

Exploring the Managerial Dynamics in a Turbulent Context: The Reaction of SMEs' Leaders

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Small and medium enterprises constitute the bulk of the Lebanese economic fabric. Over the past decades, the managers of these SMEs have played a pivotal role in the survival of their businesses. This research aims at understanding how these managers manage to survive in a turbulent context marked by perpetual changes that are almost constantly renewing themselves, by showing how, in such an environment, they manage to mobilize resources and skills and deploy dynamic capacities in order to develop efficient and sustainable practices. The results of qualitative research of the exploratory type are intended to present researchers with a "reaction model" that, in a similar context, could enlighten SME leaders on the managerial performance required.

Keywords: SME, leader, turbulent context, management practices, Lebanon

INTRODUCTION

In constantly changing environments, companies suffer direct consequences that affect their strategies and performance (Smart and Vertinsky, 1984). These effects, which induce new managerial behaviours, lead leaders¹ to monitor and integrate the "environment" dimension into their decision-making in order to survive, safeguard their place in the market and develop (Lesca, 2008; Kotler *et al.*, 2014). They are compelled to be attentive and reactive in their daily practices, which enables them to divert threats and/or transform them into opportunities (Brouard, 2007). This observation, which concerns large firms, is also true for SMEs (Crutzen and Van Caillie, 2010). Saporta's (1986) analysis, carried out more than thirty years ago and which considered that the survival of the SME is intimately linked to its mostly uncertain environment, is still valid today with a two-way reading. According to Torrès (2002), the size of the SME gives it organizational flexibility as well as reactivity in decision-making, which favours the seizing of emerging market opportunities (Julien, 1997; Julien and Carrier, 2002). On the other hand, Raymond and St-Pierre (2005) stipulate that in an uncertain context, the survival of the SME is threatened. Indeed, such a context requires reactive decisions despite the limited information and resources available to the firm. These studies, which confirm the link between the survival of the SME and the surrounding context, do not focus on current management practices.

The Lebanese context is unique. Fifteen tumultuous years of civil war (from 1975 to 1990) followed by Israeli invasions and internal conflicts rooted in a system of confessional pluralism. This system, linked

to both the history and the geographical situation of the country, is based on the official recognition by the state of 18 religious communities. In addition, there is a complex regional situation marked by the current war in Syria [March 2011 and until now] (Corm, 2004). All these disturbances have not occurred without direct impact on the country, which is in an endemic state of political, economic and social instability (Desquilbet, 2007; Couland, 2005). The definition of the SME, which constitutes the backbone of the Lebanese economy, depends on the national context in which it evolves (Zinnbauer *et al.*, 2009; Ramadan and Levratto, 2011). We retain the one adopted by the German Agency for International Cooperation (GTZ) in a study² carried out in 2007, which gives the following classification for the Lebanese SME: the category of very small enterprises is made up of firms that employ less than 5 persons. The category of small enterprises is made up of companies that employ between 5 and 49 people. The category of medium enterprises consists of enterprises that employ between 50 and 200 persons. In this study, the last two definitions were used³. The management of these companies has peculiarities that are related to the Lebanese culture. This management, which mainly leans towards the informal and is subject to controversies, has hardly raised enough interest among researchers (Hamdan, 2004), although a considerable number of SME managers have been able, in such a context, to conquer foreign markets (Levratto and Ramadan, 2009). Moreover, a large number of SMEs are only growing by showing a remarkable capacity for resilience, based, according to Choucair (2012) and Abi-Samra (2010), on specific management practices. Taking into account the fact that small business leaders are inclined to easily evoke the causes that are at the root of their organizations' success and that they consider to be a personal victory (Weitzel and Jonsson, 1989), an investigation conducted among these leaders will attempt to identify and analyze these practices.

Our article reinforces the literature that suffers from a lack of empirical anchoring (Le Boulaire and Retour, 2008) as well as data that indicate to managers of small and medium enterprises how to manage effectively (Sadler-Smith *et al.*, 2003). It presents, in the form of a model, a specific combination of resources, which, when articulated together, help the SME manager to withstand a turbulent context. By rethinking a classical model based on the work of resource theory and focusing on firms of a certain size (Barney, 1991), this research focuses on SMEs and approaches their managers in a dynamic process. Thus, taking into account the specificity of Lebanese SMEs which have shown a remarkable resilience (El-Khoury, 2011) and the particularity of SME managers' actions in such a context, this study aims at answering the following question: *"What are, in a turbulent context, the effective and sustainable managerial practices through which SME managers manage to reinforce the resilience of their firms?"* ».

In order to answer this question, we conducted a case study among fifteen Lebanese SME managers. In order to highlight the link between the manager's practices and the turbulent context, we first studied the turbulence of the Lebanese context. Subsequently, we relied on a literature review on the leader's role within the SME as well as on the strategies elaborated from the dynamic resources, skills and capacities. These strategies are more likely to be relevant in changing environments, as the survival of organizations within the same environment depends on the resources they hold and mobilize for the provision of products and services (Foss and Ishikawa, 2007). Next, we described the methodological protocol followed. We presented, analyzed and interpreted the results before finally moving on to managerial discussion and conclusion.

THEORETICAL FRAME OF REFERENCE

The turbulent context is a complex, particularly agitated context, the elements of which are continually changing (Emery and Trist, 1965). The literature on this topic has focused on three main attributes that describe it. It is an environment subject to a succession of rapid changes that are almost constantly changing and unpredictable (Cameron *et al.*, 1987; Ansoff and McDonnell, 1990; Gueguen, 2001). In Lebanon, the environment is constantly marked by rapid and profound changes. In addition to the fifteen years of civil war that have torn the country apart, Lebanon is struggling in a fragile context manifested by an almost chronic state of interlocking crises of all kinds: political, economic and social (Corm, 2004). The inadequacy of the political system, the decay of institutions, and the absence of appropriate and in-depth

economic reforms only aggravate the situation (Fayad, 2008). This context, described by El-Ezzi (2003) as specific and complex, has been affected by damage at all levels: considerable material damage, a large number of victims and 600,000 internally displaced persons, emigration of nearly a quarter of the population, material degradation of basic infrastructure, a serious deterioration in the productive capacities of the economy and a weakening of the situation of private enterprises (Labaki and Rjeily, 1993). In this environment where changes are frequent and follow one another accompanied by poor control of uncertainty, turbulence is intense (Salloum, 2015).

To describe the SME, the six characteristics of Julien's (1997) factual model will serve as a reference. These elements, validated by most of the work in management science, are: the central role of the leader, the flexible organizational structure, the simplicity of the coordination mechanisms and the information system, the lack of resources and the weakness of skills.

We will address these elements by looking specifically at the leader's practices. Indeed, the concept of SME refers to a specific dynamic (Levratto, 2009) that is distinguished by the leader's daily management practices, specifically in unstable environments. These are mainly the leader's expectations of employees, their mobilization, strong interpersonal relationships and ease of communication (Barzi, 2011; St-Pierre *et al.*, 2003). When these actions are adequately mobilized in the face of pervasive uncertainties, they enable the leader to quickly renew his tactics and strengthen the agility of his company, thus enabling the SME to demonstrate greater resilience (Barzi, 2011; Sherehiy and Karwowski, 2014; Sull, 2010).

Pinel and Robert (2009, p.71) have defined resilience, and we will retain their approach, as "*the ability of a system to maintain or restore an acceptable level of functioning despite disturbances (...)*". In the SME context, this capacity is deployed through the skills, intuition, versatility and profile of the leader (Lee and Tsang, 2001; Abaaoukide and Bentaleb, 2011; Durand, 2006; Sogbossi, 2012). For these authors, the same situation is perceived and interpreted differently depending on the leader's profile. Subsequently, the decision-making process varies and can be explained through the personality of the SME manager, his experience (Alaoui *et al.*, 2008; Lefebvre, 1991; Marchesnay, 2000; Jaouen, 2010) and his ability to influence employees and build loyalty (Peretti and Swalhi, 2007). For example, a paternalistic manager makes rather traditional decisions (Raveleau, 2007; Bryan and Farrel, 2009; Meier and Pacitto, 2007), whereas a more knowledgeable manager relies on innovation in his decisions (Dugré, 2011; Beyer, 2010). Moreover, the leader's behaviour blends in with the SME's strategy, in the case where his power comes essentially from his leadership (Antonakis *et al.*, 2004), and this along two lines. In the first, called dialogical and maintained between him and his company, two logics, one individual and the other collective, are combined (Fonrouge, 2002). The second, known as internal proximity, is based on a loosely structured hierarchy based on informal communication between internal actors and allows the manager to maintain his hold on the firm and its evolution (Torrès and Jaouen, 2008). In addition, the notion of external proximity allows the manager to better understand his environment and subsequently be able to modify part of it. In fact, through his or her business relational network, the manager acquires a privileged mode of access to certain specific resources (Chabaud and Sammut, 2016; Puthod and Thévenard-Puthod, 2006). This creates a competitive advantage for the SME and strengthens its resilience (Marchesnay, 2008; Martin, 2008).

Coutu (2002) argues that one of the aspects of managing a resilient organization is knowing how to take advantage of resources to tinker with new solutions to unusual situations encountered. Note that resources can be tangible, intangible, financial or human (Prévot *et al.*, 2011). This aspect, which is consistent with the definition of resources as assets "*that an organization holds or is capable of mobilizing*" (Johnson *et al.*, 2011, p.105), leads to an analysis of organizations' managerial practices through their deployment. For his part, Andrieux (2005) asserts that the leader's ability to develop new configurations for using these resources as quickly as possible contributes to consolidating the resilience of his organization and providing it with a structure that is favourable to its survival and growth. The mismatch in terms of resources between the present and the ambitious future creates a tension in the executive that creates a problem-solving dynamic within the company (Fauvy, 2009).

We continue the analysis by considering core competencies as the "*activities through which an organization uses or deploys its resources*" (Johnson *et al.*, 2011, p.105); such mobilization is essential to

ensure the firm's good management in an unusual situation of change (Hamel and Prahalad, 1995). These competencies are qualified as key when they are of value to the organization's clients, thus enabling it to differentiate itself from its competitors (Johnson *et al.*, 2011). They are part of organizational routines and are the result of collective learning (Saives *et al.*, 2011). Following periods of uncertainty, this learning makes it possible to better prepare for the future of the company (Altintas and Royer, 2009). Thus, in a turbulent context, leaders must know how to mobilize, coordinate and integrate skills into goods and services that generate value in order to benefit from market opportunities and neutralize environmental threats (Ulrich *et al.*, 2008). This astute combination, which it is appropriate to identify, is similar to the strategic capacity of the company (Barney, 1991; Johnson *et al.*, 2011), which evolves over time. This is the concept of dynamic capabilities (DC), which explains the organization's ability to recompose, transform and reconfigure this combination to adapt to a changing environment (Teece, 2007; Mercuri and Rais, 2010).

This literature review leads us to formulate our problem as follows: Taking into account the specificity of the Lebanese environment, the objective of this research is to understand how SME managers manage, through their managerial practices, to reinforce the resilience of their companies, and this by mobilizing resources and skills and by reconfiguring the CDs in the context in which they work. This issue is broken down into exploration elements in Table 1, which constitutes the reference framework for the research. This table, which served as a support for the data collection and analysis, groups together four questions that the field investigation will enable us to answer.

TABLE 1
THE RESEARCH TERMS OF REFERENCE

The four elements of exploration	
1	In the face of uncertainty, the decisions of the SME manager can be explained through his profile and leadership. The ^{first} question that emerges is: would it be possible to establish a link between the profile of the SME manager and the survival of his company?
2	The proximity of the manager promotes an efficient managerial mode of operation. The ^{second} question is: how, through the internal actors and the external business relationship network, can the manager ensure a favorable knowledge of his environment?
3	Certain intangible resources are capable of changing the SME environment and consolidating its resilience. The ^{third} question is: what are the new configurations resulting from the mobilization of certain resources by the SME's manager and which promote the survival and growth of his company?
4	The mobilization of certain key competencies in goods and services that generate value and the reconfiguration of certain practices, strengthen the company's resilience in a changing environment. The fourth question is: what are the skills and CDs that allow the manager to benefit from market opportunities and neutralize environmental threats?

METHODOLOGICAL PROTOCOL

The conceptualization of the problem resulted in a reference framework made up of four elements of exploration from the literature (Mucchielli, 2005). From this framework, the main themes, each of which corresponded to a specific level of knowledge, were developed. They contributed to the construction of the interview guide (Appendix 1) with previously formulated questions that guided our interviews in the data collection. We used ⁴potential indicators identified in the literature to develop and formulate these questions (Lamoureux, 1995; De Peretti *et al.*, 2013). Subsequently, comparing the data collected with existing theories enabled us to understand and explain the managerial practices of Lebanese leaders that have proven effective and underpin the resilience of their organizations.

This research is part of a qualitative, exploratory approach based on an interpretive phenomenological methodology, which translates into a focus on the dynamic aspect of the research process (Smith and

Osborn, 2003). The case study strategy was mobilized in the construction of the research object. This strategy, based on the uniqueness of each firm as well as on the Lebanese SME-manager symbiosis, allowed us to explore specific practices related to SME managers.

The sampling of the targeted SMEs was carried out in a reasoned and non-statistical manner. The SMEs were selected based on the disparity of several predetermined characteristics: manager profiles, workforce, location, industry sector, etc. The SMEs were selected on the basis of the disparity of several pre-determined characteristics: manager profiles, workforce, location, industry sector, etc. Thus, our study population includes 15 managers who, up to the date of the interview, have been able to cope with the crisis environment that has shaken the country for more than five decades. Appendix 2 presents a description of the interviewed executives, the location and size of the sampled SMEs as well as the different sectors of activity to which they belong. Semi-directive focused interviewing was the preferred qualitative data collection method. The data collected was processed as suggested by Bardin (2013) in four stages using content analysis with the use of the qualitative analysis software Weft QDA⁵.

- During the first stage, which is the preparation of the material, the 15 recorded interviews (I1, I2, ...I15), were transcribed in full with line numbering and entered on a complete list of interviews to be analyzed.
- The second stage, the pre-analysis stage, consisted of two operations. The first operation consisted of a careful reading of the material to be analyzed. In the second operation, the unit of analysis chosen as the cutting rule was the "theme". A thematic analysis was therefore carried out, to identify standardised units of meaning whose presence and frequency of appearance are significant.
- The third step, that of coding the material, was the controlled operation of the analysis. The work process adopted for this purpose was the traditional method of manual cutting for the first six interviews, followed by the use of the software on which the work was transferred and completed. The operation of the material was carried out in two stages, namely coding and categorization⁶. During coding, the raw discourse data were broken down according to the idea, into units of meaning to be coded (Bardin, 2013). This operation led to a reorganization of the content of the discourse and its transformation into a fairly large number of codes (189). Subsequently, all coded *verbatim that had* similar meanings were grouped together and classified under a generic title, which reduced the number of codes (72) because some were removed or integrated into others. After decomposing the processed material, we proceeded to define the first categories following the categorization approach of Miles and Huberman (2003). At this stage we used great care to keep the analysis close to the text, refraining from any interpretation. To this end, we based ourselves on an analogical and progressive grouping of coded units of meaning with a common semantic character, under broader categories (Mayer and Deslauriers, 2000). Once the preliminary analysis grid was developed, the work was transferred to the Weft QDA, which allowed us to count the occurrences. This operation contributed to the development of the final analysis grid (see Appendix 4), which was mainly anchored in the reference framework by eliminating and/or grouping together certain categories that recorded an occurrence of zero or at the limit equal to one.
- The interpretation of the results, which was the fourth stage of this work, consisted in reproducing as faithfully as possible the results obtained following the application of the analysis grid that guided us in our analyses and discussions and allowed us to judge whether the data collected meet the points identified in the reference framework.

The data collected from the respondent interviews revealed common characteristics among all leaders and highlighted two sets of leaders who differed in specific traits: the first set included 7 leaders with a rather cautious leadership style and the second set included 6 leaders with a rather reactive leadership style. Two of the 15 leaders interviewed, however, oscillated between the two sets. The data collected was classified in the analysis grid into four components⁷. Each component, presented and analyzed below (Part 3), grouped together a number of themes that were subdivided into sub-themes and then into categories.

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

The aim of this part is to discern the divergences or convergences of the data collected in the field with the scientific writings in order to associate, for each of the four components, the theoretical contributions and the field. Thus, the categories that represent each component from the analysis grid were illustrated by *verbatim reports* taken from the interviewees' speeches and accompanied by a count on the distribution of these interviewees in the two sets of conduct identified (n = ...). With the aim of transforming the results into the language of the discipline, this process was for each theme supplemented by an analysis and interpretation nourished by feedback from the literature. For example, by analyzing below the first theme of the ^{first} component, the prudent and reactive behaviors of leaders (from the field) corresponded successively to the profiles of paternalistic and informed leaders (from the literature).

The 1st Component: Decision-Making in a Turbulent Context

The Lebanese leader, who in his decisions favors survival strategies, much more than those of development and growth, is anxious to reconcile the quality of decisions with the quantity of quick decisions. The decisions taken by this leader are detailed below.

Acting Conditioned by the Personality of the Leader

The managers who, during the coding stage, had a "prudent" conduct, ensure the survival of the SME through rather static practices, based on a wait-and-see attitude and delaying action. Those who had a "reactive" conduct, seek survival through dynamic practices oriented towards innovation. Table 2 shows this:

TABLE 2
ACTING CONDITIONED BY THE PERSONALITY OF THE LEADER

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>
Prudent" driving (n =7)	"(...) <i>it's better to wait, (...) it's more cautious...</i> " I3/ L474-477.
Reactive" driving (n =6)	" <i>We are trying to find suitable and immediate solutions, and so far we have succeeded, (...).</i> " I8/L36-41.

This subdivision enriches the literature by showing that the "cautious" leader who avoids change corresponds to the profile of the "paternalistic leader", the "PL". This leader, who is rather a leader-owner, is conservative and prudent (Raveleau, 2007; Bryan and Farrel, 2009). On the other hand, the "reactive" manager, who is more of an employee manager, corresponds to the profile of the "informed leader", the "IL", who focuses on the search for new alternatives to support his or her company (Dugré, 2011; Beyer, 2010).

Use of a Personalized Relationship With Employees

The familiar relationship between the Lebanese leader and his employees facilitates information gathering and control. In addition to this, there is a physical proximity, woven through the senses and nourished by the Lebanese culture, with the actors both internally and externally. This closeness, is the basis of the optimization of the employees' performance, as shown in the *verbatim* below.

TABLE 3
USE OF A PERSONALIZED RELATIONSHIP WITH EMPLOYEES

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>	ALMOST ALL LEADERS
Close, spontaneous and informal relationships (n =14)	<i>"I like to take a little tour (...) it's a way to control, to supervise. I talk to them [employees] about anything and everything," I9/ L209-215.</i>	
Physical closeness woven through the senses (n =11)	<i>...seeing us, shaking their hand, a friendly gesture on the shoulder, etc.". All this is necessary (...)." I1/ L122-126.</i>	

The relations of affective proximity, which are a continuation of the work of Torrès (2002), establish a dynamic of problem solving and strengthen the leader's hold on the company. As for the physical link, it joins the *polysensory* management of Torrès (2007) which substitutes the sensory capacities of the leader to the classical management tools.

Use of the Manager's Personal Skills

Intuition, versatility, innovation and flair are, for the Lebanese leader, as many indispensable skills to make decisions. Although at this level the subdivision of respondents into two sets is clear, however, versatility and intuition bring them all together. The context that surrounds the Lebanese manager, marked his personality and contributed to make him a strong person through hardships and easily able to cope. The integration of intuition in decision making, gives him a skill based on his experience and judgment. In addition, the "reactive" leader demonstrates creativity and a faculty to monitor the course of events. The "prudent" leader demonstrates the ability to mobilize resources judiciously and at the right time. The "prudent" leader relies on his or her "flair", which comes from the know-how of ancestral leaders. The *verbatim statements* in Table 4 bear witness to this:

TABLE 4
USE OF THE LEADER'S PERSONAL SKILLS

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>	NEARLY ALL DIRECTORS
The leader is a person with a variety of abilities (n =11)	<i>"Here, there is everything and that's what makes the Lebanese businessman versatile (...) with a great knowledge in almost every field. " I3/ L446-447.</i>	
The leader frequently uses intuition to decide (n =10)	<i>"We base ourselves on intuition because we don't have a concrete criterion that allows us to discern in such a complex environment as ours. " I9/L136-140.</i>	
The manager shows a developed sense of creativity (n =5)	<i>"Lebanese is a well of ideas (...). Its concern is to always find new solutions. " I7/ L123.</i>	
The manager actively and continuously monitors the course of events (n =4)	<i>"We're always on the alert (...), we can't sleep on our victories, on our laurels, we have to be vigilant. " I4/ L309-313.</i>	« IL »
The leader mobilizes resources wisely (n =5)	<i>"By the force of things we become very fast (...) we try to find quick emergency exits. " I14/ L48-51.</i>	
The leader returns to the practices of his or her predecessors (n =6)	<i>"(...) because we have the flair, it's in the family (...). " I10/L 296-297.</i>	« PL »

Running a Lebanese SME means being able to change "caps". This observation corroborates with the one reported in the literature, which considers that the versatility of the manager is an indispensable competence for the survival of the SME (Durand, 2006). The decision by intuition, favoured by the Lebanese manager, is a continuation of Sogbossi's work (2012). The author underlines that in a turbulent environment, the proliferation of several variables limits the scope of rational thinking in favour of intuitive decision making. Proactive decisions based on the speed of acting at the right time and with the minimum of resources are in line with Brouard's (2007) comments and highlight an entrepreneurial vision in "IL". In terms of the literature, the classic management mode of the "PL" is consistent with a traditional orientation. It is a leader centred on the values of the profession and the know-how of the ancestors, rather than on profit maximization (Meier and Pacitto, 2007; Jaouen, 2010).

The 2nd Component: Managerial Practices Vis-a-Vis Partners

At a time when the environment is putting him to the test, the Lebanese leader never tires of mobilizing actions through the network that surrounds him: employees, customers and partners in the business.

Optimal Use of Employee Performance

The Lebanese leader opts for the versatility of the employees which, according to him, limits recruitment, reduces the turnover rate and motivates the present elements. Moreover, the emigration of talents pushes him to reinforce the retention efforts with the only difference that these efforts are for the "IL" oriented towards qualified employees, while for the "PL", they are oriented towards rather dedicated employees. Table 5 shows an excerpt of *verbatim reports* on this subject.

**TABLE 5
MAXIMIZING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE**

The Land	Verbatim	
The leader advocates the versatility of the human element (n =13)	<i>"It's the versatility we prefer. The employee becomes more resourceful, more responsible and also more efficient because he understands all the systems, (...) This leaves him a certain margin for creativity." I2/ L401-414.</i>	NEARLY ALL
Manager retains qualified employees (n =6)	<i>"When there is an employee who distinguishes himself from others by his competence, we try to retain him, to motivate him more by increasing his salary, by giving him a bonus,..." I8/L161-165.</i>	The "IL"
Leader retains dedicated employees (n=5)	<i>"We try to invest in dedicated people who are not necessarily the best because they are the ones who stay, (...)." I12/ 154-156.</i>	The "PL"

The literature agrees with these results and considers that the versatility of SME employees is a basic skill, which allows the human element to cope with change. The loyalty efforts made by managers are manifested through two orientations (Peretti and Swalhi, 2007): one relational, which is prominent in the "PL", and another of efficiency, which characterizes the "IL".

Reaching Customer Satisfaction

The manager's relationships with his clients are long-lasting and deep. The manager does not hesitate to make concessions and submit to their conditions even if he considers them illogical. The "IL" deploys his efforts to improve the quality of the offer in order to gain the loyalty of new customers. However, the "PL" is consolidating the refocusing on its traditional customers. Table 6 presents an excerpt of *verbatim reports* on this subject.

TABLE 6
ACHIEVING CLIENT SATISFACTION

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>	
The manager improves the quality of his products in order to win new customers (n = 5)	"...if you have a customer, especially a new one, (...) you have to guarantee a certain quality. Our products follow international standards and we rely on that a lot..." I14/ L356-361.	The "IL"
The manager consolidates the refocusing on his traditional customers (n =6)	"(...) the company's relationship with its former customers, its service All this makes them [customers] more available and ready to help you in difficult times." I2/ 34-37.	The "PL"
The manager submits to the conditions of his clients (n = 14)	"...we are obliged to do work outside of the normal schedule and at the same price, (...), take it or leave it." I11/ L470-475	NEARLY ALL

The literature shows that the "IL", who is more of a manager-employee, seeks the growth of the SME he manages, while the "PL", who is a manager-owner, is more concerned with its day-to-day survival (Kotler *et al.*, 2014). The concessions, sometimes aberrant, evoked by the managers suggest a specific relationship between the Lebanese manager and his customers.

Networking

Friendly and professional relationships mobilized both between SMEs in the same profession allow the sharing of experiences and challenges, as shown in the *verbatim* in Table 7.

TABLE 7
NETWORKING

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>	
Leader maintains friendly relationships with peers (n =11)	"(...) our relationship with them [the colleagues] is rather friendly, implicit agreements (...) if there is information I pass on, this does not prevent us from finding ourselves on the market, on offers, one against the other." I3/ L422-429.	NEARLY ALL EXECUTIVES
Manager maintains formal relationships with peers (n =8)	"It's more of a professional relationship, very cordial. (...) we can manage to further strengthen exchanges: raw materials, products, knowledge (...)" I13/ L107-115.	

Peer relationships, when they are friendly, demonstrate among leaders, relationships that create value through the synergies generated (Puthod and Thévenard-Puthod, 2006). By joining Martin's (2008) work, they approach the relational network, reduce asymmetry in dependence on resources and contribute to increasing the organization's resilience.

The 3rd Component: The Resources Essential to the Survival of the SME

The resources needed to stay afloat in turbulent times differ according to what the two sets of identified leaders have to say. The "PL" agrees that human resources are more important, while the "IL" favours financial resources.

Activation of Human Resources

The "savvy" manager seeks technically qualified, open-minded and initiative-oriented employees. On the other hand, the "paternalistic" manager values a staff with integrity and loyalty. Table 8 shows an excerpt from *verbatim reports* on this topic.

**TABLE 8
ACTIVATION OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

The Land Manager seeks creative employees (n =5)	Verbatim "We prefer someone who is always ready to play the game. (...) open to change" I4/ L225-228.	"IL" The
Manager seeks employees with integrity and loyalty (n =5)	"What matters to us is above all the human quality of our employees (...) communication with others (...)." I2/ L201-204.	"PL" The

The "IL" targets creative profiles with potential know-how. The "PL" pays particular attention to interpersonal skills (know-how) and seeks employees who are distinguished by communication skills (St-Pierre *et al.*, 2003).

Activation of Financial Resources

The Lebanese leader expresses his mistrust of banks and tries to protect himself by the availability of liquidity. On the other hand, when the banks become an unavoidable means of financing, he enters into "cold" negotiations with them, as shown in the *verbatim* in Table 9.

**TABLE 9
ACTIVATION OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES**

The Land Manager distrusts banks (n = 9)	Verbatim "Such an important resource is cash, (...) so that we can continue to pay our costs, pay our employees, pay our operating costs, (...)." I9/L 420-430.	NEARLY ALL EXECUTIVES
Manager begins "cold" negotiations with banks (n = 8)	"Loans are negotiated cold, when you negotiate loans when you need them they would cost you three times as much (...) if you negotiate them when there is no emergency it is much better." I3/ L543-547.	

The "cold" negotiations started with financial institutions are common and specific practices among Lebanese leaders. This result sheds light on the work carried out on the managerial maneuvers of SME managers in a turbulent environment.

Activation of Practices Essential to the Survival of the SME

The majority of managers agree on the rapprochement between international companies and local SMEs, which gives the latter a dynamism that reinforces its credibility. Moreover, the "IL" does not hesitate to explore foreign markets, while the "PL" prefers to move to another field of activity, without however, letting go of its basic field. Table 10 shows this:

TABLE 10
ACTIVATION OF PRACTICES ESSENTIAL TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE SME

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>	
Manager enters into agreements with international companies (n = 13)	<i>"(...), I think we need to make agreements with international companies, which increases our credibility." I8/ L120-124.</i>	NEARLY ALL
Executive explores markets outside of borders (n = 6)	<i>"(...) "we share the same clients", the Lebanese market is microscopic, (...), we need to set foot abroad to survive (...)" I15/ L300-304.</i>	"IL" The
The manager moves to another field of activity (n =4)	<i>"(...) we diversified the work, my brother turned to real estate, he was fed up with the problems of this job." I2/ L226-231.</i>	"PL" The

This merger, described as an asymmetrical alliance, which has so far been little studied (Mercuri and Rais, 2010), is of considerable benefit to the SME in terms of advice and room for manoeuvre. The exploration of foreign markets by "IL" is the result of an opportunity that arises, especially when the local market is saturated. By embarking on a new business, the "PL" begins a strategic diversification in order to reduce environmental risks.

The 4th Component: Skills in the Face of the Complexity of the Context

The skills that Lebanese leaders develop in the face of the complexity of the environment are partly similar and partly different.

The Reputation of the SME

The reputation of the SME is of major strategic importance, because it is mainly on it that the survival of the company depends. Relative *verbatim* is cited in Table 11.

TABLE 11
REPUTATION OF THE SME

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>	
The manager considers the reputation of the SME, an imperative for its survival (n = 14)	<i>"The conditions of our survival (...) are linked to our past and our reputation. " I13/ L217-222. "Our customers recognize us as a responsible and reliable long-term partner, (...)." I6/ L633-635.</i>	NEARLY ALL

The credibility of the SME, which enables it to gain the confidence of customers, supports Barney's (1991) comments that the reputation of the SME enables it to benefit from market opportunities and/or neutralize environmental threats.

Management Able to Mobilize Its Human Resources

The Lebanese leader remains the cornerstone of strengthening the creativity of his employees, thus creating a synergy within the SME. Thus, the "PL" motivates his employees by enhancing their sense of belonging while the "IL" motivates them by encouraging their creativity. The *verbatim* figures in Table 12 bear witness to this:

TABLE 12
LEADER ABLE TO MOBILIZE HUMAN RESOURCES

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>	
Leader encourages employee creativity (n = 4)	<i>"Employees need to contribute to solutions (...), they even need to be able to create them (...)." I4/ L254-257.</i>	"IL" The
Manager values employees' sense of belonging (n = 6)	<i>"The commitment of our employees strengthens us. (...), it guarantees and will guarantee, through dead ends, the survival of our company (...); we care about them and they care about us." I1/ L134-138.</i>	"PL" The

The centrality of the leader comes from his or her leadership (Antonakis *et al.*, 2004). It can be identified through two orientations: the first is human, found in the "PL" and favours emotions, and the second is productive, found in the "IL" and favours technicality.

Projection Into the Future

The managers agree on a permanent flexibility of their production process. The desire to ensure the sustainability of their business, remains their main reason for success. In addition, the "PL", by taking care of the daily routine, seeks to optimize its costs. On the other hand, the "IL", who aspires to a qualification as a "specialist", prefers to work on large projects. Table 13 shows this.

TABLE 13
PROJECTION INTO THE FUTURE

The Land	<i>Verbatim</i>	
The manager's planning horizon is distant (n = 6)	<i>"The image of the future, what we are trying to develop, is that of a company specialized in its field... " I6/L662-665.</i>	"IL" The
The manager's planning horizon is short (n = 6)	<i>"...We live from day to day, (...) big projects hardly exist. (...). I care about the present, the near future. " I10/L212-215.</i>	"PL" The
Manager invests in multifunctional equipment (n = 8)	<i>"So our secret to success is to remain flexible. (...). Flexible means not being very heavy or highly specialized (...)." I4/ L182-189.</i>	NEARLY ALL

The problem-solving dynamics created by the mismatch in resources between the present and the future are weaker for "PL" than for "IL." The problem-solving dynamics created by the mismatch in resources between the present and the future are weaker for "PL" than for "IL". The latter, in aspiring to be called a "specialist", implements rather sustainable strategies. The flexibility of the production system is in line with the notion of flexible specialization (Saives *et al.*, 2011), which, because of its adaptation to the SME, is an interesting contribution. Indeed, by equipping itself with multi-skilled equipment and personnel, the SME becomes a fertile breeding ground for innovation and reactivity.

MANAGERIAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

At the theoretical level, this article has collected the constructions of SME managers relating to a turbulent context, by mobilizing in a global way the approaches of management by resources and skills and by approaching them in a dynamic perspective. This mobilization provides an interesting configuration of strategic capacity based on new and easily applicable resource arrangements (Eisenhardt and Martin 2000).

This is not obvious due to the lack of work on these approaches, which deal with a managerial problem specific to SMEs in a highly evolving environment.

The analysis of the results tends to show that Lebanese SMEs are "agile" SMEs. Subjected to the increased demand for responsiveness, they are capable of reacting to threats, surviving and growing in a context marked by rapid change (Sull, 2010; Barzi, 2011). The Lebanese leader is a leader who adopts strategies for overcoming turbulence based on strengthening the social bond between him/her and employees (Antonakis *et al.*, 2004).

Furthermore, and following a review of previous studies, these results lead to two different findings. The first, which is in line with the literature, shows that "standard practices" do not exist (Lalonde, 2004). It highlights two profiles of leaders who ensure the survival of their firms through two different sets of actions: "paternalistic" leaders and "informed" leaders. The former, who are mostly owner-managers, flee risk and see their practices manifested through traditional measures. The latter, who in their majority are manager-employees, defy turbulence and see their actions based on innovation and the search for new alternatives. From this point of view, the status of the manager (company founder, owner, co-owner or employee), his personality, skills, willingness to take risks, education, attitude, endurance, ability to handle stress, etc. have an effect on his practices, and more specifically on the intensity of innovation and the propensity for growth of the SME he manages. The contribution at this level lies in the combination of practices that emerge for each set of managers. These two arrangements, summarized in Table 14, provide new avenues of research on the management practices of SME managers in a turbulent context.

TABLE 14
FRAMEWORK OF PRACTICES SPECIFIC TO EACH TYPE OF LEADER IN A
TURBULENT CONTEXT

	Paternalistic leader	Informed leader
Status	Owner	Employee
Looking for the	Survival of the SME	Growth of the SME
Management Mode	Traditional Orientation	Entrepreneurial Orientation
Employee Loyalty	Relational Orientation	Efficiency Orientation
Employee Qualifications	Communication Profiles	Creative Profiles
Adaptation to the Changing Market	Strategic Diversification	Exploration of New Markets
Leadership Orientation	Human Element	Productivity
Planning Horizon	Short Term	Medium and Long Term

The second observation, which constitutes an input to this study, enriches the literature on this subject. It highlights a set of management practices to which all managers agreed, regardless of their profiles, the type of firm, its size and the sector of activity to which it belongs. This contribution leads to managerial implications that aim to help managers concerned about ensuring the resilience of their organizations. These implications show that the reputation of the SME is an essential resource at the origin of its survival. They encourage managers to adopt an affective proximity management. This management optimizes the performance of the internal actors by enhancing their sensory capacities. In addition, these managers, who must be versatile, have an interest in often using their intuition in their decision making, which allows them to constantly rearrange their strategic arrangements. This versatility, which is also required for the employee, makes him or her capable of reacting adequately to any change. This work encourages SME managers to integrate flexible specialization into their production system. It is an organizational form that allows the production process to adapt quickly to any new change. It encourages them to enter into alliances, even asymmetrical ones, with international companies to strengthen the resilience of their businesses. It also encourages them to become part of a network led by a leading company (satellite companies), which provides competitive advantages to all companies. In order to counter the impact of the financial burden that weighs heavily on them in an unstable context, this study encourages SME managers to anticipate their

needs for funds through negotiations initiated in advance with financial institutions. It also encourages them to focus on the client's needs, assuming that the client is always right. This action, considered by Levratto (2009) as a specific practice of SME management, proves to be routine within the Lebanese SME (Choucair, 2012). Finally, this research allowed us to observe that the availability of cash contributes to decrease the vulnerability of SMEs, especially since an unfavorable context never gives advance notice. The main managerial elements required in the face of environmental turbulence are summarized in Table 15.

TABLE 15
THE MAIN MANAGERIAL ELEMENTS REQUIRED IN THE FACE OF ENVIRONMENTAL TURBULENCE

The Lebanese SME is an agile SME	
Management	Proximity
	Sensory management / by relevant and effective use of the senses
	By walking around
Resources	Reputation of the SME
	Cash and cash equivalents
Core Competencies / Assets	Integration of intuition in the decision-making strategy of the leader
	Versatility of employees
	Flexible production
Dynamic Capabilities	Asymmetrical alliances with international companies
	Insertion in non-formalized networks of partners
	Concessions to customers / distrust of dependence on "big" suppliers and/or customers
	Pre-negotiated loans with financial institutions

In conclusion, and by summarizing these determinants, the research has made it possible to develop a "reaction model" in Figure 1 that could enlighten SME managers working in a turbulent context on the managerial performance required. This model, which Helfat et al. (2009) believe it is wise to identify, seems to be an interesting contribution. Thus, the SME in a turbulent context is a structural system represented by a simple triangle. The leader, the master of the system, is located in the center. Because of the characteristics of the terrain (turbulence), this system needs deep foundations that will guarantee its solidity. These foundations bring together, under the aegis of three sets (Resources, Core Competencies and Dynamic Capacities), a multitude of practices based on human interactions and which allow us to understand how the SME, through a modeling of its resources and competencies, develops a process that reinforces its resilience. Finally, any structural system is subject to a process of erosion requiring permanent maintenance. Sensory management, management by waking around and proximity management ensure the resilience of this system.

FIGURE 1
MODEL OF SME MANAGERS' REACTIONS TO A TURBULENT ENVIRONMENT



This configuration of resources, particularly intangible resources, brings together the manager, the SME and the context. According to Baum *et al* (2001), it offers a model of necessary action, easily mobilized and capable of better understanding the situation. However, this framework, although it is based on synergistic interactions, does not take into account all the factors and variables that shape the relationship between the SME manager and his environment and that can possibly be more complex (Pettersen *et al.*, 2011). Moreover, this model, which is the result of exploratory research, does not fit into a logic of statistical generalization. Nevertheless, it does allow us to identify a set of reliable elements that deserve to be tested in subsequent research and on samples of managers of larger SMEs. Beyond these results, we can argue that the analysis of the Lebanese specificity clearly allowed to highlight the key characteristics of the managerial practices of the SME manager in a turbulent context; but haven't most of the contexts become so?

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ENDNOTES

1. In this article, we use the terms leader and manager interchangeably.
2. "Situation Analysis and Intervention Strategy", Publication number: EF 03 - 2007, October 2007.
3. Refer to the "Workforce" column of the first table in Appendix 2.
4. An indicator is defined as a significant element in a set of data that makes it possible to assess a situation and is manifested by a dimension of a concept.
5. Free software available on Windows, Mac and Linux at: <http://www.pressure.to/qda/>
6. For a better understanding of the coding and categorization steps, refer to Appendix 3.
7. For a better understanding of the subdivision into components, themes, sub-themes and categories, refer to the final analysis grid in Appendix 4.

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APPENDIX 1. THE MAINTENANCE GUIDE

1. Identification of the SME

Corporate Identity:

- Creation date
- Who owns the company and since when?
- Sector of activity
- Number of employees (Determination of the type of company: medium, small or very small company)
- Are you a certified company?
- Approximate revenues
- R&D budget (% of revenue)
- The company's subsidiaries

Production:

- (Type of production: production of goods or services, identify the product or range of products, destination of the products).

Description of the company:

- Deterioration of buildings and equipment (their productive capacity)
- Technology: obsolete or state-of-the-art;
- Specify the role and importance of the various departments and services as well as the functions of the company: *general management, production, human resources management, accounting, sales, etc.*

2. Presentation of the leader

- Who runs the company? Identification of the manager(s) of the company (according to their notoriety and their positions). Do you have a board of directors? Are its members family members? Do they have expertise in the field? Meetings? How do you coordinate with this board?
- Age, education and level of training.

3. Dynamics of the contribution of managerial practices to strengthening the resilience of the SME in a turbulent context

- Brief history of the company: its evolution in its environment on the one hand, in terms of location, products, composition and dynamism of the team, dominant culture, on the other hand, in terms of employment and turnover (growth indicators).
- You run a company that dates back to the year.... and has managed to survive more than 15 years of civil war. What is your secret?
- How is decision making done in such a context?
 - Do you favour consultation, discussion and negotiation rather than individual decision-making?
 - How do you maintain your authority over the company and its evolution? (*proximity*)
- Do you use business practices that you consider innovative/original (*that differentiate you from others*)?
 - In the positive case, what are these practices and what are the problems encountered in their adoption, is there a specific budget allocated (% of turnover)?
- Can you describe your relationships with other companies? What are they like? Regular, formal, non-formal (intuitive), etc. (*Networked companies*)
- What resources do you consider important for your company in such a context? Can you list them in order of importance.
 - By taking all the resources mentioned:
 - Which ones are rare?
 - Which ones are yours? Are you dependent on another company that provides you with an essential (critical) resource or do you always find alternative sources of supply?
- In such a context, what are the skills that you consider indispensable and that you seek to develop in your employees (*How do you improve their performance*)?
 - What are the routines (tricks) implemented that differentiate you from other companies?
- Do you have strategic action plans or pre-established scenarios to accompany the period of disruption?
 - Do you develop solutions from situations that have threatened your business?
 - What do you think are the main reasons for the survival of your business?

- What is your vision for the future? What are your ambitions and what is the possibility of realizing them?

General questions: (These questions are not necessarily asked of all leaders but of some, and this according to certain specific answers)

- You are the number one company in Lebanon inWhat's the reason?
- Are there any aspects that we did not cover in this interview that you find useful for understanding the problem? Could you give me your comments and/or suggestions related to this interview and the way it was conducted?

APPENDIX 2. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE MANAGERS OF THE SAMPLED SMES / LOCATION OF THE SAMPLED SMES / SECTOR OF ACTIVITY TO WHICH THE SAMPLED SMES BELONG

N.B. Business manager or business leader means the person who is at the head of a business, without necessarily being the founder or owner of the business. He or she manages the business according to the powers granted to him or her.

M = Male

F= Female

F.M. = Founding Manager of the company (*entrepreneur*)

M.O. = Owner-Manager or Co-Owner-Manager of the business without having founded it (*inheritance or buyout*)

G.M. = General Manager (*not founder or owner of the company*)

**TABLE 16
DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE MANAGERS OF THE SAMPLED SMES**

Manager No.	Creation date	Location (governorate)	Status	Management	Approximate age of executive interviewed	Gender	Staff
10	1967	South Lebanon	F.M. + O.M.	Manager + brother	55-75 years old	M	53
15	1956	Beqaa	O.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	35-55 years	M	33
3	1974	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	O.M.	Manager + brother	35-55 years	M	51
1	1970	North Lebanon	O.M.	Manager + wife	35-55 years	F+ M	75
5	1969	Beqaa	G.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	35-55 years	F	27
4	1967	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	G.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	55-75 years old	M	54
13	1935	North Lebanon	G.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	35-55 years	M	42
11	1900	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	O.M. + O.M.	Manager + father	35-55 years	M	29

6	1928	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	G.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	55-75 years old	M	65
7	1958	South Lebanon	O.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	55-75 years old	M	17
2	1962	North Lebanon	O.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	35-55 years	M	36
12	1876	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	G.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	55-75 years old	M	56
8	1970	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	F.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	55-75 years old	M	18
9	1972	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	F.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	55-75 years old	M	25
14	1968	Beirut and Mount Lebanon	G.M.	Leader at the head of the SME	35-55 years	M	81

TABLE 17
LOCATION OF THE SAMPLED SMES

Geographical distribution of Lebanese SMEs in 2006				The location of the sampled SMEs
	Number	%		
Beirut	25 504	14,50%	51%	8
Mount Lebanon	64 265	36,50%		
North Lebanon	33 985	19,25%		3
South Lebanon	29 480	16,75%		2
Beqaa	23 045	13%		2
Total	176 279	100%		15

TABLE 18
SECTORS OF ACTIVITY TO WHICH THE SAMPLED SMES BELONG

No	The economic activities of Lebanese companies	The % distribution of Lebanese companies by activity	The constitution of our sample	P (producing company) D (distributing company)	Login
1	Food and Beverages	4,7%	1	P	N10
2	Textile and leather	1,72%	1	P	N15
3	- Paper and cardboard - Printing and publishing	1,75%	1	P	N3
4	- Non-metallic products - Metal products	3,5%	1	P	N1

5	- Equipment and tools - Furniture	3,15%	1	D	N5
6	- Water, Electricity and gas - Buildings and construction	1,46%	1	P	N4
7	Sale and maintenance of all vehicles	11,45%	1	D	N13
8	Wholesale trade	3,5%	1	D	N11
9	Retail Trade	43,88%	2	D	N6 and N7
10	Hotels and restaurants	3,87%	1	D	N2
11	- Transport and activities ancillary to transport	1,23%			
12	Post and telecom	0,30%			
13	- Financial intermediation - Insurance	1,12%	1	D	N12
14	Real estate activities	0,35%			
15	- Rental of equipment and tools - IT, R&D services	4,15%			
16	Teaching - Training	0,95%			
17	Health and Social Action	4,90%	1	D	N8
18	- Societal and social service activities -Entertainment, cultural and sporting activities	2,55%	1	D	N9
19	Services to individuals	5,47%	1	D	N14
Total		100%	15		

APPENDIX 3. EXAMPLES OF CODING AND CATEGORIZATION

The Coding

Identified codes:

- Company increasingly specialized in its field
- *Create a specific image based on research rather than industry*

Raw Fragment Taken From the E6 Maintenance

The image of the future that we seek to develop is that of a company specialized in its field much more than services. In the field of health, we are trying to create a health image of the company more than an industrial image, we want to move away from the industrial to the health field (....). Health i.e. home care, patients, more services in hospitals. We are in the process of creating sleep laboratories that we manage inside the hospital to analyze all sleep problems, so we want to move towards more specialization and towards a "medicalized" image (**Case E6/ L662-671**).

Categorization

The categorization step, i.e. the grouping of codes related to the same category, was performed (for example, codes such as "*Despite the situation, buy machines*", "*Despite the situation, make a new investment*" were grouped into the category: "*Act risky*").

The realisation of code groupings is the basis for putting the results into perspective. In the table below, we explain by an example how we proceeded in the categorization step.

TABLE 19
EXAMPLE ILLUSTRATING THE GROUPING OF CODES

CODES identified and taken from the speeches of the leaders			
<i>"In spite of the situation, buy new machines".</i>	<i>"Despite the situation, achieving a new investment".</i>	<i>"Overcoming Fear"</i>	<i>"Escaping threats"</i>
Grouping of codes into CATEGORIES		Grouping of codes into CATEGORIES	
Acting risky		Acting to circumvent fear of the unknown	
SUB-THEME			
Reactive driving			
THEME			
Acting conditioned by the personality of the leader			

APPENDIX 4. THE FINAL ANALYSIS GRID

Managerial dynamics of SME managers in a turbulent context

Component 1. Decision-making in a turbulent context

Acting conditioned by the personality of the leader (Theme)

REACTIVE DRIVING (Sub-theme)

- Acting risky (category)
- Acting to circumvent fear and the unknown (category)

PRUDENT DRIVING(Sub-theme)

- Pending Decisions/Freezing (category)
- Acting under pressure, fearful and distrustful of the environment (category)

Use of a personalized relationship with employees

Use of the manager's personal skills

- Management by intuition
- Manager with diverse abilities and multiple functions
- Innovative leader
- Foresight and vigilance
- Wise mobilization of resources/have "the flair" of family

Component 2. Managerial practices vis-à-vis partners (internal and external)

Optimal use of employee performance

- Implementation of productive and mobile multi-skilled teams
- Employee Retention: Efforts focused on qualified and/or dedicated employees

Reaching customer satisfaction

- Building on previous experience with former clients
- Concern for improving the quality of products/services
- Adjusting to the changing business environment: concessions

Working in networks/networking

- Friendly relations
- Professional relations

Component 3. Resources essential to the SME's life-sustainability

Activation of human resources (in-house)

EXPERIENTIAL TECHNICAL QUALIFICATIONS (know-how)

- Use of operational, open and creative profile

INTERPERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS / COMMUNICATION (life skills)

- Use of the profile capable of showing positive spirit and solidarity

Activation of financial resources

- Protection through the availability of cash
- Granting of pre-negotiated loans (cold)

Activation of practices essential to the survival of the SME

- Alliance with international companies
- Breakthrough in local or international markets
- Breakthrough in new professions

Component 4. Essential Skills for Complex Environments

The reputation of the SME

- Saving your image
- Credibility support

Manager able to mobilize and develop his human resources

- Ability to keep employees informed and involved
- Ability to reinforce the sense of belonging of its employees

Flexible SME

Projection into the future

DISCRETE OR SHORT-TERM PLANNING

- Strengthening market presence
- Exploitation of the existing

LONG TERM PLANNING / ABILITY TO STEP BACK AND ANALYZE

- Projects embedded in quality-research-innovation
- Change of image/focus on specialization