
The role of leadership in improving organizational performance and service quality in higher education institutions.

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Abstract

Leadership plays an essential role in the success of institutional projects, particularly in the context of higher education. Effective leadership fosters collaboration and innovation, creating an environment conducive to student learning, personal development and the academic mission of institutions. This research focuses on the critical role of leadership in improving management practices within higher education institutions. It aims to explore different models of leadership and their impact on organizational performance and the continuous improvement of service quality.

Methodologically, this research is predicated upon a systematic literature review methodology utilizing the five-step framework established by Denyer and Tranfield (2009). The data is sourced from a range of prominent scientific databases including Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, in addition to conference proceedings and scientific reports. An initial dataset comprising 100 scientific publications released between the years 2000 and 2024 has been identified. Subsequent to the application of the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, 17 pertinent studies were earmarked for further examination.

Based on a comprehensive literature review to examine existing studies on leadership in higher education, focusing on theoretical frameworks and best practices in the field. This analysis serves as the basis for the research, providing an overview of the different leadership models that impact organizational performance and service quality.

The findings suggest that leadership styles characterized by transformation, participation, vision, and distribution exert a beneficial influence on organizational performance, institutional efficacy, academic quality, employee motivation, innovation, and stakeholder contentment. The studies examined further demonstrate that leadership serves as a strategic catalyst for the implementation of quality management systems and the facilitation of continuous enhancement within higher education institutions. In contrast, authoritarian and centralized leadership approaches have been recognized as possessing the capacity to adversely affect organizational climate, collaboration, and institutional performance.

The research indicates that leadership constitutes a critical determinant of success in the realms of sustainable development and governance within higher education institutions. Enhancing leadership capabilities and fostering participatory and transformational governance frameworks

can significantly contribute to the advancement of institutional quality, organizational efficacy, and educational outcomes.

Keywords

Leadership, higher education institutions, Teaching quality, organizational performance.

Introduction

Higher education in Morocco has historically served as an important catalyst for intellectual and societal progress. Nevertheless, it currently operates in a rapidly changing context, influenced by rapid global progress. Faced with multifaceted challenges - including the imperative to provide equitable access to education, ensure the delivery of high-quality academic programs, prepare students for a constantly evolving job market, and incorporate innovative technologies into educational environments - the Moroccan higher education system is undergoing a phase of transformation characterized by adaptation and innovation. Currently, Moroccan higher education is at a pivotal moment in this era of transition, requiring a re-evaluation of its methodologies, encouraging creativity, and providing academic solutions that align with society's evolving demands (Talbi, 2018). *1 As a center of growth and knowledge production, the modern university is perpetually required to be flexible in order to adapt to changing educational paradigms and meet the diverse needs of its student population. To effectively navigate such profound educational transformations, it is imperative to thoroughly reorganize the services provided to students (El Mansouri, 2019; Talbi, 2018). In this context, leadership emerges as a fundamental force pushing student services towards new horizons. The reforms advocated, exemplified by the 2015-2030 strategic vision, recognize the leadership of public school principals as a crucial element in the successful reform of the education system. Morocco has already implemented a series of reforms to its educational framework since gaining independence. These reforms have accelerated since the beginning of the 21st century. The first reform was summarized in the National Charter for Education and Training, which was drawn up in response to a proclamation from His Majesty King Mohammed VI. The next reform was the emergency plan initiated at the request of H.M. King Mohammed VI, aimed at consolidating achievements while making the necessary changes to ensure optimum implementation of the provisions stipulated in the National Charter for Education and Training. In view of the insufficient results of the emergency plan, Morocco has initiated a third reform, identified as the strategic vision of the 2015-2030 reform.

This reform was formulated by the Higher Council for Education, Training and Scientific Research (CSEFRS) following in-depth discussions and conferences involving all stakeholders involved in the reform of the Moroccan education system. According to the strategic vision, particularly in higher education, governance emerged as one of its main concerns, as it was seen as a central lever for reform. Lever 2 of the 2015-2030 strategic vision highlights two fundamental conditions for the success of education system reform: effective leadership and an

innovative approach to transformation. **2 To succeed at all levels, it is essential to have high-level human skills in terms of leadership in general, and the leadership of heads of higher education institutions in particular.

Given the persistent increase in university enrolments, the presidents of Morocco's public universities are primarily preoccupied with operational challenges and emergency management. However, the role and responsibilities of a university president go beyond simple management; they encompass a strategic effort to articulate a vision, provide direction, and engage stakeholders to collaborate with the university through networking and advocacy. It has become essential for a university president to possess genuine leadership capabilities, as well as a global vision and development plan that galvanize the teaching staff and steer the university towards continuous improvement in its educational and scientific effectiveness. Consequently, the criteria for appointing managers should be strictly based on competence and leadership, as advocated in the Strategic Vision. **3 Leadership therefore appears to be a key success factor in the harmonization of institutional vision, technological choices and continuous quality improvement.

The fundamental importance of leadership and its associated concepts, as well as the initiatives taken by governing bodies to update its principles in our educational framework, particularly in higher education establishments, are intrinsically linked to the latter's role in improving performance and quality, as well as in guaranteeing continuous improvement. These are the principles that the authorities are striving to integrate into the overall reform of the education system, with the aim of fostering development and progress in this sector. Consequently, we need to examine the influence exerted by the aforementioned concepts or, more precisely, the effects manifested by the application of these principles on the achievement of performance and the assurance of quality and continuous improvement. This led us to examine the following question: **How important is leadership in increasing organizational performance, service quality and quality assurance in Moroccan higher education institutions?.**

This systematic analysis of scientific articles using quantitative, qualitative studies,... aims to elucidate potential correlations between leadership and organizational performance, as well as service quality, by answering the following question: **"What is the role of leadership in improving organizational performance, service quality within higher education institutions?"**. To write this article, a meticulous review of contemporary scientific articles was undertaken to gather relevant data. For the purposes of this analysis, an extensive search

of several education-focused databases was conducted for peer-reviewed articles, journals and books. This systematic literature review focused on the concept of leadership and its influence on improving organizational performance and service quality. **4 The research methodology employed was a systematic literature review, which involves the synthesis of concepts drawn from a wide range of sources to construct a coherent and integrative synthesis argument (Dickins and Weber-Buchholz, 2022).

Using this methodological framework, information was gathered from an assortment of media, including academic journals, accessible conference proceedings and reports, books, ... via Scopus, Web of Science (WoS) and Google Scholar. The research focused on themes such as leadership, higher education, organizational performance, service quality and the impact of leadership. The research process followed the five-stage framework defined by Denyer and Tranfield (2009). Stage 1: Formulating the survey. The initial stage consists in circumscribing the field of investigation and defining a clear focal point for the inquiry (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). The aim of the study was to exploit relevant literature covering the period from 2000 to 2024. A comparative analysis of historical literature and contemporary findings enables researchers to identify changes, advances or enduring themes in the field. The studies sought to answer the following questions: **1. what is leadership? 2. what are the different types of leadership? 3. what role does leadership play in improving organizational performance and the quality of higher education services, particularly in the Moroccan context?**

Stage 2: Identification of studies. The second phase of the model involves the systematic identification, evaluation and compilation of key contributions relevant to the research questions (Han and Dong, 2020; Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). This investigation examined major online scientific databases, such as Scopus and WoS, to ensure objectivity and to encompass a wide range of sources and data. These databases were selected because of their accessibility within academic institutions and their use in similar studies. The survey was guided by thematic criteria encompassing leadership practices, the role and influence of leadership, and leadership within higher education institutions. In addition, a proactive approach was adopted, involving the review of additional sources derived from citations of the selected studies. Stage 3: Selection and evaluation of studies. The study used a rigorous and transparent process to select relevant articles from various repositories, ensuring clarity in its multiple phases. Initially, a total of 100 articles were selected on the basis of their abstracts. These articles were subjected to inclusion and exclusion criteria at various stages of the review process. Of these, 25 articles were excluded on the basis of their year of publication, and a

further 55 were deemed unsuitable on closer examination, as they did not directly correspond to the study objectives. In the end, only 17 articles presenting results relevant to the subject of this study were retained**6.

This inquiry is situated within an interpretivist epistemological framework, with the objective of comprehensively understanding and critically analyzing the diverse methodologies pertaining to leadership within higher education institutions, as delineated by extant scholarly literature. The selection of a systematic literature review is substantiated by the intent to identify, juxtapose, and synthesize the principal leadership paradigms, alongside their ramifications for organizational efficacy and the caliber of university services. This methodology affords a holistic and structured perspective of the scholarly discourse relevant to the investigated topic. Furthermore, this investigation employs inductive reasoning derived from the comprehensive analysis and interpretation of the findings from the chosen studies. Grounded in the observations and conclusions delineated in the existing literature, the research endeavors to ascertain overarching trends, elucidatory factors, and potential avenues for enhancement with respect to leadership within higher education institutions.

1. Theoretical framework :

1.1. Definitions and approaches of leadership :

Over the decades, the phenomenon of leadership has come under intense scrutiny and emerged as an increasingly important concept in academic discourse. Indeed, there has been a significant proliferation of definitions in various academic disciplines and a continuous evolution since the twentieth century *7. It is imperative to emphasize that this term can be articulated in different ways depending on the contextual framework, and that it primarily refers to the practice of motivating a collective of individuals to engage in actions aimed at achieving specific goals. Consequently, there are many definitions of leadership, the majority of which suggest that a deliberate influence is exerted by an individual or group on other individuals or groups, with the aim of organizing activities and relationships within a collective or organization. When perceived as a mechanism of social influence, leadership is characterized by its variability depending on the agent of influence, the essence of that influence, the objectives of its application and the results that flow from it (Cambridge Assessment, 2017). At the heart of most contemporary definitions of leadership, Leithwood et al. (2004) assert that there are two main functions: "giving direction" and "exerting influence". Each of these functions can be performed using different methodologies, and these distinctions delineate many models of

leadership. Such a definition may seem excessively bureaucratic or hierarchical; nevertheless, it should not be interpreted in this way, nor does it constitute a particularly precise delineation of leadership, making it potentially subject to accusations that its inherent imprecision significantly hampers efforts to improve understanding of the nature and impact of leadership (Leithwood et al., 2004). Leadership, as Yusuf (2017) explains, refers to how leaders cultivate and facilitate the realization of mission and vision, foster the values necessary for long-term success, and realize them through appropriate actions and behaviors. However, Smith (2016) argues that leadership can be conceptualized as a construct that has been widely studied in a variety of fields, including business and education, in which school administrators must amalgamate a diverse range of leadership skills and styles, primarily to guide educational institutions toward common goals and well-articulated visions **8. Etymologically, the term "leadership" in the English language derives from the word "leader", meaning "chief or executive", while the suffix "ship" refers to position or relational dynamics. According to B.M. (1990), "leadership is an interaction between two or more members of a group that frequently results in the structuring or restructuring of a scenario, as well as the perceptions and expectations of the participants". This succinct characterization is hardly surprising, as it underlines the fundamental links between a leader and his or her collaborators. On the basis of these definitions, therefore, it can be argued that leadership transcends mere directive actions; it also encompasses the creation of mutual understanding and consensus regarding objectives and methodologies to be employed. Furthermore, it underlines the importance of supporting individual and collective efforts, which is vital to achieving common goals.**9 Recent empirical studies draw on leadership theories, in particular visionary leadership, transactional leadership and transformational leadership.

Let's take a look at transformational leadership as articulated by Burns (1978) and Bass (1985), a theory that emphasizes leader characteristics as defined by trait and skill approaches, with a particular focus on social skills. This theory focuses primarily on the leader's ability to galvanize subordinates' energies (empowerment), win their trust and unwavering commitment, and inspire them to perform beyond their initial expectations***10. Consequently, transactional leadership, or leadership through negotiation, is characterized by reciprocal interaction between the leader and subordinates (Young et al., 2021) and is considered by many researchers to be a precursor of transformational leadership. Three essential factors define this leadership style (Van Knippenberg & Sitkin, 2013; Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003): 1. Contingent reward leadership: this refers to the conduct of leaders who strive to delineate

expected roles and responsibilities while offering followers material and psychological incentives subordinate to the fulfillment of their conventional obligations. 2. Active management by exception: the manager must remain vigilant to ensure that established standards are respected. 3. Passive management by exception: in this scenario, managers intervene only in the event of non-compliance, or when mistakes have already been made. It should be noted that transactional leaders tend to give priority to the organization's structures and objectives rather than to the individuals within it, whereas transformational leadership is primarily concerned with established procedures and decision-making processes (Harris, 2005).***11. According to Burt Nanus, (1992) visionary leadership is defined by the ability to formulate and convey a lucid and inspiring vision of the future, thereby fostering strong commitment within the organization and galvanizing teams to collaborate effectively in pursuit of ambitious but achievable goals. The term "visionary" means the ability to foresee and conceptualize a future state. This notion does not imply the possession of magical abilities or supernatural intuitions, but rather describes a leader who possesses a definitive conception of the future and implements the strategies necessary to actualize this vision. The concept of visionary leadership has been around for centuries, but it was American academic Burt Nanus who first elucidated the theory in his seminal work, *Visionary Leadership*, published in 1992. In it, he asserts that "vision is not a luxury but a necessity; without it, workers would sink into confusion or, worse, go against the grain". Nanus demonstrates that this global vision is an essential component of leadership, and illustrates how leaders can harness it to steer their organization towards a new trajectory. He identifies five characteristics inherent in this famous vision: 1. it engages and energizes individuals; 2. it gives meaning to employees' lives; 3. it establishes a benchmark of excellence; 4. it links the present to the future;

5. it transcends the existing paradigm. By inspiring, motivating and engaging the entire workforce, the visionary leader plays a crucial role in significantly improving the organization's productivity, thus raising its overall performance to a higher level.

In the field of education, Godin, Lapointe, Langlois and St-Germain (2004) define four distinct leadership styles: 1) transactional, 2) transformational, 3) moral and 4) pedagogical. Bass (1990) has championed the transformational leadership style, which encompasses the leader's ability to guide subordinates to transcend their individual interests, reshaping their needs, beliefs and values in pursuit of a collective vision (Bass, 1990). It seems that this particular approach to leadership is considered the most effective and impactful in the field of school management (Bush & Glover, 2014). This leadership style can be subdivided into three

dimensions: transformational, transactional and laissez-faire. The transformational dimension concerns the leader's influence on the evolving needs of subordinates. The transactional dimension concerns the leader's effect on task initiation and the motivation of employees to achieve their goals. The laissez-faire dimension corresponds to a form of leadership characterized by avoidance. Transformational leadership enables school leaders to achieve the goals set by the organization, namely improved student performance and increased teacher motivation (Quin, Deris, Bischoff & Johnson, 2015). Sun, Chen and Zhang (2017) make a comparable argument, correlating transformational leadership effectiveness with improved student academic performance. Other research highlights the impact of transformational leadership on school effectiveness, teacher satisfaction (Mehdinezhad & Mansouri, 2016), and educational team performance and innovation (Berkovich & Eyal, 2017)**12. Wang and colleagues' (2011) meta-analysis aimed to examine the magnitude of transformational leadership's effect on organizational performance. The survey included 78 published research articles and 35 unpublished PhD theses, both in print and online, covering the last 25 years. A fundamental criterion for inclusion was that the articles relate transformational and transactional leadership behaviors to one of the following performance measures: job performance, related task performance and creativity performance at individual, team and organizational levels. The results reveal that, at the individual level, the correlation between transformational leadership and employee performance is more pronounced when it comes to related (complementary) tasks than job-specific tasks. According to the researchers, this phenomenon is explained by the fact that related tasks become voluntary and dependent on the employee's willingness, whereas improved job performance is mainly limited by the skills, knowledge and abilities available to the employee. In addition, transformational leadership has been shown to correlate positively with team and organizational performance.**13 Furthermore, transformational leadership appears to exert a greater influence than transactional leadership in predicting individual and team performance. Visionary leadership represents one of the many contemporary leadership issues that emerged after 1990 and which are of paramount importance. The ability to conceive a coherent, acceptable, personal and compelling vision of the future of the organization as a whole or of a specific division, coupled with the ability to articulate this vision, is called visionary leadership. Some experts claim that visionary leadership has a particularly profound effect on building confidence in new initiatives, adapting the workforce, boosting motivation, retaining employees and raising worker performance levels. Leading with vision requires creative acuity, a strong, reliable, intelligent, compassionate and authentic attitude, communication skills, clear emotional articulation,

coaching, active listening, consistency and a willingness to make sacrifices. Visionary leaders are characterized by several attributes: (a) they possess a lucid vision of the future, function as motivators, focus on empowering others to achieve optimal performance, and offer clear, pragmatic direction ; (b) they demonstrate unwavering confidence, a propensity to take risks, and an appreciation of the value of resources, particularly human resources, providing appropriate organizational care and support ;(c) they inspire individuals to work diligently together to achieve common goals, acting as role models who consistently embody leadership ideals, provide constructive feedback and express gratitude for the efforts and achievements of all members of the organization (organizational effectiveness); and (d) they cultivate a clear and inspiring vision, turning "dreams" into reality, promoting change and motivating individuals to deploy greater effort and creativity in order to improve situations and conditions.**14

Over the past fifteen years, there has been a proliferation of scientific studies highlighting the importance of leadership, in its myriad interpretations, as a key determinant influencing the advancement of educational institutions and the outcomes that flow from it, irrespective of socio-cultural context and educational organizational frameworks (Kouzes & Posner, 2019; Maureira Cabrera, 2018; Villa et al., 2019). This body of evidence supports the hypothesis of a positive correlation between educational caliber and effective leadership (Barnett, 2019; Rejas et al., 2016). Hoekstra & Newton (2017) argue that it is primarily academic leaders who bear considerable responsibility for ensuring service quality in educational settings, as they oversee the day-to-day operations of teaching and administrative staff. Between the years 2000 and 2020, a series of studies were carried out worldwide concerning leadership within higher education institutions; however, in Morocco, investigations on this subject remain in their infancy. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) reports that the management paradigms of higher education institutions are evolving towards a model characterized by greater autonomy, transparency and accountability, which should be reflected in the assessment of teaching quality by independent accreditation bodies and in the implementation of processes aimed at improving the institutions themselves. The discourse on quality has become a major global concern in higher education over the last twenty years, during which time quality has moved from a peripheral to a central issue. The increased emphasis on quality in higher education can be attributed to a confluence of competing factors, the most important of which are political control of higher education, increasing student numbers, changing student expectations and fiscal control by national governments. Custodio (2013)

argues that the articulation of educational quality requires a political, social and cultural stance towards education. This evaluation implies a comparative judgment, as it requires affirming the quality of one educational experience over another. Affirming that an educational program is of high quality intrinsically implies that it may not be, which makes comparative evaluation possible. The effective implementation of a quality management system depends in part on leadership, as leaders are responsible for establishing the organization's strategic coherence and direction, as well as fostering an internal environment in which staff can actively engage in the pursuit of the organization's goals (Kotter, 2017)**15. In the literature review, we also observe that the concept of leadership in education is referred to by a variety of terminologies; some researchers refer to it as pedagogical leadership, while others refer to it as educational leadership. A distinction has been made by some researchers, including Langlois and Lapointe (2002), who specify that educational leadership refers specifically to the influence exerted by educational professionals throughout the teaching and learning process. Conversely, the notion of educational leadership is broader, encompassing the leadership exercised by administrators, parents, the community of learners and educational staff. According to Legendre's research (2005), educational leadership is characterized by the principal setting explicit goals for the school, effectively motivating the team and fostering the development of the competencies required for each individual. Other research has sought to demonstrate that leadership within educational establishments does not depend on a single individual, but rather on a collective of professionals who are both motivated and capable of innovating new didactic and pedagogical methodologies (Gather Thurler et al., 2015).***16.

It is widely recognized that the effectiveness of higher education institutions depends critically on the leadership exercised, as this significantly influences administrative efficiency and academic productivity (Croucher & Lacy, 2020). In this regard, Dawson et al. (2018) assert that the fundamental responsibility of leaders is to design and propagate a strategic framework that facilitates the realization of the institution's vision and mission, foster constructive relationships with and between subordinates, and possess the ability to respond to the evolving demands of the environment. Consequently, this requires the commitment of every member, each activating their individual initiative, professional skills and experiential knowledge in line with shared objectives (vision and mission) and in accordance with their role within the institution (Vela-Quico & Cáceres-Coaquira, 2020). However, there are a multitude of factors contributing to the increased interest in educational leadership within educational systems. These factors include the context of new public management, the emphasis on performance management and

the focus on measurable results (Gather Thurler et al., 2015). Progress in the education system depends on improving the operational efficiency of individual schools, where governance frameworks and the division of responsibilities between administrators and teaching staff play a central role. This explains why the discourse on leadership in educational institutions in general, and higher education institutions in particular, is currently seen as one of the key mechanisms for increasing the effectiveness of education systems. As SATHYE (2004) points out, leadership in higher education is an essential element of global leadership principles, functioning as a crucial fulcrum for guiding institutions towards achieving their goals (BUDUR et al., 2019). As a key determinant of organizational effectiveness across all sectors (BUDUR et al., 2021; MART, 2013), leadership is becoming increasingly important in the higher education landscape.

1.2. Performance :

The concept of performance is fundamentally at the heart of all organizational development initiatives. In French-language lexicons, performance is defined as an official statement documenting a result achieved at a specific point in time, invariably contextualized by a framework, an objective and an anticipated outcome, whatever the field of activity (Notat, 2007). Indeed, researchers agree that, to conceptualize performance effectively, it is imperative to differentiate between the action-oriented (i.e. behavioral) dimension and the results-oriented dimension (Campbell, 1990 ; Campbell, McCloy, Oppler and Sager, 1993). The "behavioral" dimension concerns the activities undertaken by an individual in his or her work environment, and only behaviors relevant to the organization's objectives can be evaluated as performance, whereas the "results-oriented" dimension concerns the consequences or outcomes arising from the former. Furthermore, performance is not defined by the action itself, but rather by evaluation processes and judgements (cf. Ilgen & Schneider, 1991; Motowidlo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997). Moreover, only actions that can be quantified, i.e. measured, are considered performance criteria (Campbell et al., 1990). Nicoleta Barbuta-Misu (2008) further asserts that performance within a contemporary company can be characterized as a state of competitiveness achieved through high levels of efficiency and productivity, with the aim of securing a sustainable market position. It is therefore imperative to emphasize that behavioral dimensions and results are empirically interconnected, even if they do not entirely coincide. The performance dimensions associated with results also depend on factors that go beyond individual behavior, the so-called "process notion".**17 Improving employees' professional performance is essential to an organization's sustainability in a fiercely competitive environment. Performance is

unequivocally a multi-faceted concept. It also serves as a central criterion for assessing an organization's success or failure. Bizhan et al. define performance as "the manifestation of the results of actions through the competencies of successful employees in a particular context" (Otieno & Njoroge, 2019). Performance can be interpreted as the correlation between the results obtained and the set of resources used to achieve them. It relates to individual efficiency in production and represents a pervasive factor within organizations, which can generally be enhanced by employee engagement (Ali, 2019).^{**18} The escalating challenges faced by organizations in gaining or maintaining competitive advantage has generated an increased focus on organizational performance, which has become paramount for survival in an intensely competitive environment. As a result, organizational performance is currently regarded as a fundamental concept for achieving the objectives of organizational operations (Richard, Devinney, Yip & Johnson, 2009). Traditionally, organizational performance has been viewed narrowly through a financial prism, considering elements such as assets, budgets, sales volume, sales growth or profitability results (Liao & Wu, 2009). Nevertheless, contemporary research indicates that the scope of organizational performance transcends mere financial gains to encompass competitive advantage, innovation, quality of results and improvement trajectories (Kirby, 2005). This leads to the following definition: organizational performance is a holistic concept that encompasses the activities, outputs and achievements of organizations in the service of the various stakeholders with whom they engage.

The global higher education sector is currently facing a volatile and dynamic environment, attributable to factors such as changing student demographics, declining public financial support and the growing importance of information and communication technologies in the educational environment (Conway, 2003). It is recognized that understanding these performance indicators would enable organizations to achieve a satisfactory level of organizational performance (OP). Despite the long-standing existence of concepts relating to performance measurement, it is increasingly necessary for institutions to transform themselves in order to institutionalize these methodologies (Poister, 2003). Higher education institutions (HEIs) also need to evolve and formulate strategies that facilitate rapid responses to changes in their organizational context and growing stakeholder expectations. In addition, the criteria for key performance indicators (KPIs) in strategic evaluations (HEIs) should be based on a framework of concepts and values

(Suryadi, 2007), namely - learner-centered education, - organizational and personal learning, - improving the status of teaching and academic staff, - HEI organizational agility, - focusing on

growth and sustainability, - managing innovation. According to Kanji and Tambi (1999), performance indicators within HEIs can be assessed on the basis of the achievement of objectives, which presupposes the effective functioning of the core process, in particular the educational process**19.

Leadership plays a fundamental role in the implementation of quality initiatives within HEIs (Middlehurst, 1993). The advent of international standards such as ISO 21001 has reinforced this dimension by incorporating explicit stipulations regarding the roles of management and leadership principles that advocate performance improvement, continuous improvement and stakeholder satisfaction (ISO, 2018). Analyzing this issue from the perspective of higher education (HE), Arsenault (2007) pointed out that "universities are undeniably not exempt from the imperative of effective leadership, as they face challenges similar to those faced by other organizations" (14) **20. ISO 21001:2018 emphasizes the need for commitment from management and top management. This requires a greater commitment from senior managers and organization directors in overseeing the quality management framework. Consequently, ISO 21001:2018 aims to foster integration and alignment with the organization's processes and strategic objectives. Senior management is now required to take greater responsibility for the effectiveness of the quality management system. The ISO 21001 quality management system model places leadership at the heart of all the organization's efforts. It facilitates management involvement in the processes of planning, supporting, operating, evaluating and improving performance. The fifth clause of ISO 21001 is entitled "leadership". It defines the essential requirements for senior managers within the organization, classified as follows: (5.1) Leadership and commitment, (5.2) Policy, and (5.3) Roles, responsibilities and authorities within the organization. **21

2. Review of empirical studies : Results :

Although there is a substantial body of academic work on educational leadership in Anglo-Saxon settings, there is a notable dearth of empirical research on its relevance to the Moroccan context and its relationship to contemporary quality standards. Consequently, this article aims to undertake a comprehensive literature review that integrates theoretical ideas on leadership with empirical studies concerning performance and quality in higher education, in order to elucidate facilitators and barriers to the development of effective leadership within Moroccan educational institutions.

2.1. Studies reviewed : leadership and organizational performance :

Numerous studies highlight **the impact of leadership on the organizational performance of higher education institutions**. The investigation undertaken by **Youness et al. (2019)** examines the impact of leadership quality on organizational performance within Moroccan public universities. Employing a quantitative research methodology, the study is anchored in a questionnaire survey circulated to a cohort of 157 university leaders, including presidents, deans, directors and general secretaries. Nevertheless, only 71 valid responses were retained for analysis. The questionnaire was meticulously designed to assess the extent to which leaders adhere to the characteristics defined by the performance indicators, and its reliability was demonstrated by the application of Cronbach's alpha, which yielded a value of 0.822, indicating substantial internal consistency between items assessing the "leadership" variable. Statistical analyses were carried out using linear regression to examine the influence of leadership style (independent variable) on organizational performance (dependent variable). The results reveal that the regression model is statistically significant and exhibits a commendable fit to the data, as shown by an R correlation coefficient of 0.826 and an adjusted R² of 0.677, indicating that almost 68% of the variance in organizational performance can be attributed to the leadership style employed. The Fisher test ($F = 148.005$; $p < 0.001$) corroborates the statistical integrity of the model, while the Durbin-Watson statistic (1.443) indicates the absence of substantial autocorrelation in the residuals, reinforcing the credibility of the results. In summary, this investigation demonstrates that leadership style is a central element in increasing the organizational performance of Moroccan public universities. These results argue for a reassessment of managerial practices within higher education, with a focus on promoting leadership styles capable of effectively harnessing human and organizational resources.

The empirical investigation undertaken by **Imane et al. (2020)** falls within a post-positivist action research framework and rigorously examines the interaction between leadership and scientific research performance in public doctoral study centers (CEDs) in Morocco. The researcher conducted interviews with 39 executives engaged in scientific management or coordination roles, using a meticulously designed structured questionnaire to assess two key dimensions of total quality management (TQM): leadership as a strategic organizational element and scientific performance assessed through a multidimensional lens. Before examining the interconnections between the variables, a comprehensive assessment of the psychometric properties of the instruments was carried out.

The leadership scale, which initially comprised six items, was reduced to four after exploratory factor analysis (PCA), with the predominant factor elucidating 69.13% of the variance. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.849 indicates a substantial level of internal consistency. Research performance was divided into several dimensions: finance, innovation, internal processes, societal impact, human resources and doctoral student satisfaction. Each sub-dimension was validated by PCA, with Cronbach's alphas above 0.76, indicating satisfactory reliability. Analyses using simple linear regression revealed a statistically significant association between leadership style exercised and doctoral center performance indicators. The correlation coefficient R (0.749) indicates a strong relationship, while the adjusted coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.549$) indicates that leadership alone explains almost 55% of the variance observed in scientific performance. The validity of the model is corroborated by the Fisher test ($F = 47.299$; $p < 0.001$), in conjunction with the Durbin-Watson index (1.547), which suggests the absence of autocorrelation in the error terms. These empirical results support the hypothesis that leadership is a key determinant of organizational performance in higher education. Educational research centers (ERCs) that adopt a coherent strategic vision, based on the principles of quality management, are able to mobilize their human resources more effectively, improve their scientific productivity and generate greater commitment from doctoral students as well as institutional partnerships. The Imane (2020) survey underlines the importance of transformational and mobilizing leadership, capable of directing collective efforts towards the goals of excellence and innovation within academic institutions.

Among the notable empirical investigations carried out in the Moroccan educational setting, the research conducted by **Karim et al. (2024)** deserves particular attention. This investigation focused on the provincial jurisdiction of Al Haouz, part of the Marrakech-Safi Regional Academy of Education and Training, chosen for its socio-economic attributes that embody the national educational milieu. The investigation employed an interpretive paradigm employing deductive reasoning, with the primary objective of assessing the leadership modalities implemented by public school administrators and their consequent effects on organizational and pedagogical effectiveness. A mixed-methods approach was used. Qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews, using a guide structured around six thematic areas. These interviews were conducted under strict conditions, including a presentation of the research framework, guarantees of confidentiality and a request for consent regarding audio recording; however, only four participants consented to the recording. Qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis using SphinxPlus software, following a structured coding

methodology aimed at elucidating recurring and salient concepts. The results of this exploratory phase indicate that authoritarian leadership is under critical scrutiny, as it is perceived by participants as detrimental to both the work environment and student learning outcomes. All interviewees affirmed the need for a participative leadership style, based on active listening and team involvement, as well as a management approach adaptable to contextual requirements. The prevailing consensus was that leadership should be dynamic rather than static, rooted in context and subject to evolution. At the same time, a quantitative survey was conducted among 52 public school principals in the province. The questionnaire administered collected data on the leadership styles used and their implications for day-to-day management and overall school performance. The statistical analysis, carried out using SPSS software, employed methodologies such as descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation. Although the study could have benefited from further elaboration of validity and reliability measures (e.g., Cronbach's alpha), the results obtained are robust and statistically significant. The data corroborate the predominance of transformational leadership in reported managerial practices. This leadership style reflects a pronounced tendency for managers to involve their staff, foster a climate of trust and galvanize teams around promising educational initiatives. The emphasis is on dialogue, encouraging initiative, valuing ideas and recognizing effort - all fundamental characteristics of leadership based on inspiration, empowerment and a shared vision. Conversely, authoritarian or transactional leadership, characterized by control and a reward/punishment dynamic, is perceived as peripheral and ineffective. It is associated with a tense school climate, declining team motivation and resistance to transformative change. Headteachers who use this leadership style report encountering a greater number of obstacles, both organizational and pedagogical in nature. Correlational analyses corroborate these observations: a significant positive correlation is observed between transformational leadership and various critical dimensions of school performance, including teacher motivation, management effectiveness, quality of organizational climate and commitment to school initiatives. In summary, Karim's study (2024) highlights the strategic importance of transformational leadership in Moroccan public schools. It appears to be a crucial mechanism for reinvigorating the organization, fostering continuous improvement and reinforcing the professionalization of educational practices. These findings are in line with international research, which highlights the importance of pedagogical, participative and mobilizing leadership in contexts of reform and innovation.

In their scientific contribution, **Imane Mekkaoui and Meriem Mekkao (2022)** set out to examine the persistence of authoritarian managerial practices within Moroccan higher

education institutions (HEIs). The aim of their research is to elucidate the factors that explain the recurrent tendency of some managers to adopt an authoritarian management style, despite the expected progress in participatory governance. The authors describe various management styles, but focus in particular on two predominant forms that are directly relevant to the realities of HEIs in Morocco, as characterized by Arbaoui and Abouali (2018). The first is participative management, in which the manager refrains from positioning himself as a distant hierarchical superior, assuming instead the role of a unifying leader who facilitates coordination, collective decision-making and the cultivation of a healthy, harmonious work environment. In this context, decisions are based on dialogue, collective proposals and the constructive confrontation of points of view between the leader and his colleagues. This management style, considered ideal by public authorities, is vigorously advocated in university reforms, notably through the principles enshrined in Law 01.00, which aims to establish governance based on consultation and participation. A multitude of studies, including the work of Guiol and Muñoz (2007), corroborate that openness to social dialogue and the encouragement of participatory practices engender a serene environment, conducive to the motivation and performance of human resources. Conversely, the authors characterize the authoritarian management style as a catalyst for tension and organizational dysfunction. This management style, based on centralized decision-making, lack of consultation and hierarchical coercion, tends to engender a deleterious social climate, characterized by demotivation, reduced cohesion and the emergence of psychosocial risks within teams. Far from meeting the requirements of contemporary, inclusive governance, this style hinders innovation, collective commitment and the quality of educational services. The survey conducted by Mekkaoui and Mekkaoui highlights the urgent need for a profound cultural transformation in HEI management, arguing for a redefinition of the managerial role, with greater emphasis on transformational leadership, active participation and recognition of internal stakeholders.

The survey undertaken by **IFISS SAIDA et al (2024)** within Moroccan public institutions (17% of which are educational establishments) elucidates the profound influence of the ethical dimensions of leadership, as defined in Imam Ali's Letter 53, on organizational performance. Through meticulous statistical analysis, the researchers assessed eleven distinct leadership dimensions and their association with three key performance indicators: effectiveness, efficiency and internal and external customer satisfaction. Univariate analysis indicated a widespread level of employee dissatisfaction with their immediate superiors in terms of managerial practices rooted in human values. Notable dissatisfaction rates ranging from 57%

to 66% were recorded for dimensions such as empathy (61.11%), humility (59.52%), respect (57.14%), tolerance (58.73%), active listening (60.32%) and delegation (58.73%). These statistics reveal a pronounced gap between anticipated ethical principles and actual practices within public administrations, thus highlighting a deficient implementation of moral leadership principles. Despite these negative perceptions, bivariate analysis shows that the presence of these dimensions exerts a significant influence on organizational performance. All the leadership variables examined show statistically significant correlations with the three performance indicators, as evidenced by remarkably high chi-square values (e.g., 136.803 for tolerance and effectiveness), as well as Cramer indices (V) above 0.3, indicating strong relationships. Tolerance appears to be the most decisive factor, showing a very strong correlation with effectiveness (Cramer's $V = 0.521$), closely followed by active listening (0.462), conciliation (0.468), delegation (0.458) and respect (0.457). These dimensions show that managerial behaviors based on transparency, recognition of others and fair distribution of power considerably improve internal operations and the quality of services rendered. Similarly, optimizing decision-making processes, including astute planning, prioritization and evaluation of alternatives, significantly improves efficiency (0.419) and user satisfaction (0.378). Humility and trust, often neglected in bureaucratic organizations, appear to be powerful catalysts for the efficiency and legitimacy of public management. The study concludes that adopting the ethical leadership principles set out in Imam Ali's letter 53 is an essential lever for improving the overall performance of public institutions. It argues in favor of a model of moral leadership based on justice, consultation, listening and responsibility, which constitutes the cornerstone of effective, equitable and sustainable public governance.

The article by Lekchiri et Al. (2018) examines the modernization of Moroccan public administrations, focusing on the central role of leadership in the success of reforms. Using a case study focusing on the Ministry of National Education, the author investigates the ability of managers and civil servants to exercise transformative leadership in an environment still deeply influenced by bureaucratic paradigms. Initially, the author stresses that leadership must not simply be seen as an individual attribute, but must be conceptualized at address as a structuring organizational process, serving as a critical factor in catalyzing change. Drawing on transformational leadership theories, the study characterizes the leader as an agent of vision and mobilization, capable of converting internal resistance into catalysts for improvement, by encouraging innovation, participation and responsibility. From this point of view, leadership appears to be an indispensable mechanism for making a successful transition to a modern, high-

performance public administration. Nevertheless, the results of the survey conducted among the Ministry's managers reveal a pronounced disparity between the ideals of transformational leadership and the actual practices observed in managerial conduct. Internal operations are still largely governed by a rigid hierarchical culture, characterized by highly centralized decision-making and limited scope for autonomy. This structural configuration hinders the emergence of proactive, innovative leaders and, consequently, their ability to bring about lasting change within the organization. Despite these limitations, the author identifies encouraging local initiatives led by dedicated leaders who adopt participatory methodologies as part of pilot projects or sector reforms. These experiences illustrate that leadership can indeed materialize, even in a difficult context, provided that stakeholders are given the necessary space for autonomy and dialogue. The study shows a strong correlation between transformational leadership and organizational performance. When leaders succeed in embodying a coherent vision, recognizing individual competencies and cultivating a climate of trust, the resulting effects on staff motivation, department coordination and support for reforms are substantial. Conversely, the absence of structured leadership diminishes the effectiveness of public policies, leading to a lack of ownership of objectives and insufficient mobilization of teams. In conclusion, Lekchiri argues for the institutionalization of leadership within Moroccan public administrations, particularly in the education sector. This requires a profound transformation of organizational culture, involving the decentralization of responsibilities, the training of managers in managerial skills, the promotion of collaborative practices, and a complete rethinking of power dynamics. From now on, leadership must be considered not simply as a personal asset, but as a fundamental component of public governance, guaranteeing the sustainability and effectiveness of the reforms implemented. According to the article "Capacité d'apprentissage organisationnel et établissements d'enseignement supérieur à Agadir" by BELLHI et Al. (2024), the results of the study reveal a significant relationship between leadership principles and organizational performance within higher education institutions. Analysis of the data, collected from teacher-researchers and administrative managers, shows that the dimension of committed leadership is a determining component of organizational learning capacity, itself linked to improved overall institutional performance.

The results show that schools with committed and visionary leaders have a clearer direction, encouraging a collective learning dynamic. This type of leadership stimulates the adoption of knowledge-sharing practices, encourages experimentation and supports the development of a culture of dialogue. When line managers adopt a proactive, participative attitude, employees

feel more involved and motivated, resulting in a healthier organizational climate, better information flow and more effective mobilization of human resources.

In addition, the study points out that establishments where leadership practices are weak or not well established encounter major obstacles to implementing organizational learning. In these contexts, performance is often hampered by a lack of shared vision, poor internal communication and resistance to change. This shows that leadership plays a catalytic role in activating the other dimensions of organizational learning, such as knowledge transfer, experimentation and goal clarification.

In summary, the results of the study confirm that leadership, when exercised in an inclusive, strategic and learning-oriented way, acts as a fundamental lever for improving the performance of higher education institutions. Not only does it help to structure a common, shared vision, it also creates the conditions for continuous improvement in pedagogical and managerial practices. Strengthening leadership in these establishments means investing in their ability to adapt, innovate and deliver sustainable performance.

The article by Abdelaaziz El Bakkali(2022) explores the essential function of distributed leadership paradigms in advancing education for sustainable development. The author begins the discourse by asserting that the current challenges facing the education sector require a profound transformation of governance and leadership frameworks. The main objective of this investigation is to analyze the extent to which the implementation of shared and transformational leadership can cultivate a sustainable educational environment, improve organizational effectiveness and raise the quality of services rendered in educational institutions. The author has used a meticulous methodology based on a systematic review of existing literature. This review combines two synergistic methodologies: meta-analysis and meta-synthesis. Meta- analysis, characterized by its quantitative and deductive nature, involves aggregating the results of multiple empirical investigations in order to statistically verify correlations between leadership styles and performance indicators. This facilitates quantification of the tangible effects of transformational leadership practices on educator satisfaction, student engagement and institutional effectiveness. At the same time, meta-synthesis uses qualitative and inductive methods to distill key concepts from diverse field research. This approach has helped to formulate a nuanced understanding of the dynamics by which shared leadership exerts a beneficial impact on educational operations. The survey results show that distributed leadership styles, particularly when combined with a collective vision and

strong community engagement, foster the entrenchment of a culture characterized by collaboration, innovation and sustainability. They empower stakeholders, facilitate collaborative learning and strengthen the adaptation of organizations to the demands of sustainable development. In addition, distributed leadership emerges as an essential catalyst for organizational performance, as it improves the efficiency of internal processes, enhances staff and learner satisfaction, and raises the overall level of educational services. In conclusion, the article highlights the need for a paradigm shift in the management of educational institutions. The author argues for transformational, shared leadership, which possesses the capacity to engender dynamic, inclusive and high- performance learning environments, in line with the principles of sustainability. This leadership paradigm serves as a strategic instrument for strengthening the resilience, effectiveness and impact of education systems in response to contemporary challenges.

Against the backdrop of educational reform in India, propelled by the New Educational Policy (NEP) 2020, the scientific article by **D. Varalakshmi et al. 2024** meticulously examines the central function of academic leadership in the metamorphosis of higher education institutions, particularly colleges, which constitute 86% of India's university cadre. The primary objective of this research is to elucidate the various roles and obligations of academic leaders in achieving and sustaining institutional quality and excellence, in line with the stipulations of NEP 2020. In addition, it seeks to propose a strategic planning framework, known as the Institutional Development Plan (IDP), designed to guide pedagogical, organizational and managerial reforms within these institutions. Methodologically, the article employs a conceptual and exploratory paradigm, based on a comprehensive literature review of national guidelines, particularly those promulgated by the University Grants Commission (UGC), as well as existing institutional frameworks. Although no empirical fieldwork has been carried out, the author supports his arguments with solid secondary sources. The results indicate that competent academic leadership is an essential lever for improving performance and ensuring quality in higher education. Leaders are responsible for developing innovative strategies, mobilizing stakeholders and managing structural transformations that have an impact on both programs and governance. Leadership is conceived as a participative process, focused on vision, foresight, change management and team empowerment. Using the proposed IIP framework, the author explains how integrated, context-sensitive planning can facilitate the effective implementation of NEP 2020, ensuring the coherence, effectiveness and sustainability of the initiatives undertaken. In summary, the study establishes a direct correlation between

leadership, educational quality and institutional performance, while highlighting the urgent need to professionalize the role of leadership in Indian higher education.

The primary objective of this research by **Marvello Yang et AL. (2023)** is to examine the influence of organizational leadership, learning orientation and strategic flexibility on the performance indicators of private higher education institutions in Indonesia, focusing on the mediating function of ambidextrous capabilities. The challenge is to determine whether leadership, by cultivating targeted organizational capabilities, can improve the quality of educational services as well as institutional performance. The aim is to determine whether leadership can, through specific organizational capabilities, raise the standards of educational services and institutional effectiveness. To this end, the researchers used a cross-sectional quantitative methodology. An online survey was distributed to 524 rectors or deans of private universities in Indonesia. The data collected were analyzed using SEM-PLS version 4.0 (Structural Equation Modeling

- Partial Least Squares), which facilitates the examination of complex interrelationships between variables. Results indicate that while organizational leadership ability is positively associated with ambidexterity, it does not exert a significant direct influence on institutional performance. In contrast, learning orientation and strategic flexibility have a positive and statistically significant impact on performance. Furthermore, ambidexterity does not mediate the interactions between leadership, learning and flexibility with regard to performance. In other words, an organization's ability to leverage its existing competencies while exploring new opportunities (ambidexterity) does not intrinsically improve organizational performance within the framework evaluated. In conclusion, although leadership remains an essential element of organizational practices, its direct effect on educational performance appears limited if it is not complemented by strategic and cultural initiatives that promote learning and adaptability. This study therefore encourages a reassessment of the mechanisms for improving the quality of educational services in higher education institutions, arguing for a more integrated approach that combines pedagogical innovation and strategic management.

The article by **Suryani Syamsuddin et al (2023)** investigates the central role of leadership in improving the quality of educational services and organizational performance within private higher education institutions in Indonesia. In a context characterized by competitive pressures and rising quality expectations, the research seeks to assess the impact of different leadership styles, with particular emphasis on transformational and transactional leadership, on

institutional performance. To achieve this objective, a quantitative research methodology was employed, involving a survey targeting 257 leaders of private universities in Indonesia, including rectors, deans and heads of academic departments. Data, collected via a structured questionnaire, were then analyzed using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method, facilitated by SmartPLS 3.0 software. The empirical results of the survey reveal that transformational leadership exerts a significant and positive influence on organizational performance, as evidenced by a path coefficient of 0.435 and a p-value of less than 0.05, confirming a strong and statistically significant correlation. On the other hand, transactional leadership also has a positive impact, albeit more moderate, with a coefficient of 0.277, which remains significant ($p < 0.05$).

Collectively, these two leadership styles explain 62% variance ($R^2 = 0.620$) in organizational performance, underlining the substantial explanatory power of the proposed model. In addition, the study elucidates the fact that transformational leadership directly influences the quality of educational services, notably by establishing a culture of excellence, promoting pedagogical innovation, strengthening team motivation and improving academic governance. Leaders who adopt this leadership style cultivate an organizational atmosphere conducive to participation, learning and accountability. Conversely, the laissez-faire leadership style is correlated with ineffective and even detrimental outcomes, underscoring the critical need for proactive engagement by leaders in the strategic management of their institutions. In conclusion, the article emphasizes that the quality and effectiveness of educational services depend profoundly on the leadership skills employed, with a particular focus on transformational leadership. It calls for investment in the training and development of the managerial capabilities of university administrators in order to strengthen governance, increase staff motivation and improve the competitiveness of institutions in an increasingly dynamic higher education landscape.

The main objective of the paper entitled "**The Influence of Leadership Styles on Employee Performance at the University of Somalia pr Ali Araye Addow (2022)**" is to examine how different leadership styles influence employee performance at the University of Somalia (UNISO). More specifically, the study seeks to measure the effect of transformational, transactional and laissez-faire leadership styles on the quality of educational services provided by employees and, more generally, on their job performance. To achieve this objective, a quantitative methodological approach was adopted. The study targeted employees of the University of Somalia, with a representative sample of 326. Data were collected using a questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. The results were analyzed with SPSS version 20

software, using statistical tools such as Pearson correlation, multiple regression and the Cronbach Alpha reliability test, which achieved a value of 0.823, guaranteeing the reliability of the questionnaire.

The results of the study showed a significant correlation between leadership styles and employee performance. In particular, transactional leadership had the highest correlation coefficient ($r= 0.854$), followed by transformational leadership ($r= 0.826$). The "laissez-faire" style showed a weaker but significant correlation ($r= 0.594$). These results show that active leadership styles (transactional and transformational) have a considerable positive impact on employee performance, and thus contribute to improving the quality of educational services within the university. In conclusion, the authors recommend that the management of the University of Somalia promote a transactional leadership style, supported by transformational leadership, while remaining open to the positive dimensions of the laissez-faire style in certain contexts. This combination of styles appears to be an effective strategy for optimizing individual and collective performance, while guaranteeing a high level of quality in the educational services provided.

2.2. Studies : Leadership and service quality :

According to **D. DRUGUŞ et Al (2014)**, the article "Leadership in Higher Education" endeavors to study the importance and progression of leadership within higher education institutions, focusing on the Romanian context and its distinctive features. The authors aim to establish a clear distinction between the concepts of leadership and management, which are often confused, while identifying the leadership styles most appropriate to meet the contemporary challenges facing universities, particularly with regard to governance, quality assurance and institutional transformation. The methodology employed is based on a thorough review of theoretical literature, underpinned by a comparative analysis of leadership styles using established models (Lewin, Likert, Hofstede, Drucker, etc.). The research further integrates an empirical perspective concerning the administration of academic libraries in Romania and Norway, drawing on cultural dimensions to elucidate disparities in management and leadership practices that depend on national contexts. Research findings indicate that transformational, participative and ethical leadership is increasingly necessary in higher education, in view of the growing demands associated with university autonomy, the quality of educational services and the process of internationalization. Leadership is conceptualized as the ability to galvanize individuals around a collective vision, inspire pedagogical innovation and

cultivate a climate of trust and collaboration. Ultimately, the article stresses that the development of leadership adapted to the realities of universities requires the consideration of cultural values, in conjunction with an institutional commitment to the training and support of academic leaders. The article emphasizes that leadership in higher education transcends mere hierarchical positioning and encompasses the ability to anticipate, motivate, inspire and facilitate change. It is also closely linked to the quality of teaching, the involvement of faculty and students, and the establishment of an organizational culture based on ethics, responsibility and innovation.

The **Kofi Nkonkonya 2024** study In an African environment characterized by significant barriers to education, this article examines how higher education leaders can be equipped with innovative management strategies to improve the quality of educational services. The main objective of the study is to examine how educational leadership, based on the transformational model, can positively influence the management of higher education institutions. To answer this question, the authors carried out a systematic literature review between 1967 and 2023. Information was extracted from leading scientific databases, including Scopus, Web of Science and the International Bibliography of the Social Sciences. After a meticulous process of inclusion and exclusion, 43 scholarly articles were selected and analyzed using a thematic methodology. The results indicate that transformational leadership facilitates the introduction of innovative administrative practices that can significantly improve the quality of educational services. The practices identified include motivating staff, integrating advanced technologies, adopting agile methodologies, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, organizing training seminars and workshops, and reinforcing a positive organizational culture. These are tangible ways of promoting educational innovation, strengthening governance and improving teaching and learning conditions within educational establishments. The article also highlights the vital importance of professional development programs for higher education administrators. These programs serve to improve their skills in educational management, which is an essential prerequisite for the implementation of sustainable, quality reforms. In this context, leadership is conceptualized not only as a hierarchical role, but also as an ability to inspire, mobilize and transform institutions to meet contemporary educational demands in Africa.

The article by **Milind Sathye 2004** The main aim of this study is to analyze academic leadership practices in higher education, by exploring the perceptions and experiences of three leaders of a higher education institution in Australia. The author seeks to determine the extent to which the observed leadership styles align with Ramsden's (1998) conceptual model, which identifies

the key dimensions of effective leadership in academic institutions. To achieve this objective, the author adopts a qualitative approach based on semi-structured interviews. Three senior university managers were interviewed using a structured interview guide covering the key aspects of university leadership as defined by Ramsden. Responses were analyzed using a thematic and comparative interpretation method.

The results show that the three leaders share a number of points in common with Ramsden's model, particularly with regard to encouraging quality teaching, supporting research and valuing staff skills. In terms of teaching, they stress the importance of mentoring, continuous assessment and pedagogical adaptation. In terms of research, they stress the importance of encouraging scientific publication, interdisciplinary collaboration and support for young researchers. In addition, the three leaders adopt management practices conducive to a healthy organizational climate, such as fair delegation of tasks, recognition of efforts and open communication.

The study shows that academic leadership contributes significantly to improving the quality of educational services. Leaders who remain close to teaching and scientific activities are better able to support teachers, encourage student success and reinforce the university's mission. The study also highlights the diversity of leadership styles, emphasizing that collaborative, ethical and development-oriented approaches are most effective in the university context.

In conclusion, this research highlights the decisive role of leadership in the quality of educational services in higher education, while providing a framework for reflection for academic leaders wishing to improve their own practice.

Evelyn Chiyevo Garwe's article "The Effect of Institutional Leadership on Quality of Higher Education Provision" examines the impact of institutional leadership on teaching quality and performance in Zimbabwe's higher education sector. The primary objective of this research is to determine how university leaders, through their management and governance practices, cultivate an environment conducive to the provision of quality education in public and private higher education institutions. The methodological framework used is based on a descriptive paradigm that integrates qualitative and quantitative research techniques. The author used a literature review, administered questionnaires to 161 participants, conducted 25 semi-structured interviews and carried out direct observation studies. The research sample comprises a diverse set of stakeholders from four universities (two public and two private), including vice-chancellors, faculty members, administrative staff and students. Research findings indicate that

leaders who champion the intellectual progress of educators and learners, while fostering a learning-centered culture, directly improve the quality of university provision. These leaders have the ability to mobilize human and organizational resources to strengthen internal processes and cultivate a favorable educational climate. The transformational leadership style, characterized by vision, participation and motivation, has been identified as an essential mechanism for guaranteeing educational quality. Universities led by transformational leaders show better organized quality assurance units, increased stakeholder engagement and higher standards. In addition, the study highlights several obstacles: excessive teaching loads, inadequate infrastructure, exclusion from decision-making processes and a lack of trust between management and academic staff at some private institutions. These factors are detrimental to the overall performance of universities. Nevertheless, institutions that adopt participative and transparent leadership aimed at excellence tend to achieve more favorable results in terms of the quality of their educational services. In conclusion, the study shows that institutional leadership contributes to improving quality and performance in higher education. It also calls for the creation of a strong national quality assurance agency to help universities achieve their educational goals.

2.3. Studies identified : leadership and ISO 21001 :

In a qualitative survey conducted in 2023, Soukaina El Hajjaji examined the implementation of leadership principles in the context of ISO 21001, focusing on Abdelmalek Essaâdi University. The main objective of this research is to assess the degree of commitment of the university's management to the requirements defined by the aforementioned standard, in particular those relating to participative leadership, learner orientation and continuous improvement. The survey instrument used was a structured 17-item questionnaire, which was administered to the university's administrative staff. Responses were quantified using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree", with an additional "don't know" option. The target demographic group, comprising administrative staff for the 2021-2022 academic year, consisted of 588 people, according to official records. From a theoretical sample of 233 (calculated with a 5% margin of error and 95% confidence level), 196 valid responses were obtained, giving a response rate of 84%. Data were analyzed using an Excel spreadsheet, which included variable coding and descriptive statistical evaluation. The results indicate an insufficient level of management commitment to several key aspects of leadership advocated by ISO 21001, including the adoption of a process-oriented approach, the implementation of internal policies to improve employee satisfaction, and the absence of effective motivational

strategies to achieve corporate objectives. In addition, the study highlights a still insufficient commitment to learners with special needs, revealing gaps in equitable access to infrastructure and learning environments. On the other hand, more favorable results were noted with regard to continuous improvement, internal communication and guidance tailored to students' needs and expectations. The author concludes that institutional quality has a direct influence on the academic development of students and the professionalization of future graduates. She emphasizes that in an environment characterized by increasing demands from society and stakeholders, quality assurance has become a strategic imperative for higher education institutions. Leadership is seen as a crucial element in this respect, serving as a catalyst for transformation and guiding the pursuit of excellence. When exercised effectively and integrated into an organizational culture focused on results, leadership facilitates the alignment of efforts, the mobilization of human resources and the achievement of the institutional mission in a sustainable and consistent manner.

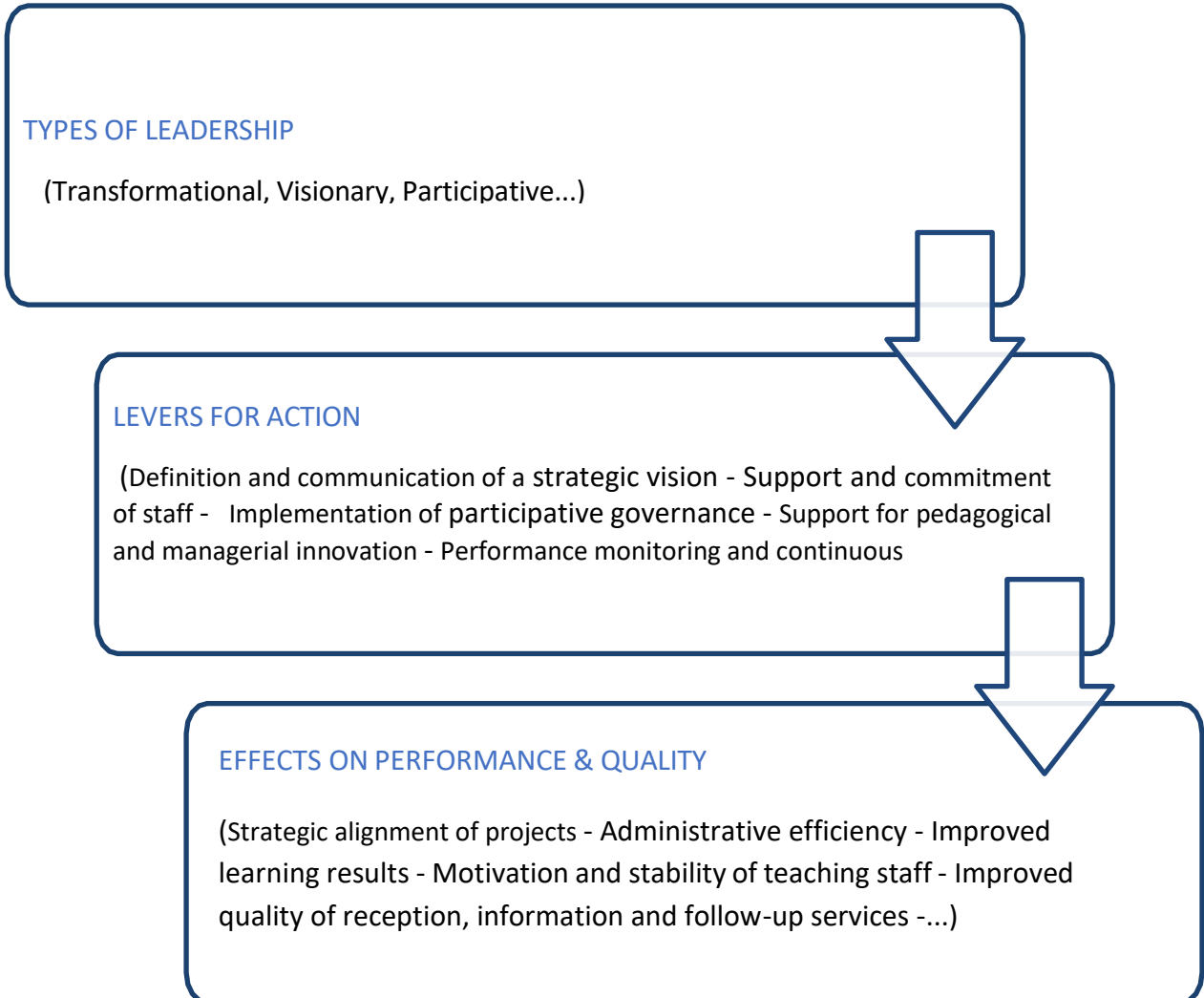
3. Discussion :

The objective of this literature review was to answer the question "What is the relationship between leadership and organizational performance and service quality within higher education institutions? Overall, the results appear relatively consistent, indicating that there is a significant relationship between the two variables, with leadership exerting an influence on both organizational performance and service quality in higher education institutions. Generally speaking, different types of leadership appear to have a particular impact on the organizational dynamics of higher education institutions (HEIs). Among these, transformational and visionary leadership are most often linked to improved institutional performance, stakeholder engagement and the establishment of a quality culture. These findings corroborate the claims of many researchers, particularly those who have examined the influence of strategic vision and managerial involvement on staff motivation, student satisfaction and the adaptability of organizational structures to change (El Hajjaji, 2023; Imane, 2020; Kamel, 2019). In addition, the stipulations of ISO 21001 have been recognized as a fundamental frame of reference for fostering visionary leadership within educational institutions. Various studies, including those conducted in the Moroccan context, demonstrate that implementing the principles set out in this standard - such as management commitment, consideration of learners' needs and expectations, and a process-oriented approach - helps to improve transparency, managerial effectiveness and stakeholder satisfaction. As a result, ISO 21001 is seen not only as a technical instrument, but also as a strategic lever for managerial transformation. In addition, other research highlights the

specific skills expected of higher education leaders: the ability to formulate a clear vision, promote pedagogical innovation, manage conflict constructively and implement participative governance. These leadership qualities appear to be increasingly crucial as HEIs evolve in environments characterized by fiscal constraints, structural reforms and growing societal expectations.

However, the study also highlighted a number of limitations. On the one hand, many studies remain essentially descriptive and do not systematically establish causal relationships between leadership and organizational performance. On the other hand, the majority of research identified focuses on a limited number of national contexts, in particular Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey and South Africa, which limits the generalizability of results. Few studies also employ mixed methodologies that integrate both quantitative and qualitative data, which are nonetheless valuable for understanding the complexity of the phenomenon. The practical ramifications of this study are significant: higher education institutions would benefit from integrating the principles of strategic and visionary leadership into their governance frameworks. In addition, training programs for university managers should include modules focusing on leadership, change management and quality assurance, to enhance their ability to effectively manage the transformations underway. In short, leadership is an essential success factor in higher education. It influences not only organizational outcomes, but also the quality of experience of students, educators and administrative staff. As a result, this area merits further investigation through rigorous and comparative empirical research, particularly in developing countries where the challenges associated with university governance are significant. Based on the 17 article abstracts analyzed, a conceptual framework is proposed that defines the role of leadership in improving organizational performance and service quality within higher education institutions (HEIs). This framework is structured around three main areas: types of leadership, levers for action and effects on performance.

Figure N°1 : The role of leadership in improving organization performance and service quality in HEIs :



Source : Authors

Conclusion

Currently, the examination of leadership has achieved increased importance and engagement in the academic sphere (Croucher and Lacy, 2020). An in-depth analysis of articles appearing in leading scientific publications reveals a clear tendency to focus research in the university context. Broadly speaking, leadership is defined as the ability to exert influence over others and to direct the efforts of organizational members towards achieving the goals of a particular institution (Erkutlu & Chafra, 2018). In contemporary discourse, leadership's potential to affect the achievement of social and operational effectiveness, and ultimately institutional prosperity, is widely recognized (Croucher & Lacy, 2020). In line with this logic, leadership is considered one of the most important and compelling organizational phenomena in higher education (Riquelme-Castañeda et al., 2020). At this stage, leadership is considered one of the fundamental cornerstones for achieving excellence in higher education (Alzafari & Kratzer, 2019), given that leaders possess the ability to elucidate roles and responsibilities, ensure appropriate resource allocation, foster partnerships and improve the management of individuals and processes (Parvin, 2019). In this regard, Butler-Henderson & Crawford (2020) argue that leaders within universities must demonstrate technical, social, emotional and managerial competencies, as these attributes are integral to achieving the vision, mission and strategic goals of these institutions (Adewale & Ghavifekr, 2019). In summary, leadership is seen as an essential competency to support institutional competitiveness, as the leader's responsibilities extend beyond managing implementation processes to encompass facilitating development, administering change and cultivating a quality-centric culture (Alzafari & Kratzer, 2019), thereby fostering the generation of innovative ideas and amplifying efforts to achieve institutional effectiveness (Munir et al., 2019). Consequently, many researchers advocate the promotion of this capability among formal leaders and the academic community as a whole (Bitzer & Cronje, 2019; Butler-Henderson & Crawford, 2020; Fam et al., 2020; Moodly & Toni, 2019; Thornton, 2020).

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