



RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE DIFFICULTIES OF ANCHORING QUALITY APPROACHES IN MOROCCAN LOCAL COMMUNITIES: THE CASE OF AN URBAN COMMUNITY, MOROCCO

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GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANT: Actor Network Theory
MUC: Moroccan Urban Communes
NPM: New Public Management

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INTRODUCTION

During this last decade the demonstrations in the Arab countries and more precisely those of the Mediterranean have been accentuated. Citizens demand the modernization of public policy management processes, which is translated operationally by the need for transparency and the improvement of the quality of local public services. For several years, quality initiatives have been developed in the public sphere under the joint influence of several events. Currently, in Morocco, the local public services are characterized by the heaviness and the complexity of the MUC administrative procedures, especially towards the most demanding citizens and those who consistently demand quality services, which has led the state to focus more on outreach and easy access to services provided by local communities.

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ABSTRACT

The influence of public management and the introduction of quality management, with the successive reforms of Moroccan public administration, have accelerated the transposition of new tools and management practices from the private to public sector. The experiences of Moroccan local communes in implementing quality approaches in their management style are too limited. With the large yards restructuring and the new constitution, the powers of municipalities are expanding, and the process of decentralization has increased to give more track maneuver to local communities. In this context, the role of leaders (administrative directors) had been dominant in the layout and ownership of quality initiatives in the Moroccan local commune's process. Through this brief, we address the problems related to the reasons that impede the implementation of quality management in Moroccan local authorities and their appropriation by the leaders. To do this, we first carried out a literature review on our subject to shed light on the key concepts and theoretical foundations, then to treat the empirical part through a semi-qualitative approach carried out in a Moroccan city based on common interview guidelines with the heads of divisions.

In this context, the implementation of approaches to reduce the costs of non-quality, and the continuous improvement of the quality of services provided to citizens is necessary. The local public offering is becoming increasingly important in local communes for politicians, citizens and all other interested parties. In this case the quality approach can be a response to the search for efficiency and effectiveness within the local public administration. However, in the case of Morocco, the literature provides very little evidence on the implementation of a quality approach in Moroccan local communities. It therefore seems necessary to explore this terrain to try to understand the obstacles that hinder its introduction and the role of leaders in its appropriation. The purpose of this exploratory and qualitative study is to analyze the process of implementation of quality approaches in a municipality in northern Morocco, in order to identify the factors that influence this process. This study is based on in-depth interviews with six leaders of a municipality X. In this case, the sociology of translation approach allows studying the role of the network of actors who are the administrative leaders of Moroccan municipalities in order to explain the delay in efforts

to introduce NPM practices in Moroccan local communities in general and UMCs in particular. In a first chapter we present the literature review in order to capture the key concepts of our research and then we propose an approach based on a qualitative study through semi-structured interviews.

Context and theoretical framework of the research:

Before analyzing the implementation of quality approaches in the UMC X, it is necessary to present a literature review on the "Quality Approaches", then to return to the characteristics of local authorities in Morocco and their specificities.

Quality Approaches: The objective of the quality approach is to make it a priority, during a given period, to resolve "non-quality" problems, so as to reduce their causes (Pesqueux, 2008). According to the ISO 9000 standard, it is a management tool that allows the organization to evolve in relation to a standard. The quality approach is then shown as a set of actions that allow an organization to meet the needs of its customers and partners, it gives managers the opportunity to identify strengths and weaknesses to draw the necessary conclusions to the improvement of the overall performance of the organization. It is therefore a global approach to continuous improvement of services, and its adoption can be done by any organization whatever its size, structure or field of action. Through the quality approach, top management implements a management system that responds on the one hand to the stakeholder's requirements, and on the other hand allows a mastery of the management practices and orientations. The quality approaches have appeared in the private sphere and have long been associated with the industrial and craft sectors, this allows to draw a view of their history to better apprehend them.

Quality and public service approaches: Referentials:

Before presenting the quality approaches that have marked the public sphere, it is considered necessary to throw light on the concept of public service. Most of the authors in the field have accepted the difficult definition of public services, however, they have advanced some tracking tests. A public service is a service supported or subsidized by the State or local authorities, to be, as its name indicates, "in the service of the public". The notion of general interest is an element consisting in the definition of public service, it is a question of satisfying a need of general or strategic interest the nature of which is considered incompatible with the normal functioning of the market (Morgan and Murgatroyd, 1994). Annie BARTOLI in her book "Management in public organizations", refers the notion of public service to a politico-cultural dimension. The public services for this author are activities of general interest (evolutionary and contingent concept) which are exercised directly or indirectly under the aegis of public authorities (Bartoli and Blatrix, 2015). On the other hand it evokes the notion of public sector in a structural perspective. It is then "all organizations managed directly or indirectly by the state (central or local)". Independently of the missions, vocations, values and legal statuses, it would be defined by "a dominant power of the State decision on the objectives of the organization" and "a dominant possession by the State of the means of this organization". The public service is also the organization that is responsible for carrying out this service. It can be an administration, a local authority, a public institution or a private-law firm that has been entrusted to it - in the context of delegated management - a public service mission (water, sanitation or water management).

In this case, the public service mission can also take various forms: concession, license, franchise, specifications, setting of tariffs or control of investments... Among the different approaches and standards of quality in public services, we can distinguish between standardized approaches and service standards aiming to the certification or qualification of a service, such as CAF or EFQM (Gueret-Talon, 2004), the circles of quality, service commitment, certification-accreditation, the welcome charter (Marianne), the LOLF (2006) and the RGPP (2007) They provide the necessary elements to their definition: the description of the service required and the expected results, the commitment of the service (equity, professionalism and transparency), the definition of objectives for particular services, the definition of costs and claims management. Thus, service standards are focused on grouping all these elements, even if, in some cases, it is difficult to satisfy this grouping.

The Moroccan local communities subject of this research:

In Morocco, the awareness of the challenges of local development is very strong. It is declined in many royal speeches and in the declarations of the general policy of the successive governments. As such, they maintain that economic development will only be achieved if efforts are directed towards upgrading the space, that should not be limited to its development, to enable it to drain all types of investment, and make more efforts to promote poor regions and municipalities and integrate them into the development process in order to achieve social justice. This mainly involves the effective and efficient management of the public administration in order to respond to the expectations of all the stakeholders. Local communes are, according to the Moroccan constitution, the regions, the prefectures, the provinces and the municipalities. They are endowed with moral personality, financial autonomy and elect assemblies to democratically manage their affairs. At the communal level, the municipal council decides on the creation and organization of communal public services and their management, examines and develops plans of the municipality; it also determines the financial participation of the municipality in mixed economy companies of municipal or inter municipal interest, votes the budget, and examines and approves the financial year report. As a result, the municipality is the anchor of local democracy, it has an economic powers and territorial planning, intervenes in the cultural and social field and provides the main local services. As part of these advisory functions, it is informed in advance about any project that will be carried out by the government or any other public organism on the municipality's territory.

Indeed, the municipality acts directly in favor of the poor people. Especially with regard to assistance for transportation and hospitalization of the poor people, homes for elderly women and to help the needy during Ramadan or recurrent events. The municipality also provides assistance to disadvantaged people through associations. The municipality's contribution is not confined to these direct support actions, it also reserves part of its gross savings to subsidies granted to NGOs or any other non-profit organization. This is undoubtedly the most appropriate space for research and implementation of an anti-poverty policy. It is the place where the different public and private actors meet and interact and this is where targeting the poor can take place.

Presentation of the municipality X: The city of Tangier is recognized as one of the oldest cities in Morocco, has existed for over 30 centuries, it was the diplomatic capital of the Kingdom as well as the main port of the country. Today this municipality exceeds 848 337 inhabitants and occupies more than 16 000 Ha, without counting its periphery which extends on the neighboring rural municipalities (Anonyme, 2015). This municipality has a long history with European residents and tourists, which justifies the diversity of its cultures. It is a real maritime crossroads, the city has always imposed itself as a city of exchange and its geography has been determinant. This municipality is today one of the largest cities in Morocco, it adopts the system of "unity of the city" and has an important place in major restructuring projects of Moroccan cities and regions. After presenting the UMC that is the subject of this study, we then present the theoretical framework chosen.

The conceptual framework mobilized: Actor Network Theory (ANT): The actor network theory (Akrichet *al.*, 1991) is based on studies of the science constitution, more precisely on the conditions of science production, the actors question and the structure of scientific discourse. Empirical studies have focused on innovations in science and technology. This theory is based on the concept of network. It provides a very important insight into the explanation of actor's behavior when innovations are implemented and in situations of change. The ANT is defined as all acts of persuasion and violence whereby a person acquires the authority to speak on behalf of other actors. It is characterized by four major stages (Bargain, 2011).

- Problematization consists in showing to the actors that they are concerned by the problem; it involves the formulation of a problem based on the identification of a need concerning the interests of several actors. It is in a way the answer to the question: how to make oneself indispensable?
- The incentive is to convince the actors to protect them from external influences, it is the phase that consists in grouping the actors around the problematization, in this case we try to answer the question: how to seal the alliances?
- Enlistment or how to define and stabilize the roles of the actors? It consists on federating the actors by different means: negotiations, ruses or strokes, this step is difficult to dissociate from the previous one;
- The mobilisation of allies or the selection of the spokesperson is the last phase; the project is "led" by certain interested and enrolled actors, but the behaviour of the represented actors raises the question: how will they react to the development of innovation? the answer is that they are totally involved in the project by integrating it (or not) with their environment, even modifying it. This process of mobilization of the actors seems particularly crucial in the public organizations, and therefore the municipalities in our case, where there are different groups of actors (elected officials, territorial frameworks, municipal agents, users / citizens) the consensus is difficult to get.

The ANT therefore focuses on the process of implementing tools and management approaches in organizations, its role is to highlight the involvement of stakeholders and their agreement to succeed in scientific innovation.

Methodology, data analysis

The methodology adopted

The strategy of access to the leaders of the municipality X: The concept of quality approaches in Moroccan local authorities is unknown, it requires a light on the obstacles of its deployment by the administrative leaders. In fact, the success of quality initiatives is strongly linked to the human factor behind the project. The involvement of stakeholders is extremely important to implement such an approach. We then try through this communication to shed light on the determining factors of the implementation of quality approaches in local Moroccan communes namely UMC, and the role of administrative leaders in this process. To do this, I based myself to carry out this research and to answer our problematic, during my 25 years of experience in a public institution and basing on the documentation I was able to gather from the local commune even though this task was not easy because of the rarity of references and sources in this field. I set a goal to meet all the managers of the municipality X to quote the heads of divisions and services in order to obtain concrete answers to my various questions namely: what are the factors influencing the institution's quality approaches in local Moroccan municipalities? and what role for the administrative leaders of municipality X?

The approach adopted: my first intention was to contact the leaders of the municipality X to discuss the issues of quality approaches in local Moroccan communes in general and in the municipality X in particular. I also wanted to know if they had information about the new managerial practices in general, and to explain the reasons that influence the introduction of quality approaches, and their role as high officials of the municipality X. The majority of the individuals interviewed were themselves interested in this object and motivated to conduct an interview. I also found that one manager was totally opposed, and I refused any opportunity to interview him. At the same time, some managers were cautious in their responses to some questions. But I was very understanding because in my personal experience I learned that there are reasons for such a refusal. The final sample selected: For our field survey, I contacted six administrative executives from the municipality X, among nine that I was supposed to meet. For the remaining three, the first refused my meeting, the second and the third were on mission. So, I decided to keep the sample composed of the following executives: The codification used for the names of the managers is a part of the anonymity and commitment taken in this direction.

The qualitative method: I opted for semi-structured interviews; in fact they give the respondents a large freedom of expression, following a series of specific questions that must be respected during each interview. This technique allowed me to guide the comments of my interlocutors while leaving them flexibility in answering on the subject of study with the help of a maintenance guide that I will present later in this chapter. I noticed that the majority of managers appreciated the questions in this guide. I have scheduled thirty minutes for each interview, but it really exceeded the time because of the importance of the topics and the participation of the executives interviewed. In addition, the semi-directive method has the advantage of using an important participatory approach to deepen certain elements as well as to better understand the feelings of respondents and their concerns about the various topics.

The advantage of such a practice is also the possibility of being both in the exchange with the person and his listening. Although difficult, I made a cautious commitment not to influence my interlocutor, and to give him the initiative and the freedom to express himself and to try to be objective.

The content of the interview guide: specific themes: I have used three main themes that focus on key questions and other minor ones for clarification. Information's on the interviewee are always necessary to obtain details about his profile and the positions he holds. Moreover, it was important to me to have an idea about the seniority of the person in the municipality X, because the age and the status can influence the answers of the person questioned and the hierarchical position is also a determining factor for this study.

First Theme: Managerial Practices: This theme covers four main questions on managerial practices in the municipality X, first of all to get an idea of these practices, their existence, functions and responsibilities, as well as on the organization of this municipality and on the relationship with guardianship to better understand this notion of responsibility in order to know who decides what?

Second theme: quality management

- Quality approaches: This theme covers questions about the design of quality approaches; it aims to enable us to understand the place of quality approach in the municipality, the difficulties hindering its implementation and the role that can play the leader in its implementation.
- Quality of citizen relations: this question allows us both to know the relationship between the municipality and the citizens, that is to say, the services presented to get more information about their nature, on the other hand it also allows us to have an idea about the information sharing practices and the awareness policy.
- -Quality control: the questions relating to this theme will enable us to better understand the concept of control as a practice and tool for evaluating the service quality within the municipality.

Third theme: the actor's network: This theme aims to understand the question of roles within the municipality, on the one hand we will be able to define and understand the roles of the leaders, and on the other hand to present answers on the difficulties of implementing quality approaches in the municipality X. We will now focus on the analysis of the data collected from the field survey.

The analysis of empirical results: After analyzing the semi-structured interviews with the six executives of the municipality X, we compared the speeches of the leaders interviewed successively according to the three topics discussed, namely, managerial practices, quality management and the network actor.

Classification according to the managerial practices: This table informs us about the leader's opinion concerning the managerial practices in the municipality X. The study of this table shows that the managerial practices are not well known in the municipality X. the effort provided remains modest for the improvement of the local public administration. This can be explained by the neglect of the important role of managerial practices and the influence of the environment on municipal practices.

The functioning of the UMC that is the subject of this study, is done on a daily basis with a significant lack of organization and a well-defined strategy. An administrative heaviness is noted with a lack of training. The role of the guardianship is not very clear between the support, the accompaniment or the allegiance.

Classification according to the quality management: We present in this table the quality management in the municipality X, the project leaders and the related difficulties. The establishment of a quality management system is an important project that arouses more interest from the managers and officials of the municipality X, nevertheless it does not present an extreme priority at least for the majority of the managers interviewed. The success of the quality process is determined first of all by the will and by the decision of the municipality president and its organ, and they must be committed to its efficient implementation. Difficulties impeding its introduction are revealed in the lack of political will, training strategy, conflict of interest and lack of support from guardianship. Thus the leader plays an important role in the appropriation, he carries the project, informs his collaborators, sensitizes them and participates and directs the project.

The actor Network: The actor network is also a theme of our analysis, this table takes up by the analysis the role of the leader, and his capacities to encourage such an approach. The leader gathers around him his collaborators, which is considered insufficient for a better deployment of the envisaged strategies. they try to work as a team and use the means available to accomplish their tasks. Managers cannot set goals and cannot put pressure on their employees, they need a feeling of belonging, motivation from the administrative board and its president.

RESULTS

We have seen that the leaders have agreed on the importance of quality approaches in local communes in general and in municipality X in particular. Their consensus is also strong on the role of the president of the municipality and its organ in the implementation of these approaches. The president of the municipal council is the guardian of the introduction and the implementation of the quality approach. It influences the role of the other actors of the municipality. The government through trusteeship has a role of support, and guidance to local communes in general. Its role can go beyond this stage by proposing restructuring projects such as the PCD for example. It can also propose or even impose quality procedures for municipalities. In fact, the responsibility for implementing quality procedures rests with the president and the municipal council. In other words, on the political organ, if the president then decides to implement it, the guardianship can only promote such an approach, its role is to ensure compliance with the current regulations, so everything that concerns communal management belongs to the municipality. We can then summarize the factors influencing the implementation of a quality approach in UMC X in:

- Lack of training for elected officials in general;
- Lack of culture and managerial will from the president and his organ;
- The absence of the initiative and the awareness of the importance of implementing quality procedures;

Table 1. The executives of the municipality interviewed

Interviewed executive	function	Sex	Period of service	Qualification
Ms. L	Responsible of communal studies	Female	6 years	Engineer
	Head of Administrative department	Male	28 years	DESA PhD student
Mr.R	Head of HR department	Male	25 years	License
Mr.C	Head of municipal works department	Male	25 years	Engineer
Mr.L	Head of Cultural, Sports and Social Development department	Male	12 years	License
Mr.LD	Head of Department green spaces	Male	18 years	Master

Table 2. Managerial practices in the municipality X

Leaders	Managerial practices
Ms.L	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no managerial practices, we work on imposed projects without planning 2. The unavailability of information for the accomplishment of tasks and the lack of training remain two points of weakness. 3. The role of guardianship is support
Mr.B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Absence of managerial practices, devices are dictated from the top 2. The administrative burden is heavy and the State must review its role 3. The relationship with guardianship has gone from several stages: from guardianship to accompaniment ... guidance is dictated and guardianship can outright reject projects (the reality is far from the text)
Mr.R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Absence of managerial practices, the initiative of the division head remains the source to succeed the tasks entrusted 2. There is red tape, and lack of training 3. Guardianship can support all initiatives
Mr.C	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There are no managerial practices 2. Needs are expressed by managers and officials 3. Training and human resources are the keys to success in reducing administrative burdens. 4. If respected, the role of guardianship is to support
Mr.L	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Managerial practices is an unknown concept 2. The status of public servants is important 3. The complexity of the procedures is one of the dysfunctional elements in the municipality X 4. The President's authority hinders the smooth running 5. The absence of a training policy 6. The role of the guardianship is to ensure the respect of the current regulations, it cannot block modernization initiatives.
Mr.L.D	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The municipality has priority projects instead of engaging in managerial practices 2. Work is done on a daily basis without a clear strategy 3. There are skills but it lacks the will 4. Lack of training policy 5. The role of Guardianship is complex, it can support some projects as it can block them

Table 3. The quality approaches in the municipality X

Leaders	Quality management
Mrs. L	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lack of knowledge of quality approaches in general 2. The will and direction of resources remain the keys of the quality approach success. 3. The chairman of the board remains the guarantor of such an approach 4. The obstacles are in the wrong direction of the efforts
Mr.B	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quality approach is not a priority, the Staff Regulations and the organization chart are the main points of concern 2. The initiative is lacking at the communal council, the efforts are modest 3. The role of the manager is paramount in the appropriation of quality procedures 4. Poor organization is a source of poor quality
Mr.R	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ignorance of quality procedures in general 2. The implementation of a quality approach must come from the elected official who is supposed to be well trained 3. The obstacles to implementation: training, a better relationship elected / leader 4. the leader can play a very important role in the deployment of the quality approach, showing his motivation
Mr.C	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The quality approaches have their place in the UMC X, just it is necessary that the president and his council initiate them 2. The difficulties lie in the lack of training and the lack of will from the politician. 3. The administrative cadre is ready to play its role of support and project leader.
Mr.L	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The implementation of a quality approach is conditioned by the initiative and the personality of the president. 2. The obstacles of the implantation: the lack of the human and financial means. 3. Success is also conditioned by a policy of continuous training for the elected, the executive and the official. 4. The elected official, the leader and the official are all invited to get involved in the process in question.
Mr.L. D	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The implementation of a quality approach may constitute a framework for reflection but it is not a priority 2. The difficulties lie in the obstacles placed by resistance to change, as the communal council itself. 3. The decision of its establishment is the responsibility of the municipal council, if he has sufficient initiative and will 4. The role of the leader is very important because he will be the one in charge of the project.

Table 4. The actor network in the municipality X

Leaders	The actor network
Mrs.L	1. Collaborative work without setting goals 2. The limited number of employees is a handicap 3. The important role of the president in the conduct of the projects
Mr.B	1. Lack of strategy regarding the objectives and the management issues. 2. Teamwork, but you have to motivate the group to give the best of themselves 3. The problem of supervision is raised as an obstacle to improving the quality of services in the municipality
Mr.R	1. Absence of the organization chart for a better organization 2. Group work while motivating employees 3. He does not find problems in setting goals at his division level because he has the support of the president
Mr.C	1. Work is done on a daily basis 2. It does not set goals, it runs 3. Try to work in groups, and create a climate of support for their efforts 4. Learning is done on the building site
Mr.L	1. It does not set goals 2. Execution work with a force of proposal 3. Relationship of respect and collaboration with his collaborators 4. Lack of organizational chart and supervision for municipal managers and officials.
Mr.L.D	1. Collaboration inside and outside the division 2. They do not set goals at their level 3. Lack of human resources hampers actions undertaken for participatory management 4. He gathers his collaborators by their own means for the accomplishment of the tasks assigned to them

- Conflicts of interest and lack of a long-term vision as to the benefit of managerial practices. The agenda is limited to the gains of the elections;
- Ambiguities about the relationship between the communal council and the administration, it is managed in terms of relationship, interest and allegiance, and not on the principles of skills, efficiency and achievement of results;
- The lack of organization chart is a major handicap for the definition and distribution of tasks and responsibilities and leads to the failure of improvement efforts.

The administrative directors are not responsible of the implementation of quality procedures in the municipality X, however their role is very important in terms of the deployment of quality management, they are its bearers within the meaning of (Callon, 1986). The setting of the objectives belongs to the municipal council (the problematization), recourse to the interest of the actors of the municipality through the periodic commissions and the strategic planning. Their recruitment is done by different means, negotiation on their status, motivation, bonus ... it is the president who has the power to reunite them around him.

Thus the actors will be mobilized to carry the project of the quality approach in the municipality X. The administrative director cannot be responsible of the quality approach implementation in municipality X. his role as broadcaster, spokesperson and liaison are important for the implementation of quality procedures. For him the deployment process begins with his own presentation of the project, this presentation is totally positive according to the interviewees. The next step is the commitment of the leader to carry the project, finally the stage of the operationalization of the approach. The actor network or leviathan is the president of the municipality, who has the leading role in the implementation of quality approaches in the municipality X. The ANT, thus presents an important framework to explain the difficulties and the determining role in the process of implementing quality approaches (Akrich *et al.*, 2006). Our analysis illustrates the role of the leader as a spokesperson of the municipality.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article is to focus on the implementation of quality approaches in Moroccan local authorities namely UMC, in the context of a qualitative study on the municipality X. For this, we have progressively studied quality approaches in their historical dimension with particular attention to quality management in the public sector. We used a specific theoretical framework: the sociology of translation theory. To deal with this problem, we presented the selected data collection methodology to administrative staff by adopting a maintenance guide adapted to the subjects covered. We also explained the composition of the tool in our "semi-directive interview" to justify the use of this approach. The analysis of all the data collected in the field allowed us to make the link between the quality procedures and their deployment by the actors of the municipality X, the implementation of quality procedures is the responsibility of the president of the municipality and his body, while the role of the leaders is extremely important in their appropriation. With regard to the actor-network theory on which we have relied to explain the role of the actors in the process of implementation of the quality approaches, this theory has reached its objective in the explanation of the phenomena observed in our study. The actor-network theory provides interesting insights into the difficulties of implementing management tools in general and quality approaches in particular.

The use of the qualitative method as the sole source of data collection can be considered as the limit of this research, so we will try to integrate the quantitative approach in order to generalize the results obtained. We did not take into consideration, the opinion of the president of the municipality and the elected officials of the municipality, their integration in our study could have given relevant results. We underestimated the role of chairpersons in such an approach when the study showed the opposite. the consideration of the role of elected representatives with the contribution of a theoretical framework such as the theory of social representations could enrich our approach. The realization of this paper has allowed me to enrich my thinking and acquire knowledge about quality approaches in Moroccan local communes. Knowledge that will serve me for my doctoral thesis project on the same subject.

The interviews with the administrative officials were beneficial for me personally, academically and professionally, and helped me to familiarize with the subject in question.

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