

Contemporary Trends in Brazilian Human Resource Management Studies over the Last Decade (2001–2010)

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Abstract

In seeking to detail what is new in the lesser-known field of Brazilian Human Resource Management (HRM) research, this study analyzes 136 recent Brazilian HRM articles over the last decade from 2001 until 2010. Findings reveal that contemporary Brazilian HRM research contains: a wide range of HRM topics; the isomorphic use of some Western HRM themes; and case-based, descriptive methodologies using non-probability sampling. While the number of recently published Brazilian HRM studies has increased, such research seems ripe for further empirical and theoretical development. Our contributions to knowledge lie in: surfacing and classifying recent Brazilian HRM research trends and identifying potentially fruitful areas for future research. Implications for practitioners include the need to attract and retain expert staff, to use more localized pay and reward systems, and to assess the usefulness of HR interventions in the public sector.

Keywords: human resource management, research, review

1. Introduction

Brazil has recently surfaced as one country of interest among the ‘rising powers’ group of developing economies – the ‘BRICS’ (Brazil, Russia, India and China) (Economic and Social Research Council [ESRC], 2012). Here, key figures regarding Brazil indicate its: closeness to the United Kingdom (UK) in becoming the world’s sixth largest economy in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (Centre for Economics and Business Research [CEBR], 2011); higher Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) occurring; GDP growth of 3% on average from 1990–2008; and an increasing population—of approximately 197 million people today (Vassolo, De Castro, & Gomez-Mejia, 2011, pp. 19, 21, 23).

While Brazilian research in management studies has been increasing to become ever-more sophisticated over the 1990s (e.g., Machado-da-Silva, Cunha, & Amboni, 1990; Vieira, 1998), Brazilian HRM research seems extant – of emerging interest among mainly locally-based scholars, and only focused on studying specific HRM practices (e.g., Caldas & Tinoco, 2004; Tonelli, Caldas, Lacombe, & Tinoco, 2003; Tonelli & Caldas, 2004; Wood Jr., Tonelli, & Cooke, 2011). This article adds to prior, existing findings by Wood Jr. et al. (2011) who studied the wider period of Brazilian HRM research from 1980 until 2010, and contributes to knowledge as it classifies and analyzes recent Brazilian HRM research from 2001-2010 in depth. In doing so, our study offers a *new, detailed, examination, analysis and categorization* of contemporary Brazilian HRM research trends, which to our knowledge has not been seen before.

The time period chosen of 2001-2010 is used to ‘pause and reflect’ on the status of Brazilian HRM research and identify knowledge gaps that academics and practitioners can use to ‘make important contributions to theory, research, and practice’ (Deadrick & Stone, 2009, p. 51). Our study responds to literature calls to increase knowledge about strategic HRM ‘in countries with emerging economies’ (Lengnick-Hall, Lengnick-Hall, Andrade, & Drake, 2009), and for scholars in more advanced Western societies to understand ‘how they can

learn (or re-learn)' from the world's emerging economic powers (Chen, 2011). Thus the question this study seeks to answer is: what has been happening recently regarding Brazilian HRM research and how can it be meaningfully categorized and explained?

We also look to 'talk to' indigenous Brazilian researchers regarding how they might better communicate their work to the wider global HRM community, which might become important for them if they seek international recognition and impact from their research. Here, for useful dialogue to occur between local Brazilian and non-local scholars and practitioners, we need to understand what recent HRM topics have been researched in Brazil, and how they can be usefully comprehended. Once ascertained, we can then detail ways in which indigenous Brazilian HRM research may become more corroborated, unique and relevant to wider and larger HRM knowledge communities. As such, our analysis of the latest Brazilian HRM literature seems both justified and useful, as it enables HRM academics and managers to better understand the foci, subjects and pathways of current and future Brazilian HRM research that may contribute to global HRM knowledge over time.

This article is structured as follows. After this introduction, we outline the HRM research topics and theories of emerging relevance in Brazil, including the research methodology we adopted for our study. These sections are followed by a presentation of our findings, and an analytical discussion of recent Brazilian HRM research trends. Lastly, we detail our conclusions, study limitations and some potentially fruitful opportunities for future research. We begin with an overview of Brazilian HRM research and the journals it appears in.

2. HRM Research in Brazil: Setting the Scene

2.1 Brazilian Journals and HRM

As is well-known, many academic journals in the Business and Management (B&M) field listed on international indexes such as the Thomson Reuters Journal Citation Reports publish HR-related research studies, as do more specialist HRM ones, such as *Human Resource Management, the Journal*. However, what is less understood is that the publication of HRM articles in mainstream B&M journals is not very common in Brazil, and moreover, that specialist HRM journals do not exist in Brazil—at all.

Further, while international management journals commonly publish articles that present meta-analyses of specific individual HR practices on various HRM topics (e.g., Bell & Federman, 2010; Brewer & Shapard, 2004; DeGroot & Kiker, 2003; Joshi & Roh, 2009; Lengnick-Hall et al., 2009; Meglino, Ravlin, & DeNisi, 2000; Morris & Robie, 2001; Zacharatos, Hershovis, Turner, & Barling, 2005; Zhao, Wayne, Glibkowski, & Bravo, 2007), it is not common to find articles which analyze more than one HRM topic in Brazilian HRM studies in such journals either. We attempt to bridge these research gaps (above) by analyzing the *multiple* HRM topics appearing in recent local Brazilian journals, a new and novel contribution which to our knowledge has not been seen before.

2.2 Brazilian HRM Studies

Tonelli et al. (2003) argue that until the 1980s the Brazilian HRM literature was almost entirely imported from topics and concerns appearing in the advanced North Western countries, and only in the 1990s that Brazilian-based researchers started to focus on locally-based HRM foci and issues when the Brazilian economy was undergoing privatisation and trade liberalisation. New, indigenous research streams appear stimulated by the increase in HRM-related practices and resulting issues arising in Brazilian organizations, and the inclusion of an HRM division into the Annual Meeting of Brazil's National Association of Graduate Programs and Research in Management (Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração [EnANPAD]). Here, Siqueira's (1988) analysis of Brazilian HRM-related EnANPAD works published from 1982 until 1987 reveals significant growth in research volume, as does Roesch, Antunes, & Silva, (1997) evaluation of HR research among 74 Brazilian Masters Dissertations written in the 1980s and 1990s.

Overall, Tonelli et al. (2003, p. 120) are concerned about Brazilian HRM research productivity. This is because they argue that it seems to: have grown more in volume than quality (e.g., by 106% between 1991 and 2000); be functionalist in outlook, and empiricist in focus; become generally qualitative-based in design; derive mostly from an international HRM literature; be developed by a very limited set of authors and academic research programmes. Further, Barbosa (2004) states that as emerging Brazilian HRM research is mainly based on existing organizational practices, it has a deterministic approach drawing upon limited levels of consistent reflection.

A wide historical analysis from 1980 until 2010 by Wood Jr. et al. (2011) critically categorizes Brazilian HRM into a 'colonization' period (of 1950–1980) and a 'neo-colonial' one (from 1980 onwards) through the local theoretical lens of 'Tropical-ism', and Fischer and Albuquerque (2010, p. 7) found that while Brazilian HR

departments had undergone ‘significant’ change over the last 10 years, local HRM academics see challenges arising including aligning strategic HRM practices to organisational goals, and developing the capabilities of line managers in HRM. This latter, practitioner-oriented knowledge in Brazilian HRM seems somewhat ‘behind’ Western HRM studies, as such concerns are longstanding ones in the United States (US) (Jackson & Schuler, 2000, pp. 27, 167) and the European Union (EU) (Brewster & Larsen, 1992). From the above, it is perhaps unsurprising Fiuza (2010, p. 12) contends that Brazilian HRM research seems generally under-developed and in need of more work.

3. Research Methods

The study presented is an analysis of scholarly articles in HRM published in Brazilian-based management journals from the start of 2001 until the end of 2010, among journals which were ranked among the top levels A2, B1 and B2 on the Brazilian *Qualis System*. The Qualis System is used by the Brazilian Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior–CAPES (Coordination for the Development of Higher Education Personnel), to classify scholarly management journals in Brazil according to their relevance in publishing theoretical and empirical contributions to the management field (Note 1). Their ranking includes the following categories: A1 (the highest), and A2, B1, B2, B3, B4, and B5, down to C (the lowest ranking)—where C has an impact factor of zero (Note 2).

While no one management journal in Brazil classified as A1, the levels A2, B1 and B2 represent 74 percent of total scores on this ranking system. From the above, we considered that journals ranked from A2 to B2 seem to represent the state-of-the-art of scholarly management research in Brazil, and it is from journals among this top-tier that the articles we analyse below are derived. The list of journals included in our research database is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Brazilian-based journals analysed

Journal	Published by	Qualis Classification 2007
BAR (Brazilian Administration Review)	Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração (ANPAD). Rio de Janeiro/RJ.	A2
BASE - Revista de Administração e Contabilidade da Unisinos (Journal of Administration and Accounting of Unisinos)	Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos. São Leopoldo/RS.	B2
BBR (Brazilian Business Review)	FUCAPE Business School. Vitória/ES.	B2
Cadernos EBAPE.BR (Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration Journal)	Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas da Fundação Getúlio Vargas do Rio de Janeiro (EBAPE - FGV/RJ). Rio de Janeiro/RJ.	B2
O&S – Organizações & Sociedade (Organizations & Society)	Núcleo de Pós-Graduação em Administração da Universidade Federal da Bahia (NPGA/UFBA). Salvador/BA.	B2
RAC – Revista de Administração Contemporânea (Journal of Contemporary Management)	Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração (ANPAD). Rio de Janeiro/RJ.	B1
RAC Eletrônica – Revista de Administração Contemporânea Eletrônica (Electronic Journal of Contemporary Management)	Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Administração (ANPAD). Rio de Janeiro/RJ.	B1
RAE – Revista de Administração de Empresas (Journal of Business Administration)	Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo da Fundação Getúlio Vargas de São Paulo (EASP - FGV/SP). São Paulo/SP.	B1
RAE Eletrônica (Revista de Administração de Empresas Eletrônica) (Electronic Journal of Business Administration)	Escola de Administração de Empresas de São Paulo da Fundação Getúlio Vargas de São Paulo (EASP - FGV/SP). São Paulo/SP.	B1
RAM – Revista de Administração Mackenzie (Mackenzie Journal of Management)	Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie. São Paulo/SP.	B2
RAP - Revista de Administração Pública (Journal of Public Administration)	Escola Brasileira de Administração Pública e de Empresas da Fundação Getúlio Vargas do Rio de Janeiro (EBAPE - FGV/RJ). Rio de Janeiro/RJ.	B1
RAUSP – Revista de Administração da Universidade de São Paulo (University of Sao Paulo Journal of Management)	Faculdade de Economia e Administração da Universidade de São Paulo (FEA/USP). São Paulo/SP.	B2
REAd – Revista Eletrônica de Administração (Electronic Journal of Management)	Escola de Administração da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. Porto Alegre/RS.	B2

Prior works in the field by Tonelli et al. (2003), Caldas and Tinoco (2004) and Tonelli and Caldas (2004) refer to the period from 1991 to 2000, and while Wood et al. (2011) examine the period from 2001 until 2010, they do so as part of a wider review from 1980 until 2010. As such, a gap remains to examine scholarly publications in Brazilian HRM in more depth in the most recent period of 2001–2010 – which we attempt to fill below.

Here, in order to identify and include the maximum number of HRM papers and topics among the journals detailed above, we used several combinations of keywords in our search of their databases, such as: strategic human resource management, human resource management, people management, training, development, compensation, recruitment, selection, staffing, performance appraisal and careers. To ensure that no relevant research articles on Brazilian HRM were omitted from our analysis, we also undertook a manual search of the journal websites listed in Table 1.

Our search of both computerized and manually-derived abstracts yielded a total of 136 relevant HRM-based articles from 2001-2010 available for analysis, which we then independently read and reviewed fully to assess their suitability for inclusion into the present analysis. We analyzed all 136 full articles on the following dimensions: (1) journal name; (2) number of HRM works published; (3) author institutional affiliations, sector and papers published; (4) HRM topic frequency; and (5) research methods. In doing so, our analysis follows existing identified best practices employed by other Brazilian-based scholars in classifying, categorizing and analyzing data in similar ways to theirs, such as Tonelli et al. (2003) and Tonelli and Caldas (2004). The results of our content analysis are presented along these dimensions.

We elected to survey the ten-year period from 2001 until 2010 for our analysis as it illustrates the rapid, recent accumulation of Brazilian HRM research studies which makes our study feasible, and in revealing sufficient coverage it also facilitates the viewing of resultant HRM and methodological patterns arising in such works too.

3.1 HRM Research Domain, Content Analysis and Coding Procedures

To set up a meaningful list of HRM sub-areas to examine, we analyzed the domain statements of HRM-related divisions of the Academy of Management (AoM) and adjusted them to be consistent with recent HRM reviews (e. g., Deadrick & Gibson, 2007). We then refined these HRM sub-areas into HRM topics along an ‘entry-to-exit’ HRM process model (Jackson & Schuler, 2000), and coded our identified articles based on the principal HRM topic they described. After short-listing these articles, we earmarked appropriate units for content analysis using thematic distinctions so as to facilitate and comprehend textual interpretation from such rich data (Krippendorff, 2004).

In this study, content analysis is defined as a technique for making inferences from text to social context which frequently uses statistical analysis of text units and references by systematically identifying the specific characteristics of messages (Bauer, 2000, p. 133; Holsti, 1969, p. 18). Relevant examples of content analysis in Brazilian HRM studies which we followed include those of Tonelli et al. (2003) and Wood Jr. et al. (2011). We used categorical distinctions to analyze article research methods, and analyzed all 136 articles in detail along the five dimensions stated (above). As such articles comprise all the locally published Brazilian HRM articles in management journals over the last decade, content analysis of them allows us to see detailed patterns of ‘where we are now’ regarding them, and any relevant research gaps arising.

The authors independently read and coded all 136 fully downloaded articles using a coding scheme we had previously developed, and inspected the distribution of HRM topics all such articles contained using our HRM domain list. We then entered all 136 articles into the data coding only once and placed each article under an HRM topic group, which is perhaps arbitrary. However, when considering the large number of papers included, thorough details of studies emerges under each HRM topic in our analysis. We inspected all 136 local HRM articles and themes fully, and placed them into relevant HRM topics.

3.2 Secondary Data Sources

We identify and analyse two categories of secondary data regarding recent Brazilian HRM studies: the HRM journal article topics published by Brazilian-based authors, and our own normatively identified HRM domains structured and refined by HRM process modelling (Cooke, Macau, & Wood Jr., 2012, p. 116). While some commentators (e. g. Jankowicz, 1994) argue that literal translations in management studies between English and other languages may remove some embedded meanings, he also states that iterations in them may mean meta-level purpose and comprehension is not lost in such translations. As such, following Cooke et al. (2012) we originally themed our Brazilian-Portuguese journal article data set by HRM domains and each multi-lingual author identifying common HRM topics in it. All such researchers then exchanged themes to begin collective, congruent iterative translation and analysis into English so as to establish ‘meaning attributions’, a process which

is not possible using qualitative data analysis software. We then blind back-translated our English language data set into Brazilian-Portuguese (Marschan-Piekkari & Reis, 2005), and used a fourth multi-lingual translator to confirm its accuracy or otherwise with the original analysis (Cooke et al., 2012, p. 117).

Our secondary analysis draws on published materials and summarizes them in tabular form. We now detail our findings, which are organised and detailed in sequential order (below) in terms of: identified journals; article frequency; author affiliations; sector and productivity; HRM topics; and research methods.

4. Findings

4.1 Brazilian-Based Journals Publishing HRM Research

The identified local journal outlets and numbers of recent Brazilian HRM articles they published are detailed in Table 2.

Table 2. Title, frequency, year and total HRM articles published in Brazilian-based journals

Journal	Year										Total
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	
BAR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
BASE	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
BBR	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Cadernos EBAPE.BR	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
O&S	3	3	1	2	3	1	2	1	1	2	19
RAC	6	1	3	2	1	3	0	2	3	2	23
RAC Eletrônica	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	0	7
RAE	1	2	1	2	2	3	0	2	1	1	15
RAE Eletrônica	0	0	3	2	2	2	1	0	1	0	11
RAM	0	2	1	1	1	3	0	5	0	2	15
RAP	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	3
RAUSP	3	1	3	0	0	1	1	3	0	1	13
REAd	0	3	4	2	2	3	2	0	2	3	21
TOTAL	13	12	16	11	11	16	12	17	13	15	136

Table 2 reveals that six journals published 106 (or 77% of the total) Brazilian HRM articles in our data set, namely, the Journal of Contemporary Management (RAC), Electronic Journal of Management (REAd), Organizations and Society (O&S), Journal of Business Administration (RAE), Mackenzie Journal of Management (RAM), and USP Journal of Management (RAUSP).

While some of the local Brazilian journals in Table 2 started in the 1960s, others only began in 2000 and thus appear to have similar but different publishing profiles. For example, the Brazilian School of Public and Business Administration Journal (Cadernos EBAPE.BR) was created in 2003, and the Brazilian Administration Review (BAR), Journal of Administration and Accounting of Unisinos (BASE) and Brazilian Business Review (BBR) all began in 2004. In doing so, although EBAPE, BAR, BASE and BBR publish some 9 identified HRM articles now (6% of the total), they do not have enough longevity to publish more such works. Additionally, as the Electronic Journal of Business Administration (RAE Eletrônica) established in 2002 was incorporated into the Journal of Business Administration (RAE) in 2010, and the Electronic Journal of Contemporary Management (RAC Eletrônica) started in 2007 was absorbed into the Journal of Contemporary Management (RAC) in 2009, such local journal history could partly explain the limited numbers of HRM articles appearing in them too.

Overall, Table 2 reveals a steady output of recently published Brazilian HRM studies which hits double figures in each year, and averages some 13.6 HRM articles per year between 2001 and 2010.

4.2 Frequency of HRM Articles Published in Brazilian-Based Journals

Of the HRM articles identified, some 16% were published in the RAC, 15% in REAd, 13% in O&S, 22% in

RAM and RAE combined, and 9% in the RAUSP (Note 3). The other journals listed in Table 2 published the remaining HRM articles surveyed.

4.3 Institutional Affiliations, Sectors and Papers Numbers

We followed best practice guidelines in the Brazilian literature detailed by Loiola and Bastos (2003) and Vergara and Pinto (2001) of considering the institution of the first author, and where the first author identified multiple affiliations, of considering only the first one stated. Information about the institutional affiliations of authors, sectors employing them and numbers of HRM papers they published is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3. Institutional affiliations, sector & paper numbers of Brazilian-based authors

Brazilian Higher Education Institution (HEI) Affiliation	Sector	Numbers
Universidade de Bras ília –UnB	Public	22
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul – UFRGS	Public	12
Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – UFMG	Public	9
Funda ção Get úlio Vargas - FGV/SP	Private	8
Universidade de S ão Paulo – USP	Public	6
Universidade de Passo Fundo – UPF	Private	5
Universidade S ão Caetano do Sul – USCS	Private	4
Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina – UFSC	Public	4
Faculdade de Estudos Administrativos - FEAD/MG	Private	4
Universidade do Vale do Rio dos Sinos – UNISINOS	Private	3
Pontif ícia Universidade Cat ólica do Paran á– PUCPR	Private	3
Funda ção Get úlio Vargas - FGV/RJ	Private	3
Pontif ícia Universidade Cat ólica do Rio Grande do Sul - PUCRS	Private	3
Universidade Federal de Pernambuco – UFPE	Public	2
Universidade Estadual de Maring á– UEM	Public	2
Universidade Federal de S ão Jo ão Del Rei – UFSJ	Public	2
Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte – UFRN	Public	2
Universidade Federal de Lavras – UFLA	Public	2
Universidade Corporativa Banco do Brasil	Private	2
Consultant “Cientistas Associados Ltda.”	Private	1
Other Private HEIs	Private	19
Other Public HEIs	Public	8
International HEIs	Public/Private	6
Total		136

Table 3 reveals a slightly larger number of private sector Brazilian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) employing recently publishing HRM researchers compared to public sector ones doing so. Here, a main group of nine private sector Brazilian HEIs is seen (of 35 authors) along with one consultancy, and another smaller group of private sector publishing HEIs too (representing 19 authors). A subsequent group of 11 public sector Brazilian HEIs are also seen (some 67 authors), who are joined by another sub-group of other public sector publishing HEIs (representing eight authors). The smallest remaining group consists of both public and private sector International HEIs (representing six authors).

In terms of HEI type, 75 of the contemporary Brazilian HRM articles we identified (55%) were written by authors affiliated to public sector Brazilian HEIs, while 55 such articles (40%) were authored by scholars affiliated to private sector local HEIs. The remaining six articles (4%) were authored by researchers affiliated to

Brazilian HEIs straddling the public/private sector divide. The low number of local authors affiliated to International HEIs who recently published HRM papers in Brazilian journals may be an indication of limited journal contributions and impact outside of Brazil.

Three public sector Brazilian HEIs appear to employ the most authors of recent Brazilian HRM research articles, namely the University of Brasilia-UNB (22 authors), Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul-UFRGS (12 authors), and Federal University of Minas Gerais-UFMG (nine authors), who are complimented by one local private sector HEI, the Getulio Vargas Foundation-FGV/SP (eight authors). Taken together, these four Brazilian HEIs (above) employ 51 authors, or some 37% of the total contemporary HRM journal output identified in Brazil. The majority of recent Brazilian HRM publications analyzed (n=22) were authored by members of the Graduate Program in Social, Work and Organizational Psychology at the University of Brasilia (UNB), who mainly focus on organisational training, development and education.

4.4 HRM Topics Appearing in Brazilian-Based Journals

The frequency of articles based on specific HRM topics published in the last ten years in Brazilian journals is presented in Figure 1.

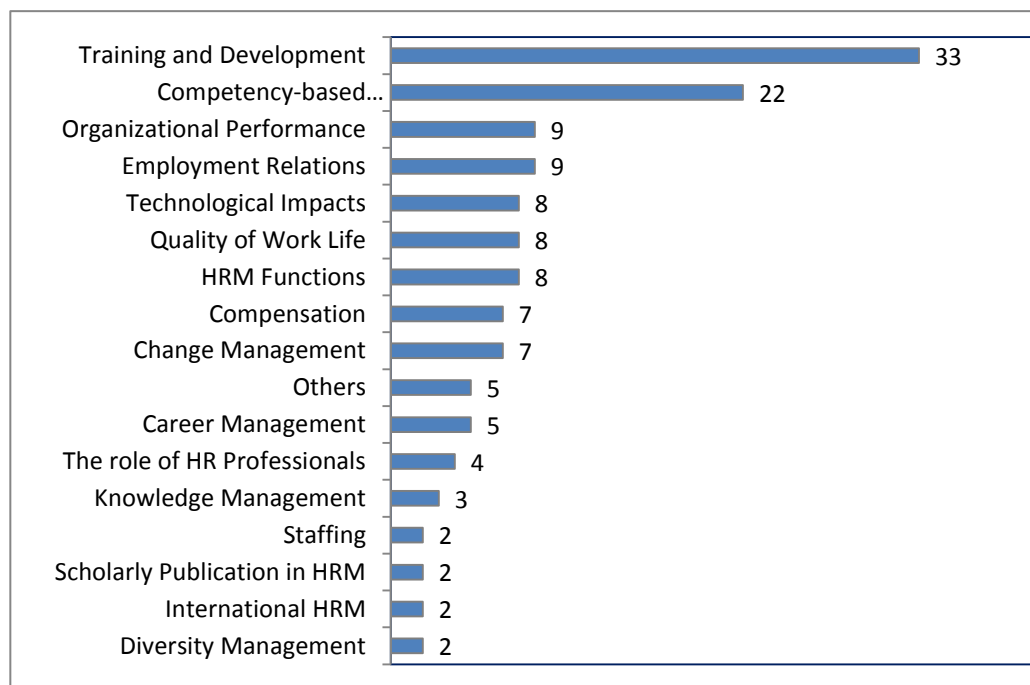


Figure 1. HRM topics and numbers published in Brazilian-based journals

In spite of the wide diversity of HRM topics seen in Figure 1, a large number of them (some 55 papers, or 40% of the total) seem quite specifically focussed on addressing Training and Development (T&D) and Competency-Based Management (CBM). In such works, T&D tends to be viewed as a strategic tool for enhancing employee performance and creating sustainable organisational advantage, and CBM to detail inherent difficulties in the operation of relevant models, particularly involving compensation systems based on individual competencies. Following Wood Jr. et al. (2011), the appearance of T&D is perhaps likely due to local Brazilian organizations needing to train staff in response to increasing competition, and CBM occurs as a search for organizational efficiency which may drive up demand for more expert staff.

For each one of the HRM topics identified in Figure 1, we now provide an overview of their contents in full, which forms a substantive part of our analysis below.

In the articles with a focus on Training and Development, we identified a predominance of the following themes being researched: evaluations of training and its impact on organizational performance (El Kouba, Roglio, Del Corso, & Silva, 2009; Lacerda & Abaad, 2003; Meneses & Abaad, 2003; Silva, 2006); training based on distance education (Carvalho & Abaad, 2006; Coelho & Abaad, 2010; Ghedini, Testa, & Freitas, 2008; Schroeder,

Nakayama, Pilla, Haro, & Binotto, 2005; Testa & Freitas, 2003); and works on corporate universities (Alperstedt, 2001; Brandão, 2006a; Vergara & Ramos, 2002; Vergara, Brauer, & Gomes, 2005). In these articles, Training and Development is considered to be a strategic tool for enhancing employee performance, and to create a sustainable competitive advantage.

On research regarding Competency-Based Management, most Brazilian-based authors discuss managerial competencies using the theoretical underpinnings developed by Fleury and Fleury (2001), Le Boterf (2003), Ruas (2001), and Zarifian (2001). The emphasis of such studies is on the mobilization of resources (knowledge, skills and attitudes) towards workplace goals, and is seen in studies by Bahry and Tolfo (2007), Bitencourt (2004), Brandão et al. (2008), Bruno-Faria and Brandão (2003), Kilimnik et al. (2004), and Ruas and Comini (2007). Another perspective addressed in these studies is the concept of competences as a source of organisational performance and competitive advantage, which appears in works using Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, such as those by Bahry and Tolfo (2004), Brandão et al. (2008), and Brandão and Guimarães (2001). Here, many such articles indicate difficulties inherent in the operationalization of competency-based management models, particularly those of compensation systems based on competencies.

Brazilian-based authors that analyse links between HRM and Organizational Performance consider human resources as a source of competitive advantage that need to be measured in order to identify their contribution to such organizational performance (e.g. Coda, César, Bido, & Louffat, 2009; Lacombe & Albuquerque, 2008). On this theme, some articles also detail the creation and validation of instruments to measure the effectiveness and relevance of strategic HRM policies, such as Fiuza (2008), and the use of a 'Balanced Scorecard' to measure the performance of human resources more generally, like Fernandes, Fleury, and Mills (2006).

The issue of the Quality of Work Life (QWL) is considered by Guidelli and Bresciani (2010) in Brazilian HRM as a way of promoting social welfare, and also as a mechanism for employee retention in Brazil too. According to Oliveira and Limongi-França (2005), concerns about the QWL are based upon notions of employee well-being influencing organizational efficiency (either directly or indirectly). In this context, three articles construct and use models and scales to measure employees' satisfaction with QWL programmes (e.g., Asfora & Dias, 2006; David & Bruno-Faria, 2007; Souza & Bastos, 2009).

The articles that relate to HRM Functions present a holistic, strategic and institutional perspective of HRM, such as those by Lacombe and Achu (2008), and Maciel and Silva (2008), and point out that despite the use of modern HRM practices in Brazil, more traditional, conservative models of managing people are still predominant in the Brazilian organizations researched. Another aspect emphasized in such studies is the idea of HR practices having a disciplinary power over organizational members (Capelle & Brito, 2003).

On the topic of Technological Impacts, a consensus exists among the authors reviewed that technology may be useful in the process of changing the focus of HRM practices from an operational to a strategic logic. However, the automation of HRM systems in Brazil are also seen to decrease the power of the HR department within Brazilian organizations too, as they seem to encourage the democratization and dissemination of information—as detailed in the works of Mascarenhas, Vasconcelos, & Vasconcelos (2005); Pereira, Becker, & Lunardi (2007); and Vasconcelos, Mascarenhas, & Vasconcelos (2004), while another HRM-related challenge is the management of tele-commuting, as surfaced by Barros and Silva (2010), Sakuda and Vasconcelos (2005), and Tremblay (2002).

The studies we identified on Compensation focus on variable reward, competency-based pay, and reward systems for executives, such as Copelli and Piccinini (2003), Oliva and Albuquerque (2007), and Ribeiro, Guimaraes and Souza (2003). Here, researchers reveal the problems faced by organizations when implementing competency-based pay—due to its complexity—as using it seems to require a continuous effort from both line and HR managers overall.

In the articles seen exploring Change Management, Brazilian-based authors consider HRM as a mediator of organizational pressures capable of reducing the negative impacts of change (e.g., Borges, 2009), mainly during the processes of mergers, acquisitions, and privatization—such as Homem, Oltramori, & Bessi (2009), Oliva (2002), and Wetzel (2001). Here, the Role of HR Professionals also includes monitoring the dynamics of change, as the key competences of a Brazilian HR manager detailed by Morassutti and Grisci (2002, p. 12) include: leadership, talent identification, people development through systematic analysis of team competences and motivation, applying action plans tailored to individual needs, and improving both interpersonal relationships and results from HR interventions.

Locally-based authors researching Career Management appear to consider it to be an individual responsibility, e.g., an 'individual enterprise' where careers are associated with individual, and not just organizational

expectations – the so-called ‘Protean careers’ (Balassiano, Ventura, & Fontes-Filho, 2004; Fontenelle, 2007). Another challenge related to career management according to Homem and Dellagnelo (2006) and Homem and Tolfo (2008), is to manage the career expectations of expatriate and repatriate employees.

The theme of Knowledge Management is also addressed in Brazilian HRM studies, and such works focus on the development of employees based on the dissemination of best practices as a source of competitive advantage (e.g. Cançado, Moraes, & Silva, 2006; Tonet & Paz, 2006; Vieira & Garcia, 2004). Here, authors analyse the selection and training processes used for developing and sharing skills at work (Vieira & Garcia, 2004), and propose a model of knowledge sharing in the workplace (Tonet & Paz, 2006). Additionally, Cançado et al. (2006) find that knowledge management practices promote commitment between employees and organizations.

The articles identified concerning Diversity Management relate to the process of the inclusion and management of handicapped workers. Here, Carvalho-Freitas (2009) in a case study of a company with 1,400 employees, conclude that this organization considers diversity to be (1) a socially-based issue, and not just one about enforcing the law, and (2) that investments in training act as a means of promoting equal opportunities for handicapped workers in general. Another article highlights the importance of investments in the process of socialization and the adjustment of practices and working conditions for handicapped workers (Carvalho-Freitas, Toledo, Nepomuceno, Suzano, & Almeida, 2010).

The articles we identified as Scholarly Publications in HRM are the ones we used as references in this article: *HR Academic Production in Brazil: 1991-2000* (Tonelli et al., 2003) and *Research on Human Resources Management in the 1990's* (Caldas & Tinoco, 2004).

On our second to last theme of Staffing, some articles address the issue of impression management during the recruitment and selection process. According to Carvalho and Grisci (2002, 2003), both recruiters and candidates perform standardized roles, which are considered to be the “ideal” ones in such processes.

Lastly on the HRM topics we identified, the three articles we classify as Others deal with specific subjects, such as: bullying (Martiningo Filho & Siqueira, 2008); the management of highly qualified workers (Valerio Netto & Valerio, 2006); and the management of multiple employment contracts (Fernandes & Carvalho Neto, 2005), all of which may be considered as emerging issues in Brazilian HRM research. We now turn our attention to the research methods of the HRM studies just detailed.

4.5 Research Methods Used in Brazilian HRM Studies

We adopt the local Brazilian terminology used by Loiola and Bastos (2003) to most accurately classify the HRM articles just detailed (above) on their own terms, namely of: (1) fieldwork – empirical evidence and theoretical references; (2) literature reviews – different theoretical revisions of the same subject; (3) essays – author's personal viewpoints based on relevant literature; and (4) experience reports – case-based reviews on single experiences of phenomena. A classification of the Brazilian HRM articles we analyzed using such local terms is detailed in Figure 2.

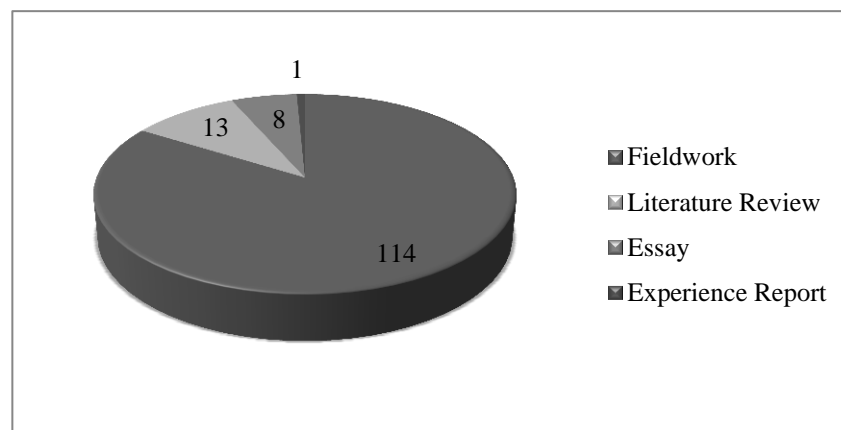


Figure 2. Research methods used

Here, Figure 2 shows the dominance of fieldwork in recent Brazilian HRM studies, as 83% of the HRM articles

we examined (n=114) involve empirical works, and detail the feasibility of HRM concepts being used in 'organizational routines'. In doing so, they relate to the functionalist epistemological positions critiqued earlier by Barbosa (2004) and Tonelli and Caldas (2004). We found 13 literature reviews (9% of the total) which represent a concern with consolidating Brazilian HRM knowledge, while experience reports seem an unpopular research type – as only one article appears in this category which is associated with a consultancy.

The research methods used in 75 contemporary Brazilian HRM research studies (55% of the total) were non-statistical, and based on a single case study or from multiple cases. Of the remaining articles, 47 studies (34% of the total) used statistical tools such as questionnaire surveys, and to a lesser extent 14 articles (10% of the total) used mixed research methods which combined both statistical and non-statistical data collection and analysis. As such, the use of quantitative and mixed methodologies both seem presently less-used in recent Brazilian HRM research when compared to more qualitative ones.

5. Analysis and Discussion

Our analysis reveals six Brazilian journals with the highest number of HRM articles and four highly productive Brazilian HEIs—all of which have prestigious graduate programs and distinguished HRM researchers (Cooke et al., 2012). The leading focus of HRM articles we identified on T&D and CBM confirms Fischer and Albuquerque's (2010, p. 8) case that the authors of such works believe strategies used to address local organizational HRM challenges require 'greater investment' in staff education, training and development, and that prioritization and investment regarding such foci as 'legacy issues' needing attention in Brazilian organisations today.

The wide range of HRM topics we found illustrates that contemporary Brazilian HRM research is sophisticated in terms of both focus and content, and supports Tanure and Duarte's (2005) analysis of Brazilian researchers needing 'pragmatism' to link HRM concepts and behaviour together to produce meaningful outcomes.

While our results generally support the cases made by Tonelli et al. (2003) and Wood Jr. et al. (2011) that some Brazilian-based scholars tend to pursue 'hot' HRM topics in the Western literature, we also found some articles that use locally-informed theoretical lenses like 'Tropical-ism' (Wood Jr. et al., 2011) in contemporary Brazilian HRM research. Additionally, we found a three to four year delay between popular Western HRM topics such as CBM being researched in Brazil (e.g., Brandão, 2006b) and an even longer one regarding links between 'HRM and Organisational Performance' research in local Brazilian HRM studies when compared to them appearing in Western journals (e.g., Huselid, 1995).

Further, we also discovered some research gaps too, as while multiple HR role modelling (e.g., Caldwell, 2003; Ulrich, 1997; Ulrich & Brockbank, 2005) seems well researched in the Western HRM literature, few works other than the one by Tanure, Evans, and Cançado (2010) appear in recent Brazilian HRM studies. Such time-lags and inconsistencies seem partly due to the management, organisational, political and economic factors identified by Wood Jr. et al. (2011) regarding the emerging state of HRM in Brazil when compared to HRM in more developed countries.

Overall, our review indicates that while Brazilian HRM research is maturing nicely, it is doing so on its own terms and at its own speed. As such, it is somewhat difficult to currently argue that a wholly seamless, globally connected HRM research agenda exists with this particular 'BRIC' country. Instead, it could be argued that HRM research in Brazil, although longstanding, comprehensive and serious in nature, is at a nascent and emergent stage, if viewed through a more Northern and Western lens. Moreover, the full extent of indigenous Brazilian-led theories like 'Tropical-ism' suggests potential for HRM research in Brazil to take a non-Western turn, and possibly move towards a more unique, locally situated 'recipe' instead.

Of course, whether one would want to view such locally based Brazilian HRM research with Northern and Western eyes is perhaps questionable, but when so much of the non-BRIC HRM literature either emerges or derives from it, it seems difficult not to do so. If not used, what HRM concepts and theories would be better to benchmark and assess local Brazilian HRM works? As such, the Westernized cultural ties that bind us in terms of analysis may arguably act as a useful anchor and reference point in assessing the spread and trajectory of HRM studies globally, including in Brazil, no matter how crude they arguably appear. We now discuss some implications from our study for HRM research and practice.

5.1 Study Implications

While the topics and methodologies of the 136 Brazilian HRM articles we analyzed chart and signify increased HRM research volume occurring over the last decade, most such studies seem comparable to those appearing in mainstream Western HRM research, at least in terms of the focus, evaluations and tests they use. In doing so,

recent Brazilian HRM studies seem to accept and imitate Western HRM themes openly, and while seeking to create something new and innovative when adopting and adapting them, local works still appear to lack many uniquely Brazilian HRM topics, concepts and theories. An implication arising is that for Brazilian HRM research to develop it might need to be more attuned to indigenous HRM phenomena, and to investigate further how well Western assumptions and theories 'fit' or adequately explain Brazilian HRM research and practice.

For example, as a country with some of the world's poorest, vulnerable and most marginalized people (Vassolo, De Castro, & Gomez-Mejia, 2011), few recent local Brazilian HRM studies examine: the plight of Brazil's working poor; new barriers to workplace inclusion; working life in the shadow informal economy; and the experiences of unemployed Brazilians. A further implication here is thus that more work seems needed to move forward from the current exploratory, descriptive stage of Brazilian HRM research to a theory-building one, so as to generate authentic local HRM foci, interpretations and models too. We now detail some potentially useful ideas for future academic research, and implications arising for practitioners in Brazilian HRM.

5.2 Ideas for Future Research

In terms of research methodology, because limited numbers of longitudinal works appear in contemporary Brazilian HRM articles undertaking more such studies may provide a new and important time dimension for researchers to employ, as could undertaking more statistically-based analysis, because doing so might provide opportunities for relevant scale measurement, development and testing too. As we found few recent local works that presented analysis between Brazilian HRM findings and those from other international data sets, undertaking such comparative work is also recommended. While some recent Brazilian research exists on Quality of Work Life (QWL) and employee well-being, more research studies seem needed which investigate non-managerial opinion about them, and these studies could be complimented by those systematically exploring issues of employee commitment, engagement and voice, including differences among worker groups and trade union roles so as to understand the contemporary concerns of Brazilian employees and their workplace representatives.

With regard to theory, the few recent Brazilian HRM works using it to 'frame' their studies mainly did so by reconfiguring existing Western HRM theories such as Resource-Based View (RBV) understandings of CBM, and conceptual models like the 'balanced scorecard' to examine the peculiarities of local contexts when linking HRM practices to organisational performance outcomes. As such, more culturally-informed and cultivated theory might need producing that is relevant to the Brazilian context, such as 'Tropical-ism' (Wood Jr. et al., 2011) to help explain locally occurring HR phenomena. Indeed, theory generation might be gained through developing new conceptual frameworks stimulated by the use of indigenous Brazilian typologies, metaphors and examples – which may require inductive groundwork to understand research settings, target informants and environments, and using qualitative methods to fully comprehend detailed HRM phenomena occurring in Brazilian organisations.

In terms of more international HRM concerns, thinking of Brazil's increasingly wider role in the world as a 'BRIC' country may need further investigation, as understanding how and in what ways the 'outbound transfer' of HRM practices from local, Brazilian firms impacts on the international stage is yet to be researched. Although HR's role in reducing ecological degradation and sustainability is currently being researched in Brazil (e.g., Jabbour & Santos, 2008; Jabbour, Santos, & Nagano, 2010), issues such HR's role in Corporate Responsibility (CR) currently appear less investigated in Brazil, and thus form potentially new and useful research avenues too.

Lastly here, research could also be undertaken on cross-national paths in transmitting HRM ideas. While some potential isomorphic 'Americanization' may be being enacted in recent Brazilian HRM research, we would want stronger, more longitudinal evidence than is already available to suggest this as a direction of travel. This is because following Cooke et al. (2012, pp. 126–127) such Western 'imports' may simply reflect the local cultural traits that Tanure and Duarte (2005) argue make up contemporary Brazilian work culture, namely: power concentration, personal relationships and flexibility.

5.3 Implications for Practitioners

Initially, our review suggests that practitioners could focus on attracting and retaining more competent, qualified and experienced staff, as both T&D and CBM seem to have increased in importance in Brazilian organizations due to changes in the HR marketplace since recent global financial difficulties began (Carvalho Neto & Sant'Anna, 2011; Stefano, Kroehn, & Oscar, 2011). The use of localized pay and reward systems may be usefully assessed by practitioners as such systems currently seem to go beyond organizational boundaries, while further investigation could also be undertaken on the utility of HRM tools and techniques in the Brazilian public sector, due to a lack of such studies at present too.

While the use of more Northern and Westernized HRM tools and techniques seems to be increasing rapidly, our review raises a note of caution to any enthusiastic local, Brazilian-based HR practitioners wanting to further increase the use of such interventions. Our hesitancy revolves around questions of cultural fit, and whether some such non-local HR 'solutions' will ever truly be operationalized fully, and implemented well in Brazil, and also if they will become long-standing ones too, or fall away like other management fads and fashions instead. We now detail our study limitations and conclusions.

5.4 Study Limitations

As our study presents an analysis of HRM articles published in Brazilian-based journals rather than other works (e.g. books, chapters and conference papers) and over the last decade only, reference to such studies appearing in Western, English-language journals, non-journal outputs and using a different time period all could have offered more accessible, wider and longitudinal contributions forward. Nonetheless, and despite such limitations, this study provides a new, inside view of 'what is happening' in recent Brazilian HRM research using a highly detailed contemporary data set which might remain untapped if not surfaced and interrogated. As such, our analysis may act as a reference point for interested HRM scholars and practitioners to identify future areas for research and intervention in Brazilian HRM.

6. Conclusions

This study responds to literature calls for 'insider' perspectives on cross-cultural research (Easterby-Smith & Malina, 1999), and makes a number of contributions to HRM knowledge in identifying, classifying and analyzing 136 local HRM Brazilian journal articles over the period from 2001 until 2010. Firstly, we contribute by providing an in-depth understanding of recent Brazilian HRM research, and secondly in detailing the first English-language account and overview of recent Brazilian HRM research—which is not always available to non-Portuguese speakers due to such journals and their contents not readily appearing in easily accessible international databases. We thirdly offer scope to understand that recent Brazilian HRM research studies seem neither simply derived from North American nor Anglo-Saxon ones, and a fourth contribution lies in suggesting new, future directions for Brazilian HRM research and implications for practitioners to consider (above).

Overall, our assessment of recent Brazilian HRM research is that while it is rapidly improving in terms of both quantity and quality, methodological issues also arise regarding it. This is because many contemporary Brazilian HRM works employ non-probability sampling which may limit scope for generalizing findings, meaning it may benefit from using more diverse research methods in future. Additionally, although the HRM research gaps detailed (above) might currently seem like missed opportunities, they also perhaps bring new and rich openings for future research studies in Brazilian HRM forward too.

Moreover, while locally-based HRM researchers in Brazil both currently read and widely use Western HRM sources (e.g., isomorphism occurs), doing so may suggest that what such locals 'say' about Brazilian HRM might potentially seem useful in terms of international HRM knowledge, as it does tie into the more broader global HRM literature. Thus there seems much more to know regarding Brazilian HRM research, and it arguably appears timely for both locally-based Brazilian scholars and researchers based outside of Brazil to work closely together to further enhance our understanding of Brazilian HRM as a whole.

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Notes

Note 1. The Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior – CAPES (Coordination for the Development of Higher Education Personnel) is an agency of the Brazilian Ministry of Education, and plays a key role in the expansion and consolidation of Graduate Programs (both taught Masters and research Doctorates) in Brazil.

Note 2. The criteria used by CAPES to classify journals is defined by the Ofício Circular – available at www.capes.gov.br. CAPES rankings are based on yearly JCR/ISI (Journal Citations Report) Impact Factors, and the Scopus/SCImago rankings.

Note 3. In all instances, raw original percentage figures are reported and have not been rounded-up to the nearest upward percentage level.

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