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HAS STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP MATTERS ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: AN INSIGHT FROM EGYPTIAN PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES.

Shorouk Mohamed Farag Mohamed Aboudahr - Dr. Mua'azam Bin Mohamad
School of Education and Modern Languages, Universiti Utara Malaysia- School Education and Modern
Languages, Universiti Utara Malaysia

shroukaboudahe@gmail.com- muaazam@uum.edu.my

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ABSTRACT:

The educational departments at different levels in Egypt seek to reform education, improve its conditions, and keep pace with the technological developments and the information and communication technology revolution that have imposed many challenges on the lifestyle. However, the issue of quality education in Egypt in terms of quality culture and practice is still in a stage of a quagmire. Therefore, this study investigates the influence of strategic leadership and quality management practices in Egypt public universities, the participants in this study were 120 academic staff from nine universities. This employed a random stratified sampling in choosing the participants. The respondents administered 32 questions on the strategic leadership questionnaire and 34 questions on quality management practices. The data collected and analyzed through multiple regression and correlation techniques to ascertain the hypothesized relationship. The study analyzed using partial least square – structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) through the Smart-PLS, to check the hypothesize variables. The result of the study found that a strong and positive relationship between strategic leadership and quality management practice. The study also, showed that no statistically significant differences between the averages of the responses to strategic leadership and improving the quality of education due to gender. The study recommended that the necessity of paying attention to the strategic leadership from the different colleges to take

advantage of their strategic role in decision-making and developing the educational institution through the applying and practice of quality management.

Keywords: Strategic leadership, Quality management practices, public universities.

INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, the term "world-class university" "WCU"-also named as "globally competitive universities," "world-class," "elite" or "flagship" universities-has become a catchphrase, not only to improve the quality of higher education learning and research but also, more critically, to develop the ability to succeed on the global higher education market through acquisitions and creation of advanced knowledge.

According to Khan (2011), quality is the focus of most organizations as it is considered to be the main competitive and business practice; quality management has become a strategic tool for achieving superior performance and competitiveness as well, Top management support is essential and the most important factor for quality management in providing clear guidance for the satisfaction of employees (Ng, Goh, & Eze, 2010). Several countries around the world are now heading towards higher education in an attempt to overcome current challenges (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). Therefore, HEIs need to modify their degree programs and courses to stay viable in the changing labor market (Pincus, et.all. , 2017). Thus, The protection of high-quality education standards has become a major concern of HEIs and governments. So it requires continuous assessment and government funding to ensure colleges, universities, and other educational institutions are successful (Najafabadi, Sadeghi, & Habibzadeh, 2008). In support of this, the United Nations (UN) introduced a new development plan for the year 2015 aimed at transforming the world through 2030. The seventeenth goal article four highlighted the efforts and intention of the government to provide a continuous chance and outstanding education for every citizen. This is supreme as Bunyi (2013) indicated: That excellent education is very vital for continuous education as it makes low student drop-outs and allows for continuous survival of education which later leads to fruitful employment and emoluments in contrast with those that could not finish in good time. Hence, it will allow learners to advance and engross good uprightness that produces

good and obedient members of the nation and the chance of producing potential managers in the near future.

Inevitably, This problem was also faced by Arab countries in the late 1990s, as the educational systems in those countries faced major challenges in improving university-level education quality. Nonetheless, several challenges have forced governments to respond to new development requirements in the fields of science and technology, as well as strong social demand for a wide range of educational areas and increasing demands for nation growth (Alsharqawi& Mariam, 2003). Additionally, Al-Bashir,(2016) hinted that the situation prevailing in the Arab world is one in which administrative appointment is generally not based on merit but political considerations and seniority. School administrators, as a rule, do not receive enough specialized training but "learn by doing" as they are drawn from and advance through the ranks of teachers.

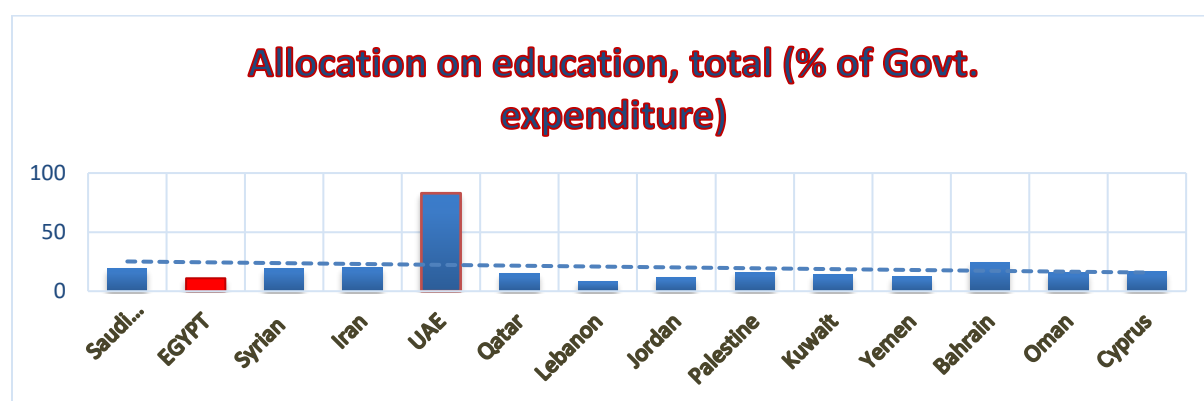
In Egypt, higher education at the beginning of the new millennium faces unprecedented challenges with regards to university management, funding, recruitment of staff to produce graduate that can compete favorably in this modern time, so government recognized the importance of creating strategic leadership and management as a tool to save the country from this bane. However, strategic leadership creation in Egyptian universities is a difficult matter, especially that these universities suffered due to crude systems used in governing university affairs which slow the administration process of the school. Surprisingly, most of the Egyptian universities have failed to apply strategic leadership approach, then these problems require immediate solutions for the success of this approach,(Khalil,2017). Nowadays Egyptian universities need to let a critical mass of managers develop the skills and abilities required to exercise strategic leadership, (Adel Rajab, Abdulhadi Mabrouk, 2007). This means that Strategic leadership may be one of the most critical organizational issues due to its positive effect on organizational performance.

Problem statement

The (higher) education sector in the Middle East as well as in Egypt suffers from several shortcomings, perhaps because of the lack of financial resources, high demographic pressure on the system, or governance issues due to corruption within the education system. These factors inter al lead to quality problems, which affect the outcome quality of higher education severely. With a view on the high competition in the domestic labor market as well as concerning the international

competitiveness of Egyptian graduates and the potential for Egyptian universities in the international market for higher education, high quality of study programs and the provision of skills which meet the employers' needs is a pressing issue for policymakers in Egypt. This is, in particular, relevant in the light of the recent and ongoing transformation process, which demonstrates the negative impact of a mismatch on the labor market and the associated problems on social stability and life satisfaction of (young) people.

Figure (1): Allocation on education, total (% of Govt. expenditure) among Middle East Countries.



Source: (World Bank, 2018).

Table 1.1:

The Percentage of Allocation on education, total (% of Govt. expenditure) among Middle East Countries.

S/No	COUNTRY	Allocation on education, total (% of Govt. expenditure)	Rank
1	Saudi Arabia	19.25742	4th
2	EGYPT	10.9418	13th
3	Syrian	19.18405	5th
4	Iran	20.04203	3rd
5	UAE	82.91099	1st
6	Qatar	14.83565	9th
7	Lebanon	8.57552	14th
8	Jordan	11.74613	12th
9	Palestine	16.21137	7th
10	Kuwait	13.85411	10th

11	Yemen	12.48924	11th
12	Bahrain	24.40469	3rd
13	Oman	15.96524	8th
14	Cyprus	16.27625	6th

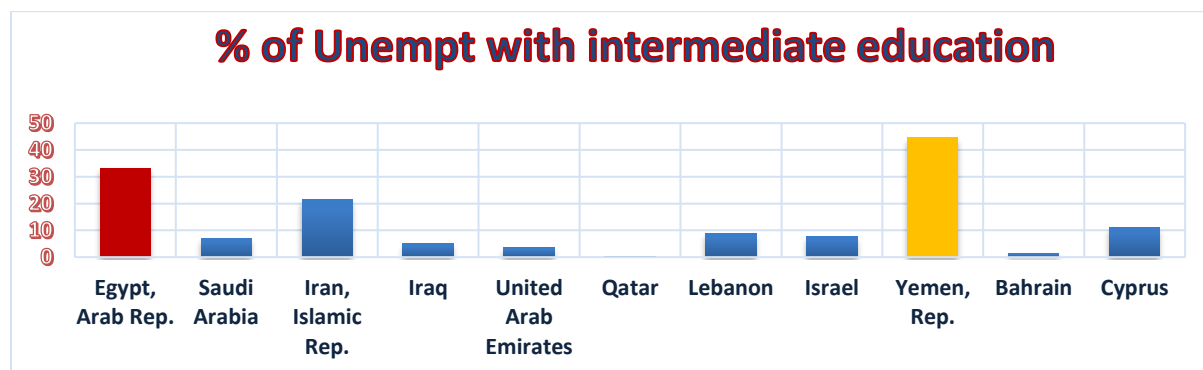
Source: (World Bank, 2018).

In Table 1.1 shown the world bank report of government allocations to education in 14 middle east countries and Egypt ranked 13th among these countries which show that allocation for school in Egypt is nothing to talk about. The schools in Egypt receive a small number of funds to finance modern facilities for school especially university to meet with the standard of the rest of the world. The more reason why the newly established accreditation system in Egypt, and analyze the role of the National Authority of Educational Quality Assurance and Accreditation (NAQAAE) within this process to address the structural shortcomings as well as implementation problems of the current accreditation system which limit the capacity of the national accreditation agency to provide accreditation for all institutions of higher education in Egypt and to ensure the overall quality of higher education.

The consequence of the poor quality of higher education, a large part of the overall workforce lacks the skills and expertise that the market demands. The overall low quality of education and in particular missing employability skills can be identified as the root causes of that problem: Training systems, as well as higher education institutions, fail to produce the demanded skills see Table 1.2 below, showing that Egypt is among the top two nations with the high level of unemployed graduates after Yemen.

Another issue is the overcrowding of students in higher education as facilities available for students is not sufficient for students enrolled in most of the universities in Egypt. More evidently, current data indicates that the number of students entering higher education institutions still grows at about 6 percent (60,000 students) per year no provision has made by the government against large inflows of the students. Furthermore, the expected increase in the higher education students' enrolment goes up to more than 35 percent, with the percentage of the youth population entering the working-age is estimated to rise to 67 percent in 2020.

Figure (2): Unemployment with intermediate education among Middle East Countries



Source: (World Bank, 2018).

Table 2

The Percentage of Unemployment with intermediate education among Middle East Countries

S/No	COUNTRY	% of Unemployment with intermediate education	Rank
1	Egypt, Arab Rep.	33%	2nd
2	Saudi Arabia	7.13%	7th
3	Iran, Islamic Rep.	21.44%	3rd
4	Iraq	5.06%	8th
5	United Arab Emirates	3.70%	9th
6	Qatar	0.12%	11th
7	Lebanon	8.76%	5th
8	Israel	7.70%	6th
9	Yemen, Rep.	44.60%	1st
10	Bahrain	1.54%	10th
11	Cyprus	11.01%	4th

Source: (World Bank, 2018).

In terms of quality, higher education in Egypt is characterized by a lack of adequate and qualified teaching staff, affected by under-motivation and underpay, which often leads to corruption. As for the curriculum itself, “irrelevancies, a lack of practical skills formation, an over-concentration on memorizing content, passive pedagogies, and a lack of learning materials, library books, facilities and equipment” (OECD, 2010) can be detected. As a consequence, there is a significant mismatch between the labor demand in the market and the skills provided by graduates and young academics. Employers claim to seek graduates who have not only “hard skills” in the sense of technical or formal knowledge but also possess “soft skills” (OECD, 2010). Graduates should excel in at least

one foreign language, must have computer and information technology skills, as well as other communication and teamwork skills. According to Coplin (2003), employers want to hire graduates with personal potential who perform well in daily business and take initiatives, no matter which grade of specialization they acquired. Employability skills, more detailed, can be classified in “core employability skills”, which cover generic attitudinal and effective skills, and “communication skills” (e.g. English language skills, written and verbal communication; Osman, 2011). In a wider sense, the definition of “employability” comprises writing and oral communication skills, skills in mathematics, research, decision-making, critical thinking, evaluation, computer work, teamwork, and lifelong learning skills. These qualifications have to be obtained within the course of study, the curriculum itself, not after graduation. The higher education system has to equip students with these named skills to enhance their career flexibility. As for Egypt, employability skills are on average not sustainably offered by the system of higher education. The need for curricula to be updated or at least adjusted to the market’s needs – in short: quality assurance – is even more significant than the absence of these skills in the curriculum. This results in a weak performance and/or a lack of chances for the single individual, as the competition in the job market is very high, and “opportunities appear much less promising than those of the previous generations” (Osman, 2011), as well as results in drawbacks for the overall economic growth. Additionally, as Egypt takes part in the Bologna Policy Forum (since 2008) of the European Union (EU), and higher education is planned to be harmonized with EU standards, there is at least some external pressure to reform the higher education sector with a view on quality assurance.

The researcher will formulate the study issue based on the foregoing through the following main question:

What is the relationship of strategic leadership in achieving the quality of education in Egyptian public universities?

In the context of the above the following questions can help to define the problem of the study more clearly as follows:

What is the level of strategic leadership, and quality management practices among Egypt's public universities?

1- Is there any significant difference among lecturers of Egypt's public universities regarding gender on quality management practice?

2- Is there any relationship between strategic leadership and quality management PRACTICES AMONG EGYPT'S PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES?

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The need for the current study to explore the expected relative impact of the strategic leadership and quality management practice on school improvement in state universities in Egypt using multiple regression analysis. This research is intended:

- 1- To the level of strategic leadership, and quality management practices among Egypt's public universities.
- 2- To identify the significant difference among lecturers of Egypt's public universities regarding gender on quality management practice.
- 3- To investigate the relationship between strategic leadership and quality management practices among Egypt's public universities.

SIGNIFICANT OF THE STUDY

The study is very important as it deals with three important key constructs in educational management. One of these constructs is management practices in higher education which has a great role in leading the societies due to the many services it provides to the labor market or different sectors. In the meanwhile, Strategic leadership, which is of increasing interest because of their connection with many organizational variables that have an impact on the behavior of individuals and decision making in organizations and thus affect the final outputs. In addition, to the above, it is possible to limit and highlight the importance of the study in practical and theoretical significance.

- 1- The results of this study may contribute to presenting a set of recommendations to administrative leaders in Egyptian public universities about the actual reality of the practice of strategic leadership in universities and the proper ways of practicing quality management.
- 2- Contributes to adding new scientific in the field of strategic leadership and its relationship to the practice of quality management.
- 3- The current study helps to some extent by contributing to the efforts made by the Egyptian government to achieve quality and improve administrative goals stipulated in the education Vision 2030.

4- help to new horizons open for researchers to further studies in the field of educational management.

Conceptual Framework

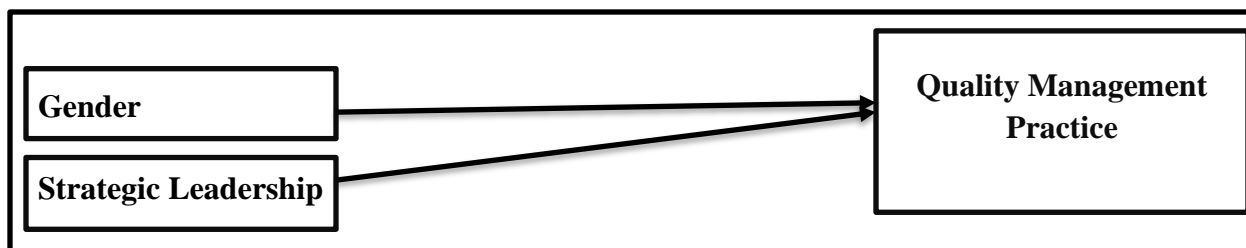


Fig 3: Conceptual Framework of the study.

Methodology of research

This study implemented a quantitative research design by using a survey technique to establish the effects of the construct through its dimensions in the study. This design permits the use of the survey to gather information from the sample and measure their opinions toward some issues. The population of the study comprises of 120 lecturers from 9 selected faculty in Egypt public university. A simple stratified sampling technique was used to select lecturers as respondents. was used for data collection by the researchers. The instruments used in this study consist of four sections; Part A and Part B, Part A is a strategic leadership survey by Ali (2012) adapted to suit the context of the study. Whereas Part B is quality management practice by Saraph et al.1989. Respondents were asked to rate each item on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA=5); Agree (A=4); Neutral (N=3); Disagree (DA=2) and Strongly Disagree (SD=1). The data was computed using the Smart PLS (SEM) software was used to ascertain the average variance extracted (AVE), convergent validity, discriminant validity, and factor loadings of the constructs to ensure that the research may useful for the essential analysis of data. Moreover, the study used two software namely: Statistical Package for Social Sciences SPSS(23)for descriptive and Smart PLS (3) for data analyses investigate the relationship among the constructs.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

In the current study, the descriptive statistics were explained in the form of mean and standard deviation for a better understanding of the descriptive analysis of the study. To achieve this, the study used the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was to determine the mean and standard deviation of the constructs.

Table 1 presents the respondents' perception of all the variables of strategic leadership style and quality management practices in Egyptian public Universities. The examination of the results reveals the respondents' attributes of strategic leadership style, gender, and quality management practices in Egyptian public Universities. The average score of mean and standard deviation is moderately good with a mean of 4.02 and the standard deviation is 0.442 which indicates the higher-level response of quality management practice in Egyptian public Universities. Hence, the highest mean value is 4.02 for the construct of quality management practices. The lowest mean is 1.04 of the construct of gender. So, quality management practice and strategic leadership style have a higher level of response on the Egyptian public Universities.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics

Constructs	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Quality Management Practices	1	5	4.019	.442
Strategic Leadership Style	1	5	3.930	.657
Gender	1	2	1.039	.836

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Assessing Model Fit

Figure 3 below, presents the examined measurement of the model. Data were analyzed via structural equation model revealed the fitness of the model. By rule of thumb, the composite reliability should be greater than 0.7 and the average variance expectation should be greater than 0.5 (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson 2014). The model shows the indicators (loadings) of variables. Some items are not loaded as they don't meet the benchmark. This led the researcher to discard such indicators and the final measurement model is as shown below.

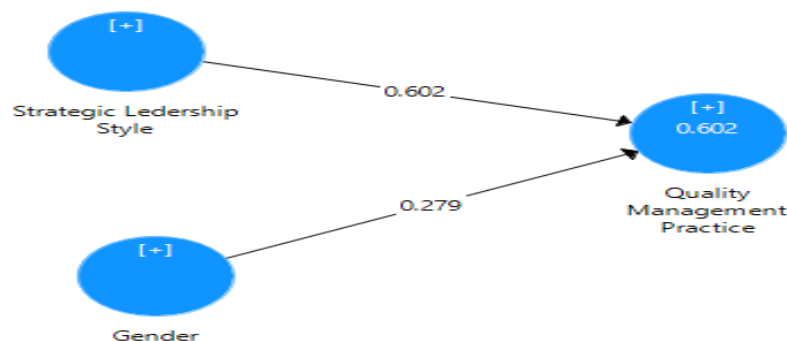


Figure 3: Measurement Model.

The validity of the Research instrument

Validity refers to the accuracy of a measure or the extent to which a score is accurately and truthfully represent the concept of a construct (Zikmund *et al.*, 2013). Similarly, Sekaran and Bougie (2013) defined validity analysis as a test or assessment of how efficient a research instrument that is developed measures a particular construct is intended to measure. To determine the internal consistency reliability and validity of all the constructs of this study, Cronbach alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) as suggested by Garson (2016) were calculated using PLS-SEM algorithm as shown in table 4 below.

Table 4: *Construct Reliability and Validity*

Constructs	Composite Reliability	AVE	R Square
Quality Management Practices	0.957	0.547	0.602
Strategic Leadership Style	0.940	0.534	
Gender	0.942	0.745	

Source: Field Survey (2020) Computed Using PLS 3 Software.

From the table above, CR and AVE of all constructs as computed were above the threshold of 0.7 and 0.5, respectively as suggested by (Hair *et al.* 2014). Therefore, it is concluded that all the constructs were measured by the chosen indicators which confirmed the validity and reliability of the research instrument.

Table 5: *Discriminant Validity*

Constructs	GEN	QMP	SLS
Gender	0.972		
Quality Management Practices	0.569	0.740	
Strategic Leadership Style	0.481	0.736	0.731

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Note: The bolded diagonal numbers represent the square root of the AVE of each construct. Table 5 presents the result of discriminant validity. The numbers that are bolded represent the square root of AVE of each latent variable and are higher than their correlation with another latent variable

as can be observed in the table. The square root of AVE is greater than the correlations among the constructs, as suggested by Fornell-larcker criterion. This means that the requirement that a construct should be unique and also capture phenomena not represented by other constructs in the model is confirmed (Hair et al., 2014).

Bootstrapping Analysis

It is important to carry out a bootstrapping analysis to determine the effect of strategic leadership styles on quality management practices in the Egyptian public Universities. Bootstrapping was done by using 5,000 subsamples using 120 cases. Based on the result, figure 4 is presented which shows how the magnitude and significance of the structural paths are consistent.

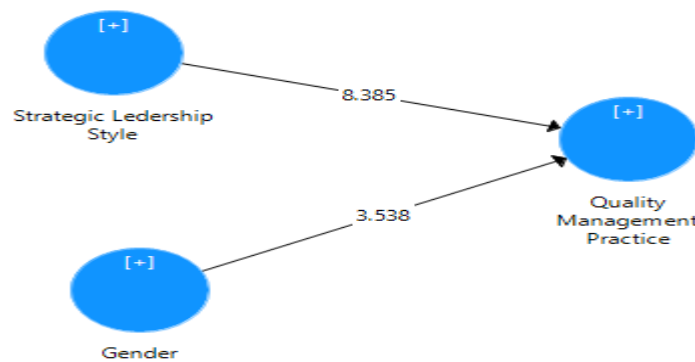


Figure 4: Structural Model

Test of Hypotheses

Table 6 presents the path coefficient which indicates the Beta Value, Standard Error, Adjusted R Square, and Decision Rule of hypotheses tested in the study.

Table 6: Effect Size on Direct relationship

Hypotheses	Beta	SE	T-values	P-Values	Decision
SLS -> Quality Mgt. Practices	0.602	0.072	8.385	0.000***	Supported
Gender -> Quality Mgt. Practices	0.279	0.079	3.538	0.000***	Supported

*** $p < 0.01$; ** $p < 0.05$; * $p < 0.1$

Source: Field Survey, 2020

Table 6 above shows that the strategic leadership style has a T-value of 8.385 with the corresponding beta coefficient of 0.602. This means perceived threat has a positive and significant

effect on quality management practices in the Egyptian public Universities. Therefore, the study rejects the first null hypothesis which assumes that strategic leadership style has no significant effect on quality management practices in the Egyptian public Universities and accept the alternate hypothesis that stated, there is a significant influence of strategic leadership style on quality management practices in the Egyptian public Universities. Hence, hypothesis one is supported. This finding is confirmed with (Alayoubi, Al Shobaki, & Abu-Naser, 2020);(Ameen, Yousef Sandhu, & Hussain Rana, 2019) ; (Aboudahr, 2018) and a study of (Mataria, 2016) who found that leadership is a key factor for applying quality management in an educational institution in order to improve the quality of education.

Table 6 also revealed that gender has a T-value of 3.538 which is statistically significant at 1% with the corresponding coefficient of 0.279. This also implies that gender has a positive and significant effect on quality management practices in the Egyptian public Universities. Therefore, the second hypothesis which inter alia stated that gender has a significant effect on quality management practices in the Egyptian public Universities is accepted. the finding is consonance with the finding of (Aboudahr,2048); (Rabaya & Abid,2015); (Ahmad & Al-Faqih,2011)and (Kasim& Raja Suzana Raja 2010) which indicates that when the difference about the effect of strategic leadership on achieving quality management practice is identified, it does not disagree with both genders. Therefore, the study rejects the alternative hypotheses, which assumes that gender has no effect, and accepts the null hypothesis.

Effect Size

It is important to assess the effect size for the relationships between strategic leadership style and gender on quality management practices in the Egyptian public Universities. The result is presented in Table 7.

Table 7: Effect Size on Direct relationship

Constructs	Effect size (f ²)	Q ²	Decision
Strategic Leadership Style	0.70		Substantial
Gender	0.15		Medium
Quality Mgt. Practices		0.313	

Source: Field Survey, 2020.

Table 7 shows the effect size computed as the increase in R-squared of the variable to which the path is connected, relative to the variable's proportion of unexplained variance (Chin, 1998). R-

square change is the change in R^2 when a causal factor is removed from the model. The f-square coefficient is constructed according to Cohen, (1988) and Ringle, and Henseler, (2007) as $(R^2_{\text{original}} - R^2_{\text{omitted}}) / (1 - R^2_{\text{original}})$. The effect size of each construct is a strategic leadership style (0.70) and gender (0.15). The rule of thumb according to Cohen (1988) is that values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 are said to be weak, moderate, strong effects respectively. Therefore, looking at the f^2 as shown in table 7 above, both the strategic leadership style and gender have a small effect on quality management style in the Egyptian public Universities.

CONCLUSION

The strategic leader has an effective and important role in the practice of quality management in universities. Additionally, distinguishes strategic leadership is that it makes a fundamental change in the institution and creates an environment that accepts and understands the importance of change and accepting new ideas. the study recommends that the policymakers in higher education concern the strategic leadership into the further training program and courses. Furthermore, Increase the financial resources of higher education institutions to help leaders to practice quality management without facing obstacles that prevent leaders from continuing development and improving the quality performance of the university.

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