

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE: STUDY CASE OF COMPETITIVE INTELLIGENCE PRACTICES IN MOROCCAN SMES

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Abstract

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Increasing uncertainty and volatility has affected small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) resilience. Their competitiveness is no longer akin to macroeconomic factors but is very much impacted by asymmetric access to information. This is particularly relevant given the challenges posed by the digitalization of various business processes. In order to remain resilient and keep a competitive edge, SME owners/managers ought to make strategic decisions based on reliable and relevant information. There is then the need to consider adopting an information management-oriented approach such as competitive intelligence. Our study examines competitive intelligence practices across SMEs in Morocco, an area that is under research in this part of the world. Our research provides empirical evidence on how managers perceive competitive intelligence and the state of its practices in Moroccan SMEs. Our sample includes SMEs based in the Fez-Meknes region, northwest of Morocco, and operating across various sectors. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. Following the saturation principle, we conducted nine interviews. Our findings show that managers acknowledge the value of timely information and recognize its relevance to competitiveness. That said competitive intelligence practices remain embryonic and informal. Our research provides valuable initial insights for SME managers and policymakers alike but also to academics who are interested in developing the ecosystem of Moroccan SMEs.

Keywords: Competitive Intelligence, Asymmetric Information, SMEs, Morocco

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1. INTRODUCTION

The importance of small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in any economy is undeniable and even more so during a post-pandemic era where growth is uncertain. SMEs are a common form of

companies, spread throughout the world, more specifically in emerging countries. They contribute significantly to job creation and global economic development. According to the World Bank (n.d.), SMEs represent about 90% of all businesses and more than 50% of jobs worldwide. That same report

indicated that formal SMEs contribute up to 40% of national income (GDP) in emerging economies. If informal SMEs are taken into consideration, these results will be even higher. Moreover, 600 million jobs will be needed by 2030 to contain the growth of the global workforce, making SMEs a top priority for nations. In fact, 7 out of 10 formal jobs in emerging economies are generated by SMEs. As pointed out by Salles (2003), SMEs constitute both the substance of the productive system and its main factor of renewal. Unlike large groups, the territorial, and therefore national, links they continue to forge make them a major player in economic development. In so doing, they contribute more directly than large groups to the attractiveness of a region and the national economy. As for multinational companies, SMEs contribute significantly to the growth of any country. They are evolving in a new environment that is volatile, uncertain, complex, highly competitive, and marked by a profusion of information. This new context means that these entities are constantly confronted with new problems, particularly those related to information, and this leads to a redefinition of the traditional factors and determinants of their competitiveness. To remain competitive, SMEs are therefore called upon to adapt their management philosophies, adjust their operating modes, and reconsider their managerial approaches to remain resilient. They should therefore favor approaches that are designed to generate strategic knowledge. One of these approaches has come to be known as competitive intelligence. Competitive intelligence is a coordinated process of collecting, analyzing, interpreting, disseminating, and managing useful information with the aim of enlightening decision-makers in an uncertain and unpredictable environment. Muñoz-Cañavate and Alves-Albero (2017) suggest that entrepreneurs and managers have an inescapable need to understand the external environment in which their firms operate. They need to know their competitors, suppliers, distributors, and customers who they are and what they do, the financial entities they work with, and the operations of the government agencies that affect them. These needs call for a structured process of information acquired suited to the particularities of each firm, for the interpretation and analysis of that information, and for making analysis available to the firm's decision-makers.

Therefore, this paper intends to answer the following research question: *How do SME owners/managers perceive competitive intelligence, and what is the state of its practices within their companies?* To do so, we carried out an exploratory qualitative study. Following the saturation principle, nine SME owners/managers were interviewed.

The paper is structured as follows. In Section 1, the introduction, we discuss the research context and identify the research question. Then, the focus will be on the literature review, Section 2, where the competitive intelligence concept will be defined, and an overview of previous studies on competitive intelligence will be given. Section 3 presents the research methodology. Next, the research findings will be presented and discussed in Section 4 and Section 5, respectively. Finally, Section 6 will summarize the research conclusions and limitations.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Competitive intelligence

Competitive intelligence is an organized approach aiming to improve competitiveness through the collection, processing of information, and dissemination of knowledge useful to the control of its environment (Bournois & Romani, 2000). Its mission is to continuously inform the company about the technological, political, economic, legal, and social systems that can affect its competitive position (Blondel et al., 2007). Competitive intelligence can also be defined as a mode of management of informational asymmetry. By allowing the firm that practices it to be better informed than its competitors, it increases this asymmetry for the benefit of the firm that practices it and thus gives it a source of competitive advantage (Larivet, 2006). Transdisciplinary, it mobilizes specific skills and collective intelligence (Delesse, 2011). This information management approach, actually, requires a set of skills and mental faculties to develop strategic knowledge that will help adapt to new situations, achieve the defined objectives and improve the competitiveness of organizations. It also advocates coordination and is part of a collective approach to building and managing strategic knowledge while respecting the principles of ethics and deontology. It is not exclusively reserved for companies, as it also allows public authorities to implement geopolitical strategies and preserve economic security. Competitive intelligence has three components. The first one is monitoring, it is a systematic approach to collecting, processing, and disseminating information to detect emerging trends (Harrar & Ghomari Malti, 2018). The second component of competitive intelligence is influence. It is about changing the representations, perceptions, and behaviors of actors in the company's favor. It is the action that one actor exercises on another. In the context of competitive intelligence, the influencer is the company and the influenced is one of its many other stakeholders: competitors, suppliers, customers, civil society associations, and the state. In this last case, it is concretely a question for a company to defend its interests with the public decision-makers called to take decisions likely to affect it (Rival, 2012). The third component is protecting information. It refers to the preservation of the company's knowledge.

2.2. Competitive intelligence within SMEs

In the age of the knowledge-based economy, organizations have to operate in a complex environment that request the intensive use of high-value data and information in their process, products, services, and technologies (López-Robles et al., 2020). In fact, the knowledge-based economy makes knowledge prominent in cultivating competitive advantages and longevity for organizations more than ever (Chaithanapat et al., 2022). Therefore, it becomes one of the most valuable assets that all companies, large and small, need to manage nowadays. One of the ways to do so is by adopting a competitive intelligence approach. Competitive intelligence is the third most frequent research area. However, it seems that it is still new

and not well practiced (Sadeghiani et al., 2022), especially within SMEs (Benyelles, 2017; Badaoui & Chettih, 2017; Belhocine, 2015). As a field within strategic management, competitive intelligence needs to be encouraged, particularly in SMEs, which are considered priority agents for economic, technological, and social development (López-Robles et al., 2020). Actually, SMEs are very specific. They can be identified following quantitative criteria such as revenue and employment. They also have qualitative specificities like a flexible structure, a strong dependence on their environment, and the determining role of their owner-manager. In this vein, it should be outlined that two particularities of SMEs make them fertile ground for competitive intelligence. These are notably the lack of resources and the search for complementarities as well as the management of proximity and the generation of relational capital (Assabane et al., 2020). Implementing competitive intelligence activities in SMEs managerial approaches will, indeed, contribute to understanding the industry and competitors, and identify areas of competitors' vulnerability (Chawinga & Chipeta, 2017).

The study conducted in Quebec by Hassani and Mosconi (2022) reveals that manufacturing SMEs could improve their dynamic capabilities using learning mechanisms such as the competitive intelligence process. The authors explained that the dissemination of competitive intelligence product/knowledge help managers to respond to customer preferences and different needs. Another study conducted in South Africa by Nenzhelele (2014), highlights that the majority of SMEs know about competitive intelligence. However, they practice it so informally. This is because most of these SMEs are very small and lack the resources to formalize them. Calof et al. (2018) focused their research on competitive intelligence within European firms, and they came to the conclusion that competitive intelligence is more formalized now in European firms than it was in 2006, and the breadth of its applications has grown beyond competitors to include customer related intelligence, technology, and market. In their paper on the synergy between knowledge management and competitive intelligence practices and their role in obtaining competitive advantage in SMEs based in Malawi, Chawinga and Chipeta (2017) state that conducting knowledge management and competitive intelligence activities enables managers to effectively compete and succeed in the market and achieving a competitive advantage. The authors also argued that the most important competitive intelligence activity practiced by most SMEs is gathering information, and the challenges that affect their level of engagement in competitive intelligence activities are mainly the protection of critical information, nonformalized knowledge, and lack of time and resources. According to d'Hennezel (2019), who conducted research on small businesses operating in the aeronautic sector in New Aquitaine, these companies are unfamiliar with the concept of competitive intelligence, even though their strategies seem to be based on competitive intelligence fundamentals such as anticipatory analysis of the environment, protection of the company's assets and in particular its knowledge assets, and an influence approach. The author adds that to

obtain the resources it needs; the company must consider participation in meetings in incubators, the technology park, and working groups in the competitiveness cluster. As for Sliman (2016), this study reveals that in Moroccan SMEs competitive intelligence activities are limited to environmental monitoring, which is practiced in an informal and unstructured way. Moreover, the author explained that SME managers are not sensitive to information, particularly in terms of strategic thinking. The work by Bouyahiaoui et al. (2014) states that one of the critical factors influencing the competitiveness of SMEs is the monitoring of their environment. These authors argue that the development of competitive intelligence to ensure active and permanent monitoring of the international environment in order to provide permanent and reliable data is necessary to seize opportunities and avoid risks. Competitive intelligence provides SMEs with invaluable information for winning new prospects, launching new products, positioning against competitors, and developing new subsidiaries. As far as we are aware, few empirical studies focused on competitive intelligence in Moroccan SMEs. Therefore, we aim, through this paper, to examine how managers perceive competitive intelligence and the state of its practices in Moroccan SMEs.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. The firms surveyed

The sampled companies are SMEs in the Fez-Meknes region operating in different sectors of activity. As for the sample size, we followed the theoretical saturation principle. As explained by Albarello (2004), it is a phenomenon that occurs after a certain period of time in qualitative research when the data collected are no longer new. All efforts to collect new information are then useless. What is collected then fits into already known frameworks, and the research can be stopped. According to Royer and Zarlowski (2014), theoretical saturation is reached when we no longer find additional data generating new theoretical insights or new properties to the main ones. Romelaer (2005) also adds that to satisfy the principle of theoretical saturation, the sample selected must be diverse. According to the author, the idea here is not at all to have statistical representativeness and a complete sample. The idea is to have sufficiently explored the variety of situations. In our study, we tried to respect these two conditions. On the one hand, we stopped the interviews when the information collected became repetitive, redundant and the information obtained from an additional interview was no longer relevant. On the other hand, we tried to choose SMEs operating in the main industries of the region. Among the SMEs that agreed to participate in our study, three operate in the textile industry, two in the construction sector, two in the building materials industry, one in the advertising sector, and one in the agri-food sector. The interviews took place during the period from September 2020 to November 2020. The number of SMEs studied was therefore set at seven. We realized that we had reached theoretical saturation after the last two interviews. However, it

should be noted that when interpreting the results of our study, we took into account the answers of the nine SMEs, so that the statements included in our analysis were not redundant.

3.2. Data collection tool

Since our research is exploratory, primary data was collected using semi-structured interviews. Although they typically follow a guide or protocol developed prior to the interview and focus on a central topic to provide a general structure, the semi-structured interview also allows for discovery, with space to follow thematic trajectories as the conversation proceeds (Magaldi & Berler, 2020). Semi-structured interviews are conducted using an interview guide that specifies the important themes to be discussed during the interview and which are generally developed based on a literature review. In our study, the interview guide enabled us to collect the same data from the various interviewees and provided us with a reference point to assist them. Our guide was pre-tested, corrected, and validated with a manager not participating in the study and a university professor. Interviews took place face-to-face and lasted on average thirty minutes to one hour. For reasons of confidentiality required by all the companies interviewed, we will use the expression "SME-" to indicate the names of the companies when presenting the findings.

3.3. Data analysis

In our study, the chosen method for data analysis is content analysis. It is a quantitative description and systematic examination of the interviewees' speech. Content analysis is performed on data collected using unstructured or semi-structured methods such as interviews (free or semi-directive) or documentary methods. Some answers to questions inserted in questionnaire surveys can also be processed by content analysis (Blanc et al., 2014). It includes several methods namely the thematic analysis, the analysis of the evaluation, the analysis of the enunciation, the analysis of the expression, the analysis of the relations, and the automatic analysis of the speech (Bardin, 1980). In our research, we have privileged the thematic content analysis of the semi-formatted type, which consists in transversally cutting the corpus of interviews. Knowing that there are statements concerning the themes in the interviews, it is a question of taking these statements (Hampartzoumian, 2005). Some of the themes were set before, and new ones were discovered during the analysis. To do so, we used NVivo 13 software. It is one of the most widely used qualitative data analysis software. It allows organizing and having better visibility of unstructured qualitative data, exploring in-depth interviews conducted. It also assists the researcher in his or her content analysis (coding, querying), and highlights links and connections that are difficult to spot through manual processing. However, it should be outlined that the use of such software does not replace the researcher's reflection and his or her coding and interpretation skills. Its use only makes it possible to overcome the complexity of manual data processing. It should also be noted that while qualitative research admits the subjectivity of the researcher, it is important to pay particular

attention to its validity and reliability. In this context, the literature reveals that the reliability and validity of qualitative research depend on the validity and reliability of its measuring instrument, which in our study is the thematic content analysis. According to Drucker-Godard et al. (2014), it is a question of verifying that the different operations of research can be repeated with the same result by different researchers and/or at different times. Then, an inter-coder coefficient is calculated by dividing the number of agreements by the sum of the agreements and disagreements. When it is higher than 80%, it is satisfactory. In the context of our study, we carried out the coding over two different periods and the inter-coder coefficient obtained was 90%.

4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The analysis of our interlocutors' statements allowed us to identify three essential themes that we will present below.

4.1. Information management within Moroccan SMEs

Information management is one of the main themes that emerged from the interviews. In fact, SMEs' competitiveness depends largely on their ability to master the information related to increasingly complex markets. Managing the information flows within these entities is therefore crucial to achieve and maintaining a high level of competitiveness. As Tchouassi (2017) points out a company must adapt, if possible, anticipate, sometimes influence, and in any case, react with agility. To achieve this under the right conditions, business managers need the right information, at the right time, to make decisions. The key role that information plays in the decision-making process is no longer up for debate. The analysis of the statements made by the managers interviewed shows that the concept of information is often qualified as primordial, important, very important, and necessary. It seems, therefore, that all respondents agree on the absolute importance of information in dealing with the uncertainty of the environment in which they operate. One of them clearly states:

"Whoever has the information has the power" (SME-1).

Across SMEs in the region, information is collected by managers and sales staff in a legal way. Their main sources of information are their personal networks, the media, customers, and suppliers. However, the managers remain open to their collaborators who do not hesitate to bring up any information considered useful and strategic. This is evidenced by the following statements:

"As a manager, I use the internet, the media, and mainly my personal network to find opportunities and if one of the sales managers obtains information from a client or a supplier, he or she brings it up to me" (SME-5).

"Once we figured out that we need specific information we start by calling on our contacts, checking the media, or even ministries websites, etc. But sometimes the employees can bring in information spontaneously without really being aware that we need it and it turns out to be strategic in the end" (SME-4).

"It is the manager who calls on his contacts because it is a family business and sometimes certain employees can collect information" (SME-3).

As for the information management process, it should be noted that it involves several stages, namely the identification of information needs, data collection, data processing and analysis, and then dissemination. At the level of the region's SMEs, the trend observed is that the information collected is not processed in a formalized way. It is disseminated to the employees concerned, while information judged to be strategic is kept confidential and remains at the level of the top management. We can find this point in the following statements:

"Then, this collected information is sorted out. Some of it interests the financial department or the marketing department and the strategic information remains at the top management level. Afterwards, we use this information to make strategic decisions" (SME-6).

"Then, the CEO takes a decision based on this information. If necessary, it's communicated to the department or executive involved" (SME-1).

"Then the essential information is gathered at the top management and sent to the different departments according to their needs. And we tend to archive key information so that we don't waste time looking for it a second time" (SME-4).

4.2. Perception of competitive intelligence importance

In Morocco, the adoption of competitive intelligence both at the managerial and territorial levels is not a desire to align with a trend but emanates from a desire to anticipate and control a national environment in full transition and adapt to the effects of accelerated and increased globalization. The country's interest in such a practice has manifested itself through the establishment of a certain number of institutions for information processing and the organization of national and international conferences on information management and competitive intelligence. Despite all these efforts, several papers related to competitive intelligence in Morocco argue that it is not widely rooted in the mindset of Moroccan managers or their managerial practices. Through our interviews, it appears that the concept of competitive intelligence is generally associated in the minds of the respondent with resource management, monitoring, and business management. The majority of the interviewees are therefore slightly familiar with competitive intelligence. While some are unaware of the existence of such a practice or provide incorrect definitions, two interviewees provided incomplete but correct definitions:

"It is related to the collection and management of information" (SME-4).

"I know this concept perfectly well; it is related to the management of information and the creation of knowledge to make strategic decisions. I have already come across articles and videos on the internet about this and there was a conference held in Dakhla on the subject" (SME-5).

It appears that the concept calls out to a few managers. The majority assimilate it to a process of accelerating production processes, reducing costs,

and increasing profits. This statement is in line with the claims of Lahrach and Rahouti (2021) who argue that competitive intelligence has "a real problem of semantic and terminological ambiguity. It has proven to be a paradoxical concept. It is nourished by various doctrinal fields of action that are difficult to circumscribe" (p. 498). On the perception of the importance of competitive intelligence practices, our respondents gave their impressions about each component of competitive intelligence. Regarding monitoring, the ideas from the literature were found in the interviewees' statements confirming the crucial role of monitoring for their entities. Let us quote for instance:

"Information is very important especially, in these times of crisis. When we know the markets, our competitors, our customers, and our suppliers, we can anticipate changes in the environment and the reactions of customers. When we also know the new technologies, we can propose innovative products and have a competitive advantage" (SME-9).

"Information is essential and very useful. Keeping an eye on our environment allows us to reduce losses and keep customers. It also allows us to know the new technologies and the new manufacturing processes so that we can innovate in our manufacturing processes" (SME-2).

"Well, the more we know about our competitors, and the new entrants, the more we can adapt our products and our sales strategies. Through monitoring, we are one step ahead of our competitors" (SME-6).

"Our market is very competitive, if we miss any information, our competitor will exploit it in his favor, so we don't really have the right to make mistakes, that's why we have to monitor our environment well and continuously" (SME-7).

As for the protection of information, the interviewees argue that the protection of strategic knowledge is a critical aspect of the management of their entities since any information leakage can give their competitors the opportunity to get ahead of them. The authors identified several means and techniques for protecting information that we found in the statements of our interviewees, including staff awareness, securing information systems and premises, signing confidentiality clauses, and the thoughtful dissemination of information. We find this in the following statements:

"If we don't protect sensitive information, all of our efforts will go down the drain. So, we train our employees and make them sign confidentiality clauses, and we try to secure our offices and our computers. And luckily we've never had any problems" (SME-8).

"Faced with the competition, we try to do our best to protect our strategic information. To start with, we have secured information system. We have also IT managers on-site in case of need and we sign confidentiality clauses with our employees. And of course, any important information stays at the top management level" (SME-3).

"Protection is important because if we manage to get information that I would say is strategic and will enable us to be ahead of our competitors, we are not going to reveal it. So, we try to keep it at the level of the top management" (SME-5).

Another component of competitive intelligence is influence. Our interviewees recognized the crucial

role of influence in the competitiveness of their companies. We find this in the following comments:

"Of course, we have to be able to influence customers, for that we use advertising, and we have to influence public organizations too when there is a law that is not in our favor. For that, we use our networks. And of course, it allows us to be more competitive" (SME-1).

"Influential communications with clients are important and really make the difference between our competitors and us" (SME-6).

Despite this interest of Moroccan managers in influence practices, it is worth highlighting that some of them clearly pointed out that it is difficult for an SME to influence its environment. This is mentioned in comments such as:

"But the problem is that we don't always have the means to do it. For customers, we use the media, but for decision-makers, it's a bit difficult, even if we belong to a few professional clusters, we don't always have access to the people who implement laws and standards" (SME-2).

"It's important, but I wouldn't say it's essential because sometimes we don't have the means to put pressure on the authorities. Influencing our clients, yes, through our website, but we don't really have direct access to the authorities" (SME-7).

4.3. Competitive intelligence challenges in Moroccan SMEs

As for the potential implementation of a competitive intelligence system, it appears that the basic internal conditions necessary are financial and human resources. In fact, SMEs are experiencing financial difficulties and the implementation of an economic intelligence unit constitutes an additional expense and an important investment. Moreover, it is necessary to have competent and specialized collaborators in this field.

Concerning the external factors, support from the government through subsidies will encourage the managers to set up a competitive intelligence unit. These points are clearly expressed in our interviewees' statements:

"To set it up, we need financial resources and qualified human resources, but we don't really have the budget. So, we do what we can, indirectly, and we collect information from several sources without dedicating an entire department or service to it. The culture of the manager matters too" (SME-3).

"We need time, financial resources and experienced managers. And with the pandemic, we're trying to minimize our costs, not add to them. So, if the state provides us with experts or consultants in the field for free or at reasonable prices, why not" (SME-6).

"I think that this practice will be useful to us, but the recruitment of managers and the purchase of equipment and software subscription as well as the training of our employees will cost us a lot. And for an SME it's not evident, so it's not a priority at the moment unless the region provides us with experts in the field or financial assistance. The culture of the manager is also important" (SME-9).

An important challenge highlighted by all the interviewees is the culture of the company. It was confirmed that both managers and employees have hardly any culture of adopting an information

management approach and consider that it does not lead to concrete results. They already think they are doing business intelligence by collecting information and will therefore find it difficult to accept that a separate unit will be dedicated to an approach perceived as marginal.

5. DISCUSSION

This research investigates how owners/managers perceive competitive intelligence and the state of its practices in Moroccan SMEs, especially those based in the Fes-Meknes region. The empirical study revealed that managers recognize the value of information and admit its crucial role in their competitiveness. However, they are more interested in the financial and commercial aspects. Our findings also indicate that competitive intelligence is not deeply rooted in the minds of the majority of the respondents. While some are unaware of the existence of such a practice, others provide partially correct definitions. However, all the interviewees agree on the indisputable importance of information to cope with the uncertain environment in which they operate. Another finding is that managers and sales staff collect data in a legal manner. Their main sources of information are their personal networks, the media, customers, and suppliers. All the data collected are not processed in a formalized way. These results support the postulations of Nenzhelele (2014) that have argued that SMEs in South Africa practice competitive intelligence informally. We also find that information is disseminated to the employees concerned, while the information deemed strategic is confidential and remains at the level of the owner/manager. These results are in line with those of Sliman (2016) who stated that managerial practices in Moroccan SMEs are related to their owner/manager's culture and vision. In this vein, the author explained that if the owner/manager is not sensitive to information, competitive intelligence practices will not be formalized in the SMEs, and he will tend to keep strategic information at his level. Moreover, our exchanges with the SME owners/managers in the Fez-Meknes region have shown that they recognize the crucial role of the various components of competitive intelligence in the competitiveness of their entities. However, they only focus on gathering information. Furthermore, it appears that these companies are experiencing financial difficulties and the establishment of a competitive intelligence unit is an additional expense and a large investment.

6. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it should be outlined that Moroccan SMEs operate in an uncertain and highly competitive environment. In order to remain ahead of its competitors, every company is required to anticipate the major changes in its environment, quickly and agilely react, avoid potential threats and seize the opportunities that arise. To do so, managers need to take strategic decisions based on reliable information. Therefore, they need to consider adopting an information management tool such as competitive intelligence. Given the fact that competitive intelligence is not a widespread practice

in Moroccan companies, our research aim is to explore how managers perceive competitive intelligence and the state of its practices in Moroccan SMEs, especially those based in the Fes-Meknes region. Therefore, we conducted qualitative research, which revealed that owners/managers acknowledge the value of information and recognize its significant role in their competitiveness. However, competitive intelligence practices remain embryonic and informal. Our work fills a gap in the literature on competitive intelligence in the Moroccan context. Although this practice appeared in Morocco at the beginning of the 2000s, few studies focused on competitive intelligence particularities in Moroccan SMEs. Moreover, our work aims to draw the attention of owners/managers to a value-creating approach, which tends to be underestimated.

The current paper presents some limitations that can be considered as an opportunity for further research. First, this work focuses only on the Fez-Meknes region, so it will be necessary to be vigilant when generalizing these results to the different regions of Morocco. In fact, each region has its own economic and competitive characteristics, so the concerns of managers and management requirements will certainly differ. The second limitation is related to the context of the study. A study conducted in a Moroccan context cannot be generalized to other countries unless they have the same characteristics in terms of the level of development, managerial practices, and managers' and employees' culture.

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