التخفيف من حدة ظاهرة التهكم التنظيمى بالجامعات الحكومية المصرية بزيادة الدعم التنظيمى المدرك للعاملين

إعداد :

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الملخص

هدف البحث للتخفيف من ممارسة ظاهرة التهكم التنظيمى بالجامعات الحكومية بمصر، من خلال زيادة الدعم التنظيمي المدرك من العاملين فيها، وذلك من وجهة نظر أعضاء هيئة التدريس ومعاونيهم والإداريين (العاملين بالجامعات). ولتحقيق هدف البحث تم استخدام المنهج المختلط، وجمعت البيانات من ٥٢٢ من العاملين بإحدى الجامعات الحكومية كدراسة حالة؛ حيث تم اتباع تصميم الحالة المتسلسل المختلط بشكل كامل، والذى تضمن المزج بين الأساليب النوعية والكمية بشكل متتابع مع إعطاء الوزن الأكبر للبيانات النوعية عن الكمية، وتطبيق ذات الأدوات على نفس العينة. وتم ذلك عبر مرحلتين رئيسيتين؛ تضمنت المرحلة الأولى استخدام الاستبيان كأداة كمية، لجمع بيانات من عينة بلغت ٤٠١، منهم ١٨٧ من أعضاء هيئة تدريس ومعاونيهم ومنهم ٢١٤ إدارى، بتطبيق استبيان لقياس ممارسات التهكم التنظيمى (١٣ ممارسة) واستبيان آخر لقياس مستوى الدعم التنظيمى المدرك (١٩ ممارسة). أما في المرحلة الثانية، فتم جمع البيانات الكيفية باستخدام المقابلات (فردية، وجماعية) مع ١٢١، منهم ٢٨ من أعضاء هيئة التدريس ومعاونيهم، و٩٣ من الإداريين. ومن أبرز النتائج الكشف عن ارتفاع ممارسة التهكم التنظيمى (بأبعاده الثلاثة)، وانخفاض مستوى إدراك العاملين للدعم

التنظيمى المقدم من الجامعة، كما توصل البحث لطبيعة العلاقة بين التهكم التنظيمى والدعم التنظيمي المدرك، وتحديد أربع أسباب وراء وجود مستوى مرتفع من التهكم التنظيمى، وثلاث أسباب وراء ضعف إدراك العاملين للدعم التنظيمى الذى تقدمه الجامعة، وحددت العينة ستة مقترحات لزيادة الدعم التنظيمى المدرك بغرض تقليل التهكم التنظيمى. وانتهى البحث بعرض آليات مقترحة يمكن من خلالها أن تقوم الجامعات المصرية بالتخفيف من ظاهرة التهكم التنظيمى بزيادة الدعم التنظيمى المدرك للعاملين فيها. وقد يساهم البحث في الإضافة للأدبيات ذات العلاقة بإدارة مؤسسات التعليم العالى–وتحديداً الجامعات؛ من خلال نتائج اعتمدت على بحث ميدانى لإحدى الجامعات الحكومية بمصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التهكم التنظيمى، الدعم التنظيمي المدرك، الجامعات، المنهج المختلط.

Mitigating Organizational Cynicism in Egyptian Public Universities by Increasing Staff's Perceived Organizational Support

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Abstract

The purpose of the study is to examine the extent of Organizational Cynicism (OC) and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) in the university context and to suggest ways to mitigate OC by increasing staff's POS. Mixed-method were used to collect data from 522 staff members across two phases. The first phase involved the use of the questionnaire as a quantitative method with the sample size=401, composed of 187 academics and 214 administrators. In the second phase, qualitative data was collected using interviews (individuals and focus groups) with 121 interviewees, 28 being academics and 93 being administrators. The data was collected from a public Egyptian university (University-X). According to analysis findings, the extent of OC and POS were revealed, the relationships between POS and OC were tested, the reasons for having high OC and weak POS were explored, and staff in University-X suggested means of mitigating OC by increasing the POS. This study introduces several contributions to literature focusing on higher education institutions and specifically on organizational management. It offers empirical evidence to further understand the perspective of university staff regarding their workplace; thus, contributing to the limited body of research on OC and POS in universities using data coming from a non-Western context, Egypt.

Keywords: Organizational Cynicism, Perceived Organizational Support, University, Mixed-method.

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Introduction

Organizational Cynicism (OC) is the negative attitude displayed by employees towards their organization, leading to a multitude of unfavourable effects. OC may be seen as a result of weakly Perceived Organizational Support (POS) from employees' perspectives. Despite its long history dating back to Ancient Greece (Mignonac et al., 2018), cynicism remains a growing workplace phenomenon, arguably one of the hallmarks of contemporary society and thus recognized as a problem that calls for empirical attention, specifically, on educational institutions setting (Bingol, 2020; Girgin & Gümüşeli, 2018; Shrestha et al., 2012).

POS refers to employees' belief of how their organization recognises their contributions, efforts and welfare. Literature shows that if an employee believes their organization properly supports them, they have high POS, which leads to positive performance (Chang et al., 2020) and high commitment (Nayir, 2012). Despite the significant research on POS in Western countries, research regarding it has been comparatively lacklustre in the Global South, particularly in Arab countries, as seen in a study which meta-

analysed Western and Eastern (including Egypt) cultures regarding relationships of POS with attitudinal and behavioural outcomes (Rockstuhl et al., 2020). It urged the need for more empirical studies on POS in Eastern countries. Thus, this study offers an examination of POS and its effect on mitigating OC in an Egyptian institution, hoping to aid filling the gap in literature.

Although, a myriad of literature has been conducted on OC and POS, researchers usually address them individually rather than mutually dependent concepts, with only a handful of previous studies combining the two variables (Alsubaie & Nasaani, 2021; Mignonac et al., 2018; Özer & Alici, 2019). If investigation on combining OC and POC in the educational institutions is understudied, then it is even more rare in university context (Barquero Cabrero et al., 2021). As such, there is a need to study both academics and administrators' perspectives in such a setting. Consequently, this study can be seen as a response to the call for more investigation of OC and POS as a paired unit in university context.

To show the need for the current study, it is important to highlight OC and POS related literature conducted in the Egyptian context. Many studies are conducted in the Egyptian setting but not exclusively on universities, such as (Abouraia, 2019; Abu-Eldahab, 2022; Ahmed, 2021; Albashouty, 2020; Ashry, 2021; Atteya, 2022; Ismaiel, 2021; Kaddah, 2021).

There were however a few studies done on OC and POS separately. Firstly, four previous studies were found to be concerned with the OC phenomenon within particular Egyptian universities. For example, (Marzouk, 2020) focused on OC of academic staff working in Cairo University, and uncovered reasons behind OC there as well. One such reason was staff's low salaries paired with a lack of support or financial incentives, in concurrence with increased workloads. The second study (Alsetoohy, 2020) focused on OC seen with teaching assistants working within faculties and institutes of tourism and hotels in Egypt. It aimed to understand the nature of OC and the causes of it. That study's findings highlighted four reasons that contribute to cynical behaviour among teaching assistants: lack of future aspirations; lack of organizational justice, faulty institutional performance, and inadequate teaching and research capabilities. It recommended adopting transparency and values of fairness and integrity. A third study concerned with OC and its relationship with toxic leadership was conducted in Mansoura University (Hasaneen, 2018). Data was gathered from both educational and hospital staff. It found that the relationship between the two variables was positive, therefore, it recommended working on decreasing the toxic behaviour of leaders in order to mitigate the level of OC. Another study concerned with the OC of employees working at Asyut University and its relationship with Counterproductive Work Behaviors (CWB) (Rayan, 2018), revealed a positive correlation between OC and

CWB. Findings related to OC dimensions correlated strongly with the behavioral dimension, followed by the affective dimension. However, the cognitive dimension had no relationship with CWB. All previous studies called for more studies on OC, as it is seen as quickly spreading negative phenomenon highly noted in Egyptian universities.

Secondly, four studies concerned with POS in the Egyptian university were found. For example, a study (Hassan, 2021) collected its data from staff working at two universities, Mansoura University and Kafr-Elsheikh University. It was concerned with the effect of POS on continuous learning for university staff. It found that both financial and perceived POS have a significant direct positive effect on staff's continuous learning in both universities. Unlike the current study, that study focused only on academics. It concluded with a call for future studies concerning other universities and other populations rather than just academics. The second study (Mahgoub, 2020) was carried out with general staff employees at Mansoura University. It aimed to measure the impact of POS on workplace constructive and destructive non-conformity on employee response. It found that POS impacted employees' response and their constructive and destructive non-conforming behavior. Therefore, it recommended having a more positive workplace by increasing POS. Another study (Khatry, 2020) conducted on public universities in Greater Cairo focused on personality traits as variables of the relationship between POS and

impression management and its dimensions among employees. It revealed a negative relationship between POS and all the dimensions of impression management. It concluded that there is a decreased influence for POS on impression management, therefore it recommended carrying out more studies on POS. Additionally, a fourth study (Mahmoud, 2019) focused on explaining the relationship between POS and negative workplace behaviours within the Youth Welfare Departments in Sohag University. It revealed a significant negative relationship between POS and all dimensions of the negative workplace behaviours, such as assault, vandalism and theft. The study gave recommendations to enhance relationships between workers and educating officials and leaders of the importance of POS.

After highlighting previous studies concerned with the Egyptian university setting, it is apparent that there are several motivating factors for conducting the current study. For starters, all aforementioned previous Egyptian studies were conducted on different universities and not the case study of the current study (University X). Furthermore, some of the previous studies carried out their research solely on OC, while others carried it out solely on POS. The researcher did not find any studies, in the context of Egyptian universities, that merged both OC and POS together in one piece of research. Moreover, the previous studies conducted their research on just one of the following: academic staff, teaching assistants, or administrative staff. None carried out research on all

three together, which is what the current study aimed to do. Finally, it can be said that the current study comes as a response to all the studies performed on OC and POS separately in an Egyptian university context that called for further investigation. Another reason for conducting this study is due to the consequences of changing conditions, namely the impact of COVID-19 on educational institutions, particularly universities. As the researcher works in a public university, she first-hand witnessed the administrative confusion and resulting difficulty in providing support to university staff, and OC increased significantly. The researcher believes that POS plays a vital role in decreasing OC. It is then obvious that the study has significant contributions for theoretical and practical perspectives and is one of the few studies that is concerned with organizational cynicism in Egyptian universities.

The goal of this study is to suggest practical procedures that Egyptian universities can apply in order to mitigate OC among administrators, academics and their assistants by increasing staff's POS. Subsequentially, this study aiming to contribute to literature of organisational behaviour within the context of higher education. To achieve this, six research questions should be answered, as follows:

1. What is the conceptual framework of OC and POS?
2. What is the level of POS and OC among staff?

3. What is the nature of the relationship between POS and OC among staff?

4. What are the reasons behind OC?

5. What are the reasons behind low or high POS?

6. What are staff's suggestions to mitigate OC by increasing POS?

It is worth mentioning that, in this study, the word 'staff' refers to both academics and administrators belonging to the case study university (University-X), whereas the word 'academics' means assistant teaching staff, teaching staff and researchers and, the word 'administrators' indicates the people working as admins at University-X. The study is divided into five main sections. First, the theoretical framework, provided by the related literatures, on OC and then on POS. Then, a summary background of University-X is introduced. After that the research methodology is presented. Then the results and discussion are shown. Subsequently, procedures to mitigate OC by increasing POS in universities are proposed. Finally, the conclusion to present the overall research summary, limitations and directions for future research is highlighted.

Conceptual Framework

In order to answer the first research question concerned with presenting a conceptual framework of both OC and POS, this section introduces three subsections, which are: a conceptual understanding of OC, followed by a conceptual understanding of

POS and the third subsection is about literature combining OC with POS.

1- A Conceptual Understanding of OC

Historically, some sources date the origin of the term cynicism to the 4th century (Dean Jr et al., 1998) while others date to the late 17th century (Lexico, 2021). In dictionaries, cynicism is defined as 'the belief that people only do things to help themselves, rather than for good or sincere reasons' (Oxford-Dictionary, 2021) and 'not trusting or respecting the goodness of other people and their actions' (English-Dictionary, 2021). In the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s the bulk of research on OC was conducted. In early studies (Mirvis & Kanter, 1989; Niederhoffer, 1963, 1967), it was concluded that OC is a common hopeless feeling within a workplace among employees. In some studies, the meaning of cynicism was based on personality trait perspectives (Scott & Zweig, 2016), but others view it as an attitude that is likely to be found in all types of organizations (Dean Jr et al., 1998; Naseer et al., 2020). It is thought that cynicism happens when an organization does not show justice, honesty, and sincerity to its employees (Brandes, 1997).

Literature revealed the negative impacts of OC on both employees and organizations. Employee-wise, it was confirmed that OC is linked with low job satisfaction, low commitment (Abraham, 2000; Wanous et al., 1994), burnout (Dillon, 2018), low core self-evaluation (Scott & Zweig, 2016), exhaustion (McAlpine et al.,

2020), high absence rate (Leitão et al., 2021), intention to leave an organization (Durrah & Chaudhary, 2020) and it negatively affects the role of ethical leadership and reduces its role in raising positive behaviours and reducing negative behaviours (Nemr & liu, 2021). Organization-wise, the negative effects of OC on organizations were also observed. Results of a study focused on primary schools, (Acaray & Yildirim, 2017) indicated that OC negatively affects school culture. Findings in (Girgin & Gümüşeli, 2018) also confirmed that OC negatively affects perceived organizational justice in vocational high schools. Additionally, high-performance work systems were proven to be unsuccessful at regulating group turnover in a high cynicism environment (Brown et al., 2021). Cynicism has been identified as a hindrance to organizational quality improvement (Brandes, 1997), and linked to low organizational support (Kasalak & Bilgin Aksu, 2014) and organizational citizenship (Singh & Randhawa, 2021).

Previous studies highlighted three dimensions of OC originally cited from the quintessential of cynical research (Abraham, 2000; Brandes, 1997; Dean Jr et al., 1998). The first is the 'Cognitive' dimension that refers to a cognitive belief that an organisation lacks integrity. Cynics believe that an organization betrays them as honesty, fairness, and sincerity are sacrificed to expediency and so unscrupulous behaviours are the norm. Cynics also believe that their organisation's official statements cannot be taken seriously in those relationships in organisation and choices of managers are

based off self-interest. Secondly, '*Affective*' dimension refers to a negative emotional reaction towards an organisation. It is thought that cynics experience many negative emotions when thinking about their organisation, like anger, distress, contempt, shame and disrespect. Thirdly is the '*Behavioural*' dimension, which refers to the refusal attitude that leads cynics to only acknowledge a negative narrative regarding their organization and thus only speaking of the negatives to outsiders. This could be verbal, like explicitly mentioning their interpretations of the organisation's lack of honesty and sincerity, or nonverbal as exchanging knowing glances, smirking and sneering.

2- *A Conceptual Understanding of POS*

Most literature references the definition of POS as that shown in prior studies of Eisenberger and his colleagues (Eisenberger et al., 1986; Eisenberger et al., 2016; Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). They identified POS as staff's orientation toward their workplace and their overall perception of how their organization values their efforts. A supportive organization is characterized as a workplace that presents a helpful environment to its staff, acknowledges their contributions and accordingly meets their needs (Adıgüzel, 2021).

According to social science theoreticians, the Social Exchange Theory (SET) and Support Theory (OST) are related to POS. SET appoints a conceptual paradigm that has roots in sociology (Blau, 2017), and refers to the 'reciprocity' norm, which implies

repayment in kind such that a positive or a negative treatment experienced in the workplace is reciprocated by the staff. According to that rule, organizational support encourages staff to work hard to repay their organization (Chen et al., 2020). Whereas, OST is based off the theory of social exchange, which presumes that greater success on behalf of an organisation would be appreciated by its staff and compensation should be elicited by POS, contributing to a sense of responsibility to support the organisation (Kurtessis et al., 2017).

Literature shows that POS has positive outcomes on both individual staff and their organisations. Staff-wise, it has a positive impact on staff; as it increases their job satisfaction (Choi, 2019; Wen et al., 2019), work performance (Novitasari, 2020), commitment (Aledeinat & Alrfou, 2017), self-esteem (Nikhil & Arthi, 2018), well-being (Rahman et al., 2020), innovative behaviour (Nazir et al., 2019), loyalty, trust (Bosak, 2019), and employees' retention (Shah & Asad, 2018). Organization-wise, POS increases organizational engagement (Tkalac Verčič, 2021), organizational citizenship (Bergeron & Thompson, 2020), a sense of obligation and welfare (Shields, 2017). It is confirmed that (Nikhil & Arthi, 2018) a staff with high POS will help the organisation reach its goals. Therefore, it is important that the level of staff POS be constantly reviewed (Shields, 2017).

Prior studies suggested three factors that affect POS, these are: organisational fairness, supervisor support and job conditions and

rewards. Some saw them as categories (Aljanabi et al., 2014; Eisenberger et al., 2016) and others called them precursors (Rahman et al., 2020) or antecedents of POS (Jabagi et al., 2020). Regardless of the term, the first one '*Organizational Fairness*' refers to the approaches used by an organization to regulate how resources (like payments, job assignments and promotions) are distributed, and it is seen as the strongest drivers of POS (Jabagi et al., 2020). '*Job Conditions and Organizational Rewards*' is concerned with the likes of training opportunities, job security, flexible work-practices and autonomy. Finally, '*Supervisor Support*' is considered to be a great source of organizational support where supervisors act as agents of the organization. It is concerned with supervisors' assistance and how they value employees' contributions.

3- *Literature combining OC with POS*

Numerous studies in different disciplines, like business, healthcare, and education, have highlighted the relationship between POS and OC. In business, for instance, a study (Özer & Alici, 2019) conducted in ship maintenance and the repair business determined the relationship between POS and OC, confirming a significant negative relationship between them. In healthcare, a study (Alsubaie & Nasaani, 2021) focused on healthcare staff showed how POS influences burnout and cynicism. Combining OC with POS in an educational institution was found, though few studies regarding universities exist. One of the first examples is the

research of (Brandes, 1997) that studied cynicism within educational institutions. Additionally, (Acaray & Yildirim, 2017) studied the effect of teachers' personality traits on OC in schools. Also, (Kasalak & Bilgin Aksu, 2014) investigated the relationship between POS and OC of research assistants in a Turkish university (Akdeniz University), this is to find out if OC can be predicted according to the level of POS. That study conducted confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and applied an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to determine the dimensions of both POS and OC. Then the data collected from research assistants was analyzed by Multiple Linear Regression analyses and the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings proved that POS is a significant variable in predicting OC. A limitation of the aforementioned study had was that it only investigated research assistants, and in turn advised research on other staff as academics and administrators, which the current study aims to do. Subsequently, the current study differs from the Turkish study in many forms; as the current study aims to suggest ways in mitigation OC by increasing POS, it also used both OC and POS in a different university environment, Egypt, and used a vaster sample involving both academics and administrators; and thus was not exclusive to research assistants. However, the current study had benefits in using the findings of (Kasalak & Bilgin Aksu, 2014) study

4- *Background of the Case University-X*

University-X is a medium sized state Egyptian university located approximately two hours from Cairo. It was established in the mid-seventies, and is well-known for being a community service university. It has 17 faculties and 3 institutes, with a total number of 3503 academics, 7705 administrators, and approximately 35.000 undergraduate and 6.000 postgraduates students (UniversityX, 2021).

University-X recently developed a strategic plan covering the years from 2020 to 2025 (UniversityX, 2020). Unfortunately, many of the aims highlighted in that plan regarding supporting staff were not achieved due to COVID-19. University-X experienced much disorder during the COVID-19 crisis due to faulty decision-making, insufficient support for staff, poor planning, and a lack of instructions for staff. A factor that influenced poor decision-making was the assignment of four different university Presidents throughout a period of only two years. During all of this, staff cynicism was very prevalent due to increasing workloads with minimal support. For these reasons, University-X was selected in order to better understand the interaction of POS in reducing OC in the context of universities from the perspective of academics and administrators.

Methodology

1- Method

This study is a mixed-methods study, which combines rigorous qualitative and quantitative method and data were collected from the same sample. Some scholars (Seyfried & Reith, 2019) recommend using mixed-methods in higher education studies, due to the complexity of universities, as it allows the identification of regularities and relate the findings of both approaches with each other.

A Fully Mixed Sequential Dominant (FMSD) status design (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2009) was followed for a deeper exploration of how to mitigate OC through increasing staff POS. FMSD involves conducting a study that mixes qualitative and quantitative methods that occur sequentially across two phases, where the qualitative method is given more weight. First phase involved the use of a questionnaire, which is a quantitative tool, though it included one open-ended qualitative question asking for suggestions for mitigating OC. As the data collected from this specific question was insufficient, a second phase, qualitative in type, was initiated. The tools used were individual interviews and focus groups (FGs). The second phase and the open-ended question helped conclude that, this is indeed a dominant design, as the weight of the qualitative method and the amount of qualitative data both outweighed that of quantitative type.

2- Ethical Considerations

Permission was secured prior to data gathering. Ethical approval from the Research Ethics Committee in the Faculty of Education, from which the researcher belongs to was obtained. Additionally, permission (No. 378) was acquired from the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS, 2021) to collect the data. Afterwards, written and signed permissions from the participating academics and administrators in the focus groups and individual interviews were taken. Furthermore, the sample confidentiality was ensured, and all staff members were fully informed of the purpose of the study, the ethical guidelines that ensured their anonymity, and the right to withdraw at any given time. Finally, all the sample participation was voluntary without any monetary cost or financial incentive for those involved in the study.

3- Participants

The targeted population is staff working at University-X. There are 11208 staff composed of 3503 academics and 7705 administrators (UniversityX, 2021). A random sample was chosen, from staff from different faculties, such as Faculty of Education, Medicine, Dentistry, Business, Engineering, Tourism and Hotels, Nursing, Veterinary, et. cit. Snowball sampling is used, where the researcher sent the link of the questionnaire to staff she knows, and asked them to distribute it to others. The same approach was followed with interviews, where the researcher invited staff she

knows, who in turn introduced her to others. As seen in table 1, a total sample size of 522, composed of 215 academics and 307 administrators, was successfully acquired. According to 'Raosoft sample size calculator' (Raosoft, 2021), the preferred sample size of this study is 377 for the confidence level to be 95%, since the population size is 11208. Fortunately, in this study the sample was 522, which means that the confidence level is more than 95%.

Table 1. The study samples.

	Academics	Administrators	Total
Questionnaire	187	214	401
Individual interview	22	8	30
Focus group interview	2 FGs with 6 people	18 FGs with 85 people	20 FGs with 91
Total	215	307	522

As seen in table 1, the questionnaire's sample size=401, composed of 187 academics and 214 administrators. Whereas, in the interviews (individuals and FGs) 121 interviewees, 28 of academics (individual=22, FGs=6) and 93 of administrators (individual=8, FGs=85). The researcher stopped collecting data through interviews when it reached saturation, which means when the answers and explanations gathered from the interviewees seemed to be similar.

4- Instruments and Procedure

The current study collected data through questionnaires and interviews (individuals and FGs) in two phases, as follows.

A. **First Phase**

The data was collected from mid-April to mid-May 2021, through an online-questionnaire including both POS and OC statements. The questionnaire was designed to measure staff's perceptions of POS and OC. It consisted of five parts. The first part comprised an introductory letter with confirmation of voluntary participation, and guaranteed confidently. The second section had questions related to variables: gender, job category, age and experience. The third and fourth parts included POS's and OC's statements. Final part was an open-ended question.

To determine the level of POS, 19 statements were selected and rewritten to be suitable for this study from the studies of (Eisenberger et al., 2001; Eisenberger et al., 1986). Also, the OC was measured using (Brandes, 1997) scale with 13 statements, distributed across three dimensions, keeping the number of questions at a reasonable level.

The researcher translated the adopted scales into Arabic, to fit the study sample. All POS statements were positively worded, a sample item includes "The University cares about my opinions". However, all OC statements were negatively worded, like "when I think about my Faculty/University, I feel angry". Every statement was assessed via a three-item Likert-Scale (1: agree; 2: agree to some extent; 3: disagree), see attachment No. 2 at the end of this study.

Before distributing the questionnaire, the validity and reliability were tested. The content validity was conducted by 10 academic experts, working at 6 different universities in Egypt, see attachment No. 1 at the end of this study. This is to ensure the suitability of conducting the Arabic version of the scales with Egyptian context to ensure it measured the research objectives. Then, the questionnaire was pilot tested -as recommended by many researchers, as (Muijs, 2012)- with 17 staff to evaluate the statements' clarity. Adjustments were accordingly made. Cronbach-Alpha was calculated to determine the overall reliability, which was=0.94 of POS and 0.92 of OC. This is considered a strong reliability (Michael Sullivan, 2018). Thus, the questionnaire was found to be valid and appropriate in measuring the constructs.

The participants were asked to respond on a voluntary basis and anonymity was provided for respondents. Valid responses of 401 were collected, then their responses were analysed.

B. Second Phase

In this phase, the data was collected from mid-May to the end of July, through interviews to obtain a deeper understanding of OC and POS and to get practical suggestions of ways to mitigate OC in university context. Both individual and FG interviews were face-to-face and semi-structured, where certain questions were pre-prepared, with spontaneous follow-up questions when required (Muijs, 2012). Individual interviews were conducted when it was difficult to organize FGs. The main pre-prepared questions were:

a. Identify ways in which the university supported you?

b. Identify ways in which the university failed to support you?

c. What are the reasons behind OC in University-X?

d. What are the reasons behind POS in University-X?

e. In what ways did organizational support, or lack of support, influence OC?

f. What are ways University-X can properly conduct future organizational support to mitigate OC?

To ensure participants' comfort, the researcher took hand-written notes as most refused to be recorded, although either way anonymity was to be ensured. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents and confidentiality was guaranteed.

5- *Data Analysis*

Variables of interest are: demographic variables (gender, job category, age, and experience), POS as an independent variable, and OC as a dependent one. Regarding quantitative data, the questionnaire was statistically analysed using IBM SPSS, Vol.25. Descriptive statistical analysis was used. Since demographic variables were categorically measured, they were represented using frequency and percentage. ANOVA, t-test, Scheffe-test and simple-regression analysis were all also used. Regarding qualitative data, the transcription of all interviewees was conducted in Arabic, and then meaningful statements were translated into English to be discussed in the findings.

Results and discussion

The quantitative and qualitative analysed data were combined, then organized in a thematic way, to answer the research questions, as suggested in (Braun & Clarke, 2012; Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This section is organized in six parts: the participants' demographic characteristics, the level of OC, the level of POS, the relationship between POS and OC, the reasons behind OC, the reasons for low POS and suggestions for increasing POS to mitigate OC.

1- The participants' demographic characteristics

Descriptive statistical analysis was carried to summarise data of the sample's gender, job category, age and experiences, in table 2.

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of participants. N=522.

Variables	Total	Gender		Job category			Age range					Experience		
		Male	Female	Academics	Academic Assistances	Administrators	<30	30-40	41-50	51-60	>60	< 5	5 - 10	> 10
Questionnaire Sample	401	155, 38.7%	246, 61.3%	129, 32.1%	58, 14.5%	214, 53.4%	98, 24.4%	101, 25.2%	114, 28.4%	66, 16.5%	22, 5.5%	70, 17.5%	96, 23.9%	235, 58.6%
Interview Sample	121	50, 41.3%	71, 58.7%	16, 13.2%	12, 9.9%	93, 76.9%	38, 31.4%	28, 23.1%	30, 24.8%	18, 14.9%	7, 5.8%	21, 17.4%	27, 22.3%	73, 60.3%

From table 2, it is seen that most participants were females (60.7%). More than half of them (58.9%) are administrators. Almost half of them were young workers (40s or less), only 5.6% were above 60, who are academics, as only academics are allowed

to work after the retirement age, which is 60 in Egypt. Nearly a third of the participants worked longer than 10 years.

2- *The level of OC among staff*

Results to answer the second research question about the OC level among staff sample, and the significant differences between groups are introduced in tables 3 and 4.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics and significant differences between groups regarding OC.

Variable	Gender		Job category			Age range					Experience		
	Male	Female	Academics	Academic Assistances	Administrators	<30	30 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	>60	< 5	5 - 10	> 10
M	15.41	21.47	19.22	22.84	18.07	21.04	20.83	17.78	16.8	16.77	22.3	18.28	18.53
SD	3.95	5.63	6.08	7.49	4.79	6.59	5.95	4.41	5.68	3.62	5.31	6.59	5.36
Test	t=-11.7s*		F=16.45 s*			F=10.73 s*					F=13.30 s*		

(*) S, significant at $p<0.05$; ns, p-value= 0.000 and N=401.

In table 3, significant differences between groups were shown in the categories of gender, job category, age, and experience, within statements of OC. Independent-Samples t-test was conducted to determine if difference in gender leads to different levels of OC, when p-value<0.05. It was decided that there were differences between the levels of OC given by males and females; t=-11.7, p-value=0.00, Mean (M) of females was higher than males. This means females were more cynical. This may be due to the higher pressure faced by women at work. This explanation is concluded from many interviewees' statements. Female administrators said:

'Male colleagues often ridicule and underestimate us, especially, when a female is in charge. We often mock their sexist behaviour'.

Additionally, ANOVA tested whether there are differences between the averages given to the OC statements according to Job, age and experiences, when p-value<0.05. Results revealed that there are differences in all three variables, F=16.45, 10.73, 13.30 in order, p-value=0.00. To determine which variable's categories the difference originated from, Scheffe-tests were conducted. It showed that academic assistants, participants younger than 30, and staff who have less than 5 years of experience are more cynical. This could be concluded from a young female academic assistant's statement: *'Yes, we're more cynical, because academics take advantage of us. I prepare all the material that they should do themselves, then they get the credit, and we don't even get a thank you'.*

Some of these findings are in-line with literature. For instance, (Terzi & Derin, 2016) revealed that employees aged 20-30 experience cynicism more heavily than older employees. Contrary to this study's findings, that the academic assistants are more cynical than administrators, a study (González-Rico et al., 2018) confirmed that the cynicism was stronger within administrators than academics in a Spanish university. The difference in results may be because this study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic, where academic assistants had a larger workload compared to others, due to the switch to online-teaching and they having a better

understanding of technology. Academic assistants said: *'During the pandemic, we were pressured to help our seniors in switching to online-teaching, as the majority struggled with technology. This increased our workload'.*

Additionally, the level of OC was verified, in table 4.

Table 4 Level of OC from the sample's perception, OC items ordered by Mean.

Item No.	Item ordered by M	Item	M	SD	Level
OC. 1	5	I believe that my Faculty/University says one thing and does another.	1.29	0.57	High
OC. 2	4	I believe that my Faculty/University's policies, goals, and practices seem to have little in common.	1.35	0.58	High
OC. 3	1	I believe that if an application was said to be done in my Faculty/University, I had be more sceptical whether it would happen or not.	1.52	0.60	High
OC. 4	2	I believe that my Faculty/University expects one thing of its staff, but rewards another.	1.42	0.76	High
OC. 5	3	I believe that in my Faculty/University very little resemblance between the events that are going to be done and the events which are done.	1.37	0.68	High
Cognitive cynicism			**1.39**	**0.64**	**High**
OC. 6	2	When I think about my Faculty/University, I feel angry.	1.47	0.76	High
OC. 7	3	When I think about my Faculty/University, I feel furious.	1.47	0.76	High
OC. 8	1	When I think about my Faculty/University, I feel tension.	1.58	0.83	High
OC. 9	4	When I think about my Faculty/University, I feel a sense of anxiety.	1.37	0.68	High
Affective cynicism			**1.47**	**0.76**	**High**
OC. 10	2	I complain about the things that happened in my Faculty/University to my friends outside it.	1.63	0.86	Moderate
OC. 11	4	I and my colleagues look at each other in a meaningful way when my Faculty/University and its staff are mentioned.	1.28	0.59	High
OC. 12	3	I talk with others about how work is being carried out in Faculty/University.	1.43	0.73	High
OC. 13	1	I criticize the practices and policies of my Faculty/University to people outside it.	1.95	0.91	Moderate
Behavioural cynicism			**1.57**	**0.77**	**High**
Total OC.			**1.47**	**0.72**	**High**

As agree=1, agree to some extent=2 and disagree=3, and all statements are negative; so the levels of OC: M=more than 2.4 to 3 is low; 1.6 to 2.4 is moderate; and less than 1.6 to 1 is high.

In table 4, total Standard Deviation (SD) of OC=0.72, indicating sample's consistence answers. The total M of OC=1.47, indicating a high level of cynicism, which may be due to weak POS, as will be later discussed. OC's dimensions are ordered as cognitive cynicism, is the strongest, with the lowest M=1.39; then affective with M=1.47; and the weakest dimension with the highest M=1.57 is behavioural cynicism.

In table 4 the OC statements are ordered, depending on M and SD. This shows that the highest level of OC statements, with the lowest M, in cognitive dimension is OC.1. This can be explained through interviewee's statements like: '*While University-X claims it's undergone a complete digital transformation, they're still demanding both traditional paperwork and digital work simultaneously. They claim one thing then do another*'.

The findings revealed the lowest level of OC statement, with the highest M, in behavioural dimension is OC.13. This may be explained as most staff have a fear of gossip as University-X is located in a small community where everyone knows everyone. Academics said: '*During our daily commute from Cairo to campus, we complain to each other about University-X, but never to outsiders as we fear slander*'.

3- *The level of POS among staff*

As a continuation of the second research question's answer, regarding the level of POS among staff, results were introduced in table 5.

Table 5. Demographic characteristics and significant differences between groups regarding POS.

Variable	Gender		Job category			Age range					Experience		
	Male	Female	Academics	Academic Assistances	Administrators	<30	30 - 40	41 - 50	51 - 60	>60	< 5	5 - 10	> 10
M	51.23	49.21	47.44	47.28	52.26	48.94	49.49	50.34	51.64	50.14	49.16	49.76	50.34
SD	4.99	6.74	6.61	7.83	4.37	5.94	7.20	6.24	5.3	4.05	4.91	6.17	6.58
Test	t=3.22s*, p-value= 0.03		F=85.8s*, p-value= 0.00			F=2.15 ns, p-value= 0.07					F=1.06 ns, p-value= 0.35		

(*) S, significant at p<0.05; ns, non-significant at p>0.05, N=401.

The data was tested for differences based on demographic variables within POS statements, in table 5. To determine whether there are differences between males and females regarding POS, t-test was conducted, p-value<0.05. Difference between them was found; t=-3.22, p-value=0.03. M of males is higher than females, meaning that unlike females, males believe that University-X is supportive. This is may be due to the fact that female staff have more needs than their male colleagues. A female mentioned: '*Females need more support from University-X. Working mothers need an on-campus nursery. It would encourage us to commit more to work. Unfortunately, this is unlikely to happen*'.

Regarding Job, age and experiences variables, ANOVA checked for differences between the averages given to the POS statements, p-value<0.05. No differences between age groups and experience are found. However, there are differences between the three job categories, Scheffe-test shows that the POS level within administrators are less than other groups. Administrators said:

'Although we are the backbone of University-X, we barely get any support, and academics scorn us'.

Moreover, the findings concluded from the POS questionnaire are discussed in table 6.

Table 6 Level of POS from the sample's perception, POS items ordered by Mean.

Item No.	Item ordered by M	Item	M	SD	POS Level
POS. 1	8	The University values my contribution to its well-being. .	2.61	0.56	Low
POS. 2	10	The University appreciate the extra effort from me.	2.64	0.63	Low
POS. 3	16	The University strongly considers my goals and values.	2.79	0.47	Low
POS. 4	15	The University consider any complaint from me.	2.78	0.48	Low
POS. 5	14	The University consider my interests when it makes decisions that affect me.	2.78	0.48	Low
POS. 6	9	Help is available from the University when I have a problem.	2.63	0.53	Low
POS. 7	6	The University is willing to extend itself in order to help me perform my job to the best of my ability.	2.58	0.52	Low
POS. 8	2	The University would understand my absence due to a personal problem.	2.33	0.80	Moderate
POS. 9	3	The University would forgive an honest mistake on my part.	2.34	0.65	Moderate
POS. 10	4	The University provides me opportunity to move up the ranks.	2.46	0.73	Low
POS. 11	12	The University would grant a reasonable request for a change in my working conditions as can as possible.	2.69	0.50	Low
POS. 12	18	The University cares about my general satisfaction at work.	2.85	0.41	Low
POS. 13	7	If I decided to quit, the University would try to persuade me to stay.	2.60	0.67	Low
POS. 14	5	The University cares about my opinions.	2.57	0.55	Low
POS. 15	13	The University takes pride in my accomplishments at work.	2.70	0.54	Low
POS. 16	17	The University would understand if I were unable to finish a task on time.	2.84	0.43	Low
POS. 17	11	The University wishes to give me the best possible job for which I am qualified.	2.66	0.55	Low
POS. 18	19	The university tries to make my job as interesting as possible.	2.88	0.36	Low
POS. 19	1	My supervisors are proud that I am a part of this University.	2.29	0.71	Moderate
Total			**2.63**	**0.56**	**Low**

As agree=1, agree to some extent=2 and disagree=3, and all statements are positive; so the level of POS: M=more than 2.4 to 3 is low; 1.6 to 2.4 is moderate; less than 1.6 to 1 is high

Consistency of the samples' answers toward their levels of POS is found SD=0.56, M=2.63 showing staff have low POS. This was confirmed in the interviews, staff said: *'Although we occasionally get some kind of support, it is not enough'.* Additionally, the POS

statements are ordered depending on its M. The lowest level of POS statement was POS.18, this may be explained by an administrator: '*Working here is tedious. We do our job the same way every year, and when I attempt to be creative, no encouragement is received*'. In contrast, POS.19 was the highest M. This may be because it seems that supervisor encouragement is an important point to show support, as confirmed in (Akram et al., 2018; Boyer & Edmondson, 2015). An administrator said: '*When my supervisor was switched with a new, encouraging and supportive one, I was extremely motivated to work*'.

Examples of lack of university support as social, financial and technical were expressed. An administrator said: '*Despite taking up extra work during the already busy exam season, I got zero appreciation for it*'. Another academic said: '*As a professor with innovative publications, I've found zero marketing support for my work from University-X*'. A young academic said: '*We get so much pressure to publish international papers, but no financial backing for it*'. A senior academic expressed: '*Throughout the pandemic, we've received insufficient technical support and training, and University-X isn't trying to redeem that*'. Administrators also said: '*Other university staff get car and house loans and healthcare privileges, but we do not*'.

4- The relationship between POS and OC

A simple regression analysis was conducted to test the relationship between POS and OC to answer the third research question. A significant negative relationship between POS and OC within its sub-dimensions is confirmed, in table 7.

Table 7. The results of simple regression analysis of POS on OC, N= 401, p<0.05.

Dependent variable	Independent variable	B	Beta	t.	R^2	f	Sig.
OC	Constant	53.5	-	33.16	0.54	460.67	0.000
	POS	-0.69	0.73	21.46			
Cognitive cynicism	Constant	21.91	-	36.75	0.62	638.63	0.000
	POS	-0.29	0.79	25.27			
Affective cynicism	Constant	15.65	-	17.97	0.24	127.59	0.000
	POS	-0.19	0.49	11.29			
Behavioural cynicism	Constant	15.94	-	21.89	0.31	178.37	0.000
	POS	-0.19	0.56	13.36			

Table 7 shows the results of a negative regression, this means the dependent variable (OC) will decrease if the independent variable (POS) will increase. The results show that $R^2=0.54$ regarding OC, which indicates high effect size. Whereas, the independent variable of POS captured 54% of the variance in predicting OC. This result means more than half of the sample exhibit OC and negative signs of POS. If POS is a predictor of cynicism, then it can be said that increasing POS is key in mitigating OC. Additionally, Beta-value showed that POS=0.73 and B-value=-0.69, this means the staff's POS negatively impacts the level of OC. In other words, the lower the POS, the higher OC by staff and vice versa. Moreover, table 7 also introduces results of

investigating the impact of POS on the OC dimensions. The findings show that R^2 values of cognitive, affective and behavioural cynicism dimensions are –respectively– 0.62, 0.24, and 0.31. The previous results agreed with many other studies (Alsubaie & Nasaani, 2021; Fauzan, 2020; Kasalak & Bilgin Aksu, 2014; Sen et al., 2021), which confirmed that when POS is low, OC is high. With such results it is important to find ways of increasing POS to decrease the staff's OC.

5- *Reasons of high OC*

The data highlighted many reasons for staff being cynical. These can be organized in four reasons, as follows.

A. Poor crisis management

It was revealed that OC is on the rise in University-X, especially with the COVID-19 pandemic; since hasty organizational actions to deal with unpredicted conditions were made, resulting in staff OC. Participants stated that although University-X does not have the required infrastructure for online-teaching; university leaders forced them to use their own home internet. Chaos in decisions was seen, especially at the beginning of the pandemic. Everyday new orders were given, insufficient and poor online teaching training was offered to staff. Most academics were lost and found the university unsupportive. This is seen as poor crisis management. Academics said: '*We were receiving contradicting orders from different executives! They just wanted teaching to continue without attempting to solve the concurrent issues. After they ignored us, we*

attempted to deal with it ourselves, but this behaviour otherwise made us cynical'.

Many studies highlighted the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on higher education (Edghiem et al., 2021; Kazemian & Grant, 2022; Webb et al., 2021), which slightly differ from one case to another, but generally many universities faced confusion and chaos with poor crisis management.

B. Exploitative leaders and staff downsizing

One reason of OC is the existence of exploitative leaders, specifically ones downsizing staff. Exploitative leaders are selfish and manipulate and exploit employees by secretly increasing workload (Schmid et al., 2019). An increasing number of staff complain about the way their leaders deal with them. Some administrators said: '*Our boss always takes advantage of us and forces us to do more work, just to look better in front of his own boss. He takes all the credit and minimizes our effort. Of course we are cynical when we are dealt with as slaves!*' Also, an academic assistant said: '*My academic supervisor is the head of department. He indirectly forces me to do all his work, as when he asks me it is unviable for me to refuse, I feel negatively and have associated cynicism*'.

The results of the way leaders deal with staff affects their level of OC are also confirmed in other studies (Qian & Jian, 2020). It is found that when the boss is seen as an exploitative leader, OC

increases (Elsaied, 2022). It is also revealed that (Scott & Zweig, 2016) negative organizational actions, such as downsizing, could result in increasing OC among those who are already predisposed.

C. Ineffective communication

The study revealed that ineffective communication is a reason behind participants' OC. Findings indicated that ineffective communication happens when leaders do not distribute information between university staff, leading to staff having a limited voice in managerial decisions. A professor claimed: '*I would be less cynical if University-X explained the decisions they are forcing on us*'. Administrators said: '*University-X arranges meetings just for show when the higher-ups have already made the decisions. Such superficial and deceitful acts increase our cynicism*'.

It seems that poor communication between employees and leaders leads to cynicism, as (Abugre, 2017) confirmed. Therefore, scholars (Qian & Jian, 2020) confirmed the importance of communication between employees and their employer to lower OC.

D. Organizational change

Findings show that OC increases during university organizational changes, like with University-X's digital transformation. An administrator claimed: '*After executive decisions were forced upon us, and thousands were spent on digital transformation, nothing seemingly happened. All the devices are outdated in every way, and the internet is unreliably slow and*

spotty'. Literature confirmed that employees who are cynical about change are also less likely to believe that their organization cares about them or values their contributions (Liegman, 2015). Researchers find that employees' change cynicism lessens with higher POS (Ouedraogo & Ouakouak, 2020).

6- *Reasons of low POS*

Three reasons of low POS in University-X were revealed, that concur with many other studies, like (Kurtessis et al., 2017; Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). They are as follows.

A. Doubts of organizational fairness

Interviewees expressed their doubts of University-X's fairness, as they thought that distribution of promotions and job duties was not done adequately. An administrator with PhD said: *'University-X did not support me in attaining my PhD, even though it gave support to academic assistants. I feel no appreciation for my hard work'*. Another administrator said: '*The more I work, the more work is dumped on me without appreciation'*. Such views are related to findings of (Eisenberger et al., 2001).

Additionally, results confirm the existence of workplace discrimination between administrators and academics staff in providing support. An administrator said: '*The support we receive from University-X is very limited compared to academic staff'*. Surprisingly, academics didn't feel supported either. An academic said: '*I cannot say that I am satisfied with what I get. Other academics in other universities receive more services and support'*.

B. Weak rewards and bad job conditions

Findings suggest that staff have low POS, since they feel recognition and rewards are weak, and job conditions are bad. It revealed that University-X does not make the importance of staff's membership clear to them. Thus, many administrators see it as an insecure work place. An administrator said: *'I do not feel job stability. 8 years ago I signed a temporary contract with 26 other employees, most of whom left due to bad conditions'.* Researchers (Garcia et al., 2021) linked the issues in the previous statement with POS. The existence of weak rewards was also elucidated.

Staff also tend to perceive job conditions as bad, however the meaning of that differs from one staff member to another. For academics, bad job conditions means a lack of support in conducting required research activities. For administrators, it has more to do with increasing their workload. An academic said: *'We receive little support for our research activities. All materials are purchased out of pocket and we're still pressured to publish internationally. Unbearable conditions!'* Administrators said: *'Job conditions are poor due to little effort in employment after existing employees retire. Instead of the workload balancing out, it also further increases due to a greater number of students'.* Such results highlight the fact that university staff need a different kind of support given by their university. Other scholars (González-Rico et al., 2018) confirmed this, as they found that staff have different

well-being patterns due to different characteristics of their activities across universities.

C. Low supervisor support

It seems that staff connect support received from University-X with that received from their immediate supervisors. Consequently, when low supervisor support is received, POS decreases. Administrators said: '*Our previous boss managed to encourage us, and this led to us sometimes working weekends, even without financial incentives. On the contrary, our current boss is aggressive and unappreciative and this negatively impacts our feelings towards University-X*'. Such a statement is in agreement with findings in (Jabagi et al., 2020; Kurtessis et al., 2017), suggesting employees had higher POS due to receiving encouragement from supervisors. This also led to decreased OC as revealed by (Bosak, 2019; Scott & Zweig, 2016).

7- *Suggestions to increase POS and mitigate OC*

This section answers the sixth research question by introducing a number of staff's suggestions to increase POS and in turn mitigate OC at University-X.

A. Enhancing job conditions and rewards to mitigate OC

Findings suggested that enhancing job conditions and rewards may help mitigate OC, and ways for doing that were suggested by the participants. They said: '*University-X should adapt its policy to support academics in doing their research, and support administrators in their work*'. This statement suggests that tailored

services and benefits would be strong in conveying the university's support of its staff and thus enhance POS. Also, staff said: *'University-X should provide their most hardworking staff with more appreciation, by using extrinsic rewards and recognition programs'*. Another said: *'We need more support. I'd suggest establishing a counselling unit, to help staff with social or personal problems. Also, social services, like summer resorts, should be provided'*. Administrators said: *'More flexibility and understanding is needed to feel supported. Flexible scheduling is a must'*. Accordingly, it was found that flexible scheduling is a point of employee-anticipated organizational support (Casper & Buffardi, 2004).

Moreover, interviewees said: *'A more friendly and connected environment should be fostered. Recreational trips would help academics and administrators interact in a fun environment'*. Indeed, findings (Eisenberger et al., 2016) suggest that POS can be reinforced through informal social gatherings, and implementing supportive workforce services. Also, it is found that the breadth of support efforts may include employee assistance programs and extrinsic reward and recognition programs (Dillon, 2018). This should increase POS and mitigate OC (Byrne & Hochwarter, 2008; Scott & Zweig, 2016).

B. Introducing organizational support with good communications

Using effective methods to convey university support can mitigate OC, as it clarifies organizational support. A Workers Union member in University-X said: *'Meetings should be done with staff in order for them to see what University-X does for them. Even after establishing a social media page, most are suspicious of our announcements'*. Similarly, academics suggested: *'University-X should conduct awareness campaigns to justify the difficulties that hinder fulfilment of support. This may prevent OC'*. Findings suggest that university leaders are seen as communication channels to display the university support structure to staff. This is supported in literature, as it is said that if supervisors are a pipeline to reduce OC, it is advised that organizations consider ensuring that communication channels between supervisors and employees are a primary means through which information is relayed (Scott & Zweig, 2016).

C. Intelligently introducing organizational change

Findings revealed that preparing for organizational change is necessary to reduce OC. Conflicting decisions are taken during sudden organizational change, which leads staff to be cynical. Staff said: *'I think OC would decrease if we were prepared for organizational change. This is a perfect method of support'*. Indeed, researchers confirmed that OC related to organizational change leads to workers feeling less obligated to support their organization

reaching its change goals (Liegman, 2015). It is revealed that (Aslam et al., 2018; Muqadas et al., 2017) employees react negatively towards organizational change if the organization does not share knowledge and convince them with benefits of change.

D. Providing training to university staff

Providing training programmes to both university supervisors and staff is recommended to increase POS and reduce OC. They should aim to provide supervisors with crisis management skills and necessary competencies, like how to treat employees fairly, constructively and value their efforts. Participants said: '*University leaders and supervisors should be educated on supporting staff and managing crises, and staff trained to be future leaders*'. Subsequently, University-X must equip its staff with suitable trainings depending on their needs, in order to stimulate organizational support and mitigate cynicism. Other scholars (Dillon, 2018; Eisenberger et al., 2016) indicated the importance of support in the form of training supervisors, anticipated leaders and employees and increase POS.

E. Increasing organisational fairness to mitigate OC

Participants suggested that more organizational fairness shown can mitigate OC. They mentioned some procedures that could be applied and said: '*Fairness is important, this can be seen when treating staff equally, choosing leaders according to lawful rules, and holding people accountable for their actions and fair resource distribution*'. Literature considered organizational fairness a

fundamental aspect that makes an important contribution to POS (Eisenberger et al., 2001). Fair treatment conveys a sense of care, but selective treatment sours other employees (Eisenberger et al., 2016). A study concluded that the effect of employees' social cynicism on their OC may be lessened by instituting policies emphasizing greater fairness (Kwantes & Bond, 2019).

F. Fostering supportive relationships between university leaders and staff

Results suggested that fostering supportive relationships between leaders and employees can increase staff POS and decrease their level of OC. Many recommendations were given. Participants said: '*Supervisors represent the university, and as such they should be understanding, transparent, honest and authentic to decrease our OC*'. Researchers (Smith et al., 2021) write that advancing organizational support is recommended to decrease OC. Consequently, universities should 'support supervisors so they will foster POS in their subordinates'(Eisenberger et al., 2016).

Proposed Procedures to Mitigate OC by Increasing POS in universities

This section introduces procedures that can be followed by Egyptian universities to mitigate OC by increasing their staff's POS. It's worth mentioning that this section is based on findings concluded from analyzing quantitative and qualitative data gathered in this current study, and also on results from related literature concerned with Egyptian universities such as (Alsetoohy, 2020;

Hasaneen, 2018; Hassan, 2021; Mahgoub, 2020; Mahmoud, 2019; Marzouk, 2020; Rayan, 2018). Eleven procedures organized in three sections related to the three OC dimensions are proposed; five procedures to mitigate cognitive OC, three to decrease affective OC and three to mitigate behavioural OC, as follows.

1- *Proposed Procedures to Mitigate Cognitive OC*

As findings confirmed that the highest level of OC was with cognitive OC, five procedures have been suggested for it. These are: democratizing the process of choosing university leaders, educating them, enhancing transparency and communication, furthering staff's awareness of organizational fairness, and adopting all-round performance evaluation, as follows.

A. Democratizing the process of choosing university leaders

Findings in this study indicated the importance of leaders for dealing with staff's negative cognitive thoughts towards their universities. It also showed that leaders' inability to properly manage organizational change and convince staff of the importance of these changes caused more OC.

Having a standardized democratic process of choosing leaders, supervisors and managers by popular vote would then, hopefully, increase POS and decrease OC. Publishing a list of standard leadership traits will help staff make rational and educated votes. This list should include characteristics, such as the ability to be a good coach, active encouragement of employees, sharing of leadership visions, ability to deal with organizational change and

avoidance of ill-conceived initiatives. It is proposed that after staff apply for a position of authority, an official meeting should be conducted, in order for anonymous votes to be cast by the individuals that will be under their authority.

Currently, in Egyptian Universities, the university President chooses usually individuals who represent Deans, and Deans choose individuals who represent their faculty's Heads of Departments without any consideration for the opinions of people working under them. Therefore, the suggested procedure can be seen by university staff as having a fair democratic process in choosing their leaders. It aims to deal with staff's cognitive beliefs such as that their university is deficient of integrity, fairness and honesty. This will therefore lead to them feeling responsibility for people in leadership positions instead of cynicism with traditional hierarchical authoritative position choosing.

B. Educating university leaders

Educating university leaders is important; as they are imperative in the process of mitigating cognitive OC by increasing POS. This can be done by having obligatory training sessions for leaders in order to help them identify and dealing with the causes of OC and its negative effects on their university environment. This in turn will lead to staff members having more trust in the dignity of their university, and competence and knowledge of their leaders.

Since each university has at least its own leadership training centre and administrative training centre, a fee-free training matrix

should be implemented in order to raise the level of awareness and education of leaders in staff OC mitigation and POS incrementation. Suggested topics for university leader trainings include appropriate methods to respond to sudden university changes, guidance on increasing staff's POS, providing support to university staff working under them, and how to be an authentic, ethical, servant and transformational leader.

C. Enhancing transparency and communication

It's recommended to adopt an open-door policy in order to make it easier for staff to directly communicate with university leaders. In addition, conducting periodic meetings between university staff and leaders in order to elucidate the status of actions done to fulfil staff's demands, such as explaining delays behind enhancing job conditions, would allow for greater transparency and consequently reduce cognitive OC.

Another procedure that enhances greater transparency and communication among university staff members is the addition of official and non-official meeting sessions between all groups of staff. This is unlike the current model followed by most universities, where the Secretary General meets with administrators, the university President meets with academic staff, and the Vice President of Postgraduate Studies meets with academic assistants. With this act of inclusion of the three pillars of university employees, cognitive OC may decrease.

D. Furthering staff's awareness of organizational fairness

Organizational fairness needs to be visible, especially for specific groups, who are seen as more cynical and feel unfairness. As findings, in this study, show that females, administrators and young academic assistants tend to be more cynical than others. Presenting more support to all staff, but specifically those groups will help rejuvenate their awareness of organizational equality.

Universities should also present policies that integrate organizational fairness, starting from a university's strategic plan to the integration of procedures that enhance perceived organizational fairness. This visible procedure may include providing equal healthcare solutions for all staff and dismantling the popular construct of categorical discrimination, where academics are even presented with higher service hospitals compared to administrative staff. It also must extend to other services, such as access to recreational activities, university-provided housing, discounts to necessary services and other things tailored to all staffs' needs without role discrimination.

Additionally, equality in application of university law, regulations, and norms in a professional manner to all is recommended, as groups with less authority often are cynical due to feelings of discrimination. Due to the existence of two distinct sets of laws for academics and administrators, increasing awareness behind the existence of, and the necessity of these laws, is important. These laws are split into the Civil Service Law for administrators and academic assistants, University Organization

Law for academic staff. Clarification of how each is tailored to support each category of staff, and how it provides support to each group, will assist in staff's confirmation of fairness. Consequently, cognitive OC will, hopefully, decrease.

E. Adopting all-round performance evaluation

As findings, in this study, show the existence of exploitative leaders and staff downsizing, therefore, a procedure of implementing concrete periodic evaluation for all university staff is proposed.

At most universities, semi-annual evaluation is employed only for administrator staff while academic staff are not periodically evaluated. This form of evaluation for administrators often depends only on the opinion of a direct manager on them, but not vice versa. The findings of this study indicate the importance of the evaluation of academics as well; in order to avoid OC from administrative staff.

Following this, adopting a 360-degree evaluation procedure, that can be used as a method for measuring concrete performance of university academics and administrators is viable to enhance POS decrease cognitive OC. This procedure confirm that all university staff would be evaluated from others working with them, including their peers and leaders. Evaluation should be anonymous and confidential. However, results should be presented in a transparent manner with an emphasis on the goal of the process, which is to

discourage negative behaviour, such as OC, and instead encourage positive behaviour, such as trusting the organization.

2- *Proposed Procedures to Mitigate Affective OC*

In order to decrease university staff's negative sentiment towards their university by increasing their POS, three procedures are proposed. These are: creating effective social support units, spotlighting on university achievements and awarding noteworthy staff, as follows.

A. Creating effective social supportive units

Developing an improved, single 'social support club' in every university that unites academics and administrators is recommended, rather than the traditional Egyptian approach which has separate clubs for both. Differentiating between different staff members in regards to provided social activities when they work at the same university can be viewed as discrimination. Therefore, this study proposes combining these clubs so social activities bring together university employees. This may reduce negative feelings towards the university, prevent social isolation and decrease feelings of prejudice. If set up, it would aim to provide a suitable, healthy and non-toxic work environment. It would also decrease negative emotions such as disrespect, contempt, shame, and feelings of unfairness and discrimination between all three groups of administrators, academics, and their assistants.

The proposed procedure suggests holding events in the club that combine both academics and administrators. The club should

introduce social gatherings and events for all university staff and their families. This can be applied through providing events such as recreational trips, group breakfasts during events as Ramadan and Christmas, as well as subsidized group expenses. Such events would aim to develop and increase positive human relations between university staff, academics, academic assistants and administrators.

B. Spotlighting on university achievements

Casting light on major achievements within the university is suggested. This procedure should be appreciated by staff and would make them feel their efforts towards these achievements were acknowledged, valued and appreciated. Bringing attention to achievements would in turn contribute to decreasing negative emotions among university staff and increasing their POS.

This procedure can be conducted through setting up celebrations of university achievements such as progression in World University Rankings and gaining accreditation from the National Authority of Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education (NAQAAE). In such events, all university staff should be invited, unlike the current Egyptian university approach which only invites academic staff. This is to spread feelings of pride and belonging when viewing what the university has accomplished, and to show how all three categories of staff (administrators, academics and their assistants) cooperated to achieve this.

C. Awarding noteworthy staff

To mitigate cynical emotions, it is proposed that universities acknowledge the contributions of their staff. This can be illustrated through highlighting noteworthy individuals from academics, academic assistants, and administrators. The main aim of such a procedure is to display organizational appreciation and acknowledgment of such individual efforts.

The selection of staff from each category can be applied through the use of results from the previously suggested performance evaluations. When these evaluations are applied, competition standards can be designed. The proposed selection procedure should be done through fair competition with measurable standards based on credibility, sincerity, productivity, and integrity. A judgement committee should be established as an ad hoc committee to decide on the winners at the end of each academic year. An honoring ceremony should then be held to award selected winners. Such procedures should be conducted fairly, with no forms of flattery or unfairness in order to avoid increasing cynical emotions.

3- *Proposed Procedures to Mitigate Behavioral OC*

The recommended procedures for mitigating behavioural OC are: building an extrinsic and intrinsic university rewards system, initiation of a behavioural OC response team, and activating an ethical university charter, as follows.

A. Building an extrinsic and intrinsic university rewards system

In order to mitigate behavioural OC, it is recommended that universities increase extrinsic and intrinsic rewards. An example of extrinsic rewards is giving staff access to instalment payment plans for different facilities and services, and an example of intrinsic rewards is giving payment bonuses. The reciprocity norm can then be achieved through these rewards, as staff may repay the organization by spreading the same positivity they experienced in the workplace inside and outside the university.

This procedure should be conducted through the creation of a reward points system that is connected with the results of the previously suggested performance evaluation. Linking a staff member's level of performance to the availability of extrinsic and intrinsic rewards is a must to achieve organizational loyalty. A breakdown of how rewards and incentives are distributed and clarifying why they are not given to some due to poor performance will lessen the proportion of discrimination for staff members. Having this rewards system is expected to decrease behavioural OC.

B. Initiating a behavioural OC response team

It is recommended that universities assign a team of people that initiate immediate responses to staff's behavioural OC. This can be conducted by mostly pre-existing public relations offices.

Most of the time, behavioural OC by staff is done through social media posts as to spread their negative thoughts regarding their university to outsiders. Therefore, a response procedure for allegations made against the university on social networking sites is important.

It is critical that the team's responses are honest and not made for the purpose of simply bringing down or disproving negative allegations. Fault should be recognized, admitted, and dealt with, and similarly, false statements should be corrected. It must be shown that staff's feedback is taken seriously and being attended to, especially with recurrent and popular complaints. This procedure can be seen as a way of showing how university values feedback and tries to be a supportive organization.

C. Activating an ethical university charter

Having an ethical charter that ensures the absence of nepotism and favouritism may reduce behavioural OC.

The suggested ethical charter should include ethical principles that all staff (administrators, academics and their assistants) must adhere and commit to in their behaviours and professional practices. One of these principles should be to not spread negative things about the university to outsiders, whether verbally or non-verbally. Instead, it should be advised to illustrate feedback and complaints to university leaders and assigned authorities.

Additionally, the suggested ethical charter should elucidate the fairness and freedom that staff have such as their right to object and

reject to university actions. This procedure can be seen as a preventive action for behavioural OC.

Conclusion

This study sails new horizons for research on OC regarding higher education, it also attempts to carry implications for theory and practice. It empirically verifies the extent of POS and OC in academics and administrations' perceptions. The results obtained have shown that OC and POS are related in an inverse relationship. It also explored reasons of high OC and of low POS. It confirmed that OC is unfavourable to workplace attitude among staff, but with a thorough grasp of POS, effective remedies can be applied. Therefore, eleven practical procedures were suggested to reduce OC. These suggested procedures will encourage university staff to perceive their organization supports and values them in a positive manner so consequently OC will decrease. The results conducted in the Egyptian university context, are supported by several previous researches conducted in other organizations rather than universities and in other countries, as (Adıgüzel, 2021; Brandes, 1997; Sen et al., 2021).

There are several theoretical and practical implications provided in the current study. Theoretical-wise, it can be said that this study contributes to the literature linking OC with POS in a higher education context. Practical-wise, it shed light on linking organizational support and cynicism, in turn, it suggested ways to decrease OC through increasing POS. This is suggested through

advisable means for university leaders to strengthen POS, which can be applied in organizations rather than universities.

Undoubtedly, while the study findings contribute to literature, a couple of limitations are found. The main limitation is regarding the generalization aspect, which cannot be guaranteed; as the results concern one Egyptian university, which may differ from other universities and/or other organizations in general. The second limitation is the lack of investigation of other variables that may affect OC other than POS. Despite these limitations, the study came up with important findings which can aid researchers in further investigation.

For future studies, the researcher believes that a more fine-grained analysis of OC and POS in different institutions, with different samples is needed. Other researchers can apply this study's methods to data samples in other countries as well. More research is needed to determine variables related to OC. Future research suggested on staff employed in public and private universities can also be investigated comparatively.

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ملحق (١) أسماء المحكمون الأفاضل

الجامعة	الوظيفة	الإسم
حلوان	استاذ التربية المقارنة والإدارة التعليمية	١– أ.د. إبراهيم عباس الزهيري
الزقازيق	استاذ الإدارة التربوية	٢– أ.د. أحمد نجم الدين عيداروس
حلوان	استاذ التربية المقارنة والإدارة التعليمية	٣– أ.د. حسام حمدى عبد الحميد
الزقازيق	استاذ أصول التربية	٤– أ.د حمدى حسن عبد الحميد المحروقى
الأزهر	استاذ الإدارة والتخطيط والدراسات المقارنة	٥– أ.د حشمت عبدالحكم محمدين فراج
بورسعيد	استاذ أصول التربية	٦– أ.د. جورجيت ديميان جورج
أسيوط	استاذ أصول التربية والتخطيط التربوى	٧– أ.د. عبد التواب عبد اللاه عبد التواب
حلوان	استاذ التربية المقارنة الإدارة التعليمية	٨– أ.د. رشا سعد شرف
الزقازيق	استاذ التربية المقارنة والإدارة التعليمية	٩– أ.د. محمد أحمد حسين ناصف
حلوان	استاذ التربية المقارنة والإدارة التعليمية	١٠– أ.د. نهلة سيد عليوة

ملحق (٢) استمارة الاستبيان

تقوم الباحثة بدراسة بعنوان" **التخفيف من حدة التهكم التنظيمى بالجامعات الحكومية المصرية بزيادة الدعم التنظيمى المدرك للعاملين**". وتهدف لمعرفة كيف يمكن للدعم التنظيمى بالجامعات التقليل من انتشار ظاهرة التهكم التنظيمى بين الإداريين وأعضاء هيئة التدريس ومعاونيهم، وذلك بتجميع بيانات من إحدى الجامعات الحكومية. ويشير الدعم التنظيمى المدرك بالدراسة الحالية إلى اعتقاد الإداريين وأعضاء هيئة التدريس ومعاونيهم بأن الكلية/الجامعة تدعمهم وتهتم بهم وتقدر مجهوداتهم وتعتنى بهم ماديًا وشخصيًا. أما التهكم التنظيمى فيشير للمواقف السلبية تجاه الكلية/الجامعة من خلال اعتقاد الإداريين وأعضاء هيئة التدريس ومعاونيهم بضعف المصداقية والثقة والنزاهة بالمؤسسة التى يعملون بها، مع الشعور السلبى تجاه الكلية/الجامعة وبالتالى تحدث أفعال سلبية تهكمية تجاهها. أرجو التكرم بقراءة عبارات الاستبيان بعناية، ثم اختيار الإجابة التى تعبر عن رأيك بكل شفافية، وتؤكد الباحثة لسيادتكم الآتي:

١-   إن البيانات المجمعة من هذا الاستبيان ستحاط بسرية تامة.

٢-   لن تستخدم بيانات الاستبيان إلا لأغراض الدراسة والبحث العلمي فقط.

٣-   لن تذكر أي بيانات تتعلق باسمك أو وظيفتك التي تعمل بها.

٤-   تمت الموافقة على إجراء الدراسة من خلال لجنة أخلاقيات البحث العلمى بالكلية التى تعمل بها الباحثة.

٥-   تمت الموافقة على إجراء هذا الاستبيان من خلال الجهاز المركزى للتعبئة العامة والإحصاء.

أولاً: بيانات أساسية

النوع: ذكر/أنثى. **الوظيفة:**   ١-عضو هيئة تدريس (مدرس– استاذ مساعد– استاذ) ٢- هيئة معاونة (معيد– مدرس مساعد)– ٣-إدارى (دبلوم متوسط –بكالوريوس/ليسانس – دبلوم عالى– ماجستير– دكتوراة). **العمر:** أقل من ٣٠، ٣٠–٤٠، ٤١–٥٠، ٥١–٦٠، أكبر من ٦٠ (بالنسبة لأعضاء هيئة التدريس). **سنوات الخبرة:** أقل من 5 سنوات، ٥– ١٠–أكثر من ١٠

ثانيًا: الدعم التنظيمي المدرك

غير موافق	موافق لحد ما	موافق	العبارات
			١. تقدر إدارة الكلية/الجامعة قيمة عملي في تحقيق تقدمها
			٢. تقدر إدارة الكلية/الجامعة أى جهود تطوعية أقوم بها بخلاف عملى
			٣. تضع إدارة الكلية/الجامعة الأهداف التي أسعى لتحقيقها في اعتبارها بدرجة كبيرة
			٤. تهتم إدارة الكلية/الجامعة بما أقدمه من شكاوى وتظلمات
			٥. تهتم إدارة الكلية/الجامعة بمصلحتى عند اتخاذها قرارات تؤثر علىّ
			٦. تسعى إدارة الكلية/الجامعة لحل المشكلات التى أواجهها
			٧. تحرص إدارة الكلية/الجامعة على توفير التسهيلات لمساعدتى فى أداء عملى بما يتناسب مع قدراتى ومهاراتى
			٨. يتفهم رئيسى المباشر غيابى عن العمل نتيجة وجود أسباب شخصية
			٩. تتجاوز إدارة الكلية/الجامعة عن أخطائى غير المقصودة
			١٠.تتيح لي الكلية/الجامعة فرصًا "متكافئة" للترقي الوظيفي والاكاديمي
			١١.تقوم إدارة الكلية/الجامعة بالاستجابة لمطالبى الخاصة بتحسين بيئة العمل قدر الإمكان
			١٢.تهتم إدارة الكلية/الجامعة برضائى عن العمل
			١٣.تتمسك بي إدارة الكلية/الجامعة للبقاء في العمل إذا ما قررت

غير موافق	موافق لحد ما	موافق	
			ترك العمل بها
			١٤.تبدى إدارة الكلية/الجامعة اهتمامًا بآرائى
			١٥.تفتخر إدارة الكلية/الجامعة بإنجازاتى فى العمل
			١٦.تتفهم إدارة الكلية/الجامعة عدم قدرتى أحيانًا على إنجاز ما طلب منى فى الوقت المحدد
			١٧.تسعى إدارة الكلية/الجامعة لإعطائى المهام التى تتناسب مع مؤهلاتى
			١٨.تحاول إدارة الكلية/الجامعة جعل وظيفتى ممتعة قدر الإمكان
			١٩.يشعرنى رئيسى المباشر بأنه فخور بأننى جزء من الكلية/الجامعة

ثالثًا: التهكم التنظيمى

غير موافق	موافق لحد ما	موافق	العبارة
			البعد المعرفى
			١.أعتقد أن إدارة الكلية/الجامعة تقول شيء وتفعل شيء آخر
			٢.أعتقد أنه يوجد اختلاف بين سياسات الكلية/الجامعة مع أهدافها وممارساتها
			٣.أتشكك في جدية إدارة الكلية / الجامعة للقيام بممارسة ما تعتزم القيام بها
			٤.أعتقد أن إدارة الكلية/الجامعة تفتقد للنزاهة عند مكافأة من يستحق
			٥.لا أعتقد أن هناك تطابقًا بين ما ينبغى أن تقوم به

			الكلية/الجامعة وبين ما يتم بالفعل
		البعد الوجدانى	
			٦.عندما أفكر بدوافع إدارة الكلية/الجامعة أشعر بالغضب
			٧.عندما أفكر بدوافع إدارة الكلية/الجامعة أشعر بالاستياء
			٨.عندما أفكر بدوافع إدارة الكلية /الجامعة أشعر بالتوتر
			٩.عندما أفكر بدوافع إدارة الكلية /الجامعة أشعر بالقلق
		البعد السلوكى	
			١٠.أشكو لأصدقائي المشكلات التي تحدث بالكلية/الجامعة
			١١.أتبادل أنا وزملائي النظرات للتعبير عن الاستياء والسخرية تجاه إدارة الكلية/الجامعة
			١٢.أتحدث مع الزملاء عما يحدث بالكلية/الجامعة من ممارسات
			١٣.أنتقد ممارسات وسياسات الكلية/الجامعة أمام الآخرين (من خارجها)

رابعاً: ما مقترحاتك لزيادة الدعم التنظيمى المدرك للعاملين بالجامعة بهدف تقليل التهكم التنظيمى؟