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### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### THE INFLUENCE OF ORGANIZATIONAL IMPROVISATION IN PROJECT MANAGEMENT CONTEXT TO SOFT SKILLS EMERGENCE: MOROCCAN PUBLIC SECTOR CASE STUDIES

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#### Abstract

Characterized by an interdisciplinary approach to achieve specific objectives within a fixed deadline and a defined quality, project management has experienced increasing success in recent decades, mainly the public sector in Morocco. Organizational improvisation has become the most adopted model, leading to its institutionalization, in certain public establishments, which allowed the emergence of several skills among project actors particularly "soft skills". Based on a literature review and a qualitative survey carried out in four public organizations, this article aims to identify some soft skills that were developed in a project environment.

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#### Introduction:-

Moroccan public administration has undergone a long process of reforms aimed at modernizing the State and answering the increasing needs of its users through the development of several managerial approaches such as management by objective (MBO), Results-based management (RBM) and project management. This latter, was gradually introduced in order to avoid radical rupture with conventional styles. In fact, the Moroccan context is quite peculiar, in that, the Project management approach allows flexible managerial styles, particularly organizational improvisation.

In the context of structures' change, the issue of skills management in project management organizations has become a major challenge for both organizations and researchers.

Any organization, whether public or private, is a place of learning. We benefit greatly from policies, procedures, hierarchical relationships and all formal and informal collaborations.

In each organization, developing employees' skills, at any managerial level, cannot be dealt with randomly. It requires continuous, conscious and concerted efforts by the internal actors at all levels. In addition, it requests time and a real commitment.

The emergence and development of "soft" skills within a public company operating in a project environment is the core of our research. Indeed, we deemed it judicious to initiate a research about the role of project management improvisation in the emergence and development of soft skills which lead us to ask the following questions:

Which project management model is most adopted in the Moroccan public sector?

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How could organizational improvisation in a project management framework develop the soft skills of project actors ?

Finally, what are the different softskills that emerged among project actors?

Through all these queries, we aim at providing answers to some management issues. For this purpose, we propose to study in a first part a review of the literature on project management, then on skills management, at last, we devote the second part to study the influence of organizational improvisation in a project environment on soft skills.

Project management : concepts and context

Project management : an atypical concept

The project request consultation and membership from all the stakeholders, but also a consensus around clearly defined and achievable objectives.

It is a non-hierarchical management where the project team is led by a project manager who is responsible for selecting and recruiting representatives from different activities and businesses of the company, in order to achieve the performance objectives "quality / costs / deadlines".

There is a profusion of definitions of project management, so it can be defined as «set of actions committed by one or more organizations in order to determine a project, launch it and carry it out. In other words, project management combines project management in its « toolbox » function and the project management function in charge of defining objectives (costs, deadlines, technical specifications), political actions, financial aspects, project organization, etc. » Garel, (2003), p. 15. For Cleland (1990), p. 314-315 « project management is a form of organization that can help the company to implement strategies in turbulent environments ». While AFITEP defines project management as « applying knowledge, skills, tools and methods to project activities to reach or exceed the needs and expectations of project stakeholders. Reaching or exceeding the needs and expectations of stakeholders means finding a balance between competing constraints, such as : scope, cost, deadline and quality ; different needs and expectations between stakeholders ; identified (needs) and unidentified (expectations) requirements ».

This management approach is not limited to a well-defined sector, it has known a remarkable extension, affecting the various institutions.

#### **Project management emergence in moroccan public sector:**

Among modern management methods, project management has traditionally been reserved for some business unit in the private sector (IT development, pharmaceutical industry, automotive, aeronautics, etc.), or to major structuring projects (infrastructure « Channel Tunnel, BIG DIG, ... etc, aerospace « APOLLO project »). Currently, this managerial practice has quickly spread in public sector and even to associative activity, Royer (2005), indeed the project has gradually emerged as one of the dominant paradigms of management.

Through the various reforms that the public sector has experienced, the transition from management to more modern management methods has proven to be very delicate since it has run up against the bureaucratic foundations that had rightly endeavored to make their mode as impersonal as possible.

The implementation of management in project mode in the public sector in Morocco has only had an echo from the beginning of the 2000s, since it has experienced a renovating revolution.

Programs aimed to transforming or adapting public service have multiplied in the past two decades, with the target of improving performance and / or quality. Putting the user at the focus of his concern, this latter believes he will benefit from more personalized services replying their constraints and needs, however the public authorities are obliged to reason according to a logic of demand and no longer according to a logic of supply, Laufer et Paradeise, (1982).

Actually with a rhythm characterized by digital transformation, massive launch of structuring projects, looking for performance in a increased competition context with the private sector, etc. the public sector must organize itself in project.

However, the public organizations specificities do not call into question of project management principles but influence the way in which managerial processes will be designed and implemented.

### **Project management models :**

From its emergence until today, project management models have known a remarkable evolution, while adapting to the companies context (competition, innovation, reorganization, quality... etc.). Indeed, the literature of project management presents two models blocks, classic qualified as rigid, and modern qualified as flexible, thus a new model is emerging, that based on the referential of best practices.

### **The classic models « rigid » :**

Traditionally, project management is characterized by two models with a high degree of formalization Chédotel, (2005) ;Garel (2003) : the sequential design flow, or « Waterfall Model » and the concurrent engineering.

### **Sequential design flow:**

Inspired by the Taylorian organization of manufacturing production, the Project Management Institute took it back and formalized it in its first version in the late sixties. To illustrate this project management model Takeuchi & Nonaka, (1986) use the metaphor "the relay race". Based on phases dissociation, the principle of this project management model is, once one phase is completed the other begins.

Criticized by several authors Chédotel, (2005), "foreseeable constraints", Charue-Duboc and Midler, (2002) « real lack of actors integration » ; Stalk and Hout, (1992); Brown & Eisenhardt, (1997), « Path total duration makes the overall project duration too long ».

### **Concurrent engineering:**

Developed to shorten project development cycles, Clark & Fujimoto, (1991). Takeuchi & Nonaka, (1986) use the metaphor « rugby scrum », to illustrate this model in which each member of the team progresses at the same time as the others, while many combinations are possible at almost all stages of the game.

Over time these two rigid models have shown their limits, due to the insufficient consideration of human and organizational dimensions. This results in staff exhaustion, increased coordination and communication difficulties, the escalating trend in engagement, and difficulties in acquiring new skills necessary for radical innovations Royer, (2005).

These classic project management models are largely based on formalization principles, and therefore these models are considered as rigid. Regarding to the changes in the project environment, although the sequential model is more successful than the concurrent engineering model, since it does not integrate the concepts of learning, innovation, production and knowledge capitalization Garel, (2003).

### **Modern models « Flexible » :**

Taking into account the instability of the project environment, organizations are looking for new forms of project management focused on flexibility, of which we present the models "organizational improvisation" and "organizational agility".

### **Organizational improvisation :**

To conduct their strategic activities with maximum flexibility and creativity, more and more organizations have adopted project mode management.

The project management models development, which gives importance and flexibility to project actors, brings out about a new approach called "organizational improvisation". Improvisation supposes a recombination of resources, creatively, in a short time between decision and action, allowing an adaptation of a work group, by an innovation, Adrot, (2010). Several managerial studies dealing with organizational improvisation, Weick, (1998); Moorman and Miner, (1998); Miner et al, (2001); Baker et al (2003) have identified five emerging characteristics: adaptation, time compression, resource recombination, creativity and innovation.

### **organizational agility :**

The classic models rigidity is first manifested in the integration and implementation of changes that are long and costly. Thus, they imply going back to workmanship, which are occupied by other tasks, Garel, (2003).

Organizational agility was applied first in the software world in the 1990s, and then spread to other areas, the “organizational agility” movement was developed to deal with the question of a project team ability adapting to changes in its environment (growth of uncertainty and high time pressure, mastery of the triptych “cost/quality/functional scope”).

In IT development, this model constitutes a new logic described as being iterative, incremental, encouraging self-organization and adaptation to needs and change growth, Highsmith & Cockburn, (2001) ; Morien, (2005) ; Poppendieck, (2006) ; Petersen & Wohlin, (2009). Therefore, it is difficult for a manager to plan and organize the entire development process upstream, Ceschi, et al. (2005) ; Morien, (2005).

Agile methods are a solution for companies growth to survive and persist in an unstable environment, Abrahamsson, Salo & Ronkainen, (2002) ; Williams & Cockburn, (2003).

Through the variations of flexible models project management have contributed to rebalance somewhat instrumental and procedural visions of the functioning of organizations. However, being essentially centered on the role of the chief, the organization in project mode extended to the other actors of the project. However, being essentially focused on the project manager role, the project organization has spread to the other actors of the project.

### **The model based on best practices :**

In addition to classic and modern methods, referentials, standards and best practices of project management have become essential tools in steering and managing projects. Marked in recent decades, standards in all kinds and in all areas have experienced increased and intensive production, Zardet & Bonnet, (2010). As pointed out Ahanda & Teneau (2011), the referentials are above all choices, not constraints, whose interest is to support organizations while being in line with the strategic choices of the company. These referentials flourish of all kinds, indeed, there are a multiplicity of referentials that cover the main areas of project management, particularly (HERMES, PMBOK du PMI, Prince2, the Competence Referential ICB “Individual Competence Baseline” and OCB “Organizational Competence Baseline” de l’IPMA, MSP - Managing Successful Programmes, et ISO 21500, CMMI, ITIL, ...etc.).

In project management, the most used standards are PMBOK (Project Management Body of Knowledge) of PMI (Project Management Institute) and PRINCE2 (Projects IN Controlled Environments - Projets en environnements contrôlés).

### **PMBOK of PMI :**

The Project Management Institute (PMI), created in the United States in 1969, is an association which brings and organizes professionals in project management, whatever the area of activity.

At the beginning of the eighties, three initiatives were taken by the PMI (Navarre, 1993), first the development of a body of knowledge in project management, synthesized in the PMBOK, then the development of project certification and finally the adoption of an ethical charter and an oath to build a profession of project manager. Garel, (2003), p. 83, underlines, that « the standard model of the PMI is at the same time formalized, professionalized, diffused, standardized and essentially North American ».

### **Prince2**

This best practice referential is considered among the best in terms of project management. Because PRINCE2 is truly generic and adaptable to any project kinds, regardless about its size, the organization that supports it, its geographic location or the culture that implements it, Descheemaekere (2015). PRINCE2 is based on three important concepts: principles, themes and processes. In a limited number, they make it possible to structure the project management approach in a simple and pragmatic way. It should be noted that the method within an organization whether PRINCE2, PMBOK or an adapted method is necessary, because it will allow in particular to speak a common language and not to have to “reinvent the wheel” with each new project.

The model based on best practices referential can be criticized if organizations use it improperly as this could potentially constitute a brake, or even an obstacle, to the development of skills and the capacity to innovate.

**Competence management :**

For several decades, the skills management subject has been both for researchers and for decision-makers a constant interest in organizations. In the broad sense, this concept requires particular importance for human resources departments, whereas today managers of various organizational units have become increasingly involved in the selection, recruitment, training and skills development process.

**Competence concept : difficult to circle**

Even if competence is extensively analyzed, criticized and debated by such varied branches as training, work psychology, sociology, linguistics, etc. there is no consensus about its definition. So according to Le Boterf (2008), P. 49 « it's not the ability to hold a position or acquaintance. It also does not mean that we can act competently. To be competent is more and more to be able to manage complex and unstable situations in changing work contexts and increasingly characterized by events and news ». According to Ledru and Michel (1991), competence is the capacity available to solve problems effectively in a given context. For Zarifian (2002), competence can be characterized by 3 elements: a social attitude, a cognitive approach and a collective existence. Finally we retain the definition of Kerri Gati, (2009), "the recognized capacity for an individual to mobilize and combine personal and external resources (knowledge, know-how, behavior, networks of people...) in a given professional situation according to objectives to be achieved".

**Skills expansion:**

For Bellier (1999), competence is characterized by its heterogeneity, it aggregates both technical know-how and interpersonal skills " behaviors, attitudes, etc."

**Technical skills "hard":**

Technical skills are linked to specific knowledge which is still essentially acquired today, through training leading to diplomas, Ségol (2005). The technical skills are considered to be all aspects of skills in terms of knowledge and know-how linked to the various components of the profession, that is the body of knowledge but also the methodologies and procedures specific to each of the dimensions of the business, they are necessary to obtain and keep a job on the labor market.

It's about knowing how to substantiate data, translate it into achievements and actions, translate information and knowledge, make them operational, reproduce, enrich the quality of operational processes, Jolis (1998). It is therefore important that training is geared towards the labor market needs. However, technical skills must be complemented by behavioral skills are also necessary in order to facilitate integration, commitment, involvement and interpersonal skills.

**Social and behavioral skills "soft":**

Other authors prefer to describe it as "behavioral, social, transversal or human skills". Dixon et al. (2010) consider soft skills as "a combination of interpersonal and social skills".

Muzio and Fisher (2009) explain that technical skills are related to innate intelligence and soft skills to behaviors, motivation and other aspects of human interaction. The soft skills concept integrates the ability to mobilize knowledge and use it in a specific context, "inter and intra-personal skills". For Assia BENABID (2017), it is about personal skills allowing to harmonize relationships with others and to live well your work with confidence and this, in a spirit of cooperation, to be enterprising, to build his life and make initiatives.

Several authors discuss the soft skills importance in many disciplines, such as analysis and operational research / management science, Sodhi and Son (2008), accounting, Stovall and Stovall (2009), information systems Richards et al. (1998), finance, Dixon et al. (2010), leadership, Newell (2002), project management, Alam et al. (2010),... etc.

The project is a dynamic environment characterized by a complexity, which highlights the importance of managers relational capacity and requires development of relational and behavioral skills, Auger, (2008). Project actors are involved in many interactions with different stakeholders (employees, client, delegated project master, subcontractors, etc.) and must therefore have great interpersonal skills.

The project management exercise requires interpersonal skills, which without concealing other skills kind, are nonetheless central, which represent a condition for the success of any project. These specific skills highlighted in workplace are called "Soft Skills" C. Muir (2004). El Oualidi (2009) underlines that in a project, beyond general

management skills, technical skills and even project management skills, the project actor must have human qualities (leadership, working in a network, knowledge generate internal support...) are also called "soft skills". Pépin et al, (2013), indicates four major skills types as a condition for a project success, these are technical skills, administrative and process skills, business and strategic skills as well as interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

#### **Assumptions and research methodology:**

##### **Research assumptions:**

The inclusion in a dynamic reform cycle, the policies government change, government strategic directions that are not part of a continuity and consistency framework, etc. lead to a public decisions reorientation and impact consequently the public projects outcome. To cope with this, we consider that public organizations adopt the organizational improvisation model, which is an organizational form facilitating working in a changing environment, which requires rapid, irreversible decision-making, and taking into account the interdependence between the actors in action, K. Vignikin (2013).

We also recognize that this mode of organization promotes the emergence, development and acquisition of "soft skills". F. Chédotel, (2006), shows the contribution of research on organizational improvisation into project management. This approach, which reconciles formalization and flexibility, suggest developing "soft skills".

Finally, we consider that the "soft skills" development in a project environment is done through several organizational approaches: organizational learning, capitalization and experience feedback and training.

##### **Research Methodology:-**

Our research object aims to understand how the practice of a flexible project management allows the emergence of "soft skills". Our research, rooted in a qualitative based on the data from the case studies, Glaser and Strauss, (1967), was conducted from an inductive perspective, within four Moroccan public organizations. Crozier & Friedberg, (1992), suggest a research approach by stages. Our research framework can adopt a hypothetico-inductive inference, I. Niiniluoto & R. Tuomela (1973), which it constitutes and identifies its object of study in successive stages.

To structure and organize our field study we will rely on the DELPHI method, which is increasingly known by specialists in medium and long-term strategy development, Booto, et al., (2011). It is a participatory approach characterized by the anonymity of the data, of the participating experts and by the independence of the opinions, which makes it possible to gather summaries of opinions and draw a common conclusion.

Several points led us to call on the Delphi method:

1. Firstly, the problem of identifying "soft" skills in a project environment does not lend itself to precise analysis techniques but can benefit from subjective judgments and assessments on a collective basis;
2. Then the convincing profiles sought in the context of our research are those, who have a more strategic vision, able to interpret situations, to issue recommendations, able to appreciate situations both on project management practice and on soft skills, to note the evolutions, to give an objective and congruent evaluation and to develop an analysis or a founded judgment (expert population);
3. Thus the high number of people seems difficult to interact effectively, something which is not always required within the framework of a Delphi and the heterogeneity of the participants is important to guarantee the validity of the results;
4. Finally, the deadlines, costs and availability of the expert population do not allow frequent meetings.

This method adapts to our needs by its orientation to the collection of data by the intermediary of experts. In short, this approach uses the lived experience of experts to propose and verify increasingly general hypotheses on the characteristics of the whole.

The Delphi method can be carried out by following four steps, Crochemore, (2005): 1) Rigorously define the subject to be treated and its scope; 2) Research and training of the panel of experts; 3) Design and write an interview guide; 4) Collect information either by mail, telephone interview or face to face, then process the results.

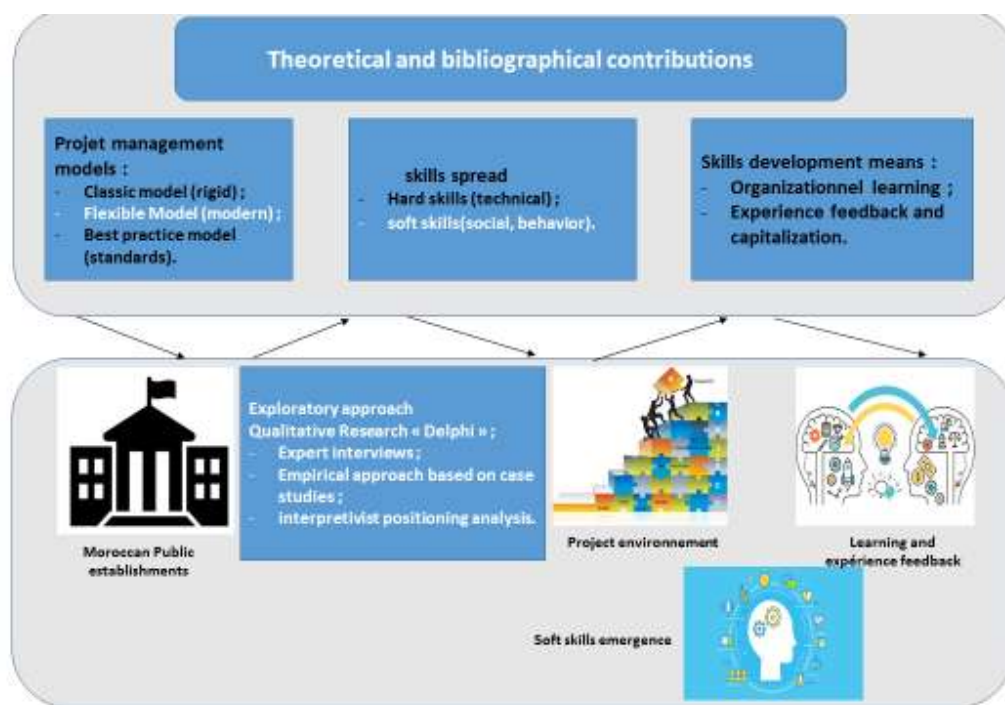
The content of the interview guide is presented in the following table: (Table 1).

**Table 1:-** Summary of the interview guide.

Themes et sub-themes broached	Underlying questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The interviewee and his place in the organization</li> <li>- Environmental actors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizational chart</li> <li>- Activities</li> <li>- Observed progress</li> <li>- Environment perception</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizational configuration</li> <li>- Project management models</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organization mode</li> <li>- Decision process</li> <li>- Resource allocation</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Soft skills appreciation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Management and development skills systems</li> <li>- Soft skills categories</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizational approaches fostering soft skills emergence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Organizational learning and Interactions</li> <li>- Informal relationships and skills transfer</li> <li>- Experience feedback and capitalisation</li> </ul>

We were therefore resort to use "qualitative content analysis" to interpret meaning from the content of text data and, hence, adhere to the naturalistic paradigm. The aim is to build a model to describe the phenomenon in a conceptual form. The results obtained below, come from a codification of the privileged data of the crossing of these.

The purpose of this research was first to confirm the relevance of the adoption of organizational improvisation as a project management model in Moroccan public organizations, to show their influence on the emergence of soft skills through organizational learning and experience feedback and finally to list these soft skills through an exploratory approach (Figure 1) made of goings and comings between theories borrowed from the case studies of public establishment in Morocco.

**Figure 1:-** "hypothetico-inductive" approach conducted during this research.

Our field of experimentation is based on case studies. We approached 28 public establishments, finally we received the acceptance of four, which are organized in project management (essential condition) operating in different activity sectors (urban development "Alpha", promotion of mining and hydrocarbon potential "Beta", rail transport "Gamma", and the aquaculture development "Landa"). We will remain anonymous on request and in accordance with the Delphi method.

**Table 2:-** Experts interviewed and their organizations.

Experts  Organisation Name	Others Directors	Projet managers	HumainesRessources managers	GeneralDirector	Subsidiary Director	Total
Alpha	2	2	1			5
Bêta		3	1	1		5
Gamma		4	1			5
Landa	1	2	1		1	5
Total	3	11	4	1	1	20

20 people were interviewed over a period of twenty months (mid-May 2016 to December 2017), with interviews lasting one hour and twenty-five minutes. Almost all of the interviews were recorded with the permission of the interviewee, and transcribed. They were then analyzed using a content coding method.

Our research objective is to draw lessons, on the one hand to confirm the theoretical hypotheses and on the other hand in order to carry out a listing of "soft" skills.

### Results and Discussions:-

The research issue is part of a understanding logic of the flexible project management model practice (organizational improvisation) influence on soft" skills emergence and development. It comes in three stages. The first consists in studying the flexible project management model (organizational improvisation) importance in public structures as a management reference adapted to the latter. The second is to understand the means of developing soft skills and finally the third is to highlight the soft skills developed in this project environment. We explain the results of this research on the basis of an interpretative positioning analysis by illustration of testimonies (most relevant passages).

#### Organizational improvisation project management model adapted to public structures:

The main results are presented in summary form, along with testimonies from the experts interviewed. Thus, they underline the dynamic and uncertain context of the project which is favorable to creativity and allows a real construction and diffusion of specific "soft" skills.

Indeed, the regulations governing the management of public contracts and contracts are marked by very harsh rigidity, however certain types of services may be subject to derogation through riders or through the negotiated procedure. "Initially the terms of reference do not take into account a certain number of details, as the project progresses, technical elements appear, at that time solutions must be proposed to bring the project to a successful conclusion", quotes the General Director "Beta".

We note that organizational improvisation is a spontaneous approach as a flexible model within the framework of project-mode management in the public sector. "We don't have project management benchmarks, but we have adopted our own project management approach. The project team must seek a balance based on flexibility which makes it easy to integrate any new information into the project", explains a project manager "Gamma".

Our results show that imperfect information decision-making, crisis and hazard management or the return of an employee to their original entity are situations that require organizational improvisation. Obviously, we conclude that organizational improvisation is an organizational form facilitating operation in a changing environment, which requires rapid, irreversible decision-making, and the taking into account of the interdependence between the actors in the action, indeed the project in represents an example, since the actors work in turbulent contexts, which require adaptation and speed of reaction.

#### Soft skills demonstrated in the project environment:

Through the construction of our interview guide, our reflection focused on identifying the main "soft" skills that emerged among project actors who are going through one or more projects through the expert who is preparing to



answer our question about research: How can organizational improvisation in a project management framework bring out and develop soft skills in a public organization?

Thus, through the analysis of the results we were able to identify 23 soft skills that we structured around four main axes: Leadership, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal and communication.

<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Intrapersonal</b>	<b>Communication</b>
- Decision making ; - Motivation; - Affecting ; - Coaching; - Dealing with difficult people. -	- Empathy ; - Emotional intelligence ; - Negotiation; - Diplomacy; - Intercultural openness; - Conflict resolution.	- Autonomy; - Personal branding ; - Intuition; - Critical thinking; - Personal initiative; - Stress management; - Adaptability.	- Body language ; - Public speaking; - Sense of humor ; - Storytelling ; - Eloquence.

In engineering projects, it is generally recognized that technical managers lack leadership skills to effectively manage people, Thite (2000). However, the project environment favors the emergence of leadership skills, moreover, during our study we listed several. "first of all, to have character, but it also develops with experienced people, nevertheless i do not let my team pull me down, i impose my way of being, i do everything i can to pull everyone up, they have to get on my level.", indicates a project manager "Gamma".

There is considerable evidence that interpersonal skills are a necessary ingredient in the professional success of project actors. Interpersonal skills are necessary when interacting with other actors. "I think that the strength of any organization today lies in its cultural diversity, a real project manager is who masters cultures and languages." add a strategy director "Alpha".

"Before asking the team to cooperate and give themselves fully to the project, i try to develop qualities of generosity, by encouraging them to do better even if things go wrong, by sharing moments of familiarity (a breakfast or lunch will please them)", explains a subsidiary manager "Landa".

Intrapersonal skills lead to an ability to understand yourself, to discern your own motivations, feelings, strengths, weaknesses, goals and to act accordingly. "I talk to my colleagues or my collaborators to know what disturbs on me, i call it a fifteen minutes empty bag, i try to detect my weaknesses to rework them", indicates a human resources director "Beta".

"In project mode, employees become actors and are therefore each returned to the autonomy they are supposed to have to get involved and make the project succeed.", adds a human resources director.

"The project experience was an opportunity for me to make a self-criticism: I developed a more diplomatic spirit to communicate a message, formulate a request or be asked for an arbitration." underlines the director general "Beta".

Finally, communication skills have an important place in a project environment, as in all aspects of life. Receiving unclear or insufficient information about a task is one of the most harmful sources likely to cause negative affect from employees (Anxiety and frustration): lack of information or resources to perform tasks, Dasborough, (2006). Indeed, there are several communication skills, so during this research we distinguished those most emerging and developed in a project environment. "In a project, communicating is part of our daily life and we often have to communicate in front of a mixed audience (collaborators, external service providers, hierarchy, etc.), as we progress to overcome shyness, to adapt our speech, to develop the ease of explaining oneself to express oneself with clarity, with intelligibility, that will give the impression of professionalism and allows one to stand out", adds the operations manager "Alpha".

"For me, the most difficult thing in communication is to convince an audience, projects in general often allow stakeholders to have more confidence. For that, you have to order your ideas, tame your words, be attentive to the words of others to respond with relevant ricochets", indicates a project manager "Landa".

**Organizational approaches fostering soft skills emergence:**

Often the training implementation actions is considered as a miracle solution for building skills, which quickly allows an individual to build a skill. Training oriented towards soft skills is very rare and therefore, there is a shortage and a scarcity on the job market in these skills.

Organizational learning, capitalization and experience feedback can integrate the mechanisms that promote soft skills emergence and development in a project environment.

**Organizational learning:**

The projects ramp-up makes possible to develop soft skills, especially when project actors have multiplied direct interactions based on the achieved learning and lived experiences.

Companies organized in project mode are considered as organizations bringing distinctive resources and skills that distinguish them from others.

To launch projects, public organizations often call on external service providers. The latter are considered a source of competence. "Over 80% of projects are carried out by external service providers who provide us with the necessary skills, we try to integrate the maximum of resources to benefit from this external potential and ensure a skills transfer", indicates General Director "Beta".

Interactions around the project, whether between actors of different functions within the project or with other actors outside the organization, have made it possible to bring out different interpretations thus arousing critical thinking and building together a sense to the fuzzy goals that were given to them initially.

The project is marked by instability and unpredictability, it constitutes a context which fosters learning more than others, since events can disrupt its normal progress, which requires adaptations and improvements. In this context, the project actors must be able to project and adapt themselves to the evolution of the project process and therefore we are witnessing the emergence of soft skills among project actors. "Going from one project to another is losing sleep. The project is a school in its own right, our organization has always invested in learning, it is a strong element of our culture", a project manager testifies "Beta".

The role of trial and error in learning, allows team members to devote time, find necessary resources and adequate solutions. Moreover, Koenig (2006) emphasizes that organizational learning is based on the creation of relationships between preexisting skills. It is obvious that the ability of an organization to solve some problems depends closely on the richness of the collaborations network that it hosts. Along the same lines, Burgelman (1994) point out that organizational learning is an adaptation of organizations to the environment through the selective adoption of organizational routines.

Rick Nason, (2017), explains that in a complex environment, constant and continuous adaptations must be made by following a "test, learning and adaptation" approach. This requires experimentation, creativity and a high degree of tolerance for failure rather than knowledge, obedience and conformism.

**Feedback from past experience or « lessons learned »:**

In project management, where each project is unique, experience shows that there are many invariants and highlights the imperative need to capitalize on past experiences and learn from them. All this in order to foster the use of good practices, to avoid repeating past mistakes and thus helping them to make good decisions. This opens up tremendous opportunities for the capitalization of projects experience. It should be noted that this is a factor for improving efficiency in human activities.

The capitalization of experiences is the result of a crisis (incident, accident, etc.) due to an involuntary error. It takes place either formally by saving the history of projects using several tools in the form of usable data (presentations, reports, rules, procedures, etc.), or informally through mentoring, tutoring, 'coaching (frequenting senior project managers, experiencing significant events, imitating behavior and gestures, etc.). This informal approach is a widespread practice in communities.

“Junior project managers often use deans to draw on their experiences, talents and lessons learned, whether through free or directed listening, which allows them to reframe the project implementation plan.”, decrypts a project manager “Landa”.

However, the most structured organizations that have a PMO (Project Management Office), often save their experiences in a collaborative tool (information system) by type of project, by domain and with keywords for operation and training of new project managers. “After adopting a project management method for four years, we realized that the appropriation of documents, the departure of certain project managers, and the absence of a tool to save project events constitutes a brake on capitalizing on experiences.”, testifies the subsidiary Director “Landa”.

Feedback from experience brings economies of scale from proven solutions in order to invest in innovative solutions, J. Renaud et al, (2008). “Management has seriously thought of setting up an information system which allows, on the one hand, to follow up on projects in real time and to provide periodic reporting and, on the other hand, to build up a project database. After a while, we built our own library of best practices by area of expertise (risk management, content, procurement ...). New project managers thus quickly became autonomous, avoiding trial and error and the renewal of unnecessary practices.”, specifies a project manager “Alpha”.

A good capitalization of knowledge and past experiences is based on their transcription in real time. It must therefore promote access, information sharing, collaboration, the exchanges stimulation, knowledge homogenization and professionalization.

Several types of tools serve as memories for the capitalization of experiences such as: project memory, company memory which must therefore give access to information describing both the characteristics of a project and of the company. They also make it possible to avoid wasting energy and resources, to repeat some errors, to duplicate the same tasks ... and thus to minimize the costs drift, deadlines and technical specifications.

However, in public organizations managed in project mode, learning, capitalization and feedback from experience are faced to a number of risks, firstly the increased use of external expertise threatens the transfer and sharing of skills and the loss of internal skills. Secondly, these organizations are marked by a high turnover of project teams and their frequent returns to their original directions, leading to the disappearance of memories. Thirdly, the absence or failing formalization of past experiences, whether by omission or lack of tools or by consideration as an additional workload. Fourthly, the actors naturally have a tendency to keep their experiences more or less jealously because they consider that the conservation of information is a source of valorization, informal power and responsibility. Finally, we find the absence of tutoring and companionship culture.

### **Conclusion:-**

The project stipulates a non-hierarchical management mode in which a project team, made up of representatives of the various functions of the company and led by a project director, meets and calls upon the resources of “business” structures in order to achieve objectives performance “quality / cost / time”. In addition, the public context is quite specific, marked by turbulent contexts that require adaptation and speed on the part of the team.

This article allowed us to provide an answer to our research questions. The objective of this article is to contribute to the understanding of the emergence of “soft” skills in a public project environment marked by organizational improvisation.

Our assumptions were clearly verified, moreover our results confirmed it and made it possible to highlight that in the public sector, organizational improvisation remains the most suitable model for its operation in project mode, thus this environment favors the emergence of “soft” skills, and finally, organizational approaches such as organizational learning or capitalization on experiences make it possible to play a relay role which promotes the emergence and development of these “soft” skills.

We would like to offer the various project players, in particular project managers, managerial systems that allow them to develop their “soft” skills. Indeed, our results allow us to offer two categories of managerial tools : organizational learning or capitalization on experiences, while leaving them the opportunity to experiment with new managerial tools. We have contributed to fueling the debate on this subject by proposing a bundle of “soft” skills (listing of “soft” skills that have emerged and developed in such a context).

Finally, our research reveals two limits. First, there is an absence of the quantitative nature of the research since it is purely qualitative. The second limitation is that this research has been limited to the Moroccan public sector with cultural diversity and therefore its results cannot be generalized and therefore cannot target universality. It is an approach specific to a given context. As Thiéart (1999) announced: "the only objective can only be to refute the theory and in no case to abandon it".

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