

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

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## Abstract

**Purpose:** Competitive advantages required for long term survival of an organization which is 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 as statistical software and SEM was used as a 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 educational institutes in Africa in implementation of strategic change management.

**Originality:** Although researchers' depicts the arguments stated from other research work to backup present research arguments. But by the knowledge of researchers no previous study conducted on educational leadership as a mediating variable in strategic change management and employee performance in geographical setting of comprehensive universities of Ethiopia.

**Keywords:** Educational Leadership, Strategic Change Management, Employee Performance.

## I 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).

Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic felt in Least Developed Countries for a long time especially in Ethiopia (Leininger et al., 2021). Without changing the present traditional education methods it's difficult to continue the learning and teaching (Nandy et al., 2021).

Thus, Post COVID-19 periods paved the inevitability for structural changes in Ethiopia higher education. In post COVID-19 periods Education sector in Ethiopia undergo strategic digital transformations in comprehensive Universities of Ethiopia (Dereso et al., 2021). During this period the Influence of Educational Leadership played a key role in Successful Change Management implementation in Educational institutes (Lerra et al., 2021). It is imperative to develop a critical reagent management strategy as even the smallest change as a response to wicked problem (Maundrell, 2021).

As an emerging economy, Ethiopia has 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. Management of change suggested by Kurt Lewin (father of change management) in the form of unfreeze–change–refreeze paved the way for strategic change management to solve the unseen problems faced by education sector during the COVID-19 pandemic (Bazzi, 2022). 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.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEWED

An educational leader serves as a guide and influences other educators in an administrative setting (Milon et al., 2021). Educational leadership is identified as networking, enhancing educational practices, calmness &

compassion, analytical & strategical thinking and transparency which are supported by educational leadership literature during the pandemic (Yokuş, 2022).

Strategic change management is the process of managing change in a structured, thoughtful way in order to meet organizational goals, objectives, and missions (Dumas & Beinecke, 2018). a change or changes to important features of an organization's business, for example because of new threats or opportunities in its market is considered as strategic change, as seen during post COVID-19 pandemic digital transformation of education system (Hanelt et al., 2021).

Employee performance is defined as how an employee fulfills their job duties and executes their required tasks (Saleem el al., 2021). It refers to the effectiveness, quality, and efficiency of their output. Performance also contributes to our assessment of how valuable an employee is to the organization (Sa'adah & Rijanti, 2022).

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 performance because it enhances the skills, qualification, education and experience successfully (Chen & Nkurunziza, 2015; Asbari et.al. 2021; Haq et.al, 2022).

Educational leadership has a mediator role between the distributed leadership behaviors of

school administrators and teachers' attitudes (Sonmez & Gokmenoglu, 2022). Mediator role of education leaders' influences the student learning, thus helps to achieve the goal of strategic change management (Leithwood & Sun, 2018). Educational leadership was predicted to be influenced by organization culture. Types of organizational cultures mediated by leadership orientations implemented in school organizations affected the employee's performance (Burhanuddin et al., 2018).

### 3 SEMANTIC MODEL

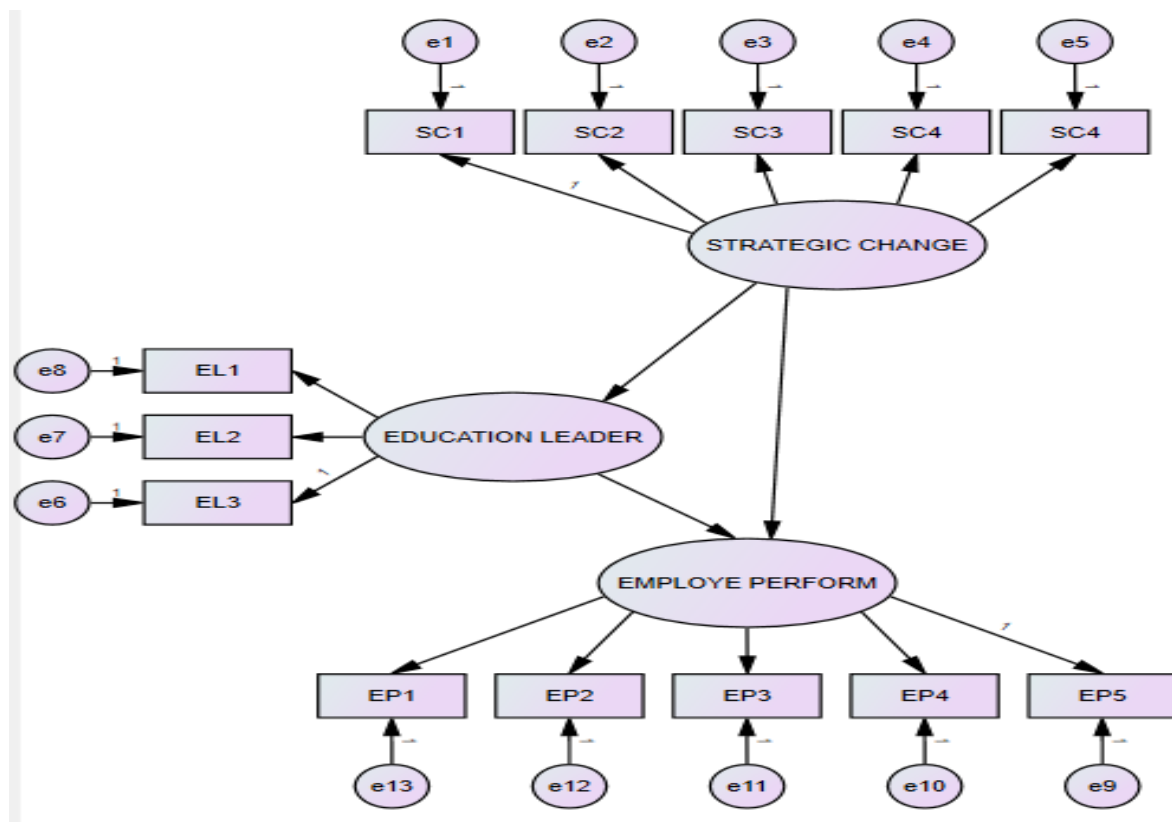


Figure 1: *Conceptual Framework*

### 4 HYPOTHESES

H01: There is no significant relation between strategic change management and employee performance.

H1: There is significant relation between structural change management and employee performance.

H02: There is no significant mediating role of educational leadership between strategic change management and employee performance.

H2: There is significant mediating role of educational leadership between strategic change management and employee performance.

[illegible]

mc2 = mc<sup>2</sup> 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 educational leadership. The mc is equal to correlation between dependent variable and its

prediction and mc2 = mc<sup>2</sup> is the Bentler-Raykov squared multiple correlation coefficient manifested the equation level goodness of fit.

## 7 Final Fit Model

Table 2: *Fitness of "Final Fit Model" Assessment based on Figure 2*

S. N	Category	Indicator	Gained Value	Acceptance Point	Decision
1.	Measure of Absolute Fit	RMSEA	0.043	< 0.05	Under acceptance
2.	Incremental fit index	CFI	0.921	Near to 1	Under acceptance
3.	Tucker-Lewis index	TLI	0.932	Near to 1	Under acceptance
4.	Parsimonious fit	$\chi^2/df$	3.803	< 5.0	Under acceptance
<b>Note: Level of Acceptance is based on Hair et al. (2012).</b>					

Source: STATA 20 Outputs (2022).

According to table 2, an absolute measure of fit presumes that the best fitting model has a fit of zero. Parsimony-adjusted index (Root Mean Square Error of Approximation) gained value for absolute fit was 0.043 that was lower than value of 0.05. the parsimonious fit ( $\chi^2/df$ ) was 3.803 which is less than 5.0 were higher than 0.90, CFI value for Incremental fit indexes was 0.921 and TLI had value of 0.932, which were close to one. All these values under acceptance level showed the confirmation of goodness of fit (GOF).

## 8 Hypothesis Testing

Table 3: *Hypothesis Outcomes*

Structural equation model	Number of observation (275)
Estimation method	ml
Log likelihood	-1311.186

Observed Information Matrix (OIM)

depvars	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	(95% Conf. Interval]
edu_leader	.4904029	.0492921	9.95	0.000	.3937922 .5870136
str_chg	.1492649	.0431785	3.46	0.001	.0646366 .2338933
_cons	-.6632388	.5051496	-1.31	0.190	-1.655274 .3287963
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

<b>var(e.edu_leader)</b>	.9712339	.0828271	--	--	.8217375	1.147928
<b>LR test of model vs. saturated: chi2(0) = 0.00, Prob &gt; chi2 = .</b>						

Source: STATA 20 Outputs (2022).

In the above Structural equation model  $P > |z|$  values for educational leadership is 0.000 and coefficient value is 0.490. P value is less than the 0.05 shows the statistically significant and positive relationship. Structural equation model  $P > |z|$  values for structural change is 0.001 and coefficient value is 0.739. P value is less than the 0.05 shows the statistically significant and positive relationship. As, 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. In statistics, the likelihood-ratio test assesses the goodness of fit. The LR test compares the log likelihoods of a model with values of the parameter a constrained to some value to a model where it is freely estimated. LR test of model vs. saturated with  $\chi^2(0)$  value was 0.00. LR test of model vs. saturated:  $\chi^2(0) = 0.00$ ,  $\text{Prob} > \chi^2 = .$  A saturated model has the best fit possible since it perfectly reproduces all of the variances, covariances and means. That's why the saturated model above has a chi-square of zero with zero degrees of freedom. Since

you can't do any better than a saturated model, it becomes the standard for comparison with the models that you estimate. So, it is interrelated that all latent variables have significant relations and H1, H2, H3 and H4 are considered as accurate.

Below figure 3 shows mediating role of strategic changes was tested with help of path diagram.

## 9 SEM MODEL:

The SEM model as act as a baseline model, that brings us to the baseline model. This is defined in the STATA [SEM] Structural Equation Modeling Reference Manual as a model which includes the means and variances of all observed variables plus the covariances of all observed exogenous variables.

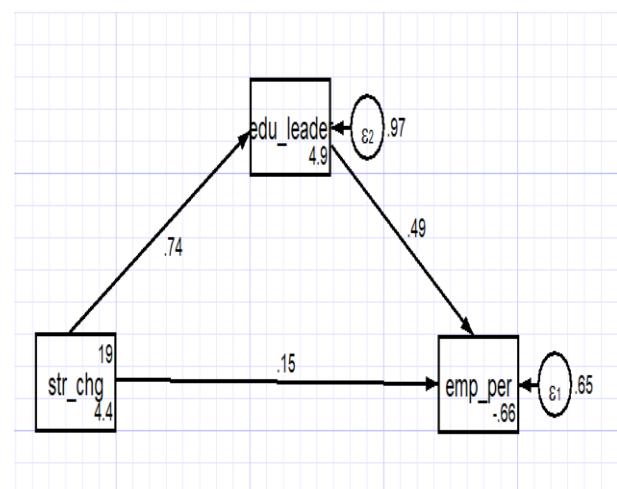


Figure 2: Baseline Model (SEM model)

### 9.1 DIRECT EFFECTS

Table 4: Direct Effects

Observed Information Matrix (OIM)

Structural	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	$P >  z $	[95% Conf.	Interval]
<b>emp_per &lt;-</b>						
<b>edu_leader</b>	.4904029	.0492921	9.95	0.000	.3937922	.5870136
<b>str_chg</b>	.1492649	.0431785	3.46	0.001	.0646366	.2338933

<b>edu_leader &lt;-</b>						
<b>str_chg</b>	.7396552	.0282996	26.14	0.000	.684189	.7951214

Source: STATA 20 Outputs (2022).

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..

## 9.2 INDIRECT EFFECTS

Table 5: *Indirect Effects*

Observed Information Matrix (OIM)

Structural	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
<b>emp_per &lt;-</b>						
<b>edu_leader</b>	0 (no path)					
<b>str_chg</b>	.3627291	.0390112	9.30	0.000	.2862685	.4391896
<b>edu_leader &lt;-</b>						
<b>str_chg</b>	0 (no path)					

Source: STATA 20 Outputs (2022).

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.

## 9.3 TOTAL EFFECTS

Table 6: *Total Effects*

Observed Information Matrix (OIM)

Structural	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P> z	[95% Conf.	Interval]
<b>emp_per &lt;-</b>						
<b>edu_leader</b>	.4904029	.0492921	9.95	0.000	.3937922	.5870136
<b>str_chg</b>	.511994	.0269763	18.98	0.000	.4591215	.5648666
<b>edu_leader &lt;-</b>						
<b>str_chg</b>	.7396552	.0282996	26.14	0.000	.684189	.7951214

Source: STATA 20 Outputs (2022).

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.

$$\text{Total effect (0.7396552)} = 0.1492649 + 0.3627291$$

## 10 Result and Discussion:

The results of direct, indirect and total effects presented in above tables show that the determinants of structural change management have affirmative and considerable direct influence on the employee performance. In investigating the indirect influence of structural change management on the employee

performance, the findings show that the Education leadership in educational institutes fully mediated the relationship by having the indirect influences of  $\beta = 0.362$  with  $p < 0.01$ , respectively. Indirect path is more momentous than direct path. Maximum evidence for mediation is found. The influence of Educational leadership as a middle variable on the association among this determinants and the employee performance was found to be significant. Thus, outcomes manifested that Educational leadership mediates the association among structural change management and employee performance in comprehensive Universities of Ethiopia.

Outcomes of investigation demonstrated that all the conditions for goodness of fit indices models includes GFI, AGFI, and CMIN/DF have rallied the requirements. However, based on parsimony assumption, present model has been acknowledged as it is and not required any modifications in the basic model (Hair et al., 2014). For that reason, it can be understood and accepted that the model has en suite with standard criteria of a best model. It means that model was used to bring out the estimations and further explanation of the results of research. Structural equation model testing results briefly can be presented sequentially.

Based on Table 3, it can be revealed that statistically the four hypotheses framed were empirically supported with help of all resultants in an acceptance level. The relationship among variables depicted with the criteria of value of probability (prob.) were lesser than standard requirement (prob.  $< 0.05$ ), then it is followed by z-value which was also found under the acceptance level. The level impact of strategic change management variable on employee performance can be seen from its path coefficient of 0.1492, and probability value (prob.) that was smaller than  $\alpha$  standard ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ). Thus, outcome results provide evidence that first hypothesis (H1) projected was accepted and supported by empirical data. The direction of influence was found to be positive and statistically significant.

The illustrative elucidation of SEM path diagram revealed that direct path shows less

extensively association but the indirect paths exposed more noteworthy relation. Thus it manifested that educational leadership fully mediated the independent and dependent variables.

As per the table 3 (hypotheses outcomes) it is apparent that a statistically positive and strong relationship found between the employees performance and strategic changes imparted by the university. Thus alternative Hypothesis 1 (H1) was accepted and null hypothesis H01 was rejected. STATA output of SEM indicates that strategic change management practiced by the Bule Hora university is responsible for enhancing employees performance in the study area as  $p < 0.001$  level. Similarly, other considerable association found and revealed that educational leadership fully mediates the relation between Strategic change management and employees performance. Thus, assumption H2 was supported and H02 was rejected. There is a considerable connection found among educational leadership and employees performance with p value is 0.000. Also, there is a considerable affiliation found among educational leadership and strategic change management. Similarly all hypotheses were shown a considerable statistical significant association in a affirmative direction. Results also demonstrated that educational leadership mediates the association among strategic change management and employees performance for the reason that indirect path is more significant than direct path. Educational leadership also mediates the relationship between change management and employees performance because direct path is not significant but indirect path is more significant. Thus educational leadership fully mediated the variables. The outcomes of present research was in consistent with earlier studies like by Chen & Nkurunziza (2015); Asbari et.al. (2021) and Haq et.al, (2022) that external environment dynamics factors will be improved company competitiveness. The findings of this study also support the findings of previous studies which concluded that the management of strategic changes and educational leadership together can have an effect on employee



performance (Sonmez & Gokmenoglu, 2022; Burhanuddin et al., 2018).

The result of this study provides empirical evidences that strategic change management is an imperative constituent that affected employee's performance direct or indirect in light of educational leadership. Related to this fact, educational institutes must be considered this result to develop educational leadership. Improved educational leadership can nurture better employee's performance. For the time being, the employee's performance can be looked from the level of efficiency, effectiveness, employee's productivity and other related criteria's. Related to these findings, it was asserted that management of strategic change will be given a huge effect on educational leadership and employee's performance including higher educational and additional institutes.

## II 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 weak 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.

## 12 Limitations

Study is limited to geographical setting of the Ethiopia. Also it is centered towards the comprehensive universities of the Ethiopia. Internal validity of data is under question because respondent's responses may be affected by the anxiety of prevailing COVID-19 panic.

## 13 Acknowledgements

The authors are thankful for the respondents of Bule Hora University, Ethiopia for their valuable contribution in providing the timely responses even in COVID-19 pandemic difficult time. Present research was self sponsored by the authors.

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