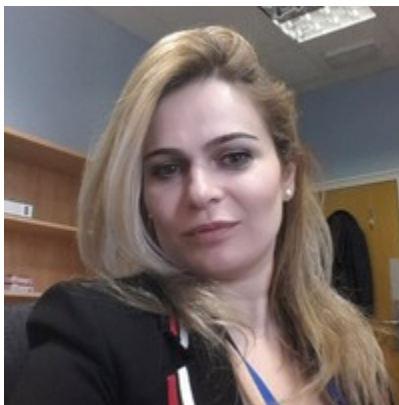


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Barriers of organizational inclusion: a study among academics in Egyptian public business schools

Abstract

We investigate the main barriers of organizational inclusion practices of academics in Egyptian higher education institutions and propose interventions to enhance academics' sense of organizational inclusion. A total of 245 academics was interviewed in 49 face-to-face focus groups. Upon conducting the interviews, the authors used thematic analysis to determine the main ideas in the transcripts. We could not identify any adoptable paradigm for the systematic practice of organizational inclusion experienced by academics in the chosen business schools. Moreover, we identified three types of barriers hindering the sense of organizational inclusion among academics which are cultural, functional and psychological. However, the focus of our study is on a single perspective (academics) and a single area (Upper Egypt) - a matter that neglects a variety of other views including mainly the authorities of Egyptian higher education sector. As a result, we identified three prompt managerial interventions for Egyptian public business schools. The first is economic which proposes a link between the financial remuneration of professors and the number of academic theses they supervise, the second is functional which strongly recommends that units to be created for managing foreign educational grants and scholarships, and the third is cultural which proposes that cultural tolerance units be required to manage any discriminatory and unequal opportunity claims. Our paper contributes by filling a gap in HR management in the higher education sector, in which empirical studies on the practices of organizational inclusion have been limited so far.

Keywords – inclusion; organizational inclusion; business schools; Egypt

Paper type – research paper

Introduction

Due to increasing immigration, the challenges of the ageing population and demographic shifts around the world, the discourse on inclusion has expanded more than ever before. Stoermer et al. [69] highlight that many international organizations, such as the US Census Bureau [76] and DESTATIS [20], have considered inclusion research as a strategic organizational reality. Furthermore, these organizations have asserted that the increase in both theoretical and practical research on inclusion, not only increases an organization's understanding of its procedures but also assists every organization in tailoring its specific model for managing its heterogeneous staff [58].

The concept inclusion was first explored by Gilhool [32] in the field of education. Crawford [16] and Babacan [5] have introduced the concept of social inclusion to describe individual participation in highly trusted and respectful relationships with each other or, in other words, the welcome feelings individuals experience with family, peers and at community levels. Within the organizational context, inclusion maybe perceived as the sense of value, appreciation and equality an employee fully perceives in his work unit/system [63]; [39]. Lirio et al. [46] describe it as an organizational characteristic or a sense of belonging an employee feels within his workplace. Ely and Thomas [25] elaborate that discrimination and fairness, access and legitimacy and integration and learning are factors motivating inclusion within different workplaces. From their side, Tang et al. [73] consider inclusion as the extent of full participation, involvement and contribution every individual perceives and acts through within his organization.

Importantly, Bernstein and Bilimoria [7] highlight that scholars sometimes use the concepts of diversity and inclusion interchangeably although they are different. Moreover, even if diversity is so beneficial in generating the different types of information needed to access new markets and foster social and work

relationships, attaining these benefits is largely based on the sense of inclusion (e.g. respect, equality and engagement) employees experience [15]; [49]. Consequently, the positive side of diversity constantly comes as an outcome for organizational inclusion. The same has been confirmed by Kulkarni [43], who claims that diversity is a double-edged concept that entails benefits (e.g. workplace harmony) as well as negative outcomes (e.g. workplace conflicts). Van Dijk et al. [77] and Tang et al. [74] also point out that avoiding the negative outcomes of diversity entails a shift from diversity to inclusion management, in which a detailed approach and sometimes ongoing managerial interventions are often in place to foster full engagement for the employee in his workplace unit, group, department and organization.

Authors [51]; [14]; [55] have paid attention to the dynamic factors involved in creating an inclusive organizational climate. Moreover, they consider that discovering or creating these factors is a prompt reality that motivates other scholars to shift from diversity to inclusion-related studies. According to Shore et al. [67], Dobusch [22], Mousa [53] and Jansen et al. [38], managing any inclusion process involves two primary dimensions: the sense of uniqueness and the sense of belonging in employees. Only those organizations that balance between these dimensions can utilize the full capacities of their employees for their organization's welfare. Therefore, realizing workplace inclusion entails personal growth, organizational continuity and sometimes social peace. Furthermore, Abbas and Wu [3] concluded that employee innovativeness is a result of how an organisation is fairly treating its employees and how the employees are perceiving this treatment as inclusion. Bostjancic and Petrovcic [8] concluded that engagement through organizational inclusion is a main predictor for career satisfaction and Zameer et al. [80] show that employee engagement and inclusion can lead to a favorable corporate image and enhance customer satisfaction. Abbas and Wu [2] found that trust between the employee and the organisation plays a role between employee engagement, inclusion and justice.

Studies for example show that workplace exclusion has negative impacts on the targeted individual relative to other mistreatment behaviors. For instance, empirical studies found that workplace exclusion, compared to workplace bullying, has a stronger influence on work-related attitudes including affective commitment, psychological withdrawal and job turnover [59]. Furthermore, the impact of workplace exclusion is greater than the effects of sexual harassment and incivility on emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and professional efficacy [71]. Given the negative consequences of exclusion at workplace, more studies in the field are needed to investigate the current practices of inclusion/exclusion and how this could be moderated enough by managers to create a healthy work environment.

According to Ylostola [79], societies cannot be labelled friendly and culturally diverse if some of their social groups face a kind of workplace marginalization. In an Egyptian study, Mousa [52] addressed how nurses in an Egyptian public hospital perceive their cultural diversity and upon conducting 25 semi-structured interviews, he discovered that Christian nurses preferred to deal with their Christian colleagues and the same for Muslims, which clearly maximizes the in-out group comparisons between them. Accordingly, work life in Egypt is limited by many forms of cultural bias, such as organizational ostracism, in-out group comparisons and workplace discrimination in terms of religion and sometimes origin which requires further explorative studies in the field. Mousa's study [52] could not identify any inclusive organizational strategy built on identifying the main barriers for inclusion within the organisational climate through which employees could retain their uniqueness while contributing to the organizational performance which is identified as a gap for further research.

Based on the aforementioned, the authors of this paper focus on investigating the current barriers of organizational inclusion practices in an unanalyzed context, i.e. Egyptian public business schools, through addressing academics work there. It is to be mentioned that business education in Egypt is described with low quality as according to the 2017 global competitiveness report, the quality of the management education

they offer in Egypt is one of the worst globally (<https://www.weforum.org/>). The authors, given their best knowledge, could not find studies addressing inclusion and/or cultural diversity in different Egyptian organizational settings in the higher education sector. The other reason for addressing Egyptian public business schools is that these schools are ones of the biggest public schools in Egypt which are described to have diversified cultural, different social classes and religious backgrounds across all parts of Egypt. The remainder of this paper is organized as follows: the next part includes the literature review. The methodology follows with a description of the characteristics of the organizational setting in which this study is conducted and the procedures followed in conducting interviews together with the analytical mechanism employed. The authors devote the final part of their paper to highlighting their main findings, their discussion and the conclusion of the paper.

1. Literature review

1.1 Organizational inclusion

Van Ewijk [78] highlights that scholars from many disciplines (e.g. sociology, public administration, law and governance, management, etc.) have studied diversity and its subsequent outcomes. Moreover, Ozbilgin et al. [60] have noted that the definition of diversity varies across disciplines and even in the same discipline from one researcher to another. Furthermore, Linnehan et al. [45] and Sippola and Smale [68] elaborate that inclusion scholars have started their studies based on previous research on equality and equity in the workplace along with equal opportunities literature in the US academic context. Strauss et al. [70] and Kulik and Roberson [42] indicate that US scholars started to use the concept of diversity management from 1991, and since 2000 many western authors have started to use the concept of inclusion instead of diversity management.

Authors such as Chen et al. [12] and Guillaume et al. [36] state that paying attention to a diverse workforce secures an organizational climate in which the equal treatment and involvement of employees is fully utilized for the betterment of the organization's peace and harmony. Consequently, organizational inclusion has become a business imperative organizations employ to maximize the positive outcomes of workplace diversity [23]; [29]; [9]; and [11]. Shore et al. [67] and Mousa [55] consider it as a measure for the organization's internal norms, values and leadership style. Bell and Nkomo [6] consider inclusion as a cornerstone on which workplace relationships are created, resisted and improved. Apparently, workplace/organizational inclusion may be associated with the following HRM theories: Social identity theory, which claims that individuals seek more self-esteem and recognition through belonging to a particular group [72], and Social exchange theory, which claims that individuals do their best to fulfill organizational/social objectives and retain positive attitudes toward their organization or society if they experience fair organizational/social treatment.

Although Pless and Maak [62] assert the importance of developing an inclusive organizational climate in which every single employee feels valued, respected and inspired to realize his career aspirations and the organization's goals, authors such as Foldy [27]; Mousa and Ayoubi [56] and Mousa and Puhakka [57] doubt the ability of any inclusion protocols in a positively changing organization and/or intergroup relationships if they fail to comprehend issues related to internal organizational power. Accordingly, many organizations tend to create employee resource groups or internal employee networks to ensure feelings of equality and assimilation among their employees [18]; [10]; and [54]. This may justify why different business corporations not only regularly review their internal diversity policies and consider them as a main part of their corporate governance reports but also undertake continuous intercultural training and constantly promote the values of sameness among their employees particularly if the staff possess the same degree of education, language skills and work experience [26]; [31]. In this regard, in managing, satisfying

and retaining a diverse workforce in different organizations, Zanoni and Janssens [81] assert the importance of a meritocratic principle, in which inclusion is based on merits, and authors like Ahmed et al. [4] and Colic-Peisker and Tilbury [13] confirm the significance of the neo-liberal argument in which hiring employees is only based on employee credentials. Djikhy and Moustaghfir [21] suggest that real team-work resulted from international staff inclusion is important for universities to support knowledge transfer and value generation dynamics within the context of higher education.

Leadership styles and governance structures also play crucial roles when managing inclusion within the diverse workforce. For example, Gotsis and Grimani [33] differentiate between distinct leadership styles and assess their potential in fostering inclusive leader behaviours and found four emerging leadership styles (ethical, authentic, servant and spiritual leadership) for informing inclusive climates within organisations. More specifically, in another study conducted by Gotsis and Grimani [35], they found that the spiritual leaders are effective in strengthening employees' perceptions of belongingness and uniqueness. Furthermore, the same authors [34] argue that servant leadership embodies an inclusive leadership philosophy and facilitates feelings of belongingness and uniqueness among diverse employees. Lin et al. [44] found that transformational leadership encourages knowledge sharing and inclusion among individuals, and similarly, Kohan et al. [41] show that transformational leadership has a positively significant effect on friendship and inclusion at the workplace and organizational climate.

1.2 Inclusion among academics in higher education

According to Desivilya et al [19], it has become a reality nowadays in a single university to find academics who have different demographic characteristics (e.g. origin, race, ethnicity, age, gender, religion etc.), educational backgrounds and work experience, and at the same time, exercising various lifestyles and fulfilling different research objectives. This is what people call a culturally diverse educational setting or in other words an inclusive educational context. The creation of this inclusive work setting should consider the balance between individuals' attitudes, feelings and behaviors on the one hand, and their organization's norms, values and practices, on the other [75]. It may also include identifying the sets of skills individuals, teams and organizations should develop for a protocol of cultural tolerance and/or well-being.

Higher educational settings are considered a reflection of how complex societies have become. They represent intergroup dialogue, in-out group communication and unlimited discourse about workplace equality [24]. Furthermore, educational contexts sometimes witness stress, tension, conflicts and inequality claims that may result from the ongoing actions and reactions people experience [66]. In this regard, Fujimoto and Hartel [28] propose the following four criteria for the effective learning of workplace diversity: including minority members in decision-making processes, adopt both random and stratified sampling to formulate teamwork, continuously employ equal opportunity principles in a team's interactions and seek a common agreement when making a decision.

Knights and Omanovic [40] highlight that inclusion-related outcomes involve and are not limited to safeguarding human rights, ensuring equality and promoting social justice. These outcomes are much broader than those related to diversity, which mainly focuses on accessing new markets, supporting corporate innovative capabilities and enhancing problem-solving skills. This may explain why Misra and McMahon [50] advocate that business schools should draw on its surrounding social, political, legal and changes to secure a kind of socio-academic integration. Moreover, business schools are "called upon to demonstrate commitment and actions in support of diversity in the educational experience" [1] p.10. This includes and is not limited to appreciating differences among social identities and showing respect toward various demographic and cultural characteristics [37].

2. Methodology

As indicated earlier, the authors of the present paper could not locate many papers focusing on organizational inclusion practices in public organizational settings. Furthermore, the existing literature about organizational inclusion falls under the scope of psychology, HR management as well as organizational behavior. To the best of the authors' knowledge, no studies on organizational inclusion were conducted in the Egyptian context. This may justify, to a large extent, why the authors of this paper decided to do a research on this topic in the Egyptian organizational setting. Furthermore, one of the authors used to work as teaching assistant in one of the studied business schools in this research before travelling to Europe seeking his postgraduate studies, when he experienced the workplace atmosphere in the Egyptian higher education sector which is almost the same.

2.1 Procedures

The research process for this paper started in February 2018 by determining the units of analysis for interviews: participants (academics), time (Fall, 2018), and place (public business schools in Upper Egypt) in addition to the explored behavior (practices of organizational inclusion in Egyptian public business schools). Most importantly, the authors employed a comprehensive count sampling method to target their respondents. The impetus of using comprehensive count method is to include all academics who work in the addressed business schools in their semi-structured focus groups. Worthy to highlight is that employing comprehensive count sampling as a mechanism was aimed to alleviate bias and increase the likelihood of generalizing the study results. All focus groups are in Arabic, and the duration of each interview is 45 minutes approximately.

2.2. Participating universities and personnel

This study involves the participation of academics who works in 3 different public business schools in 3 different public Egyptian universities. Within the Egyptian academic context, students and officials always label the school of business as faculties of commerce or sometimes colleges of management. The three selected universities are in Upper Egypt, the part that represents 25% of Egypt's total area and that often receives the least media coverage and the poorest infrastructural development plans and share in the Egyptian public spending. Historically, at society level, this region in Egypt is described to be a problematic region due to the social structure resulted from the different religious background. In Egypt, Christians are Egypt's largest religious minority, constituting at least 10 percent of the population, where most live in upper Egypt, where this study has been conducted. While they are represented in all social classes in Egypt, with a considerable number in the middle classes, a result of their interest in education, this has not helped their societies to be fully integrated with the majority of Muslims. However, this could be the case of minorities in other countries as well. At the higher education level, business schools in Egypt (faculties of commerce represent the highest percentage of university students and academic staff given the nature of the subject, the demand and the average of students admitting to these schools. In business schools in Egypt the percentage of minorities, particularly in upper Egypt is reported to be much higher than other schools, which supported the authors' arguments in investigating barriers of inclusion and integration amongst these schools.

Generally, Upper Egypt includes 4 public universities, but the authors of this paper received acceptance for collaboration from only 3 of these business schools. The number of Egyptian public universities is 24. The first selected business school includes 4 academic majors (accounting, management, economics and math)

and as mentioned earlier, the authors chose to focus on all academicians whose number is 88 but they received acceptance for collaboration only from 45 of them. The second school has 4 academic majors (accounting, management, economics and math). The total number of academic staff in this school is 148; 9 of whom are on leave for different reasons. Moreover, the author received acceptance for collaboration only from 100 of them. The third business school includes the same 4 academic departments (accounting, management, economics and math). The total sample size of the third business school is 122. However, the authors received acceptance for collaboration from only 100 of them. The authors achieved good participating rate in the focus groups, given the importance of the topic of this study and its qualitative nature, when also the deans of the schools have positively responded to the authors' request in facilitating the focus groups and in collecting the relevant responses. In total, out of 350 academics in the schools' population who were contacted, 245 participated in the focus groups, which is almost %68 of the total population. This number of the participants is representing the population as it includes all academic ranks from diversified age group, research background and experience. It was also difficult to get all participants participating in the focus groups.

The authors choose these three public schools as they represent an area in Egypt, as mentioned earlier, the poorest infrastructure plans which was reflected in the education system and culture. The public higher education system in Egypt is centralized and schools have more or less similar organizational structure and bureaucracy which are reflected in the educational culture at universities. Additionally, public schools were chosen for this study as historically they are much older and highly supported by the government policies than private business schools. While historically, the Egyptian Government initiated equality, diversity and inclusivity policies, unfortunately this was not a prioritized practice across the sector. In a study in inclusiveness in higher education in Egypt, Cupito and Langsten [17] found that since 1952 Revolution, in pursuit of social justice and economic development, Egypt's leaders eliminated fees, instituted a universal admission examination, promised government employment to all graduates of higher education, and expanded the number of places, and officials expected these policies to increase inclusiveness as enrollments grew, however inclusiveness did not change for males and, at best, modestly improved for females, and that young adults from the wealthiest families maintained a substantial advantage in the likelihood of enrolling in higher education.

2.3 Observations

It was observed during the conducted focus groups that some respondents refused to have their interviews recorded when they were informed that the authors would record them. For those who refused the recording, the authors based their decision on the majority decision within each focus group, so if more than %50 of the interviewees refused to record the content of the focus group, a decision was taken to take notes manually. Otherwise, the interviewee will be given an option to leave the interview if more than %50 of interviewee accepted recording. For those who refused to record the interview, their decision was to continue conducting the focus group interview, but rather preferred to listen to their colleagues in the group and not to make comments during the interview. Furthermore, some of them were reluctant to uncover details with regards to the administration of their schools out of fear of giving a negative impression about their colleagues who currently manage academic departments, schools and research centers.

2.4 Analysis of collected data

Upon conducting the focus groups, detailed transcripts are made in which the content of the focus groups is typed out. Only relevant information derived from the transcripts is coded. Owing to the specific focus of this research, questions and answers of the research are related to one of these concepts, namely, organizational inclusion, golden workers, equality, recruiting, training, developing, justice, equality,

diversity management, work-place discrimination and many others. Within the research, reliability is enhanced via audio recording for some of the conducted focus groups, and authors attempted to target all academics working in the addressed schools. Internal validity is enhanced by cyclical proceedings of data collection and analysis. Furthermore, all interviews are conducted in Arabic which is the native language for both respondents and two of the authors.

Upon conducting the interviews, the authors used thematic analysis. The authors compared each transcript with the other transcripts collected in order to narrow down the data sets and come up with the main patterns. Subsequently, the patterns were coded into constituent themes, and the main themes were extracted to reflect the respondents' main answers/experiences/viewpoints. All authors participated in the coding and analysis after agreeing in general principals. This was done first for ten focus groups individually to see the similarity level amongst the all authors, then after reaching to a reasonable level of similar thinking and coding, all authors divided the coding and the analysis amongst them for the remaining focus groups.

3. Findings

Before tailoring the interview questions, the authors were fully aware of the level of social rights and freedoms Egyptians can exercise since the takeover date of the current political regime in May 2014. Therefore, the authors were highly sensitive when designing and conducting their research interviews among academics in the chosen business schools.

The concept can be described as recognizing, appreciating and respecting an individual's uniqueness within the workplace. It could also be seen in terms of an individual's sense of integration with his colleagues, managers and other organizational actors. However, and according to our respondents, the concept was defined as the level of female participation in their current workplace or academia. *"In Egyptian academic settings, we don't differentiate between men and women and the selection or hiring of academics is only based on the score they had in their undergraduate study years,"* explained one of the respondents and the authors consider this answer to a great extent to be incomplete/insufficient.

However, upon elaborating the meaning of the concept of organizational inclusion, a respondent proclaimed *"I, as a Christian academic, only feel comfortable dealing with Christian colleagues even if we are very few or a minority. Dealings with Muslim colleagues do not move smoothly, and sometimes, they even stop their speech when they see me. Moreover, they never stop debating Islam-related aspects regardless of my existence"*. The same was iterated by another Christian respondent before adding *"it is bad luck to have a head of an academic department who is a conservative Muslim as I often hear very offensive sentences regarding my religion even he unintentionally does that. Furthermore, one time I had to threaten a colleague that I would officially complain if he does not stop arguing with me about my religious customs"*. Surprisingly, one female academic mentioned, *"I feel discriminated against because of my gender. My supervisor tends to be a bit slow in deciding a time for my PhD defence and one time he said he cannot bear finding a female head for the accounting department one day"*. The same had been repeated by three other female respondents who are affiliated with both the statistics and management departments.

Four of the respondents asked about the logic behind addressing inclusion practices in their business school if they feel an absence of the principles of justice. When the authors asked how? A respondent complained *"the grants for foreign Master and PhD studies are often hidden in the offices of the heads of the academic departments, and academics only hear about them after the deadlines and from their colleagues in other schools/faculties"*. When the authors asked for more clarification, another respondent said, *"in Egyptian public business schools, Rectors intentionally tend to hinder by attempts academics to complete their*

Masters and/or PhD course within their legally predetermined time because finalizing a PhD means I will be a partner in the process of writing books and forcing undergraduate students to buy them". He added "the normal period to complete Masters or PhD in any Egyptian public business school is from 15 to 20 years if not more. Moreover, Egyptian academic's incomes include a low monthly salary and profits from writing and selling books to undergraduate students. The undergraduate students have no source of information except their lecturer's books. Without buying books, they never manage to deal with their lecturer's exam.

Furthermore, when asking if there is any law to organize the academic production and the procedures used for hiring, developing, promoting and retaining academics, all respondents asserted the existence of the Egyptian law for organizing universities but unfortunately it is mostly out of service. A respondent stated *"this law is used only to organize professors' meetings and promotions"*. Another one said *"it is also used to punish any academic who thinks about debating his supervisor and/or head of his academic department"*. In addition, a respondent whose academic department is accounting elaborated that the dean of his business school said in a meeting that he feels sorry when he sees academics defending a PhD thesis because at this moment, this young academic will the income from producing and selling academic books with him.

Concerning their assessment, a number of respondents clarified that the heads of their academic department assess their performance monthly. Furthermore, the head of the academic department, dean of the school and academic supervisor can punish any academic by deducting half of his monthly salary. One respondent said, *"the mechanism of assessment converts us into servants who cannot argue, debate and/or reject any of their decisions"*. However, a respondent stated *"only sons of professors; who work with us; can deny, reject and/or criticize. Moreover, they are the ones who expect fully funded opportunities to study abroad."* When asking who will fund them? The respondent said *"the Egyptian ministry of higher education offers educational grants to distinguished academics. However, in Egypt the concept of distinguished is applicable only to professors' sons."*

Furthermore, four respondents who belong to the department of economics indicate that academics who are affiliated with the department of management have the upper hand over others. When asking why? One respondent said *"those who belong to the department of management and marketing complete their Master's and PhD earlier than those in other departments. Moreover, the number of professors in the department of management and marketing is more than the number of professors in the departments of accounting, statistics and economics. Accordingly, only after three deans from the management department, can we find a dean who belongs to one of the three other departments"*. When asked how this may affect the inclusion practices perceived by academics who belong to the other three departments, one respondent said *"only those who belong to the department of management and marketing are constantly chosen to participate in conferences and other academic activities. This means much greater financial reward and learning opportunities than for colleagues in other departments."*

4. Discussion

It was not difficult for the authors to discover how academics face a militant climate in the chosen business schools. Even the respondents themselves feel hesitant and sometimes worried before replying to any of the authors' questions. Such feelings of stress, worry and fear reflect the low level of political, societal and cultural freedom Egyptians suffer nowadays. This kind of organizational climate indicated to the authors why the majority of the respondents thought that organizational inclusion represents a level of socio-economic welfare they need years to attain.

The discourse concerning religion, gender and political ideology besides these being used as a basis for distributing academic benefits (e.g. pay, promotion, training opportunities, scholarships, etc.) represents a violence for the principle of distributive justice, which plays a significant role in shaping the attitudes of academics toward their colleagues, supervisors, department heads and their workplace [64]. Schaafsma [65] highlights that any mismatch between employee (academics in this case) competences (e.g. education, work experience, etc.) and the outcomes they perceive from the organization they work in may yield feelings of organizational ostracism, distrust and cynicism. The authors believe that the business schools that form the sample here are strongly influenced by how much power/status some Egyptian minorities possess (e.g. women, Christians and Islamic members affiliated politically).

What may fuel the feelings of exclusion among academics is the mechanism through which they are evaluated on a monthly basis. The respondents asserted that they show a high level of obedience in addition to very little discussion, debate and argument with their rectors and/or academic heads in order to avoid any organizational and/or financial punishment. This comes in contrast to Colic-Peisker and Tilbury [13], who propose using a meritocratic mechanism for the hiring, development, assessment and retention of academics based on their competences. Furthermore, the claim of half of the respondents that organizational nepotism and personal relationships play a role in choosing academics for foreign educational scholarships reflects a form of unjustified workplace discrimination, which in turn raises the question of the existence and effectiveness of the principle of equal opportunity in the sample business schools. Loftus [47] and McLeod and Herrington [48] confirm the organization's need to maintain an open mindset with their stakeholders (academics in this case) to overcome any discriminatory structural barriers that may be used to exclude people.

Another disturbing reality the authors have noted through the replies of the respondents is the tendency for academics to classify themselves as Muslim-Christian, male-female, liberal-Islamic affiliated etc. Their workplace communications even function on the basis of these classifications. This represents a clear case of in-out group differentiation in which people feel safe to deal with those who are similar [24]; [28]. Tajfel [72] considers the individual's attempts to seek a sense of belonging to a specific social identity as a part of human nature and a natural paradigm seeking more recognition and respect. However, it is a school's responsibility to establish a set of planned professional goals; in other words, a business case for workforce diversity which gradually unifies those who are different [49]; [43]. According to Shore et al. [67], such in-out group differentiation negatively affects the level of organizational commitment, job satisfaction and job performance among employees (academics in this case). Obviously, all the aforementioned negative organizational feelings were fully touched upon by the authors of this paper during the interviews conducted.

5. Theoretical implications

What may curb any thought or strategy to realize organizational inclusion in the chosen business schools is the kind of dehumanizing of academics who belong to the academic departments of economics, statistics and accounting conveyed when confronted with the notion that they are second-class academics when compared with their colleagues in the department of management and marketing. This in-out quality in the management department is a new classification – the first time such a phenomenon has been identified and recognized by the authors of this paper. Pfeffer [61] indicates that workplace conflicts besides cultural negative feelings (e.g. bias, discrimination, prejudice etc.) often appear when appreciating a few employees (certain academics in this case) over their colleagues. In addition, the view that professors have of academics as prospective competing rivals, particularly in terms of financial income, may hinder any possible neutral communication toward inclusion. This may justify why Ghorashi and Sabelis [30]

demonstrate that an organizational inclusion strategy would not be effectively introduced without addressing the set of norms, expectations, social relations and leadership style in the addressed context. Accordingly, the organization's leaders (heads of academic departments and professors in this case), HR staff and employees (academics) should actively participate in not only comprehending their cultural differences but also constituting a commitment toward diversity in order for harmony and continuity to flourish at their schools.

Based on the aforementioned, the authors consider that the following figure (Figure 1) represents the main barriers to organizational inclusion academics sense: cultural barriers (gender bias, religious bias and political ideology bias), functional barriers (organizational nepotism and absence of distributive justice) and psychological barriers (in-out group differentiation and dehumanizing).

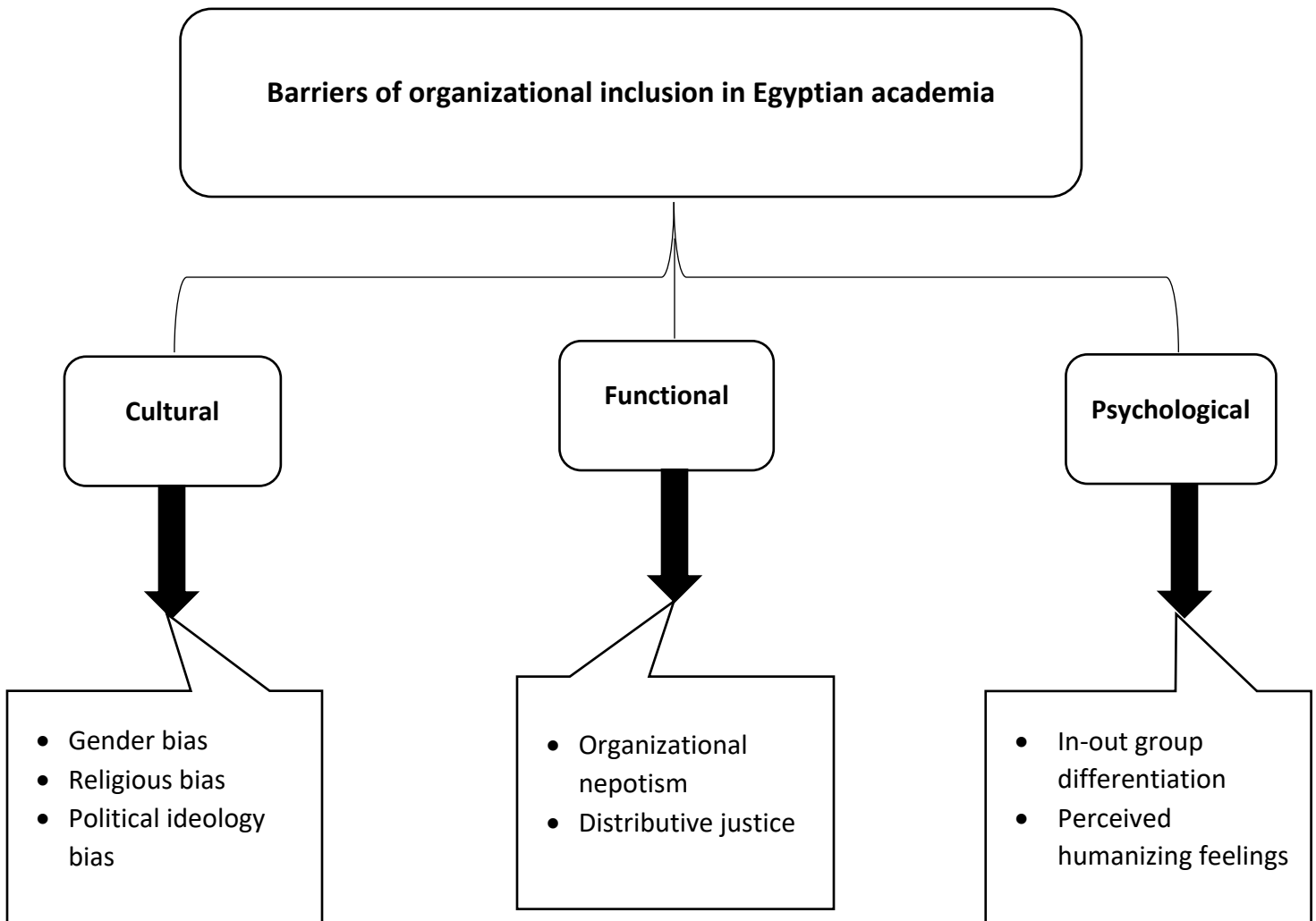
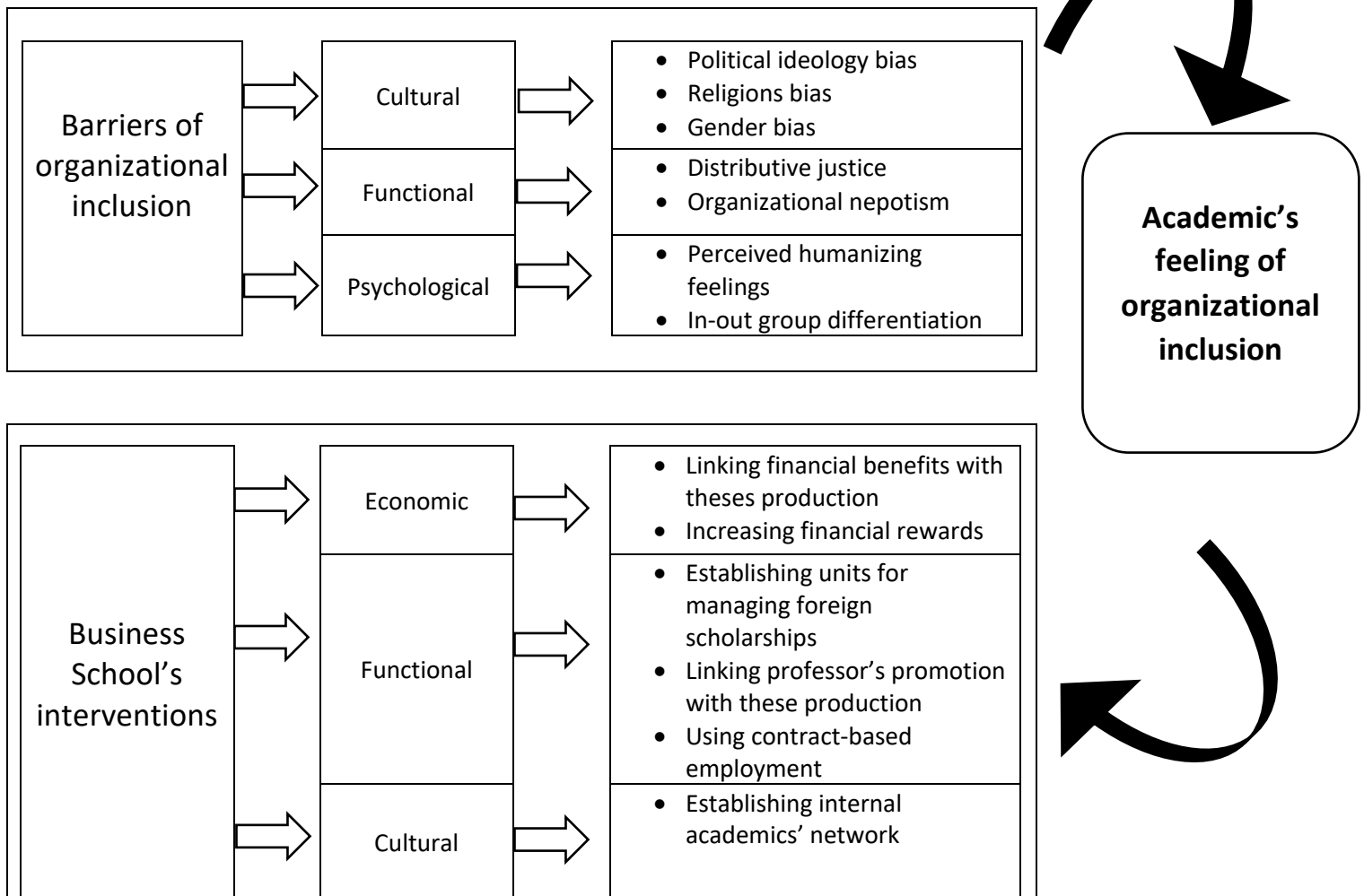


Figure 1: Barriers of organizational inclusion in Egyptian academia (composed by the authors)

6. Practical implications

However, and given the aforementioned findings, the authors of this paper consider that the situation could be changed and academics could begin to feel a sense of organizational inclusion if the administration of their business schools undertake and promptly conduct the following managerial interventions: first, an economic intervention, in which authors of the present paper suggest that the financial rewards both senior and young academics perceive should be enhanced. Moreover, there is a need to link the professors' financial remuneration with their production of supervised theses. Second, functional interventions, in which the authors suggest creating units for managing foreign educational scholarships. Moreover, there is a need to link the promotion of professors to the number of theses produced. Furthermore, the authors recommend Egyptian public business schools to think about contract-based employment as a mechanism for hiring and retaining professors, particularly in light of the Egyptian parliament passing the 2017 Egyptian public service law (<https://www.slideshare.net/sdraomn/2017-66943444>). This law requires the number of employees (including academic professors) in all Egyptian public settings including universities be decreased. Third, cultural interventions, in which the authors suggest establishing cultural tolerance units which will monitor, solve and manage any claim of discrimination or lack of equal opportunity. Moreover, business schools should start to constitute internal academic networks, which prefer random selection, organize continuous intercultural training and constantly promote the values of equality among academics. The following figure (Figure 2) shows the required managerial interventions Egyptian business schools have to undertake in order to enhance the sense of organizational inclusion among academics.



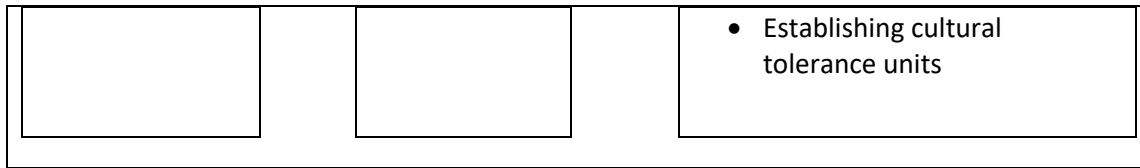


Figure 2. business schools' interventions to enhance academics' sense of organizational inclusion (prepared by the authors).

7. Conclusion

This research aimed to discover academics' feelings toward the organizational inclusion practices they perceive in three public Egyptian business schools. The quality of public Egyptian business schools has been ranked as the lowest globally according to the 2017 global competitiveness report (<https://www.weforum.org/>). Consequently, it was the authors' intention to explore inclusion management practices in an attempt to enhance the quality of the whole education process in the chosen context. As mentioned earlier and upon analyzing the conducted interviews, the authors of this paper did not identify any systematic organizational inclusion practices in the chosen business schools. Moreover, the authors have explored some barriers to organizational inclusion academics face and subsequently classified them into the following three categories: Cultural barriers (gender bias, religious bias and political ideology bias); functional barriers (organizational nepotism and absence of distributive justice); and psychological barriers (in-out group differentiation and dehumanizing).

This research maybe subject to criticism because it only addresses the view of academics without paying attention to the perspectives of their academic partners (rectors and heads of academic departments). This may hinder the creation of a holistic picture of the situation. However, time constraints in addition to the inability to convince the other three partners, limited the authors' ability to go in this direction. It is advisable for other researchers in the field to ask the same research questions to other academic partners in the same public business schools. Moreover, addressing Egyptian private business schools may also enrich the findings here.

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