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RESEARCH ARTICLE

PERCEPTIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ON SCHOOL PERFORMANCE IN THE REGIONAL ACADEMY OF GUELMIM OUED NOUN

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Abstract

The social representations of school performance have proven to be very diverse, and vary according to the aspirations of the stakeholders involved, the position they occupy in the system and the issues attached to it. In Morocco, there are multiple stakeholders in the public education system (The ministry of education and its decentralized services, teacher unions, the civil society, parents, students, etc.), and each of them has a specific mission which is in dynamic complementation with the other stakeholders in the system. The school principal remains the local actor par excellence. He occupies a decisive position in the functioning of the school. This position, which involves critical decision making, is where the execution of educational policies is exercised and where the aspirations of the different stakeholders are expressed. This paper aims at questioning how school principals perceive the "performance of their schools". In other words, it enquires on the signification (meaning) that these school leaders give to the performance of a school. To respond to this inquiry, data is collected using a questionnaire, which is administered to 40 different schools in the region of Guelmim Oued Noun.

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Introduction:-

The social representations of school performance have proven to be very diverse, and vary according to the aspirations of the stakeholders involved, the position they occupy in the system and the issues attached to it. In Morocco, there are multiple stakeholders in the public education system (The ministry of education and its decentralized services, teacher unions, the civil society, parents, students, etc.), and each of them has a specific mission which is in dynamic complementation with the other stakeholders in the system. The school principal remains the local actor par excellence. He occupies a decisive position in the functioning of the school. This position, which involves high critical decision making, is where the execution of educational policies is exercised and where the aspirations of the different stakeholders are expressed. This paper aims at questioning how school principals perceive the "performance of their schools". In other words, it enquires on the signification (meaning) that these school leaders give to the performance of a school. Our research is based, first of all, on a theoretical argument on performance in general and the performance of educational institutions in particular. It is reinforced by a sound review of literature aiming to justify the aspects maintained in the question. To respond to this inquiry, data is collected using a questionnaire, which is administered to 40 different schools in the region of Guelmim Oued Noun.

Educational performance, a subjective concept:

Performance most often refers to the notion of assessing companies and organizations. It is a matter of designing specific criteria to evaluate a result accomplished at a given time, with reference to a context, an objective or an expected result, regardless of the field in which the evaluation process is taking place. Notat (2007).

According to Mr. Lebas, performance does not exist intrinsically. It is defined by an information user in relation to a decision-making context characterized by a domain and a time frame. M. Lebas (1995).

Considering these definitions, the concept of performance appears to be, vague and multidimensional which only takes on its full meaning if it is considered in a precise context and at a determined time. This part seeks to better understand the concept of school performance. First, it begins with the presentation of the concept of "performance" in management science, (1). Then we move on to the notion of school performance (2).

The word "performance" and its extension in the management sciences:

To define performance, the vocabulary of specialists is not stabilized and divergences are strongly noted, something that makes of it a portmanteau which has received and still receives multiple significations.

1. It includes at the same time many ideas, it is used in various senses and by several disciplinary fields M. Lebas (1995), it appears vague, ill-defined 2. Our approach to the definition of the word or concept of performance will be split into two steps: determining the etymological meaning of the word (1.1.1), then seeking its understanding (the meaning in which it is used) in management science.

The name or etymology of the word "performance":

The denomination consists of identifying the origin of the concept; identifying its initial meaning and the reasons for its first emergence.

For performance, its origin dates back to the middle of the 19th century in the French language Chertouk (2011). At the start, its meaning was twofold; it meant both the results obtained by a racehorse and the score of a race. From 1876 it will be used in the plural and designates "results, actions accomplished by an athlete or a team". Its meaning has never stopped evolving since its appearance. In 1869 it indicated the "way of doing something, action accomplished (in any other field)", in 1929 the concept is used in technical field and designated the "set of optimal possibilities of a device and designated by extension an exceptional output. Thus, performance in its French definition is the result of an action, success or exploit. Contrary to its French meaning, the performance in English "contains an action, its result and possibly its exceptional success". A. Bourguignon (1995). In management sciences, the place given to performance is crucial, while its concept has always been ambiguous. Thus, it is defined as "the achievement of organizational objectives whatever the nature and variety of these objectives." A. Bourguignon (2000).

What is performance in management science?

In management sciences, while its concept has always been ambiguous, the place given to performance is crucial. Therefore, it is defined as "the achievement of organizational objectives whatever the nature and variety of these objectives." A. Bourguignon (2000). By extension, a person who achieves their objectives is considered to be performing. In the corporate world, we thought, at the outset, that value is created as much in the sense of the shareholder, and that performance is only a one-dimensional concept that designates the ability of a company to generate value, that is, benefits for its shareholders (Boshe, 1998). Subsequently, this purely financial and one-dimensional logic was the subject of strong critic (Dohou-Renaud, 2007; Bouquin, 2004; Lebas, 1995) in favor of a new logic integrating the different actors involved in the development of the business. According to this last approach, value is stakeholder, in other words, created by and for all the stakeholders of a company, and performance is a multidimensional concept which is not limited to the mere creation of the benefits for the shareholders but it exceeds meeting the expectations of all stakeholders. As for the definitions of performance, Bourguignon (1997) joins the English definition of the term by attributing three meanings to it: it is, first of all, an action or an activity to be accomplished (Baird, 1986), a result of the action and a success (a representation of success). Lebas (1995) for his part he proposed common characteristics which allow a better understanding of this term, namely: to perform an action with a well-defined objective, to achieve a result, to know how to measure and judge this result and to compare it with an internal or external reference and finally the ability to apply concepts of continuous progress for the purpose of competition. This is how Niculescu (1999) defined performance as a state of competitiveness achieved by a level of efficiency which ensures the company a lasting presence in the market. In addition to efficiency, some authors also insist on effectiveness (Verboncu, Zalman, 2005). Effectiveness represents conformity or the capacity to achieve objectives, while efficiency implies respect for resource constraints, i.e. negotiated means (Commarmond and Exiga, 1998; De la Villarmois, 2001). There is, therefore, no consensus or

unanimity on what performance is because each culture, each socio-political context and each company can bring different responses (Bourguignon, 1995; Lebas, 1996; Morin et al., 1994) hence its polysemy.

Performance in education: what is a successful school?

The difficulty to comprehend performance is not unique to the business field, in the public sector, this question is more recurrent. If we generally consider that performance translates into the achievement of the organization's objectives, this apparent simplicity very quickly comes up against the nature and variety of these objectives in the case of public organizations (Stéphanie Chatelain-Ponroy, François Cellier 2005).

Performance is efficiency and effectiveness:

The performance of the school as a public organization has aroused the interest of many researchers and practitioners who have presented various definitions from different perspectives (economic, technical, organizational, etc.) (Liu 2006). Thus Scheerens defines it by the average success of pupils at the end of a formal schooling period (Scheerens, 2000). Levine and Lezotte (1990) joined Scheerens's definition by specifying that academic performance is "the production of a result or a desired result", in other words, the degree of achievement of the desired objective (effectiveness). Beyond the achievement of the desired objectives, the school's performance sometimes involves going beyond the set objectives (Hoy and Miskel, 2001) and adding more values to the students' results compared to other schools (Sammons et al. 1995), performance is therefore excellence and not just success. According to Maslowski, school performance also wants efficiency, not just effectiveness (Maslowski, 2001). Effectiveness boils down to achieving maximum results using minimal resources, effort or time (Hawes & Stephens, 1990; Maslowski, 2001; Wideman, 2003; Windham, 1990).

To conclude a successful school it is an organization that is both effective and efficient, in other words, it achieves the objectives assigned to it (effectiveness) with the additional requirement of minimizing expenses as much as possible (efficiency) (Scheerens & Creemers, 1989; Scheerens et al, 2007) If a school's performance translates into both effectiveness and efficiency. Such a definition requires an operational translation in terms of criteria for measuring these two components.

The effectiveness of a school: definition and evaluation criteria:

Legendre, in the 1993 edition of the current dictionary of education (2nd edition), defines efficiency as the "degree of achievement of the objectives of a program or degree of attainment of an objective" Legendre (1993). According to Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1988), "the concept of efficiency is used to describe the relationships between factors (input) and products (output)", It virtually means the relationship between outputs (the observed effects of action educational) and entrances (enrollment and stated objectives). These authors notably distinguish internal effectiveness from external effectiveness. The distinction is also noticeable in the definitions of Legendre (1993).

The internal effectiveness of a school:

The internal effectiveness of a school is concerned with the relationships between educational inputs and academic results (these being expressed in terms of knowledge, know-how, interpersonal skills, etc.) within a given educational institution (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1988). It measures the degree of achievement of internal objectives. It can be assessed quantitatively (number of graduates compared to the number of registrants) or qualitatively (qualities of skills/knowledge before and after training). Internal efficiency, therefore, results from the comparison of the results of the teaching-learning process with the corresponding learning objectives. The grades obtained from exams carried out during training or at the end are indicators of internal effectiveness. Internal effectiveness, however, is best expressed by success rates and year repetition or dropout rates.

The external effectiveness of a school:

Assessing the external effectiveness of an education system may be done by asking whether educated individuals are socially and economically useful (or productive). Indeed, Psacharopoulos & Woodhall (1988) sees this as a means which "allows us to know to extent to which education meets the objectives of the society and satisfies the needs of the labor market". In this sense, external effectiveness makes it possible to evoke the idea of impact pursued or achieved. It can be assessed quantitatively by asking in particular: whether the system trains sufficient qualified executives but also whether these executives have managed to access the labor market. (through monitoring the unemployment rate). It is assessed qualitatively by how the knowledge and skills acquired match the ones targeted or by the appropriateness of the skills of the schools' graduates to the job occupied.

And what about efficiency?

Efficiency is defined as “the relationship between what is achieved and the means used to achieve it”, or even as “the expression of a comparison between the result and the efforts made or the resources devoted to the pursuit of an objective” (Renald Legendre 1993), in other words, comparison of costs with results. Just like effectiveness, efficiency is both internal and external, and in both cases, it can be assessed qualitatively and or quantitatively:

The internal efficiency of an educational institution:

The internal efficiency of an educational institution can be measured by a cost-effectiveness analysis internally, that is to say the connection of the means implemented with the results obtained. It can be assessed quantitatively by the ratio between the quantitative results and the means used to achieve them, for example, the ratio between the number of trainees who successfully pass a school year and the expenses incurred in their training. It can also be evaluated qualitatively by reporting the results obtained in their qualitative aspect to the means used to carry them out, this is the case where we compare the quality of the studies and the expenses incurred or also the number of teachers recruited.

The external efficiency of a school:

External efficiency assesses the external effects of educational action (in terms of impact). It seeks to establish the link between the external facts produced by the school and the means used to achieve them. In quantity, it is measurable by the ratio between the quantitative results and the volume of the means undertaken to arrive there, in quantity it can be comprehended by the results under their qualitative aspect in relation to the volume of the means involved. The multiplicity of definitions of performance and the difficulty of finding a single one, comes mainly from the diversity and multiplicity of interests of the organization's stakeholders, which sometimes become contradictory (March, 1991). Each of these parties has its own judgment criteria. There are as many definitions of performance as there are stakeholders in the life of the organization, which makes many say that performance is a subjective concept.

Perceptions of High School principals on school performance in the region of Guelmim Oued Noun:

Performance is a social construct that depends first and foremost on the various representations and expectations of the stakeholders involved (P. Benoit and S. Robert 2014). The objective of this study is to highlight the representation of the performance of the Moroccan school from the point of view of its parties concerned. Analysis carried out in the first section leads us to retain a two-dimensional approach to school performance consisting of efficiency and effectiveness, the field survey will guide so that it shows how the population concerned perceives these two notions of performance. In this part, We will attempt to present our field of investigation as well as the methodology adopted first, then we move on to the presentation and discussion of the results.

The field of investigation and the research methodology used:

The objective here is twofold, it is first to present the study area as well as the target population for the research, then the research method chosen.

The field of study:

The Regional Academy of Education and Training (shortly known for AREF) are public establishments that enjoy moral and financial autonomy (law NO 07-00), subject to the supervision of the State, which ensures the application of the texts relating to education and training establishments, the organization of schooling and the conditions of appointment to the functions of the school administration. The Regional Academy of Education and Training of Guelmim Oued Noun (former Guelmim Es-Smara academy) is created after the application of the new territorial division (a territorial division of 2011), it is made up of four provincial directions (Guelmim, Tan-Tan, Assa Zag, and Sidi Ifni). With a total number of 80,459 students, this study investigates only high schools; the number and the enrollment rate of students are presented in the table below:

Methodology:-

Given our objective and the research question, the methodological approach adopted is the descriptive questionnaire. The data you find in this text is collected by a self-administered questionnaire addressed to 40 high

schools located in the Guelmim Oued Noun region. This survey aims to collect data expressing the conceptions of school principals on performance. The questionnaire consists of a total of thirteen questions divided into three parts:

1. The first part, entitled personal data, aims to identify the background information of the informants.
2. the second part, relating to the establishment's information, relates to the characteristics of the establishment (number of students, urban or rural location, etc.)
3. the third part is the most important, it seeks to detect the representations that the interviewees hold about performance. This part is broken down into five questions, the first confronting the notion of effectiveness with that of efficiency to find out which of them is the most accurate in the definition of performance. The second relates internal and external effectiveness and seeks to show which of the two is more used to express performance. By the third question, we want to detect tendencies of the informants in terms of choice between the qualitative or quantitative aspects of efficiency. The fourth relates to efficiency, it seeks to show which of the two types of efficiency (internal or external) is more adopted to qualify the efficiency of a school. The fifth question asks which of the aspects is most preferred for assessing effectiveness: qualitative or quantitative. The statistical processing of data from the questionnaires was done using sphinx software and Microsoft Excel 2007.

The presentation and discussion of results:

We first present the results and then move on to their analysis based on our documentary research.

The results of the survey:

The results will be presented according to the structure of the survey, a paragraph will be reserved for each part of the survey. The socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents relate to age, sex, level of education and years of experience: The age of the interviewees is between 30 and 50 years. The age group 30-40 represents 29.4%, that of 40-50 represents 47.1% and at the end 50-60 is 23.5%. All of the principals are male.

Table 01 : Distribution of principals interviewed according to the nature of the diploma obtained

Diploma obtained	%
Baccalauréat (High School graduation diploma)	35,3%
Licence (BA)	58,8%
Master/DESA/DESS (MA)	5,9%
Doctorat (PHD)	0,0%
Total	100%

The table above shows that, the majority of principals involved in this study are BA holders (58.8%), while the percentage of Masters holders is only 5.9%.

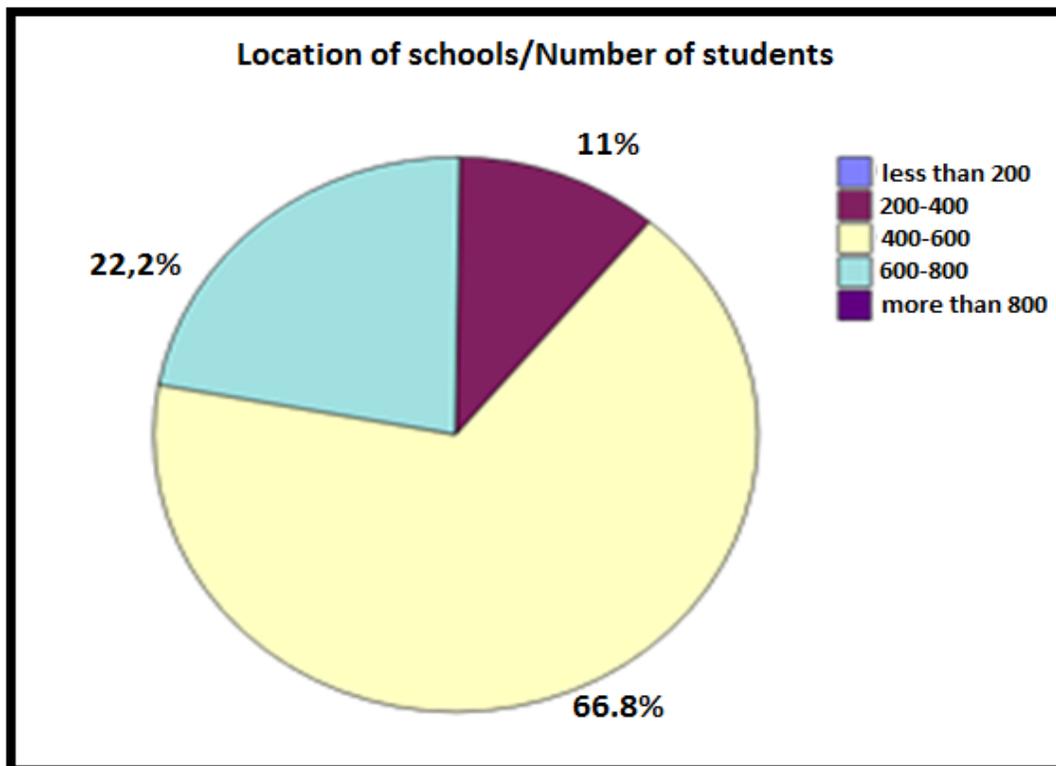
Table 02 : Distribution of principals interviewed according to their job seniority.

Seniority (in years)	%	Cumulates
Less than 3	5,90%	5,90%
3 to 4	29,40%	35,30%
4 to 5	11,80%	47,10%
5 to 6	23,50%	70,60%
6 to 7	17,60%	88,20%
7 to 8	5,90%	94,10%
8 and above	5,90%	100,00%
Total	100%	

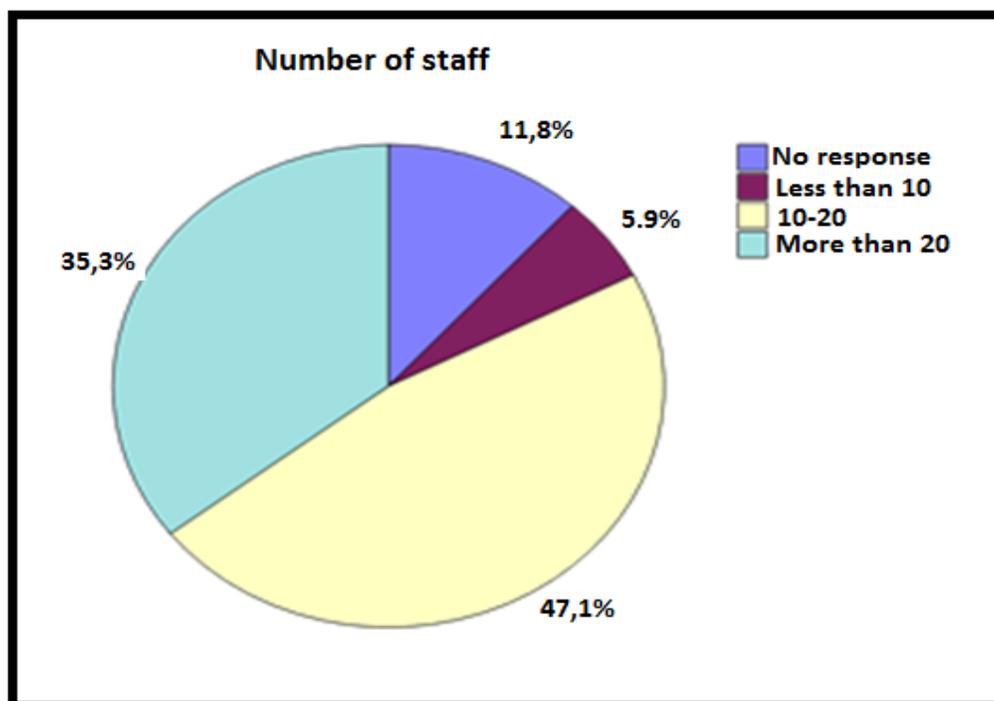
The seniority of principals varies from 1 to 8 years with an average of 4.59. The majority of respondents have a seniority of less than 6 years.

The characteristics of the institutions concerned by our study:

The majority of high schools are urban 67%, with a number of students between 400 and 600. Regionally the number of students enrolled in high schools varies between less than 20 and 800. 400-600 is the most frequent number with a proportion of 47%.

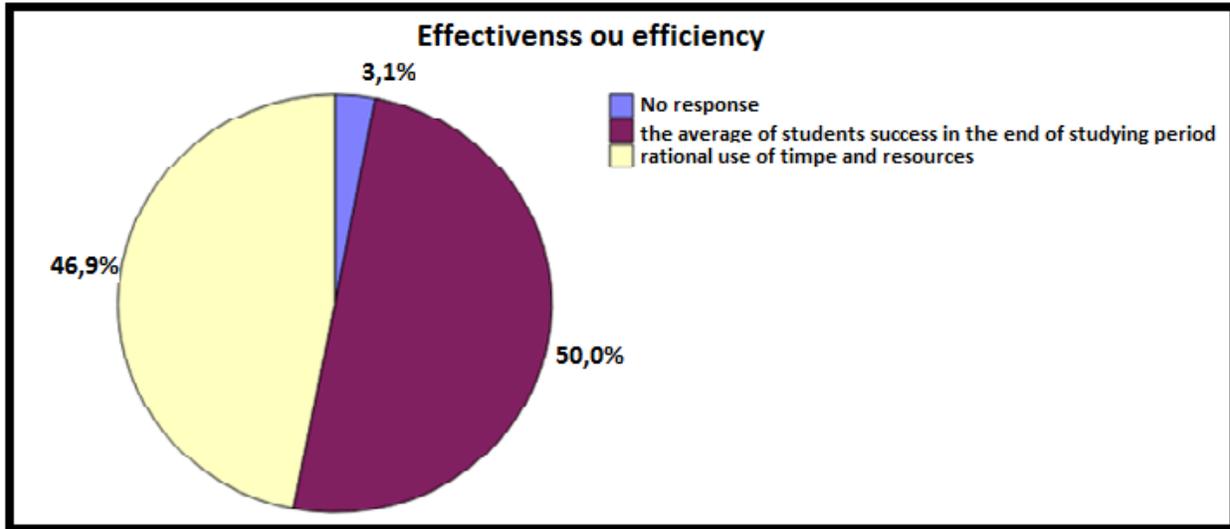


For the number of staff per establishment, two principals did not respond to this question (5%). In general, the number of staff per establishment exceeds 34 people in most of the high schools surveyed (47.1%). High schools with less than 10 people in staff account for 5.9% of the total high schools in the region.

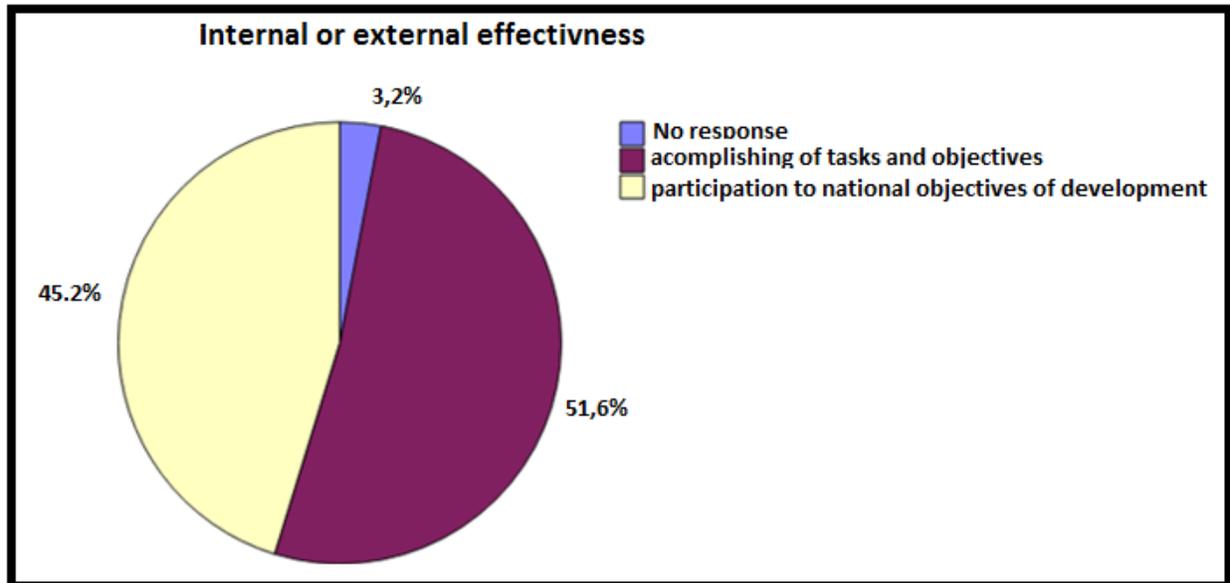


Results relating to directors' representations for the concept of "performance":

For principals of high schools in Guelmim Oued Noun region, performance is more efficient, Fifty percent of those questioned believe that the success of the school depends rather on the success of the students than the rational use of resources.



As for the difference between internal and external efficiency, the interviewees favor internal efficiency measured by the degree of achievement of objectives than external efficiency seen as the degree of school participation in national development objectives.



The results of the survey showed that the evaluation of internal efficiency takes into account the quantitative aspects (frequency of its appearance in the 1st row is 47%) more than the qualitative aspects (23% in the first row). External effectiveness is further evaluated by quantitative criteria (77% in the first row). The results also show that there is no difference between internal and external efficiency in explaining the performance of high schools, they are present at the same frequency 47%. As for their evaluation, the questions favored the quantitative evaluation in both cases.

Discussion of the Results:-

The results of our study will be presented in four main conclusions:

performance, effectiveness, and efficiency:

Most of the principals interviewed confirm that performance is both efficiency and effectiveness. The answers to the first question of our survey clearly show this observation, 82% of the interviewees answered this question by checking the two boxes.

Effectiveness, as an achievement of the institutions' objectives, is the dimension that comes first to mind when one is interested in the concept of performance. These are the direct and immediate effects of educational action. 91% of those who think performance is both efficiency and effectiveness put efficiency first. In the end, the choice of efficiency as a criterion for the success of the school was unanimously accepted by the respondents. Efficiency is absent in 18% of respondents as an indicator of school success. This absence does not mean that the efficiency is insignificant, but rather that the directors do not attach much importance to the question of the economy of resources as long as these resources are largely controlled by the provincial directorates or by the regional academy and not by schools.

Conclusion 1: the performance of a school is, first of all, its ability to achieve the objectives assigned to it (efficiency), but also the rational use of resources (efficiency).

Internal efficiency versus external efficiency:

Our results tend to emphasize that internal efficiency (measured by the degree of accomplishment of the establishment's tasks and objectives) is more essential than external efficiency (measured by the degree of participation in national development objectives). With frequencies of 94.1% and 82.4% respectively. Only 22% of high school principals believe that the success of the school requires the coexistence of the two dimensions of efficiency. Then 2.5% did not answer this question.

Conclusion 2: Effectiveness is both internal, seen as the accomplishment of the school's mission, and external, the degree of school's participation in the objectives at the national level. For the majority of our respondents, the first dimension is more important than the second. This can be explained by the fact that managers focus more on achieving the internal objectives of their establishments than on monitoring national objectives.-how is internal efficiency evaluated: qualitatively or quantitatively? The objective of this question was to detect the preferences of the directors surveyed with regard to the choice of criteria for evaluating effectiveness. To this question, our study sheds light which tends to underline the existence of a difference between internal efficiency, evaluated through its qualitative aspect, and external efficiency judged quantitatively. 47.1% of those questioned think that the success of the school can be judged by the level of mastery of learning (the qualitative aspect of effectiveness) against 23.5% who advocate the quantitative aspect (the success rate). This result can be explained by the increasing importance given to the qualities of learning (content taught) in the context of a knowledge economy.

Frequency distribution table of the aspects retained for the evaluation of the efficiency by rank.

Effectiveness	Evaluation aspect	(row 1)	(row 2)	(row 3)	(row 4)
Internal	Quantitative	23.5%	52.9%	5.9%	17.6%
	Qualitative	47.1%	17.6%	23.5%	11.8%
External	Quantitative	23.5%	23.5%	41.2%	11.8%
	Qualitative	5.9%	5.9%	29.4%	58.8%

Conclusion 3: for the high schools subject of our study, the internal efficiency is evaluated rather qualitatively, while the external efficiency is preferably evaluated quantitatively.

Internal or external efficiency?

The results showed that internal and external efficiency have almost the same importance in assessing school performance. They are present with the same proportion 47.1%. Each of the two dimensions of efficiency has two qualitative and quantitative facets.

In the same vein our results also showed that for internal efficiency there was no big difference between the two facets (qualitative and quantitative) 41.2% and 35.3% (the qualitative aspect appears in 1st and 2nd rank with the same frequency), on the other hand for internal efficiency, the qualitative aspect only comes first with a frequency of 5.9% while it was chosen 4th in 52.9% of the cases .

Frequency distribution table of the aspects retained for the evaluation of the efficiency by rank.

Efficiency	Evaluation aspect	(row 1)	(row 2)	(row 3)	(row 4)
Internal	Quantitative	41.2%	41.2%	5.9%	11.8%
	Qualitative	35.3%	11.8%	35.3%	17.6%
External	Quantitative	17.6%	29.4%	35.3%	17.6%
	Qualitative	5.9%	17.6%	23.5%	52.9%

Conclusion 4: internal and external efficiency have the same power in explaining the performance of the high schools in our study, they are evaluated preferably quantitatively rather than qualitatively.

General Conclusion:-

The examination of school performance has been the subject of numerous works in the scientific literature. In this regard, the objective of this communication was to study the conceptions of performance of Perceptions of High School principals on school performance in the region of Guelmim Oued Noun.

The assumption underlying this work was that the meaning attributed to the concept of performance depends strictly on the context of its use. The results showed that the performance of a school is, first of all, its ability to achieve the objectives assigned to it (efficiency), but also the rational use of resources (efficiency). Concerning effectiveness, the results concluded that it is both internal (measured by the level of achievement of the school's mission) and external (evaluated through the degree of participation of the school in the objectives a nationwide). The results also showed that for the majority of respondents the first dimension is more important than the second and that internal efficiency is assessed rather qualitatively, while external efficiency is assessed rather quantitatively. Finally, the results of our work indicate that internal and external efficiency have the same force in explaining the performance of the high school subject of our study and that they are evaluated preferably quantitatively than qualitatively.

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