WHAT WILL PROJECT MANAGEMENT LOOK LIKE IN 2035? AN EMPIRICAL STUDY BASED ON SMES IN GERMANY

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Abstract:
Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are widely recognized as the backbone of the German economy, yet their future viability is increasingly challenged by disruptive technological and socio-economic forces. Project management, as the discipline that enables innovation and transformation, is directly affected. This paper reports on a Delphi study with forty-one experts that explored the future of project management in SMEs in 2035. The study identified six systemic shifts: breakthroughs in AI and automation, dynamic skills development, decentralized organizations, the convergence of digital and traditional lifestyles, the challenge of navigating complexity, and the unbound availability of data. Rather than interpreting these as isolated drivers, the study applies Complexity Theory, framing them as emergent patterns in complex adaptive systems. This theoretical lens emphasizes non-linearity, interdependence, and emergent behavior, suggesting that project management success will depend on adaptive navigation rather than control (Cilliers, 1998; Stacey, 2011). The findings show how methodologies will evolve towards hybrid, human-centered, and complexity-informed forms, and how the project manager's role will transform from controller to navigator of uncertainty (Snowden & Boone, 2007). The paper draws not only on established megatrend research (Glockner & Neef, 2024; Artuso & Guijt, 2020; Helmrich, Hummel, & Wolter, 2020) but also on broader futurological perspectives on the management of uncertainty (Gracht & Kisgen, 2022). In doing so, it offers a theoretically grounded perspective and concrete tools to support SMEs in navigating complex project environments by 2035

Keywords: Project Management 2035, SMEs, Megatrends, Delphi Study, Future Skills

1. Introduction

In Germany, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) account for 99.5 percent of all companies. Their economic and societal role is fundamental, not least because they are a key driver of employment, innovation, and regional cohesion. However, their stability and adaptive capacity are increasingly challenged by multiple disruptive forces—technological, demographic, and socio-economic. Developments such as the rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence, demographic shifts, climate-related imperatives, and the expansion of digital platforms are exerting growing pressure on traditional models of organising work and generating value.

Among the business functions affected by this transformation, project management occupies a particularly strategic position. It is the organisational discipline through which change, and innovation are structured—and as such, it lies directly at the intersection of these broader dynamics. Historically, project management has operated under assumptions of stability, control, and linear planning: goals were defined, outcomes measured, deviations managed. These logics were reinforced through sequential methodologies and hierarchical decision structures.

In recent years, however, these foundations have begun to erode. While agile and hybrid frameworks have introduced more flexibility, they too often remain rooted in implicit assumptions of predictability. Yet the environments in which projects unfold are increasingly characterised by uncertainty, interdependence, and volatility. To remain relevant, project management must evolve—not merely in terms of tools, but in terms of mindset, governance, and purpose. This requires a deeper sensitivity to complexity, emergence, and systemic interrelations.

This paper builds on established megatrend research developed by Z_punkt (Glockner & Neef, 2024), offering a structured view of the long-term forces shaping future economic and societal contexts. These trend insights are complemented by global analyses of systemic transformation (Artuso & Guijt, 2020) and by national projections on qualification dynamics (Helmrich, Hummel, & Wolter, 2020). Together, they inform a foresight framework that is both evidence-based and interpretive. To this, I add a futurological perspective on the governance of the future itself, drawing from debates around anticipatory leadership and systemic navigation (Gracht & Kisgen, 2022).

The theoretical foundation for this work is Complexity Theory, which conceptualises projects not as isolated units of planning, but as complex adaptive systems. Such systems exhibit emergent properties, non-linear interactions, and unpredictable dynamics (Cilliers, 1998; Stacey, 2011). Within this frame, the role of the project manager transforms—from planner and controller to facilitator, sensemaker, and adaptive leader (Snowden & Boone, 2007). To operationalise these concepts, this study combines a Delphi-based foresight process with megatrend analysis. The result is a set of plausible futures and applied implications for project management in SMEs.

1.1. Research Problem

While the future of work and technology has received increasing academic and policy attention, relatively little has been said about how these shifts will specifically reshape project management in small and medium-sized enterprises. Much of the existing foresight literature focuses on large corporations or macro-level transformations, often overlooking the everyday realities of SMEs—organisations that operate with tighter resources, flatter hierarchies, and greater operational agility.

The German Mittelstand, long considered a model for resilience and innovation, is no exception to the pressures of systemic change. Yet despite its strategic importance, there remains a lack of tailored foresight that speaks directly to its needs—especially when it comes to managing complex, uncertain project environments.

This study addresses that gap by asking how SMEs can realign their project management practices in response to rapidly evolving technological, organisational, and societal landscapes. The goal is not to forecast one definitive future, but to develop plausible scenarios, practical insights, and strategic tools that can help SMEs navigate uncertainty more intentionally and proactively.

1.2. Objectives of the Paper

This paper sets out to explore what project management might look like for SMEs in the year 2035. To do so, it combines empirical foresight methods with a complexity-informed perspective. The research was designed not to predict the future in any deterministic way, but to surface patterns, perspectives, and practices that can support meaningful preparation.

Three core objectives guide this work:

- **First**, to identify key technological, organisational, and societal trends likely to influence how project management unfolds in SME contexts.
- **Second**, to translate those trends into narrative scenarios—referred to here as *Stories from the Future*—that illustrate how different developments might play out in practice.
- **Third**, to derive concrete, actionable insights for SME leaders and project professionals, helping them build adaptive capacity, strategic foresight, and resilience in the face of complexity.

Taken together, these aims position the study at the intersection of academic contribution and real-world relevance: it offers a framework for thinking about the future of project work, and practical tools for shaping it.

2. Methodology

2.1. Theoretical Lens: Complexity and Foresight

When trying to make sense of how project management might evolve, especially within the SME context, traditional linear models quickly fall short. Complexity Theory offers a more fitting perspective—one that acknowledges the messy, interconnected, and often unpredictable nature of real-world systems. At its heart, the theory suggests that outcomes don't follow a straight line from cause to effect. Instead, they emerge through dynamic interactions between people, structures, and technologies (Cilliers, 1998).

This kind of thinking has major implications for project management. Rather than assuming that projects can be neatly planned and controlled, Complexity Theory encourages us to pay attention to feedback loops, shifting conditions, and the importance of continuous adaptation (Stacey, 2011). It invites project managers to let go of the illusion of full control and instead focus on enabling learning, sensing change early, and responding with agility.

Snowden and Boone (2007) make a helpful distinction here between *complicated* and *complex* contexts. In complicated settings, expertise and analysis can point to clear solutions. But in complex environments—which many SMEs increasingly operate in—solutions have to emerge through experimentation, collaboration, and responsiveness. For SMEs dealing with volatile markets, evolving technologies, and limited resources, this distinction isn't just theoretical. It's deeply practical.

Adding to this systems-based view, the field of foresight contributes a complementary layer. Foresight doesn't aim to predict *the* future, but rather to explore multiple possible futures and to open up structured conversations about what might be coming. Approaches like Delphi studies, scenario planning, and trend analyses offer organisations the chance to pause, reflect, and engage with long-term change in a way that is both grounded and imaginative (van der Heijden, 2005).

This study brings both perspectives together. Complexity provides the systemic lens, and foresight offers the interpretive tools. The Delphi method, used here, was chosen not just for its structured nature, but because it supports exactly the kind of reflective, iterative, and pluralistic thinking that complex futures demand. As Gracht and Kisgen (2022) argue, the challenge of *managing the future* isn't about eliminating uncertainty—it's about learning to work with it.

2.2. Delphi Design and Analysis

To explore how project management might look in SMEs by 2035, I conducted a three-round Delphi study with a panel of 41 experts. Most of them held senior roles in project management within German SMEs and had direct experience with navigating complex, fast-changing environments. The participants weren't randomly selected; instead, I deliberately sought out professionals with both formal qualifications—like PMP or IPMA certifications—and hands-on leadership experience. This was essential to ensure that the study reflected not just theoretical insights, but grounded, practice-oriented perspectives.

The Delphi process itself was designed to balance individual judgement with collective learning.

It unfolded in three phases:

- In Delphi **Round 1**, participants evaluated a curated list of **75 future-relevant trends** using a five-point Likert scale. Based on their ratings, **6 trends were identified as highly relevant** (score ≥ 4.0), and 69 were considered less relevant.
- In Delphi **Round 2**, participants re-evaluated the 6 most relevant trends, this time rating them on **importance**, **probability of occurrence**, and **desirability**—now using a seven-point scale. In addition, participants qualitatively described the trends' **potential impact on project management** and proposed **measures SMEs could take to prepare**.
- In Delphi **Round 3**, the process shifted from trend **evaluation to scenario development**. Experts collaboratively assessed six scenario narratives—referred to as ***Stories from the Future***—that illustrated how combinations of the trends might plausibly play out in SME project environments by 2035. Each story was evaluated on a ten-point scale, and all six achieved consensus (≥ 6.7).

For the analysis, I used both quantitative and qualitative methods. On the numbers side, descriptive statistics like medians and interquartile ranges helped surface areas of consensus and divergence. But the real value lay in the interpretation of qualitative input. Using NVivo, I coded responses thematically, applying the principles of interpretive content analysis as outlined by Krippendorff (2019). This method isn't about counting keywords—it's about understanding how meaning is constructed and shared.

To strengthen the conceptual clarity, I also drew on the Gioia methodology (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2013). This approach helped translate expert quotes and practical examples into broader categories and theoretical constructs. The result was not a single vision of the future, but a set of nuanced, plausible scenarios grounded in both data and practitioner insight.

This blended methodology reflects the very ideas underpinning Complexity Theory. It accepts that no single perspective or method will capture the full picture. Instead, insight emerges through diversity, iteration, and synthesis—just as it does in real-world organisations facing complex change.

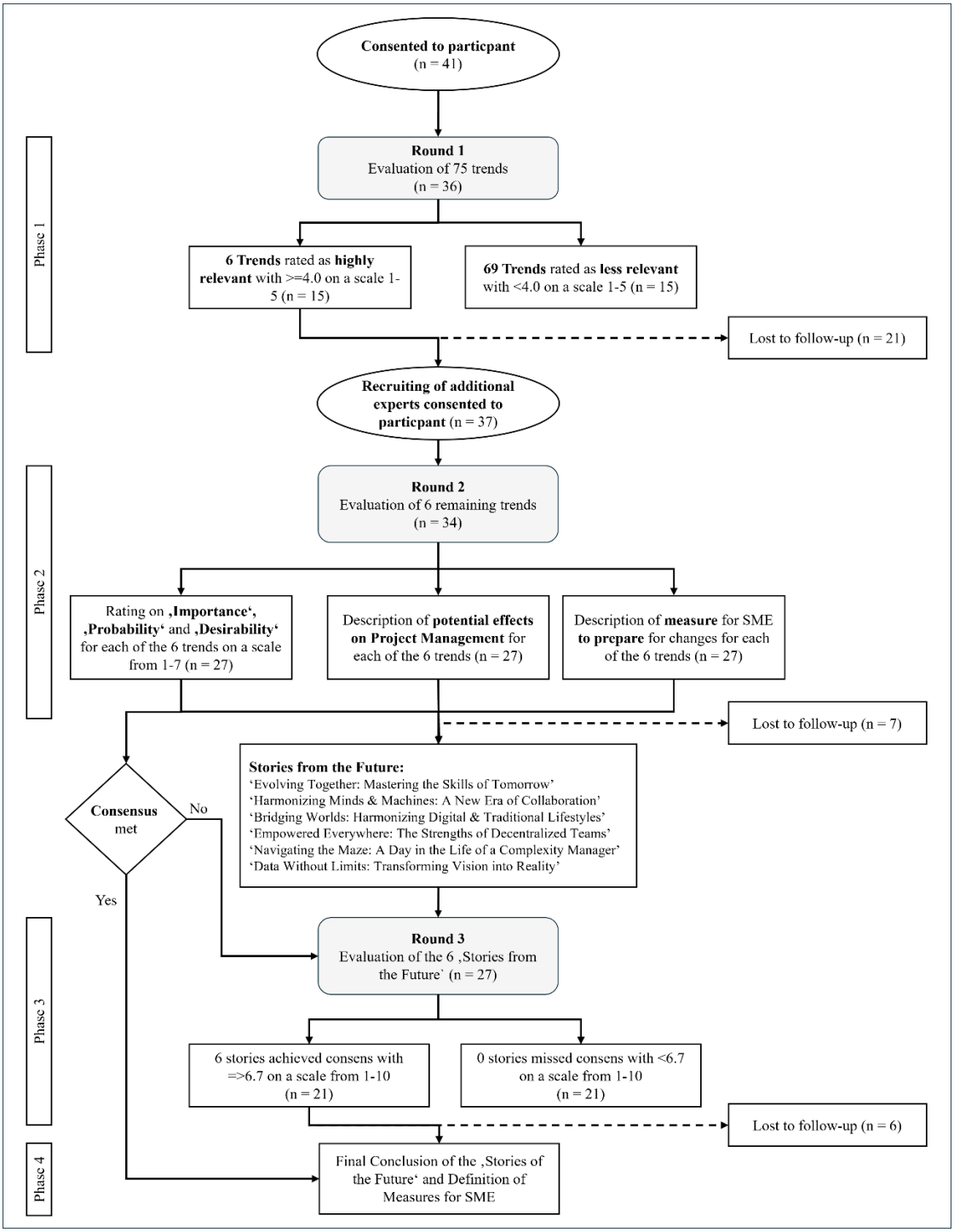

Figure 1: Flow Chart of the Delphi-Study conducted in this research

3. Findings

3.1. Six Strategic Shifts through a Complexity Lens

The Delphi process led to the distillation of an initial list of 75 trends into six overarching strategic shifts. These are summarized in Figure 2 and should not be interpreted as isolated developments. Instead, Complexity Theory invites us to view them as systemic patterns that evolve in dynamic interaction with one another. This theoretical framing draws attention to feedback loops, path dependencies, and co-evolutionary logics that are particularly relevant for project management in SMEs.

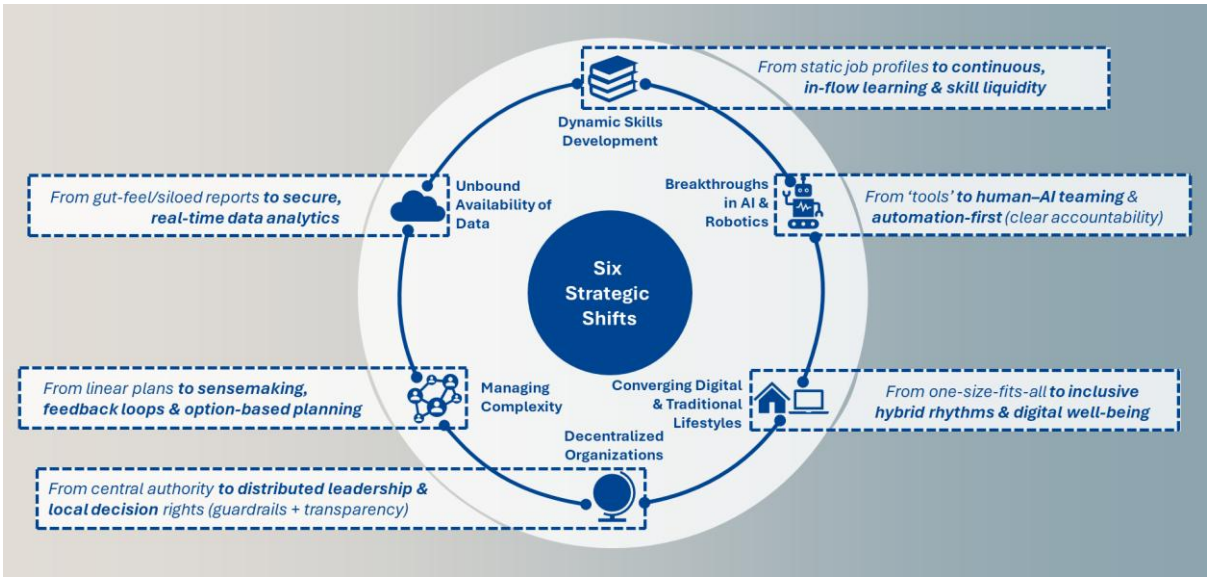

Figure 2: The Six Strategic Shifts

The first shift concerns **dynamic skills development**. Rather than following a predictable, linear sequence, skills now emerge through cyclical processes. New technologies generate new competence requirements, which in turn stimulate learning processes that reshape professional practice. This aligns with Byrne and Callaghan's (2013) understanding of skills as contextually embedded and socially negotiated, rather than pre-defined or static.

The second shift involves **breakthroughs in AI and robotics**. As automation takes over routine analytical and administrative tasks, human actors increasingly concentrate on judgement, creativity, and ethical evaluation. This redistribution of roles is not a straightforward substitution but an ongoing negotiation of function and responsibility—characterised by feedback and adaptation. The finding mirrors insights from Holzmann, Zitter, and Peshkess (2022), who identify a growing expectation that AI will augment rather than replace human project work. Complexity Theory helps explain this non-linear progression, whereby every advance in technology generates new human response patterns (Snowden & Boone, 2007).

The third shift addresses the **convergence of digital and traditional work practices**. While digital platforms are expanding the possibilities for collaboration, they must be reconciled with persistent human needs for trust, authenticity, and presence. Complexity Theory frames this not as a linear substitution of one form by another, but as a co-evolutionary process—where social systems and technological infrastructures interact, producing hybrid forms of working that are continuously negotiated in practice.

The fourth shift highlights the rise of **decentralised organisations**. Authority increasingly migrates from centralised hierarchies to distributed, autonomous teams. In such contexts, resilience arises not from central control but from the responsiveness of local actors. Stacey (2011) points out that effective organisations foster self-organisation and local sensemaking, principles that SMEs—due to their size and flexibility—are often well positioned to adopt.

The fifth shift relates to the **explicit challenge of managing complexity**. Traditional project management models typically assume stable environments, linear causality, and high predictability—assumptions that are increasingly problematic in volatile, uncertain, and interdependent contexts. Here, success depends on adaptive processes such as collective sensemaking, scenario development, and iterative experimentation. Snowden and Boone's (2007) Cynefin framework provides a useful orientation by advocating for probe–sense–respond strategies over detailed advance planning.

The sixth shift concerns **data abundance and decision-making**. The availability of real-time data streams can enhance oversight, but it can also overwhelm decision-makers and obscure what truly matters. In line with Complexity Theory, the key lies not in maximising data volume but in cultivating pattern recognition and contextual interpretation. Effective decision-making depends as much on qualitative insight as on technical instrumentation.

These six strategic shifts were explored and brought to life through the **Stories from the Future**, collaboratively developed by participants during the third Delphi round. As shown in **Figure 3**, these narratives do not aim to predict specific outcomes but to illustrate plausible configurations of interacting dynamics.

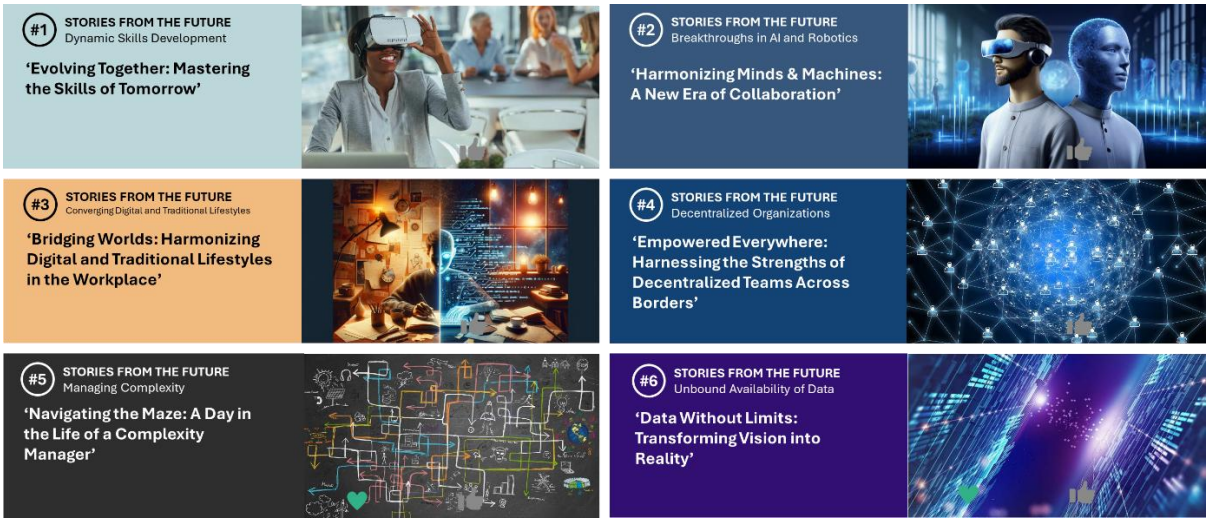

Figure 3: The six *Stories from the Future* drafted based on the Six Strategic Shifts

They were designed as conceptual tools—resonating with van der Heijden's (2005) notion of scenarios as *strategic conversations* that make complex systems more intelligible and actionable. Their construction followed a grounded approach inspired by Gioia et al. (2013), which facilitated the translation of individual perspectives into aggregate conceptual frames. This iterative process reinforces the view that futures are not discovered but socially constructed.

3.2. Evolution of Project Management Methodologies

The six strategic shifts presented in Figure 2 inevitably imply a reconfiguration of project management methodologies. While agile practices will continue to play a central role, they alone will not suffice. Increasingly, **hybrid approaches** that combine the adaptability of agile methods with the reliability and structure of traditional frameworks will define methodological best practice—especially in the context of SMEs.

These hybrid models are best understood as emergent responses within complex adaptive systems. Rather than being planned top-down, they evolve over time, as organisations adjust their approaches in response to feedback, experience, and environmental change. For example, an SME operating at the intersection of digital innovation and regulatory compliance may adopt agile sprints for development tasks while maintaining stage-gate checkpoints for external auditing. Such contextual tailoring reflects the essence of Complexity Theory: stability arises not from rigid standardisation but from **coherent flexibility,** shaped by **continuous learning** (Stacey, 2011).

The increased availability of **real-time data and analytics** reinforces this trend. Dashboards, forecasts, and algorithmic decision-support systems enhance visibility across portfolios. Yet, as emphasised in the sixth strategic shift (see Figure 2), more data does not automatically translate into better decisions. Data must be **interpreted within its systemic context**. As Byrne and Callaghan (2013) argue, sensemaking becomes a core competence. Scenario techniques drawn from foresight (e.g. scenario planning; van der Heijden, 2005) complement these data-driven approaches by fostering interpretive awareness and long-term thinking.

In parallel, the rise of **decentralised organisations** (the fourth strategic shift) calls for new coordination mechanisms. Cloud-based collaboration platforms, digital workspaces, and distributed ledgers allow teams to interact asynchronously across time zones and institutional boundaries. These tools, while powerful, also demand careful design of **governance structures** that promote trust, transparency, and shared accountability. Project managers must shift from planning **and oversight to facilitating interaction,** in line with Snowden and Boone's (2007) call for enabling leadership in complex environments.

A further implication concerns the **human-centred orientation** of future project methodologies. Technological innovation must be matched with cultural sensitivity and stakeholder inclusivity. As highlighted in the third strategic shift—**the convergence of digital and traditional values**—methodologies must be designed not just for technical performance but also for authentic human engagement. This includes methods for stakeholder co-creation, ethical review processes, and culturally responsive facilitation.

Finally, increasing environmental volatility makes clear that no single methodology can be universally applied. Instead, future project environments demand **methodological adaptability**—the ability to reconfigure tools and processes in real time. **Complexity-informed tools** such as dynamic risk maps, portfolio simulations, and contingency scanning are examples of this orientation. These are not just supplements to traditional methods—they reflect a fundamental rethinking of methodology as evolving practice, not fixed procedure.

In summary, by 2035, the methodological landscape of project management will be defined less by allegiance to particular schools (agile vs. waterfall) and more by the capacity for **systemic responsiveness**. SMEs that succeed will not be those that adopt a fixed set of best practices, but those that foster a learning culture capable of **iterative experimentation**, contextual adaptation, and **continuous methodological innovation**.

3.3. Changing Role of the Project Manager

As project management methodologies continue to evolve, so too does the role of those who apply them. Insights from the Delphi study and the scenario narratives point toward a notable shift in professional identity—from someone who primarily monitors tasks and deadlines to someone who navigates complexity and enables emergent outcomes.

This transformation plays out across several dimensions. One of them is the growing need for **data literacy**. As AI and analytical tools become more integrated into everyday project work, project managers won't necessarily need deep technical expertise. Still, they must be able to assess the reasoning behind algorithmic suggestions and understand where technology supports—and where it might obscure—sound judgement. Holzmann et al. (2022) observe that while many project managers expect AI to automate routine activities, human responsibility will remain crucial in interpreting insights, making ethical decisions, and providing contextual awareness.

Another shift concerns **leadership structures**. In more decentralised organisational settings, project managers can no longer rely solely on hierarchical authority. Instead, they are expected to enable decision-making across teams and roles. This requires a more facilitative approach—building trust, encouraging dialogue, and helping others take ownership. Stacey (2011) suggests that such distributed leadership can strengthen adaptability, especially when local responses to changing conditions are needed. In the context of SMEs, where roles are often fluid and informal, this shift can be both a practical necessity and a cultural challenge.

The role is also becoming more centred around **sensemaking**. In uncertain or fast-changing environments, recognising patterns and building shared understanding within teams becomes just as important as planning or control. Rather than delivering fixed instructions, project managers are expected to guide collaborative reflection and interpretation. From a Complexity Theory perspective (Cilliers, 1998), this means acknowledging that meaning is constructed through interaction—not dictated from above.

In parallel, **human and relational competencies** are taking on greater weight. The ability to read social dynamics, show empathy, and work across cultural contexts is increasingly seen as essential—particularly in hybrid or remote environments where informal cues are harder to perceive. The broader convergence of digital tools with traditional forms of communication (Artuso & Guijt, 2020) makes it more important than ever to balance efficiency with authenticity. This aspect of the role often remains underemphasised in formal training but proves critical in practice.

Finally, the ability to **learn continuously** is becoming a defining expectation. Helmrich et al. (2020) describe a labour market in which ongoing reskilling is the norm. For project managers, this doesn't just mean acquiring new tools—it involves developing a mindset that values experimentation, reflection, and openness to new ways of working. As Gracht and Kisgen (2022) highlight, future-oriented management is less about stability and more about remaining responsive to ongoing change.

Taken together, these developments suggest a profession in motion. The project manager of 2035 is no longer positioned primarily as a controller of certainty, but as someone who supports navigation through ambiguity—by integrating data and dialogue, encouraging shared sensemaking, and enabling teams to adapt as conditions evolve.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study confirms that SMEs are exposed to disruptive developments that cannot be tackled using linear project management approaches. Complexity Theory offers a fitting conceptual framework for understanding these dynamics, portraying project environments as adaptive systems shaped by interdependencies, feedback, and emergence (Cilliers, 1998; Stacey, 2011). Rather than eliminating uncertainty, project managers are required to engage with it—adjusting their strategies as contexts evolve.

The six strategic shifts identified through the Delphi process reflect broader research on megatrends. Glockner and Neef (2024), in their foresight work, highlight key forces such as digitalisation, demographic change, sustainability, and AI-driven automation. These themes also appear in global perspectives by Artuso and Guijt (2020), who argue that such trends are deeply interconnected. Likewise, Helmrich, Hummel, and Wolter (2020) show how these forces are already reshaping the demand for skills across the German labour market. Taken together, these findings suggest that the six shifts observed in this study are not isolated but symptomatic of systemic transformation.

At a conceptual level, the study contributes to futurology's evolving discourse. Gracht and Kisgen (2022) contend that managing the future requires more than trend extrapolation—it demands a fundamental rethinking of management as a discipline shaped by uncertainty. This argument aligns with the complexity-informed perspective adopted here: project management must not only adapt to external change but also reassess its own tools and identity in light of systemic volatility.

The findings also build on existing research in the field. Holzmann, Zitter, and Peshkess (2022) found that project managers expect AI to take over many routine tasks, while human actors concentrate on strategy, ethics, and relational work. This study supports those insights but extends them by showing how AI interacts with other dynamics—such as decentralised teams, continuous skill development, and overwhelming data availability. Complexity Theory underscores that these elements are not separate issues but part of a broader pattern of co-evolution and feedback.

For SMEs, this presents both a challenge and an opportunity. Their limited resources and lack of dedicated foresight departments make long-term planning difficult. Yet their proximity to customers, informal structures, and flexibility position them well to experiment and adapt. Many Delphi experts stressed that SMEs do not need to predict the future in detail. Instead, they must become more resilient in the face of multiple plausible futures (van der Heijden, 2005).

4.1. Implications for Practice

For SMEs, translating foresight into action means embedding adaptability into the organisation's DNA. Rather than one-off transformation initiatives, capability-building must be ongoing. Partnerships with external experts—such as universities or innovation hubs—can help close resource gaps. Internally, lightweight foresight activities like scenario workshops or Delphi-inspired stakeholder dialogues can promote a culture of reflection and anticipation.

For project managers, the study suggests a pragmatic path forward. Adopting AI tools in pilot settings, introducing small-scale sensemaking routines, or enabling more distributed decision-making can generate valuable learning. These incremental changes, when sustained, accumulate into more systemic shifts over time—mirroring how complexity-driven systems evolve through feedback, rather than through central redesign (Byrne & Callaghan, 2013).

4.2. Practical Tools and Frameworks

The findings of this study underline that SMEs and project managers must actively prepare for the systemic shifts ahead. From these insights, and the broader necessity to translate foresight into actionable practice, a set of practical frameworks can be derived. These include the **Strategic Readiness Radar for SMEs**, which enables organisations to assess their maturity across domains such as AI adoption, skills development, and complexity navigation; the **Project Manager Readiness Radar**, which supports individuals in reflecting on competencies such as distributed leadership and systemic sensemaking; the **Complexity Canvas**, which helps teams to map interdependencies and feedback loops; and the **Skill Heatmap**, which identifies capability gaps and informs training or recruitment strategies. The Figure 4 shows examples of the Strategic Readiness Radar for SMEs and for project managers.

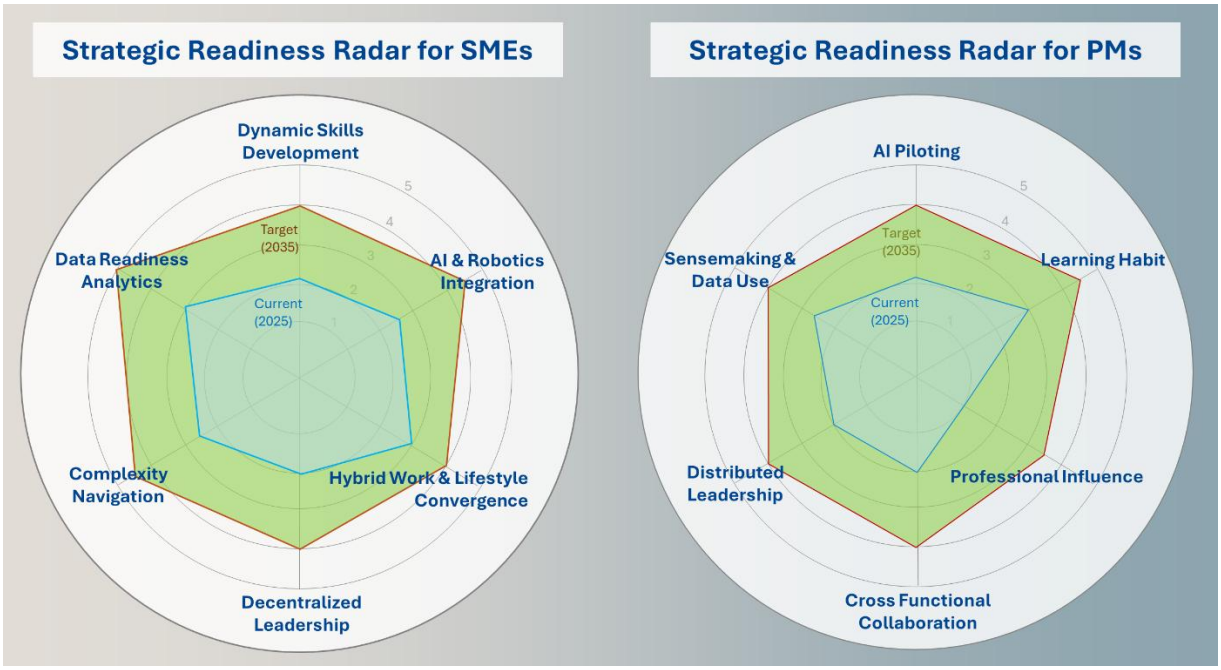

Figure 4: Strategic Readiness Radar for SMEs and Project Managers

Such tools do not predict fixed outcomes but support SMEs and project managers in navigating uncertainty. They represent structured ways of applying complexity-informed thinking to everyday practice, aligning with Krippendorff's (2019) argument that meaning and action emerge through interpretive reconstruction rather than deterministic coding. In this sense, they serve as bridges between foresight insights and the daily realities of SME project environments.

4.3. Conclusion

This study shows that the future of project management in SMEs will be shaped less by rigid methods and more by adaptive, context-sensitive practices. The most resilient SMEs will be those that engage with complexity rather than resist it—and the most effective project managers will be those who learn to lead without relying on control.

By integrating foresight research (Glockner & Neef, 2024; Artuso & Guijt, 2020; Helmrich et al., 2020), futurological debates (Gracht & Kisgen, 2022), and practical insights from project management (Holzmann et al., 2022), this paper highlights a key conclusion: project management in 2035 is not about prediction—it is about participation in emergent change. As Byrne and Callaghan (2013) remind us, complex systems evolve through learning, not planning. SMEs and their project leaders must do the same.

5. Limitations and Future Research

Like any foresight-driven study, this research is not without its limitations. Its focus on German SMEs brings a certain depth and contextual relevance, but it also narrows the broader applicability of the findings. Different national contexts—with their own regulatory, cultural, and economic landscapes—may surface distinct challenges or responses. Future studies would benefit from cross-country comparisons or sector-specific investigations to deepen and contrast the insights generated here.

The Delphi method proved valuable in capturing diverse expert perspectives and navigating the inherent uncertainties of long-range thinking. Still, it is a method rooted in subjective judgment. While that subjectivity was structured through multiple rounds and group feedback, it remains an interpretive exercise rather than an empirical generalisation. Longitudinal studies could help determine whether the shifts and scenario elements identified here materialise in practice—and how organisations actually respond to them over time.

There is also an open question around the practical utility of the tools developed in this study, such as the Readiness Radar and Complexity Canvas. While they are grounded in the data and theoretically sound, their actual use in everyday project settings has not yet been tested. It would be valuable for future research to engage with practitioners—perhaps through pilot studies, case work, or design sprints—to observe how these tools are adopted, adapted, or perhaps even rejected in favour of other methods.

Lastly, more attention could be given to the interface between foresight and project management as distinct yet complementary domains. As Korthals, Seidl, and Vonhof (2021) demonstrated in their work with public libraries, even institutions traditionally anchored in stability can find value in exploring alternative futures. Project environments—especially in the SME sector—may benefit similarly from building foresight not as a one-off activity but as a regular practice embedded into project governance and reflection. Future research could explore how such integration might be achieved more systematically.

In this article, I used DeepL for the purpose of grammar correction.

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