Group-based Assessments – A Tool to Improve Job-readiness of Project Management Graduates

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Why Is Project Management Important?

Tool for creating economic value, fostering competitive advantage and generating business benefits

PM methods and strategies reduced risks, cut costs and improved success rates

Alignment between PM and business strategy enhances the chances

60% of senior executives said building a strong PM discipline is a top-three priority for their companies

80 % of global executives believed having PM helped them remain competitive during the recession

90% of global senior executives ranked PM methods as either critical or somewhat important to delivering successful projects

PMI (2010)

Project Success

Perceived in different ways by all stakeholders

⇩

No conclusive evidence or common agreement

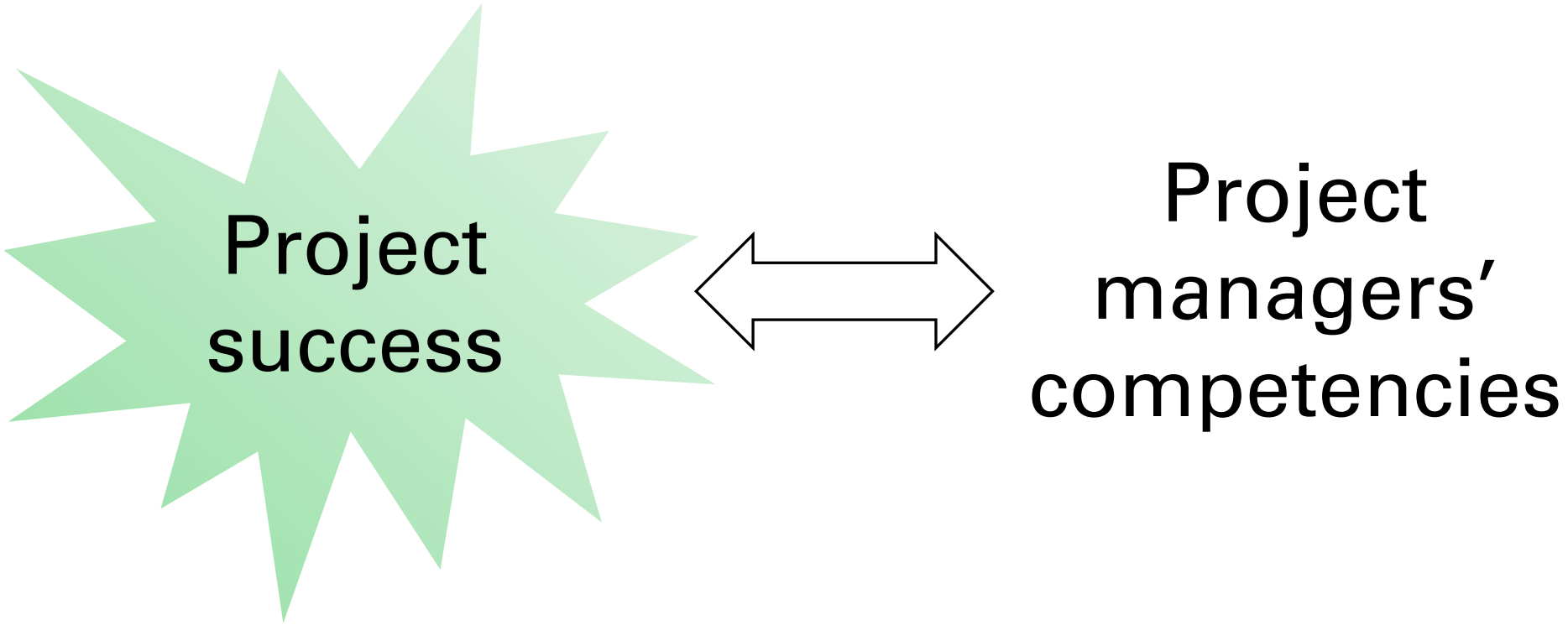
⇩

A lack of consensus regarding the criteria by which success is evaluated

650 project managers' opinions - achieving project success is undoubtedly more difficult and far more complex than simply meet the "iron triangle" criteria.

Fernandes et al. (2014); Gomes and Romão (2016)

Project Success and Project Managers' competencies



Magano et al. (2022)

Definitions of Competencies

A bundle of skills and technologies that enables companies to provide benefits

Ability of an individual, a team, or a company to mobilize and combine resources to implement an activity in a situation

Three dimensions of competence: cognitive, functional, and social-knowledge

Two perspectives on competence: the theoretical and the operational

Combination of knowledge, skill, and attitude (KSA)

Hamel and Prahalad (1994); Le Deist, F.D.; Winterton (2005); Loufrani-Fedida and Missonier (2015)

Project Managers' Competencies

A mix of **contextual, technical and behavioural** competencies

Six dimensions: industry-specific and generic skills, project management knowledge and expertise, (senior) managerial skills, (positive) personal traits, project management methodology experience, and professional qualifications and risk management

Three main areas: the context, the project management tools, and techniques and the human aspect

58 project management competencies divided into four clusters competencies: processes, personal, technical, and context and business

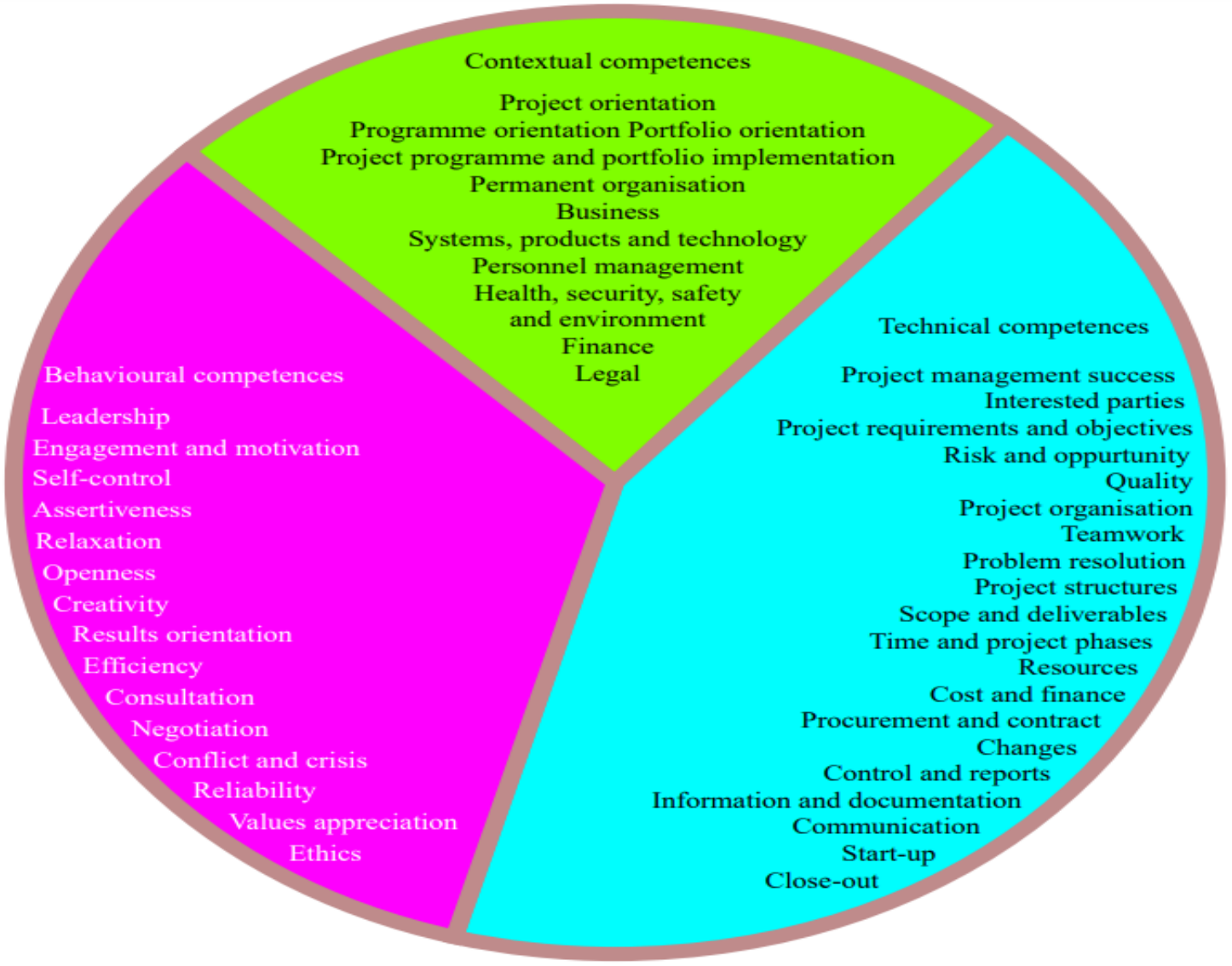
81 competencies divided across 11 dimensions: influencing, communication, emotional, contextual, management, cognitive skills, professionalism, knowledge and experience, project management knowledge, and personal skills and attributes

Brière et al. (2015); Chipulu et al. (2013); Horváth (2019); Rezende & Blackwell (2019); Takey and de Carvalho (2015)

Competencies Framework

- "Project Management Competency Development Framework" (Cartwright, 2008)

- "APM Competence Framework" (The Association for Project Management Competence Framework, 2015)


Contextual competences
Project orientation
Programme orientation Portfolio orientation
Project programme and portfolio implementation
Permanent organisation
Business
Systems, products and technology
Personnel management
Health, security, safety
and environment
Finance
Legal
Technical competences
Project management success
Interested parties
Project requirements and objectives
Risk and oppurtunity
Quality
Project organisation
Teamwork
Problem resolution
Project structures
Scope and deliverables
Time and project phases
Resources
Cost and finance
Procurement and contract
Changes
Control and reports
Information and documentation
Communication
Start-up
Close-out
Behavioural competences
Leadership
Engagement and motivation
Self-control
Assertiveness
Relaxation
Openness
Creativity
Results orientation
Efficiency
Consultation
Negotiation
Conflict and crisis
Reliability
Values appreciation
Ethics

IPMA (2006)

Hard & Soft Skills

- Generally refer to processes, procedures, tools and techniques
- Hard skills are important for planning and control

- "Soft" skills refer to dealing with human issues, i.e. the "people" part of the project.
- Soft skills (dealing with people)
- Teamwork
- Cognitive skill
- Leadership and communication skills
- Motivation, delegation, ownership and sense of achievement;
- Responsibility, authority and delegation
- Trust in his team and delegate work

Balance and optimize the use of these skills

Focus on Hard Skills

Hard skills are not enough!

Mere hard skills (discipline-specific and technically oriented)

→

Soft skills, which are interpersonally related

Human Skills and PM

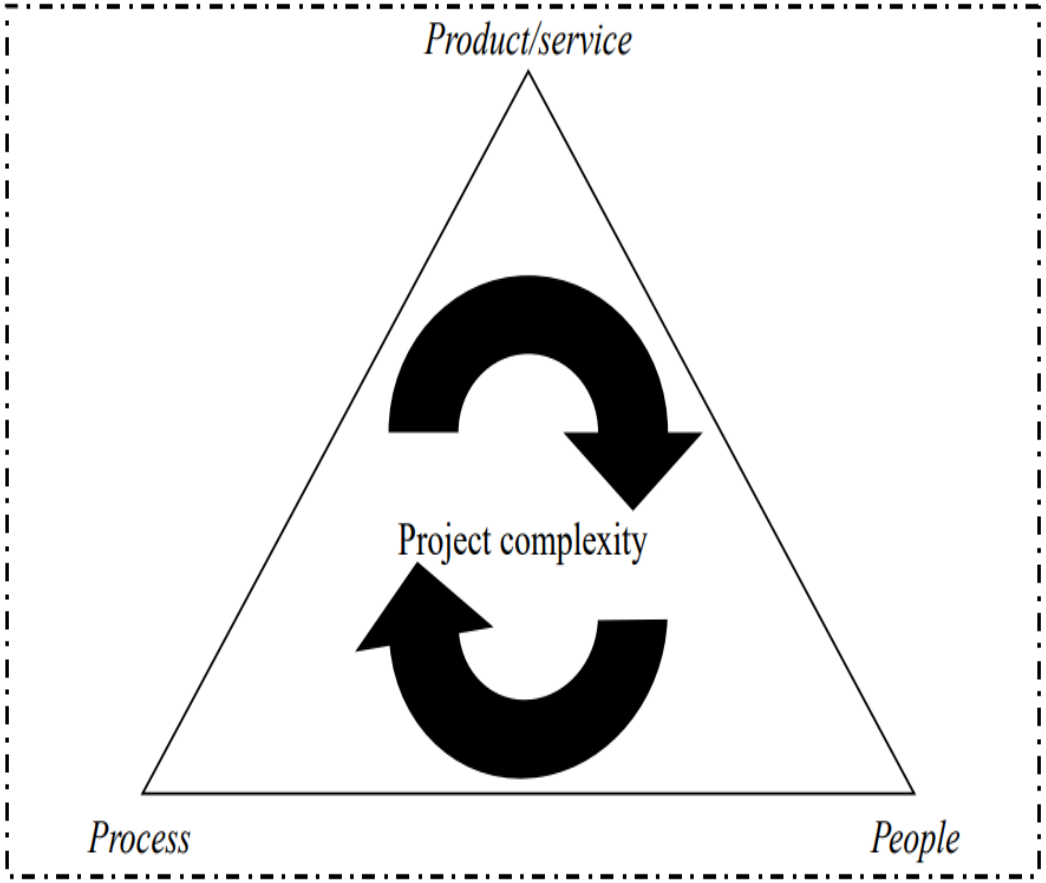
- Human skills of project managers have the greatest influence on PM practices and technical skills the least.

- Project leadership requires more than just technical competence.

Human skills and PM

90-95 % of performance issues annually related to soft skills

50% strategy and understanding of dynamic environment, 40% management and only 10% technical applications

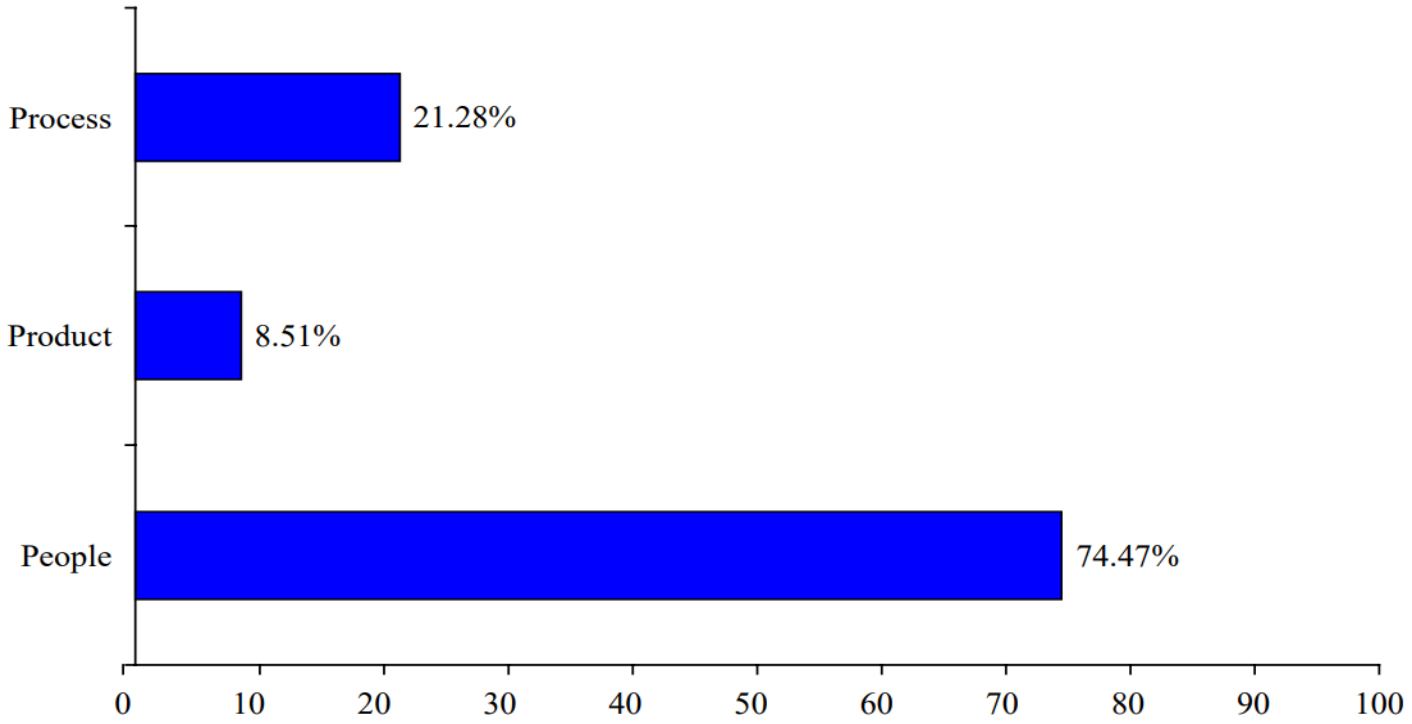


"a project which ***involves a lot of people'",*** "many ***different people*** with different skills",

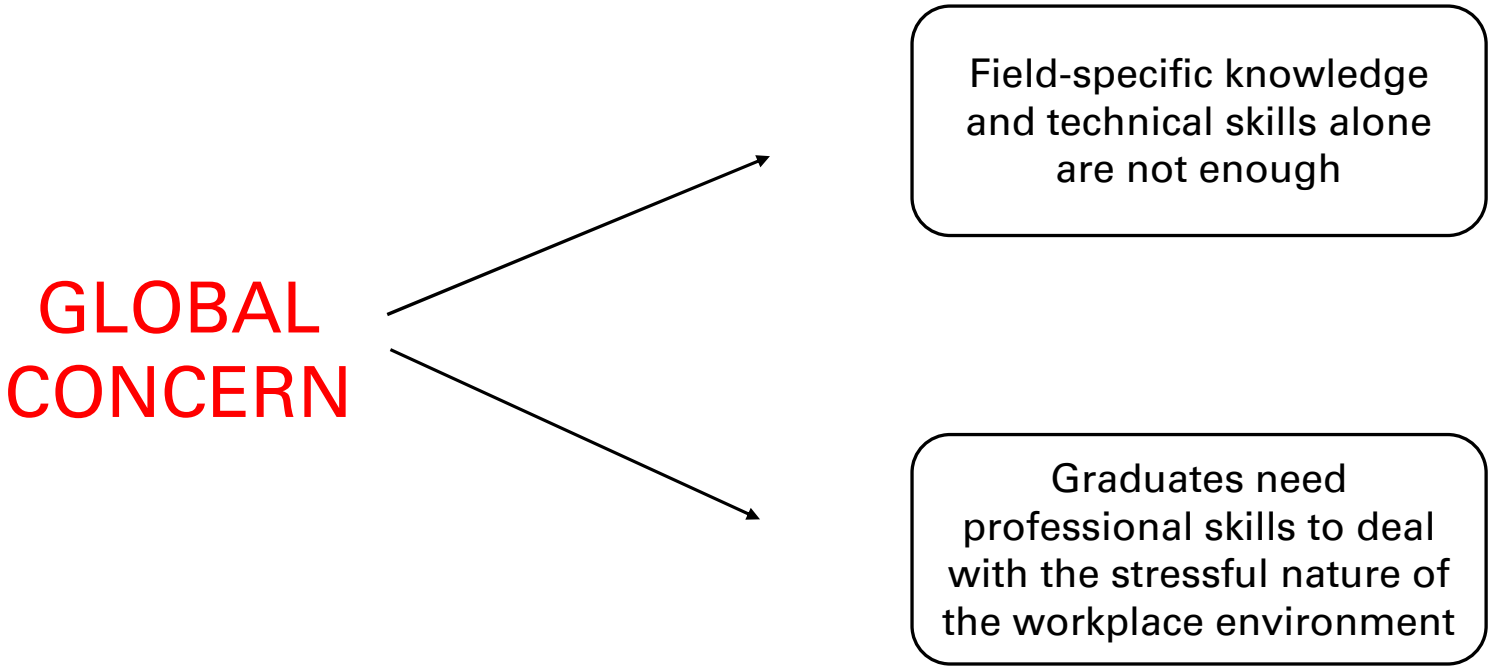
"***variety of people*** in terms of skills and experience", multidisciplinary, multi-national, multi-site and ***a lot of stakeholders***, many functional cross-over, i.e. all related to dealing with ***many people*** with multidisciplinary background

The variety and number of teams, virtual teams and location of teams were the other terms used to define complex project, which again ***imply people.***

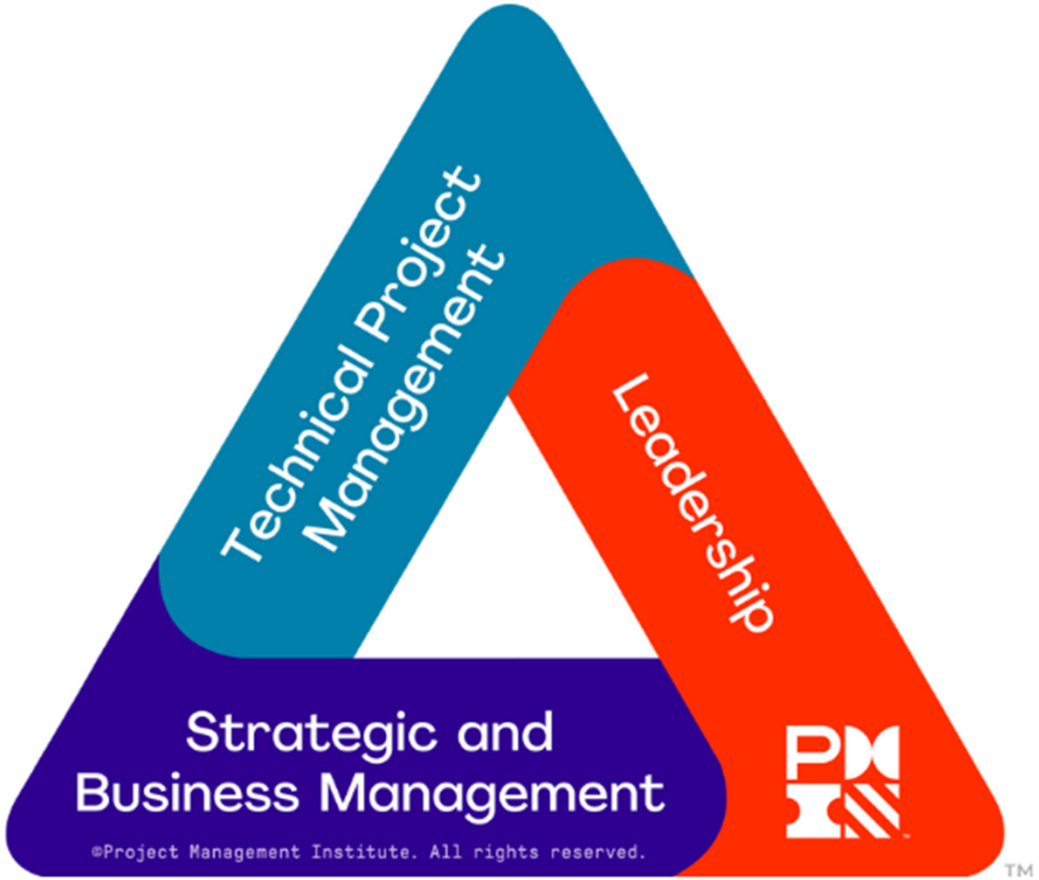
Project Complexity



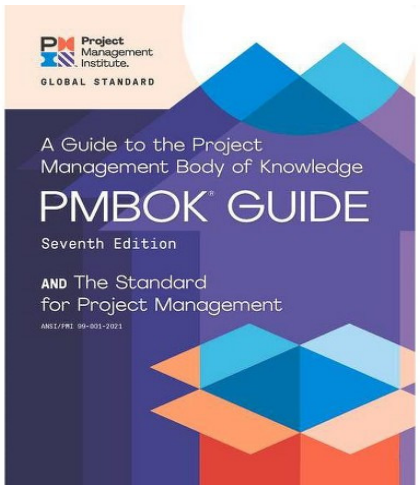
PM Graduates' Preparation



PMI Talent Triangle



University Education on PM

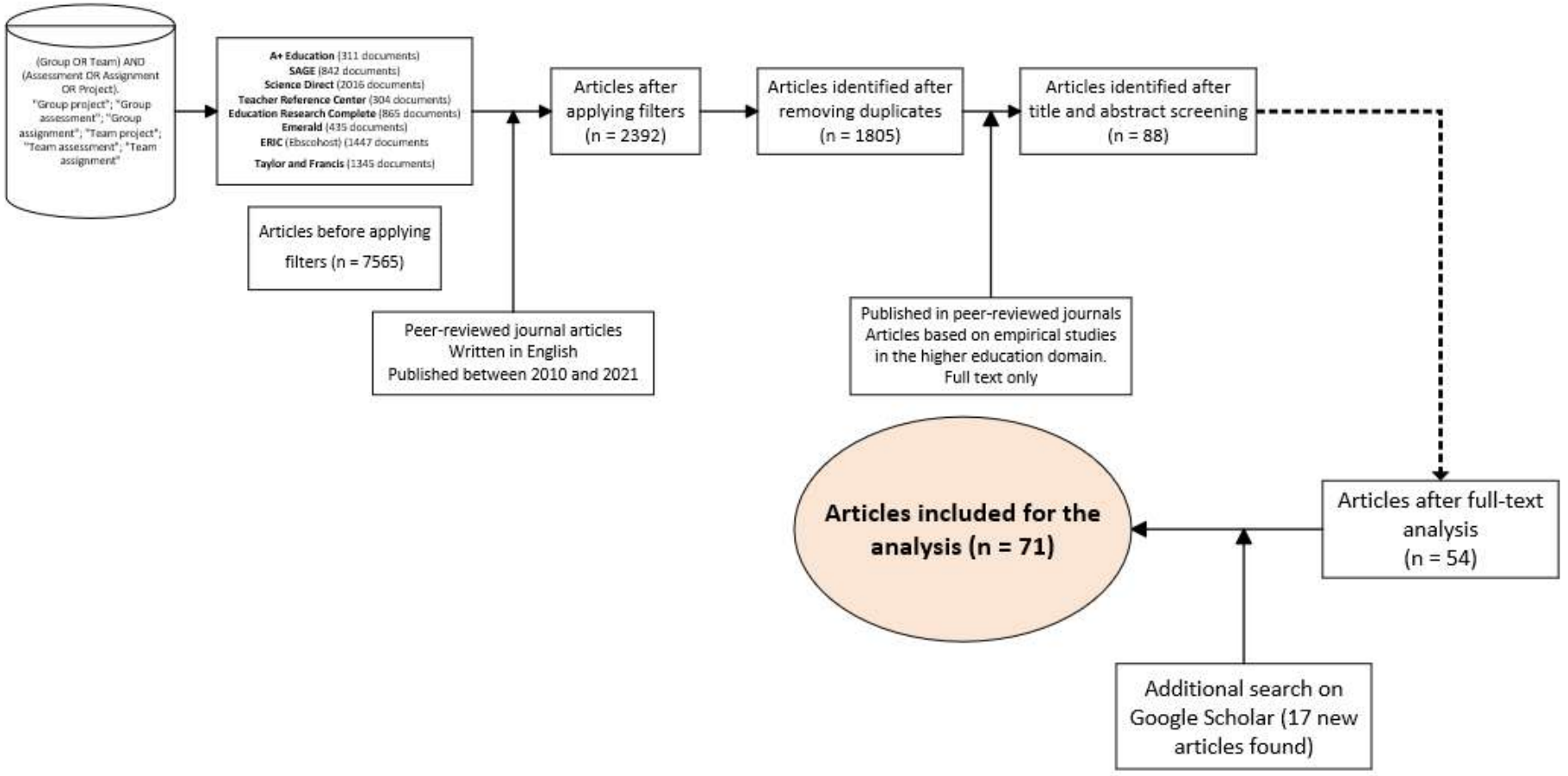


"practitioner development has tended to exclude or marginalise knowledge, skills and behaviours that overlap or are considered as belonging to other areas of practice such as general management, human resource management and a range of other fields." (Crawford et al. (2006, p. 724).

Technical skills

GROUP-BASED ASSESSMENTS

Systematic Literature Review



Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Any scholarly article published in peer-reviewed journals	Conference proceedings, reports, book chapters, and dissertations were excluded.
Articles based on empirical studies	Any non-empirical studies, such as review papers, were excluded from this review.
Any study which is in the higher education domain	Studies related to primary school, secondary education, vocational education, training, and workplace sectors were excluded.
Full text only	In order to read and understand the full findings of the article.
In the year range (2010–2021)	The scoping review suggests that a considerable number of publications are available from the last decade.
Described in English	The authors' inability to interpret other languages.

Theme 1: Self- and Peer Evaluations

- A useful method for addressing the problem of freeloading
- Individual contributions need to be reflected
- Fosters independent learning
- Assists academics in understanding the reasons for high variation

Formative and Summative Peer Assessments

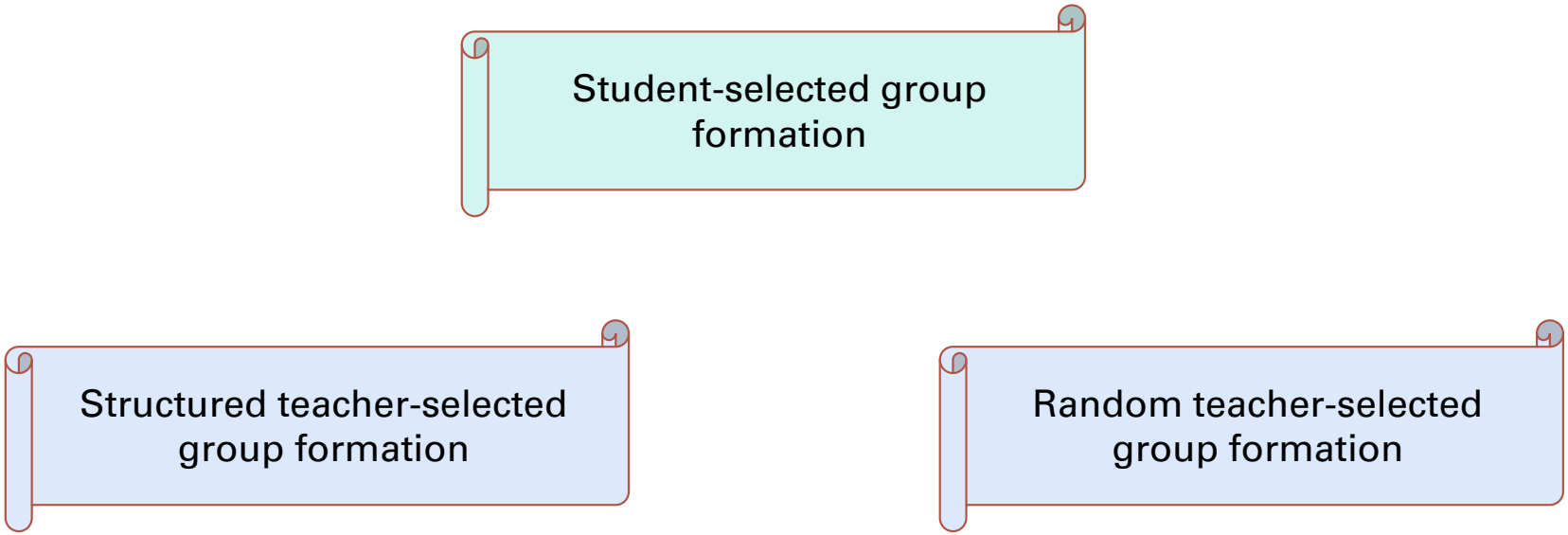
Adjusting Peers' Marks

Anonymity and Confidentiality in Peer Evaluations

Qualitative and Quantitative Questions in Peer Evaluations

Training for Self- and Peer Evaluations

Theme 2: Group Formation



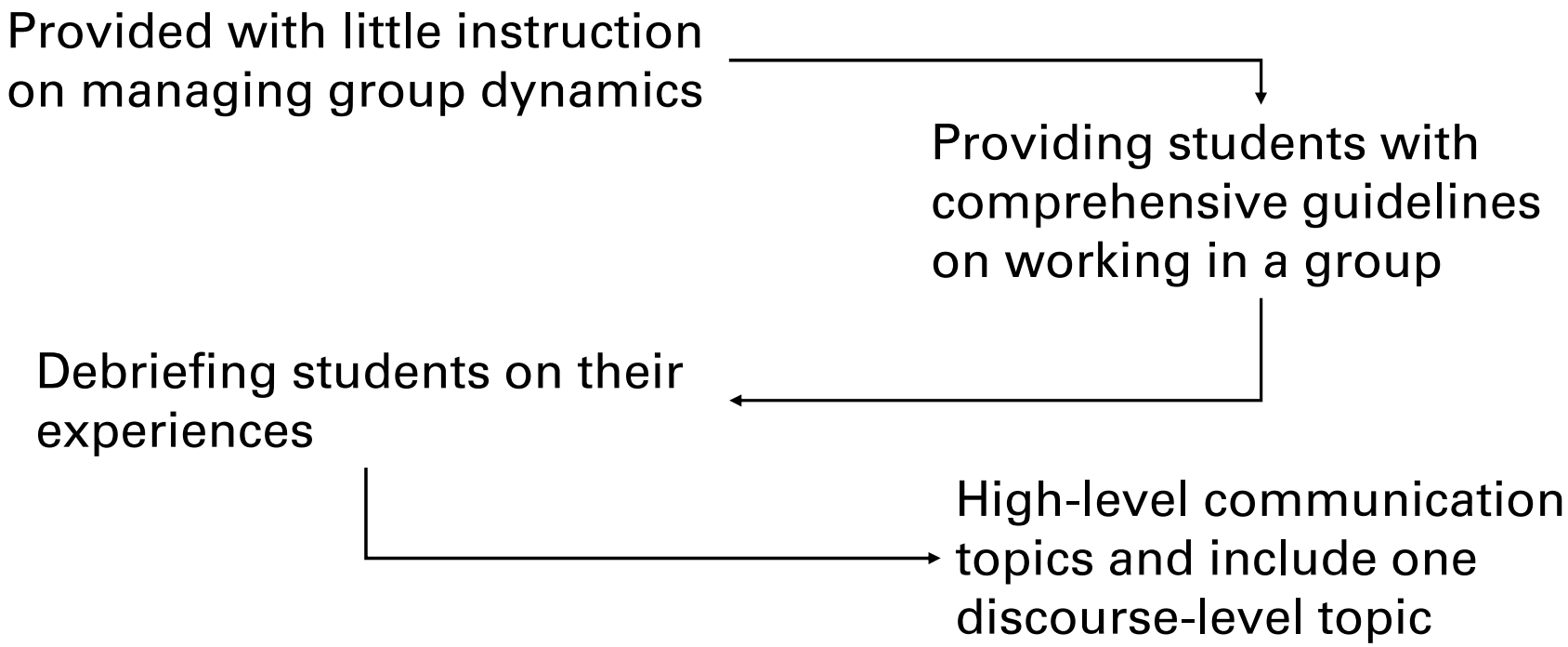
Theme 3: Group Size

Interpersonal transactions increases with number of students

Nature and size of the task

Little consensus on the number of members in a group

Theme 4: Training for Working in Groups



Theme 5: Academics' Support and Guidance

- Engaging themselves in resolving group complexity, group conflict, discussing group skills development in students
- Allocating designated class time for group meetings
- Clarify assessment specifications and improve the quality of tasks

Theme 6: Facilitation of Group Work by Technology

- To collaborate, communicate, facilitate group discussion, and share resources.

- Facilitate group discussion and share resources, including Wiki, discussion boards, Skype, FaceTime, Zoom, Google Docs, the GroupMe application, and social media platforms

Summary

- Hard skills are not enough to bring project success.
- Universities need to ensure that PM graduates are well-prepared for the industry.
- Group-based assessments have the potential to develop the right skills if designed effectively.

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Any questions?

Thank you for your attention