



LINKING PROJECT MANAGER'S COMPETENCES DEVELOPMENT AND INTENTIONAL CHANGE

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Linking project manager's competences development and intentional change

Introduction

Literature review

- Competence evaluation
- Intentional change

Research project

- Description and objectives
- Research methodology

Results and impact

- Results
- Implementation/exploitation

Conclusions

- Competences and competence evaluations are **strategic issues in project business and higher education**
- Competences are often **conceptualized**:
 - as the underlying characteristics of the individual
 - as a combination of skills, knowledge and attitudes.
- **In this paper** competences refer to traits, knowledge, skills, experience and values that an individual needs to accomplish his or her tasks
- Competences -> **performance** and intentional change
- **Higher education** and competence development:
 - competence evaluation and development
 - an in-depth integration of competences among the existing/traditional educational models



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- Competences are **defined** as behaviour models (Roberts, 1997) or as hidden characteristics of personality with an effect on the performance at work (Spencer and Spencer, 1993)
- The **application** utilized in this research focuses on the assessment of the most essential and critical professional competencies of Project Managers' (Liikamaa et al., 2003).
- **Learning and knowledge sharing** appear as the most important capability that a project-based firm should have (Hawk and Artto, 1999; Prencipe and Tell, 2001; Ruuska, 2005; Maqsood et al., 2006)



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• **Sustainable behavioural change is intentional.**

The process of intentional change is described by Boyatzis, 1999, 2001; Goleman et al., 2002

- It is important to note that often an intentional change process must begin with a person wanting to change. This desire may not be in their consciousness or even within the scope of their self-awareness

• *Boyatzis' five discoveries of intentional change theory.*

The change process actually involves a sequence of discontinuities, called discoveries, which function as an iterative cycle in producing the sustainable change at the individual level.

- 1) the ideal self and a personal vision; ■ 2) the real self and its comparison to the ideal self resulting in an assessment of one's strengths and weaknesses, in a sense a personal balance sheet; ■ 3) a learning agenda and plan; ■ 4) experimentation and practice with the new behaviour, thoughts, feelings, or perceptions; ■ 5) trusting, or resonant relationships that enable a person to experience and process each discovery in the process.



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- 1st objective: the assessment of project managers' **generic and specific competencies** through the process of self-evaluation. Propose a measure for the intentional change and its drivers
- 2nd objective: the analysis, in an academic context, of the deployment of social and personal competences with the main and most generic application of improving teaching quality in order to configure a student-centred teaching/learning. **Students** are target of not just scientific knowledge and career subject, but also competences, having a high demand generated by employers
- 3rd objective: the analysis, in business context, of **experienced project managers** in order to improve our knowledge on business settings.



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- The application used, evaluates the competences of the work role of the project manager by means of **120 statements** related to the individuals' every day work.
- It requests the self-evaluation of the current competence level and the target level desired by the respondent, identifying the possible **creative tension**
- The results can be visualized in detail at the level of **30 competences**, grouped in 6 competence groups than can be further classified as personal or social main groups of competences

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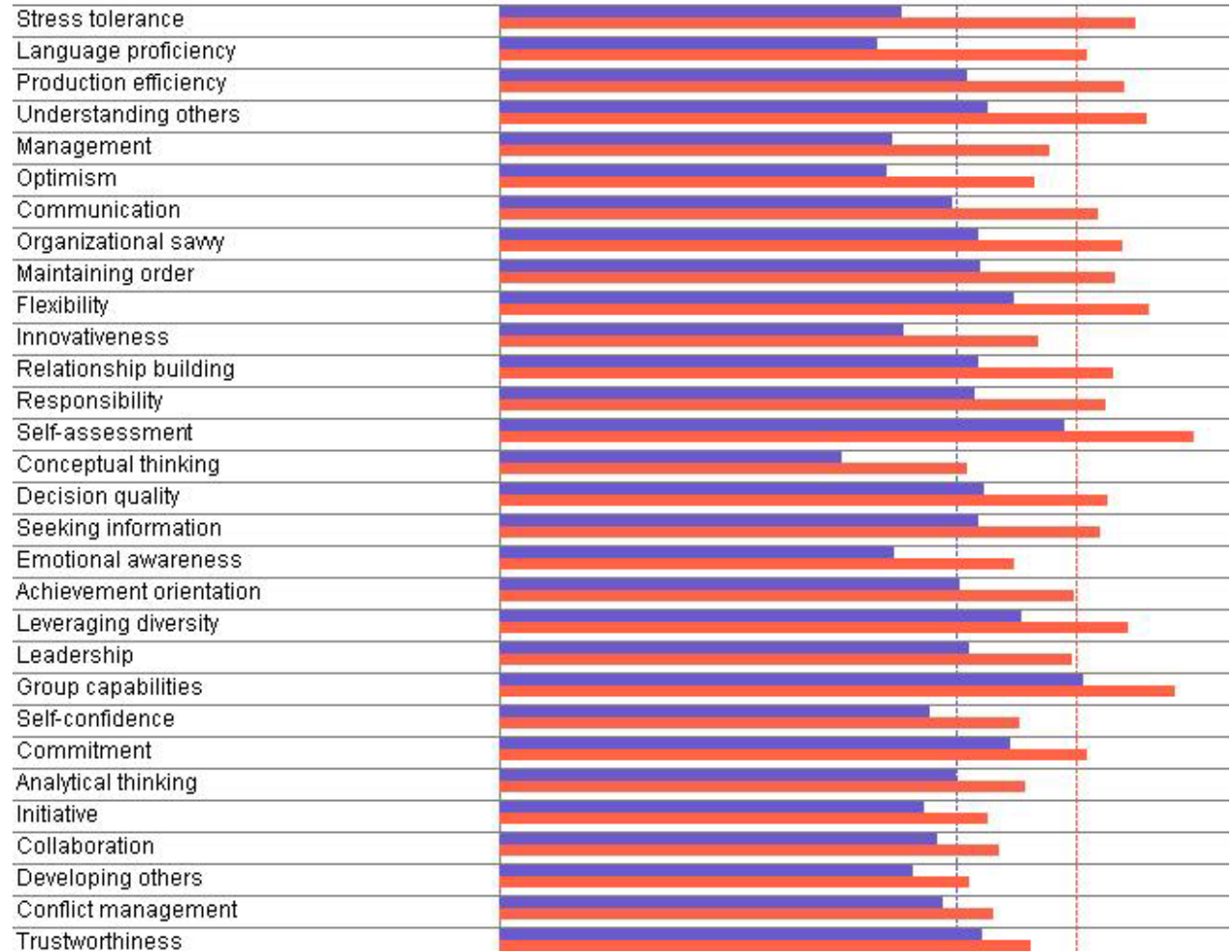
Conclusions

- Part of the study was conducted during 2009 with students at the University of Girona, *Spain*.
 - **Students** were on their 4th year of studies.
 - They were asked to consider themselves as project managers of their learning career.
 - 14 students rolled in Industrial Engineering studies completed the evaluation.
- During 2007 another evaluation was conducted in *Finland* for competence assessment among **experienced project managers from industry** (businesses in metal industry).
 - The method utilized was the same as in Spain.
 - 14 **project managers** were chosen with an age scale varying from 29 to 55. Participants had a considerable working experience, 5 to 25 Years.



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- Results for students, as project managers



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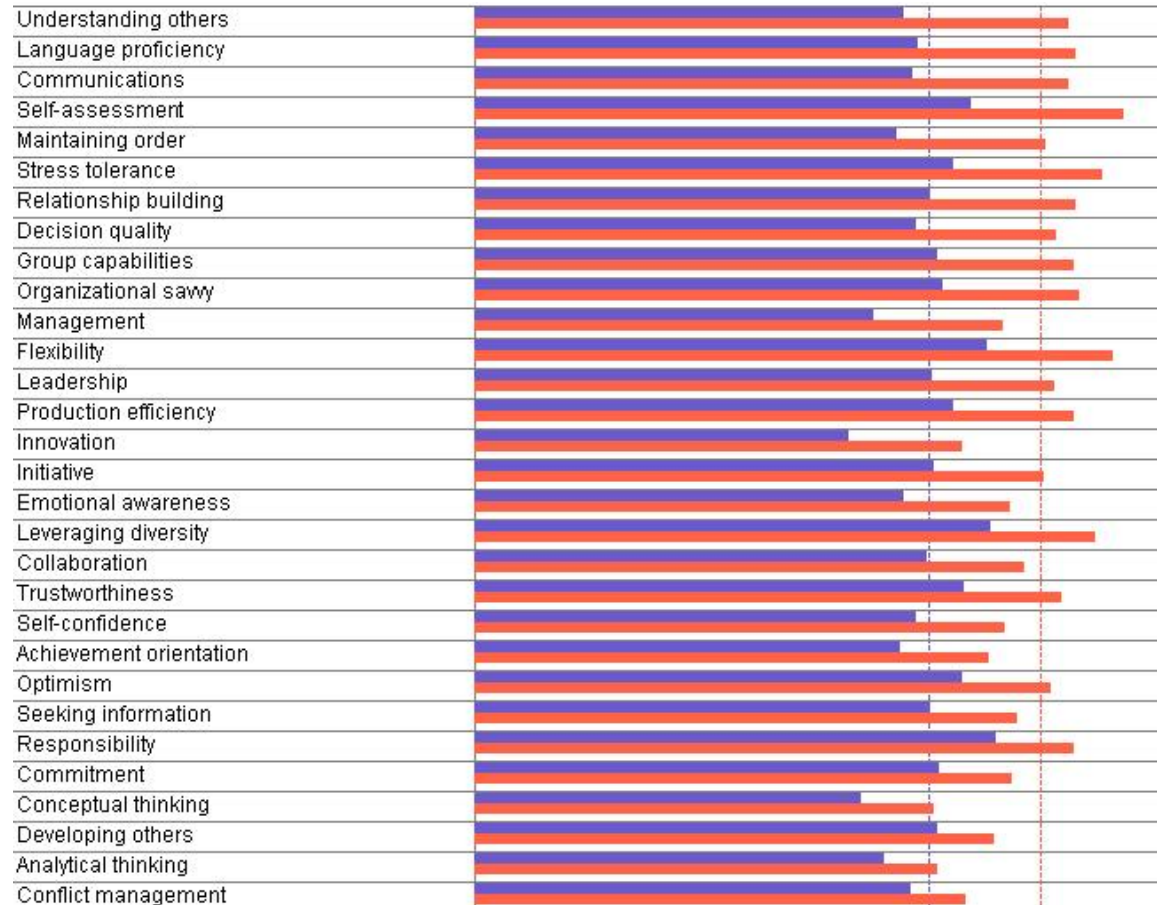
■ Implementation/exploitation

Conclusions

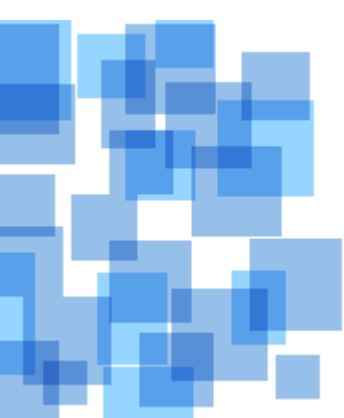


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• Results for experienced project managers

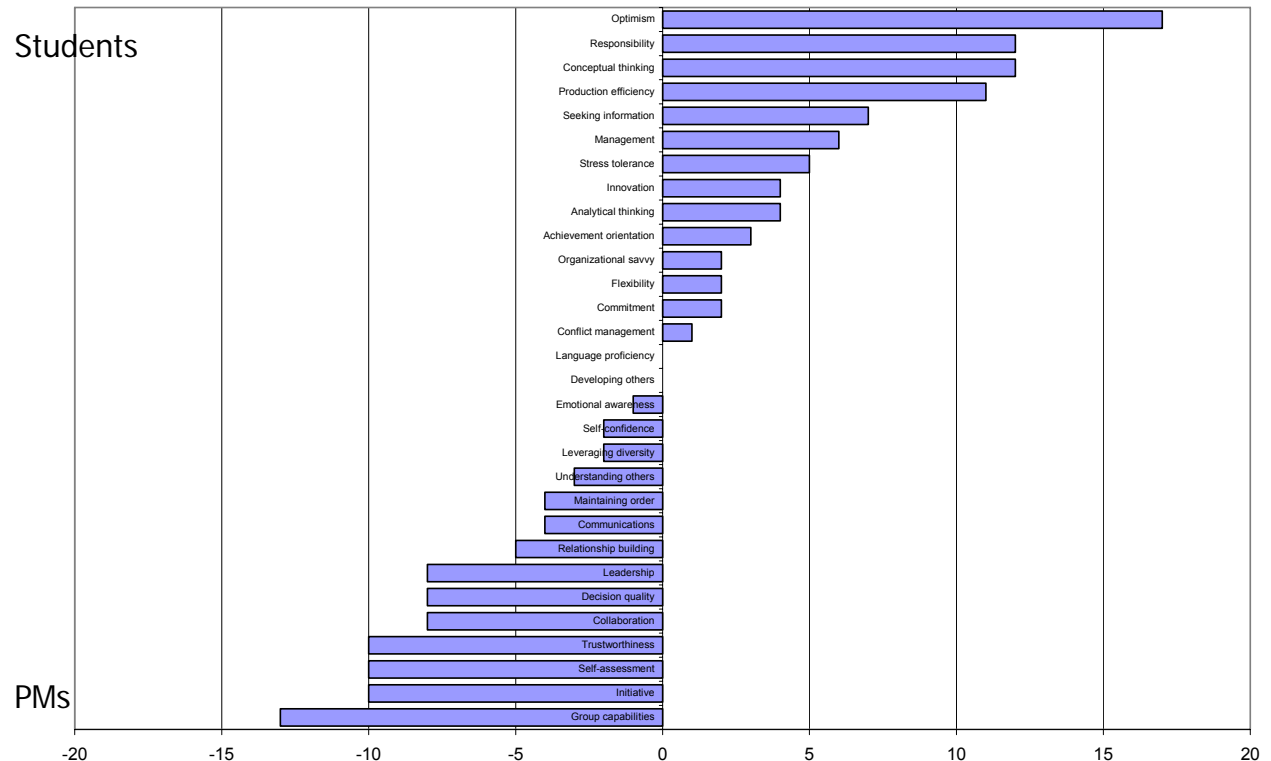


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• Competence differentials for ST to experienced PMs



The centre of the plot shows the commonalities. We highlight **emotional awareness** (ability to recognize, understand and analyse one's own feelings), **developing others** (noticing other peoples' development needs and promoting their capabilities), **language proficiency** (ability and courage to use foreign languages), and **conflict management** (conciliating and settling of disagreements) as those competences that both students and project managers ranks as important for development. The top extreme items are those more important for students (**optimism** followed by **responsibility** and **conceptual thinking**).



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- The results provided by the self-evaluation give valuable information for **individuals, organizations and management**
- The implementation and exploitation of competence development is highly **context dependent**. In academic settings such evaluation is relatively recent and the competence topic is one step behind business. Therefore, comparing students acting as project managers to experienced project managers makes much sense from the perspective of a field acting as main HR supplier for another, namely academia to business.
- Competence **standardization and regular monitoring in university** settings is far from the degree of such in businesses where the habitual way of working is often by the means of projects

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- Competence evaluation and development is in the spotlight of academia, business and administration, areas where project-based work organization is equally habitual. Still, the **degree of standardization and monitoring** is unbalanced
- Universities, as main work force provider for the business sector, are main actors in the knowledge society where businesses are the ultimate innovators and wealth generators. Each time more, they have high expectations in terms of quality of the education system. One possible way to **create synergies** between the two is through project management.
- The proposed methodology shows **extremes and commonalities for academia and business** in terms of perceived development needs using a sample of students acting as project managers and another sample of experienced project managers.
- Further development and special attention should be centred to a more **in-depth integration of project management competence development and evaluation** in the traditional teaching/learning system.



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Thank you for your attention!

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