

Organizational learning, authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change: a study of Egyptian academics

Abstract

Purpose – This paper focuses on academics in three private foreign universities located in Cairo (Egypt) to explore the effect of organizational learning on individual-level resistance to change with and without the mediation of authentic leadership.

Design/ methodology/ approach – A total of 960 academics were contacted and all of them received a set of questionnaires. After four follow ups, a total of 576 responses were collected with a response rate of 60.00 percent. The author used the chi-square test to determine the association between organizational learning and authentic leadership. Multiple regressions were employed to show how much variation in individual-level resistance to change can be explained by organizational learning and authentic leadership.

Findings – The findings highlight a statistical association between organizational learning and authentic leadership. Moreover, another statistical association is explored between authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change. Furthermore, the statistical analysis proved that having an authentic leadership in the workplace fosters the effect of organizational learning in alleviating individual’s resistance to change.

Research limitations/ implications – Data was collected only from academics and did not include rectors and/or heads of academic departments, the matter that may lead to an inflation of statistical relationships. Future research could use a double source method. Moreover, focusing only on private foreign universities working in Egypt diminishes the author’s potential for generalizing his results.

Practical implications – The author recommends establishing a unit for knowledge management inside every university. The function of this unit includes but is not limited to examining prospective socio-political, cultural and economic changes/challenges in the surrounding environment and preparing the possible scenarios for dealing with them. This in turn should comprise involvement and learning opportunities for academics work in these universities. The suggested units should also organize monthly meetings between academics and representatives from different Egyptian sectors such as NGOs personnel, CEOs of private and public companies, environmentalists and politicians to address what change those actors seek universities to undertake to guide academics to fulfil their expectations.

Originality/ value – This paper contributes by filling a gap in HR management and organization literature in the higher education sector, in which empirical studies on the relationship between organizational learning, authentic leadership and resistance to change have been limited until now.

Keywords – organizational learning; authentic leadership; resistance to change; academics; Egypt

Paper type – research paper

Aprendizaje organizativo, liderazgo auténtico y Resistencia al cambio a nivel individual: un estudio de académicos egipcios.

Resumen

Objetivo – Este artículo se centra en los académicos de tres universidades privadas extranjeras situadas en El Cairo (Egipto) para explorar el efecto del aprendizaje organizativo en la resistencia individual al cambio con y sin la mediación del liderazgo auténtico.

Diseño/metodología/aproximación – Se contactó con un total de 960 académicos. Se obtuvieron 576 respuestas válidas para un ratio de respuesta del 60%. Los autores usan el test chi-cuadrado para determinar la asociación entre el aprendizaje organizativo y el liderazgo auténtico. Se utilizaron regresiones múltiples para mostrar cuanta variación en la resistencia individual al cambio puede explicarse con el aprendizaje organizativo y el liderazgo auténtico.

Resultados – Los resultados muestran una asociación estadística entre el aprendizaje organizativo y el liderazgo auténtico. También se explora la relación estadística entre el liderazgo auténtico y el nivel de resistencia individual al cambio. Más aún, el análisis estadístico muestra que un liderazgo auténtico favorece el efecto reductor del aprendizaje organizativo en la resistencia individual al cambio.

Limitaciones / implicaciones – Los datos se obtuvieron exclusivamente de académicos, y no incluían rectores y/o directores de departamento, lo cual puede haber aumentado la significatividad estadística. La investigación futura puede utilizar un método con dos fuentes. Más aún, el foco en universidades extranjeras privadas que trabajan en Egipto puede afectar a la generalizabilidad de los resultados.

Implicaciones prácticas – Los autores recomiendan establecer una unidad de gestión del conocimiento en cada universidad. La función de esta unidad incluye, pero no se limita a, examinar posibles cambios /retos socio-políticos, culturales y económicos en el entorno, y a preparar posibles escenarios para afrontarlos. Esto a su vez debe comprender la identificación de oportunidades de aprendizaje para los académicos en estas instituciones. Estas unidades deberían organizar reuniones mensuales entre los académicos y representantes de diferentes sectores Egipcios tales como personal de ONGs, directores de empresas públicas y privadas, activistas por el medioambiente y políticos para identificar sus necesidades y los cambios necesarios en la universidades para abordarlos.

Originalidad / valor – Este trabajo contribuye a rellenar una ausencia en la literatura sobre organización y gestión de recursos humanos en la educación superior, en la que hasta la fecha no existían estudio sobre la relación entre el aprendizaje organizativo, el liderazgo auténtico y la resistencia al cambio.

Palabras clave – aprendizaje organizativo; liderazgo auténtico; resistencia al cambio; académicos; Egipto

Tipo de artículo – artículo de investigación

Aprendizado organizacional, liderança autêntica e resistência à mudança a nível individual: um estudo de académicos egípcios

Resumo

Objetivo - Este artigo concentra-se em académicos de três universidades particulares estrangeiras localizadas no Cairo (Egito) para explorar o efeito do aprendizado organizacional na resistência em nível individual à mudança com e sem a mediação da liderança autêntica.

Projeto / metodologia / abordagem - Um total de 960 académicos foram contatados e todos receberam um conjunto de questionários. Após quatro acompanhamentos, um total de 576 respostas foram coletadas com uma taxa de resposta de 60%. O autor usou o teste do qui-quadrado para determinar a associação entre aprendizado organizacional e liderança autêntica. Se usou regressões múltiplas para mostrar quanta variação na resistência individual à mudança pode ser explicada pelo aprendizado organizacional e pela liderança autêntica.

Resultados - Os resultados destacam uma associação estatística entre aprendizado organizacional e liderança autêntica. Outra associação estatística também é explorada entre liderança autêntica e resistência individual à mudança. Além disso, a análise estatística provou que ter uma liderança autêntica no local de trabalho promove o efeito do aprendizado organizacional na diminuição da resistência individual à mudança.

Limitações / implicações da pesquisa - Os dados foram coletados apenas de académicos e não incluíram reitores e/ou chefes de departamentos académicos, o que pode levar a um aumento nas relações estatísticas. Pesquisas futuras poderiam usar um método com fonte dupla. Além disso, o foco apenas em universidades particulares estrangeiras que trabalham no Egito diminui o potencial do autor de generalizar seus resultados.

Implicações práticas - O autor recomenda o estabelecimento de uma unidade para a gestão do conhecimento em todas universidades. A função desta unidade inclui, entre outros, o exame de possíveis mudanças/desafios sócio-políticos, culturais e econômicos no ambiente circundante e a preparação dos cenários possíveis para lidar com eles. Por sua vez, isso deve incluir envolvimento e oportunidades de aprendizado para os académicos trabalharem nessas universidades. As unidades sugeridas também devem organizar reuniões mensais entre académicos e representantes de diferentes setores egípcios, como o pessoal de ONGs, diretores executivos de empresas públicas e privadas, ambientalistas e políticos para as mudanças que esses atores procuram nas universidades para orientar os académicos a atender às suas expectativas.

Originalidade / valor - Este artigo contribui preenchendo uma lacuna na literatura sobre gestão e organização de RH no setor de ensino superior, no qual estudos empíricos sobre a relação entre aprendizagem organizacional, liderança autêntica e resistência à mudança foram limitados até agora.

Palavras-chave - aprendizagem organizacional; liderança autêntica; resistência à mudança; académicos; Egito

Tipo de trabalho - trabalho de pesquisa

Introduction

Over the past two decades, organizational learning has gained a momentum in management and organization-related literature. Ortenblad (2002) considers it as a necessity for organizations to manage owing to its significance in stimulating adaptability and ensuring changeability. This comes as a result of changes in market dynamics and the environmental uncertainties organizations face (Rijal, 2010; Megheirkouni, 2017). Gunasekaran (2004) highlights that organizations differ in their responses to organizational learning as many of them consider it a negative symptom forcing changes in their way of doing things while others consider it as an opportunity for achieving organizational excellence.

Despite the fact that organizational learning has been addressed in the banking sector (Dirani, 2009), educational settings (Bowen et al., 2006) and health-care context (Andrews & Delahaye, 2000), authors like Heraty (2004) touched on the absence of rigorous scope and/or content of organizational learning and accordingly urged the need to do more empirical studies on it. The same has been highlighted by Voolaid and Ehrlich (2017) who claim that the demographic changes, technological advancements, immigration protocols and cultural diversity challenges urge researchers and organizations to pay more attention to the importance and practices of organizational learning. This may justify the growing inclination of different institutions and/or businesses to become learning organizations (White & Weathersby, 2005; Voolaid & Ehrlich, 2010). However, Molodchik and Jardon (2015) have noted that only adaptive and agile organizations have started to embed organizational learning into their strategic and daily work culture.

According to Yukl (2009) and Valencia et al. (2010), organizational learning is believed to be a driver for organizational positive and desirable outcomes such as wise financial performance, readiness to entrepreneurship, and sound governance systems. Moreover, authors like Jamali et al. (2009), Ortenblad (2013) and Jain and Moreno (2015) note that the majority of empirical studies on organizational learning have been conducted in Western countries and very few researchers and/or theorists have attempted to address it in developing ones. Gharaibeh (2011) and Muehlfeld et al. (2012) highlight that the majority of published papers on organizational learning used qualitative holistic, single and longitudinal case studies. Accordingly, Nevis et al. (1995) and Goh et al. (2012) assert that the relationship between organizational learning and other organization-related phenomena and/ or attitudes such as firm performance, employees' commitment, turnover intentions and organizational inclusion remain unknown. Garcia-Morales et al. (2012) indicate that the main motive behind caring about organizational learning is the desire of different organizations to have adaptive human capital that does not resist organizational change. Unfortunately, Alas and Vadi (2006) have emphasized the scarcity of the studies that touch on the association between organizational learning and individual resistance to change.

The authors of this study aim to fill a gap in both HR management and organization literature by exploring the relationship between organizational learning and individual-level resistance to change with and without the mediating role of authentic leadership. In general, studies of HRM and organizational behavior are very limited in the higher education sector comparing with other sectors (Nakpodia, 2009; Patnaik et al., 2013; Alas and Mousa, 2016). The authors reviewed trends of studies in the sector published in top twenty academic journals relevant to studies in higher education and unlike studies in other sectors, they did not find advanced analytical studies in the field which tackle the interchangeable relationships between organizational learning, authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change as this study did. Other studies such as Khalifa and Ayoubi (2015) and Mousa and Ayoubi (2019) explored different organizational and HRM aspects in the sector, as it further aimed at exploring the role of transactional and transformational leadership in enhancing organisational learning. For this purpose, the authors address academics in an unknown organizational context which is the private foreign universities in Egypt. The impetus for addressing these universities is the fact that they have become a main destination for Egyptian

postgraduate and undergraduate students over the past decade. Furthermore and because of their complete dependence on students' tuition fees, these universities have to manage market shifts, adapt to new technologies, and continuously upgrade their mission in order to survive and simultaneously compete. Consequently, and given what is highlighted by Elias (2009) who elaborates that social systems like universities can survive only when paying attention to learning included within organizational change processes. This motivated the authors to address academics in this educational context and explore the previously mentioned relationship there. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: the authors start first with a literature review, followed by the methodology, then the results, and lastly the discussion and implications.

1. Theoretical framework and hypotheses

1.1 Organizational learning

The concept of organizational learning was developed by Argyris and Schon (1978) who introduced the concepts of single-loop, double-loop and deuteron-learning. According to Argyris and Schon (1978), Antal (2000) and Tsang (2001) single-loop learning reflects a modification for the mechanism by which things are done, whereas double-loop learning entails a development of mechanisms/ways for replacing the old ways of doing things. Deuteron learning addresses senior managers' and executives' thoughts to update/modernize/cultivate the way they see/do/evaluate ways of doing things. Moreover, organizational learning has been seen by Argote (2013) as the activities/procedures/processes organizations undertake to create, import, store, retain and share knowledge at different levels of the organization. Change and Lee (2007) highlight that organizational learning reflects an outcome of the spread of privatization policies countries perform, shortage of skilled workers businesses suffer from, and market uncertainties organizations have to manage.

LeBrasseur et al. (2002, P. 143) mentioned that organizational learning entails "the revision of the cultural foundation of the organization (its assumption and values) to create a new problem solving approach". This reflects an ongoing acquisition of knowledge and subsequent intentional cultivation of behaviors, roles, rules and governance systems within organizations (Barakat and Moussa, 2014). Altman and Iles (1998) and Wong (2001) point out that the process of organizational learning mostly starts by sharing individual work experiences, a matter that gradually develops the collective capabilities of the organization. Tsang (1997) believes that organizational learning reflects an inescapable organizational response to the surrounding local and global evolution. Furthermore, Popper and Lipshitz (2000) and Spector and Kim (2014) differentiate between researchers who address learning organization in order to assess the quality of learning these organizations secure and those who address traditional organizations that provide their staff with learning opportunities. Other researchers mainly analyze the practices involved within the process of delivering knowledge at the individual, group and organizational levels. Ortenblad (2001) highlights the irrelevancy of using the terms organizational learning and learning organization interchangeably as the first reflects an organization's set of activities that ensures learning at different organizational levels, whereas the second represents a form of organizations that cares about its workers' continuous learning and participative dialogues.

Organizational learning was perceived by Martin (1999) and Janssen (2015) as a strategic priority that can constantly be translated into dynamic procedures through which organizations promote learning and consider knowledge as a necessity for survival and growth. Karash (2002) and Barney (2007) consider organizational learning as a platform through which an organization can exploit and manage its resources. Moreover, it also reflects an assessment tool for discovering an organization's level of readiness to deal with internal and external turbulent changes. Practically speaking, Armstrong and Foley (2003) demonstrate that assessing the current learning capabilities, identifying learning needs, meeting identified learning needs

and sustaining learning in the workplace are the four stages needed to develop policies for adopting organizational learning.

Fung (2006) and Raes et al. (2015) affirm the importance of bodily and virtually participation to yield more desirable outcomes from organizational learning. Moreover, Cludts (1999) considers participation as a platform for knowledge transfer. However, the level and scope of participation differs from one organization to another and is widely based on each organization's rule, routines and management system. Agulanna (2006) and Matsue (2015) assert that participation works as a driver for creating trust and inclusive work climate inside organizations. Phang et al. (2008) affirm that organizations constantly seek to harmonize between organizational learning practices and those values, actions, assumptions, expectations included as parts of its undertaken culture. Moreover, Wiewiora et al. (2013) highlight that organizational culture is the main determinant of organizational learning practices, purposes and policies.

1.2 Organizational learning and authentic leadership

Argote (2011) sees that organizational learning reflects a process of creating, sharing and disseminating knowledge among organizational members. The process may entail a continuous change in staff's cognitive and behavioral practices. Moreover, the knowledge shared may reshape an organization's routines, rules and bureaucratic procedures (Crossan et al., 1995). Consequently Crossan et al. (1999) indicate that organizational learning may come as a result to social interaction between individuals themselves and the groups they are affiliated to. Consequently Ortenblad (2001) and Chermack et al. (2006) indicate that the process of organizational learning has two levels: The first is individual which focuses on individual learning experiences and re-constitutes them in terms of organization's objectives, mission and priorities. The second is organizational which is perceived as a sum of learning plans organized by organizations in addition to learning experiences that individual employees have. Senge (1990) highlights that developing personal skills, staff's collective vision, and organization's culture of sharing knowledge are often believed to be a result of organizational learning and a driver for building a learning organization.

Wotkins and Marsick (1996) identify seven dimensions an organization has to secure in order to become a learning one. These seven dimensions are: securing continuous learning opportunities, promoting dialogue, ensuring collaboration and team building, creating systems to store and transform learning, developing a collective vision, maintaining relationships with stakeholders and providing strategic leadership for learning. Agulanna (2006) indicates that the context of organizational learning differs also from one organization to another because of the differences in managerial structures and institutional norms in organizations. Accordingly, the process of organizational learning is very formal in Western organizations while is still underdeveloped in the African organizational contexts which still suffer from outdated socio-cultural aspirations besides centralized and undemocratic organizational facets (Walsh, 2015; Belle, 2016).

Apparently, Antal (2000) and Lowe (2004) have recognized two types of knowledge. The first is tacit knowledge which involves personal implicit know-how, know-what, know-why and know-when knowledge which is difficult to be communicated, whereas the second is explicit knowledge which involves this kind of know-how, know-what, know-why, know-when knowledge that is easy to be communicated and shared via books, meetings, conferences and even daily interactions. Lowe (2004) highlights that the majority of big businesses and NGOs have specific units for managing knowledge. These units are responsible for creating, storing, and sharing meaningful knowledge at different levels of the organization.

With the increasing demands for ethics and integrity, the need for a more adaptive and value-based style of leadership has been prompted (Chaudhary & Panda, 2018). As a response, authentic leadership has received considerable attention by both general management and organizational behavior scholars such as Peus et al. (2012) who studied its relationship with organizational commitment, Azanza et al. (2015) who

investigated its relationship with work engagement, Valsania et al. (2012) who explored its association with organizational citizenship behavior, Wong and Laschinger (2013) who elaborated on its impact on organizational performance, and finally Oh and Oh (2017) who demonstrated its effect on employee turnover intentions. However, Gardner et al. (2011) and Rego et al. (2014) noted that authentic leadership has been widely dealt with only in Western developed economies. Avolio et al. (2004) assert that authentic leaders can constantly develop and disseminate hope, resilience, confidence, optimism and ethics. According to Walumbwa et al. (2008), the main difference between authentic and transformational leadership is the fact that authentic leaders focus on developing followers' psychological and practical capabilities, whereas transformational leaders often intend to develop their followers into leaders. This may justify why Gardner et al. (2011) and Gatling et al. (2016) indicated that authentic leaders are not considered inspirational and charismatic. Walumbwa et al. (2008, P.94) define authentic leadership as "a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering self-development".

Previous studies which explored the relationship between authentic leadership and organizational learning were conducted in sector other than the higher education sector (Okmen et al., 2018; Farnes et al., 2019). The authors of this paper believe that as authentic leadership focuses on developing followers' psychological and practical capabilities, it may, by default, enhance organizational learning by reflecting a process of creating, sharing and disseminating knowledge among organizational members, which may entail a continuous change in staff's cognitive and behavioral practices. Both processes are aiming at achieving the same thing. Accordingly, the authors believe that

H1: There is a statistical association between organizational learning and authentic leadership in the HE sector.

1.3 Authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change

Authentic leadership style involves four dimensions: self-awareness, relational transparency, balanced processing and internalized moral perspective (Neider & Schriesheim, 2011). According to Azanza et al. (2015) and Oh and Oh (2017) self-awareness reflects leaders' identification of their own strengths and weaknesses in addition to their effect on their followers' thoughts and behaviors; relational transparency refers to leaders' expressing and openly sharing thoughts, motives and information with others; balanced processing reflects leaders' readiness and capabilities to consider all information, alternatives and scenarios before making decisions; and finally the internalized moral perspective reflects leaders' orientation to be limited and guided by sound ethical values in face of all expected pressure and/or situations.

Another observation spanning the past three decades is that it has become rare to find any academic and/or professional paper in the social sciences that does not contain the word "change". Kieselbach et al. (2009) indicate that organizational change has become a norm in today's organizational context. This may justify why many authors have paid attention to it. At the individual level, Axtell et al. (2002) have addressed the relationship between organizational change and work stress, Holt et al. (2007) have examined the association between organizational change and job satisfaction, whereas Probst (2003) has focused on the relationship between organizational change and psychological well-being. At the organizational level, authors such as Martin et al. (2005), Oreg (2006) and Holten and Brenner (2015) have investigated the relationship between organizational change on the one hand and employees' turnover intention, level of absenteeism and perceptions of leadership styles on the other.

House et al. (2004), Svetlik et al. (2007) and Mousa and Puhakka (2019) highlight that organizational change has often come to reflect an organization's desire to tackle its surrounding socio-cultural and socio-economic demands and/or expectations. Thus, Alas and Vadi (2006) assert that theorists cannot discuss organizational change in isolation from organization's surrounding social context. Campbell (2004); Campbell (2007) and Alas and Sun (2007) affirm that the process of organizational change is widely influenced by national culture, in-organization's norms, leaders' mindset and stakeholders' pressure. This also comes in line with Burke and Litwin (1992) who have recognized two types of organizational change: the first is transformational and comes as a response to an organization's external environment and consequently upgrades an organization's mission, culture and strategy, whereas the second is transactional and often comes as a response to insider organizational motives. Moreover, this second type of organizational change cares about employees' psychological and motivational feelings and constantly updates employees' job responsibilities.

Basically, Waddell and Sohal (1998, p.544) defined resistance to change as "a complex multi-faceted phenomenon that is caused by a variety of factors". This resistance is often the result of employees attempt to protect themselves from any negative consequences they may face as a result to this change (Fiedler, 2010). Piderit (2000) highlights that resistance is what one may feel towards change. Mabin et al. (2001) and Erwin and Garman (2010) assert that there is no commonly accepted definition for resistance to change. Moreover, Piderit (2000) elaborates that the majority of definitions for resistance to change focus only on the opposition and/or employee's unfavorable reactions towards change. However, Lines (2004) points out that sometimes an employee's resistance may help an organization to refine the planned strategy of change. Oreg (2006) has also added that resistance maybe considered beneficial when it stops change that may not be in the interest of the organization.

George and Jones (2012) have identified three levels of resistance to change. The first is organization-level resistance which results from the expected changes of power, functional structure and organizational culture. The second is group-level resistance which results from change in group norms, routines and groupthink, and the third is individual-level resistance and often comes as a result of an individual's fears of uncertainty, injustice, locus of control, and losing job. Given what has preceded, it is shown that previous studies which explored the relationship between authentic leadership and individual resistance to change were conducted in sector other than the higher education sector, so the authors proposes that this relationship is important to be investigated in the context of HE. Therefore, the authors believe that authentic leaders are more capable, in comparison to other styles of leaders, to control and eliminate the risk of resistance change from employees. Accordingly, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H2: there is a statistical association between authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change in the HE sector.

1.4 Organizational learning, authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change

Ansoff (1988) define resistance to change as employee's desire to maintain the status quo. Block (1989) reflects that resistance to change entails delays, costs and instability at the workplace. Bemmels and Reshaf (1991) perceive it as employee's attempt to stop any available scenario to adapt to sudden/new internal and external realities. According to Cooper and Croyle (1984), a person's attitude towards change stimulates him to act in one way instead of another. For Kumar and Kamalanabhan (2005), employees resist change because they are not a part of the planning for the change process. The same has been confirmed by Kotter (1995) who considers poor communication as a driver for employee's resistance to change. Kotter and Schlesinger (1989) affirms that educating, involving and training employees are triggers for employees' acceptance of change.

From their side, Farjoun (2010), Oreg and Berson (2011), Appelbaum et al. (2015) and Amarantou et al. (2018) point out that not only has organizational change been prioritized by different organizations, but also by resistance to change. Furthermore, Ford and Ford (2010) and Wittig (2012) consider resistance to change as part of the organizational change institutions have to deal with before undertaking any perspective change process. Moreover, Prochaska et al. (2001) elaborate that resistance to change is often perceived as a reason for the difficulties and/or failure to implement organizational change. Kelman (2005) explains that lower-level workers tend to automatically resist any attempt to change. Firm employees often resist change because of their fears of issues like uncertainty, losing power, internal conflicts and work stress (e.g. Nadler, 1997; Clausen et al., 2000 and Sun, 2009).

Dawson (2003) considers that the level of employees' resistance to change differs from one organization to another and is mostly based on the levels of empowerment and involvement employees experience. Holton and Russell (1999) indicate that only those who have a high level of organizational commitment and job satisfaction can develop and sustain commitment to organizational change. Schein (1986) highlights that employees show more resistance to social change than to technical one although they are connected to each other. Accordingly, Zhou et al. (2006) demonstrates that any failure to manage the psychological resistance to change may negatively impact the whole process of change.

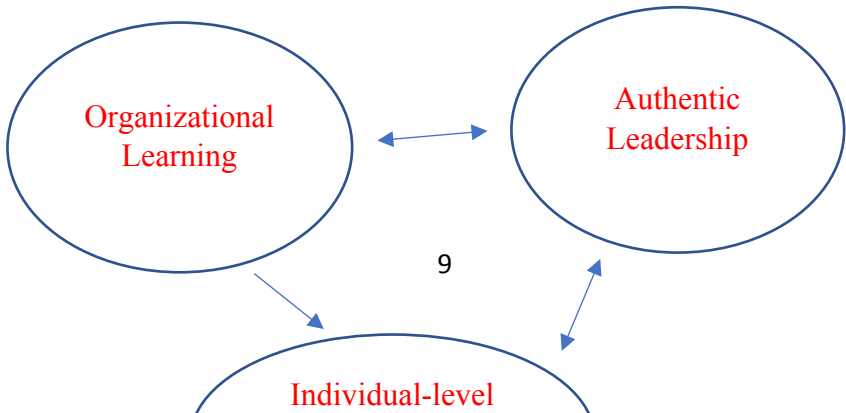
According to Adam's 1965 theory of equity, an individual constantly tends to balance their work behavior (resistance to organizational change in this case) with the benefits (respect, recognition, learning and support) he or she perceives. Moreover, and based on social exchange theory, which is often considered a main theory in explaining employee's/individual's behavior, "those voluntary actions of actors that are motivated by the returns they are expected to elicit from the other" (Blau, 1964, P. 91). This indicates that when an employee is provided with opportunities for learning besides financial and non-financial remuneration, she or he will never resist any opportunity for organizational change as long as there is a need and/or justification for this change.

Since, to the best of the author's knowledge, no studies have been conducted to elaborate the effect of organizational learning on individual-level resistance to change through the mediation of authentic leadership in the HE sector, the third hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: Organizational learning negatively impact resistance to change in the HE sector through the mediation of authentic leadership

By testing the above three hypotheses, the study has two purposes. The first purpose is to determine whether there is an association between organizational learning and authentic leadership or not, and also to determine if there is an association between authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change. The second purpose of this research is to understand how much variation in individual-level resistance to change can be explained by organizational learning and authentic leadership. Figure 1 explains the research causality relationship that will be tested.

Figure 1: Research causality relationship of the study



2. Methodology

The conceptual framework of the present quantitative study was drawn from previous literature conducted separately on organizational learning, authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change. As indicted above, to the best of the authors' knowledge, the relationship between organizational learning, authentic leadership and resistance to change has not been addressed before in the HE education sector, particularly within the context of academia and/or private universities.

The study was conducted on academics in three private foreign universities located in Cairo province (Egypt). The main reason for choosing these universities was one author's relationships with a number of academics who work there in addition to the approval of those universities to collaborate with the authors of the present paper. Generally, Egypt includes six private foreign universities, but the authors of this paper received acceptance for collaboration from only 3 of them. The first selected business school has 360 academics, the second has 260, and the third has 340 academics. Accordingly, the total sample size (study community) the authors of the present paper could address is 960 academics. Worthy to highlight is that the six private foreign universities are located in Cairo, the capital of Egypt. Moreover, only one of them was established three decades ago, the second was established two decades ago, whereas the rest are less than two decades old. Apparently, only three out of the newest four accepted to collaborate with the author of this paper. All addressed academics are Egyptians, and many of them have completed their education (Master's and/or PhDs) in Western countries.

The authors targeted all academics in the chosen universities and decided to employ a hierarchical multiple regression analysis. They distributed 960 questionnaire forms and successfully collected 576 completed questionnaires, which is almost more than 60% 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. Before distributing the questionnaire, the authors decided to rely on comprehensive count sampling in which a questionnaire was handed to every academic of the chosen universities. The choice of comprehensive count sampling ensures that every academic is contacted and represented in the collected sample, and this reduces any possibility of a bias.

Concerning the measures, as no measurement tools which have been specially developed for the higher education sector were found by the authors, the authors used measurement tools for two variables – organizational learning and authentic leadership – using tools applied in the business sector. Accordingly, the authors had to develop a model for individual-level resistance to change, for which there is no previously adopted model in the Egyptian context. The following describes the measures used to for the questionnaires.

For the organizational learning variable, the authors of this paper used Watkins and Marsick (1996's) model of organizational learning as it is described to be general and broad since most learning approaches didn't concern to all elements of individual's learning process, team based learning, the influence of the organization and their relationship with the environment simultaneously. This model was designed to

explore employees' evaluation of the learning provided by their organizations. The model includes 43 questions and seeks to explore organizational learning at the individual, team and organizational levels. The authors of this paper used only the 14 questions that investigate learning at the individual level. Moreover, the authors had to change some of the items included within the model in order to fit the Egyptian context. Worthy to highlight is that this model has been internationally tested, and consequently has a global popularity and/or recognition. Researchers such as Camps et al (2011) revalidate a measurement scale for organizational learning capability in the context of university faculty members. While their validation of organizational learning capability measurement instrument has considered cultural differences and sectorial differences, the authors in this study choose to use a more commonly applied measurement tool as indicated above.

For the Authentic leadership, the authors used the 16- item authentic leadership inventory developed by Neider and Schriesheim (2011) after updating them to fit the Egyptian academic organizational setting. This model includes items such as: my leader openly shares information with others and my leader resists pressures on him to do things contrary to his beliefs.

For the individual- level resistance to change variable, based on the studies of Oreg (2006), Bruckman (2008) and Fuchs and Edwards (2011) on the contextual factors (e.g. job insecurity, perception of justice, work stress and etc.) related to resistance to change, the author proposed the following items to test individual- level resistance to change.

- 1) My personality is often against change in both my personal and organizational lives.
- 2) I do not see a motive/need for change that my university plans to or may perform.
- 3) I often have different kinds of fears when hearing about change at my university.
- 4) My university never justifies why it performs and/or intends to perform change.
- 5) I am not a part of the processes of planning and/or execution of change at my university.
- 6) I doubt the fairness of the procedures taken to select those who perform change at my university.
- 7) I doubt the capabilities of those who plan for and perform change at my university.
- 8) I often feel afraid of the outcomes of the process of change at university may perform.

For all variables, a five-point Likert scale was formulated, where 5 means strongly agree, 4 is agree, 3 is neutral, 2 is disagree, and 1 means strongly disagree. The following presents the reliability analysis for resistance to change, authentic leadership and organizational learning using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's Alpha is used to assess the internal consistency of each of the variables used in the study. As depicted in Table I, there is a significant correlation among the three variables (ranging from 0.131 to 0.341). The following table shows the reliability analysis for the four variables using Cronbach's alpha.

Table I: Cronbach's α , descriptive analysis and correlations

Variable	M	SD	A	1	2	3
Authentic leadership	3.12	0.64	0.72	1.00		
Resistance to change	3.03	0.79	0.70	0.131	1.00	
Organizational learning				0.341	1.301	1.00

Note: α , Cronbach's α co efficient estimates, $P < 0.05$

Table (II) shows the demographic variables of the respondents

Demographic Variables	Items	Count
a) Gender	Male	400
	Female	176

b) Age	below 25 years	26
	26-30 years	100
	31-35 years	100
	36-40 years	100
	41-45 years	100
	46-50 years	100
	More than 50 years	50
c) Marital States	Single	100
	Married	416
	Other	60
d) Level of Education	Bachelor	60
	Bachelor + Master	316
	PhD	200
e) Religion	Muslim	546
	Christian	30
f) Work Bases	Full time	576
	Part time	0

3. Findings

3.1 Statistical association relationships

The first purpose of this research is to determine whether there is an association between organizational learning and authentic leadership or not, and also to determine if there is an association between authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change. The chi-square test was employed to determine this association.

Table III. Chi-square test for association between organizational learning and authentic leadership and authentic leadership and resistance to change.

			Organizational learning			Resistance to change		
			D	N	A	D	N	A
Authentic leadership	Disagree	Count	4	2	8	2	1	5
		Expected Count	6.6	2.2	7	4.9	20.9	4.8
	Neutral	Count	21	62	5	2	62	3
		Expected Count	19.5	39.4	25.1	10.1	42.2	9.7
	Agree	Count	5	3	18	9	26	8
		Expected Count	4.4	9.7	5.9	6.2	26.9	5.9

Pearson Chi-Square	Value	71.116	60.111
	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	0	0
Cramer's V	Value	0.608	0.448
	Approx. Sig.	0	0

Note: D=Disagree, N= Neutral , A= Agree

The table reflects a statistically significant association between organizational learning and authentic leadership; $\chi^2(1) = 71.116, p = .000$. $\phi = 0.608, p = .000$ means a strong association between the two variables. It also reflects a statistically significant association between authentic leadership and individual-level resistance to change; $\chi^2(1) = 60.111, p = .000$. $\phi = 0.448, p = .000$ means a strong association between the two variables. Accordingly, the first and second hypotheses are fully confirmed.

3.2 *The variation (regressions) in relationships*

The second purpose of this research is to understand how much variation in individual-level resistance to change can be explained by organizational learning and authentic leadership. For the second purpose, multiple regressions were used.

It is worth evaluating the regression models in the hierarchical multiple regressions. Here the author used 2 models. In the first model, the independent variable is organizational learning, and the individual-level forms of resistance to change are used as dependent variables one by one. In the second model, the independent variables are organizational learning and authentic leadership. As can be seen, the second model is not a completely separate model but is a variation on Model 1 with one variable added. Each model is a standard multiple regression procedure with the variables in that model entered simultaneously. Therefore, each model has measures that show how well that particular model fits the data, and these are presented in Tables IV and V below.

Table IV. Variation between predictors and the dependent variable (resistance to change)

Independent variables	Resistance to change				
Predictors	B	SE	β	t-value	P<
<u>Sociodemographic characteristics</u>					
Age	-.054	.020	-.211	-.618	.016
Gender	.018	.013	.011	.121	.716
Religion	.026	.019	.069	.629	.421
Education	-.032	.014	-.78	-.838	.418
Income	-.009	.012	-.067	-.614	.430
ΔR^2 by sociodemographic characteristics = .171, $p < .05$					
<u>First model:</u>					
Organizational learning	.406	.053	.345	-3.217	.05
ΔR^2 by first scenario = .316, $p < .05$					
<u>Second model:</u>					
Organizational learning	.314	.002	.234	9.211	.05

Authentic leadership .239 .003 .145 8.334 .05

ΔR^2 by second scenario= .416, $p < .05$

The measure of most importance when interpreting hierarchical multiple regressions is R^2 , which represents the variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. We can see from these results that each model explains a greater amount of the variation in the dependent variable as more variables are added. Essentially, the models here get better at predicting the dependent variable.

In Model 1, in which organizational learning alone is the independent variable, R^2 is 0.501, with statistical significance of $p < 0.005$, and $F = 94.590$. Due to the inclusion of authentic leadership as an additional independent variable, R^2 decreased by .100 (the variance explained decreased by 1%), and this decrease was statistically significant ($p < .0005$) and F decreased to 92.090. In other words, authentic leadership adds statistical significance to the prediction of individual-level resistance to change. In summary, the addition of authentic leadership to the prediction of individual-level resistance to change (Model 2) led to a statistically significant decrease in R^2 of .100 and $F(1, 131) = 92.090, p < .0005$.

Table V. Summary of the Regression Analyses of the Models

	Resistance to change	
Model	1	2
R	- 0.415	- 0.309
R Square	0.301	0.201
Adjusted R Square	0.512	0.41
Std. Error of the Estimate	0.347	0.317
R Square Change	0.301	0.1
F	94.590	93.590
F Change	94.590	92.090
df1	1	1
df2	133	131
Sig. F Change	0.000	0.000

Hierarchical multiple regressions were run to determine if the addition of authentic leadership improved the prediction of resistance to change over and above organizational learning. The full model of organizational learning and authentic leadership for predicting resistance to change (Model 2) was statistically significant – $R^2 = 0.216$, $F(1, 131) = 92.090$, $p < .0005$, and adjusted $R^2 = 0.100$. When organizational learning is used alone (Model 1) to predict resistance to change, $R^2 = 0.316$, $F(1, 133) = 94.590$, $p < .0005$; therefore, hypothesis 3 is also confirmed.

Table VI. Hierarchical Multiple Regression predicting resistance to change from organizational learning and authentic leadership

			B	β	R^2	F	ΔR^2	ΔF
Resistance to	Model 1	(Constant)	0.537		0.316	94.590	0.316	94.590

change	Model 2	Organizational learning	0.406	0.345				
		(Constant)	0.506		0.216	93.590	0.100	92.090
		Organizational learning	0.314	0.234				
		Authentic leadership	0.239	0.145				

Note: N=576; $p<0.05$

4. Discussion and implications

The aim of this paper was to explore the relationship between organizational learning and individual-level resistance to change with and without the mediating role of authentic leadership. Based on the statistical analysis conducted, the author of this paper has uncovered a negative statistical impact for organizational learning on academic’s resistance to change. The author considers this as an expected result and comes in line with the results of (Alas and Vadi, 2006; Amarantou et al., 2018). According to Kumar and Kamalanabhan (2005) and (Appelbaum et al., 2018), employees resist change if they are not involved as a part of the planning process for this change. In studying the relationship between organizational learning capability in the Spanish ceramic tile industry, Chiva and Alegre (2009) found that organizational learning capability and job satisfaction are strongly linked. Meanwhile, Elias (2009) and Argote (2013) elaborate that the main function of organizational learning is to develop and disseminate knowledge at different levels of the organization. Moreover, Wong (2001) demonstrates that organizational learning starts by sharing an individual experiences and then developing collective capabilities towards a new challenge/mission/change. This means that organizational learning secures a platform for employees’ involvement and integration. This would upgrade an employee (academic in this case) from being a traditional performer into an active partner in the organizational change process. Consequently, she or he will not find a reason to stop and/or resist organizational change since she or he is included as a part of it. In the case of the academics here, the authors believe that learning is their traditional norm. However, having the sense of involvement and empowerment can only be assured through organizational learning and not by the type of learning which everyone of them seeks individually and in line with his or her research ideology. Furthermore, involving academics who are considered golden workers in the process of change will not only alleviate their resistance to change but also sustain universities a set of different, rational and responsible views, the matter that accelerates the success of any organizational change.

What may support the logic/validity/relevance of the first statistical result is the fact elaborated on by Dawson (2003) who affirms that employees who have high levels of empowerment and involvement do not resist change. At the same time Cludts (1999), Barakat and Moussa (2014) and Molodchick and Jardon (2015) consider employee participation as a main feature of organizational learning. The same has been confirmed by Watkins and Marsick (1996) who highlight that organizational learning promotes dialogue at all organizational levels, and that develops an inclusive work climate in which every employee feels empowered to express, suggest and collaborate with colleagues in realizing success. This simultaneously decreases employees’ level of resistance to change.

Upon using authentic leadership as a mediator, the author has explored a very negative strong statistical relationship between organizational learning and academics’ resistance to change. This seems also another logical result. According to Walumbwa et al. (2008), authentic leaders constantly seek to develop followers’ psychological and practical capabilities. Moreover, Azanza et al. (2015) and Oh and Oh (2017) assert that the existence of authentic leaders guarantees an open sharing of thoughts, motives and information between leaders and followers. Furthermore, Neider and Schriesheim (2011) affirm that authentic leaders often consider the balanced processing of in-and-out organization’s alternatives and scenarios before making decisions. This, to a large extent, assists organizations in tackling surrounding socio-political, cultural and economic demands which sometimes drive employee resistance to change as

indicated by authors like Alas and Vadi (2006). Thus, the authors believe that the ongoing orientation of authentic leaders to maintain positive psychological and ethical climate in their organization may stop and/or alter employees' (academics' in this case) fears of injustice, uncertainty, and locus of control which are perceived to be main motives for an individual's resistance to change (Oreg, 2006; George and Jones, 2012). This provides a justification for why authentic leadership has a negative strong effect on academic's resistance to change.

The authors consider the aforementioned statistical results as an obvious example for Adam's 1965 theory of equity according to which an employee (academic in this case) seeks to balance his organizational attained benefits (organizational learning in this case) with his subsequent work behavior (the level of resistance to change in this case). Furthermore, the results represent an adoption for the social exchange theory according to which an employee constitutes a psychological tie with his employer when perceiving that his employer cares about him. In the present case, universities secure an ongoing organizational learning for its academics, and subsequently academics act as real partners and show a very low level of resistance to change. One may consider that responding to the ongoing need of academics for organizational learning besides involving them in planning to, executing and monitoring organizational change as an instance of stakeholder theory which constantly urges leaders to sustain long-term relationships with different stakeholders (academics in this case) by securing their personal and professional development (Mousa et al., 2019).

4.1 Implications

As implications for the administrations of the addressed universities, the authors recommend establishing a unit for knowledge management inside every university. This is similarly suggested by other authors such as (Hoq and Akter, 2012; Fullwood et al., 2013; Fiscal 2019). The function of this unit will include, but will not be limited to, expecting up-coming socio-political, cultural and economic changes in the surrounding environments and preparing the possible scenarios for dealing with them. This in turn should involve training sessions and/or learning opportunities for academics working in these universities. Moreover, the suggested units should organize monthly meetings between academics and some actors from different Egyptian sectors such as NGOs personnel, CEOs of private companies, executives of public enterprises, environmentalists and politicians to address what changes those actors expect universities to undertake/perform/plan to guide academics to fulfil. Moreover, the selected universities should ask every academic department to complete a weekly and/or monthly rapport in which academics fill in what in-out of university changes they suggest and how their university should respond to and/or plan for these changes. This ensures a high level of academics' involvement and secures an ongoing exchange of ideas that universities can implement/supervise /monitor. This matter develops a trusting inclusive work climate in which every academic feels appreciated and subsequently motivated to utilize his full capacities for the survival and/or growth of his university.

5. Conclusion and limitations

This study focused on academics at three private foreign universities in Cairo, Egypt. The study provides empirical evidence of a negative association between organizational learning and an academic's resistance to change. Moreover, it secures additional insights into the negative effect of organizational learning and authentic leadership on an academic's resistance to change. Apparently, this research has clear limitations. First, Although the paper addresses causality and provides relevant explanations on why and how Organizational Learning, Authentic Leadership and Individual-level resistance to change are related and accordingly suggests their mutual causality relationship, it only statistically tests their association. Second, focusing only on private foreign universities in Egypt may diminish the authors' ability to generalize results. Third, depending on academics as the only source of research data without considering rectors, head of academic departments, and administrators of the addressed universities may lead to an inflation of the statistical results. Finally, relying mostly on studies conducted in different western organizational settings,

due to the novelty and the rareness of the empirical studies on organizational learning and resistance to change in Egypt, may also constitute a fourth limitation.

Future research can test the same hypotheses in other Egyptian public and private universities in order to constitute an in-depth knowledge regarding the relationship between organizational learning, authentic leadership and resistance to change. The authors also recommend future researchers to address rectors, heads of academic departments and administrators of the addressed universities in order to form a more holistic picture of the impact of organizational learning on individual level resistance to change. Furthermore, they suggest future researchers to undertake the mutual causality with more sophisticated methods. The authors considers the idea of this research as an invitation for scholars from the majors of HR management, organization studies, strategic management, public administration and public policy to collaborate together and produce trans-disciplinary and/or interdisciplinary studies on the same research idea but in other organizational contexts.

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