

Incidence of Pedagogical Leadership in the Students' Performance in Higher Education

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Abstract: Since the creation of the European Higher Education Area EHEA in 1999, the development of new teaching models, in which the student takes responsibility for their learning, has been favoured. In this educational context, pedagogical leadership, understood as that oriented to the improvement of student achievement and performance, is presented as a response capable of promoting and improving both the quality of Higher Education and the teaching-learning processes.

This study is intended to analyse the incidence of pedagogical leadership in Higher Education institutions from the most current scientific literature. Pedagogical leadership can be defined as a leadership that will have an influence on the student's performance. For this, a systematic review was carried out in the Web of Science and Scopus databases. 17 of the 288 articles reviewed were accepted. Therefore, the representation in the scientific literature of leadership aimed at improving student performance in Higher Education is still limited and incipient. As main contributions, the need to incorporate this leadership model in Higher Education institutions is highlighted, as an element of change and improvement of quality in them, as well as to evaluate the results obtained after its incorporation in Higher Education.

Keywords: Pedagogical Leadership, e-leadership, Higher Education, systematic review, academic performance.

Introduction

The Bologna Process and the creation of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) emerged to promote European convergence in education, which implies the equalization and qualification of university education in different member countries, through numerous initiatives and programs. A new concept of academic training is therefore necessary, focusing on student learning as well as re-evaluating the function of the university professor. This function would be one which encourages the students' motivation, and recognizes efforts aimed at improving educational quality and innovation. This would take place through a series of tools which contribute to the creation of this new training model.

In this context, we find that leadership also begins to stand out as an important part of this proposed academic training. According to Lorenzo (2005, 371), we can define leadership as "the function of energizing a group or an organization to generate its growth based on a shared mission or project." From this perspective, leadership is an inherent function of an entire group. It is not an individual characteristic, but a role that must be shared among different members of every institution, being a complete and cohesive unit of the group, not of a person, nor a position.

When we transfer the concept of leadership to the educational field, various authors present us with the idea of "instructional, pedagogical or educational leadership". (Lorenzo and Castro 1999, 191).

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According to these authors, both a director and any other educator who participates with him in leadership in an educational institution must make the pedagogical and educational perspectives, along with the curricula, the main object of their concerns and activities as a professional. In this way, educational leadership is in the institution, rather than the person of the director or the teachers. The institution, then, is the one that must generate the conditions to strengthen and consolidate their leadership capacity.

It should also be noted how pedagogical leadership is becoming a principal factor in improving education, as well as a political priority, as various studies conclude that the exercise of pedagogical leadership in education determines, in an important way, its quality.

As Navarro-Corona (2016, 54) states, "leadership has been studied as a concept in different social fields and observed as a phenomenon for decades in different cultures. The bibliographic production that has emerged is vast and growing." Indeed, research on leadership and its effects has been expanding, and therefore becoming methodologically enriching in recent decades.

According to Esguerra and Contreras (2016), leadership is a complex phenomenon that is determined by a large number of variables that interact with each other. Among which, we find the competencies and individual traits of the leaders, socio-cultural aspects, the characteristics of the collaborators, as well as the environment or context in which it develops. Likewise, following these authors, we find that we have enough empirical evidence to affirm that leadership can be learned, as it is made up of skills that, by definition, can be acquired through experience. Similarly, as it is assumed that leadership occurs relationally among people in order to achieve objectives, both cooperation and collaboration, as well as social skills and communication, will constitute essential aspects for organizational development.

Tying this to an educational context, we find that if on the one hand teaching staff is the first factor related to student learning, leadership emerges as the second factor that will most influence student performance (Jaime-Cuadros et al. 2016). This is because leadership can create a series of conditions and contexts in which the faculty can better carry out its work. Waite and Nelson (2005, 390) state that management can aim to improve the effectiveness of teachers in their teaching practice and, consequently, student learning. Indeed, these authors point out that faculty management can actively influence the academic and vital opportunities for students. When attention is directed more towards teaching and learning, along with the conditions that influence them, these factors play an important role in instructional improvement, curriculum, faculty development, and even organizational development.

Within this framework, this study aims to review the degree of integration of pedagogical leadership in the context of Higher Education, as well as its influence on improving student performance. Specifically, the following objectives, based on the studies that have been done so far, were considered:

- 1) Analysing the inclusion of pedagogical leadership in Higher Education
- 2) Determining the relationship between pedagogical leadership and the performance of students in Higher Education
- 3) Understanding to what extent leadership influences the quality and results of Higher Education institutions

Methodology

Given that the purpose of this study is a documentary analysis, which requires systematized strategies for the management of scientific documents, a systematic review methodology has been adopted. The system applied abides by the protocol presented in the PRISMA statement (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis), concerning the eligibility and selection of studies. This, then, allows the elaboration of a transparent, complete,

and precise publication in which it is described why the review was carried out, how the studies were identified and selected, and what has been found (Page et al. 2021).

Figure 1. Flow chart of the sample filtering process for the systematic review

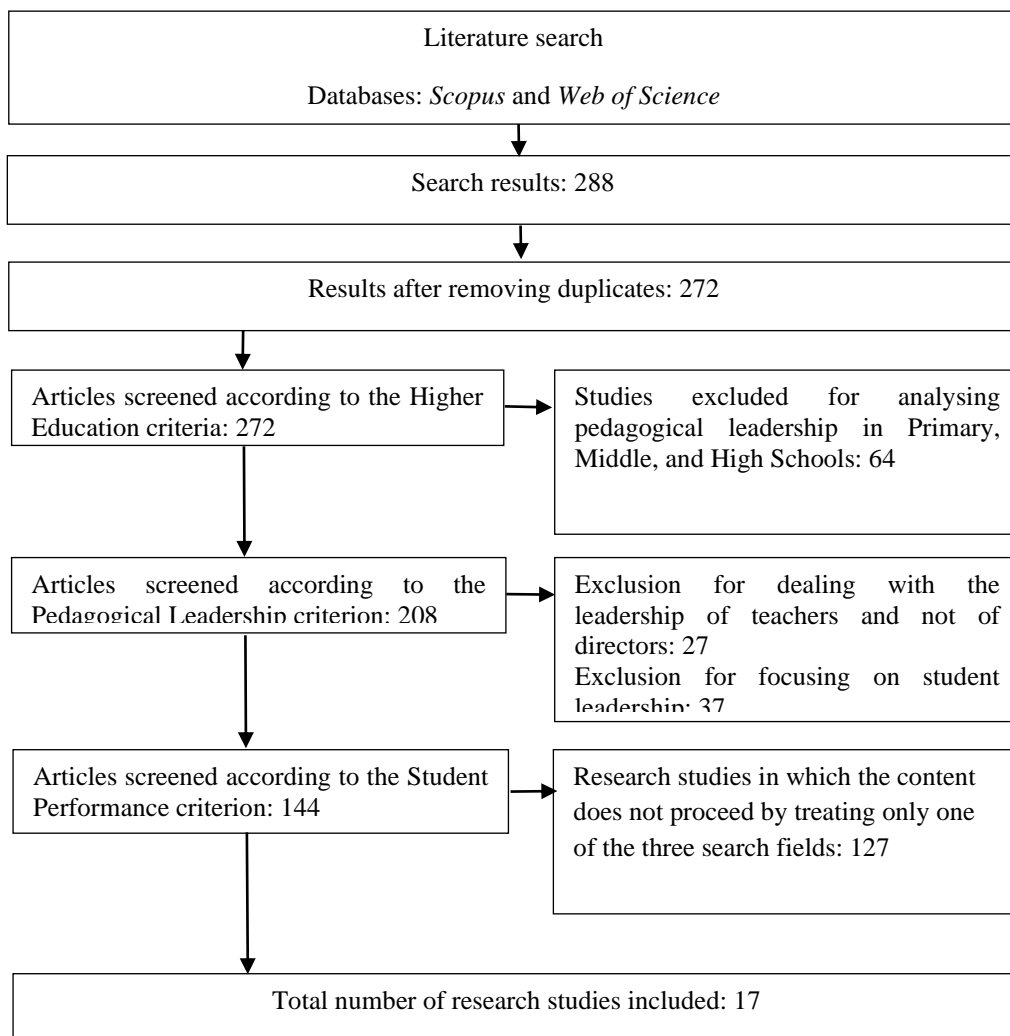


Figure 1. Flow chart of the sample filtering process for the systematic review

Source: Own elaboration

Inclusion Criteria

Filters were applied for the language (only English and Spanish), as the results found in Spanish did not reach a sufficient minimum, which would have allowed us to utilize only them in the review. No filters were applied for the date of publication. For the selection of the articles, the following criteria were taken into account: (1) that the leadership was oriented towards

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improving the performance and achievement of the students; (2) that the pedagogical leadership was exercised by the directors (directors and program coordinators); (3) that the field of study was Higher Education.

Based on the first criterion, articles were selected whose theme concerned the influence that leadership has on student performance. Therefore, studies on leadership oriented solely to management or the achievement of other types of objectives were excluded. When applying the second criterion, articles were selected that analysed the leadership exercised by the directors and program coordinators- that is, those directly responsible for the university programs. In this case, articles that analysed the leadership exercised by both teaching teams and students were excluded. Finally, when applying the third criterion, only the results that focused on Higher or University Education were selected, thus discarding those articles in which the context was the equivalent of the educational stages corresponding to Elementary School, Middle School, and High School.

Information Sources

Two electronic databases were consulted: Web of Science and Scopus. Searches were conducted between October 19 and November 2, 2021.

Search Results

The search parameters selected to carry out the review were summaries or abstracts that included the words Pedagogical Leadership, Student Performance/Achievement, and Higher Education (Educational Leadership + Students Performance + Higher Education). Filters were applied for the research areas and keywords (Table 1).

Table 1: Search terms

<i>Database</i>	<i>Search terms</i>	<i>Filters</i>
<i>Web of Science</i>	Educational leadership + Students performance + Higher education	Research Areas: -Education Educational research -Psychology -Business Economics -Behavioural Science
<i>Scopus</i>	Educational leadership + Students performance + Higher education	Subject Area: -Social Science -Business Keyword: -Leadership -Education -Higher Education

Source: Own elaboration

Selection of Studies

The first search was carried out in the Web of Science with the terms “Educational Leadership + Student’s Performance” that generated 91 results. Given that the use of the Saxon genitive could lead to a reduction in obtaining significant results, a second search was carried out, eliminating the apostrophe. Thus, the terms were “Educational Leadership + Students performance” with which 824 results were obtained. In order to not exclude any relevant

articles, we selected this search, discarding the previous one. When delimiting the results to the context of "Higher Education", the search term "Higher Education" was added. The search result from October 19 to November 2, 2021, was 282 results. This last search was replicated: "Educational leadership + students performance + Higher education / University" in Scopus, obtaining 183 results.

We applied the filter "Research Areas" to the 282 results obtained in the Web of Science, delimiting the following research areas: "Education and Educational Research," "Psychology," "Business Economics," and "Behavioural Science," which generated a search result of 229 articles.

To the 183 results obtained in Scopus, we first applied the "Subject Area" filter, delimiting the following research areas: "Social Science" and "Business", which generated a search result of 130 research publications. Subsequently, we applied the filter "Key Word" delimiting ourselves to the following keywords: "Leadership," "Education," and "Higher Education" obtaining a search result of 59 research publications.

The full search produced 288 articles, of which 11 were excluded for being duplicates, and another 5 were identified as duplicates by the authors.

Data Collection Process

The selected studies were classified according to the type of article (experimental research, conceptual paper, or systematic review) as can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Articles accepted in the review

	<i>Key words</i>	<i>Type of study</i>
Akhtar et al. (2019)	Transformational leadership; Team communication; Team Creativity; Team trust	Experimental Research
Alenezi (2017)	Educational Leadership; Practice; Factors; Northern Border University; Academic Staff; Performance	Experimental Research
Alward and Phelps (2019)	Virtual leader, Online virtual leadership, Virtual higher education, Educational leadership, Academic leadership, Higher education, Online learning	Qualitative Phenomenological Study
Badri et al. (2006)	Baldrige Award; Quality awards; Higher education; Performance measures; United Arab Emirate	Experimental Research

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Banker and Bhal (2020, 05, 01)	Academic leadership, World class university, Indian higher education, roles, responsibilities	Experimental Research (qualitative)
Delener (2013)	Leadership; Higher Education; Excellence	Systematic review
Fernández González et al. (2020)	Leaders' character, Pedagogical leadership, Quality evaluation, Students' and staff perception, Virtue ethics, Vocational Education	Experimental Research (qualitative)
Hong et al. (2021)	Organizational Purpose, Leadership engagement, Student success, Alumni involvement, Social Reputation	Experimental Research
Kantabutra (2010)	Educational planning and administration; Leadership; Higher education; Performance management	Conceptual Paper
Latif and Marimon, (2019)	Career satisfaction; Higher education; Life satisfaction; Scale development; Servant leadership; Spain	Experimental Research
Meghji et al. (2020)	Knowledge management, Knowledge sharing, Higher education, Knowledge discovery, Education	Experimental Research
Migliore (2012)	Leadership; leadership theory; Higher education	Conceptual paper
Nikolou-Walker and Curley (2012)	Higher education; Educational systems and institutions; Leadership; Work-based learning	Conceptual paper
Orozco et al. (2020, June 1)	Quality insurance, Quality management, Higher education	Position Article

	institutions	
Smith (2020)	Transformational leadership, Higher education, Panama, Professional development, Faculty, Faculty supervisor.	Experimental Research
Sutin (2018)	Educational administration; Organizational transformation; Reform; Business models; Banking industry	Conceptual paper
Vu, Vu and Ngoc (2020)	Higher education; Academic research; Transformational Leadership	Experimental Research

Source: Own elaboration

Subsequently, the following issues within the scope of the management of Higher Education institutions were addressed: purpose of leadership; leadership; and improvement of the quality of the institutions. Finally, it was analysed which treatment was given to leadership based on the theoretical terms and approaches used (Leadership models and characteristics of effective leaders) (Table 3).

Table 3. Scope of the management of institutions of Higher Education and Treatment of leadership

	<i>Purpose of Leadership</i>	<i>Leadership and improvement of the quality of the Institutions.</i>	<i>Underlying leadership models</i>
Akhtar et al. (2019)	Importance of leadership to stimulate the faculty and students as well as to generate a collaborative environment	Direct relationship between leadership and goal achievement	Pedagogical leadership and transformational leadership
Alenezi (2017)	Relationship between leadership and improvement of student learning	Relationship between effective educational leadership and staff involvement as well as improving the student experience	Pedagogical leadership

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Alward and Phelps (2019)	Direct relationship between leadership and student outcomes as well as educational quality	Relationship between effective leadership and the success of the institution	Pedagogical leadership and transformational leadership
Badri et al. (2006)	Direct relationship between leadership and educational quality	Relationship between leadership and goal achievement and improvement of the student experience	Pedagogical leadership
Banker and Bhal (2020, 05, 01)	Direct relationship between leadership and educational quality	Direct relationship between leadership and goal achievement	Pedagogical leadership
Delener (2013)	Relationship between leadership and improvement of attention to the needs of students.	Need for leadership not only to improve student results but to do so effectively	Pedagogical leadership, distributed leadership, and transformational leadership.
Fernández González et al. (2020)	Direct relationship between leadership and educational quality	Differences between the perception of leadership by both students and teaching staff	Pedagogical leadership and distributed leadership
Hong et al. (2021)	Direct relationship between leadership and educational quality	Direct relationship between leadership and results	Pedagogical leadership
Kantabutra (2010)	Relationship between the vision of leaders and performance in Higher Education	Relationship between effective educational leadership and the achievement of the objectives of the Educational Institution	Pedagogical leadership
Latif and Marimon, (2019)	Direct relationship between leadership and educational	Direct relationship between leadership and goal achievement	Pedagogical leadership

	quality		
Meghji et al. (2020)	Inclusion of leadership and knowledge practices	Relationship between the management of institutions and their results	Pedagogical leadership and distributed leadership.
Migliore (2012)	Relationship between leadership and achievement of educational excellence	Direct relationship between leadership and goal achievement	Pedagogical leadership
Nikolou-Walker and Curley (2012)	Relationship between leadership and improvement of student learning	Relationship between leadership and results and reputation of the institutions	Pedagogical leadership
Orozco et al. (2020, June 1)	Direct relationship between leadership and educational quality	Relationship between the internal management of educational quality and the achievement of higher standards in accordance with the needs of the students	Pedagogical leadership and distributed leadership
Smith (2020)	Leadership in educational institutions of higher education is a challenge in the search for quality and constant changes	Relationship between leadership and goal achievement	Pedagogical leadership and transformational leadership
Sutin (2018)	Application of leadership theories in higher education	Relationship between leadership and goal achievement	Pedagogical leadership
Vu, Vu and Ngoc (2020)	Relationship between leadership in promoting research and excellence	Relationship between leadership and goal achievement	Pedagogical leadership and transformational leadership

Source: Own elaboration

Results

Only 6.25% of the articles found met the inclusion criteria and were accepted for review, taking into account the objectives that were set. The most frequent type of article was the experimental report (58.8%), followed by the theoretical review (35.3%) and lastly the systematic review (5.9%). Given that the third objective of the study was to verify to what extent leadership influences the quality and results of Higher Education institutions, it should be noted that according to the purpose of leadership, we found that the relationship between leadership in Higher Education institutions and the achievement of high standards in educational quality was the category with the most records (53%). Likewise, nearly half of the records (47%) presented a direct relationship between leadership in Higher Education institutions and the performance and achievement of students, specifically in the results they obtained, an aspect that is related to the second objective raised in the study. Finally, some records also related leadership to a greater development of research and the adaptation of Higher Education institutions to a collaborative context (11.8%).

Table 4. Objects of study of the selected works

	<i>Type of study</i>	<i>Object of study</i>
Akhtar et al. (2019)	Experimental Research	The effect of transformational leadership and team communication on task performance
Alenezi (2017)	Experimental Research	The importance of educational leadership practices in higher education, the style of educational leadership, and the factors that affect the effective implementation of educational leadership practices in the Northern Border University of Saudi Arabia
Alward and Phelps (2019)	Qualitative Phenomenological Study	Leaders' perceptions of the competencies needed to effectively lead virtual teams in online education
Badri et al. (2006)	Experimental Research	Causal relationships in the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award (MBNQA) Criteria for Excellence in Educational Performance
Banker and Bhal (2020, 05, 01)	Experimental Research (qualitative)	The key roles and responsibilities of leaders. Exploration of nine responsibilities (vision, fundraising, safeguarding, managing intellectuals, attracting bright students, social inclusion, social responsibility, academic engagement, and stewardship) under four latent categories of academic leadership roles that included boundary-breaking, promotion of human talent, social contribution, and

		operations
Delener (2013)	Systematic review	Key findings in the existing literature investigating styles and approaches to leadership behaviours that are associated with effectiveness in higher education
Fernández González et al. (2020)	Experimental Research (qualitative)	The leadership of the directors of educational institutions from the perspective of the ethics of virtue
Hong et al. (2021)	Experimental Research	The relationships between organizational purpose, leadership practices, and sustainable outcomes for universities in emerging economies
Kantabutra (2010)	Conceptual Paper	Design of a research model to examine the relationships between the components of vision and performance of higher education institutions, as measured by financial stability, student satisfaction and growth, process improvement, learning and productivity, and teacher satisfaction
Latif and Marimon, (2019)	Experimental Research	The validation of a scale to measure the servant leadership of university leaders and the analysis of the relationship between servant leadership with professional and life satisfaction of academics
Meghji et al. (2020)	Experimental Research	The basic concept of Knowledge Management and the need for Knowledge Management in higher education centres by proposing a framework to improve knowledge processes and practices
Migliore (2012)	Conceptual paper	Design of an integrated and trust-focused model to achieve educational excellence in higher education, with an emphasis on governing boards and strategies for academic quality, and financial performance
Nikolou-Walker and Curley (2012)	Conceptual paper	The application of work-based learning in higher education by analysing the relationships, roles, and responsibilities of

		employers and higher education institutions in adult continuing education and training
Orozco et al. (2020, June 1)	Position Article	The challenges of quality management in higher education institutions in Ecuador, in relation to the current accreditation model
Smith (2020)	Experimental Research	Review of the literature on transformational leadership in the context of higher education, and evaluation of the impact of transformational leadership educational intervention aimed at teaching supervisors in higher education institutions in Panama, on the perspectives and attitudes of the participants
Sutin (2018)	Conceptual paper	The relationship between effective leadership and its effects in educational centres that apply it, analysing different professional experiences in the private sector
Vu, Vu and Ngoc (2020)	Experimental Research	The proper leadership style in higher education institutions and the role of the leader in promoting academic research in Vietnamese universities

Source: Own elaboration

Additionally, the first objective of our study was to analyse the inclusion of pedagogical leadership in Higher Education. In this sense, we found that when analysing how leadership in Higher Education institutions contributes to the improvement of the quality of such institutions, 53% of included articles indicate the relationship between leadership and the achievement of objectives of educational institutions, among which are the results of the students. Furthermore, we found that 23.5% of the articles studied relate leadership to an improvement in the experience of students, the achievement of higher standards, and an increase in the reputation of the institutions.

It should be noted that only one of the studies analysed refers to a Higher Education institution whose delivery model is 100% online. Indeed, Alward and Phelps (2019) in their qualitative phenomenological study, explores the perceptions of leaders regarding the necessary skills to lead virtual teams effectively in online education. They highlight how organizational success depends, among others, on the comprehensive training of virtual leaders, trust, emotional intelligence, and effective and respectful communication.

Indeed, communication technologies are being implemented in educational contexts, especially in Higher Education, since the number of universities that offer studies from the online modality continues to increase. In fact, virtual education is characterized by being a teaching-learning process based on the principles of an active pedagogy, in which the student is responsible for participating frequently and effectively in different virtual environments. These new online modalities maintain some characteristics of distance education, such as the fact that

students and teachers do not physically coincide in classes, but with the possibility of synchronous and asynchronous interaction, both spatially and temporally.

In this line, Das Gupta (2011) highlights how different authors have concluded that the leaders of today's organizations, including Higher Education organizations, have to deal with two interrelated forces. First, the global dispersion which is increasing and is dividing and subdividing both in the environment of customers and suppliers. On the other hand, the exponential expansion of communication through information and communication technologies, which has led to a greater frequency of daily interactions with co-workers, subordinates, and bosses who may or may not be geographically dispersed.

It is worth noting how Avolio and Kahai (2003) affirm that there will be significant differences between leading a traditional organization and leading those that have virtual environments mediated by information and communication technologies. As such, these environments seem to require leaders who can deal with the paradoxes and dilemmas as well as the complexity of the behaviours associated with their use. Therefore, new skills are needed to create and maintain groups with great performance across differing borders or limits.

However, we also have to keep in mind that some leadership fundamentals will probably remain the same even in this new context. Even so, the need arises to emphasize leadership skills with new technologies, as well as to develop effective communication skills, interpersonal skills, and the ability to deal with distributed leadership in a context characterized by both complexity and uncertainty.

Regarding leadership style, in his study, Alenezi (2017) analyses the importance of educational leadership practices in Higher Education, identifying different styles of educational leadership, as well as the factors that affect the effective implementation of educational leadership practices. At Northern Border University in Saudi Arabia Banker and Bhal (2020, May 1) examine the challenges of the Indian Higher education sector by looking at what academic leaders at world-ranked institutions are doing to respond. With their study, they seek to identify the key functions and responsibilities of leaders, exploring nine responsibilities: vision, fundraising, safeguarding, and managing intellectuals, attracting intelligent students, social inclusion, social responsibility, academic participation, and administration. They do so under four latent categories of academic leadership roles that include: Boundary Breaking, Nurturing Human Talent, Social Contribution, and Operations using a six-step thematic analysis approach.

Likewise, Delener (2013) examines whether higher education leaders are truly taking the path of success and whether, in doing so, they are implementing a transformational or transactional leadership style. Specifically, it investigates the styles and approaches to leadership behaviours that are associated with effectiveness in higher education. For their part, Alward and Phelps (2019) explore leaders' perceptions of the competencies needed to effectively lead virtual teams in online education, highlighting seven main themes: training and development; trust; emotional intelligence; communication/team building/technology; employee recognition and motivation; leadership styles; and virtual leadership competencies unique to Higher Education.

On the other hand, it is worth noting how Fernández-González et al. (2020) investigate the leadership of directors of educational institutions from the perspective of virtue ethics, while Nikolou-Walker and Curley (2012) examine the relationships between employers and higher education institutions questioning the roles and responsibilities of each in adult continuing education and training.

Finally, it should be noted how Vu, Vu and Ngoc (2020) in their study determine the appropriate leadership style in higher education institutions as well as the role of the leader in promoting academic research in Vietnamese universities. These authors also highlight the need for excellent and effective leadership to develop employees as a sustainable competitive advantage.

When specifying the type of leadership that appears in each of the studies, pedagogical leadership is the most identified, finding references to it in 100% of the studies analysed. It should be noted that in most of the works it is not cited as such (Pedagogical Leadership), since the reference, in most cases, is found as Educational Leadership. However, this term (Educational Leadership) is conceived as leadership which is oriented to achieve an improvement in the performance of the students.

We also found numerous references to transformational leadership, which appears in 29.4% of the studies analysed, and to distributed leadership, present in 23.5% of the studies. Indeed, Akhtar et al. (2019) investigate the effect of transformational leadership and team communication on task performance. They suggested that the perception of team transformation leadership has a positive effect on both communication and team confidence to measure high task performance. For his part, Smith (2020) reviews the literature on transformational leadership, applying it to the unique context of Higher Education, while detailing a transformational leadership educational intervention aimed at teaching supervisors in higher education institutions in Panama. Sutin (2018), for his part, highlights that transformative organizations are innovative, adaptable, aware of the context, and bridge the gap between leaders and their employees to provide products and services at attractive prices for their clients, stating that educational institutions that by applying these lessons, will be better positioned to meet the expectations of students and other stakeholders.

Finally, Migliore (2012) presents an integrated model focused on trust to achieve educational excellence in Higher Education institutions, highlighting strategies to achieve the development of teacher-leaders, creating a culture of shared leadership and effective governance to achieve positive results. Likewise, it demonstrates how trust between the members of the institution is essential to create collaborative environments for innovative change and excellence in educational performance.

Discussion

The first objective set in this systematic review was to analyze the inclusion of pedagogical leadership in higher education. The analysis of the studied literature shows that, despite the demonstrated importance of the influence of leadership on the performance of students in the context of compulsory education (Primary and Secondary), when we refer to Higher Education institutions, its integration is not yet sufficiently developed. An example of this is that before the search described in this study took place, a query was carried out in the same databases and with the same filters, including only the term "Pedagogical Leadership", with 1,586 results appearing. However, once the second search term, "Higher Education," was added, the results were reduced to 315, which gives an idea of the limitation of the term "Pedagogical Leadership" (translated literally) in the university context. On the other hand, a query was also carried out, replacing the term "Pedagogical Leadership" with "Educational Leadership", obtaining in this case 16,255 results, which was reduced to 3,051 when we filtered the search results by adding "Higher Education." Similarly, we observed a large reduction in results (81.23%) by limiting the field to "Higher Education."

An explanation of this situation could be attributed to the fact that, unlike compulsory education institutions, the university is not solely dedicated to teaching, but also integrating three essential and basic functions: teaching, research, and extension.

However, it is worth asking if Higher Education institutions are attributing the proper importance to pedagogical leadership, since in this review we find that Higher Education institutions are complex organizations where management is a challenge for the leaders (Smith, 2020:39). Indeed, universities are expected not only to create knowledge, improve equity, and respond to student needs, but to do so more efficiently and effectively. In this sense, leadership

is presented as a fundamental element for institutional success in achieving this transformation, as well as a critical factor for the improvement of universities (Delener 2013, 19-20).

Similarly, we note that leadership is identified as a driver of all components of the Baldrige System, including measurement, analysis and knowledge management, strategic planning, faculty, staff approach, and process management. It should also be noted that all Baldrige components or categories are significantly linked to the organizational outcomes represented by the two outcome categories of organizational performance and student: the stakeholder and market focus (Badri et al., 2006).

When determining the relationship between pedagogical leadership and the performance of students in Higher Education, as we laid out in our second objective, we can affirm how the effective leader must be able to create effective communication strategies and rules; promote the development of relationships of trust within the team; be able to give and receive feedback as well as recognition; establish a behavioural model that the participants can put into practice; understand the socio-emotional aspects of the team; maintain a healthy interaction between team members and be able to manage conflicts that may arise.

On the other hand, the perception of a team's transformational leadership has a positive effect on both communication and team trust. In addition, communication has a positive effect on trust, and trust has a significant effect on team creativity, which translates into improved performance (Akhtar et al. 2019). However, not all the agents involved always have the same perception of the characteristics of leadership. As can be seen from the results of the study carried out by Fernández-González et al. (2020), there are significant differences between the perceptions of the leadership characteristics of students and university staff. While staff members particularly appreciate the performance and intellectual virtues of leaders, to students, the moral virtues of the directorial staff are more relevant.

With the third objective of our work, we set out to understand to what extent leadership influences the quality and results of higher education institutions. Considering that, Hong, Chennattuserry, Deng and Hopkins (202, 1004) state that "the sum of the purpose of educational institutions and leadership actions are what generate the achievement of effective results collaborating in the creation of a social reputation." Along these same lines, Alward and Phelps (2019: 73) also highlight a similar understanding when they point out the existence of great pressure when it comes to attributing not only teachers but also administrators, the responsibility for learning outcomes of the students. Meghji et al. (2020, 312) underline the importance of the challenge of building efficient practices for knowledge and quality management, establishing a direct relationship between these and leadership. Likewise, we must take into account that to raise the educational quality in a higher education institution, an external evaluation, and the consequent classification, is not enough by itself to raise the educational quality. It is necessary to start from the leadership of the positions, the directorial staff, and have the commitment and participation of the rest of the staff, so that effective internal quality management actions can be implemented, which favour self-assessment and improvement (Orozco-Inca et al. 2020).

This review also allows us to observe a tendency to mainly report and publish novel interventions, especially to discover the leadership models that are most effective in improving the quality and results of Higher Education institutions. Vu, Vu and Ngoc (2020) set out to determine the appropriate leadership style in Higher Education institutions and the role of the leader in promoting academic research in Vietnamese universities. The authors highlight how transformational leadership is effective when facilitating autonomy in organizations, as well as in the budget. On the other hand, based on a critical review of existing theoretical concepts and empirical evidence, a new research model was developed by Kantabutra (2010) for future research, in which the attributes of effective vision, particularly in the education sector, are central to prevailing theories of vision-based leadership.

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However, the limited number of studies in this line suggest that the research is still insufficient, so it is clear that there is a need to further strengthen this area of research. Research leads which revert to the effectiveness of organizational development and its improvement in all dimensions of the institution.

Conclusions

Pedagogical leadership is becoming a principal factor in improving education in the context of compulsory education, as well as a political priority. Different studies conclude that the exercise of pedagogical leadership in education determines, in an important way, its quality. This systematic review is proof that the research is not widespread in the context of higher education and does not have the same impact compared to the context of compulsory education. We have found both theoretical reviews and a variety of research studies concerning the influence of pedagogical leadership on the performance of students in Higher Education that present leadership as a fundamental element for institutional success as we proposed in the first objective of the study.

Without question, this is a critical factor to maintain and improve the quality and performance of universities (Delner, 2013), and one which highlights the role of Higher Education center in the knowledge economy. In this way, he also states that the knowledge generated by these institutes needs to be collected and disseminated to improve not only student learning and performance, but also educational practices and processes, and society as a whole (Meghji et al. 2020).

Consequently, research must continue to comply with the necessary scientific standards that guarantee the quality of knowledge, in order to understand, as stated in the second and third objectives of this study, if the effects of pedagogical leadership that are observed in the performance of the institutions and performance of the students in compulsory education centres are equally evident in the context of Higher Education and improvement in their quality. This is important as university educational systems play a major role in the development of any country.

The majority of industries generally rely on highly educated people with different skills. Universities are also responsible for training cutting-edge technological skills (Vu, Vu and Ngoc 2020). Regarding the contexts of online Higher Education, it is worth noting how, in the same way, organizational success depends partially on the comprehensive training of virtual leaders, the importance of trust, emotional intelligence, and effective and respectful communication (Alward and Phelps 2019).

Finally, among the main lines of future research that could be inspired by these results, it is worth highlighting investigations about the leadership models are being carried out in the educational institutions and the role of the leader, not only in the promotion of academic research, but also in the increase in student performance, as well as the data collection instruments that are being used to measure the effects. As found in Latif and Marimon (2019), research on leadership has focused mainly on business organizations and we found only few scales to measure leadership behaviour in higher education. Likewise, it would be justified to design, apply, and evaluate leadership programs that have a direct effect on the performance of students in Higher Education.

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