

Title: Exploring AI readiness in SMEs in Morocco: A qualitative study using Altimeter AI Maturity Model

Khalid Allam, PhD Rabat Business School- International University of Rabat

Khalid.allam@uir.ac.ma

Salma Sbihi UM6p- Faculty of Governance, Economics & Social Sciences

Salma.sbihi@um6p.ma

Nouhaila Zeroual University Mohammed V Rabat Morocco

Nouhaila.zeroual@um5s.net.ma

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Abstract

As Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to transform industries, businesses are looking for structured frameworks to help them adopt to the new environment and integrate AI in their operations. For Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), adoption of AI could enhance productivity and efficiency. However, new technology adoption also requires human, technological, and financial resources that SMES often lack. This study uses the Altimeter's AI Maturity Model, which outlines four sequential stages—Exploring, Experimenting, Formalizing, and Integrating to explore the extent to which SMEs in Morocco have adopted AI in their operations and their readiness to adopt AI. Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with ten SMEs' owners in three different sectors, manufacturing, logistics, and hospitality sectors. The purpose is to determine SMEs' readiness to adopt AI using the Altimeter's AI Maturity Model and to identify enablers and barriers to future adoption. Findings of the study have theoretical and practical implications as they help reveal readiness factors specific to SMEs in a developing

economy. For policy makers, findings of the study could guide policy makers in Morocco design effective strategies that would help with the diffusion of AI adoption in the economy.