



ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTING REFORMS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF MOROCCAN ADMINISTRATIONS

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Abstract:

The modernization of public sector accounting is a crucial issue for countries seeking to improve their public administrations' performance, transparency and accountability. In Morocco, the adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) represents a significant reform aimed at aligning accounting practices with international standards. This study proposes a systematic literature review examining these reforms' impact on Moroccan administrations' performance. Through an analysis of various academic and institutional sources, we highlight the advances, challenges encountered, and implications for public finance management in Morocco. The results indicate that, despite institutional and technical obstacles, accounting reforms have helped to improve financial transparency, budgetary efficiency and accountability within public administrations. Finally, recommendations are formulated to strengthen IPSAS implementation and optimize the performance of the Moroccan public sector.

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Keywords: public accounting, IPSAS, Morocco, administrative performance, financial reforms, transparency

1. Introduction

Public accounting plays a fundamental role in public finance management and state governance. It is an essential tool for ensuring transparency, accountability and efficiency in using public resources. Over the past few decades, many countries have reformed their accounting systems, notably by adopting the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). These standards aim to harmonize public sector accounting practices internationally, promoting financial statement comparability and strengthening stakeholder confidence. In Morocco, the context of public accounting reform is marked

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by a desire to improve the performance of public administrations and meet growing demands for transparency and good governance. According to the Ministry of Economy and Finance (2023), the *National Strategy for the Modernization of Public Finances 2019-2023* emphasizes the adoption of international best practices, including the implementation of IPSAS standards. However, adopting these standards represents a major challenge for Moroccan administrations. Previous studies, such as that by Ibouazzaouine (2019), highlight the institutional, economic and cultural obstacles to this transition, including the need to modernize existing accounting systems, train staff in the new standards and overcome resistance to change within public institutions. In addition, the prevalence of deeply rooted traditional accounting practices makes the transition to IPSAS complex (Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, 2020). In this context, it is relevant to ask:

- What is the impact of public accounting reforms, in particular the adoption of IPSAS, on the performance of Moroccan administrations?

This question is of particular importance, as it enables us to assess whether the modernization efforts undertaken are actually helping to improve public financial management and strengthen public confidence in institutions.

This systematic literature review aims to:

- Review existing studies on the impact of public accounting reforms on the performance of Moroccan administrations.
- Identify the main challenges and opportunities associated with IPSAS adoption.
- Propose recommendations to improve the implementation of reforms and optimize the performance of public administrations in Morocco.

Modernizing public accounting in Morocco is a complex process that requires an integrated approach, taking into account the country's institutional and cultural specificities. The reforms undertaken have already led to significant progress in terms of transparency and performance, but further efforts are needed to overcome persistent obstacles. This study aims to shed light on these issues and contribute to the development of effective strategies for improving public financial management in Morocco.

2. Literature Review

The modernization of public accounting is a subject of growing interest in the field of public finance management, not least because of its potential impact on government performance. In Morocco, several reforms have been undertaken to align accounting practices with international standards, in particular, the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS). This literature review examines the main studies dealing with the impact of these reforms on the performance of Moroccan public administrations, highlighting the progress made, the challenges encountered and the prospects for improvement. The adoption of IPSAS in Morocco is part of an overall drive to modernize public finances. According to Ibouazzaouine (2019), this initiative aims to enhance the transparency, reliability and comparability of public financial information. The IPSAS standards, developed by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board

(IPSASB), provide an internationally recognized accounting framework, promoting stakeholder confidence and informed decision-making. The Ministry of Economy and Finance (2023) has drawn up the National Strategy for the Modernization of Public Finances 2019-2023, which emphasizes the importance of adopting IPSAS to improve the financial governance and performance of public administrations. Several studies have highlighted the positive effect of accounting reforms on financial transparency. Ibouazzaouine (2019), argue that aligning public sector accounting practices with international standards improves the quality and reliability of financial statements. This makes them easier for users to understand and boosts confidence among investors and international partners. Similarly, the International Budget Partnership (2019), in its *Open Budget Survey: Morocco*, gives a positive assessment of the country's efforts to make budget information more accessible to the public. The adoption of IPSAS thus contributes to greater budget transparency, a key element in responsible financial management.

The impact of accounting reforms on budgetary efficiency has also been widely studied. Alami & El Idrissi (2022) analyzes how public accounting reforms have influenced the efficiency of Moroccan institutions. The author concludes that the adoption of international standards has led to better resource management, more rigorous budget planning and optimization of public spending. In addition, Ministry of Economy and Finance. (2023) highlight management control's role in improving Moroccan public administration's performance. They argue that control mechanisms, reinforced by modernized accounting practices, facilitate the monitoring of strategic objectives and the efficient allocation of resources. Despite these advances, several obstacles stand in the way of effective IPSAS adoption. Ibouazzaouine (2019) identifies institutional, economic and cultural factors that complicate the implementation of reforms. These include the modernization of existing accounting systems, which are often obsolete and require significant investment to upgrade, staff training in new accounting standards and practices (Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, 2020), and resistance to change due to the prevalence of deeply rooted traditional accounting practices within public institutions. Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia (2020) add that the complexity of budgetary procedures and the lack of disseminating accessible financial information are also obstacles to transparency and the effectiveness of reforms.

Audit and management control play an essential role in improving the performance of public administrations. The Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (2020) emphasizes that auditing helps strengthen public managers' accountability and ensure the appropriate use of resources. According to AZEGAGH & ZYANI (2024), the effectiveness of accrual accounting in the Moroccan public sector depends largely on the quality of internal and external control mechanisms. Effective auditing enables anomalies to be detected, corrections to be proposed, and continuous improvement of accounting processes. The sustainability of public finances is a major challenge for Morocco. The International Monetary Fund (IMF, 2021) highlights the challenges associated with public debt and stresses the need for fiscal reforms to ensure financial sustainability. Adopting IPSAS is seen as a means of better valuing assets and

liabilities, offering a more accurate picture of the state's financial position. The World Bank (2021) also stresses that fiscal reforms, including the modernization of accounting practices, are key to optimizing the efficiency of public spending and boosting investor confidence. Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, (2020) compare the performance of the Moroccan public sector with that of similar countries, highlighting the importance of governance reforms, including accounting reforms, in improving performance indicators. They note that countries that have succeeded in fully integrating IPSAS enjoy greater financial transparency and efficiency in the management of public resources.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2018) supports this observation, stating that modern accounting practices are a key success factor for public financial management in member countries. Several authors offer recommendations for improving the implementation of accounting reforms in Morocco. Capacity building is paramount, with investment in ongoing staff training and developing the technical skills needed to apply IPSAS (Ibouazzaouine, 2019). The modernization of information systems is also essential, requiring upgrading technological infrastructures to support new accounting practices (Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, 2020). Promoting a performance culture is recommended, as well as encouraging an organizational culture focused on performance, responsibility, and accountability (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2023). Finally, stakeholder involvement is crucial, with enhanced communication and citizen participation in the budget process to increase transparency and trust (Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, 2020). Existing literature converges on the idea that public accounting reforms, particularly the adoption of IPSAS, positively impact Moroccan administrations' performance. They help to improve financial transparency, budgetary efficiency and accountability within the public sector. However, to maximize these benefits, overcoming the institutional, cultural and technical challenges is essential. An integrated approach, combining capacity building, systems modernization, and promoting a performance culture, is needed to ensure the effective implementation of reforms and the sustainable improvement of public financial management in Morocco.

3. Methodology

The methodology adopted for this study is based on a systematic literature review aimed at examining the impact of public accounting reforms on the performance of Moroccan administrations. An exhaustive literature search was carried out by consulting several recognized academic databases to carry out this analysis. Keywords used for the search included "public accounting", "IPSAS", "Morocco", "administrative performance", "financial reforms" and "transparency". Criteria for selecting publications were rigorous to ensure the relevance and quality of sources. The studies included had to focus specifically on the Moroccan context, be published between 2010 and 2023, and deal with accounting reforms and their impact on public sector performance. Articles before 2010 that did not concern Morocco or did not deal directly with accounting reforms were

excluded. In addition, only peer-reviewed publications were selected to guarantee the reliability of the information. Once the documents had been selected, a qualitative content analysis was carried out. This involved identifying recurring themes, points of convergence and divergence between the various studies, and any gaps in the existing literature. The data was organized in such a way as to highlight the main issues related to the adoption of IPSAS in Morocco, the institutional, cultural and technical challenges encountered, and the effects observed on the performance of public administrations. This methodological approach ensured comprehensive, structured coverage of the topic while guaranteeing the reliability and relevance of the information gathered. It provides a solid basis for interpreting the results and formulating recommendations to improve the implementation of accounting reforms and the performance of Moroccan administrations.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Public sector accounting plays a fundamental role in the management of public finances, providing reliable and relevant financial information for decision-making. The International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) were developed to harmonize public sector accounting practices internationally, thereby improving the comparability and transparency of financial statements (Ibouazzaouine, 2019). The adoption of IPSAS is expected to bring a number of benefits, such as improved quality of financial information, better management of public resources and enhanced stakeholder confidence. Public administration performance is a multidimensional concept, encompassing effectiveness, efficiency, quality of services rendered and citizen satisfaction. It is measured through various indicators, such as budget management, quality of financial information, accountability and transparency (Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, 2020). Modern public accounting that complies with international standards is seen as a lever for improving this performance by providing reliable data for evaluating and monitoring public policies. The link between public accounting and administrative performance lies in the ability of accounting systems to provide relevant information for decision-making and management control. Theories such as New Public Management argue that the introduction of private sector management practices, including advanced accounting standards, can improve public sector effectiveness and efficiency (Alami, & El Idrissi, 2022). Thus, the adoption of IPSAS is seen as a means of modernizing public accounting and, by extension, improving government performance.

4.2 Public Accounting Reforms in Morocco

Morocco has undertaken several reforms to modernize its public accounting framework. Historically, the Moroccan accounting system was based on traditional practices, ill-suited to today's demands for transparency and performance (Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, 2020). The need to move towards international standards became evident,

leading to the gradual adoption of IPSAS. Motivations behind these reforms include the increased need for transparency and accountability in public finance management. International partners, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, have also encouraged Morocco to align its accounting practices with international standards to improve the country's financial credibility (IMF, 2021). The *Stratégie nationale de modernisation des finances publiques 2019-2023*, drawn up by the Ministry of Economy and Finance (2023), illustrates this commitment to reform. Among the key reforms is the overhaul of the public accounting framework, aimed at integrating IPSAS principles while taking account of national specificities (Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, 2020). This involves revising accounting laws and regulations, setting up new financial information systems and training staff.

4.3 Impact of Reforms on Administrative Performance

Public accounting reforms in Morocco have had a significant impact on financial transparency. Adopting IPSAS has improved the quality of financial reporting, making financial statements more understandable and internationally comparable (Ibouazzaouine, 2019). In addition, the International Budget Partnership (2019) has noted an improvement in public access to budget information, which contributes to strengthening citizen and investor confidence. Regarding budgetary efficiency and resource management, reforms have positively influenced the effectiveness of public spending. Alami & El Idrissi (2022) points out that applying international standards has enabled better budget planning and a more rational allocation of resources. In addition, management control has been strengthened, optimizing the use of public funds (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2023). The reforms have also helped to strengthen responsibility and accountability. Public managers are now held to higher standards, and performance monitoring and evaluation mechanisms have been implemented. This fosters a culture of transparency and accountability within administrations.

4.4 Challenges and Obstacles to IPSAS Adoption

Despite the progress made, adopting IPSAS in Morocco faces several challenges. Institutional and cultural factors, such as resistance to change within institutions, are a major obstacle (Ibouazzaouine, 2019). Traditional accounting practices are deeply rooted, making the transition to new standards complex. Training and skills development are crucial. Many public officials lack knowledge of IPSAS, requiring in-depth training programs (Benabdelhadi & El Mouissia, 2020). Without adequate training, the correct application of the new standards remains difficult. Modernizing accounting systems is another major challenge. Existing financial information systems must be upgraded to incorporate the new accounting practices. This involves significant investment in information technology and technological integration to support modern accounting processes.

4.5 The Role of Audit and Control in Performance

Auditing, both external and internal, plays an essential role in improving the performance of public administrations. Auditing institutions, such as the Court of Accounts, help ensure compliance with standards and detect irregularities (Court of Accounts, 2020). The Arab Organization of Supreme Audit Institutions (2020) emphasizes that auditing reinforces transparency and accountability, key elements for effective public management. Internal management control is also crucial to performance monitoring. By setting up internal mechanisms, activities can be continuously monitored, and adjustments can be made where necessary. In the case of local authorities, the World Bank (2024) notes that strengthening internal control has led to better financial management and improved public services.

4.6 Benchmarking and Lessons Learned

Comparing Morocco with other Arab and developing countries, it appears that it has made significant progress in reforming its public accounting. However, similar challenges are observed elsewhere, particularly concerning resistance to change and the need for training (OECD, 2018). International best practice shows that the success of reforms depends mainly on political commitment, ongoing training and system modernization. Lessons learned include the importance of a progressive approach tailored to national specificities. Involving all stakeholders from the outset of the process and clearly communicating the expected benefits of reforms are essential to overcoming resistance.

4.7 Recommendations for Effective Implementation

For effective implementation of accounting reforms, a holistic approach is recommended. Integrating institutional, technical and human aspects is crucial, ensuring that all relevant stakeholders are involved in the process (Ibouzzaouine, 2019). Capacity building must be a priority, with ongoing training programs for staff and partnerships with international institutions to share knowledge and experience. Improving information systems is also essential. Investing in information technology guarantees the security and reliability of financial data, thus facilitating the application of IPSAS standards. Finally, promoting a performance culture is essential. This involves raising awareness of the importance of accountability and providing incentives to encourage good practice within public administrations.

5. Conclusion

The modernization of public sector accounting in Morocco, in particular through the adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), represents a significant step forward in the quest for improved public sector performance. This study, based on a systematic literature review, highlighted the positive impact of these reforms on financial transparency, budgetary efficiency and accountability within the Moroccan

public sector. The results showed that alignment with international standards has improved the quality of financial information, facilitating informed decision-making and strengthening stakeholder confidence. Adopting IPSAS has also contributed to more efficient management of public resources, thanks to rigorous budget planning and enhanced management control. These advances are essential to meet the growing demands for transparency and accountability, both from citizens and international partners. Nevertheless, the study also highlighted some challenges hindering the effective implementation of reforms. Institutional and cultural factors, such as resistance to change and the prevalence of traditional accounting practices, remain major obstacles. In addition, the need for staff training and the modernization of financial information systems are essential prerequisites for ensuring the correct application of the new standards. Faced with these challenges, adopting a holistic approach that integrates institutional, technical, and human dimensions is imperative. Capacity building through ongoing training programs, investment in information technology, and the promotion of a performance culture are all levers that ensure the success of the reforms. All stakeholders, including political decision-makers, public managers and civil society, are crucial to overcoming resistance and fostering ownership of the changes.

Conflict of Interest Statement

I certify that I have NO affiliations with or involvement in any organization or entity with any financial interest (such as honoraria; educational grants; participation in speakers' bureaus; membership, employment, consultancies, stock ownership, or other equity interest; and expert testimony or patent-licensing arrangements), or non-financial interest (such as personal or professional relationships, affiliations, knowledge or beliefs) in the subject matter or materials discussed in this manuscript.

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