can lead to the incorrect interpretation of participants' responses to interview questions. This is due to the qualitative researcher functioning as an instrument of data collection and analysis in a phenomenological study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One method for addressing the potential impact of participant and researcher biases that I used in this study was member checks. The process of conducting member checks involved making preliminary analysis accessible to some of the participants to review and provide feedback as to if the interpretations make sense or "ring true" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 246). As for addressing potential researcher bias in an interpretive phenomenological study, Smith et al. (2009) described the cyclical process of a "more enlivened form of bracketing" whereby the researcher acknowledges and sets aside their prior experiences, assumptions, and preconceptions. They explained that, by skillfully maintaining engagement with the participant and the participant's words, a researcher inevitably will park or bracket their biases (Smith et al., 2009)

Significance of the Study

Findings from this study contribute to filling a gap in the research literature specific to human resource managers' perceptions about and experiences with integrating knowledge management practices and human intellectual capital management strategies in the workplace (Wang et al., 2016). Researchers have shown the positive relationship between knowledge management practices and organizational innovation, performance, and competitive advantage (Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Wong et al., 2015) as well as how the integration of knowledge management practices and human

intellectual capital management strategies can improve organizational performance (Wang et al., 2016). Yet, little is known about human resource managers' lived experience of knowledge management practices and human intellectual capital management strategies as well as their perceptions about the integration of these practices and strategies in the workplace. Researchers have emphasized the importance of examining the synergistic relationship between knowledge management practices and human intellectual capital strategies that can help enhance organizational performance (Hussinki et al., 2017; Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Wong et al., 2015).

Significance to Practice

The findings can assist business leaders, human resource managers, and C-suite executives who have an awareness of the new paradigm of human resource complexities in the workplace by helping them learn how to integrate knowledge management practices with existing human intellectual capital management practices. Data and themes that emerged from participant interviews may be helpful for designing solutions for human capital challenges in the workplace in terms of the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers. The findings may also contribute to extending human resource managers' understanding of the importance of this integration for the purpose of maximizing human intellectual capital through the creation, sharing, and utilization of knowledge within the organization. The findings could promote reexamination of previous research related to knowledge practices with an inclusion of human intellectual capital strategy concepts. The results of this qualitative study generated insights that can be used in future quantitative or mixed-method studies.

Significance to Theory

This study is significant to the further development of conceptual frameworks and theories related to knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies. Perceptions of human resource managers interviewed for this study may further inform various conceptual frameworks addressing the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Shujahat et al., 2019). Human resource managers' accounts of lived experiences of managing knowledge among the workforce can generate new awareness that may build upon Drucker's (1999) seminal knowledge-worker productivity theory.

Human resource managers interviewed for this study also provided new insights that can further inform the historical evolution of various conceptual frameworks and theories relevant to the strategic management of human intellectual capital in the workplace. Theory in this area has evolved from Wright and McMahan's (1992) seminal SHRM theory that focused more on human capital, the employees, to latter theories that focused more on human resource management practices (Wright & McMahan, 2011). More recently, however, SHRM theorists, recognizing the relationship between human resource practices and individual and organizational performance, are returning to the theoretical roots of Wright and McMahan (1992) by emphasizing the importance of human capital itself and how best to attract, motivate, develop, and retain talent (Wright & McMahan, 2011). The lived experiences and perceptions of human resource managers, as documented in this study, can inform current theory development focused on human capital.

Significance to Social Change

The results of the current study may affect positive social change by contributing to improved human resource intellectual capital management policies and practices that benefit both individual employees, prospective and actual, and the organizations where they work. Muro et al. (2017) discussed the impact of increased demand in technical and digital skills among employees. These knowledge workers can contribute to modern-day organizations' success and are highly sought by business leaders.

C-suite executives and human resource managers interested in enhancing organizational performance specific to knowledge processes could benefit from the findings of this study that can increase their understanding of how knowledge management practices integrated with human intellectual capital management strategies can have a positive impact in community engagement.

Results of this study may also affect positive social change by providing insights that can help business leaders adopt measurable knowledge management practices for the purpose of optimizing and leveraging individual and organizational performance outcomes and assets that can contribute to corporate responsibility by addressing social issues. Moore and Coady (2010) reported that corporate involvement in solving social problems will escalate given the higher expectations for business to integrate social values into their business strategies. Integrating knowledge practices with human capital strategies may also improve embedding social engagement into a business strategy to evaluate and determine how to scan for issues and opportunities.

Summary and Transition

This chapter began with an overview of the research literature to provide background on the specific problem that although the theoretical and empirical literature indicates that integrating knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies can help enhance organizational performance, human resource management professionals' experiences with this integration are not well understood (Wang et al., 2016). The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutical, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of human resource managers specific to their integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States. The overarching research question was as follows: What are the lived experiences of human resource managers related to integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States?

Two concepts were relevant to this study, knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies. I focused on the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization in this study (Shujahat et al., 2019), which are grounded in Drucker's (1999) seminal knowledge-worker productivity theory. Of the four types of intellectual capital, human capital, organizational capital, customer capital, and external stakeholder capital (Ramadan et al., 2017), I only examined human intellectual capital, as grounded in Wright and McMahan's (1992) seminal theory of SHRM, among a sample of 16 human

resource managers in the eastern region of the United States with experience in management, finance, and human resource management. I collected data using semistructured interviews and used the qualitative data analysis software program ATLAS.ti 9 to organize and code the data using a two-cycle coding process (Miles et al., 2014).

Chapter 2 is a comprehensive review and synthesis of the literature pertaining to the phenomenon of interest: the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in the workplace. The chapter will include an in-depth discussion of the concepts and theories relevant to the phenomenon of interest.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The literature indicates integrating knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies is a synergistic way for human resource managers to maximize knowledge resources within an organization (Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019). The general problem addressed by this study was that organizational leaders and managers in the United States are encountering significant human capital challenges with the major shift in the U.S. workforce as the millennials are rapidly becoming the majority of the workforce while the baby boomer generation retires (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). The specific problem addressed by this study was that although the theoretical and empirical literature indicates that integrating knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies can help enhance organizational performance, human resource management professionals' experiences with this integration are not well understood (Wang et al., 2016). The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of human resource managers specific to their integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States.

This chapter begins with a description of the literature search strategy, followed by a discussion of the study's conceptual framework. Next, I present a review of the relevant literature, beginning with discussion of how corporate America is situated within the modern-day, knowledge-generating society and followed by a review of the literature specific to the relatedness of the learning organization, organizational learning, and

knowledge management. In the following literature review section, studies addressing the concepts of tacit knowledge and knowledge management processes are presented, following by a discussion of studies related to human intellectual capital management strategies. Lastly, I review literature on hermeneutic phenomenology before concluding the chapter with a summary and discussion of conclusions drawn from the relevant literature.

Literature Search Strategy

I conducted this literature review using the Walden University Library to access the following databases: Google Scholar, Business Source Complete, ProQuest Central, Sage Journal, the Journal of Knowledge Management, Taylor and Francis, and Sage Management Journal. I used Boolean and citation searching techniques in key searches in later stages of gap identification and included the following terms: *knowledge workers*, *knowledge society*, *tacit knowledge*, *knowledge management*, *knowledge management process*es, *human capital and knowledge management process*, *organizational learning and knowledge management*, *organizational learning and human capital management*, and *human capital and social change*.

The literature for this review ranged in publication dates from 1992 to 2019. I developed a search strategy using germinal works for key terms. After developing a list of practicable terms, the search was expanded to modern articles and sources. During my search, key terms changed, and I was able to identify and make connections in shifting trends in the field of management. Subsequently, I was able to search for new terms to link them to former terms previously used in the literature. As each key term evolved,

that term was narrowed based on relevance with the scope of the literature review to fill in gaps between the human intellectual management strategies and the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and utilization.

Conceptual Framework

The study's conceptual framework comprised Drucker's (1999) seminal knowledge-worker productivity theory and Wright and McMahan's (1992) seminal theory on strategic human resource management (SHRM). Researchers have concluded that an organization's management of its intellectual capital assets is connected to its knowledge management capability (Ramadan et al., 2017).

Drucker (1999) identified six major factors that determine knowledge worker productivity. The starting place for determining the productivity of knowledge workers is to identify the task. Second, to be productive, knowledge workers should be able to manage themselves; they require autonomy. Third, the work should entail continuing innovation. Fourth, knowledge workers should be continuous learners who are committed to continuous teaching. Fifth, knowledge worker productivity is as concerned with quality as it is quantity of output. Lastly, organizational leaders focused on maximizing knowledge worker productivity should perceive and treat knowledge workers as assets rather than costs. Paramount to productivity is knowledge workers' desire to work for the organization over other professional opportunities (Drucker, 1999).

Drucker's (1999) knowledge-worker productivity theory has informed the current literature on knowledge workers' behaviors (Li et al., 2018) and knowledge management processes (Shujahat et al., 2019). Building on Drucker's concept of the knowledge

worker and Horibe's (1999) focus on the value creation of knowledge workers in terms of ideas, analyses, judgment, syntheses, and design, Li et al. (2018) expanded the literature by investigating the innovative behaviors of knowledge workers. They conducted a quantitative survey to examine the impact of self-management ability and achievement motivation on the innovative behaviors of 216 high-tech knowledge workers. Like Drucker, Li et al. emphasized the importance of knowledge workers' ability to self-manage to perform work that is creative, challenging, and autonomous in nature. Li et al. defined self-management as a process by which knowledge workers manage their thoughts and actions, essentially the dimensions of personal perception and professional practice. As for the second factor of achievement motivation, Li et al. described knowledge workers' motivation in terms of pursuing success and avoiding failure. Based on their study results, they concluded that knowledge workers' self-management abilities, personal perceptions, and professional practice had a significant and positive impact on their innovative behaviors. The researchers further concluded that the knowledge workers' achievement motivation played an intermediating role between their self-management abilities and innovative behaviors (Li et al., 2018).

Whereas Li et al. (2018) expanded upon Drucker's (1999) knowledge-worker productivity theory by investigating the innovative behaviors of knowledge workers, Shujahat et al. (2019) expanded the literature by investigating the mediating role of knowledge worker productivity between knowledge management processes and innovation. The researchers focused their quantitative survey study of 369 information technology (IT) workers on the specific knowledge management processes of knowledge

creation/generation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization/application. Shujahat et al. found that knowledge worker productivity mediated between the two knowledge management processes of knowledge creation/generation and knowledge utilization/application and knowledge workers' innovation, but not between knowledge sharing and innovation. However, the researchers concluded that Drucker's knowledge-worker productivity theory continues to be of critical importance to the 21st-century management discipline, especially in the area of knowledge-based innovation. They explained that knowledge sharing did not significantly impact the productivity of the IT engineers in their study who tend to be more introverted in nature and whose work tends to be performed in isolation (Shujahat et al., 2019).

Whereas Drucker's (1999) work focused on maximizing knowledge worker productivity and treating knowledge workers as assets, rather than costs, Wright and McMahan (1992) theorized that the relationship between human resource practices and individual and organizational performance ultimately lead researchers back to emphasize the importance of human capital itself and how best to attract, motivate, develop and retain talent (Wright & McMahan, 2011). For the purposes of this current study, human intellectual capital strategies were grounded in Wright and McMahan's (1992) seminal theory of SHRM. The theorists defined SHRM as "the pattern of planned human resource deployments and activities intended to enable an organization to achieve its goals" (Wright & McMahan, 1992, p. 298). In their seminal work, Wright and McMahan (1992) further explained that SHRM theory is concerned with decision making about (a) human resource practices, (b) the composition of the human capital resource pool, (c) the

specification of required human resource behaviors, and (d) the effectiveness of decisions in terms of various business strategies and/or competitive situations.

In their most recent work, Wright and Ulrich (2017) updated the state of the literature on the field of SHRM, describing theoretical and empirical progress over 40 years. The theorists traced the roots of SHRM, described its current state, and made projections for future research directions. The evolution of the SHRM field included the three eras of conceptual development (e.g., Baird & Meshoulam, 1998; Lengnick-Hall & Lengnick-Hall, 1988; Miles & Snow, 1984), empirical examination (e.g., Delery & Doty, 1996; Huselid, 1995; MacDuffie, 1995; Snell, 1992; Youndt et al., 1996), and empirical critiques (e.g., Gerhart et al., 2000; Guest et al., 2003; Huselid & Becker, 2000; Wall & Wood, 2005; Wright et al., 2001; Wright et al., 2005). Wright and Ulrich explained that SHRM research has expanded in the four areas of theoretical foundations (e.g., Chadwick & Dabu, 2008; Kaufmann, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Wright & McMahan, 1992), firm performance (e.g., Kaufmann, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c; Kehoe & Wright, 2013), multilevel issues (e.g., Den Hartog et al., 2013; Wright & Nishii, 2012), and fit and flexibility (e.g., Way et al., 2015; Way et al., 2018).

In summary, a major focus of business management scholars in the 21st century has been how to increase the productivity of knowledge workers, especially in terms of unstructured intellectual tasks pivotal to innovation (Shujahat et al., 2019). Some scholars have contended that a company's ability to manage, maintain, and create knowledge has a positive impact on its new product introduction into the marketplace (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011).

Guided by the concept of knowledge management processes, in this study I explored how human resource managers focus on maximizing knowledge worker productivity by treating knowledge workers as assets, rather than as costs, as discussed by Drucker (1999) in the knowledge-worker productivity theory. Additionally, I explored research in human resource manager decision making about human resource practices, the composition of human capital resource pools and behaviors as well as the effectiveness of decision making in business strategies and/or competitive strategies in human resource management according to Wright and McMahan's (1992) theory of SHRM. My aim was to understand the link between the concepts to determine how an organization's management of its intellectual capital assets is connected to its knowledge management capability in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States. Through the use of semistructured interview questions, I explored elements of the concepts of knowledge management practices with human capital strategies that impact the phenomenon of human resource manager decision-making practices addressing human capital challenges in the workplace.

Literature Review

This review of the literature is structured in five major sections. In the first two sections, I provide valuable contextual background about (a) corporate America in a knowledge-generating society and (b) the learning organization, organizational learning, and knowledge management. The third section includes studies specific to the key concepts of tacit knowledge and knowledge management processes, and the fourth section contains studies specific to the second key concept of human intellectual capital

management strategies. Lastly, I focus on literature on qualitative, hermeneutic phenomenology in the fifth section.

Corporate America in a Knowledge-Generating Society

No longer situated within an industrial society, U.S. corporations are focused on a key to success within a knowledge-generating society: knowledge workers (Palvalin et al., 2017). Davenport (2005) defined knowledge workers as individuals with a "high degree of expertise, education, or experience" (p. 10) and described the primary purpose of their jobs as involving "the creation, distribution, and application of knowledge" (p. 10), which is consistent with Shujahat et al.'s (2019) three knowledge management processes of creation, sharing, and utilization.

Extensive research has been conducted on how the physical environment of the workplace influences knowledge workers' quantitative and qualitative productivity (Palvalin et al., 2017). Some researchers argued that qualitative metrics for knowledge worker productivity should replace linear quantitative production metrics associated with the industrial era (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). Examples of workplace environmental factors that support employee productivity include spatial conditions for concentration, spatial conditions for communication and social interaction, workplace ergonomics, access to advanced technology, and indoor climate control (Palvalin et al., 2017). However, Palvalin et al. (2017) noted a deficiency in the literature specific to knowledge workers' self-management skills that enable them to cope with the pressures of performing multiple and varied tasks simultaneously. To address this gap in the literature the researchers conducted a quantitative survey study of 998 Finnish knowledge workers

to investigate the impact of both the physical workplace environment and workers' self-management practices on productivity (Palvalin et al., 2017). Based on their study findings, Palvalin et al. concluded that workplace environments and the self-management practices of workers impact both individual and team productivity. Of particular significance to this current study, Palvalin et al. found that workers' self-management practices had a greater impact on individual and team productivity than workplace physical environment factors. A strength of Palvalin et al.'s study was the large sample of 998 Finnish knowledge workers. The researchers noted a limitation of their study in that they did not measure other mediating variables known to impact worker productivity, such as intrinsic motivation, employee health, access to advanced information and communication technology, and personality type (Palvalin et al., 2017).

Meaningful to this current study's research questions are Palvalin et al.'s recommendations that managers support workers' development of self-management skills and emphasize the importance of greater collaboration between managers and human resource managers in this area. These recommendations are significant to the three knowledge management processes that are the focus of this current study's research questions: knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. The recommendations are also relevant to the aim of this current study to explore human resource managers' lived experiences of integrating these knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies.

Knowledge workers are defined in the literature as capital assets in that their experiences, expertise, education, and creativity can contribute to positive economic

outcomes for their employers (Davenport, 2005; Drucker, 1999). Differentiating knowledge workers from industrial workers, Bolisani and Bratianu (2018) characterized knowledge workers in terms of their (a) preference for autonomy, (b) need for a different kind of motivation, and (c) value of and hesitance to share their knowledge, as well as the qualitative (as opposed to quantitative) nature of their productivity. The authors further described the business of knowledge workers, including thinking and creating. Describing the needs of the modern-day U.S. corporation for managers and workers who are more creative, innovative, dedicated, and adaptable, Whyte (2002) explained that these human attributes reside within the soul of an individual.

Whyte (2002) argued that although 21st-century employers must "honor the souls of the individuals who work for them" (p. 10), the literature is sparse concerning the soul's needs in the workplace. Soul is the essence of a person's being or spirit and involves how that person experiences belonging in their world, community, and work. "Where there is little sense of belonging, there is little sense of soul" (Whyte, 2002, p. 14). People long for the sense of belonging "to something larger than themselves" (p. 14). Without the worker's sense of belonging in the workplace and achieving meaning in the work, an employer cannot coerce enthusiasm, creativity, innovation, and commitment for a sustained period of time (Whyte, 2002). In addition to the need for belonging and meaning, the knowledge worker prefers autonomy (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018) and rejects the notion of work's authoritarian dominance over human existence (Whyte, 2002). Knowledge workers need the freedom to think in their unique ways, and they are intrinsically motivated by challenges and meaningful achievements as opposed to

external rewards. Employers should also take into consideration how knowledge workers' adaptability and creativity flow from their soulful passions. "Their souls love the hidden springs boiling and welling at the center of existence more that they love the company" (Whyte, 2002, p. 7). Literature specific to the needs and motivations of knowledge workers in the context of Whyte's perspective of the soul in the workplace is relevant to this current study because it informed the development of the interview questions that were posed to participants about knowledge creation, sharing, and utilization processes that involve their employees.

The Learning Organization, Organizational Learning, and Knowledge Management

Senge (1990) popularized the term *learning organization*. Senge described five personal disciplines key to the creation of the necessary organizational infrastructure for promoting continuous learning, adaptation, and growth: (a) system thinking, (b) personal mastery, (c) mental models, (d) shared vision, and (e) team learning (Gagnona et al., 2015). The characteristics of a learning organization include its adaptability, ability to learn from mistakes, intentional exploration of situations for development, and optimization of the contributions of its personnel (Gagnona et al., 2015). Bolisani and Bratianu (2018) described organizational learning and knowledge management as aspects of the learning organization, but they clarified the use of the term *learning organization* by arguing that it is a mere metaphorical construct because learning is a human process and knowledge generation results from individuals who learn.

Acknowledging the complexity of organizational learning, Chiva et al. (2014) defined it as "the process through which organizations change or modify their mental

models, rules, processes or knowledge, maintaining or improving their performance" (p. 689). The organizational learning literature includes two streams: theoretical and practical (Basten & Haamann, 2018). However, Basten and Haamann (2018) argued that an ideal learning organization has yet to be realized because the gap in the literature specific to concrete strategies for implementation that are grounded in organizational learning theory. To address this gap, the researchers conducted a concept-driven narrative literature review to answer two research questions: (a) What approaches for organizational learning are proposed in the literature and (b) How do these approaches correspond to organizational learning theory. To match organizational learning practice with theory, Basten and Haamann followed guidelines for conducting systemic reviews that included searching, aggregating, analyzing the literature. Using this systemic review process, they located 405 publications that were further analyzed using mapping techniques.

Basten and Haamann (2018) identified organizational learning practices that spanned the three categories of people, process, and technology, which they mapped to related organizational learning theories. Of particular relevance to this current study was the researchers' finding that both the knowledge and learning culture within an organization are critical for the effective implementation of organizational learning practices such as communities of practice, problem-based learning, experiential learning, role-playing, and the use of interactive multimedia. A strength of Basten and Haamann's was the detailed audit trail that enables readers to evaluate their work and future researchers to replicate the study. The researchers acknowledged a limitation of their

efforts to the combined theoretical and practical literature in order to progress toward an ideal learning organization in that their findings are hypothetical and need to be further investigated through empirical studies. However, Basten and Haamann's study was meaningful because it provides a theoretical and practical contextual background for this current study's research questions about human resource managers' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies.

Organizational learning and knowledge management, which are related to Drucker's (1992) knowledge economy, are two fundamental fields key to the goal achievement of modern-day organizations (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018; Castaneda et al., 2018). Over the past 10 years, both fields have undergone dramatic changes and are projected to continue changing over the next 10 years (Easterby-Smith & Lyles, 2011). Although organizational learning and knowledge management have been studied separately, there is a gap in the literature specific to the evolution of and relationship between these closely related fields as well as their connection to the learning organization. To address this gap in the literature, Castaneda et al. (2018) conducted a systematic literature review of knowledge management and organizational learning publications to investigate whether organizational learning has been conceptually absorbed by knowledge management. The researchers searched the relevant literature from the period when the organizational learning field was developing. They used the VantagePoint 10.0 software during the literature search phase of the study, locating

16,185 articles from the Scopus and ISI Web of Science databases (Castaneda et al., 2018).

Castaneda et al.'s (2018) findings are relevant to this current study in two areas. First, the study provided a historical context for understanding how knowledge management is related to organizational learning and the learning organization. Based on their systemic review of the relevant literature, the researchers found the fundamental processes of organizational learning and of creating and acquiring knowledge have been gradually absorbed by the knowledge management literature, becoming essential parts of knowledge management definitions. Additionally, Castaneda et al.'s findings disconfirmed Pun and Nathai-Balkissoon's (2011) claim that organizational learning and knowledge management are becoming subconcepts of the learning organization. Rather their findings confirmed those of Easterby-Smith and Lyles (2011) that characterized the learning organization as "a category focus in process and practice, which is complementary to knowledge management and organizational learning" (Castaneda et al., 2018, p. 321). Similarly, Lewis (2017) referred to the knowledge-creating organization, explaining that knowledge management enables organizational learning.

Second, Castaneda et al.'s (2018) findings provided justification for this current study. From their analysis of the literature, the researchers found that an increasingly common term for both the fields of knowledge management and organizational learning is understanding the role of human variables associated with knowledge workers whose tasks entail thinking, creating, sharing, transferring, transforming, and applying knowledge (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). Moreover, Castaneda et al. found *human*

resource was the fastest growing thematic category over the past 10 years. Based on this finding, the researchers concluded that further studies are needed to develop an understanding of the dynamic relationship between aspects of knowledge management, human variables, and organizational performance (Castaneda et al., 2018).

A particular strength of Castaneda et al.'s (2018) study was its systematic, scientific, transparent, and replicable design. The authors detailed their methods in an audit trail of decisions, procedures, and conclusions, which were rigorous, explicitly stated, and reproducible. Yet the authors cited three limitations of their study: (a) the use of only two databases, (b) search terms used in the study excluded suggestions of certain authors, and (c) the number of thematic categories was not formally optimized and descriptive names could be open to other interpretations (Castaneda et al., 2018). Particularly meaningful to this current study's research questions were Castaneda et al.'s confirmation of knowledge creation, a key process of knowledge management that is being investigated in this study. Additionally, Castaneda et al. provided support for this current study's approach of combining of human resource and knowledge management processes and strategies in a single study.

Studies Related to Tacit Knowledge and Knowledge Management Processes

Knowledge management strategy entails building and managing knowledge stock using the processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Marouf, 2016; Shujahat et al., 2019). Included in the literature are two major approaches to knowledge management: codification and personalization (Marouf, 2016). Codification involves taking knowledge developed by a person, codifying it into a

document form independent of the person, and storing it for reuse within the organization. With the personalization approach, rather than being codified, knowledge is transferred between individuals and teams. The personalization approach entails "exploiting the tacit knowledge of people as well as the combined knowledge in teams to add value to the organization" (Marouf, 2016, p. 156).

Tacit Knowledge

Knowledge management strategy is increasingly concerned with using methods, techniques, and tools to elicit tacit knowledge as a means of creating new knowledge that can be systematically organized for future retrieval and use with the aim of adding economic value to the organization (Garcia & Coltre, 2017; Marouf, 2016). Viewed as a strategic resource for sustaining organizational competitive advantage and superior performance, tacit knowledge has been divided into four factors: (a) individual/personal knowledge, (b) managerial knowledge, (c) expertise knowledge, and (d) collective knowledge (Zaima et al., 2015). Garcia and Coltre (2017) likened the tacit dimension of knowledge management to human behavior associated with management style, communication, and interpersonal relationships, while relating the explicit dimension to the structure and technology required for organizational effectiveness. Simply stated, tacit knowledge refers to what a person knows how to do but cannot express (Kandukuri & Nasina, 2017). This knowing more than can be expressed is described as "unconscious and subjective insights, intuitions, and hunches including both technical know-how and know-why" (Muthuveloo et al., 2017, p. 194). In a similar manner, Lewis (2017) described the formal and systematic nature of explicit knowledge, explaining that the

focus is on knowing about something. In contrast, tacit knowledge is comprised of insight, personal experience, and professional expertise that involves knowing how to do something (Lewis, 2017). For example, a person is using tacit knowing when reflecting, thinking critically, solving problems, and making decisions based on personal knowledge, skills, and experiences (Anastasiou, 2019).

Tacit knowledge entails employees' experiences, which can be lost if they are not captured in a retrievable form before employees retire or leave the organization for other jobs (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). As such, it is important that employers devise the means to convert tacit knowledge, which is subjective and integrates personal experiences that are not amenable to being transferred, to explicit knowledge, which is objective and can be transferred by codifying and storing it in a form that can be retrieved and used for other purposes (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). Conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge involves four processes: socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995). Socialization is the process of sharing and creating tacit knowledge through personal experiences. The externalization process involves articulating the tacit knowledge through reflection and conversation. Combination involves systematizing the tacit knowledge while apply to explicit knowledge. The process of internalization entails the learning and acquiring of new tacit knowledge through practice (Garcia & Coltre, 2017). When considering knowledge management processes, it is important to note that explicit knowledge is based on tacit knowledge. As such, the conversion of knowledge from tacit to explicit is necessary for understanding, using, and creating new knowledge (Garcia & Coltre, 2017).

Both explicit and tacit knowledge are important to the knowledge management process (Kandukuri & Nasina, 2017). Tacit knowledge, when effectively managed, impacts organizational performance by enhancing worker performance and organizational capacity (Muthuveloo et al., 2017).

Responding to the problem of a lack of knowledge about how tacit knowledge management impacts organizational performance, Muthuveloo et al. (2017) conducted a quantitative study to investigate Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) four dimensions of converting tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, which are (a) socialization, (b) externalization, (c) combination, and (d) internalization, and their impact on organizational performance. The study research sites were local and foreign companies located in Malaysia. Random sampling techniques were used to select managers, senior managers, or directors employed by the companies. A total of 108 valid surveys were received and analyzed using partial least squares–structural equation modeling software. A particular strength of the study was that the research sites included companies that are highly regulated (e.g., medical, insurance, and pharmaceutical) and place a high value on knowledge workers as well as the creation, sharing, and utilization of knowledge. All of the participating companies had talent retention programs in place that emphasized the importance of retaining employees' skills and knowledge. A limitation of the study was the design of the questionnaire that mainly focused on the sharing of information from internal and external environments, which the researchers acknowledged could have influenced the findings specific to the dimensions of socialization and internalization (Muthuveloo et al., 2017). Based on their analysis, Muthuveloo et al. found that two

dimensions of tacit knowledge, socialization and internalization, had significant influence on organizational performance. Their finding was meaningful to this current study's first subresearch question because it confirmed the importance of knowledge creation in the overall knowledge management process.

The impact of innovation on company performance and success is well documented in the literature (Magnier-Watanabe & Benton, 2017). However, little is known about the role of knowledge in translating innovation into performance. Magnier-Watanabe and Benton (2017) conducted a quantitative survey study of Japanese companies to investigate the role of tacit and explicit knowledge in mediating the relationship between organizational innovation and performance. The researchers used a Japanese internet survey service to administer the Japanese-language survey instrument to 310 managers and staff members representing a wide range of industries located in Japan.

Statistical analysis of the quantitative dataset using SPSS and PROCESS revealed two significant findings (Magnier-Watanabe & Benton, 2017). First, those companies with higher explicit and tacit knowledge use reported greater performance. Second, employees at companies with greater management innovation reported using both more tacit and explicit knowledge (Magnier-Watanabe & Benton, 2017). A strength of the study was the wide range of industries that were represented in the sample. Yet the researchers cited two limitations: (a) data for the dependent and independent variables were simultaneously collected with the same survey instrument, increasing the risk of common method variance; and (b) the data only included participant responses about

Japanese companies located in Japan, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Magnier-Watanabe and Benton's (2017) findings were meaningful to this current study's overarching research question. When developing the interview questions aimed at eliciting human resource managers' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies, I considered both tacit and explicit knowledge use in the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization.

Knowledge Management Processes

Knowledge management process are grounded in Drucker's (1999) knowledge-worker productivity theory. When developing this theory, Drucker focused on the 20th-century management challenge of increasing the productivity, in terms of task efficiency, of manual workers employed predominantly in industry-related businesses. Rather than being concerned exclusively with task efficiency in production quantity, however, 21st-century businesses, which predominantly serve the service sector, should expand their focus to include the achievement of production quality in a knowledge and digital economy (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). Although some researchers have investigated the impact of knowledge management processes on employee productivity in terms of task efficiency, there is a gap in the literature concerning the impact of knowledge management processes on the cognitive aspects of knowledge-worker productivity (Shujahat et al., 2019).

Shujahat et al. (2019) designed a quantitative study for the purpose of investigating the "mediating role of knowledge-worker productivity on the relationships

between knowledge management processes and innovation" (p. 443). The study sample consisted of 369 knowledge workers in Pakistan's IT sector, including technical managers and administrative managers. Data were collected using pen-and-paper survey instruments to measure knowledge management processes (knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization); knowledge-worker productivity (job autonomy at work, meeting time demands, and work efficiency); and innovation (product innovation and customer problem-solving capability). Data were analyzed using the SmartPLS 3, Version 26 (Shujahat et al., 2019).

Drucker's (1999) knowledge-worker productivity theory was pivotal to this study's conceptual framework. Specifically, the knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization, which were investigated in this study, are ground in Drucker's theory. Shujahat et al.'s (2019) findings indicate that knowledge-worker productivity is a significant mediator between two knowledge management processes (knowledge creation and knowledge utilization) and innovation. Since the process of knowledge sharing does not significantly impact knowledge worker productivity, the researchers found that knowledge-worker productivity does not mediate between knowledge sharing and innovation. These findings are relevant to this current study because they confirm the application of Drucker's knowledge-worker's productivity theory to understanding the impact of knowledge management processes on the cognitive aspects of knowledge-worker productivity (Shujahat et al., 2019).

One of the strengths of the study was the sample size of 369 IT managers. Another strength of the study was the use of instruments with demonstrated validity and reliability that had been extensively used by previous researchers. Lastly, Shujahat et al. (2019) used the same data analysis software employed by previous researchers who used the same data collection instruments. By replicating the data collection and analysis methods of previous researchers, Shujahat et al.'s comparison of their findings with prior studies was strengthened.

A limitation of Shujahat et al.'s (2019) study was that the interrelationships among knowledge management processes were not explored. A second limitation was the researchers only considered three knowledge management processes identified in the literature. Different studies have defined knowledge management as including the five processes of knowledge acquisition, knowledge creation, knowledge transfer, knowledge storage, and knowledge application (Costa & Monteiro, 2016; Inkinen, 2016). Shujahat et al. limited their study to be consistent with the operational definition of knowledge management as involving the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Ahmad et al., 2017; Shujahat et al., 2019). Shujahat et al.'s work was meaningful to this current study because their operational definitions of the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization were used to develop this study's three guiding subresearch questions.

Findings from numerous studies have shown a relationship between knowledge management and intellectual capital as well as the impact of these two concepts on

organizational performance (Abualoush et al., 2018; Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018; Attar et al., 2019; Ramadan et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). Noting the gap in the literature specific to the role of knowledge management infrastructure in the development and support of knowledge management processes and accumulation of intellectual capital, Abualoush et al. (2018) conducted a quantitative survey study to investigate the relationships among four variables: knowledge management infrastructure, knowledge management process, intellectual capital, and organizational performance. The study's sample included 134 employees from three food industry companies in Jordan, from which 123 completed questionnaires were collected.

Key findings relevant to this current study were twofold. First, both knowledge management processes and intellectual capital were positively and significantly related to organizational performance (Abualoush et al., 2018). Abualoush et al.'s (2018) findings were consistent with the results of studies by Wang et al. (2016) and Apiti **et al.** (2017). Second, knowledge management process had a positive and significant relationship to intellectual capital (Abualoush et al., 2018). This second finding was consistent with results from Ramadan et al.'s (2017) showing how the four knowledge management processes of knowledge acquisition, knowledge generation, knowledge documentation, and knowledge transfer had significant positive impacts on intellectual capital.

A strength of Abualoush et al.'s (2018) study was its contribution to the development of a theoretical framework that provides an explanation for how knowledge management infrastructure and process as well as intellectual capital are related to organizational performance. This theoretical framework can provide valuable guidance

for future studies. The researchers discussed the weakness of their study sample that prevents generalization of their findings to other companies within the food industry sector. Among the large food industry in Jordan, only three companies agreed to participate in the study. This small sample size was limited to Jordanian companies dealing in a narrow range of food products to include dairy, juices, packaged salads and desserts, and bottled water. Despite the study limitations, results from Apiti et al.'s (2017) research were meaningful to this current study's research questions about the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies because the researchers showed that knowledge management processes are helpful for building intellectual capital in an organization (Apiti et al., 2017).

Wang et al. (2016) argued that the research literature shows knowledge management strategy and intellectual capital are interrelated. However, they were among the first research teams to address a deficiency in the literature: previous studies had failed to examine the fit between knowledge management and intellectual capital strategy with the aim of understanding how the fit impacts organizational performance (Wang et al., 2016). To address this gap in the literature, Wang et al. conducted a survey study to collect quantitative data from Chinese high-technology firms. The target population was top managers at 800 high-technology companies in Jiangsu province, a developed region in China. Using convenience sampling methods, the researchers recruited chief executive officers, general managers, and senior managers of 356 companies. Of the 356 surveys collected, 328 were complete for a 41% response rate.

Based on the relevant literature, Wang et al. (2016) developed a theoretical framework for understanding the fit between intellectual capital and knowledge management strategy. According to the researchers, intellectual capital is concerned with different forms of knowledge within the organization, while knowledge management is concerned with processes and practices used to maximize the organization's knowledge resources. Fit involves the matching of "multiple, interdependent and mutually reinforcing organizational elements" (Wang et al., 2016, p. 1863). In the case of their theoretical framework, the researchers' aim was to investigate the fit between (a) the three major components of intellectual capital—human capital, structural capital, and relational capital—and (b) four types of knowledge management strategy. Within the knowledge management literature, knowledge management strategy is categorized in terms of two aspects: (a) knowledge sourcing that has two dimensions, internal-oriented and external-oriented strategy; and (b) knowledge focus that is either explicit-oriented or tacit-oriented strategy (Wang et al., 2016). Wang et al. selected knowledge sourcing when categorizing knowledge management strategy for their theoretical framework. The framework's four knowledge management strategy types are internal-external strong (IS-ES), internal strong-external weak (IS-EW), internal weak-external strong (IW-ES), and internal weak-external weak (IW-EW).

According to Wang et al.'s (2016) theoretical framework, the IS-ES strategy emphasizes the need for both internal knowledge, tacit and explicit, and the search and absorption of useful external knowledge. Therefore, the ideal intellectual capital profile for maximizing an organization's operational and financial performance for the IS-ES

knowledge management strategy should include strong and balanced human capital, structural capital, and relational capital (Wang et al., 2016). In the case of the IS-EW knowledge management strategy, the ideal intellectual capital profile for maximizing organizational performance should include strong human capital with reasonable structural capital and relational capital. As for the IW-ES knowledge management strategy, the ideal intellectual capital profile for maximizing organizational performance should include strong structural capital and relational capital with reasonable human capital. Lastly, the IW-EW knowledge management strategy is indicative of companies having low aspirations for leveraging internal or external knowledge. Wang et al. explained that an ideal intellectual capital profile for this knowledge management strategy may include strong relational capital with reasonable structural capital and human capital. The researchers further explained that if the human capital is overly strong in this intellectual capital profile, the constructive suggestions of workers may be ignored and not implemented, which can negatively impact workers' enthusiasm and morale, which, in turn, negatively affects work outcomes (Wang et al., 2016).

Based on statistical analysis of the 328 completed participant surveys, Wang et al. (2016) found that their theoretical framework was effective for predicting an organization's operational performance and financial performance. Comparing the ideal and nonideal intellectual capital profiles generated from the raw data, the researchers found that the lower deviation from the ideal profile reflected higher fit, which should result in better performance (Wang et al., 2016). A strength of the study was the statistical analysis methods used that produced a novel explanation of organizational

performance variances by examining the alignment of knowledge management capabilities. The authors noted the limitations of the cross-sectional survey design, self-reported data, and the collection of data in a specific region of one country, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other populations. However, the findings specific to the fit of the human capital component of intellectual capital to the four knowledge management strategies were meaningful to this current study's research questions. Wang et al.'s findings that show relationship between human intellectual capital and the four knowledge management strategy types support the design of this current study that aimed to explore human resource managers' experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies.

Studies Related to Human Intellectual Capital Management Strategies

The theory of dynamic capabilities (Zahra et al., 2006) stresses the importance of businesses engaging in processes to renew and update resources in order to strengthen their competitive positioning in the marketplace and maintain lasting competitive advantages over time. As previously discussed, Wang et al. (2016) studied business resources in terms of intellectual capital, which they defined as "the total amount of knowledge that will be leveraged for gaining sustainable competitive advantage in an organization" (pp. 1863-1864). Intellectual capital entails knowledge that is embedded in an organization's human capital, structural capital, and relational capital (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018; Claver-Cortés et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2016). Human capital refers to the summation of employees' knowledge, competence, skills, innovativeness, values, attitudes, commitment wisdom, and experience (Claver-Cortés et al., 2018; Wang

et al., 2016). Structural capital refers to the valuable strategic assets of an organizational, including capabilities, culture, routines, procedures, information systems computer hardware and software, and databases, that enable employees to be productive (Claver-Cortés et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2016). Lastly, relational capital refers to knowledge and learning capabilities present in the relationships the organization has with key stakeholders, including customers, partners, providers, distributors, investors, and public groups (Claver-Cortés et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2016). Because this current study is concerned only with human intellectual capital, only studies about this component of intellectual capital were reviewed in this section.

Claver-Cortés et al. (2018) explained how the innovation a company requires to effectively respond to market dynamism depends on its development of capabilities. Claver-Cortés et al. focused their research on the vital capability of human intellectual capital. The literature gap the researchers addressed in their study was the lack of understanding of the specific human intellectual capital management strategies, in the form of organizational routines, that are facilitators of innovation, which are critical to a business developing and maintaining competitive advantages.

Claver-Cortés et al. (2018) aimed to identify organizational management practices that involve intellectual capital as a facilitator of innovation. The researchers drew their sample of five shrimp exporting companies from Ecuador's shrimp production and export business sector, specifically those companies that are located in the El Oro Province. The researchers employed a qualitative methodology, based on grounded theory data collection and analysis techniques. Data were collected through interviews with human

resource managers and other management professionals employed by the five shrimp exporting companies. For data analysis purposes, the researchers employed the use of the software T-Lab, Version 8 as a tool to assist with the grounded theory analysis techniques of open coding, axial coding, and selective coding (Claver-Cortés et al., 2018).

Claver-Cortés et al.'s (2018) findings indicated human capital, structural capital, and relational capital management practices are facilitators of innovation in shrimp exporting companies. The findings specific to the human capital practices are relevant to this current study that was focused on the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. The human capital practices identified by Claver-Cortés et al. as being key to innovation are consistent with strategies concerned with organizational learning, knowledge transfer, and training experiences. Arguably, these strategies are key to a company's capability to develop the human intellectual capital needed to achieve and sustain competitive advantages in the marketplace (Claver-Cortés et al., 2018).

A strength of Claver-Cortés et al.'s (2018) study was the researchers' adherence to grounded theory data collection and analysis techniques informed by the grounded theory literature. The researchers detailed their data collection and analysis methods in such a way as to produce a rigorous and reproducible qualitative study. Another strength was the comprehensive literature review on intellectual capital, knowledge management, and innovation that informed the development of the study.

The major limitation of Claver-Cortés et al.'s (2018) study was its qualitative design and small sample size, which does not allow for the generalizing of findings to

other populations, contexts, and settings (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Claver-Cortés et al.'s study was relevant to this current study's research questions that aimed to explore the relationship between human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies.

As previously explained, knowledge management capabilities are inseparably linked to a company's ability to manage its intellectual capital (Ramadan et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). The research literature emphasized the strategic importance of the quality of human intellectual capital in terms of its capability to increase the relationship between organizational strategy and performance outcomes Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018; Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016; Rađenović & Krstić, 2017). Rađenović and Krstić (2017) explained that human capital is important because it is pivotal to the creation of the other two intellectual capital components of structural capital and relational capital.

Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė (2018) cited the literature specific to the critical importance of human intellectual capital in that it is the enabler of knowledge management because employees are the developers of knowledge management processes. Because employees apply their knowledge to improve overall knowledge management within the organization, "human capital influences the use of knowledge" (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018, p. 110). Although research over the past 10 years has linked the two fields of intellectual capital and knowledge management, problematic is the continued difficulty of expressing the values of these two domains in a tangible form (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018). To address this problem, Atkočiūnienė and

Praspaliauskytė conducted a quantitative survey study to investigate the influence of both intellectual capital and knowledge management on IT companies' financial and other performance indicators. The study sample consisted of 86 IT companies operating in Lithuania.

Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė's (2018) results showed that knowledge management processes have greater influence on IT companies' financial performance than other performance indicators. Of the five knowledge management processes examined in the study, knowledge acquisition, knowledge retention, knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, and knowledge application, knowledge creation (41.3%) and knowledge application (41.3%) had the greatest impact on financial performance. To a lesser degree, knowledge management processes influenced other performance indicators such as employee satisfaction, customer growth, work efficiency, and customer satisfaction. Of the five knowledge management processes examined in their study, Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė found that knowledge application (38.8%) had the strongest influence on the other performance indicators. The researchers further reported that the performance indicators of employee satisfaction and work efficiency, as well as customer satisfaction, were influenced most by teamwork, accumulated knowledge, experience, and regular market analysis. Based on their findings specific to knowledge management processes and financial performance, Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė's concluded that an effective knowledge management strategy for an IT company can result in increases in profit, market share, sales, and return on investment, while an

ineffective knowledge management strategy can contribute to decreased financial performance.

Two findings from Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė's (2018) research were relevant to this current study that focused on the human capital component of intellectual capital. Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė found that all three components of intellectual capital influenced financial performance: structural capital (39.7%), relational capital (36.8%), and human capital (34.1%). This finding indicates that the IT companies that participated in the study placed greater emphasis on attending to infrastructure and operational management, which aligns with the nature of these software companies' preference for smooth operations (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018). Addressing their study's finding that contradicts the empirical literature on the positive influence of human capital on financial performance, Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė explained that wording of two questionnaire items may have influenced this result. Questionnaire items about employees' creativity and employees suggesting and developing new ideas received low scores from participants, evaluations that were likely influenced by the high number of the participant employees whose work is focused on performing mechanical tasks related to software maintenance, not exercising creativity (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018).

Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė (2018) also found that performance indicators other than financial performance were influenced by all three components of intellectual capital: human capital (37.4%), structural capital (36.7%), and relational capital (32.5%). This finding indicates that the IT companies' employees are the main influencers of

employee and customer satisfaction, work efficiency, and increasing the customer base, not the companies' infrastructure or relationships with stakeholders (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018). The researchers concluded that creativity and professionalism have the greatest influence on performance indicators other than financial performance. They further recommended that IT companies aiming to increase customer satisfaction, customer growth, employee satisfaction, and employee work efficiency should focus on the development of their employees in the areas of professionalism, creativity, and generation of new ideas (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018).

The strengths of Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė's (2018) study included a well-developed review of the literature that enabled them to situate their study and explain their findings in the larger context of empirical research. Another noteworthy strength was their participant recruitment response rate of 70.49% of the targeted population of Lithuanian IT companies. Additionally, the researchers noted that the similar calculated determination coefficients for both knowledge management and intellectual capital indicate that all knowledge management processes, knowledge acquisition, knowledge retention, knowledge sharing, knowledge creation, and knowledge application, and all intellectual capital components, human capital, structural capital, and relational capital, influence various aspects of organizational performance, which is consistent with the extant literature. Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė's study extended the extant literature by determining the value of knowledge management processes and intellectual capital components in a tangible form. A particular weakness of this study was the researchers' findings specific to human intellectual capital. They

attributed their finding of human capital having less influence on financial performance than the other two intellectual capital components of structural capital and relational capital to the nature of the IT employees' work, which is highly mechanical in nature. Thus, the study sample of IT employees hinders the generalizability of results to other employee groups.

Particularly meaningful to this current study's research questions were Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė's (2018) findings that all knowledge management processes, and all intellectual capital components influence various aspects of organizational performance, which confirms the extant literature. Additionally, relevant were Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė's results that establish benchmarks concerning calculable values for knowledge management processes and intellectual capital components. Although the researchers' model used some differing terminology for one of the three knowledge management processes included in this current study, an equivalent exists that justified the relevance of their model for this study. Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė and this study both used the term *knowledge creation*. The term *knowledge sharing* was also used in both studies. The term *knowledge utilization* was used in this current study, which is equivalent to Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė's use of the term *knowledge application*.

Qualitative Hermeneutic Phenomenology

Phenomenology is a qualitative research design used by researchers when their goal is to understand individuals' lived experience of a particular phenomenon (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016; van Manen, 2017). Since the aim of this current study was to understand

human resource managers' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge management practices with human intellectual capital strategies, the phenomenological approach was appropriate. Because it was not known to what extent knowledge management practices were being integrated with human intellectual capital strategies by human resource managers, a hermeneutical approach with an emphasis on interpretation was a better fit than a classical or descriptive transcendental approach.

Transcendental phenomenology, grounded in Husserl's (1970) theoretical work, and hermeneutical phenomenology, grounded in the work of Heidegger (1962), have similarities. First, both approaches rose up from the two phenomenologists' shared backgrounds in German philosophy (Laverty, 2003). Second, both phenomenological approaches are concerned with lived human experiences (Laverty, 2003; Smith, et al., 2009; Vagle, 2014). Smith et al. (2009) used the term *idiographic* to describe the nature of phenomenology as being focused on a particular case in order to elicit unique personal lived experiences of a phenomenon of inquiry. The phenomenological researcher wants "to know in detail what the experience for this person is like, what sense this particular person is making, what is happening to them" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 3). Third, from a practice perspective, both transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenology usually use the same data collection method of semistructured interviews, although Smith et al. explained that this is not always the case. For example, with interpretative phenomenological analysis that is grounded in Heidegger's hermeneutical approach, participant diaries as well as participant observation in which the activity being observed includes discussion of experience can be used to collect data. Whether employing the

usual data collection method of semistructured interviews or participant diaries and participant observation, the aim is to provide the participants with opportunities to provide "rich, detailed, first-person account[s] of their experiences" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 56). These interviews are transcribed into written form in preparation for data analysis. Despite their similarities, these two phenomenological approaches differ in the ontological, epistemological, and methodological domains (Laverty, 2003).

Before examining the ontological and epistemological differences between transcendental phenomenology and hermeneutical phenomenology, background information on the positivist and interpretivist frameworks was helpful. Ontology is concerned with reality—its form, nature, what can be known about it, while epistemology is concerned with the relationship between the knower and what can be known (Laverty, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Within the ontological realm there are two basic frameworks. The positivist framework entails the perspective that reality is something apart from the self that can be received and studied as opposed to something a person can create (Laverty, 2003). Epistemologically, the positivist framework is associated with the traditional scientific approach wherein researchers are viewed as being able to be the disinterested scientists who separate their biases from their work (Laverty, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The second ontological framework is that of interpretivism (or constructivism). The interpretivist framework is grounded in the ontological perspective that there are "multiple realities that are constructed and can be altered by the knower" (Laverty, 2003, p. 26). Unlike the positivist perspective that reality is apart from the individual knower, the interpretivist perspective is that reality is local to and can be

altered by the individual knower. Epistemologically, the interpretivist perceives a relationship between the knower and what can be known (Laverty, 2003).

Scholars have noted that Husserl's (1970) approach to transcendental phenomenology tended to lean toward the epistemological perspective of positivism in terms of the relationship between the knower and the object of study (Laverty, 2003). For Husserl, the individual knower is capable of comprehending consciousness in order to arrive at the essences of a particular phenomenon, the structures of which "could be seen in intentionality and bracketing" (Laverty, 2003, p. 27). Although Husserl did not describe his approach in terms of a purely ontological and epistemological positivist framework, his perspectives on the nature of consciousness and the relationship between it and the knower tended toward a Cartesian positivism (Laverty, 2003). Heidegger (1962), however, tended toward, perhaps too far, in the opposite direction of the interpretivist who believes all reality is local to and can be altered by the individual knower (Laverty, 2003).

Aside from ontology and epistemology, methodology is concerned with how a researcher investigates a particular phenomenon that can be known. There are distinctions between transcendental and hermeneutical phenomenology in terms of how research is conducted (Laverty, 2003). Transcendental phenomenology is descriptive in nature, focuses on the structure of experience and the organizing principles that provide form and meaning to lived experiences, and aims to "elucidate the essences of the structures as they appear in consciousness" (Laverty, 2003, p. 27). Hermeneutic phenomenology differs in that it is "interpretive and concentrated on historical meanings of experience

and their developmental and cumulative effects on individual and societal levels" (Laverty, 2003, p. 27).

This current study involved following Smith et al.'s (2009) approach to interpretative phenomenological analysis. When analyzing phenomenological data using an interpretative approach, a researcher's aim is to "capture individual variations" of participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon of inquiry while using thematic analysis techniques (Vagle, 2014). I collected data using semistructured interviews, which is the most common method used in phenomenological research (Laverty, 2003). Smith et al. described a process through which the researcher engages in reflective analysis of the participants' account of their lived experiences. In the case of this study, the phenomenon of inquiry was human resource managers' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. The primary focus was on the lived experiences and meaning making of the participants. However, the result of the analysis was the researcher's account of what the individual participants thought, which is described as the double hermeneutic (Smith et al., 2009). Smith et al.'s six steps are (a) reading and rereading the participant interview transcript, (b) initial exploratory noting of anything of interest contained in the written transcript, (c) developing emergent themes, (d) searching for connections across emergent themes, (e) moving to the next participant interview transcript, and (f) looking for patterns across the multiple participant interview transcripts.

Summary and Conclusions

U.S. corporate leaders recognize a key to success within the new knowledge-generating society is knowledge workers (Palvalin et al., 2017). Addressing a shortcoming in the literature, Palvalin et al. (2017) recommended that managers support workers' development of self-management skills and emphasize the importance of greater collaboration between managers and human resource managers in this area. These recommendations were relevant to the aim of this current study to explore human resource managers' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. Similarly, Whyte (2002) was concerned about the need in modern-day U.S. corporations for employees who are more creative, innovative, dedicated, and adaptable. Whyte further explained that the critical knowledge worker human attributes of autonomy, motivation, and knowledge sharing (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018) reside within the soul of an individual. Whyte's poetic approach can help to 21st-century employers learn how to develop these attributes and other ones such as creativity by honoring "the souls of the individuals who work for them" (p. 10).

Another major theme in the literature relevant to this current study's topic of research included the relationships between the learning organization, organizational learning, and knowledge management. Bolisani and Bratianu (2018) explained that organizational learning and knowledge management are aspects of the learning organization, but they argued that Senge's (1990) learning organization is a mere metaphorical construct because learning is a human process and knowledge generation

results from individuals who learn. Castaneda et al. (2018) contended that the fundamental processes of organizational learning and of creating and acquiring knowledge have been gradually absorbed by the knowledge management literature, becoming essential parts of knowledge management definitions, and *human resource* has been the fastest growing thematic category in the knowledge management literature over the past 10 years. Thus, Castaneda et al. recommended that further studies address the need to develop an understanding of the dynamic relationship between aspects of knowledge management, human variables, and organizational performance. Castaneda et al.'s recommendation provided justification for this current study's inquiry about human resource managers' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes and human capital management strategies.

Another major theme in the literature relevant to this current study was that of tacit knowledge and knowledge management processes. Increasingly, managers are focused on using methods, techniques, and tools to elicit tacit knowledge from employees in order to create new knowledge that can be systematically organized for future retrieval and use with the aim of adding economic value to the organization (Garcia & Coltre, 2017; Marouf, 2016). Tacit knowledge includes individual/personal knowledge, managerial knowledge, expertise knowledge, and collective knowledge (Zaima et al., 2015). These forms of tacit knowledge can be lost if they are not captured in a retrievable form before employees retire or leave the organization for other jobs (Bolisani & Bratianu, 2018). Researchers have concluded that both tacit and explicit knowledge use should be explored in the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation,

knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Magnier-Watanabe & Benton, 2017; Muthuveloo et al., 2017; Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995).

Drucker's (1999) knowledge-worker productivity theory was pivotal to this study's conceptual framework. Specifically, the knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization, which were featured in current study, are ground in Drucker's theory. Although some researchers have investigated the impact of knowledge management processes on employee productivity in terms of task efficiency, Shujahat et al. (2019) addressed the gap in the literature concerning the impact of knowledge management processes on the cognitive aspects of knowledge-worker productivity.

Findings from numerous studies show a relationship between knowledge management and intellectual capital as well as the impact of these two concepts on organizational performance (Abualoush, et al., 2018; Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018; Attar et al., 2019; Ramadan et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). Study results indicated that both knowledge management processes and intellectual capital are positively and significantly related to organizational performance (Abualoush et al., 2018; Apiti et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). Additionally, research revealed that knowledge management process is positively and significantly related to intellectual capital (Abualoush et al., 2018; Ramadan et al., 2017). Furthermore, researchers showed how knowledge management processes are helpful for building an organization's intellectual capital (Apiti et al., 2017), thus justifying the need for this current study that addressed the gap

in the literature specific to human resource managers' integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies.

The last major theme in the literature important to this current study was the concept of human intellectual capital. Human capital, along with structural capital and relational capital, is a component of intellectual capital (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018) and refers to the summation of employees' knowledge, competence, skills, innovativeness, values, attitudes, commitment wisdom, and experience (Claver-Cortés et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2016). Human intellectual capital is important in terms of its capability to increase the relationship between organizational strategy and performance outcomes (Atkočiūnienė & Praspaliauskytė, 2018; Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016); and in its role in the creation of the other two intellectual capital components of structural capital and relational capital (Rađenović & Krstić, 2017). Additionally, human intellectual capital is an enabler of knowledge management. Atkočiūnienė and Praspaliauskytė (2018) established benchmarks concerning calculable values for knowledge management processes and intellectual capital components that set the groundwork for this current study that addressed the gap in the literature concerning the integration of knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies. The methods of researching this topic are detailed in Chapter 3, which includes a description of the qualitative research design, hermeneutical phenomenology, as well as methods for participant recruitment, data collection, and data analysis. A discussion of issues related trustworthiness and ethical procedure for human subject research are included in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3: Research Method

The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of 16 human resource managers specific to their integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States. This chapter is organized in five major sections. First, a discussion of the study's research design and rationale is presented. Second, I explain my dual role as the researcher in a double hermeneutic. The third section contains information about the study methodology, including the participant selection logic, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis procedures. In the fourth section, I discuss issues of trustworthiness before concluding the chapter with a summary in the fifth section.

Research Design and Rationale

The overarching research question was as follows: What are the lived experiences of human resource managers related to integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States? When conducting hermeneutic, phenomenological research, SQs are helpful for further guiding the exploration of theory-driven questions (Smith et al., 2009). Three SQs focused on the three processes identified in the knowledge management literature that were explored in this study:

SQ1: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge creation processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

SQ2: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge sharing processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

SQ3: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge utilization processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

The two central concepts of the study were knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies. For the purposes of this study, knowledge management processes were defined as involving the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Shujahat et al., 2019). Human intellectual capital strategies were defined as those used by human resource professionals to manage an organization's human intellectual capital, including those strategies related to the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

I used a qualitative method with a hermeneutic, phenomenological design in this study (van Manen, 2014). This research approach was appropriate for the goal of understanding human resource managers' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge management practices with human intellectual capital strategies. I chose a hermeneutic approach because of its emphasis on the interpretation of factual experiences as reported by participants (Heidegger, 1962). In hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher aims to interpret the "historical meanings of experience and their

developmental and cumulative effects on individual and societal levels" (Laverty, 2003, p. 27).

I considered a transcendental, phenomenological approach but deemed it not effective for this study because of the emphasis on describing the essences of the participants' subjective experiences (Laverty, 2003). Arriving at a descriptive universal essence of the phenomenon of inquiry, as in the case of the transcendental approach (van Manen, 2014), would not have achieved this study's aim of understanding the qualitatively different ways human resource managers experience the integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. Because it was not known to what extent knowledge management practices were being integrated with human intellectual capital strategies by human resource managers, I determined a hermeneutical approach with an emphasis on interpretation was more suitable than a descriptive, transcendental approach. Therefore, hermeneutic phenomenology was the design used for this study. Case study was also a consideration, as a possible research design (Yin, 2014).

The connection of phenomenology to the field of human resource development (HRD) and, more generally, to management research has been documented in the literature and provided further rationale for the selection of this research design. Because phenomenology as a research design aims to explain the universal essence of human experience, it is particularly helpful to researchers working to expand understanding of the whole and complex human experiences relevant to HRD practice (Gibson & Hanes, 2003). Gibson and Hanes (2003) concluded that phenomenological research can

contribute both to HRD future research and practice as a means of expanding understanding of human experiences within the organizational environment where meaning making is of paramount importance. Similarly, Ehrich (2005) explained the contributions of phenomenology to management research. Because of its focus on bringing forth the essence of individuals' lived experiences through interviews, phenomenology is a methodological fit for management studies aimed at increasing understanding of the human dimensions of organizational processes and practices (Ehrich, 2005).

Role of the Researcher

In hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher holds a dual role in what is described as a double hermeneutic (Smith et al., 2009). In one sense, the researcher is like a participant in that they are drawing from the experiences of other persons to make sense of the world. Yet, in another sense, the researcher is not an actual participant (Smith et al., 2009). To understand the phenomenon of interest for this study, I interviewed human resource managers about their experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. My access to the phenomenon was through the participants' self-reported experiences of it. The double hermeneutic included my interpretation of the participants' experiences based on my own experientially informed perspective. The double hermeneutic can also be understood according to the first-order meaning making of the participant and the second-order sense making of the researcher (Smith et al., 2009).

As the researcher, I did not have personal or professional relationships with any of the participants. There were no ethical issues involving supervisory relationships, work environments, and conflicts of interest to be addressed concerning this study. Although bracketing is used as a means to manage researcher biases in the transcendental approach to phenomenology, such is not the case in the hermeneutic approach wherein the researcher's knowledge and experiences are instrumental to the circular nature of interpretation and understanding (Heidegger, 1962).

The hermeneutic circle, as described by Heidegger (1962), involves the interpretive process of gaining understanding about a phenomenon through shared knowledge and shared experiences of the participants as well as the researcher. In order to derive meaning about the phenomenon of the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies, I continually engaged in questioning my own presuppositions, based on the existing relevant literature, and the experiential knowledge obtained from the participants through semistructured interviews. Heidegger's circular hermeneutic process entails the researcher's engagement in interpretation by way of the initial first grasp understanding of the phenomenon based on the relevant literature and theoretical frameworks and inspection of detail obtained from the study participant interviews. I also engaged in further global inspection. The ultimate goal of engaging in the hermeneutic circle of reasoning was to arrive at a deeper understanding of the phenomenon that was the focus of the research (Heidegger, 1962).

Methodology

Participant Selection Logic

The focus of this hermeneutic, qualitative, phenomenological study was to understand human resource managers' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge management practices with human intellectual capital strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States. I chose human resource managers as participants due to their decision-making practices addressing human capital challenges in the workplace in the areas of hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers (Wang et al., 2016).

To identify the study population, I consulted the U.S. Bureau of Statistics. According to the U.S. Bureau of Statistics information on occupational employment statistics, an estimated 143,580 individuals are employed in the human resource manager profession, not including individuals in private practice (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018). Human resource managers in the eastern region of the United States are employed in the 21 states of Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. An estimated 60,000 individuals are employed as human resource managers in the 21 states that comprise the eastern region of the United States, not including individuals in private practice (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2018).

Purposive sampling techniques are justified in qualitative research because of the need to identify and select information-rich cases from which the researcher can learn

much about the phenomena of inquiry (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In the case of phenomenological research, van Manen (2014) described the need to gain "examples of experientially rich descriptions" (p. 353). To achieve an experientially rich sample, I used two purposive techniques: opportunistic sampling and snowball sampling (Miles et al., 2014). Opportunistic sampling entailed taking advantage of opportunities in the field to interview individuals who met the study's selection criteria. Snowball sampling involved asking experientially rich interviewees to suggest additional persons who met the study selection criteria and could provide relevant lived experiences helpful for answering the research questions (Miles et al., 2014).

Critical to the sampling process in qualitative research is the need to set boundaries to guide the selection of participants from whom data can be collected to answer the research questions (Miles et al., 2014). Four original criteria guided the selection of participants in this study. The first selection criterion related to geographic location; only individuals working in the 21 states of the eastern region of the United States were selected to participate in the study. Second, I only selected human resource managers that were members of the Society for Human Resource Management. Third, those selected to participate in the study were required to have a minimum of 5 years of experience in a senior leadership, such as C-suite executive, director, or departmental head. Fourth, I only selected individuals with knowledge of their company's knowledge management practices and human intellectual capital strategies as participants.

I initially identified potential participants through the Society for Human Resource Management, which was founded in 1948 and is the world's largest human

resource membership organization devoted to human resource management (Society of Human Resource Management, 2020). More than 275,000 professionals located in over 160 countries are members of the Society for Human Resource Management, which is known as a leading provider of resources to serve the needs of human resource professionals and advance the professional practice of human resource management. The Society for Human Resource Management has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China, India, and the United Arab Emirates. Membership with the Society for Human Resource Management requires certification of SHRM-CP or SHRM-SCP recognizing individuals as experts and leaders in the human resources management occupation. A Society for Human Resource Management certification is the only human resources certification offered globally with the largest membership in human resource management. The Society for Human Resource Management has been endorsed by more than 100,000 employers, representing 115 million employees worldwide. The SHRM-CP and SHRM-SCP exams are accredited by the Buros Center of Testing qualifying individuals with the highest credentials to implement human resource management knowledge in the workplace.

I primarily contacted and recruited participants through a discussion board of the Society for Human Resource Management. I posted information about the study, including the purpose, participant selection criteria, and guidelines for voluntary participation, on the discussion board. I used the website's directory to target postings to individuals and groups employed in the 21 states of the eastern region of the United States: Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland,

Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Society for Human Resource Management website postings included a link to my email address for those individuals who were interested in participating in the study. I contacted interested individuals by email and phone to determine if they met the selection criteria and facilitate participant informed consent and the scheduling of interviews.

A secondary source for recruiting participants was affiliate Society for Human Resource Management chapter LinkedIn professional groups. LinkedIn is a social networking site designed specifically for the business community that provides the means for registered members to establish and document networks of people they know and trust professionally (LinkedIn Corporation, 2020). Networks can be created individually and through group organizations called connections. I posted information about the study with a link to my email address on the LinkedIn pages of Society for Human Resource Management chapters located in the eastern region of the United States. There were 38,069 LinkedIn members who are registered with Society for Human Resource Management chapters located in the eastern region of the United States. As individuals responded favorably to recruitment efforts by indicating their interest in participating in the study, I contacted them by email and scheduled a telephone conference call during which I determined that they met the study's four selection criteria and facilitated participant informed consent and the scheduling of interviews. Additionally, I used snowball sampling. I asked participants at the end of the interview if they were aware of

any persons who may be interested in participating in the study. However, participant recruitment efforts based on the initial four selection criteria were not successful in achieving the target sample size.

Only two Society for Human Resource Management members responded to the initial participant recruitment process via the Society for Human Resource Management member community discussion website and the Society for Human Resource Management chapter LinkedIn professional groups. I used snowball sampling techniques to obtain additional participants who met the study selection criteria and could provide relevant lived experience helpful for answering the primary and secondary research questions. When the snowball sampling techniques did not generate the required number of participants, I submitted a request to, and received approval from, the Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) for a change in the study's "Participant Selection Logic" procedures. The request entailed changing the initially proposed procedures as follows.

The first change involved revising the second participant selection criterion. The initial criterion read: "Individuals must hold a current professional membership in the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)," which was expanded to include individuals with academic degrees in human resource management or a related field. The revised participant selection criterion reads as follows: "Individuals must hold either a current professional membership in the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) or an undergraduate or graduate degree in human resource management or a related field."

The second change involved enhancing participant recruitment efforts. To enhance participant recruitment, I added another source for professionals who would meet participant selection criteria. I expanded the recruitment sources to include members of the professional organization Academy of Management (AOM). I recruited additional participants via the AOM online community. The AOM was not a research partner in the study. Recruitment efforts through the Society for Human Resource Management and AOM resulted in obtaining eight participants for the study. I used snowball sampling techniques to recruit eight additional participants for a total of 16 participants.

As individuals responded favorably to recruitment efforts by indicating their interest in participating in the study, I contacted them by email in order to schedule a telephone conference call for the purpose of determining that they met the study's participant selection criteria. During the phone call, I collected key demographic information on those individuals who met the selection criteria. Next, I emailed the informed consent forms to the 16 individuals who agreed to participate in the study with instructions to complete the form and return it to me. After receiving each participant's signed informed consent form, I scheduled a one-on-one semistructured interview at a day/time that was convenient for the participant.

In a general sense, qualitative researchers aim to achieve data saturation with their sample. Data saturation refers to the point at which no new insights are forthcoming from the participants (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Data saturation is reached sooner in homogenous study samples whereby the participants share common selection criteria (Guest et al., 2006), such as was the case of this current study. Wherein the goal is to

understand common perceptions and experiences of a homogeneous group of individuals, 12 interviews is adequate (Guest et al., 2006). Rather than aiming for data saturation, van Manen (2014) argued that phenomenological researchers should focus on collecting enough "experientially rich accounts" from participants to produce a "scholarly and reflective phenomenological text" (p. 353). For the purposes of this current study, the goal was a sample size of 15-20 participants, I continued sampling and interviewing until I achieved data saturation after 16 interviews.

Instrumentation

A semistructured interview guide served as the study's primary data collection instrument. I developed the interview guide based on the literature relevant to knowledge management practices and human intellectual capital strategies. Knowledge management practices addressed in the interview guide were defined according to Shujahat et al.'s (2019) framework that includes the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. Human intellectual capital management strategies were addressed in the interview guide as including those related to the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

A secondary data collection instrument was a researcher field journal. During the semistructured interviews, I maintained in a field journal to document observations. In addition to documenting observations about participants' behavior cues, I noted my reflections about the participants' lived experiences and perceptions of organizational processes for creating knowledge, sharing knowledge, and utilizing knowledge. The

journaling process was helpful for clarifying study results throughout the analysis process, which was helpful for ensuring credibility (Moustakas, 1994).

When developing interview questions for phenomenological inquiry, the researcher aims to capture the experiences as lived by the participants (van Manen, 2014). Unlike other qualitative research designs, phenomenology is not concerned with participants' opinions, beliefs, or perceptions. The researcher seeks to explore what it is like for participants to experience the phenomenon of inquiry (van Manen, 2014). In the case of this study, I explored human resource managers' experiences of integrating knowledge management practices (knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization) with the human intellectual capital management strategies of hiring, retaining, and managing employees in their workplace. The interview questions (the appendix) were developed to answer each of the study's guiding research subquestions.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

Participant recruitment and data collection procedures did not begin until I received approval to conduct the study from the Walden University IRB. Then I began the initial recruitment of potential participants by posting information about the study, including the purpose, participant selection criteria, guidelines for voluntary and confidential participation, on the Society for Human Resource Management Connect member community discussion website. I am a member of the Society for Human Resource Management and have confirmed that I am allowed to post a group inquiry concerning participation in my study and request that interested members respond to me

by private message. As a the member of the Society for Human Resource Management, I have access to the Connect website's directory for the purpose of targeting postings to individuals and groups within the 21 states of the eastern region of the United States: Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. The Society for Human Resource Management website postings included a link to my email account for those individuals who were interested in participating in the study.

When initial recruitment efforts using the Society for Human Resource Management Connect member community discussion website were not successful in obtaining enough participants who met the four study selection criteria, I began a secondary round of participant recruitment through affiliate Society for Human Resource Management chapter LinkedIn professional groups. I posted information about the study with a link to my LinkedIn account and/or private email address on the LinkedIn pages of the Society for Human Resource Management chapters located in the eastern region of the United States.

As previously stated, when recruitment efforts did not generate the target sample of 15-20 participants, I submitted a formal request to the Walden University IRB for a change in the study's "Participant Selection Logic" procedures to expand the selection criteria. After the IRB approved my request, I resumed the recruitment process until achieving a final sample of 16 participants.

As individuals responded favorably to recruitment efforts by indicating their interest in participating in the study, I contacted them by email to schedule a telephone conference call during which I determined that they met the study's initial four selection criteria and/or two expanded selection criteria. During the phone call, I gathered key demographic information: (a) age, (b) race/ethnicity, (c) highest level of education, (d) state of employment, (e) employment title/role, and (f) type of Society for Human Resource Management credentialing. Recruitment and participation confirmation efforts continued until I achieved a final sample of 16 participants.

After confirming an individual's participation by telephone conference call, I sent them an email containing the informed consent form with instructions to sign and date the form and return to me by email. After I received a signed informed consent letter, I scheduled a one-on-one interview at a day/time that was most convenient for the participant. I did not conduct interviews without a signed informed consent letter from participants. Prior to the scheduled interview, I sent each participant a copy of the interview questions to help them prepare for the interview by reflecting in advance about their lived experiences.

As the researcher, I conducted all of the individual interviews. Because the target population included Society for Human Resource Management members and AOM members who may or may not also be identified through LinkedIn and employed within the 21 states that comprise the eastern region of the United States, it was necessary to conduct telephone interviews (15 participants) and one Zoom interview. I continued sampling and interviewing until I achieved data saturation after 16 interviews. I utilized

FreeConferenceCall.com (FCC) to facilitate the interview call and audio recording (with participants' permission) for transcribing purposes. The FCC platform and the Zoom platform generated MP3 recording files that were transcribed into writing for analysis purposes. I retained independent transcription services to convert the MP3 recordings to Microsoft Word documents for uploading into the qualitative data analysis program ATLAS.ti 9 for analysis purposes. I obtained a signed confidentiality agreement from the independent transcriber to ensure the confidentiality of all information included in the recording file.

I conducted the semistructured one-on-one interviews in the private setting of my home to ensure participant confidentiality. The length of the interviews ranged between 22 minutes and 1 hour and 46 minutes. At the conclusion of each interview, I asked the participant for permission and preferred mode of contact (i.e., email, phone, text) to follow up with them should I need clarification for any interview responses. I facilitated transcript review via email by asking each participant to verify the accuracy of the transcript before beginning data analysis.

Data Analysis Plan

To answer each of the study's research questions, I collected data through semistructured interviews with human resource professionals specific to their lived experiences of the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. With participants' permission, I audio recorded the interviews and transcribed them for analysis purposes. I used the qualitative data analysis software program ATLAS.ti 9 to organize and code the data using a two-

cycle coding process (Miles et al., 2014). Throughout the coding process, I kept the study's purpose statement and research questions at the forefront of thought as a means of guiding the progression of analysis. I used the hermeneutic circle approach to analyze the data to arrive at a deeper understanding of human resource professionals' experiences with and perceptions about integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies (Heidegger, 1962).

van Manen's (2014) approach to thematic analysis guided the process of identifying meaning structures "embodied and dramatized" in the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon as represented in the interview transcripts (p. 319). When determining themes within the phenomenological context, the aim was to discover aspects or qualities that make up a phenomenon and without which the phenomenon could not exist (van Manen, 1990). van Manen's (2014) thematic analysis approach involved treating the participant interview transcript texts as sources of meaning at three levels: the whole story; the separate paragraph; and the sentence, phrase, or word.

van Manen (2014) described three reading approaches for exploring insights and themes at each of the three levels of meaning: wholistic, selective, and detailed. When using the wholistic reading approach, I used the wholistic approach when reading each interview transcript to gain a sense of the overall meaning of the transcript. Next, I used van Manen's selective approach when reading the transcripts several times to identify statements or phrases that revealed phenomenological meanings about the participants' lived experiences. Lastly, I used the detailed reading approach when doing a sentence-by-sentence examination for the purpose of identifying and capturing expressions and

phrases about the participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies (van Manen, 2014). I engaged this three-way process of analysis by moving from reading each interview transcript as a whole (wholistic analysis), identifying essential statements and phrases that capture participant experiences relevant to the research questions (selective analysis), and doing a close read of every sentence (detailed analysis). The process of identifying and refining emerging thematic structures was iterative within and across all participant interview transcripts (van Manen, 2014). While following van Manen's thematic analysis iterative process, I utilized Miles et al.'s qualitative coding techniques.

When analyzing the interview data, I adhered to Miles et al.'s (2014) approach to first-cycle and second-cycle qualitative coding. According to Miles et al., the interview transcripts are the data source to be analyzed, and the basic medium of analysis are words in the form of participant quotes. The analysis process is coding, which involves deep reflection, analysis, and interpretation of the data's meaning (Miles et al., 2014). I uploaded each participant interview transcript into the ATLAS.ti 9 qualitative data analysis program, which I used as a tool for organizing the data and performing the two cycles of analytic coding.

First-cycle coding involved the initial summarization of segments of the data (Miles et al., 2014). Data segments, or data chunks, were summarized by assigning code labels that provided symbolic meaning. Saldaña (2014) defined a code as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 3). While

performing first-cycle coding, I used the code manager function in ATLAS.ti 9 to assign code labels to chunks of data and provide an operational definition for each code. The code manager function enabled me to view the list of codes and their definitions to ensure consistency in the coding process because codes reoccur throughout the analysis process and oftentimes require further refinement (Friese, 2019). For example, some codes merged with other codes and some individual codes were split into multiple codes to clarify meaning, in which cases operational definitions were revised. In addition to viewing the evolving code list, the ATLAS.ti 9 code manager enabled me to examine the codes in context within a particular interview transcript and across all interview transcripts, which was helpful for maintaining consistency in the assigning of codes and developing and refining operational definitions (Friese, 2019). After completing the iterative first-cycle coding process for all interview transcripts, I began second-cycle coding.

Miles et al. (2014) described second-cycle coding as pattern coding. Pattern coding entailed grouping the initial codes into a smaller number of categories or themes. Pattern coding consisted of categories or themes, causes or explanations, relationships among people, or theoretical constructs (Miles et al., 2014). In the case of phenomenological research, pattern coding condenses the large amount of interview data into smaller units of analysis. For this study, I used analysis tools within ATLAS.ti 9 to examine the first-cycle codes in various forms (i.e., code-document tables, co-occurrence tables, word clouds) for the purpose of identifying themes emerging from the initial codes. Like with the first-cycle analysis, ATLAS.ti 9 enabled me to perform second-cycle

analysis of individual codes and participant interview transcripts as well as across all codes and participant transcripts for the purpose of examining similarities and differences in the data, which was helpful for discovering themes (Friese, 2019). Additionally, I used the query tool to ask complex questions of the data by combining codes and groups of codes while exploring possible themes. I used the query tool to retrieve participant quotes that were illustrative of codes and themes (Friese, 2019) for reporting in Chapter 4.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Credibility

Credibility is concerned with truth value for the persons participating in the study and readers of the study findings (Miles et al., 2014). I used two strategies to ensure the credibility of the study's findings. First, when deeply enmeshed in the analysis of participants' interview transcripts, I kept the analysis process connected to both the purpose of the study and the research design. Purpose, design, and the collected data drive the analysis process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). I reviewed the study's purpose statement and research questions as well as the hermeneutic circle diagram prior to and throughout the analysis process using first-cycle and second-cycle qualitative coding techniques (Miles et al., 2014). Second, utilizing the hermeneutic circle process of making sense of the participants' meaning making (Heidegger, 1962), I engaged in the constant comparative strategy (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) of doing ongoing analysis of similarities and differences in category codes, patterns, and themes emerging from the participants' interview transcripts.

Transferability

The issue of transferability is concerned with the transfer of qualitative research results to other contexts and settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended that the burden of proof for transferability lies more with the person interested in applying the findings elsewhere than it does with the researcher who lacks information about the contexts and settings in which the study results will be applied. However, the researcher can enhance the transferability of findings through the use of rich, thick descriptions of the study methodology and findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, I provided in-depth descriptions of the methodology to the extent that another researcher could replicate the study. When reporting the study findings, I provided rich, thick descriptions to include the participants' demographic information, personal experiences, and perceptions relevant to the phenomenon. When reporting findings from the first-cycle and second-cycle coding analysis processes (Miles et al., 2014), I provided illustrative quotes from the participants to provide further clarity and context for the findings.

Dependability

Of importance to establishing dependability is the need to document the constantly changing context within which a study takes place (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, I used the audit trail as a means of detailing how I conducted the study and analyzed the data. Additionally, I maintained a codebook to maintain consistency in the inductive two-cycle coding process (Miles et al., 2014). I created the codebook using the qualitative data analysis program ATLAS.ti 9 and included a listing of the codes by label

and code definition. The code manager function in ATLAS.ti 9 enabled me to quickly review examples of the use of codes across all participant interviews, which was helpful for ensuring consistency in the coding process.

Confirmability

In qualitative research, confirmability refers to establishing objectivity by setting aside the researcher's biases (Miles et al., 2014). Yet in hermeneutic phenomenology, the researcher is part of the double hermeneutic that includes the researcher's interpretation of the participants' experiences based on their own experientially informed perspective (Smith et al., 2009). As such, bracketing the researcher's biases and establishing reflexivity are not desirable techniques for establishing confirmability. Instead, I enhanced the confirmability of the study findings by including illustrative quotes from participants that could help readers confirm that my biases were not dominating the interpretation of data as well as detailing the sequence of steps for data collection, processing, and analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Additionally, I conducted member checks by emailing preliminary analysis to some of the participants to review and provide feedback as to if the interpretations make sense or "ring true" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 246).

Ethical Procedures

The Walden University IRB has specific requirements concerning the treatment of human research participants that I adhered to when conducting this study. When the snowball sampling techniques did not generate the required number of participants, I submitted a request to, and received approval from, the Walden University IRB for a

change in the study's "Participant Selection Logic" procedures. As a member of the Society for Human Resource Management, I utilized its organization-wide and chapter-specific social media tools such as LinkedIn and Society for Human Resource Management Connect to recruit participants. Because I did not conduct research at particular institutional sites, no institutional permissions were necessary.

All Society for Human Resource Management and AOM social media recruitment postings about the study and potential participation included specific instructions to respond to the researcher via a private response mechanism instead of responding publicly to the informational posting. The private response mechanisms included the option to contact me by private email messaging through my personal password-protected email account or LinkedIn account. The recruitment postings specifically instructed interested individuals to not respond directly to the Society for Human Resource Management message board posting to ensure participant confidentiality.

I informed participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could decline participation. I also informed them that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any penalties. During the informed consent process, I informed participants of any risks or benefits they may encounter. Additionally, I assured them of confidentiality during the data collection process as well as the reporting of study findings. I provided participants with my phone number and email address so they could contact me directly with any questions or concerns.

I handled all information collected during this study with the intent of maintaining participant confidentiality and protecting access to confidential data. I assigned each

interviewee a unique pseudonym that I used throughout the data collection process. I conducted the interviews and recorded them using FCC, which employs Transport Layer Security to encrypt data, and Zoom conference call. Additionally, I used password-protection to further ensure privacy of data collected with FCC and Zoom. I made every effort to ensure that participants were not identified in the interview recordings, and I obtained a signed confidentiality form from the transcription service prior to sending the MP3 recording files.

Multiple procedures were used to protect confidential data. Only I had access to the list of participants' names and assigned pseudonyms designated by P1, P2, P3, etc. in the order of their participation. I stored this list, the interview recordings, and written transcripts electronically on my private password-protected computer and in a locked file cabinet my office. No one other than me had access to passwords or file cabinet lock keys. All data will be secured for 5 years, after which files I will permanently delete all electronic data from my computer and shred all printed documents secured in the locked file cabinet. Because I did not have a relationship with any of the participants, there were no other ethical issues related to conflict of interest or power differentials.

Summary

I used a qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological research design to answer the study's research questions about human resource managers' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies. A hermeneutic approach to phenomenology was appropriate for this study because of its emphasis on the interpretation of factual experiences as reported

by participants (Heidegger, 1962). I held a dual role as the study researcher in keeping with the double hermeneutic (Smith et al., 2009) that includes the researcher's interpretation of the participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies.

I selected participants from the population of human resource managers employed in companies located within the eastern region of the United States, which included the 21 states of Alabama, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia. I utilized the purposive sampling techniques of opportunistic and snowball sampling to identify, recruit, and select participants who could provide experientially rich descriptions of the phenomenon of inquiry (van Manen, 2014). I identified and recruited potential participants through the Society for Human Resource Management nationwide and chapter-specific social media tools as well as the AOM.

I used a semistructured interview guide to collect data from participants. I conducted and recorded the interviews (with participants' permission) using FCC and Zoom. I field tested the interview guide with subject matter experts to establish content validity. I had the interview MP3 audio recordings transcribed into written form and uploaded them into the qualitative data analysis software program ATLAS.ti 9, which I utilized to organize and code the data using a two-cycle coding process (Miles et al., 2014). I followed van Manen's (2014) approach to thematic analysis to identify meaning structures contained within the participants' lived experiences of the phenomenon as

represented in the interview transcripts. I discussed issues of trustworthiness specific to credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability in this chapter as well as ethical procedures that I followed when conducting the study.

In Chapter 4, I describe the data collection and analysis procedures used while conducting the study. I present the study results so as to answer each of the three guiding research questions. I also present a discussion of the interpretation and implications of findings as well as the study limitations.

Chapter 4: Results

The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of human resource managers specific to their integration of knowledge process with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional services firms in the eastern region of the United States. The participants had experiences in the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization as well as human intellectual capital management strategies. The primary research question was as follows: What are the lived experiences of human resource managers related to integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States? When conducting hermeneutic phenomenological research, SQs are helpful for further guiding the exploration of theory-driven questions (Smith et al., 2009). With the following three SQs, I explored three processes identified in the knowledge management literature:

SQ1: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge creation processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

SQ2: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge sharing processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

SQ3: What are human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge utilization processes with human intellectual capital management strategies?

This chapter includes a discussion of the research setting, demographics, data collection, and data analysis. In this chapter, I also address issues of trustworthiness before presenting the study results. The chapter concludes with a summary of answers to the research questions and an introduction to Chapter 5.

Research Setting

Sixteen individuals participated in telephone interviews. All but one interview occurred via FCC (one participant requested the interview be conducted using the Zoom online meeting platform) and were audio recorded. Each participant provided informed consent before the interview took place.

I conducted the interviews in my home in a private setting to ensure solitude and the privacy of the participants. Prior to starting each interview, I reminded the participant that I would record the interview, I discussed the risks and benefits of being in the study, I offered a $10 gift card for participating, and I assured them of the confidentiality of their participation. At the time of conducting the interviews, participants were experiencing the impact of the global coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The pandemic was affecting the participants' professional and personal lives as they managed quarantines, lockdowns of schools and businesses, remote working, and other rapidly changing public health guidelines and mandates. These and other related factors may have affected participants' emotional well-being, daily life, and work patterns, but

they did not affect their ability to participate in the study interview. Other than the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, I was not aware of any other personal or organizational conditions that may have influenced participants' experiences or my interpretation of the study results.

Demographics

The participants in this study had experiences with integrating their organizations' knowledge management processes (i.e., knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization) with human intellectual capital management strategy (i.e., employee hiring, retention, and management). The participants were professionals in service firms located in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Rhode Island, and Tennessee. Three of the participants were from Washington, D.C. The participants were individuals who were human resource managers or management professionals and were either current professional members of the Society for Human Resource Management or held undergraduate or graduate degrees in human resource management or other related fields. The mean age of the participants was 52.6 years, and the median age was 50.5 years. Table 1 shows participants' gender and race characteristics.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Characteristics: Gender and Race

Characteristic	Category	*n*	%
Gender	Male	7	43.75
	Female	9	56.25
Race	Black	9	56.25
	White	6	37.50
	Hispanic	1	6.25

Data Collection

After receipt of the Walden University IRB approval (IRB Approval No. 07-13-20-0565875), I began the participant recruitment process via the community discussion website for Society for Human Resource Management members and Society for Human Resource Management chapter LinkedIn professional groups. Only two Society for Human Resource Management members responded, so I used snowball sampling techniques to obtain additional participants who met the study selection criteria and could provide relevant lived experience to answer the primary and secondary research questions. When the snowball sampling techniques did not generate the required number of participants, I submitted a request to the Walden University IRB for a change in the study's "Participant Selection Logic" procedures, for which I received approval. The request entailed changing the initially proposed procedures as follows.

The first change was revising the second participant selection criterion. The initial criterion read: "Individuals must hold a current professional membership in the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM)," which I expanded to include individuals with academic degrees in human resource management or a related field. The revised participant selection criterion reads as follows: "Individuals must hold either a current professional membership in the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) or an undergraduate or graduate degree in human resource management or a related field."

The second change was enhancing participant recruitment efforts. To enhance participant recruitment, I added another source for professionals who could meet the participant selection criteria by including members of the professional organization, the

AOM. I recruited additional participants via the AOM online community. The AOM was not a research partner in the study. Recruitment efforts through the Society for Human Resource Management and AOM resulted in obtaining eight participants for the study. I used snowball sampling techniques to recruit eight additional participants for a total of 16 participants.

As individuals responded favorably to recruitment efforts by indicating their interest in participating in the study, I contacted them by email to schedule a telephone conference call for the purpose of determining that they met the participant selection criteria. During the phone call, I collected key demographic information on those individuals who met the selection criteria. Next, I emailed the informed consent forms to the 16 individuals who agreed to participate in the study with instructions to complete the form and return it to me. After receiving each participant's signed informed consent form, I scheduled a one-on-one, semistructured interview at a day and time that was convenient for the participant.

Of the 16 participants, I interviewed 15 by telephone using FCC and interviewed one participant using the Zoom online meeting platform. The data collection instrument was an interview protocol with five interview questions, which I emailed to the participants to review prior to the scheduled interview. All interviews were audio recorded with the participants' permission. I conducted the interviews in the private setting of my home to ensure participant confidentiality. The length of the interviews ranged between 22 minutes and 1 hour and 46 minutes. I continued interviewing until I achieved data saturation.

Data Analysis

While following van Manen's (2014) thematic analysis process, I used Miles et al.'s (2014) qualitative two-cycle coding techniques to analyze participants' interview transcripts. First-cycle coding (i.e., open coding) involved initial summarization of segments of the data (Miles et al., 2014). Data segments were summarized by assigning code labels with symbolic meaning. While performing first-cycle coding, I used the code manager function in ATLAS.ti 9 to assign code labels to chunks of data and provide operational definitions for codes. The code manager functioned as a code list, enabling me to ensure consistency while refining by merging and splitting codes and revising code definitions. The ATLAS.ti 9 code manager also enabled me to examine the codes in context within a particular interview transcript and across all interview transcripts, which was helpful for maintaining consistency in the assigning of codes and developing and refining operational definitions. After completing the iterative first-cycle coding process for all interview transcripts, second-cycle coding began.

Miles et al. (2014) described second-cycle coding as pattern coding, which entails grouping the initial codes into a smaller number of categories or themes. Pattern coding may consist of categories or themes, causes or explanations, relationships among people, or theoretical constructs. In the case of phenomenological research, pattern coding condenses the large amount of interview data into smaller units of analysis. I used analysis tools within ATLAS.ti 9 to examine the first-cycle codes in various forms (i.e., code-document tables, co-occurrence tables, word clouds) for the purpose of identifying categories and themes emerging from the initial codes. ATLAS.ti 9 also enabled me to

perform second-cycle analysis of individual codes and participant interview transcripts as well as across all codes and participant transcripts for the purpose of examining similarities and differences in the data. I used the query tool to ask complex questions of the data by combining codes and groups of codes while exploring possible categories and themes; this tool was helpful for retrieving participant quotes that were illustrative of categories and themes for reporting in this chapter.

The following three tables depict themes, categories, and code units that emerged from the analyses. The tables are organized according to the research question and SQs. The themes, categories, and code units applicable to participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge creation processes with human intellectual capital management strategies appear in Table 2. These themes address the first research question. Illustrative participant quotes that emphasize the importance of the knowledge creation integration themes and categories appear in the Study Results section of this chapter.

The themes, categories, and code units applicable to participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge sharing processes with human intellectual capital management strategies appear in Table 3. These themes address SQ2. I provided illustrative participant quotes that emphasize the importance of the knowledge sharing integration themes and categories in the Study Results section.

Table 2

Knowledge Creation Integration: Themes, Categories, and Code Units

Themes	Categories	Code units
1. Nature of knowledge	a. Generational knowledge	▪ Deepening generational knowledge
	b. Tacit (implicit) knowledge	▪ Tacit + explicit knowledge
	c. Explicit knowledge	▪ Tacit + explicit knowledge
2. New knowledge	a. COVID-19	▪ COVID-19 new knowledge
	b. Recruited/hired knowledge	▪ Increasing hired knowledge ▪ Recruiting new knowledge
	c. Society-based knowledge	▪ Societal influences
3. External influences on knowledge process integration	a. External influences on knowledge creation	▪ External knowledge creation
	b. External limitations on knowledge creation	▪ External limitations
4. Internal influences on knowledge process integration	a. Leadership influences	▪ Employee buy-in + improvisational leadership ▪ Leadership communications ▪ Managerial perspective
	b. Employee influences	▪ Employee buy-in + improvisational leadership ▪ Employee engagement ▪ Managing employee stress
	c. Technology influences	▪ Disruptive technology + competition ▪ Technology challenges ▪ Technology factors affecting workplace environment ▪ Virtual creation
5. Knowledge process integration improvements	a. Organization-level improvements	▪ Multiple-region setting ▪ Organizational behavior ▪ Organizational intentionality ▪ Organizational knowledge creation ▪ Organizational learning ▪ Organizational performance
6. Knowledge process integration hindrances	a. Leadership hindrances	▪ Lack of leadership ▪ Lack of leadership support

Table 3

Knowledge Sharing Integration: Themes, Categories, and Code Units

Themes	Categories	Code units
1. Nature of knowledge	a. Proprietary knowledge	▪ Proprietary information
2. New knowledge	a. Recruited/hired knowledge	▪ External search ▪ New hire sharing
	b. Society-based knowledge	▪ Societal influences
3. External influences on knowledge process integration	a. External sources for knowledge sharing	▪ External sources
4. Internal influences on knowledge process integration	a. Leadership influences	▪ Candidate interviewing ▪ Onboarding new hires
	b. Employee influences	▪ Benefit to employee ▪ Employee engagement challenges ▪ Employee job security ▪ Employee relevance ▪ Knowledge compliance ▪ Sharing is reciprocal
	c. Technology influences	▪ Technology challenges ▪ Virtual sharing
5. Knowledge process integration improvements	a. Team-level improvements	▪ Sharing across teams
	b. Department-level improvements	▪ Departmental sharing
	c. Organization-level improvements	▪ Organizational intentionality ▪ Organizational learning ▪ Sharing strategic plan
6. Knowledge process integration hindrances	a. COVID-19 hindrances	▪ COVID-19 challenges
	b. Team/department-level hindrances	▪ Slow/time-consuming process
	c. Organization-level hindrances	▪ Disadvantages of hierarchical structures ▪ Lack of access to resources ▪ Slow/time-consuming process
7. Knowledge process integration outcomes	a. Employee outcomes	▪ Employee recruitment ▪ Employee retention

Table 4 shows the themes, categories, and code units applicable to participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge utilization processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. These themes address research question 3. Illustrative participant quotes that emphasize the importance of the knowledge utilization integration themes and categories appear in the Study Results.

In the final stage of analysis, I applied the concept of the hermeneutic circle to bring the parts back into relationship with the whole. In addition to being concerned about "the dynamic relationship between the part and the whole" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 28), the hermeneutic circle is a valuable conceptual tool for helping manage the iterative process of analysis key to the methods of phenomenology. In the case of the current study, I first analyzed data in the form of themes, categories, and themes, and reported the findings according to the three secondary research questions. Following the analysis of the data by secondary questions in the forthcoming results section, I brought back together the thematic parts of the data to address the whole of the research—the primary research question, which is presented at the conclusion of the results section. This approach to analyzing the data offers "different perspectives on the part-whole coherence of the text" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 28).

Table 4

Knowledge Utilization Integration: Themes, Categories, and Code Units

Themes	Categories	Code units
1. Nature of knowledge	a. Tacit (implicit) knowledge	▪ Employee knowledge and behavior
	b. Explicit knowledge	▪ Utilizing skills and accumulated knowledge
2. New knowledge	a. Recruited/hired knowledge	▪ Utilizing recruited knowledge
	b. Society-based knowledge	▪ Societal influences
3. Internal influences on knowledge process integration	a. Leadership influences	▪ Leadership support
	b. Employee influences	▪ Employee buy-in ▪ Transferring external training to performance ▪ Transferring internal training to performance
	c. Technology influences	▪ Virtual utilization
4. Knowledge process integration improvements	a. Individual-level improvements	▪ New job transfer ▪ Measuring performance
	b. Team-level improvements	▪ Measuring performance
	c. Department-level improvements	▪ Measuring performance
	Organization-level improvements	▪ Measuring performance
5. Knowledge process integration hindrances	a. Leadership hindrances	▪ Lack of authenticity ▪ Lack of executive support ▪ Progress hampered
	b. Team/department-level hindrances	▪ Lack of authenticity ▪ Progress hampered
	c. Organization-level hindrances	▪ Lack of authenticity ▪ Lack of organizational intentionality ▪ Lack of organizational prioritization ▪ Progress hampered
6. Knowledge process integration outcomes	a. Employee outcomes	▪ Improved employee performance ▪ Success in applied knowledge
	b. Customer/client outcomes	▪ Improves customer outcomes ▪ Increased referrals/sales

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

I used two strategies to ensure the credibility of the study's findings. First, when analyzing the participant interview transcripts, I kept the analysis process connected to the purpose of the study and research design. Because purpose, design, and the collected data drive the analysis process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015), I periodically reviewed, throughout the analysis process, the study's purpose statement and guiding research questions. Second, in keeping with the hermeneutic circle process of making sense of the participants' meaning making (Heidegger, 1962), I used the constant comparative strategy (Corbin & Strauss, 2015) of conducting ongoing analysis of similarities and differences in category codes, patterns, and themes emerging from the participants' interview transcripts. I made no adjustments to the credibility strategies described in Chapter 3.

Transferability

To enhance the transferability of study findings, I provided rich, thick descriptions of the study methodology and results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I provided detailed descriptions of the methodology to the extent that in the future a researcher could replicate this study. I also provided rich, thick descriptions when reporting the study findings, including information on participants' demographic characteristics and personal experiences and perceptions relevant to the phenomenon of inquiry. When reporting findings from the first-cycle and second-cycle coding analysis processes (Miles et al., 2014), I included illustrative quotes from the participants in order

to provide further clarity and context for the findings. I made no adjustments to the transferability strategies described in Chapter 3.

Dependability

To establish the study's dependability, I documented any changing context with the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). I used audit trails throughout the data collection phase. Additionally, I maintained a qualitative code book to maintain consistency in the inductive two-cycle coding process (Miles et al., 2014). The qualitative data analysis program ATLAS.ti 9 was suitable for creating the codebook that included labels and definitions for each code. Additionally, the code manager function in ATLAS.ti 9 enabled me to quickly review examples of the use of codes across all participant interviews, which was helpful for ensuring consistency in the coding process. Lastly, although not described in the section on dependability in Chapter 3, I emailed the interview transcripts to the participants to review for accuracy. Based on their review, the participants did not recommend any changes.

Confirmability

As mentioned in Chapter 3, confirmability in qualitative research refers to establishing objectivity by setting aside researcher bias (i.e., bracketing). However, given the study's research design of hermeneutic phenomenology, as the researcher I was part of the double hermeneutic that included my interpretation of the participants' experiences based on my own experimental informed perspective (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore, I did not bracket my biases. I enhanced confirmability of the study findings by including illustrative quotes from the participants that could help readers confirm that my

researcher biases were not dominating the interpretation of the data (Miles et al., 2014). Additionally, I conducted member checks by emailing preliminary analysis to some of the participants to review and provide feedback as to if the interpretations make sense or "ring true" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 246).

Study Results

The study results are organized by the primary research question and the three secondary research questions. Data analysis revealed seven shared themes across knowledge creation integration (SQ1), knowledge sharing integration (SQ2), and knowledge utilization integration (SQ3). The seven shared themes were as follows: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledges, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge process integration hindrances. Knowledge creation integration and knowledge sharing integration shared the theme of external influences on knowledge process integration, which was not a theme that emerged from the knowledge utilization data. Additionally, knowledge sharing integration and knowledge utilization integration shared the theme of knowledge process integration outcomes, but this theme did not emerge from the knowledge creation integration data.

First, I will report the results for each SQ. Following the presentation of results for each SQ, I will present a textual description in the form of illustrative participant quotes that emphasize the importance of the related themes and categories. Second, I will

present a discussion of the primary research question as viewed through the hermeneutic circle of interpretation.

Secondary Research Question 1

The first secondary research pertained to human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge creation processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. Thematic analysis of participants' interview transcripts revealed six themes: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledge, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, and (f) knowledge process integration hindrances. Table 5 shows the themes and categories helpful for answering SQ1 about participants' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge creation processes. The table also includes listings of the participants who described each of the categories.

As Table 5 shows, six themes emerged from the analysis of interview data pertaining to the participants' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge creation processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. The following sections, organized thematically from highest to lowest frequency of participant responses, include textual descriptions and illustrative participant quotes that emphasize the importance of the themes and categories.

Table 5

SQ1: Knowledge Creation Themes and Categories by Participants

Themes	Categories	Participants
1. Nature of knowledge	a. Generational knowledge b. Tacit (implicit) knowledge c. Explicit knowledge	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
2. New knowledge	a. COVID-19 pandemic b. Recruited/hired knowledge c. Society-based knowledge	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
3. External influences on knowledge process integration	a. External influences on knowledge creation b. External limitations on knowledge creation	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14
4. Internal influences on knowledge process integration	a. Leadership influences b. Employee influences c. Technology influences	2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
5. Knowledge process integration improvements	a. Organization-level improvements	1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
6. Knowledge process integration hindrances	a. Leadership hindrances	3, 10, 13, 14, 16

New Knowledge: Textual Descriptions

The new knowledge theme emerged from all 16 participants' (100.00%) discussions about the processes of knowledge creation. This theme is the only one that all participants described as being important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation processes, all participants described workplace knowledge as involving the COVID-19 pandemic, recruited/hired knowledge, and society-based knowledge.

COVID-19 Pandemic Textual Description. Fourteen participants (87.50%) discussed the COVID-19 pandemic as a type of new knowledge important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. For P15, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the processes by which employees generate new knowledge. She described how before the pandemic, employees worked together in the same office wherein "you can meet or you can…schedule time to meet in person when you need to. You can collaborate. You can think of ideas, you can brainstorm, share together" (P15). Because of the COVID-19, her company's employees were relocated to work remotely from home. P15 talked about how remote working negatively affected employees' abilities to create new knowledge:

> Then [employee interaction happens through] Zoom meetings and people become more isolated…[they are] working on their own, not necessarily feeling comfortable to just schedule another Zoom meeting for everybody to get together and just brainstorm ideas…a lot of what I notice is the informal dynamics have left as a result of COVID because I can't walk over to someone's desk, pop in to say "hello, how are you? Quick question for you." But now, unless we do this via email or like Microsoft Teams or like a chat or instant messaging type of service, you've lost that kind of informal interaction because now it has to go through email or you need to schedule a Zoom meeting.

Recruited/Hired Knowledge Textual Description. Ten participants (62.50%) discussed recruited/hired knowledge as a type of new knowledge important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P1 described

how her company recruits for new knowledge and is intentional about maximizing the benefits of new knowledge obtained from new hires by ensuring that it increases.

> If we're going to recruit for the knowledge, then we have to ensure that the knowledge is utilized, and we have to ensure that that knowledge increases. And the way that you increase that knowledge is by providing developmental and training opportunities that allow for that. (P1)

Society-Based Knowledge Textual Description. Nine participants (56.25%) discussed society-based knowledge as a type of new knowledge important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P1 discussed new knowledge being created in response to societal-level issues and how her organization integrated this new knowledge during the past year. For example, P1 explained how professional organizations like the Society for Human Resource Management had local chapter members collaborated to create knowledge about "what to do in a pandemic and how to prepare staff to prepare policies, procedures, you know, all of that." Additionally, P1 talked about the need examine knowledge creation processes in light of societal issues:

> I think over our experiences of integrating knowledge creation processes and the human resources decisions and actions [that] have come also with what's going on with us as a society—with the racial tensions and having to create opportunities to help people gain knowledge as to the historical references and why people may be feeling tension and why some things are just not acceptable any longer.

Internal Influences on Knowledge Process: Textual Descriptions

The internal influences on knowledge process integration theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge creation. Fourteen of the 16 participants (87.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation processes, most participants described internal influences in terms of leadership influences, employee influences, and technology influences.

Technology Influences on Knowledge Creation Textual Description. Thirteen participants (81.25%) discussed technology influences as an internal influence on the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. Technology is influencing how organizations create usable knowledge for their clients and/or consumers. For example, P8 described how his organization is creating knowledge for capitalizing on the Cloud and wearable consumer technology products like Apple watches and iPhones. P8 described internal conversations about how wearable technology is affecting knowledge creation within their organization: "Now how do you generate data about how that [wearable technology] could impact individual health outcomes?" However, P5 described how the use of meeting platform technology (i.e., Zoom) has made it "more difficult now when we talk about the creative process and we talk about really getting people engaged. It's been hard when you're coming up with hard core ideas based on creativity."

Employee Influences on Knowledge Creation Textual Description. Twelve participants (75.00%) discussed employee influences as an internal influence on the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P3 described taking action to address how working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic was negatively affecting employees' abilities to create knowledge. In addition to giving employees access to resources through the LinkedIn Learning platform, she developed staff self-care sessions. She explained, "We spoke about self-care techniques and I talked about meditation and prayer and looking at things outside of the work environment, how they can better take care of themselves." P3 recognized how employee well-being affected knowledge creation for the organization during the COVID-19 pandemic and took action: "As managers, we need to understand that in any organization that you've got to nurture the people before they can even be productive."

Leadership Influences on Knowledge Creation Textual Description. Six participants (37.5%) discussed leadership influences as an internal influence on the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P13 talked about specific processes to integrate knowledge creation processes into human resource decisions and actions within her organization. Her experiential background with the creation of processes positioned her to revamp the performance management processes within her organization that has affected "everyone from senior leadership all the way down to first-line employees." Of particular focus to the revamping work was leadership communications and decision making, which when not properly aligned negatively affected knowledge creation and disseminated throughout the organization.

> What I found is that some of the decision making was being done at the HR [human resources] level that was not in line with what the line managers always needed or thought should be done. So sometimes you want to risk when you have an academic system or academic process that in theory looks good, but doesn't always work in terms of delivery because there's a time commitment for managers within the organization to facilitate the needed creation of knowledge…when we took a more strategic look at the creation of knowledge through performance management, it had more of a strategic outlook on the organization where people were being touched on a continuous basis.

Knowledge Process Integration Improvements: Textual Descriptions

The knowledge process integration improvements theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge creation. Fourteen of the 16 participants (87.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation processes, most participants described knowledge process integration improvements in terms of organization-level improvements.

Fourteen participants (87.50%) discussed organizational-level improvements related the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P4 described how his company improved knowledge creation processes incrementally at what he referred to as the "club level" of a particular market before the knowledge was

integrated into the entire organization: “One specific club first…maybe the club that the idea came from to see if it would work.” P4 is a market manager who is responsible for 13 different clubs within his market. If an idea tested in one club had great potential but didn’t work initially as intended, he and his team would “massage it a little bit” and explore how to make it work in other instances and/or other levels of the organization. The idea, explained P4, “might be [more successful] in a complete market and not just at a specific club.”

Nature of Knowledge: Textual Descriptions

The nature of knowledge theme emerged from most of the participants’ discussions about the processes of knowledge creation. Eleven participants (68.75%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation processes, most participants described knowledge as generational, tacit (implicit), and explicit in nature.

Generational Knowledge Textual Description. Nine participants (56.25%) discussed the generational knowledge as a type of knowledge important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P5 described how her millennial perspectives about knowledge differ from other generational cohorts: “Millennials have a different perspective on how processes and how things can be completed, whereas the silent generation and baby boomers are a little bit more solidified with their concrete knowledge and processes.” Unlike members of the silent generation

and baby boomer generation who are better at dealing with concrete knowledge and processes, P5 explained that members of the millennial generation "tend to need a lot of input on tasks and roles and responsibilities and requirements because these things are so wide open, like there's so many possibilities that they need that information to really narrow it down." She further described how she and her millennial peers "see everything from the time perspective of having knowledge at your fingertips." Although P5 explained that millennials are better at accessing knowledge quicker, she also acknowledged that millennials are not as adept as other generational cohorts at using the knowledge to complete tasks in an orderly fashion. P5 concluded that members of the millennial generation are "much more independent in the sense that they'll get the basic information and then, you know, go out there."

Tacit (Implicit) Knowledge Textual Description. Six participants (37.50%) discussed the tacit (implicit) knowledge as a type of knowledge important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P11 talked about the difference between knowledge management theory and principles he learned during his master's degree program and practitioner knowledge. Practitioner knowledge is tacit knowledge (knowing how) learned through experience. P11 described how he draws upon the experiences, insights, and intuitions of subject matter experts to develop trainings for his employees and then codifies the knowledge: "So I have like sessions where we have like interactive sessions to acquire the tacit knowledge from some subject matter experts and then quantify that into explicit knowledge by documenting it and that story in the database." (

Explicit Knowledge Textual Description. Six participants (37.50%) discussed the explicit knowledge as a type of knowledge important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P11 also described how he extracted tacit knowledge from subject matter experts for the purpose of documenting it as explicit knowledge and storing in a database to make it accessible for other employees. P15 talked about how he used explicit knowledge that is already stored in a computer system for the purpose of onboarding interns:

> We still have to meet and discuss how we're going to onboard them, how we're going to make sure that all of their information is added to the system appropriately. How are we going to conduct orientation, all of those type of things?

He described the onboarding process, even with knowledge stored in a computer system, "still takes a lot of time. There's cross training and there's making sure that everyone is aligned" (P15).

External Influences on Knowledge Process: Textual Descriptions

The external influences on knowledge process integration theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge creation. Eleven of the 16 participants (68.75%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation processes, most participants described external influences in terms of influences and limitations.

External Influences on Knowledge Creation Textual Description. Eight participants (50.00%) discussed external influences as important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. P8 works within an area that is committed to improving the clinical trial process that pharmaceutical companies use to bring a drug to market. Within his work environment, the knowledge creation process is externally influenced by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, which oversees pharmaceutical company's human clinical trials.

> They have clinical trials laid out all over the world and then they take all the data associated with the patients taking the drug and patients come in for checkups and they take all that information and put it in and sort of massive databases that have been mined for information about the efficacy of the drug or any side effects that are widely used. And that's kind of how they generate new knowledge associated with the discovery of drugs and ensuring that they're safe. (P8)

External Limitations on Knowledge Creation Textual Description. Five participants (31.25%) discussed external limitations as important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. For P9, external influences limit the knowledge creation process within the company. As a state institution, P9's employer is regulated by the state government. P9 explained, "About half of our employees are governed by civil service rules and they're very regimented. And just about [all] employees are also members of state bargaining units [that] are also very regimented." As such, employees have the ability to override P9's decisions to higher levels. So P9 has experientially learned how to work around the ramifications of

decisions to achieve the company's objectives. "You really have to acquire a lot of the knowledge of civil service rules barring new rules, state rules and things of that nature," explained P9. He is thinking about retiring but his employer is concerned about how they will replace him because it has taken years for him "to acquire a lot of the knowledge of civil service rules barring new rules, state rules and things of that nature. It's just not a job that you can bring in something from the outside who can do it," explained P9.

Knowledge Process Integration Hindrances: Textual Descriptions

The knowledge process integration hindrances theme emerged from fewer than one third of participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge creation. Five of the 16 participants (31.25%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation processes, participants described this theme in terms of leadership hindrances.

Five participants (31.25%) discussed leadership hindrances as important to the integration of knowledge creation processes into human intellectual capital. "Within the organization, knowledge is centralized to a large extent," explained P13, "and at some point it becomes decentralized when it gets out throughout the organization relative to the talent within the organization." She described how leaders within the organization "have their visions and thought processes around how things should get done and who should do them and what are some processes and procedures that need to take place." Because of leaders' varying visions about the nature of knowledge creation and how processes

should be managed, P13 explained that what she often finds is the "there's communication barriers around disseminating information simply because it doesn't always allow for an intuitive thought process from one level of the organization to the next."

Secondary Research Question 2

The second secondary research pertained to participants' experiences of the integration of knowledge sharing processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. Thematic analysis of participants' interview transcripts revealed seven themes: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledge, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge process integration outcomes (Table 6).

Table 6 shows the themes and categories helpful for answering SQ2 about participants' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge sharing processes. I identified seven themes from the analysis of interview data pertaining to the participants' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge sharing processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. In the following sections, organized thematically by highest to lowest frequency of participant responses, I provide textual descriptions and illustrative participant quotes that emphasize the importance of the themes and categories.

Table 6

SQ2: Knowledge Sharing Themes and Categories by Participants

Themes	Categories	Participants
1. Nature of knowledge	a. Proprietary knowledge	2, 7, 8, 11, 14, 15
2. New knowledge	a. Recruited/hired knowledge b. Society-based knowledge	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
3. External influences on knowledge process integration	a. External sources for knowledge sharing	4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11
4. Internal influences on knowledge process integration	a. Leadership influences b. Employee influences c. Technology influences	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
5. Knowledge process integration improvements	a. Team-level knowledge-sharing improvements b. Department-level knowledge-sharing improvements c. Organization-level knowledge-sharing improvements	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15
6. Knowledge process integration hindrances	a. COVID-19 knowledge sharing hindrances b. Team/department-level knowledge sharing hindrances c. Organization-level knowledge sharing hindrances	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15
7. Knowledge process integration outcomes	a. Employee knowledge sharing outcomes	1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 15

New Knowledge: Textual Descriptions

The new knowledge theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge sharing. Fourteen of the 16 participants (87.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of

knowledge sharing processes, most participants described new knowledge as being recruited/hired knowledge and society-based knowledge.

Society-Based Knowledge Sharing Textual Description. Twelve participants (75.00%) discussed society-based knowledge as a type of new knowledge important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P9 talked about external society-level knowledge that needs to be shared within his organization. He must stay current with the COVID-19 pandemic knowledge being produced by various governmental health and safety agencies. He explained, "we had a Zoom meeting with the governor's Office of Employee Relations." He stressed the importance of making sure he was current on knowledge being generated by government agencies because it was constantly changing as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed. As he acquired current knowledge, he explained the importance of sharing the rapidly changing guidelines and regulations with his employees because "you can't just sit on what you know."

Recruited/Hired Knowledge Textual Description. Eleven participants (68.75%) discussed recruited/hired knowledge as a type of new knowledge important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. In his work with the Department of Justice, P6 is involved in developing the criteria for recruiting staff members with new knowledge needed for a particular department. He described the next important step of ensuring that those recruited and hired for their knowledge are properly integrated into the department for which they were hired "to ensure that those who are currently in the department get [the knowledge] they need." The emphasis on the

sharing of newly acquired knowledge was also the concern of P1 who stressed the importance of increasing that new knowledge through the sharing via developmental and training opportunities.

Internal Influences on Knowledge Process Integration Textural Descriptions

The internal influences on knowledge process integration theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge sharing. Fourteen of the 16 participants (87.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge sharing processes, most participants described internal influences in terms of leadership, employee, and technology.

Employee Knowledge Sharing Influences Textual Description. Twelve participants (75.00%) discussed employee influences as important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. According to P13, transference of knowledge is a key competency for employees:

> That knowledge, learning and transfer is one of the primary core competencies for success in order to have people to feel a part of the organization and as a team member and talent team member within the organization. Because regardless of someone's expertise, it's all about what we know individually and collectively come together and share across the organization that increases the performance overall.

Leadership Knowledge Sharing Influences Textual Description. Eight participants (50.00%) discussed leadership influences as important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P1 described how human resource professionals experience conflict between what would be most beneficial for employees versus leadership expectations about knowledge sharing.

> I do think when it comes to knowledge sharing processes, that sometimes it is challenging for our professionals because we expect it to, you know, to support the employee and innovation. And sometimes it's indicative of the organization and everything that sometimes there is a big conflict and what organization is required to do versus what, you know, they need to do in order to support that knowledge sharing process for the employees of the company.

Technology Knowledge Sharing Influences Textual Description. Two participants (12.5%) discussed technology influences as important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P3 described how her team adapted all employee training knowledge for sharing with online technology during the COVID-19 pandemic: "So we have had employees doing training [while] working from home." In addition to employees performing their regular work tasks remotely from home, they needed additional support to remain current with their professional development and training. P3 and her team were responsible for "managing remotely all types of things that we're going to help them with…[while] being able to manage capacities in place during this time of [limited] learning because we've been remote since March [2020]."

Knowledge Process Integration Hindrances Textual Description

The knowledge process integration hindrances theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge sharing. Fourteen of the 16 participants (87.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge sharing processes, most participants described integration hindrances in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, team/department-level hindrances, and organization-level hindrances.

Knowledge Sharing Team/Department-Level Hindrances Textual Description. Thirteen participants (81.25%) discussed team/department-level hindrances to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P11 explained how knowledge sharing at the team level is currently hindered because of the need for employee travel. "I think a lot of companies are going to move from the travel model and want to [use] the [Microsoft] Teams approach," he explained. By using the video conferencing capabilities of Microsoft Teams, employee interaction can be maintained with "minimal disruption" while eliminating the consumption of time and cost associated with employee travel.

Knowledge Sharing Organization-Level Hindrances Textual Description. Eleven participants (68.75%) discussed organizational-level hindrances to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P1 described the challenges of achieving organization-wide knowledge sharing when there is a lack of

intentionality “about making it happen or creating opportunities [for it to happen].” Most of the organization-level knowledge sharing she has experienced has “lacked depth” because knowledge sharing is “a slow process.”

> I think because this is a slow process because this is not a quick fix per say. It is challenging for organizations to stick with it and to want to go through that. That said, this is a process that’s going to have to be done over time. And I think organizations don’t want to invest the time, energy and resources into it over time. They just want to try and find a quick fix and it’s not a quick fix. So I don’t think that we’re doing as good a job [sharing knowledge] as we could in all cases. (P1)

Knowledge Sharing COVID-19 Hindrances Textual Description. One participant (6.25%) discussed the COVID-19 pandemic as a hindrance to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. Several of the participants discussed how technology has influenced how knowledge is shared within their organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic. P2 described how expanded use of technology to share training knowledge (internal and external) while employees were working from home was problematic. For example, “We found that not everybody has a computer. While some people go the to the library [to access computers], the libraries are closed right now” (P2). P2 explained that other points of access to a computer outside of employees’ normal workspace (i.e., friends’ homes and personal computer kiosks located throughout the organization’s buildings) were not accessible during COVID-19 lockdowns. She described employees’ experiences:

> A lot of people feel like if I have a virtual office, I can't get the same [training knowledge]. I don't have the same opportunity of knowledge sharing with others in my industry as if I were the attending person. So, I don't know of anybody that's done a virtual conference this year. (P2)

Knowledge Process Integration Improvements Textural Descriptions

The knowledge process integration improvement theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge sharing. Fourteen of the 16 participants (87.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge sharing processes, most participants described integration improvements at the team level, department level, and organization level.

Organization-Level Knowledge-Sharing Improvements Textual Description. Fourteen participants (87.50%) discussed organization-level improvements to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. With the goal of improving employee performance and organization success, P13 described how knowledge sharing is expedited organization-wide through the use of employee town halls.

> For example, we often have what I'm calling a town hall roundtable with senior leaders and throughout the organization that can go around and give real time information on what's going on in the organization, how things are being managed, what is expected, what new opportunities are coming forth. You know,

> what our competition is doing. And when you share those type…of data in real time, you tend to get more of a knowledge transfer where people are learning from each other through each other. And what I found is that the knowledge sharing process becomes iterative and people start…piggybacking off of other people's knowledge and transfer of knowledge from one group to another. So it definitely improved employee performance and organizational success because now you're including the organization within the organizational data gathering and information planning. Which often leads to people feeling more of a part of improving their own everyday performance and a part of the role of the organization.

Team-Level Knowledge-Sharing Improvements Textual Description. Ten participants (62.50%) discussed team-level improvements to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P5 described the use of learning teams who meet together "to go over the practices and to kind of share ideas and to share their knowledge base in a nonthreatening [informal] manner." She further described the use of teams to address the organization's internal culture:

> So, we do really an organization wide assessment to determine what our internal culture is. And then from that internal culture, we look at where we could adapt and change. Right. Or where we could address those things like that. They can make a better culture overall. So those teams are given an opportunity and they develop a plan to address that that area of opportunity. And then we integrate that plan when feasible, issuing when feasible, because there are times that we have to

> change that, but we integrate that plan into our activities as an organization. So, part of it falls on HR depending on what the what the opportunity for improvement is in these areas. (P5)

Department-Level Knowledge-Sharing Improvements Textual Description. One participant (6.25%) discussed department-level improvements to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P2 described department-level knowledge sharing as employees sharing knowledge they obtain outside the organization.

> People if they go to a seminar, a video conference, and they come back and share that knowledge with their team members within their department, usually through a regular team meeting because every department has some Department of XYZ and others, if they have the time…in my department, we have daily meetings, but we can afford to because we are [a] supporting department. But more frontline departments, they have like weekly meetings. But that's a way to share the knowledge. Once somebody comes back from a seminar or conference, you're expected to kind of give a synopsis of what that we can learn from the conference that was attended or the seminar. (P2)

Knowledge Process Integration Outcomes Textual Descriptions

The knowledge process integration outcomes theme emerged from more than half of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge sharing. Nine of the 16 participants (56.25%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital management strategies

(employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge sharing processes, more than half of the participants described integration outcomes in terms of their effect on employees.

Nine participants (56.25%) discussed employee outcomes important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P1 described how knowledge sharing has improved employee outcomes in the past 3 to 5 years:

> I have had the opportunity to interview people who ask about those types of [knowledge sharing] opportunities. And they often ask… "What does the organization do to continue to ensure better that I continue to to grow and that I continue to expand my knowledge." I especially have heard this a lot from those coming straight out of college or…right after they get their advanced degree and they want to know, "well, how do I continue this? What what can I do and what is it going to do to the organization and for me?" So I do think that it definitely will play a part in retention processes, recruitment processes, and just individual professional development opportunities.

External Influences on Knowledge Process Integration Textural Descriptions

The external influences on knowledge process integration theme emerged from fewer than half of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge sharing. Seven of the 16 participants (43.75%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge sharing processes, fewer than half of the

participants described external influences in terms of external sources for knowledge sharing.

Seven participants (43.75%) discussed external sources as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital. P6 is a public school district supervisor who discussed how budget cutbacks necessitate looking "outside the entity [school district] to help bring in the knowledge that you need." He explained how his district has formed knowledge sharing partnerships with "Rutgers University, Johnson and Johnson, and Bristol-Myers Squibb." P1 described working jointly with external professional organizations (i.e., local Society for Human Resource Management chapters) to create and share knowledge specific to COVID-19 policies and procedures that aligned with government public health and safety agency guidelines and mandates.

Nature of Knowledge: Textual Descriptions

The nature of knowledge theme emerged from more than a third of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge sharing. Six of the 16 participants (37.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge sharing processes, more than a third of the participants described knowledge as being proprietary in nature.

Six participants (37.50%) discussed the nature of proprietary knowledge as being important to the integration of knowledge sharing processes into human intellectual

capital. In terms of knowledge sharing, P8 discussed the proprietary nature of knowledge that is "unique to the company." Although knowledge about a product may be widely available, such as facial makeup, P8 explained how there are knowledge differences "that are specific to the company in that a company has a set of formulas that define a particular list foundation. And that would be more of a trade secret." In the case of proprietary knowledge, P8 explained that the company is selective about which employees have access to knowledge and how the sharing of knowledge is compartmentalized as opposed to all product knowledge, being accessible to employees across the entire company (i.e., knowledge about the creation of new formulas and improvements in old formulas).

Secondary Research Question 3

The third secondary research question pertained to human resource managers' experiences of the integration of knowledge utilization processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. Thematic analysis of participants' interview transcripts revealed six themes: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledge, (c) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (d) knowledge process integration improvements, (e) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (f) knowledge process integration outcomes. Table 7 shows the themes and categories helpful for answering research question three about participants' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge utilization processes. The table also includes listings of the participants who described each of the categories.

As Table 7 shows, I identified six themes from the analysis of interview data pertaining to the participants' lived experiences of the integration of knowledge utilization processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. In the following sections, organized thematically by highest to lowest frequency of participant responses, I provide textual descriptions and illustrative participant quotes that emphasize the importance of the themes and categories.

Table 7.

SQ3: Knowledge Utilization Themes and Categories by Participants

Themes	Categories	Participants
1. Nature of knowledge	a. Tacit (implicit) knowledge b. Explicit knowledge	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 16
2. New knowledge	a. Recruited/hired knowledge b. Society-based knowledge	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 16
3. Internal influences on knowledge process integration	a. Leadership influences b. Employee influences c. Technology influences	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16
4. Knowledge process integration improvements	a. Individual-level improvements b. Team-level improvements c. Department-level improvements d. Organization-level improvements	2, 6, 12, 13, 15, 16
5. Knowledge process integration hindrances	a. Leadership hindrances b. Team/department-level hindrances c. Organization-level hindrances	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16
6. Knowledge process integration outcomes	a. Employee outcomes b. Customer/client outcomes	1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 15

Nature of Knowledge: Textual Descriptions

The nature of knowledge theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge utilization. Thirteen of the 16 participants (81.25%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge

utilization processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge utilization processes, most participants described knowledge as being tacit (implicit) and explicit in nature.

Tacit (Implicit) Knowledge Textural Description. Eleven participants (68.75%) discussed tacit (implicit) knowledge as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P13 described tacit knowledge in terms of "on-the-job training; it is what it is that you do each and every day." She further described the responsibilities related to ensuring that employees are increasing tacit knowledge:

> It is giving them, you know, different responsibilities so that they're learning something new all the time. And I think also the manager influences…[how they] increase their knowledge, because the fact that [managers are] giving them new work, [managers are] giving them things on the team that they might not have done before so that [they] can increase not only the knowledge of the team, but…everybody [has] a chance to work on a specific matter…For example, on my team, whereas even though they're primarily responsible for recruiting, I've assigned different projects for the team to lead so that they can increase their competencies from a project leadership perspective, from a collaboration standpoint, but also learn a new skill or two or how a different area within home acquisition works. And so I think that that is really key is giving them opportunities to learn new things while they're still…in their current role. (P13)

Explicit Knowledge Textural Description. Ten participants (62.50%) discussed explicit knowledge as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P7 focused on the importance ensuring that about 25 of her organization's 42 employees are involved in facilitating the utilization of explicit knowledge within the organization.

> Whether that's a virtual facilitation, whether it's simulated facilitation, we start to use a little bit of our adaptive reasoning for our salespeople. You know, "customer asked and I answer[ed]" scenarios plugged into our AK simulation. So they practice their selling skills, things like that. And then obviously [we] will do a tremendous amount of in-person instruction around the country, training centers as well…We have e-learning where people can learn on their own, and we have jobs that people can have at their desks, flow of work in different ways. But primarily we focus on learning. Virtual instructor-led and in-person instructor facilitation. (P7)

Internal Influences on Knowledge Process Integration: Textual Descriptions

The internal influences on knowledge process integration theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge utilization. Thirteen participants (81.25%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge utilization processes, most participants described internal influences as being related to employees and technology.

Knowledge Utilization Employee Influences Textual Description. Nine participants (56.25%) discussed internal employee influences as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P9 talked about how knowledge utilization is employee-driven and that higher education organizations need to plan better for employee changes. "We just had the payroll manager leave," P9 explained, "and he never told anybody anything and nobody knows what to do." The payroll manager had been with the higher education organization for 30 years. During his tenure, although he was willing to teach others, the company had done little succession planning. "As you lose the people who have experience, replacing them becomes very difficult, especially in this area right now where we have so many budget issues of higher education" (P9).

Knowledge Utilization Leadership Influences Textural Description. Six participants (37.50%) discussed internal leadership influences as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P5 described how her organization is intentionally involving senior leaders in learning about how to better integrate knowledge within the organization through an annual job-swapping opportunity.

> Our senior leadership team, executive leadership team, [swaps jobs with] staff…[in order to learn] different positions…and what that role really entails. And it's not just for an hour, [rather they] serve a full day in [the staff roles]. We've gotten some really great problem solving because we have that level of leadership in a position that doesn't normally get attention. But it really kind of

> integrates different knowledge levels to explain what's possible versus what really is in that time. [Job swapping] helps us formulate where we want the organization to go in the future because we just see where it actually is versus where we want it to be. (P5)

Knowledge Utilization Technology Influences Textural Description. Two participants (12.50%) discussed internal technology influences as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. To empower employees to utilize their professional knowledge within the organization, P2 uses technology to monitor their progress.

> So there's a section devoted just to their [employees] online training and [we monitor to ensure] they've been consistent. Have they kept up with it or [do they not] work on all classes? . . . . That's one way that you can certainly apply that knowledge that you learned in those courses that you took online and make them applicable to the job and the department that you work in. (P2)

Knowledge Process Integration Hindrances: Textual Descriptions

The knowledge process integration hindrances theme emerged from most of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge utilization. Thirteen of the 16 participants (81.25%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge utilization processes, most participants described integration hindrances at the levels of leadership, team/department, and organization.

Knowledge Utilization Team/Department-Level Hindrances Textural Description. Twelve participants (75.00%) discussed team/department-level hindrances as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. “You would hope that people want to impart the knowledge that they have, [but] a lot of times they don’t” explained P9. He stressed the importance of succession planning at the department level so higher education organizations can ensure the seamless utilization of knowledge. “Times where enrollment is down, the dorms are not full,” explained P9, “So a lot of the revenue [you] used to have to hire people you don’t have anymore.” Therefore, he argued that you need to design succession planning to allow for the utilization of knowledge at the department level, but he explained that this is not being done in higher education organizations.

Knowledge Utilization Organizational-Level Hindrances Textural Description. Ten participants (62.50%) discussed organizational-level hindrances as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P14 explained how the president of the university hindered knowledge utilization at the organizational level. The president’s professional background was not in academia. She had been a business leader in the fast-food industry. She applied what she had learned in business, a net promoter scale, to her leadership of the university.

> This type of measurement system [the net promoter scale], was very difficult for the average academic to kind of follow up…Fast food chains had used it and they had grown so much in the last 5, 6 years or so. I guess she correlated that with

> maybe some of their growth…I have to be honest, especially at the beginning, because she was very unhappy about [our] weak net promoter score…We [were]…never trained specifically on it…We had a lot of data and…a lot of sections and some definitions of what that meant. But at the end of the day, I don't think the average employee fully understood any of it…It was very beneficial for the C-Suite, you know, the president has enjoyed it and her office directly. (P14)

In sum, P14 concluded that the net promoter scale hindered the utilization of knowledge throughout the university.

Knowledge Utilization Leadership Hindrances Textural Description. Five participants (31.25%) discussed leadership hindrances as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P10 explained how leaders within the organization can hinder knowledge utilization by not supporting the work of the human resources department. She explained that it is the human resource department's responsibility "to educate our people, but it also needs to have an advocate in the leaders and maybe the leader of one of the leaders to make sure that each of them [employees] are doing what they need to do."

New Knowledge: Textual Descriptions

The new knowledge theme emerged from more than half of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge utilization. Ten of the 16 participants (62.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the

integration of knowledge utilization processes, most participants described new knowledge as being recruited/hired, society-based, and related to leadership.

Society-Based Knowledge Textural Description. Nine participants (56.25%) discussed society-based knowledge as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P7 discussed how knowledge influenced by societal changes is affecting knowledge utilization within the trucking industry.

> We definitely have a big change in culture, in the cultural changes that are going on in the industry that seem to be, to be blunt, historical. But the good old boys' network…it's a…majority of white males . . . [that] follows a company that has made it. And I'm not sure if it's because we're…Swedish-owned or what. That has been especially a real focus on [how to utilize] women in leadership positions. I would say minority wise, we're probably tremendously open, and we really help push and look for opportunities to bring diversity to our internal workforce…So the [trucking] industry is opening up to a whole new sector of people. The ability to get in the industry is becoming easier and you [can] do well. So but those things are probably coming more from our corporate perspective, our group impact. (P7)

Recruited/Hired Knowledge Textural Description. Three participants (18.75%) discussed recruited/hired knowledge as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P1 described the critical importance of utilizing knowledge hired into the company: "We oftentimes recruit for knowledge,

but then when folks get into the organizations, we don't utilize the knowledge that we recruited for." P8 discussed in-depth how to balance the utilization of new knowledge acquired through the hiring of younger recent college graduates with retaining the existing knowledge of employees representing older generations. "You've got new this new generation coming in who has a different set of knowledge and the older generation that's leaving that has this historical knowledge."

Knowledge Process Integration Outcomes: Textual Descriptions

The knowledge process integration outcomes theme emerged from more than half of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge utilization. Ten of the 16 participants (62.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge utilization processes, more than half of the participants described integration outcomes as being related to employees and customers/clients.

Knowledge Utilization Customer/Client Outcomes Textural Description.

Eight participants (50.00%) discussed customer/client outcomes as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. In addition to describing the beneficial employee outcomes associated with knowledge utilization, P1 explained how the employee benefits affected customer satisfaction and retention.

> We saw improved customer satisfaction [as a] result. We saw improved retention of customers. You know, in one particular case that I was involved in personally,

> there was a reduction of 25% turnover in the [customer] group, a specific group which had had huge turnover prior to that. And so the savings from that were reinvested…Customer retention also helped us with sales because we started getting referrals from those customers. So it was a ripple effect, but it was a positive ripple effect.

Knowledge Utilization Employee Outcomes Textural Description. Seven participants (43.75%) discussed employee outcomes as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. Although stating that her organization did not always achieve the level of knowledge utilization desired, P1 explained, "there are a couple of cases where there have been exceptions, where we did and we were able to make it a priority to see it through. And we saw the employee perform it." In those cases, the organization realized the benefits of reduced employee turnover. Additionally, P4 reported that increased knowledge distribution and utilization within the organization resulted in improved employee performance. He told his employees that by "making sure you're getting [the knowledge you need]…You're going to be the best employee that you can be with my help."

Knowledge Process Integration Improvements: Textual Descriptions

The knowledge process integration improvements theme emerged from more than one third of the participants' discussions about the processes of knowledge utilization. Six of the 16 participants (37.50%) described this theme as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). When discussing

this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge utilization processes, more than one third of the participants described integration improvements in terms of individual-level, team-level, department-level, and organization-level improvements.

Knowledge Utilization Team-Level Improvements Textural Description. Three participants (18.75%) discussed team-level improvements as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P6 discussed how special education teams utilize knowledge in public education—specifically what works and doesn't work. **"**You do have textbooks that are online…but what…we have to do…in special education is try to mimic what [teachers do]…in the classroom verbatim [with] what [we're] doing online," P6 explained. But when discussing this team approach, she further explained, "It won't work. And we found that out very quickly."

Knowledge Utilization Individual-Level Improvements Textural Description. One participant (6.25%) discussed individual-level improvements as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. According to P2, organizations need to consider how employees have acquired knowledge when thinking about how to facilitate individuals' the utilization of that knowledge.

> I think it's still through on-the-job training or even if somebody transfers to a new job, I still think that would be a facilitation of that knowledge to think about the company, about what they've learned in their current job or the job they're responding to as well as daily function. (P2)

Knowledge Utilization Department-Level Improvements Textural Description. One participant (6.25%) discussed department-level improvements as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P16 described how her organization trains employees at the unit level. “People come from other places and start a new position and have to be trained [to work] everywhere.” She explained that training people as a unit ensures that employees have the skills needed to utilize knowledge based on the required tasks rather than where they came from.

Knowledge Utilization Organizational-Level Improvements Textural Description. One participant (6.25%) discussed organizational-level improvements as being important to the integration of knowledge utilization processes into human intellectual capital. P13 described the use of communities of practice to enhance knowledge utilization at the organizational level.

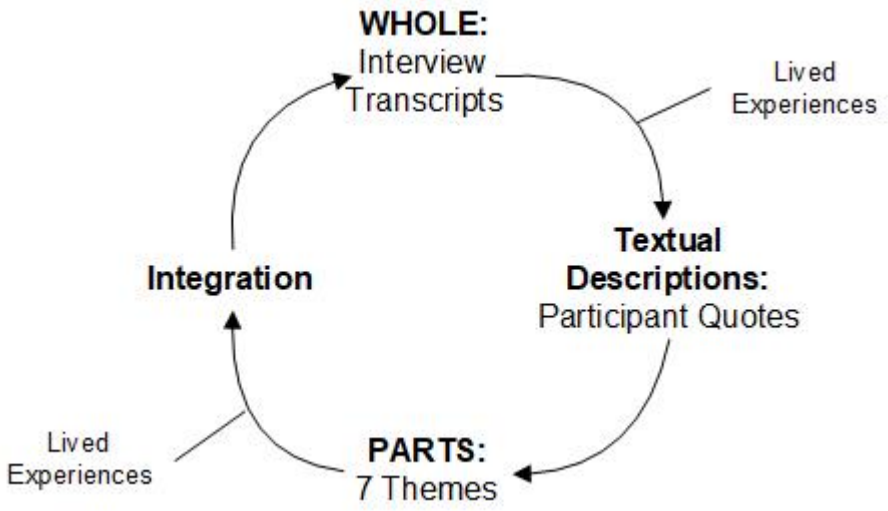
> One thing that’s happening within the organization is that our Internet has chatroom. And the chat room has been an opportunity for people to share knowledge informally. It's not a formal process, but it's definitely an informal process . . . . Another area is what are called community of practice groups. And community of practice groups are targeted groups on specific topics where people come to engage, to share knowledge and to facilitate that knowledge throughout the organization. (P13)

Primary Research Question

The study's primary research question focused on the lived experiences of human resource managers specific to the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. This discussion of the primary research question reflects its view through the hermeneutic circle of interpretation for each of the seven themes shared across knowledge creation integration (SQ1), knowledge sharing integration (SQ2), and knowledge utilization integration (SQ3). The seven shared themes were as follows: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledges, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge process integration outcomes. Figure 1 shows the hermeneutic circle as the circuitous process for interpreting the participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital strategies. The aim for this section is to integrate the results into the whole. To bring the whole back together again (Smith et al., 2009), I discuss the seven themes as they relate to the primary research question.

Figure 1

The Hermeneutic Circle



Nature of Knowledge

Whether addressing the knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, or knowledge utilization, all 16 participants (100%) discussed the importance of understanding the nature of knowledge. When considering the integration of knowledge creation processes into the human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management), participants described workplace knowledge as being generational, tacit (implicit), explicit, and proprietary in nature.

Nine participants (56.25%) stressed the importance of understanding the differing ways generational cohorts create knowledge. For example, P5 explained that the silent generation and baby boomers are better at making knowledge concrete than millennials. Employees of the millennial generation, he explained, tend to get lost in the myriad of

possibilities and need help of the silent and baby boomer generations to create and implement knowledge in real-world workplace contexts.

When discussing knowledge creation and knowledge utilization processes, six participants (37.50%) described knowledge as being tacit (or implicit) in nature. P11 distinguished between knowledge management theory and principles he learned during his master's degree program and practitioner "knowing how" knowledge. When discussing human intellectual capital management strategies, he explained how he drew upon the experiences, insights, and intuitions (tacit knowledge) of subject matter experts when developing employee trainings. He also emphasized the importance of retaining the tacit knowledge acquired from subject matter experts by documenting it in databases, at which point it becomes explicit knowledge.

For P13, tacit knowledge is critical to her company's success, so she was intentional about ensuring that employees and their managers are engaged in "on-the-job training," regardless of their tenure with the company. She provided an example of how she increased tacit knowledge within teams. She led a team that was primarily responsible for recruiting new hires. However, she assigned projects to her team members outside their normal roles to increase their knowledge, competencies, and collaboration with others. For example, a team member whose role is to interact with professional organizations for the purpose of recruiting new hires through traditional means was assigned to a project that focused on recruiting independent contractors, or gig workers, for specific time-limited projects.

Thirteen participants (81.25%) described using explicit knowledge during knowledge creation and knowledge utilization. P15 described how he used explicit knowledge stored in computer systems for the purpose of onboarding interns. For example, interns benefit from initial computer-based orientation sessions. Later, interns participate in computer-based cross-trainings that help them develop a wholistic picture of the organization. The aim of these cross-trainings is to make sure "everyone is aligned" (P15). P7 explained that over half of her organization's employees were engaged in facilitating the use of explicit knowledge. She described the use of simulated facilitation to advance the adaptive reasoning skills of salespeople. Salespeople practice their selling skills using "customer asked and I answered" simulated scenarios. Additionally, the use of both virtual instructor-led and in-person instructor training served to maximize the explicit knowledge existing within the organization.

When discussing knowledge sharing processes, six of the participants described the proprietary nature of knowledge. P8 defined proprietary knowledge as that which is "unique to the company." In the case of proprietary knowledge, such as product formulas, P8 explained that his company must be selective about which employees have access to the knowledge. To protect "trade secrets," P8 explained how proprietary knowledge is compartmentalized so it is accessible only to select employees.

New Knowledge

The theme of new knowledge emerged from participants' stories about integrating knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization with human intellectual capital management strategies. All 16 participants (100.0%) talked about

varying aspects of new knowledge in terms of (a) the COVID-19 pandemic (n = 14), (b) recruited/hired knowledge (n = 13), and (c) society-based knowledge (n = 14). However, they limited discussions about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to the knowledge management process of knowledge creation.

At the time I conducted the current study, Americans were grappling with the global COVID-19 pandemic. P15 described how the COVID-19 pandemic was negatively affecting her company's ability to create new knowledge. In compliance with public health guidelines, all employees were relocated to work remotely from their homes. Spontaneous employee in-person interactions in the workplace key to brainstorming and the sharing of ideas were replaced by online meetings with the use of the Zoom platform. The isolation caused by working remotely at home stifled employees' interactions with one another. P15 explained that employees' ability to create new knowledge together decreased because of the loss of daily informal interactions that occur naturally in the shared workplace.

Thirteen participants (81.25%) discussed new knowledge acquired through the employee recruitment and hiring processes and how this new knowledge affected knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization processes. P1 described how her company recruited for new knowledge that did not exist within the organization. She emphasized the importance of being intentional about maximizing the benefits of the new knowledge obtained by new hires by ensuring that it is increased within the company. She explained a shortcoming within her company: "We oftentimes recruit for knowledge, but then when folks get into the organization, we don't utilize the

knowledge that we recruited for." One human resources strategy she used to address this shortcoming is to increase the newly acquired knowledge through training opportunities that enable existing employees to further develop their knowledge and skills.

Fourteen participants (87.50%) also acknowledged how workers in their organizations dealt with new knowledge that is society-based. They described how society-based knowledge affected the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge integration. At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, P1 reached out to her local Society for Human Resource Management chapter to collaborate with other Human Resource professionals on how to create new knowledge concerning how to respond during a pandemic and how to prepare human resources staff to prepare necessary policies and procedures for employees to follow. She also described needing to respond to the society-based problem of racial tensions with internal human resource decisions and actions that could address the tensions by helping employees gain knowledge about historical references that are no longer acceptable in society.

Like P1, who addressed new knowledge related to the COVID-19 pandemic, P9 discussed the importance of staying current on knowledge being produced by various governmental health and safety agencies. He went beyond awareness of the current state of COVID-19 knowledge to stress the importance of sharing relevant knowledge within his organization. As he acquired current and relevant knowledge, he was intentional about sharing the rapidly changing public health and safety guidelines and regulations with his employees because "you can't just sit on what you know."

For P7, new knowledge influenced by societal changes was affecting how her company used the knowledge to benefit the trucking industry. Specifically, she addressed changing gender norms within the trucking industry and how her company focused on better utilizing women in leadership roles. P7 attributed the influence of her company's corporate perspective on using the knowledge and expertise of women leaders to opening up the trucking industry to "a whole new sector of people."

Knowledge Process Integration Improvements

Across the three knowledge processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization, all 16 participants (100.0%) described improvements in the integration with human intellectual capital management strategies. P2 was the only participant to recount experiencing individual-level improvements. To improve knowledge utilization in an organization, P2 talked about the importance of considering how individual employees acquire knowledge they need to perform their jobs. For example, she explained that some employees acquire knowledge through formal on-the-job training while others acquire new knowledge when they transfer to a new job and informally interact with peers while performing daily functions. According to P2, with a better understanding of how individual employees acquire knowledge, human resource managers can develop and implement strategies to ensure maximally using and retaining knowledge within the organization.

Ten participants (62.50%) described their experiences with team-level improvements in the knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization processes. P5 described the formation of learning teams that are empowered to address issues of how

the organization's internal culture can affect necessary adaptation and changes. She explained that these teams can also contribute to the improvement of organizational culture. P6 recounted how improvements were made by special education teams that were quickly able to identify public education classroom strategies that did not work for special education teachers.

Two participants (12.50%) described their experiences with department-level improvements in the knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization processes. P2 described how employees can contribute to department-level knowledge sharing. Within her organization, employees are encouraged to share knowledge obtained at in-person seminars or video conferences during department-level meetings. She explained the expectation that employees provide a synopsis of how the newly acquired knowledge can be applied to the organization. P16 recounted how her organization trained employees at the unit or department level because they come from different places and must be trained to work everywhere the organization has a geographic presence. Training employees on the unit or department level ensures that they have the skills needed to use knowledge based on the required tasks rather than where they came from.

Lastly, 15 participants (93.75%) described organization-level integration improvements in the areas of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. P4 described how his company improved knowledge creation processes by testing ideas at "club levels" of particular markets before integrating the ideas into the entire organization. P13 explained how she expedited knowledge sharing organization wide through the use of employee town halls. During town hall roundtable discussions,

senior leaders deliver real-time information about "what's going on in the organization, how things are being managed, what is expected, and what new opportunities are coming forth." Additionally, P13 explained how she used communities of practice to enhance knowledge utilization at the organizational level. P4 discovered that the town hall knowledge sharing opportunities resulted in employees' "piggybacking off of other people's knowledge and transfer[ring] of knowledge from one group to another" (P 4).

Knowledge Process Integration Hindrances

The knowledge process integration hindrances theme emerged from 16 participants' narratives about the three knowledge processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. Participants described hindrances associated with COVID-19 (n = 1) as well as hindrances experienced at the levels of leadership, teams and departments, and the organization. For example, P2 explained how some employees working remotely from home due to the COVID-19 pandemic were hindered from accessing knowledge shared through internal and external training opportunities. "We found that not everybody has a computer," she explained. Employees' access points to computers while working remotely included friends' homes and personal computer kiosks located throughout the organization's buildings, neither of which were good training environments. Additionally, these options often were in violation of public health and safety COVID-19 guidelines and regulations. Public libraries were not an option because they were closed.

In addition to team/department-level hindrances (n = 14) and organization-level hindrances (n = 14), eight participants (50.00%) described leadership-level hindrances to

knowledge creation and knowledge utilization. P13 explained that within her organization, “knowledge is centralized to a large extent.” She further explained how leaders, with their varying perspectives about the nature of knowledge creation and how it should be managed, often hindered communication and the dissemination of information “from one level of the organization to the next” (P13). Likewise, P13 explained how leaders within her organization hindered employees’ knowledge utilization by not supporting the work of the human resources department to educate employees.

Internal Influences on Knowledge Process Integration

The internal influences on knowledge process integration theme emerged from 15 (93.75%) participants’ narratives about knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. Participants described three types of internal influences: leadership influences, employee influences, and technology influences. Participants talked about these three influences in terms of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge integration.

Eleven participants (68.75%) described how leadership can have both a negative and positive influence on knowledge process integration. P13 described her human resource decisions and actions to revamp leaders’ communications and decision-making processes that, when not properly aligned, were negatively affecting how knowledge was being created and disseminated throughout the organization. P1 described her experiences of addressing conflicts between what would be most beneficial for employees and leaders’ expectations about how knowledge should be shared.

Acknowledging senior leaders' need to learn how to better integrate knowledge within the organization, P5 described her organization's annual job-swapping program. She explained how job swapping between senior leaders and staff members "helps us formulate where we want the organization to go in the future because we just see where it actually is versus where we want it to be" (P5).

According to 14 participants (87.50%), employees influence how knowledge processes are integrated with human intellectual capital management strategies. P3 described how the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected employee well-being, which in turn resulted in declines in employees' knowledge creation activities. As the human resource manager, P3 developed employee self-care sessions to help them learn how to take better care of themselves during the pandemic. In terms of knowledge sharing, P13 talked about how knowledge transfer is a key employee competency that affects individual, team, and organizational success. She explained that regardless of an employee's expertise, success "is all about what we know individually and collectively come together and share across the organization that increases the performance overall" (P13). P9 talked about how knowledge utilization is employee-driven within higher education organizations. In the case of employees who have not shared their knowledge gained over a long tenure with the organization, "as you lose the people who have experience, replacing them becomes very difficult" (P9).

Lastly, 13 participants (81.25%) shared their lived experiences of internal technological influences on the integration of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge integration processes with human intellectual capital management

strategies. For P8, technology was positively affecting knowledge creation within his organization as they capitalized on the use of the Cloud and wearable consumer technology products like Apple watches and iPhones. Conversely, P5 described the negative experiences of using online meeting platforms such as Zoom during the COVID-19 pandemic. She explained how meeting technologies that can enable remote engagement can also hinder human creative processes. Conversely, P3 perceived technology as positively affecting the sharing of knowledge, in the form of employee professional development and training, during the pandemic. Like P3, P2 used technology to address employee professional development and training. In addition to providing online employee training, P2's organization used technology to monitor employees' progress through courses applicable to their job and department.

External Influences on Knowledge Process Integration

The theme of external influences on knowledge process integration appeared in the lived experiences of 14 participants (87.50%) of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing, but not knowledge utilization. For P8, the external influences of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration limited how his pharmaceutical company generates new knowledge through human clinical trials. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration oversees human clinical trials aimed at discovering new drugs and ensuring they are safe, and this oversight can limit pharmaceutical companies' efforts to generate internal knowledge aimed at bringing drugs to market. Like P8, P9 described the knowledge creation limitations imposed upon his organization, a state institution, by state governmental regulations. Employees are governed by regimented civil service rules and

state bargaining units. Because employees can use governmental regulations to override P9's decisions, he had to learn from experience how to work around the ramifications of decisions to achieve his institution's objectives.

In yet other examples of external influences on knowledge process integration with human intellectual capital management strategies, P1 and P6 recounted experiences of forming knowledge sharing partnerships with entities external to their organizations. P6, a public school district supervisor, shared how budget cutbacks necessitated forming partnerships with Rutgers University, Johnson and Johnson, and Bristol-Myers Squibb to bring needed knowledge into his school district. P1 expanded on her experiences of partnering with local Society for Human Resource Management chapters to both create and share knowledge specific to COVID-19 human resource policies and procedures.

Knowledge Process Integration Outcomes

The theme of knowledge process integration outcomes appeared in the lived experiences of 11 participants (68.75%) of knowledge sharing and knowledge utilization, but not knowledge creation. P1 described her human resources experiences of the positive outcomes of knowledge sharing in terms of employee recruitment and retention. For example, she explained how she highlighted the knowledge sharing opportunities within the company when interviewing potential new hires. She started doing this after noticing that interviewees, especially recent college graduates, were increasingly asking, "What does the organization do to continue to ensure better that I continue to grow and that I continue to expand my knowledge?" P1 also explained that the beneficial employee outcomes often resulted in improved customer satisfaction. For P4, the positive outcomes

of knowledge utilization within his organization included improved employee performance.

Summary

Seven themes emerged from the two-cycle data analysis of the participant interview transcripts. The seven themes were as follows: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledges, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge processing integration outcomes. SQ1 pertained to the participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge creation processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. Findings for SQ1 revealed six themes and their categories related to participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge creation processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. These themes were as follows: (a) nature of knowledge (three categories: generational knowledge, tacit knowledge, and explicit knowledge); (b) new knowledge (three categories: COVID-19 pandemic, recruited/hired knowledge, and society-based knowledge); (c) external influences on knowledge process integration (two categories: external influences on knowledge creation and external limitations on knowledge creation); (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration (three categories: leadership influences, employee influences, and technology influences); (e) knowledge process integration improvements (one category: organization-level improvements); and (f) knowledge process integration hindrances (one category: leadership hindrances).

SQ2 pertained to participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge sharing processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. Findings for SQ2 revealed seven themes and their categories related to participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge sharing processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. These themes were as follows: (a) nature of knowledge (one category: proprietary knowledge); (b) new knowledge (two categories: recruited/hired knowledge and society-based knowledge); (c) external influences on knowledge process integration (one category: external sources for knowledge sharing); (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration (three categories: leadership influences, employee influences, and technology influences); (e) knowledge process integration improvements (three categories: team-level knowledge-sharing improvements, department-level knowledge-sharing improvements, and organization-level knowledge-sharing improvements); (f) knowledge process integration hindrances (three categories: COVID-19 knowledge sharing hindrances, team/department-level knowledge sharing hindrances, organization-level knowledge sharing hindrances); and (g) knowledge processing integration outcomes (one category: employee knowledge sharing outcomes.

SQ3 pertained to the participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge utilization processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. Findings for SQ3 revealed six themes and their categories related to participants' lived experiences of integrating knowledge utilization processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. These themes were as follows: (a) nature of knowledge (two categories: tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge); (b) new knowledge (two categories: recruited/hired

knowledge and society-based knowledge); (c) internal influences on knowledge process integration (three categories: leadership influences, employee influences, and technology influences); (d) knowledge process integration improvements (four categories: individual-level knowledge utilization improvements, team-level knowledge utilization improvements, department-level knowledge utilization improvements, and organization-level knowledge-sharing improvements); (e) knowledge process integration hindrances (three categories: leadership knowledge utilization hindrances, team/department-level knowledge utilization hindrances, organization-level knowledge utilization hindrances); and (f) knowledge processing integration outcomes (two categories: employee knowledge utilization outcomes and customer/client knowledge utilization outcomes).

Finally, I applied the hermeneutic circle concept to explore the findings again from a wholistic approach by answering the primary research question. The study's primary research question focused on the lived experiences of human resource managers specific to the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. The human resource managers who participated in this study discussed their lived experiences of integrating the three knowledge management processes (knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge integration) with human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management) in terms of seven themes. These themes were as follows: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledges, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge

process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge process integration outcomes.

In Chapter 5, I interpret the findings in light of the peer-reviewed literature and discuss the ways the study findings confirmed, disconfirmed, and/or extended the existing scholarly literature. I also describe any limitations to trustworthiness of the study findings. Based on the study findings, I make recommendations for future research. Next, I describe positive social change implications and discuss methodological, theoretical, and/or empirical implications are discussed. Lastly, I present recommendations for practice, followed by a concluding message.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of human resource managers specific to their integration of knowledge process with human intellectual capital management strategies in professional services firms in the eastern region of the United States. The current study served to address the problem that although the theoretical and empirical literature indicates that integrating knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies can help enhance organizational performance, human resource management professionals' experiences with this integration are not well understood (Malik et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2016).

Key findings from the two-cycle analysis of the participant interview transcripts revealed seven shared themes: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledges, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge process integration outcomes. These seven themes emerged across knowledge creation integration (SQ1), knowledge sharing integration (SQ2), and knowledge utilization integration (SQ3).

Interpretation of Findings

I organized the interpretation of the findings in the context of the peer-reviewed literature according to the seven themes that emerged from data analysis. I discuss the seven themes in the following order: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledges, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on

knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge process outcomes. I then explain how the study findings are related to the conceptual framework comprised of Drucker's (1999) knowledge-worker productivity theory and Wright and McMahan's (1992) theory on SHRM.

Nature of Knowledge

The nature of knowledge theme emerged from all 16 participants' responses on the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation, sharing, and utilization processes into human intellectual capital management strategies (i.e., employee hiring, retention, and management), participants described workplace knowledge as being generational, tacit (i.e., implicit), explicit, and proprietary in nature.

Findings from the current study about knowledge being both tacit and explicit in nature and important to the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies confirm the extant peer-reviewed literature (Garcia & Coltre, 2017; Marouf, 2016; Shujahat et al., 2019). Knowledge management strategy involves building and managing knowledge stock using the processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization (Marouf, 2016; Shujahat et al., 2019). Two major approaches to knowledge management are codification and personalization (Marouf, 2016). Codification involves taking knowledge developed by a person, codifying it into a document form independent of the person, and storing it

for reuse within the organization. This codification process involves the formal and systematic nature of explicit knowledge wherein the focus is on knowing *about* something (Lewis, 2017). With the personalization approach, rather than being codified in a formal and systematic manner, knowledge is transferred between individuals and teams. The personalization approach entails fully utilizing tacit knowledge from individuals and teams for the benefit of the organization (Marouf, 2016). Simply stated, tacit knowledge refers to what people know how to do but cannot express (Kandukuri & Nasina, 2017). Knowing more than can be expressed is unconscious and subjective in nature, including personal insights, intuitions, and hunches about the how and way of technical processes (Muthuveloo et al., 2017). The current study findings also expanded on Nonaka and Takeuchi's (1995) research specific to the conversion of tacit knowledge to explicit knowledge, which involves the four processes of socialization, externalization, combination, and internalization. Both the tacit and explicit nature of knowledge should be considered when integrating knowledge management processes with the human intellectual capital management strategies related to the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers (Garcia & Coltre, 2017; Marouf, 2016; Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

Findings from the current study about knowledge being generational and proprietary in nature and important to the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies were not located in the literature. However, these findings extend research related to both knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies. For

example, the generational nature of knowledge may be applicable to the three knowledge management processes of Shujahat et al.'s (2019) framework: knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. Participants in the current study described their experiences of generational knowledge being important to the creation of knowledge within their organizations. In another example, the current study findings about the proprietary nature of knowledge stress the critical importance of considering how to integrate knowledge sharing processes with the human intellectual capital management strategies related to the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

New Knowledge

The new knowledge theme emerged from all 16 participants' discussions about the three knowledge management processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation, sharing, and utilization processes into human intellectual capital management strategies, participants described new knowledge in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic, recruited/hired knowledge, and society-based knowledge.

Findings from the current study about new knowledge in terms of recruited/hired knowledge confirmed the existing scholarly literature. The participants discussed recruiting and hiring for new knowledge lacking within the organization. Both issues of codifying and personalizing the new knowledge to maximize its use were discussed. For example, P1 explained, "We oftentimes recruit for knowledge, but then when folks get

into the organizations, we don't utilize the knowledge that we recruited for." These findings are consistent with Wang et al. (2012), who argued that accessing new talent alone is not enough to ensure success because the talent must be properly integrated into the organization. Wang et al. further described the use of codification-oriented knowledge management strategies that entail hiring new workers who can blend into the organization's existing knowledge system as well as personalization-oriented knowledge management strategies that involve hiring workers who can solve specific problems while being able to tolerate ambiguity.

Findings from the current study about new knowledge in terms of the COVID-19 pandemic and society-based knowledge were not located in the existing literature specific to the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. I did not locate any published literature specific to human resource managers addressing the integration of these processes and strategies during any emergency comparable to a worldwide pandemic. Participants in the current study discussed the importance of considering knowledge with society-level implications and collaborating with other organizations and agencies external to the organization to develop the necessary policies and procedures in a timely manner to guide rapidly changing operational practices.

External Influences on Knowledge Process Integration

The external influences on knowledge process integration theme emerged in the coded interview data of 14 of the 16 participants in the current study. When discussing this theme and how it affected the integration of knowledge creation and sharing

processes into human intellectual capital management strategies, the participants described external influences and limitations as well as external sources of knowledge. The current study findings about the link between knowledge creation and knowledge sharing with external influences confirms the research on the four subprocesses of knowledge processes within organizations, specifically on the subprocess of externalization (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Shujahat et al., 2019). Moreover, knowledge management strategies are categorized in terms of two aspects: (a) knowledge sourcing that has two dimensions (i.e., internal-oriented or external-oriented strategy) and (b) knowledge focus that is either explicit-oriented or tacit-oriented strategy (Wang et al., 2016). Additionally, the current study findings are consistent with Ramaden et al.'s (2017) research concerning the role of external stakeholders in an organization's accessible human intellectual capital.

Internal Influences on Knowledge Process Integration

Participants in the current study described this theme in terms of their experiences with three types of internal influences on knowledge process integration: (a) leadership influences, (b) employee influences, and (c) technology influences. Of the 16 participants, 15 described all three types of influences as impacting knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization processes. As I explained with the external influences in the previous section, these findings confirm the same extant research (i.e., Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995; Ramaden et al., 2017; Shujahat et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2016). Of particular interest is how the current study findings provided support for Basten

and Haamann's (2018) conclusion that organizational learning practices include the internal influencing categories of people (i.e., leaders and employees) and technology.

Furthermore, the current study's findings provided support for Wang et al.'s (2016) theoretical framework for understanding the fit between intellectual capital and knowledge management strategy. The framework involves matching interdependent organizational elements that reinforce one another (Wang et al., 2016). Wang et al.'s framework includes four knowledge management strategy types: IS-ES, IS-EW, IW-ES, and IW-EW.

Knowledge Process Integration Improvements

Participants in the current study described knowledge process integration improvements at the following levels: (a) individual, (b) team, (c) department, and (d) organization. All 16 participants described aspects of these four levels of improvements as impacting the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization processes. The current study findings specific to the four levels of integration improvements support Marouf's (2016) conclusion that the personalization approach involves fully utilizing tacit knowledge from individuals and teams for the benefit of the organization. The current study findings also confirm Zaima et al.'s (2015) research showing how the four factors of tacit knowledge (i.e., individual/personal knowledge, managerial knowledge, expertise knowledge, and collective knowledge) are strategic resources for sustaining organizational competitive advantage and superior performance. More generally, the current study findings support the extant literature on how knowledge management processes are helpful for building intellectual capital in all

levels of an organization (Abualoush et al., 2018; Apiti et al., 2017; Shujahat et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2016).

Knowledge Process Integration Hindrances

All 16 participants in the current study described knowledge sharing and knowledge integration process integration hindrances as being related to the COVID-19 pandemic and three organizational levels: leadership, team/department, and organization. P2 described how the expanded use of technology during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affected how internal and external training knowledge was made available to employees. She explained that her employees expressed their frustration with how working virtually from a home-based office limited their access to training knowledge as well as opportunities to effectively share knowledge with other employees and colleagues within the industry. Of the literature reviewed for the current study prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, none addressed how a public health emergency affected organizational leaders' efforts to integrate knowledge management processes with the human intellectual capital management strategies related to hiring, retaining, and managing knowledge workers.

The current study findings are consistent with the literature addressing the importance of leaders' support of knowledge management processes and their integration into human intellectual capital management strategies (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016; Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019). For example, changes in workforce demographics in the past 2 decades have affected organizational leaders' increased strategic emphasis on human capital investments (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). These

increased strategies are the result of leaders who are adapting to the shift from an industrial society of mass production to one of product customization. This shift requires an emphasis on human capital challenges related to hiring, retaining, and managing the new knowledge worker (Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019). To successfully meet these challenges, leaders at all levels within the organization should be capable of integrating knowledge management practices into existing human capital management strategies to ensure organizational innovation, performance, and competitive advantage (Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Wong et al., 2015).

Knowledge Process Outcomes

Of the 16 participants, 13 described outcomes associated with knowledge sharing and knowledge integration processes. As for knowledge integration processes, the participants described two outcomes: employee outcomes and customer/client outcomes. These findings support the literature specific to performance outcomes resulting from knowledge sharing and knowledge integration processes (Andreeva & Kianto, 2011; Shujahat et al., 2019; Sousa & Rocha, 2019; Wang et al., 2016; Wong et al., 2015). Wang et al. (2016) concluded that integrating knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies can improve organizational performance. However, acknowledging the lack of evidence based in practice, Wang et al. recommended future research address the gap in the literature specific to human resource managers' perceptions about and experiences with this integration, which informed the design of the current study. Therefore, the findings from the current study expand upon the literature by providing specific examples of how integrating knowledge management

practices into human intellectual capital management strategies affected employee outcomes.

P1 explained how knowledge sharing has improved employee outcomes in recent years. She explained how her organization's commitment to knowledge sharing has contributed to the ability to attract candidates who are looking for opportunities to grow with and contribute to organizations that are committed to expanding employees' knowledge. She also described how this outcome positively impacts employee recruitment and retention processes as well as expands individual professional development opportunities. According to P4, the positive outcomes of knowledge distribution and utilization within his organization resulted in improved employee performance.

Additionally, Andreeva and Kianto (2011) reported on how to maximize knowledge management processes to have a positive impact on new product introduction into the marketplace, which the current study's participants described as a positive outcome for customers and clients. P1 described how beneficial employee outcomes can result in improved customer satisfaction and retention. She reported on measurable outcomes, including a reduction of 25% in turnover in a particular customer group that had been experiencing high turnover rates before the organization's integration of knowledge management processes into human intellectual capital strategies that resulted in improved employee performance.

Conceptual Framework

The current study's conceptual framework includes Drucker's (1999) seminal knowledge worker productivity theory and Wright and McMahan's (1992) seminal theory on SHRM. The links between these two theories is supported in the literature, with researchers concluding that an organization's management of its intellectual capital assets is connected to its knowledge management capability (Ramadan et al., 2017). Findings from the current study indicating that the integration of knowledge management processes into human intellectual capital management strategies improves employee performance extend Drucker's research on worker productivity.

Additionally, findings from the current study revealed that merely acquiring human intellectual capital is not enough, organizational leaders must adopt measurable knowledge management practices in order to optimize individual and organizational performance outcomes, which is consistent with the extant literature (Hussinki et al., 2017; Wang et al., 2016). Moreover, the current study's findings confirm Wright and McMahan's (1992) SHRM theory, which is concerned with decision making related to (a) human resource practices, (b) composition of the human capital resource pool, and (c) specification of required human resource behaviors as well as the effectiveness of decisions in terms of various business strategies and/or competitive situations. The SHRM theory is meaningful to the current study's findings about the nature of knowledge, providing a theoretical framework for making decisions about how proprietary knowledge should be shared and protected within the organization.

Limitations of the Study

I used a qualitative phenomenological research design that had methodological weaknesses. First, the interview data collection methods limited the sources of data to 16 participants who are human resource managers or management professionals working for professional service firms located in the eastern region of the United States. The limitation of the small sample relates to issues of the transferability of study findings to other contexts and settings. Although decisions about transferability in qualitative research lie with those interested in applying the findings elsewhere, the original researcher can help others make decisions about transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To help the readers of my study to consider issues of transferability, I provided rich and thick description when detailing the research methodology and reporting study findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Second, the COVID-19 pandemic may have influenced the study findings. During the data collection phase, public health mandates required employees to work remotely from their home offices. Participants in the current study discussed making necessary adjustments to facilitate workflow and meet the needs of their employees. Participants also worked with external organizations (i.e., local Society for Human Resource Management chapter; public health agencies; and local, state, and federal government regulatory agencies) to acquire new knowledge about COVID-19 and pandemic mandates/guidelines needed to develop and implement new organizational policies and procedures. To make these necessary adjustments while developing and implementing new policies/procedures, participants described making critical changes that altered how

they had previously experienced the integration of knowledge management process with human intellectual capital management strategies in the workplace.

Third, two types of biases may have influenced the study outcomes. The study interviews captured the participants' perceptions about experiences from their recent or distant past. These perceptions may be limited by recall bias or recollection error in that participants incorrectly recall former experiences due to memory effects or the influence of recent events (Blome & Augustin, 2015). Another type of bias, researcher bias, may lead to the incorrect interpretation of participants' responses to interview questions. This limitation is due to the qualitative researcher functioning as an instrument of data collection and analysis in a phenomenological study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). One method I used to address the potential impact of participant and researcher biases was member checks. I made preliminary analysis accessible to some of the participants to review, and they provided feedback about the study interpretations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). All participant reviewers agreed with the reasonableness and truthfulness of the preliminary study interpretations.

As for addressing potential researcher bias in an interpretive phenomenological study, I adopted Smith et al.'s (2009) cyclical process of an enlivened form of bracketing whereby I acknowledged my prior experiences, assumptions, and preconceptions during data collection and data analysis and made decisions about when to consider my biases and when to set them aside. While conducting this hermeneutic phenomenological study, I was part of the double hermeneutic that included my interpretation of the participants' experiences based on my own experientially informed perspective (Smith et al., 2009).

As such, other forms of bracketing researcher biases and establishing reflexivity used in qualitative research were not desirable techniques for this study. In addition to monitoring my biases, I enhanced the confirmability of the study findings by including representative quotes from participants that could help readers confirm that my biases were not dominating the interpretation of data (Miles et al., 2014).

Recommendations

The current study addressed a gap in the literature (Maliket al., 2020; Wang et al., 2016) specific to human resource management professionals' experiences with integrating knowledge management processes (knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization) with human intellectual capital management strategies (employee hiring, retention, and management). Study findings revealed seven shared themes: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledges, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge process integration hindrances. The themes emerging from the participants' lived experiences were applicable to the integration of the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. The majority of the findings confirmed the theoretical and empirical literature by revealing how human resource managers integrated knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. However, new areas for research were identified based on the participants' lived experiences. Future researchers should consider expanding practice-based research in two areas: (a) the generational and proprietary

nature of knowledge and (b) how public health emergencies and society-based knowledge affect knowledge process integration.

Regarding the first area of the generational and proprietary nature of knowledge, findings from participants' lived experiences extended the extant knowledge management literature and human intellectual capital management literature. Future researchers should address research questions about how generational knowledge (knowledge spanning multiple generational cohorts) affects the three processes of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. Such research could expand knowledge about the practical application of Shujahat et al.'s (2019) theoretical model as well as other knowledge management theoretical frameworks. Researchers should also consider designing studies that investigate how organizations handle proprietary knowledge when integrating knowledge sharing processes with human resource strategies related to hiring, retaining, and managing modern-day knowledge workers (Sousa & Rocha, 2019).

The second area in need of further research concerns how public health emergencies and society-based knowledge affect knowledge process integration with human intellectual capital management strategies. Participants in this current study recounted how the COVID-19 global pandemic affected organizational operations and their roles as human resource managers. Yet I could not locate parallels to their lived experiences in the extant literature. Future researchers should further investigate how human resource professionals collaborated with external organizations and agencies to develop necessary policies and procedures to guide operational practices that were rapidly changing in response to the global pandemic. A related area of research is the

expanded use of technology during such crises. Knowledge from such research based in human resource managers' lived experiences would be valuable for extending theoretical frameworks to consider unpredictable public health emergencies.

A limitation of the current study was the sample size that relates to issues of the transferability of study findings to other contexts and settings. This is an inherent limitation of qualitative research, including phenomenology. Related to this limitation were purposeful sampling issues I experienced while recruiting participants. Initially, the proposal included four criteria that guided the selection of participants: (a) working in the eastern region of the United States, (b) member of the Society for Human Resource Management, (c) have a minimum of 5 years of experience in senior leadership, and (d) have knowledge of their company's knowledge management practices and human intellectual capital strategies. However, when sampling techniques failed to generate the target number of participants, I requested and received approval from the Walden University IRB to change the study's participant logic procedures. The first change involved expanding the selection criterion related to Society for Human Resource Management membership to include individuals without Society for Human Resource Management membership who hold an undergraduate or graduate degree in human resource management or a related field. The second change involved expanding recruitment sources to include members of the AOM. By expanding the participant selection criteria and using snowball sampling techniques, I achieved the targeted sample of 16 participants.

When designing studies on this research topic, whether qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods, future researchers should identify multiple ways of accessing potential participants. For example, researchers could increase the target population from which to recruit participants by including membership lists of numerous professional organizations for human resource management and related fields. Although the Society for Human Resource Management is a benchmark organization for traditional and nontraditional students without professional experience to receive a certificate of learning in human resource management, Society for Human Resource Management membership typically represents individuals seeking entry-level positions. Human resource managers with higher levels of education and experience maintain professional memberships in leadership and management professional groups affiliated with related fields. Additionally, future researchers should consider expanding the participant selection criteria to include the title *chief human resource officer*. The chief human resource officer is a strategic partner to a chief executive officer and, as such, provides valuable insight about how to unlock and create value in an organization by improving human performance, measuring strategic performance, and engaging employee work performance as a source of sustainable competitive differentiation.

Future research could build upon the literature specific to human resource leaders experiences of the integration of knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies. For example, researchers could replicate this current phenomenological study in other geographic regions of the United States. Additionally, researchers might consider using a different research approach, such as a

Delphi study, to confirm the themes identified in the current study or expand an understanding of how those and other themes affect the integration of knowledge management process with human intellectual capital management strategies.

During the interviews, several participants in the current study suggested the need for future studies to investigate how diversity and culture differences as well as leadership styles influence the integration of knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital strategies within organizations. One participant recommended future research to study the influence of diversity specifically to organizational hiring practices. Another study participant discussed the importance of studying social change and social justice issues as they relate to human resource managers' concerns about diversity hiring practices, promotion, leadership, and inclusion. Future research on how social change and social justice impact organizational performance could extend human resource professionals' knowledge about how these social issues affect the successful integration of knowledge management processes and human intellectual management processes.

Implications

Study findings based on human resource leaders' experiences of integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital management strategies may positively impact the workplace success of knowledge workers employed by professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States. By participating in this study, human resource managers who serve organizations within in this region may, as a result of heightened awareness and new insights, change how they integrate

knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization processes into their strategies for hiring, retaining, and managing knowledge workers. For example, the majority of participants in this current study (68.75%) described their experiences of generational knowledge and how important it is to the creation of knowledge within their organizations.

P5 shared her observations about the different ways generational cohorts create knowledge. As a member of the millennial generation, she explained that employees of the silent generation and baby boomer generation are better at making knowledge concrete than employees of the millennial generation. The implication at the individual level is that millennial knowledge workers tend to get lost in the myriad of possibilities and need the help of the silent and baby boomer generation knowledge workers to both create and implement knowledge in real-world workplace contexts. Furthermore, the extant literature indicates that millennial workers graduate high school with lower levels of general knowledge as well as desiring and needing greater supervision than workers of previous generations (Barbuto & Gottfredson, 2016). By integrating the study findings about generational knowledge into their human intellectual capital strategies, human resource managers can position knowledge workers across all generational cohorts for greater collaborative success in the workplace, which in turn contributes to organizational success. Millennial knowledge workers can learn from silent and baby boomer knowledge workers how to maximize the use of knowledge to complete concrete tasks in an orderly fashion without unnecessary supervision. Silent and baby boomer knowledge

workers can benefit from millennial knowledge workers' modeling of how to quickly access needed knowledge.

Findings from this current study related to the new knowledge theme may impact how human resource leaders manage the effects of global public health emergencies on organizational performance. These organization-level implications also have potential implications for positive social change. Such implications may be realized through the participants' affiliation with workplaces in the eastern region of the United States. as well as their involvement with local and national professional organizations.

During the data collection phase of the study, participants described their ongoing experiences of the global COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic was affecting their professional and personal lives as they managed quarantines, lockdowns of schools and businesses, a remote workforce, and other rapidly changing federal public health guidelines and local and state mandates. The participants described their experiences of the organizational implications of the global COVID-19 pandemic in the areas of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing.

When all employees within her organization were sent home to work remotely, P15 experienced the shortcomings of technology communication platforms in the area of knowledge creation and knowledge sharing. Her organization utilized the Zoom meeting platform to facilitate employee interactions. However, she explained that the technology was not effective at facilitating the spontaneous communication and collaboration that occurs naturally in the halls and around the lunch tables of the shared physical workplace. She further explained how the loss of the informal and naturally occurring

communications and collaborations hindered the spontaneous flow of knowledge creation between knowledge workers within her organization. P2 discussed how the lack of reliable access to computer technology and internet connectivity while working remotely from home negatively affected employees' ability to successfully perform their jobs.

A second hindrance to knowledge creation within the workplace that was attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic involved how it was affecting employee well-being, which in turn resulted in declines in employees' knowledge creation activities. P3 realized the pandemic was negatively impacting the productivity of her organization's knowledge workers whose community health care systems were inundated with COVID-19 patients. As an organizational leader who directed human relations operations, P3 took action by developing and facilitating self-care sessions with the aim of helping employees identify how they could take better care of themselves and their families during the pandemic.

A third way that the COVID-19 pandemic hindered knowledge creation and knowledge sharing involved the human resource leaders more directly. The participants described needing to access new information about the COVID-19 pandemic being produced by various local, state, and federal government health and safety agencies. P9 discussed the moral imperative as a leader of staying current and promptly sharing the rapidly changing public health guidelines and regulations with employees, while P1 described how she collaborated with the local Society for Human Resource Management chapter to develop necessary internal policies and procedures for employees to follow that aligned with rapidly changing public health guidelines and mandates.

The shortcomings of technology and the social isolation caused by working remotely at home during a pandemic have implications for individual employees and their employers. The lack of reliable access to computer technology and internet connectivity as well as the ineffectiveness of such technologies to enable the spontaneous communication and collaboration that occurs naturally in the physical workplace hinder the employees' productivity as well as the quality of their work. The social isolation caused by working remotely at home stifled employees' collaboration with one another. Additionally, the social isolation employees endured during quarantines and lockdowns negatively impacted their physical and mental well-being, which in turn resulted in diminished productivity and quality of work. Diminished employee productivity and quality work outcomes, in turn, negatively affect the employing organization's ability to serve their clients and remain competitive in the marketplace.

Based on the findings specific to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, human resource professionals should work closely with the appropriate leadership team members to reevaluate their organization's emergency response plan and determine how to update company policies and practices for the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic as well as future emergencies that may result in the workforce being dispersed to work remotely from home. When developing or updating a business emergency response plan, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (2021) recommends conducting a risk assessment to identify potential emergency scenarios. If necessary, existing business emergency response plans should be updated to include a global pandemic. Additionally, organizations should develop or update existing business continuity plans and crisis

communications plan that include a global pandemic scenario in order to ensure the well-being of employees and the effective continuation of operations, especially those related to essential services and infrastructure (Federal Emergency Management Agency, 2021).

Findings from this current study can contribute to human resource leaders understanding of how the integration of knowledge management processes with the intellectual capital management strategies related to the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers can contribute to employees' successful job performance, which in turn, positively impacts the business's success. When businesses are successful, they can positively impact needed social change (i.e., helping communities prepare for and respond to global emergencies such as a pandemic). The social implications of successful businesses include the benefits of creating shared value, which is the connection between successful businesses and the health of a community (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Businesses need a flourishing community that creates product demand and provides public assets and a supportive environment critical to economic success. Communities need successful businesses that can provide jobs and wealth creation opportunities for citizens (Porter & Kramer, 2011). In essence, by improving value at the business level, societal values are improved (Porter & Kramer, 2011). Social implications of high-performing successful businesses include improving citizens' access to basic human needs for housing, food, safety, and well-being as well as educational opportunities that advance individual prosperity and societal-level progress (Porter & Kramer, 2011).

Findings from the current study also have theoretical implications, specifically those related to knowledge management processes (Shujahat et al., 2019) and knowledge-worker productivity (Drucker, 1999) as well as human intellectual management (Wright & McMahan, 1992). For example, study findings related to the generational nature of knowledge and how the global COVID-19 pandemic has impacted knowledge management processes and human intellectual capital management strategies could influence how current theoretical and conceptual frameworks are interpreted and applied in the workplace. Moreover, study findings could inform the development of new theories that integrate knowledge about how a global emergency such as a pandemic affects employee job performance and business operations in the areas of knowledge creation, knowledge sharing, and knowledge utilization. As this study indicates, expanded interpretations and applications of existing theories and the creation of new theories should address aspects of extended employee technology use in remote locations during lockdown scenarios as well as the impact of social isolation on employees' well-being and productivity.

Conclusions

This study addressed the problem that although the theoretical and empirical literature indicates that integrating knowledge management practices into human intellectual capital management strategies can help enhance organizational performance, human resource management professionals' experiences with this integration are not well understood (Malik et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2016). Reviewing 2 decades of research on the alignment of intellectual capital and knowledge management, Wang et al. (2016)

recommended that knowledge managers (i.e., human resource managers) extend their understanding about the synergies between human intellectual capital and knowledge management strategies in order to maximize knowledge resources within an organization. The purpose of this qualitative, hermeneutic, phenomenological study was to explore the lived experiences of human resource managers integrating knowledge management processes with human intellectual capital strategies in professional service firms in the eastern region of the United States.

Seven themes emerged from the analysis of interviews of 16 human resource professionals: (a) nature of knowledge, (b) new knowledges, (c) external influences on knowledge process integration, (d) internal influences on knowledge process integration, (e) knowledge process integration improvements, (f) knowledge process integration hindrances, and (g) knowledge process outcomes. Two of the themes have particularly relevant implications for individual employees, employing organizations, and positive social change: the generational nature of knowledge and the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic on knowledge creation and knowledge sharing as well as the human intellectual management strategies related to the hiring, retention, and management of knowledge workers. Study findings suggest the need for expanded interpretations and applications of existing knowledge management and human intellectual capital management theories in addition to the creation of new theories in order to address aspects of extended employee technology use in remote locations during lockdown scenarios as well as the impact of social isolation on employees' well-being and productivity during a global pandemic.

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Appendix: Interview Guide

1. Could you tell me about your lived experiences with the processes your organization has in place for **creating new knowledge** vital for improving employee performance and/or organizational success?

2. Could you tell me about your experience with integrating these **knowledge creation processes** into your human resources decisions and actions?

3. Could you tell me about your lived experiences with your organization's **knowledge sharing processes** aimed at improving employee performance and/or organizational success?

4. Could you tell me about your lived experiences with the processes your organization has in place for facilitating the **utilization of knowledge** aimed at improving employee performance and/or organizational success?

5. Can you think of anything else that you would like to add about your experiences that we did not already discuss?