African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

Le soft power des entreprises marocaines opérant en Afrique : une revue de littérature systémique

The soft power of Moroccan companies operating in Africa: a systemic literature review.

Auteur 1 : EL-LABBAR Abdelghani
Auteur 2 : NECHAD Abdelhamid

EL-LABBAR Abdelghani Phd Student, Management, Strategy, and Governance Laboratory, National School of Commerce and Management, Tanger, Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Morocco.

NECHAD Abdelhamid, Professor of Higher Education, National School of Commerce and Management, In Tanger, Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Morocco.

<u>Déclaration de divulgation :</u> L'auteur n'a pas connaissance de quelconque financement qui pourrait affecter l'objectivité de cette étude.

<u>Conflit d'intérêts :</u> L'auteur ne signale aucun conflit d'intérêts.

<u>Pour citer cet article :</u> EL-LABBAR .A & NECHAD .A (2023) « Le soft power des entreprises marocaines opérant en Afrique : une revue de littérature systémique », African Scientific Journal « Volume 03, Numéro 21 »
pp: 0616 – 0635.

Date de soumission : Novembre 2023

Date de publication : Décembre 2023

DOI : 10.5281/zenodo.10444944

Abstract

In our comprehensive review of the soft power strategies employed by Moroccan companies in Africa, based on an analysis of 27 scientific articles, we explore how these companies enhance their presence on the continent. The study delves into the challenges they encounter, including heightened global competition and the associated political and economic risks in the region. This literature review contributes valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and practitioners by offering a rigorous analysis of Moroccan companies' soft power in Africa. The findings align with broader research on corporate soft power, emphasizing the importance of a strong local presence, social responsibility, and culturally adapted communication for success. Recommendations include leveraging cultural heritage, understanding local dynamics, and forming partnerships. However, research limitations underscore a bias toward large corporations, while prospects advocate for further exploration of soft power mechanisms and effectiveness in diverse contexts. Practical implications for Moroccan companies in Africa involve developing a strong local presence, emphasizing social responsibility, adapting communication, forming partnerships, and investing in communication skills to bolster soft power and thrive in the African market.

Key words: Soft power, Moroccan companies, Africa, Internationalization

.

Introduction

In recent years, Moroccan companies have experienced rapid growth in their presence on the African continent. According to a report by the Confederation Générale des Enterprises du Maroc (CGEM) published in 2019, Moroccan companies have experienced sustained growth in Africa, with an 8.1% increase in foreign direct investment in Africa in 2018 . In addition, the report revealed that Moroccan companies generated over 50% of their sales abroad, mainly in Africa. This economic expansion is in line with Morocco's foreign policy, which has placed Africa at the center of its strategic priorities. Indeed, Morocco sees Africa as an important market for its exports and a potential growth area for its companies.

Morocco has thus launched an economic strategy aimed at strengthening its presence on the African continent, by establishing trade agreements and economic partnerships with numerous African countries. This strategy has led to a significant increase in Moroccan investment in Africa, as well as to a growing presence of Moroccan companies in various sectors, such as telecommunications, infrastructure, financial services, energy, agri-food, and so on.

However, Moroccan companies operating in Africa face major challenges, such as increased competition with other regional and international economic players, the complexity of African markets and the specificities of local cultures. To succeed in Africa, Moroccan companies need to develop effective strategies for influencing their environment and strengthening their brand image and competitiveness in the region.

In this context, the concept of "soft power" can be seen as a key element in the expansion strategy of Moroccan companies in Africa. Soft power, which is based on the influence and attractiveness of a country or a company, can help Moroccan companies develop their presence in Africa by creating bonds of trust and positively influencing their economic and social environment.

The research focuses on the soft power of Moroccan companies operating in Africa, particularly on how these companies strengthen their economic and cultural presence in the region.

The primary objective of the research is to conduct a systematic literature review on the soft power of Moroccan companies in Africa. This review aims to analyze the various strategies and practices employed by these companies to influence their environment and strengthen their presence on the continent. Additionally, it seeks to identify key success factors and challenges faced by Moroccan companies using soft power in Africa.

Our article focuses on a literature review concerning the soft power of Moroccan companies established in Africa, a subject of great importance to political science researchers, economic

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

experts, international relations and diplomacy professionals, as well as Moroccan companies seeking to establish or strengthen their presence in Africa.

This systemic literature review on the soft power of Moroccan companies operating in Africa aims to take stock of knowledge on the concept of soft power and its application by Moroccan companies in Africa, to analyze the soft power strategies used by these companies, to identify the success factors and challenges of the soft power of Moroccan companies in Africa, and to propose avenues for future reflection by highlighting the limits and prospects of research in this field as well as the practical implications for these companies.

The establishment of Moroccan companies in Africa has become a strategic issue for the country's economic and cultural development in the region. In this context, soft power has become an important tool for strengthening the presence of Moroccan companies in Africa. This issue raises several questions: **How do Moroccan companies use soft power to strengthen their economic and cultural presence in the region? What are the most common and effective strategies**? What are the soft power challenges facing Moroccan companies in Africa? Finally, how can we improve the use of soft power as an economic and cultural development tool for Moroccan companies operating in Africa? These are just some of the questions that need to be explored in order to better understand the challenges of soft power in the context of Moroccan companies' presence in Africa.

The research is structured to examine the foundations of the growing presence of Moroccan companies in Africa, the challenges they encounter, and how soft power can be a strategic tool to overcome these challenges. The formulated hypotheses aim to better understand the functioning and impact of Moroccan companies' soft power in Africa. The literature review seeks to identify the various strategies and practices employed by these companies, highlighting key success factors and obstacles. Finally, the research proposes avenues for future exploration, emphasizing the limitations and prospects of research in this field, as well as practical implications for Moroccan companies operating in Africa.

The question of the impact of soft power on Moroccan companies operating in Africa is being studied by researchers in the social sciences and economics. Soft power can help companies position themselves on international markets by developing relationships of trust with consumers and local partners. This systematic literature review aims to analyze the soft power of Moroccan companies in Africa, identifying the different strategies and practices used to influence their environment and strengthen their presence, as well as the key success factors and challenges they face. Four hypotheses are formulated to better understand the functioning and impact of Moroccan companies' soft power:

- **Hypothesis 1**: Moroccan companies use soft power to strengthen their competitive position in Africa.
- **Hypothesis 2**: Moroccan companies are able to adapt to the cultures and economic environments of African countries, enabling them to exercise their soft power successfully.
- **Hypothesis 3**: The soft power of Moroccan companies can be influenced by political, economic and social factors specific to each African country.
- **Hypothesis 4**: Moroccan companies may face significant challenges in exercising their soft power due to competition from international companies already established in Africa.

It is against this backdrop that this systematic literature review sets out to analyze the soft power of Moroccan companies operating in Africa. By examining the existing literature on the subject, this review seeks to identify the different strategies and practices used by Moroccan companies to influence their environment and strengthen their presence in Africa, as well as the key success factors and challenges they face.

1.1 Methodology

A systematic literature review on the soft power of Moroccan companies operating in Africa requires a structured and rigorous methodology. This methodology includes several important steps, such as the establishment of inclusion criteria to determine relevant studies, the systematic search to identify all relevant studies, the assessment of the quality and relevance of studies, the extraction and analysis of data, the synthesis of results and the interpretation of conclusions. By following this methodology, the review can provide a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of current knowledge on the subject, and contribute to the development of new perspectives on research and practice.

1.2 International corporate soft power: theories, issues and limits.

Soft power is a key concept in contemporary international relations. It refers to the influence that one actor (country, company, NGO, etc.) can exert on others through non-coercive means such as culture, public diplomacy, education, economic appeal and foreign policy.

1.2.1 Definitions and characteristics of soft power:

As the discipline of international relations developed, the stereotypical perception of power began to evolve. Joseph Nye highlighted the growing importance of intangible forms of power, such as culture, ideology and institutions, due to changes in the international framework. In addition, Nye introduced the notion of "soft power" and "hard power" to divide power into two pure forms.

Hard power, or command power, is defined as the ability to achieve one's objectives through coercive actions or threats, the so-called "carrots" and "sticks" of international politics.

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

Traditional criteria for measuring hard power include population size, territory, geography, natural resources, military strength and economic strength.

Soft power, on the other hand, is based on the ability to shape the preferences of others without resorting to force, coercion or violence. Intangible assets such as an attractive.

personality, culture, political values, institutions and policies regarded as legitimate, or moral authority, are essential to soft power. Legitimacy is central to soft power, as it enables us to attract and sincerely convince others through the use of our values and set of practices.

It's important to stress that soft power is not just about cultural attractiveness, but also about the ability to set the agenda and manipulate the preferences, desires or thoughts of others, as Steven Lukes noted in his theory of the third face of power. The roots of soft power can be traced back to the writings of Car, who assimilated power into three categories: military power, economic power and power over opinion. Power over opinion could be seen as a variant of Nye's soft power.

However, other researchers and authors have proposed similar definitions, albeit with nuances. Jan Melissen defines it as "the ability of a state to influence the behavior of others through the attractiveness of its culture, values and policies". Oliver Turner defines it as "the ability of a state to persuade others to share its goals because of the legitimacy or appeal of its policies or ideas". Jonathan McLelland defines it as "a set of tools and tactics that enable a state to attract and persuade others in a non-coercive way". These different definitions all emphasize that soft power is a non-coercive form of influence based on cultural attractiveness, political legitimacy or the ability to persuade others to share a country's objectives.

We note from these definitions that, soft power can be defined as the ability of a state or entity to influence the behavior of others by virtue of the attractiveness of its values, culture, policies and ideas, without resorting to force or coercion. It relies on intangible assets, such as political legitimacy, credibility, moral authority and cultural appeal, to shape the preferences of others and induce them to adopt desired behaviors.

1.2.2 Characteristics of the soft power concept:

The characteristics of "soft power" are multiple and can be used jointly or separately to strengthen a player's influence abroad. Here are the main characteristics of soft power:

a. non-coercive strategy: soft power is characterized by its lack of recourse to force, coercion or violence to achieve results. Instead, it relies on intangible assets such as culture, political values, legitimate institutions, diplomacy and policies considered fair and equitable (Nye, 1990).

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

b. Ability to shape the preferences of others: soft power is based on the ability to influence the preferences, desires and opinions of others without coercing them. It aims to convince and persuade rather than to impose (Melissen, 2005).

c. Cultural appeal: cultural appeal is a key element of soft power. It can take different forms, such as music, literature, cinema, cuisine, fashion, etc. (Nye, 2004) .

d. Political legitimacy: Political legitimacy is another important element of soft power. It refers to the recognition of the legitimacy of a country's institutions and policies by other countries. Legitimacy is essential to persuade others to share a country's objectives (Turner, 2010) .

e. Ability to set the international agenda: soft power enables countries with soft power to set the international agenda and put forward their priorities. By influencing the preferences and opinions of others, they can steer international debates and discussions in the direction they want (McLelland, 2014) .

In short, "soft power" is a form of influence that can be used by states to strengthen their presence and influence abroad. The various forms of "soft power" can be used jointly or separately to strengthen an actor's influence abroad.

1.2.3 Corporate internationalization: theories and paradigms:

The internationalization of companies is an important topic for economists and management researchers. Several theories have been developed to explain why companies choose to internationalize their activities, and the strategies they use to do so. In this article, we will analyze seven of these theories.

Initially, the theory of comparative advantage, developed by British economist David Ricardo, argued that it was in companies' interest to specialize in activities where they had a comparative advantage. Internationalization enables companies to benefit from these comparative advantages on foreign markets (Ricardo, 1817).

In the same vein, the Uppsala model, also known as the "progressive march theory", was developed by Swedish researchers Johanson and Vahlne. According to this theory, companies tend to internationalize gradually,

starting with markets that are geographically and culturally close, before expanding into more distant and complex markets. This gradual approach enables companies to adapt gradually to the cultural and economic differences of different markets (Johanson & Vahlne, 1977). On the other hand, the network enterprise paradigm, also known as the "globalization paradigm", emphasizes the importance of collaboration and coordination between a company's various subsidiaries and partners. According to this approach, companies must develop global networks

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

of activities to meet changing customer demands and competitive pressures on world markets (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1989).

In summary, the various theories of corporate internationalization offer interesting insights into the motivations and strategies of companies to expand their presence in global markets. Each of these theories emphasizes the importance of different factors, such as comparative advantages, transaction costs, inter-organizational relationships, adaptation to changing environmental conditions, or the creation of global business networks. By integrating these different models into their internationalization strategy, companies can improve their ability to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of global markets, and strengthen their competitive position.

1.2.4 Soft power of Moroccan companies internalizing in Africa: Theoretical basis and different paradigms

Moroccan companies operating in Africa can be analyzed using various economic theories. Firstly, legitimacy theory suggests that these companies seek to win the trust and support of local populations by adopting practices that conform to local norms and values. In this way, they can reinforce their brand image and market positioning. Similarly, the theory of corporate social responsibility (CSR) suggests that companies have a responsibility to the society in which they operate, and Moroccan companies can integrate social and environmental considerations into their strategy and practices to contribute to the economic and social development of the African countries in which they operate.

Next, resource dependence theory can be used to explore how these companies manage their dependence on local resources and seek to diversify their sources of supply. Dynamic capabilities theory can also be used to study how these companies develop specific capabilities to adapt to the specificities of African markets and offer innovative products and services.

Multinationalization theory can be applied to explore why these companies have chosen to invest in certain African countries and how they benefit from their presence in these countries. Similarly, the paradigm of South-South cooperation can be used to study how these companies collaborate with other African companies to strengthen their collective presence in the region.

In addition, the theory of the diffusion of innovations can be used to explore how these companies introduce innovations into African countries, and how they adapt their products and services to the needs and expectations of local populations. Corporate governance theory can also be applied to study how these companies are governed and organized, how they ensure the transparency and accountability of their actions, and how they create value for their shareholders and for society as a whole. Finally, economic decolonization theory can be used

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

to explore how these companies contribute to the decolonization of the African economy by creating local jobs, transferring skills and fostering the emergence of regional value chains .

In addition to existing theories on innovation practices, governance and cultural diffusion, three other theories can be mobilized to understand the practices of Moroccan companies operating in Africa. Diffusion theory suggests that the adoption of an innovation depends on factors such as perceived usefulness, simplicity and compatibility with local needs and values. In this way, Moroccan companies can adapt their products and services to the needs and expectations of local populations. Corporate governance theory suggests that the way a company is managed and organized has an impact on its performance and sustainability. Moroccan companies can therefore explore how they are governed and organized, how they ensure transparency and accountability in their actions, and how they create value for their shareholders and society as a whole. Finally, the theory of cultural imperialism can be mobilized to explore how Moroccan companies disseminate Moroccan culture and values in African countries, and how they contribute to the construction of a common African cultural identity. These theories can provide interesting perspectives for understanding the practices of Moroccan companies and their impact on local communities and society as a whole.

In short, these different economic theories can provide a better understanding of the strategies and practices of Moroccan companies operating in Africa, and their contribution to the region's economy and development. It should be stressed, however, that these theories are not exhaustive, and that other approaches can also be mobilized to analyze Moroccan companies in Africa.

1.2.5 Sources of soft power for companies going global:

The sources of soft power for companies going global can vary according to a number of factors, such as corporate culture, reputation, expertise, innovation, social responsibility and so on. According to some researchers, here are some of the most common sources of soft power for companies:

- Investing in corporate social responsibility (CSR): by investing in CSR initiatives such as sustainable development programs or charitable actions, companies can enhance their brand image and strengthen their soft power. Companies can also integrate CSR practices into their overall strategy to enhance their reputation and influence.

- Using social media to strengthen soft power: companies can use social media to enhance their brand image and reputation, and thus strengthen their soft power. Companies can publish relevant and interesting content, interact with their audience and use influencers to reach new audiences.

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

- The use of corporate diplomacy: companies can use their influence to build relationships with governments and other key players, strengthening their soft power and their ability to influence policies and regulations in their sector of activity.

- Developing strategic partnerships: by establishing strategic partnerships with other companies or organizations, companies can strengthen their influence and power in their sector, and enhance their soft power.

- Innovation and technology: Companies that develop and adopt innovative technologies can enhance their brand image and reputation as market leaders. It can also help them gain the support of local governments looking to attract innovative companies and encourage technological development.

- Reputation: a company's reputation can also be an important asset for its soft power. A company with a positive reputation in its market can attract new customers, talent and partners.

- Expertise: a company's expertise in its field can also play an important role in its soft power. Companies that are recognized for their expertise can be seen as leaders in their markets, and therefore more attractive to partners and talent.

These sources can be exploited by companies going global to increase their influence and create a climate of trust in the host country. It is important to note that these sources evolve over time and space.

1.2.6 The challenges of soft power for companies going global:

In the field of soft power theory, one of the key issues is the conceptual ambiguity surrounding its resources. Whereas hard power resources are straightforward and simple, soft power resources are more complex, both in their categorization and in their nature. Debates on soft power have often failed to take these conceptual, institutional and practical implications into account.

However, the soft power challenges facing companies going global are manifold, and can vary depending on a number of factors, such as the business sector, the target country, the local culture, and so on. Here are just a few examples:

- **Reinforcing a company's reputation and image:** by using sources of soft power such as culture, values and social practices, a company can reinforce its brand image and reputation with local consumers. This can help to improve its competitive position and increase its market share.
- **Encourage cooperation with local partners**: by using sources of soft power such as language, culture and shared values, a company can foster cooperation and partnerships

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

with local businesses. This can facilitate integration into the local market and help overcome cultural and linguistic barriers.

- **Improving relations with local authorities**: by using sources of soft power such as corporate social responsibility (CSR), a company can improve its relations with local authorities and strengthen its institutional position. This can make it easier to obtain licenses and permits, as well as political and regulatory support.
- **Dealing with negative reactions from local consumers**: by using sources of soft power such as effective communication and cultural adaptation, a company can deal with negative reactions from local consumers. This can help prevent reputational crises and maintain the confidence of local consumers.

2. Soft Power of Moroccan companies in Africa: Strategies, challenges and prospects.

Morocco is increasingly perceived as a major player in Africa, particularly in terms of investment. Moroccan companies have succeeded in establishing strong ties with neighboring African countries, using their soft power to forge lasting economic and commercial relationships. This growing economic presence is accompanied by the projection of a positive image of Morocco on the continent, reinforcing its influence and visibility. Against this backdrop, it is interesting to examine the strategies, challenges and prospects of Moroccan companies' soft power in Africa.

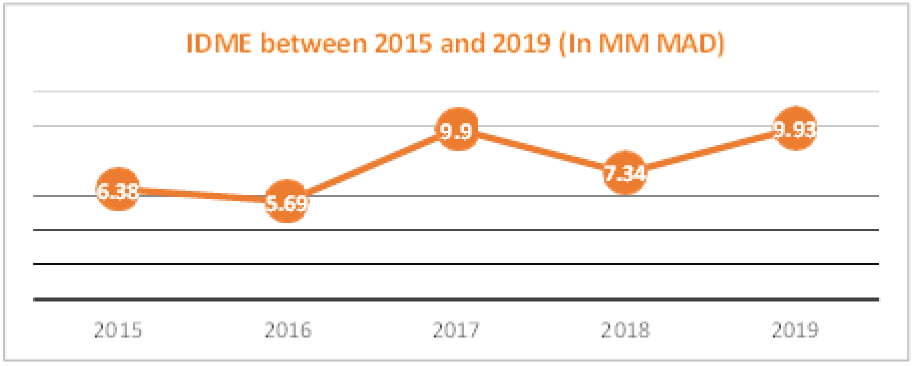
2.1 Overview of Moroccan direct investment abroad: the case of Africa.

Over the past two decades, Africa has established itself as a major growth pole and an attractive destination for foreign direct investment. Between 2001 and 2015, the continent's annual growth rate was higher than the world average, thanks in particular to the recovery of the global economy and domestic demand in African countries. Momentum is being driven by private consumption underpinned by a growing middle class and demographic dynamism, as well as by investment fuelled by improved business conditions and public spending (mainly on infrastructure and wages) in some countries. The continent's accelerating urbanization also presents opportunities for international companies in real estate, infrastructure and distribution. Morocco has also established solid partnerships with several African countries, including Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal, Ghana, Guinea, Nigeria and many others. These partnerships have boosted trade and investment between Morocco and these countries.

In 2019, there was a 35% increase in net flows of Moroccan direct investment abroad (IDME), which amounted to 9.9 million Moroccan dirhams, compared with the previous year's figure of 7.3 million Moroccan dirhams.

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

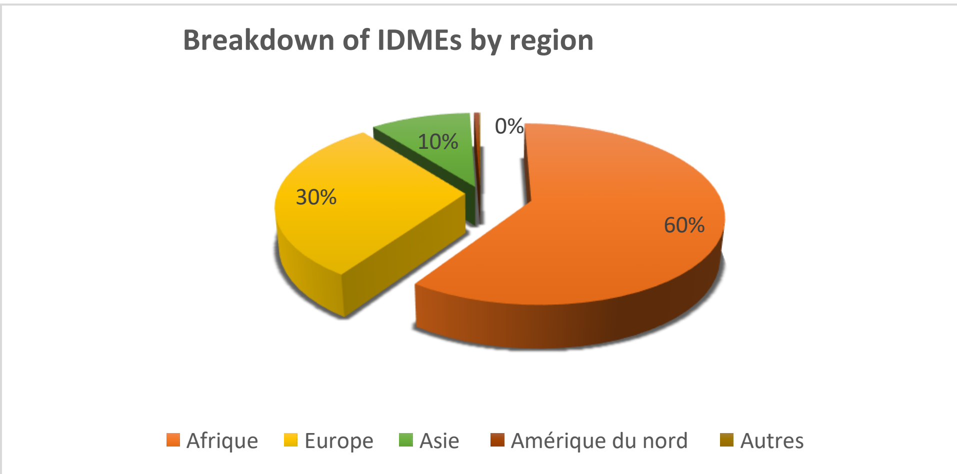
Figure 1: IDME trends between 2015 and 2019 (In MM MAD)



Source: Compiled by us on the basis of data from the Office de change

Foreign direct investment is an important component of a country's economic development strategy. Morocco, like many other countries, is seeking to extend its economic influence internationally through outward direct investment. The graph below shows the distribution of Moroccan direct investment abroad (IDME) by geographical zone. Knowledge of this distribution is essential for understanding the strategic choices made by Moroccan investors, the opportunities and challenges associated with each geographical area, and the overall economic dynamic. With this in mind, we take a closer look at the figures presented in this table to gain a better understanding of trends in Moroccan direct investment abroad.

Figure 2: Geographical distribution of IDMEs worldwide

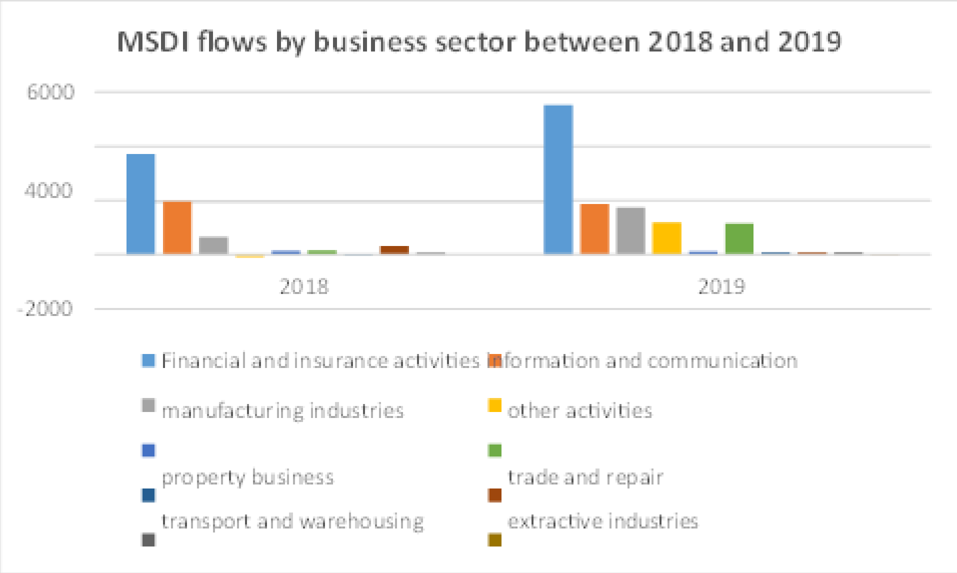


Source: Compiled by us on the basis of data from the Office de change

The best-performing industry in terms of financial and insurance activities is the financial and insurance sector. Despite a marked decline, Moroccan investments abroad continue to grow. A total of 3.6 million Moroccan dirhams is allocated to support activities in the information and communication industries.

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

Figure.3: MSDI flows by business sector between 2018 and 2019



Source: Compiled by us on the basis of data from the Office de change.

In summary, Moroccan investment in Africa has grown significantly in recent years, reflecting Morocco's commitment to strengthening its economic relations with African countries. These investments have created new jobs, stimulated economic growth and strengthened cooperation between Morocco and Africa.

2.2 Moroccan companies' soft power strategies in Africa and their challenges:

Morocco has been developing an outreach strategy in Africa for many years, drawing on a range of diplomatic, economic and cultural strategies to strengthen its influence on the continent. In this context, Moroccan companies have also adopted soft power strategies to strengthen their positioning in Africa.

2.3 Soft power strategies adopted by Moroccan companies in Africa:

Against a backdrop of increasing economic competition in Africa, Moroccan companies have adopted soft power strategies to strengthen their presence and influence on the continent. These strategies aim to promote the image of Morocco and its companies in Africa, while strengthening economic and cultural ties with African countries.

Promoting Moroccan culture: Moroccan companies can use Moroccan culture to strengthen their brand image and influence in Africa. For example, telecommunications company Maroc Telecom organized a Moroccan music festival in Côte d'Ivoire to promote Moroccan culture in that country (Zayed et al., 2019).

-Developing strategic partnerships: Moroccan companies can establish strategic partnerships with African companies to strengthen their presence on the African market and enhance their reputation. For example, the OCP group, a world leader in phosphate, has established

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

partnerships with African agricultural companies to promote sustainable agriculture and strengthen its influence in Africa (Rabhi, 2020).

-Support for development projects: Moroccan companies can support development projects in Africa to strengthen their brand image and reputation. For example, Royal Air Maroc transported medicines and medical equipment free of charge to support efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic in Africa (La Tribune Afrique, 2020).

-Training and skills development: Moroccan companies can offer training and skills development programs to strengthen their presence and influence in Africa. For example, the Banque Centrale Populaire du Maroc has set up a training program for African entrepreneurs to help them develop their skills and strengthen their businesses (Jeune Afrique, 2019).

-Cooperation and partnership with local governments and stakeholders: Moroccan companies can cooperate with local governments and stakeholders to develop joint projects that meet the needs and aspirations of local communities. This can reinforce the company's positive image and contribute to its local integration.

- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR): Moroccan companies can implement CSR programs that address local needs and improve the quality of life of local communities. These can include sustainable development programs, education and training initiatives, health and wellness programs, and cultural and artistic initiatives. CSR programs can help reinforce a company's positive image and improve its relations with local communities.

-Promoting Moroccan culture: Moroccan companies can promote Moroccan culture in Africa by organizing cultural and artistic events, supporting local artists and craftsmen, and highlighting Moroccan products and traditions. This can help reinforce the company's positive image and improve its visibility and reputation in the region.

-Promoting values and ideals: Moroccan companies can promote values and ideals that are shared by local communities in Africa. This can include values such as integrity, ethics, transparency and social responsibility. By doing so, companies can strengthen their reputation and positive image with local communities.

- **Training and skills development:** Moroccan companies can offer training and skills development programs for local workers. This can help workers improve their skills and enhance their employability, which in turn can help improve relations between the company and local communities.

- **Developing strategic partnerships:** Moroccan companies can establish strategic partnerships with other local companies in Africa. This can help reinforce the company's presence in the

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

region, while strengthening relations with local communities and enhancing the company's reputation.

-**Participation in local events:** Moroccan companies can take part in local events in African countries, such as trade fairs, conferences, festivals and so on. This can help strengthen their presence and visibility in these countries, while providing an opportunity to meet potential business partners and customers.

- **Collaboration with local partners:** Moroccan companies can collaborate with local partners in African countries, such as associations, NGOs or local businesses. This can help strengthen relations with local communities, provide a better understanding of local needs and reinforce the company's image as a reliable and responsible partner.

- **Developing partnerships with universities and research centers:** Moroccan companies can work in partnership with universities and research centers in the African countries where they are based. This collaboration can include participating in research projects, organizing training courses or conferences, and setting up internship programs for students. This can help reinforce the company's credibility and legitimacy in these countries, while contributing to the development of local capabilities.

- Promoting Moroccan culture: Moroccan companies can promote Moroccan culture in African countries by organizing cultural events such as art exhibitions, festivals,
concerts, film screenings and so on. This can help raise the company's profile as a cultural player and strengthen cultural ties between Morocco and African countries.

- Creating entrepreneurial networks: Moroccan companies can create entrepreneurial networks in Africa, by organizing networking events, creating online discussion groups, offering mentoring opportunities, etc. This can help raise the company's profile as a key player in the African entrepreneurial ecosystem, and strengthen ties between Moroccan entrepreneurs and their African counterparts. This can help raise the company's profile as a key player in the African entrepreneurial ecosystem, and strengthen ties between Moroccan entrepreneurs and their African counterparts.

- Business networking: Moroccan companies can strengthen their influence by establishing business networks with local partners in Africa. These networks enable Moroccan companies to better understand local realities and adapt to the needs of African consumers.

2.4 The soft power challenges facing Moroccan companies in Africa

Morocco has made considerable efforts to strengthen its economic presence in Africa in recent years, focusing on the use of soft power to promote its businesses and strengthen its relations with countries on the continent. However, despite these efforts, Moroccan companies continue to face many challenges when seeking to extend their influence in Africa. This section will examine the main challenges facing Moroccan companies and suggest strategies for overcoming them.

- **Limited market access:** Moroccan companies often face trade barriers, such as high regulations and customs duties, when trying to enter African markets. This can make it difficult for them to expand their activities and limit their growth potential.

- **Lack of infrastructure:** The lack of quality infrastructure, such as roads, ports and airports, can hamper the ability of Moroccan companies to get their products to African markets. It can also affect their ability to access raw materials and other resources needed for their activities.

- Security concerns: Armed conflict, terrorist attacks and organized crime are major security concerns in many African countries. Moroccan companies may face high security risks when trying to operate in these countries.

- **Political instability:** Political changes and conflicts can create uncertainty for Moroccan companies operating in Africa. Political changes can lead to changes in trade and tax regulations, which can affect the profitability of companies.

- Corruption: Corruption is a major problem in many African countries and can hamper the ability of Moroccan companies to do business in the region. Bribes and informal payments may be required to obtain business permits and licenses, which can increase business costs and damage reputations.

- **Language barriers:** Language differences can create significant barriers for Moroccan companies trying to communicate with consumers and business partners in Africa. Knowledge of local languages can be essential for success in certain markets.

In short, the soft power challenges facing Moroccan companies in Africa are many and varied, ranging from limited market access and corruption to lack of infrastructure and language barriers. However, with innovative and sustainable strategies, these challenges can be overcome. Moroccan companies can play a key role in Africa's economic and social development by investing in key sectors and strengthening their position as important economic players on the continent.

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

Conclusion:

1.1 Synthesis of the results of the systemic literature review

A systemic review of the literature on the subject of corporate soft power abroad identified a number of studies on the subject. Overall, these studies have shown that soft power can play an important role in the success of companies abroad, enabling them to influence the attitudes and behaviors of local populations and decision-makers. Soft power can also help strengthen a company's image and improve relations with local stakeholders.

Companies that succeed in exercising effective soft power are often those with a strong local presence and an active commitment to social and environmental responsibility initiatives. They are also able to communicate effectively with local populations using channels adapted to their cultural context.

As for the implications for Moroccan companies in Africa, the literature review suggests that they can draw on their cultural heritage and experience of South-South cooperation to strengthen their soft power on the continent. They should also be attentive to the cultural and political specificities of each country in which they operate, and work in partnership with local actors to reinforce their legitimacy and acceptability.

Finally, the literature review highlights the importance for Moroccan companies in Africa of developing communication and image management skills, as well as strengthening their commitment to social and environmental responsibility, in order to reinforce their soft power and maximize their international success.

1.2 Research limitations and prospects

Research into corporate soft power at international level faces a number of limitations, including the difficulty of measuring its impact on companies' economic and commercial performance, as well as the concentration of studies on large multinational companies to the detriment of SMEs and local businesses. To make progress, it would be useful to conduct more research into the application of soft power by SMEs and local companies, as well as into the differences in perception and use of soft power between different business sectors. Research prospects could also focus on exploring the mechanisms underlying the effectiveness of corporate soft power, the interactions between corporate soft power and public policy, and assessing the effectiveness of Moroccan companies' use of soft power in Africa. Finally, tools for measuring corporate soft power that take into account the cultural and political specificities of different contexts could be developed to better understand the impact of corporate soft power internationally.

1.3 Practical implications for Moroccan companies operating in Africa.

The practical implications for Moroccan companies operating in Africa are as follows:

- Develop a strong local presence: Moroccan companies should invest in creating a strong local presence by establishing regional offices and recruiting local employees. This will enable the company to better understand local dynamics and engage more effectively with local stakeholders.
- Strengthen their commitment to social and environmental responsibility: by implementing social and environmental responsibility initiatives, Moroccan companies can reinforce their positive image with local communities and improve their acceptability and legitimacy.
- Adapt their communication to local contexts: Moroccan companies should be aware of the cultural and linguistic specificities of each country in which they operate, and adapt their communication accordingly. They should also prioritize the communication channels that are most widely used and most effective in each context.
- Working in partnership with local players: Moroccan companies should seek to establish partnerships with local players, such as local governments, NGOs and local businesses. This will enable the company to strengthen its legitimacy and acceptability in the local market.
- Invest in the training and development of image management and communication skills: Moroccan companies should invest in the training and development of their employees' communication and image management skills, in order to maximize their ability to exercise effective soft power.

By implementing these practical implications, Moroccan companies operating in Africa can strengthen their soft power and their ability to succeed in the African market.

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

BIBLIOGRAPHIE

- The report by the Confédération Générale des Entreprises du Maroc (CGEM) is entitled "Moroccan companies in Africa: State of play and perspectives" and was published in April 2019. You can find this report on the official CGEM website, or by using the following link: https://www.cgem.ma/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/etude-entreprises-marocaines-en-afrique.pdf
- **Nye, J. (1990)**. Soft power. Foreign policy, (80), 153-171.
- **Nye, Joseph S. Soft Power:** The Means to Success in World Politics. New York: Public Affairs, 2004.
- **Lukes, Steven. Power:** A Radical View. London: Macmillan, 1974.
- **Carr, Edward Hallett.** The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
- **Melissen, J. (2005).** The new public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations. Palgrave Macmillan.
- **Turner, O. (2010)**. The role of soft power in UK foreign policy. International Affairs, 86(2), 347-363.
- **McLelland, J. (2018).** Soft power and the UK's world of influence. Routledge.
- **Melissen, J. (2005)**. The new public diplomacy: Soft power in international relations. Palgrave Macmillan.
- **Nye, J. S. (2004). Soft power:** The means to success in world politics. Public Affairs.
- Turner, O. (2010). The concept of soft power: A critical analysis. Journal of Political Power, 3(2), 211-227.
- **McLelland, J. (2014).** Soft power and the US presidency: The cultural dimension of international relations. Routledge.
- **Ricardo, D. (1817).** On the principles of political economy and taxation. London: John Murray.
- **Ohanson, J., & Vahlne, J. E. (1977).** The internationalization process of the firm-a model of knowledge development and increasing foreign market commitments. Journal of international business studies, 8(1), 23- 32.
- **Bartlett, C. A., & Ghoshal, S. (1989).** Managing across borders: New organizational responses. Sloan Management Review, 31(4), 7-17.
- **Luo, X., Bhattacharya, C. B., & Wei, X. (2018).** Corporate social responsibility, customer satisfaction, and market value: Evidence from China. Journal of Business Research, 89, 210-223.

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

- **Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. (2018).** Institutional entrepreneurship through dissent: Insights from a comparative study of European advocacy NGOs. Journal of Business Research, 89, 246-259.
- **Hardy, C., & Maguire, S. (2018).** Institutional entrepreneurship through dissent: Insights from a comparative study of European advocacy NGOs. Journal of Business Research, 89, 246-259.
- **Li, H., Zhang, Y., & Luo, Y. (2017)**. Strategic partnerships, innovation, and firm performance: Evidence from China. Journal of Business Research, 70, 149-156.
- **Carpenter, R. C. (2011).** Diplomacy in the digital age: Essays in honour of Ambassador Allan Gotlieb. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- **Aula, P. (2010).** Social media, reputation risk and ambient publicity management. Strategy & Leadership, 38(6), 43-49.
- **Prahalad, C. K., & Hamel, G. (1990).** The core competence of the corporation. Harvard Business Review, 68(3), 79-91.
- **Li, Y., & Liu, Y. (2019).** Soft power of Chinese enterprises: A literature review and future research agenda. Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 36(4), 943-974.
- **Chen, J., & Dai, X. (2019).** The soft power of multinational corporations: A conceptual framework and empirical analysis. Journal of International Management, 25(1), 47-61.
- **Lee, S. H., & Lee, J. W. (2018).** Soft power strategies of Korean multinational corporations in China. Journal of Business Research, 89, 287-294.
- **Le, V., & Nguyen, H. T. (2021).** Soft power strategies of Vietnamese multinational corporations in foreign markets: An exploratory study. Journal of Business Research, 122, 89-97
- https://www.oc.gov.ma
- **Zayed, S., Charfi, M., & Jaouadi, S. (2019).** The establishment of Moroccan companies in sub- Saharan Africa: what soft power? Revue Marocaine d'Administration Locale et de Développement, 41, 221-245.
- **Rabhi, K. (2020).** OCP, a model of sustainable development in Africa. https://www.medias24.com/ocp-un-modele-de-developpement-durable-en-afrique-13509.html
- **La Tribune Afrique (2020). Covid-19:** Royal Air Maroc transports medicines and medical equipment to Africa free of charge. https://afrique.latribune.fr/entreprises/2020-06-19/covid-19-royal-air- maroc-transporte-gratuitement-des-medicaments-et-du-materiel-medical-en-afrique-853372.html

African Scientific Journal
ISSN : 2658-9311
Vol : 3, Numéro 21, Décembre 2023

- **Jeune Afrique. (2019).** BCP trains African entrepreneurs. https://www.jeuneafrique.com/862646/economie/la-bcp-forme-les-entrepreneurs-africains/
- **Slassi, M., & Benali, M. (2018).** Soft power strategies of Moroccan companies in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of BMCE Bank. In Africapolis 2018: Enjeux et défis des villes africaines face à l'urbanisation (pp. 643-656). Editions L'Harmattan.
- **Zaki, N., & El Baz, J. (2019).** Soft power strategies of Moroccan companies in Africa: the example of Royal Air Maroc airline. Journal of African Business, 20(2), 206-222.
- **Hamzaoui, R., & Bouziane, M. (2021).** Soft power strategies of Moroccan companies in sub-Saharan Africa: The case of the insurance company Saham. Management et Société, 1(21), 61-79.
- **Mokhtari, F. (2018).** Soft power strategies of Moroccan companies in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of the insurance company Saham. Revue de Gestion des Ressources Humaines, (109), 55-70.
- **Zaki, N., & El Baz, J. (2019)**. Soft power strategies of Moroccan companies in Africa: the example of Royal Air Maroc airline. Journal of African Business, 20(2), 206-222.
- **Saadani, Y., & Hafsi, T. (2018).** Soft power strategies of Moroccan companies in sub-Saharan Africa: the case of Attijariwafa Bank. In Management et diversité culturelle: Regards croisés sur les pratiques de management (pp. 63-82). Editions Harmattan.
- **Belhassan, S., & Bellarabi, A. (2020).** Soft power strategies of Moroccan companies in Africa: the case of the insurance company Saham. Revue marocaine des études africaines, (6), 1-16.
- **El Idrissi, A., & El Ouardighi, F. (2019).** Moroccan soft power in sub-Saharan Africa: A focus on the film industry. Journal of African Media Studies, 11(1), 1-18.
- **Amine, L. S. (2018).** Moroccan Multinationals in Africa: The Soft Power Approach. Journal of Business and Management, 20(4), 38-48.
- **El Iraki, R., & Auh, S. (2019).** Soft power, hard impact: The strategic use of Moroccan culture and business practices in African markets. Journal of Business Research, 98, 169-181.
- **Ouzzani, M. (2020).** Moroccan Companies' Expansion Strategies in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges. International Journal of Economics, Commerce and Management, 8(5), 33-46.