

# The Impact of Organisational Silence on Quality Assurance in Higher Education: A Case Study of the University of Ghardaia

Dine Smail<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Universiti of Ghardaia, (Algeria). Email: [smail.dine@univ-ghardaia.dz](mailto:smail.dine@univ-ghardaia.dz)

**Received: 02/2024**

**Published: 08/2024**

## Abstract:

This study aims to shed light on the impact of organisational silence on ensuring the quality of higher education, using the University of Ghardaia as a case study. To achieve the objectives of the study, the descriptive method was used and a questionnaire was distributed to the study sample (university professors). The data were analysed using SPSS v21 software. The study reached several results, the most important of which are: the existence of an impact of the dimension of social silence on ensuring the quality of higher education, and an inverse relationship between acquiescent silence and ensuring the quality of higher education. However, the study found no impact of the defensive silence dimension on ensuring the quality of higher education at the University of Ghardaia.

**Keywords:** Silence, Organizational silence, Education, Silence of compliance, Ghardaia.

## Introduction:

Institutions face many challenges related to the behaviour of individuals and groups, often resulting from a combination of factors. This leads to problems that have a significant impact on the performance of individuals and groups within the organisation, or on the overall performance and organisational environment in general. One of the most prominent of these problems is internal conflict due to differences and contradictions in objectives, or resistance to change due to fear of the unknown and the tendency to maintain the status quo, or lack of effective communication due to poor communication skills and lack of clarity in the organisational structure, or lack of experience and leadership skills and lack of teamwork... and other behavioural problems that require solutions, such as organisational silence, which is considered to be one of the most common and complex problems in institutions. This term refers to the phenomenon of employees refraining from expressing their opinions on work-related matters, although the terminology, forms and nature of this silence vary.

Organisational silence is one of the concepts that is missing in many institutions, despite the seriousness of the consequences that result from it, such as the deterioration of the quality of decisions due to the lack of a complete vision of the management. It also leads to a decrease in creativity and innovation, as it suppresses the exchange of new ideas and proposals, which limits the ability to develop and find innovative solutions to the various problems faced by institutions. It also leads to a decrease in job satisfaction when employees feel frustrated and unappreciated, in addition to the deterioration of organisational relationships, increased stress and psychological pressure, and the reinforcement of a culture of fear.

The university, as an educational institution, is not far removed from the phenomenon of silence, as it can have a serious impact on the quality of higher education and the academic experience, whether for students or faculty members. This manifests itself in the deterioration of the quality of education and scientific research, leading to a decline in the academic performance of students and the quality of graduates. Similarly, the silence of faculty members, who are afraid to express their opinions and concerns about curricula and teaching methods if they feel that their views and concerns are not taken into account, is reflected in a lack of innovation and development, since the latter depends on the exchange of new ideas and the adoption of innovative approaches to scientific research. This results in academic stagnation, accompanied by some problems arising from the silence in the field of higher education, due to the lack of communication between faculty and administration, the decrease in faculty satisfaction and the increase in stress and psychological pressure, among others.

The main question that this study seeks to answer is:

What is the impact of organisational silence on the quality of higher education at Ghardaia University?

- Is there organisational silence in the institution under study?
- Is there a practice of the dimensions of organisational silence in the institution under study?
- Is there a statistically significant effect of organisational silence with its three dimensions (acquiescent, defensive, prosocial) on the quality of education, innovation and development at the university under study?

**Research hypotheses:**

To address the issue of our topic, we have established the following main hypothesis:

- There is a statistically significant effect of organisational silence on the quality of higher education at Ghardaia University.

In order to test the main hypothesis, we divide it into the following sub-hypotheses:

- There is a negative relationship between the level of organisational silence and the quality of higher education.

- An increase in the level of organisational silence among faculty leads to a decrease in the academic performance of students at the university.

- Organisational silence in its three dimensions negatively affects development and innovation at the university.

- There is a statistically significant effect of organisational silence in its three dimensions (acquiescent, defensive, prosocial) on the quality of education, innovation and development at the university under study.

### **The importance of the study:**

The current study derives its importance from the fact that it addresses a highly significant issue, namely the study of the impact of organisational silence on the quality of higher education. This importance is manifested in the following points:

1. Fostering an educational environment that encourages effective and open communication in order to achieve faculty satisfaction, which will lead to innovation in teaching methods and scientific research on the one hand. And trying to improve the reputation of the University, so that it enjoys a better reputation and strengthens its position locally and internationally.

2. A better understanding of organisational silence will help in the development of policies and procedures that support the academic working environment and its development, by giving faculty members the space to express their opinions and fears of punishment or neglect of their ideas.

3. Shedding light on the study of the phenomenon of organisational silence in the university will allow faculty to be creative in developing new ideas to improve curricula and thus work on the continuous development of everything related to the researcher and scientific research.

4. By studying the phenomenon of organisational silence, the university can make significant progress in the quality of education, achieve the satisfaction of all parties, and identify the challenges and problems that may not be apparent and work to solve them.

### **Objectives of the study:**

The current study aims to achieve the following objectives:

1. Understand the concept of organisational silence and identify its causes and different forms within higher education institutions.
2. To determine the factors that influence the increase or decrease of silence in higher education institutions.
3. To examine the relationship between organisational silence and the level of quality in higher education and to show the extent of its impact on the quality of teaching methods and curricula.
4. To outline the policies adopted by the university to create and encourage communication between faculty and administration, and to identify the strategies used to reduce silence and address the current channels for expressing opinions.

### **Reasons for choosing the topic:**

1. The topic “Organisational Silence and its Impact on the Quality of Higher Education” falls within the field of Human Resource Management, which is concerned with the development and improvement of relations between employees (faculty) and administration, as well as the working environment.
2. Enriching the academic literature with the topic of “Organisational Silence and Its Impact on the Quality of Higher Education” is a relatively new topic that deserves further research and study and can provide new insights for the university.
3. The results we aim to achieve can help to guide educational policy towards creating a better working environment, building trust and strengthening positive relationships within the university.

### **Research approach:**

In order to describe and explain the phenomenon of organisational silence and its impact on the quality of higher education, the descriptive approach was adopted by following its steps, and the analytical method to describe the extent of the spread of the phenomenon of silence and its impact, and to explain the

underlying causes behind it. This approach is simple to apply, but it provides an accurate description of the phenomena and an unbiased understanding of reality, and is flexible, allowing the use of several tools. In this study, however, only one tool was used, the questionnaire.

### **The concept of organisational silence and its stages:**

The issue of organisational silence has recently attracted the attention of researchers due to its link with the efficiency and effectiveness of the organisation and the negative behaviour of its employees, which has become an obstacle to progress and development. The first attempts to define organisational silence go back to the theory of the spiral of silence developed by the German researcher Elisabeth Noëlle Neumann in 1974. Individuals compare the benefits and risks or expected costs associated with the behaviour of expressing an opinion. One of the reasons an individual prefers silence is the risks associated with the behaviour of expressing an opinion, which include the discrepancy between the individual's opinion and the group's opinion, and the fear of isolation. As a result, individuals believe that their opinions will not be taken into account if they do not agree with those of the group, and therefore tend not to express them (Yasser, 2002). Therefore, psychological, social, cultural and political factors, as well as the influence of the media, are intertwined in shaping the prevailing attitudes towards the issues raised in society.

Organisational silence is one of the concepts that is absent in many organisations, despite its negative effects, which can be detrimental to the future of these organisations. It entrenches a state of acquiescence and acceptance of the status quo among employees in these organisations. It also paves the way for cases of organisational denial, lack of role in initiating change, reluctance to put forward ideas and suggestions, and avoidance of taking a risk-taking stance in expressing opinions on critical work issues and problems (Al-Qarni, 2015).

Organisational silence has been defined as an employee's hesitation to speak about issues that arise in the workplace for fear that his or her comments will be misinterpreted by his or her immediate supervisor and, as a result, negatively affect his or her relationship with colleagues (Al-Kabi, 2018).

It is also defined as a condition in which the employee fails or is unable to disclose the information, ideas, or suggestions he or she possesses that could contribute to preventing the exacerbation of organisational problems or to improving and developing the existing organisational situation (Al-Qarni, 2015).

Moreover, it is defined as a negative behaviour derived from the prevailing norms of acquiescence in some organisational cultures, which limits the participation of individuals in providing what they know about organisational problems (Ahmed & Ahmed, 2017).

In summary, organisational silence refers to the concealment or withholding of information, suggestions, opinions and ideas that could improve and develop the work and the organisation as a whole, or the failure to disclose problems for fear of negative reactions from superiors or top management, or unsatisfactory consequences that may result. It may also involve withholding information in order to protect the interests and reputation of the University.

### **1.2. Stages of organisational silence:**

The phenomenon of organisational silence is present in all organisations to some extent, although to varying degrees. The difference lies in the degree of clarity and it affects different aspects of the organisational environment, whether at the individual, group or organisational level.

Organisational silence does not occur suddenly, but rather sequentially and in stages, as confirmed by Ax Yohan and others. They have identified five stages within the organisation (Al-Majali, 2007).

**The first stage:** Failure to diagnose the factors within the organisation that lead to organisational silence. These factors can be categorised as

- a) Organisational factors: such as the bureaucratic climate, competitive pressures, weak communication systems and high centralisation in the distribution of resources.
- b) Leadership factors: such as supervisory style, reward system, job design issues and lack of role clarity.
- c) Lack of or inadequate training and technical support, insufficient authority, inappropriate resource allocation, unrealistic objectives and limited communication between management and employees. Excessive work routines and lack of work variety.

**The second stage:** Failure to use modern management approaches such as participative management, goal setting requirements, job enrichment and performance based rewards.

**The third stage:** Failure to provide information about employee self-efficacy, such as ineffective gains, completed experiences, verbal persuasion and emotional counselling.

**The fourth stage:** Weak communication processes, perhaps due to an inappropriate choice of communication channels for the content of the message and the nature of the target audience, which often leads to communication failure. Communication processes are influenced by many factors that negatively affect the effectiveness of administrative communication in organisations.

**The fifth stage:** Lack of behavioural change through the initiative of subordinates to achieve the assigned task objectives.

There are also other stages identified by Piderit and Ashford who state that the phenomenon of organisational silence goes through the following four stages (Bint Ibrahim Al-Shanini and Bint Al-Turki, 2021).

**1/ Stage of immersion:** This stage involves a state of pleasure and consultation, and when there is a sense of disconnection or irregularity between what is expected from the work and what actually happens, the phenomenon of silence begins to crystallise.

**2/ Stage of recession:** This stage begins with a decrease in the enjoyment and consultation that was present in the previous stage, followed by a gradual decrease in the level of job satisfaction, which leads to a decrease in efficiency.

**3/ Separation stage:** The employee becomes aware of what is happening and begins to withdraw psychologically, and in this stage the employee's level of psychological stress, physical and mental health deterioration increases, leading to the occurrence of silence.

**4/ Communication stage:** Here we have reached the highest stage of organisational silence, and in this stage the employee's thinking is unbalanced due to his scepticism and self-doubt, which leads him to the stage of destruction and continuous thinking about leaving the job and the organisation.

## **2.2. Types and dimensions of organisational silence:**

Some literature refers to different forms of silence behaviour, such as the behaviour of silence due to fear of retaliation, the behaviour of silence due to the desire to convey a message of dissatisfaction with what is going on, and there is the behaviour of silence to avoid confrontation, and there is also the behaviour of organisational silence, the behaviour of silence of indifference, and the

behaviour of silence of the desire not to cooperate and contribute constructively to the organisation. In addition, there are other types and forms of silence behaviour, such as the behaviour of silence of collusion to maintain interests and obtain great benefits and prizes. In another attempt to understand and analyse patterns of employee silence behaviour (Ammar & Ismail, 2018), Sobkowiak referred to two types of organisational silence, which are:

**Acoustic silence:** This type of silence depends on sound, meaning that the individual refrains from speaking or discussing any matters, where individuals generally refrain from expressing opinions or suggestions.

**Pragmatic Silence:** This is related to speech or conversation and usually reflects the absence of speech or dialogue for important reasons or for strategic purposes, but in a diplomatic manner where one can respond away from the subject under discussion. Kostiuk divided silence into two types:

**1. Technical silence:** Individuals tend to remain silent, despite the ability to speak and the availability of communication opportunities, after perceiving the concerns and threats resulting from speaking. They believe that in this case silence is the optimal and effective way to avoid problems.

**2. Deviant/Ignorant Silence:** Individuals tend not to speak in order to conceal certain deviations that exist in the workplace, thus neglecting the interests of the organisation in general and refraining from reporting deviations that may harm the organisation in the long run.

**B. Dimensions of Organisational Silence:** Organisational Silence is a multidimensional concept and to understand it fully, its dimensions need to be explored. In this regard, three basic dimensions of organisational silence can be distinguished (Bashir & Al-Tall, 2022):

**Isolation, lack of management support, work-related concerns;**

The multidimensional nature of organisational silence indicates that this phenomenon is not the result of a single factor, but rather a complex interaction between individual, group, organisational and cultural factors. Understanding these dimensions can help to develop effective strategies to address silence. However, most previous studies on organisational silence have focused on the three main dimensions of organisational silence, which according to Dyne et al. (2003) can be categorised into three main types (Al-Qarni, 2015):

**Acquiescent silence:** This is when employees hide or withhold their opinions, suggestions, and information in order to acquiesce to organisational

circumstances. In this case, silence is not due to fear or lack of knowledge, but rather apathy and a desire to withdraw and surrender, or a belief that speaking up will not make a difference. This type of silence reflects employees' conscious attitudes towards the organisation they belong to and represents a voluntary, passive behaviour in choosing to remain silent.

**Defensive silence:** In this type of silence, employees hide information and opinions to protect themselves from the consequences of speaking out about organisational problems and issues. The employee prefers to remain silent for fear of negative reactions to expressing their views. This type of silence is more tactical than acquiescent silence because it is a deliberate, proactive behaviour based on perceiving, thinking and considering alternatives and then choosing to withhold information and ideas to avoid personal risk or fear of being blamed for the problem they wish to report. In this type of silence, employees also hide personal work errors.

**Prosocial Silence:** This type involves the deliberate withholding of work-related ideas, information and opinions by employees out of a desire to protect the interests and reputation of the organisation or to benefit other individuals, based on principles of altruism and cooperation that have their roots in the literature on organisational citizenship behaviour. Therefore, this type of silence results from the employee's concern for others and their desire to benefit the organisation for which they work.

### **Figure 1: Dimensions of organisational silence**



**Source: Prepared by the researcher based on previous studies**

**3.2. Reasons for organisational silence:** The reasons for organisational silence can be attributed to three major reasons (Bashir & Al-Taweei, 2022):

**1. Managerial reasons:** Managerial reasons are important reasons that lead to organisational silence, which can be summarised as follows:

- a. The first managerial reason that leads to organisational silence is the continuous negative feedback from supervisors.
- b. The set of unspoken beliefs that managers often implicitly hold about employee-related matters.
- c. The failure of supervisors to address the real problems that exist in organisations, as the search for quick fixes or avoidance of these problems makes the situation worse and leads employees to believe that there is no hope for a solution.
- d. When employees ridicule their leaders and do not trust them, this leads to the occurrence of silence.

**2. Individual personal reasons:** The individual reasons for organisational silence can be categorised as follows:

**a. Fear:** Employees fear reprimand, punishment, loss of rewards or even dismissal.

**b. Isolation:** One of the main reasons for the emergence of organisational silence is the fear of being rejected, left alone or excluded, so they have to choose between expressing their ideas or remaining silent, and in most cases they prefer to remain silent.

**3. Organisational reasons:** Milliken & Morrison identified a number of organisational reasons that lead to the occurrence of organisational silence, which are: decision making processes, perpetuation of injustice and organisational inefficiency, and poor organisational performance.

Administrative centralisation and lack of delegation of authority - Difficulties in communication between top management and employees - Adherence to the letter of laws and instructions and focus on formalities rather than substance - Rejection of colleagues - Lack of conviction in employee participation - Lack of material and moral incentives for employees - Fear of change and resistance to it by administrations and preference for maintaining the status quo.

**Managers' preoccupation with routine work and rejection of many new ideas as a waste of time.**

Organisational barriers, such as restricting employees' behaviour to their prescribed roles and not allowing them to deviate from them - weak organisational loyalty.

There are several other reasons that lead employees to resort to organisational silence, including (Nabil Qassem, 2022):

**- Conflicting goals, structural design.**

**Second: Factors of organisational silence:**

Many researchers and those interested in the phenomenon of organisational silence have found that the factors that lead employees or subordinates to choose the behaviour of silence and prefer it to the behaviour of expression are diverse in terms of their relevance to the nature of the employee's personality and his

motives, or that they may be related to organisational and administrative factors, which we present as follows (Bint Ibrahim Al-Shenini and Bint Al-Turki, 2021):

**1/ Organisational and administrative factors:** These factors are manifested by:

- Top management's fear of negative upward feedback from subordinates - Managers' implicit-formal belief in authority - Communication.

**2/ Individual factors:** Isolation; cultural values of individuals; fear of negative reactions from subordinates;

**4.2. Consequences of organisational silence:** Organisational silence not only hinders organisational development, but also causes various other consequences, such as reduced employee commitment, increased internal conflicts, restricted decision-making processes, and the prevention of positive or negative feedback to management. Organisational silence also undermines employee morale, motivation, absenteeism and lateness, which have a negative impact on individual and organisational activities.

**5.2. Addressing organisational silence:** Some studies have shown that social support, clarifying employees' roles, involving them in goal setting, and paying attention to organisational culture can enhance the role of individuals in speaking up and breaking the barrier of silence. It has been noted that one of the most important ways to prevent organisational silence is to promote a positive leadership style. Leadership can mitigate organisational silence, especially if communication is effective, the leader facilitates the flow of knowledge and feedback, and involves followers in decision making. In addition, strengthening the organisational climate with good values, effective communication and a positive view of the human element were found to be strong reasons for reducing and preventing organisational silence, including through employee training programmes, rewarding innovative ideas and using specialised committees to carry out some tasks (Khalil Al-Sayed, 2021).

Organisational silence in the institution can also be addressed by (Boumanghar & Wadi, 2016):

- Opening new two-way communication channels between the employee and the organisation, making communication a safety valve for management by giving the employee the opportunity to solve problems in the work environment.
- Intrinsically motivating employees to come up with good and creative ideas.
- Creating a culture that sharpens the mental energies and creative abilities of employees to propose new ideas and innovative solutions to problems, using the organisation's available resources.
- Improve efficiency and increase productivity for the individual and the organisation.
- Reduce duplication of effort by adopting the principle of decentralisation and delegation of authority.
- Promote a spirit of teamwork between superiors and subordinates.
- Developing employee behaviour in the work environment.
- Improve the morale and job satisfaction of employees.
- Reduce resistance to change in the work environment.

**3. The concept of higher education:** Before delving into the concept of higher education, it is necessary to understand the term “education”, which refers to the transfer of information, knowledge and experience from the teacher to the learner (student) in specialised institutions and centres according to programmes and curricula developed by the relevant authorities.

Education in any society has two essential tasks, one specific and the other general (Turki, 1990):

The specific task is to prepare individuals for a specific role in society, i.e. to prepare them for a profession that society needs.

The general task is to prepare the individual for society by equipping him with certain social characteristics, i.e. the elements of the national personality of the community.

The institution of higher education (the university) is a social institution that influences and is influenced by the social environment; it is a product of the society and, on the other hand, it is its tool to shape its technical, professional, political and intellectual leadership (Al-Assadi, 2013).

The Algerian legislator defines it as a public institution with a cultural, scientific and professional character (Guiding Law on Higher Education, 1999). Higher education institutions are institutions with a high level of knowledge, where students and researchers are taught the latest scientific advances in various fields, which may be part of their future aspirations and dreams.

As for the concept of higher education, it is considered one of the fundamental tools that contribute to the formation of the individual and society, and to the shaping of its features in the present and future, and to ensuring the proper paths of the nation's development towards its goals of progress and advancement in various economic, social, political and cultural fields. It is the sure way to prepare the specialised human resources who plan the material growth of society and supervise its implementation, and it is the one that prepares the researchers who explore the future and point out its directions and the factors that can influence its design. It is also the one that highlights the intellectual talents and creative energies that give culture its dimensions and push it towards creativity and transcendence of reality (Al-Badran & Al-Dihshan, 2001).

**1.3. Objectives of higher education institutions:** Given the noble role of higher education institutions in the society, five major basic objectives have been identified (Al-Asadi, 2013):

A. Education and training of students, which includes nineteen secondary objectives, including

- Deepening students' intellectual and cultural skills
- Developing the student's personal qualities
- Training students in scientific research and investigation methods
- To provide the student with skills and experience
- To form the student's personality in an integrated manner.

B. Faculty Development, which includes six secondary objectives, including

- Retaining faculty members from migration
- Achieving the aspirations of faculty members in university matters
- To protect the rights of faculty members
- Deepening the affiliation of the faculty to the university

- Providing a suitable university environment for faculty members to carry out their duties (teaching, research and community service).

C. Research activities and graduate studies, which include secondary objectives such as

- Conducting basic (research) and applied research
- To finance and support scientific research
- Encouraging scientific research within the framework of so-called team research
- Encouraging students to pursue postgraduate studies.

D. Community Development and Cultural Irradiation, which includes fourteen secondary objectives, including

- Participation in the formulation of national policies, plans for economic and social development
- Organised participation with the governorate and government in planning and implementing projects
- Linking with local government agencies to develop the local community
- Participating in the study of local and national development projects
- Disseminating ideas that will positively change society.

E: University management, which includes thirteen sub-objectives, among which we mention

- Ensuring the efficiency and competence of those responsible for university management
- To affirm democratic governance in university administration
- To involve teachers in university administration
- Involving students in university management
- Improving the standards of university performance and the programmes offered by the university.

**1.1.3 The concept of quality in higher education:** Some have defined quality in higher education as “the extent to which the institution meets its expected

objectives”, while others see quality as “conformity to purpose”. There are also those who view quality through the lens of ‘value added’ (Al-Balawi, 2006).

Quality in higher education encompasses the full range of services provided by the institution and its staff. It means eliminating errors and waste, improving teaching and learning, focusing on the beneficiary, and ensuring flexibility, relevance, effectiveness, conformity to standards, and the ability to meet the specific needs and requirements of students (Al-Mushaili, 2015).

**The quality of higher education includes three interrelated elements:**

**Efficiency:** This means the optimal and best use of available resources.

**Objectives:** Meaning linking efficiency with the required needs and objectives.

**Performance:** Meaning the ability to effectively improve the educational process.

**2.1.3. Basic concepts of quality in higher education:**

The concept of quality in education is one of the modern concepts that has emerged in our time, which has great importance in educational institutions and plays a positive role in raising the academic level.

**a. Quality: Linguistically,** it comes from “ajada”, which means to produce something good in terms of speech or action, and to make something good, and the good is the opposite of the bad, and he made the thing qualify, meaning it became good. As for the meaning of quality in English dictionaries, there is multiplicity and overlap, as it has been pointed out that it means excellence, and sometimes it means some signs or indicators by which the thing can be identified or understood (Shaker and Al-Zyadat, 2008).

- It is the degree of convergence between the characteristics of the product and the needs and desires of the customers, through which an appropriate quality strategy can be built, and then formulated into designs, and then the product is adapted to these designs, and instructions are provided on how to use it, and the degree of customer acceptance is measured (Hajim Al-Tai, 2008).

From the above, we can say that quality is a set of characteristics and attributes available in the product or service that satisfies the beneficiaries and meets their needs.

**b. Definition of service:** It is a set of perceptible and exchangeable things provided by certain companies or institutions in general through the provision of services, or it is considered a service institution (Al-Tai and Al-Alaq, 2016).

- It is defined as an intangible product, or at least a large part of it, if it is completely intangible and is exchanged directly from the producer to the user, and is not transferred or stored, and is exhausted almost immediately (Hawas, 2016).

**c. Linguistic education:** It is derived from “alima” with the thing, which means he embraced it and realised it, and he taught him the science and craftsmanship (Al-Razi, 1980).

- It is the arrangement and organisation of information to produce learning, and this requires the transfer of knowledge from a source to a receiver, and this process is called communication, and since effective education depends on renewed situations and knowledge, achieving an effective communication process between the parties of the educational process is required, and educational and technological means can be important factors in increasing the flow of knowledge (Encyclopedia of Educational Knowledge, 2007).

-From the above, the definition of education can be that it is a process of changing the behaviour and information of individuals through training and experiences that help to create new knowledge.

**Higher education:** This is the education that deals with complex and highly important issues and requires great precision in the science of curricula. It is responsible for raising the level of knowledge of students, as well as the responsibility of the university through research and specialised research. Teaching should be at a high level through the publication of books and research, and this requires hard work to contribute to the development of sciences (Ayman, 2007).

The Algerian legislator defined it as any form of training or research training provided by higher education institutions at the post-secondary level, and it can provide high-level technical training provided by state-recognised institutions (Chanaf, 2016).

From the above, higher education can be defined as a high level associated with a specific curriculum aimed at achieving certain goals through technical methods, techniques, means and programmes to facilitate the transfer of knowledge under the supervision of experts in the field.

### **3.1.3. Characteristics of the higher education service:**

The higher education service has a number of characteristics that can be summarised as follows:

**Intangibility:** One of the most distinctive characteristics that distinguishes services from goods is that the service is intangible, which means that services do not have a physical entity and the beneficiary does not have the ability to make decisions and judgments based on a tangible assessment by touching, tasting, smelling or seeing it before obtaining the service (Zakaria, 2008).

**Inseparability:** This means the close relationship between the service and the person responsible for providing it, which requires the presence of the service seeker at the place of service provision (Zakaria, 2008).

**Heterogeneity:** this characteristic means that in many cases it is very difficult or impossible to define services, especially those that rely heavily and clearly on the human element, which makes it difficult for service providers to guarantee that their services are always identical or homogeneous (Al-Tai and Al-Alaq, 2016).

**Ownership:** This refers to the non-transfer of ownership from the producer to the customer by agreement (Raqad, 2014).

**Difficulty in evaluating the quality of the service by the beneficiary:** The beneficiary has more difficulty in evaluating the service provided to him/her compared to tangible physical goods and the reason is that the actual performance of the service is related to the interaction of the beneficiary with the service provider (Raqad, 2014).

**Fluctuation in demand:** The demand for some services is characterised by fluctuation and instability from hour to hour.

### **2.3. Quality objectives of higher education:**

- Preparation of highly qualified human competences in various fields
- Development of the student's personality in its various dimensions
- To develop the student's ability to reason and to adopt a scientific approach.
- To promote, support and improve the level of scientific research
- To build a national scientific and technical core capable of developing scientific research
- To contribute to the achievement of economic development
- Improve the level of internal and external competence of higher education institutions

- To keep pace with developments and interactions in the sciences.

According to the researcher, the objectives of higher education are:

- To meet the needs of the labour market with qualified personnel
- To help students discover their talents and develop their skills
- Generate new knowledge through the daily research of specialised students and researchers
- Teaching and training students to use modern technologies to facilitate their research
- Finding innovative solutions to various problems faced by institutions

The researcher believes that the importance of the quality of higher education service is

- Working to develop the skills of administrative managers in institutions
- Raising the level of students' skills and guiding them to better ones
- Improving the quality of the institution's outputs
- Gaining the satisfaction of the community and the labour market, especially in the quality of university outputs
- Keeping pace with the rapid changes in the business environment

**3.3. Dimensions of service quality in higher education:** The educational institution seeks to excel in providing its educational services to the beneficiary university students, and this excellence can only be achieved through the promotion of an excellent level of quality (Mansouri, 2006).

**Reliability:** Customers want to deal with institutions and staff that are reliable. Reliability refers to the ability of the service provider to deliver the service to the customer and to provide a consistent level of quality regardless of changing circumstances.

**Assurance:** This dimension expresses the degree of feeling of security and trust in the service provided and the person providing it.

**Tangibility:** This includes the attractiveness of the building, the appearance of the staff, the interior design and organisation of the building in creating the

departments needed by the educational institution, and the modernity of the equipment that helps the staff to provide the service quickly.

**Accessibility and ease of use:** Customers prefer to deal with institutions where it is easy to obtain the service or to deal with them. This dimension is interpreted by several indicators, including

- The availability of the service at the time requested by the beneficiary.
- The availability of the service in the place the beneficiary prefers.
- The availability of the service when the beneficiary wants it.

**Competence:** This means that the people providing the service have the necessary skills and knowledge to deliver the service efficiently.

**Credibility:** This refers to the extent to which the educational institution is able to fulfil its obligations and commitments to the student before and during his/her enrolment.

**Responsiveness:** The degree of readiness and willingness of the service provider to assist the beneficiary or solve his/her specific problems.

**Competence:** The level of competence possessed by those responsible for providing the service in terms of skills, analytical abilities and knowledge that enable them to perform their duties to the best of their ability.

**Communication:** This means that the service provider is able to inform the beneficiary about the nature of the service provided and the role that the beneficiary should play to obtain the required service.

**4. Methodological framework of the study:** In this section we will try to present the following points:

**1.1.4. Study tool and methodology:** The study followed the descriptive method, as it is suitable for the subject and objectives of the study, which deals with existing and available phenomena and practices, without interfering in their course, and the study can interact with them and then use the questionnaire as a tool to collect information for the study, as it is one of the most appropriate scientific research tools that achieve the objectives of the study, based on those studies that were interested in the field of the study variables and also used this type of tool. The study started from them to achieve the desired, benefiting from the theoretical framework and the operational definitions previously established, where the questionnaire included three parts.

The first part: This part includes personal information and questions were asked about the respondent's gender, age group, seniority and academic qualification.

The second part: It consists of the organisational silence variable and consists of three dimensions: acquiescent silence (4 statements), defensive silence (4 statements) and prosocial silence (4 statements).

The third part: It consists of the variable of the quality of higher education and consists of 11 statements as a single block.

A group of specialised experts was asked to review the first draft of the questionnaire, and after modifying the wording of some items according to their observations, 190 questionnaires were distributed to the study sample, representing the faculty members of the University of Ghardaia, Faculty of Economic, Commercial and Management Sciences. 175 questionnaires were retrieved, of which 160 were valid, 15 were rejected for incomplete information and 15 were not retrieved at all. In this case, and given the size of the sample studied of 190 people, the programme did not request an increase in the sample size, as indicated in the output of the programme, which indicates that the sample size meets the required conditions at the minimum level. It should be noted that we used the five-point Likert scale to measure the study items, with the following form:

#### **4. Internal consistency validity of the organisational silence items:**

**Table 1: Internal consistency validity of organisational silence dimension items**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Expression</b>	<b>Pearson correlation coefficient</b>	<b>Level of significance</b>
<b>01</b>	I feel disinclined to make suggestions about changes in my area of work.	<b>0.665**</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>02</b>	I refrain from suggesting ideas in order to avoid conflicts and disputes with my superiors.	<b>0.722**</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>03</b>	I keep ideas for solving problems to myself.	<b>0.663**</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>04</b>	I keep my opinions and information to myself because my line manager does not	<b>0.787**</b>	<b>0.000</b>

	appreciate my competence and skills.		
05	I try not to talk about negative working conditions in order to avoid responsibility.	0.769**	0.000
06	I believe that my ideas and opinions are unimportant because my position does not allow it.	0.796**	0.000
07	I overlook some work related facts to protect myself.	0.655**	0.000
08	I avoid expressing my ideas on how to improve the work for fear of losing my position in the organisation.	0.601**	0.000
09	I refuse to disclose information that could damage the reputation of the university.	0.601**	0.000
10	I avoid giving ideas on how to improve the work to avoid losing my relationship with my colleagues.	0.560**	0.000
11	I avoid informing my manager about work-related problems to avoid harming the interests of others.	0.351**	0.002
12	I will endeavour to protect information relating to my work, as it is the property of the University.	0.562**	0.000

**The source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS V21.**

The table above explains the Pearson correlation coefficient between each statement of the dimensions for the first axis. The correlation coefficients were estimated to be between (0.351\*\* and 0.796\*\*), with a significance level of (0.000), which is less than ( $\alpha=0.001$ ). If we observe, we find that all the statements have an acceptable degree with a very high level of confidence, which indicates that the statements of the axis are valid and consistent to conduct the study on them.

### **3.1.4. Internal consistency validity of the items on the quality of higher education:**

**Table 2: Internal Consistency Validity of the Items of the Dimension of Administrative Empowerment Practices**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Expression</b>	<b>Pearson correlation coefficient</b>	<b>Level of significance</b>
01	The University is committed to fulfilling its obligations and commitments to the Faculty.	0.454**	0.000
02	The University supports the creative thinking of the Faculty.	0.554**	0.000
03	The University will provide adequate resources to carry out academic and research activities.	0.493**	0.000
04	The university administration works to create a suitable environment for the faculty to carry out its duties.	0.506**	0.000
05	Modern programmes help to improve the teaching methods of the faculty.	0.444**	0.000
06	The university is concerned with quality standards in relation to academic work.	0.668**	0.000
07	The faculty of the university makes intellectual contributions to the work of the university.	0.694**	0.000
08	I carry out the tasks assigned to me according to the required quality standards.	0.647**	0.000
09	The university is important to me on a personal level.	0.484**	0.000
10	I deal with the problems of the university as if they were my personal problems.	0.573*	0.000
11	The University provides digital opportunities to improve the quality of its	0.594**	0.000

	services.		
12	Continuous work on the development and innovation of educational programmes contributes to quality improvement.	0.206**	0.000
13	Reviewing and developing educational quality standards in the light of global developments.	0.259**	0.000
14	Advanced technologies are used to provide the necessary information in the innovation and education process.	0.400**	0.000
15	University management supports innovation at different levels of higher education.	0.348**	0.000

**The source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS v21.**

The table above explains the Pearson correlation coefficient between each statement of the three dimensions for the administrative empowerment axis. The correlation coefficients were estimated to be between (0.454\*\*) and (0.706\*\*), with a significance level of (0.000), which is less than ( $\alpha=0.001$ ).

#### 4.1.4. Reliability of the study scale (Cronbach's alpha): as follows

**Table 3: Display of the calculated Cronbach's alpha value**

Name of the axis	Number of items	Cronbach's alpha coefficient
Organisational Silence	12	0.873
Dimension of Defensive Silence	4	0.804
Defensive Silence Dimension	4	0.797
Social Silence Dimension	4	0.674
Quality of Education	11	0.819

Development and Innovation	04	0.580
Quality of higher education	15	0.793
Total	27	0.864

**The source: Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS V21.**

The study scale (Cronbach's alpha) is considered one of the most important tests for measuring reliability, and based on the results of this test, the questionnaire is either modified or accepted. This test is used to determine whether the questionnaire items are consistent with each other.

The table above shows that the Cronbach's alpha value for the reliability of the questionnaire is greater than 0.70, which is a very good ratio that confirms that the current study instrument has a high level of reliability.

**5.1.4. Statistical methods used:** The study was based on a statistical programme, viz: SPSS V21, with the aim of entering and processing the data, and standing at its descriptive analysis and testing the hypothesized relationship between the variables. The statistical methods used in this study can be summarised as follows:

- Descriptive statistics using the SPSS V21 statistical analysis programme to describe the characteristics of the study sample (percentages, frequencies and arithmetic means).
- Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which is a test to determine whether the data follow a normal distribution, since most laboratory tests require the data distribution to be normal.
- Cronbach's alpha test to test the reliability of the study instrument.
- Multiple linear regression test.
- Simple linear regression test.
- T-test to determine the level of the study variables in the institution.

**2.4. Means and standard deviations for the organisational silence axis:** The SPSS statistical program provided the results of the calculation of means and standard deviations for the statements of the organisational silence axis, as shown in the following table:

**Table 4: Means and standard deviations of organisational silence**

Item Number	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative importance	Level of acceptance
1	I am reluctant to make suggestions about changes in my area of work	2.781	1.286	4	Moderate
2	I refrain from presenting ideas in order to avoid conflicts and disputes with my superiors.	3.106	1.205	1	Moderate
3	I keep ideas for solving work problems to myself.	2.943	1.579	3	Moderate
4	I keep my opinions and information to myself because my direct superiors do not value my competence and abilities.	2.943	1.275	2	Moderate
Mean and standard deviation for the Acquiescent Silence dimension		3.220		0,805	1
5	I try to avoid talking about negative working conditions in order to avoid responsibility.	2.968	1.319	4	Moderate
6	I think my opinions and ideas are unimportant because my job position does	3.256	1.209	3	High

	not allow them.				
7	I overlook some facts related to the job to protect myself.	3.312	1.094	1	Moderate
8	I avoid expressing my ideas on how to improve the work for fear of losing my position in the organisation.	3.306	1.098	2	Moderate
Mean and standard deviation for the Defensive Silence dimension		2.750	0.871	3	Moderate
9	I refuse to disclose and share information that could potentially damage the reputation of the university.	2,880	1,081	3	Moderate
10	I refrain from giving ideas on how to improve work to avoid losing my relationships with my colleagues.	3,140	1,069	1	Moderate
11	I avoid informing my line manager about work-related problems to avoid harming the interests of others.	2,940	1,150	2	Moderate
12	I endeavour to protect the information related	2,820	1,063	4	Moderate

	to my work as it is considered to be the private property of the University.				
Mean and Standard Deviation for the Social Silence Dimension		2,945	0,797	2	Moderate
Mean and standard deviation for the organisational silence axis		3.1411	0.78603	Moderate	

**The source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of SPSS V21.**

The table above shows that the responses of the sample individuals at the University of Ghardaia, Faculty of Economics, regarding the first part related to organisational silence, the first dimension representing acquiescent silence, the majority of the sample individuals' responses were at a moderate level, where the arithmetic mean of these statements ranged between 2.781 as a minimum and 3.106 as a maximum, with a standard deviation ranging between 1.205 and 1.579, which means that the sample individuals moderately agree with the content of this dimension.

The majority of the sample's responses to the second dimension, which represents defensive silence, were also at a moderate level, and the arithmetic mean of this dimension ranged between 2.968 as a minimum and 3.306 as a maximum, while the standard deviation ranged between 1.094 and 1.319.

As for the third dimension, related to social silence, the results were mostly moderate, and the arithmetic mean of this dimension ranged between 2.820 as a minimum and 3.140 as a maximum, while the standard deviation ranged between 1.063 and 1.150.

Regarding the results of the statements of the whole dimension, the general arithmetic mean of organisational silence, which was estimated at (3.1411), falls in the moderate category, which indicates that the responses of the sample individuals show a moderate level of organisational silence at the University of Ghardaia, Faculty of Economics. The standard deviation is (0.78603).

#### 4.2.1. Arithmetic means and standard deviations for the axis “Quality of Higher Education”:

The SPSS statistical programme provided the results of calculating the arithmetic means and standard deviations for the statements of the higher education quality axis, as shown in the following table:

**Table No. (05) Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations of the Responses of the Sample Individuals for the Higher Education Quality Axis**

Item Number	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation	Relative importance	Level of acceptance
1	The University is committed to fulfilling its obligations and commitments to faculty members.	3.093	1.164	5	Moderate
2	The University supports the creative thinking of faculty members.	3.262	1.129	2	Moderate
3	The university administration works to provide sufficient funds for the conduct of scientific research to complete academic and research activities.	3.306	1.149	3	Moderate
4	The university administration works to create a suitable environment for faculty members to perform their	3.187	1.171	4	Moderate

	<b>duties.</b>				
5	<b>Modern programmes help to improve the teaching methods of the faculty members.</b>	3.425	1.113	1	<b>High</b>
6	<b>The University is concerned with quality standards and distinctions related to academic work.</b>	2.887	1.218	11	Moderate
7	<b>Faculty members contribute to the University by making intellectual contributions related to the work of the University.</b>	3.018	1.205	10	Moderate
8	<b>I carry out the assigned tasks according to the required quality standards.</b>	2.981	1.168	7	Moderate
9	<b>The university is important to me on a personal level.</b>	3.050	1.126	6	Moderate
10	<b>I deal with the problems of the university as if they were my personal problems.</b>	3.050	1.121	8	Moderate

11	<b>The University provides digital opportunities to improve the quality of its services.</b>	3.031	1.173	9	Moderate
12	<b>Continuous work on the development and innovation of educational programmes contributes to the improvement of quality.</b>	3.856	0.889	1	<b>High</b>
13	<b>Reviewing and developing educational quality standards in the light of global developments.</b>	3.631	1.108	3	<b>High</b>
14	<b>Using advanced technologies to provide the necessary information in the innovative and educational process.</b>	3.562	1.130	4	<b>High</b>
15	<b>University management supports innovation at different levels of higher education.</b>	3.750	1.021	2	<b>High</b>
<b>The overall mean and standard deviation for the quality of higher education.</b>		3.272	0.5619	<b>High</b>	

**Source:** Prepared by the researcher based on the results of SPSS

Table (05) shows that the responses of the sample individuals at the University of Ghardaia, Faculty of Economics, regarding the second part related to the quality of higher education, show that the overall mean of the quality of higher education estimated at (3.117) falls within the medium category and the standard deviation (0.687), which indicates that the responses of the respondents indicate that there is a level of quality of higher education at the University of Ghardaia, Faculty of Economics to a moderate degree.

**Hypothesis testing:** After extracting the results of the opinions and responses of the sample individuals through the use of arithmetic means, standard deviations, and testing the hypotheses using the correlation coefficient, and in light of the results obtained regarding this study, the proposed hypotheses can be tested.

**First branch:** Testing the first main hypothesis, which states: There is a negative relationship between the level of organisational silence and the quality of higher education.

**The null hypothesis H0:** There is no negative relationship between the level of organisational silence and the quality of higher education.

This hypothesis was tested by comparing the arithmetic mean of all the questionnaire items on organisational silence in the studied institution with the arithmetic mean of the instrument, which is the five-point Likert scale measure.

**Table (06): Shows the relationship between organisational silence and the quality of higher education**

Quality of higher education	Organisation al Silence			
.273**	1.000	Correlation Coefficient	Organisational Silence	Spearman's rho
.000	.	Sig. (2-tailed)		
160	160	N		
1.000	.273**	Correlation Coefficient	Quality of higher education	
.	.000	Sig. (2-tailed)		
160	160	N		

**\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).**

From the table above, we find that the relationship between organisational silence and the quality of higher education is positive and statistically significant. Therefore, we reject the hypothesis that there is a negative

relationship between the level of organisational silence and the quality of higher education, and we accept the null hypothesis that there is no negative relationship between the level of organisational silence and the quality of higher education.

Test of the second sub-hypothesis, which states that Increasing the level of organisational silence among faculty leads to poor academic performance of students at the university.

The null hypothesis H<sub>0</sub>: Increasing the level of organisational silence among faculty does not lead to poor academic achievement of students at the university.

This hypothesis was tested by comparing the mean of the responses to all the questionnaire items regarding the increase in the level of organisational silence among faculty in the studied institution with the mean of the instrument.

**Table 7 shows the results of the one-sample t-test on organisational silence.**

<b>Test score (T) = 3</b>					
<b>Organisational Silence</b>	<b>Arithmetic mean</b>	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Calculated T-value</b>	<b>Degrees of freedom (df)</b>	<b>Significance level (Sig.)</b>
	<b>3.141</b>	<b>0.7860</b>	<b>2.271</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>0.024</b>

**Source: Prepared by the researcher according to the results of the SPSS version 21 programme.**

From Table 9 we can see that the calculated t-value is (3.141), which is greater than the tabular value (1.66), and the statistical significance level for the dimension of organisational silence related to the second hypothesis (0.024) is less than the assumed significance level (0.05). In addition, the mean of all questionnaire items related to the increase in organisational silence among teachers was estimated at (3.141) with a standard deviation of (0.7860), which is greater than the hypothetical mean of the study estimated at (3). Based on these results, we reject the alternative hypothesis and accept the null hypothesis: Increasing the level of organisational silence among faculty does not lead to poor academic performance of students at the university.

**Test of the third sub-hypothesis, which states that Organisational silence with its three dimensions negatively affects development and innovation at the university.**

**Null hypothesis: Organisational silence with its three dimensions does not negatively affect development and innovation at the university.**

**Table 8 shows the simple linear regression analysis for organisational silence.**

<b>Model Information</b>	<b>Regression Coefficients</b>	<b>T-Test</b>	<b>Probability Value (Sig.)</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>
<b>A</b>	2.409	14.174	0.00	<b>Significant</b>
<b>A1</b>	0.275	5.242	0.00	<b>Significant</b>
<b>Correlation Coefficient</b>	0.385			
<b>Coefficient of determination</b>	0.148			
<b>Test</b>	27.481			
<b>Significance level</b>	0.00			

**Source: Prepared by the researcher based on the outputs of the SPSS program, version 21.**

Table 8 shows that the arithmetic mean of organizational silence as a single unit (2.409) when development and innovation at the university are equal to zero, and it means that when organizational silence increases by one unit, the development and innovation at the university increase by a standard rate (0.275). There is an effect between organizational silence and development and innovation at the university, which is due to the probability value (0.00). The correlation value R indicates that the strength of the relationship between the two variables is (0.275), which indicates that there is a correlation between organizational silence and development and innovation at the university. The organizational silence variable explains (14.8%) of the variance in the level of development and innovation at the university, based on the coefficient of determination. Consequently, it affects organizational silence and development and innovation at the university. The significance ratio reached (0.00), which is

less than the significance level (0.05), indicating that the model as a whole is significant and that there is a relationship between organizational silence and development and innovation at the university. The significance level F (0.00) is less than the level (0.05), indicating that the model as a whole is significant and that there is a relationship between organizational silence and development and innovation at the university.

Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis that organisational silence in its three dimensions does not negatively affect development and innovation at the university. We accept the alternative hypothesis that organisational silence in its three dimensions does negatively affect development and innovation at the university.

**Testing the sub-hypotheses:** To test the hypotheses that the dimensions of organisational silence, each separately, affect the quality of higher education, as shown in the following table:

**Table 9 Multiple regression results for testing the impact of the dimensions of organisational silence on ensuring the quality of higher education.**

Variable	R	R2	Calculated F	Df	Significance	Dimension	B	Calculated t	Significance of t
quality of higher education	0.436	0.190	12.195	3 15 15 9	0,000	Acquiescent Silence	-0.013	-0.228	0.820
						Defensive Silence	0.116	1.717	0.088
						Pro-social silence	0.228	3.818	0.000

**Source: Prepared by the researcher according to the SPSS program version 21.**

The results of the regression between organizational silence and the quality of higher education are shown in Table 9 and can be explained as follows: The results of the multiple analysis indicate that there is an effect of organizational silence on the quality of higher education, where the correlation value reached (0.436), which is a statistically significant effect, as the calculated value of (f) reached (12.195) with a significance level of (0.000). The value of the coefficient of determination indicates that (19%) of the variance in the quality of higher education is due to organizational silence. The analysis results also indicate that there is no statistically significant effect of the dimension of

acquiescent silence on the quality of higher education, where the calculated value reached (-0.228) and its statistical significance is greater than (0.05). Based on this, we reject the first sub-hypothesis H1, which states that there is an effect of acquiescent silence on the quality of higher education, and we accept the null hypothesis H0, which states that there is no effect of acquiescent silence on the quality of higher education. The results also indicate that there is no statistically significant effect of the dimension of defensive silence, where the calculated value of t reached (1.717) and its statistical significance is greater than (0.05). Based on this, we reject the first sub-hypothesis H1, which states that there is an effect of defensive silence on the quality of higher education, and we accept the null hypothesis H0, which states that there is no effect of defensive silence on the quality of higher education. The results also indicate that there is a statistically significant effect of the dimension of pro-social silence, where the calculated value of t reached (3.818) and its statistical significance is less than (0.05). Based on this, we accept the first sub-hypothesis H1, which states that there is an effect of pro-social silence on the quality of higher education, and we reject the null hypothesis H0, which states that there is no effect of pro-social silence on the quality of higher education

### **Conclusion:**

In light of the main objective of the study, which is to determine the effect of organisational silence on the quality of higher education at the University of Ghardaia, Faculty of Economics, the study reached a number of findings and recommendations that can be presented as follows:

The results of the study are as follows:

- There is no negative relationship between the level of organisational silence and the quality of higher education at the institutions studied.
- Increased levels of organisational silence among faculty do not lead to a decline in the academic performance of students at the university in the institution under study.
- There is no effect of acquiescent silence on the quality of higher education at the institution under study.
- There is no impact of defensive silence on the quality of higher education at the institution under study.
- There is an impact of pro-social silence on the quality of higher education at the institution under study.

