

Training and Development and the varieties of capitalism: a comparative contextual approach

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1. Introduction

There is vast material about Training and Development (T&D). Most theorists or practitioners of the Human Resources field would easily come forward and agree that it is an important system within the Strategic Human Resource Management, but more recent is the understanding of the implications of context in the dynamics and interactions of T&D within the firm and with society.

There is a growing realization that national, institutional and cultural differences are key to determine how Human Resources Development operates but their impact is under researched (Garavan *et al.*, 2004). Gooderham *et al.* (2018) argue that the majority, of the most cited studies on the field of Human Resources Management, are on organizational performance or on the influence of Human Resources Management on individual performance. They refer to this as consequence of a central stream of research that is largely context-free. They also refer to Brewster *et al.* (2016) realization of the concentration of researches conducted at the individual level.

We support our choice of doing a comparative study on training and development on the belief that mainstream HRM research is in need to be more aware of cross-national institutional theorization, bringing it closer to the nationally constrained reality of practitioners. (Gooderham *et al.*, 2018).

The goal of this paper is to study the differences and similarities across countries of four variables of Training and Development and compare them to the varieties of capitalism, observing how they help to describe the complementarities across subsystems and help support or not this theory. For that purpose it was made a quantitative analyses with the Cranfield Network on International Human Resource Management (Cranet) database, in the topic of Training and Development (T&D). The study was based on comparisons between different countries to establish a dialogue with varieties of capitalism. In that sense, Germany was chosen as an ideal Coordinated Market Economy (CME) country, UK as a Liberal Market Economy (LME) and Brazil as a Hierarchical Market Economy (HME).

2. Development of Human Research Management

There are a multitude of definitions about what constitutes Human Resources Development (HRD), drawing from the research conducted by Dias (2017) on her doctoral dissertation, she examined definitions over a period of 40 years and came up with 24 different meanings. She found evidences, even though not conclusive, that authors define HRD within two categories. One of them refers to “organizational, team and individual learning” and the other “organizational change and development”.

We can argue that there is no conclusion on the matter of definitions but regarding the aspect of importance, there's little disagreement. For instance, the discussion on HRD has also accompanied the development of the discussions on what poses as Strategic Human Resources Management. From the Universalist stand point, training is one of the core practices related to organizational performance improvement (Delety & Doty, 1996) but from the resource-based view of the firm (Barney, 1991) that can also be inferred. If a resource to be considered a competitive advantage, must be rare, valuable, inimitable and non-substitutable, develop a unique and valuable human capital pool is on the firm best interest.

There are many ways on which an organizational can do that, but one of them and maybe the most directly one is through training and development. From the contingency approach (Delery & Doty, 1996), organizational and industry factors should be taken into considerations and understood in order to comprehend the variations on HR practices, training included, and the impact of the organization's performance. This approach focuses on how the integration of organizational resources, practices and capabilities lead to sustainable competitive advantage using the notion of internal or horizontal fit and external or vertical fit (Stavrou & Brewster, 2005). When we look from the Institutionalism perspective, especially Varieties of Capitalism as reference, education and training systems are one of the aspects that constitute complementarities across subsystems (Hall & Soskice, 2001; Goergen, Brewster & Wood, 2009). We will explore this notion further, as this was the perspective we took to develop the investigation on which this paper was constructed.

Garavan (2007) explains HRD as a coherent, vertically aligned and horizontally integrated set of learning and development activities which contribute to the achievement of strategic goals. The author understands that there are four levels of context: a) the global environment; b) the organization's strategy, structure, culture, and leadership; c) the value and uniqueness that the firm attaches to particular jobs; and d) individual expectations, employability and careers (Garavan, 2007). He suggests that the global environment can be understood in terms of three sets of conditions, local, national, and multinational. We adopted this definition as the definition that we used to back our research as this definition builds the bridge between the contingency and institutionalism approaches.

Drawing from Garavan's *et al.* (2004) reflections on exploring HR levels of analysis, their approach offers three levels of possible analysis. The first one is the individual, which explores the human aspect, the premise being that only throughout individual performance, may organizational goals be achieve. The second level of analysis emphasizes the resource aspect of HRD, the premise is that the organization provides the context and driver for human and system performance. An organizational level analysis explores the understanding of the set of developmental activities or interventions that focus on supporting the achievement of organizational objectives. The third level of analysis is the Community and Societal. The purpose of HRD at this level is concerned with the provision of education and the development of human capital toward improving national competitiveness and the quality of life of citizens.

Our investigation addressed both organizational and Community and Societal levels of analysis.

Dias (2017) argues that based on what is most notable in this field of study, Human Resources Development has three main components: training and development, organizational development and career development. On our study we are going to focus on the training and development component.

3. Training and development

One of the main components of organizational development and its capacity of remaining competitive is the ability of its workforce to continuously learn and improve (Salas *et al.*, 2012; Stavrou and Brewster, 2005; Peretz & Rosenblatt, 2011).

A most basic definition of Training and Development (T&D) can be the one offered by Salas (Salas *et al.*, 2012) that argues that T&D can be thought as the activities systematically planned and designed to promote the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes. T&D is then, the efforts dispensed by the organizations to offer learning opportunities to its employees (Borges-Andrade & Abbad, 1996).

It is argued that T&D can be viewed from two different perspectives. The first one sees it as a system or a process that includes the estimate of need for training, the planning and execution of activities and the evaluation of the activities (Borges-Andrade & Abbad, 1996). The second perspective adds to the first one because, even though it acknowledges T&D as a system, also perceives it as a subsystem of a large system and in so, is influenced by and influences the context within the larger system, being it the organization or society (Salas *et al.*, 2012).

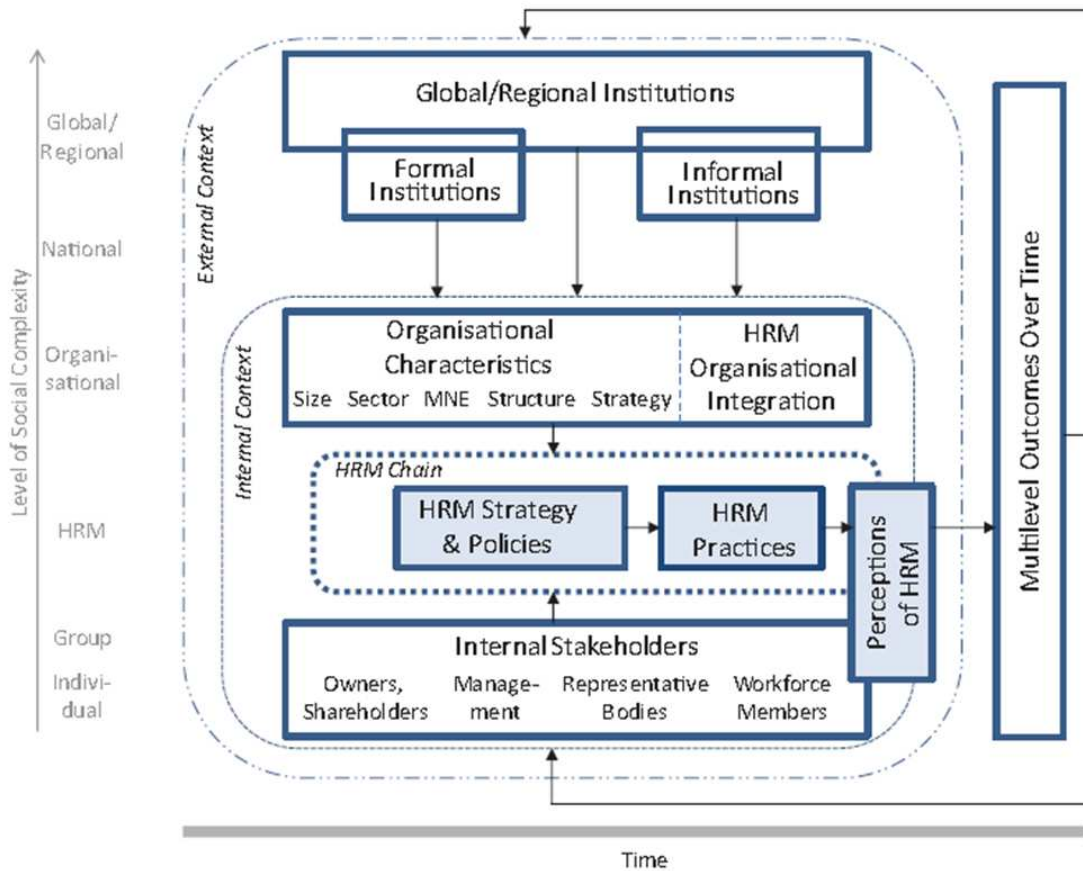
Authors such as Salas and Peretz (Salas *et al.*, 2012; Peretz & Rosenblatt, 2011) argue that T&D investments can have impact on nation level. Salas refers to Arguinis and Kraiger (2009) work where they presented the role of training in promoting economic development within nations. Peretz & Rosenblatt, on the other hand refers to Tregaskis (1997) work where she compared training practices in organizations in the United Kingdom and France and found evidences that in UK, where training is less regulated by the government than in France, more emphasis is placed on organizational training.

Peretz & Rosenblatt (2011) investigated three national characteristics: power distance, future orientation, and uncertainty avoidance. They found that, at a more or less extent, all three characteristics were related with the T&D indicators studied.

We choose to do our study investigating the process T&D and discuss the difference and similarities between nations. In order to describe the T&D process we choose 4 variables: estimative of training, percentage of payroll costs, approximate number of days by year and effectiveness. We analyzed those variables comparing countries that described varieties of capitalism to support our discussion on nationwide analyses.

The comparative contextual framework for HRM (Gooderham *et al.*, 2018) helped us explain how the bundle training and development, on the organizational level practices allow nation level discussions. It is an institutional framework, therefore theoretically grounded in economic institutional theories. It includes contextual factors and makes explicit distinctions on internal and external dimensions. Identifies different levels of complexity that work as building blocks. We used HRM practices, based upon perception of internal stakeholders that express certain organizational characteristics and compare them among nation results.

Figure 1 –
Comparative contextual framework of HRM. Source: Gooderham *et al.* (2018).



4. Varieties of Capitalism and contextual studies

In order to create a new framework to help analyze HRM, Hall and Soskice (2001) defined the “varieties of capitalism”. For the authors’ most theoretical formulations captures important effects of institution and economic behavior in companies, but most miss to understand the behavior between actors. In that sense, the theoretical framework of varieties of capitalism is an actor centered theory in a relational conception of the firm (Hall and Soskice, 2001). National institutional contexts could be summarized in two different types: liberal market economies (LMEs) and coordinated market economies (CMEs).

In liberal market economies, hierarchy is the primary firm coordination via competitive market arrangements (Hall and Soskice, 2001). In this scenario, the equilibrium between firms is an outcome of economic behavior between demand and supply conditions. For example, training and education system of LME are generally to highly fluid labor markets (Hall and Soskice, 2001). The high levels of general education can result in lower cost of additional training. For this study purposes, it’s important to notice that the authors define the United Kingdom as a typical LME.

In coordinated market economies the non-market relationships are more important to coordinated interactions between actors (Hall and Soskice, 2001). Therefore, the results of interactions are often results of strategies between organizations and other actors. The authors define Germany as a typical CME.

In general terms, CMEs and LMEs contexts have different economic and institutional ways to address similar problems. The interaction between actors in a specific economic and political scenario diverges. For example, Hall and Soskice (2001) explains how a CMEs usually provide more institutional support for the strategic interactions - whether in the form of industry-specific training, development or collaborative. On the other hand, LMEs contexts provides economic actors with greater opportunities to allocate resources and encourage them to adapt to assets and technologies in a faster dynamic.

Hall and Soskice (2001) best explain the main institutional differences between LMEs and CMEs as:

Broadly speaking, liberal market economies are distinguishable from coordinated market economies by the extent to which firms rely on market mechanisms to coordinate their endeavors as opposed to forms of strategic interaction supported by non-market institutions. (Hall and Soskice, 2001, p.33)

LME countries, for example, are expected to increase and decrease wages faster, as CME countries there's a stronger trend toward union influence reduction. We can argue that LME and CME countries respond differently to similar environmental changes.

The authors also understand that the varieties of capitalism approach can also be useful to analyze not ideal types of LME or CME countries. In a way to add for the varieties of capitalism framework, Schneider (2009) also explains how different countries and types varieties of capitalism offer conceptual opportunities to analyze HRM practices.

The author addresses to a third type of variety of capitalism: hierarchical market economies (HMEs). For Latin America, for example, represent this type of economy, which business structure has essential characteristics that can define this region as: diversified business groups, multinational corporations, low-skilled labor, and atomistic labor relations. The author also explains that turnover in Latin America is traditionally very high - avoiding long-term relationships between employees and firms - and education levels and investment in training are minimal.

After briefly presenting HRM field of analyses and the central ideas on varieties of capitalism, it is important to situate this study conceptual theory on comparative studies. HRM practices and process are systematic and thought in the same way, however, they are practiced according from context to context (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012).

Nevertheless, US hegemony on HRM still prevails and most of research on the field still doesn't acknowledge comparative analyze (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012). This type of study can provide empirical analyses that differentiate from descriptions and prescriptions. In that sense, comparative analyzes can be seen as a deeper level of analyzes in HRM (Brewster and Mayrhofer, 2012).

Empirical research on comparative analyzes can be seen as an endeavor to analyze HRM in a deeper and empirical way. This kind of research can have different levels of analyses.

5. Methodology

It is important to notice that this research has a positivist paradigmatic orientation (Caldas, 2005). Positivism is characterized by an epistemology that seeks to describe what happens in the social world, based on what is concrete and observable (Burrell & Morgan, 1979). In that sense, the objective to understand variations on training and development of employees in the proposed countries has an objective and positivistic approach.

Despite the possible variations within a positivist paradigm, this study has as method the use of a quantitative research to read the social reality. Surveys were used as a method through a structured and self-administered questionnaire (Cooper & Schindler, 2011), in order to measure specific contexts.

The following subsections will explain the database used and its ways of data collection and treatment.

5.1. Database

In order to obtain relevant and structured data, this study was based on the Cranfield Network on International Human Resource Management (Cranet). Launched in 1989, it was established to meet the need for ready access to information on best practice and comparative performance within Europe and now globally. Cranet is an established research collaboration and obtained an excellent track record of a continuing basis data and under a rigorous quality and analysis results (Cranet website, 2018).

Cranet items within the survey were derived from an extensive literature review on HRM practices. The initial questionnaire from 1989 was object of discussions with expertise's on HRM and a network of academics. After these discussions, the questionnaire has been revised several times, based on the results of the network discussions or by up-dated literature reviews. At the end of 2010 Cranet network had 45 countries and communities as members, as Australia, New Zealand, Canada and USA (Brewster *et al.*, 2011).

The questionnaire is developed in English and then translated in the national local language, after a rigorous process to capture meaning in different languages. The survey has factual questions about different topics, in order to capture objectives elements of HRM.

In most cases Cranet survey is conducted using post or email questionnaire. Response rates range from 12-25% (Cranet website, 2018) and the respondent is a person with responsibility in HRM in the organization.

It is noted that data collection can have different samplings procedures in each country. Each country partner, in coordination with Cranet network as a whole, is responsible to collect, check and process all survey data. In order to monitor each countries effort, Cranet meets twice per year to analyze data and discuss methods and results.

5.2 Database management for the study

For this study, it was used Brazilian and international Cranet database. The data was accessed by contact with members of Cranet in Brazil, followed by a mentorship on how to analyze the

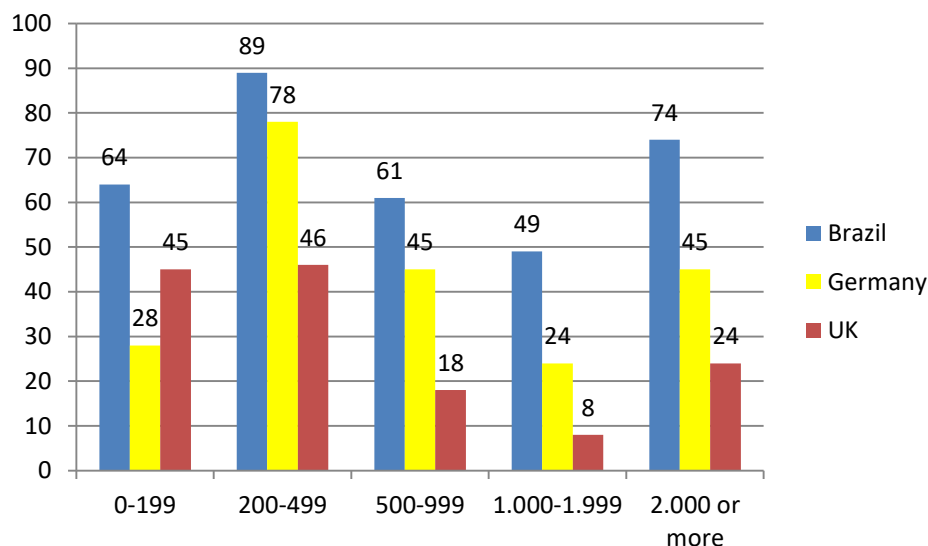
database responses. The data from this research was collected between May and September of 2014.

As explained in section two, comparative analyzes on HRM enhance comparisons between different countries. In order to establish a dialogue with varieties of capitalism literature, this study was based on results of one country from the ideal type of capitalism. In that sense, Germany was chosen as an ideal CME country, UK as a LME and Brazil as a HME.

Cranet database have respondents from private, public and mixed sectors. In order to maintain the research to the private sector only, responses from public or mixed sectors were discarded. Additionally, incomplete responses (n=56) and outliers (n=0) were checked and discarded. With this selection, final report used had the following full responses by country: Brazil 337 responses, Germany 220 responses and UK 141 responses.

The database has companies from different annual revenues and total employees size. It was maintained all responses regardless the respondent annual revenue and total employees. Based on Cranet reports analyzes, companies were divided into groups for analytical purposes: i. Group one has companies from 0-199 employees; ii. Group two from 200-499 employees; iii. Group three from 500-999 employees; iv. Group four from 1.000-1.999 employees and, finally, v. group five have companies with 2.000 or more employees. Graphic one shows the size distribution by country:

Graphic 1 –
Size distribution respondents by country. Source: made by the authors



Cranet questionnaire is composed by seven parts. One of those is intended to understand the respondent characteristics (section one) and the remaining deals with questions addressed to the organization. For this study it was used part of the questions from section one, three and six only. The data of those questions will be presented in the following section.

5.3 Data and analyzes

This section will present the Cranet questions chosen and enhance analyzes based on preview literature review made. The questions chosen deals with training in development, specifically about: estimative of training, percentage of payroll costs, approximate number of days by year and effectiveness. As the aim of this study is a comparative analyzes, all tables will show results for the selected countries (Brazil, Germany and UK) and company sizes.

Question four (section three) results can be seen at “Table 1”. Respondents were asked if they systematically estimated the necessity of training of personnel in their organization. Answer could be “yes” or “no”.

Results from this question shows that Brazilian companies estimated systematically the necessity of training more frequently than UK and Germany.

UK has the minimum value (62%) for this question. As an LME country, it’s expected that companies invest less on training than other types of capitalism. As this type of capitalism enhances markets fast adjustments and economic balance between supply and demand (Hall and Soskice, 2001), individuals are expected to be responsible for their professional development.

Accordingly, UK shows – with some variation – that as bigger a company is, lower is the estimation for training. UK companies with “2.000 or more” employees shows the minimum result for this question (17%). This can suggest that manual or less qualified labor from big companies don’t have the priority to estimate training – and supposedly don’t have problems to find new workers for the activities needed.

Germany results for this questions are consistent with and CME country. As showed before, this variety of capitalism has the characteristics of and coordinate integration between different institutions. Is expected that the state and other coordinated institution are responsible for technical personnel training, in order to reduce private organizations necessity to provide such trainings. Nevertheless, Germany results by company size varies and no conclusive analyzes can be revealed from this data segmentation.

Results from Brazil for this question are also consistent. As Latin America has the characteristics of under skilled workers (Schneider, 2009), in many times private organizations have the necessity to enhance training and development for their workers. So, as data shows, a HME country is expected to estimate the need for training of personnel in a higher percentage as CME and LME countries.

When analyzing the results by company size, Brazilian data shows that as bigger as a company is higher are the chances of training of personnel estimation. This can suggest that a stronger bureaucratic company HRM have better chances to estimate the needing for training.

Table 1 –

Section 3 Question 4 - Do you systematically estimate the need for training of personnel in your organization? Source: made by the authors

Country	Brazil	Germany	UK
Yes (%)	84%	68%	62%
0-199	64%	57%	73%
200-499	85%	69%	70%
500-999	85%	75%	78%
1.000-1.999	90%	54%	50%
2.000 or more	93%	76%	17%

Question five (section three) asked the respondents the percentage of annual payroll cost spent on training. Results are in “Table 2”.

Accordingly, with results from “Table 2”, Brazil as an HME has the higher payroll cost spent on training. As Latin America is a region with low skilled workers and high turnover (Schneider, 2009) it’s expected a higher necessity of investment on training. The results from this question regarding company size shows that smaller companies’ tendency is to invest a higher percentage of payroll costs than big companies.

Germany results are consistent with a CME country (as “Table 1” results). As a type of capitalism in which coordination between actors are more intense, less efforts on training and development are expected by private companies. As Brazil results, smaller companies have the tendency to invest a larger percentage of payroll costs on training than big companies.

In the other hand, UK results show, comparatively, a moderated percentage of investment. As an LME country, supply and demand adjustments can enhance the necessity for companies enter or adapt different markets, solutions or technologies. It can be suggest that, in some scenarios, this can enhance the necessity for training or personnel.

UK results on company size are in opposition with Brazil and Germany results. For UK results as bigger the company higher is the investment on training. The data and literature review made in this study is unable to comprehend this scenario in a full picture, but it can suggest that some larger companies have training necessities to adapt workers for new work conditions on a bigger scale.

Table 2 –

Section 3 Question 5 - Percentage of the annual payroll costs spent on training. Source: made by the authors.

Country	Brazil	Germany	UK
Mean	5,1	3,2	4,5
0-199	5,6	4,9	4,8
200-499	5,3	2,9	3,7
500-999	4,8	3,1	3,6
1.000-1.999	5	2,6	6,5
2.000 or more	4,6	3,4	6,8

Question three (section six) asked the respondents the approximate number of days employees received training, according to their company level. The results showed in “Table 4” are the mean of days of training for each of the categories expressed on the table.

Regardless of the seniority of employees, Brazilians private organizations has the maximum results for days of training. As presented before, Latin America characteristic of lower skilled labor can be one of the justifications for that result. Added to that, Brazil results show that the number of days received on training evolves with employee’s seniority.

On the other hand, Germany and UK had approximate results, with the former having a slightly higher number of days of training. The data suggest also that as higher the seniority of employees, higher the number of days of training received. It appears that the medium size companies in Germany have a greatest effort of days of training, especially when we look at managerial and professional employees. On the other hand, the bigger the company, the less effort in terms of days of training on manual employees on Germany, suggesting a greater impact of complementarities across subsystems in the German coordinated market economy. Nevertheless, the results showed by these questions difficult the analyses to compare these CME and LME countries.

Table 4 –

Section 3 Question 6 - Approximate number of days employees receive training (managers, professionals and clerical/manuals). Source: made by the authors.

	Mean (Managers)			Mean (Professionals)			Mean (Clericals/Manuals)		
	Brazil	Germany	UK	Brazil	Germany	UK	Brazil	Germany	UK
country average	7	5,5	4,6	7,8	7	5	9,5	4,7	5,6
0-199	6,6	6,3	4,3	7,6	5	4,2	7,8	4,5	6,2
200-499	7,9	6,8	5	8,1	10,1	6,3	7,4	6,4	6,1
500-999	6,4	3,8	3,7	6,9	5,8	4,4	6,9	3,5	4,6
1.000-1.999	7	3,5	4	8,4	3,6	4,3	9,3	2,8	4
2.000 or more	6,9	4,9	5,3	7,9	5,2	4,9	7,8	3,7	4,5

Question seven (a) (section three) asked respondents if their organization evaluated systematically the effectiveness of training. Answer could be “yes” or “no” and “Table 5” shows the results in percentage by category analyzed.

Data shows that Brazil has the higher result for evaluation of training (67% against 59% of Germany and 48% of UK). This result suggests that the HRM process for training and development in the country make a greater effort to analyze its effectiveness. This may reflect a link the greater percentage of investment of the payroll being invested when compared with other countries. Brazil’s data also shows that bigger private organizations tend to evaluate trainings effectiveness more than smaller companies.

The lower measure of effectiveness on training in UK and Germany can be a result of priorities of HRM in LME and CME countries. Brazil, as a lower skilled work force, necessity for an effective training is supposed to be higher.

Table 5 –

Section 3 Question 7a - Do you systematically evaluate the effectiveness of training of personnel in your organization?. Source: made by the authors.

Yes (%)	Brazil	Germany	UK
country average	67%	59%	48%
0-199	50%	44%	60%
200-499	69%	58%	39%
500-999	67%	66%	22%
1.000-1.999	78%	63%	50%
2.000 or more	71%	63%	58%

6. Conclusion

The data we analyzed suggested evidences that Training and Development on each of the countries is, in general term, aligned with the characteristics of the country. We found that all the variables analyzed showed that Brazil, as an HME, puts more effort in this HR subsystem and that can be explained by, the not only lower investment, but also lower quality of the national educational system, therefore offering lower level of workforce quality. This result, on the other hand, suggest that companies in Brazil behave not accordingly with the avoidance of investment due to the fear of losing trained employees to competitors discussed by Schneider (Schneider, 2009). It seems that due to lack of complementarity, private sector to sustain competitiveness, enhances efforts to T&D system.

When we analyzed Germany's results in comparison with the other countries, we can notice an effort to estimate accompanied with less investment in term of % of pay roll and days of training, especially manual labor on bigger companies. Those results may indicate a better complementarity across subsystems on CME in comparison with HRM and LME.

UK, as the example of LME, showed results that were the least consistent with what could be argued as a Liberal Market Economy. The theory suggests that those are the economies where we'd find the least effort in T&D due to the presence of highly-fluid labor markets.

Hall and Soskice (2001) argue that in those market where is relatively easy to release and hire people, is less attractive to base your strategies on long term employment, in that sense, investment in T&D would be less encouraged, added to the fact that the presence of highly-fluid labor market, makes it easier to competitors to poach better skilled employees without investing on training themselves. This dynamic would encourage workers on acquiring the general skills that can be used on different firms in order to advance their careers in face of the highly-fluid labor markets. The results showed that numbers on UK, especially when considering investment, are significant high, especially when compared to Brazil. These results might suggest the even though there is a highly-fluid labor markets, the necessities of the

organizations are not that easily observed and in order to sustain the necessary competitiveness, companies will put efforts on the T&D system to complement their business strategies. This article does not intend to stress all the opportunities that the subject offer, further investigation could add more clarity to the characteristics of the efforts of T&D across countries. We understand that a broader number of countries should be analyzed as a deeper analyzes, focusing on size of company or sector, could advance understanding. However, we also understand that contextual comparison is important to demystify the generalist approaches and help understanding how a HR system can at better service of the organization.

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