Spirituality and Compassion in the organisations: a contribution for the achievement of organizational results

Espiritualidade e Compaixão nas organizações: uma contribuição para os resultados organizacionais

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ABSTRACT
Since it is no longer relevant to assume that any chosen assignment cannot be considered as a hazardous search for survival, human beings mostly spend their lifetime at work with the objective to reach human achievement. In that perspective, some organisations may still generate difficult environments with low level conditions of work and the act of compassion represents a virtue capable of minimizing a potential pain that hardly stay unconsidered within the work sphere. This study raises a contextual understanding on why the organisations need to perceive and understand the pain of their employees and, consequently, trigger mechanisms to overcome them. The issue involves key theories about spirituality, compassion and the organisations. It also refers to the forces that have a leading role in the deployment and sustaining of compassion in the organisations, and finally tries to establish the conceptual link between the consistent bonds of compassion and, both active and creative spirituality. Finally, a Brazilian case that lead to reflect on human values and its contemplation in the organisations and its application through confessional activities is introduced. In such perspective, spirituality and compassion may inspire a growing process of humanization of the organisations and for the community, to a large part about the human beings, their contribution for the achievement of organizational results and to its perpetuation in the organisations.

Keywords: Spirituality, Compassion, Organisations, Brazilian case.

RESUMO
Uma vez que não é mais relevante supor que qualquer profissão escolhida não pode ser considerada como uma busca ao acaso pela sobrevivência, os seres humanos passam a maior parte da vida trabalhando com o objetivo de alcançar a realização humana. Mesmo assim, algumas organizações ainda podem gerar ambientes difíceis com condições de trabalho inadequadas e o ato de compaixão representa uma virtude capaz de minimizar uma dor potencial que dificilmente fica desconsiderada dentro da esfera do trabalho. Este estudo aborda uma compreensão contextual sobre por que as organizações precisam perceber e compreender as dores de seus colaboradores e, consequentemente, acionar mecanismos para superá-las. A questão envolve teorias-chave sobre espiritualidade, compaixão e as organizações. Refere-se também às forças que têm um papel de liderança na implantação e sustentação da compaixão nas organizações e, por fim, tenta estabelecer o vínculo conceitual entre os vínculos consistentes de compaixão e
espiritualidade ativa e criativa. Por fim, apresenta-se um caso brasileiro que leva a refletir sobre os valores humanos e sua contemplação nas organizações e sua aplicação por meio de atividades confessionais. Nessa perspectiva, a espiritualidade e a compaixão podem inspirar um crescente processo de humanização das organizações e da comunidade, em grande parte sobre o ser humano, sua contribuição para o alcance dos resultados organizacionais e sua perpetuação nas organizações.

Palavras-chave: Espiritualidade, Compaião, Organizações, caso brasileiro

1 INTRODUCTION

The centrality of work in human life seems to encounter itself through the consensus that arises from the researches that involve the relation between being and doing (Sonenshein et al, 2013). Through the act of work, human beings have transformed the world but should at least, be part of it. But in recent years, with the advancement of technology, the division of labor has become more complex, where the vision of the workforce has suffered disruptive changes in work patterns, raising a scientific concern to understand better the meaning of work and its proper sense (Berger, 1983). Until recently, the study of the reality of work, through more intangible concepts, was considered as not relevant because of the mainstream of research based the worker's ability to perform, its respective task to achieve the organizational objectives (Sznelwar et al., 2011).

Looking at life from the exercise of the profession has become a constant challenge in organizational studies. Some successful actions, in the face of misfortune, begin to be propagated, almost contagious and impelling new positions, even when the manifestation of the suffering of members of the organisation start to arise (Dutton et al., 2006). It may take different forms. There are invisible pains that affect the relationship, build distances, and enhance the individualism that crystallizes indifference and insensitivity.

However, the role of compassion does not come into play only when there is a considerable amount of suffering. Compassionate actions could spontaneously attend an employee in its individuality, as well as in group’s coexistence. In that sense, the role of leadership seems to be of paramount importance (Dutton et al., 2002). In addition to keeping a team united and focused on reaching its goals, a leader must not be the protagonist of the relations between the group’s actors in charge of humanizing the environments and strengthening mutual aid. Since spirituality is a “dimension” of the human being, which sustains and inspires compassionate actions, bringing it closer to compassion requires no effort. Spiritual people are prone to gestures of solidarity, sensitivity and dedication to others, where humanized environments can contribute to organizational performance and talent retention. Spirituality and compassion, a Brazilian management differential that will bring a new perspective on management in the organisations.

This theoretical essay is built out of three scientific realities. First, from the work of Jane E. Dutton, Monica C. Worline, Jason M. Kanov, Kristina M. Workman, Sally Maitlis, Jacoba M. Lilius, Peter Berger,
and Peter J. Frost, which are based on major force or critical events, such as flood, fire, disease, attacks
and others. Second, the work of William David Thompson; Tracey E. Robert, J. Scott Young, Virginia A.
Kelly; Nicholas W. Twigg; Satyanarayana Parayitam and Francisco Gomes de Matos on spirituality
perspective,

Thirdly, key authors from the science of Organization Studies (George, 2014, Dutton et al. 2014,
Lilius et al. 2012, Rynes et al. 2012), who question how organisations respond to human suffering and
who demonstrate a central concern for future theorization and research. They consider that research should
focus on the conditions under which organisations inflict the least harm and further alleviate suffering;
considering specific organizational events that affect the naturalness of life and their impact on
professional performance as a central point of human existence. Such perspective brings light on the
importance of compassion and spirituality in the workplace to sustain greater dignity, humanization of
relationships, to enhance both personal and organizational results. Finally, the essay brings a Brazilian
perspective to the concepts brought up and gathers the concerns and questions about the way in which the
subject could be studied, as well as the gaps that may inspire future research.

**Spirituality and Compassion: the construction of a concept**

To discuss about spirituality can be like addressing a little-known subject, both for the people and
in the organizational sphere. However, spirituality has been a pertinent subject of study, due to its
embracing nature, under the umbrella of the science of Theology (Dornelles, 2006). For that reason, Nash
and McLennan (2003) describes spirituality as an access to a “sacred force” that impels life, emphasizing
the discovery of the “inner self” of a human being and the self-discovery of the connection between such
force and life itself. Thompson (2001) goes a step further, by stating that spirituality is capable of
producing those brilliant ideas that you do not understand where it came from. As an explained human
dimension that may concern theological knowledge, it becomes more challenging to approach and
integrate the current diversity of the workplace, due to the existence of so many opinions and conceptions
about our way of life (Twigg and Parayitam, 2006).

The theme of spirituality introduces a different view on human life (Case and Gosling, 2010). A
worker is studied as having, besides material needs, spiritual needs, as proposed by the theory developed
by Maslow et al. (1970) Furthermore, all experiences from this field of knowledge is an experience of a
mystery that transcends the human being and it involves a scale of self-values. That is why spirituality is
said to occur in the encounter between the finite and the infinite in the depths of the human being; it is an
experience that manifests aspiration for the infinite.

Twigg and Parayitam (2006) highlight the breadth of the meaning of spirituality, where a subject
may perceive, in an imprecise and not obvious manner, that it is involved with a superior and distinct
entity. It is a moment of experiences of mystery that transcends and fills with admiration and curiosity,
which has the feeling of being conquered or of conquering something greater than itself.

According to Moggi and Burkhard (2004), the concept of spirituality includes such elements as love, respect for life in all its manifestations, free will, hope, honesty, integration, the truth, kindness, beauty and equality. Even with this broad definition of spirituality, the multiplicity of concepts and the most varied interpretations recorded throughout history remain open.

Pierce (2006) states that trying to define spirituality is like trying to fix a nail in the sand and the first mistake in trying to define it accurately is to confuse it with religion or devotion. Boff (2006) conceptualizes spirituality as something that transforms the inner human being. Furthermore, the author explains that the spirituality of the Western world differs from the one from the Far East, although there is a complementation between both, they fundamentally aim to create in human beings a center from which everything binds and relink continuously, allowing an encounter with the totality of the existence. Boff (2006) goes even further when he relates spirituality to the experience nor to the doctrine, dogmas, rites, and celebrations. According to the author, it is a present dimension in each human being, which is revealed by its capacity for dialogue with himself, its own heart; which is being translated into love, sensitivity, capacity of listening to the other, and care about everything and with all.

In order to clarify the meaning of the concept of compassion in organizational studies, the definition of compassion refers to the act of feeling the passion of the other human being, where a specific relationship generates a feeling between the subjects, pointing out the one who suffers and the one who is witnessing such suffering. The literature dealing with organizational contexts presents definitions that converge with the understanding of the concept of compassion as a sensitivity that focus on suffering in the work environment, generating compassionate attitudes among the individuals themselves and respective practices of the organisations to minimize the pain (Frost, 1999).

From a religious organisations point of view, there is broad scientific production that deals with the concept of compassion (Serafin and Feuerschütte, 2014). The organisations can be influenced by different understandings presented and approached by the most diverse religious expressions, as a part of the relationship with the transcendent, the exercise of compassion. One of the main objective of an organisation is to treat people humanly through the principle of religious compassion. In a Brazilian perspective, Christianity introduces compassion through many expressions and past actions of Jesus Christ himself. In the history of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, the proposed paradigmatic model of compassion that serves all for the action of succoring the one who is weak, is not based on social, moral, or religious rules, but on the pain of the other, the vulnerability that puts you lying by the roadside (Azevedo, 2006).

In an anthropological sense, the concept of compassion is greater than just a subjective feeling,
where a subject meets another in a situation in which they find themselves through a state of suffering. Such dynamic provokes attitudes of care, with a view to overcoming this situation. The pain of others provokes solidarity, removing indifference and provoking compassionate actions. In this way, the moral principles of respect and attention for the other, as a sufferer, have the same goal of compassion (Azevedo, 2006).

The most common definition of compassion in the organizational literature describes it as a process that reaches three simultaneous moments in the face of the finding of suffering in the work environment: to notice, to feel and to respond collectively to the pain of the other, with the intention of softening it. (Dutton et al. 2009). Therefore, compassion can be perceived in a daily organizational context where, instead of being exercised as a defensive and punctual strategy, it may inspire formal policies to the point of instituting compassionate routines. Compassion becomes a sense of solidarity in relation to the other that can be cultivated and implemented as a management policy, in addition to occasional situations and thus achieve the normality of the daily life of the organisations.

**Compassion on the path of spirituality**

Compassion springs from the path of spirituality, since it constitutes a spiritual dimension that inspires feelings and gestures that humanize. Compassion and spirituality go together in order to bring about transformations that consolidate joy, hope, peace and the infinite desire to make sense at time and actions. Compassion is based on spirituality, which enables and invites the human being to transcendence. If suffering does not fulfill nor dignify, the organisations could considered environments that generate actions that may favor overcoming (Boff, 2006).

In order to overcome such state of pain, the organisations are challenged to cultivate and implement compassion, with the aim of provoking gestures of recognition and active solidarity. Taking into account the needs of that moment, compassion permeates the times, explicitly and formally exercised within the organisations. As humanization experiences may emerge simultaneously, compassion can incorporate actions and even support structures, ensuring well-being, through decent working conditions, flexibility and solidarity, inspiring gestures of relief and abstraction from suffering (Frost, 1999).

In researching the reaction and procedures adopted by the organisations, the authors show that attention to pain, caused by certain events, can generate relief and well-being to those involved, as well as intensify the belonging and affective ties between colleagues and the company. In a way, the researches carried out are based on events that caused deep suffering. In the face of the pain experienced by its members, organisations have the opportunity to respond effectively, relieving pain, mitigating the impact of the event. However, not all organisations are aware of are able to act in order to overcome the consequences of events that cause suffering. The presence of spirituality can sustain greater sensitivity to suffering and inspire compassionate actions.
**Spirituality in organizations**

By analyzing the organisations based on the spiritual dimension, the human being is no longer understood only from his capacity to do, but to be. The dimension of “being” comprises a whole existence: a body, a physical and an interiority - its spiritual existence (Twigg and Parayitam, 2006)

In an organizational perspective, employees would expect to find in their workplace the possibility of a life with more meaning, respect, creativity, values and purposes (Gockel, 2004). Human beings are not a human existence with a spiritual experience, but a spiritual being having a human experience (Nash and McLennan, 2003). Furthermore, Thompson (2001) demonstrates that the effects of spirituality experience are not immediate, but they can make a difference between people and enable a quality leap in the workplace.

In contemplating the human dimension of spirituality, it becomes possible to give greater meaning to work (Milliman et al. 2003), because the inclusion of spiritual values in the environment of work contributes to social transformation and allow the occurrence of transcendence (Tracey et al., 2006).

Since spirituality is a personal experience of transcendence and when transported to the workplace, it becomes capable of including a multiplicity of policies and practices that focus on the recognition of the “soul” at personal and organizational levels (Gockel, 2004). Thus, it is assumed that the responsibility for the inclusion of spirituality in the organisations is everyone's concern.

As spirituality is also a matter of culture, it is an ancient and important theme: it binds people, faith, hope and love. For the last decade, it has been expanding its space in society and, especially, in the world of restructured work, there is only space for spirituality in organisations that value the human side and this concern must be something constant within them (Matos, 2001).

The organisations, by welcoming the development of the spiritual dimension, contribute to value the worker, the organization itself and the community. In fact, the spiritual dimension in the workplace strengthens the exercise of all the functions of the organisation (Groen, 2001). Wherever people are, the manifestation of transcendence seems to be present, improving their condition of life (Case and Gosling, 2010).

In a Brazilian perspective, Matos (2001) emphasizes that companies are made up of people and a true company has a soul. Therefore, in relation to spirituality in the organisations, the question is not whether it is feasible, but rather what is essential. Therefore, any program of human formation that contemplates spirituality requires clarity and definition of its meaning. It is necessary to pay attention to the basic values of the workers in their development activities, and it is up to the organisations to establish their real priorities.

The search for an ideal work environment also includes the joy of the people who are part of such environment, because “happiness and business are inseparable concepts from one another” (Csikszentmihalyi, 2004). In addition, when working with spiritual concepts in companies, we are
basically talking about raising the level of awareness of people and groups, without losing sight of the tangible results (Moggi and Burkhard, 2004). The spiritualized environments can thus count on manifestations of joy, trust, respect, personal fulfillment and, consequently, results for the organisation.

In addition, there is a possibility of converting the search for the spiritual dimension into an antagonistic strategy, which aims to transform the “absolute” into a marketing resource. The use of the manipulative instrument serves only as a motivation for productivity (Matos, 2001). Spirituality may not be quantified, but it will manifest itself in attitudes, relationships and transformation, that is, in a greater degree of humanization of the employees. The presence of spirituality in the organisations seems to appear more clearly in spaces where there is greater emancipation and appreciation of the human being in society, and it is possible to reveal that people are seeking greater sense at work, looking for a socially responsible approach to business and new motivational aspects for the professional activity.

There is a close connection between spirituality and compassion. Of course, a spiritual person cultivates values that humanize and transform it into relational attitudes. Compassion in this study is understood as the ability to feel the pain of the other, to sympathize with human suffering; which cannot be treated with indifference. The search for organisations, which express sensitivity and show appreciation for their employees, have registered significant growth. Increasingly, work environments are challenged with humanization. Spirituality and compassion favor and respond to a deeper pursuits that go beyond satisfying basic needs (Twigg and Parayitam, 2006).

**Compassion: the chosen path**

Compassion is not a phenomenon of recent times. Some feelings and actions are millennial, because they mix with the trajectory of the people. More recent studies show a sensitive approach of science to compassion. In the same way, compassion accompanies the history of humanity. Since suffering is inherent to a human being, compassion becomes a fundamental part of existence. Suffering can be understood as unpleasant experiences, including physical and emotional pain, psychological stress, and existential anxiety itself, there are few organisations that take into account their employee’s personal pain situation. Undoubtedly, suffering is an inevitable, ambiguous and generally neglected aspect of the organizational life (Lilius et al., 2011). Although the human capacity to demonstrate compassion is universal, most companies do not incorporate acts of solidarity, ignoring the fact that indifference does not help in the search for excellence of results, on the contrary, it damages and even disrupts it (Dutton et al., 2002, Lilius et al., 2011).

Compassion is broader than empathy, but it is not as comprehensive as love, although it is presented as a form of unselfish love (Frost, 1999). Compassion elects the human being in a punctual situation of pain and inspires solidarity, accompanied by actions to overcome such experience. In this perspective, compassion is exercised when someone’s pain strikes another person. The exercise of
compassion within the organisations presupposes a degree of courage, since it is necessary to overcome the technical and normative question of the old practices (Frost, 1999); to reinvent and exercise a humanizing way of dealing with such issues, especially when suffering is present. The awareness of the pain of the other can generate spontaneity and creativity in order to achieve its overcoming.

There are several situations that can generate pain to the members of the organisations. From natural disasters to private and intimate situations, pain becomes present directly interfering with normal life and reverberating in the workplace. Opening “organizational interest” for compassion, as a way to preserve human dignity, becomes an investment in restoring the performance of the organisation itself, reinforcing the commitment to the employee and its colleagues. For such, a new operational logic is necessary, to encounter compassionate practices towards the employees and the organization itself (Simpson et al., 2015).

**Compassion in the organisations**

The importance of organizational compassion goes beyond the obvious reasons of humanism. If spirituality is recognized by the human sciences as an inherent dimension of the act of existing, the presence of compassion is a natural phenomenon that highlights the spiritual way of living. By unleashing the feeling and implementing their compassionate actions, the suffering in the workplace diminishes and, as a result, the connection with colleagues increases and the bonds of belonging to the organization grow stronger (Dutton et al. 2002). Compassion is a generating force that broadens the vision, favors the understanding of the facts and enables for the overcoming. An encounter with compassion has transformative effects on individuality, on the relational field between team members and on the organisation as a whole (Dutton and Workman, 2011). When people know that they can bring pain to the workplace, they do not waste more energy trying to ignore the pain they are feeling (Dutton et al., 2002). However, when forced to repress sorrowful feelings, the performance of the function is affected and the discomfort reaches the others.

However, organisations’ reactions to the suffering of their employees vary widely. The capacity for compassion can take place through various manifestations and moments. Furthermore, the principle that triggers compassionate actions is always the act of perceiving the pain of the other. When you realize the pain, feelings arise that cause the approach first. Then, responses to suffering take shape through actions (Lilius et al., 2011). Noticing, feeling and responding to suffering are skills of the limbs and a capacity of the organisation itself. By opening the heart to the vulnerability of the other, organisations extend the possibilities for meaningful and lasting change (Dutton and Workman, 2011).

However, compassion is more than a psychological state; it is a practice that is not restricted to organizational space, by proposing the “cure of pain” (Simpson et al., 2015). An initiative to respond to suffering can trigger different forms of compassion within and outside an organisation. However, by not
taking care of the pain is creating a rift between the employees and the organisation. The way of dealing with tragedies, illnesses, losses and misfortunes defines the values of the organisation (Dutton et al., 2002). By institutionalizing compassionate acts, the organisations create connections with their employees and with others. The systemic appreciation of compassion can add individual gains as well as organizational gains (Frost, 1999). Differently from what it is imagined, the same organizational structures assigned to normal work can be redirected to respond to human pain (Dutton et al., 2006). Therefore, the implementation of compassion does not require investment in the creation of another structure. In that perspective, compassion is a dynamic process that can build communities in the workplace, because organisations are nothing else than human being’s structures (Kanov et al., 2004).

The velocity of a compassionate action seems to depend on the eminence of pain and also on the required resources (Dutton and World, 2006). However, the magnitude of an organisation's response to pain is measured not only in large-scale actions, but in the inspiration and power of small actions (Dutton and Workman, 2011). Over time, it is clear that actions, regardless of proportion, are incorporated into an organisation’s culture to the point of becoming a competence (Dutton et al., 2002). Obviously the focus will continue on the assignment, but compassion can be the positive asset to it (Lilius et. al., 2011).

Recent researches show that the organisations are shifting the subject of compassion in a more central manner (Dutton and Workman, 2011), since some results have shown its capability in reducing suffering in workplaces (Lilius et al., 2011). However, in order to implement the culture of compassion, and considering the fact that an employee represents more than its organizational functions, a new understanding is necessary, accompanied by respective management practices (Dutton et al., 2006). Compassion can become an organizational routine, as a practice that arises within the organisation and when the ability to perceive pain is developed among all members (Dutton et al., 2006).

The formation of multipliers of compassion can deal with the many pains that are practically unavoidable in the workplace. If the workplace is considered as a generator of pain, it should also be considered as a space of healing. However, this care with the human being cannot be accompanied by merely productive interests. There seems to be a long way to go when it comes to perceiving, feeling, and collectively responding to pain within the organisations (Kanov et al., 2004). Just the fact that a human being can remain working for a long period, compassion can directly affect the intensity of suffering and influence the performance of its activities; since it is virtually impossible not to carry the joys and sorrows to the workplace (Kanov et al., 2004). Human pain naturally triggers actions. The mobilization of the organisation in order to respond to the pain will depend on the internal resources and the “outputs” resulting from the sensitivity in perceiving specific situations of suffering.

Dutton et al. (2006) have developed a theory to explain how individual compassion in response to human pain in organisations becomes socially coordinated through organizing compassion. The theory indicates that the social architecture of an organisation, and its representative and emerging characteristics
affect the extraction, generation, coordination, and calibration of compassionate resources. In this context, the theory of organizing compassion suggests that the same structures designed for the normal work in the organisations can be re-designed for a new purpose: to respond to the pain of its members.

More recently, Dutton et al. (2014) address compassion as an organizational process that involves the attention and the perception of suffering, as well as the interpretation and the meaning of suffering in a specific context. These two processes inform the feeling that arises as well as the motivation and action that is taken in response to the suffering situation. It is a social process that derives from compassion as an individual emotion. The authors characterize a process that includes attention to suffering, sense making about suffering, feeling of empathic concern, and action to alleviate suffering.

A Brazilian experience

A Brazilian perspective on the practice of compassion can be identified from the following experiences, resulting from an ethnographic study based on direct observation. The construction of the narrative begins by describing the context and then follows the logic of the process of compassion organizing described by Dutton et al. (2014).

Endowed with a cultural singularity, reactivity and a spirit of tolerance, the cultural openness and projection of Brazil on the international scene are part of a long tradition of miscegenation. It is in such perspective that the concepts of compassion and spirituality are approached in light of the characteristics and specificities of the Brazilian strategic culture.

To consider the importance of the events in the definition of the facts is an aspect that has been present in Brazilian culture since the beginning of the history of Brazil, when Pedro Alvares Cabral deviated from his route to the Indies, and casually arrived at the coasts of a new continent, South America. Through the centuries, a continent was formed and in the “substance of the facts, several American nations were disseminated and created” (Bonfim, 1997), some of native origin, other nations of Spanish colonization, and finally Brazil, formed by Portuguese colonizers. According to Bonfim (1997) despite similar processes of colonization and the approximation of characteristics of neo-Iberian peoples, there are more differences between the Brazilian nation and those of Spanish origin than between Portugal and Spain. The Brazilian colony was the only nation of South America to resist with internal strategies and resources to foreign invaders. In fact, the Brazilian colony was the first one of the continent to grow by its own means, to introduce a new society and to gain independence. “All of this should have to do with a strong significance in the character of the new nationality, in a way to react against the misery of the processes of the metropolis” (Bonfim, 1997). According to Bonfim (1997), the Brazilian society could not be considered as a simple sum of ethnic elements, like the “Portuguese”, the “Negros”, the natives from the colonial times and the European immigrants from Italy, Germany and Poland. Mainly from the 18th century, traditions were mixed by combining qualities of spirit and their manifestations into a new
and original expression.

Thus, in Brazil, the different traditions establish a dynamic of miscegenation, despite the great diversity and territorial extension of the country, resulting in a new and original expression. This variety does not engender phenomena of ethnic or religious fundamentalism as it does in other regions of the world today. Brazil has its own way of integrating and welcoming difference with tolerance and openness without fear of losing its roots. (Fachinelli et al., 2015). Such characteristics associated with other ethnic, religious, geographic, economic, political and social factors allow us to identify particular traits of compassion in Brazilian companies.

The object of the study is linked to the phenomenon of Italian immigration to southern Brazil in the nineteenth century. In 1886, a group of Catholic religious from the Capuchin Franciscan Order arrived in southern Brazil from France. The first goal was to realize and structure evangelization. However, upon arriving in the State of Rio Grande do Sul, the perception of the needs inspired an investment in education and popular education and a follow-up with farmers and micro entrepreneurs. In a period of almost no active media, on February 13, 1909, the group acquired a weekly newspaper to better guide those farmers and entrepreneurs, distributed in distant and hard-to-reach places, teaching techniques and introducing new cultures that would provide new sources of income. The editorial work of the newspaper later inspired the acquisition of concessions from radio stations. Today, there are 14 radio stations, as well as communication platforms such as websites and social networks, always with the aim of spreading the development and strengthening of the values derived from spirituality and compassion. Now it represents an economic group that is facing the balance between the denominational characteristic and the demands of the corporate universe, through economic-financial sustainable survival.

On June 25, 1909, the “São Boaventura Literary Association” was established as a philanthropic juridical entity, in order to legalize the businesses that were emerging and as the main sponsor of all social and productive works. One hundred years later, the group still owns a cluster of projects that maintains social works. The existence of the companies of the Capuchin Franciscan Order is justified because they seek to qualify the lives of people, in the various age groups, who are in a situation of vulnerability.

The companies of the Capuchin Franciscan Order are present throughout the State of Rio Grande do Sul, where they actuate in the field of 1) graphics, with the Editora São Miguel and Gráfica Institute of Minors; in the field of 2) hostels, with the São Lourenço Hostel, the São Francisco Hostel and the Pousada dos Capuchinhos; in the field of 3) food and restaurants, with the Cantina Industrial (Vinhedo dos Frades) and the Cantina Shop (Cantina dos Frades); in the field of 4) agricultural and agricultural products; in the 5) audio-visual industry, with 14 radio stations and the Correio Riograndense newspaper and 6) with a Superior School of Franciscan Theology and Spirituality (ESTEF), which is offering undergraduate and extension courses with focus on human and spiritual formation.

In order to guarantee the success of all those projects, the Community employs 483 people.
Spirituality and compassion permeate all actions that involve their management. A strategy manual, with its human and Christian values, helps guide the posture, the human relationship, the handling of conflicts and the listening of the employees, in their respective places of action are well explained. In addition, a Capuchin Franciscan leads each company in the group.

The group of employees can note the process of compassion daily, and its output can be understood and identified by any member of the group. In terms of pain triggers, the proximity to the employees favors the perception of pain in the most diverse situations. In such context, the leaders are trained to exercise the sensitivity and the acceptance of these painful moments. Suffering launches an emerging process in the organisation that has its expression with a focus on the dialogue and an approach on the facts that are immediate. The internal formal and informal communication processes must be incentivized and the opening to problem solving, specifically on pain-generating problems.

An example of this is the morning meeting in the graphic segment. During that meeting, there is a specific space given for prayer. It is an ecumenical chapel, where the group meets for a moment of spirituality. Each morning is different group meet with representatives of other organisations. Specific situations of suffering from the colleagues are reported in the form of a prayer and after the meeting, the leader of the group directs the situations to the religious responsible for the management, who will deal directly with the person who is in a pain situation. However, the direct relationship and its simplified approach established by both the religious director and the respective leaders eliminates or minimizes traditional hierarchical distancing, favoring open and frank dialogues.

As for the moments of expression in suffering, the group has in its planning moments for meetings of sharing, where the situations that demand support are treated specifically. The fact that there is a religious leader in all the companies of the Capuchin Franciscans, it favors the verbalization and the respective referrals of cases, in order to reduce the impact of the suffering. The causes of pain are treated immediately, including those involving the lack of food, the loss of family members, the lack of access to early childhood education and treatments for addiction. Factors such as personal concerns, expectations about one's own role, and emotional exposure norms are revealed in the face of the collective recognition of pain.

The climate of freedom of expression and the humanized formation of leaders guarantee a significant opening for the expression of pain situations. In addition to exercise and professional commitment, there is a look at the person and the family of the professional. When it is not possible to meet the need in general, the simple possibility of expressing and verbalizing the problem serves as a great and important aid in overcoming pain. The creation of meaning in relation to the expression of suffering in the work environment contributes to the empathic concern of suffering in the work environment and to the creation of a network of solidarity from the attention to the pain of the other.

In such context, the impact of factors such as time pressure, performance demands, status, tensions,
and other contextual factors becomes relativized. Human formation, which is characteristic of spiritual bias, inspires responses of compassion. The priority for human dignity allows the availability of sufficient time to alleviate the tension, through the referral of the solution of the problems. A very common fact is the home visit by the religious who is in that sector of the corporation. In addition to the specific act of blessing the residence, for example, there is a moment of family dialogue, of exposing the problems faced, of requesting material help. When it comes to sickness, for example, the family receives the systematic visit of the religious who acts in the corporation. In the event of death, all religious assistance is given, and participation in a follow-up group for the mourning process is offered.

Regarding cultural factors such as the quality of relationships, the level of civility, and cultural assumptions about values of interdependence, the culture of solidarity stood out in the group. Creativity creates actions that often surprise everyone. If there is suffering, the triggers are also spontaneous. A recent example is the accompaniment of a family, whose employee was immobilized in a bed. Upon returning from the hospital, the family was assisted in receiving a basic food basket, a wheelchair and, a hospital bed was provided in addition to the daily monitoring of the family's needs.

Many relief actions are developed by the Capuchin Franciscans, but the first one is listening to the problem that is causing the pain. Referrals are immediate. The Capuchin Franciscans also have many partnerships that help in solidarity. They deal with different volunteer professionals such as psychologists, attorneys at law, doctor, food aid companies and many others. Recently an employee was facing problems with his daughter who had been involved with drugs. In addition to home visits, the parents started participating in a specialized group that guides the procedures and actions aimed at curing addiction. With such kind of help, the problem was circumvented and the improvements are significant.

Because of compassionate actions, outcomes can mainly be perceived based on the resources and meanings that matter to the organisation and its members. A healthy organizational climate is created from the results of the implementation of spirituality and compassion in an organisation. Solidarity and the immediate willingness to help those who are suffering generate union, qualify the tasks and allow the experience of organizational happiness. In addition to using specific instruments to measure the organizational climate, the traditional gatherings that gather employees on specific dates: Easter, Christmas and New Year’s Eve express the quality of an organizational climate. Employee compliance can also be measured in participation to those meetings and in sporting events. The use of specific tools in social networks has allowed the sharing of situations of suffering. The solidarity responses and their suggestions demonstrate the unity of the team. When there is something happening in one of the sectors, the sharing habit is almost natural.

This case reveals that the process of organizational compassion can be perennial in the organisations, especially when it is associated with organizational values. This aspect can be favored when an organisation has in its existence and mission spirituality, as is the case of the confessional organisation.
Other situations carried out in Brazil indicate that some “religious entrepreneurs” fill the spaces of uncertainty and pain through the search for the transcendent, which offers them the necessary subjective security for action. Those leaders develop skills that are not restricted to mere economic conduct, a dimension in which their actions are irrational, but aligned with the entrepreneurial spirit, such as faith and hope (Serafin and Feuerschütte, 2014). In the case of the present study, this characteristic of the leaders defines to a large extent the compassion experienced in the group of companies and reveals clues of what can be a perspective for the compassion in Brazilian companies.

2 CONCLUSION

Choosing suffering as the trigger of compassionate actions is not about evidence of a random choice. Pain does not go un-noticed, unless it is forbidden to be experienced spontaneously, while it happens during the professional exercise. The lenses of compassion extend the individual and the collective viewpoints to bring light into the reality of the suffering of the employees and help to organize actions of pain relief. This is not a one-off action, but a process in which compassion gradually becomes a structuring part of the organizational system.

The scientific contributions of Jane E. Dutton, Monica C. Worline, Jason M. Kanov, Kristina M. Workman, Sally Maitlis, Jacoba M. Lilus and especially Peter J. Frost stimulate new perspectives at understanding compassion in the workplace. The literature has been enriched to a point that makes the concepts of compassion and spirituality relevant constructs for organizational studies. Frost appears as an inspirer for the community of researchers dedicated to the subject. Bearer of a fully human and provocative look, the author mentions that acting with compassion supposes courage and competence. It becomes incisive when it calls for a fresh look at the organisations with the lenses of compassion. In one of his most referenced work, compassion in the organisations starts with the painful experiences, as the mobilizing factors and organizers of compassion in a collective dimension. Those are extraordinary situations, many linked to catastrophes, which inspire compassionate observations, understandings and actions. However, there is also a concern about the integration of compassion into the organizational processes, with a focus on a greater perception and pain of the other, regardless of its origin.

The narrative of such Brazilian experience reveals that compassion can be present in the daily life of an organisation that has through spirituality and the confessional values a relevant reason to exist. The relationship between compassion and spirituality is not a cause and an effect problematic, but rather a dimension of a positive approach to organisations, which seeks humanity flourishing at work. The evidence gathered in this study reveals that the spiritual dimension, immanent to the human being, contributes to making it compassionate. Spirituality inspires and sustains actions that make compassion effective. It is through spirituality, intrinsic to the human being, that compassion is justified, and it conquers the deserved space in the field of professional practice. Another mobilizing factor of compassion
evidenced in the case studied was the role of leaders. Compassionate leadership movements were identified in actions taken by the leaders for the ones who were suffering, as well as some actions taken by leaders toward those who are seeking to alleviate the suffering in the organisation. Because leaders are religious, it is possible to see that spirituality amplifies the attention and actions taken to alleviate suffering.

Considering the uniqueness of the case, the Capuchin Franciscan Order as an organisation, it presents possibilities for future studies on compassion and spirituality: analyzing compassion as a process associated with the day-to-day management of companies that are anchored in the traditional view of profit-making organisations. More specifically, the study of the factors and the dimensions of compassion that can be part of daily routines and practices. In other words, the compassion associated with the dynamics of the organisation.

Thus, new studies may contribute to the fact that compassion confirms the humanization as an inspiring culture of practices that favor individual and collective well-being, as well as the achievement of organizational goals.
REFERENCES


