Lessons Learned from the PMMM Research Series[1]

Contextualization[2]

By Darci Prado, PhD

ABSTRACT

This article introduces the series of articles entitled "Lessons Learned from Maturity Research". It contextualizes the topic by presenting a summary of the Prado Maturity Model-PMMM and the maturity research conducted in Brazil since 2005 by the website https://maturityresearch.com/en/home-en/. In addition, it shows the main results of the research conducted in 2024. At the end, we present the list of lessons learned that we will address in our next articles.

1 - INTRODUCTION

All those who work in an environment that has some kind of relationship with projects aspire to be completely successful in their respective work. Some examples:

- Professionals with some connection to strategic planning, whether at the C-Level, in business or operations areas, aspire to projects to materialize the results dreamed of by strategists.
- Project Managers aspire for their projects to end by fully achieving the goals as planned and pleasing everyone involved.
- Project management office (PMO) professionals aspire for all projects in the portfolio to end successfully.

However, everyone knows that the above aspirations do not always come true to the same extent as our dreams. The harsh reality of the real world sometimes frustrates us and causes stress. Even though it is common knowledge that it is difficult to be successful in the project environment, what most people still do not know is a quantification of the extent of this frustration. My experience over the last 25 years has given me some insights into this subject, as I have been fortunate enough to work on this topic alongside people who have greatly

[1] *The Project Management Maturity series of articles by Prof Darci Prado is based on his extensive research on this topic in Brazil and other countries. Darci is the developer of the Prado Project Management Maturity Model which has been successfully implemented by many organizations in Brazil. More about this model and related research can be found at. https://maturityresearch.com/en/home-en/*

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inspired and helped me, and I could not fail to mention Russell Archibald, who inspired us to start the research and was with us while he was alive.

So, in this series of articles, I decided to share my experience, mainly from my experience with the Maturity Research, which has been conducted in Brazil since 2005 by the website www.maturityresearch.com. These lessons also come from my experience as a consultant, project manager, PMO, speaker, university professor and author of books and articles. I hope that they help PM professionals to better position themselves in a project scenario and be less impacted by possible negative results. I also hope that they will be useful to academia in studies that delve deeper into the subject.

2 - THE PRADO-PMMM MATURITY MODEL

The Prado-PMMM maturity model was launched in 2002. It includes 5 levels and 7 dimensions. Table 1 shows a brief description of each level and Table 2 shows a brief description of each dimension.

Table 1 – Characteristics of the Prado-PMMM Model Levels

Level	Name	Characteristics	Total Success
1	Almost Unknown *(Ad hoc)*	Projects are executed based on intuition, "good will" or individual "best effort".	Very low
2	Started (each one at his way)	Introductory knowledge of PM Introductory use of tools (sw) for sequencing activities. Isolated initiatives for planning and controlling some projects.	Low
3	Standardized (just one model)	Existence of a single standardized platform for Project Management The platform has been in use by the main stakeholders for over a year, during which time all the processes of the methodology (beginning, middle and end) can be used in a significant number of projects.	Significant improvement
4	Managed (anomaly mitigation)	Elimination (or mitigation) of the causes of manageable anomalies that hinder the success of projects.	Usually above 75%
5	Optimized	This level represents the situation in which the GP platform not only works and delivers results but has also been optimized through the practice of continuous improvement and technological and process innovation.	Usually above 90%

Table 2 – Characteristics of the Prado-PMMM Model Dimensions

Dimension	Meaning
Competence in Project, Program and Portfolio Management	Those involved in project management must be competent (knowledge + experience) in aspects of project management, such as those presented in the PMI PMBOK manual or the IPMA ICB manual. The level of competence required depends on the role played by each individual.
Behavioral Competence	Those involved in project management must be competent (knowledge + experience) in behavioral aspects (leadership, organization, motivation, negotiation, etc.). The level of competence required depends on the role played by each person.
Technical and Contextual Competence	Those involved in project management must be competent (knowledge + experience) in technical aspects related to the product (good, service or result) being created, as well as in aspects of the organization (finances, its production/distribution model, its business, etc.). The level of competence required depends on the role played by each person.
Methodology (Processes)	Existence of an appropriate methodology for project management that encompasses the entire cycle that needs to be monitored. This may include not only the Implementation phase, but also the Business Case phase.
Computerization (Tools)	The relevant aspects of the methodology must be computerized, and the system must be easy to use and allow the right decisions to be made at the right time. Eventually the entire cycle initiated by the idea/need must be computerized.
Organizational structure	An appropriate organizational structure should be in place for both the Business Case and the Implementation. In the case of implementation, this structure usually involves project managers, PMO, sponsor and committees. The Organizational Structure should standardize the authority and power relationship between the project managers and the various areas of the organization involved with the projects.
Strategic Alignment	The projects executed in the sector are fully aligned with the organization's strategies. The processes in question (portfolio management) are executed with the necessary quality and agility. There are computerized tools and the organizational structure in question is adequate.

Finally, in Figure 1 we show the relationship between levels and dimensions of the model, highlighting that the greater the maturity, the greater the success, an aspect that has been demonstrated in all maturity research since 2005.

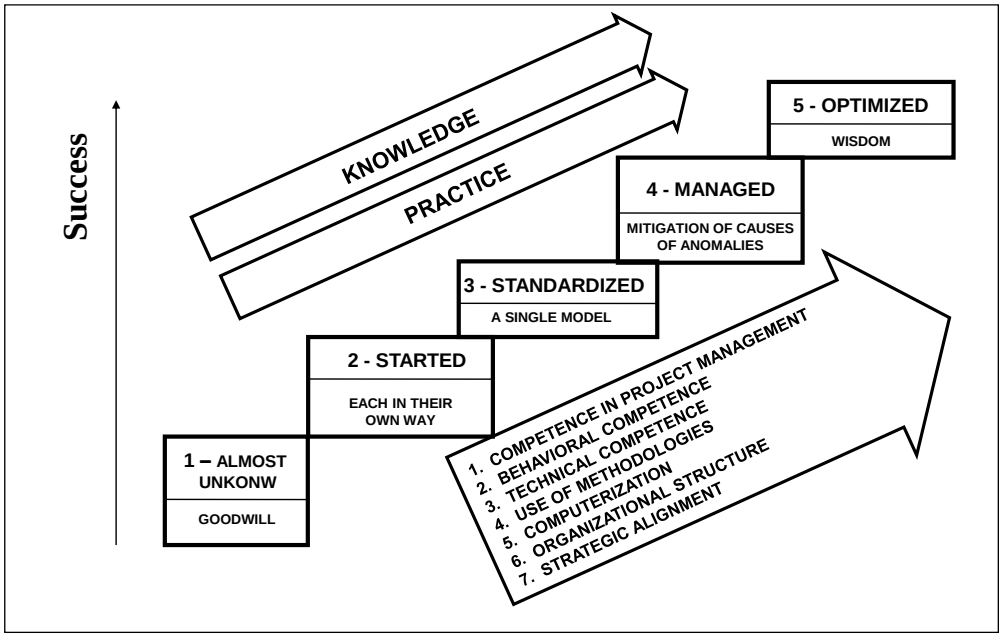

Figure 1: Levels and Dimensions of the Prado-MMGP model [3].

An important aspect of the model, shown in Figure 1, is that it seeks to measure not only existing knowledge, but also experience gained in practice.

It is important to note that the model was designed to assess the maturity of a department (or area) of the organization where we have a portfolio of projects. Therefore, it is not a model for assessing the maturity of the entire organization, nor is it a model for assessing the maturity of a PMO.

3 - THE MATURITY SURVEY

The maturity survey was launched on the internet in 2005 and has been conducted in Brazil every 2 or 3 years on the website https://maturityresearch.com/en/home-en/. The website is always available, and anyone can access any data on the website at any time, free of charge.

In the period from 2005 to 2024, the average values for Brazil maturity fluctuated as shown in Figure 2:

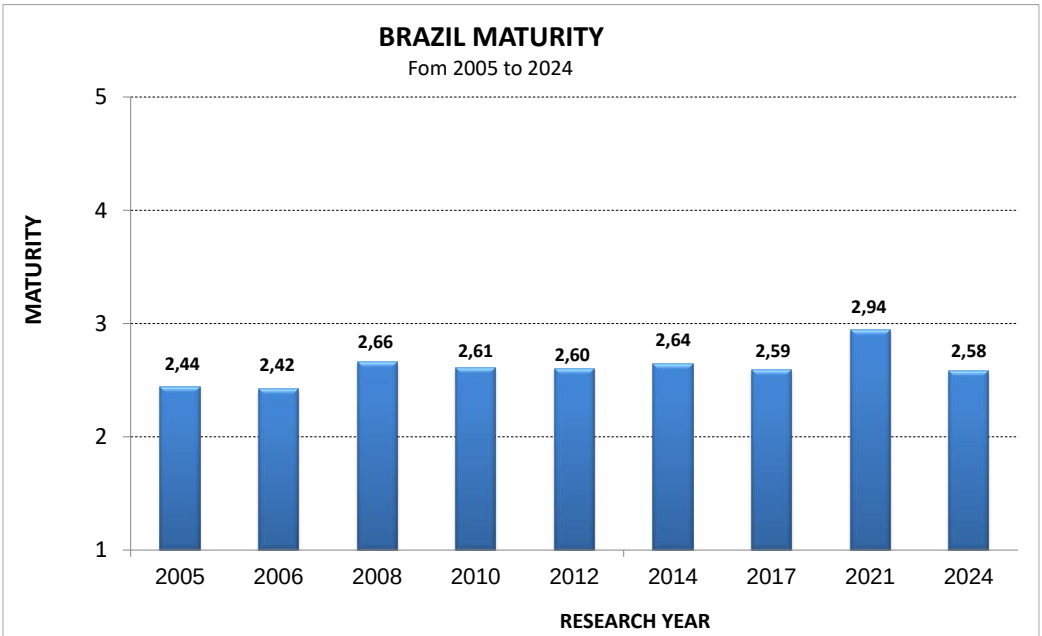

Figure 2: Average maturity in Brazil between 2005 and 2024 [1].

It is possible to observe a certain stability in the values around 2.60. The value for 2021 (the year in which we had the COVID pandemic) is out of line with the others and will be better discussed in a following article of this series.

3.a) Questionnaires

When participating in the survey, participants answered two questionnaires:

- A 31-question questionnaire in which they provide data on their project context, such as:
  - Information about the organization: name of the organization, revenue (or budget), total number of employees, name of the department, type of organization (public, private or third sector), business sector of the organization (finance, steel, oil, etc.), category of projects (construction, IT, innovation, etc.), type of client of the projects (internal or external);
  - Performance data: total number of projects in the portfolio, average duration of each project, average cost of each project, average success of the portfolio (total, partial or failure), average delay, average cost overrun, average scope execution, etc.
- A 40-question questionnaire to assess the maturity of the sector.

This approach allows for stratifications and important cross-referencing of the data, as we will indicate below.

3.b) Reports

Three types of reports are produced:

- Performance indicators (success, delay, cost overruns and scope execution)
- Participants
- Governance

3.c) Stratifications

The three types of reports above are produced in different stratifications, such as: type of organization, branch of the organization, category of projects, type of client, size of the organization (revenue and total number of employees), state of the federation, etc.

4 – A SUMMARY OF THE RESULTS OF THE BRAZIL 2024 SURVEY

In 2024 we had 117 participant organizations and below we show some of the results from the same.

4.a) General Results

Average maturity in Brazil: 2.58
Performance Indicators:

- Success:
  - Total success: 55%
  - Partial success: 33%
  - Failure: 12%
- Average delay: 30%
- Average cost overrun: 21%
- Achievement of planned scope: 73%

Average composition of project portfolio in the department:

- Average number of projects: 24
- Average duration of each project: 15 months

4.b) Conceptualization of Success

The degrees of success shown above are inspired by the Standish Group model [2] and are as follows:

- **Total success**: A successful project is one that has achieved its goal. This generally means that it was completed and produced the expected deliverables, results and benefits, and that the key stakeholders were fully satisfied. In addition, it is expected that the project was completed within the expected time, cost, scope and quality requirements (small differences may be acceptable depending on the type of project).
- **Partial success:** The project has been completed, but it has not produced all the expected results and benefits. There is significant dissatisfaction among key stakeholders. In addition, some of the anticipated time, cost, scope, and quality requirements are likely to have been significantly worse than desired.

- **Failure**: There is enormous dissatisfaction among the main stakeholders either because the project was not completed or because it did not meet the expectations of the main stakeholders or because some of the expected requirements for deadline, cost, scope and quality were at unacceptable levels.

The above definitions are generic and apply to any category of projects. However, more specific definitions are available at https://maturityresearch.com/en/home-en/. For example, we have definitions for Engineering, Construction and Information Technology.

4.c) Distribution of participants across maturity levels

In 2024, the 117 participants are distributed across the five maturity levels (described above) as shown in Figure 3:

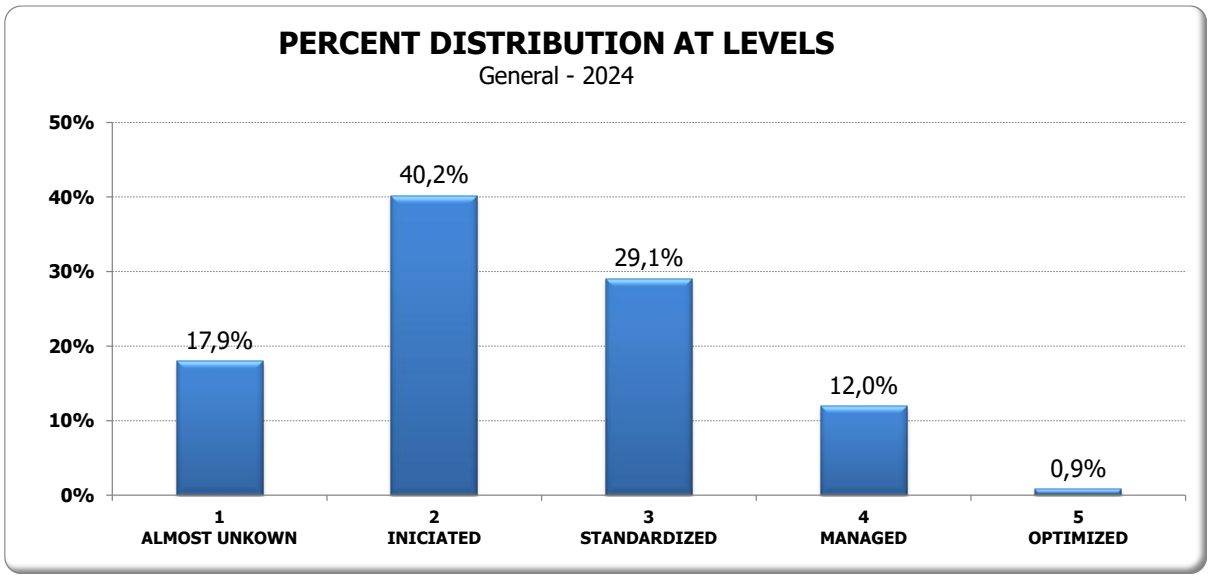

Figure 3: Distribution of 2024 survey participants across maturity levels [1].

We can observe a strong concentration in the initial levels (1, 2 and 3). For the excellence levels (3 and 4) we have only 12.9% of the participants. This observation is consistent with all the research carried out previously.

4.d) Average Adherence to Maturity Dimensions

The average values for adherence to the maturity dimensions are shown in Figure 4.

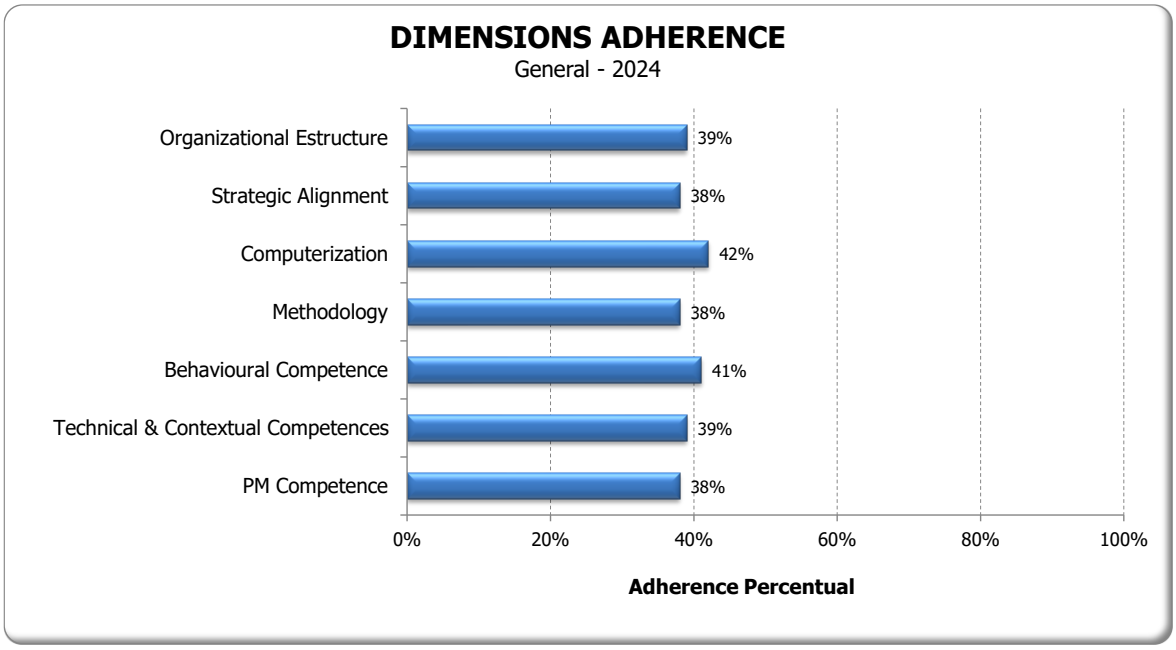

Figure 4: Adherence to maturity dimensions [1].

We can see that the values are relatively close to each other. To reach the level of excellence (levels 4 and 5) an adherence of over 70% is required. On the website https://maturityresearch.com/en/home-en/ we carried out an analysis of benchmark organizations (maturity values above 4.0).

5 – LESSONS LEARNED

In the next articles we will present the following lessons learned:

1. Curiosities in the relationship between success and maturity levels.
2. Heterogeneity is an important aspect for data analysis.
3. The evolution journey
4. Longevity does not imply greater maturity or success.
5. Not everyone gets there.
6. Critical Success Factors.
7. Culture Factor.
8. PMO at high levels of maturity.

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Darci Prado is a consultant and partner of FALCONI in Brazil. He is an engineer, with graduate studies in Economical Engineering at UCMG and PhD in Project Management from UNICAMP, Brazil. He has worked for IBM for 25 years and worked with UFMG Engineering School for 32 years. He holds the IPMA Level B Certification. He was one of the founders of Minas Gerais State and Parana State PMI chapters, and he was a member of the Board Directors of the Minas Gerais State PMI chapter during 1998-2002 and member of the Consulting Board during 2003-2009. He was also the president of IPMA Minas Gerais State chapter during 2006-2008. He is conducting Project Management maturity research in Brazil and Italy. He is author of nine books on project management and is also author of a methodology, a software application, and a maturity model for project management. Darci can be contacted at darciprado@uol.com.br.