Governance and digitalisation: Local Authorities in Morocco: A Modeling Attempt

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SUMMARY

This study examines the links between governance and local government performance in Morocco. The methodology adopted allows for an in-depth analysis of the causal relationships between various aspects of governance, such as transparency, participation, convergence and partnership, and local government performance, assessed in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impactTop of form. The results of the study indicate that some specific dimensions of governance play a significant role in determining the performance of local governments in Morocco. For example, transparency and citizen participation could emerge as key factors positively influencing the quality of local public services. Structural equations make it possible to identify these relationships quantitatively, thus providing valuable information for decision-makers and practitioners engaged in improving local governance in Morocco.

KEYWORDS

Governance, performance, local authority, territorial development, LISREL method.

INTRODUCTION

Duringthese last twentydecades, the concept of governance hasmuch evolved in theintellectual debates and political, economic and social spheres. Since the 1990s, a diversity of definitions, approaches and sometimesof divergencesemerged, creating a complex conceptual landscape.Smith and Lewis (2011) even point out that it is a contradictory phenomenon, some of these elements seem logical when isolated and others irrational and absurd when juxtaposed.However, despite the lack of a clear consensus, it is nevertheless possible to identifythe ideahighlighting the importance of governance in efficiencyof thepublic affairs managementof the state. Governance has now become an essential element of territorial development policies.

Attention to governance is increasing significantly, involving a diversity of development actors such as researchers, politicians, civil society, and decision-makers. Despite the lack of unanimous agreement on its conceptual definition, establishing a culture of "good governance" has become a priority for achieving optimal performance in public policies and development programs.

Interestingly, various empirical works consistently confirm the positive and significant link between the quality of governance and overall performance (financial but also sustainable). These studies reinforce the idea that effective governance is a key catalyst for progress and the success of development initiatives, thus highlighting its crucial role in building resilient and prosperous societies.(Pallage and Robe (2001), Marin and Barraqué (2013), Subirats and Otros, (2007).

In this long-term globalization and global crisis, Morocco has also engaged in initiativesconsolidation of the principles and values of good governance. These initiatives have taken shape through:

- Anew constitution in 2011, which gives a prominent place to governance by emphasizing the imperative need to establish good governance mechanisms.
- High Royal Guidelines, aimed at establishing the foundations of exemplary governance and improving the quality of public services as essential prerequisites for improving the living conditions of citizens.
- The creation of a ministerial department dedicated to governance, thus demonstrating Morocco's formal commitment to promoting exemplary government practices and strengthening the effectiveness of public institutions. This approach underlines the strategic importance given to governance as a fundamental lever for territorial development and improving the well-being of the population.
- The implementation of a new development model in 2021 which includes the modernization of the administration and the strengthening of governance tools as a priority lever with a view to achieving sustainable and inclusive growth.

This increased interest in governance has resulted in the adoption of a new development approach. This approach aims to strengthen decentralization and deconcentration, considered as fundamental levers for improving governance and optimizing the performance of development projects. Thus, the emergence of governance in Morocco is the result of various socio-economic and political factors. These elements include in particular the impact of globalization, the inadequacies noted in the socio-economic reforms undertaken by thecountryafter its independence, and especially the harmful consequences of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) of the 1980sand the drought period from 2019 to 2022 which significantly impacted the Moroccan economy.

So, thedifferentterritorial scales, such as municipalities, provinces and regions, have acquired a status as well as skills and attributions that position them as key actors in territorial development. However, despite the crucial role assigned to them, these entities are faced with a significant shortage of financial and human resources. Consequently, just as for companies, issues related to governance are proving to be fundamental challenges, determining the success and performance of local authority development projects.

It is in this context that the object of our research is placed. Our approach aims to better understand the links between governance and the performance of local authorities in Morocco. More specifically, we seek to assess the extent to which the governance system, as conceptualized and implemented by local authorities,can heinfluence the performance of these entities? We focus particularly on the case of the municipalities targeted by the National Initiative for Human Development (INDH) in the province of El Kelaa des Sraghna.

1- LITERATURE REVIEW

1-1 Conceptual approach

1-1-1 Governance: Definition and measurement criteria

Governance refers to the way public affairs are organized, directed, and managed. It encompasses decision-making processes, institutional structures, and coordination mechanisms that govern interactions between local authorities, community actors, and citizens. Definitions of governance generally emphasize the aspects of transparency, accountability, citizen participation, convergence, partnership, and efficiency in the management of local affairs.

The World Bank considers local governance as the institutional framework and processes by which local decisions are made and implemented. It involves active citizen participation, transparency, accountability and efficiency in the management of local resources.[1].According toUNDP, governance refers to how power is exercised, how citizens

[1] WORD BANK, (1989), “Sub Saharan Africa: from crisis to sustainable growth”, Washington DC, p:1.

and institutions interact in managing local affairs, and how decisions are made.[1]. The International Institute of Local Governance (IILG) defines local governance as a process that ensures collective decision-making, accountability, transparency, citizen participation, and the promotion of sustainable development at the local level. Thus, according to the UN, governance focuses on the mechanisms by which local authorities and communities collaborate in the management of local affairs, thereby promoting well-being and sustainable development at the community level.

In short, governance concerns the processes and structures that govern the management of affairs at the local level, emphasizing citizen participation, transparency and accountability, partnership and convergence to foster territorial-sustainable development and the well-being of local communities.

Governance is measured by:

- **Citizen participation:**

Citizen participation can be considered as a key indicator of governance. Governance can be defined as the process by which institutions, political actors and citizens interact to make decisions, implement policies and manage public affairs. In this context, citizen participation plays a crucial role as it represents the active involvement of citizens in these governance processes.

The reasons why citizen participation is an important indicator of the quality of governance are:

- Democratic legitimacy: In a democratic society, citizen participation is essential to ensure the legitimacy of decisions taken by governments and public institutions. The more citizens are involved in the decision-making process, the more legitimate the decisions taken are perceived to be.
- Accountability and transparency: Citizen participation promotes accountability of governments to those they govern. When citizens actively participate in decision-making processes, it encourages institutions to be more transparent and accountable for their actions.
- Representativeness: Diverse citizen participation allows for better representation of the interests and needs of the population in decision-making processes. This contributes to more inclusive governance and more equitable policies.
- Building trust: Citizen participation builds trust between those who govern and those they are governed. When citizens have the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect them, this helps build trust in public institutions and reduce social tensions.
- Innovation and Effectiveness: Citizen participation fosters innovation and effectiveness in decision-making and problem-solving. Citizen contributions can bring

[1]UNDP, (2006), “Evaluation of the governance system in Morocco”, Al Maârif Al Jadid printing house, p: 5.

new ideas, different perspectives, and creative solutions to challenges facing communities.

In summary, citizen participation is a key indicator of governance because it reflects how public institutions involve and respond to the needs, concerns and interests of citizens, which is fundamental to ensuring democratic and effective governance.

- **The partnership**

Partnership as a governance indicator is about assessing how collaborations between different actors contribute to decision-making, policy implementation and the achievement of objectives in an effective, transparent and inclusive manner. Key aspects to consider include the nature of partnerships, theirinvolvement, their transparency, accountability, effective collaboration, results and impacts, and their sustainability. By assessing these aspects, we can understand how partnerships strengthen governance by promoting citizen participation, improving the quality of decisions taken and increasing the impact of interventions on the populations concerned.

- **Transparency**

Transparency is a key governance indicator that measures the degree to which decision-making processes, actions of governments and institutions, andifthe informationarerelevant, open, accessible and understandable to citizens. Here are some points to consider when using transparency as an indicator of governance:

- Access to information: The transparency indicator assesses the extent to which governments and institutions provide easy and fair access to public information. This includes access to information laws, online portals, public reporting, and other mechanisms to make government data and documents available to the public.
- Disclosure of decision-making processes: It examines the clarity and visibility of decision-making processes, including how policies are formulated, decisions are made and public funds are allocated. Increased transparency in these processes strengthens public trust in government and improves the legitimacy of decisions made.
- Accountability: Transparency facilitates accountability by allowing citizens to monitor and evaluate the actions of governments and institutions. Financial reporting, independent audits, public inquiries and other oversight mechanisms are indicators of transparency that strengthen the accountability of decision-makers.

Transparency as a governance indicator measures the openness, accessibility and clarity of decision-making processes, government actions and public information. It promotes accountability, citizen participation, public trust and the legitimacy of institutions, which contributes to more democratic, responsible and effective governance.

- **Convergence**

Convergence can be seen as an indicator of local governance as it reflects the ability of different stakeholders to work together towards common goals despite their differences. In the context of local governance, convergence can be observed at different levels:

- Convergence of interests
- Policy convergence
- Convergence of resources
- Convergence of results

Convergence can be an important indicator of local governance, as it reflects the ability of different stakeholders to collaborate and coordinate their efforts to achieve common goals and produce positive outcomes for the local community.

1-1-2 Performance of local authorities: Definitions and evaluation criteria

Local government performance is a concept which, in a scientific context, encompasses the evaluation and measurement of the effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and impact of actions undertaken by local authorities in the context of their missions.

The performance of local authorities, from a scientific point of view, refers to the capacity of a local administrative entity, such as a municipality, a region, or a province, to optimally achieve its objectives defined in terms of improving the well-being of citizens, efficient management of resources, and positive impact on local development. It involves a rigorous evaluation of the policies, programs, and projects implemented by local authorities, based on quantitative and qualitative criteria in order to measure operational efficiency, financial management, citizen satisfaction, and the results obtained in terms of sustainable development.

This scientific approach to the performance of local authorities seeks to go beyond a simple quantitative assessment to encompass qualitative and contextual dimensions, considering the complexity of local issues and the diversity of citizens' expectations. It promotes a holistic analysis of local governance practices, integrating multidimensional criteria to assess the success of local authorities in fulfilling their missions in the service of the local community.

The local performance criteria, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact, are key concepts used to evaluate and measure the results and effectiveness of actions undertaken at the local level. Here is their definition:

- **Relevance:**

Relevance refers to the extent to which actions and policies implemented at the local level respond to the real needs and priorities of the community. An action is considered relevant if it effectively addresses the specific problems faced by the community and if it is aligned with its objectives and values.

- **Efficiency**:

Effectiveness refers to the ability of actions undertaken at the local level to achieve the objectives set. Itmeansthe extent to which resources are used optimally to produce the expected results. An action is considered effective if it manages to achieve its objectives satisfactorily, producing the expected results with a minimum of resources.

- **Efficiency**:

Efficiency refers to the ability of actions undertaken at the local level to achieve results with the minimum of resources required. It focuses on optimizing the use of available resources, minimizing costs and maximizing the results obtained. An action is considered efficient if it manages to produce the desired results while using the least possible resources.

- **Impact:**

Impact refers to the long-term effects and sustainable changes resulting from actions undertaken at the local level. It measures the concrete and positive results on the community and its socio-economic, environmental or cultural development. Impact evaluates the real and significant changes that occur thanks to local actions, taking into account the long-term results and their sustainability.

Relevance assesses the adequacy of actions with local needs, effectiveness measures the achievement of set objectives, efficiency assesses the optimization of resources used, and impact assesses the long-term effects on the local community. These criteria are essential for evaluating the performance and effectiveness of local initiatives.

1-1-3 Governance and performance: what links?

1-2 Theoretical approach

Since its emergence in the vocabulary of political, social and economic sciences, the term "governance" has been used to address the relationship between the market and the state. It encompasses the way in which the state, public action and decision-making evolve to meet the challenges of economic liberalism and neoliberalism. This approach focuses particularly on identifying non-economic factors contributing to development.

Moreover, the failures of development models, both economically and socially, have led to a new perspective on the question of development, going beyond the traditional definition limited to economic growth (increase in productivity, high growth rate, etc.).

Today, economists and development experts consider that wealth creation is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for reducing poverty and ensuring sustainable human development. This shift in thinking underscores the importance of adopting a more holistic approach, taking into account the economic, social and political dimensions of development to create conditions conducive to sustainable and equitable prosperity.

The new institutional economy

New Institutional Economics (NEI) has emerged, providing an approach to development that integrates not only economic factors, but also political and institutional ones. This perspective has been greatly enriched by the work of North (1990). According to this author, poverty in Third World countries stems from institutional constraints that impose considerable costs on economic policies, thus discouraging productive activity. North's particular attention is focused on the role of governance in achieving performance, with particular emphasis on economic performance.

North (1990) is among the leading proponents of transaction cost theory, a theoretical movement that finds significant applications in three key areas: organizational theory, exemplified in particular by the work of Williamson (1985), public economics, with notable contributions from Coase (1937), and development economics, where North (1990) has exercised a preponderant influence. These researchers all consider institutions as alternative regulatory mechanisms to the market, put in place by actors to minimize transaction costs and maximize performance.

The emphasis on reducing transaction costs, particularly in the context of public governance, underlines the imperative of a territorial organization that promotes cooperation and coordination of territorial policies. This coordination is crucial to achieve optimal performance.

In addition to transaction cost theory, several theoretical studies have established a link between the performance of organizations and institutions and their governance arrangements. This relationship has been explored through various theories, including agency theory, stakeholder theory and public choice theory.

Agency theory

Agency theory, a precursor in the integration of neoclassical tools into institutional management, has focused, according to Uhaderbord (1995), Spiller (1996), Zimmerman (1968) on contracts designed to resolve coordination problems between an agent and a principal within a firm or administration. The objective is to minimize transaction costs and achieve optimal performance. It should be noted that transaction cost theory (TCT) stems partly from agency theory.

Stakeholder Theory

Furthermore, the relationship between governance and performance has also been addressed by Freeman (1984), founder of stakeholder theory. According to this theory, an organization must be attentive to all the groups and individuals with whom it interacts. Faced with a diversity of actors with divergent interests, negotiation, consultation and concertation are means of collective decision-making aimed at improving economic and social performance. Expanding the number of actors with divergent interests and seeking compromises constitute the core of this theory, forming the basis of good local governance.

Resource Dependency Theory

Resource dependence theory has also examined this relationship, arguing that "the successful organization is one that maintains relationships with its environment" (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Openness to the environment is considered "a necessary means of developing a favorable network that allows managers to achieve their goals and be legitimate." Thus, in the public sector, failure to respect the principles of good local or territorial governance appears as an obstacle to the development of a supply of local public goods.

Public Choice Theory

Mueller's (1984) public choice theory also explored the relationship between governance and performance, particularly in the public sector. It provides a framework for understanding public decision-making, and more generally political behavior, in terms of the individuals involved in the process. According to its proponents, successful public policies result from the set of interactions with actors who have different values, preferences, and beliefs.

The theory of Collaborative Governance:

This theory emphasizes collaboration between different stakeholders, including public sector actors, private organizations, and civil society. It argues that effective governance of local governments relies on the ability of actors to work together in a coordinated manner to achieve common goals, thereby promoting optimal performance.

The Theory of Responsibility and Accountability

This approach emphasizes the importance of transparency, responsibility and accountability in local government governance. It suggests that clear and transparent accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure effective performance by encouraging institutions to respond to the needs and expectations of citizens.

The theory of Participatory Governance

This theory emphasizes the active involvement of citizens in the decision-making process and the management of public affairs at the local level. It postulates that citizen participation strengthens the legitimacy of decisions taken, promotes the accountability of local authorities and thus contributes to better performance of local authorities.

Capability Theory

This approach draws on the work of Amartya Sen and suggests that effective governance must focus on building the capacity of local governments, particularly in terms of education, health, infrastructure and access to resources. It argues that strengthened capacities are essential for sustainable performance.

However, the analysis of the empirical literature on the relationship between governance and performance reveals that beyond the abundance of work in the field of companies, the situation differs for the public sector. There is a gap in the empirical work on this relationship, particularly with regard to projects carried out by local authorities.

These theoretical considerations form the basis of our thinking, and allow us to analyze the link between governance and the performance of local authorities in the Moroccan context.

Thus, the methodical organization of research based on working hypotheses represents a crucial, essential phase.so that we canconduct an approach in a structured and rigorous manner. The hypothesis acts as a guide, taking over from the initial question. It plays a central role in facilitating the selection of the most relevant data from an abundance of information, thus allowing them to be subjected to tests aimed at confirming or refuting the hypothesesthat we havepreviously formulated.

The hypotheses relating to our problem are presentedas follows:

- ✓ Participation has a significant influence on performance;
- ✓ Convergence has a significant influence on performance;
- ✓ Transparency has a significant influence on performance;
- ✓ Partnership has a significant influence on performance;

2- RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2-1Positioning and method

The coherence of the paradigm, the method and the object of the analysis determines the validity of scientific knowledge (Igalens and Neveu, 2005). To define our epistemological position, we have chosen to adopt the positivist paradigm. Thisaims to explain human and social reality through causal relationships.

Our reasoning method is part of the hypothetico-deductive perspective. This methodological approach is based on the establishment of preliminary hypotheses, based on a thorough understanding of the problem studied.as we did in the first part of this research. By following this approach,we have formulatedexplicit hypotheses which are then subjected to testing andrigorous checksthrough the analysis of the data collected. This hypothetico-deductive methodology provides a logical structure to our research process, allowing us to systematically evaluate the validity of our hypotheses in light of the results obtained, thus strengthening the robustness of our scientific approach.

Our methodological choice is resolutely oriented towards the quantitative approach to conduct the investigation of this study. By opting for this approach, our objective is to collect numerical data, in order to quantify the observed phenomena and to analyze the relationships between the studied variables in a systematic manner.

2-2 Progressof the investigationand data analysisTop of form

- **Specify the domain of the construct:**

As part of our research, we specify the domain of the construct by implementing two distinct approaches. First, we opted for the realization of an exploratory design in order to explore in a deep and open manner the essential dimensions of our construct. This approach will allow us to acquire an initial and holistic understanding of the theme studied.

In parallel, we have developed a taxonomic design, emphasizing the systematic classification of the constituent elements of our construct. This approach will allow us to structure and organize the different components in a categorical manner, thus facilitating a more precise and targeted analysis.

By combining these two designs, we aim to obtain a comprehensive perspective of the constructed domain, combining in-depth exploration and methodical classification for a comprehensive understanding of our research topic.

- **Operationalization of variables:**

As part of our methodological approach, we proceeded to the operationalization of the variables, a crucial step aimed at defining the concepts studied in a precise and measurable manner. In accordance with the guidelines established by the National Observatory of Human Development in 2015, we developed a detailed matrix of variables and sub-variables, presentedin the formof items. These items make it possible to define the different dimensions inherent to governance and performance.

This matrix, developed with rigor, constitutes an essential methodological tool to structure our evaluation approach and guarantee the adequate representativeness of the elements studied. It will serve as a guide during data collection, thus facilitating the measurement and systematic analysis of the parameters associated with governance and performance in the specific context of our study. (National Observatory of Human Development, 2015).

- **Development of the questionnaire:**

The next step in our methodological process consisted of developing the questionnaire, a meticulous task guided by the recommendations formulated by Roussel and Wacheux in 2005. By ensuring strict adherence to these methodological guidelines, we designed a robust and coherent data collection instrument.

To quantify the participants' responses, we opted for the use of the 5-modality Likert scale, thus offering a relevant gradation of the opinions expressed. In order to guarantee a clear and logical organization of the questionnaire, the items were presented in seven distinct parts, after a carefully crafted preamble. This structuring will facilitate the understanding of the respondents and will promote a precise and targeted response to each aspect addressed, thus reinforcing the reliability of the data collected during our survey.

- **Pre-test of the questionnaire:**

Before implementing our questionnaire, we conducted a pre-test with five presidents of targeted associations. This process allowed us to adjust certain items based on their feedback. In addition, to ensure atotal taken into accountLinguistically, the questionnaire was translated into Arabic to meet the specific needs of potential participants.

- **Data collection:**

For data collection, we opted for face-to-face interviews, which were considered effective in terms of response rates. This approach was carried out with the support of the Social Actions Division in the province of El Kelaa des Sraghna, thus strengthening the efficiency and quality of our information collection process.

- **Sample selection:**

In the sample selection process, we chose to target 94 associations benefiting from INDH projects at the level of the municipalities targeted by this initiative. Our questionnaire was specifically directed to the presidents of these identified associations.

To ensure balanced representation, we adopted the proportional method by stratifying the associations according to their project type. This approach allows us toallowedto ensure diversity and adequate representation of the different associative realities concerned by the INDH, thus reinforcing the validity and relevance of our sample.

- **Quantitative data analysis:**

a) Exploratory phase

During the exploratory phase of our research, special attention was paid to exploring the structure of the measurement scales we use. This in-depth analysis aims to understand the internal arrangement of items within each scale, thus allowing for an accurate contextual interpretation. In parallel, we assessed the reliability of these scales, examining the internal consistency of the items to ensure stable and reliable measurements.

To conduct these analyses in depth, we used IBM SPSS Statistics 20, an advanced statistical toolto strengthenthe rigor of our methodological approach.

b) Confirmatory phase

In the confirmatory phase, we applied the Structural Equations Model (SEM) with the Linear Structural Relations Approach (LISREL). This advanced methodology allowed us to test and confirm the hypothesized relationships between our latent variables.

Covariance structure analysis was also performed to assess the interdependencies between our variables, thus consolidating the validity of our theoretical framework.

3- Results

3.1 Reliability of measuring instruments

The tablebelowgives the values of validity tests before and after deletion of the items, the results show that the indicators (KMO and alpha) were significantly improved after the deletion of the item "Evaluation of training" from the variable "Participation" having communalities lower than 0.3.

All the sub-variables of our model give values that exceed 0.50 (threshold accepted for KMO and alpha). With quite satisfactory values or even excellent for certain sub-variables. This result confirms the reliability of our measurement scales and ensures the representativeness of the items in the measurement of the variables and constructs studied in our work.

Table 1. Summary of validity analysis results of the measurement scale of the variables (before and after deletion of unreliable items)

Variables	Sous-variables	Qualité de représentativité avant suppression des items			Nombre d'items à supprimer	Qualité de représentativité après suppression des items			Nombre final des items
		Indice KMO*	Signification de Bartlett*	Alpha de Cronbach*		Indice KMO*	Signification de Bartlett*	Alpha de Cronbach*	
Gouvernance	*Participation*	*0,85*	*0,000*	*0,89*	*1 item*	*0,92*	*0,000*	*0,91*	*9 items*
	Convergence	0,70	0,000	0,80	0 item	0,70	0,000	0,80	3 items
	Partenariat	0,72	0,000	0,84	0 item	0,72	0,000	0,84	3 items
	Transparence	0,71	0,000	0,54	0 item	0,71	0,000	0,54	4 items
Performance	Pertinence	0,50	0,000	0,75	0 item	0,50	0,000	0,75	2 items
	Efficacité	0,72	0,000	0,83	0 item	0,72	0,000	0,83	3 items
	Efficience	0,67	0,000	0,77	0 item	0,67	0,000	0,77	3 items
	Impact	0,88	0,000	0,88	0 item	0,88	0,000	0,88	6 items

3.2 The dimensionality of measuring instruments

Before starting the hypothesis testing, a preliminary step is to reduce the number of sub-variables by grouping them into factors that provide the maximum amount of information. To do this, we chose to use a principal component factor analysis (PCA). This methodology will allow us to condense the sub-variables of each variable in the model into factors that we will later use in the model test and hypothesis validation.

Table 2: Results of factor analyses of sub-variablesTop of form

Variables de mesure		Nombre des Items	Nombre de facteurs dégagés	Pourcentage d'information restituée par le facteur*
Gouvernance	Participation	9 Items	1 facteur	57,93%
	Convergence	3 Items	1 facteur	71,76 %
	Partenariat	3 Items	1 facteur	75,59%
	Transparence	4 Items	1 facteur	55,01%
Performance	Pertinence	2 Items	1 facteur	80,03%
	Efficacité	3 Items	1 facteur	75,54%
	Efficience	3 Items	1 facteur	68,63%
	Impact	6 Items	1 facteur	64,61%

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Factor analysis generated a significant KMO and Bartlett index for all subvariables, indicating adequate representation of these subvariables in the identified factors. Each factor accounted for a significant percentage of information, exceeding 50% of the total variance, and the total inertia exceeded 1 for all factors.

These results denote a reasonable satisfaction of the derived factors for each subvariable, highlighting an increased reliability of the components. Consequently, these factors can be credibly used as explanatory variables in our structural analysis of the conceptual model.

4.3 Adequacy and discriminant validity

The analysis gave quite satisfactory results in terms of measuring the index of measurement of the quality of representation of the model by the variables.

Table 3: representativeness of the model

Types d'indices	Exemples	Seuils d'acceptations empiriques*
Les indices absolus	Khi-deux	276,864
	Signification khi-deux	0,000
	GFI : Goodness of Fit Index	0,964
	AGFI : Adjusted Goodness of Fit Index	0,953
	RMR :Root-mean-square residual	0,039
	RMSEA : *Root-mean-square error of approximation*	0,036
Les indices incrémentaux	CFI : Comparative Fit Index	0,952
	NFI : Normal Fit Index	0,938
	RFI : Relative Fit Index	0,984
	IFI : Incremental fit Index	0,957
	TLI : Tucker-Lewis index	0,902
L'indice de parcimonie	Khi-deux normé (Khi-deux/ddl)	2,184

- The value of the normalized chi-square statistic is below the accepted error threshold of 0.05, indicating that our model is statistically significant.
- Moreover, the RMSEA shows a value considerably lower than 0.05, suggesting no significant difference in the covariance matrix.
- The NFI also meets reliability standards, exceeding the 0.90 threshold.
- Similarly, the CFI provides a satisfactory model comparison result, with a value of 0.95.

All of these indicators confirm the quality of the representativeness of our model, highlighting that the explanatory variables manage to correctly estimate the dependent variable.Top of the form

3.3 Measure of relationship between variables

The analysis of the sub-variables measuring the dependent variable "performance" reveals that the latter was constructed from four main sub-variables, namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and impact, as previously stated.

Table 4: Regression Weights

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
FAC1_Pertinence	<---	Performance	1,000				
FAC1_Efficacité	<---	Performance	1,048	,186	5,643	0,00	
FAC1_Efficience	<---	Performance	,977	,187	5,238	0,00	
FAC1_Impact	<---	Performance	1,125	,185	6,096	0 ,00	

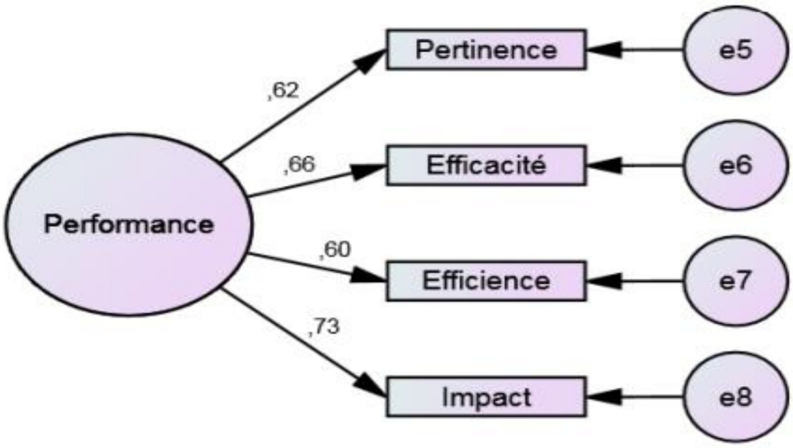
The table shows that these 4 sub-variables give a significance lower than the error threshold 0.05which showsthat they manage to formulate the performance variable exactly.

Table 5: Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
FAC1_Pertinence	<---	Performance	,619
FAC1_Efficacité	<---	Performance	,658
FAC1_Efficience	<---	Performance	,600
FAC1_Impact	<---	Performance	,728

Referring to the table, it is notable that the four sub-variables play a significant role in the construction of the "performance" variable, as evidenced by their estimation coefficient exceeding 50%. These results can be presented schematically according to the following format:

Figure 1: Formulation of the performance variable



- **Analysis of the variables influencing the dependent variable “performance”**

The table below presents the significance thresholds of the relationships between the variables, in our study we accept a relationship which does not exceed an error threshold P: of 0.05.

Table 6: Regression Weights (Group number1- Default model)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Performance <--- FAC1_Participation	,447	,061	7,267	0,00	
Performance <--- FAC1_Covergence	-,014	,032	-,447	,655	
Performance <--- FAC1_Partenariat	,074	,033	2,251	,024	
Performance <--- FAC1_Transparence	,291	,047	6,225	0,00	

According to the data in the table, the P-value is less than the threshold of 0.05. Therefore, we can conclude that three variables in our model, namely Participation, Partnership and Transparency, have a significant influence on the dependent variable (performance).Top of form

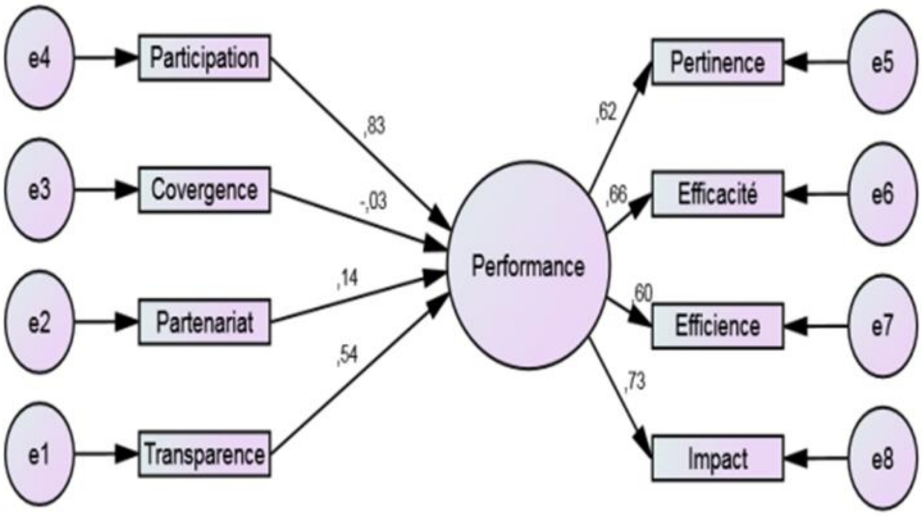
On the other hand, the convergence variable has a significance level higher than the accepted error threshold, thus indicating that this variable has no significant impact on the dependent variable.

Table 7: Standardized Regression Weights (Group number1- Default model)

			Estimate
Performance	<---	FAC1_Participation	,829
Performance	<---	FAC1_Covergence	-,027
Performance	<---	FAC1_Partenariat	,138
Performance	<---	FAC1_Transparence	,541

The regression table above presents the percentage of influence of each variable on the dependent variable. It is observed that the variable "participation" exerts the greatest influence, representing 83%, while transparency contributes 54%, and partnership 14%.

Figure 2: The Validated Research Model



- A variation in the variable "Participation" leads to a variation in the dependent variable "Performance" of 83%.
- A variation in the “Partnership” variable induces a variation in the dependent variable “Performance” of 14%.
- A variation in the variable "Transparency" generates a variation in the dependent variable "Performance" of 54%.
- The "convergence" variable does not show any significant influence on the dependent variable.

Based on this result, it is clear that we can validate and accept the hypothesesH1, H3 and H4 but we could not verify H2.Welet's presentthe resultsin formatof table:

Table 8: Summary of results of research hypothesis tests

Hypothèses de recherche	Résultat du test	Validation
• Hypothèse 1 : la participation exerce une influence significative sur la performance	Béta : 0,83 Sig : 0,000	Acceptée
• *Hypothèse 2 : la convergence exerce une influence significative sur la performance*	*Béta :-0,03* *Sig : 0,655*	*Rejetée*
• Hypothèse 3 : le partenariat exerce une influence significative sur la performance	Béta : 0,14 Sig : 0,024	Acceptée
• Hypothèse 4 : la transparence exerce une influence significative sur la performance	Béta : 0,54 Sig : 0,000	Acceptée

4- DISCUSSION

The findings from the application of the structural equation model to the evaluations of beneficiary associations provide valuable insights into the key factors that influence the performance of initiatives and projects at the local level. The following is a discussion based on these findings:

- Importance of participation: The high correlation (83%) between participation and performance highlights the crucial role of stakeholder involvement in all phases of local projects. When community members are actively engaged in the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects, several benefits emerge. First, this involvement ensures that projects truly address local needs, as those directly affected have a deep understanding of the challenges and opportunities in their area. In addition, participation fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens, which can lead to greater buy-in for projects and continued support in the long term.

- Role of transparency: The significant correlation (54%) between transparency and performance highlights the importance of open communication and the dissemination of clear and accessible information in local governance processes. When local authorities' decisions and actions are transparent, citizens are better informed and can participate in a more informed manner in discussions and debates on policies and projects. Moreover, transparency strengthens public trust in local institutions, which can help create an environment conducive to the success of initiatives.
- Limitations of partnership: Despite the importance often given to partnership in local governance, the limited correlation (14%) between partnership and performance suggests that its contribution to improving project outcomes may be less significant than expected. This may be due to several factors, such as misaligned expectations between partners, differences in priorities and resources, or difficulties in maintaining effective collaboration over time. These findings highlight the need to carefully select partners and put in place strong coordination mechanisms to maximize the benefits of partnership.

- Challenges of convergence: The lack of positive correlation (-3%) between convergence and performance highlights the challenges faced by local governments in effectively coordinating the efforts of different stakeholders. Convergence of actions can be hampered by obstacles such as institutional rivalries, divergent interests and resource constraints. To overcome these challenges, it is necessary to promote a culture of collaboration and partnership, as well as to put in place effective coordination mechanisms to align the objectives and actions of different stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

The aim of our research was to study the links between governance and performance of local authorities. Our results showthe importance of participation and transparency in local governance to improve project performance, while highlighting the challenges faced by local authorities in managing partnerships and coordinating actions.

These results provide valuable insights for local decision-makers to design and implement more effective policies and projects that are tailored to the needs of local communities.

The buzz around governance is not about to stop. We will have to think about governance differently. Its paradox constitutes as many problems in public management. Research work must be situated and analyzed in its contexts by describing the issues and uses through an interdisciplinary approach (economic, sociological, etc.) so that the prescriptions are practical and used effectively by decision-makers.

FUTURES RESEARCH DIRECTION

Future research could explore other facets of performance. As we have previously highlighted, today performance is not limited to simple financial indicators, it must also focus on the ability of local authorities to create a positive impact on the environment and the well-being of citizens. The respectful use of resources to preserve humanity over time remains more necessary than before. A study on the measurement of sustainability by including state products and services would be an interesting avenue of research. For example, few studies have studied governance in relation to quality of life and by taking into account environmental criteria (ecological footprint). Studies on sustainable development indicators could shed light on public policies. The managerial impact will be visible through the implementation of sustainable policy development plans according to the specificities of each country, with sustainability indicators and appropriate monitoring.

We also note few longitudinal studies. The impact will be easier to determine and understand in this type of study given the complexity of the nature of governance (as we noted in the introduction to this chapter). We therefore invite researchers and practitioners to turn more towards longitudinal studies in order to highlight local specificities. We believe that cultural and sectoral effects could be the origin of the dysfunctions and failure of public affairs governance plans imported from other countries. Researchers could explore these avenues by using qualitative or mixed studies.

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