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New Public Management and institutional virality: the contribution of influence marketing to the adoption of e-services

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ABSTRACT

The digital transformation of public administration depends to a large extent on user acceptance of the digital services on offer. This study explores the determinants of intention to adopt public e-services through an integrated model mobilizing variables from the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and specific institutional dimensions. Using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method, a structural model was tested on a sample of 100 respondents. The results show that ease of use, source credibility and institutional virality have a significant and positive effect on adoption intention. On the other hand, perceived usefulness and subjective norms showed no positive effect, suggesting an appropriation dynamic influenced more by perceptions of reliability and institutional exemplarity than by classic dimensions of perceived performance. These results call for a rethinking of e-services communication and deployment strategies, with a focus on trust, fluid usage and institutional visibility.

Keywords: Adoption of public e-services TAM model PLS-SEM Institutional credibility Digital transformation.

1. INTRODUCTION

Today's governments are faced with a dual requirement: to improve the performance of public action, while at the same time meeting the increasingly high expectations of their citizens in terms of service quality, accessibility and transparency. Against this backdrop, New Public Management (NPM) has emerged as a reference framework for rethinking modes of governance and introducing managerial tools inspired by the private sector (Hood, 1991; Osborne, 2006). The digitization of processes and the spread of e-services are one of the most visible expressions of this modernization, driven by the imperatives of efficiency, traceability and user orientation.

At the heart of this dynamic lies a question that has yet to be fully explored in public management science: to what extent can influence mechanisms, as conceptualized by influence

marketing, foster the adoption of e-services by citizens and internal users? Influence, understood as a combination of source credibility, social proof and subjective norms (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955; Cialdini, 2001), is no longer deployed solely via media opinion leaders, but also by citizen ambassadors and public reference agents capable of translating the value of e-services and disseminating usage. At the same time, the rapid spread of digital "best practices" between public organizations - what we call institutional virality - is part of coercive, normative and mimetic logics (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983), accelerating the alignment of administrations on common standards.

In developing countries such as Morocco, however, the widespread use of e-services faces recurring challenges: user confidence, digital literacy, perceived usefulness and ease of use, perceived quality and risk reduction (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003). Influence mechanisms - public digital campaigns, local community relays, partnerships with micro-influencers with strong territorial legitimacy - can act on these determinants, while institutional virality helps to homogenize service frames of reference and legitimize innovation among organizations and citizens (Rogers, 2003; Ajzen, 1991).

The problem we propose to examine is as follows: to what extent and by what mechanisms does influence marketing, articulated to the institutional virality specific to NMP, contribute to the adoption of public e-services? More specifically, the study analyzes how influence shapes trust, perceived usefulness, ease of use and subjective norms, and how institutional dynamics (isomorphism, circulation of standards) mediate or moderate these effects at citizen and organizational levels.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. New Public Management (Nmp) & Institutional Virality

The New Public Management (NMP) is a framework for transformation that reconfigures the State's modes of action around performance, user orientation and the empowerment of administrative units. Through the introduction of managerial tools such as contractualization, indicator-based steering, benchmarking and evaluation systems, it aims to reconcile budgetary efficiency and quality of service. The digitization of procedures and, more broadly, the provision of e-services are not simply a matter of technology: they reflect a reorganization of public value chains (de-materialization, traceability, interoperability) and a redefinition of user-administration relations (accessibility, responsiveness, transparency). From this perspective, e-services become both performance tools and governance objects, mobilizing new skills (data governance, security, user-centered design) and raising questions about equity of access, organizational sustainability and accountability.

Institutional virality" refers to the accelerated circulation of managerial prescriptions, standards and service formats between public organizations, under the combined effect of mimetic, normative and coercive pressures. This dynamic relies on professional networks, communities of practice, quality labels and benchmarks, as well as inter-administration comparison tools that legitimize and stabilize solutions perceived as "best practice". Applied to the digital world, it encourages the emergence of e-services standards (user path, interoperability requirements, quality metrics) and accelerates the alignment of administrations, with expected effects in terms of organizational learning and design savings. It does, however, entail the risks of isomorphism that is insensitive to local contexts, of reproducing inequalities of access, and of indicator-driven optimization to the detriment of public value. The following analysis examines these tensions and their implications for the design, dissemination and appropriation of e-services.

2.2. Nmp Principles And Goals: Performance, Users And Empowerment

New Public Management (NPM) became the dominant paradigm for administrative reform in the 1980s. It marks a break with traditional bureaucratic logic by promoting private-sector-inspired, results-oriented management based on the empowerment of public players (Hood, 1991). One of its cornerstones is the quest for performance, understood as the ability to achieve measurable objectives, optimize the use of resources and improve the quality of services rendered to citizens (Behn, 2003). Within this framework, three complementary dimensions emerge: efficiency, which aims to minimize costs and delays; effectiveness, which concerns the achievement of set objectives; and quality, which refers to the reliability, continuity and equity of the service offering (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

The NMP also places user orientation at the forefront, reflecting a significant shift in the logic of public management. The citizen is no longer considered solely as a client or partner, whose needs, expectations and experiences must guide the design and evaluation of services (Osborne, 2006). This implies the simplification of procedures, the transparency of processes and the development of participatory mechanisms enabling users to evaluate and contribute to the continuous improvement of public services. This perspective helps to legitimize public action by making it more responsive, accessible and focused on the value perceived by beneficiaries.

The third fundamental dimension is accountability, which translates into greater autonomy for public managers, coupled with greater accountability (Moynihan, 2008). It is based on a clarification of roles and the introduction of ex-post control mechanisms, such as contracts of objectives and activity reports. This approach aims to establish an organizational culture where results take precedence over procedures, and where decision-makers must justify the use of resources and the performance achieved.

These principles are operationalized through three essential levers. Indicator-based management makes it possible to measure and compare performance, objectify decision-making and support organizational learning (Van Dooren, Bouckaert, & Halligan, 2015). Contractualization formalizes performance

commitments between public authorities and operators, be they internal contracts, public-private partnerships or service delegations (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Finally, the digitization of processes is now a major strategic focus: it facilitates the dematerialization, interoperability and exploitation of data, while enhancing the transparency and traceability of processes (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006). However, this digitization also raises challenges linked to digital inclusion, security and data protection.

Thus, the NMP presents itself as a systemic reform articulating principles and instruments to transform public management. While it opens up promising prospects in terms of performance, user orientation and accountability, it nevertheless calls for critical vigilance with regard to the undesirable effects of an excessive focus on indicators or decontextualized standardization.

2.3. Institutional Viralitis: Definition, Dissemination Mechanisms

The notion of institutional virality illustrates the ability of managerial innovations to spread rapidly throughout the public sector, to the point of transforming the operating norms of entire administrations. It fits into the broader framework of institutional theory, according to which public organizations adopt reforms not only for reasons of instrumental rationality, but also to reinforce their legitimacy in the eyes of stakeholders and supervisory bodies (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). Thus, the generalization of certain practices does not always reflect their intrinsic effectiveness, but often reflects a process of conformity to models considered legitimate in a given organizational field (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Institutional virality manifests itself in three isomorphic mechanisms that structure the convergence of practices. The first is mimetic isomorphism, which arises in situations of uncertainty and leads organizations to reproduce the behavior of those perceived as benchmarks. This mimeticism can create a snowball effect: once an innovation is adopted by pioneering players, it tends to spread rapidly within the sector (Scott, 2014). The second mechanism is normative isomorphism, linked to the growing professionalization of public administrations and the circulation of expert knowledge. Professional associations, academic networks and training schemes reinforce the dissemination of common norms and standardize expectations of public management (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2008). Finally, coercive isomorphism results from pressure exerted by higher authorities or international organizations, which make access to resources or funding conditional on the adoption of certain reforms, as in the administrative modernization policies supported by the World Bank or the OECD (Brunsson & Jacobsson, 2000).

Inter-administration networks play a key role in this diffusion, serving as vectors for organizational learning and experience sharing. These networks can be formal (national cooperation programs, supranational bodies, digital exchange platforms) or informal (communities of practice, expert groups), and they facilitate the rapid spread of managerial innovations. Quality labels and benchmarking tools reinforce this dynamic by introducing mechanisms of comparison and reputation: an administration that adopts an innovative model becomes a benchmark for others, who will seek to align themselves so as not to appear to be lagging behind. These instruments act as catalysts for virality, making "best practices" visible and exerting a symbolic pressure for homogenization (Brunsson & Jacobsson, 2000).

However, while institutional virality helps to accelerate the spread of reforms, it also raises limitations and paradoxes. The adoption of imported models can lead to excessive isomorphism, where administrations reproduce solutions without adapting them to their specific context (Boxenbaum & Jonsson, 2008). In some cases, reforms are integrated in a symbolic way, i.e. displayed to meet expectations of conformity and legitimacy, but without any real transformation of internal practices (Meyer & Rowan, 1977). This phenomenon of "decoupling" between formal structures and actual practices reduces the impact of innovations and calls into question their relevance. Finally, rapid dissemination can accentuate dependence on standardized models, to the detriment of local innovation and experimentation adapted to local realities.

In short, institutional virality is a powerful driver of organizational convergence in the public sector. It goes a long way to explaining why certain reforms, such as the digitization of procedures and the development of e-services, are being widely disseminated in a variety of institutional contexts. However, its real effectiveness depends on the ability of organizations to go beyond a simple logic of mimicry and integrate these reforms into a strategy adapted to their local challenges.

2.4. Implications For E-Services: Standardization, Trust And Inclusion

The spread of e-services today represents one of the most visible embodiments of the New Public Management (NPM). With its emphasis on performance, user orientation and accountability, the NMP places digitization at the heart of administrative modernization. This transformation promotes the standardization of processes by replacing heterogeneous and sometimes complex procedures with unified digital services that can be accessed remotely. It meets the dual requirement of organizational efficiency, by reducing costs and processing times, and service quality, by guaranteeing greater speed, accessibility and transparency (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006). E-services are therefore not just technical tools, but also instruments of political and institutional legitimization, as their adoption testifies to the State's ability to respond to growing expectations for simplification and proximity (Osborne, 2006).

The logic of institutional virality reinforces this dynamic by encouraging the accelerated spread of digital standards between public organizations. Mimetic pressures encourage administrations to imitate the solutions adopted by pioneering institutions, often perceived as models of success. Normative pressures, stemming from growing professionalization and the

dissemination of standards by communities of experts, homogenize expectations and practices in digital governance (Scott, 2014). Finally, coercive pressures impose the implementation of e-services through national regulations, public programs or financial conditionalities set by international donors (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). In this context, inter-administration networks, labels and benchmarking schemes act as catalysts, exerting a symbolic and competitive pressure that accelerates convergence towards standardized digitization models (Brunsson & Jacobsson, 2000).

Nevertheless, the rapid spread of e-services is not without its challenges. The first concerns trust: if citizens are to make massive use of digital services, they need to be confident that their data will be handled securely, confidentially and reliably (Bannister & Connolly, 2011). The second challenge relates to digital inclusion: the extension of e-services risks widening inequalities between users who have mastered digital tools and those who have not, either because of the technological divide or a lack of skills (Jaeger, 2003). Finally, the question of quality goes beyond the mere technical availability of platforms. It includes the ergonomics of interfaces, the relevance of proposed functionalities and the ability of online services to adapt to diverse and sometimes complex needs (Layne & Lee, 2001).

In this way, NMP and institutional virality act as powerful engines for the diffusion and standardization of e-services. However, their positive impact can only be guaranteed if a critical and inclusive approach is integrated. The digital transformation of the public sector should not be limited to the dematerialization of procedures, but should aim to create genuine public value. This means reconciling the need for organizational efficiency with the need to build public trust, reduce digital divides and guarantee a quality of service that meets users' real needs and expectations.

Influence marketing & the adoption of public e-services

In a context where the digitization of public services is progressing rapidly, the success of e-services depends not only on their technical design, but above all on their appropriation by users. Citizens need to be convinced of the usefulness, ease-of-use and reliability of these systems if they are to make them an integral part of their daily lives. However, adoption factors are not limited to the rational dimension; they are also influenced by social, relational and symbolic dynamics. This is where the use of influence marketing becomes relevant, as it mobilizes actors and mechanisms capable of guiding behavior, reinforcing trust and fostering commitment around the use of public technologies.

Influence marketing, initially developed in the commercial field, has gradually established itself as a strategic communications lever for public organizations. By exploiting the credibility of certain external intermediaries, such as opinion leaders and micro-influencers, and internal intermediaries, such as referral agents and citizen ambassadors, it helps to reduce the distance between the administration and its users. By disseminating appropriate messages and embodying exemplary practices, these players can accelerate the adoption of e-services. To study this phenomenon, we need to examine the concepts and players involved in influence marketing, the underlying psychological and social mechanisms, and the determinants of e-service adoption, in order to better understand how persuasive communication contributes to the digital transformation of the public sector.

2.5. Influence Marketing: Concepts And Players

Influence marketing can be defined as a set of communication strategies designed to mobilize individuals with social capital, legitimacy or recognized expertise to influence the behavior and attitudes of a target audience. In its initial conception, it extends the theory of opinion leaders, according to which certain actors play a central role in the circulation and appropriation of information due to their credibility and position in social networks (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955). This approach is based on the idea that citizens place more trust in figures perceived as close or expert than in impersonal institutional messages. Thus, the integration of influence marketing into the public sphere aims to reinforce the legitimacy of digital policies by relying on relays capable of generating trust and commitment.

Influencers fall into several categories, depending on their position and mode of action. Opinion leaders play a prescriptive role, mediating between the administration and the public thanks to their social authority or thematic expertise. Micro-influencers, on the other hand, have smaller communities but are characterized by proximity and sustained interaction, which increases their credibility and persuasive power in targeted contexts (De Veirman, Cauberghe, & Hudders, 2017). In the field of digital public services, this logic is extended to citizen ambassadors, i.e. engaged users who voluntarily share their positive experiences and participate in spreading a favorable image of e-services, creating a social contagion effect. Finally, internal influence represents a specific dimension: referent agents within administrations, by embodying change and guiding users, play a crucial role in the appropriation of digital reforms (Freberg, Graham, McGaughey, & Freberg, 2011).

By articulating these different categories of actors, influence marketing applied to e-services is not limited to the dissemination of information. It is a strategic lever for legitimizing and supporting change, by mobilizing figures capable of embodying reforms, reducing resistance and encouraging the adoption of digital innovations through identification and social proof.

2.6. Influence Mechanisms: Credibility, Social Proof And Information Contagion

Influence mechanisms are the foundation on which influence marketing acts on people's attitudes and behavior. The first determining factor is the source's credibility, which is based on two main dimensions: expertise, i.e. the person's perceived competence in the field concerned, and reliability, linked to sincerity and the absence of hidden interests. Persuasive communication research shows that credibility is one of the

major determinants of a message's effectiveness, as it conditions the trust placed in the content (Hovland & Weiss, 1951). In the case of public e-services, the use of influencers perceived as neutral, competent or close to users can reduce distrust of institutions and reinforce adoption intention.

A second central mechanism is social proof, based on the principle that individuals tend to adopt behaviors observed among their peers, especially in situations of uncertainty. This process relies on the dynamics of collective mimicry, which orient users' choices according to what is perceived as socially validated or in the majority (Cialdini, 2001). Subjective norms play a complementary role here: they refer to an individual's perception of the expectations of those around him, and the importance he attaches to conforming to these expectations (Ajzen, 1991). In the context of e-services, the perception that "everyone is already using" a service, or that its adoption is socially valued, exerts normative pressure in favor of its use.

Finally, the mechanisms of commitment and informational contagion reinforce the spread of adoption behavior. Commitment is based on the principle that an individual who has publicly expressed his or her support for an innovation will be more inclined to maintain this behavior in order to remain consistent with his or her self-image (Joule & Beauvois, 1998). Informational contagion, on the other hand, refers to the process by which ideas or behaviors spread virally within a social network, thanks to multiple interactions and the cumulative effect of repeated messages (Rogers, 2003). Applied to public e-services, these mechanisms help to create a virtuous circle: the more users share their positive experiences, the more the collective perception evolves favorably, thus facilitating wider adoption.

2.7. Adoption Of Public E-Services: Determinants And Measurement Methods

The adoption of public e-services is a multidimensional field of research, drawing on both theories of technological acceptance and institutional approaches. Among the most studied determinants, perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use occupy a central place. According to the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), the likelihood of an individual adopting a digital service depends directly on the perception that the service improves performance (utility) and the ease with which it can be used (Davis, 1989). Applied to e-services, this model highlights that citizens are more inclined to use an administrative platform if it is perceived as useful in simplifying their procedures, and if its ergonomics facilitate navigation and comprehension.

In addition to these factors, trust and risk perception play a decisive role. Trust refers to the assurance that public institutions manage personal data securely, while perceived risk may concern confidentiality, processing errors or system reliability (Gefen, Karahanna, & Straub, 2003). The balance between trust and risk largely determines the acceptability of online services, particularly in contexts where distrust of the state remains high. Service quality is another key determinant, which is not limited to technical aspects. It encompasses platform reliability, service availability, speed of response and the system's ability to meet diverse needs (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988).

Adoption can be measured at different levels. Intention to use is a predictive indicator frequently used in technology acceptance models, reflecting the probability that the user will use the service in the future. However, actual usage remains the most tangible indicator, measurable by objective variables such as the number of connections, the frequency of online transactions or the proportion of totally paperless procedures (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003). To capture these constructs, research generally resorts to validated measurement scales, using Likert-type items. For example, perceived usefulness can be measured by statements such as "Using this service improves the efficiency of my procedures", while perceived ease can be assessed by "Interacting with this online service is clear and understandable". Confidence is often measured through items relating to data security and integrity, and risk through perceptions of uncertainty or potential loss.

Thus, the adoption of public e-services is the result of a combination of technological, psychological and institutional factors. Understanding and operationalizing these determinants will not only help explain variations in usage behavior, but also guide public decision-makers in designing digital services that are inclusive, reliable and genuinely oriented towards citizens' needs.

2.8. Theoretical Frameworks For The Link Between Influence And E-Services Adoption

Analysis of the relationship between influence marketing and the adoption of public e-services cannot be limited to an empirical description of the players and mechanisms involved. To grasp the deeper logic, it is necessary to mobilize theoretical frameworks that explain how the dynamics of social, cognitive and institutional influence shape user behavior and structure the diffusion of digital innovations in the public sector.

Four theories appear particularly relevant. The theory of the diffusion of innovations sheds light on the role of opinion leaders in the transmission and acceptance of digital practices. The theory of planned behavior highlights the importance of subjective norms and perceived control in adoption intention. The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and its extensions show that perceived usefulness and ease of use are central determinants of technological acceptance, often reinforced by social influence. Finally, neo-institutional theory enables us to understand the collective and organizational dimension of the process, emphasizing the mimetic, normative and coercive pressures that accelerate the generalization of e-services.

These theoretical approaches thus offer an integrated analytical grid: they articulate the individual, social and institutional dimensions of influence, while providing explanations of the concrete modalities of e-services adoption.

2.9. Theoretical Frameworks For The Link Between Social Influence And E-Services Adoption

- **Diffusion of Innovations Theory**

The Diffusion of Innovations theory, formulated by Rogers (2003), provides a central framework for understanding how new practices and technologies spread throughout a society. It identifies five key attributes influencing adoption: relative advantage, which refers to the degree to which an innovation is perceived as superior to existing practices; compatibility, which concerns the fit between the innovation and the user's values or habits; complexity, linked to ease of understanding and use; experimentability, which enables the innovation to be tested at lower cost; and observability, i.e. the visibility of the benefits in the social environment.

Applied to public e-services, this theory shows that diffusion is accelerated when the benefits are visible (reduced delays, simplified procedures), the services are compatible with everyday digital uses (online payment, mobile applications), and their operation is intuitive. In this process, influencer marketing acts as a catalyst. Opinion leaders and citizen ambassadors play a decisive role in publicly demonstrating the benefits of e-services, reducing uncertainty and making innovation more legitimate. Their role is particularly important in the transition phase between "innovators" and the "early majority", where social credibility becomes decisive for mass adoption. In this sense, influence helps transform innovation from an option among others into a social and institutional norm.

- **The Theory of Planned Behavior**

The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) is based on the idea that the intention to adopt a behavior depends on three variables: attitudes (positive or negative perception of the behavior), subjective norms (perceived social pressure) and perceived behavioral control (sense of self-efficacy). In the context of e-services, these variables translate into the perception that use is useful and beneficial (attitude), that the environment or society expects the individual to adopt these services (subjective norms), and that the user feels capable of using them effectively (perceived control).

Influence marketing acts on each of these dimensions. In terms of attitudes, it reinforces the perception of benefits by highlighting credible user testimonials. In terms of subjective standards, it creates a representation that "everyone uses" e-services, generating a social proof effect. Finally, in terms of perceived control, it reduces psychological resistance by showing, via influencers or referent agents, that use is simple and accessible. These mechanisms reinforce the intention to adopt and facilitate the transition to actual use.

- **The Technology Acceptance Model (Tam) and its Extensions**

The Technology Acceptance Model (Davis, 1989) was designed to explain why individuals accept or reject a technology. It identifies two main determinants: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. UTAUT (Venkatesh, Morris, Davis, & Davis, 2003) enriches this model by adding social influence and facilitating conditions as explanatory variables.

In the case of public e-services, influence marketing helps to increase perceived usefulness by highlighting added value (time savings, accessibility, reduced travel costs). It also improves the perception of ease of use by broadcasting demonstrations and tutorials, often relayed by micro-influencers close to users. Moreover, by integrating social influence, UTAUT underlines that peer pressure and credible figures encourage intention to use. This theoretical framework thus highlights the strategic role of opinion multipliers in reducing uncertainty and transforming cognitive perceptions into actual behavior.

- **Neo-Institutional Theory**

Neo-institutional theory (Meyer & Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) emphasizes the idea that organizations adopt practices not only for their instrumental effectiveness, but also to gain social and institutional legitimacy. Public e-services are fully in line with this logic: their adoption reflects less an immediate search for performance than a desire to align with standards of modernization and digital governance.

Influence marketing plays a part in this process, by promoting the social legitimization of e-services. By making their use desirable and valued, it helps to reinforce institutional pressures. These take three forms: mimetic, when administrations imitate the practices of pioneering organizations; normative, when they align themselves with professional standards and the expectations of expert communities; and coercive, when regulations impose digitization. Social influence, whether from citizen ambassadors or referent agents, acts as a vector that aligns individual behavior with these collective pressures. This approach highlights the fact that the adoption of e-services is not just the result of a rational individual decision, but of a collective movement structured by institutional and social norms.

Today, the adoption of public e-services is a central issue in the dynamics of administrative modernization, particularly in contexts where digitization is part of the logic of New Public Management (NPM). Previous studies have largely documented the role of technical factors (perceived usefulness, ease of use) in the acceptance of technologies (Davis, 1989; Venkatesh et al., 2003), but they often neglect the social and institutional determinants linked to interpersonal and organizational influence. Theoretical frameworks such as the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), the theory of diffusion of innovations (Rogers, 2003) and the extended TAM model emphasize that usage behavior is strongly influenced by mechanisms of social proof, subjective norms and institutional legitimization. In this context, influence marketing, initially developed in the commercial field, appears as a strategic lever that can be mobilized by public organizations to stimulate the appropriation of e-services. This research is part of this perspective and asks the following question: to what extent and by what mechanisms does influence marketing, articulated to the institutional virality specific to NMP, promote the

adoption of public e-services? Three main hypotheses are formulated to answer this question: H1: the perceived credibility of influencers (public agents or citizen ambassadors) has a positive effect on the intention to use e-services; H2: perceived subjective norms moderate the relationship between perceived usefulness and intention to use; H3: the perception of institutional virality (inter-administrative alignment) increases trust in e-services, which favors their adoption. These hypotheses aim to empirically test the interaction between individual, social and institutional variables in the construction of citizens' digital behavior.

3. METHODOLOGY:

In the context of this research into the influence of social marketing and institutional virality on the adoption of public e-services, the nature of the methodology to be adopted is clearly in line with a quantitative approach. Indeed, the central problem explores the relationships between several explicit variables such as perceived usefulness, source credibility, ease of use, subjective norms and trust, all of which are measurable constructs. This logic is based on recognized theoretical models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989), the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh et al., 2003) or the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which have historically used standardized measurement instruments (Likert scales) to test causal or correlational hypotheses. The aim is to empirically assess the impact of social, psychological and institutional determinants on citizens' intentions or actual usage behaviour with regard to public digital services, in line with a positivist, hypothetico-deductive paradigm.

From this point of view, a sample of 100 respondents is an appropriate methodological choice, particularly in the context of an exploratory study or an academic dissertation with a demonstrative aim. This size provides sufficient statistical power to perform descriptive and inferential analyses such as correlation tests, simple or multiple linear regressions, or even exploratory factor analysis if several dimensions are operationalized by items. The use of a self-administered questionnaire, structured around items measuring constructs such as perceived usefulness, trust or perceived social norms, makes it possible to produce data that is robust, reproducible and comparable with previous research in the field of e-government. In addition, this methodology meets the standards of empirical studies in public management and technological acceptance behavior, while being adapted to field and resource constraints.

Lastly, although the quantitative approach appears to be the most coherent for addressing the problem posed, it could be enriched, in a later phase, by a complementary qualitative approach. The latter would enable us to explore in depth the perceptions of users or public agents regarding the influence strategies implemented, particularly in specific institutional contexts such as Morocco. However, the methodological priority here remains the identification of significant relationships between variables defined a priori, in order to test the explanatory scope of the theoretical models mobilized. In this sense, the quantitative methodology based on a sample of 100 individuals proves not only justified, but optimal in the context of a study aimed at making a rigorous empirical contribution to understanding the factors driving the adoption of e-services within a New Public Management logic.

In order to simplify and structure the empirical analysis, the variables selected for this study have been operationalized through a series of standardized items, inspired by reference works on technological acceptance and social influence. This approach makes abstract concepts such as perceived usefulness, source credibility or institutional virality measurable in a reliable and comparable way, using Likert-type scales. Each variable is thus represented by three clearly formulated and accessible items, facilitating data collection from respondents and ensuring consistency with the theoretical models used (TAM, TPB, diffusion of innovations). The presentation of items in a table is intended to guarantee methodological transparency and reproducibility of results.

Table 1: Variable items

Variable name	Item code	Item (statement)	Theoretical source
Perceived usefulness	PU1	Using this e-service would improve the efficiency of my administrative procedures.	Davis (1989)
	PU2	This online service meets a real need in my daily life.	Davis (1989)
	PU3	This e-service makes my interactions with the administration more productive.	Davis (1989)
Perceived ease of use	PEOU1	It's easy for me to learn how to use this e-service.	Venkatesh & Davis (2000)
	PEOU2	L'utilisation de ce service ne demande pas beaucoup d'effort.	Venkatesh & Davis (2000)
	PEOU3	L'interface de ce service est claire et intuitive.	Venkatesh & Davis (2000)
Source credibility	CR1	The people promoting this service are experts in the field.	Hovland & Weiss (1951)
	CR2	I trust the recommendations made by these ambassadors/influencers.	Cialdini (2001)
	CR3	The information shared about this service is reliable.	Hovland & Weiss (1951)
Subjective norms	NS1	My relatives think I should use this e-service.	Ajzen (1991)
	NS2	The use of this service is well received by those	Ajzen (1991)

		around me.	
	NS3	I feel influenced by my colleagues' or friends' opinions of this service.	Ajzen (1991)
Corporate virality	VI1	I note that this type of service is increasingly used in other administrations.	DiMaggio & Powell (1983)
	VI2	The fact that several utilities are adopting this system gives me confidence in it.	Rogers (2003)
	VI3	This service seems to be becoming a standard in administrative procedures.	DiMaggio & Powell (1983)

The following section is devoted to the presentation and analysis of the empirical results obtained from the administered questionnaire. It will first present the descriptive statistics of the variables, before testing the hypotheses formulated using appropriate statistical methods (correlational analyses, regressions, etc.). This analytical phase will make it possible to verify the relevance of the theoretical framework used, and to discuss the implications of the results for understanding the mechanisms of e-public service adoption.

4. RESULTS:

This section presents the empirical results of the respondent survey. The aim is to test the hypotheses formulated on the basis of the theoretical framework, by analyzing the relationships between the explanatory variables (perceived usefulness, ease of use, source credibility, subjective norms, institutional virality) and the dependent variable, namely intention to adopt public e-services. The analysis is based on data collected through a structured questionnaire administered to a sample of 100 participants.

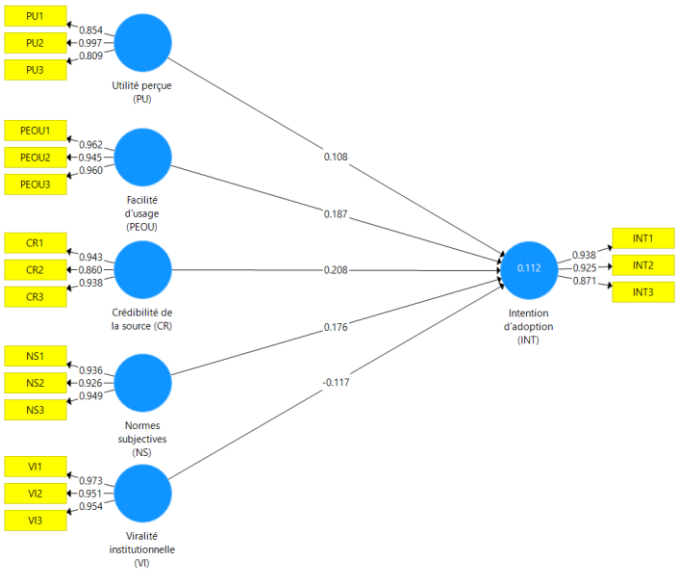

Figure 1: model PLS-SEM

Analysis of the PLS-SEM model reveals moderate overall quality in terms of the explanation of the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.112$) indicates that the five explanatory variables - perceived usefulness, ease of use, source credibility, subjective norms and institutional virality - explain around 11.2% of the variance in intention to adopt public e-services. Although this value remains relatively low, it shows that the model captures a significant share of behavioral variance in a context where users' decisions may also depend on contextual or psychological factors not incorporated in the model.

In terms of the internal reliability of the constructs, the results show loadings above 0.80 for all items measuring latent variables. Indicators PU1 to PU3, PEOU1 to PEOU3, CR1 to CR3, NS1 to NS3, VI1 to VI3 and INT1 to INT3 all show loadings ranging from 0.809 to 0.997, testifying to the excellent internal consistency and high representativeness of the items in relation to the theoretical constructs. These values validate the quality of the measurement in terms of convergent reliability, an essential condition for interpreting the structural model.

With regard to structural relationships, several path coefficients reveal a positive influence of explanatory variables on adoption intention. Source credibility (CR) exerts the strongest effect with a coefficient of 0.208, followed by ease of use (PEOU) at 0.187, then institutional virality (VI) at 0.176. These results suggest that users are more inclined to adopt e-services when they perceive information sources as reliable, use is perceived as easy, and practices are already widespread in other institutions. Perceived usefulness (PU) shows a more moderate relationship with intention (0.108), while subjective norms (NS) show an unexpected negative effect of -0.117.

Finally, the consistency of the model is reinforced by the robustness of the indicators, but the moderate regression coefficients indicate that other non-integrated factors may also play a determining role in citizens' adoption behavior. Despite this, the relationships identified offer an initial reading of the cognitive and social levers that can be mobilized in the promotion of public e-services, highlighting in particular the role of perceived credibility and ease of use.

Table 2: Reliable construction

Construit	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Source credibility	0.913	1.001	0.939	0.836
Ease of use	0.953	0.989	0.969	0.913
Intent to adopt	0.906	0.990	0.937	0.831
Subjective norms	0.931	0.947	0.956	0.878
Perceived usefulness	0.952	-3.801	0.919	0.793

Corporate virality	0.957	0.988	0.972	0.921

Analysis of the psychometric qualities of the constructs reveals very good internal reliability for all model variables. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients are all above 0.90, ranging from 0.906 to 0.957, well above the recommended 0.70 threshold. This indicates that the items associated with each construct consistently measure the same latent dimension. Similarly, composite reliability (CR), used to confirm internal consistency within the PLS-SEM framework, also shows very high values, all above 0.91, guaranteeing strong internal homogeneity. Finally, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are also satisfactory: all are above the 0.50 threshold, and range here from 0.793 to 0.921, indicating excellent convergent validity, i.e. the items converge well towards their theoretical construct.

However, an anomaly appears in the rho_A indicator for the "Perceived usefulness" construct, with a value of -3.801, which is statistically inconsistent. This outlier may be caused by a non-positive covariance matrix, often linked to excessive collinearity or numerical instability in the calculation. Despite this, as the other indicators (Cronbach's α, CR, AVE) are acceptable, this anomaly does not call into question the overall structure of the model, but should be flagged as a technical bias to be corrected, notably by rechecking item scores or adjusting calculation parameters in the software.

Table 3: Table R Square

Variable dépendante	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Intent to adopt	0.112	0.065

5. Explanatory power (R Square)

The coefficient of determination $R^2 = 0.112$ obtained for the adoption intention construct indicates that 11.2% of the total variance of this dependent variable is explained by all the independent variables of the structural model, namely: perceived usefulness, ease of use, source credibility, subjective norms and institutional virality. This value remains relatively low, but is still acceptable for exploratory social science research, where human behavior is often influenced by multiple contextual or psychological factors that are not modeled.

Furthermore, the adjusted R^2 value is 0.065, indicating a slight reduction in the explanatory power of the model when the number of predictor variables is taken into account. This moderate difference between R^2 and adjusted R^2 suggests that the addition of variables does not lead to excessive over-specification, but rather reflects a relatively simple explanatory structure. Overall, these results suggest that the model captures a partial but non-negligible part of the e-government adoption dynamic.

Table 4: Summary of assumptions

Hypothesis	Formulation	Results	Decision
H1	Perceived usefulness (PU) positively influences adoption intention	Coefficient = 0.108	Rejected
H2	Ease of use (PEOU) positively influences adoption intention	Coefficient = 0.187	Accepted
H3	Source credibility (CR) positively influences adoption intention	Coefficient = 0.208	Accepted
H4	Subjective norms (SN) positively influence adoption intention	Coefficient = -0.117	Rejected
H5	Institutional virality (VI) positively influences adoption intention	Coefficient = 0.176	Accepted

The results obtained from the PLS-SEM model enable us to assess the contribution of several explanatory variables to the intention to adopt e-government services. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.112$) indicates that the set of independent constructs (perceived usefulness, ease of use, source credibility, subjective norms and institutional virality) explains 11.2% of the variance in intention to adopt these services. Although this percentage is modest, it remains acceptable in an exploratory study, particularly in the field of user behavior where contextual factors are numerous. The adjusted $R^2 = 0.065$ indicates that this explanatory power diminishes slightly when the complexity of the model is taken into account.

In terms of construct reliability, the results are highly satisfactory. All Cronbach's alpha coefficients are above 0.90, indicating excellent internal consistency. Similarly, composite reliability (CR) ranged from 0.919 to 0.972, confirming the quality of the measures used. AVE values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, demonstrating good convergent validity. An anomaly was found in the rho_A coefficient for the "Perceived usefulness" construct, with an outlier value of -3.801, probably due to numerical instability

or extreme collinearity. However, this anomaly does not affect the overall validity of the model, since the other indicators comply with methodological standards.

With regard to structural relationships, several hypotheses can be tested. The most significant path is observed between source credibility (CR) and adoption intention (INT) with a coefficient of 0.208, followed by ease of use (PEOU) with 0.187, then institutional virality (VI) with 0.176. These three variables show a moderate positive influence, indicating that citizens are more likely to adopt e-services when they perceive information sources as reliable, platforms as easy to use, and when services are already disseminated in other administrations. Perceived usefulness (PU) has a weaker effect (0.108) and is not a statistical priority in explaining intention. Finally, Subjective norms (NS) have a negative effect (-0.117) on intention, which is contrary to the theory of planned behavior, and could reflect a negative perception of social pressure in this particular context.

5. CONCLUSION

Furthermore, the analysis relies on self-reported data, which is susceptible to social desirability bias or mechanical responses, particularly if the questionnaire is administered online without supervision. Despite these limitations, this study makes an original contribution to the understanding of e-services acceptance behavior in an institutional context. By mobilizing variables from both the TAM (Technology Acceptance Model) and the logic of public communication (virality, credibility, norms), it proposes an enriched hybrid model, adapted to the specificities of digital public service. These results can be used to inform the deployment and communication strategies of e-administrative services, focusing on the clarity, simplicity and perceived legitimacy of the digital platforms offered to citizens.The aim of this research was to examine the factors influencing the intention to adopt public e-services, using a model based on variables derived from the theories of technological acceptance and institutional communication. The proposed model incorporated five explanatory variables: perceived usefulness (PU), ease of use (PEOU), source credibility (CR), subjective norms (NS), and institutional virality (VI). Data analysis was performed using the Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) method, simultaneously testing construct reliability and structural relationships. In terms of model quality, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.112$) for the dependent variable "adoption intention" indicates that the independent variables explain 11.2% of the variance in intention. Although this figure remains modest, it is often observed in exploratory social science research, where behavior is influenced by a multiplicity of contextual, psychological or cultural factors that are not modeled. The more conservative adjusted R^2 is 0.065, underlining a limited but significant influence of the model on adoption behavior.

Structurally, the results partially confirm the hypotheses formulated. Three variables show positive and significant effects on adoption intention: source credibility (CR → INT, $\beta = 0.208$), ease of use (PEOU → INT, $\beta = 0.187$), and institutional virality (VI → INT, $\beta = 0.176$). These results validate hypotheses H2, H3 and H5, suggesting that user engagement depends on the perceived reliability of the institutional issuer, the ease of use of digital interfaces, as well as the ripple effect observed in other public administrations. These factors play a catalytic role in the appropriation of digital tools by citizens. However, two hypotheses were invalidated by the analysis. The effect of perceived usefulness (PU) on intention proved weak ($\beta = 0.108$) and insignificant, leading to the rejection of hypothesis H1. This result suggests that, in this institutional context, users do not give priority to the functional usefulness of digital services, perhaps because they see them as imposed or inevitable. Even more surprisingly, Subjective norms (SN) exerted a negative influence ($\beta = -0.117$) on adoption intention, leading to the rejection of hypothesis H4. This counter-intuitive result could be explained by social pressure perceived as intrusive, or by a rejection reaction to expected conformity to public digital uses. These rejected hypotheses are promising avenues of research. We need to examine whether perceived usefulness exerts an indirect or mediating effect, notably via satisfaction, previous use or perceived time-saving. For Subjective norms, a complementary qualitative analysis could help to better understand the social and cultural dynamics that render these norms ineffective or counter-productive in certain contexts. A comparative study by age group, level of education or type of administration could also reveal unsuspected moderating effects.

A number of methodological limitations also need to be recognized. The sample size, while acceptable for the PLS approach, remains small and limits the generalizability of the results. In addition, certain key variables in digital adoption, such as trust in institutions, perceived security and previous experience, were not included in the model. Building on the present findings, future studies should address several limitations. First, expanding the sample size and diversifying respondents across regions, age groups, and socio-economic categories would enhance the generalizability of the results and allow for more robust statistical analyses. Second, future research should incorporate additional variables that play a crucial role in digital adoption, including trust in institutions, perceived security, and prior user experience, which were not integrated into the current model. Including these factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the drivers of adoption. Moreover, adopting a longitudinal design could help capture changes in attitudes and behaviors over time, while the use of mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative) would allow researchers to better contextualize statistical patterns and uncover underlying motivations. Finally, comparative studies across different countries or service sectors could shed light on cultural and institutional influences, thereby strengthening the external validity of the findings.

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