Educational Leadership Mediating Role in Strategic Change Management and Employee Performance in Comprehensive Universities of Ethiopia

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Abstract
Purpose: For an organization long term survival required competitive advantages that are based on strategic change management adoption. Present study was based on the mediating role of educational leadership in between strategic change management and employee performance in comprehensive universities of Ethiopia. **Design/ Methodology/ Approach:** Research used both qualitative and quantitative research approach. In qualitative researchers adopted the exploratory design. For analysis of mediating role of educational leadership STATA 20 was used statistical software and SEM was used as statistical tool. **Finding:** Results of SEM model manifested that educational leadership fully mediate the relation between strategic change management and employee performance in comprehensive universities of Ethiopia. Because of educational leadership employee performance was enhanced in comprehensive universities of Ethiopia. To support the argument researcher used the direct effect, indirect effect and total effects. Study results will be footing steps for other higher education institutes in Africa in implementation of strategic change management.**Originality:** Post COVID-19 period paved the necessity for structural changes in Ethiopia higher education. Therefore in light of education sector development plan (ESDP-6) present study in unique and original in its self.
Keywords: Educational Leadership, Strategic Change Management, Employee Performance.
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INTRODUCTION
Change is inevitable and organizations in the modern world are operating under ever changing demands. However, to achieve desirable and intended outcomes, change must be strategic in nature (Al-Ali et. al., 2017). Strategic Change management is a systematic approach used to leverage the benefits of change. It is also viewed that the systematic approach will better manage the change process with the intention of positively improving employee performance (Turner, 2022).

In Africa, most of African countries have undergone strategic changes because of presence of Universities educational system through institutional learning. In order to compete globally, universities have embraced change management factors especially through educational leadership (Kumalo & Scheepers, 2020). Origin of change management theories started with Kotter. Kotter (1996) presented eight steps to produce a successful change of any magnitude in organizations (Thu & Thu, 2022).Strategic change is one of them. Management textbooks begin their discussions on how the field of managing change developed with Lewin's classic model' and use it as an organizing schema. Kurt Lewin is widely considered the founding father of change management, with his unfreeze–change–refreeze or 'changing as three steps 'that further paved the way for strategic change management (Cummings et. al., 2016; Bazzi, 2022).

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:
Previous researches have contradictory evidences in there outcomes. Some researchers showed the positive and statistical significant relationship between the strategic change management and the employee performance. But some researchers showed the negative relationship between the strategic change management and the employee performance. Likewise Wachira, et. al. (2017) study revealed that strategic change management has a significant effect on the employee performance. The findings established positive relationship between strategic change management and the employee performance.

Karanja (2015) findings revealed that employee performance is been positively influenced by strategic change management. The variable that changed the most and influenced employee performance positively is educational leadership (Muliati et.al, 2022). Daniel (2019) study concludes that strategic change is inevitable in educational institutes and catalyzed by the educational leadership. Onyemaechi (2018) study results indicate that the extent that employees have access to change management practices is positively related to the educational leadership adoption. Firm performance is positively associated to the educational leadership adoption.

In Africa, the service industry is undergoing strategic changes in the areas of educational leadership and it is influencing the performance of the employees. The educational leadership has affected employees because it enhances the skills, qualification, education, experience successfully (Chen & Nkurunziza , 2015; Asbari et.al., 2021; Haq et.al., 2022).

SEMANTIC MODEL:
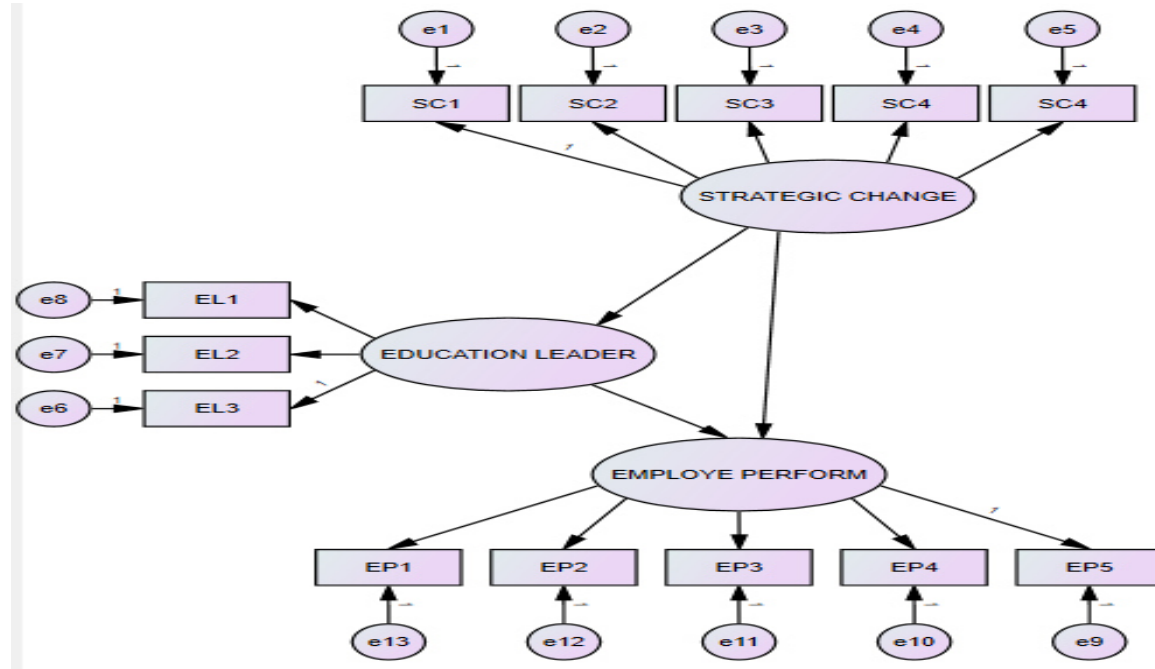
HYPOTHESES:
H_{01}: There is no significant relation between strategic change management and employee performance.
H_1: There is significant relation between structural change management and employee performance.
H_{02}: There is no significant mediating role of educational leadership between strategic change management and employee performance.
H_2: There is significant mediating role of educational leadership between strategic change management and employee performance.

RESEARCH DESIGN
The study will adopt descriptive and explanatory research design. Descriptive design is appropriate because the discovery of answers to questions relating to demographic characteristics that define the respondents. Descriptive study concerned with the views of a person towards effect of change management on employee performance. Explanatory research design will also used to explain the relationship and effect between the variables and the results of the research.

RESEARCH APPROACH
The study used the mixed research approach that is best suited for the present research. Qualitative approach used to gather data in the form of structured questionnaire. On the other hand quantitative research approaches found to be suitable of explaining the association or relationship between the change management and employee performance.

DESCRIPTION OF STUDY AREA
As a comprehensive university of Ethiopia, Bule Hora University is located 470 km south of Addis Ababa in Bule Hora town, West Guji Zone, Oromia Regional State. The zone is divided into two agro-ecological zones namely, semi-arid lowlands to the south and the more humid lands at higher altitudes to the north (Gelchu, 2022)). Since the construction of BHU delayed beyond expected completion time, the university started functioning in the campus of Bule Hora College of Teachers Education with a total of 243 regular and 116 weekend degree students in 4 faculties in 2011/12(2004E.C) academic year; and transferred to its own campus in September 2012 (Dereso & Kant, 2022).

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT
QUESTIONNAIRE

Structured or close-ended questions are the questions with a list of all possible alternatives from which respondents select the answer that best describes their situation. They are easier to analyze since they are in an immediate form, the questioners have two sections:

TARGET POPULATION

The study populations of the study were the staff of the Bule Hora University at head office that has experienced in various form of organization change. The total populations of the employees in Bule Hora University at head office are 1065.

SAMPLING SIZE

The sample size is the actual respondents representing the whole target population. After determining the entire population for the study (i.e. 1035) sample size is calculated by using the Slovins formula (Anand & Mishra, 2022) accordingly,

$$n=\frac{N}{1+N\,(e)\,2}$$
$$1+1035\,(0.05)2$$
$$n=275$$

DATA ANALYSIS TOOL:

STATA 20 was used as a powerful structural equation modeling (SEM) software helping support the present research and theories by extending standard multivariate analysis methods, including regression, factor analysis, correlation and analysis of variance.
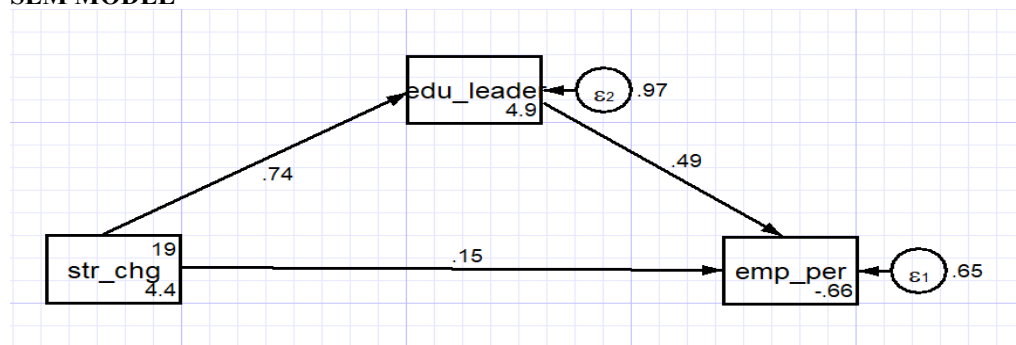
STRUCTURAL EQUATION

Structural equation model   Number of obs   =   275
Estimation method = ml
Log likelihood   = -1311.186

```
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
              |             OIM
              |    Coef.  Std. Err.    z   P>|z|   [95% Conf. Interval]
--------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
Structural    |
 emp_per <-   |
   edu_leader | .4904029  .0492921    9.95  0.000   .3937922   .5870136
       str_chg| .1492649  .0431785    3.46  0.001   .0646366   .2338933
       _cons | -.6632388  .5061496   -1.31  0.190  -1.655274   .3287963
--------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
 edu_leader <-|
       str_chg| .7396552  .0282996   26.14  0.000    .684189   .7951214
       _cons | 4.91931   .5435239    9.05  0.000   3.854023   5.984598
--------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
  var(e.emp_per)| .648949  .0553426            .5490601   .7670105
var(e.edu_leader)| .9712339  .0828271            .8217375  1.147928
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------
LR test of model vs. saturated: chi2(0)   =     0.00, Prob > chi2 =    .
```

In the above Structural equation model P>|z| values for educational leadership, strategic change and employee performance were (at 95% Confidence Interval) are below 0.005. It means educational leadership; strategic change and employee performance have significant relationship with respect to each other. Coefficient between strategic change and employee performance was 0.14926 in the direct relation and showing the week relationship. Coefficient between strategic change and educational leadership was 0.7396552 with a strong correlation value. Coefficient between educational leadership and employee performance was 0.4904029 is showing the moderate relationship.

SEM MODEL

DIRECT EFFECTS

```
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
             |            OIM
             |    Coef.  Std. Err.    z   P>|z|    [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
Structural   |
  emp_per <- |
   edu_leader| .4904029  .0492921   9.95  0.000   .3937922   .5870136
      str_chg| .1492649  .0431785   3.46  0.001   .0646366   .2338933
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
  edu_leader <- |
      str_chg| .7396552  .0282996  26.14  0.000    .684189   .7951214
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

Direct effect between strategic change and employee performance was 0.14926.But indirect effect between strategic change and employee performance was .3627291. This was much higher and significant. These positive improvements are observed in employee performance was because of educational leadership. P-value also showed significant with less than 0.005 values..

INDIRECT EFFECTS

```
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
             |            OIM
             |    Coef.  Std. Err.    z   P>|z|    [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
Structural   |
  emp_per <- |
   edu_leader|       0  (no path)
      str_chg| .3627291  .0390112   9.30  0.000   .2862685  .4391896
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
  edu_leader <- |
      str_chg|       0  (no path)
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

Indirect effect between strategic change and employee performance was .3627291.which is multiple of 0.74 and 0.49. 0.74 (.7396552) was the relationship coefficient between strategic change and educational leadership. 0.49 (.4904029) was the relationship coefficient between educational leadership and employee performance.

TOTAL EFFECTS

```
------------------------------------------------------------------------------
             |            OIM
             |    Coef.  Std. Err.    z   P>|z|    [95% Conf. Interval]
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
Structural   |
  emp_per <- |
   edu_leader| .4904029  .0492921   9.95  0.000   .3937922   .5870136
      str_chg| .511994   .0269763  18.98  0.000   .4591215   .5648666
-------------+----------------------------------------------------------------
  edu_leader <- |
      str_chg| .7396552  .0282996  26.14  0.000    .684189   .7951214
```

Total effect was 0.7396552. This total effect is total of direct effect between strategic change and employee performance i.e 0.1492649 and indirect effect between strategic change and employee performance was 0.3627291.which is multiple of 0.74 and 0.49.

Total effect (0.7396552) = 0.1492649 + 0.3627291

EQUATION-LEVEL GOODNESS OF FIT

Equation-level goodness of fit

```
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------
            |         Variance              |
   depvars |  fitted  predicted  residual | R-squared      mc      mc2
------------+-------------------------------+-----------------------------
observed    |                               |
   emp_per |  2.038532  1.389583  .648949  | .6816587  .8256262  .6816587
 edu_leader |  3.383855  2.412621  .9712339 | .71298    .8443814  .71298
------------+-------------------------------+-----------------------------
   overall |                       | .7249333
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------
```

mc = correlation between depvar and its prediction
mc2 = mc^2 is the Bentler-Raykov squared multiple correlation coefficient

The overall R-squared value for this model was 0.7249333; it means that 72.49 % of variability in employee performance was explained by relationship between the strategic change and employee performance. The mc is equal to correlation between dependent variable and its prediction and mc2 = mc^2 is the Bentler-Raykov squared multiple correlation coefficient manifested the equation level goodness of fit.

CONCLUSION

Educational leadership, strategic change and employee performance were have significant relationship with respect to each other. Coefficient between strategic change and employee performance has direct relation and showing the week relationship. Coefficient between strategic change and educational leadership has a strong correlation value. Coefficient between educational leadership and employee performance has showing the moderate relationship.   Indirect effect between strategic change and employee performance which is multiple coefficients between strategic change and educational leadership was drastically increases because of mediating effect of educational leadership. The overall R-squared value for model was showed that variability in employee performance was explained by relationship between the strategic change and employee performance. The total effect because of employee performance was increased because of effect of educational leadership in case of comprehensive universities.

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