

## The Relationship Between Change Leadership Practices and Organizational Commitment in The Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum, Sudan

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### Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the relationship between change leadership practices and staffs' organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum. To achieve the purpose of the study, a survey research design was employed. Among 239 staff members at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum, data were collected from 106 (44.00%) respondents using close-ended questionnaire. Data collected were analyzed using one sample t-test and Pearson correlation coefficient. The result of the study indicated that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has practiced change leadership. The study revealed that the level of staff organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum was high. Furthermore, the study's findings indicated that change leadership practices had a positive and low relationship with staffs' organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum. Besides, the study recommended that change leadership practices need to have committed staff members to achieve change vision and goals effectively. As a result, university leaders and researchers should consider the staff's commitment while trying to introduce change initiatives or design change strategies in the university.

**Keywords:** Change leadership; organizational commitment; staff members.

### 1. Introduction

Secondary education is a significant and exclusive level. Change defines as the conversion of organizations about certain things from their current situations into other situations (Gilia, 2016). To be nimble innovating and introducing more sustainable methods and procedures, organizations need to change processes (Redding, 2012). Similarly, higher education institutions are not immune to these changes as they work in an ever-changing environment: information, technological, administrative, etc. Temple (2011) stated that like other organizations, universities are also under a series of changes to guarantee their contribution and societal

relevance. Ramaley (2014) confirmed that universities are changing in today's world because the world itself is changing, and complex problems confront us daily. This shows that major changes in universities need to be prepared, enforced, and sustained to turn the universities into institutions that can function effectively and efficiently in the tumultuous climate (Ghasemy & Hussin, 2014).

Kotter (1996) in his theory discussed the practices of change leadership in terms of creating the climate for change by creating a sense of urgency, forming a powerful guiding coalition, developing and communicating a vision, engaging and enabling the whole organization by removing obstacles, and implementing and sustaining change by building on change. Also, Robbins (2001) (as cited in Genie, 2019) stated that building and

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communicating a shared vision, building a supportive environment, redesigning/adjusting the organization, and performance are dimensions of basic leadership behaviors and competencies that all successful leaders should behave while leading change. In addition, Herold, Fedor, Caldwell, and Liu (2008) proved that most of the change leadership behaviors such as communicating the plan for the change, building a guiding coalition, developing a sense of urgency or a compelling rationale for the change, and providing support are linked to commitment or support for the change. As a result, change leadership in higher education institutions needs committed faculty members who can accomplish the goals (Aydin, Sarier & Uysal, 2013).

Organizational commitment at universities has recently started to attract growing attention (Tekin, Kayacan & Bektas, 2014), because the level of staff commitment in higher education is crucial for any efforts of change to succeed (Ashkenas, Siegal & Spiegel, 2013), due to a staff with a low commitment level often put his interest first instead of his duties and responsibilities (Ganesan, 2009), and because committed staff could demonstrate positive work behaviors (Selamat & Nordin, 2012). This organizational commitment identified the degree of loyalty, strength of identity, and obligation towards a common goal and the level of engagement and willingness to make efforts to accomplish that goal (Mowday, Steers & Porter, 1979; Camp, 1994; Hulpia, Devos & Rosseel, 2009). In this respect, staff members with high affective commitment are less likely to leave their organizations (Nehmeh, 2009; Vandenberghe & Tremblay, 2008), and value organizational goals and vision (Enriquez et al., 2001). Also, a high degree of continuance commitment leads staff members to be aware of the costs of discontinuing membership (Reza, 2010). Koul (2016) claimed that workers with a strong

normative commitment continue to work at the organization as proper behavior and obligation. That is, a lack of organizational commitment can reduce organizational effectiveness (Banjarnahor et al., 2018). Hence, change leaders often depend on the commitment of their staff (Bennet & Durkin, 2000).

There is evidence of the relationship between change and organizational commitment. However, the evidence for whether this relationship is direct or indirect is mixed. Cohen and Lilach (2011) reported that more organizationally committed Israeli teachers were more likely to participate in an optional change in their educational system than those who were less committed. Employee readiness for change was positively linked to organizational commitment, according to Madsen et al. (2005). The participation dimension of engagement had the best relationship with change readiness in this report. Also, it appears that the extent of change influences the effect of change on organizational commitment. Fedor et al. (2006) found that when a change has a beneficial effect, when the change is significant, and when the change affects the recipients' working conditions, organizational commitment is especially likely to be affected. According to Jaros (2010) argues that current and future research must take into account and explain this critical dimensionality of change commitment. To be able to understand the role of staff commitment, it would be wise to look at the behavior of managers in the change process. This ultimately provides us with a better understanding of how change leadership practitioners should focus their efforts to maintain organizational commitment during times of change (Visagie & Steyn, 2011). Prior research also suggests that organizational commitment is instrumental in achieving change; the more the staff is committed to the organization, the more he/she is willing to

accept change (Iverson, 1996). Hence, for the importance of the efficiency and persistence of higher education institutions, the researcher attempt to study change leadership practices and organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum.

McRoy and Gibbs (2003) suggest that leadership plays a central and important function in the change process in higher education. Indeed, higher education institutions need leaders who have the skills, characteristics, and talents to lead change (Kezar, 2014; Lawler & Worley, 2006). Sibhato and Singh (2012) assessed the implementation of change at Mekelle and Aksum Universities. They identified a lack of staff training, false reports to outsiders that hide actual progress of implementation, frustration with slow results on behalf of the top management, and lack of top management determination and enthusiasm. Asgedom and Hagos (2013) pointed out that most change initiatives lack the support of considerable academic staff as well as the commitment and leadership qualities to implement.

According to Burke (2014), a change leader is supposed to create a positive working environment, increase motivation, decrease change-related problems at a minimum level and so increase the organizational commitment of staff. As a result, having difficulties in change leadership in higher education can negatively affect the efficiency of organizations as well as the mood and efficiency of staff and their OC (Business week, 2005).

The above perspectives and discussions gave the researcher a strong motivation to conduct this study to enhance the importance and understanding of change leadership practices and staff organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum. Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to assess the status of the change leadership

practices at the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum; staffs' organizational commitment; the relationships among the change leadership practices and staffs' organizational commitment. In line with this, the following research questions were specified:

- a. How do staff members perceive change leadership practices at the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum?
- b. What is the level of staff organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum?
- c. Is there a statistically significant relationship between the change leadership practices and staff organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum?

## **2. Method**

The study followed survey research design. According to Creswell (2012), a survey research design are procedures in quantitative research in which investigators administer a survey to a sample or to the entire population of people to describe the attitudes, opinions, behaviors, or characteristics of the population. Hence, in this study the quantitative data was collected through questionnaires to offers answers to questions of the frequency of a phenomenon being tested.

The population of this study was targeting all staff members in the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum. Therefore, from the total population 239 of staff members in the Faculty of Education, a sample size of 106 respondents was optimal for this study, which represents (44.00%). The staff members were selected by stratified random sampling because in this type all members of the population stood a chance of being selected. The stratification variable of interest is sex of staff members, with two subgroups—male, and female. The researcher classified staff

members into the subgroups. Of the 239 staff members, 49%, or 117, are male staff members and 51%, or 122, are female staff members. Because we want proportional representation, in this study 49% of the sample (52 staff members) was male staff members, and 51% (54 staff members) were female staff members. A closed-ended questionnaire was employed to answer the research questions raised of the study. This questionnaire comprised two parts, namely; 1/ Change Leadership Practices; The researcher developed this questionnaire according to Kotter's leading change model after back to some related literature like Hurd (2007), Liu (2010), Herold et al. (2008). This questionnaire consisted of three phases: create a climate for change, engage and enable the whole organization, and implementing and sustaining change. Respondents were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) that was used for all items under each phase. The questionnaire comprises in total 27-items (nine items for each dimension of leading change). 2/ Organizational Commitment; A revised version of the organizational commitment scale by Allen, Meyer & Smith (1993), which is a standardized questionnaire consisted of three dimensions: affective commitment, continuance commitment, and normative commitment. Affective commitment measured the desire of staff to remain with the university. Normative commitment measured the obligation of staff to stay in the university. Continuance commitment measured recognition of the costs of leaving the university. Respondents were asked to rate on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) used for all items under organizational commitment, which comprises 18-items (six items for each dimension of organizational commitment). The reliability of the questionnaire was assessed by using Cronbach's Alpha

coefficient. Therefore, the Cronbach's alpha for the entire questionnaire was 0.957. Churchill (1979) stated that high alpha values indicate that the items are highly correlated with accurate scores. This means that the result of the reliability was acceptable; therefore, the questionnaire was valid to be applied. The data collected was analyzed using one sample t-test.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

Examining the practices of change leadership at the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum was the first research question. The change leadership practices have examined in terms of three dimensions: create a climate for change, engage and enable the whole university, and implementing and sustaining change. To this end, a one-sample t-test was employed for aggregate change leadership practices and their sub-dimensions to have a better understanding of the magnitude of their practices at the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum.

The change leadership practices in the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum were the first research question set for empirical explanations. The mean values of each dimension of change leadership practices (create a climate for change  $m = 33.09$ , engage and enable the whole Faculty  $m = 31.83$ , and implementing and sustaining change  $m = 32.66$ ) were significantly higher than their respective test values which were (27) for all of them at their respective  $t(105) = 7.722, 5.923, 7.009, p < .05$ . The results imply that create a climate for change, engage and enable the whole Faculty and implementing and sustaining change were practiced at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum.

Besides, the mean of the aggregate score of change leadership practices (97.58) was also significantly greater than the expected test value (81) at  $t(105) = 7.179, p < .05$ . Since the aggregate mean value was significantly higher

than its test value, the result shows that the change leadership was practiced at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum with its different dimensions. The result of this study agreed with the study of Saqqa (2011) in that the change leadership of the academic leaders from the point of view of the faculty members was high in the Umm Al-Qura University. Al-Lihyani (2011) found that the heads of departments in the Faculties of Education practice change to a high degree. The empirical study of Abu Samra (2014) also indicated the degree of practicing change leadership to the heads of academic departments in Palestinian universities from their prospective was (4.01) and rated (%80.27), and this meant that there was a high degree of approval. Another study by Al-Qarni (2016) revealed that the reality of the practice of the heads of academic departments at Tabuk University for the change leadership from the viewpoint of faculty members was high. In contrast, the result of this study opposed to the result of Al-Thubaiti (2017) in that the degree of change leadership in educational administration departments in Saudi universities was moderate.

The level of organizational commitment among staff members in the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum was the second research question. the mean scores of the affective commitment, continuance commitment and normative commitment were found to be significantly higher than the respective Test values (18) with ( $t=18.219, 2.029$  and  $17.386$ ) at  $p<0.05$ . This means the degree of staff affective; continuance and normative commitment in the Faculty of Education were high. Also, the overall mean score of organizational commitment (67.49) was also significantly greater than the expected test value (54) with ( $t= 18.752$  and  $p<.05$ ). This means the degree

of staff organizational commitment in the Faculty of Education, University of Khartoum was high. This can be explained by fact that the staff members had a strong sense of belonging to the Faculty of Education, and they would not leave the university right now because they have a sense of obligation to the staff in it. Also, most of the staff members have graduated from the University of Khartoum and appointed in the same university, so they feel the university deserves their loyalty.

The result of the current study seems to agree with the result of Koc (2018) who found that the level of organizational commitment was high, and they had the most emotional commitment, followed by normative commitment and continuing commitment. Lorch (2019) showed high rates of organizational commitment at Arkansas faculty. Supporting this, Koul (2016) revealed that commitment ratings for substantive participation were the highest in select Government Colleges of Chandigarh. Also, Gamer (2015) showed that the organizational commitment was a high degree among staff members at Dongola University. Similarly, Yahaya, Chek, Samsudin, & Jizat (2014) revealed that the commitment level of faculty members was high in a Malaysian public higher education. In differ with the result of this study, Fika, Ibi, & Abdulrahman (2016) found that the level of staff commitment in Borno State Colleges of Education was low. Also, Kassaw, & Golga (2019) revealed a moderate level of organizational commitment among academic staff at the Haramaya University.

Investigating the relationship between change leadership practices and organizational commitment was the third research question raised to be assessed. In this regard, the Pearson correlation coefficient was used to investigate the nature of the relationship

between change leadership practices and organizational commitment as positive or negative or no relationship at all between them, and to measure the strength of a relationship between two variables. Considering that correlation of 0.90 to 1.00 Very high correlation; 0.70 to 0.89 High correlation; 0.50 to 0.69 Moderate correlation; 0.30 to 0.49 Low correlation; and 0.00 to 0.29 little if any correlation. from correlation analysis of the change leadership practices and dimensions of organizational commitment. The results of correlation analysis revealed that, at 0.01 alpha level, the change leadership practices were positively correlated with the dimensions of organizational commitment labeled as affective commitment, normative commitment, and continuance commitment ( $p < 0.01$ ). Table 3 also, indicates that the change leadership practices were positively correlated with the overall organizational commitment ( $p < 0.01$ ). Moreover, the result of correlation analysis, in the same table, uncovered that except in the case of the continuance commitment which negatively correlated with the affective commitment, the scores of some of the other dimensions of organizational commitment were positively and significantly correlated among themselves.

Furthermore, the change leadership practices were little correlated with the affective commitment, at  $r = 0.190$  and  $p < 0.01$ . Also, change leadership practices were low correlated with the normative commitment, at  $r = 0.308$  and  $p < 0.01$ . The correlation between the change leadership practices and continuance commitment also is little at  $r = 0.113$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . The result of correlation analysis, in the same table 3 revealed that the change leadership practices were low correlated with the overall organizational commitment at  $r = 0.315$ ,  $p < 0.01$ . This indicates that there was a positive and low relationship between change

leadership practices and organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum. The meaning is that as change leadership practices increase by one level, the opportunity to have committed staff is fairly weak.

Some previous researches support the result of current study such as; Avolio, Zhu, Koh, and Bhatia (2004) in the research they conducted with 520 participants, examined whether psychological empowerment mediated the effects of leadership on followers' organizational commitment. They derived a significant and positive relationship between leadership style and organizational commitment. In the same way, Lines, R. (2004) argues that involvement in strategic change processes is often believed to have a range of positive implications for decision quality, affective reaction to change, and progress in implementing strategic change. The findings indicate a robust positive relationship between engagement and achievement of goals and organizational commitment, and a strong negative relationship with resistance to change. Besides, Cohen and Lilach (2011) found that more organizationally committed Israeli teachers were more likely than less committed teachers to participate in an optional change in their educational system. Sofat, Kiran, and Kaushik (2015) aimed to study different change initiatives and their impact on organization commitment in India. The study found that initiatives taken during change were correlated significantly to organizational commitment. Also, Savas, Kosker, Demir, and Utar (2015) aimed to analyze teachers' perception regarding the relationship between change leadership and organizational commitment. The study found that there is a positive correlation between the sub-dimensions of change leadership and organizational commitment.

#### **4. Conclusion**

This study was conducted to investigate the status of change leadership practices and the relationship between change leadership practices and staffs' organizational commitment. The study was carried out at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum with this intention. To achieve this purpose, survey research design was employed.

The result of the study indicated that the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum has practiced change leadership. That is meant, the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum made it clear upfront to those in each department why the change is necessary. The Faculty inspires and encourages the group to work together as a team. Also, the Faculty supports collaboration between staff members to achieve change goals. So, it is very important for college officials to involve staff members and enable the entire institution in the change process.

Moreover, the findings of the study revealed that the level of staff organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum was high. This means the staffs of the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum have a desire to work, so they expected to have a level of productivity and affective commitment. In addition, this confirms that staff members have great sense towards the goals and objectives of the University of Khartoum. So, they expected to have exemplary normative commitment.

Furthermore, the study's findings indicated that change leadership practices had a positive and low relationship with staffs' organizational commitment at the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum. This likely means that as change leadership practices increase by one level, the opportunity to have committed staff is relatively weak. This may be due to the nature of individuals in any organization to resist the change when introduced, resulting in

low acceptance of change, which leads to weak commitment.

Based on the findings of the study, the study forwarded the following recommendations; to get staff members involved in the change vision, the college officials should frequently communicate as well as implement the change vision into the day-to-day work. Accordingly, the importance of change must be embedded in the vision, strategies, and objectives of the Faculty of Education University of Khartoum. To make the change move forward, the college officials should delegate authority and decision-making, sharing information that can empower staff members to work toward the change goals.

Due to committed staff members can accomplish the goals and vision effectively. So, to enhance staffs' organizational commitment, university leaders and officials should design effective human resource policies in the university that treat all staff members as equal in the work so that can lead to increase the loyalty and obligation to the work and the university. The officials also should exert efforts to draft policies and laws that can help to improve the work-life of staff members in the university.

Besides, change leadership practices need to have committed staff members to achieve vision and goals effectively. As a result, university leaders and researchers should consider the staff's commitment while trying to introduce change initiatives or design change strategies in the university.

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