Effect of Change Management Practices on Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Public Sector in South Ethiopia Regional State

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Abstract

This study examines how change management practices affect organizational performance in the public sector through the crucial lens of employee engagement. To collect data from 350 respondents randomly selected from ten bureaus, as well as qualitative data from selected individuals in the study region. A cross-sectional survey design and a convergent parallel design were used. Data analysis using SmartPLS4 showed that the measurement and structural models met the expected criteria, demonstrating the validity and reliability of the constructs through bootstrapping. The findings suggest that effective change management practices have a substantial impact on both employee engagement and organizational performance. Furthermore, employee engagement mediates the relationship between change management practices and organizational performance, indicating that strategic change management practices boost engagement, which in turn improves organizational performance. The study's originality lies in its focus on the public sector, offering strategic change management practices designed to enhance organizational performance through increased employee engagement. This research contributes to the literature by exploring the under-investigated role of employee engagement as a mediator in the relationship between change management practices and

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organizational performance, particularly in the public sector. Employee engagement plays a critical role in the implementation of change management practices and in organizational performance.

Keywords: *change management practices; organizational performance; employee engagement; public sector*

Introduction

The public sector comprises government organizations that provide basic services, with an emphasis on affordability and accessibility, including infrastructure, healthcare, education, and law enforcement. Its efficacy immediately improves people's quality of life and social stability, making it crucial to the resilience and well-being of the community(Grazia et al., 2013; Chukwukadibia, 2023). In the public sector, equitable, effective, and efficient service delivery is seen as a crucial measure of organizational effectiveness. Public organizations prioritize employing engaged employees and implementing robust change management practices to carry out these vital responsibilities, which improves their capacity to serve the community(Doderqlhqo, 2015; Rahmawati et al., 2016; Goh, 2026; Voet et al., 2016; Chychun et al., 2023; Mehmood et al., 2024).

Change management practices are crucial for the successful implementation of change initiatives and their significant influence on organizational performance. The integration of change into company culture, good communication, a well-defined change plan, adequate resource allocation, and leadership commitment are the main dimensions of the change management practices. Effective implementation of these techniques is necessary for businesses to improve performance and public service delivery (Kho et al., 2020; Errida & Lotfi, 2021; Phillips & Klein, 2023; Mukhlis et al., 2024).

The effectiveness of change initiatives and organizational performance is significantly influenced by staff engagement in addition to change management practices. Engaged employees exhibit higher levels of commitment, initiative, and creativity, which increases productivity, financial outcomes, and customer happiness. Thus, prioritizing employee involvement is essential for effective change and better organizational outcomes(Vaja & Bhatt, 2018; Rameshkumar, 2020; Kossyva et al., 2021; Kossyva et al., 2026).

Organizational performance in the public sector is evaluated using critical components such as financial success (profitability), operational effectiveness (resource use), and service quality (client satisfaction). These are framed from four perspectives: internal processes, learning and growth, financial, and customer

satisfaction. The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework is a helpful tool for comprehensive performance evaluation since it aligns activities with strategic goals(Doderqlhqơ, 2015; Moullin, 2026; Northcott, 2026).

This study examines how Lewin's unfreezing stage and ADKAR's model, which emphasizes individual transformation, interact in the theoretical framework to successfully promote awareness and a desire for change. The study improves the effectiveness of the change process by methodically putting Kotter's planned phases into practice. Furthermore, using Social Exchange Theory improves employee engagement by making sure that workers feel appreciated and encouraged, which fosters an atmosphere that is favorable for effective transformation. In addition to addressing the drawbacks of conventional change management techniques, this innovative model emphasizes the critical relationship between organizational performance and individual motivation, ultimately enhancing resilience and adaptability in the public sector(Chernyak-hai & Rabenu, 2018; Brock et al., 2019; Ariestyadi & Taufik, 2020; Laig & Abocejo, 2021; Prunuske et al., 2022; Xin, 2025).

Studies show significant disparities in the services offered by Ethiopian public sector organizations, as well as issues like poor coordination, erratic response times, low employee motivation, and corruption. By creating a gap between client expectations and perceived service outcomes, these challenges compromise service quality. Improvements in service delivery are urgently needed to improve customer satisfaction and boost organizational effectiveness (Hailu, 2019; Engdaw, 2020; Ferede et al., 2024; Siyum, 2024).

A study by Ethiopia's Dire Dawa Administration found that the primary issues hindering organizational performance in terms of customer satisfaction and public service delivery are poor decision-making, limited stakeholder participation, and inadequate leadership. These problems, along with poor grievance handling, low employee motivation, and corruption, worsen public discontent and service disparities. Similarly, research from South Africa shows how a lack of accountability undermines good governance, jeopardizing essential services and reducing organizational effectiveness(Hailu, 2019; Administration et al., 2020; Teshome et al., 2020).

Public sector organizations encounter challenges due to both internal responses to changing customer demands and external social, political, and economic issues. To enhance organizational performance, public institutions must develop internal competencies and adaptability. Effective change management practices are essential to overcoming these challenges and delivering better outcomes(Ahyaruddin, 2016;

Victoria et al., 2021;Zainudin & Othman, 2024; Zangana et al., 2024).To enhance performance using change management practices, organizations must effectively manage a limited number of resources in a changing environment. Public sector organizations are able to maintain their flexibility and high-quality services as a result. Research indicates that these approaches significantly improve organizational performance, highlighting their importance in addressing today's challenges(Sadikoglu & Olcay, 2014; Velsberg et al., 2020; Hasan et al., 2025).

The Ethiopian government has introduced a number of change programs in public companies, including Kaizen, Business Process Reengineering, and the Balanced Scorecard. Recent research, however, shows that these initiatives have mainly failed to enhance service delivery, with anticipated increases in efficiency and effectiveness remaining elusive. This emphasizes the necessity of reevaluating methods for bringing about significant change in the public sector(Worku M.Tadesse, 2019; Altaseb et al., 2023; Abawari et al., 2024).

This study offers a fresh viewpoint by stressing a comprehensive integration of important change management techniques, whereas earlier research has mostly concentrated on improving public sector organizational performance through various change management tools, such as the balanced scorecard, kaizen, and business process reengineering. This study examines the effects of leadership commitment, efficient communication, resource allocation, a clear change strategy, and the alignment of change initiatives with organizational culture on performance outcomes using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Smart PLS 4. Additionally, it clarifies the mediating function of employee engagement and offers fresh perspectives on how these integrated strategies work together to promote organizational performance in the public sector. In addition to strengthening the results, this methodological development closes a major gap in the body of existing literature.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Change Management Practices and Organizational Performance

Change management practices are a crucial strategic framework for successful organizational performance. Its primary goal is to enhance performance by providing workers with the knowledge and support they require to embrace and successfully execute changes. For businesses to be successful, management must approach change management practices in a unified and systematic

manner(Bejinariu et al., 2017; Bulling, 2018; Voehl & Harrington, 2020; Phillips & Klein, 2023).

Organizational performance evaluates how successfully a corporation utilizes its resources to prosper in competitive contexts, with individual performance strongly influencing outcomes. Performance evaluations in the public sector consider operational effectiveness, service quality, and financial data. By classifying indicators into four perspectives: internal processes, learning and growth, customer, and financial, the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) framework offers an organized method to improve performance and guarantee long-term success(Conțu, 2020; Stoffers et al., 2021; Nyukorong, 2022).

Scholars have shown that effective change management practices, including the allocation of resources, commitment from leaders, clear goals, integrating change into organizational culture, and good communication, are positively connected with the effective execution of change (Creasey & Taylor, 2014; Kant et al., 2023; Mizrak, 2023).

Leadership commitment, which is essential for promoting staff involvement and coordinating with company objectives, is the emotional connection and duty that leaders have to their organization. Its affective (want), continuous (need), and normative (duty) components have a big influence on the performance and well-being of an organization(Jackson et al., 2013; Al-mahdy et al., 2018). Creating a well-defined change plan is essential to improving organizational effectiveness in the change management process (Helmold, 2021). Effective communication fosters two-way interactions that encourage participation, suggestions, compliance, and information sharing. Communication is crucial to this process. By keeping lines of communication open and transparent, organizations can increase staff involvement and collaboration, ultimately resulting in positive change and better overall performance (Jackson et al., 2013; Men et al., 2014; Nasomboon, 2014; Zainab et al., 2026).

In change management, resource allocation refers to the planned distribution of resources, including personnel, funds, and time, required to implement changes within an organization. When resources are allocated effectively, transitions proceed more smoothly, and organizational performance improves because the appropriate resources are available when needed. Linking the above-mentioned change management practices with four dimensions of organizational performance in the public sector, such as customer satisfaction, financial perspective, internal process

perspective, and learning and growth perspective, ultimately enhances overall performance (Rita et al., 2017; Kimhi et al., 2019; Solodoha et al., 2026)

H1: Change management practices have a positive effect on organizational performance.

2.2. Change Management Practices and Employee Engagement

Effective change management techniques, such as clear communication, active employee engagement, strong leadership support, and targeted training, are necessary to foster high employee engagement during organizational change. Employee involvement raises the possibility that they will embrace change, which will result in improved performance, increased output, increased innovation, and higher-quality services (Vaja & Bhatt, 2018; Wilson & Wilson, 2022; AGBANA et al., 2023).

As companies continually adjust to the demands of a changing environment, the pace of change in organizational life intensifies. At the same time, success depends critically on sustaining high staff engagement. Managers can effectively handle change and maintain staff engagement during the transition process by gaining a deeper understanding of how people emotionally perceive change. This knowledge promotes a resilient and dedicated staff and facilitates more seamless change implementation. The relationship between engagement and change management is strengthened by growing studies on organizational commitment. Managers may successfully navigate changes while maintaining engagement by comprehending the emotional dynamics of employee involvement during change(Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2013; Beijer & Gruen, 2016; Bhebhe et al., 2019). This describes engaged employees who are emotionally, physically, and mentally ready to accept change management practices in the organization, which has posive role in the rise of employee engagement in the public sector.

H2: Change management practices have a positive effect on employee engagement

2.3 Employee Engagement and Organizational Performance

In today's competitive environment, employee engagement is increasingly recognized as crucial to organizational effectiveness. Employee engagement, defined as employees' passion and emotional dedication to their work and the organization's objectives, immediately increases productivity, customer satisfaction, and innovation, leading to significant results. Prioritizing employee engagement is essential for success in a fast-paced workplace, as it improves performance, job

satisfaction, and retention. A great workplace culture is fostered by engaged employees who actively support business objectives, provide exceptional customer service, and make unique contributions. This dynamic enhances community relationships, fosters trust, and improves service performance in the public sector. In the end, long-term success and a positive social impact depend on giving employee engagement top priority(Ongel, 2014; Deepalakshmi et al., 2024; Komen, 2024; Mohd Safri et al., 2025). This highlights the critical role of change management practices in aligning employee engagement and organizational performance in the public sector within this dynamic environment.

H3: Employee engagement has a positive effect on organizational performance

2.4. Mediation of Employee Engagement

This section examines the mediating role of employee engagement in the relationship between independent variables (change management practices) and dependent variables (organizational performance). By encouraging employee excitement and reducing turnover, well-managed change may help organizations thrive. Effective change management transforms anxiety into opportunities for empowerment and involvement, creating a supportive environment that unleashes workforce potential and boosts motivation. As things evolve, it becomes evident that collaboration between management and employees creates a morally upright environment that enhances psychological support. When employees actively engage in management processes, their goals align with those of the company. A productive workplace is ultimately fostered by this crucial link between improvements and enhanced performance(Komariyah et al., 2024; Islam et al., 2026; Shaik, 2026).

Employee involvement is critical to the success and longevity of a firm. Employers who prioritize employee involvement in transformation initiatives cultivate a driven staff that supports their goals. This engagement creates a crucial link between enhanced worker performance and effective change management. When they witness good behavioral and attitude changes, employees are more willing to modify. This synergy improves individual performance, which drives overall organizational success. By giving employee engagement in change management a priority, organizations can take advantage of their employee's potential for a competitive edge in a rapidly evolving environment(Osborne, 2017; Widjaja et al., 2023; Albrecht et al., 2026).

H4: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between change management practices and organizational performance.

2.5 Change Management Models

In today's rapidly changing public sector, change management approaches are essential for guiding organizational transformation. They provide structured frameworks to help public companies deal with internal and external problems, like evolving customer needs and technology advancements. By outlining processes and tactics precisely, these methods remove resistance, facilitate smooth transitions, and involve stakeholders. This rigorous approach guarantees that organizations in the public sector properly answer the changing needs of citizens by improving service delivery and increasing adaptability(Bekmukhambetova, 2021; Sheik Hamdo, 2021). These models are discussed as follows :

2.5.1 Kurt Lewin's Change Management Model

Organizations use theories of change to guide their adaptation to competitive environments. According to Lewin's change model, there are three stages: unfreezing, movement, and refreezing. Leadership at all levels is crucial. To foster a culture of continuous change, leaders need to demonstrate new behaviors, recognize achievements, take responsibility for their failures, and ensure that the organization's goals align with the present (Hussain et al., 2018; Burnes, 2019; Majka, 2024). This model's general steps are sometimes criticized for requiring consideration of extra aspects to tailor them to particular circumstances.

2.5.2. Kotter's 8-Step Change Management Model

Kotter's eight-step change strategy includes building a coalition, producing urgency, enabling action, generating immediate results, consolidating advancements, making a cultural shift, and emphasizing leadership. Although Kotter's paradigm provides a solid foundation for change, success in the fast-paced world of today requires adaptive approaches. It is difficult and often artificial to sustain real urgency in political contexts, according to critics. The intricacy and unpredictability of the public sector may make complexity theories more suitable than Kotter's linear approach(Aldemir, 2010; Carreno & Carreño, 2024).

2.5.3. ADKAR Change Management Model

The ADKAR Model's five key elements for fostering organizational change are awareness, desire, knowledge, ability, and reinforcement. It prioritizes individual transitions, ensuring that employees understand the need for change, are motivated to engage, possess the requisite skills, and receive ongoing support. By balancing personal and professional goals, ADKAR helps managers overcome opposition and implement effective transformation methods. It is crucial for successful change

management because of its emphasis on continuous reinforcement, which ensures long-lasting impacts(Boca, 2013; Kiani & Shah, 2014; ANGTYAN, 2019; Paramitha et al., 2020).

2.5.4 Social Exchange Theory

According to social exchange theory, people weigh the advantages and disadvantages of their connections in order to maximize gains and reduce losses. According to this idea, organizational performance and change management are mediated in the workplace by employee engagement. Employees are more inclined to welcome organizational changes with enthusiasm when they feel appreciated and emotionally invested. In addition to making transitions easier, this increased engagement boosts output, creativity, and general efficacy. Organizations can increase employee engagement and improve performance by cultivating a culture of exchange and fair transactions(Powers, 2009;Moss, 2013); Lawler et al., 2026).

2.5.5. Kehan's Employee Engagement Model

According to Kehan's Model, employee engagement improves team dynamics and fosters productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction, all of which lead to better organizational performance. Enthusiasm, dedication, and attention are characteristics of engagement, a positive condition in which people devote their mental, emotional, and physical resources to their tasks. This intense commitment yields improved results and higher satisfaction. Supportive workplace resources and favorable psychological environments that promote productive interactions and motivation are crucial components of engagement. Employees who are fully engaged make the most of their potential, which leads to increased commitment and improved output(Gatti, 2016;Abbas et al., 2026;Davis, 2026).

Kotter's 8-Step Change Model is a comprehensive framework for organizational transformation, encompassing resource allocation, leadership involvement, and effective communication to ensure smooth transitions. But lacks flexibility in the dynamic environment. Unlike ADKAR, which focuses on individual transitions, Kotter provides an orderly framework that addresses all significant aspects of change management. Lewin's method simplifies the process; it lacks certain implementation strategies (Pollack & Pollack, 2015; Sittrop & Crosthwaite, 2021; Appelbaum & Habashy, 2026).

However, this study emphasizes the application of Social Exchange Theory to organizational dynamics. The relationship between change management practices and organizational performance is mediated by employee engagement. Employees

are more inclined to accept change when they feel appreciated and involved, which boosts output, innovation, and overall efficacy. Fostering an environment of equitable interactions increases participation and improves output(Albrecht et al., 2022;Ahmad et al., 2023; Homans & Blau, 2025;Rajâa & Mekkaoui, 2025).

2.6 Review of Empirical Literature

Aman Gemechu and Mustefa Ibrahim Wake used 69 randomly chosen participants to examine how change management strategies affected organizational performance at Ethio Telecom South Region. The balanced scorecard, kaizen, and regular quality circles all had a positive effect on performance, with kaizen being more important, according to their SPSS analysis. The study has limitations: it focuses on specific techniques and overlooks important elements such as communication, leadership commitment, and a clear change plan, even though it recommends the regular use of these strategies. Additionally, this study focused on the public sector's change management practices and their effect on organizational performance through the mediating role of employee engagement using SmartPLS4 (Gemechu & Ibrahim Wake, 2021).

Belete Jember Bobe, Dessalegn Getie Mihret, and Degefe Duressa Obo's study, "Public Sector Reforms and Balanced Scorecard Adoption: An Ethiopian Case Study," examines how political ideology influenced the adoption of the Balanced Scorecard in a major Ethiopian public health organization. Using actor-network theory and semi-structured interviews, the researchers discovered that although the BSC sought to match operational goals with strategic objectives, its implementation was hampered by inadequate information systems and a top-down approach, which shifted attention from balancing planning and performance to only improving strategic alignment (Bobe et al., 2017). This study identifies significant gaps in the literature on the effect of change management on organizational performance in the public sector of South Ethiopia. It emphasizes the mediating role of employee engagement, using structural equation modeling with Smart PLS4.

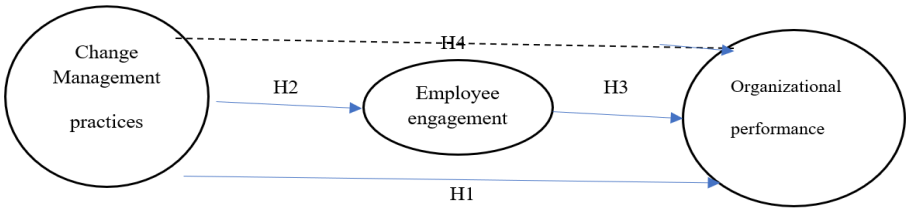

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

Source: Adopted from (Powers, 2009; Moss, 2013; Bakker et al., 2014)

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Research Design and Approach

Descriptive statistics were employed in this study to efficiently summarize the data, thereby setting the stage for insightful inferential analysis (Bahna, 2009; Kaur et al., 2018; Alabi et al., 2023). A structural equation model in SmartPLS4 was used to investigate the mediating role of the latent variable (construct) employee engagement in the relationship between change management practices and organizational performance in the public sector, and a comprehensive report was presented (Ghanbar, 2024; Hwa et al., 202; Hair et al., 2025). A cross-sectional survey was used to collect data at a single point in time (Rindfleisch et al., 2008; Wang & Cheng, 2020; Design et al., 2021). To gain a thorough understanding of the study issue, the researcher combined quantitative and qualitative data using a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach. Triangulation was carried out to confirm the authenticity of the data, which helped to boost understanding(Demir & Pismek, 2018; Bhairawa & Ida, 2022).

3.2. Sources of Data

Data is a set of values of qualitative or quantitative variables. The researcher used primary and secondary data for this study. Primary data were obtained through structured and semi-structured Questionnaires from the sampled respondents, and secondary data from different written literature, articles, and customer satisfaction feedback books from selected bureaus (Douglas, 2015; Kubben, 2018; Ajayi, 2025).

3.3. Sample Techniques

This study examined the effect of change management practices on organizational performance in the public sector, with employee engagement as a mediator, across ten bureaus in the South Ethiopia Regional State, Ethiopia. From the twenty-two Regional Bureaus, ten were selected using simple random sampling techniques(Berger & Zhang, 2006; Koether, 2012; Izzah & Jamil, 2020).

To determine the sample, the researcher applied Taro Yemane's formula(Adam, 2020) with a 95% confidence interval, considering the population size (N=2800) to ensure representativeness, and the population proportion was 0.05 because the research population was known(Uakarn, 2021) . The following is the formula:$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e^2)}$ Where n represents the sample size, N denotes the population size, and indicates the level of precision. Population size (N) = 2800. The resulting sample size is 350. There was rigorous daily follow-up. Enumerators were hired, and the

researcher implemented time arrangements that enabled participants to fully cooperate with the inquiry, including obtaining support letters from each Bureau, to achieve a 100% response rate. The researcher then randomly selected sample respondents from the sample bureaus' daily attendance lists using a lottery method, as recommended by (Taherdoost et al., 2016;Nattino et al., 2025).

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

To collect data for the study, researchers used focus groups, key informant interviews, and questionnaires designed to support the objectives of the study on change management practices and their effects on organizational performance. Surveys gathered quantitative data on employee perceptions of change management, focus groups provided group insights, and key informant interviews provided in-depth contextual information. It provides a comprehensive understanding of how change management affects organizational performance(N. K. Sharma, 2022). In terms of the measurement tools, the researcher used the standardized research tools that were collected and adapted to apply in this study, and 68 Likert scale items were developed and used in this study (Thomas, 2018;Pendidikan et al., 2023).

3.5. Methods of Data Analysis

The researcher used Smart PLS 4 to conduct initial assumption tests on the measurement and structural models to guarantee robust analysis before hypothesis testing(Wong, 2015; Cheah et al., 2020; Subhaktiyasa, 2024). The structural model displays the connections between constructs, whereas the measurement models display the links between each construct and its indicators. These models are often displayed using a route model, which shows the hypotheses and the variable correlations (Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019; Subhaktiyasa, 2024). The researcher selected SmartPLS to analyze data for the study "Effect of Change Management Practices on Organizational Performance: The Mediating Role of Employee Engagement in the Public Sector, Ethiopia". Its easy-to-use interface, capacity to manage small sample sizes, and lack of rigid distributional assumptions make it useful for data that is not normally distributed. Additionally, its emphasis on predictive precision and versatility in analyzing complicated interactions (Ringle et al., 2014; M. Sharma & Chaudhary, 2024; Hu & Alsaqqaf, 2025; M. Sharma et al., 2025).

Validity

The study's validity was evaluated using key criteria. First, the study ensured that the instruments accurately measured the intended variables. The questionnaire instruments underwent a pretesting phase to ensure participants fully understood the questions and to preserve validity. Before pretesting, advisers and subject-matter experts were also given copies of the questionnaire to provide their input. This procedure was used to improve the study's accuracy and dependability. Additionally, validity was assessed more broadly, focusing on the research tool's ability to convincingly demonstrate that it measures the desired goals(Wyllie, 2013).

Reliability

The reliability and internal consistency of the survey instrument were evaluated. By administering two identical survey versions to the same group, parallel-form reliability was confirmed with a correlation higher than 0.7. Internal consistency was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, and a value larger than 0.7 was found (Gottman et al., 1998). To ensure that each question effectively added to the overall construct, item-total correlations were also examined. When composite reliability was calculated, all items satisfied the consistency threshold of 0.70. Additionally, the factor loading for each item was greater than 0.50, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) was in excess of 0.50 (Alarcón & Sánchez, 2015). These findings significantly increased the assessment's validity and reliability, as seen in Table 2. This demonstrates the relationship between reliability and validity (Wyllie, 2013).

Table 1. Construct Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
CMP	0.772	0.794	0.849	0.536
EE	0.895	0.899	0.919	0.656
OP	0.818	0.826	0.881	0.65

Source: Field Survey (2025)

CM= Change management practices , **EE=** Employee engagement, **OP=** Organizational Performance

Discriminant Validity: **Heteotrait – Monotrait (HTMT)**

To assess discriminant validity, the HTMT ratio was used. Strong validity is indicated by values below 0.85 for unconnected constructs and below 0.90 for closely

linked constructs. All HTMT values remained below the predetermined thresholds of 0.85 for unconnected constructs and 0.90 for closely linked constructs, as shown in Table 3. This result confirms that each reflective construct measures a unique notion with little overlap, strongly supporting the existence of distinct validity among the constructs (Roemer & Schuberth, 2026).

Table 2. Heteotrait – Monotrait (HTMT)

Construct	CMP	EE	OP
CMP			
EE	0.68		
OP	0.785	0.833	

Source: Field Survey (2025)

CM = Change management practices, **EE** = Employee engagement, **OP** = Organizational Performance

3.6. Ethical Approval Statement

Before the study commenced, the Ethical Committee of the University reviewed and approved the research title, granting ethics approval. Then, all participants' informed consent was obtained, and the study complied with the Declaration of Helsinki's ethical guidelines. Additionally, to safeguard the privacy of research participants, anonymity and confidentiality were upheld throughout the entire process(Parums, 2024). Documentation of the ethical approval letter is available for verification upon request.

4. Results and Discussions

Assessing how change management practices affect organizational performance was the goal of this study. Through the analysis of data from across public sectors, we were able to better understand how much change management practices contribute to good organizational results, emphasizing how important they are for building resilience and achieving strategic goals. The following are the discussions on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, descriptive analysis of the independent variables, and the regression output of the effect of change management practices on organizational performance of the study.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents and Descriptive Analysis of the Variables

Table 1 presents a demographic profile of the 350 respondents, including frequencies and percentages. With 125 (35.71%) females and 225 (64.29%) males, the sample is predominantly male. 64 respondents (18.29%) were between the ages of 29 and 39, 241 (68.86%) were between the ages of 40 and 50, and 45 (12.86%) were above 50, indicating a senior workforce. With three respondents (0.86%) holding a diploma, 207 (59.14%) holding a bachelor's degree, and 140 (40.00%) holding a master's degree, the respondents demonstrate significant levels of educational attainment. According to experience levels, 208 respondents (59.43%) have 18 years or more of experience, while 7 respondents (2.00%) have fewer than six. The majority of respondents (252; 72.00%), categorized as Experts, fill job posts. 250 respondents (71.43%) earn between Birr 5,000 and 10,000, based on the salary distribution. The workforce in this demographic profile is highly educated and experienced, which is believed to enhance their understanding of change management practices and organizational performance. These descriptive data summarize the distribution of participants from the ten regional bureaus of the regional state and provide a foundation for further investigation.

Table 3. Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Variables	Descriptions	Frequency	Percent
Sex	Female	125	35.71
	Male	225	64.29
	Total	350	100.00
Age	Below 18 years	-	-
	18-28 years	-	-
	29-39 years	64	18.29
	40-50 years	241	68.86
	above 50 years	45	12.86
	Total	350	100.00
Level of education	Grade 12 complete	-	-
	Certificate	-	-
	Diploma	3	0.86
	Bachelor Degree	207	59.14
	Masters Degree	140	40.00
	Doctorate Degree	-	-
	Total	350	100
Service Year	Below 1 year	-	-
	1-5 years	-	-
	6-5 years	7	2.00
	12-17 years	135	38.57
	18 and above	208	59.43
	Total	350	100.00
Job position	Head of Bureau	-	-
	vice head	40	11.43
	directorate director	58	16.57
	Expert	252	72.00
	Total	350	100.00
Salary level	Below Birr 5,000	-	-
	Birr 5.000 – 10,000	250	71.43
	Birr 10,000-15,000	60	17.14
	Above Birr 15,000	40	11.43
	Total	350	100.00

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 4. Descriptive Results of the Variables

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. dev
Change management practices			
Leadership commitment	350	3.271429	.6252484
Change integration	350	3.464286	6364279
Effective communication	350	3.435238	.6171404
Resource allocation	350	3.232381	.632958
Clear change plan	350	3.49381	.6210848
Mediating variable			
Employee engagement	350	3.37381	.4687256
Organizational Performance			
Financial perspective	350	3.442857	.5766148
Customer satisfaction	350	3.453714	.5571884
Internal process	350	3.643429	.5487675
Learning and Growth	350	3.173714	.5952972

Source: Survey Data (2025)

Table 4 provides a brief overview of the descriptive findings of significant aspects in the research on employee engagement, organizational performance, and change management strategies in the public sector. The analysis indicates that the most successful practices Clear Change Plans (Mean = 3.49, SD = 0.621) and Change Integration (Mean = 3.46, SD = 0.636) show a moderately favorable climate for change. Employee engagement indicates a stable foundation for staff buy-in (Mean = 3.37, SD = 0.469). The significant discrepancy between Internal Process Performance (Mean = 3.64, SD = 0.549) and the lower Learning and Growth score (Mean = 3.17, SD = 0.595) shows that while current practices manage current operations effectively, they do not adequately foster the adaptive learning and development necessary for sustained performance. Numerous studies support the finding that employee engagement, organizational performance, and change management practices in the public sector. Effective change management leads to better outcomes and higher employee engagement. Effective communication strategies and clearly stated change plans are linked to higher performance indicators. Additionally, in public sector organizations, gaining employee consent necessitates systematic change management. While operational efficiency is crucial, neglecting learning and development can jeopardize long-term success, highlighting the need for a balanced approach. When taken as a whole, these studies demonstrate the connections between enhanced organizational performance, employee engagement, and effective change management practice (Wachira et al., 2017) (Demerouti & Bakker, 2020)(Kossyva et al., 2026).

4.2. Epherical Results

Table 4 presents an in-depth analysis of the hypotheses regarding the effects of change management (CM), employee engagement (EE), and organizational performance (OP) on organizational dynamics within the public sector. As shown in Figure 1, the conceptual framework developed by the researcher is supported by robust statistical evidence, as stated below. The analysis reveals a significant and positive relationship between change management and employee engagement (β = 0.458, p = 0.000, and T = 8.511), supporting Hypothesis 1. Change management (CM) practices account for approximately 45.8% of the variance in employee engagement (EE), underscoring their strategic importance in fostering employee engagement in the public sector.

Furthermore, a significant and positive relationship is established between change management practices (CMP) and organizational performance (OP) (β = 0.551, p = 0.000, and T = 10.197), supporting Hypothesis 2. This finding indicates that change management practices account for approximately 55.1% of the variation in organizational performance, underscoring their pivotal role in public-sector performance.

Moreover, employee engagement (EE) and organizational performance (OP) demonstrate a significant and positive influence (β = 0.518, p = 0.000, and T = 7.170), supporting Hypothesis 3. This result indicates that employee engagement accounts for approximately 51.8% of the variation in organizational performance, underscoring the critical role of employee engagement in public-sector performance. Additionally, the study of the indirect path coefficient estimates for Hypothesis 4 indicates a substantial indirect effect (β = 0.237, p = 0.000, T = 5.001), supporting Hypothesis 4. This implies that change management practices have a significant indirect effect on organizational performance through their influence on employee engagement in the public sector.

The robust statistical analysis provides quantitative insights into the relationship among change management practices, employee engagement, and organizational performance. The finding suggests that organizations can significantly enhance their performance by leveraging change management practices and fostering employee engagement, particularly in the context of rapid organizational dynamism.

This study provides a solid framework for further research on how these three crucial elements of organizational performance interact. Integrating change management, employee engagement, and organizational performance strategies can help public organizations boost their competence, innovation, and resilience in a

dynamic environment. This addresses a significant gap in the literature, which typically treats change initiatives separately.

Table 5. Results of Hypotheses

Hypotheses	Path	B	Mean	STDEV	T Value	P Value	Result
H1	CM -> EE	0.458	0.459	0.054	8.511	0.000	Supported
H2	CM -> OP	0.551	0.552	0.054	10.197	0.000	Supported
H3	EE -> OP	0.518	0.518	0.072	7.170	0.000	Supported
H4	CM -> EE -> OP	0.237	0.238	0.047	5.001	0.000	Supported

Source: Survey data analysis (2025)

CM = Change management practices, EE = Employee engagement, OP = Organizational Performance

4.3. Discussion

In the discussion part, the study highlighted significant theoretical advancements, practical applications, perceptive reader feedback, and potential future research areas.

The current study asserts that change management practices influence employee engagement and are statistically significant. In terms of qualitative results, the government has consequently improved its salary, and employees have been motivated and engaged in their respective job positions. Hence, the findings of this study align with the previous study, which concluded that change management practices have a positive effect on employee engagement. If managers understand the emotional responses to change, they may be able to lead more successfully in a rapidly changing environment. This insight promotes tenacity and commitment, which leads to smoother transitions and a dedicated workforce (Swarnalatha & Prasanna, 2013; AGBANA et al., 2023; Khonjelwayo & Ellenson, 2024). The study draws support from the ADKAR model, which describes that when employees understand the necessity for change, are motivated to contribute, possess the necessary skill and are reinforced that helps managers to overcome resistance and implement change management strategies, which is important for significant organizational success (Jaaron et al., 2022; Mudjisusatyo et al., 2024). Therefore, engaged employees who are emotionally, physically, and mentally ready to accept change management practices in the organization are crucial to perform change initiatives significantly in the public sector.

Additionally, the current study fiding shows that the total direct effect of the statistics validated change management practices has a significant positive effect on the organizational performance. Organizations can gain valuable insights by investing in effective change management practices and aligning these approaches with their strategic goals. Because of this integration, public organizations may thrive in today's rapidly evolving environment and continue to be competent, creative, and resilient despite ongoing challenges (Kibet, 2023; Ferede et al., 2024b; Ali & Fisal, 2025). Hence, Change management practices such as leadership commitment, a clear change plan, effective resource allocation, effective communication, and integrating change with organizational culture enhance organizational performance. Goal alignment and employee engagement are fostered by committed leadership. A clear change plan and effective communication promote cooperation and involvement. By making changes easier through careful resource allocation, organizations can improve customer satisfaction, financial performance, and overall success (Rita et al., 2017; Kimhi et al., 2019; Solodoha et al., 2026). Furthermore, the qualitative results confirm that the public sector's organizational performance is greatly impacted by the successful application of change management techniques. The study gets support from Kurt Lewin's model, which leads organizations through the three crucial phases of Unfreeze, Change, and Refreeze, highlighting the significance of planning for change, carrying it out carefully, and establishing new habits within the organizational culture. This methodical approach not only makes transitions easier but also increases employee participation and flexibility, which eventually improves overall performance (Hussain et al., 2018; Burnes, 2019; Majka, 2024). Therefore, the public organization is trying to put effort into bringing organizational success by launching change management practices by leveraging employees for change readiness, formulating a clear change plan, and carrying it out carefully to improve organizational performance.

Furthermore, the study results reveal that employee engagement significantly improves organizational performance. It is a crucial factor in determining an organization's profitability and performance in the current competitive environment. This finding is supported by the results from qualitative data, which confirms that fulfilling employees' needs, participating in training, and developing awareness boost their engagement, enabling them to achieve organizational success.This finding aligns with the study that concluded employees who are passionate and dedicated to their profession are more productive and creative, which improves client satisfaction and overall performance (Ongel, 2014; Deepalakshmi et al., 2024; Komen, 2024; Mohd Safri et al., 2025). Hence, engaged

employees increase participation and improve service delivery; succeeds organizational performance. Supportive workplace resources and favorable psychological environments that promote employee engagement(Bakker & Bakker, 2011; Albrecht et al., 2026). Employees who are fully engaged make the most of their potential, which leads to increased commitment and improved performance (Cesário, 2017; Breevaart et al., 2026). So, the finding highlights that organizations should leverage employee engagement to increase overall performance. But the workplace support resource and other incentive strategies to be delivered to employees to meet their psychological needs to boost their engagement require further research, which enables the improvement of organizational performance (Kurniawati & Raharja, 2023; Deepalakshmi et al., 2024). The study findings get support from Kehan's Employee Engagement Model, which describes how employee engagement improves team dynamics and fosters productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction, all of which lead to better organizational performance (Gatti, 2016; Abbas et al., 2026; Davis, 2026).

Finally, the study result reveals that employee engagement mediates the relationship between change management practices and organizational performance**.** The qualitative results show how organizational performance in the public sector is enhanced when employee involvement is combined with change management strategies. Because they felt valued and empowered, employee trust and responsibility increased. These positive improvements made them more receptive to change, which confirmed the quantitative findings and directly related involvement to improved performance. This finding aligns with a study that found change management practices significantly improve organizational performance by raising employee engagement. By creating a friendly and empowering environment, organizations may turn employee concerns into chances for engagement throughout changes. By aligning personal aspirations with corporate goals, this cooperative approach boosts motivation and job satisfaction. As involvement rises, overall performance will improve, highlighting the critical link between efficient change management practices and an attractive work place ingrain employees in return to uplift organizational performance (Gemechu & Ibrahim Wake, 2021; Komariyah et al., 2024; Islam et al., 2026; Shaik, 2026). Employee engagement is a key mediator between change management practices and organizational performance in the public sector. By prioritizing employee participation in change initiatives, organizations may cultivate an engaged staff that aligns with their goals. This involvement promotes positive behavioral changes, which boosts employees' receptivity to change and enhance overall performance. By focusing on employee

involvement in the process of change, organizations may leverage the potential of their workforce to obtain a competitive advantage (Osborne, 2017; Widjaja et al., 2023; Albrecht et al., 2026). The findings show that effective change management practices not only increase employee engagement but also enhance organizational performance (Powers, 2009; Moss, 2013; Asare Duffour et al., 2024). This study draws support from the social exchange theory, which focuses on when employees are more inclined to accept organizational changes with enthusiasm when they feel emotionally invested and appreciated in their organization, which enable to improve performance (Albrecht et al., 2022; Ahmad et al., 2023; Homans & Blau, 2025; Rajâa & Mekkaoui, 2025).

Thus, this study fills a significant research gap by integrating worker engagement with change management strategies to enhance organizational performance in the public sector. Our approach highlights the unique relationship between employee engagement and effective change management, providing fresh insights on how these elements can cooperate to enhance performance in public sector organizations, even though a significant amount of the literature has studied these topics separately (Worku, M.Tadesse, 2019; Altaseb et al., 2023; Abawari et al., 2024; Komariyah et al., 2024; Islam et al., 2026; Shaik, 2026).

5. Conclusion

The workforce in this demographic profile is highly educated and experienced, which is believed to enhance their understanding of change management practices and organizational performance. The study offers compelling evidence suggesting that change management strategies significantly affect organizational performance, primarily because they raise employee engagement in the public sector. The findings support the notion that change management strategies enhance organizational performance and engagement and show the intricate link between these constructs. When organizations prioritize employee engagement throughout change initiatives, they may create a motivated workforce that aligns with their goals. Engaged employees exhibit increased trust, empowerment, and adaptability, all of which directly contribute to better individual and team performance.

Notably, this study establishes the social exchange theory as a fundamental framework for comprehending employee engagement's mediating function. This hypothesis states that when workers feel appreciated and emotionally invested, they are more likely to accept organizational changes. This reciprocal relationship demonstrates how companies may create an environment of respect and dedication

by investing in employee engagement, which strengthens the connection between organizational performance and change management practices. A supportive atmosphere that promotes employee engagement also requires elements like clear communication, effective leadership commitment, and resource allocation. Organizations enable more seamless transitions during times of change by attending to employee needs and cultivating an empowering culture, which results in long-term success.

This study fills a major gap in the literature by combining change management strategies with employee involvement to enhance organizational performance. By using this link, public sector companies may effectively navigate the challenges of a rapidly evolving environment, ensuring resilience, adaptation, and ongoing competence. The findings demonstrate how crucial it is for leaders to create a workplace culture that values employee involvement and input in order to obtain a competitive advantage in today's fast-paced world.

6. Recommendation

In order to improve organizational performance in the public sector, adopt inclusive leadership that actively involves staff members in the process of change, encouraging cooperation and trust. Establish organized feedback systems to give employees a voice and ensure that their opinions influence decisions. Invest in ongoing training to provide employees with the tools they need to effectively adjust to change. Create structures that establish employee involvement from a policy standpoint, making engagement a key component of your approach. In theory, utilizing social exchange theory emphasizes how emotional ties improve participation and moderate the effects of change management. Public sector firms can unlock workforce potential and achieve long-term success in an ever-changing setting by adopting these suggestions and turning change into a tremendous opportunity.

7. Limitations and Further Direction

The results of the study may be impacted by a number of constraints. First off, because of the particular organizational contexts tested, the findings could not apply to other industries. Relying too much on qualitative information from focus groups and interviews may result in bias due to social desirability or group dynamics.

Furthermore, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to conclude the causal links between employee engagement, performance, and change management techniques. Additionally, the results could be influenced by other outside influences, making it more difficult to isolate effects, and the sample size could not be large enough to obtain a representative view. Recognizing these constraints will aid in directing further study in this field.

8. Contribution of the Paper

This study contributes to the body of knowledge by demonstrating the combined effect of employee involvement and change management strategies on organizational performance in the public sector. It highlights the mediating role of social exchange theory by emphasizing the emotional connections that enhance engagement. The findings also offer legislators and leaders helpful guidance on how to foster a culture that supports effective change, which in turn drives organizational success.

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