



# The Role of Leadership Styles in Enhancing Employees' Performance Through Organizational Justice: Evidence from Egyptian Higher Education Institutions

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## Abstract

*The purpose of this research is to empirically investigate the relationship between leadership styles and employees' performance with mediating role of organizational justice in Egyptian higher education institutions (HEIs). The objectives of This research are: to investigate the relationship between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs, to examine the relationship between leadership styles and organizational justice in Egyptian HEIs, to identify the relationship between organizational justice and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs, to test the moderation role of university type in the relationship between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs, to investigate the mediation role of organizational justice between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs using structural equation modelling. The methodology will be based on quantitative analysis by using a questionnaire tool to gather required data and structural equation model analyses (SEM) using AMOS software version 26. The main conclusions drawn from this study are: the direct effect between Leadership Style and Employees Performance is statistically significant, the direct effect between Leadership Style and Organizational Justice is statistically significant, the direct effect between Organizational Justice and Employees Performance is statistically significant. Finally, the study found that the results of the mediation effect indicate that there is partial mediation effect of the Organizational Justice between the relationship of Leadership Style Employees Performance.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, Organizational Justice, Performance, Egyptian HEIs.

## Introduction

The significance of leadership in businesses and other fields cannot be denied. Due to the various dimensions of leadership and its styles, the application of each style carries with it a different type of significance (Al Khajeh, 2018). Leaders have the ability to unify and inspire people, while every leader in every sector and country is important, their actions reflect people, and their influence directs people toward their desired objectives. For this reason, leadership is crucial to the wellbeing of both individuals and communities (Kouzes & Posner, 2019). Consequently, successful leadership in educational institutions contributes positively and significantly to the success of lecturers and students (Altun & Tahir, 2020). A productive organisational performance requires a leader to select and adopt the right style for productivity. The right style provides excellent opportunities within organisations and permits employee participation in decision-making processes (Torlak et al., 2021b).

In higher education, leaders are those with authority over a variety of responsibilities inside the university. Higher education leaders are influential individuals who give guidance for achieving university goals and objectives (Budur & Demir, 2019). There are several approaches to carry out the duties and ob-

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ligations of a leadership. The approach of the leader is depending upon his or her position within the university and the type of the objective. School leaders are accountable for ensuring equity and justice among students, including eliminating discrimination and inequality, and addressing and resolving conflicts within the university without delay (Serin, 2020). Furthermore, school leaders are responsible for providing the techniques and teaching methodologies needed to achieve the highest learning rate in the university (Yildiz & Budur, 2019; Durmaz, 2017).

According to Sathye (2004), leadership in higher education is a part of general leadership. However, leadership in higher education differs from leadership in private and public organizations. For instance, the primary objective of private organisations is to maximise shareholders value, but the objective of public organisations is to maximise their community value. In contrast, the main objective of higher education is to develop valuable students, teams, and funding partners. Due to academics' different stakeholders, different challenges occur for school leaders.

On account of those functions, higher education leadership is not generalised as a topic, whereas it is separated into several parts which include: leadership in teaching and training, leadership in conducting studies and research, leadership in thinking strategically and creating a vision and networking, leadership for collaboration and motivation, leadership in managerial team and efficient working, leadership for justice and fairness, leadership in recognition of good performance and developing interpersonal skills (Ali et al., 2020; Hamit and Durmaz, 2021). Both general and higher education leadership is crucial since leadership is one of the primary causes of success or failure of any organisation (Budur and Poturak, 2021a). Since the style indicates the approaching method of the leader in order to achieve the desired goal (Al Khajeh, 2018).

It has been determined that the most effective component impacting institutional performance is organisational justice, which is defined as fairness in rules, processes, distribution, and interaction in institutional activities (Khuong & Hoang, 2016). When employees believe that the processes are fair, distributions are unbiased, and interactions are neutral, they will perform at their maximum level while exerting every effort to fulfil the institutional goals (Benson & Martin, 2017). The behaviour of the leadership is the most crucial factor in determining how interactions between a leader and followers affect the development of effective leadership in organizations (Szeto & Cheng, 2017). The team members are motivated by the leaders' motivation and fair interactions to work harder and achieve superior results (Tziner & Shkoler, 2018). Leadership, the perception of fairness, and performance are crucial variables in determining the credibility and success of an organization. Consequently, leadership without fairness in procedures, distributions, and interactions may not be able to attain the desired efforts and performances from the workforces (Wen et al., 2019). Thus, for leadership in HEIs, justice and performance are the foremost challenges to overwhelm the diverse situations and to obtain the desired objectives. The purpose of this paper is to elaborate on the role of leadership styles in enhancing employees' Performance through organizational justice in the Egyptian higher education institutions. The study is guided by the following objectives:

- 1- To investigate the relationship between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs.
- 2- To examine the relationship between leadership styles and organizational justice in Egyptian HEIs.
- 3- To identify the relationship between organizational justice and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs.
- 4- To test the moderation role of university type in the relationship between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs.
- 5- To investigate the mediation role of organizational justice between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs.

## Literature Review

Leadership styles is considered as the independent variable, organizational justice is considered as the mediator variable, and employees' performance is considered as the dependent variable.

### ***Leadership Styles***

The leadership literature offers insight into various leadership styles. These leadership styles demonstrate how the leadership actually depends on the situations, people's attitudes, standards, and ideals. The choice of the suitable style, at the suitable moment, and in the suitable situation, are, in fact, the essential components of a successful leader. The transformational leadership, among all leadership theories, has a prominent position due to its well-liked traits. The success of this leadership style in the current context is a result of the intimate proximity in every respect between the leader and those who follow. The structure of the leadership style mostly depends on the degree of motivation and trust that results in a decentralised system where a person may execute to the best of his or her ability regardless of any personal interests (Ojokuku et al., 2012). Employee performance may be influenced by a leader's ability to effectively apply transformational management styles to organisational tasks. Transformational leaders are characterised by their idealisation of influential attributes/behavior, inspiration of employee motivation, encouragement of customised consideration, and intellectual stimulation as they lead employees (Berger, 2013). Unlike, transformational leadership who works upon popular will and wishes with utmost flexibility towards employees, thus transactional leadership transcending what is written in black and white.

Afterward weighing the pros and cons of the previous said styles the researchers consented upon both styles of leadership namely transformational and transactional. These two styles have been deemed most suitable for the current socioeconomic, political, and academic climate. Transformational leadership thrives on the motivation, devotion, and participation of followers in the most optimal working environment. This style stimulates and influences the mind-set adjustment necessary for providing vision and achieving goals (Fernet et al., 2015). Under the umbrella of transformational leadership, by participating in the phenomenon of decision making, the employees exceed their working capacity and demonstrate maximum efficiency. The transactional leader, on the other hand, establishes goals based on rigorous standards and values and centralizes authority. This style is primarily driven by a system of incentives and penalties (Zakeer et al., 2016). These styles are the most compatible and have hints of variation that make them distinct in various contexts. This paper examines leadership styles in terms of transformational and transactional approaches.

### ***Organizational Justice***

Organizational justice is a company's and its workers' view of fair and equal treatment by its personnel (Shalhoop, 2004). Special employee expectations include professional and motivational growth, care for the institution, employment stability, and flexible working hours (Khan et al., 2020). It is a well-known truth that employees always worry about their institutional position. As a result, they work to the best of their abilities, which helps them develop positive attitudes about institutional acts (Khuong & Hoang, 2016). Since justice is primarily concerned with institutional acts that have constructive ways to serve without prejudice, it is the central subject that directly relates to both the administrative and academic health of the concerned institution(s) (Suifan, 2019). In addition, justice is also the main concern of employees in shaping their behavior toward the achievement of the institutional tasks.

Organizational justice or fair treatment from management inspires positive behaviour in employees, resulting in a commitment to obligations and duties. Previous research has proven that an organization's success is manifest when it shares sufficient information with its employees and places its trust in them (Hao, 2018). Literature has played a significant role in the exploration of fresh perspectives on organizational justice in recent years. It is a well-established truth, supported by research studies, that there is a high correlation between employee performance and organisational justice (Amin, 2020). In this paper the researchers used Rastgar and pourebrahimi (2013) scale regarding the three dimensions (distributive, procedural and interactional) justice.

### Employees' Performance

Yusuf-Habeeb and Ibrahim (2017) stated that organisational performance includes a company's actual output or results as measured against its intended outputs (or goals and objectives). They went further to argue that Performance in different scopes is measured adopting certain set parameters as benchmark to rate a subject (individual, group or organization). The only phenomenon that is directly related to both organizational failure and success is performance. The reason for this is that institutions who are able to acquire positive results from their employees are considered successful, whilst those that are unable to get positive results from their employees are considered unsuccessful due to their lack of interest in employee motivation and performance (Armstrong and Baron, 2004). Since a result, performance is a vital asset of the organizations, as improved standing and higher ranking are dependent on the degree of desired performances (Vecchio et al., 2008).

In this regard, Paracha et al. (2012) suggested that when leadership is fair, policies are transparent, and actions are clear, concerned employees will show higher performance to complete organizational tasks more successfully. Institutions are likewise more concerned with their employees' performance since higher performance leads to higher institutional performance (Tiara and Putranto, 2015). As a result, leadership styles, fairness perception, and employee performance are leading factors that are directly responsible for the success of the concerned institutions (Wen et al., 2019).

### Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature review, the research conceptual Framework were formulated as below:

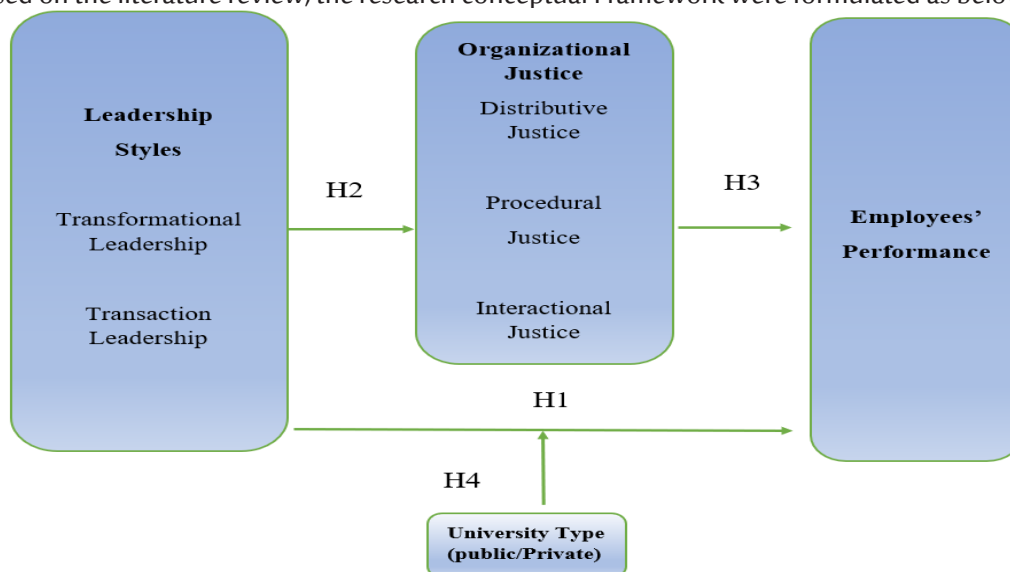


Figure 1- Conceptual Framework

### Research Methodology

According to Creswell (2012), quantitative research is an inquiry approach useful for describing trends and explaining the relationship among variables found in the literature. To conduct this research, a questionnaire is used for data collection. The researchers drew a convenience-sample out of the population regarding employees working in Egyptian higher education institutions, because of the ease of data collection and sample selection (Saunders et al., 2016), and due to the limited time and funds. The questionnaire is sent via (google forms online surveys) . The data collected from the questionnaires is analyzed with the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 to analyze quantitative data including descriptive sta-

tistics (frequencies and percentages) and inferential statistics (correlations) and Structural Equation Model analyses (SEM) using Analysis Moment of Structures (AMOS) software version 26, will analyze the hypothesized models.

### Operational Definitions

**Table 1- operational definition**

Variable	Measurement Scale
Independent Variable: Leadership Styles	Ismail et al., (2010)
Mediator: Organizational Justice	Rastgar and pourebrahimi (2013)
Dependent Variable: Employees' Performance	Villagrasa et al., (2019)

## Results and Findings

The research questionnaire was administered to seven hundred (700) respondents, 441 questionnaires representing 63% were returned, and 38 questionnaires representing 5.4% were incomplete or ineligible or refusals and 259 (37%) were not reached. There were 403 acceptable responses, a response rate 57.6%, which is highly adequate for the nature of this study.

Measurement items have standardized loading estimates of 0.5 or higher (ranging from 0.501 to 0.926 at the alpha level of 0.05, indicating the convergent validity of the measurement model. Discriminant validity shows the degree to which a construct is actually different from other constructs. (Hair et al., 2019)

The average variances extracted (AVE) should always above 0.50 (Hair et al., 2019). Table -2 shows that average variances extracted (AVE) of the particular constructs (Transformational Leadership = 0.629, Transactional Leadership =0.603, Distributive Justice =0.511, Procedural Justice = 0.568, Interactional Justice = 0.582 and Employees Performance = 0.705) are more than 0.500. Overall, these measurement results are satisfactory and suggest that it is appropriate to proceed with the evaluation of the structural model.

Composite reliability (CR) is used to measure the reliability of a construct in the measurement model. CR is a more presenting way of overall reliability and it determines the consistency of the construct itself (Hair et al., 2019). The CR of (Transformational Leadership = 0.908, Transactional Leadership =0.882, Distributive Justice =0.821, Procedural Justice = 0.887, Interactional Justice = 0.890 and Employees Performance = 0.950). So, it clearly identified that in measurement model all construct have good reliability.

**Table- 2 Model Validity Measures**

Variables	Composite Reliability CR	Average Variances Extracted AVE	Square Root of AVE	Maximum Reliability MaxR(H)
Transformational Leadership	0.908	0.629	0.793	0.937
Transactional Leadership	0.882	0.603	0.776	0.903
Distributive Justice	0.821	0.511	0.715	0.910
Procedural Justice	0.887	0.568	0.753	0.895
Interactional Justice	0.890	0.582	0.763	0.931
Employees Performance	0.950	0.705	0.840	0.954

**Measurement Model Results:** The 6 factor was subjected to CFA using the AMOS software. DF was 615 (it should be more than 0),  $c^2/DF$  has a value of 2.647, that is less than 3.0 (it should be less than or equal 3.0). The RMSEA was .059 (it should be less than 0.08). The TLI index was .916 which is very close to 1.0 (a value of 1.0 indicates perfect fit). The CFI was .922. All indices are close to a value of 1.0 in CFA, indicating that the measurement models provide good support for the factor structure determined through the CFA.

## Structural Model

**Structural model summary:** The results of structural model using the AMOS software, shows that DF was 622 (it should be more than 0),  $c^2/DF$  has a value of 2.649, that is less than 3.0 (it should be less than or equal 3.0). The RMSEA was .059 (it should be less than 0.08). The TLI index was .915 which is very close to 1.0 (a value of 1.0 indicates perfect fit). The CFI was .921. All indices are close to a value of 1.0 in CFA, indicating that the measurement models provide good support for the factor structure determined through the CFA.

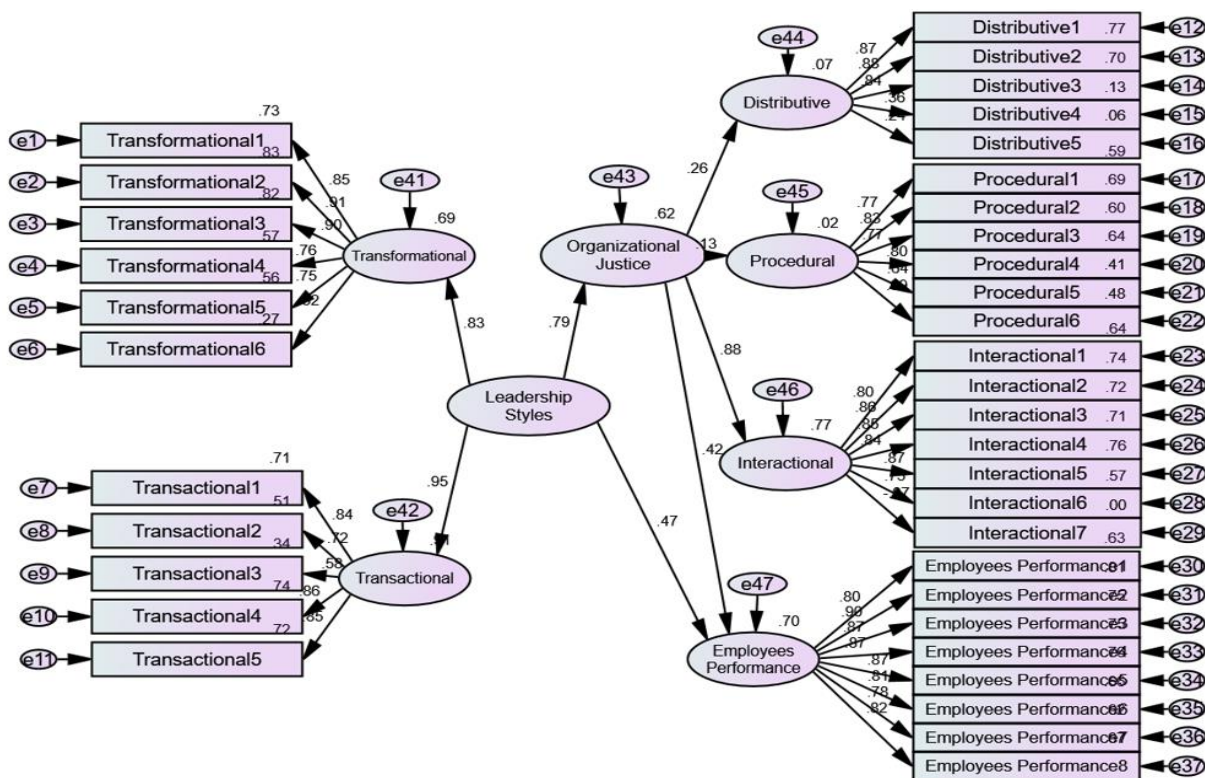


Figure (2) Structural Model (Final Result)

## Discussion

This researcher explores the analytical part performed to test the hypotheses the researcher is seeking to fulfill the research objectives. A summary of findings and conclusion could now be presented. Regarding the first objective: To investigate the relationship between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs. Due to the individual tests of significance of the relationship between the variables. It reveals that, as expected a relationship between Leadership Style and Employees' Performance ( $\beta = 0.466$ , CR (Critical Ratio) = 3.128,  $CR > 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, (H1: Leadership Styles has an impact on Employees' Performance in the Egyptian Higher Education Institutions) is supported. That result is consistent with Khan et al., (2021); and Addow (2022), who stated that Leadership Styles has an impact on Employees' Performance.

Regarding the second objective: To examine the relationship between leadership styles and organizational justice in Egyptian HEIs. According to the analysis performed testing the relationship between the variables. The second hypothesis stated that H2: Leadership Styles has an impact on Organizational Justice in the Egyptian Higher Education Institutions. ( $\beta = 0.786$ , CR (Critical Ratio) = 12.943,  $CR > 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). is supported, as it predicts that " There is a relationship between Leadership Styles and Organizational Justice ". That result is consistent with Park et al., (2016); Bas Karada et al. (2017) who stated that Leadership Styles has an impact on Organizational Justice.

Regarding the Third objective: To identify the relationship between organizational justice and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs. The third hypothesis H3 stated that : Organizational Justice has an impact on Employees' Performance in the Egyptian Higher Education Institutions ( $\beta = 0.419$ , CR (Critical Ratio) = 2.307,  $CR > 1.96$ ,  $p = 0.021$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). is supported, as it predicts that " There is a relationship between Organizational Justice and Employees Performance ". That result is consistent with Muhammad and Shaheen, (2015) who stated that Organizational Justice has an impact on Employees' Performance

Regarding the Fourth objective: To test the moderation role of university type in the relationship between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs. The results of the Multi Group Analysis (MGA) revealed that: The positive relationship between Leadership Style and Employees Performance is little difference for Private. (Beta ( $\beta$ ) Value for Private = .420 and Beta ( $\beta$ ) Value for Public = .419). The positive relationship between Leadership Style and Organizational Justice is stronger for Public. (Beta ( $\beta$ ) Value for Public = .818 and Beta ( $\beta$ ) Value for Private = .784). The positive relationship between Organizational Justice and Employees Performance is stronger for Private. (Beta ( $\beta$ ) Value for Private = .481 and Beta ( $\beta$ ) Value for Public = .460).

Regarding the fifth objective: To investigate the mediation role of organizational justice between leadership styles and Employees' performance in Egyptian HEIs. Findings reveal a statistically significant indirect effect between Leadership Style and Employees Performance Through Organizational Justice ( $P = 0.003$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ). The results of the mediation effect indicate that there is partial mediation effect of the Organizational Justice between the relationship of Leadership Style Employees Performance.

## Conclusion

Leadership is a function that motivates people, not a position or a role to be fulfilled (Budur, 2018; Zaim et al., 2020). Leadership is the most significant factor in achieving goals in any country and industry. A leader is not an authoritarian person who controls and commands; rather, it is someone who collaborates with the team and shares the same values with them while guiding them. A higher education leader is someone who has power over a group of people such as the dean, president, and professors in the classrooms. Leaders inside institutions and universities have an important role in demonstrating influence to improve organisational performance. Moreover, leadership style is a significant component in the educational system's success. In times of crisis, such as COVID 19, the leader plans and implements new strategic responses to the crisis. Every error inside the faculties and among the staff is the responsibility of the leader. The importance of leadership in higher education is its impact on the community. Education improves and develops people in order to establish a positive organisational culture inside an educational system, which ensures the development of innovation, productivity, and successes for the country. Higher education leadership has an educational and direct impact on staff and students.

Students respond to good effective leaders inside the university by developing great ideas and demonstrating excellent performance. Higher education leaders may face educational challenges. It is not hidden that many of us are used to representing autocratic leadership, and a type of leader in which each member is faced with the potential to lead himself/herself is rather new when compared to autocracy. However, most universities and institutions have actively promoted democratic leadership and witnessed its positive effects throughout the world. One of the crises that effective leaders have is the capacity to transform challenges into opportunities and to manage crisis events. Every educational system has internal problems and challenges, but those who have embraced transformational leadership have overcome and overcome every challenge. Leaders in some organisations and institutions have confused leadership with being bossy. An excellent leader is someone who has a respectable character and personality and is the idol of everyone he or she influences.

Similarly, organisational justice plays an important role on employee perceptions of fairness in leadership behaviour in institutional actions, as confirmed in this study by using mediation (partial mediation). Organizational justice mediated the relationship between leadership styles (transformational & transactional) and employee performance. The performance in organizations is anchored with number of variables wherein leadership has been considered as most influential and dynamic force in all respects. Fairness perception is also vital since it helps to influence individuals' behaviours in accordance with the norms and

values of the organisations. Through various styles, leaders attempt to influence their subordinates in order to achieve the desired tasks by inspiring them to show their wholehearted performances at workplaces. Leaders generally try to ensure the fair and transparent procedures, distribution, and interaction in institutional affairs and resources in order to motivate their employees to engage on high-valued tasks.

### Research Contribution

This research has dual significance both academically and practically.

- **Academically**, the current research fills the gap and supplements the literature and the research developed a model contributes knowledge to other models that have recommended expanding the investigative scope using structural equation modelling technique. Results show that the estimated structural model corroborated the three hypotheses, as Leadership Style construct explained 61.8 % of Organizational Justice variance ( $R^2 = 0.618$ ), Besides, Leadership Style through Organizational Justice explained 69.9 % of Employees Performance variance ( $R^2 = 0.699$ ).
- **Practically**, this study gives insights to managers and practitioners who work in the Egyptian HEIs. the quality of an educational institution is inseparable from the role that the leadership of policy makers, the implementation and development of an organization or educational organization depends heavily on its strong and weak force a leader in leading the organization. This outcome shed the light on the significance of justice (distributive, procedural and interactional) and its influence on employee's performance.

### Limitations and suggestions for future research

- First: Because this study was cross-sectional, it is not possible to investigate the nature of cause-and-effect connections between the variables. Future study should therefore focus on the requirement for a longitudinal strategy.
- Second, because this study's sample was limited to one nation (Egypt) and the Higher education institutions (public and private universities), it is important to proceed with caution when interpreting the results. Despite the fact that the research context is extremely specialized, it is thought that the conclusions apply to various fields and nations.
- Third: a convenience sample approach was used to gather information from respondents over a predetermined period of time, which led to a limitation. The range of respondents who might participate was restricted by the short time window for data collecting. Because responses are acquired based on respondents' accessibility and may not give a representative sample, the convenience sampling approach used to gather responses may have also limited the range of respondents who would participate.

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