

Inclusive leadership and extra-role behaviors in higher education: does organizational learning mediate the relationship?

Inclusive leadership and extra-role behaviors

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Abstract

Purpose – Building on social exchange theory and relational leadership theory, this paper proposes a model of inclusive leadership in higher education institutions. Together with an attempt to examine the impact of inclusive leadership on extra-role behaviors of academic staff, the paper aims to test the intervening mechanism of organizational learning among the aforementioned relationships.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected from 227 academic staff working in the Palestinian higher education institutions. Partial least squares (PLS-SEM) analysis technique was utilized to examine the hypotheses.

Findings – The findings reveal that inclusive leadership exerts a positive effect on extra-role behaviors (organizational citizenship behaviors and innovative work behaviors) in the Palestinian higher education setting. Moreover, the findings show that organizational learning plays a significant mediating role among the relationships examined

Practical implications – Academic communities are increasingly diverse. This diversity requires a work environment in which employees take on additional work roles. In response to this diversity, managers of higher education institutions should be concerned about the roles and practices of inclusive leaders. In addition, higher education institutions need to be learning organizations since this would help to mitigate this diversity and create a working atmosphere characterized by continuous learning, collaboration and dialogue.

Originality/value – In higher education, most of the literature on inclusive academic leadership is mainly theoretical. Furthermore, organizational learning in higher education research is based on anecdotal perspectives (Dee and Leisyte, 2016). To this end, this paper is novel, as it is one of few studies to empirically investigate inclusive leadership and extra-role behaviors via organizational learning in a non-western academic context.

Keywords Inclusive leadership, Organizational learning, OCB, Innovative work behavior

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Academic leadership in higher education organizations encounters significant challenges which require rethinking and renewing traditional management, organizational policies and

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practices (Bolton, 1996; Gigliotti, 2017; Stefani and Blessinger, 2017; Strathe and Wilson, 2006; Temple and Ylitalo, 2009). However, in light of these challenges, efforts to reform higher education management and leadership practices have mostly failed, while more innovative strategies have been devoted to prevail over the conventional management model (van Ameijde *et al.*, 2009; Senge, 2010; Temple and Ylitalo, 2009). In general, transforming the conventional approaches to inclusive management needs fostering successful collaboration, and the role of middle-level academic leaders must be highlighted with very new demands put on their regular practices (Henkel, 2002; Temple and Ylitalo, 2009), in order to encourage positive work-related outcomes among academic staff. These demands require adapting to academic diversity and ensuring academic quality and effectiveness in which middle-level supervisors must behave as managers of their department and at the same time display effective leadership behaviors (Evans and Chun 2015). As the academic community are more diverse than ever, another challenge for middle-level academic leaders is to develop academic leadership identities, roles and competencies at various university levels to manage this diversity (Stefani and Blessinger, 2017; Temple and Ylitalo, 2009). Furthermore, this requires middle-level managers to balance inclusion demands and classical academic freedom in a situation in which the concept of modern inclusive leadership academic setting is still underdeveloped (Stefani and Blessinger, 2017). In general, previous researchers have suggested that practicing inclusive leadership in higher education to manage diversity faces the obstacle of the lack of effective leadership in the organizational culture and especially at the departmental level (Evans and Chun 2015). Therefore, new academic leadership practices should be followed in order to incorporate the strengths of collegial practices into a more post-modern concept of relational and inclusive leadership (Stefani and Blessinger, 2017). Although different types of leadership in higher education were studied such as servant leadership (Aboramadan *et al.*, 2020a, b); transformational leadership (Owusu-Agyeman, 2019) and ethical leadership (Zeng and Xu, 2020), inclusive leadership in higher education seems to be the most effective style to manage diversity (Stefani and Blessinger, 2017; Temple and Ylitalo, 2009). Inclusive leadership can be viewed as a collaborative mechanism through which organizational members effectively take on leading roles and actions (McCauley and Van Velsor, 2004). In this leadership style, inclusive leaders eliminate obstacles, fortify relationships with others, support everyone to feel involved, and ensure that everyone get a fair opportunity to influence policies, decisions and procedures (Ryan, 2006). As leadership has implications for various stakeholders, an inclusive leader serves as the gateway to cross-cultural partnerships, procedures and policies. The inclusive leader calls upon various stakeholders to work together, in order to overcome conflicts and push policies forward (Stefani and Blessinger, 2017). Previous research in human resources management suggested that leadership is a very important key to encourage organizational inclusiveness (Ashikali *et al.*, 2020; Ashikali and Groeneveld, 2015; Brimhall, 2021), yet the legitimate question is whether the inclusive leader contributes to enhancing outcomes at the individual levels in academic settings.

On a different note, together with the concept of inclusive leadership, higher education institutions can respond to their challenges through promoting an environment which is characterized by organizational learning (Kezar and Holcombe, 2020; Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2017). Recent research endeavors suggest that higher education organizations need to be learning organizations, to facilitate change in the academic arena (Mulford, 2005; Strandli, 2006; White and Weathersby, 2005). Leaders, professors and administrators can employ organizational learning theories to encourage change, to foster the effectiveness and utilization of information within decision-making processes and to formulate and execute strategies to maximize institutional effectiveness (Dee and Leisÿtè, 2016).

Given the previous discussion, our study aims at proposing a model of the effects of inclusive leadership on academics' extra-role behaviors, where organizational learning is

hypothesized to serve as an effective intervening mechanism through data collected from academic staff working at the Palestinian higher education institutions. Our research contributes to the literature in five ways. First, although the available literature demonstrates that inclusive leadership depicts a positive relationship with employees' innovative behaviors, creativity, work engagement, well-being and voice behaviors (Carmeli *et al.*, 2010; Choi *et al.*, 2015, 2017; Guo *et al.*, 2020; Javed *et al.*, 2018, 2019; Qi and Liu, 2017), there is no evidence about the effect of inclusive leadership on innovative work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior simultaneously in the inclusion and leadership literature. Second, this is one of the very few empirical studies which empirically examine the concept of inclusive leadership of academic leaders in higher education. It has been argued that the scope of inclusive leadership in higher education is not well studied (Stefani and Blessinger, 2017). Third, this paper contributes to the inclusion literature as inclusion research is still in infancy stage (Mitchell *et al.*, 2015). More specifically limited empirical research has been conducted on the consequences of inclusive leadership (Choi *et al.*, 2015; Najmaei and Sadeghinejad, 2019). Relational leadership styles, including inclusive leadership, are not well studied in terms of their effects on positive work-related outcomes among employees (Carmeli *et al.*, 2010; Zhang *et al.*, 2016). Shore *et al.* (2018) in their review of inclusive workplaces addressed the need to study employees' perceptions of their inclusive leaders and the impact of this inclusiveness on work-related outcomes. Fourth, the study contributes to the literature of organizational learning in general and academic setting in specific. Research on organizational learning in higher education organizations is scarce (Voolaid and Ehrlich, 2017), and the existing literature demonstrates that there is a dearth of research on how organizational learning as a contextual factor may increase extra-role behaviors, especially in knowledge-intensive settings (Salas-Vallina *et al.*, 2017). Finally, this study shed lights on the role inclusive leadership plays in service sectors, especially higher education, in a nonwestern context (Palestine).

The palestinian higher education context

The academic community at Palestinian higher education institutions is remarkably diverse. According to [Palestinian Center Bureau of Statistics \(2019\)](#), the academic community working at the Palestinian higher education is characterized by unique demographic characteristics such as age (young and old), gender (males and females), inter-regional movements, different religion (Muslims and Christians) and diverse philosophical backgrounds due to academic members' educational degrees obtained from diverse cultural contexts (USA–UK, EU, others). Previous studies in the higher education setting in Palestine showed that the demographic profile is diverse in terms of age, gender and experience (Aboramadan, 2020; Dahleez *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, the agenda of ministry of higher education in Palestine is directed towards developing inclusion-oriented human resources in higher education through recruiting and training academic staff with skills, theoretical knowledge and competencies to ensure an inclusive climate at the workplace. On the other hand, higher education institutions in Palestine encounter financial challenges and operate in an environment that is characterized by political instability and ambiguity (Dahleez *et al.*, 2020; Moughrabi, 2015).

Since Palestinian universities are considered political environments characterized by high diversity and limited resources, the ideals of inclusion cannot be implemented without the presence of leaders who are willing to change. Accordingly, the role of the academic leader in the Palestinian context is to invite diverse academic staff in order to address diversity differences and to collaborate together to move policies forward to continually expand the sector capacity in response to the challenges it encounters as suggested by Senge (2010). Although leadership in the Palestinian academic setting seems to be dominated by the

presence of servant leaders as suggested in previous studies (i.e. [Aboramadan et al., 2020a, b](#); [Dahleez et al., 2020](#)), the authors believe that future academic leadership needs to be inclusive, inspiring and purposive in order to enable the higher education institutions to keep functioning and encourage academic staff to display extra-role behaviors to overcome the challenges encountered. In addition, inclusive leadership featured by dialogic approach will bring considerable practical and intellectual value to the continuous growth of the Palestinian academic institutions.

Theoretical background and hypotheses formulation

Inclusive leadership and OCB

[Komives et al. \(2013\)](#), in their model, introduced five relational leadership types: inclusive, ethical, empowering, purposeful and process-oriented leadership. While empowering leaders provide employees the opportunity to be part of the decision making through empowering them, ethical leaders are driven by values while leading others, purposeful leaders have commitment toward achieving goals, process-focused leaders manage groups process through a system perspective ([Komives et al., 2013](#)) and inclusive leaders demonstrate openness, inclusiveness, accessibility and interactive communications with employees ([Carmeli et al., 2010](#)). Similarly, [Hollander \(2009\)](#) has mentioned that the focus of inclusive leaders is to listen and pay attention to employees' needs and to transmit the feeling to employees that the leader is available to them. In different terms, inclusive leadership is characterized by continuous support to followers, open communication, providing assistance and help and showing concern for others' interests ([Carmeli et al., 2010](#); [Hollander, 2009](#)).

In contrast with many other types of leadership which may be conceptually connected, inclusive leadership possess a distinct style of recognition, belonging, inclusiveness and identity ([Randel et al., 2018](#)). Inclusive leaders are more concerned with their followers' needs and interests ([Hollander, 2009](#)). While transformational leadership is oriented toward developing and motivating followers toward achieving the goals of the organization ([Dvir et al., 2002](#)), inclusive leadership emphasizes on embracing followers for who they are, enabling them to apply their specific talents and skills and empowering them to participate in daily organizational activities. Furthermore, although servant leadership is dedicated to enabling followers to grow and develop ([Liden et al., 2008](#)), inclusive leadership is centered on the followers' needs for availability and openness. Empowering leadership is characterized by example-based leadership, authority' sharing, coaching and mentoring ([Srivastava et al., 2006](#)), whereas inclusive leadership promotes the sense of inclusiveness, access, openness and quality. Given the previous discussion, there is a minimum overlap between inclusive leadership and other existing forms of leadership. This implies that the other forms of existing conceptualizations of leadership do not completely articulate and capture the core concepts of inclusive leadership ([Randel et al., 2018](#)).

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) is a discretionary behavior, neither written in a contract as part of the employee's responsibilities nor recognized in formal reward schemes ([Alge et al., 2006](#); [Organ, 1990](#); [Xerri and Brunetto, 2013](#)). In general, employees who display OCB perform beyond what is required from them ([Danish et al., 2014](#)). According to [Organ \(1988\)](#), OCB has five dimensions: conscientiousness (going beyond the least required), altruism, (assisting others with their tasks), civic virtue (the ability to become involved in organizational life), sportsmanship (broad-minded behavior in undesirable situations) and courtesy (efforts exerted to avoid problems related to working with others). Although OCB has been demonstrated to be positively related to lower turnover intentions, higher job performance and elevated levels of job satisfaction, the topic has not received great attention from researchers into higher education organizations ([Bauwens et al., 2019](#)). Among the few studies, [Wilkins et al. \(2018\)](#) found that organizational identification positively influences

OCB within UK university campuses. In addition, [Bauwens et al. \(2019\)](#) found that performance fairness is positively related to OCB among academic staff in Belgium. [Lawrence et al. \(2012\)](#) found that some job characteristics affect the OCB of academic staff hired within a state higher education institution. [Panicker et al. \(2018\)](#) discovered that an inclusive workplace and OCB are positively correlated in a higher education setting. Finally, [Adewale and Ghavifekr \(2019\)](#) found that OCB among Nigerian lecturers is positively impacted by leadership self-efficacy.

As leadership is perceived to be a common antecedent to OCB ([Podsakoff et al., 2000](#)), the authors predict that inclusive leadership may yield positive effects on academics' OCB for two reasons. First, building on social exchange theory, known as "SET", ([Blau, 1964](#)), it is believed that when followers perceive the supportive behaviors of their inclusive leader, this will motivate them to repay the leader and the organization through showing positive behaviors ([Wang, 2008](#)). The displaying of OCB among employees is one of the ways to reciprocate ([Organ, 1988](#)). This is supported by [Liu \(2009\)](#), who has argued that good support from a leader is fundamental to the development of extra-role behaviors. Second, the links between inclusive leadership and followers' OCB can be explained by the relational leadership theory ([Hollander, 1964](#)), which addresses leadership as "a shared experience, a voyage through time" and the leader is not a sole voyager, he also says that "a major component of the leader-follower relationship is the leader's perception of his or her self-relative to followers, and how they in turn perceive the leader" (p. 55). Therefore, the behaviors of helping and being available of inclusive leaders will then be perceived as role model behaviors by employees, which in turn will encourage them to display the same supportive behaviors to their colleagues ([Carmeli et al., 2010](#)). Empirically, [Tran and Choi \(2019\)](#) uncovered a positive link between inclusive leadership and OCB among service workers in Vietnam. To this end, the following hypothesis is posited:

H1. Inclusive leadership is positively associated with academics' OCB.

Inclusive leadership and IWB

Innovative work behavior (IWB) reflects innovation behaviors which occur in different phases: the first phase is when employees explore and generate novel ideas and solutions ([Amabile et al., 1996](#); [Xerri and Brunetto, 2013](#)). The second phase is related to idea championing, in which employees try to secure others' support for their ideas ([Dorenbosch et al., 2005](#)). In the final phase, employees try to implement these ideas, with the aim of benefiting the organization ([De Jong and Den Hartog, 2010](#)). IWB is a risk-bearing, nonroutine behavior in which followers try to avoid classical ways of thinking ([Kessel et al., 2012](#)). Despite the fact that research on IWB is very limited in the higher education context, some endeavors have attempted to investigate the effect of ethical work and social capital on IWB among Pakistani teachers in higher education ([Shahab and Imran, 2018](#)) and to examine the impact of psychological empowerment on IWB of lecturers in Malaysian polytechnics ([Ghani and Jusoff, 2009](#)).

On another note, leadership has been regarded as a change agent in organizations ([Amabile, 2013](#); [Krause, 2004](#)) and has been found to play a significant role in cultivating employees' IWB ([Afsar et al., 2014](#); [Karatepe et al., 2020](#); [Scott and Bruce, 1994](#)). Based on this, the authors predict that inclusive leadership supportive behaviors would positively contribute to IWB for the following reasons. First, when inclusive leaders pay attention to the feelings and interests of their employees ([Javed et al., 2019](#)), employees show high levels of energy and commitment to their leaders and thus are more likely to pay back, exhibiting IWB ([Piccolo et al., 2010](#); [Walumbwa et al., 2011](#)). This corresponds to what has been found in SET, in which employees feel the need to reciprocate by engaging in innovative behaviors in exchange for the supportive behaviors demonstrated by their leaders ([Yeh-Yun Lin and Liu, 2012](#)). Furthermore, the relational leadership theory of [Hollander \(1964\)](#) implies that the

relationship between the leader and the member is a two-way influence in which there are social exchangeable transactions between the leader and the member. Hence, when inclusive leaders show support and availability (Ashikali *et al.*, 2020; Ryan, 2006), this will motivate followers to engage in innovative behaviors (Altunoğlu and Bulgurcu Gürel, 2015; Carmeli *et al.*, 2010). Empirically, a number of studies found that inclusive leadership positively affects IWB (Javed *et al.*, 2018, 2019; Qi *et al.*, 2019). Given the above discussion, the following hypothesis can be posited:

H2. Inclusive leadership is positively associated with academics' IWB.

Inclusive leadership and organizational learning

According to Garvin (1993), organizational learning refers to the process through which organizations create, acquire and transfer knowledge to reflect new knowledge and ideas. A learning organization is characterized by teamwork, cooperation, innovation and information-based processes (Confessore and Kops, 1998). According to Marsick and Watkins (2003), a learning organization has seven dimensions: "continuous learning, inquiry and dialogue, collaboration and team learning, people empowerment for the people dimension, environmental connection, embedded systems, and strategic leadership". Jensen (2005) has recently underlined the importance of the learning organization because of its capacity to create knowledge through motivating employees to transfer information into new knowledge. In general, research on learning organization in higher education institutions is limited (Voolaid and Ehrlich, 2017), and the area of examining the relationship between organizational learning and work-associated factors in higher education institutions has not yet been addressed (Dee and Leišytė, 2016; Voolaid and Ehrlich, 2017). Notably, few studies have employed organizational learning as a theoretical foundation to generate novel empirical work in a higher education context (Dee and Leišytė, 2016).

Concerning the association between inclusive leadership and organization learning, the authors predict that leadership inclusiveness positively contributes to organizational learning. Because the inclusive leader is open to listening to followers' feedbacks and inputs, this generates a feeling among followers that the leader appreciates discussion and information sharing (Tran and Choi, 2019). Hence, when the leader offers an opportunity for the expression of ideas and views, this encourages followers to speed up their knowledge acquisition and dissemination (Zagoršek *et al.*, 2009). Furthermore, the availability of the leader to assist and support others motivates followers to enhance their dedication to continuous learning (Choi *et al.*, 2015). Consequently, inclusive leaders create an atmosphere in which followers can learn and develop their qualities (Najmaei and Sadeghinejad, 2019). Finally, an easily accessible leader facilitates more interactions with followers, and encourages a learning-focused environment (Real *et al.*, 2014).

Empirically, few studies have established a positive relationship between leadership and organizational learning. For instance, Tran and Choi (2019) found that inclusive leaders positively influence a culture of organizational learning in Vietnamese firms. In the education setting, Hsiao and Chang (2011) found that transformational leadership positively impacts organizational learning in Taiwanese post-secondary education. Hence, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H3. Inclusive leadership is positively associated with organizational learning in academic settings.

Organizational learning, OCB and IWB

Bhaskar and Mishra (2017) established positive links between organizational learning and both financial performance and knowledge performance. Awasthy and Gupta (2012) found

that the people-level learning dimension of organizational learning has a positive impact on performance outcomes in India. Furthermore, Siddique (2018) revealed that the effect of organizational learning on business performance was positive in UAE. On the other hand, Jo and Joo (2011) found that organizational learning may contribute to encouraging employees to go beyond what is required of them, and to assisting their colleagues in conditions where the performance of an organization is threatened. Departing from this argument, it seems that organization learning may foster followers' OCB because it encourages thinking strategically, which enables employees to widen their perspectives and to achieve more than merely an individual role (Senge, 2010). Indeed, SET provides a basis for this argument since followers display discretionary behaviors when they positively perceive organizational resources (Aboramadan and Dahleez, 2020). This was confirmed by previous studies which found that learning organization was positively associated with innovative cultures in Korean firms (Škerlavaj *et al.*, 2010). Hsiao and Chang (2011) found that organizational learning influences innovation in Taiwan. In addition, Amabile *et al.* (1996) highlighted the important role organizational resources play in fostering innovation at both organizational and individual levels. Given this discussion, the authors propose the following hypotheses:

H4. Organizational learning is positively associated with academics' OCB.

H5. Organizational learning is positively associated with academics' IWB.

Mediating role of organizational learning

Under the umbrella of SET and relational leadership theory, followers tend to reciprocate to the inclusive leader (because of the supportive behavior) and the organization (because of the organizational support) through displaying extra-role behaviors such as OCB and IWB. Open and accessible leaders encourage a learning-oriented work environment (Choi *et al.*, 2015), and in return this will create a knowledge sharing and learning atmosphere (Yang *et al.*, 2004), perceived by employees as organizational support, which would, eventually, stimulate them to repay the organization by going beyond expectations (Aryee *et al.*, 2002). This suggests that organizational learning may play an intervening role in the relationship between leader inclusiveness and extra-role behaviors. Empirically, Hsiao and Chang (2011) found that organizational learning significantly mediates the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational innovation. Given this train of thoughts, the authors posit the following hypothesis:

H6. The relationship between inclusive leadership and (a) academics' OCB and (b) academics' IWB is positively mediated by organizational learning.

Research model

The purpose of the study is to propose a model of the influence of inclusive leadership in the Palestinian higher education institutions on extra-role behaviors of academic staff. Organizational learning is theorized to serve as an intervening mechanism among the aforesaid links as presented in Figure 1.

Methods

Procedures and participants

Our data were collected from the academic staff working in Palestinian universities. Academic staff (Professors) were approached by the researcher to obtain their agreement to participate in the study. Of 432 questionnaires distributed, 227 were returned and were useable for statistical analysis, representing a response rate of (52.54%). Questionnaires were

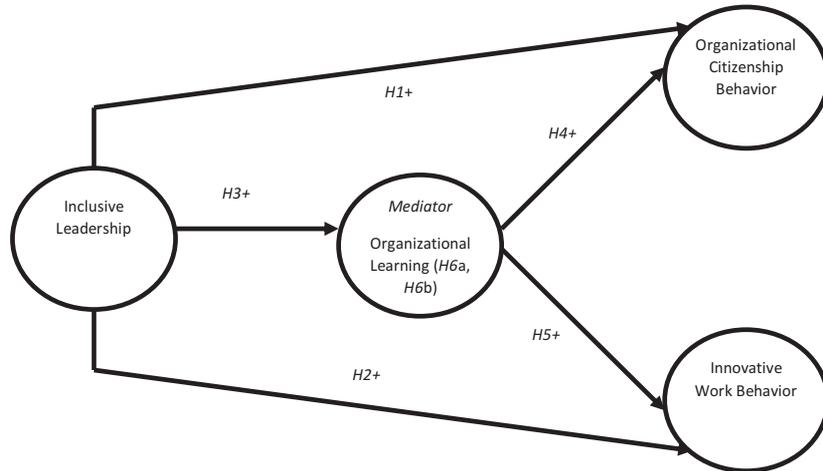


Figure 1. Research model

distributed and collected through a drop-off and pick-up method, with a two-week time lag. Initially, participants filled in the part related to inclusive leadership and organizational learning. The questionnaires were collected, and after two weeks, the respondents received their questionnaires back and completed the extra-role behavior questions. The questionnaire was translated from English to Arabic using the back-translation technique (Brislin, 1986).

The questionnaire went through a pilot study with fourteen academic staff, to evaluate the questionnaire before distributing it. Some comments and remarks were made and were considered. The first page of the questionnaire included a cover letter, where it was explained the objectives of the study, provided an overview of the study variables and explained why this research is important for both the academic community and policymakers. All respondents were assured that their personal information would not be shared.

Concerning the demographics of the respondents, of the 227 respondents, 199 were males. The average age of the academic staff was 41.5 years, with eight years' experience in academia. The respondents were working in business colleges (20%), medical schools (10%), art and literature (30%), natural science (25%), engineering (5%) and languages (10%).

Measures

Scales of inclusive leadership, innovative work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior were assessed using a seven-point Likert scale, where 1 indicates absolute disagreement and 7 indicates absolute agreement, whereas organizational learning was assessed by asking respondents to evaluate how good organizational learning dimensions are in their organizations on a 7-point Likert-type scale which ranged from "very bad" to "excellent".

Inclusive leadership. This construct was measured with nine-item scale from Carmeli *et al.* (2010) to assess the inclusive leadership of the deans who supervise academic staff. A sample item is “My supervisor is open to hearing new ideas”. The alpha reliability for this construct was 0.917.

Organizational learning. This construct was measured using seven items borrowed from Yang *et al.* (2004). These items represent the shortened version of the organizational learning dimensions. These were: continuous learning, inquiry and dialog, team learning, empowerment, embedded system, system connection and strategic leadership. Previous research has utilized these items and reported good reliability (Joo and Shim, 2010; Tran and Choi, 2019). The alpha reliability for this construct was 0.894.

IWB. This construct was measured using a six-item scale from Scott and Bruce (1994). Although this scale was designed for the assessment of employees’ IWB by their supervisors, employees assessed this scale themselves. This is consistent with previous studies (Cai *et al.*, 2018; Montani *et al.*, 2014). A sample item is “I generate creative ideas”. The alpha reliability for this construct was 0.882.

OCB. This was measured using six items borrowed from Williams and Anderson (1991). A sample item is “I go out of my way to help new co-workers”. The alpha reliability for this construct was 0.886.

Control variables. following prior research (Shin and Zhou, 2003; Tran and Choi, 2019), the authors have controlled for gender, age and experience.

Statistical analysis strategy

Descriptive statistics, reliability measures and correlations were analyzed using SPSS v.24. To test the study hypotheses, the authors have utilized partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) (Hair *et al.*, 2016). The authors utilized PLS-SEM as it has been widely used in different scientific disciplines, such as hospitality, human resource management, marketing and strategic management (Ali *et al.*, 2018; Hair *et al.*, 2011, 2012; Ringle *et al.*, 2020). PLS-SEM technique measures the path coefficients through the ordinary least squares (Rigdon, 2012, 2016). Moreover, PLS-SEM deals with ordinal measures and correlated measurement errors (Rademaker *et al.*, 2019; Schubert *et al.*, 2018), handles more outcome variables than classical regression techniques especially when the sample size is relatively small (Hair *et al.*, 2012) and provides predictive accuracy when data do not follow a normal distribution pattern. In this study, 5000 sample bias-corrected bootstrapping technique with 95% confidence interval was utilized to check for the mediation effects.

Common method bias

Common method bias was assessed using two techniques. First, the Harman single factor test was employed. The results of the test generated four factors which did not load on a single factor, and the general factor did not explain the majority of variance (34.55%), which is below the suggested cutoff point of 50%. Another technique used was to evaluate the inner variance inflation factors using the PLS-SEM method. The results showed that the values of VIF ranged from 1.0 to 1.197, suggesting that there was no multicollinearity (Kutner *et al.*, 2004) and that the data are not contaminated by common method bias. According to Kock (2015), if VIF are lower than 3.3, this indicates that the data are free of common method bias.

Results

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics and the correlations between the examined variables. The values of the descriptive statistics were as follows: inclusive leadership (Mean = 4.174, SD: 0.88), organizational learning (Mean = 3.732, SD: 0.851), IWB

Table 1.
Descriptive statistics,
correlations, Fornell-
Larcker criterion in the
diagonal

Constructs	Mean	SD	IL	OL	IWB	OCB	Age	Experience	Gender
INL	4.174	0.880	(0.741)						
ORL	3.732	0.851	0.450**	(0.739)					
IWB	4.190	0.914	0.390**	0.361**	(0.743)				
OCB	4.071	0.854	0.463**	0.556**	0.533**	(0.752)			
Age	2.930	0.741	-0.060	0.034	0.076	0.117*	1.000		
Experience	3.150	0.980	-0.153*	-0.082	-0.056	0.049	0.715**	1.000	
Gender	1.120	0.330	0.087	-0.015	-0.145*	-0.124*	-0.329**	-0.236**	1.000

Note(s): N: 227
 ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
 * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
 INL: Inclusive leadership; ORL: Organizational learning; IWB: Innovative work behavior; OCB: Organizational citizenship behavior
 Values of age and experience were transferred from continuous to categorical values

(Mean = 4.19, SD: 0.914) and OCB (Mean = 4.071, SD: 0.854). Significant correlations were found between inclusive leadership, organizational learning, IWB and OCB. The reported correlations were: inclusive leadership and IWB ($r = 0.390, p = 0.000$), inclusive leadership and OCB ($r = 0.463, p = 0.000$), inclusive leadership and organizational learning ($r = 0.450, p = 0.000$), organizational learning and IWB ($r = 0.361, p = 0.000$) and organizational learning and OCB ($r = 0.556, p = 0.000$). The results reveal that significant and positive relationships exist between the examined variables in this study.

Assessing the PLS-SEM model

Factor loadings were measured to check the internal consistency of the items. Table 2 showed that all items had a loading higher than 0.7 (Hair *et al.*, 2016). Moreover, both the average variance extracted and the composite reliability were calculated for all constructs (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). The values of the AVEs and CRs were higher than 0.5 and 0.7, respectively, following the assertions of Fornell and Larcker (1981). Based on these findings, the constructs in our hypothesized model were reliable and consistent. Discriminant validity was assessed, using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) technique. This technique includes calculating the square root of the average variance extracted and comparing it with associations between the examined variables. The results in Table 1 show that the discriminant validity was met, as all the square roots of the AVEs were greater than the correlations within the latent variables. In order to provide another evidence of the discriminant validity, the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) was calculated. Results in Table 3 indicated that HTMT ratios were smaller than 0.85, following the suggestions recommend by Hulland (1999). Therefore, we can say that discriminant validity condition was met in this study. Finally, the predictive relevance (Stone–Geisser's Q^2) was estimated for the research variables. The Q^2 values were (0.097) for organizational learning, (0.097) for IWB and (0.187) for OCB. The Stone–Geisser's Q^2 values were larger than 0, which suggests predictive relevance as recommended by Hair *et al.* (2016).

Assessing the structural model: quality criteria

R^2 and f^2 values were calculated to assess the structural model. The calculated values of R^2 were acceptable, following the recommendation of (Hair *et al.*, 2019). Organizational learning had R^2 value of 0.260, IWB had R^2 value of 0.271 and OCB had R^2 value of 0.396. According to Hair *et al.* (2019) values between 0.25 and 0.50 are considered moderate, while values between 0.50 and 0.75 are considered substantial. Hair *et al.* (2019) suggested as well that even less than 10% or lower value of the R^2 can be considered satisfactory and depends on the research context.

Moreover, the reported effect size f^2 were: inclusive leadership on organizational learning (0.197), organizational learning on IWB (0.047), organizational learning on OCB (0.183), inclusive leadership on IWB (0.073) and inclusive leadership on OCB (0.083).

Hypotheses testing

Figure 2 and Table 4 show the results of the direct and mediating effects. The results indicated that inclusive leadership exerted a positive impact on both OCB ($\beta = 0.269, p = 0.000$) and IWB ($\beta = 0.287, p = 0.001$). Inclusive leadership was also found to be positively related to organizational learning ($\beta = 0.449, p = 0.000$). Organizational learning was found to exert a positive effect on OCB ($\beta = 0.436, p = 0.000$) and IWB ($\beta = 0.232, p = 0.003$). The results lend support for H1, H2, H3, H4, H5.

To test the mediating effect, the authors calculated the indirect effects using the 5000-bootstrap method, following the suggestions of Hair *et al.* (2016). The results showed that

	Items	Loading	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	CR	AVE
Inclusive leadership	The supervisor is open to hearing new ideas	0.767***	10.646	0.931	0.600
	The supervisor is attentive to new opportunities to improve work processes	0.772***	8.360		
	The supervisor is open to discuss the desired goals and new ways to achieve them	0.787***	12.242		
	The supervisor is available for consultation on problems	0.725***	8.241		
	The supervisor is an ongoing "presence" in this team-someone who is readily available	0.802***	11.812		
	The supervisor is available for professional questions I would like to consult with him/her	0.795***	10.333		
	The supervisor is ready to listen to my requests	0.753***	8.166		
	The supervisor encourages me to access him/her on emerging issues	0.778***	10.670		
	The supervisor is accessible for discussing emerging problems	0.791***	8.944		
	Organizational learning	Continuous learning	0.746***		
Inquiry and dialog		0.806***	9.790		
Team learning		0.781***	10.950		
Empowerment		0.813***	12.711		
Embedded system		0.807***	12.457		
System connection		0.757***	8.892		
Strategic leadership		0.765***	12.436		
Innovative work behavior	I search out new technologies, processes, techniques and/or product ideas	0.810***	12.752	0.910	0.627
	I generate creative ideas	0.744***	6.559		
	I promote and champion ideas to others	0.768***	8.648		
	I investigate and secure funds needed to implement new ideas	0.835***	12.447		
	I develop adequate plans and schedule for the implementation of new ideas	0.768***	8.073		
	I consider myself innovative	0.824***	13.387		
Organizational citizenship behavior	I help my co-workers when their workload is heavy	0.815***	15.240	0.914	0.638
	I help my co-workers who have been absent to finish their work	0.803***	12.307		
	I take time to listen to my co-workers' problems and worries	0.806***	12.639		
	I go out of my way to help new co-workers	0.797***	13.488		
	I take personal interest in my co-workers	0.820***	17.496		
	I pass along notices and news to my co-workers	0.749***	10.553		

Table 2.
Loadings, AVEs
and CRs

Note(s): *** significant at 0.001

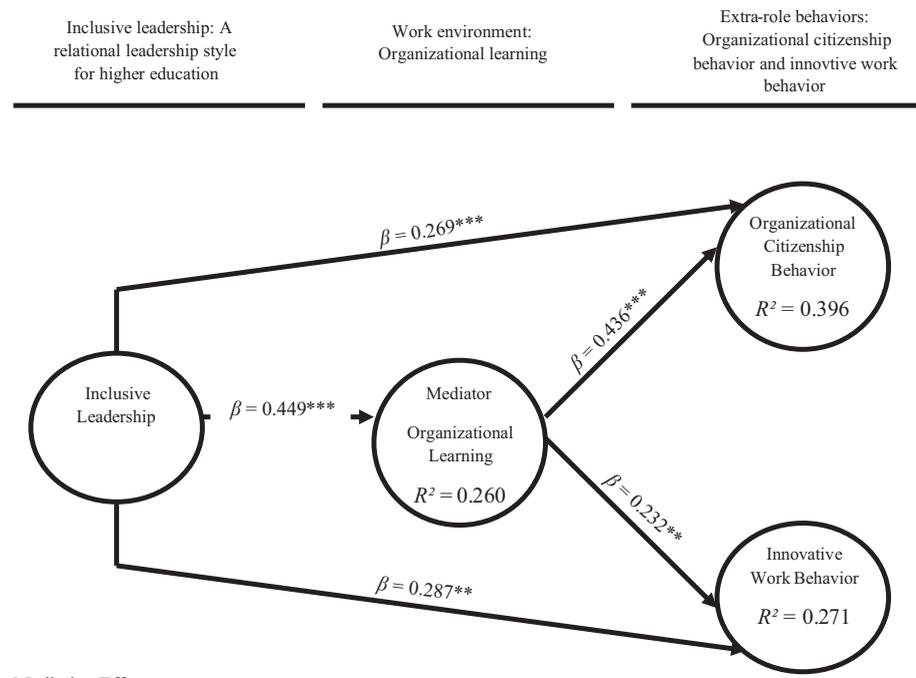
organizational learning positively and significantly mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and OCB ($\beta = 0.196, p = 0.000$) and between inclusive leadership and IWB ($\beta = 0.104, p = 0.007$). These results provide support for the H6a and H6b, suggesting that organizational learning was a significant intervening mechanism between inclusive leadership and extra-role behaviors. Finally, our control variables were not significant in the model.

Discussion

As one of the few studies, within higher education, to investigate the impact of inclusive leadership on both OCB and IWB, the study enriches the extant literature on both inclusive

Constructs	INL	ORL	IWB	OCB
INL				
ORL	0.444			
IWB	0.381	0.353		
OCB	0.463	0.553	0.526	

Table 3.
HTMT ratio



Mediating Effects

INL → ORL → OCB ($\beta = 0.196^{***}, t = 5.370$)

INL → ORL → IWB ($\beta = 0.104^{**}, t = 2.678$)

Note(s): *** significant at 0.001 level
** significant at 0.01 level

Figure 2.
Model with estimates

Table 4.
Direct, Indirect, and
Total effects

	Standardized coefficient	T statistics	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	p values
<i>Direct effects</i>					
INL → ORL	0.449	8.518	0.349	0.557	0.000
INL → IWB	0.287	3.444	0.129	0.454	0.001
INL → OCB	0.269	4.336	0.149	0.388	0.000
ORL → IWB	0.232	2.998	0.076	0.382	0.003
ORL → OCB	0.436	6.894	0.312	0.556	0.000
<i>Indirect effects</i>					
INL → ORL → IWB	0.104	2.678	0.031	0.185	0.007
INL → ORL → OCB	0.196	5.370	0.130	0.273	0.000
<i>Total effects</i>					
INL → IWB	0.391	5.729	0.259	0.528	0.000
INL → OCB	0.465	8.832	0.362	0.569	0.000

leadership and extra-role behaviors. On the one hand, the results of our study found that inclusive leadership exerts a positive impact on academics' OCB. The results are confirmed by previous studies in the private sector which suggested that inclusive leaders' behaviors positively contribute to followers' discretionary behaviors in the workplace (Carmeli *et al.*, 2010). On the other hand, the results found that inclusive leadership demonstrates a positive relationship with academics' IWB. These results were also consistent with previous business studies examining the leadership-innovative work behavior relationship (Javed *et al.*, 2018; Qi *et al.*, 2019). This suggests that the supportive behaviors of the leader encourage employees' voluntary behaviors and enhance the innovation behaviors generated by employees. Given these results, our study provides strong evidence of the effectiveness of SET and relational leadership theory in explaining how leadership can encourage employees' positive behaviors and outcomes due to the social exchanges between the leader and the follower. The results also suggest that inclusive leadership and organizational learning were positively associated. These results were in line with previous empirical evidence (Hsiao and Chang, 2011; Tran and Choi, 2019), which found that leader openness and support would create a culture of organizational learning, due to information sharing and the provision of continuous learning opportunities. In addition, our results found that organizational learning was positively related to OCB and IWB. These results were consistent with prior studies in business settings (Škerlavaj *et al.*, 2010; Tran and Choi, 2019). This implies that the existence of a learning environment will be positively perceived by employees and hence motivate them to demonstrate extra-role behaviors.

Finally, the study uncovered the role organizational learning can play as an intervening mechanism in the relationship between inclusive leadership and academics' discretionary behaviors in higher education. Our results found that the relationship between inclusive leadership and extra-role behaviors is not straightforward, and organizational learning significantly mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and both IWB and OCB.

Theoretical and practical implications

Our study responded to the different calls made to examine the concept of inclusion in general (Mitchell *et al.*, 2015) and inclusive leadership in academic setting in particular (Stefani and Blessinger, 2017; Temple and Ylitalo, 2009). In addition, the study contributed to the limited body of literature of organizational learning in higher education (Dee and Leišytė, 2016; Voolaid and Ehrlich, 2017), by examining its potential intervening role with regard to the relationship between inclusive leadership and academics' discretionary behaviors. The

results of our study may attract researchers' attention to the importance of inclusive leadership in encouraging extra-role behaviors in higher education settings.

Our results indicate important practical implications for higher education organizations in general and the Palestinian academic sector in specific. First, leadership inclusiveness should be adopted in the mindset of university managers, as it increases administrators' consciousness in relation to the creation of a systematic multicultural environment. Second, inclusive leadership creates opportunities for academics to engage in the decision-making process, which implies that they will act in a collaborative and participatory manner and will go beyond their required work in terms of extra-role behaviors. Managers of higher education organizations should highlight inclusion mindset and diversity tolerance when recruiting leaders at their organizations. Moreover, higher education institutions should reinforce the concept of inclusion, through training, seminars and workshops. On another note, organizational learning should be effectively employed to produce knowledge and provoke change. University managers might use organizational learning as a framework to understand how universities develop strategies, make decisions, and foster extra-role performance among their employees. Consequently, universities are called to promote organizational learning within both the academic and administrative aspects of university life. Universities should also provide avenues for continuous dialogue and collaboration since this will result in fruitful outcomes at both organizational and individual levels.

More specifically, the Palestinian higher education institutions are invited to consider important implications of inclusiveness at their workplace. Leaders in these institutions need to visualize inclusion as means to foster a diversity-inclusive civic culture, as this simulates organizational learning climate and discretionary behaviors among academic staff. Therefore, inclusive leaders' strategies need to encourage institutional capacity building in order to provide academic members a voice in the institutional climate, which would increase the organizational members' familiarity with the need for inclusion. This can be done through the introduction of training centers and networks aimed at reinforcing the concept inclusiveness and its value for the academic community and society in general. Inclusive leadership activities need to concentrate on changing the work environment through engaging the minority of the academic members (i.e. in terms of religion or gender) to act as diversity change agents. For instance, activities may include appointing women for administrative roles devoted to form and define the academic work in these institutions. Furthermore, these institutions are called upon establishing diversity and inclusion identifiable offices like vice president office for diversity and inclusion. These offices would bring fruitful results in promoting the image of the work climate that welcomes diversity and increasing minority' loyalty and commitment to the organization. In addition, as inclusive leaders have the potential of transforming these institutions into inclusive learning organizations and inclusive leadership practices can bring useful social capital implications through encouraging social relationships between diverse academic members (e.g. age, sex and religion). This would also have its positive effect on strengthening the social networks and fabric of the whole society.

Limitations and future research

Some limitations in this research need to be highlighted to provide future research opportunities. First, our data were collected from one source. Although the authors have followed some remedial procedures in order to reduce the common method bias, the authors call for future research to collect data from multiple sources, including supervisors' ratings. Second, our research examined the impact of inclusive leadership on extra-role behaviors via only organizational learning. Future studies might consider other mediating factors which might play an intervening role among the examined relationships. Mediating factors such as

climate for creativity and inclusive climate can be addressed (Ashikali *et al.*, 2020; Karatepe *et al.*, 2020). Third, the study utilized a sample in Palestine, which might set limitations on the generalizability of the findings. Therefore, the authors recommend further studies, to replicate this study in higher education settings within different cultures, since the Palestinian higher education is particular due to several challenges the sector encounters. Finally, collecting qualitative data or utilizing mixed-research methods would provide in-depth analysis of how inclusive leadership encourages extra-role behaviors and enable a climate of organizational learning.

Conclusion

The study proposed a model of effects of inclusive leadership on academic staff extra-role behaviors, namely, organizational citizenship behavior and innovative work behavior. Organizational learning was theorized to serve as a mediating variable among the aforementioned relationships. Using data collected from academic staff working in the Palestinian higher education institutions, the results indicated that inclusive leadership showed a positive relationship with extra-role behaviors of academic staff. Organizational learning showed to play effective and significant intervening role between the links examined. The study advises future research to replicate the model in other academic settings and examine other intervening mechanisms which may govern the relationship between inclusive leadership and its consequences.

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