

REFORMING ITS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM BY ADOPTING NEW PUBLIC MANAGEMENT APPROACHES. CASE OF MOROCCO

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ABSTRACT

The reform of the Moroccan Education System arouses the interest of everyone by being often the subject of debates. On our side, we have attempted to study the implementation of reform in the Moroccan education system. Thereby, we consider that effective project management is one of the determining factors for the good governance of any organization, especially an educational system. It allows reform actors to effectively manage all of their activities in a spirit of responsibility and accountability. It is so important for the successful project management that the various processes of planning, implementation, monitoring and control are respected. Our study focuses on evaluating the adoption of this new approach in the reform of the Moroccan education system. This will allow us to approach the strategic vision from a particular angle and especially to bring more elements of understanding of the phenomenon of reform in order to improve the decision making to enhance the chances for successful reform of the Moroccan education system. At the empirical level, our study was based on a qualitative research method (semi-structured interviews).

Keyword: - Education system, Reform, Project management, Project approach, Change management.

1. INTRODUCTION

The reform of an educational system in a country is usually a subject of debate by predilection, first in the political and media sphere, but also in the clan of specialists in pedagogy. Morocco has not been an exception, and the reform of the Moroccan education and training system still arouses everyone's interest. Thus, everywhere people talk about the Moroccan educational system and its attempts to reform. Everyone wants to know and has something to say about this subject (teachers, students, parents, experts, social partners, scientists, researchers, politicians...).

For our part, we have chosen to join this movement and to direct our research towards the study of the implementation process of the reforms of the Moroccan education and training system (ETS), particularly in the last reform called "the strategic vision "2015-2030".

Indeed, the reforms of an education and training system do not go unnoticed and are not carried out overnight, because all the spheres of this system are affected, even modified. These reforms are most often accompanied by

major organizational changes that can be a real ordeal for the men and women of the educational organization [1]. This difficulty of the organizations to apprehend the human factor would be, among other things, at the origin of the numerous dysfunctions that have marred these reforms. This must also be done without neglecting a certain risk of resistance on the part of the actors in the educational institution (Bernard [2], 1989; Legendre [3], 2002). In the case of the reform of the Moroccan education and training system called "the strategic vision 2015-2030", it is a question of a major systemic change in which we touch on :

- Training and management;
- Research and innovation;
- Teaching, learning and cultural development;
- Qualification and facilitation of economic, social and cultural integration;
- Socialization and education in values in their dual national and universal dimension.

This process of change of the educational system initiated by the Ministry of National Education, Professional Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research (we will designate for the following M.N.E), is part of the piloting of public organizations where each entity and each person in charge of this ministry must question its practices and working methods in order to integrate the spirit and the orientations of the reforms wanted by the political authorities.

Indeed, the public authorities (the M.N.E) are confronted with the difficulty of managing ever more complex educational systems. This situation increasingly requires the adoption of managerial strategies capable of dealing with this complexity and providing the actors concerned with the knowledge they need to make their decisions concerning the reform of the education and training system. The purpose of our research will therefore be to analyze the managerial practices adopted by the M.N.E during the implementation of the strategic vision, in particular the project management approach.

Within this framework, and for any research undertaken that submits to academic and empirical standards, it must take into consideration the pre-existing theoretical foundations, past works and research, not only to situate itself in the scientific sphere (in our case, Management Sciences), but also to define with the greatest precision the conceptual context in which the research is established, the authors and the theoretical currents on which the methodological approach undertaken is based and inspired.

2. PURPOSE AND CONTEXT OF THE RESEARCH

Our focus is on the study of the strategic vision 2015-2030. The latter, which is intended to be a new strategic vision of educational reform, is considered first and foremost as an examination of conscience about the state of affairs and the prospects of the Moroccan Education and Training System (ETS).

This vision was guided by the National Education and Training Charter (NETC), which remains the reference framework for ETS reform.

The strategic vision 2015-2030 defines the main priorities for education in Morocco. It draws on the main themes of NETC, which played a fundamental role in educational reforms from 2000 to 2012 and established the generalization of compulsory education. However, the new vision is a response to the main gaps and limitations of the NETC [4].

The strategic vision was created to re-launch the reform process and put quality and equity at the heart of the reforms. This principle is based on the observation that the Moroccan education and training system still suffers from chronic dysfunctions and that the qualitative advances of the reforms implemented since 2000 have remained limited in terms of the level of learning, teaching practices, the state of schools and the management of education system.

In addition, and in 2013, the National Evaluation Authority (NEA) conducted a general evaluation on "the implementation of the National Charter of Education, Training and Scientific Research 2000-2013: achievements, deficits and challenges" in order to understand the obstacles that led to the partial failure to implement the NETC (NEA, 2014a) [5]. This evaluation raised a lack of clarity in the governance of the reform, a lack of involvement and participation of local actors and citizens, and a deficit in the management, monitoring and evaluation mechanism.

To overcome these deficiencies, a new strategic vision 2015-2030 was developed in 2015 to revive the reform process and put quality and equity at the center of the reforms.

In this context, the strategic vision 2015-2030 aims to establish a "new school" based on three foundations [6]:

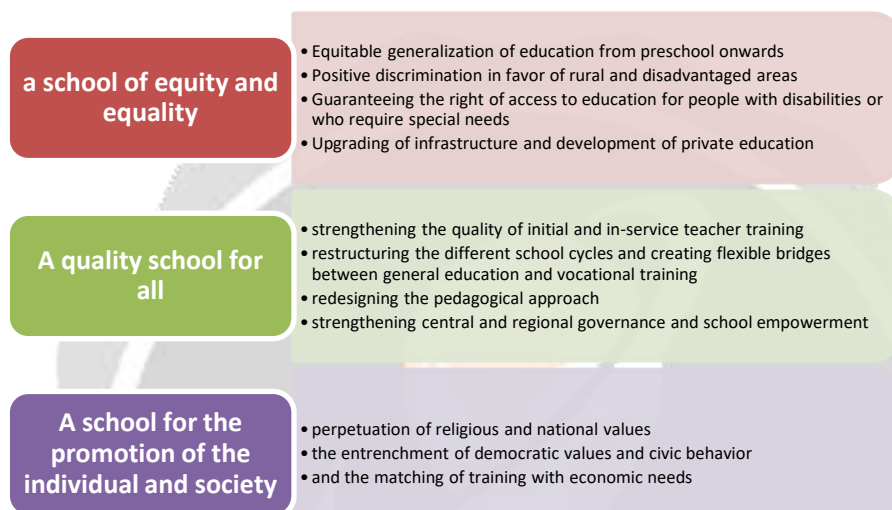


Fig -1: Foundations of the strategic vision 2015-2030

2.1. The principles of the strategic vision 2015-2030

The Moroccan school system has certainly achieved a number of things that need to be capitalized on and developed. Examples include the updating of the legal and institutional framework, the progress made in the generalization of schooling and the establishment of institutional structures for decentralized governance, which has led to the relative autonomy of universities and the development of regional academies. We can also note the revision of curricula and school programs, the pedagogical restructuring of higher education, the integration of the teaching of the Amazigh language and culture, the reorganization of courses of study and the gradual expansion of vocational training capacities, as well as the beginning of the rehabilitation of traditional education.

Nevertheless, despite the obvious importance of such achievements, the Moroccan school still suffers from chronic dysfunctions that the Higher Council of Education (HCE) has noted in the report prepared by the National Evaluation Body on "the implementation of the National Charter of Education, Training and Scientific Research 2000 - 2013: achievements, deficits and challenges" [7].

In this context, the strategic vision of the educational reform has emphasized the need to involve all the concerned actors in order to invent relevant and operational solutions, likely to make possible the realization of the expected change within the educational and training establishments.

This vision was initiated by organizing broad consultations, calling on the various actors and partners of the school, the departments responsible for education, training and scientific research and national expertise. Thus, a series of workshops were organized with professionals of the education sector around the levers and themes that constitute the core of the strategic vision of school reform 2015-2030. The purpose of these consultations was to involve the maximum possible number of school partners and to hear the views of practitioners in this large-scale project, thus

remedying the problem with the various previous reforms, which most often started from the center (top-down approach) and had to be carried out by people who were not even aware of them.

2.2. The methodological foundations:

- The adoption of a global approach including the different components of the Moroccan school;
- The deliberate choice not to turn the strategic vision into an operational and technical program that falls within the remit of the executive;
- The consolidation of achievements, without hesitating, if necessary, to make breaks, to adopt new approaches to change, which allow for the resolution of outstanding cross-cutting issues, and to reconcile ambition and realism, identification of priorities and adequacy of the pace of implementation;
- The consideration of the classroom as the nodal element of the reform, centering it on the learner, the teacher, learning and the conditions of schooling, providing schools with the necessary means for optimal functioning, building a new pedagogical relationship between the learner and the teacher and establishing a new relationship between the latter and the learning spaces;
- The anchoring of the participatory and contractual approach as a means of appropriation and implementation of the reform;
- The conviction that the ultimate goal of this approach is the development of a motivating social pact that structures the commitment of all to support the reform and its success;
- The establishment of effective governance in the design of the reform, in its leadership, in the management of its implementation, in the satisfaction of the conditions required to achieve its objectives and in the monitoring of its actions;
- The development of vigilant monitoring and systematic internal and external evaluation of the reform implementation process and its achievements, in order to design, in time, the necessary corrections and the continuous improvement of its results;
- The consideration of this vision as progressive, flexible and open to adaptations and possible enrichments in the light of evaluations and new developments [8].

2.3. Purpose of the vision

While the strategic vision of educational reform is based on relevant levers for the renewal of the education and training system, it constitutes a roadmap with systemic inputs whose objectives are to ensure:



Fig -2: The objectives of the strategic vision 2015-2030

This reform also targets [9]:

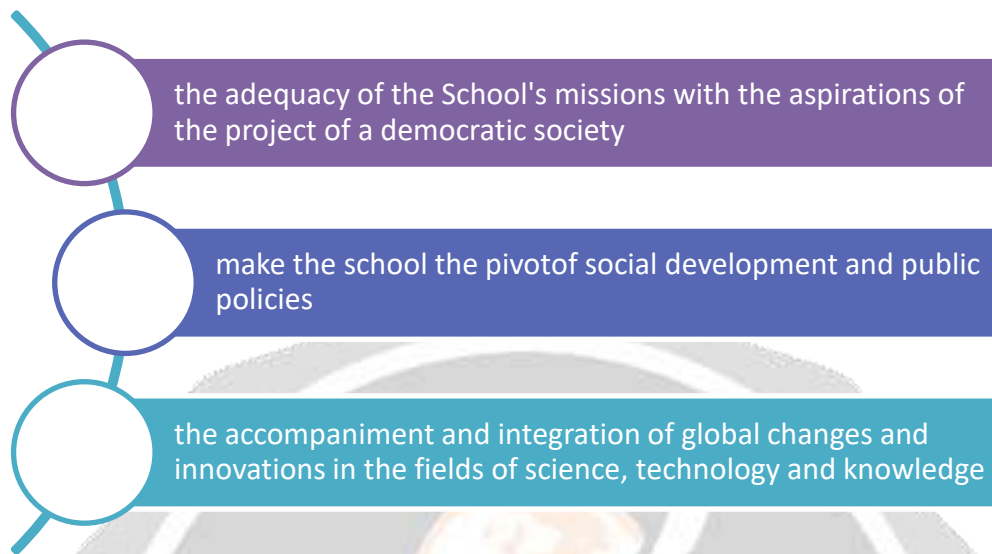


Fig -3: The targets of the strategic vision 2015-2030

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH

As soon as we study public education and training establishments that are part of public organizations, it is quite legitimate to say that the management of the education system is part of the scientific field of public management. A review of the literature allows us to show that management is nowadays omnipresent in the reflections and discourses on education and, more generally, on all public institutions.

Thus, faced with the complexity of the environment in which public sector organizations, including the M.N.E, evolve, more and more constraints and new requirements are imposed on them. This evolution, which has reduced the gap that has long existed between the public and private sectors, requires the modernization of traditional public management methods. Public management is now subject to the same efficiency requirements as private management.

Thus, for several years now, we have been observing the emergence of a range of new tools and work methods in public organizations, which a large number of authors have grouped together under the same name: "New Public Management" (Pollitt [10], 2003; Gruening [11], 2001; Finger and Ruchat [12], 1997; Delley [13] 1997).

This new mode of management consists of introducing into the public sphere concepts, tools and methods of management intended for the private sector, such as the project approach, the information system applied to management (Fixari , Moisdon and Weil [14] 1992) , management control (Gibert [15], 2008 ; Demeestère [16], 2005 , Dupuis [17], 1991) , change management, leadership, results-based management (Trosa [18], 2000 ; Emery [19], 2005) , participatory management, quality management (Guert-talon [20], 2004) , the customer approach, the strategic approach... These tools or approaches will accompany the organization in its reform projects.

However, these reform projects, which bring about radical change within organizations, require special reflection. The habits, the view of the actors, the environment of the public sector, and particularly its history do not make the task easy.

Among the tasks to be accomplished, there are real approaches in the field of project management.

This is the theoretical framework from which our analysis of the introduction of Project Management in the framework of the strategic vision of the reform of the Moroccan education and training system "2015-2030" has been approached.

It is therefore important from our point of view to clarify matters by presenting some definitions of descriptive, explanatory and interpretative notions that will be used to constitute the appropriate conceptual and theoretical tools for our analysis.

3.1. Reform and management by project

An education system reform project takes place in a given organizational context. Following the adoption of this project in the educational organization, the usual order of operation undergoes disruptions that imply changes in the behavior and attitudes of the actors. These upheavals are likely to affect all interactions between the organization, the actors, the structure and the culture. These reform projects have specific characteristics that generally lead to significant organizational changes ranging from the revision of work processes to the complete redesign of the organization. This is likely to challenge the traditional ways of the standard model (Garel [21], 2003) of conducting projects, particularly in the reform of education systems.

In fact, the attitude of the actors concerned and their involvement in the project are difficult to anticipate. The reform of the education and training system generally brings together actors from different levels of the system (local, provincial, regional, central, external) and with different profiles and backgrounds. It is therefore very likely that we will end up with ideas and visions that sometimes converge and often diverge. This difference, if not well managed, is often a source of conflict due to mutual misunderstandings. The human and organizational dimension of the education system reform project is also an important and decisive factor in its management. The field of project management of reform is also redefining its borders by moving from traditional project implementation to organizational project management (Söderlund [22], 2004), which integrates the various organizational components in the search for efficiency at the general level.

Project management is becoming a fashionable operating model and is part of the theoretical thinking around the concept of the new public management (NPM). Mazouz [23] (2002), in his research on public management, points out that "the efforts of reformers seem to be increasingly directed towards management, rather than ownership or organizational structure, to modernize the administrative function. (...) Results-based management, project-based management and program-based management are becoming appropriate ways of managing government institutions and enterprises in the new economy. (...) The changes that have been initiated have gradually and irreversibly challenged the bureaucratic paradigm. The structures and ways of doing and getting done in public organizations can now be questioned."

Thus, good project management is one of the determining factors for effective governance of any education system. It enables project actors to manage all their activities efficiently. For this reason, it is important to ensure that the various processes of development, implementation, monitoring and control are respected in order to manage a project successfully.

But first of all, it seems judicious to focus on the definition of certain concepts in connection with the management of/by project.

3.1.1. Project:

According to the Project Management Institute-PMI, a project refers to "a temporary undertaking, decided upon to produce a single result, product or service. Temporary means that every project has an explicit beginning and end; unique means that the product or service has distinctive features from any other similar product or service [24].

A definition retained by the World Organization for Standardization according to the ISO 10006 standard (version 2003) and adopted by AFNOR under the X50-105 standard:

"The project is a single process that consists of a set of coordinated and controlled activities, with start and end dates, undertaken with the aim of achieving an objective in accordance with specific requirements, including constraints of time, cost and resources" [25].

It is "a global design at the level of an organization aiming at mobilizing human resources in a common direction, known and accepted by all" (Bartoli and Hermel, 1989) [26]. Moreover, a project affects the structure, culture and actors within an organization.

In public organizations, the notion of the project is a fundamental concept insofar as it brings into interaction all the elements of the organization (human, legal, material, technical...).

3.1.2. Project management:

Project management "is the application of knowledge, skills, tools and methods, to the activities of a project, in order to achieve or exceed the needs and expectations of the project stakeholders. This means balancing competing constraints, such as: content, cost, schedule, and quality; different needs and expectations among stakeholders; identified (needs) and unidentified (expectations) requirements." (PMI) [27].

Cleland [28] (1990), considers that project management "is the art of directing and coordinating human and material resources throughout the life of a project using modern management techniques to achieve predefined objectives of scope, cost, time, quality and participant satisfaction.

3.1.3. Management by project :

Unlike project management, which is limited to defining objectives and managing resources, project management involves people working together and simultaneously who, in traditional organizations, would have worked separately one after the other (Raynal [29], 2003) . In this case, projects become tools and vectors for change, not only in the organization, but also in the management of people.

Management by project refers to the choice of managing a significant set of innovative activities in the form of a project, which must result in a specific product or service, delivered to an identified customer or user, within a given timeframe and at a fixed objective cost. Thus, according to AFNOR (standard X50-115), it is appropriate to speak of management by project when "organizations structure their organization and adapt their operating rules based on and around projects to be carried out" [30].

3.2. The project approach to management change

The project approach is an indispensable managerial approach for the success of any change project, whether organizational, human or technological.

It is often expected that cross-functionality will be put in place, that the various project actors will take the measure of their responsibilities and above all that the results targeted by the projects will be achieved. However, in order for these results to be achieved, the human and organizational context in which project management approach is developed or implemented must be prepared and meet specific requirements. This preparation consists not only in setting up formal organizational mechanisms such as steering committees, but also sometimes in making important cultural changes in the way of delegating and giving autonomy, without which the project actors cannot function.

Thus, on the human level, the project mode appears to be a powerful vector of change and mobilization of the organization's human potential. Several studies (Zannad [31] 1998, Leroy [32] 1994) have shown that project management approach makes it possible to empower individuals, increase their motivation, job satisfaction and involvement, enrich their management culture, improve cross-functional cooperation and facilitate the implementation of strategic orientations.

Consequently, being part of a project confers status, visibility, and a certain power. It means that one has been chosen, designated, or at least solicited. It is proof of a priori confidence (Boyer [33], 1999). Motivation will therefore be commensurate with the importance (priority, stakes) and perceived usefulness of the project. Because it is not without stakes, the project constitutes a factor of individual or collective motivation.

As a result, participating in a project contributes to strengthening both identity and social belonging. By conferring a role, responsibilities and a mission, the project has an identity function and, at the same time, an integrating function.

In addition, the project is a source of continuous learning for the organization's actors, where their knowledge increases as the project progresses. The transversal nature of the project also constitutes an opportunity for collective learning. It is a true interdisciplinary process that is not limited to a "soft collaboration" of several actors from different trades or professions: it involves confrontation, exchange of methods, concepts and points of view. According to LEROY, the project management approach allows people to learn by doing, to explore new fields, to confront old mental models with reality (LEROY [34], 1996).

This type of relationship ultimately favors a recombination of certain knowledge from the expertise of different professionals, integrated into a new framework of knowledge that is accessible and understandable by all participants in the same project. This is indeed a collective learning process. LARRASQUET [35] (1996) adds that the project is a source of hope, because it is forward-looking, frees intelligence, allows creativity to express itself and embraces levels of complexity and time scales that are manageable.

Thus, we can deduce that the project is adapted to a change process.

However, we note that the project mode is feared as a form of organization that generates instability and permanent questioning.

GRUNDY [36] (1993) identifies three pitfalls of a change project: an isolated change (without any link with other activities), an excessive bureaucratic burden and a lack of adaptation of the project to the type of organization. At this level, LEYBOURNE [37] (2006) emphasizes that the success of a change project depends on the adaptation of project management to the organizational framework.

Thus, the project is a vector of change. Nevertheless, this interest must be qualified by taking into account certain characteristics (adaptation to the context, culture of change...).

4. Research problem and methodology

We have just presented the object of our research, which is to study the phenomenon of the reform of the Moroccan education system. In this presentation, we have taken care to qualify the reform according to an organizational dimension (the reform project, the problems linked to the implementation of this project, the actors concerned by the project...). The results of our documentary analysis have essentially served to reframe the problem of the management of the reform of the Moroccan educational system by bringing out the managerial concerns of the M.N.E, particularly with regard to the choice of the managerial approach likely to guarantee the success of the reform of the Education and Training System (ETS). The research problem essentially poses the following questions:

How was the implementation of the project management approach within the framework of the strategic vision? And what evaluation can be given to this operation?

We then proceeded to confront our research problem with empirical reality. This step consisted in conducting a field survey with various actors who were directly or indirectly involved in the reform of the Moroccan education system.

To do this, we adopted a particular research approach, based on a hypothetical-deductive approach with an interpretative aim, applied to a qualitative research method (by semi-directive interviews).

Our methodological choice focused on the adoption of a deductive hypothetical approach which consists in the elaboration of research hypothesis in order to be confronted with the empirical reality.

These hypothesis come from a general observation made on the basis of several elements, namely our theoretical development of the problem and the feedback from previous ETS reforms. This observation consists in assuming the existence of a certain number of dysfunctions in the management strategy of the strategic vision "2015-2030". Thus, our general research hypothesis was as follows:

General Hypothesis: The project management approach adopted during the implementation of the strategic vision has experienced difficulties in its application.

Concerning the qualitative survey, our sample was essentially composed of M.N.E actors involved in the decision-making process related to the implementation of the strategic vision or who had experienced the preparatory work for the design of this reform (managers, middle office) and of resource persons likely to enrich our study with their testimonies (experts).

To confirm our research hypothesis, we conducted semi-directive interviews with our target population. The objective was to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon of the reform of the Moroccan education and training system through the different perceptions of the actors involved in the project.

The interviews were fully transcribed and analyzed using the thematic content analysis method.

In addition, we consulted documentary resources related to the reforms of the education and training system and, in particular, the strategic vision 2015-2030.

Thus, the documentary analysis combined with the analysis of the speeches made by the actors of the M.N.E allowed us to bring out the elements necessary to understand the management model of the strategic vision and the impact of these choices in the success or failure of this reform of the education and training system.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

The analysis of the data from the responses that emerged from our survey has made it possible to account for the role of the variables and parameters selected in this research in understanding the phenomenon of the reform of the education and training system, particularly at the managerial level. We also highlighted the different perceptions developed by the interviewees regarding the project management approach. Their explanations particularly helped us to better identify the problems and difficulties encountered during the strategic vision project studied.

The in-depth analysis of the results obtained allowed us to confirm our general hypothesis, to decipher certain practices and to decode certain discourses and behaviors. This corresponds to the mission of an interpretivist research that seeks to convey the message by interpreting it in the most rigorous way possible. This is why we have included the results in a synthetic framework in order to enhance their practical and managerial contributions.

Indeed, thanks to the introduction of the variable management by project in the analysis of the implementation of the strategic vision, we were able to evaluate the Project management approach adopted by the M.N.E during the implementation of this reform.

In addition, we chose to integrate the study of the following aspects into this variable:

- The appropriation of this new approach by the Education and Training System actors.
- The strategy for implementing this new approach, which includes the establishment of an appropriate organization for Project management approach and the choice of project teams responsible for its implementation.

The empirical study of this study has revealed shortcomings in the implementation of the project management approach. These shortcomings are mainly related to the promotion of this new approach among the actors concerned and to their awareness of the advantages of such an approach. Efforts to raise the awareness of M.N.E actors to the challenges of the project management approach could have guaranteed them a better appropriation of this new approach.

In analyzing the responses to the question concerning the changes brought about by the strategic vision of the 2015-2030 reform, particularly the implementation of the project management approach, we noted a certain similarity in the responses collected from our interviewed actors. Thus, the majority of respondents expressed a feeling of satisfaction with the idea of implementing this type of project management approach. Indeed, lever 23 of the strategic vision recommends that the levers of change be implemented in the form of projects as part of an integrated approach to reform [38].

However, most of the respondents deplored the application of this new approach in the field. Thus, a large number of respondents stated that the idea of introducing project management approach is a noble one, only that its application has not lived up to expectations. The implementation of this strategy has not been successful for several

reasons, notably the absence of a period of appropriation of this new approach by the S.E.F. actors, who are used to the old method. In addition, the respondents criticize the strategy for implementing this management method, regretting the lack of means to help the adoption of this new approach (technical tools, training, assistance, handholding, etc.).

In addition, the study of aspects related to the organizational change brought about by the reform of the Moroccan S.E.F. leads us to take an interest in the analysis of the organizational choices adopted by the Ministry.

Therefore, we focused on the choice of the organization dedicated to the implementation of the strategic vision 2015-2030 and the choice of the project teams in charge of executing the reform.

The feedback we received during our field survey allowed us to compare the difficulties encountered by the Ministry following the implementation of the functional organization, in parallel to the official one, and the process of designating the project teams in charge of implementing this reform.

5.1. The management by project training

Building the capacity of M.N.E. executives in the area of project management is a priority for the steering and monitoring system of education system projects.

Within the framework of the 2015-2030 strategic vision, we have identified, through the testimony of the actors interviewed, a certain number of training actions for the benefit of project team members (at the central, regional and provincial levels). These actions allowed for the sensitization of target actors to the concepts and good practices of project management, to the applied concepts of planning, deployment and maintenance of a project management system. In addition, these training activities for the members of the project teams in charge of implementing the strategic vision aimed to raise awareness of the basic concepts of project management and especially of the deployment of a project management repository at the level of the M.N.E.

The following table illustrates the opinions of the actors interviewed concerning the training actions carried out within the framework of the strategic vision 2015-2030.

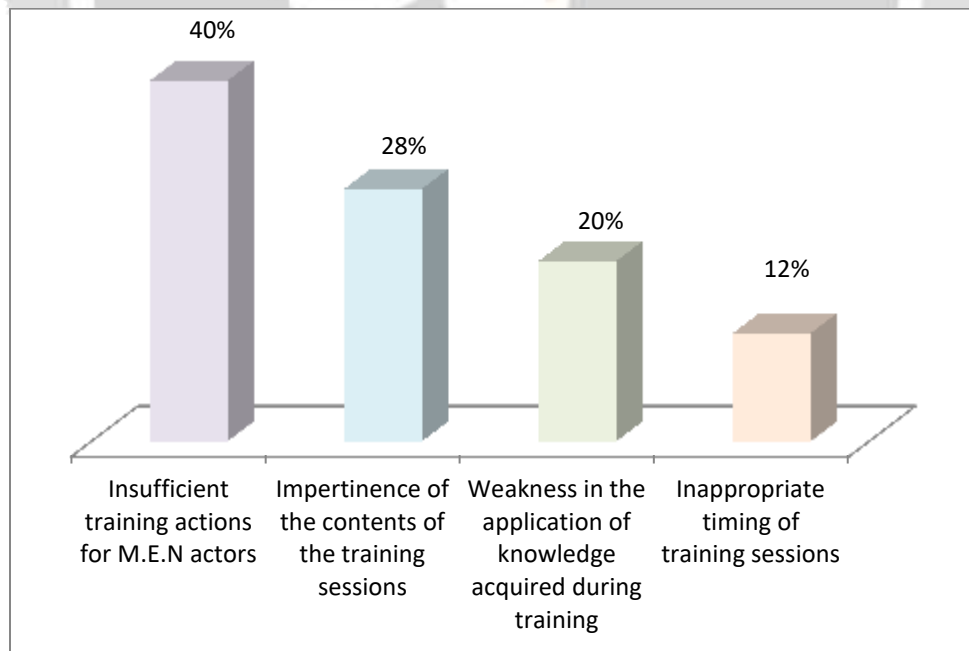


Chart -1: Training actions related to the strategic vision

5.2. - Choosing the organization dedicated to managing the reform

We have previously discussed the characteristics of project management approach, particularly the aspect that concerns the establishment of an appropriate organization for project management. In this context, LEROY [39] (1996) indicated that any project requires the establishment of a temporary organization, for a determined duration and a specific objective. He added that management by project transcends the hierarchical structures of the organization, which corresponds to the approach to the design and implementation of a new temporary organization.

In other words, each project is unique and therefore cannot be managed through existing hierarchies or functional units. Therefore, the success of the change is primarily dependent on the construction of a good project team. This team can be assembled internally or by bringing in people from other backgrounds (ministries, administrations, private sector). Teams of consultants can also be used.

The composition of project teams raises questions about the intellectual training of its members. It also raises the question of its relationship with the usual organizational chart of the organization to be changed. Among the alternatives answered in the context of "project mode", the implementation of a functional organization chart seems to be preferred [40].

We wanted to collect the opinions of our respondents concerning the choice of the M.N.E. leaders to set up a functional organization dedicated to the strategic vision.

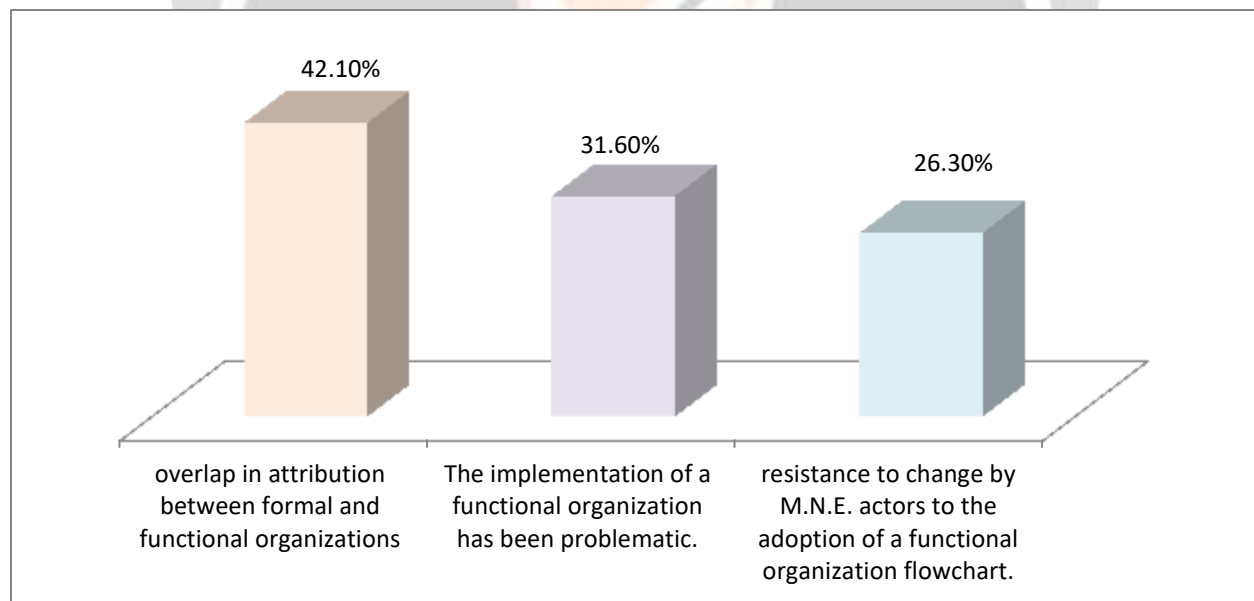


Chart -2: choice of the organization dedicated to the implementation of the strategic vision

In the context of the recommendations of the strategic vision for the operationalization of its projects, the effectiveness of change management depends on the implementation of a certain number of operationalization mechanisms. Indeed, the strategic vision recommends the development of institutional and management capacities and the establishment of organizational mechanisms to operationalize programs and projects.

In the field, what emerged most from the interviews conducted with our target population was the satisfaction of our respondents with the idea of adopting a functional organization dedicated to the implementation of the strategic vision. However, they considered that it was the way to do it that was lacking.

Indeed, Middle Office Central N°2 considers that: "The functional organization proposed for the implementation of the 2015-2030 strategic vision was relevant, but it was resisted by the Ministry's actors because of the non-institutionalization of this new organization (law, decree, ministerial note...)". In the same vein, Middle Office N°4 states: "The administrative structure at the Ministry level was not adequate to implement the strategic vision. It was therefore decided to create (temporary) functional directorates to ensure effective implementation of this reform. We should have adopted a new official organizational chart that could support the changes brought about by the reform.

In this regard, Provincial Manager No. 1 states: "There was not enough time for the actors in the S.E.F. to take ownership of this new organization.

On the other hand, project management approach also provides a response to the organization's need for transversality (GRASSET, 1996). Indeed, this transversality is concretized by the multidisciplinary character of the organization and its structure based on the competences resulting from the various responsibilities and various levels. It is a matter of bringing together the best elements and the best conditions to carry out a given project. The principle is that by following this management method, the usual decision-making circuits are shortened and the focus is entirely on achieving the objectives. Some respondents raised the difficulties linked to this transversality in terms of overlapping responsibilities and non-acceptance of this newcomer by the actors of the M.N.E. On this subject, Central Manager N°3 confided to us that: "Several categories existed within the framework of the strategic vision: Entities dedicated to this reform (functional directions) and official entities that were assigned additional tasks on top of their daily ones. However, the designated project teams were not motivated, because there were no mission letters for their actors. He adds: "The planned organization was not implemented administratively and functionally. We ended up keeping the same existing organization, and in the end, the official real organization chart (which is too flattened) dominated the functional one.

Similarly, Central Manager No. 5 raised the problem of overlap between the official and functional entities of M.N.E during the implementation of the strategic vision projects. It thus announces that:

"The establishment of a functional organization dedicated to the strategic vision projects has resulted in overlaps in the attributions of some central directorates (official and functional), which has led to conflicts between these structures."

Consequently, Ex-Responsible N°1 considers that this approach of adopting a functional organization chart in addition to the official one created resistance to change within the actors of the M.N.E "The new management approach based on the project mode was sabotaged by the actors of the S.E.F., because there was not enough time to accept this new organization".

5.3. Selection of project teams

Within the framework of the levers of the strategic vision, it is necessary to endow human resources with high competences, resulting from a rigorous selection of those in charge of educational affairs and supported by devices and structures capable of instilling the dynamics of change desired within the framework of deconcentration, decentralization.

This mobilization of the internal competences of the M.N.E is dependent on developing the management capacities of these competences, within the framework of an integrated project of renovation of educational governance.

In addition to the implementation of the strategic vision projects, these project teams are responsible for accompanying the change, and work on the sensitization and psychological and moral support components for the actors who participate or pilot the change generated by this reform.

The composition of the project teams, according to the majority of the interviewees, followed a standard pattern, in a way, by using the internal skills of the M.N.E

This choice of mobilizing internal skills and people from the trade was motivated by the possibility of capitalizing on the knowledge that the latter have.

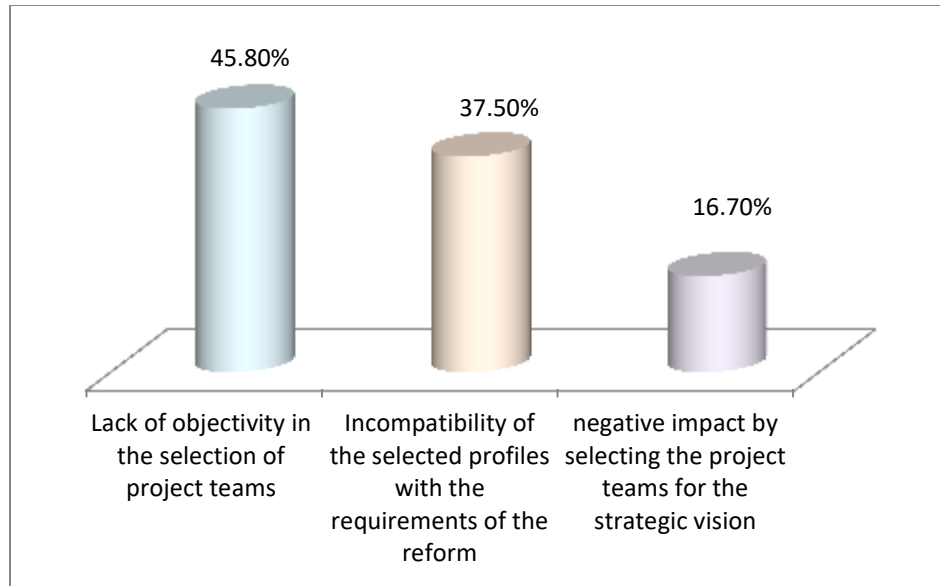


Chart -3: Choice of project teams

However, the relevance of the choice of these competencies was probably criticized by a significant portion of the interviewees. With regard to this observation, External No. 2 indicated that: "The skills of the actors were not taken into consideration when the project teams were chosen. Subjective choices were made, which had a negative impact on the implementation of the strategic vision. For example, the choice of national coordinators was not made objectively (without a call for applications and without clear selection criteria).

Central Manager N°3 also considers that the choice did not follow a coherent and rational logic. He tells that: "There were automatic choices of project directors among the central directors. The appointments were not rational. The choice of national coordinators was made either by interview or directly without interview by the project directors. The choice of regional coordinators was made internally, without a call for applications.

For his part, Central Manager No. 1 reveals that the choice of project teams was a risk factor for the success of the strategic vision, and that it was made in haste, due to lack of time. He states: "This choice was a handicap for the reform in question, because qualified skills in the system were neglected and a non-objective choice was made under the pressure of urgency.

Also, Central Manager N°8 testifies: "The choice of actors likely to implement the strategic vision was impertinent, the profiles chosen are not compatible with the requirements of the reform".

In addition, some respondents emphasized the impertinent choice of the project team leader. The strategic vision calls for effective leadership based on good governance.

Indeed, Middle Office Central No. 2 tells us that this type of profile had to be chosen carefully: "The leader chosen was not successful because his or her profile is not suited to a system such as education and training. He is an external element to the S.E.F., who does not know much about the context of this system".

Again, Middle Office N°3 assured us that the choice of people mobilized in the implementation of the strategic vision was not successful. He said, "The choice of actors was not relevant. The proof is that the majority of the actors chosen (especially in the regions) did not assimilate the contours and substance of the strategic vision until one to two years after its launch. This observation, according to the same interviewee, reveals the low level of skills involved in the projects of the strategic vision, skills that are not adequate with the requirements of this reform project of the Moroccan S.E.F.: "The selected actors were overwhelmed by the qualitative requirements of the strategic vision 2015-2030.

We note from these testimonies that despite the fact that the M.N.E drew on internal skills to form the project teams responsible for implementing the 2015-2030 strategic vision, the choices of people were not always successful. The quality/position ratio was not respected and the calls for applications concerned only a tiny fraction of the open positions (Project Management Office team, certain national and regional coordinators, etc.). It was judicious to make these choices among key players and people who are drivers and open to change. They do not necessarily represent the heads of the departments. They had to have a good command of their job and know enough about the workings of the S.E.F. to bring their expertise and experience to bear. Applications should also be open to new recruits in the system so that they can bring vivacity and dynamism.

6. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

If the successful implementation of the 2015-2030 strategic vision depended on the prerequisite of adopting a project management approach, we wondered whether M.N.E had prepared the necessary conditions for the implementation of this new approach.

Indeed, this is a profound transformation combining responsibility, accountability, impregnation of the spirit of change and renovation of the modes and methodology of action and management.

Faced with this far-reaching change, the testimony of our respondents, while recognizing the importance of this management mode, tells us of the dissatisfaction of the S.E.F. actors with the way the M.N.E has implemented this managerial change.

The criticisms concerned first of all the preparatory phase which had to arrange the means and mechanisms likely to support the new organization called by project.

The criticisms were also directed at the management method adopted during the implementation of the 2015-2030 strategic vision. This transformation was a major change for M.N.E that had to be approached with caution. On the other hand, we note that the project approach was adopted and implemented in haste, giving way to resistance movements on the part of the S.E.F. actors. Indeed, the preparatory phase that was supposed to set up the means and mechanisms likely to support the new so-called project-based organization was missed, and the actors' awareness of this new approach was not sufficient to guarantee acceptance of the change in their usual management mode and, above all, to legitimize the functional project management structure that was put in place.

Without forgetting, of course, the fact that the functional organization put in place to ensure a certain fluidity in the execution of the vision projects was not institutionalized, thus creating overlaps between the official structures (directorates, divisions, services) and functional structures (project directorates, etc.).

It is in this perspective that management by project could be accepted by all and become a concrete reality consistent with the objectives and organizational contexts of M.N.E.

Another negative point that taints the project management approach adopted by the Ministry is the designation of the leader and the project teams in charge of the implementation of the ETS reform. This approach did not follow a certain logic in the recruitment of the members of these teams, thus generating feelings of exclusion among the other actors who reacted negatively with movements of resistance to change.

Indeed, with the exception of certain central coordinators and members of the technical monitoring team, who were subject to a careful selection procedure, the appointment of project directors was automatic without any competition for these positions of highest responsibility (top managers). These positions of responsibility, which should be open to anyone with the required skills (M.N.E staff, external staff, candidates from the public or private sector, etc.), were granted only to Ministry officials, and more precisely to central directors. Most of them were therefore appointed through this "express" procedure, which did not fail to create inequitable situations and to cause frustration.

Consequently, the results obtained during our field research allow us to support the admissibility of our research hypothesis considering the existence of defects in the application of the project management approach during the implementation of the projects of the strategic vision 2015-2030.

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our theoretical study has shown that the adoption of the new project management approach ensures optimal management of the reform and achieves greater efficiency and performance for the organizations.

By adopting this new approach, public organizations, particularly educational ones, hope to accompany the reforms they undertake with a new management mode based on results, combining responsibility and accountability.

Their objective is to renovate the modes and methodology of action and management, not only at the central level, but also at the regional and local levels.

It is an approach where projects are the normal mode of operation of the organization. This management style is based on a project approach organization where people work together and simultaneously. This is in contrast to the traditional management approach where we work separately, one after the other.

This choice had to be accompanied by a qualification project aimed at developing the management capacities of the actors, within the framework of an integrated project for the renovation of educational governance.

The project mode thus becomes a tool and a vector for change.

The results of our field investigation have informed us of the existence of certain dysfunctions at the level of the functional organization set up and the choice of project teams in charge of implementing the projects of the strategic vision.

In fact, according to these results, it turned out that the structure adopted for the implementation of this reform had shortcomings. This specific structure was superimposed on the official structure of the organization, without any prior homogenization, coordination and management of this major change. This was not done by those in charge of the M.N.E due to a lack of "time", which led to overlaps between the two existing structures and resistance to change on the part of the actors of the education and training system.

It is therefore recommended at this stage to proceed gradually and to allocate more time to this operation of setting up the project-based organization. This allows the M.N.E to accompany the actors of the official organization during the implementation of this major change, thus avoiding the risks of resistance and reluctance towards management by project.

This type of change must be conceived as a sustainable process by adopting a continuous dynamic of renewal and a rhythm that is bearable by the actors in the education and training system.

Also, the transition from management by means to management by results essentially affects working methods, roles, responsibilities, relations between actors, decision-making processes, behaviors, values, etc.

At this level, it is essential to accompany this type of change with an effective and coherent change management strategy that allows the target vision to be communicated to the actors concerned by the change. This strategy must be based on anticipating possible resistance to change, powerful and persuasive leadership to promote this change, a relevant communication strategy and sufficient and adequate training and upgrading.

On the other hand, the successful implementation of project management approach in the education system depends on the quality of the project teams in charge of leading and promoting this change among the other actors of the system.

However, the results of the investigation we have carried out have revealed managerial shortcomings in the project teams selected for this new approach. They also reveal a certain lack of professionalism in the relationships between actors.

Indeed, the choice of the members of the project teams is decisive insofar as they are called upon to have a clear and coherent vision of their missions in this new management mode. Taking charge of this mission thus requires adequate profiles of motivated and competent managers who are aware of the heavy task they have been assigned.

A striking observation has emerged following the appointment of managers or directors of strategic vision projects. This category of "Top manager", which is supposed to spread a new managerial culture within the M.N.E, was appointed without a clear and justified recruitment procedure. This procedure, which is likely to guarantee a certain equality of opportunity for access to top management positions, has been neglected.

We therefore recommend that a procedure for appointing members of the project teams be launched both internally and on the external job market. This would tend to encourage the most competent candidates to apply and to demonstrate their leadership skills, in terms of communication, change management, understanding of the context, etc.

On the other hand, the appointments of project managers and teams have not been subject to fixed-term mandates with a clear mention of the remuneration and the objectives to be reached. These remunerations should be defined according to the performance and results of the evaluation of each actor, and not according to the position held.

In conclusion, the project management approach adopted by the M.N.E to implement the 2015-2030 strategic vision was deficient in the setting up of the functional organization and in the choice of the project teams in charge of implementing this major reform.

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