

# L'impact du Leadership sur le New Public Management (NPM) et le renforcement de la qualité des services publics : une enquête exploratoire auprès des Etablissements et Entreprises Publics (EEP) à caractère commercial au Maroc

## The Impact of Leadership on New Public Management (NPM) and Strengthening the Quality of Public Services: An Exploratory Survey of commercial Public Establishments and Enterprises (PEE) in Morocco

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**Abstract:** Public Establishments and Enterprises (PEE) in Morocco are a favorable field for the development of New Public Management (NPM) practices, which advocates new managerial tools and practices based on results and objectives. This NPM constitutes, according to several theories, the solution of public organizations' shortcomings. In addition, leadership presents the ability of the leader to influence and involve his collaborators in the achievement of the overall objectives of the organization, while creating a certain reconciliation with their personal interests.

To improve their performance and governance, PEEs must develop their management tools and methods, mobilize and train visionary leaders and strategists able to contribute to these PEEs' development and, consequently, improve the quality of public services offered to citizens.

The objective of this article is to present the results and conclusions of an exploratory qualitative study conducted to explain the concepts of NPM and leadership within the framework of the PEE, and whose directive interviews showed that 85% of the interviewees work in a spirit of leadership, but only 54% of them said that NPM is actually implemented within their organizations. Otherwise, 58% of respondents believe that citizens receive services equally and 42% think that services are provided transparently.

**Keywords:** Public Establishments and Enterprises (PEE); New Public Management (NPM); Leadership; Qualitative exploratory study.



## 1. Introduction

Leadership is a catalyst for the overall functioning and management mode of all organizations, particularly public ones. Coupled with a good understanding of the strategic, financial, human resources (HR) and marketing functions, it can increase the quality of public services and the level of citizen satisfaction.

The NPM approach, based on results and the identification of SMART objectives, helps improve employee's productivity and increases performance in general. It's certainly less developed within the Moroccan public ministries, but it is experiencing significant growth within Public Establishments and Enterprises (PEE).

In order to concretize this theoretical aspect, we conducted an exploratory qualitative study in the context of Moroccan PEE, and large entities in particular according to the Court of Auditors, in order to understand the dynamics between these main concepts and verify the relevance of our research's model.

The PEE are state institutions whose objective is to implement public strategies and policies. Their mission is to improve the economic and social conditions of citizens, and raise the level of country's development (Rguibi & Dridat, 2021).

These PEE are the pioneer organizations in Morocco in terms of the introduction of NPM practices, around the 1970s and 1980s. Their desire to succeed in strategic planning, public policy evaluation, cost control through management control, human resource motivation and public marketing (Belaraj & Oukassi, 2020) motivated this.

In the same logic, the Report of the New Development Model insists on the fact that "Public Establishments and Enterprises, constituting the administrative apparatus, should be strongly called upon considering the importance of their missions as operational levers on structuring sectors, and their technical capacities often of high quality and allowing the carrying of complex and large-scale projects. This requires capacity building in change management at the leadership level to ensure the mobilization of energies and skills" (New Development Model Commission, 2021).

Thus, in order to approach these PEE's field, we will try to answer the following question: To what degree is the spirit of leadership present within the PEE? And to what extent does it influence the functions of NPM and contribute improving the quality of public services?

To achieve this, we used a qualitative research tool to approach our study context and to be able to effectively demonstrate the feasibility of our theoretical model. The use of qualitative research methods dates back to the 1920s(2), particularly in the context of human phenomena. Marketing has also used these techniques such as focus groups from the 1950s (Aubin-Auger & al, 2008). Then, these methods have experienced continuous growth since the 1980s, at the level of universities and other circles.

The objective of this article is to question the field and contextualize the relationship between leadership and the functions of NPM, as well as the impact of this relationship on improving the quality of public services. Moreover, Bass & al (2003) estimated that organizations that opt for a transformational style of leadership, in the relationship between manager and employees, manage to achieve their objectives with more rigor and efficiency.

### 1.1. Interest and problematic of the research

Qualitative analysis allows "taking advantage of the rewards of numbers and words" (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 8). It is used by researchers with the objective of understanding the phenomena and events in the identified contexts, and does not seek to manipulate or modify the phenomenon of interest (Patton, 2001, p. 39). In a broad sense, qualitative research refers to

“any type of research that produces results not obtained through statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 17).

Also, qualitative research methods are introduced in order to enable researchers to understand human beings and their social and cultural life events (Danaee Fard & al, 2007). The main objective is to better assimilate the phenomena from the point of view of the participants and specific social motives. This objective is always neglected when quantifying the results (Kaplan, Maxwell, 1994) (Toloie-Eshlaghy & al, 2011).

We use qualitative research when the quantified quantitative data are not sufficient to provide the necessary answers, by highlighting the characteristics raised following the quantified methods. Also, the qualitative study can be carried out at the beginning and be supplemented by other types of studies such as the quantitative study (Golafshani, 2003). This is the approach that we wish to follow for our case.

We distinguish two main interests in our research:

- The first interest consists in validating the choice of variables and items and studying their feasibility in the field, particularly in the context of PEE, especially large groups, by having the opportunity to question and discuss directly with managers around the management and culture adopted within their organizations.
- The second interest is to constitute, through this first contact with the field, a primary but relevant idea on the existing cause and effect relationships between our variables and to explore the feasibility of our model in this sense.

## **2. Importance of leadership within PEEs**

Leadership focuses on creating a common vision, motivating and persuading employees to participate in said vision. It is the core of the organization, as it has an evaluation process to ensure the effectiveness of the entire organizational process (Jabbar & al, 2017).

As for the NPM, we retain the definition of Annie Bartoli, who considers the NPM as being "the set of processes of finalization, organization, animation and control of public organizations, aimed at developing their general performance and piloting their evolution while respecting their vocation", namely satisfying citizens through public services (Bartoli, 2005).

As part of our research, we considered that NPM is composed of four fundamental and complementary functions, namely: the strategic, financial, HR and marketing. These functions are convergent and complementary and influenced, according to several authors (cited below), by leadership.

Any successful management activity assumes leadership behavior, and that leadership behavior is influenced by the climate and culture of the organization (Lumen, 2014). In fact, leadership consists in identifying strategic and hierarchical priorities, acting effectively in interdisciplinary fields, taking risks and proposing solutions by uniting the efforts of their collaborators (Hersey & al, 2008). On one hand, the commitment to the strategy must come from the leadership of the organization, and be approved by all employees including top management (Nel & Beudeker, 2009). On the other hand, good financial performance depends on adequate financial management and reliable and regular reporting (Febiningtyas & Ekaningtias, 2014). Also, Lumen believes that leadership is an orientation process based on communication and the conviction of employees through motivation and the unique mission (Lumen, 2014), moreover, a good leader must have a good capacity for mediation and facilitation between group members (decision-making power over the group's project, conflict management, etc.). According to Terry (1960), organizations attribute their success to the leadership effectiveness and style of their administrative supervisors, which have a positive effect on organizational performance. It thus indicates that the leadership style of a leader has a considerable influence on the work

performance of employees, gives them suggestions for optimal performance of tasks, and grants them rewards. Therefore, the leadership style should be properly and carefully used to guide and motivate subordinates (Elenkov, 2002).

New Public Management (NPM) reform movements offer different visions of leadership (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). These visions are linked to public administration's quest for leaders who are enterprising, innovative, and enablers of inclusive and participatory democratic processes (Van Wart 2013, 522). In fact, public leadership is positioned at the heart of the concerns of public administration, particularly concerning the relationship between administrative structures and democracy (Waldo 1952, cited by Ospina, 2016).

Moreover, good performance is the combination of strong leadership and strong management. Successful organizations consider these two elements to be essential and put the means to combine them (Lumen, 2014).

In the context of the relationship between leadership and the improvement of public services, Brookes and Grint assume that leaders in all fields aim to improve the lives of communities (Brookes & Grint, 2010). Bouckaert and Halligan (2008) believe that the composition of quality benchmarks (TQM, ISO, the Balanced ScoreCard or others) in relation to budgetary mechanisms constitutes a lever for incorporating the logic of performance within public organizations. It also serves as an analytical tracer to identify the emergence of a complete and coherent public performance management system. Goudarzi and Guenoun also think that the quality of service is integrated into the management of public performance (Goudarzi and Guenoun, 2010). These perceptions are based on putting the customer user at the center of the management of the organization (Guglielmi and Koubi, 2000).

### **3. Methodology**

In all qualitative research, the aim is to “engage in research aimed at deepening understanding rather than examining surface features” (Johnson, 1995, p. 4), and gather valid and reliable results, using different research tools. Its main advantage is the depth of the description of the data, this offers a perspective of well-written, well-illustrated results that better deal with the phenomenon in question (Devetak & al, 2009).

Thus, the purpose of the exploratory qualitative study is to explore a little-known phenomenon or to derive new meanings from it, and to help identify the actors concerned by the said phenomenon, who may possibly provide the primary data necessary for research. Exploratory researchers are carried out to reflect different points of view and articulate a debate where these different perceptions and these diverse positions are revealed and discussed (Prévost & Roy, 2015).

As a matter of fact, our objective is to facilitate the understanding of the concepts of Leadership and New Public Management. It is a quest for systematic explanations supported by empirical evidence, a step prior to quantitative research. This so-called “qualitative” step is then a step prior to a subsequent test (Giordano & Jolibert, 2012).

To better understand our studied phenomena (Igalens & Roussel, 1998), we will go into the field with an important theoretical background that will allow us to understand through a directive interview guide the relationships between the three variables we are studying. This chosen tool brings together all the theoretical proposals collected in the literature review with the aim of encouraging the potential interviewees to deal with the key elements of our research. After the processing and analysis of the results, comes the phase of refining the measuring instruments to better understand the conceptual model.

First, we will present the tool we used and explain its purpose (2.1). Then, we will present the sample of our research (2.2); and finally, we will describe the administration's mode and how we conduct the interviews (2.3).

### **3.1. Research tool used**

The main tools in qualitative research are interviews. The different types of interviews are essential tools in qualitative research that allow you to explore new "hidden" parts for a better understanding of the problem being addressed, and to discover new ways of studying it. In addition, they serve to perceive new ideas and working hypotheses and not to validate the initial hypotheses (Quivy and Van Campenhoudt, 1995).

According to these researchers, the main objective of the interviews is to highlight the aspects of the phenomenon examined that the researcher would not have raised himself, and thus to deepen the avenues of research that the theoretical part had put forward evidence (Quivy and Van Campenhoudt, 1995).

In fact, in order to ensure the collection of the necessary data and provide some answers to our questions, we have adopted interviews, and given that our theme is "vague" and "juicy", we have chosen to proceed by structured interview.

Thus, we organized directive interviews with managers and senior executives of thirteen public Establishments and Enterprises, who manage financial, marketing and HR departments as well as strategic missions.

The directive interview tool consists of a series of questions, similar to those presented in a questionnaire. The researcher formulates the wording of the questions beforehand, and the questions are presented in the same way for all the interviewees for a period of 30 to 45 minutes. The pace of the directive interview is quite different from other collection tools, as it allows the researcher to interact with the participant in a sustained way, which makes comparisons more practical to make. The directive interview seemed to us to be the most appropriate tool for our case, because we had clearly delimited the contours of our research object, and our questions were targeted and precise (Gavard-Perret & al, 2008).

Among the advantages of structured interviews, we cite the organization and the fixed and systematic presentation of the questions. The latter are better specified and their answers are more limited for the respondent. Also, the interpretation of the interviewer is limited and minimal, because the ideas and the answers transmitted are clear and framed. The objective is to structure the answers and to obtain a general tendency of reflection.

This research allows the possibility to collect relevant data in a manner framed by the context of the research, in order to avoid latency times and collect clear and relevant information. The researcher is like the "guardian" who must analyze the level of detail of the answers formulated by the interviewee and bring it back, each time, to the objective of the interview (Grawitz, 1996).

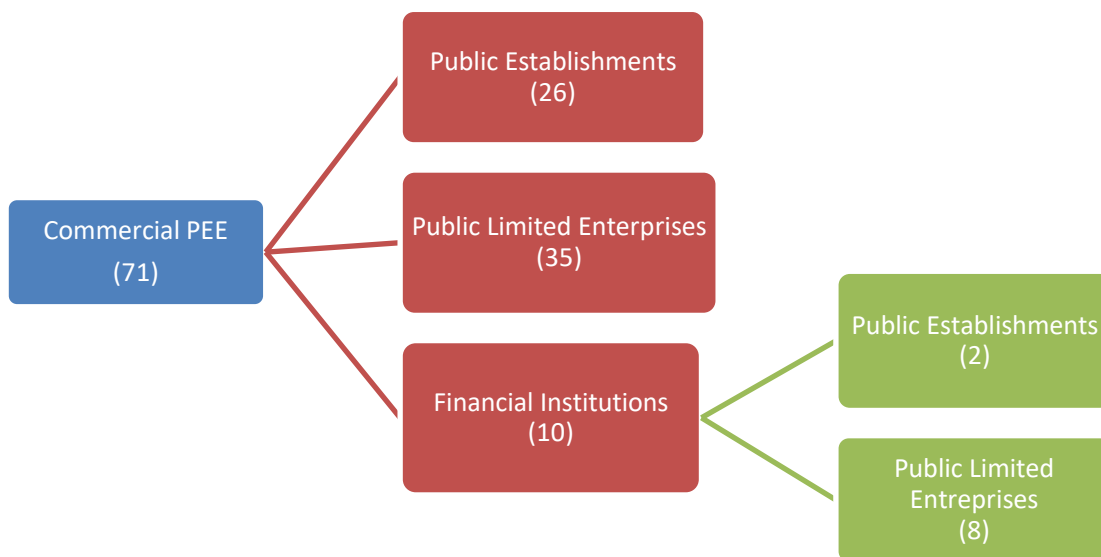
### **3.2. Sample and data collection**

According to Alvaro Pires, the sample is the result of any operation aimed at constituting the empirical corpus of a research. In practical terms, it is defined as the operation, which consists in taking part of a whole population (Pires, 1997). In the context of qualitative research, the sampling method is guided by the central problem as well as the research questions and the conceptual framework of the study (Miles & al, 2013).

Qualitative research offers the possibility to meet a small number of people in order to collect detailed information rather than working with a mass of respondents through a questionnaire to collect statistics. This type of research aims to collect verbal data, thus allowing the interpretative approach (Aubin-Auger & al, 2008).

The purpose of qualitative research is to build/discover knowledge as the study progresses. This is why a sample can be modified (can be increased or revised downwards) during the study. This reflection is linked to the fact that when we cannot take or consider everything in a search, the idea that we must choose or select a part of the whole automatically leads us to the idea of the sample (Pires, 1997). Thus, we can say that the quality of the sample is less related to its size and its representativeness. Rather, it is about new information gathered (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To this extent, the question of the size and relevance of the study sample arises for the researcher, because he is required to know the minimum number of interviews necessary while remaining linked to the subject of the research and the method followed.

To obtain the database of Moroccan PEE, we consulted several reports and documents, in particular those of the Court of Auditors and the Ministry of Economy and Finance. In this database, we have identified 71 PEE (26 Public Establishments (PE), 35 Public Limited Companies (PLC) and 10 Financial Institutions (FI)).



**Figure 1** : Population: PEE in Morocco (author)

Our sample is represented by the 13 entities among these 71 PEEs, and falls within the approach of Cooley (1928: 128) who recommends that the qualitative research should not study numerous or large institutions and groups to not interfere with a direct and total approach (Cooley, 1928). Pires also thinks that “The qualitative researcher should preferably not take a sample, nor take an excessively large piece (like New York City); it must content itself with taking a population of manageable size” (Pires, 1997).

We proceeded by a “non-probability/cluster sample” which, according to Pires (1997), is based on an arbitrary choice of units, and it is the interviewer who chooses the units and this is not by chance. Indeed, these 13 PEES were identified based on the report of the Court of Auditors – Morocco (2016) that classifies Moroccan PEE according to relevant economic criteria. These 13 major groups of PEE weigh in the aggregates of the PEE sector, at the end of 2015: up to: 66% of the investment; 65% of turnover/sales; 80% of added value; 90% of financing debts; 100% VAT credit.

In response to the principle of diversification in qualitative research enshrined by Glaser and Strauss who assert that diversification is "the major criterion of selection with regard to the samples of qualitative studies adopting multiple cases" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The choice of these 13 groups was representative of the 3 categories of PEE presented above: 5 EP of a total of 26 PE (19%), 6 PLC of a total of 35 PLC (17%), and 2 FI of 10 existing FIs (20%). Also, starting from the fact that our model is centered on four NPM functions, we made sure to have them represented by soliciting the participation of managers of different profiles. We therefore contacted people working within this sample of PEE and having strategic, financial, HR and marketing missions, in order to create a diversified and quality sample. The profile of the interviewees is as follows:

**Table 1:** Profile of interviewees -Object of the qualitative study sample-

Interviewees	Profile/Function	Number of years of experience
I#1	Administrator	7
I#2	Head of Service – Quality Department	15
I#3	Senior Manager – Continuing Education Department	6
I#4	Head of Commercial Department	15
I#5	Accounting Manager	5
I#6	Head of Division – Human Resources	20
I#7	Human Resources Manager	10
I#8	Manager in management	6
I#9	Marketing Manager	4
I#10	Chief Financial Officer	5
I#11	Communication manager	6
I#12	Project Manager – IT Department	25
I#13	Head of Service – Financial Department	7

In addition to data collection through structured interviews, other documents and reports produced by these organizations have fed our research.

In this collection process, we reached data saturation after the 10th interview, but we continued to stop at interview n°13. Therefore, we can say that our sample is of sufficient size, and can be used to conduct «good» qualitative research. The overall return rate therefore reaches 100%.

### 3.3. Administration's mode of the interview guide

Almost all of the authors who have studied the importance of interviews in qualitative research consider the quality of the interaction between the researcher and the interviewee essential. Savoie-Zajc (2009) points out that the quality of the data stems from the conduct of the interview. In addition, Poupart (1997) discusses at length the precautions to be considered to establish a quality relationship between the researcher and the interviewee. Van der Maren (2010) points out that an interview guide is essential to carry out the data collection work in an optimal way (Baribeau & Royer, 2012, p. 23-45), it consists of the questions that the researcher wishes discuss with study participants.

We have therefore developed an interview guide composed of key themes according to the theoretical framework defined beforehand.

**Table 2:** Components of the interview guide

<b>Part 1</b>	Leadership within PEEs Impact of leadership on the strategic, HR, finance and marketing functions of NPM
<b>Part 2</b>	New Public Management and results-based management within PEEs Results-Based Management tools used by PEEs
<b>Part 3</b>	Quality of public services Equality, transparency, communication and citizen participation in the public service offer Complaints and handling of complaints related to public services within PEEs

Interviewing is not just a conversation (Grawitz, 1996). Indeed, it is a very delicate exercise that requires particular expertise on the part of the interviewer (Baumard and Ibert, 2003).

For this, it is important to maintain a constant link with the interviewee, and direct the thread of his thoughts from the beginning to the end of the interview. Wacheux (2002) estimates that, generally, it is only at the end of the interview that we obtain the most relevant data. This is how the behavior of the interviewer is an important factor in the success of the interview.

Given the current pandemic situation and the peak of positive cases, which coincided with the deadline for carrying out our qualitative research, we conducted 70% of the interviews by videoconference and telephone, and 30% via the LinkedIn professional network. On average, the interviews by videoconference and telephone lasted about thirty minutes. We proceeded with clear and precise questions. The objective was to reduce the time for additional explanations, facilitate the cross-checking and analysis of the information provided by the participants, while taking into account certain recommendations of Quivy and Van Campenhout (1995), namely to refrain from be involved in the content of the interview (remain objective), and ensure that the interview is organized in an appropriate context.

#### 4. Interpretation and discussion of results

Researchers distinguish between different methods of analyzing qualitative data (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Langlely, 1997), but none is better than the other (Trudel & Gilbert, 1999). Rather, there are methods that are more appropriate than others, given the theme and the context of the research (Trudel & Gilbert, 1999), as well as the overall objectives of the research (Wanlin, 2007).

This qualitative data analysis process is necessary to identify key information. We can thus say that this analysis is not linear, because in order to carry out qualitative research, we tend to note, collect and reflect in order to write a report of qualitative data (Upadhyay & Kumar, 2014). This process of analysis requires efforts to identify themes, reflect on the data collected, and clarify the links between the issues under consideration (Tesch, 1990). Qualitative data is usually in verbal and textual form rather than numerical form.

Qualitative data analysis often involves content (lexical), discourse or thematic analysis. It allows studying the expressions and concepts used, to sort them and produce clear and adapted descriptions according to the answers of the interviewees. The objective is to demonstrate to what extent the data collected were able to answer the problem and the initial questions.

Indeed, the analysis of the directive interviews carried out as part of our exploratory study showed that 85% of the interviewees work in a spirit of leadership and feel motivated and positively influenced by their superiors. 46% of participants believe that leadership influences



all four NPM functions (Strategy, HR, Finance, Marketing). The table below summarizes the answers:

**Table 3:** Impact of leadership on the four functions of NPM (Author)

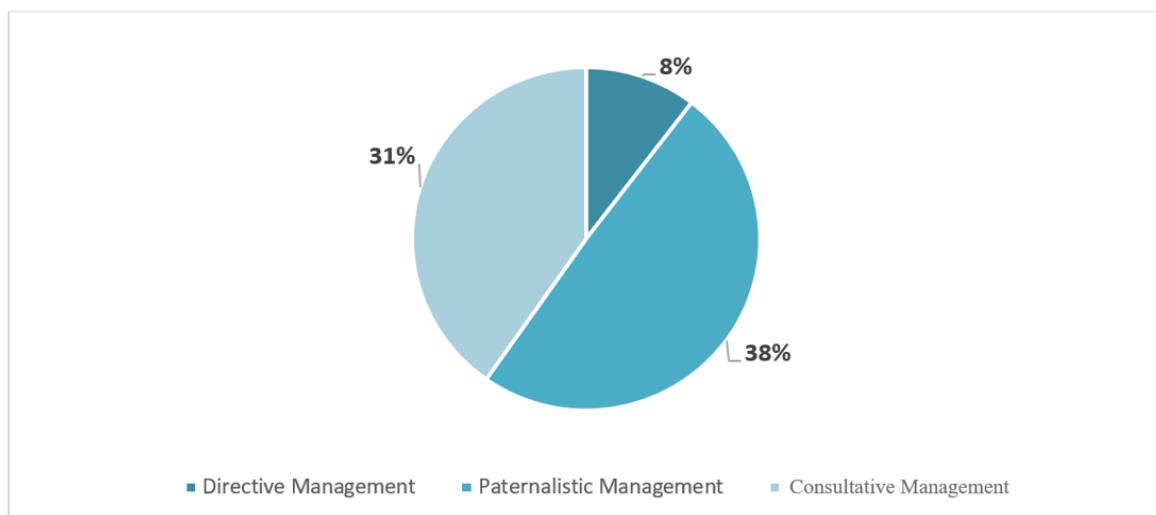
NPM dimensions/functions	Yes	No
Stratégique dimension	100%	-
HR dimension	69%	31%
Finance dimension	54%	46%
Marketing dimension	54%	46%

Our results show that leadership “acts on the four dimensions of NPM at the same time” (Interviewee 8), especially the strategic function (100% of responses), and this through “the sharing of a common vision, the involvement and support of all employees around the same values and the contribution of each individual to the performance of the company” (Interviewee 2). Also, it makes it possible to “value, motivate and boost the employees’ performance in order to achieve the strategic objectives of the organization” (Interviewee 1).

Two other interviewees, “Finance and accounting managers”, specified that “leadership influences strategic decision-making at the first place, in addition to the finance function” (Interviewee 10), and that “the development of the four functions is necessary, because they are all impacted by leadership” (Interviewee 9).

It should also be noted, “as long as there is interaction between members of the same team, there will be influence, and a good leader will know how to work with his team, impose himself ‘diplomatically’ and use conflict constructively. The good leader will also be able to raise his energy level wisely, which will allow him to mobilize his skills to his full potential and above all influence his team in the right direction (Interviewee 13)

As for NPM, 85% of managers interviewed said that they recognize NPM according to the definition proposed during the interview, but do not necessarily find it within their organizations. Only 54% of interviewees declared that it is actually implemented within their organizations. Other types of management are also adopted. The graph below shows the types of management used, in addition to NPM, within the sample of PEEs chosen.



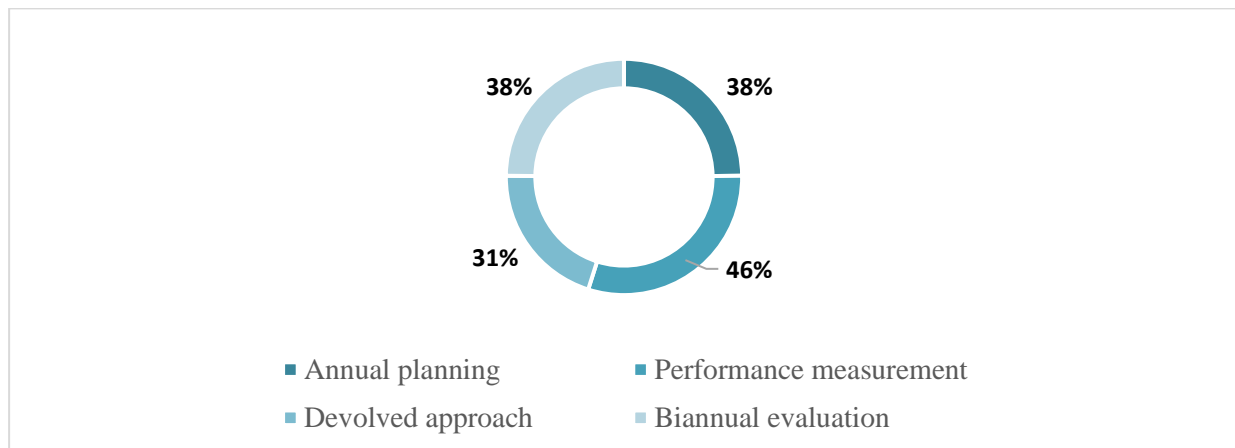
**Figure 2:** Management Types

The participants referred in their explanations to the simultaneous presence of other management modes with NPM, in particular paternalistic (38%) and consultative (31%) management. This explains why NPM is not sufficiently developed within the public sector, despite the strong consideration and its impact on improving the general functioning of the organization. Moreover, 46% of respondents say that it is not implemented within their organizations.

Also, our results show that 69% of the PEE of the sample effectively adopt a results-based approach, and this same percentage of respondents ensures that the degree of achievement of results has improved after the adoption of NPM.

Indeed, the NPM was able to contribute to the achievement of results, "following the implementation of Contracts by Objectives" (interviewee 1), and "the setting of objectives and biannual evaluations" (interviewee 12 and 8). On the other hand, another interviewee declared that "the adoption of NPM is recent, and that it is quite early to see the repercussion on services" (Interviewee 9), while the others could not comment there because they do not have access to enough information on the relationship between NPM and the achievement of objectives.

The graph below presents an overview of the three management tools used by PEE, according to the different answers of the participants:



**Figure 3:** Management tools used by the PEEs in the sample

The management tools most used within the PEE are performance measurement (46%), followed by multi-year planning (38%) and biannual evaluation (38%). This shows that the PEE are oriented towards the quantitative measurement of achievements, which consists of an analysis of the gaps between the objectives achieved and the objectives previously defined. Also, the biannual and multiannual aspect is present in terms of planning and evaluation, which shows the strategic and visionary logic adopted.

Regarding the 3rd part of the interview guide, all participants think that the management mode impacts the quality of the services provided to citizens, but our question was: "To what extent can this be achieved? ".

According to (Interviewee 1), "the adoption of NPM improves the services provided to citizens as it makes it possible to meet the expectations and requirements of stakeholders (they are many and have divergent interests), and that a good management influences the work quality of employees in the right way".

"Obviously, the management method has a significant impact on the quality of our outputs, especially since we operate in the industrial and commercial sector, which requires compliance with stringent safety and quality standards in addition to a preponderant front office with our

customers (Transport, logistics and new station concept). This is expressed through the sharing of the strategy and the understanding of the objectives by all the actors while highlighting the proximity management and the regular monitoring of performance. (Interviewee 2: Manager from a commercial PEE)

“Certainly, an employee who feels valued and listened to, will have a strong sense of belonging to his company, and will listen to customers by seeking to give the best of himself to better represent the company...” (Interviewee 3 responsible for a financial PEE).

Regarding the quality of public services, opinions differed, depending on the core business of each PEE and the nature of the service it provides. The legal model, used in our case, is based on “historical” principles of public service which take into consideration the logic of general interest (the user-citizen) (Dupuis & al, 2003). The quality of public service has been assessed according to four dimensions of the legal model (Dupuis & al, 2003) and Sabadie (2003):

Table 4: Dimensions of the legal model of the quality of public services

Dimension	Description
Equal treatment of users	In resonance with the historical principles of public service.
Participation of users in the definition of the service offer	In resonance with the democratic logic that suits the quality of administrative services, because the service by definition engages the user as a contributor (Dabholkar, 1990).
Transparency of information on the activities carried out and on the concrete processes for handling requests	Consists of strengthening the confidence that users can have in the public service carried out on a daily basis through clarity.
Complaints management	Focusing on listening to and taking into consideration users in their individuality.

The diagram below shows the answers of our interviewees:

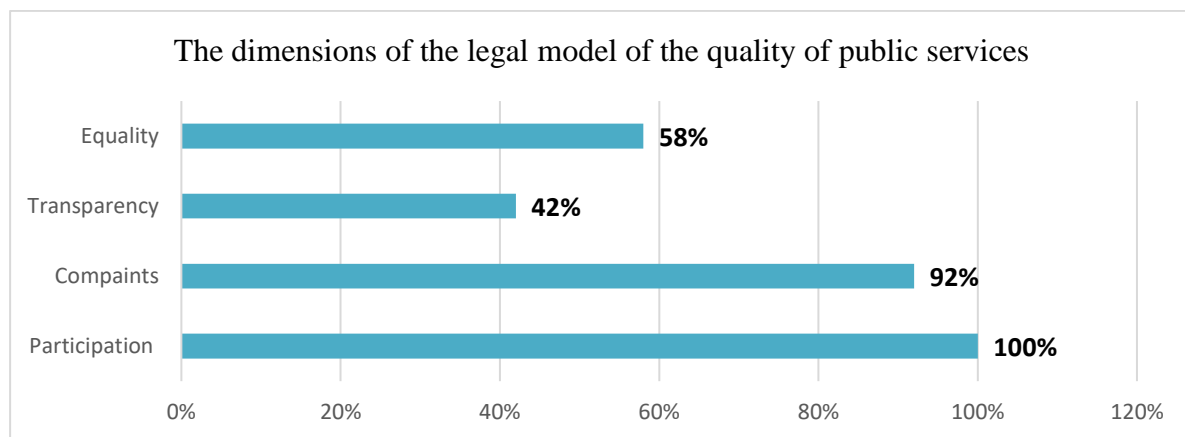


Diagram 1: Legal model of the quality of public services

All of our respondents felt that citizen participation in the provision of services is paramount. Indeed, the public service commits, by default, the citizen as a contributor; the quality and degree of this participation must be reflected in terms of the willingness of the citizen to present

the necessary contribution (Cermak & al. 1994), as well as the capacity of the PEE to provide the service (Dupuis & al, 2013).

For the so-called “historical” aspects of public service, 58% of respondents believe that citizens receive services equally, and 42% believe that services are provided transparently.

For the complaints component, it was found that 92% of the PEE interviewed have a complaints system intended to collect and process citizens' requests, but a more in-depth measurement is necessary to know the degree and frequency of management of these complaints. In terms of communication, we noted that 85% of the PEE in our sample have a portal (institutional website) intended to publish their annual reports, events, etc. and communicate with the public.

## **5. Discussion and recommendations**

Our study allowed us to understand the concepts of leadership and NPM in the complex context of PEE characterized by different levels of actions and decisions, which creates an opportunity to explore the relational nature and collective dimensions of leadership.

The three aspects that have been analyzed in our qualitative study coincide with the opinions of several authors who have dealt with public leadership, the adoption of NPM by public organizations and the quality of public services. Here is a comparison with the work of other researchers:

### **5.1. Aspect of leadership within public organizations**

The explosion of research on the subject of leadership shows that it is a preponderant research topic in the public sector (Ospina, 2016). Leadership is the core of the organization, and plays the pivotal role. It influences the strategic function as it is a process that transforms the traditional organization into a successful organization following appropriate strategies.

Thus, leaders must adopt a realistic approach to identify strategic gaps, in order to better formulate strategies (Fairholm, 2009). Also, according to several studies (Koenea, Vogelaar & Soetersb, 2002), (Tran, 2017), leadership may have had a strong impact on the net financial results of the organizations studied.

Based on the fact that leadership theories emphasize relational characteristics (Uhl-Bien 2006), they also make it possible to seize opportunities for synergy between the entire ecosystem of the organization (Ospina, 2016), and confirm the impact of leadership on the human and marketing dimension within the organization (Sterling & Bing Ran, 2015) (Ozuem & al, 2015). Moreover, Kellis & Ran (2013) considered that it is more relevant that the leadership, according to the relational culture (transformational leadership) and the transactional culture (commercial), combines between the approach oriented towards the results and that oriented towards the values.

### **5.2. New Public Management within organizations**

There are several reasons to adopt NPM in public organizations, because it advocates the logic of results, performance measurement and continuous improvement. Thus, systematically and regularly measuring, monitoring and evaluating aspects of organizational and individual performance will ensure efficiency, productivity and quality, as well as a high degree of motivation.

Denhart (2004, p. 136) stated that NPM makes government more competitive, mission-oriented rather than rules-based, results-oriented, and decentralized (De Vries & Nemec, 2013).

The shift from bureaucratic organizations to organizations using NPM as a management mode stems from several external factors (Whittington & al., 1999; Hamel & Prahalad, 1996; OECD, 1997/2001; Hood, 1991). The most important are the quality of the services and the satisfaction of the needs of the customers, and this by adopting the capacity of innovation (Beetham, 1987),

and by using management tools such as the multiannual planning, the measures of performance, the measures results and checks that goals are achieved, disaggregation and competition within the company (Hood, 1991).

This is how NPM became the driving force behind improving the quality of public services for the benefit of customers (De Vries & Nemec, 2013).

### **5.3. Quality of public services**

The quality of services has become the priority of the public sector, following the pressure of the growing expectations of citizen customers, and the competition between the public and private sectors which offer almost identical services. (Agus, Barker & Kandampully, 2007).

Also, the quality of services is known to improve market share and increase the degree of customer satisfaction (Anderson & Zeithaml, 1984) (Agus, Barker & Kandampully, 2007), knowing that organizations are required to provide quality services (Randall and Senior, 1994), improve efficiency and respond to government legislation (Robinson, 2003) under the constraint of a limited budget and reduced costs (Dewhurst & al., 1999).

In accordance with the results obtained, the traditional principles of public services (equality, continuity, adaptability) have evolved (Truchet, 1997). Today, other principles govern servuction (Guglielmi and Koubi, 2000), these are equal treatment, transparency, participation and management of complaints (Sabadie, 2003).

The results of this exploratory study confirm the relationships established between NPM and the quality of service provided, despite the constraints of the public sector (scarcity of resources, competition, growing customer expectations) (Robinson, 2003).

What we can learn from this is that PEE need to develop leadership capacities within them, in order to succeed in their organizational and performance challenges. Moreover, successful organizations seek out leaders and put them in atypical situations to develop their potential, thanks to continuous learning and encouragement (Lumen, 2014).

The discussion of public administration around leadership implies that the latter must be associated with the commitments and behaviors of public sector actors. This highlights the role of leadership in the democratization of public organizations (Van Wart 2013; Waldo 1952).

We recall that the objective of the duo “leadership and New Public Management” is to improve the performance of the administrative machine, and to manage public services well, as recommended by the Nora report (1968). This good management is required by the diversification of needs of citizens (Strobel, 1993)

Our study was able to collect the opinion of respondents on the criteria for assessing the quality of public services, according to the legal model. The qualitative results show a certain homogeneity. This is why our quantitative study will question the managers working within a larger sample of PEE on the extend of consideration of each of these dimensions, according to a measurement scale.

## **6. Conclusion**

Ultimately, we recall that the main objective of any exploratory qualitative study is to collect valid and reliable results, using different research tools to answer and/or facilitate the understanding and assimilation of the different concepts in the context studied. Among the most important advantages of the qualitative study: the precision and depth of the description of the data, it offers a prospect of well-written, well-illustrated results and allows a better understanding of the phenomenon in question.

For our study, the choice of the PEE population is explained, on one hand, by the fact that they were the first to adopt the practices of New Public Management. On the other hand, the PEE

are, for the most part, more developed and organized compared to the public ministries and have all the management functions taken into account in our model, namely the strategic, financial, human resources and marketing. In addition, we have noticed the few studies that deal with PEEs and focus on their mode of operation, which is nevertheless interesting and constantly changing.

The method used in our study is the directive interview. Our results showed that the majority of the PEE studied know the development of a spirit of leadership and adopt a results approach. We found that the spirit of leadership is much appreciated by the participants, it is "good" because it focuses on the public good rather than individual interest (Plato).

Also, the respondents declared, unanimously, that the leadership influences the strategic function, and the other functions at different percentages, specifying that the management tool most used within these PEE is performance measurement.

For the component relating to public services, it was found that 92% of the PEE interviewed have a complaints system and 85% communicate through institutional portals.

Starting from the fact that any qualitative research does not make it possible to generalize the results of the study to the entire population. We will take advantage of our exploratory qualitative study to carry out a modeling of the variables and refine our items in order to move from a theoretical model to a conceptual model. To complete this, our quantitative study will question managers working within a larger sample of PEEs on the degree of consideration of each of the dimensions, according to a measurement scale.

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