

# ***The Level of Inclusive Leadership Practice in Jordanian Higher Education Institutions and its Relationship to the Organizational Excellence of their Employees***

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the extent of inclusive leadership practices in Jordanian higher education institutions and their relationship to organizational excellence. To accomplish this goal, a stratified random sample of 480 academic and administrative personnel from Jordanian public universities was chosen. Using a descriptive correlational survey approach, a verified and trustworthy questionnaire was distributed to participants. The findings revealed that both the extent of inclusive leadership practices and the level of organizational excellence were rated as modest. Furthermore, the findings revealed a significant positive relationship between the aspects of inclusive leadership and organizational performance. In light of these findings, the study suggests that institutionalizing inclusive leadership techniques is a critical strategy for improving and sustaining organizational excellence inside institutions.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Leadership, Organizational Excellence, Jordanian Universities, Higher Education Institutions.

Received: 09-04-2025  
Accepted: 25-06-2025

## 1. Introduction

Higher education institutions are essential to the advancement of society, and their success is inextricably related to the creative and visionary talents of their leadership. As these organizations' roles have changed, inclusive leadership has become a crucial leadership approach that prioritizes meeting workers' needs for a sense of belonging while appreciating their individuality, guaranteeing equity, and encouraging active involvement in decision-making (Attia, 2023). Such leadership fosters a productive workplace that breaks down barriers between coworkers and maximizes the potential of subordinates to boost institutional competitiveness. Additionally, in a world that is changing quickly, organizational excellence is a deliberate approach to institutional sustainability. Effective leadership in higher education is exemplified by the capacity to coordinate a variety of human resources in order to meet international rankings and quality requirements. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between organizational excellence in Jordanian higher education institutions and the extent of inclusive leadership practices.

### 1.1. Research Problem and Questions

Leadership is the major engine of institutional performance, and inclusive leadership has emerged as a key catalyst for good interaction and operational efficiency in universities. This leadership style makes a substantial contribution to establishing organizational excellence by engaging competent leaders capable of providing high competitive advantage services while balancing stakeholder needs within a culture of learning, innovation, and sustainable development. Given the increased scholarly interest in inclusive leadership behavior and its effects on both subordinates and organizations, this study investigates the link between inclusive leadership and organizational excellence.

The research problem is addressed via the following primary question: What is the relationship between the prevalence of inclusive leadership approaches and organisational excellence in Jordanian higher education institutions?

### 1.2. Research Questions

The study asks the following questions:

1. What is the degree to which Jordanian higher education institutions practise inclusive leadership, according to their employees?
2. How do Jordanian higher education personnel perceive organizational excellence?
3. Is there a significant link ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between inclusive leadership practices and organisational excellence in Jordanian higher education institutions?

### 1.3. Objectives of the Study

The key goals are to assess the prevalence of inclusive leadership practices, establish the level of organisational excellence, and investigate the relationship between these two variables in the context of Jordanian higher education.

#### 1.4. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is highlighted in the following dimensions: Theoretical Significance: Bridging the research gap on the relationship between inclusive leadership and organisational success in academic settings.

Practical Significance: Assisting educational policymakers in building methods to improve leadership skills and guiding higher education authorities in designing training programmes that create inclusive leadership in line with labour market expectations.

#### 1.5. Conceptual and Operational Definition

##### 1.5.1. Inclusive Leadership

Conceptual: Leadership behaviours that promote subordinate belonging through support, equity, recognising uniqueness, and collaborative decision-making.

Operational: Higher education leaders' ability to influence and improve staff performance, as measured by the study instrument across four dimensions: promoting uniqueness, increasing belongingness, demonstrating appreciation, and supporting organizational efforts.

##### 1.5.2. Organisational Excellence

Conceptual: Organisational excellence as an integrated system evaluates institutional results through internal and external environmental interactions.

Operational: The sum of participants' responses across four domains: leadership, organisational culture, organisational structure, and human resource excellence.

#### 1.6. Study Scope and Limitations

**Scope:** Inclusive leadership and its relationship to organisational excellence among Jordanian university personnel in the first semester of 2025/2026.

**Limitations:** Results are dependent on the psychometric qualities of the instruments (validity and reliability), as well as the objectivity of participant responses.

## 2. Literature Review

The relevant previous studies were examined and divided into two basic categories. The first axis includes studies on inclusive leadership, while the second focuses on organisational excellence. The studies are organised chronologically, from oldest to newest.

### 2.1. Studies on Inclusive Leadership

Recent research has increasingly focused on the ways by which inclusive leadership influences organisational behaviour and employee performance.

*Interpersonal Dynamics:* Al-Atwi and Al-Hasani (2020) found that supplemental and complementary fit between leaders and followers improves inclusive leadership behaviours, with "person-environment fit" serving as a significant mediator at Al-Qadisiyah and Al-Muthanna Universities.

*Organisational Culture and Diplomacy:* According to Mahdi (2020), inclusive leadership at Al-Furat Al-Awsat Technical University operates at a moderate level, fostering team spirit and organisational diplomacy to assist employees in adapting to changing situations.

*Resilience and Change:* Mahmoud and Abdullah (2023) identified a high level of

practice at Iraqi institutions, where inclusive leadership is used as a modern administrative tool to improve organisational resilience and engage staff in decision-making.

*High-Involvement Management:* In the Jordanian context, Al-Hasanat (2023) found moderate levels of these practices at the Ministry of Health, noting their impact on risk management effectiveness through decentralisation, while Al-Attar (2023) reported high levels of high-involvement management at the Social Security Corporation. In a similar vein, Abu Qaoud (2024) attested to the Jordanian Ministry of Interior's high degree of high-involvement management, which is motivated by administrative empowerment and strategic orientation.

*Educational Sector:* Attia (2023) found a high degree of practice among school principals and a substantial association between organisational embeddedness and inclusive leadership among technical secondary school teachers in Alexandria.

## *2.2. Studies related on Organisational Excellence*

The focus of organisational excellence research has turned to the interaction between strategic management and internal capabilities.

*Strategic Leadership:* According to Aboud (2020), strategic leadership has a statistically significant impact on organisational excellence at Al-Zaytoonah University, and the level of excellence reached is high.

*Knowledge and Capabilities:* Odeh (2021) discovered a high level of institutional excellence at the Palestinian General Personnel Council, which was linked to substantial positive correlations with knowledge management techniques. Furthermore, Al-Haroub (2021) discovered a strong link between dynamic capacities and organisational excellence at private Jordanian universities, with both variables achieving high levels of implementation.

## **3. Methodology and Procedures**

This section describes the study methodology in depth, including the population and sample, the research instrument used, and the processes used to ensure the instrument's validity and reliability.

### *3.1. Research Methodology*

The study used a descriptive-analytical correlational approach, which is appropriate for the nature of the research. A survey-based data-collecting strategy was used to acquire information from study participants.

### *3.2. Study Population*

The study population included all personnel from public universities in Jordan's northern region. The overall population is 6,616 people, with 2,493 academic personnel and 4,123 administrative staff (source: Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research).

### *3.3. Research Instrument*

The study used a dual-axis questionnaire designed to assess the key variables. The Inclusive Leadership axis consisted of four domains: promoting uniqueness (support, diversity, and empowerment), fostering belongingness (equity and participation), demonstrating appreciation, and supporting organisational efforts. The organisational excellence axis assessed four dimensions: leadership, organisational culture, structure,

and human resource excellence.

### 3.4. Validity and Reliability

To assure the instrument's scientific rigour, a panel of ten expert arbitrators from Jordanian universities specialising in education and public administration determined content validity; items were modified based on an 80% agreement on clarity and thematic relevance. Internal consistency was then tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded reliability values ranging from 0.87 to 0.91. These results demonstrate that the instrument is highly stable and statistically acceptable for the study's objectives.

## 4. Discussion of the Results

This section shows the outcomes of the study in the order of its research questions, as follows:

### 4.1. Results of the First Question and Discussion

What is the degree to which Jordanian higher education institutions practise inclusive leadership, according to their employees? To answer this question, means, standard deviations, and overall degree were computed. The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Shows the Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, Rank, and Degree of the Dimensions of Inclusive Leadership in Descending Order.**

No.	Dimension	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Degree
1	Promoting uniqueness/differentiation: includes (supporting employees, promoting diversity, empowering employees, and professional development of employees)	3.65	0.91	1	Moderate
2	Promoting belonging: includes (justice and equality, relationship building, and participation in decision-making)	3.64	0.92	2	Moderate
3	Showing appreciation: includes (appreciating employees' efforts and contributions)	3.61	0.89	3	Moderate
4	Supporting organizational efforts: includes (openness to organizational change and promoting the institution's mission toward inclusion)	3.50	0.94	4	Moderate
	Overall	3.60	0.76		Moderate

According to Table 1, the general level of inclusive leadership practice in Jordanian higher education institutions was moderate from the perspective of employees. The mean scores across all parameters varied from 3.50 to 3.65, indicating a reasonable amount of practice. Fostering uniqueness/differentiation was rated first among the dimensions ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 0.91$ ), followed by fostering belonging ( $M = 3.64$ ,  $SD = 0.92$ ), demonstrating appreciation ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 0.89$ ), and supporting organisational efforts ( $M = 3.50$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ ).

These findings could reflect employees' beliefs that leadership practices in higher education institutions are still somewhat traditional, limiting the full implementation of inclusive behaviours, including employee support, diversity promotion, empowerment, and professional growth. Similarly, perceptions of fairness and equality, connection building, participation in decision-making, and recognition of employees' accomplishments do not appear to be sufficient to increase their sense of belonging. Furthermore, organisational support, as evidenced by an openness to organisational change and

the promotion of an institutional mission of inclusiveness, has yet to meet employees' expectations for increased organisational commitment.

This conclusion is consistent with research by Mahdi (2020) and Al-Hasanat (2023), who both found a moderate level of inclusive leadership practice. However, it differs from numerous recent studies (e.g., Abu Qaoud, 2024; Al-Attar, 2023; Attia, 2023; Mahmoud & Abdullah, 2023) that found a high level of inclusive leadership practice.

#### *4.2. Results of the Second Research Question and Discussion*

Research Question Two: How do Jordanian higher education personnel perceive organisational excellence? To answer this question, the means, standard deviations, and levels were computed. The results are presented in Table (2).

**Table 2: Means, Standard Deviations, Rank, and Level of Organisational Excellence Domains in Higher Education Institutions, Ordered Descendingly.**

No.	Domain	Mean	Standard Deviation	Rank	Level
4	Human Resources Excellence	3.66	0.85	1	Moderate
2	Organizational Culture Excellence	3.63	0.82	2	Moderate
3	Organizational Structure Excellence	3.60	0.88	3	Moderate
1	Leadership Excellence	3.56	0.90	4	Moderate
	Total	3.61	0.70		Moderate

Table (2) shows that the overall degree of organisational excellence in Jordanian higher education institutions, according to employees, was modest, with a mean of 3.61 and a standard deviation of 0.70. The means of the excellence domains ranged from 3.56 to 3.66, with all domains ranked moderately. Human Resource Excellence was ranked first ( $M = 3.66$ ,  $SD = 0.85$ ), followed by Organisational Culture Excellence ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 0.82$ ), Organisational Structure Excellence ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ), and Leadership Excellence ( $M = 3.56$ ,  $SD = 0.90$ ).

These findings may be attributable to the scarcity of environmental and administrative criteria necessary for organisational success. Furthermore, institutions continue to use old hierarchical structures that reflect bureaucratic procedures, which may impede exceptional employee performance. Employees may also believe that leadership approaches are not adequately distinguished, owing to the continuous reliance on traditional processes for appointing academic and administrative leaders. These findings contrast with those of Aboud (2020), Odeh (2021), and Al-Haroub (2021), all of whom indicated high levels of institutional excellence.

#### *4.3. Results for the Third Research Question and Discussion*

Research Question Three: Is there a significant link ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) between inclusive leadership practices and organisational excellence in Jordanian higher education institutions? To answer this topic, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to investigate the association between inclusive leadership practices and organisational excellence in Jordanian higher education institutions.

The study found a substantial positive link ( $p \leq 0.01$ ) between inclusive leadership practices and organisational excellence. This shows that promoting inclusive leadership behaviours directly increases staff performance, boosting total institutional excellence. This finding is attributed to the fact that increasing awareness of inclusive practices and providing a supportive work environment are primary drivers

for optimising institutional outcomes, particularly as Jordanian higher education's culture of inclusion remains critical for sustaining competitive excellence.

**Table 3: Shows the Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the Relationship between Inclusive Leadership Practice and Organisational Excellence in Jordanian Higher Education Institutions.**

Variable	Correlation Coefficient	Leadership Excellence	Organizational Culture Excellence	Organizational Structure Excellence	Human Resources Excellence	Total
Promoting Uniqueness	Pearson Correlation	.563**	.697**	.684**	.729**	.762**
Promoting Belonging	Pearson Correlation	.647**	.702**	.682**	.765**	.784**
Showing Appreciation	Pearson Correlation	.586**	.711**	.706**	.749**	.754**
Supporting Organizational Efforts	Pearson Correlation	.625**	.627**	.642**	.791**	.654**
Total	Pearson Correlation	.648**	.786**	.780**	.827**	.659**

Pearson correlation coefficient for Jordanian higher education institutions' levels of organisational excellence and inclusive leadership practice.  
 \* Significant at the 0.05 level, \*\* Significant at the 0.01 level.

#### 4.4. Recommendations

The study suggests implementing inclusive leadership as a formal administrative strategy and raising awareness of its importance among academic leaders to improve decision-making quality, as well as incentivising employees to pursue continuous development and implementing organisational excellence standards to boost international competitiveness. Furthermore, it emphasises creating a technologically supportive environment for innovation, developing specialised training programmes for leaders on inclusive dimensions and strategic thinking, and encouraging future research into the relationship between inclusive leadership and other variables such as administrative creativity and Total Quality Management (TQM).

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