

The effect of local administration on the enhancement of public services: a case study of the Algerian municipality of Tlemcen**Bensaoula Sarah ^{1♦}, Bezzar Mohammed Soufyane ²**¹ Larmho laboratory, Abou Beckr Belkaid university (Algeria), sarah.bensaoula@univ-tlemcen.dz² Lerema laboratory, Higher Management School (Algeria), mohammedsoufyane.bezzar@yahoo.fr**Received:** 06/09/2024**Accepted:** 02/11/2024**Published:** 19/11/2024**Abstract:**

The objective of this research is to demonstrate the importance of local governance in improving public service within the Tlemcen municipality. To collect data for the practical study, a questionnaire was distributed to 46 employees of the municipality of Tlemcen. The data was analyzed with the help of the PLS-SEM tool. The hypothesis that there is a statistically significant relationship between local governance and improved public services in the commune of Tlemcen was validated after the results were evaluated. This indicates that the improvement of public services provided by the commune of Tlemcen in particular and by public services in general is positively impacted by local government. Additionally, we found that both the quality of public services provided and the implementation of local governance concepts like accountability and openness are positively correlated.

Keywords: Public institution, public service, local governance, local authorities, municipality of Tlemcen, SEM-PLS.

JEL Classification: M10 ♦M19.

1. Introduction:

Through its local administration, Algeria aims to upgrade the services provided in all fields by eliminating bureaucratic dealings and trying to expand citizens' participation in local decision-making and imposing the principles of equality, transparency and accountability, but applying these principles becomes difficult due to the problems facing local administrations. in providing its services. It is now the responsibility of the local community to identify ways to get beyond these obstacles, and one of the most crucial ones is improving local governance.

Local governance is considered a transition from classical governance in which the authorities run the local system to a modern method in which the local community participates with the authorities in managing public affairs while adopting a set of principles such as transparency, accountability and efficiency.

Therefore, through this study, we seek to clarify the role of local governance in improving public service, by adopting the foundations and principles of local governance, given that local communities in Algeria are the basic decentralized administration that provides direct public services to citizens serve as the connection between the individual and the central administration. They are also regarded as the bridge between government body to the citizen.

The problem:

Communities in developing countries are witnessing a continuous development in their needs for public services, which imposes new challenges on local governments that require improving the mechanisms for providing these services. Local governance is considered one of the tools that effectively contribute to improving public service by enhancing several principles such as transparency and accountability.

Despite this, many local administrations still face difficulties in applying these principles, which negatively affects the quality of services provided to citizens. On this basis, the problem of our study was as follows:

How can local governance contribute to improving public service?

Investigate hypothesis:

The following are the key areas that we are attempting to concentrate on, as indicated by the hypothesis, which serves as the foundation for the investigation:

- There is a statistically significant effect between local governance and public service in the municipality of Tlemcen at a significance level of 0.05.

Study Approach:

In this research, we relied on two approaches:

The descriptive approach: because it is the most appropriate method to present the general concepts of the subject.

Statistical analytical approach:

In addition to using the statistical program SEM-PLS, we also collected data and employed tables as well as other statistical tools to study and analyze the questionnaire results.

Prior research

The paper by Lahanan Batouati titled "Introduction to the screenshots of good governance in the gesture collectivities in local Algeria".

The study examined the challenge of modernizing local administration and the reforms that have been implemented in recent years, as local authorities, which are considered engines of local development, are called upon to be effective. Whereas enhancing the effectiveness of public finance management at the local level necessarily involves improving governance conditions, and in this context, transparency is also an essential axis in implementing public and local finance reforms. Good governance standards and rules are needed to make local public finance management more effective by taking into account the dimensions of the principles of public service and the quality of public service, according to the study. Good governance standards and rules are needed to make local public finance management more effective considering the aspects of public service principles and service quality as highlighted by the study. (Batouati, 2020).

The article titled "Public service governance in the context of local development" by "Omrani Saeed" and "Ben Hassine Naji". The article aimed to explore the issue of enhancing the quality of public services through good governance, which is considered an important element in any strategy for local development, and that the management of public services should not be based solely on the institutional approach, but rather the general framework must be improved and work tools must be mastered. . The two researchers stated that in light of the various challenges facing Algeria, including the decline in oil revenues, it has become clear that the need for major changes in the management of public services is inevitable and necessary. The study concluded that the concept of good governance of public services plays a major role in defining society and its role in development, as well as the way in which public services are designed and delivered, through the following mechanisms: empowerment, transparency, participation, quality of services, and accountability (Omrani & Ben Hassine, 2019).

Hafsa Zankhari's study, "Governance of non-profit organisations as a tool to improve public service, a case study of a sample of non-profit organisations in Ouargla governorate". The researcher sought to discover how responsive non-profit entities are to social demands. The researcher aims to discover how responsive non-profit entities are to the demands of society and how to enhance public services in line with the aspirations of those it serves. A linear relationship exists between the level of dedication of the studied non-profit organizations to honesty and culture and the improvement of public services, according to the research findings. The extent to which stakeholders in the studied non-profit organization participate in the management process is linked to the improvement of public services. The level of engagement of these non-profit organizations in management correlated with the enhancement of public services. (Zankhari, 2018).

An article entitled: "The perspectives of electronic communication in Algeria" By Dr. Zaghamati Narges. The study aimed to answer the following problem: What are the requirements for development, success, and challenges associated with electronic governance in Algeria? Among the most important findings reached by the researcher in this article are:

Supporting electronic governance in Algeria is still far from successful, and evidence of this is the impact on the field of electronic governance. The other global classification of information and communication technology issued in 2016 confirms that Algeria lost 13% compared to 2012, during which it ranked 18th (Zaghmati, 2017).

An article entitled: "The marketing of services and specifications" By Dr. Laila Matali,. This study aims to identify the basic concepts and characteristics of public service marketing, which result mainly from the public service nature of the activity. Among the most important findings that the researcher reached in this article are: Government sectors adopt marketing techniques to help them meet citizens' needs for services. Public sector managers can also use successful marketing strategies by understanding the main differences between the public and private sectors. The researcher also concluded that service quality is a key factor in the success public marketing and depends on Interaction between citizens and the public service. Citizens' satisfaction with the service provided must be achieved because satisfaction is the basis of respect and trust that can be created between the state and public organizations (Matali, 2016).

2. Definition of basic concepts

2.1 Definition of governance

Governance is a modern word compared to some terms, according to the literature . In the French literature, the term government means government. For example, in the French literature, the term government means government. The concept first appeared in the early thirteenth century and was popularised as a legal concept in 1978, after which it was widely used to express costs of management. (Jeddou, 16-17 December 2008).

In the early 1980s, the term was used in a contemporary form by international organisations and also the World Bank, which prepared a report on development issues in Africa, especially sub-Saharan Africa issued in 1989, political stability and the development of societies are affected by the World Bank's focus on governance and issues related to the responsibility of government institutions., since that time when it became a term in international relations literature, until it combined sustainable development with the fight against poverty, democracy, human rights, women and children issues among international organisations and governments of Western democracies, and the concept of governance changed. Many attempts were made to reach a more comprehensive and specific definition of the term "Governance" and to link the political aspects of the concepts defined in the system of democratic values, maximizing the role of non-governmental organizations and reducing the size of government institutions, encouraging the trend towards the private sector. (Elhassan, 2012).

It can be said that local governance is a set of processes and mechanisms at the level of local administration, through which individuals can express their demands and exercise their rights and duties. This leads to the strengthening of participatory democracy, submission to all decisions, in order to achieve effectiveness, control of relationships and the use of discussion methods (transparency), accountability of authorities, and freedom of expression.

Governance has become of great importance at the global level now, in light of what the world is witnessing.

The importance of governance is evident in the following aspects:

Reducing the risks related to financial and administrative corruption faced by countries.

- Increase the level of performance, which leads to the advancement of development and economic progress of countries.
- Attracting foreign investments and encouraging local capital to invest in national projects.
- Increase the ability to compete globally and open new markets (Soliman, 2008).
- Transparency, accuracy and clarity in organisations and the consequent increase in the level of trust.
- Creating job opportunities for community members.
- Eliminating corruption within organisations.
- Ensuring integrity and probity for all those working in organisations.
- Eliminating deviations and not allowing them to continue.
- Minimise errors to the extent possible by using control systems (Muttalib, 2009).

2.2 Public Service Definition

The word public service is characterised by a double meaning, i.e. it has more than one definition, and the broad definition of public service is: "the essential needs for human well-being and the interests of the majority of society are the primary drivers behind policies aimed at improving service delivery and raising citizen's living standards". (Boudiaf, 2013)." The narrower definition is: "The connection between government public administration and citizens in terms of fulfilling their diverse needs of individuals by administrative bodies and public organisations." (Rahawi, 2017)

The Public Service School defines it as ": Any function whose performance is guaranteed, controlled and monitored by the rulers because the performance of this function is essential for the realisation and development of social cohesion and of such a nature that it can only be fully realised through the intervention of the power of the rulers (Bryanis, 2007).

Public service is also considered an aspect of the activity of public utilities, which is defined as: "Any activity required by the administration itself or by private individuals under its supervision and direction for the purpose of satisfying the public needs and services of the public." (Hajjam, 2019)

Through the above definitions, we can arrive at some of the characteristics of the public service as follows:

-offered by a public utility: A public service is a service for everyone in society, with the goal of achieving societal benefit..

- Public service is a state-funded function.: This means that the public service is provided by a governmental body and benefits citizens, thus achieving social cohesion.

- The public service is available to all individuals: this means that the public service benefits everyone in society, regardless of their circumstances.

- Public service is continuous and uninterrupted, which means that the process of public service is permanent, continuous and uninterrupted, i.e. it does not stop.

- Public service aims to achieve the public good by addressing the fundamental needs of citizens and meeting essential requirements.

- The public service's compatibility with the public good is achieved by adjusting to social changes and adjusting to them by enhancing the quality and quantity of services to serve the public good. (Mezirak, 2015)

-Responsiveness to the needs of society: We mean that the service is designed and provided based on the needs and aspirations of society.

- Public service is tailored to the specific conditions of each environment: That is, it varies according to the social and geographical conditions between different regions of the country, resulting in the existence of local interests and diverse needs in line with the conditions of each environment (Al-Roghbi, 1993).

2.3 Local governance and public service in Algeria: A theoretical approach

Local governance plays a crucial role in the development and enhancement of public services delivered by public utilities and administrations to citizens. When local governance is effective, the local administration is able to maximise transparency and community participation, which enhances trust between citizens and local authorities, leading to an improvement in the quality of public services provided.

Effective local governance enhances the orientation and quality of public service programs, there by strengthening the relationship between citizens and local communities, adresssing their needs, and improving their social well-being.

Implementing the principles of local governance requires many and continuous efforts from all parties of society, including local administrations by employing competencies and exploiting expertise in public facilities, and civil society through participation in local decision-making. Promoting transparency, accountability and applying various principles of local governance and steering policies to address the needs of the local community presents a significant challenge for local communities . however, it also offers a valuable opportunity to enhance the quality of public services and bridge the gap between citizens and local authorities.

3. Method:

The municipality of Tlemcen will be the focus of our case study after we discuss previous research and studies on the role of local governance in enhancing public services. We will clarify the methodological procedures and tools of the field study by clarifying the variables of the study and distributing a questionnaire that includes two axes directed to the employees of the municipality of Tlemcen. For this purpose, we will outline the methodological procedures and tools used in the field study. The results from the questionnaire were analyzed with the statistical program pls-sem. We will further analyze the outcomes using smart pls4 and evaluate the validity of the hypothesis.

Table N°1. Services provided by the Municipality of Tlemcen

• Human Resources Department:	• Department of Organization and Public Affairs:
-Track the files of administrative and technical workers.	-Arranging and preparing electoral lists.
-Census of vacant and vacant positions.	-Processing national service files.
-Integration of workers into public	-Census of citizens.

employment.	
-Editing decisions related to money.	-Receiving and guiding citizens.
-Preparing and following up retirement files.	-Hajj files and visiting holy sites.
• Department of Social and Cultural Affairs:	• Civil status:
-Social network files and social protection.	-Arranging birth, marriage and death records.
-Social benefits such as the elderly and chronic diseases.	-Civil status files.
- Contract employment files and youth employment.	-Managing civil documents windows.
-Processing school scholarship files.	-Processing death files and burial permits.
Department of Building and Development: It consists of two offices:	• Biometric Department:
1) Office of Construction and Development: -General real estate reserves. -Engineering studies. -Arranging expropriation files. -Follow up projects within the municipality's territory. -Building, restoration and demolition permit files.	-Processing biometric ID card files.
2) Cleaning and Security Office: - Monitoring the disinfection network and intervening to repair it. - Follow up on the process of killing and burying homeless animals and clearing the roads. -Water analysis in accordance with the share interest. -Following up all wells, tanks and springs. -Monitoring the work of the municipality's hygiene and security committee.	-Passport files processing.
	-Biometric driving license files.

Source: produced by the authors

Study population and sample.

The sample of our study included employees of 8 departments from the municipality of Tlemcen (employers' department, civil status department, biometric department, reconstruction department, public affairs department, academic and educational affairs department, social affairs department, and prevention and health preservation department) in their various administrative positions, educational levels, and years. Their experience, and

according to statistics provided by the Users Department, the total number of employees in these departments reached 142 employees.

We chose a random sample from the community studied. We distributed 46 questionnaires to Tlemcen municipal employees from various administrative positions, and all of them were returned.

Data collection tool.

Data regarding the topic of the role of local governance in enhancing public services was collected using the survey form.

Analysis scale.

A five-point Likert scale was used to measure the questionnaire items.

Statistical processing tool.

We analyzed the data obtained from the municipality of Tlemcen using SEM-PLS program.

SEM-PLS is an advanced software tool used to analyze data in scientific and social research. This program can also analyze the relationship between independent and dependent variables through structural models.

4. The verdict:

Evaluate and diagnose the model:

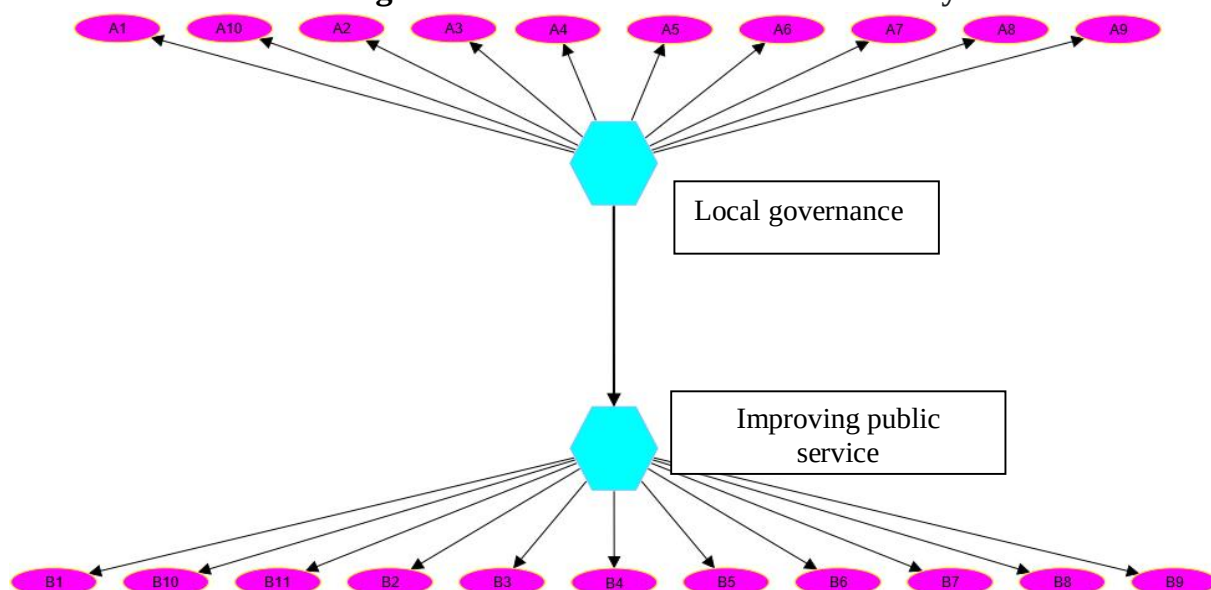
Model evaluation:

Our study employs a causal framework to explain the role of local governance in enhancing public services, and in the following model, which is also called the analysis model, this relationship is supported by a hypothesis based on a theoretical study or experimental observations.

The general model for this study consists of two variables: local governance and public service improvement, and each variable has a set of questions (statements) that represent it.

There is a causal relationship between the two variables that make up the model.

Figure N°1. The initial model of the study



Source: Prepared by researchers based on the results from the SEM-PLS program.

Standard assessment of the model:

After assessing the validity and reliability of the model, we removed three statements following the outer loadings test: A1, A2, B10, because the basic rule related to this test states that: “You must All external loading coefficients for each indicator must be greater than or equal to 0.70. However, if the external loading coefficients are less than 0.70, in this case we delete the indicator if deleting it increases the value of the Composite Reliability and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above The threshold value proposed by (Hair, Sarstedt, Hopkins, & & Kuppelwieser, 2014), and the following table shows the results of the loading coefficients.

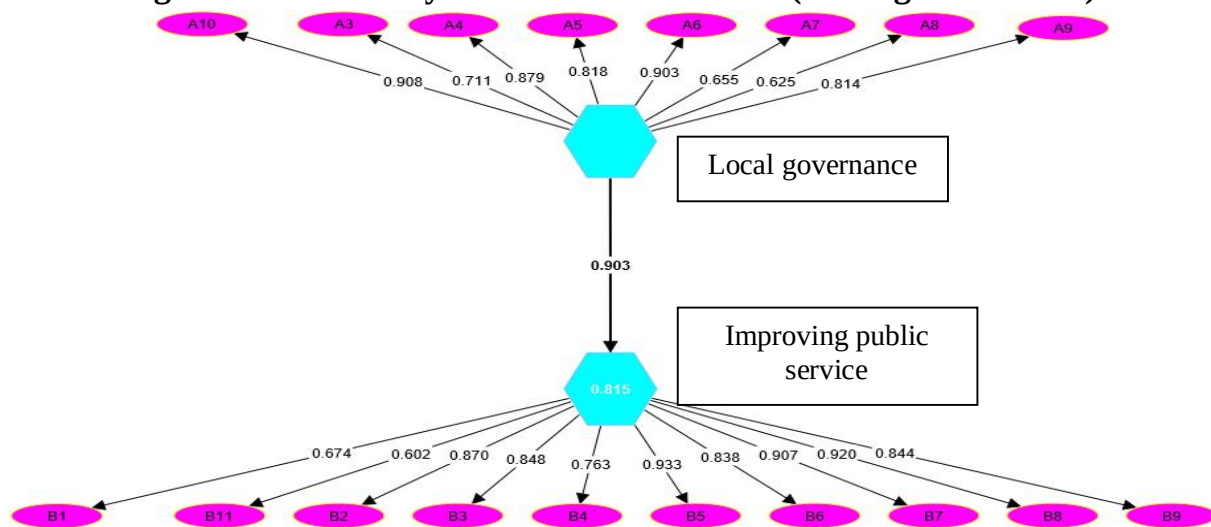
Table N°2. Passivation (saturation) inspection results outer loading.

	The paragraphs	saturation
A1	Employees receive sufficient information about the municipality's work and local decision-making.	Deleted
A2	Employees are actively involved in local decision-making.	Deleted
A3	There are sufficient opportunities for democratic participation in the development of local policies and programmes	0.711
A4	The municipality effectively fulfils its responsibility towards citizens.	0.879
A5	There is transparency in local decision-making and public service delivery.	0.818
A6	Local governance contributes to improving the quality of public services.	0.903
A7	There is sufficient transparency in the decision-making process.	0.655
A8	There is an adequate level of public participation in the prioritisation of public services.	0.625
A9	The level of public participation in the prioritisation of public services is adequate.	0.814
A10	Citizens are actively involved in trying to improve public service.	0.908
B1	Citizens complain about poor service delivery.	0.674
B2	The quality of public services is influenced by the extent to which municipalities respect the principles of participatory democracy.	0.870
B3	Quality of public services provided is correlated with transparency in municipal management.	0.848
B4	The existence of effective accountability mechanisms that enhance the quality of local public services.	0.763
B5	Quality of public services is assessed by the local community.	0.933
B6	Participating in the evaluation of the quality of public services benefits the community.	0.838
B7	Transparent reporting on the performance of municipalities contributes to improving the quality of public services.	0.907
B8	The quality of public services provided by the municipality is	0.920

	satisfied with employees.	
B9	Quality of local governance and public services are closely linked.	0.844
B10	Employees perceive an improvement in the quality of public services.	Deleted
B11	The municipality provides clear reports to the competent authorities to penalise those accused of administrative and ethical corruption cases that negatively affect the quality of the service provided.	0.602

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the outputs of the pls-sem program.

Figure N°2. The study model after saturation (loading coefficients).



Source: Prepared by researchers based on the outputs of the SEM-PLS program.

We notice from the figure shown above that there are two variables, which are local governance and public service, and each variable expresses the scales of measurement, that is, the phrases forming the questionnaire form, with a reflective representation. This means that each variable is measured depending on its set of items.

Evaluation of the measurement model:

Reaching models that are more valid for use and more appropriate to the research environment requires that these models have high validity and reliability that allow subsequent studies to use them. This shows the importance of convergent validity and discriminant validity, so we relied on them in this study to test the validity of the measures used.

Table N°3. Indicators of convergent validity.

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Local Governance	0,914	0,932	0,634
Improving public service	0,946	0,955	0,683

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the outputs of the SEM-PLS program.

We note from the table shown above that all averages of the explained variance (AVE) are greater than 0.50, as they ranged between 0.683 achieved by the public service improvement axis and 0.634 achieved by the local governance axis. This means that both axes achieved acceptable coefficients because they exceed the value of 0.50 according to (Bagozzi & Yi, 1998).

According to the results of the table, all composite reliability coefficients are significant and statistically acceptable because they are greater than 0.70, as the results of the table ranged between 0.955 recorded by the public service axis and 0.932 recorded by the local governance axis.

In addition, all Cronbach's alpha coefficients are significant and acceptable from a statistical standpoint because they are greater than 0.70, where local governance came in at 0.914 and public service at 0.946, and this confirms the presence of internal consistency between the variables, in addition to the good saturation coefficients from the figure (study model after saturation). Through these indicators, we can say that there is convergent validity, which indicates the quality of the measurement model used.

- discriminant validity

If the correlation of the variable with itself is greater than with the other variable, then this confirms that, according to (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). We show in the following table the indicators of discriminant validity for this model. the study.

Table N°4 :Discriminant validity indices.

	Local Governance	Improving public service
Local Governance	0,796	
Improving public service	0,826	0,903

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the outputs of the SEM-PLS program.

The table reveals that all discriminant validity coefficients are significant and statistically acceptable, as we observe that the value of the variable's intersection with itself is greater than that of the variable's intersection with the other variable. The value of the intersection between the axis (variable) of improving public service and itself is 0.903, which is greater. The intersection value of improving public service with local governance represents 0.826, and this indicates that there is a difference between the variables, that is, they are not similar, and each variable represents itself.

Structural evaluation of the model

The quality of the structural model is assessed using several criteria, including the coefficient of determination R² and the predictive relevance coefficient Q². We will evaluate the model's quality based on the metrics.

Coefficient of determination R²:

Table N°5: The results of this test are shown in the following table and figures:

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Improving public service	0,815	0,811

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the outputs of the SEM-PLS program.

There are three categories of strength for the model:

- Less than 0.33: weak model.
- Limited between 0.33 and 0.66: average model.
- More than 0.66: strong model.

The table shows that the coefficient of determination is 0.815 for the variable "improving public service." This confirms that the degree of the proposed model has the ability to reproduce the data and that the variable has the ability to predict. From this, we conclude that the model as a whole has good matching and that the results of the model are strong.

Predictive relationship Q2:

Table N°6 : Predictive relationship Q2.

	Q ² predict	RMSE	MAE
Improving public service	0,808	0,468	0,346

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the outputs of the pls-sem program.

This indicator allows us to measure the predictive power. If Q2 is greater than 0, then the model has predictive relevance. However, if Q2 is smaller than 0, then this model lacks predictive importance. From the results shown in the table above, we note that the value of Q2 for the variable "improving public service" It is greater than 0, reaching 0.808, which indicates that the results are acceptable.

5-Discussion:

After evaluating the model standardly and structurally, it is now the turn to test the hypothesis and discuss it for the purpose of confirming or denying it, as we used the Bootstraping method to test the hypothesis, and this is through the (SMART PLS.4) program, where the sample was doubled to 5000 individuals, and we relied on the results. Path Coefficients, and the following are the results of hypothesis testing:

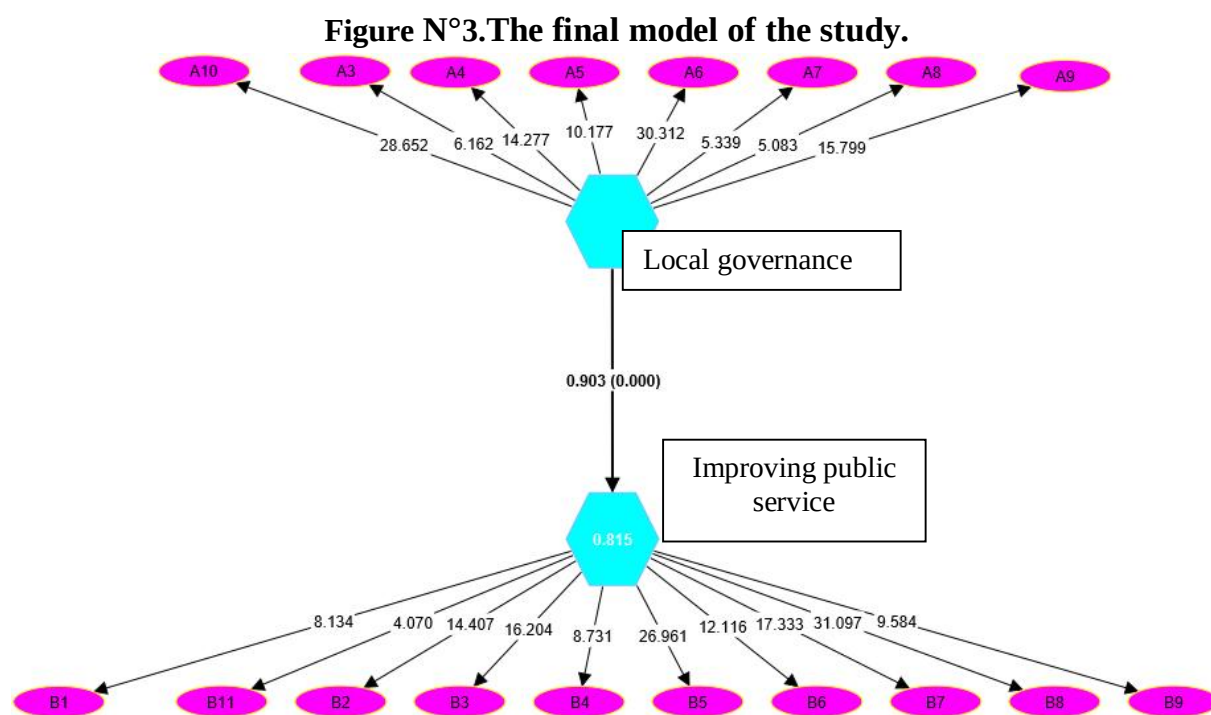
Table N°7. Hypothesis test.

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Local governance Improving public service	0,903	0,903	0,038	23,674	0,000

Source: Prepared by researchers based on the outputs of the pls-sem program.

The above table shows that there is a statistically significant effect between local governance and improving public service in the municipality of Tlemcen. According to the statistical indications shown in the table, the value of the P statistic reached 0.000, which is less than 5%, and the T statistic exceeded 1.96, recording a value of 23.674.

From this, it can be concluded that local governance has a positive effect on improving the public service provided by the municipality of Tlemcen. Our final model is shown in the following figure:



Source: Prepared by researchers based on the outputs of the pls-sem program.

The economic analysis of how local governance affects the enhancement of public services in Algeria :

- Increased citizen satisfaction: Studies show that transparent and accountable local governance practices are associated with greater citizen satisfaction with public services, particularly infrastructure, education and health.
- Reduced corruption: Initiatives to increase transparency and accountability at the local level have helped to reduce corruption in the management of public resources, allowing funds to be better allocated to essential services.
- Improved operational efficiency: Municipalities that apply effective governance practices have been able to optimise the use of available resources, thereby improving the quality and scope of public services provided to citizens.
- Local economic development: Proactive local governance can stimulate economic development by facilitating a favourable environment for local businesses, creating employment opportunities and increasing the revenue available for investment in public services.
- Local capacity building: Strengthened local governance structures have enabled local communities to better respond to specific challenges, such as natural disasters or health crises, by effectively coordinating efforts and available resources.
- Better urban planning: Effective local governance promotes more coherent and integrated urban planning, resulting in more harmonious infrastructure development and a better quality of life for residents.
- Equitable access to services: effective local governance seeks to ensure fair distribution of public services for all citizens, including marginalised or disadvantaged groups, by reducing regional disparities and ensuring a fair distribution of resources.

- Social and political stability: Transparent and inclusive local governance practices contribute to greater social and political stability by creating an environment where citizens feel represented and listened to, thereby reducing tensions and promoting social cohesion.
- Improved quality of services: The adoption of high standards of governance can lead to a significant improvement in the quality of public services such as education, health, transport and drinking water supply, thereby meeting international standards and citizens' expectations.
- Encouraging innovation and local initiative: Effective local governance encourages innovation and initiative at community level, enabling local initiatives to respond creatively and flexibly to specific local challenges.

These results underline the importance of good local governance in significantly improving the living conditions of citizens and promoting sustainable and inclusive development in Algeria.

6-Conclusion:

Local governance is an effective, necessary and indispensable tool, according to a field study conducted in the municipality of Tlemcen, the results of this study are as follows:

- Local governance is seen as the primary factor in a public facility's success or failure in enhancing public services.
- Local governance is a set of principles of transparency, oversight, equality, accountability, efficiency and community participation adopted by public administrations in order to enhance the quality of public services provided to citizens.
- To embody local governance in Algerian public facilities, an administrative system must be available that gives full powers and complete independence to public administrations.
- It is not possible to rationalize local administration and adopt local governance without there being a conducive environment that embraces community participation in decision-making and provides human resources with professional competence and a level of capabilities in public facilities in order to improve public service.
- Community participation in decision-making can enhance the effectiveness and quality of public services by identifying local priorities.
- The extent of openness and accountability within public facilities is directly related to the improvement of these services, higher transparency and accountability in public administration lead to better public services.

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