

OCCUPATIONAL COMPETENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONAL MODERNITY: Dichotomies between Discourse and Practice into Emerging Economies

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ABSTRACT

This article presents the findings from a study designed to analyze the constructs Occupational Competencies and Organizational Modernity considering empirical data surveys made with professionals from companies in emerging economies – Brazil, Russia, India and Taiwan. Data treatment by multivariate analysis and descriptive techniques unveiled a high demand for the investigated competencies, among which those described as third dimension competencies. The results also pointed out that the demand for the investigated competencies is not followed, at the same level, by modern management policies and practices, suggesting the need for organizational environments more adherent to the required new professional profiles.

Keywords: *Occupational Competencies; Organizational Modernity; Emerging Economies.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The globalization of the economy and increasingly fierce competition have demanded from organizations, notably those operating in more competitive industries of the economy, an extensive adaptive capability together with a systematic quest for elements to ensure sustainable competitiveness.

This receive now a growing emphasis upon the development of organizational competencies commonly described as the ensemble of integrated knowledge, skills and behaviors an organization should seek and have available, aiming at positively impacting its performance (Pralhad & Hamel, 1990).

Based on this understanding, several authors have pointed out a series of occupational competencies required by organizations as a response to the challenges presented by the current business and organizational context (Barlett & Ghoshal, 1997).

Steffen (1999), for example, highlighted the demand for myriad cognitive, relational, emotional and leadership aspects. Deluiz (1996), by her turn, nominated five great groups of occupational competencies: technical-intellectual (involving basic skills such as learning and thinking); organizational and methodological (associated to the capacity to organize one's own work, managing time and space); communicative (associated to the capacity of communicating with groups); social (associated to 'know-how to be' and the capacity to transfer knowledge) and behavioral (stemming from the need to incorporate the worker's subjectivity to production processes).

At the managerial level, Bartlett and Ghoshal (1997) cluster the most intensely required competencies in the context of contemporaneity in three major categories: personality characteristics (attitudes, values, intrinsic to the individual personality); knowledge attributes (knowledge and discernment) and specialized skills (associated to specific work requirements).

Rhinesmith (1993) also highlights as fundamental managerial competencies: the capacity to manage competitiveness (the capacity to collect information relating to personnel, capital, technology, processes or market opportunities in one global base); the capacity to manage complexity (the capacity to learn the whole of having a systems view, conflicts inherent to our time, managing multiple partner interests); the capacity to manage adaptability (being flexible, having emotional balance, stress tolerance); the capacity to manage teams (the capacity to act as team effort facilitator); the capacity to manage uncertainty (the capacity to deal with transformation by balancing change and control); the capacity to manage learning (the capacity to learn about oneself and facilitating a constant organizational learning).

Such is the breadth and diversity of conceptions concerning the competencies required of people operating in the current business environment as to allow the inference that the demand is for true *supermen* and *wonder-women* - the multi-competent super-professionals capable of multi-tasks idealized as responses to cope with the reality around us.

This ascertainment is joined by another, noting individual and their competencies as core elements for the strategic differentiation of organizations (Prahalad & Hamel, 1990; Pucik, Thichy, & Barnett, 1992). On this note, Bartlett and Ghoshal (1997) sustain that, besides customers and markets, organizations increasingly compete for one resource regarded as the most important of all: *human talent*. However, running against the grain of the relevance attributed to the valuation of intellectual capital as a source of competitive advantage, and notably observed in less developed economies and even in emerging ones, there are organizational movements significantly branded by the standardization of functions and activity outsourcing which, not uncommonly, entail precarious working conditions and unsafety, and structural unemployment contexts as well (Storey, 1995).

This paradox is compounded by the intensification of the work volume and by pressures imposed upon workers, ensuing from organizational optimization processes and sophistication of mechanisms and control modes. This scenario is justified in and legitimated by discourses based on the notions such as competitiveness and competencies. In other words, although logic indicates that organizational policies and practices should be veered towards the development of the required occupational competencies, it still seems difficult to state that such demand will find, within the universe of organizations, enabling contexts such as to allow their effective manifestation.

Indeed, a key issue emerging from working with organizational competencies precisely refers to the organization's capacity to identify which occupational competencies are required to sustain a specific organizational competency.

An important characteristic associated to this concept is the proactive competencies creation capacity. This fact becomes more relevant in the context of organizations installed in emerging economies such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, comprising the so-called BRICS, an acronym coined in 2001 by Jim O'Neill, head of Goldman Sachs' global economics research center.

Over the next fifty years, this bloc of countries is expected to become the strongest world economy force, since their combined GDP may collectively exceed that of the G6 in U.S. dollar terms (Goldman Sachs, 2003).

Considering such aspects, the core purpose of this study is to investigate the constructs *Occupational Competencies* and *Organizational Modernity*, analyzing the extent to which the demand for occupational competencies as commonly designated to be required for coping with the current business environment walks hand in hand with the modernity of managerial policies and practices in organizations installed in emerging economies. For this purpose, this study made four empirical data collection efforts from an initial sample of

1,134 professionals regularly enrolled in postgraduate management programs (MBA, EMBA and similar programs) in Brazil (624) Russia (200), India (107) and Taiwan (203).

The data set enabled measuring the degree to which organizations where the surveyed professionals work have required new occupational competencies, regarded as key to competitiveness in the global business environment into which their economies are increasingly factored, and also the degree of alignment of new knowledge, abilities and attitudes required by modern policies and practices of their organizations. We also sought to compare findings from the investigated countries.

The Required Occupational Competencies scale, as developed and validated by Sant'Anna (2002), was used as the theoretical framework. This scale contemplates a set of competencies recurrently emerging in writings reviewed by this author as those most emphatically required from contemporary professionals as responses to current business environment demands. The Organizational Modernity Assessment approach was adopted to measure the modernity of management policies, as proposed by Eboli (1996) and later summarized and statistically validated by Sant'Anna (2002).

This is a significant study in terms of relevance, moreover because it seeks to expand the ensemble of studies developed into occupational competencies, correlating it to other constructs such as organizational modernity. It is also relevant to the extent that it attempts to extrapolate traditional occupational competencies management approaches focused upon the design, selection of ideal profiles, incorporating the importance of constructing organizational environments to support the application and development of the required occupational competencies. Additionally, it seems relevant provide a cross-cultural analysis involving respondents from four emerging economies as concerns the investigated constructs, filling the gap of studies and literature dissemination shortcomings as yielded by these contexts. Finally, its potentials to contribute with results that may provide organizations in these countries with change projects more comprehensively anchored into the notion in modernity cannot be ignored, specially considering one of its core, however often ignored, dimension: *the human element*.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Occupational Competencies

The notion of 'competencies' is not new. In fact, it constitutes a considerably old idea, however presently (re)conceptualized and (re)valued due to factors such as the production restructuring processes in course, the unpredictability of economic, organizational and market situations and the considerable labor market characteristic changes.

The definitions of the expression 'occupational competencies' are myriad. The non-existence of a consensus around its concept, besides divergences of philosophical and ideological nature can also be attributed to the adoption of the term under different foci and in different areas of knowledge. Even considering this, we could identify the prevalence of two main currents of thought. The first one, of Anglo-American origin and taking as reference the work market, centers on factors or aspects associated to performance descriptors as required by organizations. The second, originated in France, emphasizes the connections between work and education, indicating competency as resulting from systematic learning processes.

The different perspectives and approaches existing around the *Occupational Competencies* construct notwithstanding, some common points in relation to this notion can be identified. First, occupational competency is usually presented as a characteristic or a set of characteristics or requirements - wisdom, knowledge, aptitudes, and abilities - nominated as a condition capable to produce results and/or problem-solving effects (Boyatzis, 1982; Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

Another common point of contemporary meaning of occupational competencies is the high conformity of this notion with the current business discourse, as well as concurrence with the demands originating from production restructuring and modernization in fashion.

From the understanding of competency as the result of multiple wisdoms - *know-how to do, know-how to be and know-how to act* - capable of providing effective responses to challenges stemming from the current business context and a comprehensive review of Anglo-American (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Boyatzis, 1982) and French approaches (Perrenoud, 2001; Le Boterf, 1994; Stroobants, 1993) into this theme, Sant'Anna (2002) identified, applying the content analysis technique, a rank of fifteen occupational competencies recurrently stated in works reviewed as critical to coping with the current business context, which were used as a basis for this study. They are: capacity to rapidly assimilate new concepts and technologies, capacity for teamwork, creativity, broad and overall world view, capacity for commitment to the organization's objectives, capacity for communication, capacity to deal with uncertainties and ambiguities, skill in mastering new technical know-hows relating to your job or occupation, capacity for innovation, capacity for interpersonal relationships, initiative to take action and make decisions, capacity to produce effective results, emotional self-control, entrepreneurial capacity, capacity to deal with new and unexpected situations.

2.2 Organizational Modernity

At the level of the organizations, modernity has been commonly evoked to highlight the relevance of organizations being prepared to cope with competition up to the standards of the new business world configuration, by adopting management structures, strategies and practices such as to favor the accumulation of cultural contents to encourage competent behavior.

Conventional weapons and the entire management experience already amassed have not sufficed to cope with the demands imposed by the current environment experienced by organizations. It is incumbent upon the organization to break from the past, leave traditional experiences aside and develop creative solutions capable of endowing such organizations with the competencies required by the demands from this novel environment. To cope with the characteristics of modernity, organizations should be process-oriented and focused on their customers; should be agile and lean and their tasks should assume, upon the persons executing them, a comprehensive knowledge of the business, autonomy, responsibility and decision-making abilities in increasingly complex environments requiring, therefore, a review of the traditional business models both from the structural and business and work management viewpoints.

The great challenge, however, consists in developing people with the profile required by this *new type of organization*. Such effort will require changing task employees into process professionals; rethinking managers' and employees' roles in this new organization; reinventing management systems, prompting learning to become part of the organizations routine business, in addition to crafting a new organizational culture to support the new manners of working.

In historical terms, the notion of modernity can be introduced from specific characterizations - the technology myth, the prevalence of scientific reasoning, the progress idea, and the exaltation of democracy - that differentiates it from previous periods or phases of mankind, such as *the primitive world, the ancient world and the medieval world*.

According to Touraine (1994) the notion of modernity, by its core characteristics, ensues from two major currents of thought: on the one hand, the Greco-Roman rationalism, resumed by Renaissance humanists, and on the other hand the Christian conception of the soul, as secularized by the notion of subject. However, for a long time modernity was defined only by the effectiveness of instrumental rationality, ignoring the human as liberty and as creation. From such reduction, Touraine (1994) adds, ensue the foundations of its crises, whose defeat - and establishment of a *new modernity* - assumes the rescue of the other half: *the subject*.

Therefore, modernity can be understood as the redirectioning of man towards the center of society, contemplating its many dimensions: technological (combining rationalization and subjectification); social (to the extent that subjectification is only possible by means of social movements); political (since democracy is the regime that permits the political

expression of occupational); and cultural (since liberty and effectiveness values are found at its roots).

Eboli (1996) established a set of indicators for modernity analysis at this level, seeking to transpose the characteristics of modernity to the organizational context, and understanding the modern organization as one that replicates the characteristics of modern society, favoring, at the same time, the entry and the development of equally modern occupational,

Resting upon the approach proposed by Eboli (1996) and ensuing from the application of multivariate analysis, Sant'Anna (2002) found a new cluster of modernity indicators as proposed by that author around three factors: Administrative and Human Resources Management Practices Modernity, Political Modernity and Cultural Modernity, which items were used for the purposes of empirical data surveys subsidizing the analyses submitted in this article (Table 1).

TABLE 1
Organizational Modernity Indicators

Administrative Modernity and Human Resources Management Practices	The organization's compensation system rewards acts of competencies.
	The organization is strongly results-oriented.
	There is a review system enabling discerning good from bad performance.
	The organization adequately balances concern with financial results and people and innovation.
	Human resources policies and practices encourage people to be concerned with continuous learning.
	The main criteria for promotion are a person's competencies and productivity.
	The organization combines the employment of advanced technologies with people's creativity in a balanced manner.
	The technology employed favors interaction among people and areas.
	The organization's policies and practices encourage people to be always well-informed and updated.
	The organization's strategy, mission, objectives and goals are clearly defined.
Political Modernity	The organization's human resources policies and practices encourage personal and professional development.
	Overall, employees know what they should do to collaborate with the organization's objectives.
	The organization's decision-making process is decentralized.
	The organization favors decision-making autonomy.
	As concerns political aspects, the regimen prevailing in the organization can be characterized as democratic.
Cultural Modernity	The decision-making processes are participatory and transparent.
	The organization counts on participatory management systems that encourage people's initiatives and actions.
	The organization admits behavior diversity and respects occupational differences.
	The work environment facilitates the relationship among people, even at different hierarchical levels.
Cultural Modernity	The organization's internal climate encourages new, creative ideas.
	The organization's internal climate encourages people to be in a continuous learning process in their work routines.
	There is an encouraging climate in the organization for people to accomplish their activities, seeking to excel.
	The organization encourages occupational initiative and responsibility.

The version originally proposed by Eboli (1996) included two indicators suppressed by Sant'Anna (2002), as a result of Exploratory Factor Analysis EFA: *In the organization diverging ideas and opinions are respected* and *The organization encourages and favors work in multifunctional teams*, which were, however, considered on the scale adopted for this study.

As indicated by Eboli (1996), establishing organizational modernity indicators represents a fundamental stage for investigation efforts to be carried out in this area, since only as of the selection of the main variables can business management modernity be assessed comprehensively.

2.3 Relationships between occupational competencies and organizational modernity into emerging economies

Even considering this large and growing body of theory on how competitive advantage is sustained through occupational competencies and organizational modernity, recent organizational studies cast some doubt upon the generalizability of this research to economies transitioning from a centrally-planned economy to a decentralized, market-based economy. Notably, Peng and Heath (1996) argue that due to the institutional turbulence of these transition economies, strategic choice is fundamentally different than that in the developed economies (Judge, Naoumova, & Douglas 2009).

The institutional context of emerging economies is very different from industrialized ones, because of, among others characteristics, resource scarcities and a pervasive role of government institutions in their economic activities (Austin, 1991; Wright). These institutional characteristics, coupled with economic liberalization, lead to firm-level changes in resources and capabilities that are different from those of industrialized economies. Thus researchers have pointed out the need to study how firms adapt and learn in the face of environmental changes in emerging economies (Hoskisson, Eden, Lau, & Wright, 2000; Wright *et al.*, 2005). In this manner, the resources and capabilities literature stream should also aim to identify capabilities that lead to superior performance in specific contexts (Collis, 1994; Malik & Kotabe, 2009; Priem & Butler, 2001).

Assuming that an organization's capacity to adapt and change is sorely tested during institutional upheavals in transition economies (Zhou, Tse, & Li 2006), an investigation of the sources of competitive advantage within a transition economy should begin with an examination of the organization's internal resources and capabilities for addressing these dramatic and ongoing institutional changes (Judge *et al.*, 2009).

It is evident that economic liberalization in emerging economies over the last two and a half decades has provided increased technological and learning opportunities for Emerging Market Firms (EMFs) (Zahra, Sapienza, & Davidsson, 2006). As these market environments become more dynamic, firms capabilities also require corresponding changes (Hoskisson *et al.*, 2000; Penrose, 1997). However, although logic dictates that these countries' organizational policies should be veered towards the development of new competencies capable of yielding effective responses to the new role they play in the global scenario, little is known about the level at which such demand finds enabling contexts such as to allow their effective manifestation. To what extent are these countries' organizations capable of retaining the new professional profiles required? What is the degree of modernity of their managerial policies and practices? To what extent do they present organizational ambiances favorable to the development of new required competencies? These are but a few of the questions that beacons this study.

3. METHODS

The empirical data collection efforts that subsidized the findings of this article can be characterized as being of a quantitative nature, and done under the statistical survey technique. Also, to the extent that propose to determine the incidence and distribution of population characteristics and opinions, obtaining and studying supposedly representative characteristics of these populations, present characteristics of a study of descriptive nature. The study can also be characterized as comparative, to the extent it proposes to analyze similarities and differences among the investigated universes in different target countries.

3.1 Data collection

This article comprises cross-cultural surveys, including data from four countries. A three-block questionnaire was prepared to acquire the data. The first contemplated a 15-item scale designed to measure the *Occupational Competencies*. The second block was

comprised of a 25-item scale designed to assess *Organizational Modernity*. The third block contemplated variables designed to characterize the respondents socio-demographic and professional contexts.

Respondent perception concerning the importance of competencies was assessed by a Likert-type 11-point scale, labeled at the ends as 'Not required' [0] and 'Strongly Required' [10]. In a similar fashion, the scale designed to measure Organizational Modernity equally included an 11-point scale from 'Fully Disagree' [0] to 'Fully Agree' [10].

The questionnaires were submitted to form and content validation pre-testing. Considering the inter-institutional nature of this study, the data collection strategy contemplated both the availability of questionnaires over the Internet (India) and also personal distribution, by the researchers, in classrooms (other countries).

In Brazil, the study involved a sample of 624 professionals regularly enrolled in MBA programs in two capital cities; one in the Southeastern region and another in the Northern region. From Russia, 200 questionnaires were filled out by professionals of different ages, gender, social status and education. An educational level not below specialist became an indispensable condition for selection, so respondents for the research were chosen among persons with a complete higher education and are at a stage of professional skill development different from their initial specialization.

In India the survey was applied to 107 executives pursuing a three year part time MBA degree course offered by one of the most prestigious universities in this country. The survey in Taiwan sampled 203 professionals regularly enrolled in EMBA programs offered by two national universities in northern Taiwan.

3.2 Data analysis

The starting point for the analyses was the quality verification of the data collected and of the quantitative analytical method assumptions employed (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2003). Considering the comparison among the investigated countries, *disaggregated analysis* was adopted, which enables the peculiarities of each country to be identified and isolated along the analytical process. As recommended by Netermeyer, William and Subhash (2003), the *disaggregated analysis* was veered towards determining the metrical equivalence and the structure of the scales conditioned to the different cultural contexts under analysis.

Once the exploratory analysis of the data was completed, 649 observations containing absent data were found out of a total 44,120 of which 404 occurrences (62%) were concentrated in the Indian sample and another 234 in the Brazilian sample (36%). The initial data pattern unveiled, however, a significant absent data scatter among the investigated variables, a remarkable data omission pattern refers to 17 questionnaires from India which did not assess the issues relating to the *Organizational Modernity* construct: these cases concentrate 376 absent data occurrences. Given the adoption of electronic data collection in this country, it was inferred that the absence may be associated to lack of access to the second part of the questionnaire, on the second page of the tool.

To verify the extent to which these data could veil significant patterns and biases, *t*-tests were computed of the average differences and Little's MCAR test, as recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2003) and Hair, Tatham, Anderson, and Black (1998). No significant biases were found, nor evidence to suggest systematic biases in the omission of such data (non-significant MCAR tests).

For data collected in Brazil, the decision was made to exclude those questionnaires containing a high concentration of absent data (7 questionnaires). Conversely, for the other countries, the choice was made not to exclude any questionnaire, especially in the case of India, seeking to maintain an appropriately sized sample for each country. The remaining absent data was replenished according to the stepwise regression procedure. Following this procedure, a base composed of 1,096 observations was obtained.

The analysis also sought to identify the presence of outliers that could affect results. In the case of outliers, the interquartile range criterion was adopted (as used in Box Plot

construction). Establishing a limit equal to three times the interquartile range, 229 extreme responses were detected in the database. Considering the propositions of Kline (1998), Tabachnick and Fidell (2003), these cases were replaced by values residing within acceptable parameters. To analyze the presence of multivariate outliers, a percentile 99 (99%) of distance D^2 (Mahalanobis distance) empirical distribution was estimated, re-computing for 1,000 subsamples of size equal to 100 samples from each country. 35 multivariate outliers were detected. Notably, no absent data were observed in the data obtained from Russia. In the Brazilian case, the decision was made to exclude outlier-containing questionnaires, considering the number of available questionnaires. For the other countries, maintaining a complete sample was the option, seeking to ensure an adequate number of observations for the application of multivariate techniques. This entailed a total sample of 1,092 valid questionnaires.

In the sequence, an investigation was made into whether the variable distributions were close to normal distribution. The graphic inspection of histograms, Q-Q normality diagrams, formal normality tests (Kolmogorov-Smirnov), and also of asymmetry and skewness, demonstrated significant deviations with a concentration close to maximum scale range (10). However, considering that the samples by country (except India) are close to 200 observations, it is possible to infer that normality deviations would be less problematic in terms of variance underestimation and data correlation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2003).

Finally, linearity, homocedasticity and multicollinearity were assessed. Upon comparing linear, quadratic and cubic adjustment among 400 pairs of variables, small, non-linear effects were obtained, responsible for less than 5% of total variability; then, ignoring them was possible. Scatter diagrams did not show any uneven error scatter in these pairs of variables, indicating a relative compliance with the homocedasticity assumption.

In analyzing estimate error inflation by multicollinearity (Variance Inflation Factor) no values greater than 10 were found, suggesting favorable conditions to proceed with the analysis (Kline, 1998).

Precedents analysis indicates the applicability of multivariate procedures seeking to unveil differences among the countries in terms of Required Occupational Competencies and Organizational Modernity scale dimensions.

In order to measure the Required Occupational Competencies (ROC) and Organizational Modernity (OMI) Indices, Kline's (1998) suggestions were followed, concerning the use of the simple average of the indicators making up the scales designed to measure these constructs. The averages (M) and standard deviations (S) of indicators and constructs analyzed in this study were estimated. To compare the four countries the Kruskal-Wallis test was applied and the Mann-Whitney U test was applied *post hoc* as a verification test. This choice was due to the observation that the data do not follow a normal distribution.

These analyses indicated that the differences among the groups are statistically significant for practically all variables analyzed, the prevalence being that the average trend in Brazil was higher than Taiwan's, which was higher than India's, which by the way were greater compared to Russia's. Bearing in mind that such differences could represent a mere methodological artifact, introduced by differences in the response styles of different cultures (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), the standardization of occupational responses was recommended (Hair Jr. *et al*, 1998). The procedure adopted for such was the standardization of each response by the Z-standard score (taking into account the average and the standard deviation of each respondent). After standardization, the results were converted into the original study scale, multiplying the occupational Z-standard score by the original standard deviation of the entire scale plus the standard deviation. Results off the 0-10 limits were reverted back into this valid limit. In this manner, the same response scale is obtained.

3.3 Scales psychometrics properties analysis

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was used for scales psychometrics properties analysis, extracting the factors by main components (used because of its greater robustness in the face of inconsistencies in the correlations matrix yielded by sample variability), the

conjunction of formal statistical criteria (extracted variance, scree plot, eigenvalue greater than 1) and conceptual (logical coherence of factor structure) as suggested by Nunnally and Bernstein (1994).

According to Tabachnick and Fidell (2001), exploratory factor analysis is a statistical technique applied to a set of variables when the investigator is interested in learning which of them establish coherent sets, relatively independent from each other.

Hair Jr. *et al.* (1998) understands that exploratory factor analysis serves different purposes, among which the analysis of measurement dimensionality. In this case, the assumption is that all variables contained in the scales can be clustered into factors that ensure the unidimensionality of measurements.

The second objective of exploratory factor analysis is to verify whether all constant measure indicators are really relevant to the research purposes. According to Hair Jr. *et al.* (1998), such relevance can be observed in five ways. The first is to verify the correlation among indicators. Hair Jr. *et al.* (1998) contends that the presence of relevant indicators is associated to a significant number of bivariate correlations greater than .3. The second way is by verifying the measure of sample adequacy, obtained by means of the Kaiser-Meier-Olkin – KMO test. Contained in the interval [0, 1], the closer to 1 (one) the value is, the better the sample adequacy. The third consists in the verification of values of the anti-image matrix value verification, which should be small. The fourth way, in turn, is based on indicator communality analysis, a measure that indicates the degree to which the scale items are associated to the linear combination yielded by the extracted factor. Finally, the fifth way is the indicator loading analysis.

Following scales dimensionality analysis, final solutions for each country were enabled. For the purpose of verifying the quality of the solutions obtained the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measurement analysis was employed to verify the adequacy of the sample, which remained above the minimum limits for all observations (.6), and reached a level defined by Hair Jr. *et al.* (1998) as 'very good' for Taiwan and India. Besides, the indicator anti-image matrix analysis unveiled a good adequacy of indicators and scree within acceptable levels according to literature (Hair Jr. *et al.*, 1998).

Once the dimensionality analysis was completed, the next step was the verification of the proposed scales reliability. According to Malhotra (2001), a scale can be considered to be reliable when its application, in successive measurements, entails consistent results.

In this study, as a measure of reliability of the proposed measurement, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was adopted, considered by Malhotra (2001) and Hair Jr. *et al.* (1998) to be a consistent indicator to analyze a scales' reliability. Hair Jr. *et al.* (1998) sustains that, although there is not an absolute standard, Cronbach's alpha values equal to or greater than .7 reflect acceptable trustworthiness. On the other hand, they indicate that values below .7 can be acceptable if the research is exploratory.

Concerning the dimensionality of the scale designed to measure the *Occupational Competencies* construct, the results of exploratory factor analysis indicate that the same does not converge upon unidimensional solutions in any country targeted by the study, except Brazil.

In the cases of India and Taiwan, results from the analysis indicate the presence of two factors for the construct at hand. The first factor could be called *Technical and Managerial Competencies* because it contemplates competencies attributes more directly related to the execution of technical activities, and the second factor, comprising aspects more oriented towards interpersonal relationships, communications and self-control, which could be called *Interpersonal Competencies* (Table 2). The results found in Russia were quite different (Table 3).

TABLE 2
Exploratory Factor Analysis for India and Taiwan: Required Occupational Competencies

ITEMS	India		Taiwan	
	1	2	1	2
Capacity to rapidly assimilate new concepts and technologies.	0.48	0.22	0.65	0.03
Capacity for teamwork.	0.35	0.46	0.33	0.42
Creativity	0.93	-0.09	0.87	-0.06
Broad and overall world view.	0.57	0.08	0.55	0.12
Capacity for commitment to the organization's objectives	0.04	0.61	0.24	0.54
Capacity for communication.	0.11	0.60	-0.08	0.88
Capacity to deal with uncertainties and ambiguities.	-0.20	0.83	-0.11	0.81
Skill in mastering new technical know-how relating to your job or occupation.	0.54	0.18	0.49	0.23
Capacity for innovation.	0.97	-0.19	0.95	-0.13
Capacity for interpersonal relationships.	0.45	0.30	-0.06	0.81
Initiative to take action and decisions.	0.47	0.32	0.19	0.64
Capacity to produce effective results.	0.05	0.78	0.09	0.60
Emotional self-control.	0.13	0.59	-0.01	0.76
Entrepreneurial capacity.	0.21	0.21	0.56	0.05
Capacity to deal with new and unexpected situations.	0.09	0.67	0.12	0.68
Eigenvalues	5.84	5.88	6.39	5.67
Explained variance	56.15%		60.01%	
KMO	0.857		0.888	
Cronbach's alpha	0.879	0.872	0.849	0.914

TABLE 3
Exploratory Factor Analysis for Russia: Required Occupational Competencies

ITEMS	Russia				
	1	2	3	4	5
Capacity for communication.	0.72	0.10	0.05	-0.05	0.02
Capacity for teamwork.	0.61	-0.06	-0.08	0.25	0.22
Capacity for commitment to the organization's objectives	0.51	0.37	0.09	-0.04	-0.31
Capacity for interpersonal relationships.	0.05	0.70	0.00	-0.01	0.07
Emotional self-control.	0.34	0.51	0.10	-0.02	0.19
Capacity to rapidly assimilate new concepts and technologies.	0.36	-0.47	0.26	-0.18	0.19
Creativity	-0.12	0.40	0.28	-0.01	0.25
Capacity to deal with uncertainties and ambiguities.	0.08	0.09	0.70	0.07	-0.37
Broad and overall world view.	-0.16	0.23	0.64	0.04	0.08
Capacity to deal with new and unexpected situations.	0.21	-0.07	0.54	0.07	-0.03
Skill in mastering new technical know-how relating to your job or occupation.	-0.05	-0.33	0.53	-0.02	0.30
Initiative to take action and decisions.	-0.15	0.03	0.10	0.86	0.10
Capacity to produce effective results.	0.36	-0.11	0.04	0.57	-0.21
Capacity for innovation.	0.11	0.09	-0.01	-0.15	0.74
Entrepreneurial capacity.	0.05	0.10	0.00	0.27	0.49
Explained variance	51.28%				
KMO	0.627				
Cronbach's alpha	0.516	0.521	0.463	0.368	0.304

In Russia a significantly larger number of factors is seen, yielding a five-dimension solution. The first factor contemplates indicators associated to *Teamwork and Communication*, the second relates to *Interpersonal Competencies*, the third refers to *Stance and Reaction to Risk*, the fourth to *Yielding Results* and the fifth to *Capacity to Innovate*. Besides, Russian findings indicate a low correlation among scale items, with inter-item correlation values between .18 and .35. These low values suggest that in that country the notion of occupational competencies may be more ambiguous or complex, and it becomes necessary to increase the number of indicators in each dimension. Using the Spearman Brown formula (Nunnally, & Bernstein, 1994) and considering an average correlation of .2 among the items of each factor, it is recommended that each dimension be measured with at least 10 indicators, in order to ensure an acceptable estimated reliability (Netemeyer *et al.*, 2003).

Notably, indicators such as *Capacity for Interpersonal relationships* and *Entrepreneurial Capacity* are presented in association to different factors in the factor analysis made in different countries. These findings suggest that these items may be interpreted in different manners by the respondents in different target countries of this study.

As to scale reliability and considering it to be unidimensional, Cronbach's alpha coefficients indicated high values for all groups (countries) - Brazil (.93), India (.92), Taiwan (.92) -, except for Russia, whose Cronbach's alpha was .64. Analysis by factor reveals indices greater than .7 for all groups, except, again, in the Russian case, in which scale adjustments are recommended.

As for the dimensionality of the scale designed to measure Organizational Modernity, the data obtained disclose that, although a few of the items are distinctively clustered in each country, a considerable part of the indicators grouped similarly among themselves. Again, it was found that data from Brazil suggest a solution with a single dimension, with good stability and congruence. Considering communalities greater than .4, an extracted variance greater than 60% and sample adequacy and reliability above the .9 limit, it is apparent that a single dimension solution seems to truthfully reflect the scale for that country's data.

As for the Russian results, again an item split into a greater number of factors was observed (5 factors). Similarly to the scale of Required Occupational Competencies, it is recommended that new indicators contemplating an 8-10 item scale by factor be added to each dimension. In relation to India and Taiwan, data indicate the presence of four factors, with slight differences among the variables.

TABLE 4
Exploratory Factor Analysis for India and Taiwan: Organizational Modernity

ITEMS	India				Taiwan			
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
The organization encourages occupational responsibility and initiative.	0.10	0.02	-0.02	-0.68	0.04	-0.02	0.77	0.17
The in-house atmosphere of the organization encourages people to learn continuously in their everyday work.	0.10	-0.07	0.06	-0.90	0.14	0.06	0.78	0.03
The in-house atmosphere of the organization encourages new and creative ideas.	0.12	0.14	-0.12	-0.65	0.29	0.16	0.66	-0.09
In the organization, the atmosphere encourages people to do their job - seeking to excel .	-0.22	0.22	-0.22	-0.72	0.05	0.06	0.67	0.12
The decision-making processes are participatory and transparent.	-0.04	0.76	0.03	-0.13	0.60	0.12	0.26	0.06
With regard to the political aspect, the prevailing system in the organization can be described as democratic.	-0.04	0.78	-0.11	-0.02	0.76	0.12	0.14	-0.02
The decision-making process in the organization is decentralized.	0.09	0.77	0.01	-0.09	0.65	0.14	0.00	0.26
The organization favors autonomy in making decisions.	0.29	0.51	-0.22	0.13	0.78	0.09	0.09	0.09

The organization provides participatory management systems that encourage people's initiative and action.	0.48	0.51	0.32	-0.13	0.66	0.12	0.22	0.13
The organization encourages and favors work in multifunctional teams.	0.61	0.19	-0.03	-0.05	0.14	-0.16	0.32	0.65
The organization's human resources policies and practices encourage personal and professional development.	-0.20	0.43	-0.26	-0.45	0.33	0.59	0.16	-0.12
The organization's policies and practices encourage people to always be well informed and up-to-date.	0.29	0.08	0.03	-0.61	0.21	0.26	0.08	0.46
The main criteria for promotion are the person's skills and productivity.	0.24	0.25	-0.59	0.06	0.13	0.71	-0.18	0.22
There is an assessment system that helps differentiate a good from a bad performance.	-0.05	-0.01	-0.78	-0.15	0.01	0.77	0.12	0.00
The organization's remuneration system rewards acts of competencies.	0.23	0.13	-0.64	-0.04	0.06	0.86	-0.08	0.03
The human resources policies and practices encourage people to be concerned about ongoing learning.	0.19	0.14	-0.57	-0.19	0.09	0.69	0.25	-0.05
The organization focuses strongly on results.	0.49	-0.03	-0.41	0.03	-0.37	0.64	0.39	0.15
The organization achieves a good balances between financial results, people and innovation.	0.70	0.14	-0.16	0.04	0.13	0.79	0.02	0.01
The organization combines equal use of advanced technologies and people's creativity.	0.63	-0.11	-0.24	-0.28	0.08	0.72	0.02	0.17
The technology used encourages interaction between people and areas.	0.62	-0.16	-0.28	-0.24	-0.09	0.18	0.03	0.80
In the organization diverging ideas and opinions are respected.	0.64	0.09	-0.07	-0.18	0.35	0.28	0.03	0.44
The working atmosphere facilitates personal relationships even at different hierarchical levels.	0.54	0.10	0.05	-0.29	0.30	0.15	-0.01	0.57
Eigenvalues	7.36	6.47	5.67	7.31	8.42	10.5	8.06	7.55
Explained variance	67.32%				75.84%			
KMO	0.899				0.948			
Cronbach's alpha	0.863	0.843	0.898	0.767	0.888	0.924	0.943	0.874

By the nature of the indicators and data conjunction as presented in Table 4, the obtained factors can be nominated as: *Growth and Initiative Encouragement* (factor 4 in India and 3 in Taiwan), *Decentralization and Autonomy* (factor 2 in India and 1 in Taiwan), *Reward System* (factor 3 in India and 2 in Taiwan) and *Innovation and Technology* (factor 1 in India and 4 in Taiwan).

Since the KMO averages were greater than the usual .8 levels and close to the level described as 'excellent' (.9), possibly the results of these factors adequately reflect the construct.

4. Descriptive Analysis of Data

4.1 Respondents' perception of Required Occupational Competencies

This item contains the perception of the professionals targeted by this study as to what degree the occupational competencies assessed are demanded by the organizations they work for. Table 5 shows the standardized averages and standard deviations obtained from the samples of the four countries object of this study.

TABLE 5
Required Occupational Competencies: Standardized Indicator Averages by Country

VARIABLES	GROUP										
	A		B		C		D		TOTAL		
	INDIA		TAIWAN		RUSSIA		BRAZIL				
	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	
Q1.1	Capacity to rapidly assimilate new concepts and technologies.	7.8	(2.2)	8.3 ^{cd}	(1.8)	7.4	(2.8)	7.7	(1.7)	7.8	(2.1)
Q1.2	Capacity for teamwork.	8.5 ^c	(2.0)	8.7 ^{cd}	(1.6)	7.3	(2.9)	8.1 ^c	(1.7)	8.1	(2.2)
Q1.3	Creativity	7.7	(2.0)	7.2	(2.2)	7.1	(2.7)	7.5	(1.8)	7.4	(2.2)
Q1.4	Broad and overall world view.	7.4	(2.1)	7.0	(2.3)	7.4	(2.6)	7.3	(1.9)	7.3	(2.2)
Q1.5	Capacity for commitment to the organization's objectives	8.4 ^c	(2.1)	8.3 ^c	(1.7)	7.6	(2.9)	8.1 ^c	(1.7)	8.1	(2.1)
Q1.6	Capacity for communication.	8.6 ^{cd}	(1.7)	9.2 ^{cd}	(1.5)	8.0	(2.5)	8.1	(1.7)	8.3	(2.0)
Q1.7	Capacity to deal with uncertainties and ambiguities.	7.9 ^d	(1.9)	8.4 ^d	(1.6)	7.9 ^d	(2.2)	7.3	(1.9)	7.6	(2.0)
Q1.8	Skill in mastering new technical know-how relating to your job or occupation.	8.3 ^{cd}	(1.8)	8.5 ^{cd}	(1.6)	7.5	(2.7)	7.5	(1.8)	7.7	(2.0)
Q1.9	Capacity for innovation.	7.5	(2.0)	7.3	(2.0)	7.1	(2.6)	7.5	(1.8)	7.4	(2.1)
Q1.10	Capacity for interpersonal relationships.	8.3	(2.0)	8.8 ^d	(1.6)	8.5	(2.0)	8.2	(1.6)	8.4	(1.8)
Q1.11	Initiative to take action and decisions.	8.3 ^c	(1.9)	8.6 ^{cd}	(1.6)	7.2	(2.7)	8.1 ^c	(1.5)	8.0	(2.1)
Q1.12	Capacity to produce effective results.	8.8 ^d	(1.8)	8.4	(1.4)	9.0 ^{bd}	(1.6)	8.2	(1.6)	8.4	(1.6)
Q1.13	Emotional self-control.	7.6	(2.3)	8.4 ^{ad}	(1.7)	7.9	(2.3)	7.7	(1.8)	7.8	(2.0)
Q1.14	Entrepreneurial capacity.	6.1	(2.7)	5.7	(2.6)	6.4 ^b	(2.6)	7.2 ^{abc}	(2.1)	6.7	(2.6)
Q1.15	Capacity to deal with new and unexpected situations.	8.1	(2.1)	8.8 ^{ad}	(1.5)	8.4 ^d	(1.8)	7.8	(1.6)	8.1	(1.7)
	Required Occupational Competencies Index	7.9	(1.4)	8.1 ^{cd}	(1.2)	7.6	(1.0)	7.7	(1.2)	7.8	(1.4)

Results are based on two-tailed tests assuming equal variances at the 5% significance level. For each pair with significant differences, the letter referring to the group with the lowest average appears under the highest average group. Tests were adjusted for all comparisons applying Bonferroni's adjustment.

According to the data, Taiwan was the country in which professionals perceived the greatest demand for the set of investigated occupational competencies (ROC=8.1), considering the following as the most required competencies: *Capacity for Communication* (9.2), *Capacity for Interpersonal relationships* (8.8), *Capacity to Deal with New and Unexpected Situations* (8.8) and *Capacity for Teamwork* (8.7). *Entrepreneurial Capacity* (5.7) was the least emphasized competencies.

Following Taiwan, India was the country where professionals had the highest global perception average regarding the demand for the set of investigated occupational competencies (ROC=7.9), whose most emphasized competencies were: *Capacity to Produce Effective Results* (8.8), *Capacity for Communication* (8.6), *Capacity for Teamwork* (8.5) and *Capacity for Commitment to the Organization's Objectives* (8.4).

Next, Brazil showed the highest Required Occupational Competencies Index (ROC=7.7), and the competencies most demanded were: *Capacity to Produce Effective Results* (8.2), *Capacity for Interpersonal relationships* (8.2), *Capacity for Teamwork* (8.1), *Capacity for Commitment to the Organization's Objectives* (8.1), *Capacity for Communication* (8.1) and *Initiative to Take Action and Decisions* (8.1). Again, *Entrepreneurial Capacity* (7.2) was indicated as the least emphasized competencies.

Showing the lowest general average score for Required Occupational Competencies (ROC=7.6) compared to the other countries included in this study, Russia's most demanded competencies were: *Capacity to Produce Effective Results* (9.0), *Capacity for Interpersonal relationships* (8.5), *Capacity do deal with New and Unexpected Situations* (8.4) and *Capacity for Communication* (8.0). Replicating the observations of the other emerging countries investigated, *Entrepreneurial Capacity* (6.4) was reported as the least demanded competencies.

The results obtained from the *Organizational Modernity* construct are presented in the following sub-item.

4.2 Respondents' perception of organizational modernity

Results concerning Organizational Modernity indicate levels for the four groups as indicated in table 6.

TABLE 6 - Organizational Modernity: Standardized Averages by Country

VARIABLES	GROUP									
	A INDIA		B TAIWAN		C RUSSIA		D BRAZIL		TOTAL	
	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S	M	S
Q2.1	The organization encourages occupational responsibility and initiative.									
	7.0	(2.1)	8.2 ^{acd}	(1.9)	7.0	(2.8)	7.0	(2.1)	7.2	(2.3)
Q2.2	The in-house atmosphere of the organization encourages people to learn continuously in their everyday work.									
	7.1	(2.2)	7.5 ^{cd}	(1.9)	6.5	(2.7)	6.8	(2.3)	6.9	(2.4)
Q2.3	The in-house atmosphere of the organization encourages new and creative ideas.									
	6.7	(2.4)	6.6	(1.9)	6.9	(2.6)	6.7	(2.3)	6.7	(2.4)
Q2.4	In the organization, the atmosphere encourages people to do their job - seeking to excel .									
	7.0 ^b	(2.2)	6.3	(1.9)	6.4	(2.9)	6.7	(2.2)	6.6	(2.4)
Q2.5	The decision-making processes are participatory and transparent.									
	5.9	(2.3)	5.6	(2.4)	5.9	(2.7)	6.3 ^b	(2.6)	6.0	(2.7)
Q2.6	With regard to the political aspect, the prevailing system in the organization can be described as democratic.									
	5.5	(2.3)	5.6	(2.4)	6.4 ^{ab}	(3.0)	6.3 ^{ab}	(2.6)	6.1	(2.7)
Q2.7	The decision-making process in the organization is decentralized.									
	5.4	(2.2)	5.5	(2.3)	6.1 ^d	(2.7)	5.3	(2.9)	5.5	(2.8)
Q2.8	The organization favors autonomy in making decisions.									
	5.5	(2.4)	4.9	(2.3)	6.3 ^{ab}	(2.8)	5.9 ^b	(2.6)	5.8	(2.7)
Q2.9	The organization provides participatory management systems that encourage people's initiative and action.									
	5.8	(2.1)	6.0	(2.3)	6.4	(2.8)	6.0	(2.5)	6.1	(2.6)
Q2.10	The organization encourages and favors work in multifunctional teams.									
	6.7	(1.9)	6.2	(2.3)	6.6	(2.9)	6.7	(2.3)	6.6	(2.5)
Q2.11	The organization's strategy, mission, objectives and goals are clearly defined.									
	7.9 ^{bcd}	(2.2)	6.6	(2.2)	7.0	(3.1)	7.0	(2.5)	7.0	(2.7)
Q2.12	In general, the employees know what to do to collaborate with the organization's objectives.									
	6.9	(2.3)	6.8	(2.1)	7.0	(2.9)	6.9	(2.3)	6.9	(2.4)
Q2.13	The organization's human resources policies and practices encourage personal and professional development.									
	6.4	(2.4)	6.0	(2.2)	6.6	(2.8)	6.1	(2.6)	6.2	(2.6)
Q2.14	The organization's policies and practices encourage people to always be well informed and up-to-date.									
	6.5 ^b	(2.1)	5.7	(2.2)	6.6 ^b	(3.0)	6.5 ^b	(2.4)	6.4	(2.6)
Q2.15	The main criteria for promotion are the person's skills and productivity.									
	6.1	(2.6)	6.4	(2.5)	6.8	(2.9)	6.6	(2.6)	6.5	(2.7)
Q2.16	There is an assessment system that helps differentiate a good from a bad performance.									
	6.4	(2.7)	6.2	(2.3)	6.4 ^d	(3.0)	5.9	(2.9)	6.1	(2.8)
Q2.17	The organization's remuneration system rewards acts of competencies.									
	5.3	(2.6)	5.9	(2.5)	6.3 ^a	(3.1)	5.8	(2.9)	5.9	(2.9)
Q2.18	The human resources policies and practices encourage people to be concerned about ongoing learning.									
	5.7	(2.4)	6.5 ^{ad}	(2.3)	6.3	(2.8)	5.9	(2.7)	6.0	(2.7)

Q2.20	between financial results, people and innovation.	5.9	(2.2)	5.8	(2.0)	6.5 ^{ab}	(2.7)	6.3 ^b	(2.4)	6.2	(2.5)
Q2.21	The organization combines equal use of advanced technologies and people's creativity.	6.4	(2.3)	5.8	(2.4)	6.4	(2.8)	6.3	(2.3)	6.3	(2.5)
Q2.22	The technology used encourages interaction between people and areas.	6.7	(2.1)	6.3	(2.2)	6.5	(2.7)	6.5	(2.3)	6.5	(2.5)
Q2.23	In the organization diverging ideas and opinions are respected.	5.6	(2.3)	6.1	(2.2)	6.5 ^a	(2.8)	6.6 ^a	(2.3)	6.4	(2.5)
Q2.24	The organization accepts diverging behavior and respects occupational differences.	5.8	(2.2)	6.0	(2.2)	6.3	(2.8)	7.0 ^{abc}	(2.2)	6.6	(2.5)
Q2.25	The working atmosphere facilitates personal relationships even at different hierarchical levels.	6.2	(2.3)	6.4	(2.3)	6.6	(3.0)	7.4 ^{abc}	(2.2)	7.0	(2.6)
Organizational Modernity Index		6.3	(1.6)	6.3	(1.7)	6.5 ^{ab}	(1.2)	6.5 ^b	(1.9)	6.4	(1.9)

NOTE - Results are based on two-tailed tests assuming equal variances at the 5% significance level. For each pair with significant differences, the letter referring to the group with the lowest average appears under the highest average group. Tests were adjusted for all comparisons applying Bonferroni's adjustment.

Table 6 indicate that Taiwan, albeit having the highest perception level concerning the demand for the set of investigated competencies was demonstrably, together with India, more severe regarding the assessment of the Organizational Modernity Index (OMI=6.3). Conversely, Brazilians and Russians were the most generous concerning their perception of modernity of managerial policies and practices in their respective organizations.

In the case of Taiwan, the highest scores were attributed to the items: *The organization encourages occupational responsibility and initiative* (8.2); *The in-house atmosphere of the organization encourages people to learn continuously in their everyday work* (7.5) and *The organization focuses strongly on results* (7.5). The lowest scores were attributed to the variables: *The organization favors autonomy in taking decisions* (4.9); *The decision making process in the organization is decentralized* (5.5); *The decision making process is participatory and transparent* (5.6) and *With regard to the political aspect, the prevailing system in the organization can be described as democratic* (5.6).

In India, the highest scores were obtained from the following items: *The organization's strategy, mission, objectives and goals are clearly defined* (7.9); *The organization focuses strongly on results* (7.7); *The in-house atmosphere of the organization encourages people to learn continuously in their everyday work* (7.1); *The organization encourages occupational responsibility and initiative* (7.0) and *In the organization, the atmosphere encourages people to do their jobs seeking to excel* (7.0). On the other hand, the following indicators scored lowest: *The organization's remuneration system rewards acts of competencies* (5.3); *The decision making process in the organization is decentralized* (5.4); *With regard to the political aspect, the prevailing system in the organization can be described as democratic* (5.5); *The organization favors autonomy in making decisions* (5.5).

As for Russia, the following variables scored highest: *The organization encourages occupational responsibility and initiative* (7.0); *The organization's strategy, mission, objectives and goals are clearly defined* (7.0); and *In general the employees know what to do to collaborate with the organization's objectives* (7.0). Similar to to the other investigated countries, the following aspects scored lowest: *The decision-making processes are participatory and transparent* (5.9); *The decision-making process in the organization is decentralized* (6.1); *The organization favors autonomy in making decisions* (6.3); *The organization's remuneration system rewards acts of competencies* (6.3) and *The organization accepts diverging behavior and respects occupational differences* (6.3).

Among Brazilians, by turn, the following variables scored highest: *The working atmosphere facilitates personal relationships even at different hierarchical levels* (7.4); *The organization focuses strongly on results* (7.2); *The organization encourages occupational responsibility and initiative* (7.0); *The organization's strategy, mission, objectives and goals are clearly defined* (7.0); *The organization accepts diverging behavior and respects occupational differences* (7.0).

Those aspects relating to the political dimension of the organizations scored lowest, together with the absence of compensation systems that rewarded competencies: *The decision-making process in the organization is decentralized* (5.3); *The organization's remuneration system rewards acts of competencies* (5.8); *The organization favors autonomy in making decisions* (5.9); *There is an assessment system that helps differentiate good from bad performance* (5.9) and *The human resources policies and practices encourage people to be concerned about ongoing learning* (5.9).

5. CONCLUSIONS

From the set of data obtained in the fourth empirical data surveys made it was possible to observe, overall, respondent perceptions for a high-level demand for the assessed competencies *vis-à-vis* moderate levels of modernity in management policies and practices.

Notably, perceptions regarding the significant demand for the set of investigated competencies notwithstanding, a greater emphasis was found upon those directly related to organizational performance, such as the capacity to yield results and commitment with organizational results, which is associated to the notion of occupational competencies itself. Also notable are perceptions concerning the high demand for social and relational competencies, such as the capacity to communicate, interpersonal relationships and teamwork, described by Aubrum and Orofiama (1991), such as *third dimension competencies*, which are characterized by their not being manual skills or technical knowledge but personal and relational qualities.

Concerning the perception of a high demand for the set of investigated competencies, it is timely to evoke the remark by Gitahy and Fischer (1996) concerning the *building a superman syndrome*, identified by the two authors while doing an investigation in a multinational corporation subsidiary operating in emerging economies.

The findings allow us to state that the most valued competencies according to the perceptions of investigated professionals are precisely those more directly related to the 'know how to be' and 'know how to act' dimensions, denoting the need for the organizations to build organizational environments that may effectively contribute towards people being able, in practice, to yield results as well as to deal with unpredictable situations in the business context.

Based on the set of data obtained we can reinforce the respondents' perception as to the significant demand for an increasingly broader and sophisticated set of competencies. At the same time, we should highlight the finding of a certain isomorphism as to the competencies required, which leads to the perception that everyone, no matter their social context, position in the company, level of education or professional maturity, should have the same competencies, at the same levels. Thus, let us keep mind the risk of homogeneity and isomorphism in the discourse of this construct. In the same way that we point out the need for programs and curricula that should take into account, besides repeating the statements and attributes of competencies that are broadly disseminated by the media and by training, the socio-economic and organizational contexts, and the possibilities they bring about for effective organizational.

It's valuable to record preliminary views among the most required skills in each country context and traces of their respective realities. Taiwan, for example, presents itself as the country in which they perceive higher scores for nine of the fifteen competencies investigated, especially capacity for communication, for interpersonal relationships, for teamwork and initiative to take action and decision. This indicates a possible demand for overcoming cultural traits marked in this context, such as introversion, rigidity and respect for authority and hierarchy. For India, it stands out, compared to the others, more demand for capacity for innovation and overall creativity, suggesting the tonic this country faces with the insertion in the globalization process underway. In Russia, the long history as a closed economy, with discipline, still seems remarkable, having stood out in comparison

with other countries demand for power capacity to produce effective results. In the case of Brazil, the highest scores, compared to other countries, were attributed to the capacity for innovation (tied with India) and entrepreneurial capacity. It's interesting to note that this last jurisdiction that was issued in all of the countries was the least requested among the fifteen investigated, also suggesting traces of historical influences such as a strong state presence in much of these savings, as well as characteristics associated with organizational environments still centered.

In this direction, as concerns organizational modernity, perceptions are notable regarding the prevalence of scantily, participatory, transparent and decentralized decision-making processes, as well as low degrees of autonomy conferred upon the professionals targeted by the study. In this sense, notwithstanding the verification of encouragement to the establishment of favorable internal organizational climates that facilitate teamwork, information sharing and encourage action and decision initiatives, in practice what is seen is the prevalence of a still authoritarian, hierarchized and centralized organizational nature.

These findings corroborate the thesis sustained by Leite (1996) that modernization in fashion in emerging economies involves a process that still today can be defined as *conservative modernization*, suggesting the need for organizations to adopt managerial policies more adherent to the required professional profiles.

Thus, differently from the findings of the studies developed in emerging economies by Weil (1991), the results of this paper indicate that the requirements for new professionals profiles have not been accompanied in these contexts, at the level preconized by these authors, by a new ensemble of principles resting upon worker autonomy and participation in the decision-making processes.

Quite on the contrary, the findings stress the need for changes in the behavior of organizations installed in these contexts, such that vertically integrated, centralized structures yield to more horizontal, decentralized structures, favoring greater worker autonomy, participation and involvement, which assumes deep changes not only upon managerial structures and systems but also, and most importantly, upon organizational culture.

Concomitantly, these findings pinpoint contradictions between the discourse and the praxis of management models in fashion. The expectation remains, however, that as in a virtuous circle, the demand for professionals mastering increasingly comprehensive and sophisticated competencies will entail management policy and practice modernity, capable of providing organizational environments more favorable to the development and application of their human elements' fullest potential.

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